

Dear Michelle, Harry

Thank you for your letter and for bringing this campaign to my attention.

I understand concerns raised regarding Merseyrail's approach to issuing fines to those who have purchased tickets on the Trainline app and have routinely lobbied on behalf of affected passengers to the concession holder to show greater discretion to passengers who purchase tickets in this fashion - and (crucially) update ticketing infrastructure to allow for digital ticketing.

Merseyrail have not invested in functionality that would allow tickets to be scanned. There have been instances by which passengers claim a refund for 'unused' e-tickets after travel has been completed as the ticket will not have been scanned and therefore a loss of revenues to the system.

Whilst I appreciate these challenges, it is my view that the current arrangements are not user friendly or accessible, and I acknowledge that it is often non-regular train users being penalised as they are unfamiliar with these unique Merseyrail byelaws.

I frequently correspond with Merseyrail on behalf of residents who have been issued a fine, ranging from passengers who were unable to print a ticket prior to boarding the train to those who have cognitive impairments who are trying to navigate a complex and unique ticket process. Upon several occasions, we have managed to have these fines overturned.

To resolve the issue going forward, train operating companies must invest in new infrastructure to support the use of e-tickets such as those purchased on Trainline.

During my time as Mayor, I have been working to update our current ticketing system and improve the quality of the passenger experience. The Combined Authority has invested £9.8m in developing a new tap and go smart ticketing system with contactless payments and daily fare caps, which will be introduced shortly.

From this autumn, tap and go contactless payments will be available at all Merseyrail stations for passengers using a Metro Card linked to their bank account. The second phase of this scheme, which will launch in 2025, will enable passengers to use their bank card without the need for a MetroCard.

Furthermore, should I be successful in the upcoming election, I will ensure that this archaic approach is no longer in place when the new concession is awarded in 2028 by making a stipulation as part of the bidding process.

In the meantime, I will continue to lobby Merseyrail on behalf of residents for a fairer and more understanding process.

Best wishes,

Steve Rotheram  
Mayor of the Liverpool City Region