

MINUTES

Meeting: London Assembly (Plenary)
Date: Wednesday 2 November 2016
Time: 10.00 am
Place: Chamber, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1 2AA

Copies of the minutes may be found at: <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/whole-assembly>

Present:

Tony Arbour AM (Chairman)	Andrew Dismore AM
Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Deputy Chair)	Len Duvall AM
Gareth Bacon AM	Florence Eshalomi AM
Shaun Bailey AM	David Kurten AM
Sian Berry AM	Joanne McCartney AM
Andrew Boff AM	Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM
Leonie Cooper AM	Keith Prince AM
Tom Copley AM	Caroline Russell AM
Unmesh Desai AM	Navin Shah AM
Tony Devenish AM	Fiona Twycross AM

1 Apologies for Absence and Chairman's Announcements (Item 1)

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Kemi Badenoch AM, Nicky Gavron AM, Steve O'Connell AM, Dr Onkar Sahota AM and Peter Whittle AM.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed, to the public gallery, students from Years 4 and 5 of Bnos Beis Yaakov School, located in Kingsbury, London.

2 Declarations of Interests (Item 2)

- 2.1 The Assembly received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat.

Resolved:

- 2.2 **That the list of offices held by Assembly Members, as set out in the table at Item 3, be noted as disclosable pecuniary interests.**

3 Question and Answer Session - London & Partners (Item 3)

Part A:

- 3.1 The Assembly received opening statements from Rajesh Agrawal, Deputy Mayor for Business and Chair of London & Partners (L&P) and Andrew Cooke, Acting Chief Executive, L&P as set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 The Assembly then put questions to the Deputy Mayor for Business and Chair and the Acting Chief Executive on the work of L&P.
- 3.3 The record of the questions put by Assembly Members and the answers given is attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 3.4 During the course of the question and answer session the Chair of L&P and the Acting Chief Executive undertook to:
 - Provide the Assembly with the conclusions and recommendations of the review being conducted by the Mayor into the funding and governance of L&P;
 - Consider how L&P could be more transparent in relation to its budget, accounts, performance and decision making;
 - Consider whether an Assembly Member could be a member of the Board of L&P;

- Write to the Assembly to provide data in relation to non-EU and non-UK, EU nationals applying for places at University in the London in 2017/18.

3.5 The written answers provided following the meeting are attached as **Appendix 3**.

Part B:

3.6 The Chairman formally moved the motion in the agenda, namely:

“That the Assembly notes the answers to the questions asked.”

3.7 **Resolved:**

The answers to the questions asked be noted.

4 Petitions (Item 4)

4.1 The Assembly received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat.

4.2 Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM presented a petition with the following prayer:

“We the undersigned call on TfL and the London Mayor to improve the capacity of the H14 bus route – Hatch End to Northwick Park Hospital – by changing the service specification from single decker to double decker buses. There is considerable over-crowding on the service at peak hours already, and there will be a consequential increase in passenger numbers once the construction of the large housing estate on the former Kodak sports ground is completed in the next 12 months.”

4.3 **Resolved**

That the petition be forwarded to the Mayor of London, as Chair of Transport for London (TfL) and to the Transport Commissioner, TfL, for a response.

4.4 Tom Copley AM presented a petition with the following prayer:

“We the undersigned call on TfL and the Mayor of London to re-instate the rush-hour Central Line services on ‘the Hainault Loop’ which were axed with effect from Monday 8 August 2016.

The effect of these cuts has been to leave hundreds of passengers who commute to work from Roding Valley, Grange Hill, and Chigwell tube stations with a service which is not fit for purpose. For instance, passengers who miss the 7.21am service (timed at Roding Valley) now have to wait over 45 minutes until 8.09am for the next through-train to London. This is

because, without any consultation with local people or councillors, TfL halved the number of tube trains (from 6 trains to 3) running through these 3 stations during the key period of 7.30 – 8.30am. This unwarranted attack comes at a time when passenger usage of this section of the Central Line has increased by over 20% - surely more passengers should mean more trains, not a 50% cut in our rush hour service!

We call also on the Mayor of London to fulfil his commitment to represent all those who live and / or work in London. What message does it send to working people for the Mayor to preside over drastic cuts to our transport system when most service users, particularly at the affected times, are simply trying to get to work to provide for their families and to contribute to London life, whether by working in essential public services, or helping enrich London's economy if they work in the private sector? Having publicly stated that #LondonIsOpen, the Mayor needs to support working people, like us, who help make that a reality."

4.5 **Resolved**

That the petition be forwarded to the Mayor of London, as Chair of Transport for London (TfL) and to the Transport Commissioner, TfL, for a response.

4.6 Andrew Dismore AM presented a petition with the following prayer:

"We the undersigned call on TfL to reconsider its plans to rename the 82 bus the '13' and remove the 13 bus route, thereby reducing the frequency of buses along the Finchley Road."

4.7 **Resolved**

That the petition be forwarded to the Mayor of London, as Chair of Transport for London (TfL) and to the Transport Commissioner, TfL, for a response.

5 **Motions (Item 5)**

5.1 Caroline Russell AM moved and Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM seconded the following motion:

"The Assembly notes that whilst same-sex couples are able to form a civil partnership, different-sex couples cannot.

The Assembly acknowledges that approximately one in five households in London consist of a cohabiting different-sex couple.

The Assembly believes that the current legal situation which prevents different-sex couples from forming a civil partnership is unfair and prevents these couples from being able to get legal recognition for their relationship in a way that matches their values.

The Assembly recognises that City Hall has often been at the forefront of efforts to extend rights and liberties: in 2000 it introduced the first ever registration scheme for same-sex couples.

The Assembly calls on the Mayor to support the equal civil partnerships campaign and urges him to make representations to the government for a change in the law if the Court of Appeal rejects Rebecca Steinfeld and Charles Keidan’s appeal against the High Court’s decision to reject their application to form a civil partnership.”

5.2 Upon being put to the vote, the motion in the name of Caroline Russell AM was agreed (with 16 votes cast in favour and 0 votes cast against).

5.3 Sian Berry AM moved and Tom Copley AM seconded the following motion:

“London has over two million citizens in private rented accommodation. Shelter estimates private renting will grow to 41 per cent of all households by 2025 – becoming bigger than the owner occupied sector in London for the first time since the mid-1960s.

However, conditions in these homes are not provided at a consistently high standard by landlords, and those moving home are required to pay considerable fees and do not always get a high standard of service from letting agents.

Current regulation of the sector, including licensing of landlords in certain areas and enforcement of letting agent and landlord conduct, is the responsibility of borough councils who do not have the resources to ensure a consistent level of quality and service to renters.

Extensive devolved powers have been given to the Welsh and Scottish Governments to improve standards within the private rented sector, with benefits for landlords in terms of training, as well as for renters in – for example – not being required to cover letting agent fees in Scotland. London would benefit from being able to apply consistent standards such as these at a strategic London level.

This Assembly notes the Mayor’s current efforts to seek greater devolved powers from Government to improve the private rented sector in London. We believe, however, that these current negotiations may not go far enough in securing the powers London needs to resolve the problems in the private rented sector.

This Assembly therefore resolves to ask the Mayor to continue to press the Government for the devolution of more powers over the private sector in London,

and to ask his team to meet with their counterparts in Wales and Scotland to learn about the benefits of new powers there as they come into force.”

- 5.4 Upon being put to the vote, the motion in the name of Sian Berry AM was agreed (with 12 votes cast in favour and 4 votes against).
- 5.5 It was noted that the motion set out on the agenda in the name of Steve O’Connell AM had been withdrawn.
- 5.6 Fiona Twycross AM moved and Andrew Dismore AM seconded the following motion, amended in accordance with Standing Order 3.6A (1):

“This Assembly is deeply concerned by the low-pay and unethical practices that characterise large parts of London’s hospitality sector, with research undertaken by Unite the Union showing that 63 per cent of workers in hotels and restaurants are paid less than the London Living Wage.

The hospitality and tourism industry is an essential component of London’s economy. More than 30m UK and international tourists visited London in 2015, contributing £15bn to the U.K economy.

This Assembly notes that staff turnover costs hospitality employers in London £274 million annually. This situation is likely to be exacerbated by the consequences of Brexit, with one in eight employees in London coming from the European Economic Area (EEA), a third of which make up a third of employees in London’s accommodation and food services.

This Assembly believes that hotel chains operating in the capital have a social and moral responsibility to treat their workers ethically. That means paying staff a wage they can live on; providing safe, secure work and guaranteed hours every week; and offering training, development, and career opportunities. Ethical treatment of staff leads to greater productivity, staff retention and a more positive image to promote, which translates in to significant savings for business.

This Assembly calls on the Mayor to encourage the hospitality industry to improve conditions and promote best practice similar to conditions in New York where room attendants receive a pay of at least £16 per hour. The Assembly also calls on the Mayor to undertake an evidence-led review of the financial benefits to the hospitality sector of paying the London Living Wage and pursuing employment practices that encourage workers to remain within the industry.

The Assembly calls on the Mayor to encourage the Minister responsible for Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs, Damian Hinds MP, to engage with HM Revenue and

Customs to ensure that the implementation of the minimum wage is proactively enforced.

The Assembly notes that failure to enforce the minimum wage properly creates an environment where human trafficking can flourish.”

5.7 Upon being put to the vote, the motion in the name of Fiona Twycross AM was agreed (with 16 votes cast in favour and 0 votes cast against).

5.8 Fiona Twycross AM moved and Leonie Cooper AM seconded the following motion:

“This Assembly is deeply concerned about Newsquest South London’s plans to significantly reduce its workforce, and at a time when resources for news provision across the capital are already considerably stretched.

The newsroom restructure will result in just 12 reporters covering news, sport and leisure across 11 newspapers and eight websites under a single content editor. Seven reporters have resigned over the plans and others face redundancy.

In addition to the reduction of the number of newsroom staff, the working conditions of those that remain with Newsquest will be severely compromised. This includes the following newspapers: The Croydon Guardian, Sutton Guardian, Epsom Guardian, Wimbledon Guardian, Wandsworth Guardian, Balham and Tooting Guardian, Mitcham and Morden Guardian, Kingston Guardian, Surrey Comet, Elmbridge Comet, the Richmond & Twickenham Times and The News Shopper - for Lewisham, Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley.

This Assembly believes that newsroom staff across the city provide an essential service informing the public and raising their awareness of key issues in their local areas. They serve as a valuable means of engaging individuals with the democratic process, informing Londoners of the work we do here at the London Assembly. To lose or greatly compromise the ability of newsroom staff to continue to serve the public in this way would be regrettable. London needs quality local newspapers to ensure democratic scrutiny, accountability, and to encourage an informed and active citizenship – these proposals do not provide that.

This Assembly calls on the Mayor to continue to engage with the NUJ and Newsquest in this dispute to find a solution that maintains the quality of the South London Press publications, and commit to look at ways in which local newspaper provision can be supported in London.”

5.9 Upon being put to the vote, the motion in the name of Fiona Twycross AM was agreed (with 16 votes cast in favour and 0 votes against).

5.10 Tom Copley AM moved and Jennette Arnold OBE AM seconded the following motion:

“This Assembly is concerned about the Government’s proposals to remove the 50 per cent cap on religiously selective admissions for all religious free schools and the impact this would have on diversity within London’s schools.

Since 2007, a 50 per cent cap on religiously selective admissions has been in place for new academies and free schools which select by religion. The Government’s proposals intend to remove the 50 per cent rule and in its place, introduce measures that are less likely to increase diversity in faith schools.

The Government's own data show that religious schools which are 100% selective by faith are less diverse in terms of both race and social class than religious schools where the 50% cap is in place.

This Assembly believes that it is important for schools to serve the local communities in which they are located. The Mayor has released a statement in which he said selection leads to segregation and appointed a Deputy Mayor for Social Integration to help ensure Londoners from different faiths, ethnicities, backgrounds and social classes are better integrated in a city that is the most diverse in the country.

This Assembly calls on the Mayor to make representations to the Government to keep the 50% cap in place.

This Assembly asks for the Deputy Mayor for Social Integration to examine the effects of the Government’s proposals on diversity in London and to look at ways in which we can ensure that London’s schools are fully inclusive and to lobby the Government on their proposals.”

5.11 Upon being put to the vote, the motion in the name of Tom Copley AM was agreed (with 11 votes cast in favour and 4 votes cast against).

6 Future Plenary Meeting (Item 6)

6.1 Resolved:

That the Assembly agrees to use the 7 December 2016 meeting principally to hold question and answer sessions with Gavin Barwell MP, Minister of State for Housing, Planning and Minister for London, and James Murray, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development.

7 Date of Next Meeting (Item 7)

- 7.1 The next scheduled meeting of the London Assembly was the Mayor's Question Time meeting which will take place at 10.00am on Wednesday 16 November 2016 in the Chamber, City Hall.

8 Any Other Business the Chairman Considers Urgent (Item 8)

- 8.1 There were no items of urgent business.

9 Close of Meeting

- 9.1 The meeting closed at 12.50pm.

Chairman

Date

Contact Officers: Vishal Seegoolam
Principal Committee Manager
GLA Secretariat, City Hall
The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA

Telephone: 020 7983 4425
Email: vishal.seegoolam@london.gov.uk