



Bookham Station Accessible Footbridge

“Access for All” funding for an accessible
footbridge with lifts

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Introduction

Bookham Station is situated at the north of the Bookham villages adjacent to Bookham Commons. It was constructed in 1885 and provides regular services to London and Guildford. The station buildings and footbridge are Grade II listed, and have recently been repaired with some minor accessibility improvements to the booking office.

The station's location serves Bookham, and parts of Fetcham and Effingham villages, including The Howard of Effingham and Eastwick Schools, which provide specialist centres for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The village is also home to the Grange centre for people with disabilities. There are two medical practices, and also a small industrial estate opposite the station.



Introduction

It has long been an issue that the London-bound Platform One cannot be accessed by people using wheelchairs, or mobility scooters, due to the lack of facilities. It is also difficult for passengers with walking aids, and the visually impaired to use the bridge.

In addition, pushchairs/buggies, luggage, and bicycles can present a hazard when attempting to carry them across.

The nearest alternative stations with lifts are at Guildford, and Epsom which are approximately a half hour journey by car.

Bookham Station had 322,000 passengers in 2019, and South Western Railway estimate the station was used by 800 disabled passengers. It is predicted the passenger numbers will increase if platform one is made accessible.

There is a strong requirement for the need for better inclusion facilities at Bookham station.



Proposal

The proposed solution is to provide a new accessible footbridge with lifts, designed to be sympathetic to the station architecture, and carefully located so as not to impose on the listed structures.

The bridge would be constructed under the Governments “Access for All” scheme, and implemented by Network Rail as part of their “Control Period 7”(CP7) accessibility improvements to railway stations across Great Britain.

It is expected that some of the funding will be sourced locally, but with the majority provided by the “Access for All” programme.



Evaluation

The existing footbridge is included in the listed status and should be preserved for posterity. It is suggested that the new accessible bridge could be positioned at the west of the station, which would be ideally located to serve passengers, and preserve the character of the station.

The station is fortunate to have wide platforms, which are good for disabled access, and provide space to install a new bridge.

The scope may need to include modification to the Banner repeater signal currently located on platform one. This is currently mounted on a cantilever structure and possibly could be incorporated into the design of the footbridge. This is not included in the listed status.

The station platforms were extended in 2013 to accommodate longer trains.

The ground surveys from this work could be consulted to reduce design costs.

The area is mostly built on London Clay with water courses nearby.



Evaluation

Similar Stations.

A number of stations in the south east, were awarded funding for accessible footbridges during the last Network Rail Control Period.

Coulsdon South Station has been provided with a new accessible footbridge, whilst preserving the original Victorian footbridge.

Ewell West and Crawley Stations have also benefited from new accessible footbridges which cost £3.9Million.

The cost of the Coulsdon South Bridge is not yet disclosed, but is estimated to be similar to the new accessible bridges at Ewell West and Crawley.



Evaluation

Funding for Bookham Station

South Western Railway are currently considering stations to be put forward for the next round of “Access for All” funding. 2024 – 2029 (CP7).

This is estimated to consist of a £360 Million fund to provide station accessibility improvements over 5 years for Great Britain.

Our funding application requires support from Network Rail, South Western Railway (First Group), and Surrey County Council.

It is expected that a 10% locally sourced contribution would need to be secured by 2023, to be considered for “Access for All” funding.



Evaluation

Local Funding

It is estimated by South Western Railway that an accessible bridge for Bookham could cost between £4Million and £5Million.

The cost is higher than the average for the last period, but should be considered as the project cost at this stage.

This equates to approximately a £500,000 local contribution.

It is expected that the local funding will consist partly of developers contributions under the section 106 Town and Planning Act / Community Infrastructure Levy, and Local Authority grants such as the “Surrey Big Ideas Fund”. It is also hoped that local businesses will sponsor the project, and a crowd funding campaign will help raise money.

It is recommended that fund raising is started immediately, to raise awareness and further support for the project.



Results

Following the Bookhams Residents' Association Meeting on the 10th May 2021. It was agreed that a fund raising campaign, and Council grant applications should be started immediately for the local contribution.

The target is £500,000 including developer contributions, and local authority grants. This is a high bar to overcome, however any local funds that are raised towards the project will increase the probability of the application for "Access for All" funding being successful.

Areas to also consider for fund raising are local businesses as part of a corporate sponsorship scheme, and community charitable organisations who run events to raise funds for good causes.



Conclusion

It is clear, that there is a demand for better facilities at Bookham station, that can make travel on public transport more inclusive and suitable for all.

As the project timescales are long, the Bookhams Residents' Association are also working with the National Trust, with the prospect of providing an accessible path via Bookham Common, as an interim method of access to platform one.

The hope is that our "Access for All" application for 2024 - 2029, will be successful and improve the journeys for all rail passengers at Bookham Station.

We trust our residents, and local authorities will support the efforts, and help The Bookhams Residents' Association and its friends, raise the necessary "Local Contribution" for this important project.

With national and local support, every attempt should be made to make better station facilities for the residents of Bookham, Fetcham, and Effingham.

