



From the Leader of the Council
Cllr Philippa Roe

Darren Johnson, AM
Chair of the London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

31st December, 2013

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Thank you for your letter of 13th December following the motion agreed at the London Assembly Plenary meeting of 4th December.

The safety of pedestrians and cyclists on Westminster's streets is, of course, of paramount importance to Westminster City Council and is an area in which significant investment has been and continues to be made. This is evidenced by the great deal of work that has either been delivered or that is underway or planned by the Council to improve conditions for all road users, but particularly pedestrians and cyclists.

You will have seen that the Council recently launched its draft Cycling Strategy in response to the Mayor's Cycling Vision for London and in recognition of the growing number of people choosing to cycle in the city. This strategy sets out how we intend to deliver the Mayoral vision at a local level, taking account of Westminster's unique circumstances and challenges, and will be followed in due course by a dedicated Pedestrian Strategy.

The motion agreed at the London Assembly Plenary meeting calls specifically on Westminster City Council to consider the wider adoption of 20mph speed limits. The introduction of such limits, whether in a targeted sense or on a borough-wide basis, is something that the Council continues to give consideration to, taking guidance from a number of sources, including campaign groups such as Living Streets. However, at the present time it is not something that we support.

As is reflected in the motion passed by the Assembly, calls for a 20mph limit are most often linked to a reduction in the number and/or severity of pedestrian or cycling casualties. Of the speed surveys undertaken by the Metropolitan Police since 2006, average speeds recorded throughout the borough already rest at 20.8mph. The motion specifically highlights Oxford Street, referring to it as "London's most dangerous street", and it is indeed the case that the vast majority of casualty-related accidents in Westminster occur



within the congested West End and central areas. However, it is also the case that road traffic speeds in these areas are considerably lower than the borough-wide average, both during the day and at night. There may, therefore, be very little if any practical impact in instituting 20mph speed limits, and additional concerns have been raised about how enforceable such limits would even be.

Westminster is actively committed to policies and projects that deliver real improvements for pedestrians and cyclists, for example through the 'Westminster City Plan: Strategic Policies', the Unitary Development Plan and various programmes set out in the Council's Local Implementation Plan. I am confident that the cycling and pedestrian strategies mentioned above will further enhance the substantial work that the Council is doing in this area and will help address the concerns over pedestrian and cyclist safety that lie at the heart of the Assembly's motion.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Philippa Roe
Leader of the Council
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