



Department  
for Transport

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Dear Ann

Thank you for your letter of 28 March, about the proposed changes to train services at Heaton Chapel.

The railway and the industry supports essential parts of a successful economy. We have seen a continual increase in both freight and passenger usage of our network in recent years. Between 2010-2015 passenger journeys in Great Britain increased by around 25% and freight moved by rail increased by around 18%. This trend has continued and so it is vital that we continue to invest in the railway to support this growth.

To support this growth a huge programme of modernisation is already underway. In the period 2014-2019 Network Rail will spend more than £40bn on maintaining, renewing and enhancing the railway infrastructure to meet demand and grow the economy.

With passenger growth expected to continue, the Department will continue the current record level of funding, with around £48 billion to be spent on the network in the period from 2019 to 2024 by Network Rail, which will support more maintenance and a huge uplift in renewals to increase reliability and punctuality for passengers.

Due to unforeseen infrastructure problems the delivery of the Bolton electrification project has been delayed. Network Rail has recently advised us that this project will be delivered during September/October 2018 which will allow for timetable improvements to take place from December 2018.

Completion of electrification on the Bolton corridor should see restoration of four trains an hour towards Manchester at those stations. There are still challenges around the spread of services, which we will be working with

Network Rail to attempt to improve. Four trains an hour continue to be provided from Manchester from the May timetable, with a reasonable spread of service.

Yours,  
Jo

**JO JOHNSON**

