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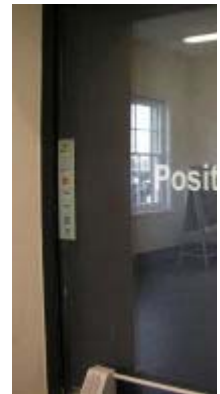
Revealed: the DfT's plans to close ticket c

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THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT has been revealed to be planning to close some ticket offices at smaller stations as part of its plan to reduce railway costs, even though a consultation is under way.

But leaked emails reveal that it is holding back on admitting the closures, while negotiations continue with at least one operator. The DfT is also hoping to make the operators seem responsible for the cutbacks, which have already sparked a wave of public opposition.

The emails, which were revealed by the BBC and have been seen by Railnews, disclose that talks are well under way with London Midland, and that 'the Minister' (Theresa Villiers) has given her approval.



However, in public the Department is still maintaining that no decisions have been made. One of the emails, from the Department's Rail Fares and Ticketing Review unit, even praises a press officer for implying that the operator that: 'your way of slipping in there that the initiative comes from TOCs not us is very neat'.

When questioned about the emails, transport minister Norman Baker said the civil servant concerned was 'junior'. He maintained that no decisions had been made.

When she launched the Command Paper at the end of March, transport secretary Justine Greening said she was saving up to £3.5 billion a year. The Paper followed Sir Roy McNulty's recommendations that operators should take a cut and in particular that the ticket offices at Category E stations should be closed. He also said that the opening hours should be reduced.

This proposal, which is proving to be one of the most controversial from McNulty, was not included in the summary media when the document was published last May, and only appears on page 208 of the 'detailed report', which

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Reader Comments:

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Bill Porter, Birmingham

Since this announcement was leaked we have now received a response from LMs head henchman who flat out being factual. I know who i believe!

Ken Usher, Birmingham

Dave, Birmingham,

Who do you think orchestrated the 18000+ signature to the petition and letters of objection to London Midland you think keeps station staff briefed on a virtual weekly basis that LM proposals still sit with the DfT? Who do you think arranged postcard distributions and other campaigns against McNulty's plans? Who do you think will be leading if LM & McNulty get the nod off the DfT? = Attend your Branch meeting or contact one of your elected reps to enlighten you on all matters.

Instead of moaning or griping from the sidelines then join the activists in opposing the plans of LM/McNulty - each occasion - after all it is "your job that is under threat" that we (RMT) are fighting to save - join us in the front. Don't hold your breath waiting for the mainstream press or the specialist trade papers to fight the good fight in the face.

Bill porter, Birmingham

We have been lied to since day one when the proposals were announced to the booking office staff. LM are making a profit for their shareholders the customers who use the trains and the people who man the ticket offices to get shafted. LM should now have their franchise removed as they clearly are not a fit and proper company failed to meet their franchise commitments.

Dave, Birmingham

Thank god for Railnews.co.uk.

I am a railway employee whose job is at risk. I am also a member of one of the biggest unions operating with yet receive almost no information from them with regards to this current situation. One could not blame me for drinking from the same plate and cup as the DfT and the train operating companies. Of course this would only appear to be true, however, I'm sure if 12000 people suddenly cancelled their union subscription our sleepers would suddenly wake up and play their part in trying to Save our Stations.

Again, thanks to Railnews for keeping us informed

Concerned Commuter, London

What a disgrace - what about disabled passengers? Wheelchair users? Who will help out people who need trains? What about safety in the evenings? How many people will get mugged at darkly lit unstaffed stations through the nose for our train fares - we could at least have some staff on hand to help!

Dave, Birmingham

dear Lutz, London

Proof reading is essential before posting your comments.

Tell the 12000 or more people who will lose their jobs as a result of proposed ticket office closures and also from trains that they are making a mountain out of a mole hill

Steve Alston, Crewe

You only need to look at the state of Manchester's Metrolink platforms and Northern Rail's GM area stations. Drunken teens smoking weed hanging round chucking bricks, assaults, attacks..... would you feel happy if you were there at 9pm?

Immediately next door, Merseyrail has booking offices first train to last train. No such problems there.

Lutz, London

Trying to make a mountain out of a mole hill. Contingency planning does not constitute a final decision. I ma ticket offices will of no great loss due to shifts in technology.

Geraint Griffiths, Chester

There should be more staff at our stations, not less. Considering how much the price of my season ticket ha you'd think we could see improvements instead of cut backs. And I still don't get a seat every morning. What

Billy Johnstone, Beith, UK

Same old Tories. Enough said!

Chris Reynell, Longstock, Hampshire.

Why cut back on something useful?

The ticket office staff also sell tickets not available or hard to find on ticket machines, help with enquiries and security.

Our local station, Winchester, is great during the day. Once the ticket offices close in the early evening, it be platforms are linked by a grotty public subway.

Rail passenger numbers are rising, surely the franchised operators can keep its stations safe and friendly ur

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