



Department  
for Transport

Councillor Emily Smith  
Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council  
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From the Minister of State  
**Chris Heaton-Harris MP**

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Dear Councillor Smith,

Thank you for your letter of 20 August to Grant Shapps about the reopening of Grove Station. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area. I welcome your support for this scheme, and I appreciate the benefits it would bring to Wantage and Grove residents.

Since its announcement in January 2020, the Restoring Your Railway programme has developed an ambitious portfolio of potential restoration schemes to reconnect smaller communities across England and Wales. We are now focused on realising the benefits of those schemes in order to regenerate local economies and improve access to jobs, homes and education.

There was a high level of interest in the third round of the Ideas Fund, which closed in March, with 89 bids received. Decisions on bids are made by an Expert Panel, which I chair, informed by analysis from DfT officials, our technical advisers and Network Rail.

Schemes have been considered against the Restoring Your Railway policy aims of levelling up and reconnecting communities, along with socio-economic benefits, transport benefits, deliverability, impact on the existing railway, support for the proposal and infrastructure requirements. The assessment takes into account information relating to recent housing developments and increased employment opportunities in the area, as you mention in your letter. We expect to announce the outcomes later this year.

Yours sincerely,

**Chris Heaton-Harris MP**  
Minister of State for Transport