



Department for Transport

Councillor Andy Hadley
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
BCP Council Civic Centre
Bourne Avenue
Bournemouth
BH2 6DY

Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill
Minister of State for Rail

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: lord.hendy@dft.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: MC/00060659

23 February 2026

Dear Councillor Hadley,

Thank you for your emails of 3 and 12 February, about the provision of replacement lifts at Pokesdown railway station.

I am shocked and disappointed to hear that you plan on withdrawing the funding for the Pokesdown Accessibility Scheme. This development was completely unexpected, particularly in light of the significant time and effort that has been invested in the project. I recognise that the scheme has taken too long to deliver and share your frustrations. However, given the priority of this scheme to the local area, my officials have regularly challenged South Western Railway (SWR) on progress at periodic meetings and project update meetings to get the project delivered.

SWR has kept local stakeholders informed at key stages throughout the process and has held Pokesdown Board meetings with Bournemouth Christchurch Poole (BCP) Council to ensure everyone understands the status of the project. It is disappointing that, now we are so close to delivering the scheme, BCP Council has suddenly and unexpectedly taken this decision. We are aware how disappointed the local community, and Tom Hayes MP, would be to lose out on accessibility upgrades that have been years in the making.

Since taking over the SWR franchise in May 2025, under the leadership of Lawrence Bowman, the operator has worked at pace to bring this project to a conclusion. This has been a complex project, but detailed design work for the scheme to install lifts in the existing shafts has been carried out over the year, and I am pleased to hear that the redesign work on the lift technology is expected to be completed by the end of March 2026.

At this point a final budget and programme will be available. I am told by Lawrence Bowman that they expect the cost of the scheme to be in the

region of the total funding pot available (including the commitment from BCP). He is hopeful that work could begin on the project as early as this summer. However, this is absolutely contingent on the funding from BCP Council remaining available. I understand you have also now met with Lawrence Bowman and he has reiterated the necessity of BCP's funding to the project.

Once the redesign work on the lift technology is complete, a final budget and programme will be available. At this point, if there is no available funding, SWR and Network Rail will immediately need to cease work. Unfortunately, without the BCP Council funding the scheme is not going to be completed due to budget constraints. The late withdrawal of funding undermines the hard work of all the partners involved to date but also risks undermining the council's reputation as a partner for future rail projects.

Given the importance of this scheme to local residents and the length of time, resources and funding it has taken to get to this stage, I urge you to reconsider your position, since third party funding is a key enabler to this project.

Thank you again for your correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Peter', followed by a long, wavy horizontal line that ends in a small upward hook.

Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill

MINISTER OF STATE FOR RAIL