



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA



John Hewitt
Chief Executive
Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UZ

6 July 2022

Dear John

We are writing to you following the fatal accident at the Rainton Gate junction, near West Rainton, that occurred earlier this week. This junction has long been highlighted by residents and elected representatives as a safety risk for many years, and the most recent accident has tragically highlighted this once more.

The Rainton Gate junction is well recognised locally as a very hazardous stretch of road. The level of traffic along the A690, the narrow exit from Pitlington Road, and the use of the central reservation to join the A690 are extremely challenging. It is widely known as an accident blackspot, with many people simply avoiding this junction altogether.

The solution to this problem has been known for some time – this junction must have traffic lights installed. The signalisation of this junction has been proposed a number of times for over seven years, yet we are still in the same situation.

Over many years, the delivery of these traffic lights have been linked to the delivery of a planning application in Rainton Gate, and as a result no change has been delivered on this stretch of road by the County Council.

Regardless of any ongoing discussions around planning applications, residents are still waiting for a solution, and the delivery of traffic lights. Now another family has suffered an appalling tragedy. We are now urging Durham County Council to begin the work to make this junction safe immediately. This cannot be allowed to continue, with more families put at risk. As this week has demonstrated, the cost of inaction is simply too great.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Mary Kelly Foy
Member of Parliament for the City of Durham

Councillor David Hall, Sherburn Division
Councillor Avril Wallage, Chair, West Rainton and Leamside Parish Council
Councillor Victoria Patton, Chair, Pitlington Parish Council
Emily Burns, Chair, West Rainton and Leamside Community Partnership

CC: Amanda Hopgood, Leader of Durham County Council
Geoff Paul, Interim Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth