
Secretariat's Memorandum

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Proposed changes to South West Trains booking office hours of opening (Schedule 17 application)

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To report South West Trains (SWT) response to London TravelWatch's objection to their proposal to alter booking office hours at 13 stations in the London TravelWatch area as considered at the London TravelWatch board of the 23 March 2010.

2 Background

- 2.1 SWT had proposed changes to booking office hours at 24 stations that it operates including 13 within the London TravelWatch area. It has now proposed to withdraw its proposal in respect of seven stations in London TravelWatch and to partially reinstate hours at one station. At the other five stations it is proposed to continue with the reduced hours because the number of transactions is fewer than 12 per hour standard set by the Secretary of State.

3. Commentary

- 3.1. Appendices A and B set out the proposals by SWT, and analyse the proposals on a station by station basis. In most cases these are similar to previous proposals in 2008 but in some cases these go further than those proposals.
- 3.2 SWT justifies their proposals on the grounds that at 15 of these stations ticket sales are less than 12 per hour (the standard set by the Secretary of State) when the previous application was considered. At a further nine stations, an average of fewer than 20 tickets were sold. These stations were within the London Oyster Pay As You Go area, and SWT report that since the introduction of Oyster on its network a reduction of between 30 and 50% in the number of tickets sold has been seen.
- 3.3 The data on which this decision was based was between 12 October 2008 and 8 November 2008, and between 18 October 2009 and 14 November 2009.

4. Issues previously raised by London TravelWatch in relation to booking office closures

4.1 In 2008 London TravelWatch objected to the previous SWT proposal on the following recommendations (Comments in **Bold** indicate changes since previous reports to the Board / Fares and Ticketing committee):-

London TravelWatch concern	South West Trains response and action since the previous schedule 17 application
That SWT investigates additional capacity at its' telesales facility covering both South West and East Midlands Trains.	This was not responded to by SWT – in both periods reviewed tickets sold by this method accounted for only 1% of all sales
That a request is made to the Office of Rail Regulation for the release of information regarding the destinations available from SWT ticket vending machines, in order to inform London TravelWatch's opinion as to whether the current arrangements are reasonable.	Eventually this information was provided, and SWT agreed to review whether the 50 or so stations not on this list but having direct services to them from stations served by SWT should be included. Some expansion of the destination list was promised. SWT email of the 11th June 2010 states 'We are currently undertaking a complete review of functionality of our TVMs and the issue of additional destinations is part of this functionality review'.
That London TravelWatch regards any change to the booking office hours of stations within the Greater London Travelcard area as premature in advance of the introduction of Oyster Pay As You Go on the national rail network in 2009, because the introduction of this will substantially change the numbers of tickets that will need to be purchased from booking offices and ticket vending machines.	The reported reduction in ticket sales as a result of the introduction of Oyster Pay As You Go coincided with a prolonged period of severe weather and disruption to services and so cannot be relied upon as a basis to agree a permanent reduction in operating hours. The proposals have been withdrawn from Fulwell, Hampton, Malden Manor, Motspur Park, St.Margarets (London), Thames Ditton and Whitton stations and Sunday hours reinstated at Barnes.
That SWT is urged to reconsider its' position on the retailing of Oyster products from both booking offices and ticket vending machines within the Travelcard area.	SWT continues in its position of not retailing Oyster products either from booking offices or ticket vending machines. SWT email of the 11th

	June 2010 states 'Our franchise commitment is to have ITSO on our TVMs and currently there are no confirmed plans to add oyster top up as an additional functionality to the TVMs'.
That SWT should provide London TravelWatch with assurances about the reliability of its ticket vending machines, and of any revised maintenance regime in respect of ticket stocks and change particularly at evenings, weekends and early mornings.	Assurances were received at the time of the previous application. Subsequently this has not appeared to be a major issue arising from our casework.
That SWT should provide assurance that staff availability on stations should be such that they are multi-functional, visible and accessible to passengers.	No such direct assurance has been provide, but there have been a general assurances in relation to disabled passengers and security at stations – overall there has been a 9% reduction in reported crime in 2009 across the SWT network.
That SWT should defer and re-examine their proposals for booking office hours changes in relation to stations proposed for gating, to take account of any changes in ticket purchasing patterns that emerge consequent to the installation of gates.	None of the stations proposed for booking office hours alterations has automatic ticket barriers – although Motspur Park, Whitton and St.Margarets should be considered for gating as each has over 1million users per year. Proposals at these stations withdrawn.
That SWT must ensure that all of the proposed upgrades to ticket vending machine capabilities are in place before any change to booking office hours is implemented, including reviewing the destinations available.	SWT implemented their upgrades on a phased basis but not linked to the implementation of booking office hours SWT email of the 11th June 2010 states 'We are currently undertaking a complete review of functionality of our TVMs and the issue of additional destinations is part of this functionality review'.
That London TravelWatch is given assurances about measures to keep queuing times within the current acceptable standards.	Assurances were given at the time that this would be kept under review. SWT email of the 11th June 2010 states 'We complete queue monitoring on a monthly basis across all flagship stations. Ticket issues data also shows a reduction at both ticket office and TVMs consistent with the PAYG area and demonstrating increased PAYG use'.

- 4.2. It is welcome that SWT should withdraw its booking office hours proposals at stations in the Oyster Pay As You Go area, given that they proposed to make their decision based on the experience of a few weeks at the beginning of a year when travel volumes are often reduced because of seasonal factors, and in the light of the serious disruption to services that occurred due to the poor and prolonged weather conditions that prevailed during this period..
- 4.3 The functionality of Ticket Vending Machines also still raises a number of issues and it is of concern that SWT still do not offer the range of destinations covered by services from their stations on these machines.

5 Representations from passengers

- 5.1 The schedule 17 mechanism allows passengers to make representations to London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus on these proposals. The consultation period closed on the 17th March 2010. All representations received to the date of this meeting were circulated to London TravelWatch board members at the meeting on the 23rd March 2010.

6 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 6.1 The proposal as such does not impact on the assisted travel service that SWT offers to passengers. However, not all passengers requiring assistance will use this service particularly as this requires advance booking, in these cases booking office staff may be assisting passengers. This is particularly likely in the case of suburban metro journeys, but as noted above the majority of London stations are now removed from the proposal.
- 6.2 It should also be noted that ticket vending machines may be difficult for a person with a disability to operate, where a staffed booking office would offer a better level of service. The issues here would be cash and card handling, understanding of which ticket to buy and how to obtain a Railcard discount.

7 Financial implications

- 7.1 The contents of this report have no specific financial implications for London TravelWatch.

8 Legal powers

- 8.1 Section 252A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places a duty upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) to keep under review matters affecting the interests of the public in relation to railway passenger and station services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area, and to make representations about them to such persons as it thinks appropriate.

9 Recommendations

9.1 Members are recommended to:-

9.1.1 Consider whether they wish to continue with the objection to the proposed reduction in ticket office hours proposed by SWT given that all of the stations in the London TravelWatch area with the exception of Strawberry Hill fall within the 12 transactions per hour standard set by the Secretary of State. In the case of Strawberry Hill that SWT is asked to reconsider whether Sunday and Monday to Friday afternoon hours are retained.

9.1.2 Continue to press South West Trains to agree to the retailing of Oyster products at their stations within the Greater London Travelcard area at both booking offices and ticket vending machines.

9.1.3 Continue to press South West Trains to widen the range of destinations available on their ticket vending machines.

Appendix A

1.1 Stations within the London Travelcard area. Listed below are the proposed changes on a station by station basis, plus alternative means of ticket purchase for passengers. Oyster Pay As You Go has now been installed. However, at present South West Trains are not committed to retailing Oyster.

Barnes	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0645	1845	0645	1300	-5hours 45 minutes	Average 10.4 sales per hour , but 1600 – 1800 over 12 per hour
Saturday	0700	1900	0830	1500	-5hours 30 minutes	Average 7.2 sales per hour
Sunday	1000	1300	Closed / 1000	Closed / 1300	-3hours / no change	Average 16.7 sales per hour / Hours reinstated.
	3 TVMs	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Upper Richmond Road ¼ mile away			

Berrylands	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0620	1010	0620	1010	No change	
Saturday	0810	1300	Closed	Closed	-4hours 50 minutes	Average 11.1 sales per hour, but 0900 -1200 up to 15 per hour
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
	1 TVM – but may be located in the wrong place	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Chiltern Drive 0.02 miles away			

Fulwell	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0640	1100	0640	1100	No change	
Saturday	0900	1400	Closed/ 0900	Closed/ 1400	-5hours/ No Change	Average 15 sales per hour / Hours reinstated
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
	1 TVM – but may be in the wrong place	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Wellington Road 0.16 miles away			

Hampton	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours (SWT/SoS)	Proposed Hours (SWT/SoS)	Difference (SWT/SoS)	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0640	1800	0640/ 0640	1325/ 1800	-4hours 35 minutes/ No change	Average 19 sales per hour/ Hours reinstated
Saturday	0740	1800	0805/ 0740	1455/ 1800	- 3hours 30 minutes/ No change	Average 17.3 sales per hour/ Hours reinstated
Sunday	0900	1500	0900	1500	No change	
	2TVMs	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Percy Road 0.09 miles away			

Malden Manor	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours)	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0630	1100	0630	1100	No change	
Saturday	0900	1300	Closed/ 0900	Closed/ 1300	-4hours/ No change	Average 16.1 sales per hour/ Hours reinstated
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
	1 TVM	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Manor Drive 0.10 miles away			

Motspur Park	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0630	1300	0630	1300	No change	
Saturday	0800	1300	0800	1300	No change	
Sunday	0900	1400	Closed/ 0900	Closed/ 1400	-5hours 30 minutes/ No change	Average 15.6 sales per hour/ Hours reinstated
	2 TVMs	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in West Barnes Lane 0.09 miles away			

St.Margarets	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0620	1900	0620/ 0620	1250/ 1900	-6hours 10 minutes/ No change	Average 19.5 sales per hour/ Hours reinstated
Saturday	0800	1400	0800	1400	No change	
Sunday	0910	1600	0910	1600	No change	
	2 TVMs	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in St.Margarets road 0.06 miles away			

Strawberry Hill	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0615	1900	0615	1300	- 6hours	Average 12.2 sales per hour – this is still above average
Saturday	0800	1700	0800	1445	- 2hours 15 minutes	Average 8.5 sales per hour, but 13 per hour 1500 – 1600 – SWT say this is now 8.6 per hour
Sunday	0900	1300	Closed	Closed	- 4hours 30 minutes	Average 15.8 sales per hour – SWT say that this is 11.9 per hour now.
	2 TVMs	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Tower Road 0.10 miles away			

Thames Ditton	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0640	1300	0640	1300	No change	
Saturday	0800	1300	Closed/ 0800	Closed/ 1300	-5 hours/ No change	Average 18.1 sales per hour/ Hours reinstated
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
	1 TVM	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in Summer Road ½ mile away			

Whitton	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0600	1945	0600/ 0600	1300/ 1945	- 6 hours 45 minutes/ No change	Average 17.9 sales per hour/ Hours reinstated
Saturday	0640	2000	0800/ 0640	1500/ 2000	-6 hours 20 minutes/ No change	Average 17.2 sales per hour, but 1500 – 1900 up to 25 sales per hour/ Hours reinstated
Sunday	0900	1600	0900	1600	No change	
	3 TVMs	Oyster PAYG installed	Nearest Oyster agent in High Street 0.08 miles away			

Appendix B

1.1 Stations outside the London Travelcard area. Listed below are the proposed changes on a station by station basis, plus alternative means of ticket purchase for passengers. It is proposed that some form of ITSO standard smartcard ticketing will be available at some date in the future.

Clandon	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0625	1100	0625	1100	No change	
Saturday	0800	1200	Closed	Closed	- 4hours	Average 8.1 sales per hour
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
	1 TVM					

Hinchley Wood	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0630	1100	0630	1100	No change	
Saturday	1000	1300	Closed	Closed	-3 hours	Average 7.5 sales per hour
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed		
	1 TVM	Served by TfL buses - add Oyster in future?				

Virginia Water	Current Hours	Current Hours	Proposed Hours	Proposed Hours)	Difference	Commentary
	Open	Close	Open	Close		
Monday to Friday	0610	1800	0610	1305	-4hours 55 minutes	Average 11.4 sales per hour, but 1600 – 1800 over 12 per hour
Saturday	0800	1700	0800	1455	-2hours 5 minutes	Average 12 sales per hour
Sunday	0900	1500	0900	1500	No change	
	2 TVMs					

