

Friends of Dore and Totley Station's (FoDaTS) response to DfT Draft Transport Accessibility Action Plan Consultation

On behalf of the FoDaTS group, I respond to the DfT's Draft Transport Accessibility Action Plan, published in August 2017. It is believed the response deadline has been extended from 15th to 22nd November 2017.

FoDaTS is a group of Friends who are helping to take care of our local station which is situated in the south-west of Sheffield, South Yorkshire on the only southern Trans-Pennine rail route, the Hope Valley line. Whilst in a very pleasant, semi-rural location, it is primarily an urban station with a wide catchment area and growing patronage (some 165,000 in 2016). It serves commuters for Sheffield, Sheffield City Region and the Greater Manchester City Region (and Manchester Airport) as well as one of the main gateways for SY to the Peak District National Park: it is without doubt vital to the economic, social and recreational well-being of SY and the Region. Set against a backdrop of woodland some of which carries SSSI status, it operates as a transport interchange for all modes of travel being sited on the A621 primary route with regular stage carriage bus services. We also have a 120 or so space Park and Ride facility with a considerable number parking on surrounding streets.

We welcome your draft strategy and find it very informative and comprehensive. We broadly support all the many actions that you put forward although of course adequate resources will have to be found if they are to be delivered. We hope the strategy, when confirmed, will not become another wish list.

We concentrate our comments on the railway aspects but appreciate that you have attempted to cover most modes of travel and the full range of disabilities. Indeed, this should be so as trips must be seen as 'door to door' rather than mode specific. We would like to make a couple of more detailed comments which we hope you will find useful.

Paragraph 4.50 is quite correct in stating that much railway infrastructure was built in the Victorian era when the needs of the disabled were not considered. However, some needs were better provided for and this included public conveniences. Over the years, these have been removed from many stations (including those at D&T) as have other facilities. It would be very useful (and surely not beyond the wit of the modern age) if funding could be earmarked in whatever grants are available for the provision and maintenance of this much requested facility (accessible for all of course) at the more remote stations where services are less frequent and waiting times generally longer.

Where rail tracks are on any sort of curve and the platform is on the concave side and where, over the years, the track bed has been raised by re-ballasting (as is the case at D&T), this results in a large gap and step from rolling stock entrance/exits, particularly in the older equipment that is currently in use (as

is the case on the Hope Valley Line). This is an obstacle to the able-bodied, let alone those with mobility impairments. It is appreciated that ramps are carried and can be deployed but, due to passenger volumes and delay, this is very rare, particularly during peak periods (except in the more exceptional circumstances, wheelchairs for example).

Finally, we wish you well in defining metrics for accessibility and applying them on a 'door to door' travel basis. As your draft strategy points out in Figure 2, impairments reported by disabled people are many and varied. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to satisfy all the variety of needs but many thanks for beginning to outline this mammoth task.

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