

6<sup>th</sup> June 2014

Gareth Powell  
Director, Strategy and Service Development  
London Rail  
Transport for London  
Palestra  
197 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8NJ

Dear Gareth,

### **London Underground vision for the Tube, including future of ticket offices**

Thank you for speaking at our board meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2014, and outlining in further detail London Underground's proposals for the future tube service.

As the statutory consumer body representing the interests of passengers, we are concerned to ensure that any changes to the way in which the London Underground operates is in the best overall interests of consumers.

We welcome the proposal to introduce a night service over the Friday and Saturday late night / early morning period, subject to appropriate safeguards to ensure the safety of passengers travelling during this time, and that any subsequent changes to the night bus network being fully consulted on, to ensure they take account of all passenger needs.

### **Ticket sales and refunds**

The scale of impact that changes to the way in which tickets are sold and refunds given is significant. Whilst "fewer than 3%" of passengers" purchase their tickets using ticket offices may sound small, it equates to approximately 600,000 passengers per week. Many of these do require transactions that can only currently be made at a ticket office window. A non- exhaustive list of transactions that cannot currently be made via Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) include: tickets for travel at a later date, tickets from stations other than where the TVM is located, discounted tickets such as privilege tickets: tickets bought with company cheque payments; Oyster refunds: redemption of PERTIS vouchers and many more.

In order to understand this complex situation better we would be grateful if you could supply us with a breakdown of the following:-

- 1.The numbers of tickets purchased more than one day in advance.
- 2.The numbers of tickets purchased for journeys to National Rail destinations in 2013/14 and the proportion of these that would still be available to purchase through a TVM.
- 3.The geographic distribution of tickets purchased for journeys to National Rail destinations, and the correlation between this and stations operated by London Underground Ltd, but also served by National Rail services.
4. The numbers and distribution of Permit to Travel (PERTIS) redemption at London Underground stations.
5. The number of reimbursements of Oyster Travelcards valid for more than one week carried out at ticket offices.
6. The number of company cheque transactions and privilege tickets that take place at ticket offices.

The functionality of TVMs also needs to be considered and we would like to see for example, the ability to print out journey histories for Oyster to be included.

In many areas of London, the LU ticket offices are the only place to resolve Oyster queries and refunds. National Rail stations are unable to do this and the knowledge of passengers that they can get their Oyster queries resolved at a London Underground ticket office is a positive.

### **Station configuration and categorisation.**

We also have a number of comments on the categorisation of the stations into Gateway, Destination, Metro and Local. We have surveyed stations since the announcement, and have concluded that the stations are each so different and unique, that the four examples given (one for each category) is not possible to assess whether the example staffing proposed is adequate. This also reflects the very different layouts of different stations, including the different numbers of entrances/exits and ticket office windows currently present. We also have a number of stations that we feel would be more appropriate in another category, some in a “higher” category, and some “lower”. We would like to see the outcome of your station-by-station review with the trade unions when it is completed, and for this also to be made available for passengers to see and comment on as part of any consultation.

We would also like to suggest that stations which are served by National Rail services, but where London Underground is the station facility operator, should be given their own classification and resourced in away that takes account of the part National Rail character of these stations. In some cases it may be appropriate to reconsider whether the National Rail operator or London Overground might be better placed to manage the staffing of these stations and be given the opportunity to take on the function of selling tickets from the ticket office.

## **Flexibility**

We note that at our board meeting your commentary that some of the space currently occupied by ticket offices would be replaced by additional ticket vending machines. You also said that any space not required for ticket offices would be reviewed against other operational needs within stations before any decision would be made to release space for commercial developments. Given the scale of the changes that you are proposing we are concerned that should some of the proposals not prove to be workable or that a station might need reclassification in the light of experience or a change in circumstances that there is insufficient flexibility available to enable a decision to be made to reuse the previous ticket office space for a ticketing function.

As discussed at the meeting, we would also like to have further information on how you propose to make staff more visible to passengers, such as by greater definition of points where passengers can get help or information in concourse areas.

## **Consultation with passengers**

The above concerns are the immediate ones that in our experience as a consumer body, we believe need to be addressed in this proposal. However, passengers in general have not been specifically been invited to comment on this in relation to their own local station.

On the National Rail network there is a requirement under the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement for passengers to be consulted about changes to booking office hours, and to submit their views to us as the passenger body. London Underground is required under this agreement to consult with passengers at the former Silverlink stations of Queens Park, Kensal Green, Harlesden, Stonebridge Park, Wembley Central, North Wembley, South Kenton, Harrow & Wealdstone, Gunnersbury and Kew Gardens. As these only form a small proportion of the network, it would seem sensible to us that passengers at all stations should be given the opportunity to comment on your proposals and to give feedback on the local implications of this change.

We propose that any public consultation should be run by us as an independent body. We would envisage a consultation through our website with passengers able to access the detailed proposals on a station by station basis and then being asked a series of questions, on what tickets they buy, any difficulties they fore see and what mitigation measures they would like to see implemented at their local stations.

In order to do this, we would need you to supply the station specific information, and also to publicise it through posters at stations and any other suitable means.

We would envisage the consultation starting when you have concluded your station by station review with the trade unions and it being run over a period of 6 weeks. We would then analyse the results and use it to inform our final view on the proposals.

If you have any queries on the content of this letter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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Director Policy and Investigation

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