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**Sent:** 25 June 2020 17:56  
**To:** GOVE, Michael <[michael.gove.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:michael.gove.mp@parliament.uk)>  
**Cc:** Halsall John <[John.Halsall@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:John.Halsall@networkrail.co.uk)>; [TransportSecretary@dft.gov.uk](mailto:TransportSecretary@dft.gov.uk)  
**Subject:** RE: Ash Vale step-free access

Michael,

I'm writing, as promised, with an update on the potential to improve journey times to and from London for Bagshot, Camberley and Frimley stations.

I appreciate how important this issue is for you and your constituents. So while I am I'm sorry to say that the service increase, set out by South Western Railway (SWR) in its franchise contract, and then as part of the December 2018 timetable consultation, is still unachievable. I have set out some other options which could help services from Bagshot, Camberley and Frimley.

### **Providing a reliable service for passenger**

Providing a reliable train service for passengers is our ultimate objective. And it is deeply ironic that over the past few months we've seen exceptional levels of train service reliability because of fewer trains on the network and very few passengers - two characteristics we hope that will change very soon. With lock down easing and COVID-19 impacting a smaller number of people, we are planning our recovery. So we've launched a review, 'Build Back Better', to inform how we can gradually reintroduce train services and attract passengers back to the railway, without compromising the reliable and safe service we want to provide. We don't know the extent to which passenger demand might be reduced, but there is every indication that travel patterns will start to change, which is why we're looking at all these issues together. As I'm sure you will understand the decisions on what we do in this field will of course be subject to DfT approval.

### **Improving the service design**

Importantly for your constituents, the review will give us an opportunity to consider whether the current train service pattern for Bagshot, Camberley and Frimley can be improved by revising the existing service design, without needing to operate more services.

### **Feasibility study – Frimley to Alton Chord**

Further to this, an option we've previously discussed to improve journey times and provide alternative services is the Sturt Chord. Although our studies have indicated this is not a viable proposition, another solution to benefit passengers in your constituency could be to build a chord between the Frimley and Alton lines, so avoiding some of the issues generated by the Sturt Chord.

I've asked our strategic planning team to instigate a specific study for your area, jointly with SWR, to establish if these are viable options in reducing journey times for passengers at Bagshot, Camberley and Frimley. This work will take around three months and I'll be in touch again when it's completed.

I hope this shows that although there are challenges in addressing these issues, we're working to see how we can resolve them in the interests of passengers in your area. I look forward to discussing this further when we have the results from our studies.

Andrew



**Andrew Haines**

Chief Executive

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