

Boris Johnson  
Mayor of London

Andrew Gilligan  
Cycling Commissioner for London  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA

Copied to:

Joanne McCartney  
London Assembly Member for Enfield & Haringey

2 March 2016

Dear Mr Johnson and Mr Gilligan

We are writing on behalf of the group 'We Support Enfield Mini Holland', a local group that started in August 2015 and now has 300 members, and Enfield Cycling Campaign.

This letter is a response to demands by David Burrowes, MP for Enfield Southgate, that your office withdraw the Enfield Mini Holland funding – on the basis that “a clear majority of my constituents” oppose the scheme (David Burrowes’ website, 16 February). We fundamentally disagree with his position. This is why:

- Mr Burrowes’ claim that 75% of his constituents oppose the scheme is deliberately misleading. A survey of approximately 17,000 of his circa 65,000 constituents produced 1,973 responses saying “no” to the scheme. We make that 11.6% of those surveyed or **a mere 3% of all of his constituents**, and definitely not the 75% he claimed. (Enfield Southgate constituents in any case do not represent anything like the majority of those affected by Mini Holland.)
- Some of his constituents in the group and beyond chose not reply to his survey, on the grounds that **it was disingenuous**. They felt that responding to the council’s detailed, constructive consultation was sufficient, as opposed to an unofficial yes/no exercise. Many other constituents report not receiving Mr Burrowes’ survey postcard.
- Over the last year, Mr Burrowes **has appeared to work closely with a group campaigning against Mini Holland**, ‘Save Our Green Lanes’ (SOGL), backed by a few members of the local business community. Their negative campaign is based on a lack of evidence, at best, and blatant misinformation at worst, for instance claiming that:
  - It will remove “most, if not all parking” from town centres on the A105 (Cycle Enfield had stated in the consultation that most will remain)
  - 95% of high street customers come by car (a survey published by Cycle Enfield found this was 30% maximum)
  - It is bound to cause the mass closure of local businesses (there is no evidence anywhere in the world of cycle lanes hurting business, and plenty to the contrary)
  - It will cause congestion and pollution (recent impact assessments have found both fears to be unfounded)
  - Nobody will cycle on the new lanes (a survey published by Cycle Enfield found that 45% would cycle, who don’t currently, if they had safe space to cycle in).

In talking to local business owners and shoppers, we found that many ordinary people had read the SOGL posters and taken these claims as fact. However, when presented with even a small

fraction of the data that has informed your office as well as our campaign, most individuals could easily envisage and support the changes as positive for our community.

- Yet **Mr Burrowes has not acted constructively** to correct these misunderstandings; to put the many benefits of the scheme across to people; or to encourage them to take their concerns to the official consultation process. Instead, he has whipped up antagonism through public meetings held separately from the consultation, and more recently through his “referendum” (survey).
- Mr Burrowes and his supporters have not been able to offer any **positive, workable alternative** to the Mini Holland plans. They have talked vaguely about leisure cycling in some of the borough’s green spaces, or promoting cycling on quiet back streets. Neither option offers a viable alternative to using a car for most people on most journeys or attempts to tackle Enfield’s pollution, congestion and health problems. Their entire campaign focuses on ‘sending the money back’.

We would like to state that:

- We welcome and support the Mini Holland plans for Enfield
- We applaud Enfield Council for their winning bid, consultation, response to the consultation results, and for their persistence in carrying the process forward
- We believe that it is absolutely vital to reduce the high number of car journeys taken in Enfield, because:
  - It is raising our air pollution to unacceptable levels, shortening life and damaging health, especially the elderly and children (35 Enfield schools are in areas with illegal levels of air pollution)<sup>1</sup>
  - It is leading many to live dangerously inactive lives, putting a strain on the NHS. 24% of Enfield’s children are obese<sup>2</sup>
  - It makes active travel harder, creating a vicious circle where children are driven to school because school run traffic makes cycling unsafe
  - It can only get worse as the borough’s population increases by 5,000 every year – other travel options **MUST** be made possible
  - It makes residential streets impossible for children to play on and high streets unpleasant places to shop
  - Nearly 100 people a year get badly injured or killed on Enfield’s roads.<sup>3</sup>

We aspire to a future for our borough where every child can safely walk or cycle to school; active travel is a convenient option for everyone; every residential street is safe for children to play on; fewer people need to own cars; the air is safe to breathe; and high streets are attractive, people-friendly, and therefore prosperous.

Please confirm that no funds will be withheld, and that you will continue to work with our council to progress the Mini Holland / Cycle Enfield programme.

Yours sincerely,

**We Support Enfield Mini Holland**

Twitter: @WeSupportEN\_MH

Facebook: ‘We Support Enfield Mini Holland’ public group

Email for correspondence: [clare.rogers@gmail.com](mailto:clare.rogers@gmail.com)

Roger Kingsnorth, Secretary

**Enfield Cycling Campaign**

Twitter: @enfieldcycling

Website: <http://enfieldcc.co.uk>

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<sup>1</sup> Enfield Green Party, 2013 [www.enfieldgreens.org.uk/local-airquality.htm](http://www.enfieldgreens.org.uk/local-airquality.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Healthwatch Enfield, 2016 [www.healthwatchenfield.co.uk/242-children-enfield-are-obese](http://www.healthwatchenfield.co.uk/242-children-enfield-are-obese)

<sup>3</sup> Enfield Council website, 2014

[www.enfield.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing/info/15/enfield\\_place/189/road\\_safety](http://www.enfield.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing/info/15/enfield_place/189/road_safety)