

## **Appendix C – Correspondence received from major stakeholders**

### **1) MPs**

- i) Sam Gyimah, MP for East Surrey
- ii) Helen Hayes, MP for Dulwich and West Norwood
- iii) Steve Reed, MP for Croydon North (See also Appendix B)
- iv) Gavin Shuker, MP for Luton South

### **2) London Assembly Members**

- i) Joanne McCartney, AM for Enfield and Haringey
- ii) Steve O'Connell, AM for Croydon and Sutton

### **3) Local ward councillors**

- i) Cllr Scott Ainslie, Lambeth Council
- ii) Cllr Malcolm Clark, Lambeth Council
- iii) Cllr Mary Cooke, Bromley Council
- iv) Cllr Peter Hill, Bracknell-Forest Council
- v) Cllr Robert Jones, Tandridge Council
- vi) Cllr Adam Langleben, Barnet Council
- vii) Cllr Jane Pickard, Lambeth Council
- viii) Cllr Jill Whitehead, Sutton Council
- ix) Cllr Clair Wilcox, Lambeth Council

### **4) Local authorities**

- i) Wandsworth Council

### **5) RMT Union – letters dated 11/3/16 and 21/3/16**

### **6) APTU**



**From:** GYIMAH, Sam  
**Sent:** 11 March 2016 16:36  
**To:** enquiries  
**Subject:** GTR ticket office changes

Sam Gyimah MP: response to consultation on GTR Ticket Office Changes

As the MP for East Surrey, I am extremely concerned about proposals to shut or reduce ticket office hours at stations serving commuters in my constituency, including at Caterham, Oxted, Horley and East Grinstead stations. My concerns are as follows:

- I receive complaints daily from constituents about cancellations, delayed trains, driver shortages and generally appalling service. Customers should be hearing about the urgent action being taken to address these issues, not proposals to reduce station services. It is very difficult to take seriously assurances that this change will benefit passengers when they are already being let down in almost every other area.
- Buying the correct ticket at the best price is already difficult enough. Certain tickets cannot be bought at ticket machines; more complex purchases can often be quickly dealt with by a ticket office, but may require multiple transactions at a ticket machine. The result will be longer queues and more confusion.
- For some elderly customers, and those with disabilities, ticket machines may not be an option at all. They are much better served by a ticket office they can find in a fixed place than a roaming host.
- Whilst I note that station hosts will operate extended hours, I am concerned that there is no guarantee that these extended hours will remain in place once ticket offices are closed. I am further concerned that it will be harder for the public to hold to account a station host than a ticket office set in a fixed location.
- I understand that ticket machines do not take delay repay vouchers. Closing ticket offices will put yet another barrier in the way of passengers claiming the compensation they are entitled to.
- There is already a real inconsistency around ticketing at stations – for instance, I am aware of customers who have regularly been sold tickets on the train by the conductor, only to find that on another occasion they are fined by an inspector. I am concerned that these changes will further reduce clarity.

I would urge GTR to listen to the strong representations that have been made against these changes, and to retain its ticket offices that provide such a valuable service for its customers, including my constituents.

Sam Gyimah MP



Helen Hayes MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr David Scorey  
Passenger Services Director  
Govia Thameslink Railway Limited  
1st Floor  
Monument Place  
24 Monument Street  
London  
EC3R 8AJ

Our Ref: ZA1672

10<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Dear Mr Scorey,

**'Modernising Stations' Consultation**

I am writing on behalf of my constituents to respond to the current consultation on the 'Modernising Stations' proposals. I am also grateful for the opportunity to discuss my concerns with you at the recent drop in session for Members of Parliament.

As the Member of Parliament for Dulwich and West Norwood I represent residents and businesses across Dulwich, West Norwood and parts of Brixton, Camberwell and Crystal Palace. Of the stations at which it is proposed to close ticket offices, Loughborough Junction, Tulse Hill, Gipsy Hill and West Norwood lie within my constituency, while residents from my constituency also use both Denmark Hill and Peckham Rye stations.

Based on the feedback that I have received from many local residents I am opposed to these proposals.

I am extremely concerned that so soon after GTR bid for the franchise and the government assessed GTR's bid as able to deliver against the franchise criteria, such significant changes are being proposed. I am not aware that ticket office closures were proposed at the bidding stage, and that the government therefore entered into the contract on the basis of such a large closure programme. This raises significant concerns about the bidding process, and engenders no confidence about the future running of the franchise.

I am further concerned that the consultation process is being undertaken for a very short period of time – just three weeks – with almost no proactive efforts to communicate with passengers and encourage their participation. It is impossible to locate a comprehensive list of the stations at which ticket offices are proposed to be closed, since despite the amalgamation of four franchises into a single franchise, the information on the consultation is only available in a fragmented way according to the original franchises. This approach lacks transparency and does a disservice to the many passengers who will undoubtedly miss the opportunity to express their views on ticket office closures.

Dulwich and West Norwood  
helen.hayes.mp@parliament.uk  
helenhayes.org.uk



The presence of staff in ticket offices at stations across my constituency provides a constant presence and a single easily identifiable point of contact in the event of an incident or emergency at the station. Residents have raised considerable concerns about personal safety if these proposals are agreed. I am also concerned that cost savings are a significant part of the rationale for these proposed changes, and that after they are implemented it would be easy to make further reductions in staff working hours and numbers.

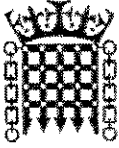
I am further concerned about the lack of firm proposals for the exact number of staff to be based at each station and the hours that they will be working, in particular at Loughborough Junction. It is important for a genuine consultation that full details are provided to all consultees and this has not happened in this case.

The current staffed ticket offices provide access to the cheapest tickets as well as providing the full range of passes and tickets. Automated ticket machines are notorious for not making the cheapest tickets readily available, and it is not clear that portable ticket machines make it easy for staff to navigate to the cheapest tickets, and it is absolutely imperative that this is addressed alongside provision of the full range of passes.

While most of the stations used by my constituents have a traditional layout with the ticket office positioned at the main entrance, the design of Loughborough Junction is such that the ticket office is on the main platform, which provides added security and oversight at a station where residents frequently raise concerns about personal safety, particularly after dark.

Loughborough Junction has a single entrance, which is very narrow and leads to a long, steep flight of steps to the platform. Residents have raised concerns about the prospect of congestion at the ticket machines at this station given the installation of new barriers and the narrowness of the main entrance. The waiting room at Loughborough Junction station closed several years ago, and the net result is an extremely inhospitable platform environment which is exposed to the elements and has a very poor microclimate. This is a very unpleasant environment in which to ask staff to work without the benefit of a ticket office. I therefore request that, in the event that the decision is taken to proceed with the ticket office closure, the waiting room at Loughborough Junction station is reinstated. The provision of services from ticket offices provides a good working environment for staff. I have to question whether it is realistic for staff to be present at all stations throughout the most severe of winter weather every year.

Many of the stations used by my constituents at which ticket office closures are proposed have no level access. Many residents have highlighted their concern as to how travellers who have a disability, or are travelling with heavy bags and pushchairs will be able to access the assistance they need without a single, straightforward location at which to seek help. At Loughborough Junction station, the lack of barriers has made it easy for friends and relatives to provide help with the long, steep flight of steps. Many residents have raised concerns about how passengers who need help will be able to get to the platforms at Loughborough Junction now that barriers have been installed at the bottom of the steps. It seems to me to be particularly irresponsible to be closing ticket offices at inaccessible stations, without any commitment to invest in new lifts or ramps at these stations.



Finally, whilst it is not within the scope of this consultation, I must take this opportunity to highlight the unacceptably poor level of rail service that my constituents receive across the network. I am contacted on an almost daily basis by residents who are subject to delays, cancellations, station skipping and overcrowding, compounded by poor quality and often late information about delays and the reasons for them. It is even more unacceptable that ticket office closures are being pursued at a time at which customer satisfaction with rail services is so low and I urge you to rethink these proposals.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Hayes".

Helen Hayes MP  
cc. Travelwatch





STEVE REED MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dear Sir/ Madam,

14<sup>th</sup> March 2016

I oppose the planned closure of the ticket office at Norbury, Selhurst and Thornton Heath railway stations

This is because I am concerned that:

- I would not be able to access all the tickets and services I need from a ticket machine;
- I would find it harder to obtain advice on tickets and fares without a staffed office;
- I am concerned that if there were insufficient numbers of ticket machines (due to them being in high demand or faulty) I would experience delays and the concourse would be more congested;

I am concerned that vulnerable or less technically minded passengers, perhaps including the elderly, disabled or visitors, may be less confident using a ticket machine and could end up overspending or being deterred from travel; and I am concerned that a ticket office closure in Thornton Heath, Selhurst and Norbury will adversely impact on security at the station and believe it is a valuable deterrent against crime.

With my best wishes,

*Steve Reed*

*(Petition included names & full addresses)*



Gavin Shuker MP  
Labour Luton South



House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

Mr Charles Horton  
Govia Thameslink Railway  
Kings Cross Railway Station  
London  
N1C 4AP

Our Ref: ZA11929  
10 March 2016

Dear Charles,

I am writing to you in response to the consultation launched by Govia Thameslink Railway on the proposed plans to close the ticket office at Luton Airport Parkway in my constituency.

Luton Airport Parkway is a busy station used by airport passengers and local residents alike. I believe plans to close the ticket office would have an adverse effect on the experience of both and I wish to let you know I oppose them. While I welcome the use of new technologies and believe that greater provision of ticket machines would be a positive step, the nature of Luton Airport Parkway means that a manned ticket office should be retained.

The station is used heavily by international travellers who may not speak English very well and need additional support in buying the correct tickets for their journey. They will expect that queuing at a ticket counter is the most appropriate way to purchase their tickets, as in their home countries.

Plans to have staff members outside of the ticket office dealing with both ticket sales and customer queries could cause delays for all passengers needing assistance. Although I did not see in your consultation document detailed staffing figures, I suspect that this will represent a net drop in the number of staff servicing the station and therefore a reduction in costs to you as an operator.

The Airport is set to expand vastly over the coming decade and I cannot believe that there is evidence to show that ticket sales and customer demand will decrease. I note also this proposal comes only a few weeks after you recently raised the price of the shuttle bus service between Luton Airport Parkway and Luton Airport by as much as 20% to 'remove the need to give out smaller change which speeds up boarding'.

Passengers regularly report to me that they feel they are getting a raw deal and I urge you to reconsider plans to close the ticket office windows at Luton Airport Parkway.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gavin Shuker".

**Gavin Shuker MP**  
Labour and Cooperative Member of Parliament for Luton South

Please reply to the constituency office: Gavin Shuker MP, 3 Union Street, Luton LU1 3AN  
Tel: 01582 457 774  
Email: [casework@gavinshuker.org](mailto:casework@gavinshuker.org)



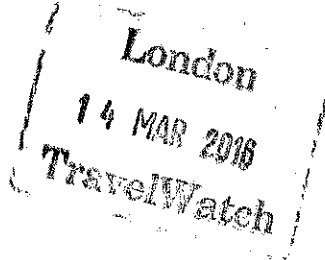
# LONDON ASSEMBLY

LABOUR

**Joanne McCartney AM**

City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London  
SE1 2AA  
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000  
Minicom: 020 7983 4458  
Web: [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)

London TravelWatch  
169 Union Street  
London  
SE1 0LL



**Our ref:** JM/YK  
**Date:** 11 March 2016

To whom it may concern,

## **GTR ticket office changes**

I am responding to this consultation on the Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) proposals to close ticket offices in my capacity as Assembly Member for Enfield and Haringey and as such my comments will primarily deal with the proposals in both those London Boroughs.

Proposals to remove ticket offices now and in the past have understandably caused concern to many commuters and as such I have been contacted by local residents to outlay their concerns about these proposals. As such, I have recently met with Govia Thameslink Railway to request further detail about the proposed changes and the impact this will have on staff and passenger safety, and accessibility for passengers with disabilities.

A number of concerns remain with regards to GTR's proposals and I continue to object to them. The fact sheets provided on GTR's website indicate that there are three models to be rolled out and stations in Enfield and Haringey fall into the first two models. Both models include proposals to move staff onto the concourse to become "Station Hosts" available from the first service until the last, trained in customer service and helping passengers use the ticket machines. The models differ in terms of the tickets available at the machines and the new handheld devices provide to Station Hosts to sell tickets. Model 1, which includes Alexandra Palace, Enfield Chase and Palmers Green stations, will only be able to sell the most popular tickets. Model 2 which include Hornsey and Winchmore Hill will be able to sell the full range of tickets available. During my meeting with GTR, it was confirmed that not all ticket offices will be selling the full range of tickets available and the reason provided was that the tickets that would be unavailable at some stations would be the long distance tickets with reservations because they were the least bought at these particular stations. However, I cannot understand the rationale behind not enabling all ticket

**Direct telephone:** 020 7983 5524    **Fax:** 020 7983 4953    **Email:** [Joanne.mccartney@london.gov.uk](mailto:Joanne.mccartney@london.gov.uk)

# LONDON ASSEMBLY

## LABOUR

machines to sell the same tickets at every station. I would like assurances that passengers would be able to access a full range of tickets, including the use of railcards.

However if GTR do proceed with these plans, I was informed by GTR at the meeting that there will be at least one member of staff from the first to last train but only if there is a footfall of 1 million and those stations with ticket gates will be staffed. However, staff will not necessarily be on the concourse for this time. Staff will be required to top up machines, put up posters and undertake cleaning. If passengers require assistance, staff will help people onto trains and will then come straight back to the concourse to sell tickets with their handheld machines. GTR have said that they are not reducing staffing levels but increasing them. I seek assurances that it is actually the case that no members of staff will be made redundant. I also seek assurances that stations will not be single staffed as this is a cause for concern regarding staff safety and will hinder passengers that require assistance with accessing trains and tickets.

GTR informed me that they would not board up ticket offices like Transport for London (TfL) have done so if the proposals are unsuccessful, they can revert back to using ticket offices. I would like to see a strong commitment that GTR will provide robust monitoring of not only the effectiveness of the ticket machines, but of the safety of staff and to ensure that travel is not made more difficult for those with mobility difficulties or disabilities.

Yours sincerely



**Joanne McCartney AM**  
London Assembly Member for Enfield and Haringey

**From:** Joanne Oywer  
**Sent:** 15 March 2016 14:49  
**To:** enquiries  
**Subject:** Proposed booking office closures

Dear Sir/Madam

Steve O'Connell would like to register his concern at the proposal to close 7 booking offices in Croydon and 4 in Sutton, to include Sutton itself.

Steve would be grateful if more consideration could be given before a final decision is made regarding closures, based on data relating to the individual stations involved. It is agreed that many rail passengers do now purchase rail tickets online, via Oyster, contactless cards and smart 'phones; however a large number of passengers still use a booking office in order to obtain other types of tickets i.e. advance, boundary, rover & privilege tickets, CIV Eurostar tickets, SCC student season tickets, Gatwick Airport staff carnets etc.

Thank you

Best regards

Joanne Oywer  
Researcher & Support Officer to Steve O'Connell  
Assembly Member for Croydon & Sutton  
Conservatives, London Assembly





**From:** Scott Ainslie [mailto:streathamgreenpartyscott@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** 08 March 2016 09:52  
**To:** enquiries  
**Subject:** GTR ticket office changes

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am one of the ward cllrs for all 3 streatham stations. I oppose the closing of staffed ticket offices as I am concerned that passengers:

- would not be able to access all the tickets and services needed from a ticket machine;
- would find it harder to obtain advice on tickets and fares without a staffed office;
- would be concerned that there were insufficient numbers of ticket machines (due to them being in high demand or faulty);
- would experience more delays and concourse congestion;
- believe that vulnerable or less technically minded passengers, perhaps including the disabled, elderly or visitors may be less confident using a ticket machine and could end up overspending or being deterred from travel; and
- believe that a ticket office closure will adversely impact on security at the station and believe that a staffed ticket office is a valuable deterrent against crime.

These proposals are unacceptable at a time of rising fares and rail passenger numbers. There is no genuine economic case for reducing the services at many of these high growth stations and this is really about cutting costs and sweating the assets to make even bigger profits for shareholders.

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With all good wishes,

Cllr Scott Ainslie  
Your Green Party Team in St Leonard's Ward

Scott: 07920 547855 Twitter: @scott4streatham

*Find out what we have been doing in your street by visiting [www.streathamgreenparty.co.uk](http://www.streathamgreenparty.co.uk) and clicking on your street name!*



**From:** Clark, Malcolm Cllr  
**Sent:** 15 March 2016 10:32  
**To:** enquiries; stationchanges@gtrailway.com  
**Cc:** Treppass, Amelle Cllr; Seedat, Mohammed Cllr  
**Subject:** GTR ticket office changes

A few hours after the deadline, but I hope you accept this short submission. As a Streatham Wells councillor, residents in my ward are directly affected by the plans to close the ticket office at Streatham Hill and also at other nearby stations, like Tulse Hill and Streatham Common.

I am concerned that this move will mean fewer staff available - the proposals don't say whether the ticket office staff will be directly allocated to be station hosts in addition to the staff who currently perform a similar role (minus the ticket-selling), or the two roles will be combined and thus there will be a net staff loss. At peak hours I am concerned the station would not be adequately staffed and long and dangerous queues could quickly build up either side of the barriers. In addition, the lack of adequate platform or concourse announcements about delays means the station and ticket staff are often kept busy having to deal with these enquiries without all their extra new responsibilities.

I asked local residents to comment about the proposals via twitter, and here were some of the key responses I received back [twitter handles can be supplied if requested]:

@MalcolmClark77 this is purely about cost saving, not service improvement.

@MalcolmClark77 streatham hill station is getting busier and now with three huge blocks of flats due to open. Needs adequate staffing.

@MalcolmClark77 One person to help at busy times is a ridiculous idea. And out of hours host maybe, but I would worry for their safety.

@MalcolmClark77 I get point tickets (require a photocard) at ticket office... Not sure how this would work with a roaming ticket seller...

These points are all well made and there is not the detail in the measures announced to address these concerns yet.

Based on recent experience at Streatham Hill with the prioritising of placement of a digital ad board over getting functioning and properly placed monitors for the train times, I am also concerned that commercial interests may trump passenger interests in any reorganisation of the station forecourts and use of the ticket hall ... and again would want to see more detail of what may be proposed.

In the end though it comes down to residents wanting the train company to focus on providing a much more reliable train service, with more carriages and more frequent services through Streatham Hill, and fully accessible train stations (needed at Tulse Hill and Streatham), than any of the proposed cosmetic changes at the 'front of house'.

yours,

Malcolm

Cllr Malcolm Clark  
Labour Councillor for Streatham Wells



part of the Streatham Wells Labour Councillor Team  
with Cllr Mohammed Seedat and Cllr Amelie Treppass  
[www.lambeth.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/councillors)

Disclaimers apply for full details see <http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/EmailDisclaimer.htm>



From: Cooke, Mary, CLLR [mailto:Mary.Cooke@bromley.gov.uk]  
Sent: 07 March 2016 15:04  
To: enquiries  
Subject: GTR Ticket office closures

I fully support these proposals. Modern efficient technology means Ticket offices are redundant and I fully support the proposals from GTR.

Mary

Mary Cooke  
Councillor Shortlands Ward  
Tel 07912 649058 (mobile)  
@MaryShortlands





From: Peter.Hill@bracknell-forest.gov.uk [mailto:Peter.Hill@bracknell-forest.gov.uk]  
Sent: 23 February 2016 19:35  
To: enquiries  
Subject: GTR ticket office changes - London TravelWatch

Dear London TravelWatch

I oppose the planned closure or reduction in opening hours of my local railway station ticket office and other GTR station ticket offices.

This is because I am concerned that:

I would not be able to access all the tickets and services I need from a ticket machine;

I would find it harder to obtain advice on tickets and fares without a staffed office;

I am concerned that if there were insufficient numbers of ticket machines (due to them being in high demand or faulty) I would experience delays and the concourse would be more congested;

I am concerned that vulnerable or less technically minded passengers, perhaps including the elderly, disabled or visitors, may be less confident using a ticket machine and could end up overspending or being deterred from travel; and

I am concerned that a ticket office closure will adversely impact on security at the station and believe it is a valuable deterrent against crime.

Sincerely  
Cllr. Peter Hill



From: Cllr Jones, Robert Alan [mailto:Cllr.alan.jones@tandridgedc.gov.uk]  
Sent: 29 February 2016 13:40  
To: enquiries  
Subject: GTR Ticket Office Changes

Dear Sir,

I must protest that many of the proposed ticket office closures will be a major mistake. Personally, I speak for Horley which is a very active station, particularly for commuters, but also for journeys to London and beyond. It is all very well having ONE ticket machine in the entrance hall and one can only imagine the problem this will create, but people who make occasional trips will not be used to an automatic machine. It will therefore take them some time to fathom out what they have to do with a queue then stretching behind them. I recently wished to purchase a ticket from a different starting point for the next day and this machine was incapable of doing what I wanted but fortunately the ticket office was open and the clerks there are excellent. How will vandalism be controlled and acted upon if the stations are left abandoned in this way.

I urge you to think again on many of the proposed closures but, in particular, the Horley Station Ticket Office.

Yours faithfully,  
Alan Jones



From: cllr.a.langleben@barnet.gov.uk [mailto:cllr.a.langleben@barnet.gov.uk]  
Sent: 07 March 2016 12:36  
To: enquiries  
Subject: GTR ticket office changes - London TravelWatch

Dear London TravelWatch

I oppose the planned closure or reduction in opening hours of my local railway station ticket office and other GTR station ticket offices.

This is because I am concerned that:

I would not be able to access all the tickets and services I need from a ticket machine;

I would find it harder to obtain advice on tickets and fares without a staffed office;

I am concerned that if there were insufficient numbers of ticket machines (due to them being in high demand or faulty) I would experience delays and the concourse would be more congested;

I am concerned that vulnerable or less technically minded passengers, perhaps including the elderly, disabled or visitors, may be less confident using a ticket machine and could end up overspending or being deterred from travel; and

I am concerned that a ticket office closure will adversely impact on security at the station and believe it is a valuable deterrent against crime.

Sincerely  
Cllr Adam Langleben



From: Pickard, Jane Cllr [mailto:JPickard@lambeth.gov.uk]  
Sent: 02 March 2016 18:30  
To: enquiries  
Cc: Meldrum, Jackie Cllr; Winifred, Sonia Cllr; Helen HAYES  
Subject: Ticket office closures

Dear Travelwatch

I gather you are collating objections to the proposed ticket office closures and would like to include the following:

I would like to protest about the proposed closure of ticket offices at West Norwood and Tulse Hill stations, both used by hundreds of residents in my ward, particularly for commuting to work but also as routes into central London for leisure and to access mainline stations including trains to France from St Pancras.

While I accept that the majority of people now have Oyster cards or Freedom Passes which they doubtless buy online, there are many occasions when people need to buy a ticket over the counter or have a query which can't be answered any other way. There are always people at the ticket office in the mornings - in fact there is often a queue - so I do not understand how these people are going to manage without the help of the staff.

I think there is also a safety aspect. A station without staff at the front and highly visible will quickly become a magnet for vandalism.

Finally, I do not recall this policy being revealed when Govia was bidding for the franchise. It seems at odds with their professed focus on passengers.

Kind regards

Jane

Jane Pickard  
Cllr for Knight's Hill  
Cabinet Member for Children and Families  
07805 943085







**Sutton**

**Councillor Jill Whitehead**

London Borough of Sutton  
Liberal Democrat Councillor for Carshalton Central  
Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhoods Committee

32 Milton Avenue

Sutton

SM1 3QB

[www.sutton.gov.uk](http://www.sutton.gov.uk)

Date: 10th March 2016

GTR Station Changes Consultation,  
London TravelWatch,  
169 Union Street,  
London,  
SE1 0LL

**London Borough of Sutton Response to Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) proposals to change station ticket office arrangements (February 2016)**

The council recognises that the way people buy and use rail tickets is changing, with many passengers within Greater London using Oyster Cards, Contactless and Freedom Passes, while Govia's smartcard The Key will provide similar benefits outside London. As a result of the wider use of smartcards and contactless payment we accept that use of ticket offices and paper tickets is declining, and that GTR need to make best use of their staff resources and station space.

Bringing staff out of ticket offices onto the concourse to be more accessible to passengers could work where ticket office use is low, as long as the full range of tickets is still available for sale. There are certain ticket types and transactions that are not currently available from ticket machines, such as extensions to season tickets or freedom passes, railcards, purchasing Oyster and Key cards, the use of rail vouchers and the booking of complex longer distance journeys.

The council strongly objects to the proposed closure of Sutton ticket office. Sutton is the 6<sup>th</sup> busiest station on the Southern network and 7<sup>th</sup> busiest in south London, having almost 7 million passenger entries and exists per annum. The council has major growth plans for Sutton, a Metropolitan town centre, in terms of housing and employment which will result in a significant increase in station usage over the next decade. The council has also recently completed the Station Gateway scheme at Sutton, which made some significant improvements to area outside the station, as well as opening the side entrance.

The ticket office at Sutton is well used most of the time and there is often a queue. We consider that the ticket office at Sutton should remain open during the peak times at least, and this should include the busy periods at weekends when there are a considerable number of leisure and infrequent passengers who do not have smartcards and may need advice or help. Outside peak times sufficient staff should be available on the concourse to sell tickets and assist passengers with the machines. As the station concourse in front of the ticket barriers at Sutton is quite small and congested we would suggest having a station host desk or podium in the existing ticket hall with a formal queuing system as for the ticket office.

Many stations in Model 3 outside London have much lower usage than Sutton yet are to retain their ticket office, and we consider it is important that this major London Metropolitan town centre should retain a ticket office facility.

For the other stations in the borough we would like to retain the ticket office facility in the peak hours. Wallington (2.2 million entries and exits per annum) and Carshalton (almost 1.5 million) are the second and third busiest stations in the borough, while Carshalton Beeches (just over 1 million) is the sixth busiest. Carshalton has a large educational use as well as commuter use due to Carshalton FE College and three large secondary schools nearby as well as serving the council's Denmark Road office and a number of other key trip attractors; while Wallington is the second largest town centre in the borough with a significant office and retail base as well as significant commuter use.

We note that there are no proposals for Hackbridge and Cheam stations, which are less busy than Carshalton and Wallington. Is this because they do not have ticket barriers?

Ticket offices sell the full range of national rail tickets and can ensure that passengers get the most appropriate ticket and best fare. They are especially useful for occasional rail users and visitors, including tourists from overseas, who may not possess Oyster Cards, may be unsure how to use the ticket machines, or need travel advice. Sometimes the ticket machines are out of action or difficult to use, and many are not as user friendly as they should be e.g. some are difficult to see in bright sunlight. Some machines do not offer tickets for the most popular local

destinations (e.g. some list distant and obscure stations as the most popular), or make clear the best deal for a journey, while some have a baffling array of travel-card options. If stations are to become more dependent on ticket machines it is essential that they are made more user-friendly and fit for purpose. Moving the ticket machines into ticket office areas would help in reducing glare from the sun.

It is essential that Station Hosts with their hand held machines can offer the same range of tickets and services as the ticket offices currently do, and do not take longer and cause delays. It is also essential that Station Hosts are clearly identifiable and always available in sufficient number to meet passenger demand. We would like to see specific commitments on the number of Station Hosts that will be available at each station at various times of day. We would be concerned if the affected stations did not have sufficient staff to deal with customer demands. There should be at least 2/3 staff on the concourse at busy times, so that if one is dealing with a customer or incident, there will be other staff that people are able to turn to.

The problem with just having ticket machines and insufficient staff, is that at times the machines don't work and elderly/disabled people (including people with learning disabilities) may need assistance in purchasing tickets and often rely on station staff to guide them. Visitors and tourists may also find using ticket machines difficult, particularly if English is not their first language.

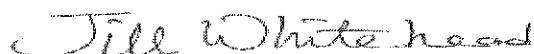
A podium or desk for Station Hosts to be based at would help people to find them, similar to the information points at termini stations, and formalise a queuing system at busy times, ensuring they do not block passenger flow at the barriers. We welcome the proposal that Station Hosts will be available for longer hours than the current ticket offices and that the waiting rooms and toilets will also be open longer hours. However, Station Hosts should not be seen as a substitute for current gate-line staff in order to reduce staffing costs, and should not be required to go off and do other tasks such as cleaning. There are also concerns about staff safety and security, particularly in the early morning and late evening, if they are carrying money out in the concourse; and also their comfort if they have nowhere to sit down and are out in the cold in winter.

As part of this scheme we would also like to see other station improvements, as identified by the council in conjunction with GTR on site surveys in recent weeks. This should include additional gate-line capacity where possible to alleviate congestion at peak times, improved passenger information, and greater availability of toilet and waiting room facilities.

Should these proposals be implemented we would like them to be rolled out on a trial basis to test passenger reaction and behaviour. Usage of the ticket machines should be monitored and where demand exceeds supply the number of machines should be increased.

Finally, we consider that the three week consultation period for this proposal is too short, and does not give people an adequate time to find out about it and respond.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Jill Whitehead  
Chair of the Environment and Neighbourhoods Committee



From: Wilcox, Clair Cllr  
Sent: 15 March 2016 11:08  
To: enquiries  
Cc: stationchanges@gtrailway.com  
Subject: GTR Ticket office changes

I am writing in response to the proposed changes to station office management which relate to Streatham and Streatham Common stations, used by many residents in my ward of Streatham South. I note that it is suggested that these stations would lose their ticket offices from June 2016. Whilst I can understand the need to create efficiency savings given the current economic circumstances, I feel that this is not a helpful move.

First of all, unlike tube stations, often over ground train travel involves more complex arrangements and visitors and elderly people often find it helpful to talk to someone who can check all the onward travel options behind a desk. If the staffing arrangements are to be based on amalgamating the role of overseeing the ticket barrier and the station office then there simply will not be time for the 'Host' to carry out this more time-consuming role.

In addition, feeling safe and secure whilst in the station is a major concern to commuters and other users of the station. With the recent removal of the paper-seller who had a stall on the footbridge between the platforms, it was felt that this negatively impacted on the feeling of safety of station users. Were the station office to be closed as well then it is very easy to see how someone who needed help might not immediately know where to go to get it.

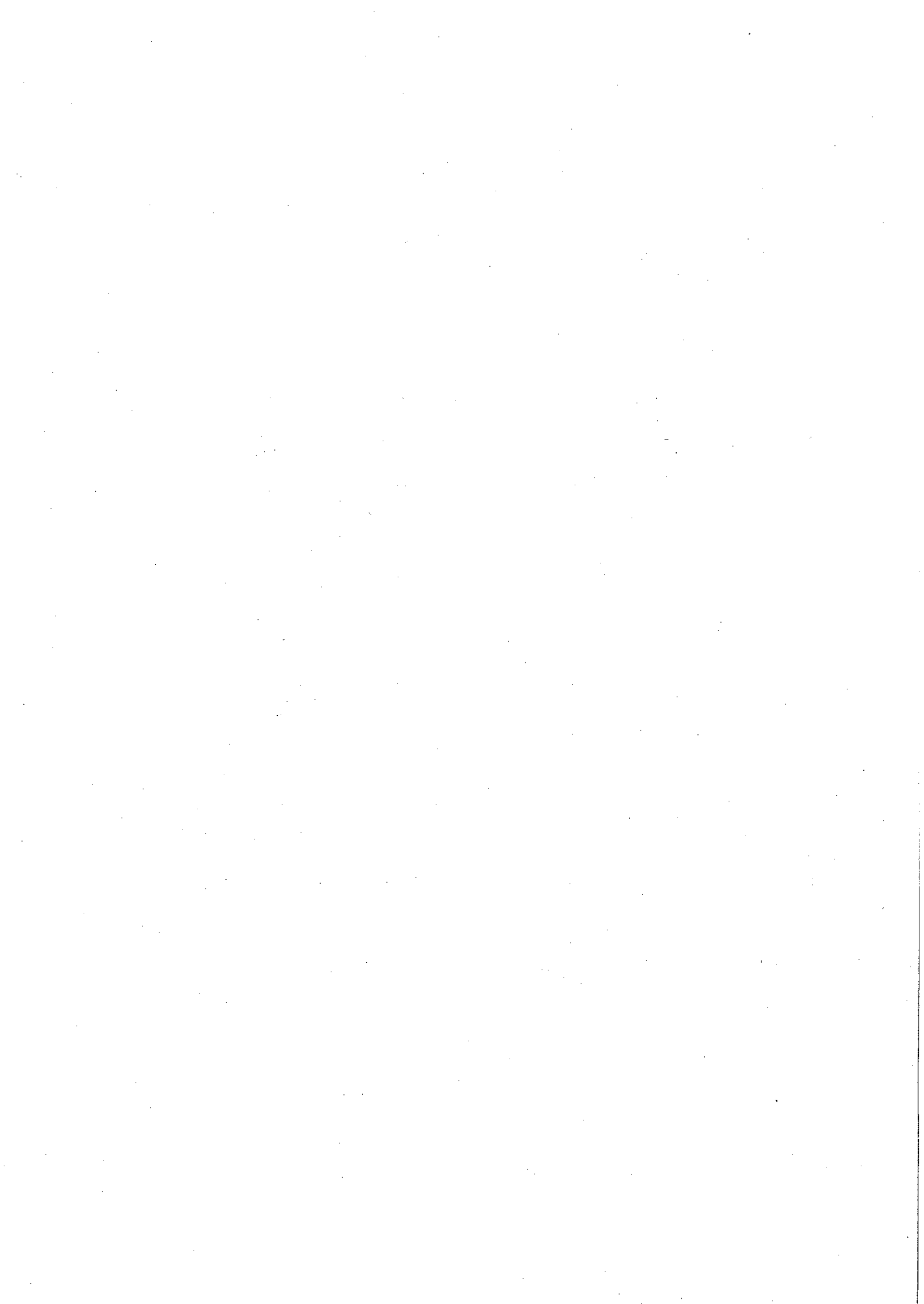
I am also concerned about how the closed station office will signal a real downturn in the smartness, oversight and impression of a well-used public space. There is a cash point outside the station nearest to the ticket office and I believe that some people will not feel as safe using this as they are now, knowing that there is a member of staff nearby to call on if they feel unsafe.

Ultimately I think that seeking to replicate the removal of ticket offices that has been carried out on the tube network will prove to be a backwards and ill-judged step. We need our stations to be safe, secure and well-functioning and the human element of this cannot be underestimated. What works for tube travel does not necessarily work for train travel and I would urge you to reconsider these proposals.

Kind regards

Councillor Clair Wilcox  
Streatham South Councillor  
Chair, Planning Applications Committee

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## Wandsworth Council

Housing and Community Services Department  
The Town Hall  
Wandsworth High Street  
London SW18 2PU

Please ask for/reply to: John Slaughter  
Telephone: 020 8871 6000  
Direct Line: 020 8871 6293  
Fax: 020 8871 6003

Ms K Cox  
Stakeholder Manager  
Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR)  
[Katherine.Cox@gtrrailway.com](mailto:Katherine.Cox@gtrrailway.com)

Email: [jslaughter@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:jslaughter@wandsworth.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.wandsworth.gov.uk](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk)

Our ref: HCS/JSI  
Your ref:  
Date: 11 March 2016

Dear Ms Cox

### Consultation on proposed changes to the opening hours of ticket offices

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an input into your consultation on changes to your ticket offices, and in particular the proposals to close ticket offices in our Borough. This letter constitutes an officer-level response which will be considered by our Councillors at our Passenger Transport Liaison Group on 14 March 2016. We will endeavour to let you know the outcome of this meeting the following day.

The following stations are in our borough: Battersea Park, Wandsworth Common, and Balham. In addition, whilst the following stations are just outside our borough, they serve our residents and businesses: Tooting (in the London Borough of Merton), and Streatham Common (in the London Borough of Lambeth).

We fully appreciate your need to make the best use of your resources at each station, and we welcome the proposal that all the affected stations would be staffed from the very first to the last train, 7 days a week, with facilities such as waiting rooms being open for longer, and with "Station Hosts" available to answer customer queries, provide advice and assist with ticket purchase. We also appreciate that your proposals are much more flexible than Transport for London's policy of closing virtually all their ticket offices on London Underground. However, we are concerned that many travellers may be disadvantaged by certain aspects of your proposals unless you can address their particular needs.

Ticket offices are currently the gateway to not only your network, but to the national rail system to the extremities of England, Scotland and Wales. Many ordinary travellers have little concept of the network, how to access it, alternative routes, fares and destinations. Without a known reference and inquiry point in the form of a

staffed ticket office, travellers may be discouraged from using the train. This may be particularly applicable for off-peak travel, which tends to be more flexible and optional, which is exactly the time you need to encourage travel on your trains when they are more likely to have spare capacity.

We can see that you have partially addressed our concerns in your proposal for station hosting points for "Model 2" stations like Balham, which would keep the facility at a known location on the station. But we cannot see the advantage of this arrangement over the existing, as the hosting point must surely be on the public side of the ticket barriers in the vicinity of the ticket office, as otherwise customers will need a ticket or pass to get through the barriers to reach the hosting point. I understand from your stakeholder conference on 7<sup>th</sup> March that this proposal is not aiming to reduce staffing, and that there would still be staff available at the barriers.

We have particular concerns over your proposals for "Model 1" stations, ie Battersea Park, Wandsworth Common, Streatham Common and Tooting Stations:-

1. In future it will not be possible to buy "add-on" tickets for rail journeys extending beyond the TfL boundary for those using Oyster Cards or Freedom Passes, or extensions beyond the limits of season tickets. This will be a major disincentive to people to make additional use of train services, contrary to national and local policies to encourage the use of public transport. Your ticket machines need to be reprogrammed to enable Oystercard /Travelcard holders to purchase the additional element when they need to journey beyond their Travelcard limits.
2. As mentioned above, the ticket offices currently provide a known location to find staff for assistance: once these are gone, staff would be free to move around the station. At the "Model 1" stations, and staff would not necessarily stay on the concourse as stated in your consultation document. These are large stations, and they may get called anywhere, and it will be difficult or impossible (eg Battersea Park and Tooting) to see from the station entrance into the station to establish their whereabouts. This will be a particular problem when ticket barriers are closed, thus preventing freedom of movement around the station, and for the mobility or visually impaired, who are even more restricted in their movement. It will, therefore, be important for a help point or some form of communication to be located within the entrance area of the station so as to enable first-time users, the disabled and others unsure of station arrangements to summon help.

At Wandsworth Common Station there is often a queue at the ticket machines, even when the ticket office is manned, frequently caused by travellers having difficulty in understanding how to operate the ticket machines. Consequently we would ask, if you decide to progress your proposals, that additional machines are provided, and that these new machines should be clearer and easier to use.

Finally, we would like to know your plans for the ticket offices once they do close. As you may know, Battersea Park Station is a listed building, and therefore listed building consent may be required to alter or remove this office.



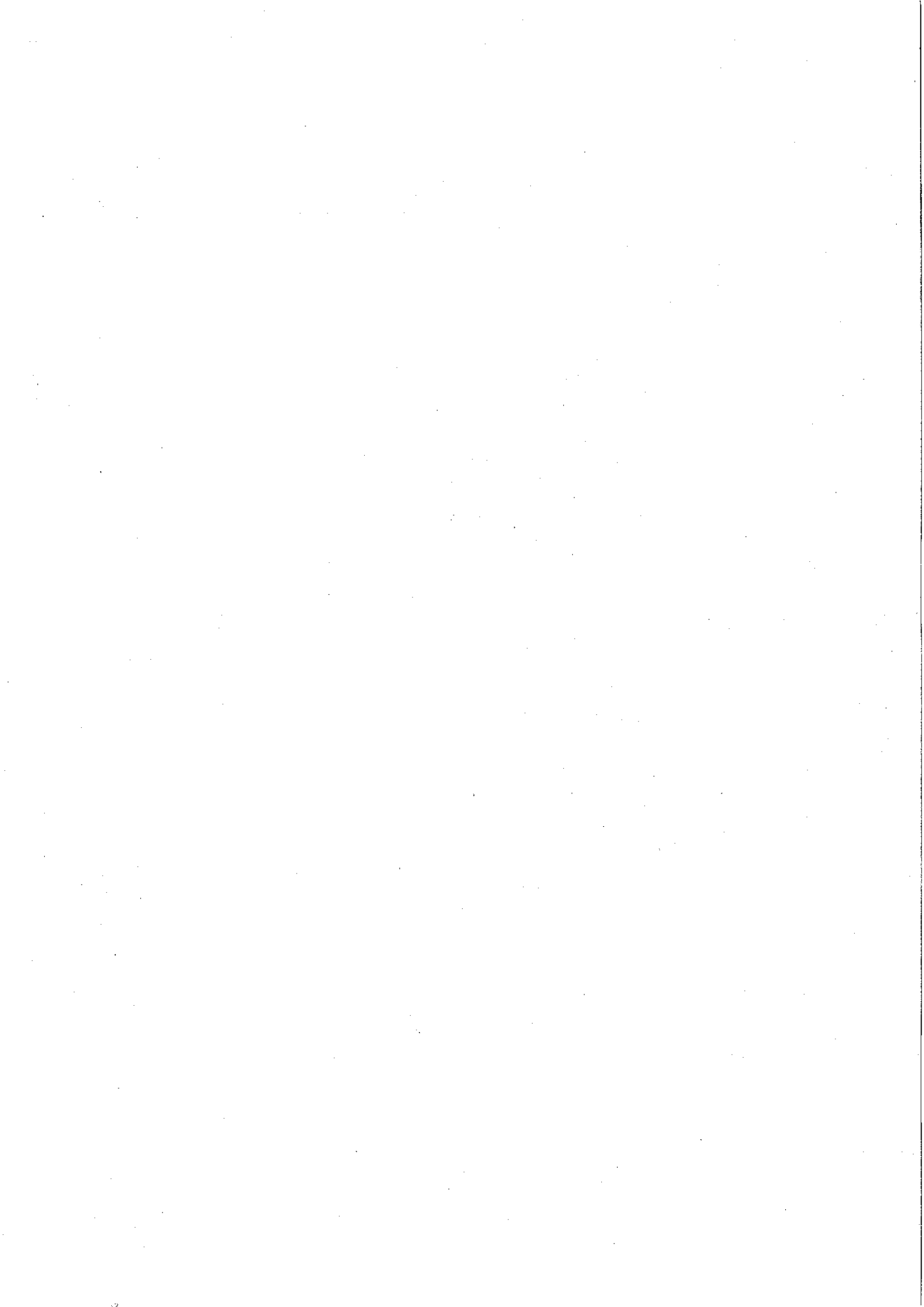
We look forward to hearing your response to our concerns. Please contact us if you have any queries on this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Stone', written in a cursive style.

John Stone  
Head of Spatial Planning and Transportation

cc. [stationchanges@gtrailway.com](mailto:stationchanges@gtrailway.com)  
Mr T Bellenger, Director, Policy and Investigation, London TravelWatch



London TravelWatch  
169 Union Street  
London  
SE1 0LL

11 March 2016

Dear Sir/ Madam

**Govia Rail Station ticket offices consultation about closure and changes to opening times**

Thank you for consulting on behalf of Govia about its proposals to close ticket offices or reduce their opening hours across two of its franchises (Southern and Thameslink).

This has been a chaotic and badly organised consultation with little respect shown by Govia either to yourselves or the travelling passengers. A botched attempt to start the consultation at the start of February was abandoned and then started again without any notification in an equally unsatisfactory way on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February. It will be of little surprise to find out the vast majority of passengers with whom our members had contact, both after the initial publicity surrounding the first consultation and then during this one were not aware of the proposals and had not seen any posters about the ticket office changes being proposed for example.

For example, on the 3 March when 20 members of RMT volunteered to leaflet Balham Station not one poster could be found displayed at the station and not a single passenger we spoke was aware of what was happening. Where posters are displayed it is unclear that any detriment will be experienced and the message is an overwhelmingly positive one promoting modernisation and not the loss of jobs or facilities.

When we explained the proposals and the use of customer hosts in the future, passengers were dismayed at the idea of disorderly lines of anxious passengers squabbling over who is next to speak with a roving member of staff. There was a perception of long lines of people queuing for ticket machines and that travel on the transport network is becoming more and more unsafe, managed only to extract profit at the expense of customer service.

Govia in their consultation document claim otherwise and that these changes are motivated by a desire to improve customer service. We dispute that assertion and refer to the Franchise Agreement signed with the Secretary of State in 2014 which states at 3.1 D in the section on *Staffing at Stations / Proposals to de-staff Stations*:

"(d) in deploying staff for the purposes of this paragraph 3.1, it [the company] acts as a reasonable efficient and skilled Train Operator. Accordingly the Franchisee shall ensure that staff deployed in the fulfilment of its obligations under this paragraph 3.1 are assigned to duties that mean that they are reasonably deployed on platforms, **ticket offices** and station concourses so that their availability to provide reasonable assistance and advice to passengers (as needed) is visible to passengers;"

RMT believes that an efficient and skilled operator should be ensuring that the deployment of staff via ticket offices remains the reasonable way in which to provide services to passengers. This is the case especially given the complexity of some of the interaction involved.

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General Secretary: Mick Cash

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There would appear to be a drive to close ticket offices from both the DfT's Franchising Department and the train operating companies, who are seeking to trim operational costs, including staff costs and the transactional costs of ticket selling. In doing so, the costs of such staffing are being seen as a high proportion of operational costs, although as a proportion of the total Railway costs (i.e. including Network Rail's total costs, and the regulatory and Departmental costs) they are not.

The Railways are there to serve a) passengers; b) freight; and c) external economic and social objectives related to moving a) and b) and the cost of operational staff providing an efficient and skilled service should not be identified as an inconvenient burden.

RMT believes that Train operating companies should not look on the reduction in costs of staffing as a potential source of profit, but instead see their jobs as a necessary element of providing an efficient service across the whole industry, and in relation to the impact on a), b) and c) above.

RMT has seen no evidence as part of these proposals that challenge our view, but we do hear evidence, both subjective and objective from passengers, that these proposals will deliver a significant and adverse effect on levels of service and other benefits that ticket offices bring including to security, help for the disabled, vulnerable or technically less able.

RMT believes all the evidence from your own passenger research and that of Transport Focus supports the view that ticket office staff are valued by passengers. It is certainly the view heavily supported in the form of comments on postcards and petitions returned by passengers.

Indeed Transport Focus' latest report on **Passenger attitudes towards rail staff** (February 2016) makes the point that "Train tickets are sold through a number of different sales channels. In recent years there has been growth in the number of 'self-serve' channels, but at present station ticket offices remain the most popular method of purchasing a ticket.....In the course of our research for the Thameslink and Southeastern franchises we asked passengers what their preferred method of ticket purchase would be. With both operators a slightly higher proportion of passengers wanted to be able to purchase tickets online than currently do. However, the most preferred method was still the ticket office. **45 per cent of Thameslink and 55 per cent of Southeastern passengers preferred to use the ticket office.** This was more than double the number, in both instances, of those that preferred ticket vending machines"

Schedule 17 makes it absolutely clear that an operator can only make major changes to ticket office opening hours if: "the change would represent an improvement on current arrangements in terms of quality of service and/or cost effectiveness and members of the public would continue to enjoy wide spread and easy access to the purchase of rail products, notwithstanding the change"

In terms of the quality of service it is evident that the cuts proposed by Govia will not result in an improvement on current arrangements for the reasons we outline.

We hope that as champions representing the views of passengers, you are minded to oppose the withdrawal of the ticket office services, the maintenance of which passengers reasonably believe to be in their interests. We hope your assessment of Govia's latest proposals (made with little supporting evidence), will fully reflect the passengers' views and not be moderated to better fit with the aim of simply reducing operational costs.

There is also a very serious issue about the data that is being used to justify these proposals. On 4 February RMT representatives requested that management provide us with the figures relating

to their statement that customers are not using the booking offices and now favour TVMs and online purchase.

The data requested was for a long period, ideally at least 6 months for the takings from the booking offices, TVMs and revenue staff. We wanted to see this in a detailed form so that we could compare the usage of TVMs when booking offices were open, and also when revenue staff were helping, to be compared with the TVMs usage, by time of month, day of the week, etc.

That would enable us to see how many tickets were sold at a booking office? What types of tickets were sold? What was the value of each ticket etc.? This could then be compared to the data from TVM takings, numbers, and value of tickets. RMT understand that by comparing, for example, a ticket from Stevenage to London Terminals sold by a TVM with an advance ticket purchase from a Booking office is not the same. Only by drilling down on the real detail of the statistics would we be able to understand the logic of these proposals.

At a meeting on 4 February Govia promised to make an effort and bring us the information we requested. On the 26 February we received the Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) allocation plan, the schedule 17 consultation timescale and the National Rail Passenger Survey. However, the raw ticket data was not provided and we were simply shown pie charts that showed that the total booking offices sale from all Stations on the line has reduced from 60+% to 30+% of total sales between 2009 and 2015. RMT believes this can be challenged, as it does not tally with Transport Focus report and it is out of context; the number of passengers has increased significantly during this period and the percentage may still reflect the same numbers of passengers actually using the booking office.

We were presented with Alexandra Palace station tickets sales, TVM and booking office over a continuous 2 month period (September and October) and we pointed out that whilst the TVM is available 24 hours the booking office is not, so it is not a genuine comparison. This is also a station within the zones where the oyster card is available. The two months that were used are when a large number of young people are going back to school or universities and they will tend to use new technology more than older passengers, plus all the commuters who return from summer holidays.

While an analyst can extract and selectively interpret data and express it in graphics, the analyst's report can never reflect the reality of what happens on the station. A figure of 1 ticket sold in 10-15 minutes at a Booking Office does not reflect the fact that the person served might be an elderly customer with hearing and/or visual impairment, nor the complexity of the ticket request.

RMT has despite requesting, not received any explanation as to the method of determination as to when a station is a host station and not a hub station as part of these proposals.

We do not believe Govia's claim that upgraded ticket machines and customer hosts on platforms can perform the full range of the tasks currently carried out at ticket offices is genuine.

Specifically, the following is a non-exhaustive list of the tasks that are performed at ticket offices, but which cannot be carried out at ticket machines or on mobile hand-held devices:

- Buy railcards and annual season tickets
- Odd period season tickets (longer than 1 month - e.g. 6 weeks and 5 days)
- Season ticket changes - e.g. customer wishes to increase/ reduce the number of zones of their season ticket

- Get refunds Take Rail Travel Vouchers as payment.
- Take National Transport Tokens as payment
- Produce the photo ID cards which are essential for season tickets of a month or longer to be valid.
- Cancel a ticket for immediate refund if a mistake is made at the TVM.
- Retrieve lost money from malfunctioning TVMs.
- Make seat reservations
- Make sleeper reservations
- Issue Carnet tickets
- Make rail/sail bookings to any station in Ireland (these are walk up fares for immediate travel)
- Issue car park tickets/give part rebates on one bought from parking machine
- Issue Groupsave tickets (these are available for discounted travel for 2,3 or 4 people for walk up off peak travel on nearly all routes in the south east).
- Issue replacements for internet sales tickets where the TVM has malfunctioned mid-print.
- Advise the cheapest valid fare – RMT searched for how many there are for a London – Birmingham journey and counted a total of 156! All these have different validities and conditions. The machine – even if it did offer all the fares, which it will not do - won't tell you those restrictions, and even if it did, it would take a PhD and several hours to go through them, so the passenger and the queue behind you would miss their train.
- Any walk-up ticket which doesn't start from the same station, or is not for dated for same day travel. (Most TVMs do not allow this)
- Privilege tickets – most 'unsafeguarded' rail staff (i.e. those who entered service after March 1996) are not entitled to a privilege discount on oyster pay as you go fares. The only way to avoid paying quadruple the correct fare is to use the booking office or risk prosecution/penalty fares.
- Mixed tender payments - e.g. part cash and part card
- Boundary Zone Extension tickets to mainline stations (for travel card season tickets not including Zone 1)
- Discounted advance purchase tickets
- Split tickets and more complicated journeys
- Some machines don't even let you buy a ticket starting at another location. Especially frustrating if you're using your season ticket for part of the journey.
- The ability to pay with £50/ Scottish Bank notes and 1p, 2p and 5p coins
- Refunding last PAYG top-up or whole PAYG balance or using PAYG balance to offset the price of a season ticket (e.g. a customer who mistakenly topped up, when intending to purchase a season ticket)

- TVM do not work for those who are without a UK billing address when using a card
- Mainline discounts on single tickets
- Replacing damaged paper travel cards
- Using a ROLT/RLMP to replace a ticket lost in a ticket gate
- Purchasing some of the wide range of mainline tickets - e.g. Advance, Super-off peak, Open singles/ returns
- The acceptance of warrants
- Privilege-rate Mainline paper tickets
- The ability to purchase group tickets for more than 19 people in a single transaction
- Refunding Same Station exits (more than 30 mins)
- Excess fares window (helps deter and offset losses to fare evasion)

Feedback from our members is that passengers are often tentative about approaching them in the ticket hall or platform. Even where passengers appear to want advice on a journey or using a machine, they are frequently shy about requesting assistance. Staff can take steps to mitigate this – but obviously within limits. This was of course never the case with ticket offices as the function of staff in the offices was clear to everyone.

Where a passenger does require assistance, they frequently have to be referred to other sources of assistance – i.e. to the phone helpline (from where they are often referred back to the station) or online. This is exasperating for passengers and undermines passengers having a positive perception of the administration of our railways.

In terms of visually-impaired people, where ticket offices are retained, people can learn the route to the ticket office window, but where ticket offices have been removed, our members report that such customers are struggling to locate mobile staff. Further, ticket machines are touch-screen and do not deploy audio or tactile operation technology, so cannot be used unaided by many visually-impaired people.

In terms of hearing-impaired people, ticket office windows have induction loops, but obviously a mobile member of staff does not. In terms of mobility-impaired people, the design of ticket machines (e.g. absence of a level counter for sorting change) is inadequate. We therefore believe that Govia has not taken sufficient steps to accommodate disabled users and would not be able to adequately mitigate the proposed loss of ticket offices.

Not all ticket halls are suited to the placing of large ticket machines and TVM transactions are much more likely to be held up, causing queues and requiring staff assistance to correctly complete. Regarding the queuing problems GTR fails to note the excessive queues currently and we are unaware if they have recorded the correct information. Most passengers are not aware what the industry's guidelines are regarding queuing in peak and off-peak periods. While these guidelines are not in the National Rail Conditions of carriage, Govia has recognised it in its own passenger charter (amounting to an annex to their contract with the passengers). We request that you enquire whether Govia is monitoring the queues at station, a norm expected within the railway industry.

The lack of ticketing facilities could also impact on revenue if station staff are instructed to let customers travel without valid tickets. This situation does occur at stations and persists for

prolonged periods on occasions. We anticipate that the accumulated impact on revenue, will likely have negative consequences for the provision of services.

There are also reasons related to the layout and local setting of the stations that make the case for retaining ticket offices therein especially persuasive. One factor is deterring crime against passengers. We agree with the concerns in this regard of Dawn Butler, MP for Brent Central, remembering the appalling murder of Tom Ap Rhys Pryce<sup>1</sup>. She is correct to state that the ability of staff to safely oversee the ticket hall and safely be able to summon assistance is enhanced by staff being located in and having access to the secure confines of a ticket office.

Although a number of the stations which face losing their ticket offices are suburban, there are still relatively elevated levels of criminality in and around those stations. For example, within Norbury station there were 384 criminal and anti-social behaviour offences recorded as occurring in 2015/16 (up from 304 the year before)<sup>2</sup>. In the same time period Balham saw an increase from 612 to 952, Denmark Hill 300 to 400, Gipsy Hill 60 to 120, and Thornton Heath 135 to 195 and Selhurst up from 56 to 84.

Furthermore, many stations which have already shed their ticket offices are showing a significantly higher level of reported criminality. For example, statistics produced by the British Transport Police for Wembley Park station (ticket office removed) show 2,544 criminal and anti-social behaviour offences reported committed in 2015/16 (up from 2,256 the year before)<sup>3</sup>. Whereas at nearby Wembley Central station (ticket office retained) there were just 14 criminal and anti-social behaviour offences reported committed in 2015/16<sup>4</sup>.

Obviously there are many variables underlying the occurrence and recording of crime. However, there is a wealth of international research specific to public transport showing that where the level of official control differs, certain types of crime (e.g. theft and sexual assault) are often displaced to locations where criminals feel more confident that they will not be caught. This is a plausible hypothesis in understanding crime fluctuations in Wembley, which further research would likely support.

Finally we note your recent decision in relation to the proposal by Transport for London to close ticket offices at the "ex-Silverlink" stations. We suggest that there are material differences between the services available to passengers at or around those stations as compared to those available at the stations operated by GTR. Specifically, Transport for London has invested considerable sums into upgrading the TVMs in use at its stations and continues to upgrade them. Also, Transport for London has invested considerable sums into permitting processing of payment for journeys by passengers via bank card "wave and pay".

GTR has not trialled the closure of ticket offices at a sample of stations. If it had done, it would have been able to analyse and present evidence on which we, London Travelwatch and Transport Focus could better understand the implications of their proposal. Within London a significant number of ticket purchases have, following the closure of almost all TfL ticket offices, been displaced to national rail station ticket offices. Accordingly we are concerned that the removal of all ticket offices, which GTR's proposal appears to herald, will leave passengers with a very much diminished service across the combined transport network.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.kilburntimes.com.uk/news/dawn-butler-mp-brent-overground-ticket-office-closures-would-cost-liver-14374865>

<sup>2</sup> <http://crimemaps.btp.police.uk/data/?q=Norbury, London SW16, UK#about>

<sup>3</sup> <http://crimemaps.btp.police.uk/data/?q=Wembley Park, Wembley, Wembley, Greater London HA9, UK#about>

<sup>4</sup> <http://crimemaps.btp.police.uk/data/?q=Wembley, Greater London, UK#station>



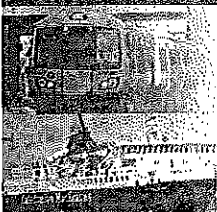
We hope you will support the continuation of existing services to passengers from ticket offices at these Govia Thameslink Railways stations. We request the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our concerns and also to be able to respond to any supplementary or rebuttal arguments which GTR may wish to put.

Yours faithfully

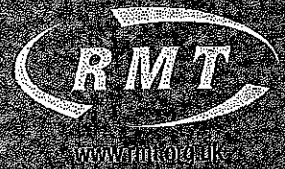
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mick Cash". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Mick Cash**  
General Secretary





National Union of Rail Maritime  
and Transport Workers



To All Board Members  
London TravelWatch  
169 Union Street  
London  
SE1 0LL

21<sup>st</sup> March 2016

NP R2/1BO

Dear Sir/ Madam

**Govia Thameslink Rail Station ticket offices closures: Secretariat  
memorandum Board meeting 22/03/16**

Further to my letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> March in which I set out RMT concerns over the recent consultation to both close some ticket offices and in others reduce opening hours at a total of 55 Station ticket offices across London, I would be grateful if the following comments in respect of your report could also be considered.

In 5.1 in your report I assume it is a typing error as clearly we are looking at station ticket offices where it is alleged that there are fewer than 12 transactions per hour and yet it states "it is not appropriate to consider closing" them. If only that was the case the many thousands who have responded to the consultation would be relieved but it appears from your report they are not even recorded. You make no mention of a 12,000 plus 38 degrees petition which was handed in to GTR and which we drew to your attention. Given the consultation notices in Stations, where they were displayed, encouraged passengers to also contact GTR, are they simply ignored if you do not consider them? You claim 5,000 responses which we find it difficult to reconcile with the fact that we recorded nearly 5,000 hard copy postcards and letters sent to you and recorded 3246 visits to the LTW letter on our website. Whilst that is in no way a guarantee they sent an e-mail on, it is difficult to believe no one at all did.

We welcome the fact that because it has become clear that GTR were not telling the facts about the statistics, in 5.3 you note in Model 1 stations "*at almost all of the stations ticket offices recorded more than this consistently on Mondays and Tuesdays between 07.00 and 10.00, with some stations also experiencing this on other days of the week*"

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General Secretary: Mick Cash

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If the criteria you value so highly in 5.2 is a hard won standard why are you now prepared to concede it? For stations with more than 12 but under 20 you are accepting that the ticket office can close. Surely they, like the stations in model one, have times of exceptional high volume usage and should at least remain open for some of the time. This is a very worrying development and raises the bar for other Operator's to claim their stations meet?

RMT welcomes that you have been able to establish the facts as we have not been shown the detailed evidence requested and the statement certainly does not tally with our member's experience at the stations. As we said in our previous letter we have grave concerns over the validity of the data being used and would welcome an opportunity to look at the information you have seen in some detail.

In 5.3 it states "*The station host would still be available to issue tickets from their mobile device throughout these periods*" and it is only the volume of sales that mean you are recommending that the ticket office to be opened at certain times.

We are not able to share your confidence about the mobile devices. The information given to us by GTR state that the current mobile ticket retailing solution is used for "**the primary purpose of on board ticket sales.**" It is however being replaced as it is coming to the end of its life and it is "too big, too slow and the screen too small"

A new machine is now being developed but the company says nothing to RMT about its ability to do anything more in terms of the services it can provide, only that it is lighter, faster and has a bigger screen.

I will not rehearse again the extensive non exhaustive list of things that the hand held ticket machine cannot do but would caution against the idea that it can do many of the things required, let alone as you yourself state in 5.8 in the report "*In terms of ticket types available at stations there will be very little change compared to now, accept under model 1 stations where the use of mobile devices **will mean that some complex transactions that were previously available at ticket offices will not be feasible.***"

You are correct to say this is about the fundamental question as to what constitutes a ticket office (5.11) "*Model 2 and 3 stations will continue to issue the full range of tickets from fully-functional ticket office machines*" as GTR say the ticket office machines ( 4.1) will be "**relocated to a station hosting points**". This is clearly because the stand alone vending machines on the station (TVM's) and the hosts handhelds (which you admit in 5.8 cannot perform a full range of services) are unable to fulfil that role.

That is why you were trying to claim in 5.9 "*However, because the proposal would see ticket office machines retained and a full range of products available, and because the hours of operation of these ticket machines is greater than currently offered, the closure of the physical ticket office would not be detrimental to the passenger*".

A ticket office is completely re defined to include anywhere the machine is set up in a station. Are you able, and do you have the legal authority, to redefine what a ticket office actually is as part of Schedule 17?

Why will there be no detriment? Will it be feasible and practical to move the ticket office machine about all the time as required on platforms or in the concourse? Will they be safe or secure? Would the requisite power points, internet and cabling be available? Will the staff using them be safe and secure? What arrangements will be made to control queues? Will the staff be able to do the other duties expected of them such as gate line or assisting passengers and staff a ticket machine station?

Surely the only logical thing to do is have guaranteed access to the ticket office and for it to be available when required? Especially as you admit nearly all of these stations do meet the "important determinant of current policy" the threshold of 12 per hour as laid out in Schedule 17.

**To concede GTR can close the ticket office with less than 20 ticket sales per hour by simply re-locating it on the platform is not a precedent RMT can accept and we will seek to challenge on Health and Safety grounds.**

Why not have it opened on a scheduled basis to reflect all the services that cannot be provided on any hand held or ticket vending machine that is available on the market at the moment?

We would be grateful therefore for urgent clarification as to what is meant in 5.9 to 5.13 so that we can explain the proposals both to our members and the passengers who are extremely concerned for the future.

You make the point immediately after in 5.12 and 5.13 about the importance of staff and safeguarding their role as part of Schedule 17

*"The closure of the physical ticket office implies that schedule 17 protection for these ticketing arrangements will be lost and that the hours of operation of the station host could be reduced in future without further consultation. This is a cause for significant concern. For these reasons, it is recommended that the proposed hours of operation for station hosts are incorporated into the protected schedule 17 hours.*

*5.13 Members should note however that the draft 'partnership' between TfL and the DfT envisages an increase in station staffing at stations within the London area."*

Are you aware that the proposals RMT is being consulted on **show net 95 job losses** in total? If you really envisage an increase in staffing in the London area how do you reconcile that with formal proposals to cut staffing at Balham by 6 staff, Streatham Hill Station by 6.5, Peckham Rye 4.5 and Streatham Common 4.5 to name just a few.

RMT believes that an efficient and skilled operator should be ensuring that the deployment of staff at ticket offices was one part of a reasonable response to the

provision of such a service, especially given the complexity of some of the issues involved and not instead proposing the closure of ticket offices and the loss of many jobs. Less staff operating a gateline or standing on a concourse/platform will be more exposed to untold dangers, distractions and other incidents.

**We will not accept a heightened risk of crime, attacks and robberies because of placing staff in danger carrying out the same duties that have previously enjoyed the security and safety of the ticket office. Do LTW accept there will be a heightened risk in the future?**

We hope that as champions representing the views of passengers, you are minded to look again at your report and take evidence from a number of other sources on the technical proposals and effects that will be felt by user groups representing the disabled, elderly and others with special assistance needs.

**It is not acceptable to simply state as you do in point 8 that the closure will have implications for passengers with disabilities but say nothing about what they are or how they will be dealt with.**

GTR has not trialled the closure of ticket offices at a sample of stations. If it had done, it would have been able to analyse and present evidence on which we, London TravelWatch and Transport Focus could better understand the implications of their proposal. Within London a significant number of ticket purchases, have following the closure of almost all TfL ticket offices, been displaced to national rail station ticket offices. The queues at Victoria for displaced customers queuing for Oyster payments are causing serious and dangerous congestion with staff harassment becoming more noticeable and should be of concern.

Accordingly we would ask you to consider again the rush to remove all the ticket offices and would request a meeting to discuss in more detail our concerns.

Yours faithfully



**Mick Cash**  
General Secretary



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07887 628367

13 March 2016

Dear Sirs

## **GTR Proposal to make changes to Ticket Office arrangements**

APTU (The Association of Public Transport Users) is the rail user group for travelers between West Hampstead Thameslink and Harlington inclusive on the Thameslink North route. Our response has been informed by a briefing to our members and a request to them for changes they see important if ticket office usage is to be reduced.

### **Conclusion: Proposal is unacceptable in isolation**

Our key conclusion is that the consultation does not contain the information needed to form a considered judgment. This is because there is no detail on the improvements to alternatives to ticket office use; in isolation, we regard this proposal as unacceptable as ticket office users often either have no alternative (eg immediate purchase of an off peak ticket for the following day (Sunday through Thursday) or have little trust in the ability of the alternative (a ticket vending machine (TVM) to offer the lowest price. We believe these improvements will require many more months than the time allowed in the current proposal.

### **Actions required to create a sensible proposal**

We believe that London TravelWatch and Transport Focus need to obtain the following additional information from GTR before concluding on the appropriateness of this proposal:

1. Details of the nature of, and timetable for, introduction of alternatives to the traditional Orange Striped ticket. In practice, this is likely to be GTR's Key Go Smartcard, and bank contactless cards and products like ApplePay,
  - a. GTR's the Key is only available for Season tickets for Thameslink and Great Northern stations at present.
  - b. In some cases, there may be a need to accelerate other commitments in the franchise such as single off-peak tickets at half the price of off-peak returns.
2. Details of improvements to the functionality, reliability and usability of TVMs.
3. Details of improvements to functionality and usability of the Internet ticket issuing application.

4. An overall programme plan that links 1, 2 & 3 above with the ticket office changes and includes mandatory milestone requirements (eg delivery of single & day tickets on Smartcards) before ticket office changes (other than pilots) are made.
5. Additional details on the ticket issuing facilities to be available to Hosts – both in terms of proportion of ticket office functionality available and performance / speed of use.
6. A commitment to undertake local informal consultation on the changes at each station before implementation – the physical layout of each station has significant impact.

We believe that items 1 to 4 are sufficiently important to justify their own separate consultation. Once there is an agreed way forward to improve the alternatives to ticket office issued tickets – and these changes have been implemented, then the multi-purpose Host role can make good sense (subject to the more detailed concerns described later).

The GTR Proposal refers to starting this in the summer of 2016. We regard this date as far too soon – the pre-requisites described elsewhere in this response are likely to take far longer to deliver than the next few months, and accordingly, whilst the revised date should be primarily dependent on the timetable for these improvements, we envisage it to be at least 12 to 24 months away (although we would very pleased to be proven unduly pessimistic as regards this).

It is to be noted that certain aspects of the proposal, that will provide the Host Role at times the ticket office is not currently opened are unequivocally an improvement, although we do note that the need to provide first to last staffing referred to as a plus is a specific franchise commitment.

### **Approach required**

We believe that this change can only be of benefit to the travelling community if the need to purchase any form of ticket at the station is eliminated for many users (through Smartcard and similar technologies) and that TVMs move from an unwelcome choice (when compared to a ticket office) towards at least equal. This will require both extensions to the range of tickets available (and the elimination of time restrictions) and in machine usability. We consider both of these improvements are essential pre-requisites to successful implementation of the Station Host concept, as we believe it can only be effective once demand for tickets issued by a member of staff has much reduced. This will provide them with enough time to both complete their new tasks and to be available for ticket issuing for travelers who cannot use alternate methods easily.

### **Purchase via the Internet**

We note that there is a reference to the ability to purchase via the Internet. We believe this needs to be treated as a disadvantage to the user community whilst the end product is an Orange Striped ticket, as this means a change from a one step to a two step process – and still retains the uncertainty of how long needs to be allowed for collection (and the worry that all TVMs will be broken). Once Smartcard tickets are more widely available, then we



agree that it can be an alternative for many (but not all) travelers – if the speed of time between purchase and availability is much reduced from the current two hours.

### **Ticket Vending Machines as an alternative**

Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) are quoted as an alternative. A consistent feedback from the membership is dissatisfaction with them. The following emerge as consistent themes:

1. Lack of functionality [see below].
2. Lack of usability – difficult to use, particularly for non-standard needs. This is not helped by differing designs in use.
3. Ticket types not available [see below].
4. Badly located machines – made unusable at times by glare, and unpleasant to use at others (eg rain).
5. Low reliability.
  - a. As a simple example of this, when I visited my local station recently, 3 were broken, 1 was refusing to issue pre-ordered tickets, leaving only 2 functional machines.

### **Detail on improvements required**

We set out below a number of improvements that need to be made to Smartcard issued tickets, to the Internet and to TVM functionality. Effectively each of these is a reason to retain ticket office hours 'as is' until delivered:

- Smartcard - The key
  - Vast improvement in availability time from current 2 hours – it should be possible to buy a ticket on-line at the station and then immediately upload it.
  - Pay As You Go available – including mixed journeys (peak one way, off peak the other etc<sup>1</sup>).
  - Covers singles, peak, off peak, super off-peak.
  - Covers all discounts – eg Local Authority, Student specials etc.
  - Covers special ticket types.
  - Covers add-ons such as Freedom pass and Boundary tickets .
- All the above also available via contactless cards (in some cases after registration).
- Oyster delivered to all promised locations.
- Internet purchases:
  - Further improvements in availability time from current 15 minutes – it should be possible to buy a ticket on-line at the station and then immediately print it.
  - All missing ticket types added – refer Smartcards.
  - Boundary tickets available.

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<sup>1</sup> Members regularly referred to buying a zones 1 to 6 off-peak travel card and a return to Elstree to save money when returning during the evening peak. Equivalent price tickets need to be available on Smartcards and from TVMs

- Station TVMs
  - Full range of ticket types available – refer Smartcards.
  - Tickets that do not start / end at the station the TVM is based at.
  - Fully usable by PRMs (persons with reduced mobility).
  - Off peak / future dated time of sale restrictions removed.
  - Always offer lowest price.

We enclose, as an appendix some sample quotes from our members.

The last point on station TVMs is an important point, which may require fundamental re-design – away from “sell me an off-peak ticket” towards “I am travelling at 8am and 3pm, sell me the cheapest ticket”.

My members have highlighted that TVMs do not issue Advance tickets and have suggested that they should. I believe this requires more thought – it seems to me that the role of a TVM is to issue a ticket quickly and to provide throughput, and allowing advance tickets, including seat selection is inconsistent with this. It may prove worthwhile to provide one such TVM in busier stations located near the host. It may also prove sensible to allow some more local Advance tickets that do not involve seat reservations to be purchased at machines.

Whilst some travellers will naturally migrate towards Smartcards (et al) and improved TVMs, we also believe incentives should be considered, such as discounts, quicker delay-repay etc.

### **Demand for ticket issuing**

We also note that there is reference to lower average ticket sales per hour at times of the day when Hosts are to the only option for staff issued tickets. We are not convinced that hourly is the appropriate measure, as there are peaks before and after trains depart / arrive – If demand is 12 tickets per hour, the requirement is not to sell a ticket every 5 minutes – it is more likely to be to sell 4 tickets as quickly as possible every 15 minutes. As an example, last time I used a TVM at Harpenden in the evening (when the ticket office is planned to be closed), there were 7 people in the ticket office queue (including the person being served) – and all 3 TVMs near the ticket office were in use.

The timing of ticket office opening hours also needs to take account of other factors such as school holidays – it may well be sensible to have much more differential in the opening hours.

### **Role of the Host**

Depending on their location, we are not currently clear whether or not station hosts will have a role in supporting arriving passengers at the ticket barriers – eg dealing with those without tickets, those with failed tickets (eg mag stripe errors). To the degree that they take over any of these roles from existing barrier staff (or allow barriers to be operated for

longer) then we are concerned they will be overwhelmed with demand for their services, resulting in delayed passengers and the benefits expected not being achieved. This will be exacerbated if the machines issued to host either cannot issue all ticket types (we would regard this as unacceptable) or if ticket issue (and other tasks – eg season ticket re-print) times increase as this would reduce capacity compared to the ticket office is open option

We are also concerned as to how Persons of Reduced Mobility and others with special needs will be supported – not conceptually – the role of the Host is an improvement, but practically – given other demands for the Host's time – including anger and disappointment from others whilst they wait.

Finally, we have concerns about cash handling as the Host could be vulnerable to theft – something that could also put travelers at risk

### **Individual stations**

Detail has not been made available as to where Hosts will be typically expected to be located, nor where the Station Hosting point will be located. We believe this information needs to be made available, and subject to an informal local consultation. For instance, we can see natural locations for the Station Hosting point at stations like City Thameslink and West Hampstead Thameslink, but it is less clear how they can well positioned at stations like Harpenden (ticket office away from natural pedestrian flow) and Elstree and Borehamwood (congestion).

### **Prototyping**

We can see that there are benefits from prototyping, and once improved mobile ticket issuing functionality available to Hosts there should be two trials in London zones 1 to 6 - central London excluding St Pancras and elsewhere to start to iron out issues. A further trial outside London should then occur. In each case, ticket office hours should not be reduced – if the Host concept is successful, they should become the preferred option for staff based ticket issuance.

### **Conclusion**

We look forward to hearing from you; if you would like to meet me, we would welcome such a meeting.

Yours sincerely

Neil Middleton

Neil Middleton  
Chairman  
APTU

## Appendix – Sample quotes

1. One ticket machine currently always refuses my credit card – and I am not the only passenger with that experience
2. Not all types of tickets are available on the website eg Senior railcard for Supersaver fare on Sat 12th March same day return. This option was not available on the website. Had I bought the ticket online I would have paid double the fare of £6.60. Nor did the website tell me about the Railcard option for onward travel across Zones 1-6
3. School holiday periods are exceptionally busy at Leagrave station with many family groups travelling and needing advice about ticket options. There needs to be extended opening hours during all the school holidays
4. don't seem to be possible at a machine as one transaction:
  - a. Buy an off-peak travel card together with a full fare return from the boundary of zone 6 to Harpenden
  - b. Buy two off-peak travel cards with senior discount as a single transaction
  - c. Buy an off-peak travelcard with senior discount without having to seemingly start the transaction again after pressing the button for senior railcard
  - d. Buy a travelcard plus return from boundary of zone 6 to anywhere e.g. Worthing or Woking
5. The category of ticket I have been most inconvenienced by not being able to buy it from TVMs (unless this has changed very recently) is the half-fare travel available for journeys within Hertfordshire by holders of HCC concessionary passes.
6. The existing machines are tedious, frustrating and sometimes impossible. The screens are insufficiently touch sensitive [or even fail to register entirely]; locating the required destination using the 'keyboard' is slow and cumbersome; selecting the ticket type is prone to error; the LACON discount is not available; and the 'bar' on buying an off peak fare is not set early enough to ensure catching the first cheap train. In other words they are hopeless and nobody in their right mind would use them when a staffed ticket office is available.