

Councillor Foster,

I along with many of my Labour colleagues on the council note with concern reports that 131 staffed ticket offices in the north of England are currently being proposed to be closed.

I, and I am sure the view is shared by many of my labour colleagues, believe that ticket offices provide a vital service to residents in South Ribble. Having a clearly sign-posted place in the station for people with ticket enquiries provides certainty and confidence for customers who may struggle to otherwise locate station staff. Not all residents are able to use station ticket machines, or have the means to book a ticket in advance. Complicated journeys involving connections are likely to require human assistance to ensure customers purchase the most appropriate and cheapest tickets, and do not incur penalties from mis-booked tickets.

I am very concerned that the closure of ticket offices will disproportionately affect elderly and disabled residents in both Leyland and Buckshaw Village– as well as those with poor literacy and IT skills. I also am concerned about the possible implications for current station staff and the concerns that have been raised to me over possible staff redundancies by staff at the Leyland office. I therefore ask if you would support by asking the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Transport, and the Government Railways Minister, expressing Council's opposition to the possible closure of staffed rail ticket offices – and in particular the offices at Buckshaw Village and Leyland, and request the Chief Executive to write to northern rail expressing the Council's opposition to any plans to close the staffed ticket office at Buckshaw Village and Leyland.

Paul Wharton-Hardman