

Penny Thompson – Chief Executive
Brighton & Hove City Council
Grand Avenue
Hove

9th September 2014

Dear Penny

Hove Station Footbridge – access issues

I am submitting the following letter under Council Procedure Rule 23.3 to be included on the agenda for the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee meeting of 7th October.

On 27th March, local residents presented a petition to Full Council asking for action to be taken to improve access to Hove Station from north of the railway for people with physical disabilities, parents with buggies, and people with bicycles or carrying luggage. Currently, direct access is via a bridge over the railway with steep uneven steps.

The petition was referred to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 29th April who noted the petition and indicated support for the principle of the improvements that were requested. In addition, the Executive Director for Environment, Development & Housing agreed to write to the other organisations with an interest in the bridge, in addition to the City Council, informing them of the improvements that are being suggested.

Baroness Kramer, the Minister of State at the Department for Transport responded to the Executive Director's letter on 23rd June. This letter contained a number of suggestions for possible funding for making the station fully accessible from the north. I am aware that a similar letter was also sent to Network Rail to which we have yet to see a response.

I believe that this is an extremely important issue for many residents in this part of Hove who rely upon using the train and currently find access extremely difficult. There are six care homes within half a mile north of the Footbridge with many residents who get around on mobility scooters, as well a charity for the young visually impaired (Blatchington Trust) right next to the north side of the Footbridge. There are also many families with young children and babies struggling to lift buggies and shopping, whilst holding on to younger children up and down the Footbridge.

It is certainly not clear where legal responsibility for addressing this situation lies. If action was taken by residents under the Equality Act as suggested by Baroness

AGENDA ITEM 31(C)iii

Kramer, who would be accountable for making the reasonable access improvements to avoid falling foul of the anti-discrimination legislation?

Millions has been spent by the Council on improving access to Brighton Station yet Hove Station is being neglected.

I am requesting that officers bring a report to a subsequent meeting of this Committee examining possible options for funding access improvements to Hove Station, in partnership with Network Rail and the Department for Transport. This could form part of the current deliberations around the LTP4 funding process.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr. Tony Janio