



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

21 August 2020

Chris Heaton Harris MP
Minister of State
Department for Transport
Great Minister House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Dear Chris,

Since your appointment as Minister of State at the Department for Transport we have had numerous conversations and meetings around the need to introduce more flexible ticketing on our rail services, to support part time rail commuters who do not need to commute every day of the week.

Since the coronavirus pandemic the number of commuters in this position has risen drastically, meaning the need for such flexible ticketing options has become even more urgent than ever. You will be aware that alongside almost all other Kent MP's, I asked Southeastern for further action on this and am pleased to note that last month they submitted proposals to the Department for a flexible ticketing solution, through the Rail Delivery Group. I trust you can look favourably on this application.

The impetus for change no doubt came from the policy which Great Western Railway sought to introduce. However, as part of this consideration I would be grateful if you could look at whether a carnet ticketing solution could be made available on Southeastern and GTR services. This is something supported by local rail user groups and would represent pre-bought tickets which can be used to travel on different days. For example, a book of ten tickets could be bought to be used over a two-month period.

South Western Railway are an example of an operator who offer a carnet system, however this only offers a 5% discount on standard fares. To be attractive to part time commuters, the discount ought to approach that of a weekly season ticket, with the larger the carnet, the higher the discount. In addition, it would be preferable for the carnet to be available for use in both peak and off-peak periods, reflecting the move away from standard office times, and towards supporting more flexible working patterns. This would also reflect that at present you cannot purchase an off-peak season ticket.

These ideas would help introduce a much needed modernisation of rail ticketing, recognising the increased flexibility that all rail passengers require, It is essential that public confidence is restored in the ability of the rail system to meet passengers needs, especially in communities like Tonbridge, Edenbridge and Malling where there are many residents who commute into

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London, but are unlikely to do so with as much regularity as they did in previous years.

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best wishes,

Tom Tugendhat

TOM TUGENDHAT