
Report To:	Inverclyde Council	Date:	5 December 2024
Report By:	Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services	Report No:	LS/096/24
Contact Officer:	Diane Sweeney	Contact No:	01475 712147
Subject:	Save ScotRail Ticket Offices – Notice of Motion by Councillor Cassidy		

1.0 PURPOSE AND CONSIDERATIONS

1.1 For Decision

For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of the receipt of a Notice of Motion by Councillor Cassidy, countersigned by Councillor Brennan, relative to relative ScotRail ticket offices.

1.3 The terms of the Notice of Motion are set out in appendix 1 to the report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Council is asked to consider the Notice of Motion by Councillor Cassidy.

Lynsey Brown
Head of Legal, Democratic, Digital & Customer Services

Appendix 1

Save ScotRail Ticket Offices

This Council Notes:

- That the Scottish Government owned rail operator ScotRail, announced on 31st October 2024 plans to reduce ticket office hours at 101 (70%) of its 143 staffed stations. This means weekly ticket office hours across the ScotRail network would reduce by around 2800 hours a week.
- ScotRail has commenced a 12-week internal staff consultation on the proposals which ends in February 2025.
- Wemyss Bay Station, the 2023 winner of Best UK Station is one of the stations affected by this announcement which will see its hours cut by 61% to 45 hours a week with a loss of 70 hours per week.
- Greenock Central station will see its current hours cut by 62% to 32 hours a week with a loss of 55 hours per week; Gourock station will see its current hours cut by 43% to 70 hours a week with a loss of 53 hours per week; Port Glasgow station will see its current hours cut by 41% to 72 hours with a loss of 50 hours per week and Greenock West station will see its current hours cut by 38% to 77 hours with a loss of 47 hours per week.
- According to Transport for All disabled people are less likely to travel by rail than non-disabled people and that around two-thirds of ScotRail stations are un-staffed.
- There is an ongoing campaign by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) to Save ScotRail Ticket Offices.
- These proposals would close ticket offices for significant portions of the day, amounting to a reduction of one-third of overall hours at affected stations, totalling a loss of around 2,900 hours per week.
- That these controversial proposals were first introduced in early 2022 by former operator Abellio following a 21-day public consultation run by passenger watchdog Transport Focus on proposals for cuts to ticket office hours.
- These proposals in 2022 faced overwhelming public opposition with 98% of respondents objecting to the plans to reduce ticket office hours.
- That at the time, the process that the passenger watchdog had to follow when reviewing the consultation responses, meant that it could only object to proposals under a 'narrow' criteria relating solely to ticket sales.
- That since then ScotRail is now owned by the Scottish Government, and guidelines for ticket office closures have changed. Under the new process, Transport Focus, the passenger watchdog, must assess any closure proposals according to accessibility, safety and service quality criteria.
- That during the 2022 Public Consultation, a poll by Disability Equality Scotland of its members found that 95% objected to the proposals.
- That the RMT has highlighted that ScotRail's plans were initially consulted on under outdated procedures, rendering them illegitimate by today's standards.
- The Scottish Government 2022 report into women's and girls' views and experiences of personal safety when using public transport found that –women and girls feel safer when there are staffed ticket offices open during their journeys.
- Ticket office staffing is the only regulated staffing at stations, meaning cuts could lead to broader unregulated staffing reductions without future public consultation.

This Council believes:

- Staffed ticket offices are vital for making rail accessible for all, especially disabled and older people.
- These cuts will seriously impact passenger safety, accessibility and security, thus will worsen passenger service and have a detrimental impact on passenger experience of the ScotRail network.
- These cuts ignore the needs of the traveling public and put essential services at risk and will erode the quality of services in Inverclyde and around Scotland.
- That the Scottish Government, as ScotRail's owner and the body who authorised ScotRail to proceed with these cuts, must urgently intervene and instruct it to scrap the plans to cut ticket offices hours and maintain the services that passengers deserve.
- That ScotRail reliance on outdated processes renders these proposals illegitimate and warrants their immediate withdrawal.
- That protecting staffed ticket offices is crucial to supporting local communities, tourism and Inverclyde's economy.

This Council agrees to:

- Voice support for RMT campaign to protect the vital services offered by staffed ticket offices and commit to advocating for the vital role they play in Inverclyde alongside Trades Unions, campaign groups and disabled orgs.
- Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Scottish Government calling on them to intervene and reverse this decision and to seek a commitment to fully staffed ticket offices to ensure safe, secure, and accessible railways for all.
- Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to ScotRail Managing Director to raise the Council's concerns and call on ScotRail to reverse this decision and publish the relevant Equality Impact Assessment. ScotRail will also be requested to provide a detailed impact assessment on the accessibility, safety, and economic consequences of these changes, with specific focus on Inverclyde.
- Voice its opposition to ticket office closures and to advocate for the vital role that Inverclyde ticket offices play in supporting the community, tourism and Inverclyde's economy.

Proposed by: Councillor Paul Cassidy

Seconded by: Councillor Francesca Brennan