

Motion to stand in opposition to potential closure of Rail Station Ticket Offices in Southend-on-Sea Borough

This Council believes that ticket offices provide a vital service to residents in Southend-On-Sea. Having a clearly sign-posted place in the station for people with ticket enquiries provides certainty and confidence for customers who may struggle to otherwise locate station staff.

Not all residents are able to use station ticket machines, or have the means to book a ticket in advance. Complicated journeys involving connections are likely to require human assistance to ensure customers purchase the most appropriate and cheapest tickets, and do not incur penalties from mis-booked tickets. The well observed unreliability of ticket machines poses the issue of customers not being able to purchase tickets, and the potential to cause delays to travel at peak hours. Furthermore, the periodical outages of the current smart card system has the potential to cause even further disruption at stations with no ticket office.

Council is concerned the closure of ticket offices will disproportionately affect elderly and disabled residents in Southend-On-Sea – as well as those with poor literacy and IT skills. Council also notes the possible implications for current station staff and the concerns that have been raised over possible staff redundancies.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Transport, and the Government Railways Minister, expressing Council's opposition to the possible closure of staffed rail ticket offices at Leigh-on-Sea, Chalkwell, Westcliff-on-Sea, Southend East, Thorpe Bay, Shoeburyness, Southend Victoria and Prittlewell.
- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to C2C and Greater Anglia expressing the Council's opposition to any plans to close the staffed ticket offices.
- Refer this issue to Place Scrutiny with the recommendation that representatives from C2C and Greater Anglia are invited to attend a Scrutiny Meeting at the earliest possible point to discuss future plans for staffing.

Proposer: Cllr Gabriel Leroy

Seconder: Cllr Daniel Cowan, Cllr Matt Dent