

4<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Dear Mayor Jarvis,

**Re: Bus Back Better implications for disabled people**

Having looked through the national government policy that is setting the roadmap for the future of bus services and note there is a great significance placed on accessibility for disabled people.

For many disabled people, the existence of a bus service is vital for them to be able to access city life to work, shop, attend appointments, and connect socially with people. Keeping services running is vital but accessibility need to increase as well, and we hope the fiscal urgency of submitting 'something' as a funding bid to government to keep services funded will not harm the many opportunities for improving accessibility.

With the need for either an Enhanced Partnership or a move towards Franchising being a requirement for funding in the medium term, it seems a lot of inclusivity and access decisions are required by the LTA to make the most out of either option. We believe involvement of disabled people with lived experience of an impairment is vital in that process.

It would be great to hear what you have in mind for accessibility and whether the voice of a pan-disability group of travellers would be helpful in understanding:

- The importance of direct journeys without changes (preferably not taking vastly indirect routes).
- Onboard accessibility needs.
- Bus stop accessibility improvements.

As there is a compressed timescale for putting plans together and I gather that other than Sheffield Transport 4 All (ST4A) there is not a similar pan-disability forum in other parts of South Yorkshire then it would be helpful to remind you of the group. Our experience and input in the short term could help give a good outcome for wider South Yorkshire's disabled people in the interim period. Note: we would need some assistance to facilitate this.

It would be great to share some of the great things from Sheffield regarding transport access with the rest of South Yorkshire perhaps via contributing to this process. I would also be grateful to hear any plans you have for how SCR will be hearing from the disabled community across the region in the future?

ST4A has found that working with operators, SCC, and SYPTE both for consultation on new changes, and for troubleshooting when issues arise has been really effective and I hope that is something you would be interested in considering as valuable for SCR in the future.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts,

James Martin – Acting Chair Sheffield Transport 4 All.