



**West
Midlands
Trains**

Date 13th October 2023

Michael Roberts/Sasha Langeveldt
Campaign and Advocacy Officer,
London TravelWatch,
Europoint
5-11 Lavington Street
London
SE1 0NZ

Re: West Midlands Trains Ticket Office enhancement proposal

Dear Michael and Sasha,

I am writing further to West Midlands Trains' (WMT) proposals to close ticket offices. Further to my recent conversations with yourselves, reviewing the feedback presented to us and addressing the ticket sales data for each location; we have decided to make some enhancements to the proposal, and these are outlined below.

The underlying desire to create a more flexible approach to staffing* for WMT remains a key principle of the proposal. We recognise the need to amend the thinking to give a more focused staffing presence at some key locations. We maintain that the flexible deployment of our staff is a key and desirable outcome of this process, ensuring that 61 unstaffed locations on the WMT network (and crucially the customers that use them) receive the benefit of WMT staff.

The following sets out the principles associated to this amended position with supporting documents included in Appendix form, alongside the accompanying 'WMT SUMMARY DOCUMENT TF & LTW 131023' Excel file.

Crucially, we have increased the number of resource associated to this work. This allows us to ensure that there are more hours of coverage than were detailed in the initial proposal.

* It is our assertion that details of staffing roles and numbers is confidential information and should not be shared. It should also be noted that any changes to WMT Staff roles, terms & conditions and locations of work are (as per the original proposal) subject to negotiation and/or consultation with the relevant Trade Unions. Trade Union consultation is intrinsically linked to the outcome of the public consultation.



Change 1. Large Staffed Locations - 21 Locations.

We have reviewed all of our ticket office locations by:

- the size of the ticket office; focusing primarily on
- the number of ticket office windows (*Historically this is a result of being a busier / larger location*)

Of the 87 staffed locations on the WMT stations estate, 21, have more than 1 window at their ticket office. These locations account for 60.5% of the total WMT ticket office sales last year 2022/23. (1,921,925 of 3,178,353 total ticket office sales). See Appendix 1.

For these 21 locations, we are now proposing to maintain the current ticket office hours moving forward. As a result, we will need to maintain the associated staffing numbers in order to fulfil the roster that is currently in place.

It is proposed that the ticket office will be closed at these locations, with staff moving outside of the ticket office from behind the glass. This will ensure a staffing presence throughout the original hours of operation with staff undertaking wider customer experience duties at the station. It should also be noted that these staff will retain access to the original ticket office method of retailing and will therefore be able to sell the full suite of tickets as they do today.

It should be noted that the 10 original locations cited as being a Customer Information Centre's (CIC's) in the original proposal are part of this 21; these stations will retain the 'role' as a CIC in this amendment.

Change 2. Review of Single Staffed locations. Focusing on 9 locations.

The remaining 66 currently staffed locations have single window ticket offices (predominantly meaning that a single person would be present at that location at any one time).

We have reviewed the sales data associated to these locations and the hours in which these sales were made; for each station over a 6-week period (same time frame as issued in the Appendix B documentation) that was not disrupted by engineering work or strike action.

When applying the widely accepted legacy measure of *an average of 12 ticket issues per hour as previously specified by the DfT*, we are able to make an educated judgement as to the usage of the ticket office throughout a typical day/week. In doing so, we have set a benchmark of achieving this for at least 4hrs.

For those locations that register this, we will again look to maintain the current hours of operation that is associated to the ticket office. With the associated staffing levels maintained. It is proposed that the ticket office will be closed at these locations. Staff will be available 'in front of the glass' to ensure a presence throughout the original hours of operation and undertaking wider customer experience duties at the station. The staff will retain access to the original ticket office method of retailing and will therefore be able to sell the full suite of tickets as they do today.

This benchmark applies to a further nine locations. See Appendix 2.

These locations account for 32.1% of the total sales last year associated to single window ticket office locations, (402,899 ticket office sales, of the total single window total sales of 1,256,824).



In summary, we aim to guarantee the same staffing levels and hours associated to the current ticket office across 30 stations of the 87 that are classed as 'staffed' today. These 30 locations accounted for 73.1% of the total WMT ticket office sales last year.

At these locations, customers will be able to retail what they have done historically, in the same way.

Remaining Locations – 57

For the remaining single staffed locations, it is our proposal that they will be served by our flexible team, that have the option of roving across the network. This allows us to ensure that a staffing presence is also felt at these locations. These teams will have the ability to retail tickets with the use of mobile ticketing machines.

It should be noted that the principle associated to rostering of this team is to create a more uniform approach to station staffing across the network and moving away from the legacy ticket office hours. Thus providing, a broader staffed customer experience presence across the network.

It is our aim to introduce an 'early' 'middle' and 'late' shift that the teams will work to, working in a 4-day working week, and complete daily shifts of 8hrs 45minutes. With the option of a split shift across locations of 4hrs each.

The teams will focus on being a presence at current staffed locations. We will look to advertise these hours, so that our customers can plan under normal operation. Due to the nature of this new approach however, we will reserve the right, that when operational incidents or special events take place at different locations, (including currently unstaffed locations, or indeed locations that maintain staffing and hours but need additional support) then we will utilise our resource there for the duration of that incident / event.

When applying this hybrid approach – of maintaining current ticket office hours at 30 locations as outlined above, and then applying an indicative coverage for the remaining locations – we achieve 90.1% of the former schedule 17 hours across our network.

While there are outliers, this is certainly a positive outcome, providing a good balance between ensuring that staffed locations today retain a significant presence in the future as part of this proposal. Crucially, we are also able to deliver coverage and support at the currently unstaffed locations (61 of 149 stations) on the WMT network.

It is my belief that this approach enhances the work that we have undertaken to date and should be received as an iterative development to the answers previously submitted to you.

As always, I welcome your feedback and am ready to answer any further questions that you may have.

Thank you once again for your support in this matter.

West Midlands Trains



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