



**Great Western Railway**

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27 September, 2023

Dear 

**Re: Ticket Office Clarifications**

Thank you for your letter of 6 September 2023, summarising the clarifications required and issues raised in response to the proposals we made covering the four stations within London TravelWatch's remit. We appreciate the work your team has put into analysing the proposals and the responses submitted.

I would also like to express my thanks to those who took part in the consultation process, including members of the public, elected representatives, passenger organisations, and accessibility groups.

Our proposals aim to improve services for customers by:

- Allowing colleagues to be closer to customers rather than in a fixed location, so that they can assist customers where they need help rather than being able to offer only limited help at the current fixed Ticket Office
- Increasing visibility of colleagues across the station giving reassurance to customers and providing additional safety presence across platforms and concourses
- Delivering efficiencies by making better use of staff capacity, freed-up following the migration of customers from Ticket Offices, giving more help to a wider range of customers, offering our staff a more varied role and, in time, reducing cost to taxpayers.

We have always maintained that this initial period, following the close of the public consultation would be central to ensuring that our proposals are the best possible. Your work with Transport Focus, and your early engagement with us has allowed us to develop our proposals further.

The detailed answers to your questions and comments can be found in the appendices, but there are four principal clarifications that I think you will find useful:

**Current Hours Commitment** – While we make clear in our proposals that we do not intend to de-staff stations, you have made clear that some concern around our intentions remains. We have revised our proposals to extend our station staffing commitment, which will now ensure retail-trained staff will be available at the same time a Ticket Office is open today.

This revision will be in place prior to any changes taking place. This means that in addition to staff being available across platforms and concourses, retail-trained staff will be available at the same times as they are today.

**'Help at Hand' staff contact points** will be introduced to address concerns from customers about our proposals making it difficult for customers to know where to go to ask for help.

We will review our existing Meeting Points and create new Welcome Points with a 'Help at Hand' facility, providing customers with a link to a retail-trained staff member in the station during current Ticket Office opening hours who can offer immediate advice or meet the customer to provide help in person.

The locations will be prominently marked at the station and included in Passenger Assist confirmation emails, on GWR.com, and on the online NRES station information system (as they are today). Familiarisation days will be held before the changes go live to ensure customers, assistance animals and carers can acclimatise to the new arrangements.

**Digital First, not digital only** – The transition to digital ticketing – online, via app smartcard or CPAY - has seen 85% of Great Western Railway customers move away from buying from Ticket Offices without any advertising incentive.

We expect, and will encourage, customers to continue to migrate to digital options, but our proposals do not rely on this. Our original submission outlined options at self-service ticket machines or on-board trains as alternatives for customers, and our modelling assumes all Ticket Office customers will switch to self-service ticket machines. This ensures that – even at maximum capacity – they could still cope with the additional demand.

Following your feedback, we have revised our plans to maintain the ability for customers at stations to buy every ticket currently available there today.

Customer choice remains key. Should a customer ask for help buying at a station, staff will initially offer to demonstrate the benefit and convenience of buying digitally via the app (or, where applicable, options such as pay as you go/CPAY), before moving to offering a self-service option. Staff will now also have the ability to directly sell the c.1% of tickets that may not be available through these channels. As a result, customers will retain the same access to the same range of tickets as they do today.

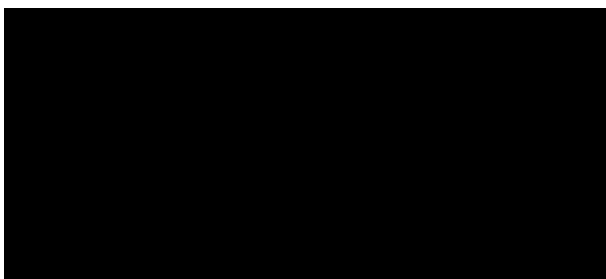
Although we will be updating our wider TVM estate so more can accept cash and provide a wider range of products than today, stations in the LTW area already take cash, and will continue to do so.

**Active Queue Management** - Multi-skilled staff will be trained to undertake active queue management at self-service ticket machines when queues are longer than a few minutes. This will serve a dual purpose of relieving waiting times while providing an opportunity to educate customers about the benefits of digital ticketing and build their confidence.

These commitments improve the passenger experience beyond our initial proposal, exceeding the current level of service we offer in several instances. It means instead of only being able to help the declining proportion of customers who visit a Ticket Office, we can also better react to the needs of all our customers, 85% of whom don't use the Ticket Office today.

Once again, thank you to you and the team for your input into the process to date. I hope that the revisions and clarifications we have made in response demonstrate the value we place on that work. We would be very happy to set up a call or meeting to discuss further should you wish.

Yours sincerely



Great Western Railway

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*Appendix A Responses to Questions*  
*Appendix B Station Purchasing History Graphs*  
*Appendix C Stations Information Sheet*  
*Appendix D Stations Retailing Capacity Report*  
*Appendix E Digitisation Promotional Flyer and Poster*  
*Appendix F GWR EIA Summary*