



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill
Rail Minister
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

1 August 2024

Dear Lord Hendy,

Step-free access to Platform Six, Upminster Station

I write to you in connection to my long-running campaign to provide step-free access to Platform Six at Upminster Station, the only platform at Upminster without it. In May, the project was granted Access for All (AfA) funding by your Department to undertake feasibility works. However, I am concerned that the Department's response to a written question on the timescale for these works (Q1549) indicated that the Government's approach to the program may change.

As a former Commissioner for Transport for London, I am sure that you will be aware that Upminster is a busy and important station within the TfL network. The latest data from the Office for Rail and Road estimates that the station ranks 31st in London for passenger interchanges and 58th for total number of entries/exits, with 4.4million journeys starting/ending at the station between April 2022 to March 2023. Of course, given that more people are returning to the work place in the wake of the pandemic, usage is likely to have increased since then.

Upminster Station has step-free access to the platform for the c2c services and District Line services, however access to Platform Six for the London Overground Upminster-Romford branch is via stairs. This is both the only platform within Upminster Station and on this branch of the London Overground not to have step-free access. It is worth acknowledging that the entirety of the Elizabeth Line service has step-free access making Platform Six a particular glaring omission from an otherwise very accessible corner of the TfL network.

The London Overground Upminster-Romford service acts as a vital link for c2c services between London Fenchurch Street and Shoeburyness to the Elizabeth Line travelling through central London to Heathrow Airport. Making that platform accessible would be especially valuable for those with cases who want to get to Heathrow on the Elizabeth Line or older people, parents with buggies and disabled people who want to go to work, shop or socialise in Romford.

Since 2018, I have been working closely with the station operator, c2c, to support AfA applications. In doing so, we have garnered the support of the local authority, disability groups and over 1,100 residents who signed a petition in favour of the project.

In his response to my question, Minister Lightwood advised that the Government are 'carefully considering the best approach to the AfA programme'. While I also note Minister Lightwood's comments that the Government *is* committed to improving the accessibility of the railway, I do wish to seek assurances that this commitment extends to Upminster.

Telephone: 020 7219 2631

Email: julia.lopez.mp@parliament.uk

Web: www.julialopez.co.uk Twitter: @julialopezmp



I hope that this letter is helpful in confirming the importance of this project to the local community and the wider rail network in the region. I would welcome any further assurance you are able to provide as Rail Minister.

With best wishes,

Julia Lopez MP

Member of Parliament for Hornchurch & Upminster