

Using your powers to stand up for Healthy Streets

Key information

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CC:

Seb Dance, Deputy Mayor for Transport

Will Norman, London Walking and Cycling Commissioner

Dear Sadiq,

Using your powers to stand up for Healthy Streets

Following up on our conversation today in MQT, I am writing to formally request that you exercise your powers under Part IV of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 ('the 1999 Act') to prevent the London Borough of Tower Hamlets carrying out its [decision of 20 September 2023 to remove Low Traffic Neighbourhoods \(LTNs\)](#), contrary to the binding commitments made in its Local Implementation Plan, agreed between it and yourself in 2019.

If you are not minded to exercise these powers, I request that you provide adequate reasons for your decision, pursuant to the duty set out in *Dover District Council v CPRE Kent* [2017] UKSC 79. This would need to explain how you have carefully considered the exercise of these powers. In particular, it should set out the impact of the removal of these schemes both on targets and ambitions in the Mayor's Transport Strategy, as well as national targets, including the 2030 Climate Target and the 2028 Particulate Exposure Reduction Target, both of which the UK is set currently to miss very significantly. Given the risk of the borough taking rapid action unilaterally, I request and require an initial response to this letter within two weeks of today's date.

According to your 2021 Vision Zero Action plan update, 70 per cent of road deaths and serious injuries occur on borough roads. While you have an objective to reduce road deaths and serious injuries by 65 per cent by 2022 and 70 per cent by 2030, progress has stalled since 2013, once the temporary effects of the pandemic are disregarded. In addition, due to the significant deprivation in Tower Hamlets, removal of its LTNs would raise

particular equalities issues. Besides these compelling environmental and social reasons for intervention, there are vital economic ones too.

The [Transport for London \(TfL\) funding settlement runs out in March 2024](#), and if you allow this borough to waste funding by ripping out high quality active travel schemes (also increasing the burden on the NHS) this increases the risk for the whole of London of unfavourable future settlements.

The legal position, set out in more detail in the appendix to this letter, is very clear. The 1999 Act entrusted you with the duty to develop and implement safe, integrated and efficient transport. Some elements of this are delegated to borough councils, but these are subject to your supervision and coordination. The statutory scheme is crystal clear that it is your ultimate responsibility to ensure borough commitments are carried out, and not acting carries a real risk that other local authorities will follow.

I have already met with your Walking and Cycling Commissioner, and have raised my concerns about Tower Hamlets' likely removal of these schemes since September 2022, prior to its decision. In addition, I have explained to him on more than one occasion the powers that I think could be used.

Frankly, it is hard to imagine a clearer case where issuing directions or directly taking over borough powers would be more justified. As an Assembly Member, I have trusted that your commitment to leadership on healthier streets was genuine, so I hope you will follow up on this commitment and act now when it will make a real difference.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience and in any event within two weeks of the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Sian Berry

Green Party Member of the London Assembly