

Iain Stewart MP
Chair of the Transport Select Committee

By email

08 November 2023

Dear Iain,

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the Transport Select Committee on 13 September 2023 to give evidence on the implications for accessible travel as a result of Chiltern's proposals to change the way we operate ticket offices at stations. I won't repeat what I said in my letter to you last month and clearly events of the last week mean that industry-wide proposals have been withdrawn.

However, I am writing to you on the advice of the clerk to the Committee to ask for you to change a section of your 20 October letter to Huw Merriman MP, Rail Minister, where it mentions Chiltern Railways.

Your letter to Huw Merriman MP contains the passage below in bold which I believe does not reflect what I wrote in my letter dated 11 October.

'We were also told by Richard Allan, Chief Executive at Chiltern Railways, in a letter following the session, that the Rail Delivery Group did not advise operators prior to the launch of the consultation on the need for multiple alternative formats of the proposal documents and it did not instruct operators to make some formats available until very late in the consultation period (the letter states that operators were not instructed to include an Easy Read format until 10 August 2023).'

I include below in italics the relevant section from my letter dated 11 October 2023 which addressed the provision of alternative formats.

'The guidance from Rail Delivery Group (RDG) before the launch of the consultation on alternative formats was that Train Operating Companies (TOCs) should follow the same process for providing alternatives as they would for customer information on engineering works or industrial action. We sought further guidance from the Passenger bodies, and, on advice, initially provided all our consultation documents in the formats below - they were deemed satisfactory by both RDG and the passenger bodies.'

- Plain text
- Braille

- *Large Print*
- *Accessibility tool (Recite) available on our website, which provides translation into different languages, and alternative formats/fonts including large print and colour themes.*

RDG later provided further guidance to all TOCs to widen the alternative formats to include audio and EasyRead as a mandatory requirement, and BSL as optional. Our Accessibility Manager tested this with Chiltern's accessibility group. We then added both formats to the list following the extension to the consultation.'

It is clear in Chiltern's letter to the Transport Select Committee that we had guidance from RDG to provide alternative formats as appropriate to each Train Operating Company at the start of the consultation. Chiltern provided four alternative formats including Braille in July and later added Easy Read following further guidance.

I am sure you will agree the importance of correcting the record on this matter. I'd be grateful if the statement could be amended to reflect the content of Chiltern's letter, or for the paragraph to be removed altogether.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward your prompt response. If there is a need for any further clarification or discussion, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details provided in the header.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Richard Allan". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Richard Allan

Managing Director, Chiltern Railways