

Neil Betteridge  
Chair  
Disabled Persons Transport  
Advisory Committee  
4/24 Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DR

Direct line: 020 7944 8012  
Fax: 020 7944 6998  
Minicom: 020 7944 3277

E-mail: [dptac@dft.gov.uk](mailto:dptac@dft.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.dptac.gov.uk](http://www.dptac.gov.uk)

Jim Fitzpatrick MP  
Minister of State for Transport  
Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DR

20 August 2007

Dear Jim Fitzpatrick

## **The Governance of Britain - Draft Third Session Legislative Programme**

I am writing as Chair of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC). DPTAC was set up under the Transport Act 1985 to advise the Department for Transport on the transport needs of disabled people.

Your office wrote to me covering a copy of *The Governance of Britain - Draft Third Session Legislative Programme* and inviting comment on it. I am also responding to the proposals set out in advance of the Queen's Speech in the Prime Minister's statement to the House of Commons.

First of all may I take this opportunity to welcome the draft **Local Transport Bill**, to which we will be responding fully before the closing date. We broadly welcome changes that will permit better specified local authority bus contracts, the creation of additional passenger transport authorities where appropriate, and the harmonisation of local road pricing schemes. We are also very pleased to see provision being made for the payment of DPTAC members, which should assist us to retain and recruit a highly motivated membership.

There were also a number of legislative proposals that did not directly concern your department, but which have implications for the transport needs of disabled people and I am pleased to have this chance to rehearse for you why they are so important.

As far as legislation on **climate change** is concerned, DPTAC accepts that financial instruments have a role in influencing the behaviour of drivers. However it is also important that they do not bear down unduly on disabled people, who will not for many years have the same freedom to shift to other modes of transport that other people do. It is for this reason that our policy statement on road pricing makes the case for extending the exemption of Blue Badge holders (as a proxy for disabled people) from the London congestion charge to all other road pricing schemes.

On **planning reform**, DPTAC welcomes the opportunities presented by the draft legislation, which will have a significant impact on the way in which transport infrastructure projects such as airports and runways, motorways and interchanges are brought to fruition. However it is also essential that the government strikes the right balance between, on the one hand, bringing forward at the earliest possible opportunities the benefits to disabled people flowing from major transport infrastructure projects, and on the other ensuring that disabled people have a voice to ensure that those very projects are accessible to them.

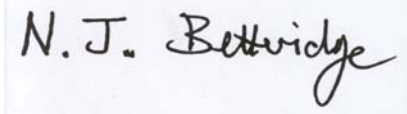
**Housing renewal** has been highlighted as an early priority for the new administration, and this will, of course, have implications for transport infrastructure. We have worked closely with your officials in the production of the Department's *Manual for Streets*, and it is important that this carefully considered guidance is used in the production of the infrastructure that services new and renewed housing developments. For example, as accessible buses become more common around the country, pavements and streets that can accommodate their ramps become increasingly important.

In the past we have observed that major transport projects are not always designed with the needs of disabled people prominent from the outset. I am pleased to say that the signs are that the London Olympics will be an exception to this. However it is equality important that legislation governing other projects such as **Crossrail** also makes appropriate provision for the transport needs of disabled people.

Finally, transport may or may not in the longer term be a part of the individualised budget system as it rolls out. Whether this happens or not, health and social care support packages around independent living are a pre-requisite for disabled people's mobility.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss this with you. Meanwhile I will post this response on the government websites mentioned in the letter from your office.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature reads "N.J. Betteridge" in a cursive style.

**Neil Betteridge**  
Chair