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for Transport

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From the Secretary of State
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Dear Michael,

Thank you for your email of 10 November regarding step free access at Ash Vale station.

We're taking great strides to improve accessibility for all passengers through the Access for All programme. To accelerate delivery of step free accessible routes at stations, we recently closed the nomination period for Access for All projects to receive funding beyond 2024. Over 300 nominations were submitted, and I can confirm that Ash Vale station was nominated by South Western Railway.

The Department will now assess these nominations with Network Rail. As in previous tranches, the criteria used will include annual station footfall, weighted by the incidence of disability in the area, the availability of third-party funding, and the priorities of the rail industry itself. We must also ensure a fair geographical spread of projects across Great Britain.

I'm pleased to read of your endorsement for Access for All funding at Ash Vale station, and the ongoing work by Surrey County Council to develop proposals for the scheme and to offer match funding. However, the process of assessing nominated stations must be done fairly and equally, and in line with the criteria set out above. I expect, at this stage, to be able to announce successful Access for All projects in 2023.

Beyond Access for All, we are continuing to make decisions on important enhancements to the railway and manage funding with proper consideration to ensure we deliver value for money for the taxpayer.

Yours ever,

Rt Hon Mark Harper MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT