

ScotRail clarifies ticket office consultation whilst RMT voices opposition

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ScotRail added further clarification around its consultation into ticket offices, while rail union RMT said it would oppose any changes.

As reported yesterday, ScotRail has said it is considering shutting three stations and reducing opening hours at 120 more. Pre-pandemic, the use of ticket offices had already begun to drop, with some passengers favouring online options or ticket machines. As a result, the share of sales ticket offices took a slide from 40% in 2011 to 28% in 2019.

When the initial consultation launched, it was picked up by the media, but there was no press release immediately available.

The press release issued today brings up some of the points in the consultation document but also adds a few.

ScotRail says in the press release there will be less fare fraud and ticketless travel by cutting the hours of the ticket offices, new “family-friendly working hours and part-time shifts”, less antisocial behaviour, and

more revenue.

As part of the changes, some staff will be redeployed to a range of high-visibility frontline duties.

Phil Campbell, Head of Customer Operations, said: "There has been no real review of our ticket office opening hours for 30 years, and it is important we keep up with the changing habits of customers who no longer rely on purchasing tickets in that way.

"With more than a 50 per cent drop in the use of ticket offices, heightened by the pandemic, we want to do everything we can to make sure everyone has a hassle-free journey.

"Nobody in ScotRail will lose their jobs as a result of these changes, and it is important to note that rather being about cutting jobs, this is about adding value for our staff and customers.

"Over the coming weeks we'll be talking to customers, staff, and stakeholders about the improvements they can expect to see and experience as they travel around Scotland's Railway."

ScotRail will still have ticket offices at 140 stations should the changes go ahead.

RMT did not agree with ScotRail's assessment the changes would reduce antisocial behaviour and said it would turn "many of our stations into a mugger's paradise".

General secretary Mick Lynch said: "RMT is firmly opposed to ticket office closures and cuts and will be campaigning publicly and politically in the coming weeks to oppose these short-sighted attacks on Scotland's railway."