



Peter Taylor - Liberal Democrat Elected Mayor of Watford

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Rt Hon Mark Harper MP
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR
United Kingdom

Monday 24th July 2023

Dear Mr Harper,

Proposed Ticket Office Closures

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed closure of ticket offices across the country.

I have already, separately from this letter, contributed to the consultation online. I understand that other leaders across Hertfordshire will be doing the same and registering their opposition to the removal of ticket offices. This is unsurprising given that all but four ticket offices in the county will be closed.

The closure of ticket offices will have a detrimental impact on passengers, particularly those with disabilities and the elderly. While I understand and recognise the growing use of digital ticketing options, it is important to keep in mind that one in eight tickets are still bought face to face.

Within Watford itself, we are seeing a reduction from a ticket office to a customer service "hub" at Watford Junction. While we are pleased that we are retaining some provision for ticket help we are concerned that this will be seen as a stepping-stone to a full removal of services in the not too distant future. We are also worried about the loss of ticketing provision at Watford High Street and Bushey stations. Although they are not within the scope of the consultation we fear that once closures become the norm, these offices too will close.

At a full council meeting recently, members highlighted several unintended consequences of ticket office closures, including potential safety concerns and in one instance, difficulty accessing a defibrillator which could have led to the death of passenger.

Members also raised that our current ticketing system in this country is still too confusing, and for many people, ticket machines are difficult to navigate. Additionally, Watford sees many tourists who stay in our town and then use our rail stations to visit London or other parts of the UK. Thousands of people travel through Watford Junction station each week as they visit the popular Warner Brothers tour. Many people struggle to use our ticket machines and need support. Until a more user-friendly and efficient ticketing solution is implemented, we must prioritize the needs of all passengers and stop these closures.

I would urge you to reconsider these proposals and engage in efforts to ensure the accessibility, safety, and convenience of public transport for all passengers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" and "T".

Peter Taylor
Elected Mayor of Watford