

---

**Meeting:** Rail North Committee  
**Subject:** Ticket Office Consultation  
**Author:** David Hoggarth, Head of Strategic Rail  
**Sponsor:** Darren Oldham, Rail and Roads Director  
**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, 13 September 2023

---

**1. Purpose of the Report:**

1.1 To agree a response to the proposed closure of rail station ticket offices.

**2. Recommendations:**

2.1 That the Committee considers and agrees, subject to any amendment agreed by the meeting, the Transport for the North response to the consultation and agrees the next steps as outlined in this report.

**3. Main Issues:**

**Background**

3.1 On Wednesday 5 July 2023, train operators launched the consultation on station ticket office closures under the Rail Delivery Group's Ticketing and Settlement Agreement. Originally the consultation was open for 21 consecutive days (5-26 July) and was then extended to 1 September.

3.2 Under the Rail North Partnership Agreement (between Transport for the North and Department for Transport) changes to ticket offices gives Transport for the North the right to be consulted and to provide a response to the Secretary of State for Transport. Transport for the North's response will sit alongside the response provided by Transport Focus (relating to the public consultation).

3.3 Transport for the North has an additional period to submit its response to the Secretary of State as opposed to the 1 September consultation deadline for public responses through Transport Focus.

3.4 A draft consultation response is provided as Appendix 1 to this report.

3.5 In summary Transport for the North (TfN) objects to the proposal to close ticket offices in our region on the basis that:

- The consultation process is flawed
- The proposals will have a detrimental impact on the North and will have a particularly adverse effect on more vulnerable groups
- The proposals do not have a strong business case and are therefore poor value for money.

We suggest an alternative way forward involving:

- Addressing future retailing as part of a wider ticketing and stations reform programme in a way that works for the North. This would be undertaken in the context of integrating stations more fully with their local communities and making rail travel more attractive and accessible.

3.6 Transport for the North has sent to Rail North Partnership series of proposed mitigations and clarification questions for Northern and TransPennine Express. These include:

- At stations where partner funding is secured for station enhancements those stations should remain open

- How will customers continue to access waiting rooms, toilets, and lifts when there are no station staff, including at facilities owned by partners authorities
- What is the process for securing funding for the mitigations identified by the Equality analysis and what is the delivery timescales.

3.7 In August 2023 Transport for the North published two policy position statements alongside this Ticket Office Consultation response setting out how we think ticket retailing and fares should evolve in the North of England. These statements are framed around identifying 'what good looks like' before any wholesale change to at station retail and set out the specific outcomes or tests against which proposals would be measured. The policy position papers are appended to this report (Appendices 2 and 3). It is intended to submit the policy positions in support of the consultation response.

#### **4. Corporate Considerations:**

##### ***Financial Implications***

4.1 There are no financial implications to TfN arising within the report.

##### ***Resource Implications***

4.2 There are no direct resourcing implications to Transport for the North as a result of this report.

##### ***Legal Implications***

4.3 Legal Implications are included within the report.

##### ***Risk Management and Key Issues***

4.4 Risk 309 is being managed at corporate level which relates to the pandemic having changed travel patterns and behaviours and therefore service and investment decisions will need to reflect new markets and emerging evidence of demand.

##### ***Environmental Implications***

4.5 This report does not constitute or influence a plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consents of projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive and therefore does stimulate the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or EIA.

4.6 Passenger rail and rail freight plays an essential part in achieving our decarbonisation objectives within Transport for the North's Decarbonisation Strategy, particularly around reducing road vehicle mileage.

##### ***Equality and Diversity***

4.7 Closure of rail station ticket offices will have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups who are more reliant on face-to-face contact to purchase tickets, particularly customers with disabilities and those most impacted by transport related social exclusion.

##### ***Consultations***

4.8 Transport for the North Members are being consulted through this report.

#### **5. Background Papers:**

5.1 There are no background papers

#### **6. Appendices:**

6.1 Appendix 1 – Ticket Office Consultation Response

6.2 Appendix 2 – Rail Retail and Ticket Media in the North of England Rail

6.3 Appendix 3 - Fares Reform for the North of England

**Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used**

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| a) TPE | <i>TransPennine Express</i>               |
| b) EIA | <i>Environmental Impact Assessment</i>    |
| c) SEA | <i>Strategic Environmental Assessment</i> |