



'Work smarter,' Tube bosses tell staff - after plans to close every ticket office are revealed



Cost savings: The Tube needs to meet £220m budget cuts

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Published: 14 August 2013
Updated: 07:22, 14 August 2013

Tube bosses have told thousands of staff that change is on the way and money must be saved "through smarter ways of working."

It follows the revelation in the Evening Standard on Monday of confidential Tube documents warning that all 268 station ticket offices face closure.

This to help meet budget cuts of £220 million.

Passengers wanting to buy tickets at stations would be forced to use automatic machines and thousands of jobs could go.

Phil Hufton, London Underground (LU) chief operating officer, states in the staff briefing that he wants to "clarify" - but does not deny - the article.

He writes: "We are in a good place, our services are more reliable and our customers remain satisfied with the customer service they receive.

"However, we must continue to change to ensure we carry on meeting the demands of our customers - particularly as we see demand consistently rising.

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"Technology is changing customer behaviour and we need to keep pace.

"Cost is driving greater scrutiny on our business and we need to demonstrate the greatest possible value for money through smarter ways of working."

Staff will attend workshops featuring a mock-up of a station "which is as close to a live station environment as possible and allows staff to see how ideas will look and how they might work if they become a reality."

Bob Crow, the RMT leader, said: "If LU were seeking to calm the waves of anger that have been unleashed by the leaking of the cuts plans through issuing this memo I can tell them they have achieved the exact opposite.

"By failing to address any of the key issues, and throwing up a series of smokescreens, they are confirming that not only are the cuts to staff and closure of ticket offices the real deal but that they are already being rolled out."

A grassroots campaign opposing the cuts comprising community groups, charities, councillors, trade unionists and Labour shadow London minister Sadiq Khan is being launched in Southwark tomorrow.

It has been organised by the TSSA transport union which represents the majority of 2000 ticket office and backroom staff who could lose their jobs in the first tranche of cuts.

Manuel Cortes, the TSSA leader, said the campaign was about far more than saving jobs.

"Why should a young woman fear going into an unlit Tube station at night? Why should an elderly person be left to struggle with a complicated ticket machine on a deserted station on a Sunday afternoon.?"

LU says stations will remain staffed all the time trains are running.

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