Kevin’s response to Paignton Consultation Proposals,

Dear Sirs\Madams

**Consultation on Closure of Torquay Ticket Office**

I write as the Member of Parliament whose constituency includes Torquay Station to give my comments on the proposal to close the ticket office at this station.

Whilst noting the wider reasoning for the overall proposals is the fall in the use of ticket offices to under 15% of sales nationally, the situation at Torquay Station indicates a higher number of people still wishing to have a staff member sell them a ticket.

As the consultation document itself confirms, at Torquay Station 29.4% (37,984) of tickets are still sold from the ticket office, nearly double the national average. This said, as a regular user of Torquay Station for my own train travel, I recognise the current facilities are far from ideal for passengers.

The ticket office, facilities for staff manning the station and customer toilets are all located on the Down Platform, where the only destination is Paignton Station. Whilst many arrive at this platform, only a tiny number depart from it. Most passengers (over 90%) using this station enter the station from the other side of the building onto the Up Platform.

The Up Platform is the location of the self-service ticket machine, but staff are based mostly based in the Ticket Office on the opposite platform. To reach the Ticket Office requires using a Victorian era footbridge with no lift or any form of accessible option to reach the other side of the station, although a lift is planned this will still be an inconvenient option.

Whilst Torquay Station is a historic gem and a perfect specimen of classic Victorian Station architecture, the immediate environment for passengers arriving at Torquay Station on the Up Platform is far from welcoming, with disused (and damaged) letter boxes mounted to the wall the first sight on arrival. The buildings on the Up Platform are in good condition, but have been empty for some years.

Given these facts I would raise the following points in response to the proposals for Torquay:

* The current ticket office and staff facilities are on the “Down” Platform, whilst the self-service ticket machine is located on the “Up” Platform where virtually all passengers depart from. If the ticket office closes, will staff facilities be provided in the buildings on the Up Platform, along with additional\upgraded ticket machine, to make it easier for staff to help customers purchase tickets and access trains?
* The buildings on the Up Platform have been unoccupied for some time, as part of these changes could a proper waiting room\booking hall area (With ticket machine) be created (With toilet facilities), rather than passengers and staff needing to stand on the platform during winter months and cross the bridge to access toilets?
* What will the staffing numbers at Torquay Station be before and after the changes proposed during hours it is manned?

I would be grateful for a response to the above points and for confirmation of receipt of this email.

Finally, I have copied this email to Cllr Mark Spacagna whose ward includes Torquay Railway Station and has supported the Friends group.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Foster MP

Member of Parliament for Torbay

House of Commons

London

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