

## **Notice of Motion On Proposal By Northern Trains To Close Rail Ticket Offices In The Borough To The Labour Group**

### **To Oppose the Closure Of Chorley, Buckshaw and Adlington Ticket Offices And Replacement With 'Journey Makers'**

Currently in Chorley we have 5 railway stations of which three have attended ticket offices. The proposal recently issued by Northern Rail and the Department of Transport will see the full closure of these ticket offices, and the creation of a new 'Journey Maker' role. The hours of attendance of this new role are a significant reduction in the hours a current staff member is available at the stations, and in the case of Adlington, outside of peak travel times.

Across the Chorley Borough, pre-Covid, nearly 1.5 million people used the stations annually. The latest data available is for 21/22 when almost 1 million people used the network. Given our recovery since the pandemic it would be fair to say we are again approaching pre-Covid usage numbers.

Many of those users will be placed in a situation of the rail network no longer being accessible to them by the ticket office closures. Young and old. Those with physical and hidden disabilities. Those who are not familiar with the rail connections and current routes who simply need to speak to a person for assistance. Those who will not be travelling at the peak times the 'Journey Maker' will be available. In fact, the 'Journey Maker' times seem to be geared around being available at times when people are travelling for work. A journey they probably make several times a week and require little assistance. There is very little provision being made for those who do not wish to travel at the busier times. People who would probably wish to avoid peak travel times.

There are also safety concerns about busy stations having no staff on site, leaving some users extremely vulnerable. We are already aware of issues around anti-social behaviour at local stations and this will only increase with no staff presence. Many young people do not fully understand the dangers around the railways or the number of serious injuries and deaths that occur every year on railway tracks. We should not be leaving stations open and unattended for young people to congregate and 'hang out'.

There appears to be very little equality of opportunity within the proposed measures and very little to support anyone presenting with any disability that may limit their access to the public transport system without assistance.

I ask that this Council urgently write to Northern Trains and the Secretary of State for Transport to strongly oppose this decision and to highlight the difficulty many of our residents will face if these proposals are enforced and the safety concerns of leaving such busy stations unattended. I also ask that the Council Leader submits a formal response to the consultation currently taking place to record the Council's opposition for the reasons stated above and any other reasons identified in due course.

I would also ask all Councillors present to voice their concerns via the online consultation and engage with their local residents to encourage them to also take part.