

Southwark Cyclists  
London Cycling Campaign  
Newhams Row  
London  
SE1 3UZ

07592 985 293  
southwark@lcc.org.uk

Dear Planning Policy Team,

The following letter contains our suggestions for how cycling could be incorporated into the New Southwark Plan. The document firstly explains our vision of how investment in cycling would benefit everyone in the borough. It specifies a long term design goal to make Southwark London Cycle Design Standards compliant on all roads, and to smooth cycling flows in order to discourage anti-social cycling. It then summarises the wider benefits of making cycling infrastructure suitable for all by designing for disabled users. Finally it highlights the project management and political benefits of quickly delivering a number of routes through the borough.

Overall, we argue that many current complaints about cycling are caused by excessive numbers of cyclists being concentrated onto a small number of safe routes, or from cyclists learning habits based upon trying to stay safe on roads designed for high-volumes of fast motor traffic. We suggest that if Southwark has better cycling infrastructure then many of the current complaints about cycling will cease, larger numbers of residents will cycle, and Southwark Council will rightly be able to take credit for improving transport in the borough.

The document ends with a series of specific suggestions for quick wins and strategic actions to support cycling in Southwark.

If you would like further information or discussion on the points described in this letter, do not hesitate to be in touch.

On behalf of Southwark Cyclists,

Andy Cawdell,  
Coordinator

## **A cycling network for everyone.**

Southwark Cyclists shares the vision of Southwark Council's Cycling Strategy: enabling everyone from age 8 to 80+ to make local journeys safely, quickly and independently by cycle. We believe that the main obstacle to achieving this vision is the lack of a dense network of safe and pleasant streets to cycle on.

**Everyone wants to be safe on the move; but the main source of transport danger is motor traffic.** Motor traffic is one of the primary factors dissuading people from cycling, and it is also responsible for discouraging walking, discouraging outdoor play, and producing air pollution. As such, it is better for everyone – cyclists and non-cyclists - if people are able to cycle without proximity to heavy traffic. The new Superhighways and Quietways clearly demonstrate that large numbers of people will start cycling once they have access to high-quality infrastructure that makes cycling safe. Furthermore, many cyclists who are currently willing to cycle in heavy traffic will use and politically support these safe cycling infrastructures.

**We believe that the key justification for investment in cycling is its benefits for all residents – not only people who cycle.** The bicycle is a highly efficient and cost-effective way to meet the borough's transport needs. It is able to transport a far higher number of people per hour than private motor traffic, often at faster speeds, without air pollution, and requiring far less space for parking at the destination. Reducing motor traffic, congestion and promoting exercise is good for the NHS, Public Health and local business, but it is also a matter of social justice. Low income individuals are disproportionately likely to live alongside high-traffic and high air pollution roads, to lack large gardens or nearby green spaces in which to exercise or play, and to develop diseases linked to a lack of exercise and exposure to polluted air. The overriding justification for promoting cycling and building cycling infrastructure is because it will improve the borough and its finances for everyone.

**To define a borough-wide design goal,** we call on Southwark Council to work towards achieving the London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS) on each road in the borough, starting with key cycle routes. The LCDS recommend that cyclists should be segregated if there are "above 1000 vehicles during the peak hour" on the road, or the 85th percentile speeds are above 20mph<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> LCDS, 2014 edition, Chapter 4, p8

**To achieve the LCDS**, we argue that ‘Superhighways’, which are primarily on main roads, should entail a dedicated and protected track for cycling. Segregated cycle tracks also mean that pedestrians on the pavement and residents or employees in the adjacent buildings are further away from motor traffic, and so less exposed to its danger and pollution. ‘Quietways’, which are often on more residential streets, should achieve the standards by slowing and removing through traffic so that there are fewer vehicles. Where Quietways do not slow and remove traffic to the LCDS maximums they should incorporate segregated sections, or they cannot be considered fit for purpose, nor an unbroken network. Finally, low-traffic residential streets can still benefit from improvements to support cycling, such as by installing secure cycle parking and planting street trees. Such measures act to calm traffic and encourage cycling, so also reducing air pollution and encouraging non-transport uses of the space.

As well as access a safe route, **short, reliable journey times** are a key consideration to everyone who travels. This is not the same thing as high speeds, nor the shortest route! In terms of distance, since main roads connect popular destinations in a straight line, a Superhighway along main road will tend to make the physically shortest journey. Likewise, no-one wants their journey to be 50% longer because a ‘Quietway’ has a large detour in it, or lots of little detours. However, most of the physical effort in cycling is from accelerating, so a steady pace is much more efficient and relaxed than repeatedly sprinting and stopping. Synchronising the traffic lights along a route will allow cyclists to maintain a constant speed, which transport planners call “surfing” a “green wave” of synchronised traffic lights.

**Synchronising the traffic lights for bicycles has three main benefits** for Southwark’s aims to make cycling more popular and less controversial. Firstly, it gives cyclists the potential to travel more sedately whilst still traveling efficiently; making the route more attractive will encourage cycling’s growth in absolute numerical terms. Secondly, if cyclists do not develop habits like sprinting to meet the next set of traffic lights, then it will encourage more sedate styles of cycling and remove the incentive to jump red lights. Thirdly, creating infrastructures that give cyclists greater ability to combine efficient movement with law-abiding, polite behaviour will mean that opposition to cycling on the grounds of some cyclists’ impolite, law-breaking behaviour should decrease.

**For a physical design strategy**, Southwark Cyclists argues that the best way to make cycling attractive to a wide range of demographics, and to enable more sedate, sociable ways of cycling is to design the cycling network to **meet the requirements of “disabled” or mobility impaired cyclists**. If we design corners and slopes to the minimum requirements of those who use their bicycle as a mobility aid and cannot dismount, then we also enable journeys with freight and with children. If we design smooth surfaces to reduce barriers for those who cannot handle jolting or are physically weak, then we also encourage efficient cycling that is attractive to everyone. If we design a dense, well-signposted and direct network for people who cannot physically take large detours and plan complex routes, or who cannot use smartphones and maps, then we enable easy journeys by visitors, children and those starting to cycle for the very first time. This inclusive vision is already being realised on the Blackfriars Superhighway: for example, the Southwark Cyclists 'Bike Train' passed a mother and child on hire bike and scooter. Shortly after, several faster cyclists overtook our slow, chatting group of novices. Just like putting in a pavement, putting in a safe cycle route allows everyone to use the public space.

**In terms of delivery and project management**, we understand that Southwark's roads are going to be made safe for cycling by building a number of intersecting routes, implemented one by one and eventually fairly distributed across the borough. However, in planning these individual routes, it is important to remember that individual routes are not the end goal. For *all* Southwark residents to feel comfortable enough to travel to any local destination by cycle, the borough needs a dense grid of cycle-friendly streets. The grid will be built by adding individual routes, whether cycle tracks or traffic-calmed roads; but the overall aim is to join up all of Southwark's schools, workplaces, retail, leisure and residential areas. Just like a bus network, individual sections of high-quality route are meaningless unless they connect to a network of interchanges and feeder routes go all the way to the final destination. Isolated segments of infrastructure, or measures to achieve behaviour change by training and marketing, can only do so much. At the same time, training and marketing is a valid part of ensuring that new infrastructure is understood, supported at consultation, and quickly utilised when installed.

Finally, we argue that **there will be political benefits to improving cycling infrastructure**, even from non-cyclists. It is our belief that much existing opposition to cycling in Southwark is a reaction to the lack of high-quality cycling infrastructure. Firstly, as more people cycle, more people have a personal interest in cycling infrastructure. However, we also believe that many

complaints about cyclists are actually complaints about the low quality of existing infrastructure - particularly around Burgess Park and the Old Kent Road. Based on years of engagement with Councillors, Officers and other community groups, we feel that much so-called “anti-social cycling” is caused by large numbers of cyclists being concentrated onto a small number of good routes, or learning habits that allow them to feel safe on roads designed for cars. We suggest that if Southwark has better cycling infrastructure then many of the current complaints about cycling will cease, and Southwark Council will rightly be able to take credit for improving transport in the borough.

**Overall, Southwark Cyclists supports the council’s existing Cycling Strategy, but believes that cycling should be more intensively supported in the period covered by the New Southwark Plan.** The remainder of this letter suggests specific solutions for particular problems for cycling in Southwark. In summary these are:

1. Limitations in the Southwark Cycling Strategy.
2. The Old Kent Road.
3. The Surry Canal Path and Burgess Park.
4. The Spine and Burgess Park
5. Portland Street
6. Copenhagen Crossings
7. Cycling to Schools
8. Cycling in Dulwich
9. Cycle Parking
10. Further network development

### **1. Limitations in the Southwark Cycling Strategy.**

Southwark Cyclists strongly supports the Cycling Strategy that was adopted in 2015. The underpinning research indicated that for Southwark to have a network that was truly accessible to all, with all of the financial, road safety and health and wellbeing benefits that cycling can deliver, then the proposed network needed to be delivered over time in its entirety. Each of the north-south routes proposed in the Quietways and the Southwark Spine are serving different places and different types of demand. They each unlock accessibility for different parts of the borough, but where the individual routes are interconnected they deliver far more than the sum of their parts.

We remain committed to seeing this delivered and to supporting Southwark Council in its delivery. We recognise that some compromise is needed to ensure that conflicts are avoided with local residents where ever possible: we have been active participants in the recent consultation concerning the Bellenden One-way system, and we have been pro-active in

making proposals that meet the needs of the Friends of Burgess Park by reducing traffic across Burgess Park through also making improvements to Wells Way (see point 4).

We would stress, however, that we have concerns at the quality of the delivery of the routes that have been identified in the strategy. We feel that there is little point delivering routes that do not meet the guidance set out in the London Cycle Design Standards. We would highlight, for example, that the concerns that we repeatedly made in relation to Edmund Street about potential conflict between motor vehicles and those who are cycling are becoming evident as Notting Hill build out their changes to Edmund Street. Once this road is re-opened those who cycle will be coming into conflict with motor vehicles owing to the presence of on-street parking that is not built into the footway – inevitably in those situations those who are cycling will be intimidated by those who driving who will take precedence. As we have done for many years now, we would stress the benefits of a point closure along this street to deter through traffic on this a Quietway route.

## **2. Old Kent Road**

Southwark Cyclists are strongly in favour of installing segregated cycle lanes on both sides of the Old Kent Road when the area is redeveloped. On such a busy road, only segregated lanes are likely to attract significant numbers of new cyclists of all ages. However, as a key traffic corridor, the lack of infrastructure provision for cycling already has significant effects on a far wider area.

Examining alternative routes to the Old Kent Road, we would firstly like to stress that Quietway 1 is not parallel to it, particularly to the east of St James Road. By the time Quietway 1 leaves the borough at South Bermondsey it is almost a mile north of the Old Kent Road; a seven minute journey at a sedate 12km per hour. Furthermore, with the pause or cancellation of Cycle Superhighway 5 along the Queens Road and Peckham road, there is no high-quality direct south-east to north-west route south of Quietway 1. Because the hills south of the Peckham Road discourage east-west cycling, much of the cycle traffic originating east of Southampton Way and south of the Old Kent Road (including much from Lewisham's Brockley, New Cross and Ladywell) is funnelled towards Rye Lane and the Surrey Canal Path. The Surrey Canal Path is probably the most overcrowded and complained about location in the borough for pedestrian-cyclist conflict, and a constant source of ill-will towards cycling in general, (see below).

We would like to note that Friends of Burgess Park, Southwark Living Streets and the Walworth Society all support the installation of segregated cycle tracks on the Old Kent Road, whether in their own right or to take pressure off Burgess Park as a cycle route.

### **3. The Surrey Canal Path and Burgess Park.**

The Surrey Canal Path is very congested during the morning and evening peak. Southwark Cyclists does not support inappropriately fast “anti-social” cycling on the path. This is an uncomfortable experience for cyclists and pedestrians. It also crowds out learner cyclists, for whom it would otherwise be an excellent way to gain experience and confidence by cycling longer distances.

We believe that the best way to reduce congestion on the path is to open up safe alternatives. At the largest scale, this includes segregated cycle lanes on the Old Kent Road and a high quality north-south route along, for example, Hollydale road and Asylum Road.

More immediately parallel to the Surrey Canal Path, Peckham Hill Street is supposed to be the alternative route. Current motor traffic levels mean that it is not safe and not an acceptable alternative. Southwark Cyclists suggests that Sumner Road would more easily be made into an alternative that would draw cyclists off the Canal Path. The current problems with the Sumner Road route are as follows:

- a) crossing Peckham High Street
- b) crossing Commercial Way
- c) Willowbrook Way Junction
- d) resurfacing

#### *3a) Crossing Peckham High Street*

There is a slight dog-leg at the crossroads with Peckham High Street, Bellenden Road and Melon Road. Southwark traffic engineers are currently seeking permission from TfL to move the lights to include the Melon Road exit, as otherwise cyclists cannot cross the road. The plans are held up by this.

Simon Phillips (previously responsible for cycle planning in Southwark) envisaged a long set of traffic lights encompassing both the Rye Lane crossing to the Arch and the Melon Road crossing. This was part of a plan to revitalise Peckham Town Centre funded by the previous administration in City Hall. As we understand it, a preliminary study by Southwark and Atkins was supposed to report in January 2016 but has not been seen by Southwark Cyclists.

### *3b) Sumner Road, crossing Commercial Way*

Commercial Way is a short cut avoiding Peckham Town Centre and carries a lot of traffic. A safe crossing for cyclists is required. This could involve upgrading the existing pedestrian crossing. The northern part of Sumner Road is a rat run involving high speed motor traffic on a narrow residential road. A serious attempt to turn Sumner Road into an alternative for the Surrey Canal Path would need to filter it at some point south of Commercial way. If filtered, much of the on-road parking could be retained, although some parking close to junctions needs to be removed.

### *3c) Willowbrook Way*

The northbound exit into Willowbrook Way works well enough. Southbound there is not enough protection for more than one cyclist at a time, and to reach that protection the cyclist has to move across fast-moving traffic. It is inadequate for large numbers of cyclists and not at all tempting compared with the Surry Canal Path. This junction needs to be signal-controlled to add a right turn phase for cyclists going south. For more detail see the attached copy of Southwark Cyclists' submission to the Quietway 83 public consultation on 28/6/2016.

### *3d) Resurfacing*

Large parts of Sumner road need resurfacing, as is normal for a new quietway route. The road surface has aged significantly in large stretches.

## **4. The Spine and Burgess Park**

Putting the Spine through Burgess Park will not automatically create a perfect route for cycling, particularly at night. However, the alternatives are worse and would arouse equally heated opposition from different groups of people. Southwark Cyclists has a lot in common with the Friends of Burgess Park and agree on a number of issues.

Overall, Southwark Cyclists believes that the Spine should go through the park, and that this should be a relatively direct route between Thurlow Street and Chandler Way. However, we suggest that improving alternative routes to the Surry Canal Path as a matter of urgency would reduce pressure on it, which would reduce opposition to the Spine route passing through the park.

A key demand of the Friends of Burgess Park is that the Spine go down Wells Way. Southwark Cyclists agrees that Wells Way needs high-quality cycling provision, both as a key road, to reduce pressure on the park and to create a "night route" that does not go through the

park. Southwark Cyclists supports the following suggestion on Friends of Burgess Park's website<sup>2</sup>:

“[T]he minimum requirements for cycle routes would be:

- a) Continuous cycle paths in both directions the length of Wells Way, between Albany Road and Southampton Way. This would involve the purchase or right of way access across land at the cooling station and removal of the railings at that point.
- b) Parking restrictions on at least one side of the road. There are currently a number of cars which have for sale notices. Some of them appear to have been parked for a long time as there is a collection of leaves and debris around them.
- c) A wider pedestrian crossing to the north of the subway plus better sight lines from park.
- d) Connecting cycle path between Wells Way and Subway route.

For Wells Way to work as the preferred cycle route, it has to link in to a well-designed network of cycle routes.”

Southwark Cyclists' detailed proposals for the road layout can be found at:

<http://southwarkcyclists.org.uk/cycling-in-southwark-needs-a-strategy-for-burgess-park/>

## 5. Portland Street

This road is one of the main north-south routes in Southwark, particularly for journeys from Loughborough Junction and Camberwell to Elephant and Castle and London Bridge, via Edmund St. Currently there is no safe way to cross from Burgess Park to Portland Street via the traffic lights at Albany Road. We support the plans discussed last year for a re-designed junction with dedicated cycle green phase and hope this will be implemented soon.

Portland Street itself is a rat-run for through-traffic running parallel to the Walworth Road, but is also used by traffic avoiding the Old Kent Road. Although additional traffic calming is planned, we argue that a narrow residential road with a school at the south end requires filtering to remove north-south motor traffic. This could occur around the junction with Liverpool Grove and/or East Street.

High quality cycle routes on Portland Street will again reduce pressure on the Spine's length through Burgess Park, and would link up well with improved provision on Wells Way.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.friendsofburgesspark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/WELLS-WAY-discussion-document-Mv.pdf>  
See also <http://www.friendsofburgesspark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/CyclingPresentation16Jul16BurgessParkFriends.pdf>  
<http://www.friendsofburgesspark.org.uk/revitalisation/cycling/>

## **6. Copenhagen Crossings.**

We continue to press the benefits of Copenhagen Crossings in Southwark and ask for these to become part of the infrastructure that streetscape improvements can deliver. Friendly to both cyclists and pedestrians, the crossings appear on minor side roads as a continuation of the footway. They make crossing side roads much easier by insisting that vehicles slow down upon entering or exiting the side road, and also give way to pedestrians and cyclists. As such they have benefits in making both pedestrians and those who cycle be and feel safer. We understand that the Council has had reservations about these in the past owing to their potential impact on people with a disability.

We feel that through careful consideration the tactile elements of currently acceptably designed side road crossings can be incorporated into a blended design without signals being given to drivers that they have any priority. Their use and acceptance is becoming widespread by the most progressive boroughs in the capital and by TfL. In contrast, Southwark appears to be falling behind in gaining the benefits that they offer from improved safety, security and a reduction in intimidation from motor vehicles.

We would point to the following locations where they are used and/or proposed: In Lambeth their use is now well established, see Cambria St - Coldharbour Lane and Venn St in Clapham. Close to us on the Transport for London Route Network (TLRN) they are in use at Magee St where they were introduced with the segregated cycle lanes at the Oval. In Waltham Forest their use is widespread as part of the improvements associated with the mini-Holland and Camden are proposing their use in Tavistock Place and Torrington Place if the changes there are made permanent. We can supply pictures to illustrate all of these locations if that is of value.

We would like to take this forward as a matter of urgency and understand how we can influence the process by which they can become considered as part of the mix of interventions that Southwark considers. Their use in both in the designs for the Peckham Town Centre and the Walworth Road South schemes would improve those schemes significantly for pedestrians and those who cycle.

## **7. Cycling to Schools**

Southwark Council's Cycling Strategy, adopted in 2015, emphasises the role of cycling to school. The strategy is to increase the proportion of journeys to school by bike from the current 4% to 15% by 2025.

To help achieve this, we recommend:

- a) Reappointing a Cycle to School advocate, comparable to that funded by TfL and provided by Sustrans in 2013/4. This advocate would continue the work of going into schools and promoting the benefits of cycling for health, school performance and wellbeing.
- b) Extending the role of the School Travel Plan officers (Gary Douglas and Rachel Gates) to include promotion of cycling to school. Gary and Rachel are keen and could, we suggest, do more promotional work.
- c) Promulgating to parents and Head Teachers the message that active travel to school improves learning, especially early in the day. Factual research on this has been brought together by Professor Adrian Davis and colleagues. Adrian is Public Health and Transport consultant to Bristol City Council (see attached briefing). Adrian could be invited to address a suitable educational meeting in Southwark. Such an event could link the issue of active travel to school with the primary objectives of teachers and parents, which are teaching and learning.
- d) Working with groups of parents interested in pupils cycling to school. One of these groups in Dulwich has recently appointed a new Chair. We suggest that a meeting between this group and Cllr Wingfield might well be productive.

## **8. Increasing cycling in Dulwich**

Implementation of Quietway 7 through Dulwich has been delayed by the study into the Dulwich Foundation Coach Service. This study has now been completed, with recommendations for substantial changes which will benefit cyclists. Following this, Quietway 7 should be implemented.

Transport for London has agreed to support a holistic review of traffic in the Dulwich area. Southwark Cyclists is helping with this review, and looks forward to collaborating with the local community and with Southwark Council.

A local project to make cycling to schools safer is an off-road cycle and walking path behind the Herne Hill Velodrome from the north end of Burbage Road to Dulwich Village. This would be particularly useful for families living in and near Carver, Stradella and Winterbrook Roads, the north end of Burbage Road and the western end of Half Moon Lane. This area houses about 2,250 residents, with 600 children. Southwark council did a topographical survey of this in 2013. It now needs a feasibility study, covering hours of use, security, lighting, fencing, maintenance and management. We urge the Council to commission this.

## 9. Cycle Parking

We welcome the installation of secure on-street cycle parking across the borough, in the form of Sheffield stands, bike hangers and bike lockers. We will continue to advertise the mechanisms by which people can request the installation of secure on-street cycle parking at their home or workplace. We hope that sufficient funds will be allocated to cycle parking to ensure that the previous waiting list for secure spaces is eliminated.

Given the demand for on-street bike parking, we hope this is taken as evidence of the importance of cycle parking more generally. We would identify off-street cycle parking on new developments (residential and workplace) as an issue of particular importance at the stage of planning permission, and in the New Southwark Plan. In the recent past there have been clear problems with developments such as the Shard being granted Planning Permission without including on-site parking. Furthermore, we are receiving reports that many developments which meet the existing Southwark Plan's minimum cycle parking conditions are finding their on-site cycle parking fully occupied before their residential or commercial units are even fully let. We hope that the New Southwark Plan will raise the minimum cycle parking standards, and that planning control will reduce the extent to which cycle parking is seen as a negotiable aspect of planning permission.

## 10. Further network development

We have been involved in a number of consultations, formal and informal, on routes that will contribute to the development of a network of safe, attractive, routes in Southwark. Four of the most important are listed below:

- a) Quietway 14. We are keen to see the Quietway routes developed. Quietway 1 was the first to be finished in London and was designed by Southwark's engineers. It has proved very popular with a more than 150% increase in cycling on the route<sup>3</sup>. Parts of Quietway 7 and 83 have been mentioned in previous sections. In addition, Southwark have now consulted on all the central parts of Q14 (Blackfriars Rd to Tower Bridge Rd) and we have broadly supported the proposed designs. We hope now that work to implement Q14 will start and we will get another good east-west route through the north part of the borough.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://southwarkcyclists.org.uk/5479-2/>

- b) Cycle Superhighway 4 and the Surrey Quays Gyratory. Southwark and TfL have developed excellent plans for CS4, including the stretch through Surrey Quays. We were disappointed that the London Mayor did not include CS4 in his first list of future projects. We are keen to support any lobbying by the Council to get CS4 in TfL's next set of routes for implementation.
- c) Elephant Road and a better eastern bypass of the Elephant and Castle. The new road layout at the E+C northern "peninsula" is an improvement, but still the best option is to keep cyclists off the main junctions. An opportunity is presented by the Elephant Park development and the future redevelopment of the Shopping Centre. A direct, safe route from Walworth Rd to Rockingham Rd can easily be created by suitably engineering Elephant Rd, creating a cycle crossing of New Kent Rd, and continuing down the service road (Arch St, on the east side of the rail viaduct). This route could be extended to Blackfriars Rd and the North-South Cycle Superhighway (CS6) via the existing bypass, Keyworth St and the new public square being built at the Blackfriars Circus development.
- d) Surrey Quays and Canada Water. Large scale developments are underway or planned in Rotherhithe at Surrey Quays and Canada Water. The main developer (British Land) has consulted widely, including with Southwark Cyclists. We strongly support the plan for a Greenway from Russia Woodland to Southwark Park (something originally proposed in the Southwark Canada Water Area Action Plan). However we have argued against an additional through-road crossing the Greenway at mid point. This Greenway will also link through to the planned Thames bridge to Canary Wharf, something which again, clearly, we strongly support. We have also proposed that this Green route through Rotherhithe and Bermondsey could form the start of a green corridor running the length of the borough and linking all the major parks – "The Five Parks Route" (<http://southwarkcyclists.org.uk/proposal-for-a-new-route-the-five-parks-route/>).

If you would like further information or discussion on the points described in this letter, do not hesitate to be in touch.