I’m writing as a local ward Councillor in Rotherham regarding your inquiry into the recent timetable changes. Whilst a lot of coverage has been on larger main stations, there has also been an impact on smaller stations such as Rotherham. This has been compounded by the complete lack of any public consultation on these changes, with commuters often not knowing of the change till they turned up at the station on the day to find their usual train wasn’t running.

I was contacted by residents concerned about changes to the timetable. No information was available online, and passengers were left trying to compare current and future train times on the National Rail Planner.

The main changes were removing a peak hour train (which now turns out was for the tram-train to be inserted but this is not yet operational) and the removal of direct trains to Lincoln, Scunthorpe and Bridlington.

Rotherham Council made enquiries with South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE) and Sheffield City Region Combined Authority (the two organisations in our region which have the statutory responsibilities related to rail services) on my behalf in early May 2018 but they were not aware of these changes.

I then wrote to Northern Rail on 31st May 2018, and finally got a reply on 13th August 2018. Northern Rail say they consulted with South Yorkshire Passenger Transport from May 2017 on the changes.

In the end it’s the passenger that suffers from this breakdown in accountability and the recent changes have been less than transparent. I don’t feel there has been any opportunity to give any view on the changes, particularly addressing concerns that the station is being downgraded, and changes have not been clearly communicated in advance.

*August 2018*