Board Meeting 23.3.10



Secretariat's Memorandum	Agenda item 11 LTW 346
Author: Tim Bellenger	Date 9.3.10

Proposed changes to South West Trains booking office hours of opening (Schedule 17 application)

1 Purpose of report

1.1 To consider the proposed alterations by South West Trains (SWT) to booking office hours at 13 stations in the London TravelWatch area.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are recommended to:
- 2.1.1 Object to the proposed reduction in ticket office hours on the basis that the figures derived from stations in the Oyster Pay As You Go (PAYG) area were based on the experience of a period of severe weather and train services, and it would be unreasonable to make a long term decision based on this.
- 2.1.2 Continue to press South West Trains to agree to the retailing of Oyster products at their stations within the Greater London Travelcard area at both booking offices and Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs).

3 Background

3.1 SWT has proposed changes to booking office hours at 24 stations that it operates including 13 within the London TravelWatch area. Their letter is appended as Appendix A.

4 Commentary

- 4.1 Appendices B and C set out the proposals by SWT, and analyse the proposals on a station by station basis. In most cases these are similar to previous proposals in 2008, but in some cases they go further.
- 4.2 SWT justifies their proposals on the grounds that at 15 of these stations ticket sales are less than 12 per hour (the standard set by the Secretary of State) when the previous

application was considered. At a further 9 stations an average of less than 20 tickets were sold. These stations were within the London Oyster PAYG area, and they report that since the introduction of Oyster on their network they have seen a reduction of between 30% to 50% in the number of tickets sold.

4.3 The data on which this decision was based was between 12 October 2008 and 8 November 2008, and between 18 October 2009 and 14 November 2009.

5 Issues previously raised by London TravelWatch in relation to booking office closures

5.1 In 2008 London TravelWatch objected to the previous SWT proposal on the following recommendations:

London TravelWatch concern	South West Trains response and action since the previous schedule
	17 application
That SWT investigates additional capacity at its telesales facility covering both South West and East Midlands Trains.	This was not responded to by SWT – in both periods reviewed tickets sold by this method accounted for only 1% of all sales.
That a request is made to the Office of Rail Regulation for the release of information regarding the destinations available from SWT ticket vending machines, in order to inform London TravelWatch's opinion as to whether the current arrangements are reasonable.	Eventually this information was provided, and SWT agreed to review whether the 50 or so stations not on this list, but having direct services to them from stations served by SWT should be included. Some expansion of the destination list was promised.
That London TravelWatch regards any change to the booking office hours of stations within the Greater London Travelcard area as premature in advance of the introduction of Oyster PAYG on the national rail network in 2009, because the introduction of this will substantially change the numbers of tickets that will need to be purchased from booking offices and TVMs.	The reported reduction in ticket sales as a result of the introduction of Oyster PAYG coincided with a prolonged period of severe weather and disruption to services and so cannot be relied upon as a basis to agree a permanent reduction in operating hours.
That SWT is urged to reconsider its' position on the retailing of Oyster products from both booking offices and ticket vending machines within the Travelcard area.	SWT continues in its position of not retailing Oyster products either from booking offices or ticket vending machines.
That SWT should provide London TravelWatch with assurances about the reliability of its TVMs, and of any revised maintenance regime in respect of ticket stocks and change particularly at evenings, weekends and early mornings.	Assurances were received at the time of the previous application. Subsequently this has not appeared to be a major issue arising from our casework.

London TravelWatch concern	South West Trains response and action since the previous schedule 17 application
That SWT should provide assurance that staff availability on stations should be such that they are multi-functional, visible and accessible to passengers.	No such direct assurance has been provided, but there have been general assurances in relation to disabled passengers and security at stations – overall there has been a 9% reduction in reported crime in 2009 across the SWT network.
That SWT should defer and re-examine their proposals for booking office hours changes in relation to stations proposed for gating, to take account of any changes in ticket purchasing patterns that emerge consequent to the installation of gates.	None of the stations proposed for booking office hours alterations has automatic ticket barriers – although Motspur Park, Whitton and St. Margarets should be considered for gating as each has over 1 million users per year
That SWT must ensure that all of the proposed upgrades to TVM capabilities are in place before any change to booking office hours is implemented, including reviewing the destinations available.	SWT implemented their upgrades on a phased basis but not linked to the implementation of booking office hours
That London TravelWatch is given assurances about measures to keep queuing times within the current acceptable standards.	Assurances were given at the time that this would be kept under review.

- 5.2 It is of great concern that SWT should base its decision to withdraw booking office hours at stations in the Oyster PAYG area on the experience of a few weeks at the beginning of a year when travel volumes are often reduced because of seasonal factors, and in the light of the serious disruption to services that occurred due to the poor and prolonged weather conditions that prevailed during this period. It is therefore recommended that a decision on these hours should be re-evaluated on the basis of figures from a later period, without the impact of weather conditions and widespread service disruption.
- 5.3 The functionality of TVMs also still raises a number of issues and it is of concern that SWT still do not offer the range of destinations covered by services from their stations on these machines.

6 Representations from passengers

6.1 The schedule 17 mechanism allows passengers to make representations to London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus on these proposals. The consultation period closes on 17 March 2010. All representations received to the date of this meeting will be circulated to members in a confidential appendix to this report at the meeting.

7 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 7.1 The proposal as such does not impact on the assisted travel service that SWT offers to passengers. However, not all passengers requiring assistance will use this service particularly as this requires advance booking, in these cases booking office staff may be assisting passengers. This is particularly likely in the case of suburban metro journeys.
- 7.2 It should also be noted that TVMs may be difficult for a person with a disability to operate, where a staffed booking office would offer a better level of service. The issues here would be cash and card handling, understanding of which ticket to buy and how to obtain a Railcard discount.

8 Financial implications

8.1 The contents of this report have no specific financial implications for London TravelWatch.

9 Legal powers

9.1 Section 252A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places a duty upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) to keep under review matters affecting the interests of the public in relation to railway passenger and station services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area, and to make representations about them to such persons as it thinks appropriate.



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Re: Proposed changes to Ticket Office Hours on South West Trains

Date 23rd February 2010

Ref: SSWT/DFT/0210/563

Dear Tim Bellenger

South West Trains hereby gives notice of the proposal to alter the schedule 17 hours as major change at 24 stations as attached in appendix 1 in accordance with the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement, chapter 6-18 clause 1.a (i).

The proposal is to change opening hours at these stations in accordance with passenger demand to represent an improvement on current arrangement in terms of cost effectiveness.

A summary of current and proposed hours is included with appendix 1.

Analysis of ticket issues at 14 stations demonstrates an average of about 12 tickets an hour or less are issued during the times proposed for closure. As specified in the criteria set by the Secretary of State. At a further 9 stations within the Oyster Pay As You Go (PAYG) network an average of less than 20 tickets an hour are issued during the times proposed for closure. Since the implementation of PAYG we have seen a reduction in the amount of ticket issues through our ticket offices at PAYG stations on average of between 30 to 50%. This highlights a shift in customer demand to Oyster card. An additional 1 station sits within both categories.

The analysis covered ticket issues in 15 minute time bands across two normal periods, RSP 1007 to 1008 (20/09/09 – 14/11/09). Ticket sales demonstrate that transactions generally reflect 'walk up' type tickets or 7day seasons that are typically available through ticket vending machines (TVM).

The adjustment of opening hours allows us to suitably reflect sales demand at ticket offices and will provide cost efficiencies with reductions in shift patterns, reduced weekend cover or Sunday enhancements.

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Alternative Retailing Options

The retailing sales trend continues to shift towards ticket vending machines, telesales and Internet. In excess of 50 % of issues is now met by TVMs. This shift change is highlighted in Fig 1 and 2 below.

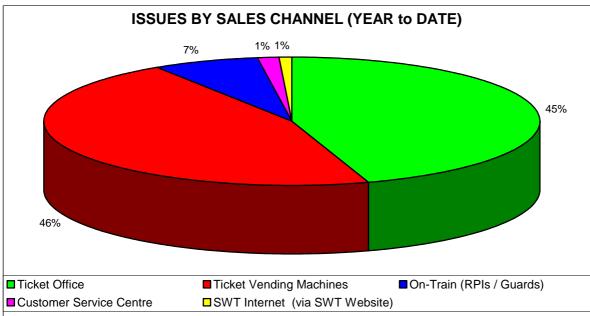
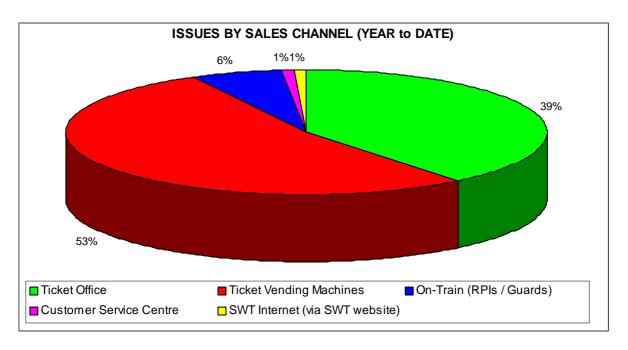


Fig 1. RSP Period 0908 (12th October – 8^{th} November 2008)





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A total of 444 ticket vending machines are available across South West Trains and are embedded into the ticket purchase habits of many of our customers. Development of the usability and functionality of these machines continues as they prove to be a key feature in our retailing strategy.

Pre-paid ticket collection can be collected from TVMs within 2 hours of purchase; monthly season ticket renewals and peak tickets for the following day are also available throughout all TVMs across the South West Trains network. All other ticket sales can also be obtained by Internet, Telesales or during the revised opening hours from the ticket office. Issues through pre-paid ticket collection have grown to 1.8 million since introduction on South West Trains in August 2008 and continue to expand each month.

PAYG top up may be obtained through the Internet and Oyster outlets within 250 metres of the stations. Top ups can be uploaded through validators or gate lines at South West Trains stations.

Expansion of our Smart card pilot scheme (currently Staines to Windsor) commences in the spring of 2010 to include stations Weymouth to Basingstoke, Staines to Wokingham and the Isle of Wight.

The South West Trains website has recently been redeveloped to focus more clearly on ticket sales. Increased usage and sales have continued to be experienced since its launch in November 2009.

In accordance with our previous application and the clarification set out in the letter from DfT on 12th January 2009, each station continues to provide a help point giving access to information for passengers and there are no charges made for Internet or telesales service.

Meeting the needs of our disabled customers

Where there is no longer a member of staff available to provide suitable assistance, the guard will, as now, help customers requiring assistance. We have Help Points available on all platforms at South West Trains managed stations. Our assisted travel line is also available for people who need additional help when travelling with us. This is a pre-booked service and we ask for 24 hours notice if possible. In cases where passengers are travelling to stations where there is no disabled access, arrangements will be made on train or at station for suitable taxis to be provided, to or from the nearest accessible station, in accordance with our current Disabled persons protection policy.

Security at Stations

South West Trains has a dedicated Security & Crime Prevention department whose responsibility it is to help safeguard the security of our customers, employees, property, and infrastructure. Our aim is to create an environment free from crime, and the fear of crime. Our latest crime statistics show a 9% reduction in crime since last year.

There are Help Points at every station where passengers can contact someone 24 hours a day and every SWT operated station is equipped with CCTV. Our BTP Neighborhood Policing Team successfully operates joint initiatives with adjoining TOCs, local councils, police forces and our Revenue Protection staff to improve security across our London and Mainline area.



Revenue Protection

Revenue continues to be protected by the provision of 33 gate lines across our network including Waterloo. 95% of journeys on our network are covered by a gateline at one end of the journey and 35% of journeys have a gate line at both ends. Current Penalty Fares rules will continue to apply and it is not envisaged there is a need to make any formal application to make changes to the scheme, as there are no full station closures. The revenue protection handbook will be updated to reflect the changes. Ticket vending machines will be available for ticket sales after the ticket office is closed as they are currently.

Timescales

Following our previous submission and the criteria set by the Secretary of State of about 12 tickets an hour we await an early decision to our application.

A copy of this proposal has been sent to Passenger Focus, ATOC and our Franchise Manager at the DfT. Consultation for the 28 day period as specified in the TSA will commence from 25thFebruary 2010 to 24th March 2010 to coincide with public consultation through station posters which will run from 25th February 2010 to 17th March inclusive.

Implementation of the revised hours will be intended one week following approval. Local staff consultation regarding shift patterns and hours will commence following approval and will be phased in as appropriate. Issues affecting existing staff redeployment may result in some stations being open past the registered opening hours until these are resolved. Where possible it is planned to use these staff and hours to encourage customers to use ticket vending machines by means of 'floor walking'.

If you require any further detail or information regarding these proposals please contact Lynn McLachlan, contact details are as shown.

Yours sincerely

Lynn McLachlan

Retailing Development Manager

Copy to:

Colin Martin, ATOC Fares and Retail Dept, 3rd Floor, 40 Bernard Street, London WC1N 1BY Jocelyn Pearson, Passenger Link Manager, Passenger Focus, Whittles House, 14 Pentonville Road London N1 9HF Chloe Sellers Acting Franchise Manager, Zone 3/33 Great Minster House 76 Marsham Street London SW1P 4DR Sir Alan Greengross – alan.greengross@indusmond.net

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CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX 1

			CURREN	T HOURS						P	ROPOSED HO	OURS				
STATION	Monday - Friday Open	Monday - Friday Close	Saturday Open	Saturday Close	Sunday Open	Sunday Close	Monday - Friday Open	Monday - Friday Close	Avg Tkts per hour (during hrs proposed to close)	Saturday Open	Saturday Close	Avg Tkts per hour (during hrs proposed to close)	Sunday Open	Sunday Close	Avg Tkts per hour (during hrs proposed to close)	Inside P.A.Y.G area
ASH VALE	06:25	12:00	08:00	13:00	09:00	12:00	06:25	12:00		08:00	13:00		closed	closed	9.4	No
BARNES	06:45	18:45	07:00	19:00	10:00	13:00	06:45	13:00	10.4	08:30	15:00	7.2	closed	closed	16.7	Yes
BERRYLANDS	06:20	10:10	08:10	13:00	closed	closed	06:20	10:10		closed	closed	11.1	closed	closed		Yes
BROOKWOOD	06:30	20:15	08:10	15:00	08:10	15:40	06:30	13:00	8.5	08:10	15:00		closed	closed	8.8	No
CAMBERLEY	06:10	19:50	06:10	19:05	07:40	15:10	06:10	12:10	8.4	08:00	14:50	6.9	closed	closed	8.2	No
CHRISTCHURCH	06:00	17:30	07:00	14:00	08:45	12:45	06:00	17:30		07:00	14:00		closed	closed	12.1	No
CLANDON	06:25	11:00	08:00	12:00	closed	closed	06:25	11:00		closed	closed	8.1	closed	closed		No
CREWKERNE	05:50	18:00	06:05	17:25	09:00	17:20	05:50	12:20	6.3	07:30	12:30	3.7	closed	closed	4.0	No
FARNCOMBE	06:15	18:00	07:30	16:00	08:45	16:05	06:15	12:15	10.0	08:00	14:35	11.7	closed	closed	10.1	No
FULWELL	06:40	11:00	09:00	14:00	00:00	00:00	06:40	11:00		closed	closed	15.0	00:00	00:00		Yes
HAMPTON	06:40	18:00	07:40	18:00	09:00	15:00	06:40	13:25	19.0	08:05	14:55	17.3	09:00	15:00		Yes
HINCHLEY WOOD	06:30	11:00	10:00	13:00	closed	closed	06:30	11:00		closed	closed	7.5	closed	closed		No
MALDEN MANOR	06:30	11:00	09:00	13:00	closed	closed	06:30	11:00		closed	closed	16.1	closed	closed		Yes
MOTSPUR PARK	06:30	13:00	08:00	13:00	09:00	14:00	06:30	13:00		08:00	13:00		closed	closed	15.6	Yes
NETLEY	06:10	10:10	09:00	12:00	closed	closed	06:10	10:10		closed	closed	5.4	closed	closed		No
POKESDOWN	05:50	20:15	06:30	13:40	08:00	15:00	05:50	12:30	5.4	07:50	13:40	5.3	closed	closed	6.5	No
ST DENYS	07:00	10:45	06:00	13:20	09:00	16:30	07:00	10:45		closed	closed	6.9	closed	closed	6.6	No
ST MARGARETS (GREATER LONDON)	06:20	19:00	08:00	14:00	09:10	16:00	06:20	12:50	19.5	08:00	14:00		09:10	16:00		Yes
STRAWBERRY HILL	06:15	19:00	08:00	17:00	09:00	13:00	06:15	13:00	12.2	08:00	14:45	8.5	closed	closed	15.8	Yes
SUNNINGDALE	06:00	18:45	07:00	18:00	08:00	17:00	06:00	18:45		07:00	18:00		08:50	16:20	9.8	No
THAMES DITTON	06:40	13:00	08:00	13:00	closed	closed	06:40	13:00		closed	closed	18.1	closed	closed		Yes
VIRGINIA WATER	06:10	18:00	08:00	17:00	09:00	15:00	06:10	13:05	11.4	08:00	14:55	12.0	09:00	15:00		No
WHITCHURCH (Hampshire)	06:00	11:15	06:00	10:25	closed	closed	06:00	11:15		closed	closed	6.5	closed	closed		No
WHITTON	06:00	19:45	06:40	20:00	09:00	16:00	06:00	13:00	17.9	08:00	15:00	17.5	09:00	16:00		Yes

SSWT proposed changes key

CLOSED = NEW CLOSED

PROPOSED CHANGES TO CURRENT HOURS

CURRENT HOURS NO CHANGE

Appendix B

1.1 Stations within the London Travelcard area. Listed below are the proposed changes on a station by station basis, plus alternative means of ticket purchase for passengers. Oyster Pay As You Go has now been installed. However, at present South West Trains are not committed to retailing Oyster.

Barnes	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0645	1845	0645	1300	-5hours 45 minutes	Average 10.4 sales per hour, but 1600 – 1800 over 12 per hour
Saturday	0700	1900	0830	1500	-5hours 30 minutes	Average 7.2 sales per hour
Sunday	1000	1300	Closed	Closed	-3hours	Average 16.7 sales per hour
	3 TVMs	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Upper Richmond Road 1/4 mile away			

Berrylands	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0620	1010	0620	1010	No change	
Saturday	0810	1300	Closed	Closed	-4hours 50 minutes	Average 11.1 sales per hour, but 0900 -1200 up to 15 per hour
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
	1 TVM – but may be located in the wrong place	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Chiltern Drive 0.02 miles away			

Fulwell	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0640	1100	0640	1100	No change	
Saturday	0900	1400	Closed	Closed	-5hours	Average 15 sales per hour
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
	1 TVM – but may be in the wrong place	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Wellington Road 0.16 miles away			

Hampton	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0640	1800	0640	1325	-4hours 35 minutes	Average 19 sales per hour
Saturday	0740	1800	0805	1455	- 3hours 30 minutes	Average 17.3 sales per hour
Sunday	0900	1500	0900	1500	No change	
	2TVMs	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Percy Road 0.09 miles away			

Malden Manor	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours)	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0630	1100	0630	1100	No change	
Saturday	0900	1300	Closed	Closed	-4hours	Average 16.1 sales per hour
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
	1 TVM	Oyster PAYG	Nearest Oyster			
		installed	agent in			
			Manor Drive 0.10			
			miles away			

Motspur	Current	Current	Proposed	Proposed	Difference	Commentary
Park	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours		
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to	0630	1300	0630	1300	No change	
Friday						
Saturday	0800	1300	0800	1300	No change	
Sunday	0900	1400	Closed	Closed	-5hours 30	Average 15.6
					minutes	sales per hour
	2 TVMs	Oyster	Nearest			
		PAYG	Oyster			
		installed	agent in			
			West			
			Barnes			
			Lane 0.09			
			miles away			

St Margarets	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0620	1900	0620	1250	-6hours 10 minutes	Average 19.5 sales per hour
Saturday	0800	1400	0800	1400	No change	
Sunday	0910	1600	0910	1600	No change	
	2 TVMs	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in St.Margare ts road 0.06 miles away			

Strawberry Hill	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0615	1900	0615	1300	- 6hours	Average 12.2 sales per hour
Saturday	0800	1700	0800	1445	- 2hours 15 minutes	Average 8.5 sales per hour, but 13 per hour 1500 – 1600
Sunday	0900	1300	Closed	Closed	- 4hours 30 minutes	Average 15.8 sales per hour

2 TV	1 3	Nearest		
	PAYG	Oyster		
	installed	agent in		
		Tower		
		Road 0.10		
		miles away		

Thames Ditton	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0640	1300	0640	1300	No change	
Saturday	0800	1300	Closed	Closed	-5 hours	Average 18.1 sales per hour
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
	1 TVM	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Summer Road ½			
			mile away			

Whitton	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0600	1945	0600	1300	- 6 hours 45 minutes	Average 17.9 sales per hour
Saturday	0640	2000	0800	1500	-6 hours 20 minutes	Average 17.2 sales per hour, but 1500 – 1900 up to 25 sales per hour
Sunday	0900	1600	0900	1600	No change	
	3 TVMs	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in High Street 0.08 miles away			

Appendix C

1.1 Stations outside the London Travelcard area. Listed below are the proposed changes on a station by station basis, plus alternative means of ticket purchase for passengers. It is proposed that some form of ITSO standard smartcard ticketing will be available at some date in the future.

Clandon	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0625	1100	0625	1100	No change	
Saturday	0800	1200	Closed	Closed	- 4hours	Average 8.1 sales per hour
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
-	1 TVM					

Hinchley Wood	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0630	1100	0630	1100	No change	
Saturday	1000	1300	Closed	Closed	-3 hours	Average 7.5 sales per hour
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
	1 TVM	Served by TfL buses - add Oyster in future?				

Virginia Water	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours)	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0610	1800	0610	1305	-4hours 55 minutes	Average 11.4 sales per hour, but 1600 – 1800 over 12 per hour
Saturday	0800	1700	0800	1455	-2hours 5 minutes	Average 12 sales per hour
Sunday	0900	1500	0900	1500	No change	
-	2 TVMs					