

# Luton station

## What passengers want

Passenger priorities for improvement

November 2010



**W**orking in partnership, Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch have been liaising closely with passengers in order to understand how Luton station might better serve the needs of those using and passing through the facility.

The research was designed to focus on three areas:

1. To understand current passenger satisfaction with Luton station
2. To identify passengers' priorities for improvement and how any future station developments may improve passenger satisfaction
3. To investigate the differences in satisfaction/priorities for First Capital Connect (FCC) and East Midlands Trains (EMT) passengers using the station.

Of the 432 passengers surveyed, 66% were commuters travelling, on average, four times a week. 27% of passengers were leisure passengers with the remainder travelling for business.

In addition, as Luton currently has no step-free access to all but one of the platforms and the facilities for disabled passengers are poor, a separate consultation exercise was undertaken to ensure that their needs were considered. Issues identified included the lack of step-free access at the station as well as poor provision of way-finding signage and tactile information for visually impaired passengers.

- **Satisfaction with access to and from Luton station** — The main ways passengers accessed Luton was either on foot (60%), by bus (13%) or by car (13%). Passengers who accessed the station on foot were critical of the footbridge from the town centre. There were concerns about the condition and security issues were raised. For those passengers arriving by bus, they felt the speed and frequency of the service were the biggest areas for improvement. Finally, there was some evidence that more passengers would like to use the bus to travel to/from the station but improvements to the frequency and routes of the buses were required.

### Passengers' overall priorities for improvement

(1= highest priority and 10 lowest)

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Walkway linking the city centre to the station           | 1  |
| Lighting throughout the station                          | 2  |
| Waiting rooms  | 3  |
| More station staff                                       | 4  |
| Toilets  | 5  |
| Real-time information                                    | 6  |
| Canopies covering the length of the platform             | 7  |
| Step-free access from the booking office to the platform | 8  |
| Ticket selling facilities                                | 9  |
| Bus connections  | 10 |

Sample size: 432 passengers

- **Passenger information** — The research found 56% of passengers were satisfied with the information provided at Luton station. When asked what they wanted improved, 42% of all passengers said they wanted better real-time information. This was even more important for commuters (49%). Passengers using the railway for leisure or business purposes said information about buses was their highest priority.
- **The station environment** — Only 29% of passengers said they were satisfied with the station amenities. The key areas passengers want improved are waiting and seating facilities as well as more toilets. Only 22% of passengers said they were satisfied with the station's entrances/exits, booking halls and walk-



ing routes. 70% of passengers thought the main station entrance required improvements and 68% of passengers said they wanted improvements to the booking hall.

- **Safety and security** — Only a third (33%) of passengers said they were satisfied with the levels of security at the station. The key area passengers wanted addressed is the visibility of station staff at night. Particular comments were made about beggars being an issue at the station.
- **Retail outlets** — Passengers were asked about the retail facilities they wanted to see at Luton. Cash machines and newsagents were the most requested facilities identified, however, passengers stated these were a low priority for them compared with other needs, such as improvements to the walkway linking the city centre to the station, lighting and staff.
- **Passengers' priorities:** When asked about priorities, all groups of passengers highlighted the footbridge linking the town centre and station as the main area they wanted improved. FCC passengers wanted better lighting and waiting rooms as their second and third highest priorities respectively. EMT passengers wanted improved waiting facilities and more visible of staff.



Only a third of passengers (33%) said were satisfied with the levels of security on Luton station

**When asked 'what would need to be improved to make you rate the station more highly?' passengers say:**

*"Security at night – real staff on duty, not CCTV!"*

*"Luton station is the worst station I have ever seen in the UK or abroad. The facilities are non-existent, the walkway to the town centre is dangerous and always crowded with homeless people and the station in general is dilapidated and dirty....."*

*"Let's have a station we can be proud of."*

#### **Next steps**

This research has identified the current levels of passenger satisfaction with Luton station and the main passenger priorities for improvement. Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch will now be working closely with the operators at Luton and Network Rail in order to ensure that they are aware of passenger aspirations and that these are considered in any future schemes. In the current economic climate, it is imperative that any improvement works taking place at stations reflect and address passenger priorities. While the funding previously identified for Luton has been withdrawn, we are pleased to see that work is now progressing on a new footbridge linking the station and town centre. Passengers highlighted this as the number one priority for improvement at the station and will welcome this improvement.

We are encouraged that First Capital Connect and Network Rail are working to identify future improvements to Luton station and Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch will continue to ensure that passenger priorities are considered within the development of these schemes.

#### **Contact us**

If you want to know more about the work we are doing on your behalf to ensure you get a better deal when you travel by rail, bus or coach contact us:

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