
Secretariat memorandum

Author : Sharon Malley

Agenda item: 5

LTW521

Drafted: 16.05.16

Matters arising

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1. To record responses to or further information received on matters arising from previous meetings.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1. That the report is received for information

3 Information

- 3.1. The current position is set out in the accompanying table (Annex A). Updates for inclusion in this report are invited five working days in advance of the meeting, in writing to the Committee Services team, rather than in person at the meeting.

4 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 4.1. None – report is for information only.

5 Financial implications

- 5.1. None – report is for information only.

6 Legal powers

- 6.1. Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider - and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight). Section 252A of the same Act (as amended by Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005) places a similar duty upon the 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.

Annex A: Matters arising from previous London TravelWatch meetings

No	Date	Minute	Action	London TravelWatch owner	Status	
1	22.03.16	9	Submit findings of consultation on Govia Thameslink Railway ticket office closures.	Director, Policy and Investigation	Letter was sent on 24.03.16. This is attached, along with the reply from GTR.	Complete

Letter to GTR in respect of ticket office closures

Keith Jipps
Passenger Service Director (GN)
Govia Thameslink Railway
East Side Offices
King's Cross Station
LONDON
N1C 4AP

24th March 2016

Dear Keith,

Proposed changes to GTR Ticket Offices and introduction of Station Host role.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals, which were considered by our Board at their meeting on the 22nd March 2016. Thank you also for attending and contributing to that meeting.

Members expressed considerable concern that the proposals need to be much clearer on their extent and implications, and to be trialled in a number of locations and scenarios before their full introduction at the stations that you are proposing. For this reason we are objecting to the proposals as they stand at the moment.

In our view an acceptable proposal that meets the needs of passengers would include the following elements:-

General principles

1. That the hours that the 'station hosts' would be available should be included in the formal schedule 17 hours under the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA), rather than a separate arrangement that could be altered without further consultation. The role of the station host would therefore perform the same function as a regulated ticket office.

Reducing the need for passenger interaction with ticket offices and ticket vending machines

2. Communicating with the many passengers who still purchase tickets through ticket vending machines (TVMs) and ticket offices, who would be better off using Oyster / Contactless or other smart card products, that these channels are available to them.
3. Supporting the introduction of internet retailing of 'Boundary Zone' extension tickets.
4. Supporting the introduction of Railcard discounts to Oyster Pay As You Go fares on Monday to Friday peak times for journeys commencing between 1600 and 1900 to reduce the demand by passengers at this time for single paper tickets, and abolish the current anomaly that these are cheaper than Oyster.
5. Introducing a system of automated compensation for delays for holders of Oyster / Contactless and other smart cards, reducing the need to issue vouchers as compensation, and for ticket offices to accept and process.

6. Where compensation is paid in the form of vouchers allow these to be redeemed via an internet purchase, this reducing the need for passengers to use ticket offices to accept and process these vouchers.

Improving the usability of ticket vending machines

7. Simplifying the fares and ticketing structure to make the presentation of these on TVMs much simpler and easier to understand, and reducing the number of anomalies where paper tickets are cheaper than the equivalent Oyster / contactless / smartcard fare. This should include a review of all evening peak hour restrictions on the Thameslink and Great Northern routes, to reduce the need for passengers to purchase multiple or split tickets in order to get the best value fare.
8. A programme of reliability improvements to the current fleet of TVMs.
9. A programme of informing and training passengers to use TVMs, to increase their confidence in using these machines. In particular, many of the respondents to our consultation were unaware that tickets from other stations including Boundary Zones can be purchased through your machines.
10. Adding the ability to sell at TVMs tickets subject to local discount arrangement e.g. Hertfordshire concessionary passes.
11. Relocating some TVMs to locations sheltered from the elements and glare, where currently they are in exposed positions.

Communicating change to passengers

12. Communicating to passengers how the change in arrangements will benefit them and give assurances about access to information, where hosts will be located, how people with reduced mobility will be catered for and personal security improved. This would involve a range of media such as leaflets, online, social media and direct contact at stations.
13. Explaining the role of station hosts and any limitations such as acceptance of cash or a limited range of tickets that can be issued from a mobile device.
14. Using TfL to contact users of Oyster / Contactless cards to communicate the changes in ticket selling.
15. An acknowledgement by GTR that 'the Key' will not be appropriate alternative for journeys wholly within the London Travelcard zones 1 to 6

Detailed consideration of the operational plans on a station by station basis

16. The layout and operation dynamics of all stations are different one from another, and so need a detailed operational plan at each individual station. London TravelWatch and Transport Focus would be able to contribute to this process.
17. At all stations a designated and signed 'station host' point is needed together with clear instructions as to where queuing should take place, and how people with hearing and/or sight loss will be dealt with.

Trialling the proposal before widespread introduction

18. We recommend that the new model is trialled in a meaningful way at a variety of station types to prove the concept. This could include operation at stations and / or exits / entrances not subject to TSA conditions e.g. new East Croydon entrance, unmanned stations on the Wimbledon loop, the Eardley Road entrance to Streatham Common, Crews Hill: and / or reversible trialling at stations such as City

Thameslink, Gipsy Hill, Ashted, Oxted, Sanderstead, New Barnet or Queens Road Peckham.

In addition, we think that a number of measures are required at individual stations to facilitate any change. These would include:-

Model 1.

We are concerned that there are very high numbers of tickets issued on Mondays and Tuesdays between 0700 and 1000 at almost all these stations. We attribute this to issuing weekly season tickets (either point to point or Travelcard). Many of these passengers would be better off using Contactless payment cards with weekly capping or using an Oyster Pay As You Go or Travelcard product.

We are also concerned that the mobile ticketing option from the station host would be a slower more time consuming method of operation than using the current ticket office machines, a significant dis-benefit to passengers at a critical time of day at the beginning of a week.

Models 2 and 3

As noted above the station hosting point at these stations must be clearly defined, together with instructions on queuing.

I hope that this is a comprehensive reply. I think it would be useful if a meeting could be convened with ourselves, Transport Focus and the Department for Transport to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bellenger
Director Policy and Investigation

Letter from GTR in respect of ticket office closures

Tim Bellenger
Director, Policy and Investigations
London TravelWatch
169 Union Street
London
SE1 0LL

Keith Jipps
Passenger Service Director (GN)
Govia Thameslink Railway Ltd
East Side Offices
King's Cross Station
London N1C 4AP

Email : Keith.jipps@gtrailway.com

22nd April 2016

Dear Tim,

Proposed changes to ticket offices and introduction of Station Hosts

Thank you for your response to the public consultation on our proposed changes to ticket offices and the introduction of Station Hosts.

As a result of your feedback, and that of passengers, other stakeholders and interested parties, Govia Thameslink Railway intends to amend its plans to ensure that passengers continue to be able to purchase the full range of tickets, longer term staffing of stations is protected and that the passenger benefits of the introduction of Station Hosts and the extended hours of staff availability is achieved through smooth implementation. Our amended proposals will ensure that the protection that Schedule 17 of the Ticketing Settlement Agreement provides currently is maintained.

Originally our plans were to introduce Hosts with three types of operating model;

- Hosted station (Model A)
- Hosted point of sale station (Model B), and,
- Hosted point of sale with partial ticket office opening (Model C).

Model C stations were to remain regulated under the current Schedule 17 arrangements with the ticket office and Hosted Point, that would have a ticket office machine in position, becoming the designated point of sale. We were proposing to remove regulated hours at Model B stations but a ticket office machine would have been available to sell the full range of tickets. At Model A stations we were intending to retail through TVMs and a handheld device, with no access to a ticket office machine, which would have meant not all tickets, albeit ones with low demand, would be available for sale at these stations.

In your response to our proposals you raised a number of concerns around the alteration to ticket office operations and the introduction of Station Hosts and offered suggestions to improve ticketing and communication arrangements.

Ongoing Protection of passenger benefits through the Schedule 17 arrangements of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA) and access to the full range of tickets was also stated as an area of concern.

To address these issues we are amending our operating plans for these stations as part of our continued plans to introduce Station Hosts. A concern that was consistently aired throughout the consultation process was that passengers felt they would be disadvantaged being unable to purchase all ticket types or railcards and would pay more than they need to for the journeys they are making. This was never our intention as ticket sales of these types at the Model A stations were very low and we were maintaining access to ticket office machines at the Model B and C stations. However this was a real concern for our passengers and stakeholders and we feel we need to address this concern.

We now propose to maintain access to a ticket office machine at the Model A stations as well. This machine will be within a Hosted Point within the concourse area where space allows, or, will be accessible for the Station Host within the ticket office to enable sales of tickets not available within self-service ticket machines or the Host's handheld device. As a result of this change passengers will continue to be able to buy the full range of tickets at all stations under this proposal.

Each station will have an operational plan devised before the introduction of the Station Host role and any amendment to ticket office operations. These plans will include the hours of ticket office opening (at Model C stations) and how the Host will operate within the concourse area and if a queuing system is needed and how that would be implemented. At a number of stations we will have more than one host at busy times, along with platform staff to assist passengers elsewhere on the station. As part of the implementation of the Hosts we would provide additional resources to support the Host(s) and ensure that passengers are not facing delays in obtaining tickets, until such time that the Hosted approach has been embedded and the need for additional resource subsides. At certain times we will strengthen staffing levels especially around special events and engineering works. We intend to maintain the committed queuing time standard at all of these stations. Hosts will be easily distinguishable within the station concourse areas and the Hosted Point will be signposted to. We will maintain the committed queuing time standard at all of these stations and will monitor queue times as part of the service quality (QueST) audits as well as regular review by the Station Management teams.

As part of the rollout of the Station Host role, and change to ticket office operations, we intend to introduce a soft launch / pilot at between 5 and 8 stations, a mix of each of the models, commencing mid-June of this year. It is intended that the soft launch will last for approx. 4 weeks to enable us to review peak season ticket renewal weeks and increasing off peak and weekend demand periods.

These stations will be selected on the basis of ticket sales levels, the station infrastructure supporting the Host role and across a geographical mix that covers stations within London and the Counties. We will develop the operational plans and would like to involve London Travelwatch and local passenger groups and stakeholders in these plans and formulate the scope and the evaluation of these stations.

We will continue to provide the protection that is afforded through Schedule 17 of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA) and maintain the requirements of Schedule 17, as per the current stipulated times. We will continue to provide a point of sale at each station that can sell the full range of tickets and regulate these points of sale under the current requirements, with the designated point of sale being generally within the concourse area and at times within a ticket office. Effectively we are withdrawing our proposals to change Schedule 17 as we will continue to meet the TSA requirements.

We stated within our original letters to you and Transport Focus that we would commit to providing Station Hosts, at the 83 stations, for the times within our proposals for the length of our franchise (2021). We intend to continue with that commitment which will see Station Hosts available to assist passengers with ticket purchases for 2,600 hours more per week than the current ticket office opening hours and each of these stations will have a member of staff from first train in the morning until last one of the day.

With the extended hours at these stations we will be able to provide enhanced service and assistance, especially at times when stations are currently unstaffed. This will enable station facilities such as waiting rooms, toilets and lifts to be available for most of the day that train services operate and provide enhanced safety and security, especially late at night.

We have commenced a work stream to review and improve the functionality of our ticketing systems with a view to improving ticket types available for purchase through self-service machines and the handheld device that will have significantly improved functionality and speed of issue than the current handheld machine. Aligned with this work we have a communications plan to promote the use of Contactless and Oyster within the London area. These products are the most popular within this area but there remains large numbers of passengers still buying paper tickets and not experiencing the benefits of these products.

We will also be promoting the introduction of the Station Hosts and the significant benefits for passengers that these roles will bring. We will continue to develop improvements to ticketing systems with the KeyGo pay as you go type product being introduced outside of London on the Great Northern route in September, additional 65 self-service ticket machines and a roadmap of improvements to TVM functionality. Much of this will be delivered prior to and during the Station Host introduction programme. Alongside this a significantly improved handheld device, for speed and functionality, will be issued to the Station Hosts which will undertake the vast majority of ticketing and information functionality that exists within the ticket office machines. The retention of a ticket machine at all stations within the Station Host programme will ensure that any ticket that the TVM or handheld device is unable to be sold through these means can be issued by the Host through the ticket office machines that are available.

We will commence the introduction of Station Hosts at the pilot stations in June 2016. Dependent on the success of the pilots and any lessons learnt we would look to plan to rollout to the other stations throughout the summer with an expectation that all stations would be operating with Station Hosts towards the end of autumn 2016, however this timeline is dependent on the successful implementation of stations throughout that plan. I would like to share with you further detail about our pilot stations, the operational plans for these and the wider rollout plans, along with further detail of our ticketing improvement and communications plans.

We believe that the proposals to introduce the Station Hosts and move the majority of transactions to outside the ticket office will provide a significantly improved customer service offering with the following benefits:

- Increased staff presence to assist customers with ticket purchases, provision of information and assistance
- Maintaining the ability to purchase the full range of tickets at stations
- Increased availability of station facilities

- Improved assisted travel arrangements and times of operation
- Improved revenue protection
- Improved safety and security for our passengers

If you require any further information or clarification at this stage then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Jipps', with a stylized, cursive script.

Keith Jipps
Passenger Service Director (GN)