

Our Ref: LOROL/GO/S17/TfL

Andrew McIntosh
Transport for London
Overground House
125 Finchley Road
London NW3 6HY

May 03rd 2013

Dear Andrew,

**TICKETING & SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT:
PROPOSED CHANGES to TICKET OFFICE OPENING at GOSPEL OAK STATION**

London Overground Rail Operations Limited (LOROL) hereby gives notice of a proposal to amend the Ticket Office opening hours at Gospel Oak station, from those published in Schedule 17 of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement dated 23 July 1995 (version 9.6 issued 13 March 2013) (T&SA).

LOROL believes that this proposal represents a Major Change, as it fulfils the criteria outlined in Chapter 6 clause 6-18 (1) (a) of the T&SA. It is LOROL's view that the change would represent an improvement in terms of cost effectiveness, whilst not affecting the quality of service or the ability of the public to enjoy widespread and easy access to purchase 'Rail Products'.

The current and proposed Ticket Office opening hours at Gospel Oak are as follows:

	Monday to Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
	<i>Opens</i>	<i>Closes</i>	<i>Opens</i>	<i>Closes</i>	<i>Opens</i>	<i>Closes</i>
Current hours	0630hrs	2315hrs	0630hrs	2315hrs	0830hrs	2230hrs
Duration	16 hours 45 minutes		16 hours 45 minutes		14 hours	
Proposed hours	0645hrs	2030hrs	0715hrs	2000hrs	1015hrs	1730hrs
Duration	13 hours 45 minutes		12 hours 45 minutes		7 hours 15 minutes	

In summary, LOROL proposes to reduce the weekly opening hours of Gospel Oak Ticket Office by 25 hours 45 minutes, from 114 hours 30 minutes to 88 hours 45 minutes per week. The current opening hours are the longest of any LOROL-operated station, and the proposed opening hours will bring Gospel Oak into line with similar LOROL-operated stations, such as Camden Road and West Hampstead.

It should be stressed that the proposal regarding opening hours only affects the Ticket Office. Gospel Oak station is, in common with all LOROL-operated stations, staffed throughout its operating day, from before the departure of the first train service each

morning until after the departure of the final train service each evening. This practice will be unaffected by the Ticket Office opening hours proposal.

Background to Proposal

The current Ticket Office opening hours at Gospel Oak, as enshrined in Schedule 17 of T&SA, arose from the convention – which dates back to the British Rail era – of conductors selling tickets, using Portable Operated Ticket Issuing System (PORTIS) machines and, later, AVANTIX machines, to passengers aboard train services operating on the Gospel Oak to Barking line (GOB). From this practice, the need arose to keep the Ticket Office at Gospel Oak open until the final GOB train service had terminated each day, to allow conductors to return the PORTIS or AVANTIX machines to the Ticket Office.

This convention continued after the vesting of British Rail in 1994, and throughout the tenure of North London Railways/Silverlink Metro (1995-2007). However, since the LOROL Concession began in November 2007, on-board ticket sales have been discontinued on the GOB. Thus there has been no requirement for PORTIS or AVANTIX machines, and the late opening time at Gospel Oak Ticket Office has not been required for this purpose.

In other words, the underlying reason behind the late opening time at Gospel Oak Ticket Office ceased to apply some five years ago. Hence, given the now-defunct PORTIS/AVANTIX convention, LOROL is re-considering the opening hours.

Recently, the level of ticket sales at Gospel Oak has been reviewed. This review illustrates that, from 1800hrs on weekdays, the rate of ticket sales drops sharply; moreover, most of the sales that do occur during evenings are either made using the two Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) that are in situ at Gospel Oak station, or could easily be made at these TVMs, as they mainly comprise Travelcards or Oyster top-ups. This review highlighted that the present Ticket Office arrangements are not cost effective.

Analysis of Ticket Sales

Following on from the initial review mentioned above, LOROL has undertaken a detailed analysis of Rail Product transactions that occur at Gospel Oak station.

The ticket sales data used for this analysis covers a 392-day time period, from 05th February 2012 to 02nd March 2013 (Rail Periods 12 2011/12 to 12 2012/13, i.e. 14 periods). The volume and breadth of the dataset begets confidence that this will average out any seasonal factors or other perturbations (for example, the Olympics and Paralympics occurred during the analysis period), and allow robust conclusions to be drawn regarding sales activity at Gospel Oak station.

This data has been analysed according to the following criteria:

- Ticket type (Oyster, Travelcard, Bus Pass or 'other');
- Means of sale (Ticket Office or TVM);
- Time of sale, in 15-minute time bands, from which a rolling hourly average is generated to illustrate sales activity; and

- The '12 issues an hour' Industry benchmark that is cited by the Department for Transport as defining a 'busy' Ticket Office.

Charts illustrating the data analysis are contained in Appendix 1. The principle conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis are as follows:

1. Depending on the time of week (weekdays, Saturdays or Sundays), between 92% & 95% of all ticket sales at Gospel Oak consist of Travelcards and Oyster;
2. Concerning just the Ticket Office at Gospel Oak, between 84% & 89% of ticket sales consist of Travelcards and Oyster;
3. In total, 70% of ticket sales at Gospel Oak are made via the TVMs and 30% are made at the Ticket Office;
4. The DfT and Industry's '12 issues an hour' benchmark is, on average, only exceeded on weekdays at Gospel Oak Ticket Office between 0800hrs & 1000hrs and 1545hrs & 1630hrs, and on Saturdays between 1200hrs & 1400hrs (not exceeded at all on Sundays); and
5. Ticket Office sales drop off sharply after 1800hrs on weekdays, after 1400hrs on Saturdays, and are low throughout the day on Sundays;

In summary, the data analysis emphasises that the typical demand for Rail Products at Gospel Oak station can continue to be met, via a combination of reduced Ticket Office hours and even greater use by passengers of the TVMs. As station staff will be on hand at all times to assist passengers with TVM transactions, and as the proposed extended hours of closure encompass time when the Ticket Office is lightly used, LOROL's view is that passengers will not be inconvenienced by the proposed changes.

Station Staffing & Accessibility

As mentioned above, Gospel Oak station will remain staffed from the first train service to the last train service each day, so the proposed changes to Ticket Office opening hours will not impact on the ability of customers to access any of the facilities at the station. Two TVMs are available to ensure that ticket retailing remains accessible to customers whenever the station is open.

For the proposed hours where the ticket office will close, Gospel Oak will remain a safe, fully accessible, secure and clean environment for customers. LOROL has invested in all of its stations to achieve:

- Secure Station Accreditation at all stations;
- CCTV upgrades, to provide comprehensive coverage at all stations;
- Passenger help points on all platforms; and
- Twice daily cleaning at all stations.

Procedure and Timescales

In accordance with Chapter 6-18 (2) (a) of the T&SA, this proposal has been shared (by receipt of a copy of this letter) with the following:

- London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus;
- ATOC (aka Rail Settlement Plan);
- Transport for London;
- All other Operators who are bound by the T&SA; and
- Department for Transport.

Additionally, and in accordance with Chapter 6-18 (2) (b) of the T&SA, information regarding the proposed change to Ticket Office opening hours has been advertised at Gospel Oak station, commencing on the date of this letter and to continue until Tuesday 28 May 2013. (Owing to the occurrence of two Public Holidays within the consultation period, we have allowed a slightly longer time than the 21 days stipulated in the T&SA.).

A copy of this advertisement is enclosed herewith, as Appendix 2.

Regarding timescales, LOROL invites Transport for London, and all other recipients of this letter, to serve notice in writing on LOROL regarding this proposal, within 28 days of the date of this letter, i.e. by Friday 31 May 2013, in accordance with Chapter 6-18 (2) (c) of the T&SA.

LOROL has consulted locally with its affected staff over the proposed changes, and has received a positive reaction. No redundancies will ensue from the changes, if implemented; LOROL simply intends to deploy a revised staff roster.

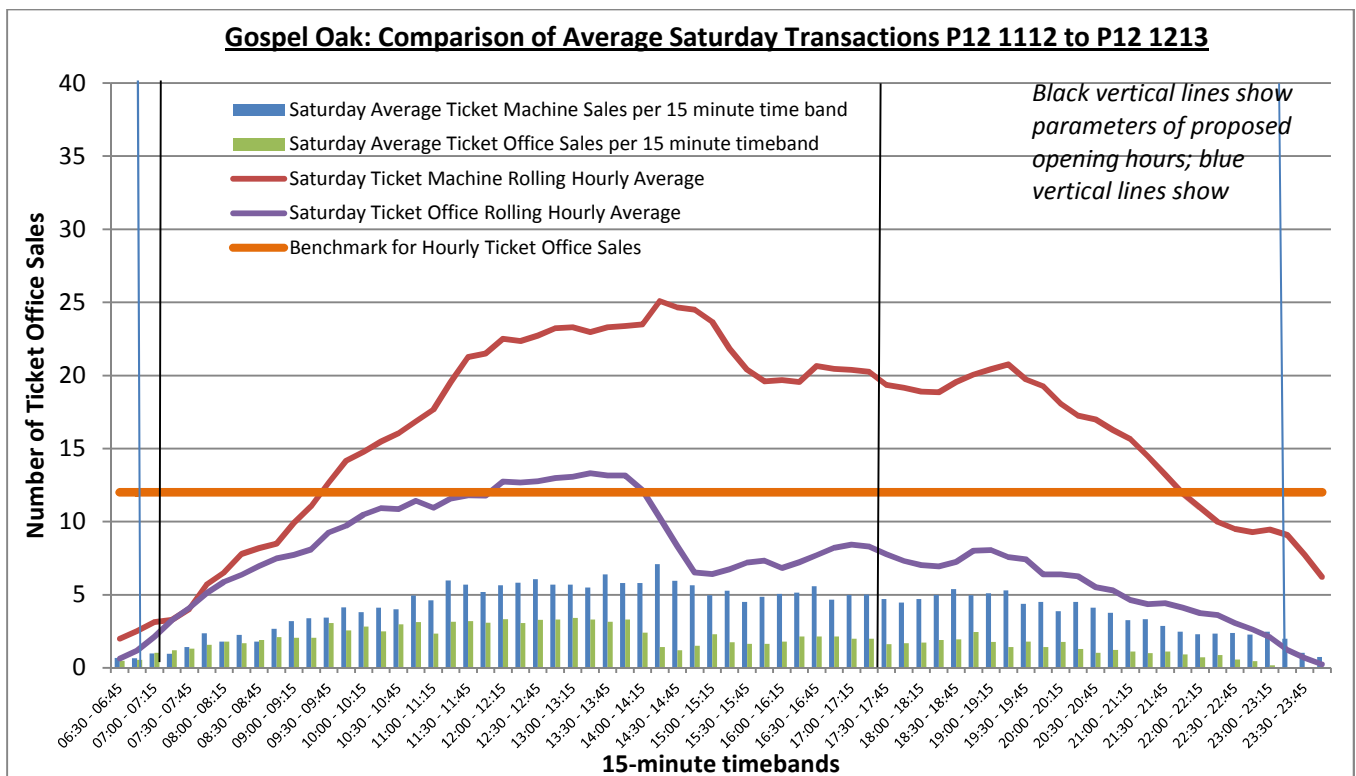
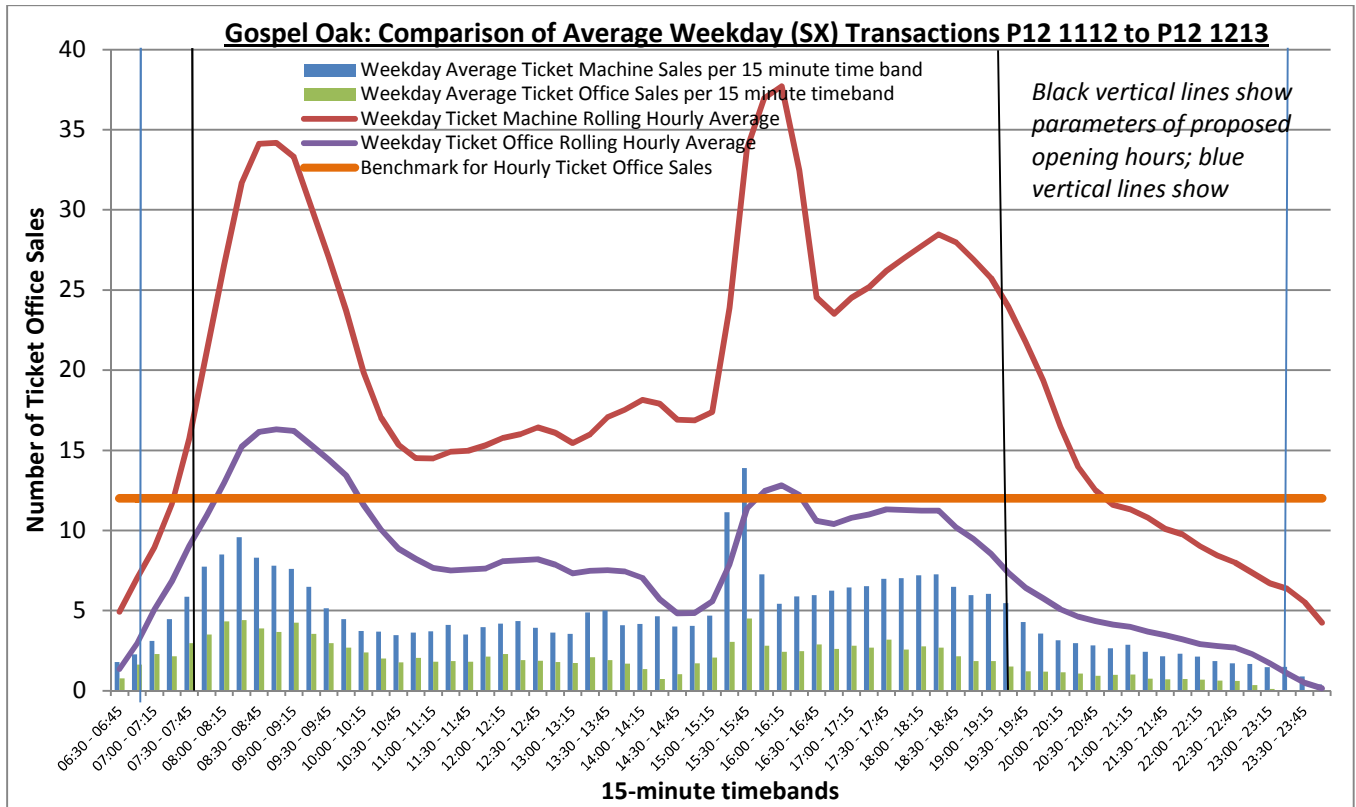
Thank you for your time and attention regarding this matter. Should you require any clarification regarding this proposal, or further information on the rationale and analysis that lies behind it, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

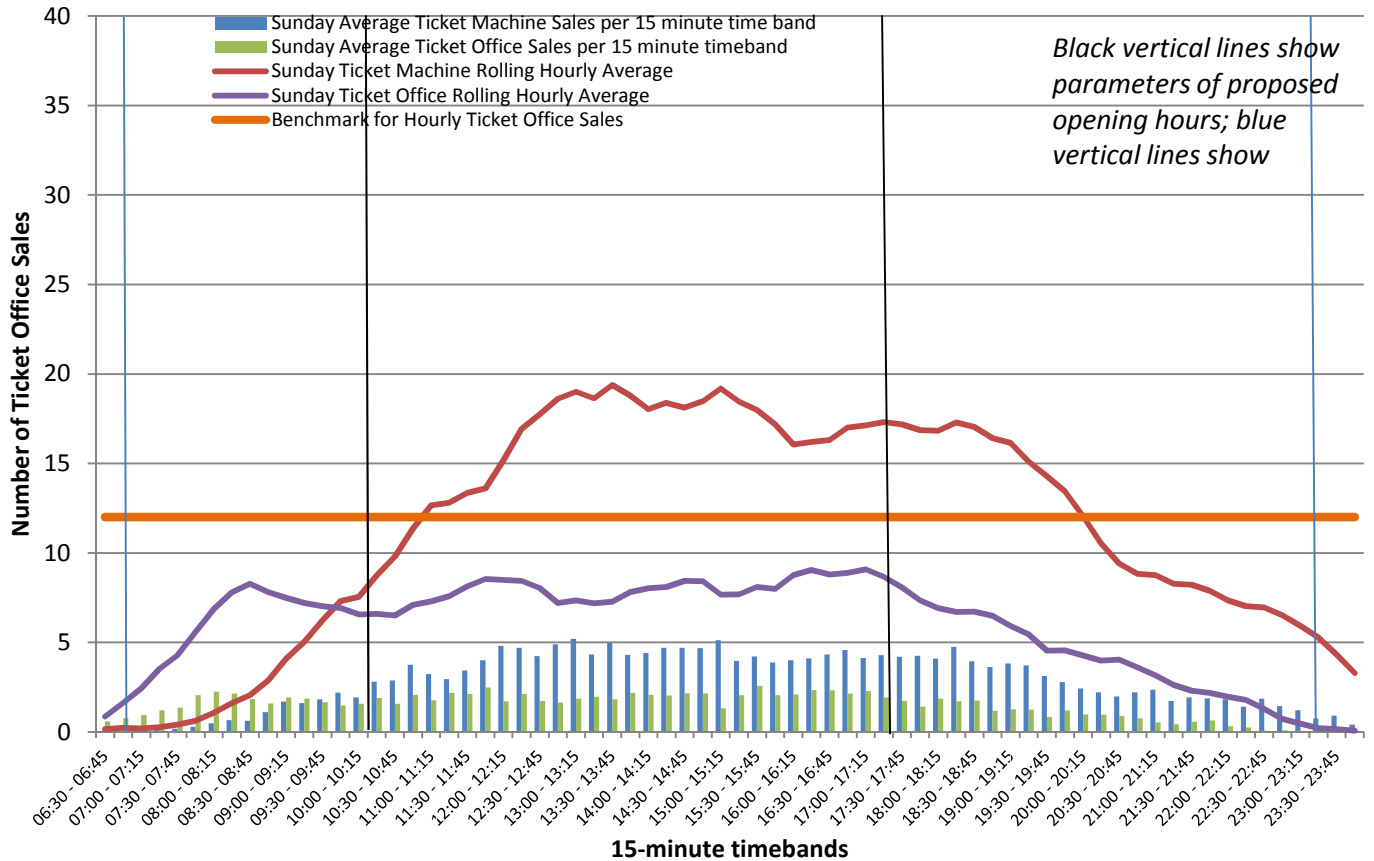


Mark Eaton
Concession Director
London Overground Rail Operations Limited

Appendix 1: Analysis Undertaken Regarding Sale of Rail Products at Gospel Oak Station

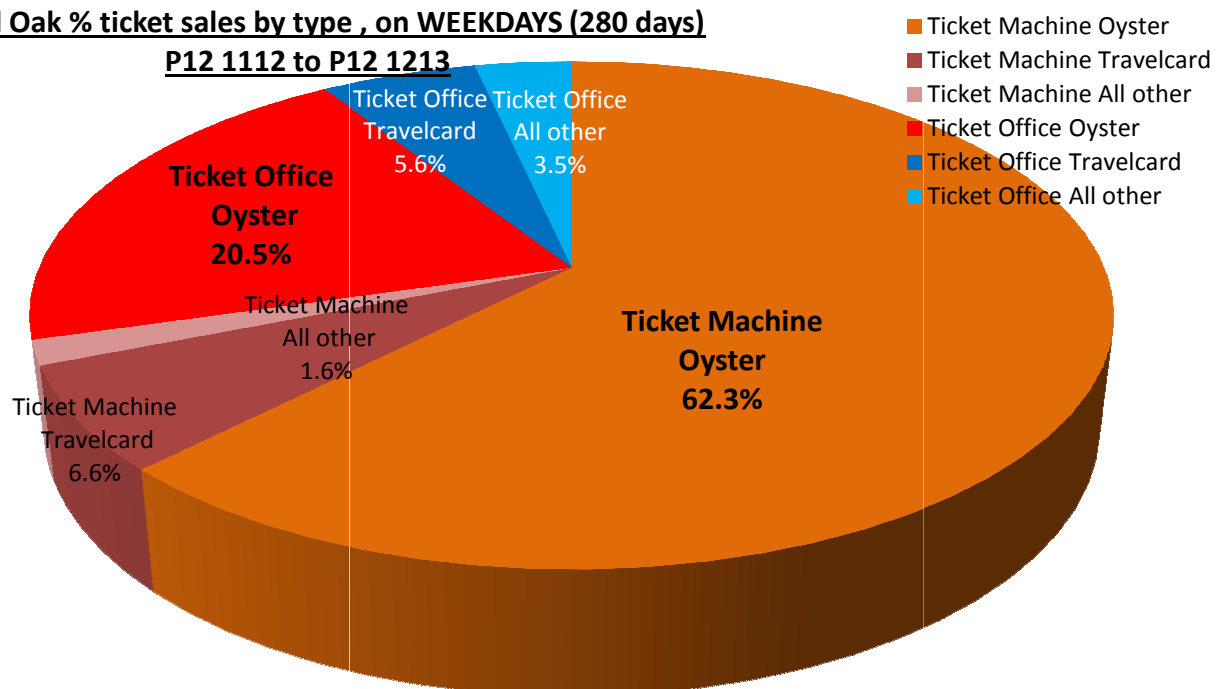


Gospel Oak: Comparison of Average Sunday Transactions P12 1112 to P12 1213



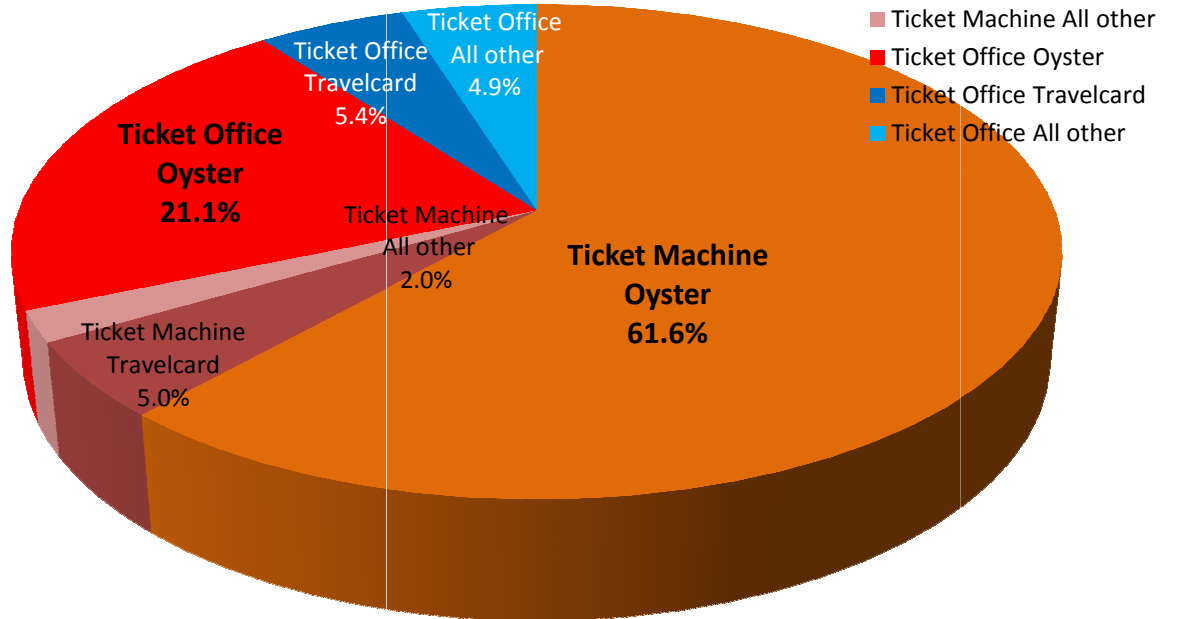
Gospel Oak % ticket sales by type , on WEEKDAYS (280 days)

P12 1112 to P12 1213



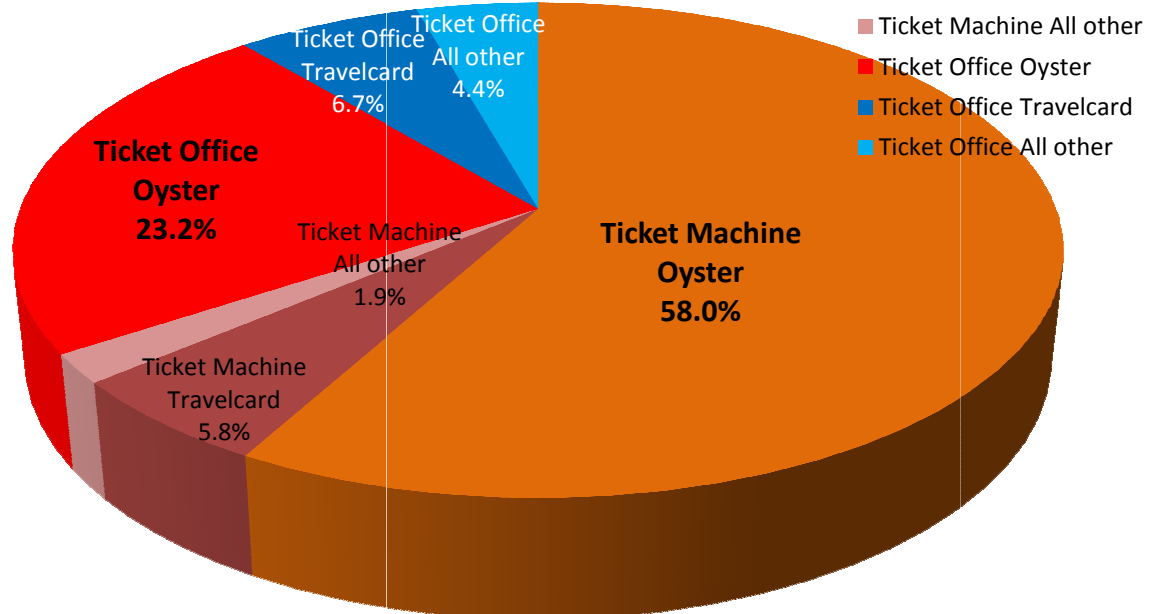
Gospel Oak % ticket sales by type , on SATURDAYS (56 days)

P12 1112 to P12 1213

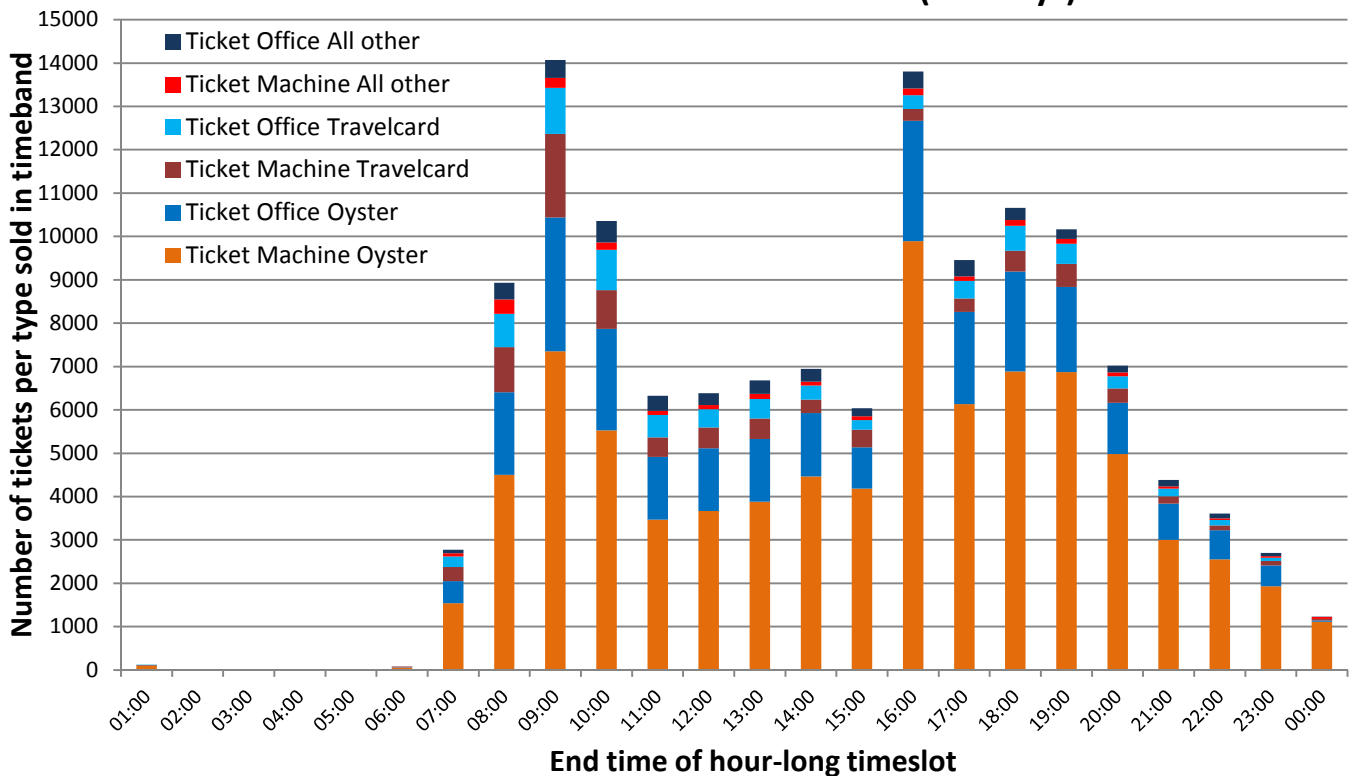


Gospel Oak % ticket sales by type , on SUNDAYS (56 days)

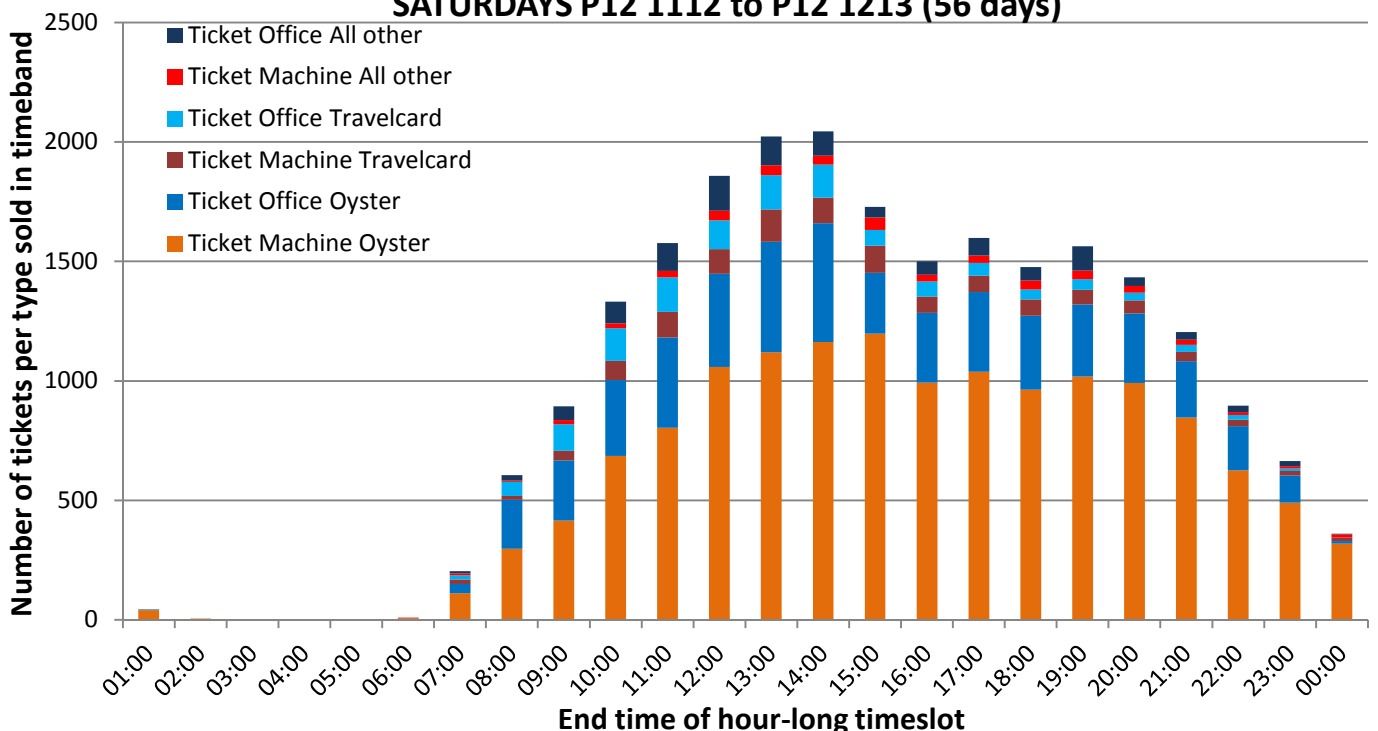
P12 1112 to P12 1213



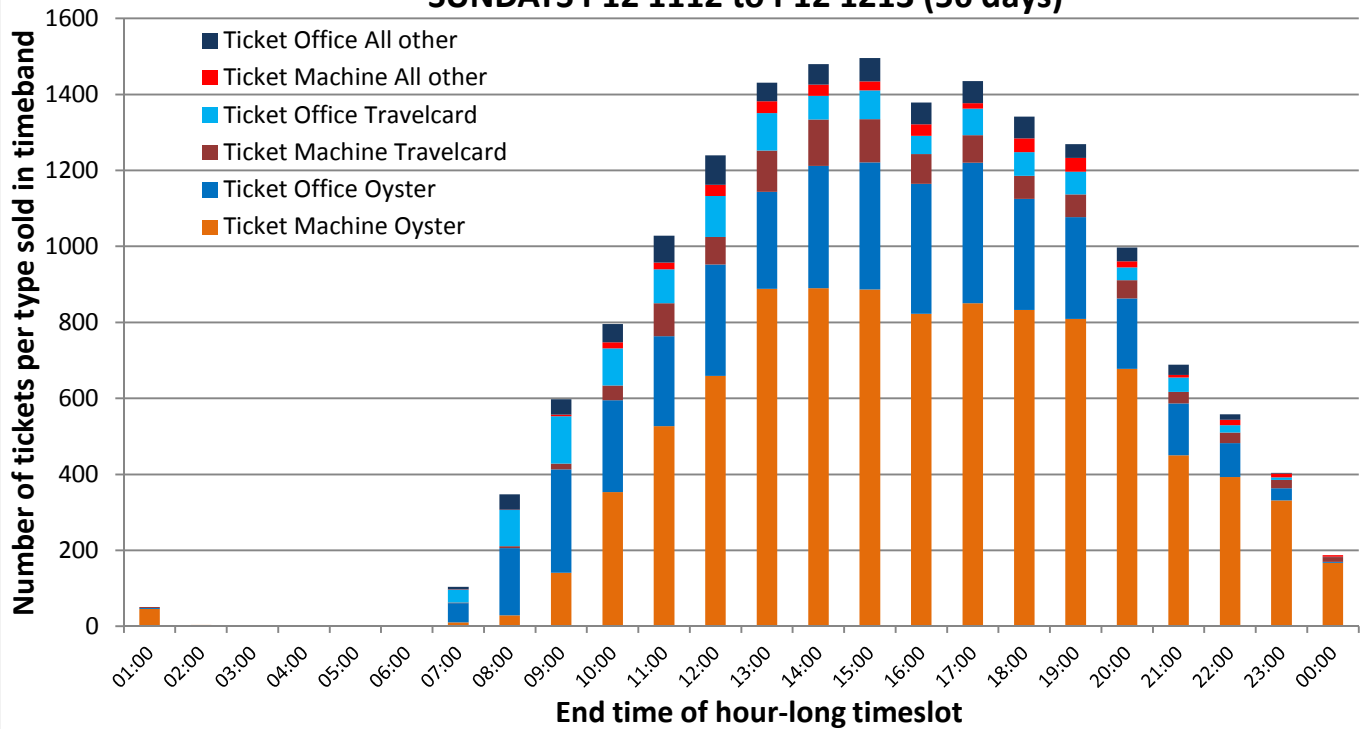
Gospel Oak: total # ticket sales by type & hour-long timeband , on WEEKDAYS P12 1112 to P12 1213 (280 days)



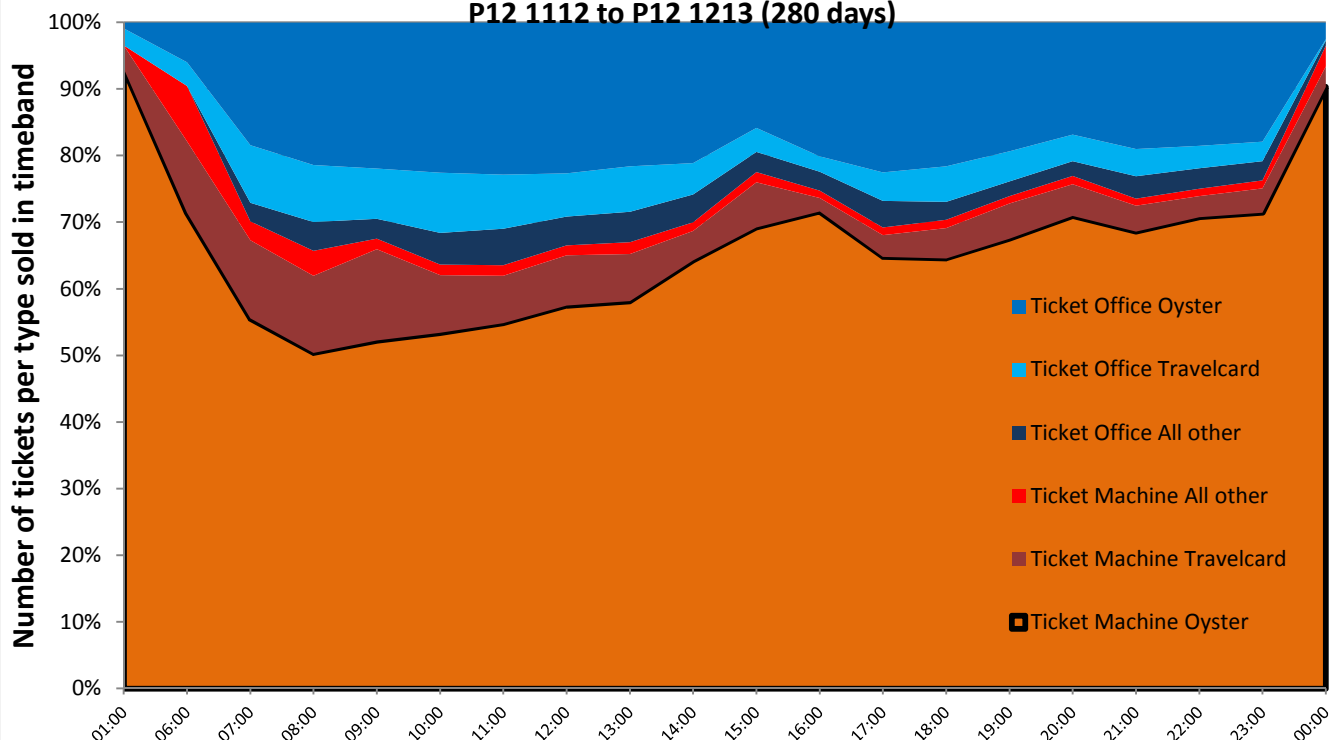
Gospel Oak: total # ticket sales by type & hour-long timeband , on SATURDAYS P12 1112 to P12 1213 (56 days)

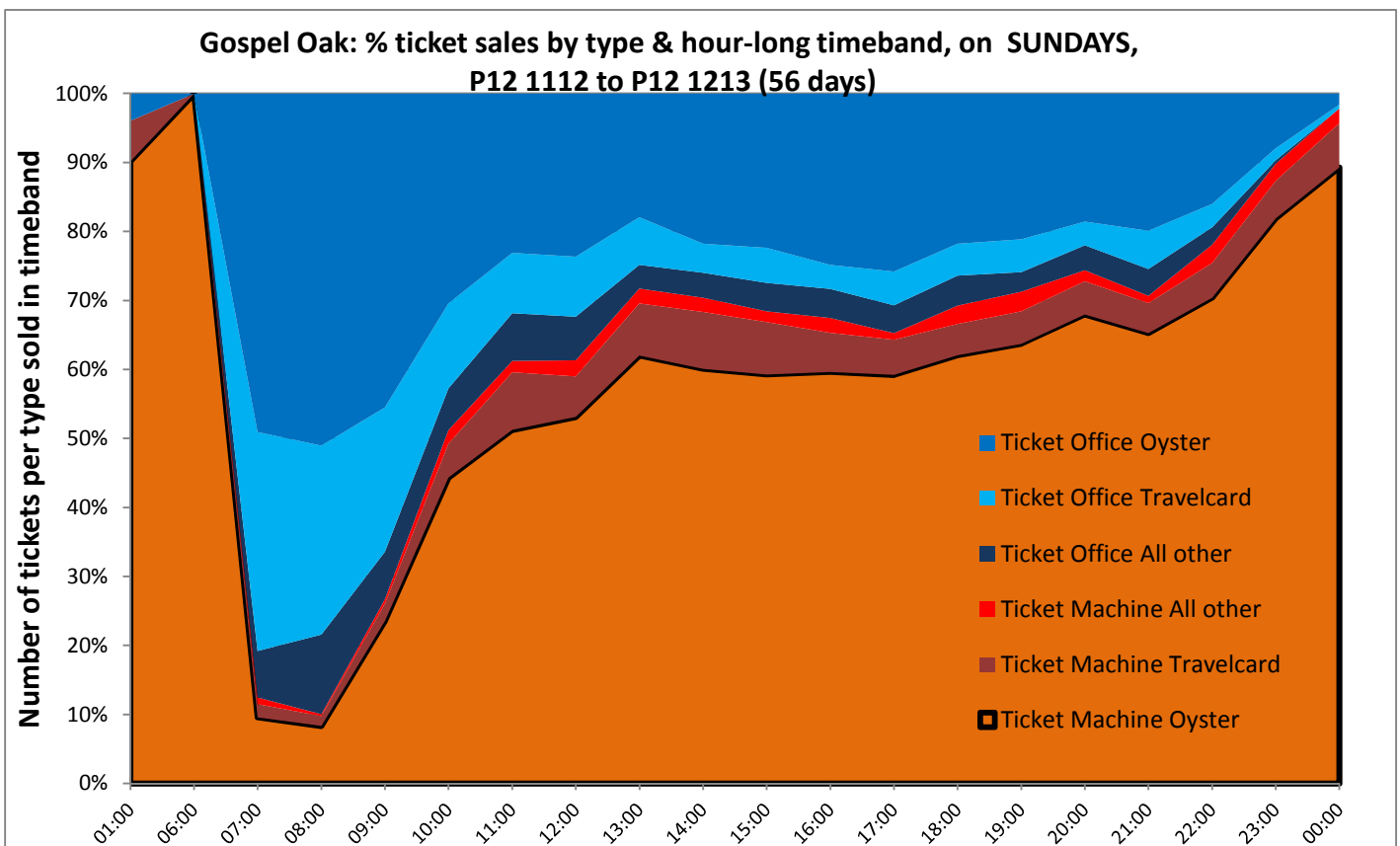
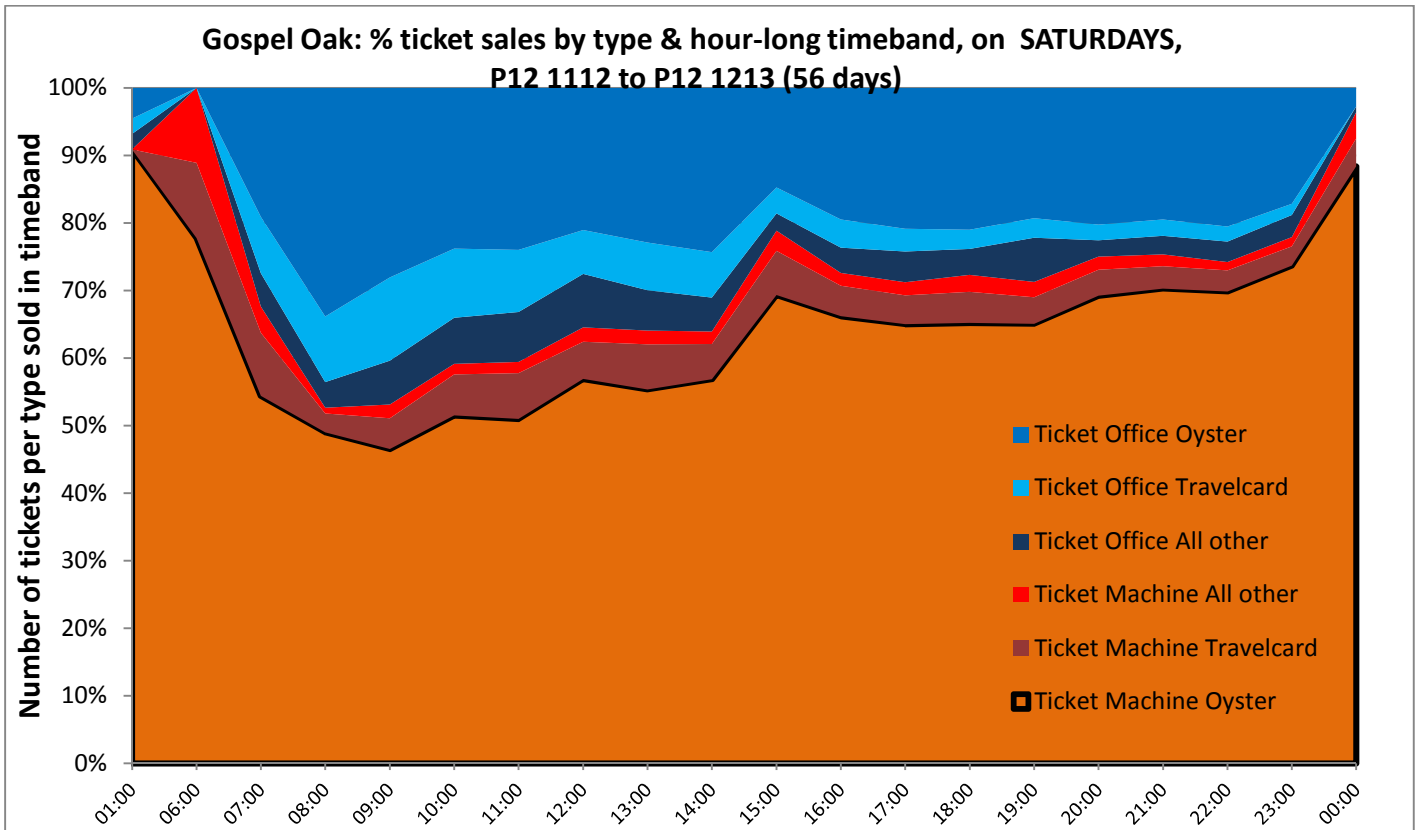


**Gospel Oak: total # ticket sales by type & hour-long timeband , on
SUNDAYS P12 1112 to P12 1213 (56 days)**



**Gospel Oak: % ticket sales by type & hour-long timeband, on WEEKDAYS,
P12 1112 to P12 1213 (280 days)**





Appendix 2: Text of Poster Advertisement on Display at Gospel Oak Station

03 May 2013

GOSPEL OAK STATION: PROPOSED CHANGES to the TICKET OFFICE OPENING HOURS

We propose to amend the opening hours of the ticket office at Gospel Oak station, as follows:

	Monday to Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
	<i>Opens</i>	<i>Closes</i>	<i>Opens</i>	<i>Closes</i>	<i>Opens</i>	<i>Closes</i>
Current hours	0630hrs	2315hrs	0630hrs	2315hrs	0830hrs	2230hrs
Proposed hours	0645hrs	2030hrs	0715hrs	2000hrs	1015hrs	1730hrs

The rationale behind the proposal is to update the ticket office hours to reflect the low level of usage of the ticket office during the early morning and late evening periods.

Gospel Oak station will continue to be staffed from before the first train service until the departure of the final train service each day. Ticket vending machines will remain available for passenger use at all times that the station is open.

Passengers who wish to formally comment on this proposal may do so by contacting London TravelWatch at the following address:

London TravelWatch
Dexter House
2 Royal Mint Court
London EC3N 4QN

Email: enquiries@londontravelwatch.org.uk

The closing date of this consultation is **Tuesday 28th May 2013.**

David Wornham
Customer Service Director
London Overground Rail Operations Limited



BARKING – GOSPEL OAK RAIL USER GROUP

Chairman: Alderman Frederick Jones, Barking & Dagenham Council
Vice Chair: Richard H Pout B.Sc. Econ. MILT, (020) 8348 5064, 07970 722991
Secretary: Glenn Wallis, (020) 8529 2361, 07789 791224

www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk
info@barking-gospeloak.org.uk



Please reply to:
227 Old Church Road,
Chingford,
London,
E4 6RB

(020) 8529 2361

London TravelWatch,
Dexter House,
2 Royal Mint Court,
London,
EC3N 4QN

25th May 2013

Dear Sir or Madam,

PROPOSED CHANGES TO OPENING HOURS OF GOSPEL OAK BOOKING OFFICE

I am writing on behalf of the Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group to object to the proposal by London Overground Rail Operations Limited to reduce the number of hours that the booking office at Gospel Oak station is open to the public.

BGORUG believes that the rationale behind this proposal is flawed. The reasoning appears to be simply economics, bringing the opening hours of this office into line with other, comparable LOROL operated booking offices.

BGORUG puts the counter argument that the wider benefits of staffed booking offices are being ignored and that LOROL should be expanding the hours of operation of its other comparable booking offices to mirror those of Gospel Oak.

ROLE OF A NATIONAL RAILWAY BOOKING OFFICE

The traditional role of a non Underground railway booking office is to be the 'shop window' of the railway and be able to offer rail tickets, travel advice and information to passengers and potential passengers, as well as the ability to issue tickets to any other station on the national rail network.

Since the transfer of the management of the former North London Metro routes from the Department for Transport (DfT) to Transport for London (TfL), there has been a noticeable move towards managing the London Overground network as an adjunct of London Underground. The 'image' of London Overground services on these and other routes and stations that have subsequently passed to TfL control, has been steadily changed away from being part of the national railway network and instead marketed as part of the 'TfL family'. The National Rail symbol has been removed from stations served only by London Overground and there is little to show that these stations are part of the national rail system and offer national rail products apart from the odd railcard poster on the platforms. The resource offered by having an office staffed by a trained, knowledgeable, directly employed member of staff has been squandered by TfL.

BARKING – GOSPEL OAK RAIL USER GROUP
PROPOSED CHANGES TO OPENING HOURS OF GOSPEL OAK BOOKING OFFICE

REDUCING PASSENGER CHOICE

Research by Passenger Focus and others, has shown that given the choice, passengers prefer to deal with a knowledgeable member of staff when seeking information and purchasing tickets or other rail products. When passengers are forced to use a Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) they often end up with a higher priced ticket than was necessary for the journey they were to undertake. In addition, LOROL TVMs, whose fare range is mandated by TfL, do not issue 'boundary zone' tickets, forcing passengers to alight at the zone boundary to seek to rebook or risk a Penalty Fare, again often resulting in their paying more for their journey than is necessary.

Since LOROL is increasingly outsourcing customer facing roles to agency staff (who, upon TfL's instruction have to wear the same uniform as LOROL staff), the booking office currently is the one place an intending passenger can be sure their transaction, be it financial or merely information seeking, will be dealt with by a competent, trained member of staff, actually employed by the company operating the station.

RECOMMENDATION FOR OPENING HOURS

BGOLUG wishes to counter propose that all LOROL operated booking offices, including Gospel Oak should be open, ideally:

Monday to Saturday: 06:30 – 23:00 hours

Sunday: 09:00 – 23:00 hours

We believe that the absolute minimum closing time must be 22:00 hours.

While we have referred to the 'Underground style' that is emerging on London Overground, one area where it has not become apparent is in the hours of operation of the train service, e.g. the last departure from Highbury & Islington to Stratford, being at 23:52SX; 23:45SO and 23:44Su. The last northbound Victoria Line train from Highbury & Islington on weekdays is around an hour later.

It is BGORUG's belief that while, reducing booking office hours, along with outsourcing staff, may deliver short term economies to the operators, in this case LOROL and TfL, in the long term it is the passengers who suffer a loss of facilities and inconvenience difficulty in trying to use the rail network. We therefore object to the reduction in opening hours of Gospel Oak booking office and respectfully request London TravelWatch to object to this proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Glenn Wallis
Secretary
Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group