

Ticket Offices Consultation Summer 2023

A submission to Transport Focus & London TravelWatch

Govia Thameslink Railway (Gatwick Express, Great Northern, Southern & Thameslink)

Railfuture has made a national submission on the Ticket Office Consultation to both Transport Focus and London TravelWatch: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display3418>.

The London & South East Branch, which covers most of GTR's Network has the following supplemental comments:

1. Too many of GTR's TVMs are deficient due to (a) being outside [key tapping difficulties, glare etc] and (b) lack of functionality. The following are routinely not available:
 - Advance tickets
 - Boundary tickets from London's Zonal edges
 - Rovers / Rangers
 - Eurostar CIV tickets
 - Herts and Beds Bus Pass discounts (applicable locally and gives a 50% discount)
2. Additionally, TVM's can be unnecessarily confusing; for instance:
 - A member comments "At Hatfield (Herts) ticket machines don't understand Moorgate (the National Rail station) or Kings Cross – you have to input "London Terminals". Also the first screen shows a quick option of a specific point to point ticket to "Underground Zones 1-2" – but to select that as a destination for a different ticket, you have to input "London Underground Zones 1-2"
 - These sorts of issue need to be corrected, through highly consistent use of names.
 - Tickets for later the same day are available – relevant when buying tickets just before the end of the morning peak for the first off-peak ticket. But this is not intuitive, being hidden behind "future travel", which we think of as being tomorrow or later. A better description, or perhaps a second button, leading to the same destination entitled (eg) "Travel later today" would be an improvement.
 - We think at least one large screen TVM with full functionality needs to be installed at a station before Ticket Office Hours are cut – but they need additional functionality as mentioned above, less Advance tickets which are already available (refer National Submission appendix E on the Gatwick Airport arrangement).
3. Cross London journeys on Thameslink should be possible via e-tickets – negotiations should take place with TfL on options for disruption and exit at their stations.
4. Staff at all stations need to be able to print Tickets on Departure in the same way as ticket offices can at present.
5. We draw GTR's attention to Appendix D: GTR's only from a Ticket Office services as matters requiring attention – to be read in conjunction with the content at 'Only currently available at a ticket office' in the main document.
6. As regards tickets and services available from the website, the comments above on availability of features and ticket types is as relevant (less Advance tickets).
7. We think that rather than classifying stations between "Largest and keep a Ticket Office" and "Others – Self Service only", there needs to be a four way classification:
 - Largest and keep a Ticket Office.

- Within TfL's Zones and with limited ticket office use – once the alternatives have been made fit for purpose (availability of Boundary fares on all TVMs, the presence of a TVM capable of selling Advance Tickets and staff capable of selling tickets and printing Ticket on Departure, then we think that Ticket Office closure can be tolerated.
 - Many stations with significant ticket office usage, where dedicated ticket selling still needs to be present.
 - Remaining stations, where an arrangement identical to those for TFL Zone located stations could be deployed.
8. We think the hub station concept needs to be expanded to include some medium sized stations so that passengers at more stations are within reasonable distance of a hub station. For instance Lewes should be included to serve the Seaford Branch and other nearby stations. It should be recognised that in some cases passengers may use other modes of travel such as car and bus, so an assessment of Lewes use should consider that some may travel from Uckfield (not necessarily specifically to buy a rail ticket, but for additional wider reasons as well).
 9. That increase in the PAYG alternative to ticket purchase before travel would be achieved if TFL's systems supported a pricing structure that is nearer to National Rail's. Thus it would:
 - Support Railcard Discounts in the way Oyster already does. We recognise that this would require passengers to set up an account and register their railcard.
 - Adopt additional price bands to match national rail prices. For instance on Thameslink / Great Northern inclusion of weekend prices.
 10. The above will be more important if TfL proceeds with abolition of the day travelcard. Giving certainty to customers will encourage them to switch from paper tickets.