railfuture

Ticket Offices Consultation – 8 key changes from Railfuture 29 October 2023

	Issue to be recognised	For example	We want to see
	Overall		
1	That the July proposals were not a coherent whole – a proper analysis of needs (including, where relevant, the mix of operators at a station) and with data on portions of travellers impacted, and a consequent vision	1) Assessments at a station – eg Hull, by Trans Pennine Express, ignored the needs of passengers using Northern; 2) there had been no identification of how ticket vending machines need to improve	A proper strategy and a plan for delivering the best use of staff is promised, complete with industry wide and station by station activity
2	That the low quality and inconsistency of equality impact assessments means that it unclear that everyone's needs have been properly identified, assessed, and mitigated	A member commented "I'm partially sighted + my brain damage makes it difficult to understand new things. I tried once to use the ticket machine. It had no disabled discount …" (and there was no plan to address these sort of issues)	We want to see both a commitment to a high level approach and a detailed design assessment for each station
	Ticket selling		
3	That self-service isn't for everyone – some people are going to need the in-person selling touch for the foreseeable future	The digitally disadvantaged, those with sight challenges, the neuro diverse etc. And separately, those for whom cash is the only option.	That staff will still sell tickets at all stations where this is currently available. Digital first is fine; Digital only isn't
4	That the product being sold is extremely complex (and thus it is no wonder that help is wanted) – something that is "topped up" by the penalties for buying the 'wrong' product being potentially severe	The design of off-peak tickets varies between lines – eg some have a lower weekend fare; others don't. Some have an early evening restriction, others don't	Recognition that fares complexity is a real barrier to self-service and some sign that something is going to be done to address this.
5	That the self-service alternatives currently aren't fit for purpose – none of them (Online, ticket vending machines and PAYG) reliably deliver the lowest fares, usability, coverage (eg many TVMs don't sell Advance tickets, act in a consistent manner,	Eg St Albans to London has two PAYG options – which is best depends on when you travel. Eg if travelling to London Wednesday 8am, returning 6pm: Use Contactless to London, Thameslink's KeyGo with registered rail card to return - £21.85;	Rollout of a Best Price promise and announcement of a plan to improve online and TVMs and to further extend PAYG

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	or have the necessary coverage (particularly for PAYG)	other combinations £24.05 + £24.60 (note A)	
	Staffing at stations		
6	That a promise of "we'll turn up when you ask" is very different to staff being at a station at set, publicised times	The proposal for Boston was for staff to turn up at random, unannounced times	Whilst roving staff have a role, the core approach is station based staff for set, published, hours
7	That being able to find staff on the station consistently and reliably is essential, particularly for those who are less mobile, including passengers with sight issues and those seeking assistance	It may only be possible to find staff if you are able and willing to search for them – and have the time	Confirmation that all stations will have a set meeting point and either staff that are always present there – or a call button or the like. Trials announced of ticket selling concepts, such as Merseyrail's MtoGo Shops or a Banking Hub to be located at a station
8	That lots of people don't usually need help on stations, but really value staff presence for reassurance, disruptions, and other practical reasons	Eg unlocking (for each use) the toilets at Worksop, providing face to face recommendations during disruption	An understanding that station staff is part of a bigger whole – creating an environment that encourages passengers to use the railway. That properly multi-skilled staff at stations are a real value add and that ticket selling knowledge is a key feature, so existing ticket office staff need to be retained, fully valued and not downgraded

Note A:

Prices to London Thameslink stations (ie no underground use).

£21.85: Contactless to London (£12.30) and Thameslink KeyGo with registered Railcard Anytime Single back to St Albans (£9.55)

£24.05: Thameslink KeyGo with registered Railcard both directions - £14.50 to London (no Railcard discount); back to St Albans £9.55

£24.60: Contactless both ways

Contactless uses TfL infrastructure and single legs priced as half of return. Network Railcard is available to all, cost £30 per annum. All the above cheaper than an Anytime 0: Return ticket on orange striped ticket, phone or printed at home - £24.80.