



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Nusrat Ghani MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

17 October 2019

Dear Nus

I write regarding the Government's £20 million Access for All mid-tier programme, and specifically, to nominate two stations in my constituency – Elmstead Woods and Chislehurst – for consideration as part of the scheme.

As you will recall, both stations were shortlisted earlier this year during the consultation for the previous funding round. It was disappointing that neither was ultimately successful through this £300 million package, and I maintain that the installation of lifts at these stations would be of considerable benefit, not just to those in the local community, but also other passengers travelling on the Sevenoaks-London Charing Cross line. However, I believe the sort of small-scale enhancements this mid-tier programme would facilitate could provide a welcome and necessary improvement in provision until full step-free access is made available. For example, accessible toilets and booking counters, more handrails, better signage and lighting, particularly in the subway at Chislehurst, as well as tactile paving on the footbridge at Elmstead Woods, would all help to significantly improve the travel experience for disabled passengers.

The reasons why enhancements are needed is clear to see. Both Elmstead Woods and Chislehurst have a considerable footfall of passengers, with ORR figures showing that 1,227,828 and 1,193,732 journeys were made at the stations respectively during the course of 2016/17. That not only includes the large number of commuters who travel daily to central London, but also less regular passengers, many of whom rely on Southeastern services for more local trips.

As part of this process, I believe particular consideration should be given to the age demographic of the constituency, with Bromley being home to more pensioners than any other London borough. The proximity of both stations to a number of schools, including Marjorie McClure – an Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' special school – and local sports clubs only stands to strengthen the need for more accessible local stations.

Indeed, Bromley and Chislehurst has the second largest number of rail commuters of any constituency in England and Wales, following only Lewisham West and Penge. Whilst, after a long-fought campaign, including the presentation of a petition in the House of Commons, we were able to finally install a lift at Bromley South station in 2012, many



passengers find it hard to understand why this part of the commuter belt continues to lag behind others in terms of step-free access.

I very much welcome that plans to make Shortlands, St Mary Cray and Petts Wood stations more accessible are currently in the design stage, but I believe there is a concerning gap in accessibility along this much-used section of the Sevenoaks line. I hope, through this process, we will be able to begin to address that anomaly.

I would, of course, be very happy to discuss this with you further.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'B' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal line.

Bob Neill MP