

Philip Glanville  
Mayor of Hackney

Cllr Feryal Demirci  
Deputy Mayor and Cabinet  
Member for Health, Social Care,  
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29th January 2019

Dear Chris

### **London Overground ticket office closures**


I am writing to you regarding the planned ticket office closure across the London Overground network managed by Arriva Rail London, and to emphasise Hackney Council's opposition to the current proposals which we set out in our consultation response to London Travelwatch.

Currently all of the Overground stations in Hackney, with the exception of London Fields, have ticket offices. These provide important information and assistant points for passengers, as well as vital refuge points for staff.

The current proposals by Arriva Rail would leave us with none. In an inner-London borough that is already facing significant cuts to our TfL bus services, as well as few Underground stations to begin with, we consider these proposals unacceptable. The improvements and increase in passenger numbers on the Overground seen in recent years in Hackney has been built on investment, but also the confidence passengers have in these ticket offices and proper levels of staffing.

The proposals are also full of assumptions and little detail, including the staffing of Overground stations at peak and off-peak periods. There is no information to suggest at what times the stations might have more staff nor overall staffing levels if these changes were implemented. One member of staff alone would not be able to deal with gateline problems, assistance with passengers, and help with buying a ticket.

The proposals also make assumptions around the use of ticket machines instead of ticket offices, as well as the use of Oyster cards and annual season tickets. Just as our



consultation submission stated, ticket offices can issue annual season tickets, refund Oyster deposits and unused credit, and top up Oyster credits for small amounts — important for many of our residents on low wages. None of these functions can be done through a ticket machine.

This is particularly important when considering events and attractions in Hackney that draw attendees from outside London, such as the Fashion Hub at Hackney Central which had a footfall of 737,292 last year, the majority of which are likely to be using public transport. Indeed current projections show overcrowding is likely to be a significant issue in the future. There is also the complexity of the Hackney Central / Hackney Downs combined stations, which are now linked by a very welcome bridge, but this now joined station has multiple entrances and platforms requiring proper staffing and facilities.

There is also concern that ticket machines are difficult to use or inaccessible to some disabled passengers. With staff balancing crowded stations and faulty gatelines, without details about the number of staff available at peak times it is unclear how station staff will be on hand to assist disabled passengers acquire tickets.

We also support the RMT Union's position on these changes, which highlight the importance of ticket offices as part of staff safety measures, including as a point of staff refuge with CCTV, panic button and lockable door.

Following on from our consultation submission to London Travelwatch, we are pleased to hear that they are recommending that the ticket offices at the busiest stations should remain open including the following situated in Hackney: Clapton, Homerton, Dalston Junction and Dalston Kingsland, and Hackney Central and Hackney Downs.

I understand that the decision now rests with the Department for Transport. We are calling on you to follow London Travelwatch recommendations, but also go further and keep all ticket offices in Hackney open for the benefit of staff and passengers.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Glanville".

Philip Glanville  
Mayor of Hackney

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Feryal Demirci".

Cllr Feryal Demirci  
Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care, Transport and Parks





CC Heidi Alexander, Deputy Mayor, Transport and Deputy Chair, Transport for London  
Mick Cash, General Secretary, RMT Union

