

## Ticket office consultation meeting for Community Rail Network members

Thursday 20 July, 2023

### ZOOM 'CHAT' NOTES (edited for clarity & conciseness)

#### Information and links posted by Community Rail Network

Transport Focus has a formal role in assessing major changes to ticket office opening hours. If a train company wishes to make such a change it must follow the process set out in a document called the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA)<sup>1</sup>.

Under clause 6-18 (1) of the TSA, changes to opening hours may be made under the major change procedure if:

- the change would represent an improvement on current arrangements in terms of quality of service and/or cost effectiveness and
- members of the public would continue to enjoy widespread and easy access to the purchase of rail products, notwithstanding the change.

Also see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/secretary-of-state-for-transport-ticketing-and-settlement-agreement-ticket-office-guidance>

Transport Focus consultation page:

<https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/train-station-ticket-office-consultation/>

Their assessment criteria:

<https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/transport-focus-role-in-assessing-major-changes-to-ticket-office-opening-hours>

The national commitments and proposals referred to by Jools are set out by RDG here:

<https://www.raildeliverygroup.com/uk-rail-industry/customer-focused-reform/customer-focused-stations.html>

#### Questions & comments from participants:

1. Tim Barkley Southeast Communities Rail Partnership:

*Here in the SCRP area we have been told of the problem of poor mobile phone coverage in some rural areas, is this something that can be considered as part of the consultation.*

2. Richard Watts Community Rail Lancashire:

*For David - Could you confirm that responses for Northern have 2 extra days with the 28th July as the final date for responses.*

3. Kath Howard Friends of Wellington Station:

*Wellington is a two-platform station. It has no concourse. Tipping the 1-person staff out of his office is no improvement. He is to be replaced by a mobile team covering several stations. This is a staffing reduction.*

4. Claire Sandys N Staffs CRP:

*Where can we find the National Commitments please?*

5. Richard Watts Community Rail Lancashire:

*For David and CRN - will alternative staffing arrangements once BO are closed such as the proposed Northern Journey Maker or Avanti's Community Ambassadors be covered by the T&SA should TOCs want to make changes to the hours they work at stations?*

6. Paul Bromley, Southeast CRP to Everyone:

*David - the web form asks users to select a specific station and detail the intended impact. Is an email the best way to submit a response covering a CRP line with the impact across all staffed stations ie one response for many stations?*

7. Paul Bromley, Southeast CRP to Everyone:

*Can you guide us on language to be used since we are not a campaigning or lobbying organisation and we are non-party political?*

8. Gary Outram (Kent CRP):

*David - Any indicative start date for Southeastern's consultation on stations outside the London metro area?*

9. Kath Howard Friends of Wellington Station:

*Why is it necessarily positive to get staff out of their offices?*

10. John Owen:

*The only evidence that has been mentioned is about the numbers of ticket office sales. What evidence has been collected about general travel enquiries and journey planning as these form a major segments of ticket office service? And before the Journey Planner person is mentioned as an alternative, how will the service not be affected if hours are reduced. It is another Barrier to Travel.*

11. Paul Bromley, Southeast CRP:

*Thanks for responses - very helpful. The consultation form is per station and not for generic responses.*

12. Steve Hopkins-Friends of Eccles Station:

*I note that Merseyrail have no plans to close ticket offices*

[David Sidebottom, Transport Focus response:](#)

[Merseyrail not part of this consultation. Non-DfT TOC.](#)

**General comments:**

Julie Pierce Friends of Wellington Station:

*It's no good having fancy adverts showing lovely destinations to travel to when people will be so confused by all the changes coming they simply wont bother getting on a train. Simple facts please so everyone can understand.*

Al Morley Derwent Valley Line CRP:

*Situation for Most EMR stations is clearly a cut in staffing We will be closing the ticket office at this station. This will be a phased approach based on those with the lowest usage being closed first. Although the ticket office will close, we expect daily visits from mobile staff at the station. The timings of these visits are to be determined by the outcome of the consultation.*

Kath Howard Friends of Wellington Station:

*The web form asks how we personally will be affected - the issues are much wider.*

Ruth George:

*How will companies manage to respond to Passenger Assist requests if there are no staff at the station, and possibly none for miles around?*

Kath Howard Friends of Wellington Station:

*I note that Labour metro mayors are mounting a legal challenge.*

Richard Watts Community Rail Lancashire:

*For Kevin - it may be an overall three year process but Northern has said that most of its BO closures will be done in 2024 with all done within 18 months.*

Julie Pierce Friends of Wellington Station:

*It's all about cost cutting and putting profits before people. It's not Rocket science people just want to buy a ticket, maybe use the toilet, help when needed to get on and off a train and info when the Trains or the Ticket machine is off line. simples.*

Dawn McGough, Community Rail Cumbria:

*Many booking office staff already get out and assist passengers as they require. However the booking office provides an identifiable focussed safe point to seek the assistance required in a calm environment rather than having to find a Journey Maker on a busy platform eg Windermere.*

Ruth George:

*Our station has a big drop from train to platform and many older people and those with disability need assistance. Northern will only staff the station from 12pm to 2pm so there will be no one to help*

Dawn McGough, Community Rail Cumbria:

*The consultation raises more questions than it gives us details about future arrangements. It is difficult therefore to positively support the proposals without knowing how local challenges will be managed.*