



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Jake Kelly  
Managing Director, Eastern Region at Network Rail  
jake.kelly@networkrail.co.uk

17<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Dear Mr Kelly,

**Re: Inspection of Biggleswade Station Footbridge: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

I am seeking some reassurance from Network Rail regarding the difference in findings from two inspections of the footbridge at Biggleswade station in my constituency.

These two inspections were conducted last year and with a gap of just over one month between the two inspections. The first inspection was conducted on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2024 by Network Rail and was of the type referred to as a “Visual Exam”. The second inspection was conducted on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024 by JNP Group. This was an “urgent site inspection” that followed the failure of a steel support for the steps to the footbridge. I have enclosed these two inspection reports for your ease of reference.

The engineer comments at the first inspection were:

*“First Examination of this asset. No reported significant defects affecting the serviceability of the asset or the operational railway.”*

At the second inspection, the following comment was included in the report:

*“One of the single bent steel place brackets supporting one of the concrete steps above the twin cranked SHS beam sections had given way due to extensive corrosion. All the existing 180 x 180 SHS twin cranked beam sections were generally badly corroded.”*

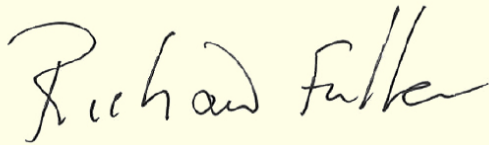
I am aware that the second inspection was, by its nature, a far more detailed inspection but nevertheless the difference between the two reports does raise some questions, for which I would be grateful for a response:

1. Please can you explain the reason for the conclusion of the first inspection that there were “no reported significant defects” barely a month before the steel bracket failed and extensive corrosion was found?
2. What changes, if any, to the visual inspection protocols has Network Rail made subsequent to the event at Biggleswade?
3. The Network Rail inspection states that the structure has a risk score of 6. What level of risk does this indicate?
4. The closure of the steps was due to the failure of one of the bent steel fixings for the concrete steps. What other railway stations in Bedfordshire have the same bent steel fixings for their footbridges?

5. Have these been inspected, or re-inspected, since the failure at Biggleswade station?
6. The second inspection highlighted the weakness of the fixings and their vulnerability to corrosion due to the use of de-icing salts etc. Are there any plans to replace these bent steel brackets with the improved design of brackets now installed at Biggleswade station at other stations?
7. The second inspection advised that the rust present on the staircase be brushed off and a protective coating applied. As far as I am aware, this has not yet taken place. Is this work planned to take place soon and, if so, when will it be completed?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Richard Fuller'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large 'R' and 'F'.

Richard Fuller CBE MP

Encl: 13 January 2024 Inspection Report

15 January 2024 Inspection Report

cc: Cllr Hayley Whitaker, Julian Vaughan, Clerk: Biggleswade Town Council