

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30 August 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Luke Spillman (Chair), Alex Anderson (Vice-Chair), Tom Kelly, John Kent (Substitute for Vikki Hartstean), Jacqui Maney and Lee Watson

Apologies: Councillors Vikki Hartstean

In attendance: Abu Siddeeq, Customer Experience Director, C2C
Councillor Ben Maney, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Highways
Mark Bradbury, Interim Director for Place
Mat Kiely, Strategic Lead for Transportation Services
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's website.

8. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

9. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

10. Question and Answer Session with C2C - Potential Impact of Ticket Office Closures in Thurrock

The Chair of the Committee opened the session explaining that the C2C representative had to leave early due to a prior commitment and with this in mind asked that the presentation be circulated to all Committee Members by Democratic Services and sought questions from the Committee.

During questions from Members the following was highlighted:

- At the present time there was no closing of stations, it was reducing the hours the ticket offices were open.
- There were another 13 train companies in the UK and of them C2C had the least number of staff, the changes to be made were not to include redundancies it was changing the roles of staff to make a better service for customers.
- It was clarified that no changes to the ticket offices would happen until all stations on the line (London Fenchurch Street to Southend Central) were contactless, which could be implemented as early as December 2023.

- With regards to staff assisting customers, with the proposed new opening hours of the ticket offices, should there be no staff physically present there would be a mobile member of the staff who could be contacted to give assistance and advise.

The C2C representative commented the consultation was due to close on Friday 1st September and as a company C2C had been encouraging as many people as possible to participate and express their views. He continued by stating the roles of ticket office staff was changing and it was intended to keep staff as they held a wealth of knowledge but to be able to retrain staff for a more diverse role. Members heard how it could take a number of years for the process to take effect, it was not something which could be envisaged immediately.

The Committee concluded that it could not support the proposed changes without the following reassurances:

- Clarification of the safeguard procedures in place should elderly, disabled or vulnerable rail users arrive at a station, seeking support, at a time when no staff member was present in the front of station areas.
- Clarification of the procedures that would be in place to secure best value to customers seeking assistance when purchasing complex tickets.

The questions and comments raised by PTR O&S Members, and those collated by the Transport Development Team, were to be collectively submitted to the London Travel Watch and Transport Focus consultation portals in advance of the consultation deadline.

11. Work Programme

The Chair of the Committee advised Members of the dates for the September and November Extraordinary meetings, and these were agreed by the Committee.

Members further agreed for the Interim Director of Place and Democratic Services to advise of the items to be presented at the September meeting so that that collated with being presented to Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the Extraordinary Committee meetings be held on 28th September and 15th November 2023.

The meeting finished at 7.43 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**