

London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time) – 20 January 2016

Transcript of Agenda Item 4 – Oral Update on the Report of the Mayor

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): We go on now to the Mayor's oral update. I understand, Mayor, that during this update you are going to be addressing the content of a press release that has been distributed this morning.

Tom Copley AM: Very late.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will not if you do not want me to.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Why I brought this up is that if you are going to make mention of it and if all Assembly Members have not had a copy, then we would ask you to wait until that is sorted out.

I am looking to Assembly Member Jones. Are you saying, as leader of the Green Party Group, that you have not received it?

Darren Johnson AM: We have it.

Jenny Jones AM: I have it now and I will read it.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): You do not need to read it or you can read it silently --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Can I talk about it or not? It is fairly straightforward.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Excuse me, Mr Mayor. Just a moment. Can I just see with a show of hands those Members who have not seen the press release from the Mayor this morning? OK.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Would it help the Assembly if I just go through the contents in some detail?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, Mr Mayor. I am chairing this meeting and I would just like us all to sort this out.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Get on with it.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): It is reasonable for Members to have knowledge of any documentation that you are referring to before you speak to them. If officers can just make sure that those Members who need a copy of the press release or, if a Member is sitting by somebody with a copy of the press release, can you share?

Roger Evans AM: I think it might help you because I have it in front of me here. It was circulated by Ed Williams [Head of Committee and Member Services, Greater London Authority] at 9.44am this morning to all Assembly Members.

Jenny Jones AM: That is a bit late.

Roger Evans AM: Yes. Even so, I have a printed copy here. For the Members who have not read it, I am quite happy to lend them mine if they would like to have it.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): All right. Thank you. Please share because I would imagine that Members will have questions in relation to the content of your press release. Is that OK? A majority of Members will have sight of the press release.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Good.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Over to you, Mayor, for your update.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you very much. The Assembly is full of highly intelligent people who ought to be able to understand the gist of what we are saying.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That is not the point.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sorry.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That is not the point. Now let us just go on to your update so that we can get questions to you.

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

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Keep your hair on. Relax, everybody. Since the last Mayor's report, we have done a load of things including launching an app for volunteering. Emma Thompson, who is the Tuberculosis (TB) Ambassador for London, launched a big awareness campaign because TB, as you may know, is more prevalent in this city than in many other comparable European cities.

One of the things that the Assembly has campaigned for we are making big progress towards achieving, which is to make sure that London accident and emergency departments (A&Es) share data with the police. There has been a big expansion in that effort and 17 out of 29 A&Es now share data regularly with the police. We think that that has helped 575 victims of serious youth violence and sexual exploitation. We are continuing with our efforts to get the medical evidence to be properly shared with the police.

We had a very good conference in City Hall about getting more London businesses to take on ex-offenders. Not enough do this. Only 12% take on ex-offenders. However, all those that do report that they are wonderful employees and they are highly productive. Timpson, for instance, has taken on 300 ex-offenders and has had only seven who have gone back to a life of crime or committed a crime again. I really urge London businesses to look at what firms such as Timpson, Greggs and many others are now doing. Transport for London (TfL) does it as far as we can, although we want to expand it. It is the right thing for society and indeed the right thing for the economy because it is massively expensive, as you all know, to put people in prison.

As you have said, Jennette, there is a consultation that we have concluded about private hire vehicles (PHVs). The consultation had a huge number of responses. There were 16,000 responses. We will be putting various proposals now to the Board of TfL. They include a formal English language requirement for drivers,

guaranteed fare estimates for customers in advance of their journeys and various other provisions for private hire operators to ensure that customers can speak to someone in the event of a problem with their journey. That is something that many passengers have called for, particularly groups that speak for vulnerable women in danger of sexual violence and so on.

There is, of course, a great concern in London about the expansion in the number of PHVs, which has gone up from about 59,000 in 2009/10 to more than 95,000 today. Basically, one in ten vehicles now entering the Congestion Charge Zone is a PHV or a minicab. It was probably about one in 100 a couple of years ago.

How do we address this? There are two tools that we have at our disposal. One is to try to cap the numbers and we would need primary legislation to do that. The Government is adamant that it does not want legislation to cap the numbers of PHVs. The alternative is, of course, to look at a congestion charge. You will appreciate that that would be a controversial step, but we are nonetheless going to be putting that forward for public consultation and will see how that goes. Obviously, it will be something that will be a matter of some controversy, but really I think, responsibly, we have to look at ways of reducing the congestion that is currently being caused by the volume of minicabs.

In addition, we have secured a commitment to progress separate legislation from the Government to regulate pedicabs and to help thereby to tackle the fare abuse that is common amongst some pedicab drivers. Furthermore - subject, obviously, to approval by the TfL Board - we are going to be altering the structure of the licence fees for minicabs so as to reflect the size of the operations concerned. Obviously, it does not make much sense for a small firm to be paying the same amount for their licence as a firm that has thousands of vehicles.

That is the broad thrust of the consultation on minicabs. It contains a lot of good sense without, I hope, being too burdensome or too injurious for a very important sector of our economy. We need the minicabs. They do a great job. However, we also need them to be properly regulated and to make sure that we tackle congestion.

I have been asked further by Caroline [Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM] to say something about a story about the Garden Bridge. All I can say there really, Caroline, is that the Government will want to reflect upon whatever the National Audit Office review has said, but the Garden Bridge Trust should be congratulated on raising prodigious sums of private finance - £85 million - already. The benefit-to-cost ratio of the Garden Bridge is estimated by TfL to be about 5.8:1. It is a great project for London and I am delighted that it is currently proceeding.

Richard Tracey AM: Mr Mayor, is this an exhaustive response from TfL to the whole of the consultation that went on? You mentioned certain aspects, but clearly there are others. I remember that there was the matter of a five-minute waiting time and so on.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. There were some ideas, Dick, that were consulted upon which did not find, I have to say, widespread support and which I do not think are sensible because they tend to be trying to turn back the clock on technological progress. In the end, we cannot disinvent the internet and we cannot disinvent apps. These things are making life much easier for people in our city. They have come to love and to value the use of apps of all kinds to speed up their lives. To try to insist that operators provide booking confirmation details to passengers five minutes before or to insist on pre-booking up to seven days in advance or the idea that you could somehow forbid an app from displaying the whereabouts of vehicles in the vicinity is I think, frankly, ludicrous. That is just Neanderthal. It is taking us backwards; not that I have anything against Neanderthals, obviously.

Richard Tracey AM: Indeed. Many of us thought that there were some impractical suggestions in the previous consultation. You said that there will now be a new consultation, particularly on the idea of removing the congestion charge exemption from PHVs. Is it the case that there will be another consultation? It seems to me that many people will feel that it will simply send up the prices for all of those PHVs that currently have an exemption.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Obviously, that will be a point that will be made during the consultation. This is something that people will have mixed views about. There is a serious congestion issue that has to be tackled. To have 95,000 PHVs on the streets, clogging up some of the most congested parts of the city, is a serious problem. The congestion charge is an obvious tool for us to use. People will make the very point that you make and there will be a great deal of hesitancy about it. Clearly, one of the arguments that will be made is that it is discriminatory between PHVs and black cabs. That is an argument that will have to be gone through.

Richard Tracey AM: Yes. Thank you.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor. Although the Transport Committee has not had a chance to meet to discuss your proposals, I am pleased that a majority of the proposals and the responses that the Transport Committee put in have found their way into TfL's document.

However, there will be some disappointment that there is not protection of people's right to book a minicab up to seven days in advance. I hope that that is something where there will be a review mechanism as the market changes. There are many people not of the iPhone generation who do want to be able to ring up and book their minicab to go to Heathrow seven days ahead. In terms of customer interests, we do need to protect everybody.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Of course.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: The thing that I feel mostly about this is that I am pleased to see TfL reassert itself as a regulator of the private hire and taxi industry and of London's streets, as it were, but it has taken three years and we have lost a lot of ground. On the issue of the congestion charging - which, as you say, is the sensible tool to deal with this - there has been a 50% - 60%-plus increase in minicabs on the street in central London in two years. I do feel that there is an extent to which TfL as a regulator does need to be faster in order to respond to these issues.

My question is a personal one to you, Mr Mayor. I know that there has been lobbying in every direction as well as the consultation itself. Can I just check a rumour with you, Mr Mayor? Is it true that George Osborne [The Rt Honourable George Osborne MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer] contacted you personally by text in order to lobby on behalf of Uber? Is there any truth in that rumour?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is fair to say that, as I have said to this Assembly many times, I have been in receipt of abundant communication from the Government and, indeed, from taxi drivers and local government at all levels about this issue - I do not know - since it really blew up. It would be wrong to go into all of the details of the various representations that I have had.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Why would it be wrong, Mr Mayor? It is bypassing freedom of information and data protection --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It would be very --

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: No. If it is true that there are civil servants and national politicians lobbying directly on behalf of a global company, is it not in the public interest that those things are known? I submitted a personal freedom of information request (FOI) to TfL and the Greater London Authority (GLA) to reveal all of this in October 2015 and it has been resisted and resisted.

Would you, Mr Mayor, in the interests of transparency, be willing to reveal through that FOI the lobbying - I am not talking about consultation responses - that has gone on from Number 10, from Number 11, from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I can give you a general answer, which is that --

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: The general answer 'yes' would be very nice. Would you respond to the --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. If you want a general answer, yes. This is a subject that keenly exercises the Government.

I have to say that there is a category error that is being made by some of my friends in the Government because they think that Uber - to pick a firm entirely at random - must be a great thing because it is Californian, it is tech and it is all of that sort of thing. Of course, that is true. It is wonderful. It provides a service for Londoners that did not exist in quite that way before. However, it has various consequences that we have to manage.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Absolutely.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Of course we are all in love with tech and it has been brilliant for London in the last few years, but there is a difference between welcoming tech investment or welcoming tech start-ups in London and necessarily wanting to see --

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: A free-for-all.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- technology do substantial environmental damage - or whatever it happens to be - in a market that is already very heavily regulated. After all, we ask the black cab drivers to go through all sorts of hoops and they spend huge amounts on their vehicles. They have to do the turning circle. They have to do the Knowledge. This is a big deal for them and in the rest --

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: That is partly helpful, Mr Mayor. You have not denied that there has been enormous lobbying by the Government?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, I do not deny that.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: One of the reasons I asked this is because, in the private hire regulations response, which has just been published, there are a couple of really important areas where you have thrown us back onto the Government to help. I am thinking of a crucial safety issues, which is the number of hours a driver drives for. In the document, it says that TfL will work with the Department for Transport (DfT) and that the DfT is going to have to solve the problem of controlling the number of hours that private hire drivers drive for. We all think that that is a crucial issue.

If the DfT has had to take on this responsibility, can you be confident that it will do it when you are receiving such anti-regulatory lobbying from the Government?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): On the number of hours, I will have to check. It may be that to deliver change there you need primary legislation and that you need the Government's help in some way. That seems to be wholly commonsensical.

There are many views about this in London. There are many people who are huge partisans of the black cabs and would never dream of taking Uber. There are many tens of thousands – if not millions – of people who use Uber. There are many people who do both. I believe that both have a great future. If properly regulated, if properly championed and if properly helped, the black cabs have a great future.

The objective of these regulations this morning is not in any way to prejudice the development of the minicab industry in London. It is very successful. It is to manage it and to try to limit the problem of congestion at the moment.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.

Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, I wanted to ask you about the Garden Bridge. In February 2013, you took a 24-hour taxpayer-funded trip to San Francisco, along with various GLA and TfL officers, which cost taxpayers £10,000. This was to try to raise private sponsorship for the Garden Bridge.

In December 2015 at the GLA Oversight Committee, you promised Len Duvall that you would, subject to advice, release the full list of who accompanied you. Why have you not released this yet?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I was not aware that we had not and I see no reason why that should not be released. I will find out if there is some reason why that has not been released.

However, I can tell you that there was a slight inaccuracy in what you said, which is that you said that the discussion was exclusively about the Garden Bridge. That was not true, actually. We are engaged with the corporation concerned in ongoing, continuing discussions about investments in this city and it would be wrong to go into details about them now.

Tom Copley AM: Of course, you have had to slightly correct yourself because indeed at the GLA Oversight Committee, when asked directly by Len Duvall if you were trying to seek out a sponsor for the Garden Bridge and if that was correct, you said, "That is entirely correct". Perhaps --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That is entirely correct, but it is also the case that there are continuing discussions going on with the business concerned and I do not particularly want to go into them.

Tom Copley AM: Can you tell us now? It is over a month now since you said to Len Duvall that you would release this information that has not been released. Could you just tell us now who was with you?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): What I will undertake is to find out why the information has not been released. It may be that there is some reason for that that has not been --

Tom Copley AM: Could you give a deadline for this, please, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No.

Tom Copley AM: Next week?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Am I giving you a deadline for finding out? I will very happily find out what the impediment is and get back to you.

Tom Copley AM: Did anyone from Heatherwick Studio or associated with Heatherwick Studio accompany you on this trip?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I would be very happy to get back to you as soon as I have the go-ahead. I do not quite understand why --

Tom Copley AM: I am sure you would remember, Mr Mayor. One person in particular I am sure you would remember if they were sitting next to you --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I would, indeed.

Tom Copley AM: -- on the plane to San Francisco.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. I am not sure that they were sitting next to me. I honestly cannot remember.

Tom Copley AM: You honestly cannot remember? OK. We look forward --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I genuinely do not think it is a wholly contemptible objective, by the way, to try to seek funding for this city from corporations that have huge sums of money. We have raised, in my time as Mayor, hundreds of millions in sponsorship. That is the right thing to do. It saves the taxpayer money. Projects like the Garden Bridge would not go ahead if we did not get private sponsorship. They have raised £85 million already. We have been involved with a great dealing of funding.

Tom Copley AM: When you were talking to whichever potential private sponsors you were talking to, did you specifically raise the Garden Bridge?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): When? Which one?

Tom Copley AM: When you were --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I can promise you that I have raised it with loads of people.

Tom Copley AM: It is interesting because that time was just before the tender for what was apparently then just going to be a pedestrian footbridge was put out. Of course, there was no mention in this tender of it being a --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Why do you hate this project so much?

Tom Copley AM: Hang on. There was no mention in this tender of it being a Garden Bridge. If you remember, three companies were asked to put in designs. Two of them were under the impression that this was only a pedestrian footbridge. Only one of those companies, Heatherwick Studio, knew that you wanted a

Garden Bridge. Yet you were over in San Francisco trying to drum up support for a Garden Bridge. This was completely uncompetitive, was it not, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, I really do not know why you are so hysterically opposed to this bridge. The only conclusion I can draw is that you think it is something --

Tom Copley AM: My views on the bridge are irrelevant. This is about the process. This is about you and --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Transparency, yes.

Tom Copley AM: -- TfL following the correct procedures. It seems quite clear in this case --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Hang on. Would you mind --

Tom Copley AM: -- that one company, Heatherwick Studio, was given an advantage over the other two companies in the bidding process because the other two companies --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, absolutely not.

Tom Copley AM: -- were not aware that you wanted a Garden Bridge.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No. You are talking twaddle because we have actually had a whole session of the Assembly whatever-it-is committee. What was it?

Tom Copley AM: The GLA Oversight Committee, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Were you there, Roger?

Roger Evans AM: I remember it well.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It seemed to last about two hours --

Tom Copley AM: The trouble is that we never get a clear answer out of you. That is why we have to keep bringing it back up.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- and a lot of these points were made then --

Tom Copley AM: Thank you, Chair. I will leave it there.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- and they were convincingly refuted. I do not know what your beef is.

Tom Copley AM: You are obfuscating, Mr Mayor. I will leave it there. Thank you, Chair.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Let me try to summarise --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Mr Mayor, it is OK. Can I just make it clear to anybody who is not familiar with this. Members can bring any question to you - once they have arranged it amongst their groups - at these sessions and they can repeat questions that have been to committees. That is not the issue.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Perhaps Tom [Tom Copley AM] had not studied the proceedings of that Committee. Perhaps he had not had a chance to read the minutes.

Tom Copley AM: I have them here.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): It is perfectly appropriate --

Tom Copley AM: No answers.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): -- for Mr Copley to have raised these questions with you.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you, Chair.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: The National Audit Office has shone a welcome light on how the Chancellor [The Rt Honourable George Osborne MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer] rushed ahead and poured public money into the Garden Bridge in what was quoted as an 'unorthodox' way. Will you now ensure that every detail of your involvement with the Garden Bridge is made public, including answering October 2015 Mayor's Questions that I have asked and providing full details of every dinner and meeting on your GLA-funded trip to San Francisco?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I have said what I have said --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: A 'yes' would be nice.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- about the fundraising trip. Look, my general view about this --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- is that it is very odd. We have tried to raise huge sums of money for London and we have been very successful in getting private sponsorship.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Will you provide details of all of your involvement, yes or no?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We have significant sums in private sponsorship for this bridge and £85 million is a lot to raise.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Will you provide full details of your involvement?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): This mayoralty was involved in a lot of those conversations. I would be very happy to elucidate you on anything except ongoing conversations between us and potential sponsors.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is a yes, then? Thank you very much.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not know what you are saying. It is a yes to what?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you very much. I will leave it there.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): The records will show that you said yes to providing all of the information that the Member asked you for.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not think that that is the case.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you.

Jenny Jones AM: You said yes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I have said what I have said about the trip.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Apart from the ongoing discussions, which --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Really, it is very odd of you to continue to belabour this subject.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I am sure that this is going to go on and on and on.

Tom Copley AM: Until we get some answers.

Andrew Boff AM: Mr Mayor, are you aware that the Garden Bridge Trust has stated that it is £30 million short of the £115 million it needs to raise from the public?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The best information I have is that it is in a high state of readiness to go ahead with the project and it has raised £85 million. Clearly, it may be possible to de-scope the project in order to cut its coat to suit its cloth, so to speak. £85 million is a huge amount of money. It has £60 million from the state. It is a fantastic project for this city.

As I said before, London is currently a massively popular city. Everybody wants to come here. However, a city cannot stand still. Around the world, cities are offering new attractions and developing their offer to tourists and to the rest of the planet. We have to do the same. The Garden Bridge will be a fantastic new venture for London. It will be massively popular. It is the right thing to do.

There was an article that I saw in the *Evening Standard* saying that the thing was such a good idea that it should be entirely funded by the taxpayer. I do not agree with that. It is right to go ahead, but only provided a very significant proportion comes from the private sector. That is what is happening.

Andrew Boff AM: I am motivated by your optimism about containing the costs of the Garden Bridge because, from its inception, the estimates have only ever been added to.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. That is in the nature of these things.

Andrew Boff AM: Originally, I believe it was £60 million and now it is £175 million.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That is the top end of the estimates, I think, and has quite a lot of contingency in there.

Andrew Boff AM: It is the figure that was published by the Garden Bridge Trust on its website. Similarly on its website, it also says that it is £30 million short of paying for the whole project.

If the bridge is to start, as it is going to fairly soon, what incentive is there for sponsors to come forward if the project is already happening?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The incentive is very clear. This is a fantastic project for London, which many people will want to be associated with. It will be there for a very long time to come and it will be absolutely beautiful. It will be a new park for London in a space where previously it was not possible to create a park. It will be an absolutely fantastic place to go for a walk or to cross over from one side of the river to the other.

One of the arguments that has been neglected in all of this is that the transport benefits for people coming out from Waterloo and going straight over that Garden Bridge towards the Covent Garden/Aldwych area will be very dramatic. Aldwych at the moment with that whole one-way system could be much livelier and could be much better. It needs to be improved. The Garden Bridge will help to transform that area. It satisfies many demands.

It is widely supported by businesses north and south of the river. The last figures I saw showed that it carried the support of about 85% of the population of this city.

I can only think that the negativity surrounding this comes from a certain amount of professional jealousy from the architectural world, which does not happen to be sure about the architectural qualifications of Thomas Heatherwick [founder, Heatherwick Studio]. There is a certain amount of that going on in some of the coverage. The rest of it is politically driven twaddle and a general negativity, which I do not support.

Jenny Jones AM: We just think it is wrong.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You do not want it? I do not understand why you do not want it. I thought that the Greens liked gardens.

Darren Johnson AM: Exactly, but answer the question --

Andrew Boff AM: Mr Mayor, I am not sure which category I fall in.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I was being heckled by Jenny [Jenny Jones AM].

Andrew Boff AM: What is clear is that the bridge will be commenced without the full funding being identified. In the event of that extra £30 million not being raised, could you tell me of the two options? Where will the funding come from? That is what I need to know. In the event of that £30 million not being raised, where will the funding come from for its completion?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We have been very clear that there is no more money from TfL and that the risk must be borne by the Garden Bridge Trust, but I --

Andrew Boff AM: The potential is there for us to have a half-finished bridge?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): As I recall, Lambeth was not too sure. Perhaps we could build a 'Garden Pier' most of the way out to Lambeth and stop short! That is not going to happen. It is going to be a great project. It is going to --

Andrew Boff AM: How would a 'Garden Pier' meet the objectives of TfL to assist in getting people across the river?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You are quite right, Andrew. It would not immediately meet those objectives but it would --

Andrew Boff AM: Who would pay to bridge the gap?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am absolutely confident that the funding gap can be - as it were - bridged and that the Garden Bridge will go ahead.

Andrew Boff AM: It is not just the funding gap. It is the gap between the shore and the bridge that I am interested in.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I understand that. As you will appreciate, the gap at the moment is very wide indeed, there being no bridge at all. The objective is to get going and that is what we are going to do.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Thank you for your answers.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. There are no more questions on the update.