

Liverpool Ferry Terminal Planning Application

A Raw Deal for Passengers?

With little or no publicity on the Isle of Man, the Department of Infrastructure submitted its formal Planning Application for the new Liverpool Ferry Terminal to the Liverpool City authorities on 11 December 2018, with members of the public including ferry users having only 4 weeks to submit their comments on the detailed proposals.

TravelWatch has attempted to identify and make sense of the relevant details in approximately sixty complex planning documents. It is very disappointing how little consideration appears to have been given to the needs of the many foot passengers travelling between the new terminal (800 metres away from the Pier Head) and the city centre amenities and railway stations. The application documents present voluminous analyses of road traffic flows, but give scant consideration to provisions for taxis, bus services, and pedestrian routes.

Although the terminal building will have capacity for 900 passengers, no attempt has been made to evaluate the numbers of foot passengers, and to determine how these can be catered for by buses, taxis, and on foot. It is not readily apparent from the plans as to how many bus and taxi bays will be provided at the terminal. The documents ("Transport Assessment Vol 1, para 4.38) blithely state that "current levels and frequency of bus services will have to increase," but there appear to be no commitments or proposals to provide bus services to and from the terminal. There are merely references to the very few infrequent inadequate existing bus services in the general area. What has happened to the previous assurances, that good bus links would be provided, given by Liverpool Mayor Joe Anderson and by our Infrastructure Minister? Mr Harmer cannot have forgotten that the User Agreement (para 3.9.1.1) specifies that services shall be to ports having "good accessibility by ... public transport."

The applicant gives the impression that bus services are really not essential, as distances "up to 2 km on foot" will be "reasonable," and claims that Lime Street station will only be a 24 minute walk away! Try that with luggage on a rainy day!

For pedestrians, it appears to be assumed that many will find their way via the dock road rather than along a more obvious new footpath link with Princes Parade. This desirable link "does not form part of the current proposals" (para 2.49). But elsewhere, it (Environmental Statement Vol 1 para 8.47) notes that it is understood that Peel will refurbish the link ready for completion of the proposed development. This needs to be a firm commitment, guaranteed within the planning permission.

This planning application for a transport interchange of regional, rather than just local, significance is clearly fundamentally deficient in the way that it fails to address the transport requirements of foot passengers. What would be the point of a fast-ferry sailing, if it was then followed by a long wait at the terminal, in the hope of there being a bus?

It need not delay the planning process if members of the public were to request that the application be granted conditional on the provision of a defined adequate bus services to connect with all sailings. Those with concerns need to voice them to Tynwald Members, and also direct to the planning authority at www.northgate.liverpool.gov.uk regarding planning application number 18F/3231. This could be the last opportunity to press effectively for adequate public transport services to and from the island's new ferry terminal.

TravelWatch Isle of Man

19th December 2018

