



Department
for Transport

From the Minister of State
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All MPs in England

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Dear Colleague,

Rail Stations Ticket Office Consultation

This Government spent £31 billion to support the UK railway during the pandemic, and reform is vital to improve the service for passengers and secure the railway's long-term financial position. However, we must pursue this reform in a way that delivers for passengers.

During the summer, train companies consulted on reforming railway station ticket offices. The aim was to move staff out from behind ticket office screens so that more help and advice could be provided in customer-focused roles.

Since the consultations launched in the summer, I have maintained that no currently staffed station should be unstaffed as a result of the changes. I was clear this must be an open and genuine consultation process, and that the changes must deliver the highest quality of service for all users of the railway. I have listened to colleagues in the House and have engaged extensively with all interested parties.

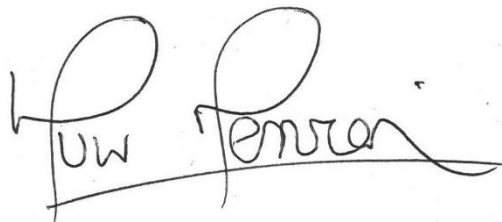
Following further meetings with accessibility groups and the passenger bodies, it has become clear the ticket office proposals do not meet the high thresholds set by Ministers. The Government has therefore communicated to the industry that ticket office reform should not proceed. I expect the Train Operating Companies to now withdraw their proposals and for no ticket offices to close.

We will continue to invest in improving the passenger experience at railway stations, and that is why the Government has committed £20 million to extend Pay As You Go ticketing to a further 53 stations in the South East by the end of the year. The Government is also continuing its work to agree Pay As You Go pilots in Greater Manchester and the West Midlands as part of Trailblazer devolution deals announced earlier this year. As part of Network North, the Government will also be spending a further £350 million to improve accessibility at up to 100 stations. Stations will be able to benefit from refitted lifts, tactile

surfaces, ramps and footbridges, new ticket gates and accessible waiting rooms and toilets. The Department has also just completed an audit of all of our railway stations and we will now be assessing what changes can be made to the benefit of all passengers.

I would like to thank the accessibility groups and colleagues in the House for their continued engagement throughout this process.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw Merriman'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

HUW MERRIMAN MP

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT