

London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time) – 18 November 2015

Transcript of Agenda Item 5 – Questions to the Mayor

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): We continue to Item 5: questions to the Mayor.

2015/3560 - Increasing cycling in London

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

In addition to your current cycling strategy, what further measures are you planning to increase cycling in London?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you very much. We are doing a huge amount, Caroline. I do not know how you could possibly want more, but £913 million is the biggest investment in cycling the city has ever seen. We are now going through the biggest infrastructural changes to London to promote cycling that anybody can remember, certainly that I can remember. It is at the background of some success.

There are some real campaigners here for cycle safety in this Chamber. I see one of them stifling a yawn there; I do not know why.

We have brought down the number of cyclists killed or seriously injured (KSIs) on the roads by 12% this year on last year, the lowest cycle casualty rate ever recorded. I am committed to bringing that down further.

The Cycle Superhighways, the Quietways, expanding the cycle hire, the Mini-Hollands, better junctions, developing the next phase of the Safer Lorries Scheme and all of those things are going gangbusters at the moment.

To be honest, this whole cycle revolution that is really underway is provoking the most incredible backlash. I have to be honest with you. I cannot think of anything I have ever done that has provoked such direct remonstrations from everybody. Virtually every senior Government Minister has ticked me off in one way or another for the Cycle Superhighways and every time they do I get prouder and prouder of what we are doing. It is the right way forward for our great city and we will continue.

What I hope very much is that there may come a time, folks, when I am no longer here to keep this all going.

Jenny Jones AM: Hooray.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Exactly. I hope that you will continue to hold any future Mayor's feet to the fire. Val [Valerie Shawcross CBE AM] asked this question last time. There is a great programme of work that needs to be protracted. You wanted to know what it is; I can tell you if you really want me to go on.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: No, I actually asked what further measures in addition to your current plan. What you are saying is great and we are all very supportive, although some of the installation, as we know, is painful. However, what further measures?

What I wanted to highlight is that we agree that KSIs are down, but eight cyclists have been killed so far this year, seven as a result of collisions with heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). This morning, the

London Cycling Campaign presented a petition to Assembly Members signed by – here it is – over 13,000 cyclists calling for you to do more to make cyclists safe specifically from HGVs.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sure, OK.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I have a few specific questions that I would like to ask you. Given that 40% of cyclist deaths occur in the morning rush-hour, will you look at implementing a rush-hour lorry ban if the assessment shows that it can work?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Just on the background, on freight in the rush-hour: we are already looking at restrictions not just for reasons of cycle safety but also for congestion reasons. We have to look at everything possible.

I am not necessarily a manic enthusiast, basically because of the risk of damaging the interests of people who must get their stuff into London, people who – whatever it is – run sandwich shops and need to get their stuff into town. You have to be very careful before you hit people with new charges and new costs.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You are actively considering this?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Caroline, yes. If you talk to Isabel [Isabel Dedring, Deputy Mayor for Transport] and if you talk to Transport for London (TfL), we are certainly looking at what we could do. However, I have to say that personally – as I did over the implementation, if you remember, of the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) phase 3 very rapidly during the recession – I have some reservations.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Also, on construction vehicles, are you actively considering banning construction vehicles in the rush-hour lorry ban if you bring one in?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That would be, again, very difficult in many ways for some parts of the economy. Also, you would have the risk of a great rush at either end of the ban. Cyclists use the roads at all times of the day, speaking entirely personally. We are there the whole time. If you had loads more lorries at the end of the morning peak, you might have a perverse and negative event.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Will you work to ensure that the construction industry adopts the Construction Logistics and Cyclist Safety standards across the board? Although, you do have your Safer Lorries Scheme, a lot in there is not fully required. It has lots of nice words, but the industry can opt out of things like retrofitting lorry cabs with glass doors to ensure full vision.

Will you look to review those and to tighten up those standards so that we can really improve safety on our roads?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): As you know, Caroline, we are already. These standards must be agreed at a European level and that is just it, I am afraid. Take whatever view of that you want, but that is the reality. We are now working not just with the manufacturers but with the Commission on legislative change. You speak rightly about the new types of cabs that we want to see. It can make a huge difference if you get the driver down to the kind of level of a bus driver with a transparent door so that they can see vulnerable road users much more easily.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I would be grateful if you could write to me with further details of what you are doing around lorry safety and we will formally present this petition to you. Thank you very much.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I would be very happy to do that. I could tell you a lot more about it now, but I would be very happy to write.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I am out of time. Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.

Andrew Boff AM: Mr Mayor, this morning, there was multiparty support for the petition that was alluded to by Caroline Pidgeon earlier.

Do you not think it is important in your schemes for cycling in London to bring the London public on board with your schemes?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do, Andrew, and you have been a great campaigner for cycling yourself over many years. Indeed, you are a passionate cyclist.

I know there is one particular part of your constituency, from memory, that is not yet fully enthusiastic or not everybody in that area - unless I missed my guess - is fully enthusiastic about one particular cycle lane. I am absolutely aware of the issue. I have had meetings personally with some of those constituents. I know this is a later question as well. I think I am right in saying that this is what Andrew is driving at and I am happy to continue to engage.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you. I wish it were just one. Actually, I am going to allude to three where there are failures, I believe, by TfL to consult residents.

In Enfield Town, we have a situation where the businesses want to have an option that involves cycling running parallel to the high street. That option has been removed by TfL, even though there is an active campaign successfully attracting a lot of support to reinstate option 4.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Really? All right.

Andrew Boff AM: You have alluded to the Cycle Superhighway 1 (CS1) route where the local residents in Stamford Hill provided four alternatives to TfL. Many of these CS1 routes are the preserve of testosterone-driven cyclists. To take that route past the gates of a school appears unwise to the residents there and they proposed four possible alternatives, all of which have been rejected cursorily by TfL.

Finally of the three - and there are others in London as well - we have a situation where quietening the roads in South Hackney has resulted in the normal consultation that one would expect on shutting roads in a part of this city being short cut and they are putting it in as a 'temporary' scheme, which usually is put in because you have an emergency situation. Hackney Council is using those particularly temporary measures in order to drive through the cycling agenda.

As you have said, Mr Mayor, I am very pro-cycling --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. That is what I want to hear. Come on.

Andrew Boff AM: -- and I have been for many, many years. What I see is - and perhaps you will not agree but I am looking for action from you, Mr Mayor - a TfL that seems intent on making more and more people resistant to the changes that are taking place in favour of cycling. It is actually turning London into a city of anti-cyclists because it will not listen. Will you take action, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am grateful to you, Andrew. Obviously, there is a balance to be struck between listening to people and trying to accommodate their views and being as humble as we possibly can in our approach. If there are failings that we have made, then obviously we need to look again at what we have done. If there are better ideas that we have wrongly neglected, then perhaps we should go back to them. However, there is a balance to be struck - and you appreciate it and you have been involved in this for so long - between listening and trying to accommodate as many people as possible and actually getting anything done. The sad fact is that if you really want to be decisive in promoting a cycling agenda, you have sometimes to take some difficult decisions.

That is not to say that the points you make are not totally valid and that the people whom you have been talking to do not have legitimate grievances against the way things have been done. If they do, then we must try harder and try to accommodate them and come back with better ideas. However, it is very, very difficult to satisfy everybody if you really, really want to make change.

Andrew Boff AM: I get that, Mr Mayor, and I absolutely agree. You have to listen to what people have said and then sometimes make a decision that some people are going to get annoyed about and upset about. I absolutely get that. That is government. That is the way we do it. Unfortunately, what you do not do, Mr Mayor, is short cut on the listening, which is what TfL is doing.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That is a very serious point and we have to listen to that. I am having meetings, as you can imagine, the whole time, particularly about the Enfield scheme, which sounds potentially great. If people think it could be improved, then our job is to try to see whether they are right and to help them if we possibly can.

However, in the end, you cannot let the best be the enemy of the good. If this whole thing just trickles into the sand because of one group's objections or another group's objections, we simply will not get it done and that would be very sad.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Can I just make a note? Mr Mayor, you talked about Mr Boff speaking on behalf of his constituencies. He spoke about Enfield and Hackney. He does not represent Enfield or Hackney. As a list member, of course, he can speak for all of London.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That is right.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Can I ask that if there is any exchange of information from your office to Mr Boff on this matter, the appropriate constituency members be copied in? That is just a matter of process. Assembly Member Deputy Mayor Evans?

Roger Evans AM: My constituency, Havering and Redbridge, is next door to the areas that Andrew [Andrew Boff AM] talked about. We did have some concerns that we did not win our Mini-Holland bid in Redbridge, but we are feeling a little bit of relief when we look across at what is happening in Walthamstow and the concerns of the residents there.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You will feel differently when it is finished.

Roger Evans AM: That was actually the question I was going to ask you, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): When it is finished and when people from --

Roger Evans AM: Will you learn from the episode in Walthamstow and ensure that the consultation and the general proposals are more acceptable when you come to do Redbridge, which I hope we will do very soon, actually?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, it is very important that TfL, which is a body with colossal power over people's lives in many ways, does behave with respect and listens to people as much as it possibly can. We have to take some difficult decisions about the allocation of road space in order to promote cycling. It is not easy. This is deeply and bitterly contested across town and I understand people's feelings. However, the results will be great and people will be very enthusiastic once it is in and once the period of pain that Caroline [Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM] described is over.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Mayor, can we move on to the next question in the name of Dr Sahota on the junior doctors' contract?

2015/3763 - Junior Doctors' Contract

Dr Onkar Sahota AM

I have been asked to put the following question to you by a member of the public:

"I am a junior doctor living in London. Like every junior doctor working in England, I face a great deal of uncertainty regarding what my salary will be from August 2016. This is due to the belligerent approach of Jeremy Hunt and the ... Government.

"As London is an exceptionally expensive city to both live and work. I am concerned regarding whether or not I will be able to afford to remain as a junior doctor in this wonderful city.

"I am not alone. There is a very real danger that many junior doctors living and working in London will have to leave their posts and seek employment in other more affordable parts of the UK. I am sure you are well aware that many London hospitals are heavily reliant upon locum doctors to ensure safe staffing levels. A mass exodus of junior doctors from our Capital will worsen this. Unfortunately this will be compounded by the proposed cap on locum rates that your colleague, Jeremy Hunt, is pushing through."

Are you concerned about the impact of the proposed junior doctor's contract on the ability of London to attract essential medical professionals?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Onkar, I should point out that these contracts are not in my purview, as you know well. They are to do with Department of Health and National Health Service (NHS) Employers. We do not have responsibility in this area and it really is not for me here to try to second-guess that or to get involved in the negotiations or the discussions now.

On your question, my information is that London is in fact at the moment very successful in attracting junior doctors and at the moment there is no difficulty in recruiting to fill vacant positions. That is the information I have from Health Education England.

Clearly, what is within my power is to try to make sure we have the conditions in which young professionals are able to start their lives, build their careers, have families and all the rest of it. Housing for me is the crucial thing there and there we are working flat out, as you know, to try to make London hospitable - as it were - for young professionals like junior doctors.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Mr Mayor, the truth is that young professionals are increasingly feeling the pain of living in London. They are struggling to find a place to live. The contract changes proposed by Mr Hunt [The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Health] will make it even more difficult for junior doctors to live in London.

Let me just talk about Dr Janis Burns, who has written to you and to me. She says,

“As London is an exceptionally expensive city to live and work in, I’m concerned regarding whether or not I will be able to afford to remain as a junior doctor in this wonderful city.”

She goes on to say,

“There’s a very real danger that many junior doctors living and working in London will have to leave their posts and seek employment in other affordable parts of the country.”

Why are you constantly ignoring the pressures and undervaluing the keyworkers in London, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): As I say, on the first point, on your actual question, the information that we have is that there is not a problem at the moment in attracting recruits. However, your other point, which is a very good one, is that we have to make sure that London can provide homes for people who are going to be on good incomes by comparison with many Londoners but who will still be able to find somewhere to live.

The answer to that is to build loads more homes and that is what we are doing to help Londoners who cannot necessarily afford a big mortgage to get part-buy/part-rent homes so that they can staircase up. Most people in those situations are going to want to be able to get a share in the value of their property, even if they cannot get the whole thing.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Mr Mayor, the truth is that London is getting more expensive to live in and to work in. Dr Janis [Burns], who has written to you and to me, then further goes and says,

“I’m sure you will be well aware that many London hospitals are heavily reliant upon locum doctors to ensure safe staffing levels. A mass exodus of junior doctors from our capital will worsen this.”

Currently, we have a shortage of 8,000 nurses in London. We are recruiting paramedics from New Zealand. You have been told previously through a report of the Health Committee that there is a shortage of 6,000 general practitioners (GPs) in London. There is a 13% vacancy rate for GP trainees in London. Yet things are getting worse because of the Government contracts.

One thing you could have done was to implement a keyworker housing strategy, but you have not. You have had eight years to do so. Why do you keep ignoring the plight of keyworkers in London?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will tell you. We do not ignore the plight of workers in London. Most people would appreciate that it is very difficult to distinguish between one sector and another. Many people in many professions feel that they are of vital importance to the economy and our job is to build as many homes as we can for all sectors of the London population. That is why I am very proud of the record we have had in building more affordable homes than ever before. For people like junior doctors, who, as I said, are not in short supply at the moment in London --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: They are in short supply, Mr Mayor. You are obviously out of touch with reality.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Not according to the briefing that I have been--

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Obviously, you need to have your briefing checked.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am always willing to listen to your expertise in this, Onkar, but I can only repeat to you what the NHS is telling me. It is vital that all professionals should be able to find somewhere to live in London. There is huge pressure on this city, basically because of the dynamism and the success of London. We have had a huge growth in population since I have been Mayor. It is by far the most dynamic and attractive urban economy in Europe. That means building loads more homes and that is the answer. That is the single best thing we in City Hall can do to help junior doctors.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I will leave it there, then, Mr Mayor. Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Mr Mayor, we go on now to question 2015/3730 in the name of Assembly Member Bacon on disinvestment in fossil fuels. The question on the order paper in the name of Assembly Member Arbour has been withdrawn.

2015/3730 - Divestment in fossil fuels

Gareth Bacon AM

Will the Mayor renounce the calls from some in the Chamber and outside to divest GLA pension investments in fossil fuels?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I understand the feeling behind this. People want everybody to divest from fossil fuels. I do not have the power to direct the London Pensions Fund Authority (LPFA) to do this anyway, but it has a fiduciary duty to its pensioners to get value from its investments. That goes, by the way, for many pension funds, the most right-on organisations you can possibly imagine, which always turn out to have investments in heaven knows what, simply because their trustees have a duty to get the best value for their pensioners.

Gareth Bacon AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. I agree with you. I understand why some Members are calling for divestment; they want to make a symbolic point. However, it will not actually make one jot of difference to climate change one way or the other. What it will do, though, as research by my office has revealed, is that over the 25-year life of a pension investment, divesting pensions in this way will cost the LPFA and our employees £25 million.

In light of that, would you agree with me, Mr Mayor, that those Members who are calling for divestment in fossil fuels should reconsider their position?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We are going to have some questions about carbon dioxide (CO₂) reduction in London anyway. Since 2008, since I have been Mayor, it has gone down by 14% as it is. In per capita terms, it has gone down by 20% because there has been such a big increase in population. That is a pretty amazing achievement considering the growth in the London economy. We have been using technology, we have been retrofitting buildings, we have been doing all sorts of technical fixes to reduce our carbon footprint and that is the way to do it. I would rather see the money invested in those sorts of technical fixes than --

Gareth Bacon AM: Thrown away needlessly?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- thrown away in some political gesture.

Gareth Bacon AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor.

Murad Qureshi AM: Mr Mayor, do you accept the existence of 'carbon bubbles', as Mark Carney of the Bank of England has highlighted recently in his speech, as being 'unburnable'?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): 'Unburnable'?

Murad Qureshi AM: Yes. That is the term he has come up with.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sorry, you will have to elucidate that for--

Murad Qureshi AM: No, let us stick to carbon bubbles.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not think carbon is --.

Murad Qureshi AM: Staying under the ground is what he meant, Mr Mayor. They need to stay under the ground in light --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I see. 'Unburnable' to keep the carbon in the ground?

Murad Qureshi AM: Yes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. Look, the way to do all of this is to keep our general strategy of reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) by retrofitting and by reducing pollution, which we have done. We have retrofitted 500,000 homes in London and we have a pipeline of 170,000 more. We have cut London's carbon footprint massively at a time of huge economic growth. That is the way to do it. The rest of it is political window-dressing.

Murad Qureshi AM: I do not want to go down that road because we have been down that road many a time. Do you not have --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You do not want to go down that road because you do not like the answer, which is another story of triumph from City Hall.

Murad Qureshi AM: Mr Mayor, do you not have a duty to act on these concerns to protect pension fund-holders in the LPFA on this basis?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The duty is upon the trustees of the LPFA and their fiduciary duty, as I understand it, is to protect their pensioners and to maximise the return from the pension fund.

Murad Qureshi AM: How do you react to warnings that the carbon bubble poses as great a threat as the bursting of the credit bubble in 2008?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That is a decision for the trustees. I am sure that they will have seen the Governor of the Bank of England's wise words. They will have reflected deeply on his message that carbon is 'unburnable' or that - it is the gerundive there that you are after - carbon should not be burned.

They will take their investment decisions accordingly. If they conclude that carbon-based companies or fossil fuel companies are in the long term, as Mark [Carney] thinks, a bad deal, then they will not go for them.

Murad Qureshi AM: You should take note of what is happening in the United States with Exxon --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It would be totally wrong for politicians, by the way. It is not right for politicians to start weighing and telling pension funds what they should or should not be investing in. That is totally wrong.

Murad Qureshi AM: This is not me, necessarily. It is Mark Carney, actually, the Governor of the Bank of England.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Mark Carney was making a --

Murad Qureshi AM: He said that to the insurance industry and --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The Governor of the Bank of England was making a point about his view on where the long-term growth trends of the economy are and what assets are likely to appreciate or depreciate over time. He was making a point about the fossil fuel economy, which is that he thinks that in the end it is a "sell". That is what he was saying. He was saying that this whole thing is a sell. That is his view. He is entitled to that view.

If the trustees of pension funds think that he is correct in that view, then they should divest themselves, but it is not for me for political reasons to weigh in and tell them to get out of some market that they may think is wise.

Murad Qureshi AM: You appoint the Chair of the LPFA. That is the critical position you can play. You have misunderstood the divestment argument. It is not an immediate cliff-hanger. It is gradual before 2050. I will leave it at that and I hope you appreciate that point.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No. Sir Merrick Cockell is the independent Chair. I have the power to remove him, I suppose or I imagine, but he is independent. It is his job and it is the job of the trustees to get on and make investments that they think are prudent. They will take full account of what the Governor of the Bank of England has said and what you were saying about the long-term viability of investments in fossil fuels.

Roger Evans AM: This is an interesting debate, Mr Mayor. How do you reconcile the call for methods of production of energy that are effectively more expensive with the need to keep prices down to prevent fuel poverty and to protect jobs in heavy industry?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You can reconcile them. You have heard from Amber Rudd [The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change] this morning that she wants to move out of coal altogether towards gas-fired power stations. For virtually every new development that we have green-lighted in London over the last few years, we have had some sort of combined heat and power plan, which is meant to be based, ultimately, on renewables so that the gas could come from boiling up rhubarb, garden waste, chip fat - or whatever you do - and all that sort of malarkey and base it on renewables.

It often proves technically more difficult than you think at first. Gas is less polluting, certainly, and I think it produces less CO₂, also, than coal. It is an improvement; it is not perfect, as I am sure Murad [Qureshi AM]

would immediately point out. However, the way forward is to have a diversity of energy supplies, some of which are carbon-neutral, and to try to increase those as fast as possible.

2015/3674 - Your message at the Paris Climate Change Summit

Darren Johnson AM

What can you take to Paris to give confidence about London's commitment to tackling climate change?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thanks, Darren. The message from London to the Climate Change Summit in Paris is that we continue to be extremely ambitious about delivering London's energy future and reducing carbon emissions. I am going for a couple of days - or a day or something - representing London at the C40 conference of mayors.

The ambition remains very, very demanding. We want to cut London's carbon emissions by 60% by 2025 based on the 1990 level. As I just said to Murad [Qureshi AM], between 2008 and 2013, London's carbon emissions decreased by 14% even though the population went up by 600,000 and per capita emissions have, therefore, gone down by 20%. That was in a time of big economic growth. London's gross value added (GVA) went up by 18%. That was an achievement, folks, and we are going to continue.

Darren Johnson AM: We can argue about your achievements and we can argue about whether you have been ambitious enough --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, you cannot argue. No, you cannot.

Darren Johnson AM: -- but what I want to focus on now --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, Darren, no.

Darren Johnson AM: Just listen and concentrate.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): There is no argument.

Darren Johnson AM: The actions of this Government are making it ever more difficult for you as Mayor and for your successor as Mayor to deliver on these targets. Can we look at the zero-carbon homes requirement? You are keeping it in the London Plan and it has had a significant effect, but Government changes may force the next Mayor to drop it altogether when it rewrites it.

Will you lobby the Government to restore this policy nationally after it has scrapped it or at least ensure that it is devolved so that it can be a decision for the Mayor of London without interference from central Government?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That is a very serious question. Nicky [Gavron AM] has a question later on exactly this point but, through you, Jennette [Jennette Arnold OBE, Chair], I will answer it even though my answer will anticipate what I would say to Nicky.

The London Plan already requires that development reduces carbon emissions in a viable and feasible way and so we have statute already through progressively tightening emission reduction targets. At the moment, those require a 35% improvement over the national standard - that is the 2013 Building Regulations - and I intend to keep those in place, in spite of what you rightly say the Government is doing. Therefore, what we are looking

at is making sure that we can continue through the London Plan to ensure that zero-carbon homes are delivered in London. We will be issuing further guidance in due course to provide the industry with the certainty it needs about how to do that.

Darren Johnson AM: You will go to Paris with a clear message on that?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Absolutely.

Darren Johnson AM: Good. What about the solar Feed-in Tariff (FIT)? I know you expressed your concerns on that. The Government's plans to slash this right down in such a dramatic and hasty fashion are really damaging the solar industry and are really damaging for the ability of this city to properly tackle climate change.

Are you going to seek clarity from the Government on its intentions ahead of the Paris summit?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Absolutely. I have been lobbied a great deal about this subject. Again, you are anticipating a question, if I may say, from the Labour Group, but I will certainly answer it happily.

The changes to the FIT are something that I was initially very concerned about and some of you may remember I expressed concern about it because it was quite a sharp cliff-drop, it seemed to me, for the subsidy removal. It is important that the Government should get that message and we have been putting that message across.

On the other hand, if it is the case - which I think it is - that the costs of solar are coming down, then it also makes sense for the Government to be withdrawing the subsidy. The question is how fast and how far you can go without jeopardising what has been a very successful industry. The technology is changing. The deals are changing. It is very encouraging and exciting to see the progress that is being made in solar.

What we are saying in the consultation is that we would like to see a transition to zero incentives spread out a little bit longer and that is the argument we are making. We would like to see a little bit longer for the industry to, as it were, acclimatise to this change.

Darren Johnson AM: Will you try to get assurances from the Government ahead of Paris on that and are you prepared to make a big deal of this in Paris if you do not get assurance?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We have already, as you know, made a response to the Government's proposals from the consultation it issued on the review of FITs and we made a variety of points, which I have already expressed. It was not in perhaps very violent language but there was no question that we see the cliff-edge problem and the uncertainty, although we accept the need to make the transition to subsidy-free as soon as possible. Obviously, if we can get to a situation in which the solar industry can operate on its own and stand more on its own two feet, it would be great.

Darren Johnson AM: One final quick question from me before I hand over to my colleague. The London Climate Change Partnership has lost funding from the Environment Agency and is running down its reserves and could close in 2017. It has done some really important work. Will you be looking at underwriting its funding as you prepare next year's budget?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will certainly look at it, Darren, although I do not want to make any commitments now in advance of the budget.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Mr Mayor, you have made a number of references to Assembly Member Gavron's question. Can you give her a complete answer and then I will bring her in for a follow-up question?

2015/3771 - How will you secure Zero Carbon Homes?

Nicky Gavron AM

How will you secure Zero Carbon Homes?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I think I have given the answer already to that question. You want to know how we are going to secure zero-carbon homes in view of the Government's policies. I have said that we will issue further guidance in due course, although it remains clearly set out in the London Plan.

Nicky Gavron AM: Yes, Mayor, and I want to say how pleased I am that you are staying with the London Plan policies and are going to issue further guidance, but it is still a national policy and it is still a great blow to British business. What we have seen is over 200 businesses, including property and construction businesses, writing to the Chancellor and saying that this sudden U-turn is undermining their confidence in the Government and will now curtail their investment in the innovation and manufacturing of green goods and services, which is a growth sector in the London economy.

My question is on the back of that. What will be the impact on London businesses?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Obviously, we hope to keep the zero-carbon homes agenda in London going very strongly. I have to say that when I go to the new developments --

Nicky Gavron AM: This is a question about London businesses. Have you done any work on the impact of the national policy on London businesses? It is more of an economic question.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): In that case, if I may so, the question is wrongly posed because the agenda here is to reduce CO₂ and not necessarily to create employment. We have lots of ways of creating employment and --

Nicky Gavron AM: Green goods and services do reduce CO₂.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): They do but, sorry, I am --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, Mr Mayor, let me help you out. You are quite right. Assembly Member Gavron, have you had an answer to your question regarding zero-carbon homes?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am not unsympathetic to the point you are making, Nicky, at all but the primary objective has to be --

Nicky Gavron AM: I am going on to ask. I wanted to know if you had done any work on that because these are property construction people. This all contributes towards zero-carbon homes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sure, yes.

Nicky Gavron AM: I wondered if you had done any work on the impact on London businesses. Clearly, you have not, but if I could --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No. That is because that is not the point. The issue is reducing CO₂ and I thought that that was what you cared about.

Nicky Gavron AM: These do reduce CO₂ --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, of course.

Nicky Gavron AM: -- because they are part of zero-carbon homes. If I could go on and just ask you, have you lobbied the Government? I did not get a clear sense from what you said to Darren [Johnson AM]. Have you actually lobbied the Government on zero-carbon homes? I have seen nothing in *Hansard*; I have seen nothing written.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I have made it clear just now that we are going to continue in London with our commitment to zero-carbon homes beyond 2016, which we can do through the London Plan. With the difference that the Building Regulations have made to homes in London, if you go to these new homes now, they barely need heating at all sometimes because they are so brilliantly insulated.

Nicky Gavron AM: Seventy per cent of our new homes are leaking, for goodness sake.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is quite unbelievable. The reduction in CO₂ emissions --

Nicky Gavron AM: Can I press my point? Have you lobbied the Government about the national policy cancelling the target on zero-carbon homes?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, because we intend to pursue the zero-carbon homes agenda through --

Nicky Gavron AM: Because you do not think you need to do it on behalf of businesses?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sorry, you are misunderstanding the point. We can do it through the London Plan and I am sure that that is the approach that you would support.

Nicky Gavron AM: I am just trying to say that there will be an impact on London businesses and you are --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, there will not be an impact on London businesses if we can keep the zero-carbon agenda alive post 2016, which is what we are going to do.

Nicky Gavron AM: London businesses work across the country, too. You are missing my point about an economic growth sector for London.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, you are missing the point.

Nicky Gavron AM: Can I just say my last question --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, you have it the wrong way around. London businesses are doing very well in all sorts of fields. The objective is to keep carbon reductions going by continuing the zero-carbon homes agenda, which we are doing through the London Plan and will continue beyond 2016.

Nicky Gavron AM: I do not know why you think 200 businesses, mainly London businesses, wrote to the Chancellor. Let me just say lastly that you have an opportunity to amplify your message --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): They should be consoled. I do not know why you always get so cross, Nicky. They will be consoled by the fact that we are continuing with the zero-carbon homes agenda beyond 2016 by using the London Plan. That is the way to do it.

Nicky Gavron AM: Businesses are hit by the national policy.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Unfortunately, you are asking me to reverse a national policy. That is not something which is in my powers, at present, to do and --

Nicky Gavron AM: You are in the Government.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- I am content with what we can do in London.

Nicky Gavron AM: Mayor, you are in the Government and I wonder if you are going to do what Mayor Bloomberg [former Mayor, New York City] did --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am not in the Government, actually. I am in the government in London.

Nicky Gavron AM: -- when he went to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP) in 2008. When he went there, he roundly condemned his own Government - the Bush administration - for its failure to act and for some of the measures it put through. Can I ask? Will you do that when you are in Paris in a fortnight?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am very proud of the record of --

Nicky Gavron AM: Will you condemn the Government for its failure to act and for its cancellation of a whole suite of policies?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will condemn the previous Labour Government --

Nicky Gavron AM: No, will you condemn this Government?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- for its abject failure to invest in our energy system, which has left us with impending brownouts, and for the disastrous policies of the previous Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Mr Ed Miliband, who absolutely incapacitated the energy supply system of this country, who was obsessed with wind and wave power that would barely pull the skin off a rice pudding and who has left this country with considerable difficulties. I am proud of the record of --

Nicky Gavron AM: Mayor, it is not worth even --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- this administration and of the previous Coalition Government - and now the Conservative Government - in bringing down CO₂ emissions. We have done very well in London. I am surprised at your niggardly approach to this. It has been a great success. We have reduced CO₂ emissions, as I have said already, by 14% or 20% per capita. That is an astonishing record and you should hail it. You should be thrilled.

Nicky Gavron AM: I will not say anything. I finished some time ago.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Can I move to Assembly Member Knight now?

2015/3627 - Reducing carbon emissions from London's homes

Stephen Knight AM

In the run-up to December's COP21 summit on Climate Change in Paris, will you instigate a massive expansion of domestic retrofit programmes in London with the target that every home in the capital is retrofitted to reduce energy consumption by 2025?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Assembly Member Knight, can I ask you? Do you feel you have had enough of an answer to put a supplementary question to the Mayor?

Stephen Knight AM: Yes, thank you. Mr Mayor, you have said that you think that retrofitting and cutting our carbon emissions is the answer and --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is one of the answers, yes.

Stephen Knight AM: Clearly, it is one of the answers. My question to you is that, actually, we are failing even on this element of carbon reduction and, in particular, as my question referred to, home energy efficiency measures. We are failing to meet our carbon reduction targets and have failed to meet our carbon reduction targets on that as well.

Do you still have as an ambition to see 1.2 million homes in London retrofitted by this year, 2015?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We have done 500,000 and we have another 170,000 or so in the pipeline and, as you know, it is very difficult in London where you have huge numbers of homes that have solid walls, are old terraced houses, are very difficult and expensive to retrofit.

Stephen Knight AM: Indeed, it is difficult --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): If you look at the figures for the reductions in CO₂, they are outstanding. I think we have done better than virtually anywhere else in the country.

Stephen Knight AM: We may have done better than some other parts of the country, but in terms of the number of homes being retrofitting that is not the case, is it, Mr Mayor? As you have said, London --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You care about CO₂, do you not?

Stephen Knight AM: No, I am talking about CO₂ emissions from homes, Mr Mayor. You had a target of 1.2 million homes in London --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, I have just explained why that is a very difficult --

Stephen Knight AM: -- being retrofitted by this year, 2015, as part of a roadmap to 2.9 million homes being retrofitted by 2025. The reality is that the actual estimate is now that only 1.1 million will be done by 2017 and that this target is being missed, Mr Mayor. We are not insulating the homes in London that we need to be in order to reduce carbon by the amount we need to in order to meet our overall objectives.

Going into Paris, is it not essential that we redouble our efforts in London to ensure that we do get London homes retrofitted and we do get a reduction in carbon emitted from London homes and, indeed, warmer homes for all Londoners?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Warmer homes, did you say?

Stephen Knight AM: Less leaky homes, Mr Mayor, so that we are emitting less carbon into the atmosphere.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Less leaky homes, yes. Look, we have made a great deal of progress, as I have said, even though the London housing stock is very difficult and very expensive to retrofit. Half a million homes have been done already. The RE:NEW programme alone has done 112,000 homes and a further 170,000 are in the pipeline.

Stephen Knight AM: Mr Mayor, you are still missing your targets. You are missing your own targets. That is the point, is it not?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am delighted by your obsession with my own targets. What you should look at is the results. We have cut CO₂ emissions, as I say, by 14% or 20% per capita and we think we are on target to get to a 60% reduction by 2025.

Stephen Knight AM: Mr Mayor, the point is that London is a city of badly insulated homes, of people in fuel poverty --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am not disputing that.

Stephen Knight AM: -- and of emitting lots of CO₂ into the atmosphere unnecessarily. We need to redouble our efforts to ensure every home in London is insulated. The current programmes are not delivering the current targets. They are not delivering --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Actually, as I have said --

Stephen Knight AM: Even in the figures that are being produced of homes that have been so-called 'retrofitted', most of those homes are just getting draught excluders.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That is not a bad idea.

Stephen Knight AM: Only a tiny proportion of them are getting serious measures like loft insulation and cavity-wall --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): By the way, draught exclusion is by no means a --

Stephen Knight AM: The conversion rate of the current programmes into actual measures like loft insulation and cavity-wall insulation, let alone solid-wall insulation, is --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Many of these buildings do not have cavity walls. That is the whole point I am making to you.

Stephen Knight AM: Mr Mayor, even those properties that do have cavity walls are largely still uninsulated. We are not even reaching the easy low-hanging fruit, let alone the hard-to-treat.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You are being too pessimistic. We have had great success with the RE:NEW and the RE:FIT programmes. We have had big cuts in CO₂ emissions in London through technical fixes and through retrofitting in spite of massive growth in the economy. We are continuing on that route.

Stephen Knight AM: Mr Mayor, when we are failing to meet our targets, when we know that we need to do more, does it not seem --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You are obsessed. We are not failing to meet our targets. Per capita, we have reduced CO₂ by 20% and we have reduced overall London's CO₂ emissions, in spite of huge economic growth, by 14%. That is a very considerable reduction and we are on target to reduce CO₂ emissions by 60% of the 1990 base by 2025.

Stephen Knight AM: No, we are behind on our targets both in terms of carbon emissions and in terms of the number of homes retrofitted, Mr Mayor. You are behind on your targets both in terms of homes retrofitted and in terms of carbon emissions from homes. You are behind on all of your targets and have been every year.

Mr Mayor, we have to do more and in the run-up to Paris I hope that you will do more to redouble efforts. Will you please look at what more can be done?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The best way to reduce hot air is to stop the Liberal Democrats at every stage.

Stephen Knight AM: Does that not just sound complacent about the climate challenge that we face?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We have had a lot of success in that so far and that is certainly one of the techniques that we are going to continue to deploy.

Stephen Knight AM: I am glad that you clearly take climate change so seriously and that you do not reduce it to silly jokes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Hear, hear. Well done.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Assembly Member Knight, you are out of time.

Jenny Jones AM: Mr Mayor, I have been listening to your answers and I am actually quite concerned - I want to take you back to Paris and the talks - that you do not really get the urgency of climate change. You have talked about your ambitious projects, but actually I would say they are quite small-scale when you look at the size of the problem.

Mark Carney, who is Governor of the Bank of England, does not agree with your dinosaur colleagues. Can I call them 'dinosaurs'? Is that OK? I think it is all right, is it not?

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): It is not a rude word, is it?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The world was a lot hotter when they were around, by the way. The world was a lot hotter when the dinosaurs were around and they coped with it.

Jenny Jones AM: Your dinosaur colleagues here do not and cannot understand that climate change is happening and that we need to have urgent measures in place. Mark Carney, the Governor of the Bank of England, said that he hoped people like Lloyds [of London] were anticipating broader global impacts on

property, migration and political stability, as well as food and water security. That is the sort of thinking that you need to take to Paris. This is a big problem that will affect us all and we need some urgent measures.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, certainly, there are huge issues of water security and that is one of the big issues that face the world. Climate change is obviously a very, very important issue. We have to do everything in our power to reduce CO₂ emissions and we are.

Jenny Jones AM: Great. That was a good answer. I will make a note of it. Let us talk about something positive that you could do. For example, you have acknowledged that you do not want to go down the divestment line and you do not want to urge the LPFA and so on. However, you could encourage it to use its funding to support more energy schemes in the renewables sector.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, I just want to go back. When you say that, the pension fund authorities have a duty to their pensioners to invest in the things that they think are going to produce a return and will not leave their pensioners in destitution in their old age.

Jenny Jones AM: Of course, but you know --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not think anybody would expect me to go to them and say, "Listen, someone has come up with an absolutely brilliant idea to make moonbeams out of cucumbers. What you have to do is invest in it and that will reduce climate change". That is not the function of a politician.

Jenny Jones AM: All right. Let me take you back to something you have said already this morning because I do not quite get your logic. You said that solar is getting generally cheaper, which is quite true with the cost of the electricity generated and the cost of the installation.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am going to use it. I am really excited by this. Is it really true? Is it worth--

Jenny Jones AM: However, what is happening with the withdrawal of the subsidies is that a lot of renewable companies are going under. We are losing jobs. We are losing industrial practices because of the withdrawal of the subsidies; yet the latest estimate for the cost of the [expansion to the] Hinkley Point nuclear power plant is £17 billion.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am with you there. I am totally with you on that one. It is a disgrace.

Jenny Jones AM: Actually, we do not subsidise something that is going to make electricity cheaper but we do subsidise something that is going to make it much more expensive.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): What about fracking?

Jenny Jones AM: That seems to be very illogical. Shut up, Tony. You sit there --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, if you have to ask me whether I think the deal on nuclear power looks like good value for money at £95 per kilowatt hour for 30 years or whatever it is, it looks like an extraordinary amount of money to spend.

However, to get back to my earlier point, we have been left in a very difficult position by previous Labour administrations with our energy supply and we need to have security of supply. Nuclear has to be part of the

mix. It will not be the whole solution but it has to be part of it. In an ideal world, we would have more nuclear physicists than France or Korea, but unfortunately we have to rely now on technicians from those countries to get our plants going and that is a shame.

Jenny Jones AM: Let me bring you back on track because you are meandering slightly.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It adds greatly to our costs that we do not have the relevant expertise in nuclear energy.

On other renewables - because nuclear is not a renewable - solar is very exciting and it is great that the costs are coming down. As I said earlier on laboriously in my answer to --

Jenny Jones AM: Please do not repeat it. That is not fair.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will. You have asked for it.

Jenny Jones AM: No. Let me ask you a question that you can say 'yes' or 'no' to because I am running out of time.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Go on. Yes or no.

Jenny Jones AM: Do you support the extra taxes on flights and car journeys that [Sir Howard] Davies [former Chair, Airports Commission] and TfL say will be required to reduce the carbon emissions for airport expansion? Do you support those taxes?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sir Howard Davies and the Airports Commission?

Jenny Jones AM: Yes. They are saying that they are going to have to put extra taxes on flights and car journeys. Do you support that?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Certainly, it will be necessary to have a congestion charge around Heathrow in order to cope with the traffic impacts --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): The Green Group is out of time.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- that will be caused by having a third runway, which would be a catastrophic policy.

Jenny Jones AM: What about expanding airports and building big new roads? Do you think that is a bad idea as well?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Actually, expanding --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, the Green Group is out of time.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You do not want my answer?

Jenny Jones AM: You can answer.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, he cannot. Let us move on to the next question.

2015/3764 - Young people in London

Fiona Twycross AM

Are young people aged under 25 at risk of being priced out of London?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you very much, Fiona. Of course, there is a huge pressure on people of all ages in London, particularly young people. There has been a net increase of young people aged 16 to 24 moving to the city. We are seeing more young people in London than ever before. Unemployment for those aged 16 to 24 fell very sharply to the lowest level since 2003.

The big issue is housing. It is the issue that Onkar [Onkar Sahota AM], really, was raising with his campaign for junior doctors and the same issue applies to young people. The panoply of measures that we are applying there for housing is important but also programmes such as apprentices, the London Living Wage and all of those things to help young people.

Fiona Twycross AM: Young people in London are facing a double whammy, really, of low pay and high costs, as you indicate, around housing. You are on the record as stating that younger, hardworking Londoners should be fairly rewarded through their pay and you mentioned the London Living Wage, yet the problem is that all too many young Londoners simply are not getting the Living Wage and are not getting enough to live on or to make ends meet. Over three-quarters of 16-to-20-year-olds are paid below the London Living Wage and four in ten of those aged between 21 and 24. In contrast to that, the median monthly rent for a room in private rented sector flat-share is around £525.

How can any young person without a family home that they can live in be expected to get by in London, and what are you going to do in the next six months while you are still Mayor to make sure that this situation is improved?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, the crucial thing is not just the Living Wage - which has gone up now to £9.40 an hour - but housing. There is the First Step scheme. The average household income for the 52,000 who have done the First Step scheme has been £37,000. That is between two people. That is really affordable. That means that people who are junior doctors, medical staff, people who work in all sorts of public sector industries and public sector work of one kind or another, people who are on low incomes, can hope to buy a fraction of their home. It is a great policy.

Fiona Twycross AM: For many young people, they would probably think you were living on another planet. Increasingly, young people are not able to buy, and they are not just sharing flats or houses but are sharing rooms in order to make ends meet. The picture you are portraying of people able to start off on the property ladder is just unrealistic.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. I am talking about a joint income of £37,000. I do not think that is on another planet.

Fiona Twycross AM: If I can draw your attention to the trend that was reported in *The Evening Standard* and *The Guardian* earlier this year of increasing numbers, the websites that advertise the rooms are saying that their rooms are advertised as twin rooms but they are bunk beds in twin rooms. In increasing numbers, it also seems that some young couples or many young couples are opting to live in shared flats because of the cost rather than find their own home.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, I am not denying --

Fiona Twycross AM: What I want to know is whether your team has done any research on this apparent trend and, if not, would you ask it to?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): On the trend of people sharing flats?

Fiona Twycross AM: No, not sharing flats; that is an established trend. Sharing rooms in shared flats, increasingly --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am not aware of any data that we have on that, but I would be very happy to --

Fiona Twycross AM: It was reported in *The Standard* and in *The Guardian* earlier this year. The Director of Spareroom.co.uk said that they had seen a 71% rise in searches for bedroom shares over two years, and another website said that in 2014 there were over 93,000 adverts placed for shared rooms, twin or triple bedrooms. Has your team done any research on this and will you ask it to do so?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I have not. Look, Fiona, I am not aware of any research specifically about sharing rooms. I would be very happy to ask the Housing team whether they know of anything and I will be very --

Fiona Twycross AM: Will you ask them to do some research on this trend and the impact on housing for young people?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- pleased to share it with you. Look, no one could deny the massive pressures that there are on young people trying to live and work in this city. It is hugely expensive and everybody understands that.

We have done what we can. Obviously, for people in full-time education, there is a benefit in terms of free travel that people do not get anywhere else in the country, which is very, very important and of huge value to Londoners. For people in search of work, there are reductions --

Fiona Twycross AM: You are starting to just list a whole load of other things that were not related to my follow-up question. I will leave it at this. Thank you.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sorry, you did ask about young people leaving London.

Fiona Twycross AM: No, I did. I did ask that, but then you are now going on to other issues. Chair --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): If they did leave London, they would no longer get the free travel that young Londoners get.

Fiona Twycross AM: -- I have finished my questioning. Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Can I say to both, it is no good talking over each other because it does not help to understand the end.

Fiona Twycross AM: He was the one who was doing it.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No. Can I just ask people to finish their questions without throwaway questions at the end and for the Mayor to just realise that we are short on time this morning?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): OK.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): The next question is in the name of Assembly Member Tracey. Your question, please.

Richard Tracey AM: Mr Mayor, as a parent and indeed a grandparent, I am particularly sympathetic to this question. I wonder. Do you think that we are doing enough to promote starter homes for young people? Are we investigating sufficiently pop-up homes, which I understand is one potential solution, or the excellent Wandsworth Council scheme of Hidden Homes? Indeed, are you convinced that enough of the local authorities in London are refurbishing some of their old housing stock in order that it is prepared?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Excuse me, Mayor. Assembly Member Tracey, if you have looked on the order paper, you will see that Assembly Member Copley has a question, which is quite clear, on Starter Homes.

Richard Tracey AM: Yes. I was talking about other forms of housing as well, Chair. If you listened to my question you will have heard that, and I am sure the Mayor has noted what I said about pop-up homes, about --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Absolutely. That is characteristically a good question. The answer is, yes, Wandsworth has done a great job with Hidden Homes. The pop-up homes are a proposal that is generally very interesting.

The key thing is to build more homes full stop and to build good new homes across London. Some of the things that some people have sometimes got hot under the collar about are when we have been very proactive in this mayoralty in calling in and pushing through some proposals that have been needlessly held up in the planning system and actually will deliver loads of new homes for Londoners.

Richard Tracey AM: Thank you.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): At least in Putney.

Richard Tracey AM: Indeed, in Putney.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Let us stay with Starter Homes. Do you have anything more to say to Assembly Member Copley regarding his question on Starter Homes?

2015/3765 - Starter Homes

Tom Copley AM

What impact will the 'starter homes' policy included in the Housing and Planning Bill have on London boroughs' ability to secure suitable affordable housing that meets the needs of the local community?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Of course. Of course I will answer Tom's. Look, Tom's question is excellent and it is very important because one of the ways we are going to judge the Housing and Planning Bill is on whether it really delivers more homes for Londoners and that is the key test. Again, the best should not be the enemy of the good.

Starter Homes are a great idea. I am massively behind Starter Homes. People overwhelmingly want to own their own home when they can. When polled, 86% of Londoners say that they want to own their own home if possible. I hope that does not mean that it will completely crowd out what we are trying to do with part-buy/part-rent systems and, indeed, it should not - as I am sure Tom would agree - mean the complete end of other types of low-cost housing, affordable rent, social rent and all the rest of it.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. The way that the Government's policy on Starter Homes is being implemented in the Housing and Planning Bill looks like it will crowd out other forms of traditionally affordable housing because the Government is essentially saying that these must take precedence over all other forms of affordable housing, no matter what the councils' planning policies are, no matter what their assessment of need in the local area is going to be. Of course, these Starter Homes will not be based on an assessment of need because, for the first time of any affordable housing tenure, there is no maximum income.

Do you think that, certainly in the London, the provision of Starter Homes should be based on an assessment of need?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, I have said pretty much in my answer what I want to say. The Bill is still working its way through. The implications for London are still something that we are in daily contact with the Government about. My assessment of this will be whether it delivers new homes for London and that is the thing that I want to see out of this Bill.

If you ask me whether I am concerned on the whole right-to-buy side of things, we have had various assurances from the Government that we will have a big programme of homebuilding and that there will be some system of compensating London for the sale of high-value council homes.

Tom Copley AM: We are straying away. I want to stick to Starter Homes, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): OK.

Tom Copley AM: Surely it is sensible to base our affordable housing policy on assessment of need. The other issue, of course, with these homes is that they will be able to be sold. They will be bought at the 20% discount, which still means up to £450,000, which cannot be said to be meeting the same kind of need as even part-rent/part-buy, let alone social housing. They can be sold at market value after five years. This is simply giving a bung to the children of George Osborne's [Chancellor of the Exchequer] rich mates, is it not?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, as I said earlier on, the overwhelming majority of Londoners want to have a share in the value of their property. At the very least, I am keen to continue with a highly successful mixed-tenure system. There are disadvantages with some of the part-buy/part-rent models, by the way. The normal --

Tom Copley AM: Do you think Starter Homes should be affordable in perpetuity? If they are going to go ahead, let us say, rather than being able to sell them on in five years, why not keep them affordable? If we are going to stretch this term 'affordable' almost to breaking point, why not keep them at a discount of 20% in perpetuity?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That is basically how the part-buy/part-rent model works, and the discount is carried on.

Tom Copley AM: Do you think they should be?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I have to say that I am sympathetic to that argument, Tom.

Tom Copley AM: Sympathetic? OK.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, London has particular needs and particular circumstances. Fiona's [Twycross AM] question; Onkar's [Sahota AM] question. We have a lot of support from the Conservative side, too. Everybody is concerned about the costs of living for people in London. Can we build enough homes, enough affordable homes? What we want from this Bill is a bit of common sense that will enable us to go ahead. As you and I have discussed, we already have huge quantities of social housing in London by comparison to many other cities.

We need to be helping people who overwhelmingly want a share in the value of their home and the best route for that is through part-buy/part-rent. If you ask me if £450,000 is high for people, yes, it is high. Some of the part-buy/part-rent schemes - and I spoke about household incomes of £37,000 - that is the sort of thing we should be focusing on.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Assembly Member Boff?

Andrew Boff AM: Mr Mayor, when the vision just proposed by Mr Copley is established, can I be on that committee for state-assessed need that will process the hundreds of thousands of applications that will be necessary for anybody who wants permission to buy a property in London? That will be a really good job. Could you tell me what the salary is going to be? Thank you very much.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sorry. This will be a committee that would decide whether --

Andrew Boff AM: How wealthy people are and whether or not they could have a home or not have a home.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I have read Tom's sayings on this subject in various places, in addition to calling on the Labour Party to apologise for its failure to build any council homes, which it has not yet done.

He makes a very interesting point. He says that people on very high incomes should be subsidised to live in social housing so that the joy of the system would be spread throughout the population or something like that. I have to say that that is absolute nonsense.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): If you want to reply if he is misquoting --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I really think that that is deranged and not a sensible way forward. We should be trying to help people on low incomes to have accommodation they can afford and, insofar as we possibly can, we should be trying to help people to buy a share of their property because that is overwhelmingly what they want. I totally disagree with the socialistic vision that you have to subsidise rich people to live in social housing so that they can somehow appreciate its political importance. That is deluded.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Chair.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): OK. Assembly Member Copley, you have a right of reply.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you. First of all, we do not subsidise rich people to live in social housing because --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We do.

Tom Copley AM: -- the rent is not subsidised. They cover the debt repayments, the management and the maintenance of the properties. Secondly, what he is referring to is my opposition to 'pay to stay', which is a tax of aspiration that will force people out of their homes simply for getting a pay rise or a new job.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): What, Lee Jasper [former Senior Policy Advisor on Equalities to former Mayor of London Ken Livingstone]? and --

Tom Copley AM: I am happy to put that on record.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- Bob Crow [former General Secretary, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers], Lee Jasper and people on £100,000 a year. Absolutely ridiculous. Frank Dobson [former Labour Member of Parliament]. Totally ridiculous.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Let us move on to the next question.

2015/3766 - Fatal Fire, Camden Road

Andrew Dismore AM

How long did it take for the first pump attendance to turn out to the fatal fire on Monday 26 October at a property in Camden Road?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thanks, Andrew. Yes, look, I am afraid that this was a very sad incident. The appliance did not get to the property in Camden Road within the target time. That was because all appliances were at a ten-pump fire in Finchley Road.

I think your question is really whether the outcome would have been any different if there had been a fire station still in operation at Belsize Park. The answer to that is emphatically not because those appliances would have been at the ten-pump fire in Finchley Road. It was a sad incident. It has to be seen in the general context of a considerable reduction both in fires and in deaths from fires.

A final point I would make by way of caution is that there is still an inquest into the exact circumstances of the fatality and it would be really prudent to wait until the outcome of that inquest before heaping too much political weight on to this incident.

Andrew Dismore AM: Thank you for that. I see you did not actually answer the question, which is a very straightforward one: how long did it take for the first pump to arrive? The answer is 13 minutes and 21 seconds.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I said that it was, I am afraid, outside of the time.

Andrew Dismore AM: Let me ask the question. The second pump took 15 minutes and six seconds, which is more than double the response time target of six minutes. By the time it got to the sheltered housing complex, the elderly resident had jumped from the third floor window and was pronounced dead at the scene. The neighbour, Mr Bell, says he jumped because of the time it took the fire brigade to get there. You say that if Belsize had not closed it would not have made a difference, but it probably would have because we would have had a standby pump at Belsize by then.

Apart from that, apart from the demands of the other fire in Finchley Road, did you know that on that date there were 11 stations "off the run", ie not operational? More than 10% of all the fire stations in London were not operational due to staff shortages on the day of this incident. Did you know that?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): What I can certainly tell you is that there has been a considerable reduction both in fires and in deaths from fires. I do not know about the particular state of operation of the fire appliances across London on that day, but the London Fire Brigade generally has been doing an outstanding job in bringing down fire, and it has been doing it partly through very prompt response times and also --

Andrew Dismore AM: This has not answered my question. It is a simple question, Mr Mayor. Did you know that 10% of the fire stations on that day were off the run?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No. I have given you my answer to that. Of course I did not know that fact but I can tell you that deaths by fire are continuing to diminish.

Andrew Dismore AM: It is not much help to Mr Yip, is it? Did you also know that there was no standby at Kentish Town that day? Mr Bell, the resident neighbour, said if there had been some over at Kentish Town Station, the poor guy would have been saved. There was no cover at that time at Kentish Town. Before you answer, let me put this to you.

On Saturday, 4 July, there was a personal reporting fire in Belmont Street in the now closed Belsize Fire Station's ground. Thankfully on that occasion there was no loss of life, but it took on that occasion 15 minutes for the appliance to arrive from as far away as Dowgate. It is all very well saying that fire deaths are down and that is a debateable point, but the fact is that this is not the first time this has happened in this area. It is not going to be the last, is it?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I just want to go back to your allegation about Belsize Fire Station because my information is that the implementation of the Fifth London Safety Plan (LSP5) would have made no difference whatever on that outcome. The Belsize Fire Station is 2.1 miles from the fire. Of the other neighbouring fire stations, Kentish Town is 1 mile away, Holloway 1.5 miles away, Euston 1.7 miles and Islington 1.8 miles. There was a big fire that was occupying a lot of pumps elsewhere and that was the reason for the unfortunate - and I repeat it, and I regret it - delay. As I said earlier on and very carefully in my opening answer, it really would be prudent to wait for the outcome of the inquest.

Andrew Dismore AM: The two points I put to you are quite straightforward. One is how long it took them to get there. The second point is that it is not the first time and it happened in July as well, although, mercifully, nobody was killed then. The fact is that in Belsize the turnout time is now more than two minutes longer than it was before you closed the fire station, but the point about it is this: there was no standby at Kentish Town because we had all these fire stations off the run. It is right, is it not, that you now want to cut a further 13 fire engines on top of the ten fire stations you closed and the 14 fire engines you cut two years ago, including both Belsize and Clerkenwell in Camden, and one of those fire engines that is under threat is from West Hampstead, is it not?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I thought that you might raise the issue of the 13 appliances. These are appliances that had been - as I understand the situation, although you obviously serve on the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) - sequestered for use in case of strike action or otherwise. They have not actually been called upon for some considerable time. The question now is how to deal with it and that is obviously a matter for the LFEPA, but I will support any decision taken on that.

Andrew Dismore AM: You see, the point about it is that it is quite clear on this day the Fire Service was overstretched because of the things you said about the big fire in Finchley Road and the fact that it took so long to get here. You now want to cut another 13 fire engines, including potentially one at West Hampstead in the same area. The fact is that you broke your election promise not to cut the Fire Brigade. You have broken now your repeated promise that after LSP5 there would be no further cuts in the front line. How can anyone in London now believe you if you say --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You are talking total --

Andrew Dismore AM: -- that the safety of London is paramount?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I really think it is regrettable and I must say that it is not the first time you have done this kind of thing. There is a tragic situation. There has been a loss of life. There is an inquest underway. I really think before you use this kind of language and make these kinds of assertions you should wait until the outcome of the inquest. The appliances were at another big fire elsewhere and that would have been the same. The situation would have been the same whether or not Belsize Fire Station had been in operation.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Assembly Member Bacon?

Gareth Bacon AM: Andrew Dismore has just referred to the 13 appliances that have been held for the contingency cover for more than the last two years. Of course, this predates LSP5. The 13 appliances that he is referring to have been off the run since before LSP5. If they were to be withdrawn permanently, Mr Mayor, it would not be affecting the frontline service and so you would not be breaking your promise under LSP5, as he well knows.

He also knows, Mr Mayor, that no decision has been taken on the 13 appliances because he chairs the [LFEPA] Resources Committee where it was debated at length last year. What he also knows is that the recommendation, should it come, to withdraw the 13 appliances will come from the Fire Commissioner and his expert judgment will be used in order to make that recommendation.

That notwithstanding, Andrew Dismore has made a number of statements and allegations regarding the unfortunate incident where the gentleman died. Do you share my very great unease that a Labour politician would be making statements like that in advance of the inquest actually taking place? If you do --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do. It is very regrettable but not untypical and I have said what I have had to say. I do pay tribute to the London Fire Brigade and what it has done in continually reducing both fires and deaths from fire. That is something, by the way, that disproportionately benefits people on low incomes, who are disproportionately the victims of fire.

Gareth Bacon AM: Thank you.

2015/3751 - Flooding Action Plan

Steve O'Connell AM

What changes do you anticipate to the London Plan or other planning guidance as a result of your new action plan to help tackle flooding risks in London?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you, Steve. Listen, you have done some great work in Croydon trying to make that part of the world less vulnerable to flooding.

The London Sustainable Drainage Action Plan is not actually a flooding plan. The idea of a flooding action plan is to make sustainable drainage taken up right the way across London and that is something that everybody supports. Sustainable drainage means making sure that the surface water disappears. There is a difference in groundwater and surface water, which you will readily appreciate and which I did not really understand until recently when somebody explained it to me. Groundwater comes up and surface water comes down. I think I have that right.

Steve O'Connell AM: Well done.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The Sustainable Drainage Action Plan, about which you rightly are exercised, is intended to help the surface water disappear into the ground.

Steve O'Connell AM: We get that, Mr Mayor. This is an important issue. You will cast your mind back 18 months when many dozens of people lost their homes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do, yes.

Steve O'Connell AM: We were within minutes of evacuating some hundreds of people --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We were.

Steve O'Connell AM: -- around midnight back in January.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I remember it vividly. It was appalling.

Steve O'Connell AM: I welcome the work that you are proposing to do on drainage. It is not just about the overcapacity of sewers. Many colleagues will be interested that it is about improving the quality of water in our rivers, which would probably be good for you to hear because I remember when you fell into one of my local rivers. The quality of that will improve.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I remember falling into your river.

Steve O'Connell AM: One in Len's [Duvall AM]. It was actually in Len's, as I remember.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It was Len's river. It was in Catford, was it not?

Steve O'Connell AM: The point of the matter --

Len Duvall AM: It was through my constituency.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The Quaggy, was it? It was called the Quaggy.

Steve O'Connell AM: Anyway, can I get you back on track, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes.

Steve O'Connell AM: Croydon also, to its credit, has just issued a plan around reducing flooding more generally. Without you going into full details about groundwater versus surface water, how do you feel that the outcomes of your plan will improve the risk against Londoners of flooding over the long --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It has to be part of a lot of different things. I have to say the Sustainable Drainage Action Plan on its own will not make a huge amount of difference, but we need to see it as part of a programme of action to try to take surface water away and that includes, I am afraid, things like the Counters Creek Sewer, the Thames Tideway Tunnel and big programmes like that.

Basically, the problem we have with the drainage into the Thames is when we have violent downfalls; then the Bazalgette interceptors overflow and we get the flooding of sewage into the Thames. The only way to deal with that is with the Thames Tideway Tunnel. Sustainable drainage is part of the way of tackling surface water.

Steve O'Connell AM: Do you have any timescales on the horizon about when the outcomes may or may not be delivered or funded at all?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Particularly in Croydon, which is vulnerable to groundwater as well as surface water, we do not have a particular timetable for the impact of this Sustainable Drainage Action Plan. I could not say that it is going to make a big difference in Croydon overnight. It will take time. It is going out to consultation now and the idea is to reduce surface water flows into the sewer network by 1% a year. That is what it is intended to do, but it has to be seen as a much bigger package of measures. The flooding in Croydon that was so appalling that we saw has to be tackled through lots of other things as well.

Steve O'Connell AM: OK. There are measures, as I just said --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes.

Steve O'Connell AM: -- without boring the audience, that the Council is attending to. Lastly, all I would suggest is around perhaps almost a legacy piece - one of your many legacy pieces - that you give particular emphasis that this work continues on for the next Mayor and beyond.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes.

Steve O'Connell AM: It is a long-term piece of work and it is about the vulnerability of London. It is not just in Croydon and Sutton.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, it is not. Look, virtually every answer I have given to these questions is that we have to build more housing. The more housing you build, the less drainage area there is on the surface of the city and the more vulnerable some areas of the town will be to flooding. The Sustainable Drainage Action Plan is a very sensible part of a series of measures that we need.

Steve O'Connell AM: Thank you. My last point: I was quite perturbed to see that about a fifth of all front gardens have been concreted over in the last ten years and I hope to think that some of the planning would be proposed to get around --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, the answer to that is to get more cycling going, particularly in the outer boroughs, and Mini-Hollands so that people do not feel they need to concrete over their front gardens to put their cars in, which is what they do, when actually most of their journeys are much less than a mile in length and could be very conveniently made by bicycle.

Steve O'Connell AM: Yes. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Get back to where we started.

2015/3736 - Anonymous Masked Demonstrations

Kemi Badenoch AM

How do we prevent anonymous masked demonstrations from happening in London, such as the November 5th "Million Mask March", especially when there is a clear intention to commit public disorder?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. Thank you, Kemi. There were some appalling attacks in this demonstration on six police horses, unbelievable, cynical and brutal attacks by people on animals; just despicable. One attack caused the rider to be thrown to the ground. Several of the horses were hurt.

You ask what we can do to prevent people like Anonymous behaving in this way or the Million Mask March from behaving in this way when they came clearly to commit disorder. We have to allow people to process and to make demonstrations. We have about 5,000 a year. These people did not engage with the MPS and we have made about 50 arrests. I hope that insofar as we have been able to catch the people involved in hurting the horses, they will face very severe penalties indeed.

Kemi Badenoch AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. My particular concern is about the people who are covering their faces to avoid prosecution. Like you say, there were 50 arrests. Three individuals refused to reveal their identities, yet they were given unconditional bail by Westminster Magistrates Court. Is there any chance of them ever appearing before the Court and how can we stop what is, quite frankly, a ridiculous situation from happening again, where people go to court and refuse to give their names and we have no idea who they are?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is very interesting that the Magistrates Court gave them unconditional bail even without giving their identities. Surely they have to give their identities. I am surprised by that. It is a long time since you were able to give a false identity in a court of law in this country or not to give your identity. I will look into that. I do not understand what happened.

The police do have powers under the Public Order Act 1994 to ask people to remove their masks. That is obviously an operational matter for them. Obviously, if they think it appropriate to get people to take masks off in order to make the march safer, then they should get on and do that.

Kemi Badenoch AM: Do you know how many were removed in this --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not know. I do not know how many masks were removed.

Kemi Badenoch AM: What can we do then to stop people whose intent is to cause public disorder, not to protest, from hiding their identities? What more can we do?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): One thing that we do before big marches and big demonstrations, if we remember, is that we sometimes have a bit of a preliminary action. There is a group called the

'black bloc', for instance, and other groups of anarchists, and we tend to try gently or the police try to inform themselves of who is likely to be doing what on the day and to take some action in advance. There are steps taken in advance to discourage violent protests, but the most important thing to do is to come down very hard on them if they break the law and to arrest them and to make sure they face serious penalties.

Kemi Badenoch AM: OK. Thank you.

2015/3767 - London Ambulance Service

Dr Onkar Sahota AM

In 2013 when answering a question (0196/2013) on the London Ambulance Service cuts programme to Assembly Member Qureshi you said:

'the LAS reaches 75% of patients with life threatening conditions in eight minutes. They exceed their target every year. They are up to 79% in December 2012'.

How are the LAS doing now, after the large cuts and redundancies programme imposed by the last government and the closure of eight Accident and Emergency departments across London?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, thank you, Onkar. This has been a continuing concern for many people in London. I have talked to the Ambulance Service. I have talked to [Dr] Fiona Moore [MBE], the new Chief Executive, recently. The performance this year is better than last year. They are improving on their targets but they are not yet within the national target of attending 75% of category A - ie immediately life-threatening - calls within eight minutes. They are still shy of that. They say they are now up to 71.3% rather than 75%, which is a great improvement on March 2015 when they were down at 55.6%. In mitigation, they say that 95% of calls are answered within two seconds. The national target is five seconds. For cardiac arrests, the median response time is seven minutes, 38 seconds, which is within the eight-minute target time.

They have had problems, as you know, with their staffing levels and with recruitment, though they are making good progress on that now, and I have talked to Fiona and Anne Rainsberry [Regional Director for London, NHS England] about the progress that they are making. I know that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is coming out with an assessment of how they have been doing and you may have some intelligence about what that says.

What I would say about the London Ambulance Service (LAS) is that they have had some serious problems, but there is no question that if you look at some of the key outputs for London, what is happening with people who are knocked over on our streets, people who are stabbed or whatever, look at their effectiveness in actually driving down the death rates, I really think that they have been playing a huge role. They are incredibly professional, and deaths from stabbings are well down, as you know. We have the lowest level of KSIs on the road now for a generation and it is not just the police. It is thanks to the fantastic work of the LAS.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Mr Mayor, the reason I raised this question is not because I was undermining the work of the LAS, which does an excellent job. The reason for me being concerned was they are underperforming and there is huge variation right across London and the reason they are underperforming is because there is difficulty recruiting. The cost of living in London is one issue. The second thing is, of course, that the service is underfunded.

When Dr Moore spoke to you, she must have raised some concerns. Have you taken them further? Have you intervened in any way to help?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): She did not raise those concerns, to be fair.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: You must be concerned about it for Londoners. You must have thought, "What could I do to improve the lot of Londoners?" What have you done?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): On the concerns that have been raised with me, one of the problems is the paramedic qualification has been changed so as to make paramedics eligible for all sorts of other jobs, often more lucrative jobs, and what has happened is that many paramedics with the LAS in the last few years have gone off to do other things and there has been a shortage of skilled paramedics within the LAS. There has been a big recruitment drive. That was what we were talking about. They have recruited more than 200 new paramedics, particularly from Australia, and staff turnover has reduced and staff sickness levels have also reduced. Look, there is no question that it is a very challenging, stressful job for people in the LAS and they do a fantastic job.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Mr Mayor, look, there is no reason to be complacent. We have a shortage of paramedics here. We are recruiting them right from the other side of the world. You cannot hide behind the fact that this is just to do with the qualifications. There is a huge crisis here and you cannot let it go by without taking responsibility. We need to fund the service properly. We need to make sure --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): As you know very well, I do not hold the purse strings here.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: No, but, Mr Mayor, you do have a right to intervene on behalf of Londoners and you do choose to intervene when it takes your fancy. What I am saying is: can you please intervene on behalf of Londoners?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I must say that it is striking the way the Labour Party always tries to reduce everything to some funding issue, and actually that was not raised with me by the head of the LAS.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Why do you think the paramedics do not want to work in London, then? Is it all to do with the new qualifications?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No. I gave you the reason. The paramedic qualification has been changed so as to make it possible for paramedics who are qualified to work in ambulances to take employment in a very wide variety of fields, some of which, for instance, are working at sportsgrounds or working for - I do not know - Premiership football clubs or whatever it happens to be, which is much more lucrative. That has led to a drain on the employment of the LAS --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: They have been getting more money somewhere else and it is not worth their while being LAS drivers? I do not agree with that and I want you to do something about it.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): There has been a big recruitment drive and, as I said in my answer, there is an improvement in LAS performance and they believe that they will hit the national target by spring of next year. I repeat what I said: I will not run down the LAS. They do an absolutely amazing job, it seems to me, and if you look at what is happening on London Streets, every time, I often --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Mr Mayor, I am not running them down. They do a wonderful job.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I have been involved or turned up on my bike at incidents when somebody has called an ambulance and it is incredible how fast they arrive and how professional they are. I have no doubt that they are saving lives across this city week in and week out. They do an absolutely amazing job.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Mr Mayor, I agree with you entirely. They do a wonderful job.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): In that case, you should --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I want you to do better for them and I want you to do better for them so that they can do a better job for Londoners, but they do a wonderful job with their hands tied behind their backs.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not think so.

Roger Evans AM: In the past, Boris, we have talked about possibly devolving the LAS to the Greater London Authority. Would it be helpful, from your point of view, to actually have the LAS bundled up with the other emergency services under our control so that you can achieve economies of scale and have the three services working together better?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am certainly very interested in the co-responding idea that Gareth [Bacon AM] has written an excellent report about because we discussed the reductions in deaths from fire and the great success that the Fire Brigade has been having, maybe the scope for other services to help out and deal with cardiac arrests and things for which they are trained to deal.

Roger Evans AM: Yes. OK.

2015/3732 - Co-responding Pilot in London

Gareth Bacon AM

Have you had a chance to read the recent report 'Time Critical', and do you support its core recommendation that there should be a co-responding pilot in London that would see medically trained firefighters attending specific types of emergencies, such as cardiac arrests, alongside paramedics to improve response times?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): There you go. I have just given my answer.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): It just flows.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Beautiful chairing. Thank you. Actually, it was Tony's [Tony Arbour AM] report. Was it Tony's report?

Gareth Bacon AM: It was.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I thank Tony for his excellent report, and I support the core ideas of co-responding.

Gareth Bacon AM: Excellent. Thank you, Mr Mayor. Do you share my frustration about what appears to be a squabble between two trade unions, the Fire Brigades Union and the GMB, over who should sit on a committee that nobody in London will understand, the Joint Consultative Committee, over who controls staff? There is one sticking point that is preventing a pilot from going on with co-responding.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You mentioned this to me the other day, Gareth, and I am sure that with your powers of diplomacy and persuasion you will get everybody to see sense and let us get it done.

Gareth Bacon AM: Yes. I am famous for that, Mr Mayor. I was very struck by the passion of Assembly Member Sahota in advocating the need to help the LAS just a few moments ago. Would you support me in encouraging him and the rest of his Labour Party colleagues, who have very good links into the Fire Brigades Union, to impress upon them the importance of getting the wheels moving, removing the silly demand that they have put on the table and letting us get this pilot going?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Absolutely, and I am sure Onkar would row in behind that 100%. He is nodding beatifically.

Gareth Bacon AM: I will take it up with him afterwards. Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.

2015/3768 - MPS Capability

Joanne McCartney AM

What types of work may the MPS stop performing if expected funding cuts are made?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you, Joanne. Really, this is something that I tried to answer earlier on since you pushed me on the impact of the CSR on the police and I put it to you that we are in the final stages now of the conversations with the Government. There are various scenarios that various levels of cuts would have, but there is no earthly point in going through that now because the Government does get the need to keep funding the police in London and this is no time to cut it.

Joanne McCartney AM: Hopefully that will be the case because we have rightly concentrated on security and terrorism this morning, but there are other issues at a local level that will have a great impact on the police ability to do their job and public confidence if cuts go ahead. I just want to go through some with you because I am not sure you are aware of some of these.

The MPS Commissioner [of Police of the Metropolis, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM] has said publicly at one of my local meetings and also publicly to the Home Affairs Select Committee that some of the work that the MPS may have to stop doing or will need to review is, for example, the cases of missing people and doing welfare checks on people who have come out of hospital and, perhaps most concerning, about whether the police will be able to monitor and check addresses of over 7,000 registered sex offenders in London. I am just wondering whether you have had those concerns expressed to you and if you --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No. I am very interested by all those points. I will ask. Those are not points that have been made to me, but I will make sure I bring that up with the committee.

Joanne McCartney AM: It is a point the Commissioner has made. This may be because some of that work may fall between the police and the Probation Service but, with the Probation Service facing cuts as well, it is important that that work does carry on.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I understand. Look, this is one of those things where there are a variety of agencies in London that basically have responsibility for the same types of people and the same families, and this is why you need multiagency support hubs and you need to be working together to make sure these people do not fall through the cracks. We should be focusing not on the service that is going to be doing the job but on the individuals either who are coming out of prison, who are sex offenders or whose

welfare is in some way in question and focusing on them and making sure that somebody has their eye on them. That is what is needed.

Joanne McCartney AM: I am glad you are going to ask questions about that because that did concern me.

Just following on from some of the work we were talking about earlier with regards to local policing, obviously the Commissioner has said that if the cuts go ahead we will be seeing reduced safer neighbourhood policing, and the Deputy Commissioner [Craig Mackey QPM] on *Newsnight* a couple of weeks ago said the threshold for investigating some of that low-level crime would have to rise. I think both you and I agree that the 'broken window' theory - if you can tackle those low-level crimes, it means that more serious crimes do not happen - is actually important.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I totally agree.

Joanne McCartney AM: If that investigative threshold goes up, it will mean that --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not want the investigative threshold, as you rightly called it, to go up at all. I really do not. Craig [Craig Mackey, Deputy Commissioner, MPS] said that on *Newsnight*, did he?

Joanne McCartney AM: He did, and that has been said in our Police and Crime Committee before as well. It is about having adequate policing resource in local neighbourhoods to be able to do that problem-solving and address those low-level crimes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, I agree.

Joanne McCartney AM: I am wondering. Are you able to give me a guarantee as to the level of Neighbourhood Policing Teams we will have in the future?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will repeat what I have always said. Look, on PCSOs, I do not want to see the removal of PCSOs.

Joanne McCartney AM: Good.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): They play an important role. That does not mean you should necessarily have, as I have said for about eight years now, a perfect triangle or lozenge or whatever of PCSOs, sergeants and constables in every Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT). There are lots of ways of doing it and you have to leave it very much to the Borough Commander to decide which wards he wants to prioritise, at which times and that kind of thing. That is really sensible. There should always be an SNT per ward.

Joanne McCartney AM: Are you actually positively making the case for the Commissioner to retain PCSOs?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No. I am making the case to retain an SNT per ward. The Commissioner also thinks PCSOs have value but I have some flexibility about where and how they are used.

Fiona Twycross AM: As part of the mayoral strategy to tackle violence against women and girls, you committed to securing prosecutions around female genital mutilation (FGM). So far this year, as you will be aware, there has been just one unsuccessful prosecution for FGM. With significant reductions in funding to the MPS, as outlined by previous speakers including Joanne McCartney, what are you doing to ensure that prosecutions for FGM remain a priority?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): They will remain a priority and we brought in the first strategy for London for violence against women and girls. We helped massively to escalate the public awareness and indeed political and police consciousness of this issue. I would not want to see any slackening of the aggression with which the police will tackle this crime.

Yes, look, it was incredibly disappointing to see what happened with that prosecution. I have to say, after reading about it and reading about the case, the normal person felt it was pretty bizarre that that individual in question had been charged. It plainly was not the right person and, if I may say so, it shows the difficulty when politicians put pressure on prosecutors to come up with something. I am afraid that with the best of possible motives people can make mistakes and it takes careful gathering of the evidence and it means reassuring the victims that they will not be the subject of reprisals or ill treatment. It is a very, very sensitive business and it takes a lot of police work.

I totally understand your concerns there, Fiona, but I am sure that [Sir] Bernard Hogan-Howe [QPM, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] does as well.

Fiona Twycross AM: With significant cuts to borough neighbourhood policing, there is a risk that it will become increasingly difficult, not easier, for police to build up the trust and evidence required, particularly in terms of the trust with communities affected by FGM, which could make it harder to identify both victims and perpetrators.

Do you believe that the money that you have committed to community work aimed at preventing FGM is sufficient to tackle this problem, and how will you ensure perpetrators are brought to justice?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): This is something that the police are absolutely determined to help us all to crack. They have a unit in the MPS, the Sapphire Unit, to deal with violence against women and girls. To get a successful prosecution for FGM is going to require a lot of co-operation by people who know it is going on but who, for all sorts of reasons, want to protect the perpetrators. That is going to require a big shift in attitudes in London and it has to happen.

Fiona Twycross AM: Last year - about this time last year, actually - when I asked you about the lack of prosecutions, you said that there were people who are simply getting away with it and, as long as they get away with it and as long as there is not a successful prosecution, then people have a sense it is not taken as seriously as it should be.

How long will people simply be getting away with it? For example, in Southwark, one in ten babies is born to a woman who has been a victim and survivor of FGM. This is not a marginal problem. How long will people simply be getting away with it?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I cannot give you the answer to that, Fiona. I would be happy to supply you afterwards with any information I have about investigations that are underway or arrests that have been made. I do not know the state of any of our particular inquiries into it. All I know is what you have just said, which is that there was a very disappointing business earlier this year when we failed. This has been illegal since 1981 in this country and we still have not produced a successful conviction. It is a great, great shame that that has not happened, although it does not mean we are not determined to do it, and we will.

Fiona Twycross AM: Thank you.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM

How will the £171m cut to the general government grant to TfL in 2015/16 affect the bus network in London?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you so much, Val. Look, you are asking about the cut to the general Government grant for TfL and what it will do to the bus network. The bus network is going to grow continuously. It is going to grow by 3 million kilometres in 2015/16, and we are constantly trying to meet the needs of the population. I cannot tell you what impact the current CSR will have on next year but obviously it would be foolish to cut money from vital transport investment in London when we have a growing population. Although bus ridership has been flattish recently, it is set to continue to grow.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. The expectations are that it is going to grow by about 7% in the next five years.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, that is probably about right.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Earlier on you really confirmed that you are expecting enormous cuts to investment in transport in London. The Department for Transport (DfT) has taken a 30% cut. *The Financial Times* was reporting yesterday that it expected that buses would be the service most hit by the cuts.

At the moment I am told by TfL that there is a bit of a problem inasmuch as the buses are actually treated as revenue expenditure. If you replace a bus with a new bus, a greener bus, it is revenue expenditure, whereas of course a Tube train is treated as capital. If the expectation is that that piece of revenue grant is going to go to zero within the next four-year period, how is TfL going to manage not just to deal with the growth in bus demand but to replace the buses?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You are right. You are completely right.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: We know that those buses have to be cleaner and greener than they are at the moment.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You are completely right. In a way, this argument is totally artificial. The distinction between capital and revenue in TfL is not one that is very easy to make. TfL services are increasingly efficient and, in revenue terms, the Tube now actually is revenue-neutral or positive in terms of the running of the Tube, which is extraordinary.

The Docklands Light Railway (DLR) is positive. The Emirates Air Line made a profit of £1 million last year or whatever and that is going back - absolutely - to pay off the capital. That is an extraordinary achievement. I thought you might like that. That is going back to pay the capital cost as well. It is very unusual to be able to pay the capital cost. Not every service can do that. Buses are the most subsidised service, as you know.

The key thing in taking a revenue cut - and I appreciate that it is artificial - is it make the case to the Government that we need to have an abatement on the capital side and to make sure that we are properly funded for the massive strains and needs of London. That is the argument that we are making. You heard what George [The Rt Hon George Osborne MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer] had to say in the Long-Term Economic Plan for London. That was right. The £10 million commitment for capital investment is good news for our city. The Chancellor supports all sorts of fantastic projects across London and that is good, but buses, as you rightly say, have to be a part of that.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Buses are the biggest element of public transport in London and they move more people than the other public transport services. Their subsidies are lower if you take out the capital cost of the bus at 24 pence per passenger --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, of course.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: -- compared to 75 pence per Tube passenger. There are some very unfair comparisons being made by the Government here because the buses are being treated unfairly as all revenue and the rest of the transport system gets a slice of capital.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You are right.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: It is a very false distinction. Capital is being protected. Revenue is not. The bus passengers are going to be the people who principally suffer. Are you going to address that?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We hope that they will not be. You framed it quite well, actually. What we are trying to do is to make sure that if we do take the revenue reduction, we get a significant abatement on the capital side.

Richard Tracey AM: OK. Thank you, Chair. Mr Mayor, I am rather intrigued by this line of questioning from my Transport Committee colleague Val Shawcross because she is worrying, quite rightly, about any potential loss of any of the wonderful bus services we have, but at the same time, as you and I discussed earlier, the Labour Party --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I was hoping you would bring this up.

Richard Tracey AM: -- is talking about a four-year freeze in fares, a £2 billion loss --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): --hopelessly.

Richard Tracey AM: -- and you told me in the last Mayor's Question Time that the other idea it has of the one-hour bus ticket will apparently cost £50 million per year.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is £30 million. Yes, it is totally bizarre, but this is the privilege of Opposition, which is where Labour is going to remain for a very, very long time, as far as I can tell, to judge by the performance of yesterday and of its Leader in the House of Commons. The chances of Labour actually coming to power in this country for a very long time are not good. It has the privilege of complete inconsistency and incoherence. That is, it is allowed to be totally logically vacuous. What it is also proposing is to take out £1.8 billion from London's transport budget by its irrational fares policy which would massively damage our ability to provide decent bus services. They have the privilege of incoherence. I have to get on and run the system in an effective way and provide for more buses and more bus passengers, and that is what we are going to do.

Richard Tracey AM: Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes, Assembly Member Shawcross. Are you saying that somebody named you?

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: I was named with affection.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): You were named with affection. Can we keep moving?

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Briefly, can I affectionately rise in response to that? I would just say that I, in sympathy, understand Assembly Member Richard Tracey's scepticism towards debates about the fares because, looking back at the current Mayor's manifesto, he said, "My approach will ensure that the fares will be lower in the longer term" --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): They will be.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: -- and of course we have seen a 48% rise in the bus fares. I express my sympathy in response to the affection, Chair.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Assembly Member Shawcross, you have got away with that one.

2015/3740 - TfL and Motorcycling

Richard Tracey AM

How much money has TfL set aside for specific motorcycling projects?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thanks, Dick. We are spending a large amount of money on the road network altogether and improving road safety, about £257 million over the business plan. Looking at the things that will particularly affect motorcyclists and the risks they face, this year alone—you have asked about spending—we have spent £340,000 on motorcycle safety and marking campaigns, £850,000 to support the MPS's motorcycle safety team and £225,000 on motorcycle education and training activities.

As you rightly say, there has been a small increase in motorcycle casualties in London. That is to be set against a general decrease in cycling and pedestrian casualties. We are trying to work out exactly why that is, what sort of motorcyclists these are who are having these sad accidents and what is going wrong. We spotted the trend earlier this year and we are working with the Motorcycle Industry Association on accreditation of compulsory basic training instructors for London. One of our anxieties is that some people are getting used to small motorbikes and then deciding to go up a grade, getting a very powerful machine, not understanding the risks involved and having very sad accidents. Some training and some information about the risks of using powerful motorbikes is important.

Richard Tracey AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. As you can imagine, I am no longer personally interested in motorcycling myself.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You are about the right age to have a motorcycle. You are a midlife --

Tom Copley AM: A midlife crisis?

Richard Tracey AM: In my past --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): A Harley [Davidson]?

Richard Tracey AM: This question came out of an interesting discussion we had in the Transport Committee with TfL and indeed with representatives of the motorcycling industry. There is a feeling amongst

motorcyclists that they are not doing as well with TfL spending as, perhaps, cyclists are in London. The other thing you --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Who put them in the bus lanes?

Richard Tracey AM: I hope you are pursuing all the recalcitrant boroughs across London to allow the motorcyclists to go into the borough bus lanes as well as the TfL ones, but that was not the point I was going to make. It came out in our discussions that the Roads Task Force recommendations encouraged a modal shift from cars and vans to motorcycles and scooters, interestingly enough, for transport as well as personal carriage. The Task Force recommendations have apparently largely been ignored by TfL. It is your Mayor's Roads Task Force.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am sorry about that. I will look into that. I do not know what recommendations it made. I would say that we have done a lot to support powered two-wheelers in all sorts of ways. I mentioned some of the investment we are making in powered two-wheeler education, training and all the rest of it.

We put motorbikes in bus lanes, which was a massive step forward. Everybody said that it would be the wrong thing, all the TfL people. The bus community said, "Absolutely not", and the cycling community said, "Absolutely not", but we trialled it, it worked and it has had no impact on the safety of those other users.

What we are now trying to work out is why some motorcyclists seem to be coming a cropper, and there seem to be a variety of factors. The numbers are from 27 fatalities to 31 fatalities or something like that. It is an increase of that order. It is not huge but it is worth looking at because all the others are going in the opposite direction.

Richard Tracey AM: Thank you.

2015/3745 - Police use of video calling

Roger Evans AM

It has been reported that Cambridgeshire Police will begin trialling a new system which enables the victims of crime to contact the police via video calling applications such as Skype. Does the Metropolitan Police Service intend to introduce similar such schemes, and what assessment has been made of their effectiveness?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Roger, this is very interesting. I know Cambridge is doing this. We will follow this with interest, using Skype to get in touch with the police if you happen to be a victim of crime. We are not using it at present but that does not rule it out. I notice that the public satisfaction with the ease of contacting the police is at an all-time high of 93%.

Roger Evans AM: I did not know that. It is a point that is worth making.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is. That is why I have made it.

Roger Evans AM: While they are looking at the Cambridge experiment they might like to take a look at 999eye, which is an app developed by the West Midlands Fire Service. That allows members of the public to livestream video of incidents to the 999 switchboard so that emergency services can get a clear sight of what is happening and provide a more appropriate response. Can you get police to have a look as well as maybe a possibility for use in London?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, certainly.

Roger Evans AM: Thank you.

2015/3770 - Cuts to the feed-in tariff

Murad Qureshi

What assistance do you plan to offer to London's solar industry in the wake of the devastating changes to the FIT and particularly in light of the Paris Summit next month?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): The next question is in the name of Assembly Member Qureshi but Assembly Member Qureshi says you have answered his primary question. Do you have a supplementary?

Murad Qureshi AM: It was the response you gave to Darren [Johnson AM] when he asked a supplementary.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): OK.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you, Mayor, for saying what you said earlier. Can I draw to your attention that it is not just the cut in the FIT that we are talking about? There was a change in the pre-accreditation system that affects, for example, the amount of solar that we develop here and also tax relief changes. Funnily enough, the Government, while cutting subsidies for renewables like solar, is doubling the subsidies for fossil fuels like North Sea oil.

When you do meet Amber Rudd [The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change] at the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), when and how are you going to put the London case across, particularly in light of 2,500 jobs being lost in the solar panel business?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, the jobs thing, as I was saying to Nicky [Gavron AM] earlier on, is obviously very important. To concentrate on what we are trying to do, which is to encourage zero-carbon energy production, solar is very attractive. We have been concerned about the steep reduction of FIT and the steep reduction in the subsidy. You have seen our response to the consultation. It was pretty robust and we continue to hope that there will be a longer glide-in.

Murad Qureshi AM: I am sorry to say that the [GLA] Conservatives Group at the Assembly is not supporting you on those efforts, but you will get the support --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Is that right?

Murad Qureshi AM: They did not sign up to the solar report that was done by the Environment Committee.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Woah. We are at one on everything.

Murad Qureshi AM: Can I --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sorry, but he is suggesting that we do not agree about something.

Murad Qureshi AM: Indeed. There are plenty of things on which you do not agree amongst yourselves.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Nonsense. There, Gareth says he agrees with me.

Murad Qureshi AM: Can I propose, Mr Mayor --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, they do not agree with your report.

Murad Qureshi AM: Our report says a lot more than they want to live up to. Mr Mayor, can I ask you then to look into a London FIT suggestion? Your officers could --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Who would pay for it?

Murad Qureshi AM: It is not so much about paying. The biggest energy consumer here in London is TfL and it could potentially buy in a lot of stuff in future, but that is not for me to say now. I want the officers to look into it.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We do have a License Lite thing with TfL.

Murad Qureshi AM: Precisely. That is where we need to be with --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I have to say that I do not entirely understand how the Licence Lite thing with TfL works. There is a question about this in a minute, is there not? Sorry, I must not anticipate.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): We are going on to that question in a moment. Can you finish answering the specifics of Assembly Member Qureshi's question?

Murad Qureshi AM: A London FIT is what we want and it should be at least investigated.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): A London FIT?

Murad Qureshi AM: Yes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, it is an interesting idea. I will ask Matthew Pencharz [Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy] to see what he thinks of it.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you. Finally, when you go to Paris, can I just remind you that the last time you went to a conference of the parties in Europe was in Copenhagen and you promised to make London the electric vehicle (EV) capital of the world?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We have.

Murad Qureshi AM: What promises are you going to be making this time that you will not deliver on?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look at it. You have huge numbers of EVs now. We have charging points all over the place.

Murad Qureshi AM: If I can correct you, you said 100,000 vehicles. We are only at 2,000 or 3,000. You said 25,000 plug-in points --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, it is more than that. It is more than that.

Murad Qureshi AM: -- and 2,000 or 3,000 again.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is more than that.

Murad Qureshi AM: I am just wondering what kind of promises you are going to be making to the summit this December again that you will not deliver on.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The promises I will be making are the promises we are already keeping. We have reduced our CO₂ emissions by 14%, we are on track to reduce them by 60% by 2025 on the 1990 base and we have huge numbers of EVs across London. They are now really starting to take off, the EVs. When I was in Japan I drove an incredible Mitsubishi. What has been disappointing --

Murad Qureshi AM: That is in Japan. That was in Tokyo, not London, and I would suggest that Paris is the capital of EVs now in Europe.

Finally, I just remind you that it is worth checking up whether the meeting is going ahead because I suspect a lot of the fringe and rally meetings around the Paris summit are not going to happen now.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Is that right? On that, I hope very much that it is business as normal. What most people around the world will want to do is to show that Paris goes on.

Murad Qureshi AM: It will go on. What I am saying is that a lot of the other things around it, like the rallies and the fringe meetings, I do not think will be because of the security concerns. Obviously that is Paris's concern.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Really? You have the advantage.

Nicky Gavron AM: You are going to the Town Hall.

Murad Qureshi AM: That is the fringe --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Let us bring it back here to City Hall.

2015/3733 - GLA Energy Supply Licence

James Cleverly AM MP

How will your plans for the GLA to become a 'Licence Lite' energy supplier help to improve the energy market in London?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): James, thank you. This is a very brilliant scheme that Matthew Pencharz came up with. We already have one Licence Lite in operation. There may be several but - and, look, I am not going to explain this very well - basically the GLA is buying in energy from a bunch of suppliers and then selling it to TfL. Somehow or other, TfL is paying us about £200,000. The gist of it is that it is paying us £200,000, which you may think is odd since we are all effectively part of the same ball of wax but I am told that it cannot get that energy any other way and that this represents a good deal for TfL as well. In theory, it is win-win.

James Cleverly AM MP: Perhaps a series of supplementary questions with monosyllabic answers from you. For example, Mr Mayor, do you feel that the GLA energy supply licence is a gateway for the middle ground energy supplier – not the micro home suppliers and not the very large suppliers of energy but that middle ground of energy suppliers? Do you think this scheme could be a good open door for those middle-tier decentralised energy suppliers to plug into the London energy grid?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes.

James Cleverly AM MP: Excellent. Therefore, what else could be done in support of this scheme to ensure that London becomes a technology hub for decentralised energy? Obviously, if we can make ourselves the go-to place in Europe and the world for decentralised energy, it would be great. Working closely with London & Partners, for example, to broadcast the fact that middle-tier decentralised energy suppliers should see London as their natural home, could that be something we could consider?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes.

James Cleverly AM MP: Excellent. We are making firm progress. Will you ensure that the work that is done through the Licence Lite and these decentralised energy suppliers is plugged into your wider plans to clean London's air, reduce bad air episodes and so on, to ensure that we do not fall foul of future European Union (EU) fines with regard to this?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. The whole initiative is very interesting and I thank you for the interest and energy you are committing to it.

James Cleverly AM MP: Finally, just a slight word of caution. There could be a temptation to use this scheme to become, to all intents and purposes, a public sector retailer of energy into domestic users. I just urge caution with regard to that. Focus on using this as a way to get clean, sustainable energy into the London travel sector and to stimulate the market rather than to try to replicate the work of free-market players, even though we all recognise there are some significant flaws in the retail energy market.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. I seem to remember there was a company called Enron that tried to do this kind of thing. We have no intention of becoming the next Enron.

James Cleverly AM MP: Thank you.

2015/3721 - Quietways Routes Consultation

Andrew Boff AM

While residents along the Mayor's new Quietways routes will benefit from decreased pollution, noise, and improved cycle routes, is it not important that the residents impacted by the schemes are adequately consulted prior to implementation in order to ensure that local residents are not disproportionately affected by the changes?

Andrew Boff AM: Mr Mayor, effectively, you have answered many of the questions. I use the opportunity of Caroline Pidgeon's [Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM] question earlier to raise with you my concerns. They are not about CS1, not about Quietways and not about Mini-Hollands. My concerns are the standards of consultation and that TfL seems to have a 'not invented here' attitude to any suggestions for amendments to the plans.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes.

Andrew Boff AM: I ask you to take that away and to take --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do. No, I take that very seriously and I hope that I gave a satisfactory answer earlier on that. Your points were well made.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Thank you, Chair.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): OK. Thank you very much.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you.