

**Our Ref: Tjb/550SE**

**Your Ref:**

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007

Mr M Bryce  
Retail Communications Manager  
ATOC, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
40 Bernard Street  
LONDON WC1N 1BY

Dear Mark,

**Major and minor changes to ticket office opening hours at various stations – application by Southeastern Railway under schedule 17 of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007 Vince Lucas Commercial Director of Southeastern Railway (SER) wrote to you and to London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus proposing a number of minor and major changes to the booking office hours at stations that they operate.

These proposals were considered by our Fares and Ticketing committee on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007, and this letter constitutes our official response. A copy of the report to this committee is attached for your information.

We were very pleased with the open and constructive consultation process that SER adopted in relation to these proposals, as compared to the proposals previously submitted by the previous operator, and the emphasis placed on achieving passenger charter targets for queuing times at booking offices. We note that there have been and will be in future, substantive changes to the way in which passengers ask for and receive information, and purchase tickets for travel. At the same time we acknowledge that passengers are reassured by the presence of uniformed staff at stations, from whom they may also obtain information, particularly at times of service disruption. We believe that the way to achieve this is to empower staff to act in a multi-functional role so as to be seen to be assisting passengers in areas of the station other than the booking office. We note that SER have made significant progress in addressing many of passengers' previous concerns about the functionality, reliability and ease of use of the self-service Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) available on their network, including the availability of Goldcard discounts and the ability to purchase period tickets and those for travel the following day.

We received over 100 postcard and 24 letter and email representations from passengers and other organisations in response to the consultation.

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London TravelWatch has no objection to the proposals subject to the following comments and recommendations:-

- (a) the welcome retention/provision of facilities for the sale of Transport for London Oyster cards at Beckenham Junction, Elmers End, Greenwich, Lewisham, New Cross and Woolwich Arsenal stations, and would encourage Southeastern Railway to progress the technical feasibility of extending this to other stations in Greater London, especially those with significant bus interchange, using both ticket office and self service ticket machines. Achievement of this objective would address many of our concerns that the number of Oyster outlets in South East London is currently inadequate.
- (b) the programme of investment in new TVMs and other physical measures being completed before any change in staffing hours is implemented on a station by station basis.
- (c) that all stations in the Greater London area are provided with TVMs that are available for both cash and card transactions, and subject to surveillance by Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), and that where these are in areas such as booking halls that are not available at all times to the passenger then a Permit to Travel (PERTIS) machine is also available within the station premises.
- (d) that Southeastern Railway continue with the current role of Railway Enforcement Officers, and also consider further measures to address passenger concerns about personal safety and security across the network especially at those stations which are subject to change in these proposals, and where passengers correspondence has identified particular problems with anti-social behaviour and crime.
- (e) the welcome commitment of Southeastern Railway to investigate the feasibility of adding a minimum price ticket covering 'ticket type required not available' to existing TVMs to cover items such as Travelcard extension tickets which would then be exchanged in the same way that existing Permit to Travel vouchers are done.
- (f) the welcome commitment of Southeastern Railway to investigate widening ticket validity at stations within a Zone on different routes within Southeastern where the return fare is the same from January 2008. This would significantly reduce the need for passengers to purchase extension tickets and the possibility of disputes with passengers in relation to the issue of Penalty Fares.
- (g) that Southeastern Railway review the current provision of CCTV at stations to ensure that it records material of high quality and which enables its operators to act in real time to intervene and seek assistance to passengers as necessary.
- (h) Southeastern Railway adopting the suggested alterations to times of opening and closing as listed below to minimise the impact on passengers and to co-ordinate more closely with train times, this list shows where SER have agreed a change with us and where they have said a change is not possible:-

## Major changes

| Station        | Day(s)   | Suggested Opening time | Suggested Closing time | SER agreed change   |
|----------------|----------|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Bellingham     | Saturday | 0640                   | 1340                   | No  |
|                | Sunday   | 0810                   | 1320                   | No  |
| Bickley        | Mon-Fri  | 0610                   | 1945                   | Yes but close for 10 minutes at quiet time during the day |
|                | Saturday | 0710                   | 1400                   | No  |
|                | Sunday   | 0815                   | 1345                   | No  |
| Chislehurst    | Saturday | 0700                   | 1915                   | Yes   |
| Lower Sydenham | Mon-Fri  | 0620                   | 1315                   | No  |
| New Beckenham  | Mon-Fri  | 0620                   | 1310                   | No  |
| Swanley        | Sunday   | 0800                   | 1430                   | Yes   |

## Minor changes

| Station        | Day(s)   | Suggested Opening time | Suggested Closing time | SER agreed to change |
|----------------|----------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Albany Park    | Sunday   | 0810                   | 1330                   | Yes                  |
| Catford        | Saturday | 0740                   | 1440                   | No                   |
| Catford Bridge | Sunday   | 0840                   | 1640                   | Yes                  |
| Clock House    | Saturday | 0720                   | 1350                   | Yes                  |
| Dartford       | Sunday   | 0715                   | 2040                   | Yes                  |
| Elmstead Woods | Mon-Fri  | 0600                   | 1930                   | Yes                  |
| Greenwich      | Sunday   | 0840                   | 1840                   | Yes                  |
| Kent House     | Saturday | 0710                   | 1410                   | No                   |
| Kidbrooke      | Sunday   | 0900                   | 1440                   | Yes                  |
| Lee            | Saturday | 0740                   | 1505                   | No                   |
| Lewisham       | Sunday   | 0710                   | 2050                   | Yes                  |
| New Cross      | Sunday   | 0810                   | 2000                   | Yes                  |
| Orpington      | Mon-Fri  | 0605                   | 2100                   | Yes                  |
| Sevenoaks      | Sunday   | 0715                   | 2115                   | Yes                  |

| Station       | Day(s)   | Suggested Opening time | Suggested Closing time | SER agreed to change |
|---------------|----------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Sydenham Hill | Saturday | 0845                   | 1605                   | No                   |

We would also wish to support the conclusions and recommendations made by Passenger Focus in relation to these proposals thus:-

1. We understand the new proposal is based on meeting SERs Passenger Charter queuing times by ensuring there are sufficient retail outlets at the times most passengers want to buy their tickets from a choice of staff and ticket windows or ticket vending machines. We endorse this approach as the direct link with the queuing time obligation should also be measurable. We would expect SER to monitor this and update Passenger Focus (and London TravelWatch) on a regular basis with the results.
2. We would recommend that SER to develop Action Plans to improve the factors affected by these changes in their National Passenger Survey results.
3. We recommend that SER develop actions to address the general concerns expressed in complaints and known issues such as vandalism and fraud affecting TVMs.
4. In the absence of the Pertis +, we would expect Pertis machines to be retained at all stations where Pertis+ was to be installed, including at all unstaffed stations.
5. In the absence of the improved Pertis + we would expect SER to confirm whether they will retain some of the Pertis machines and change the amount of cash required to the level of the minimum fare equivalent from that station as proposed for Pertis+.
6. We would recommend that in resolving complaints about SERs TVMs that SER should adopt a sympathetic and customer friendly approach to build passenger confidence in the reliability and customer services on offer.
7. Whilst we support the desire to reduce ticketless travel, we do not think that passengers from stations with no facilities to purchase a ticket should face the risk of a penalty fare. We would welcome the opportunity to look into the options for SER to either provide adequate ticket facilities or allow passengers the right to purchase a ticket without condition from a conductor or revenue inspector or alternatively to remove these stations from the Penalty fare zone especially in view of the limited number of transactions at these stations.
8. We would also expect that a much higher level of compliance with Schedule 17 than is currently achieved.

(Recommendations specific to their area omitted).

If you have any queries regarding the above please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address.

Yours sincerely

**Tim Bellenger**

Director - Research and Development

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