



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr Mark Pritchard
Leader of the Council and Disability Champion
Wrexham County Borough Council
The Guildhall
Wrexham
LL11 1AY

5 September 2023

Dear Mark,

Response to Wrexham Council's Consultation on the Mold Road / Regent Street Active Travel Plan

Having publicly encouraged residents to respond to your consultation, I am writing to share my own thoughts, which I hope will be taken into consideration as part of the process.

When I was first elected, you will recall that I encouraged Wrexham Council to appoint a Disability Champion. With your support, I am pleased that this role has been established. The fact that you, as the Leader of the Council, occupy this position, shows the commitment of the Council to accessibility. However, as Wales' newest city, I would urge Wrexham Council to adopt its own Disability Strategy to ensure that reconfigurations, such as the changes on Mold Road and Regent Street, allow everyone in Wrexham, regardless of ability, to take advantage of what our amazing city has to offer.

Last week, I met with the Vision Support Hub in Wrexham to learn about the great work they do locally supporting around 600 people, in addition to their visual rehabilitation work – the demand for which is increasing and waiting lists are growing. You will also be aware that I wrote to you in May 2023, following a meeting with the Wrexham Deafblind Support Group. As I mentioned in my letter at the time, the primary concern of the group was road safety. The group raised specific concerns regarding Wrexham Council's aim of installing more cycle lanes – which would have to be achieved by narrowing pavements. Cyclists are, of course, much harder to see and hear than cars and the group expressed serious concerns that more cycle lanes will increase the risks posed to the deafblind community and could lead to confrontation and injury. I know both you and I went out with members of this group to experience what members of the community can face when accessing the city centre.

On behalf of the deafblind community in Wrexham, I would like to reiterate their concerns and stress that all road crossings and pavements should be safe for deaf and blind residents. Furthermore, I would urge the Council to ensure that the introduction of more cycle lanes does not increase the danger to the disabled residents of Wrexham.

Following the closure of the consultation, I hope very much that Wrexham Council and yourself, as the Disability Champion, will consider my comments and continue to ensure the views of disabled residents are incorporated into all planning decisions, including the Mold Road / Regent Street Active Travel Plan. As Wrexham grows, we must ensure that all its residents and visitors can access the great things we have to offer.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Atherton
Member of Parliament for Wrexham