

Railfuture's 101 Questions on the Ticket Office Closure Consultation process July 2023



#	Question	Comment
1	The Manchester Piccadilly to Glossop line is going to have just one ticket office. Why on earth is it going to be in Glossop?	... with 588,556 entries / exits (Manchester Piccadilly has 19,581,442 entries / exits)? (if you live in Glossop, rest assured – the answer we want is Manchester Piccadilly and Glossop)
2	Chiltern can do it – plan to put staff outside the ticket office and allow them to issue every type of ticket – why can't every TOC make this promise when they are planning staff to be present, but away from the Ticket Office?	
3	Where's the study that analyses why people buy from ticket offices? (we know the portion of sales, but we don't know why – don't use the Internet, confident Internet buyer, but don't understand rail ticket choices...)	
4	For some stations (eg Boston), the proposal is to replace the ticket office with mobile staff – but there isn't even a promise of a set time – not much use for anyone who wants to go to the station to get advice – why isn't there a promise of set times?	
5	What about Toilet and Waiting Room hours? (these normally align with Ticket Office Hours / Staff presence) – we've heard suggestions that these will now be open when not staffed. But that is much easier said than done...	We know from discussions on Hadley Wood station that there is no standard to allow Toilets to be open when unattended.
6	What is average and median sale price of a ticket sold in a ticket office?	We know the average price of all tickets - £6.27, and we think it could be noticeably higher for in-person purchase, given more advice needed for a longer / more expensive journey
7	GWR have published detailed sales data per station – why haven't all the TOCs?	
8	Where is the assessment that works out how many people will stop using trains if they can't buy in-person and must use a TVM or online. How much revenue (not just journeys) is at risk?	
9	Where is the reassurance that the alternatives will be sorted first, then the ticket office windows closed?	
10	Why does the Thameslink Accessible Travel Policy start after the passenger has bought their ticket, not before?	We think this is typical of all TOCs
11	Passengers currently using assisted travel usually go to the ticket office if there is no designated waiting area for them. If the ticket office is closed, then a clearly marked, designated, point will need to be provided. Has this been built into the proposals?	
12	Why is the consultation being undertaken via the TSA ticket office change process?	Yes, that is a legal requirement - at some stage, but the more fundamental shift to insisting on online and TVMs being used more is an issue requiring proper review with a wider perspective and a longer timescale

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13	The consultation usually mentions there will still be people to help with ticket queries; how will that help be provided?	By implication it is usually via instructions on how to use Ticket Machines, but that is rarely explicitly stated. Chiltern are clear - TVM's first, ticket issued by staff if need be.
14	How can simply redeploying staff from ticket office to platform (or TVM locations) can save costs? What is the real reduction in station staffing (in terms of hours of presence lost?)	
15	Why haven't the Equality Assessments been published?	
16	What is average and median sale price of a ticket sold for cash? - at a Ticket Office; at TVMs	
17	Why aren't they clear that ticketing support really means "You [the passenger] must use a TVM, but we'll give you a bit of help"?	
18	When's there going to be promise that using a Card (Bank Contactless or Railway issued) is always the cheapest way? - At the moment, using Contactless can be the cheapest or the most expensive	Thameslink North: Contactless Cheapest for a peak single, most expensive at the weekend (and other times)
19	Why do LNER think it acceptable that a non-smartphone user is unable to reserve a seat when they arrive at a station?	
20	What portion of TVMs configured as card only are cash capable?	TVMs are regularly set to Card only as the presence of cash is a temptation to thieves
21	Why isn't the Consultation on LNER's home page?	As at 10 July; it can be found via search
22	If the ticketing assistant/seller is unable to issue a ticket will they be able to issue a permit to travel so passengers do not receive a penalty fare ?	
23	Have the Equalities Impact Analyses properly considered knock on effects from reduced staffing hours? (reduced toilet opening hours, possibly reduced shelter etc)	Yes, there are promises that the core support service - helping people off and on trains will be available with the same arrangements, but facilities like toilets are also an equality matter
24	Will the Penalty Fare regime be varied to recognise that there are more circumstances when a passenger has a legitimate inability to buy a ticket in advance?	
25	Why does it apply to Scotland as well? (Avanti West Coast want to close the ticket office at Glasgow Central)	
26	Where is the analysis that records advice given by Rail Staff on which ticket to buy? (that is then bought at a TVM or, later, online)	
27	How does the claimed redeploying staff from ticket office to platform (or TVM locations) save costs?	In real life the requirement is often for redundancies, but this is never admitted in this consultation
28	Northern's TVMs can sell Rover Tickets - why isn't there a promise that LNER (and other operators) will start selling them as well?	
29	Why is the Thameslink Accessible Travel Policy (start after the passenger has bought their ticket) almost certainly typical of every TOC's Accessible Travel Policy?	
30	Why can't passengers make even the most basic assumptions about the right ticket to buy?	

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31	What portion of ticket offices will remain occupied as staff accommodation?	Cost savings will be reduced if the accommodation has to remain in use
32	Where is the help for those that can board a train perfectly well, but may struggle due to dyslexia, arthritis and the like with buying a ticket?	
33	LNER: "As a result of the planned changes, a small percentage (8%) of ticket types (accounting for 2.3% of sales) will no longer be retailed at Berwick-upon-Tweed, Durham, Darlington, Wakefield Westgate, Retford, Newark Northgate and Grantham Stations. We will support customers with purchasing these online, or direct them to a Ticket Office where all tickets will be available." Does LNER live in the real world?	
34	Is there any sign of a project plan to deliver on this change? (for each TOC)	
35	Have there been any studies on the efficiency of ticket office vs TVM purchase? How many TVMs are needed to replace one busy ticket office window?	
36	How will the Train Operator ensure the safety and welfare of staff out on platforms and/or foyers, especially when there is only one person on duty?	
37	Thorne North ~ A member comments 'The TVM is also situated on the way from the ramped access to the platform so will create congestion at busy times'. Is it to be relocated?	
38	How will anyone pay cash at any Northern TVM? - they are all card only	
39	So, the way to get a Herts & Beds Bus Pass ticket from Flitwick to St Albans is to travel the other way (to Bedford) and buy it there. Is that a sensible answer?	We think no!
40	We sense the right words coming from TOCs regarding this exercise and an indication that they want to bring staff out from behind the ticket window (inline with Railfuture policy). We don't think this will satisfy the DfT/Treasury so where else will the cuts come?	
41	How will passengers buy Plus Bus tickets as a later addition to their existing rail ticket?	
42	If timetables change in future, will station staffing hours be changed to suit?	
43	Does the rail industry know what portion of passengers do not have a debit / credit card?	
44	Does the rail industry know what portion of passengers with a debit / credit card do not have available funds and instead need to use cash?	
45	Will TVMs and Online start to sell London Zone 6 Boundary tickets for travelcard holders? (for when they want to travel to stations outside London)	These are usually cheaper than the station nearest the boundary
46	When needed, will shelter be provided for both staff and passengers so that help etc can be given in the dry?	
47	There are suggestions that this would be rolled out over 3 years, but we are very doubtful that would meet what DfT/HM Treasury want. How is this conflict going to resolved?	
48	Where is the table that compares before and after staffing numbers by hour / day at each station?	eg 1 staff member 6am 8am; 2 staff members 8am - Noon.... Etc

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49	At what portion of stations will staffing presence remain unchanged but hours of staff time reduce?	le still (eg) 7am - 7pm, but now only one staff member after noon
50	At what portion of stations will staffing presence remain unchanged but hours of staff time reduce by more than 20%?	
51	At what portion of stations will staffing presence remain unchanged but hours of staff time reduce by more than 33%?	
52	Some existing TVMs fail to work in bright sunlight or extreme cold and wet - have these TVMs been identified?	
53	Is there a works programme to address the above?	
54	How much cash will mobile staff be expected to carry around? Is this safe for them?	
55	What analysis has TPE undertaken to be confident that the support currently provided at Scunthorpe after 2pm isn't important? (as the station is now to be unstaffed from then)	... and of course many other stations
56	Why haven't we got 10001 questions? - we could just repeat the above, ; it is not unique to Scunthorpe - nor TPE)	We'd get bored - you the reader would get bored
57	Will there be an e-ticket promise? - that passengers will always have the choice of printing out, showing a PDF or storing in a Device wallet.	In App display as well is fine - but never the only choice
58	How many staff posts will disappear in this reorganisation?	
59	Thorne North ~ A member comments: 'I won't be able to easily buy a ticket first thing in the morning when there is full sun on the TVM'. Is the work to address this on the implementation plan?	This is a regular, not a unique circumstance
60	At stations like Hebden Bridge, staff already leave the ticket office to provide help. Why isn't this option being used more widely?	
61	What about printing of tickets bought online when TVMs are broken or there are long queues?	
62	How does The Railway Act 2005 Section 29 apply to this change?	This section applies where— (a)the operator of a station proposes to discontinue the use of a station or of some part of it;
63	Will there be a policy change to disconnect waiting room opening hours from staff presence?	
64	Has there been at least one objection at every station so far?	
65	Will the ticketing assistant/seller be able to sell Oyster and Keycards ?	
66	Will TVMs that are currently situated in Ticket Office booking halls be moved elsewhere on the station?	
67	Worksop (and many other locations): A member comments "I've been in touch with a friend who uses it regularly and among the things she won't be able to do when the ticket office closes are pay for car parking without a Smartphone (and she doesn't have one). Are there plans to fix this?	
68	Will CIV tickets (used to connect with Eurostar services) become available online and on TVMs everywhere?	
69	How long does it take on average for a passenger to purchase a ticket on a TVM? And how long does it take at a Ticket Counter?	
70	And how does the above vary for buying a long distance journey involving an Advance fare and a seat reservation?	
71	How will anyone without easy access to a ticket office or Internet Access buy a Railcard?	

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#	Question	Comment
72	Why do none of the TVMs in East Anglia sell the popular Anglia Plus ticket (which covers Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire) but machines in northern England, more than 200 miles away, do sell them?	Yes, that is the Anglia Day Ranger - available from TVMs operated by Northern.
73	If you aren't a Smartphone user, how will you get a Railcard that you can use immediately?	
74	Do the operators already know that there is sufficient Wifi capacity / mobile phone signal at stations for staff on the move to use?	
75	How will passengers get advice during disruption during times that a station is now unstaffed? Yes, there are Customer Information Screens, but the data they receive during significant disruption is often unreliable - and a staff member needs to step in	
76	Have any focus groups been setup to identify how passenger behaviour might change? If, so what were the results?	
77	Do the operators already know that there is sufficient Wifi capacity / mobile phone signal at stations for intending passengers to self-serve via an App?	
78	We presume that you have modelled the average waiting time to be served by roaming staff – how will this time compare to the average for waiting to being served at a ticket office?	
79	Why can't all TVMs follow the principles of the ones at Stoke Newington?	See the end of the questions
80	Why are there so many designs of TVM screens - there is no consistency across TOCs?	
81	Have there been any discussions with PayPoint about using their services for ticket payment?	
82	On a count today, there are now only 9 TVMs at Manchester Piccadilly, one of which can handle cash and one is a "ticket collection terminal." These all appear to be new machines and are of one type; previously there were both Northern and Avanti TVM's here and there were at least another seven machines that I recall, five on the ground floor bus/car/taxi arrival departure area and two on the intermediate level between there and the main concourse all of which have disappeared in recent months. What evidence is there that they can cope?	
83	Why do many of the new large screen TVMs insist on choosing return train times, even when the ticket is flexible and seat reservations are not possible?	
84	When will cross London tickets not require an orange striped ticket to be held?	Online purchases must be collected from a TVM. These collections cause congestion and are a disincentive to online buying
85	Where is the report that analyses the experience of operating Gatwick Airport without a ticket office and identifies lessons learnt?	
86	Closing ticket offices where there is already a TVM available will reduce the number of machines able to sell tickers unless the staff carry portable machines. Will you be providing additional TVMs to ensure that waiting times to purchase a ticket do not increase?	
87	Where will the ticketing assistant/seller be positioned ? Many stations have very little room such as Caterham and South Croydon. Can it be confirmed they will not be in a location that blocks the barrier ?	

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88	"SJ spotted a customer at Market Harborough yesterday buying a ticket with a rail voucher. Can't do that at a TVM. " How will that work?	
89	Will the ticketing assistant/seller be able to top up Oyster and Keycards ?	
90	How will funding work for stations with multiple operators? Until now, the host operator ran the ticket office and commission from that helped balance the books. But TVM income can be expected to be smaller	Eg Morpeth and Alnmouth are staffed by Northern, but Railfuture thinks most passengers requiring assistance are long distance passengers (LNER, CrossCountry, LUMO etc)
91	WMT are talking about leasing ticket offices for community use - has there been any study to see if there are reasonable numbers of community organisations likely to be interested?	
92	Why are products like Contactless rolled out when they don't include a cheapness option promise; instead they can often be more expensive, and this encourages distrust in rail ticketing - and encourages the need for support from staff?	
93	Will the Permit to Travel arrangement be given more prominence given the greater barriers to buying tickets?	
94	Has any discussion taken place with those organising banking hubs to see about a regular rail staff presence?	
95	Will split ticketing become part of national rail sales as part of a process of simplifying fares?	
96	Where is the analysis of the impact on smaller stations that are currently unstaffed, but rely on nearby staffed stations - if they have less staff, what is the impact?	
97	Some TOCs - eg South Western, are clear on station categories, others are not, why didn't a leader decide a bit of consistency was a good idea?	
98	If you are travelling on an advance ticket and your connecting service is delayed, LNER require you to get your ticket endorsed at the ticket office. How will that work in the new world?	
99	Has there been any thought to creating a TVM suitable for libraries, cafes and other locations (sheltered from the weather, in a safe location etc?)	
100	Why on earth can we come up with 100 questions without much effort?	
101	Does this really save any money?	

(next page: Image of Ticket Vending Machine at Stoke Newington)

Question

Comment

