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Dear *Caroline*

## **ROAD SAFETY – A23 STREATHAM HIGH ROAD AND STREATHAM HILL**

Thank you for your letter dated 24 October 2016 regarding road safety issues on Streatham High Road.

You raise a number of issues which I shall deal with in turn. However it is worth noting that last month I met with Cllr Lib Peck, Cllr Jennifer Braithwaite, and officers from London Borough (LB) Lambeth on site to discuss their concerns about road safety on the A23 and at the St Leonards Junction in particular. Following this site visit I have instructed colleagues to bring forward further proposals to improve pedestrian safety at the St. Leonard's junction. An engagement event with the local community jointly with LB Lambeth will be progressed prior to a formal consultation, and we will develop a full programme for this scheme to realise a crossing at this location. We have also communicated this to the Safer A23 campaigners who attended a meeting with Chuka Umunna MP and my colleagues on Friday 21 October.

With regard to the rate of "Killed and Serious injury" (KSI) collisions on the A23, I would like to clarify what appears to have been communicated previously. The collisions along this stretch of Streatham High Road are not evenly distributed, but in clusters, so there are locations where the rate is above the London average and likewise, locations below. By analysing this data, we have identified several places where safety is an issue and we obviously are focussed on these locations. Road safety along Streatham High Road, and indeed the rest of the TLRN is of course a high priority and there is a programme of interventions designed to make this route safer for pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.

We have invested significant funding to deliver improvements to Streatham High Road, including improvements to the section between Becmead Road and Streatham Hill Station. This has included footway and carriageway resurfacing, improvements to pedestrian crossings and tree planting in the central reservation. We are also planning to continue with a similar scheme already implemented for Streatham High Road to the section of Streatham Hill between the junctions with Telford Avenue and Sternhold Avenue and will formally consult on our plans during 2017. In the meantime, members of the Safer A23 campaign have been invited to meet with scheme designers to properly take account of their ideas.

You have asked a number of detailed questions, and I set out below a response to each of these in turn.

### **1. 20mph speed limits**

We are trialling the use of 20mph limits on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN), as well as supporting the boroughs in delivery of their own 20mph schemes. The LB of Lambeth is introducing a 20mph limit across the borough on its own roads, and we are trialling 20mph limits on four sites on the TLRN in Lambeth. These are:

- Brixton Town Centre (between St Matthews Road and Stockwell Park Walk)
- Clapham High Street
- Westminster Bridge
- Stamford Street

Additionally, Waterloo Roundabout already had a permanent 20mph speed limit implemented. We plan to implement trials on the TLRN in Lambeth by June 2017. These sites were identified by assessing a range of data such as level of pedestrian activity, collision history, network characteristics and borough aspirations. The results of the trials will be used to inform the setting of appropriate speed limits at locations across London, including Streatham High Road at a future date.

### **2. Streatham Hill**

There are no proposals to remove the central reservation at this location but we do plan to improve pedestrian crossing facilities and the urban realm to reduce the 'motorway' feel of the road. Initial designs have been prepared and continue to be refined. As mentioned above, the Safer A23 campaign group will have an early opportunity to comment on these designs.

### **3. Junction with Telford Avenue and bus garage**

The design for Streatham Hill includes this junction, but does not include the bus garage interior. We have been in contact with the Arriva team who manage the Brixton Bus Garage and have been assured by them that they have a plan in place to stop the buses parking on the carriageway. We will ensure this is followed through.

### **4. Traffic signal phasing**

At the request of the Safer A23 campaign, in 2015 engineers visited this junction, reviewed its operation and made adjustments to the signal timings. However, I have asked that a further review be undertaken which will happen in the very near future.

### **5. St. Leonard's Church Junction at Mitcham Lane**

At this junction for the 36 months to April 2016, the latest we have data available for, there had been one fatal collision at the crossing on the south side of Streatham High Road. A second fatal collision involving a pedestrian occurred north of the St Leonard's junction, between the existing controlled crossings north of the junction with Gleneldon Road and south of the junction with Prentice Road.

An engagement exercise on 21 November 2015 presented two options for a crossing at Streatham Green approximately 90 metres south of the junction with Mitcham Lane. However feedback for this was mixed so as I have said above I have asked that we develop a further set of proposals to again consider the pedestrian access at St Leonard's junction itself. I am determined that we come forward with a workable solution that balances the needs of all road users.

### **6. Segregated Cycle Lanes**

The A23 through Streatham contains several high frequency well used bus routes with associated bus stops, and many retailers are dependent on on-street loading from the carriageway to service their businesses and attract business. There are also relatively short distances between side roads and high flows of pedestrians. These all present practical issues in terms of assessing segregated facilities for cyclists.

For these reasons we do not currently have plans for segregated cycle lanes. However, we do permit cyclists to use bus lanes and are examining the provision of additional bus lanes which can also be used.

In mid-November, we plan to consult on proposals to extend the northbound bus lane from Becmead Avenue to Drewstead Road. We would also inset the loading bay outside 148 Streatham High Road by one metre to make room for buses to pass stationary vehicles.

Furthermore, we are working with LB Lambeth to improve adjacent corridors to the A23 on Borough roads as part of the Quietway programme which is funded as part of the Mayor's Cycle Vision.

## **7. Green Man signals at controlled crossings**

The pedestrian crossing at Streatham High Road by Leigham Avenue is a Pedestrian User-Friendly Intelligent, or PUFFIN crossing, which is the only crossing of the nature you describe on Streatham High Road. When the pedestrian crossing at this location was modernised in 2007, the policy at the time was to replace pelican crossings (those with red/green indicators located on the far side of the crossing) with PUFFIN crossings.

The reason for having the pedestrian signals facing along the road is to allow waiting pedestrians to view the red / green man whilst being able to watch approaching traffic in the same field of view. Bringing the pedestrian signals closer to the pedestrians also has benefits to partially sighted users.

At a PUFFIN crossing, once the pedestrian has started crossing the road, they are picked up by "on-crossing" detectors. These automatically extend the amount of time given to cross whilst pedestrians are on the crossing. This has the benefit of giving enough time to cross safely for those who need it, particularly those with mobility impairments. At a PUFFIN crossing, the green man is intended as an "invitation to cross", during which time anyone starting to cross the road will be able to do so safely, with the detectors giving them enough time to complete the crossing. By removing the far-sided pedestrian signal there should no longer be any confusion once on the crossing (for example caused by the flashing green man), preventing users from either speeding up, concerned the signals are about to change or turning back once established on the crossing. Following the development of pedestrian countdown signals, since 2014 we have been installing countdown style crossings when modernising signals.

## **8. Re classification of the A23**

The current classification of Streatham High Road is as a 'district' place function and this reflects the actual usage of this road. Changing the classification of the road has no impact on the actual usage.

It is predominantly the 'movement' aspect of the categorisation that determines its current classification and at present attempting to reduce the movement function of this main arterial road would only serve to worsen congestion, make conditions more unsafe, and force vehicles onto less suitable alternative roads, mostly in residential areas. However, many of the changes that continue to be made will improve both the safety and the 'place' function.

I share your desire to make the A23 in Streatham a safer and more pleasant place. I have asked my team to keep me personally informed in this regard and will maintain a close interest in ensuring progress is made.

Yours sincerely

*kind regards*

**Mike Brown MVO**

*MB*