

# TravelWatch- *ISLE OF MAN*

Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers

## **TravelWatch ISLE OF MAN submission to the Consultation on Draft Terms of Reference - Travel Consultative Group**

1. TravelWatch Isle of Man is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the Consultation on the proposal to set up the Travel Consultative Group (TCG) arising out of Recommendation 7 of the 2008 Report of the Tynwald Select Committee into the Steam Packet Company. A note about TravelWatch will be found as an Appendix to this submission.
2. We broadly welcome the proposal to set up the TCG. We note the purpose of the Group: "to provide a focus for the public with respects to complaints and other matters in respect of travel to and from the Island. It will provide a framework for the consideration and discussion of passenger related issues".
3. However, while we agree that individual complaints should not normally be handled by the TCG, we consider that the TCG should scrutinise the complaints handling systems of operators, including annual statistics arising from operators' complaints handling systems.
4. We suggest that under "purpose" it would be sensible to include specifically punctuality and reliability of service, rather than just expecting them to be included in quality of service. These are absolutely critical factors for passengers according to long established research findings.
5. Under "purpose", we suggest that there should a reference to connectivity – or "joined up" transport. Many difficulties for passengers arise from a failure to connect between different modes of transport and promoting connectivity should be a key element of the work of the TCG. Given the involvement of more than one Government Department in transport, there would be benefit in officers from other departments being in attendance at meetings of the TCG.
6. Under "purpose", we suggest that the TCG should have the task of seeking and promoting improvements for passengers through discussions with the operators. We are hopeful that the Department would encourage the co-operation of operators in such discussions.
7. Others responding to the Consultation have suggested that TravelWatch could undertake all or much of the proposed work. While TravelWatch is prepared to contribute what it can to the TCG, as a voluntary organisation we at present lack the resources to undertake much or all the work of the TCG. We would be prepared to discuss this suggestion further.
8. In (2) above we reproduce the stated purpose of the TCG. Given the intention for the TCG to be a focus for public concerns, the means by which the TCG and the public may communicate is not set out. We suggest that providing suitable opportunities is critical: the work of the TCG needs to be transparent and accessible to the public; devices such as holding meetings in public and organising public meetings are examples of how good communications may be achieved.

9. TravelWatch is concerned that the inclusion of operators, hauliers or passenger handling agents on the TCG may confuse the purpose of the TCG. We suggest that while the TCG will wish to have discussions with operators and others, the core TCG membership should be those representing the interests of the travelling public.
10. We suggest the Terms of Reference (TOR) are suitably amended to take account of points we make in this submission.

Submitted by:           Brendan O'Friel – Chairman – TravelWatch ISLE OF MAN  
8 High Street, Port St Mary, Isle of Man, IM9 5DR  
Telephone/Fax 01624 833636       Email: [Brendan@ofriel.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Brendan@ofriel.fsnet.co.uk)  
[www.travelwatch-isleofman.org](http://www.travelwatch-isleofman.org)

16 December 2010

## Appendix

**TravelWatch Isle of Man** was founded following a public meeting in Douglas in January 2007 attended by over 70 people. The meeting unanimously agreed that a passenger watchdog was needed to ensure that operators took more account of the needs of passengers.

The purpose of the Association is:-

“To represent and promote the interests of Isle of Man passengers”

Our key objectives are:-

- To provide opportunities for passengers to express their concerns and needs
- To influence Public Transport Authorities and Operators to improve services for passengers
- To provide Public Transport Authorities and Operators with a passenger organisation to consult
- To encourage integrated public transport provision both on and off the Island
- To co-operate with other bodies in the interests of passengers

We have over 50 paid up members and a wider group of around 200 supporters on our mailing list.

We have developed a website which includes helpful information for passengers. Our website receives approaching 2000 visitors a year. We have also held two public meetings a year at the Villa Marina with an encouraging public attendance of around 60 although there were around 130 at our public meeting in November 2010.