

Jeremy Westlake
By email only

Councillor Bethia Thomas
Leader of the Council

Bethia.Thomas@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Tel: 01235 422422
Abbey House
Abbey Close
Abingdon
OX14 3JE

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Dear Jeremy,

Like many of my district's residents and businesses west of the Botley Road railway bridge, I was incredibly disappointed with Network Rail's latest announcement on further delays to the reopening of the Botley Road.

With the long-promised opening only weeks away, to have it snatched away again, like it has so many times before over the last two years, is unacceptable.

This is beyond frustrating for so many of our residents; access to vital services in Oxford has become a significant challenge for many in the Vale, particularly our residents and business owners in Botley, and the A420 corridor.

Many people have experienced a significant negative impact on their daily lives, with simple, usually short journeys to work or school now taking hours, with the hardest hit being those with mobility issues.

Whilst I do appreciate unexpected things happen in any project, and that public safety has to remain the top priority, delays seem to have become the norm in this project, and our patience is being stretched to breaking point.

As I have stated before, while we appreciate the improvements that this work will bring, many of my residents will not benefit from them, as their main route into the city is not by rail. Further, with the new platform and western station entrance now deferred while Botley Road works took priority, we are all aware that the benefits for rail users will not be realised for some time.

Given the scale and duration of the disruption, when many residents and businesses are struggling to carry out their daily activities, and with further disruption anticipated as the station works progress, it is essential that the Oxford Railway Station programme is managed, communicated, and delivered with far greater transparency

and care. Clearer information, realistic timelines, and more proactive engagement with those affected are needed to maintain public confidence in this project.

For many years now, my residents have felt the poor relations to those in the City, who have been acknowledged, and benefitted from consideration that was not extended to Vale. I would you like to acknowledge that Vale residents have been significantly impacted by this work, and the continued delays to reopening.

Further to this I would like a clearer timeline on when the Botley Road will reopen to the public and a clear promise that any further works will be managed and communicated with a greater level of care.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Bethia Thomas
Leader of the Council