

## **Motion – Against Office Closures in our Train Stations**

Council believes that:

- Ticket offices provide a vital service to residents in Chichester District. 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. In addition, 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 or pay more than necessary for their journey.
- The closure of ticket offices will disproportionately affect elderly and disabled residents in the District, as well as those with poor literacy and IT skills.

Council notes that:

- Train companies are pressing ahead with plans to close up to 1000 rail ticket offices across England over the next 3 years, including the offices in Chichester, Bosham, and Southbourne, according to the announcement by the Rail Delivery Group.
- Statistics from Age UK show that 3 million elderly people in the UK do not have access to the internet, and statistics from the Royal National Institute for Blind People that only 3% of those with partial or full sight loss feel able to use ticket machines.
- Statistics from the ONS Census 2021 further show that the population within Chichester District has a higher proportion of elderly and retired residents (34.9%) compared to the national average. Similarly there is a higher proportion of disabled residents (11%) in Chichester City compared to the national average.
- As a result of these statistics, residents in and around the District are likely to be disproportionately affected and have their mobility stifled by the closures.
- Concerns have been raised over the implications for current station staff and possible staff redundancies, given that there will be no regulations for minimum staffing levels at stations and on platforms.

Council resolves to:

- Instruct the Leader to write to Mark Harper MP (Secretary of State for Transport), and the Chief Executive of the Rail Delivery Group, expressing Council's opposition to the possible closure of staffed rail ticket offices – and in particular the offices at Chichester, Bosham, and Southbourne.
- Instruct the Leader to write to Southern expressing the Council's opposition to any plans to close the staffed ticket offices at Chichester, Bosham, and Southbourne train stations.
- Refer this issue to Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the recommendation that representatives from Southern are invited to attend a Scrutiny Meeting at the earliest possible point to discuss future plans for ticket offices and staffing at the above railway stations.