Dear Matt

Re: Will you take Sustrans Street for People Pledge this election?

Thank you for your letter on 22nd March. Islington Council, under Islington Labour’s leadership, is firmly committed to making the borough a fairer place for all. This has to include taking action to clean up the air we breathe and create safe routes and spaces for people walking and cycling, so that Islington remains a welcoming, safe and attractive place to live.

Over the last four years, we have worked hard to transform key transport intersections to make them safer and to support more active and sustainable forms of travel. We successfully campaigned for the removal of the Archway gyratory, which now has a safe, attractive public space with improved routes for pedestrians and cyclists. We are also working to deliver similar changes at Highbury Corner and Old Street, and are determined to ensure Transport for London (TfL) brings forward plans to remove the gyratories at Nag's Head and Kings' Cross.

While we are proud of our record on creating more safe space for people walking and cycling, we know that many people choose not to cycle because some streets can feel unwelcoming and are too dominated by motor traffic. This prevents many from taking part in active travel and enjoying the health benefits that come with it. We are committed to helping more people walk and cycle safely in the borough, and fully support the Mayor of London’s vision that 80% of all trips are made by foot, cycle or public transport by 2041.

We have supported the Quietway programme and are committed to delivering a successful Quietway network across the borough. However, there is more we can do to make streets safer for cycling. We will work with the Mayor of London to deliver the new cycle routes from Old Street to Clerkenwell Road, and along the Camden Road and Seven Sisters Road corridor. We will also investigate closing certain roads to through traffic to prevent rat-running, in consultation with local residents and businesses, to make neighbourhoods more liveable and improve pedestrian and cycle routes.

It is important that we encourage more environmentally-friendly forms of travel. That is why we were the first borough to introduce and enforce a 20mph speed limit on Council-controlled roads, and are urging TfL to implement safer speed limits on the major roads it manages. We have introduced a ‘diesel surcharge’ on residents parking and at pay-and-display parking bays to encourage people to move to cleaner vehicles, as well as rolling out a programme to install electric vehicle charging points across the borough.
We will also bring forward a new Transport Strategy in 2019, that supports our ambition of making Islington’s transport environment healthy by promoting active travel and reducing the negative health impacts of motor vehicle travel on Islington residents, particularly in poorer communities.

Islington Labour has now published its manifesto for the local elections in May 2018. The manifesto includes pledges to work towards banning lorries (HGVs) from driving through the borough on residential roads, and closing streets at school opening and closing times. I hope these pledges help to demonstrate how we would continue to create safer and healthier streets over the next four years and in the longer term.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Watts

Councillor Richard Watts

CC: Cllr Claudia Webbe