Too many women and girls don’t feel safe using our public transport network.

That was the clear message that came out of the Safer Streets Merseyside survey I ran last year.

Too many women speaking of men making them feel uncomfortable, sitting too close, making unwanted remarks or gestures, sexual touching or following them home.

Too many women speaking of ‘safety planning’ - carrying keys in their fingers as a self-defence mechanism, pretending to phone family and friends, arranging for parents to meet them at bus stops and train stations, or even just staying at home.

This is totally unacceptable. It has to stop.

Every woman and girl should feel safe getting the bus or train to work, back to their home or out to socialise.

That’s why we’ve launched Safer Streets Liverpool.

We must make every woman and girl feel safer, and be safer, while using our public transport network.

We’ve listened intently to the voices of women and girls to inform this campaign and that’s why we’re taking a two-pronged approach to tackling this issue.

Firstly, we are making it absolutely clear that this type of behaviour is sexual violence and it’s unacceptable.

Through a high impact marketing campaign, we are spelling it out – on buses, trains, billboards, on local radio and in the newspapers – exactly what constitutes unacceptable behaviour, and we are sending a clear message that there is ‘No Excuse’ for it.

We are clear that sexual violence and street harassment are fuelled by misogynistic attitudes that we see on display throughout society. That’s why we are also backing up the campaign up with educational programmes in our schools aimed at raising awareness of misogyny and sexual harassment, challenging the root causes of this behaviour, and encouraging healthy, positive relationships.

Secondly, we are using the funding to make significant, long-term investments that will make a difference – from high visibility CCTV cameras in key locations to creating ‘safe spaces’ at travel centres at each of the bus stations.

A text message service is also going live so that women can report incidents of unwanted behaviour while travelling on the bus network. We are removing any barriers for women to report behaviour so we can know where, when and who so we can tackle action to stamp it out.

Finally, we’re also training bus drivers to help them spot the signs of harassment and abuse and know how to effectively intervene so they can act as ‘guardians’ for their passengers. It should be on all of us to take action if we see it happen, not just the individual being targeted.

There’s a lot of work to do, but there is a real commitment across all partners to make a genuine difference.

Through Safer Streets Liverpool, we want to create a lasting legacy of making our region safer for every woman and girl who lives, works, or visits Merseyside.