

**From:** J.A.Rogers - North Wales Business Council

**Sent:** 03 December 2015 15:51

**To:** Michael Vaughan

**Subject:** Rail access to Manchester Airport for North Wales - 73rd Supplemental Agreement Consultation

Good Afternoon Michael,

John Rooney at the North Wales Economic Ambition Board passed on your details, in order that we could input into the above.

As a Business organisation we are focused on supporting and accelerating balanced and sustainable business growth across the region, across all sectors and sizes of business (our membership includes the Chamber of Commerce / FSB / CBI / North Wales Tourism / Wales Tourism Alliance / EEF / CITB / Glyndwr University / Bangor University / Colegau Cymru etc..).

For the North Wales region, Manchester airport is our main international hub/airport, in terms of both Trade (of crucial importance across both inward and outward business travel / freight / inward investment) and Tourism/Leisure.

As a region we are home to some 57,000 enterprises including Airbus / Tata / Siemens / JCB / Toyota and the upcoming Horizon nuclear facility, Wylfa Newydd. Key project spend in the area over the next 10 years is in excess of £20bn's and these developments will have a very positive effect across both North Wales and the North West, with knock on effects for business travel into and out from the region, both domestically and internationally.

As a region, through the Business Council and our Public Sector partner (the North Wales Economic Ambition Board), we are already working closely with Welsh Government, Cheshire & Warrington LEP and the MDA, to help maximise the economic benefits of major projects within the region and across the wider arc of the Northern Powerhouse, which in reality extends through from Holyhead to Hull. In recent meetings with the Minister for the Northern Powerhouse, it has been made abundantly clear to me, that the UK Government supports a well-connected economy across the North West and North Wales region, and that this is to everyone's benefit.

North Wales as a major tourist destination has much to offer the international visitor. However, the difficulty of travelling to North Wales from the airport by rail compared to other popular tourist areas such as Yorkshire and Cumbria (which have direct rail connectivity), means that this market opportunity is difficult to capitalise on. The tourism economy in North Wales is worth £1.8bn annually and employs 40,000 people. If the international visitor market could be opened up with direct rail connectivity from the airport, then both the economic value and employment in the region could be significantly increased.

Although we are lobbying for a number of different infrastructure improvements across North Wales and the MDA / C&W LEP region, we see as one of our key targets, the drastic improvement of our access to Manchester Airport by rail, as this seriously impedes our growth, in relation to international tourism and trade (both business travel and freight). The current rail services to Manchester Airport are wholly impractical and this leads to even further reliance on the already over capacity M56.

Manchester Airport's draft Sustainable Development Plan 2015, forecasts an increase in passenger throughput from 22 million passengers p.a. to 45 million passenger p.a. by 2030, with a good

percentage of their Users, coming from our Region, adding further to congestion, unless we can push modal change, from car to rail.

Workable connectivity to Manchester Airport is essential for us (currently Manchester Airport to Holyhead takes almost 4 hours by train, meaning that it makes more sense to use Heathrow, for international businesses coming into the area). We are home to 360 foreign owned businesses, employing 38,000 workers and this undoubtedly has a negative impact on them directly, saying nothing of the UK owned companies based here.

Currently our region is being denied meaningful rail connections to our International Airport, which surely must contravene access agreements?

We fully support the application by ATW to extend a number of North Wales services beyond Manchester Piccadilly to Manchester International Airport, to secure a workable and practical direct rail connection for our region to the Airport.

Should you wish to discuss in more depth our feedback, or if there are any areas where we can support further, please let us know. In a similar vein, should you wish this input in a formal hard copy format, that can be arranged also.

Many thanks Michael.

Yours Sincerely,

**Ashley Rogers**  
Chairman  
North Wales Business Council