



Watchdog Fears Ronaldsway-Style Queues at New Liverpool Ferry Terminal

Passenger watchdog TravelWatch Isle of Man understands that the Department of Infrastructure will soon be submitting, to the authorities in Liverpool, its planning application for the new £30 million plus ferry terminal at Princes Half-Tide Dock, ½ mile distant from the Pier Head.

The eviction from the Pier Head, with its convenient links into the city centre and to bus and rail services, could cause severe inconvenience for foot passengers, as TravelWatch has consistently highlighted to Minister Harmer. The proposed terminal is in a public transport "desert," with no bus services along Princes Parade or along the Dock Road. The distance from the city centre, as shown on the accompanying scale map, is such that only a very small minority of foot passengers can be expected to consider walking to or from the terminal via Princes Parade. Some foot passengers will rely on availability of taxis, but the majority are likely to rely on provision of a bus service to and from the city centre and its public transport facilities.

The planning application will show the physical infrastructure, which must include a new pedestrian access across the former dock entrance between the terminal and Princes Parade. As the ferry terminal forms an integral part of the strategic transport link between the Isle of Man and North West England and beyond, then good planning practice requires that the application should include details of the transport links to be provided between the ferry terminal and the city centre train and bus stations. Normally, the planning authority would be expected to scrutinise such aspects, but might this not be given sufficient weight as the City of Liverpool has been a prime mover in the eviction of the ferry service from the Pier Head?

A frequent bus service is necessary from the city centre to the new terminal. And on arrival of the ferry a high capacity bus service is required to the city centre. In the busy evening peak, bus operators could be reluctant to provide sufficient capacity, especially when the vessel is arriving with a large complement of foot passengers. For example, if only 200 of the Manannan's 800 passenger capacity wished to use the bus, they could be queueing for over an hour if say only one 50 seater bus was provided for what is likely to be at least a 20 minutes return trip.

Although the Liverpool authorities are said to have given general assurances to provide a bus service, this cannot be regarded as sufficient. It is essential to avoid a situation where ferry operator, terminal operator, and Liverpool authorities argue as to who should provide the buses. TravelWatch strongly believes that there should be guaranteed provision by the terminal owner/operator of an adequate connecting bus link, preferably as an integral part of the application, or failing that as a condition of planning approval. Furthermore, there needs to be agreement regarding maximum queueing times and a commitment to monitor and report, to avoid the Ronaldsway queueing situation.

To safeguard a satisfactory outcome, TravelWatch has sought assurances, but with no response to date, from Minister Harmer that;

- details of the ferry terminal proposals be made available to the Manx public and media in advance of the submission of planning application.
- he will publicise details of how members of the public can make their views known on the planning application to the Liverpool planning authorities.

Tynwald members and the travelling public are all too aware of the frustrations felt by departing air passengers subjected to long-standing lengthy queues at Ronaldsway Airport. It will be totally

unacceptable if sea passengers are faced with spending a long time queueing for buses on arrival at the expensive Liverpool terminal. TravelWatch urges the travelling public and business organisations to monitor developments closely and to submit representations that the planning application and approval should be conditional on the ferry terminal operator being responsible for the provision of an adequate dedicated bus service.

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