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Dear Guy

York – automatic ticket gates

Thank you for your letter to David Franks (who is on annual leave) regarding *National Express* East Coast's plans to introduce gating at York Station next year.

National Express East Coast is committed to improving the stations it manages and to ensuring they remain safe and pleasant environments for passengers.

We have recently committed £2.3m to improving York Station. This will include new electronic information boards, additional CCTV cameras, provision for increased cycling and a new first class lounge.

Gating, which is a franchise commitment, will help us to prevent fraudulent travel and protect revenue which can be reinvested in the stations that we manage. It will help us to improve and enhance facilities and the environment of the station, as well as increase the safety, comfort and security of passengers.

We are committed to continuing to engage with passengers and stakeholders to further improve and develop York Station, including in relation to our plans to introduce automatic gates. In recent weeks, this has included positive and constructive meetings and dialogue with the Head of the National Railway Museum, Hugh Bayley MP, City of York Council, york-england.com (the York and North Yorkshire Inward Investment Board) and Network Rail.

We also welcome dialogue with Passenger Focus and, while I have outlined answers to your specific questions within this letter, should you wish to discuss any aspect of the scheme or meet with National Express East Coast for a one-to-one briefing on our plans for York Station, please do not hesitate to contact Neal Smith, Public Affairs & Stakeholder Manager, on 0845 059 3217 or email neal.smith@national.express.com.



In response to your questions:-

What arrangements will be in place to allow 'meeters and greeters' access to the platform, for example to assist passengers with luggage to the train? Will platform tickets be available for this purpose, including at the Railway Museum entrance for those using the west side car parks?

The barriers will be manned at all times while they are operational (with the exception of two areas of barriers at Leeman Road and the long stay car park, which will both have video helplines during off peak hours). If a member of the public wishes to assist a friend or relative boarding or alighting from a train, they should approach staff at the barrier, who will then exercise reasonable discretion and allow them to access the platform accordingly. In such cases, we intend to issue platform passes, although note that we have no plans to implement revenue-generating platform tickets. Members of the public who have a similar request using the west side car park should also contact staff.

What assessment has been made of the likely additional transactions through York ticket office – and their impact on compliance with the three and five minute queuing time standards?

We are currently reviewing our travel centre activities in order to adapt to the anticipated increases in traffic in the three to six months following the installation of the gates. The evidence from increased barrier coverage at Doncaster and Darlington in peak hours clearly demonstrates that demand in the ticket office will increase. However, evidence from National Express East Anglia suggests that demand through travel centres levels off in the longer term as passengers opt to purchase weekly or monthly season tickets.

It is important that passengers who arrive on trains from unstaffed stations without tickets are not unduly delayed on their journey. It is not their fault that the Guard did not make it to them. How has the capacity of the Excess fares point been determined?

We are installing an Excess Fares window at York. Initially, we will also ensure members of staff are issued with Avantix machines in order to issue tickets adjacent to the gates. Past experience from gating exercises at York has proved that the majority of ticketless travel is on non-National Express East Coast flows, in particular the routes into York which are operated by Northern. We will be working with Northern and other train operating companies to address issues relating to pre-departure and on-board revenue collection to see if improvements can be made.

How will Grand Central passengers, who are permitted to buy tickets on the train without financial penalty, be granted access to the platforms?

Grand Central passengers will need to purchase tickets in advance to access trains. Tickets can be bought at the station on the day of travel or purchased on-line. Tickets can also be collected at ticket vending machines (TVM), adjacent to the gates. Passengers will not be able to access the platform to buy a ticket on the train.



In the event of TVM failure at either of the 'remote' gate lines, what will passengers without tickets be expected to do?

We would endeavour to send a member of staff to the barriers with an Avantix machine. If we are still unable to provide adequate opportunities to purchase a ticket, we would open the barriers to permit access to the station

How will the gate lines be managed at times of congestion, e.g. on race days?

At planned events we would provide extra staffing, as is our normal practice. The safety of passengers is our key priority and staff would, if necessary, open the barriers if the level of congestion deemed it the most sensible course of action.

Finally, please would you confirm the following?

That the cycle parking area on Platform 1 will be outside the gate line.

Yes. Cyclists will be able to access the train side of the station through gates, including a wide gate that will allow cycles to be taken through, which will be situated close to the cycle racks. A TVM will also be sited at these gates for increased convenience.

That the TVMs located at the Museum entrance and the entrance from the car park will be TOD-enabled?

Yes.

That it is intended to have TVMs at both 'remote' gate lines on an ongoing basis (the phrase "temporarily installed" on the Lambert Smith Hampton plan for the Railway Museum entrance creates some doubt).

Yes, we intend to have the TVMs installed permanently. The temporary reference on the plan reflects the fact that the siting of the machine will shift slightly even though it will remain at the entrance.

We look forward to continuing to work with Passenger Focus and thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Goldsmith
Deputy Managing Director
National Express East Coast