



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

10 June 2020

Dear Secretary of State

Re: Cowley Branch Line, Restoring your Railway Fund

I am committed to ensuring that the Cowley Branch Line is re-opened to passengers as quickly as possible, and I will continue to push on this issue. I believe the re-opening of the line will be fast, cheap and improve air quality and transport connections for residents of Oxford and beyond. It would connect our communities in Littlemore and Blackbird Leys to the centre of Oxford, and onwards to Bicester and other destinations, and vastly reduce the volume of traffic on our roads.

I have been working with the Oxfordshire LEP, the County Council and the City Council to ensure we have the best approach to the application process. We did not submit for the grant this time round at the request of the County Council. The County Council is working with the Department for Transport, the Oxfordshire Growth Board and other partners to progress the corridor study for Oxfordshire's railways, the first phase of which was completed earlier this year. The second round of this study is being undertaken now, and it is looking at the additional capacity needed to ensure that the Cowley Branch Line service could run, with a particular focus on the section of the line between Oxford Station and Kennington.


The County Council have determined that given the interconnectedness of the county's railways, we were very unlikely to have success with a bid this time, as issues elsewhere on the railway would limit the feasibility of services on the line at present.

Instead, we are going to put in an application later in the autumn, either for the third round of the 'Ideas' fund, or for a new 'Accelerating Proposals' fund, details of which we expect to be announced later in the year. By waiting until autumn, the County Council have assured me that with the second phase of the Corridor Study completed, and the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy (and its supporting

Investment Plan), we will ensure we can make the strongest possible case to the Department for Transport, who will judge the merit of our application based on the services able to run on the line and the demonstrable socio-economic impact of the new services.

I can assure you that I am still pushing on this issue, and I will work to ensure that passenger services will run on the Cowley Branch Line as soon as possible.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anneliese Dodds". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anneliese Dodds MP

Member of Parliament for Oxford East