

Dr Carolyn Wilkins OBE

Our Ref: 8000055296

Your Ref: Council–Access 20170322

Carolyn.wilkins@oldham.gov.uk

24 April 2017

Dear Carolyn,

RE: Oldham Council Resolution – Access for All

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the accessibility of rail stations in the Greater Manchester area.

Poor access to the rail network is a nationwide issue, and the duty to address it lies with the rail industry as a whole. It is unacceptable that over half of Greater Manchester's train stations are not accessible to all.

Funding for such improvements has primarily and previously come through the Department for Transport's (DfT) 'Access for All' (A4A) scheme. While TfGM can and has made bids for funding, the decision on which stations receive investment ultimately rests with the DfT.

As you are aware, £102 million was made available nationally in the previous funding cycle (2014-2019) but unfortunately none of Greater Manchester's 54 local rail stations were selected for funding. Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) did however secure investment for Mills Hills through a second tranche of funding and the design for this scheme is currently being finalised in preparation for delivery.

TfGM shares your frustration at the outcome of the Hendy review with funding for many schemes deferred into control period 6 (2019-2024); however we also understand that Network Rail have a finite funding allowance for this period.

Under the Equalities Act the adaptation of Railway Stations, licensed railway operators, including Network Rail, are only obliged to assess accessibility adjustments whenever they install, renew or replace infrastructure or facilities.

As a matter of course TfGM continue to pursue this with Network Rail where works trigger station change in the GM area.

In addition to Network Rail conditions, the Train Operating Companies are also obliged to provide alternative accessible transport where a station is inaccessible. This alternative is to be provided, at no extra cost, to the nearest or most convenient station to enable passengers to continue their journey.

TfGM is aware that satisfaction with rail stations is driven by a variety of expectations including the availability of facilities, interconnectivity, the provision of information and how accessible and inclusive stations are to their patrons. It is fair to say that an inconsistency exists in terms of the facilities provided, customer experience and levels of investment and development. The current Northern franchise will see around £50 million invested in the estate over the next 7 years. We anticipate that Greater Manchester stations will receive around £8 million of this Station Improvement Fund.

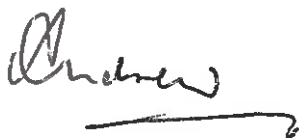
In addition TfGM, as part of the 2014 GM Devolution Agreement, has recently, on behalf of GMCA, submitted the '*Case for Change: GMCA Stations Transfer*' to Government which proposes a new way of investing, managing and operating GM stations. This will potentially see the transfer of asset management and station operations to TfGM on extremely long term leases (circa 150 years) as opposed to shorter term, franchise based periods of 7-10 years.

This approach proposes increased, more effective and efficient funding solutions to be provided to address station improvements including delivering a more accessible and inclusive GM station estate.

At this time, your continued support in lobbying government for a rapid and positive consideration of this case would be most helpful in securing a long term commitment to the improvement of rail station facilities in our region.

If I can be of any further assistance, then please do not hesitate to contact me or TfGM's Head of Rail, Amanda White at Amanda.White@tfgm.com.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Councillor Andrew Fender
Chair, Transport for Greater Manchester Committee