

Transport

24 hour tube service

Question Number: 2015/1259

12 May 2015

Joanne McCartney AM

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. Will you actually then personally take up the issue of no single staffing between outer London stations with Peter Hendy [Commissioner of Transport for London], and will you come and chat to me?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): What I undertake to do, because I really ought to talk to the experts about how they see safety in outer London stations, is that I will get back to you with an explanation of how we see the Night Tube service working to make sure that it is as safe as possible both for passengers and for our staff.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. The other issue that I have raised with you on a regular basis has been the rise in sexual assaults and harassment that have been reported on the Tube network, and obviously the running of the Night Tubes will mean that lots more people will be coming back in the early hours of the morning. You, I noticed yesterday, have started a consultation on reducing some of the night bus services in my area, for example. How will you be factoring in the risk, particularly to women, of sexual assaults and harassments that this policy may result in?

[...]

Joanne McCartney AM: OK. Mr Mayor, if you cannot tell me today, could you write to me? Have TfL talked to either the BTP or the MPS about having visible police officers, particularly in outer London, when you go live with 24-hour trains? It will have implications for their organisations as well.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will genuinely get back to you about the ways in which we are going to ensure that the Night Tube is safe both for passengers and for staff, and I will give you a broad and full answer. Hello?

Cycle Superhighways

Question Number: 2015/1639

08 Jun 2015

Caroline Pidgeon AM

[...]

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: When will you see Cycle Superhighway 6 if you have a long list? As far as I am aware, it has been cancelled. That was in an answer from you back in September.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Caroline, would you forgive me? I am looking at this chart and I do not see Cycle Superhighway 6. I assume that you are right. I am going to have to get back to you about Cycle Superhighway 6.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: In one of your answers, you confirmed that it has been cancelled and I want to know why and what on earth this reason means if it is to do with deliverability constraints within the supply chain?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am so sorry. I cannot give you further information about that because I simply do not have it with me now. What we are doing is proceeding with a huge amount of investment in cycling infrastructure. It is the thick end of £1 billion. It is having a massive impact on the carriageway. You should see the letters I get from –

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I am sure.

Cycle Superhighways

Question Number: 2015/1639

08 Jun 2015

Caroline Pidgeon AM

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Just on that point, Mr Mayor, do you think it would be more effective if cyclists who were caught going through red lights had their bikes impounded immediately so that their mode of transport is removed and they have to then go somewhere to recover it and pay a fine to get their bike back? As a cyclist myself, the most inconvenient thing is to lose your bike in the middle of a journey and to have to then clack off in boots and Lycra to get the Tube. Cyclists are much more likely to think twice about that than about a fine? Not that I wear Lycra when I cycle, just to calm everybody down.

[...]

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I would have to think about that. It is a very interesting idea. It is a custom pretty much alien to English law to take away people's property unless you absolutely have to.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Of course, that is not correct. We clamp cars all the time. Cars get clamped all the time.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is worth looking at. Actually, characteristically, Kit, you might have come up with a rather interesting idea. I will talk it over with Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] and see what the options are. I do not know how we would introduce it. I do not know what regulations we would need in order to make it possible. It is something that certainly would act as a considerable deterrent and you are spot-on in your analysis.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Certainly cars that are uninsured are immediately impounded.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. I will take it up and I will get back to you.

Noisy Tubes

Question Number: 2015/1743

08 Jun 2015

Murad Qureshi AM

[...]

Murad Qureshi AM: I am glad that I have brought it up, but I do think that there is a wider issue about mitigating the impact of 24-hour Tube. I am not saying people in central London are against it. You need to certainly work with local authorities and the MPS because I do not see any evidence of that in Westminster.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Let me get back to you with what we are doing to muffle, baffle, mitigate and do whatever we have to do to make sure that when we run a 24-hour Tube it does not keep people up at night. We are going to have a 24-hour Tube but we cannot be rattling people's teacups at 3.00am and so we will sort that out.

Murad Qureshi AM: Yes, that is the reassurance the residents want.

Increase in proportion of cyclist casualties

Question Number: 2015/1745

08 Jun 2015

Valerie Shawcross AM

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: The one thing we have political consensus on is that we want to see cycling safety. We have a programme that is kind of half through. It is really still only phase one of the cycling revolution. It is incredibly important that there is a detailed continuity plan and that you can show not just how we are going to continue the programme for Cycle Superhighways but that a new Mayor can pick up projects in development.

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

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Will you actually give us a continuity plan in some detail so that we can see into the next administration exactly how this cycling revolution will roll forward?

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

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: It is not in your business plan at the moment. It is very vague.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, I do not accept that, Val. If you look at the action plan for cycling or the cycling revolution plan, it contains a huge raft of things, all of which are very detailed and all of which require specific interventions and specific costs. They are funded and they are going ahead. The Quietways, the Mini-Hollands, the expansion of the Cycle Superhighways, the expansion of the cycle hire scheme: all of that will continue. Yes, there will come a moment in 2017 or 2018 when the thing will need a great new surge of energy and funding and I hope very much that the next Mayor will see what a priority this is. There is a very clear roadmap.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Will you publish that roadmap for us to see? For example, at the moment, I could not find a date for the completion of the three Mini-Hollands. We were really pleased that you are actually finally doing some 20mph-zone pilots on red routes, which is hugely important. The red routes are enormously dangerous and people have lobbied for this for years. What we want to see are some completion dates. We want to know there is some design work in progress and we are not going to have an interregnum while a new Mayor has to completely start from scratch?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No. I would be very happy to share absolutely everything.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Will you publish a continuity plan for us, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. Obviously, my objective is to lay out the tram tracks for the next Mayor as far into the future as I possibly can in the hope that he or she will not deviate from the path of common sense.

[...]

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: We would all agree that one death is one death too many and it is still true to say that all pedal-cyclist accidents have gone up by about 2,000 since 2008. There is an issue and what we want is for you to not just keep your foot on the gas but give us a really good –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I think you mean ‘foot on the pedal’!

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Keep your foot on the pedal, then. Give us a really good, clear technical plan for how an incoming Mayor can actually continue this without a break. That is all we ask for. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. You certainly shall have that.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Thank you.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You have that already.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: You will write to me with that, will you?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I would be happy to get Andrew [Andrew Gilligan, Mayor’s Cycling Commissioner] to talk to you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): OK. We understand that you are going to exchange information. Let us move to the next question.

Compensation for train delays and cancellations

Question Number: 2015/1961

08 Jun 2015

Richard Tracey AM

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. My final question, then. A resident has suggested to me that the reason for this issue with the carriages is because TfL was not able to inspect them before it inherited the rolling stock. Do you know if that is correct?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not, but I would be happy to get back to you about that.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. It appears to me that in future, if TfL is to inherit other lines, we cannot have this situation occurring again.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. I completely understand the point that is being made and I just repeat the message to passengers in that part of northeast London. It will get better. We are on it. Our objective is to invest in these stations, invest in these services and invest in new trains, which is what we are going to do. They have already seen a reduction in their fares, to be fair.

Joanne McCartney AM: A reduction in capacity as well, which is not good.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is not good. I accept that.

Compensation for train delays and cancellations

Question Number: 2015/1961

08 Jun 2015

Richard Tracey AM

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. The other thing I want to ask is about the issue of compensation. At the moment, looking at the TfL website, it says:

"Apply for a refund. At the moment you can't apply online for a service delay refund if your delayed journey was on TfL Rail or London Overground services between Liverpool Street and Enfield Town, Cheshunt and Chingford ..."

I am going to ask you if you would make sure that every station on that line has a notice clearly displayed apologising to customers and telling them exactly how they can apply for refunds, given that online it is not available.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): If they are delayed, yes, I will make sure that we do something to that effect.

Cyclists killed by HGVs

Question Number: 2015/2042

03 Jul 2015

Caroline Pidgeon AM

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I would like that to be soon but what about the trial of a rush-hour ban? Is it something you will consider?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sorry, on peak hour lorries, I will look at this. I have to tell you that this is something that, as you rightly say, TfL has traditionally rejected because it would just drive lorries into the surrounding periods of the day and you would have real congestion. You would have all sorts of unseen consequences. You would have lorry drivers flooring it –

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You will look at it?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): – flooring it to beat the ban and causing even more accidents. All sorts of objections like that are raised. However, we are actively studying that option now. I can tell you that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Fantastic. I really go with that.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Whether it leads to a trial I cannot promise, but we are actively looking at it.

The Night Tube

Question Number: 2015/2225

06 Jul 2015

Valerie Shawcross AM

Andrew Dismore AM: Can you tell me why there was no consultation with residents whose homes back on to the Northern line about the additional noise problems that emanate overnight?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It has been drawn to my attention that one of the impacts of the Night Tube may be extra noise. We are looking into that, particularly at Baker Street. In that type of area, I have been alerted to possible consequences. Murad [Murad Qureshi AM] drew it to my attention last time and we are working very hard to mitigate all such impacts and to make sure that the unquestioned benefits of the Night Tube do not disadvantage some people in the city.

Andrew Dismore AM: You did not actually answer my question about why there was no consultation with residents.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I cannot say. I am not certain there was no consultation.

[...]

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The answer will turn out to be that TfL was not aware of a very substantial number of residents who might be so affected. We are now getting reports of this and thank you for drawing the complaints of your constituents to my attention. We will obviously be doing whatever we can to mitigate it. I have to say that in eight years of being Mayor, this is the first time I have ever had any protest from any of you about nocturnal noise from the Tube. Not in this in this Question Time.

Andrew Dismore AM: Frankly, I find that answer incredible, Mr Mayor. Are you simply telling me that TfL had no thought about the impact on people who back on to the many miles of over ground Tube line where they are going to be disturbed at night?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): What I have been saying –

Andrew Dismore AM: Are you seriously telling me that the TfL had no thought about it? It presumably had no thought about it because it made no attempt to consult people in the first place. If it had done, it would have heard.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I cannot tell you about the consultations that were made.

Andrew Dismore AM: There were not any.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I would be happy to get back to you on that. What I can tell you is that in the course of doing this job for a long time, Night Tube noise is not something that has really been raised with me, but I am listening to you now and I am going to do what I can to sort it out. It is not something that has been raised with me before.

Electric vehicles in London

Question Number: 2015/2554

07 Sep 2015

Stephen Knight AM

Stephen Knight AM: Can I ask you this? What assessment has TfL made of the possibility in the short to medium term of converting diesel buses to run on compressed natural gas, a much cleaner fuel than diesel, in order to rid our streets of diesel buses as soon as we possibly can?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): What is happening on buses is that they are all going to be –

Stephen Knight AM: No, I asked specifically about converting to natural gas.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am not aware, particularly.

Stephen Knight AM: None at all?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The plan is to go for Euro 6 standards or better –

Stephen Knight AM: Will you ask TfL to look at this option?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): They have. Believe me, they have and –

Stephen Knight AM: You just said that no consideration has been given to it.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not believe that there are plans to go forward with the conversion of our current fleet of buses to liquid gas or natural gas –

Stephen Knight AM: Please could you write to me with a copy of what assessments have been done?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): – because we think that we can achieve the air quality benefits in other ways. I have spelled out some of them. When you get the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in –

Stephen Knight AM: Could you ask TfL, please?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): – you will have much cleaner buses running in the centre of London.

Stephen Knight AM: Mr Mayor, the current plans seem to leave our streets dominated by diesel buses for many years to come. You have said that TfL has looked at gas bus conversions and has dismissed it. Please could you publish or ask TfL to publish its assessment of doing that?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I would be very happy, Stephen, to do that.

Electric vehicles in London

Question Number: 2015/2554

07 Sep 2015

Stephen Knight AM

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Then what I wanted to ask you about. Given that there is a lack of availability at the moment of zero-emission taxis and that could be a barrier to adoption and also the cost of them - I have heard that the new ones are looking good, but the cost of them - would you consider TfL looking at procuring a replacement fleet of zero-emission-capable taxis directly and then leasing them to taxi drivers, much the same way –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Like the bus, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: – you have with the New Bus for London, in order to get the prices down to get that real hit early on of clean vehicles on our streets?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is a very interesting idea. As you know, we have £65 million from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) that we are intending to use to subsidise the acquisition of these new vehicles. It might be worth considering whether we can use our finance and borrowing ability to do just that. I will certainly not see a problem with looking at that. It may not be possible but it is certainly worth considering.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It seems that you have done it for buses and, from memory, New York do this for its taxi fleet. It leases them out. It would be a way that you could buy them quickly. It would help get through the system. Otherwise, we are going to be looking at 2033 before the taxi fleet is completely zero-emission-capable. I would like you to seriously put this to TfL and see if it can find a way to make this work.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, I shall. I did not know it was being done in New York and we will certainly look at that possibility, although, as I say, I would not want to commit to it right now.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It seems a good option to try to clean the fleet as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

Increasing cycling in London

Question Number: 2015/3560

09 Nov 2015

Caroline Pidgeon AM

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.

South West Trains

Question Number: 2015/4359

07 Dec 2015

Richard Tracey AM

Steve O'Connell AM: However, in the meantime, I would urge you to use your offices through TfL - and you can bring yourself up to speed about the details - to express your displeasure at the service that is being delivered to Londoners. It was absolutely disgraceful yesterday.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am obliged to you for pointing it out. I have not had a report from TfL about that –

Steve O'Connell AM: Can you get a report please, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): – but I will find out what happened at London Bridge yesterday. In fact, I did meet a discontented passenger who had come from that area yesterday morning. I was cycling at the time. I was aware of irritation. Let me find out exactly what happened.

Steve O'Connell AM: Could you do so?

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

Steve O'Connell AM: Thank you.

Environment

Supreme Court Judgement against the UK government over breaches of EU air pollution limits

Question Number: 2015/1498

12 May 2015

Jenny Jones AM

Nicky Gavron AM: Yes. Good morning. I agree with Assembly Members Jones and Qureshi that we need to expand the ULEZ and I am glad you are now considering that but we cannot wait. There are some measures that we absolutely have to have very, very soon. It is not just cars. I want a bit of a preamble; only one question. It is not just cars that use roads. It is schoolchildren. It happens to be National Walk to School Week. All over London now, more and more children are walking to school. It is a great initiative.

However, the issue is that we have over 1,000 schools on or near polluted roads. There is new scientific evidence done in London with 800 children at 23 schools, longitudinally, that shows that just the daily walk to and from school for half an hour damages children's lungs and stunts their growth. We used to push safer routes to school and quite rightly, but now we need safe, clean-air routes to school.

On behalf of the Labour Group - and coming to the question - I put forward an amendment to your budget [2015-16], which you did not take up. It said that this year you should be piloting clean-air routes to school with a view to putting a much bigger budget line in next year. My question is: will you now commit to supporting some pilots this year for clean-air routes to school for schoolchildren in primary schools?

[...]

Nicky Gavron AM: The point is that children are walking along very polluted roads. They have to find other routes. That has to be worked out. TfL should have a role in that. Will you support clean-air routes to school?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, of course. Just going back to what I was saying, TfL -

Nicky Gavron AM: It is not doing it now. Will you do it? Will you support it?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): - will be, I am sure, happy to give you a full briefing on what we do, but Surface Transport has a massive programme of engagement with schools. If there is something we can learn from your programme, then I would be very happy to do so, Nicky. I do not in any way wish to dismiss it.

GLA Energy Supply Licence

Question Number: 2015/3733

09 Nov 2015

James Cleverly AM

James Cleverly AM MP: 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.

Planning and Housing

Carlton Tavern

Question Number: 2015/1486

12 May 2015

Steve O'Connell AM

Steve O'Connell AM: We need to congratulate Westminster Council and the Members across both parties to support that enforcement action in giving a particularly bloody nose to the developer. Particularly I know Tom [Tom Copley AM] and myself are very keen to protect pubs. I know Tom has a written question in to you. I have probably no doubt that the developer may try to appeal against this enforcement, and my first point to you is could you try to ensure that any support you can give, through this building, in support of Westminster Council in rebuffing any potential appeal, will be made properly available?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes.

Steve O'Connell AM: In other words, would you be able to support Westminster Council in any given way?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Absolutely. I will support them morally and intellectually. They are completely right and we should all agree to make use of this pub ourselves in order to keep it going.

Paving over front gardens

Question Number: 2015/1669

08 Jun 2015

Jenny Jones AM

[...]

Jenny Jones AM: It is not just about that; there are also things you can do just as Mayor. For example, you could in fact set up a GLA website where you could urge people not to pave over their gardens and you could give them advice about other methods of creating a flat surface if that is what they want. Would you be prepared to do that?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, we have campaigned a huge amount on greening up London, protecting green space and creating more green space and, as you know, by 2025 25% of London will be under a canopy of leaves.

Jenny Jones AM: Will you do what I am asking?

[...]

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Your idea of helping people with some sort of website is a good one. I will look at what we already have and possibly what would be most useful is if we had some traffic offline about this, Jenny. If you want to do a joint initiative on this, I am very receptive.

Jenny Jones AM: OK. Great. You could use the advertising on London buses, for example, to draw people's attention to this.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. Everybody always wants that advertising for almost every good cause, but I will look at it. I will look at it.

Jenny Jones AM: I will be writing to you. Thank you.

Viability in planning decisions

Question Number: 2015/2221

06 Jul 2015

Nicky Gavron AM

Andrew Boff AM: Would you take action to end the confidentiality of viability assessments?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I would have to take advice on the effect of that and whether it would have the benign effects that we want.

Andrew Boff AM: You will try?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will certainly discuss it. I do not know whether it would have the positive effect that we want.

Andrew Boff AM: There are no good arguments for confidentiality of viability assessments that I have heard. I would welcome you submitting some to me that make any sense whatsoever.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am willing to look into it. What I do not want to do is introduce into the whole planning process, unwittingly, things that give developers an excuse not to go ahead, and that is always the problem. I would not want to see that.

Policing

Cuts to Policing

Question Number: 2015/0912

16 Mar 2015

Joanne McCartney AM

Andrew Dismore AM: The last question was this. What percentage of burglaries in Barnet resulted in a criminal prosecution last year?

[...]

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The answer is that I am very happy to write to you, Andrew, with the detail and the breakdown of criminal prosecutions of burglaries in Barnet. However, overall crime in Barnet, as indeed crime in London, has come down very substantially not just over the last four years but over the last seven years and you –

Andrew Dismore AM: That is not what your figures show.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, that is not true.

Public order police officers and Body-worn video cameras

Question Number: 2015/1482

12 May 2015

Roger Evans AM

Andrew Dismore AM: On the issue of public order, I wrote to you yesterday about the plans of anti-Semitic and far-right groups to hold a rally in Golders Green in January specifically aimed against the Jewish community. It is clearly very provocative and threatening in the wake of what happened in Paris and Copenhagen and the significant rise in anti-Semitic attacks in London over the last year. There has to be a real risk of disorder and violence against Jewish community businesses and the local community. What will you do to try to deal with this, and in particular to try to stop the rally taking place?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you for writing to me and thank you for taking it up. I will get on to it immediately and we will see what we can do. As you know, we do not generally like to ban public demonstrations or rallies except where absolutely necessary, though in the case of inciting anti-Semitic hatred or violence, that is plainly intolerable in our city, and we will see whether it meets those criteria.

Knife crime in London

Question Number: 2015/1562

19 May 2015

Caroline Pidgeon AM

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: [...] I have asked you, Mr Mayor, previously about ensuring accident and emergency (A&E) departments in London share non-confidential data with the police to help reduce violent crime.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, I remember you saying this.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: After I questioned you last year, you wrote to all the chief executives of London hospital trusts to encourage them to adopt this model. I am wondering how satisfied you were with the responses you received and perhaps you can let us know now how many A&E departments are now sharing this data with the police?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Caroline, I would be very happy to. First of all, perhaps I could just say how very strongly I support what the Commissioner has said and his general approach is right. It is important to stress with knife crime that we are doing better than we were, but it is absolutely vital not to be complacent about this. There will be a lot of action now on this front to make sure that what the Commissioner described, rightly, as a blip does not become a trend and that we really get a handle on this.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: In terms of the A&E departments –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am sure that the Commissioner will be wanting to use the full panoply of measures that he brought very powerfully into effect with Operation Big Wing in 2011.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. We are talking, firstly, specifically about the A&E departments.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): On A&E, another point about VWI is that the police figures that we are seeing are not necessarily being corroborated by the A&E statistics and by the numbers of victims presenting at A&E. That is an anomaly that we are trying to get to the bottom of. On your specific question about the number –

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, that is what I asked.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): – of hospitals that have responded, I am afraid I do not have that data with me now. I would be very happy, Caroline, to get back to you on that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK, but given I do not think yet we have all A&E departments sharing this data

and given knife crime at the moment is slightly starting to increase and we are concerned about it and given 1,000 people a month are victims of knife crime in London, will you now call a summit to get together at City Hall all the key hospital trusts and the partners to find a way forward on this? We have talked about this for years. We know the Cardiff model works. Sharing this data led to a 42% reduction in violent crime. It would be great if you could take a lead on this.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. As you know, we have written to them all and, if you had given me specific notice of that aspect –

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I am surprised your office did not pick up on that.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): – of the problem that you wish to be enlightened about, I could certainly have provided it. However, you are going to have to forgive me. I will get back to you later about the exact responses that we have had.

Domestic and Sexual Violence

Question Number: 2015/1746

08 Jun 2015

Joanne McCartney AM

[...]

Joanne McCartney AM: Could you make sure you have that conversation with the Commissioner the next time you meet him? It is vital.

The other thing we have heard is that funding from the Government for ISVAs actually ended this year with only five organisations in London receiving Government funding directly. Given that ISVAs are highly recommended as economically viable, particularly because they ensure that cases actually proceed to Court and perpetrators are actually caught and hopefully prevented from further crimes, would you support increasing their number, firstly?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes.

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes? Excellent.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I have told you. The Rape Crisis Centres also, by the way, help to support ISVAs and those going through the criminal justice system. The London Crime Prevention Fund is there to help local authorities. We are putting money into this at the moment. What I will undertake is to talk to Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] about his remarks to you about the –

Joanne McCartney AM: It was actually his response in writing to Dame Elish's report.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Forgive me; I will talk to him about his response to Dame Elish Angiolini's report. I will see how he would quantify that need and what he would like us to do by way of funding to meet this and what sort of a priority we need to give it.

[...]

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes. ISVAs deal particularly with the trauma of very serious rape and sexual violence and they are very particular. Will you agree to do that review through MOPAC?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): So do IDVAs, to be fair.

Joanne McCartney AM: Exactly, yes. There is overlap but you do need those specialist ones as well. Will you commit to doing that review?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am grateful to you for raising it. I will certainly commit to ensuring that we are spending enough on ISVAs and IDVAs and everybody in that field and I will make sure that MOPAC writes to you, Joanne. I will write to you with an account of how we are doing and what we are doing and whether I think it is adequate.

Police Funding

Question Number: 2015/2750

07 Sep 2015

Joanne McCartney AM

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes, we entirely agree with that, Mr Mayor. In the consultation that the Home Office is doing about replacing the policing formula, under various scenarios it has the MPS budget reducing by up to 43%, which obviously decimates London's police as we know it. These figures are not being given out as part of the consultation. Therefore police forces are being asked to respond to a consultation where the Home Office is refusing to release the data that lies behind the changes.

The Police and Crime Commissioners Treasurers' Society has come up with possible scenarios that lead to that 43% possibility for the MPS. The Police and Crime Commissioners of the West Midlands and Northumbria have stated that this indicates a shift away from city policing to rural.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes --

Joanne McCartney AM: They have said that they are investigating the possibility of legal action against the Home Office. Obviously, in your position as Police and Crime Commissioner of the major police force in the country, would you talk to those two Police Commissioners and others who are like-minded and talk about what you can do together, perhaps resorting to legal action? Otherwise, unless you take the lead in this, we could be looking at a disaster for our police funding.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I share that concern. You may have had a copy of the letter I have written to Theresa May [Rt Hon Theresa May MP, Home Secretary] on this.

Joanne McCartney AM: No, I have not.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We are certainly very happy to email that to you. We can send that letter.

Police Funding

Question Number: 2015/2750

07 Sep 2015

Joanne McCartney AM

Joanne McCartney AM: A final question: will you talk to the [Police and Crime] Commissioners of the West Midlands and Northumbria and any other like-minded Commissioner who wants to come together? A powerful group would be very helpful.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I certainly will ensure that we have contact. MOPAC is already in contact with Tony Lloyd [Police and Crime Commissioner, Greater Manchester] and with the Commissioner of the West Midlands.

Joanne McCartney AM: Vera Baird [Police and Crime Commissioner, Northumbria], yes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We are not yet at the stage of taking legal action. I do not exclude it but I want to make it clear that at this point in time that this is something that we think is an urgent political concern at the moment.

DBS Checks - MPS Vacancies

Question Number: 2015/2752

07 Sep 2015

Valerie Shawcross AM

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Mr Mayor, I am not pleading for deregulation. We are talking about people who have been operational in their professional roles, some of them for a very long time.

The taxi drivers who were here - and they were not here at our behest; they organised this - had an international day of protest by taxi drivers going on. One of the things they issued in their press release this morning - which I had this morning - is that they would like to see a resumption of the issuing of temporary licences to existing taxi drivers who are waiting for their DBS check to come through, through no fault of their own. That used to be the practice within TfL. They find it, understandably, incredibly unsympathetic of TfL to have taken away that temporary cover facility in a way that causes them problems. There may be technical issues but it could be something under the current legislation that you could do to ease the situation for people who are literally running into problems.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Frankly, that sounds like an extremely positive idea.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: It was one of their proposals.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will immediately ask the MPS to see if it can issue temporary DBS licences. It may be one of those things where TfL needs the MPS to give the go-ahead. I will have to get onto that straightaway.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: As a temporary measure. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you.

The Impact of Money Laundering on Housing in London

Question Number: 2015/2753

07 Sep 2015

Murad Qureshi AM

Murad Qureshi AM: Can I make my final point? Will you, as Mayor, support Transparency International's recommendation that estate agents should also exert due diligence checks on the purchasers of properties and not just sellers? That is one thing it thinks is useful. At the moment estate agents only do a due-diligence check on sellers. It wants to see this being done on purchasers at the top end of the market at least.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Due diligence done by estate agents?

Murad Qureshi AM: Yes. It is actually supported by the National Estate Agency.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Again, what you really need to have is transparency about who is buying these properties. You need to know who they are. If it can be done without completely burdening estate agents with the kind of detective work for which they are simply not equipped then, yes, I would certainly support it.

Murad Qureshi AM: That is what I think Transparency [International] need from you.

Anonymous masked demonstrations

Question Number: 2015/3736

09 Nov 2015

Kemi Badenoch AM

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.

MPS Capability

Question Number: 2015/3768

09 Nov 2015

Joanne McCartney AM

Joanne McCartney AM: 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.

MPS Capability

Question Number: 2015/3768

09 Nov 2015

Joanne McCartney AM

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.

Knife Crime in London

Question Number: 2015/3989

07 Dec 2015

Joanne McCartney AM

Joanne McCartney AM: Picking up on the point that Caroline raised about schools engaging with pupils on the dangers of carrying knives, I know that it is something you agree with. However, we have heard in our Police and Crime Committee on a number of occasions that because of the piecemeal nature of the supervision of schools – because we now have academies and we now have free schools – it is increasingly difficult to make sure that there is a consistent approach to this issue.

Therefore, I was going to ask you. Will you write to all secondary schools in London and urge them to make sure that they deal with knife crime during school time –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, I will not. I will certainly support good projects like the Kinsella [Trust] project.

I have to say that I remember in 2007/08 when we had this discussion a lot around this place. There are a lot of complicated psychological factors at work here, particularly in the imaginations of young people. What slightly concerns me – and I must be very honest with you – is the glamorisation of knife crime and the escalation of knife crime in the imaginations of young people to the point where it is simply inflaming their curiosity about what is going on. I do not want knife crime to become, as it were, part of the daily curriculum of schools in this city.

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes, but it is about destroying those myths and –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I understand exactly what you are saying. I am just hesitant about some of the methods that could be used.

Joanne McCartney AM: We had evidence from the police in some of our sessions to say that they did have difficulty getting into some schools. A very powerful letter from you urging schools to do this and, if I can just say, certain boroughs, for example, if you would think about it –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Let me think about it, Joanne. If you could send me a version of what you think might be useful, I would be very happy to study that.

Joanne McCartney AM: The other thing is that certain boroughs had an exponential increase. For example, Islington had a 79% increase in knife crime with injury involving under-25s in the last year. In my own borough of Haringey it was 31% and Tower Hamlets had a 103% increase. It seems to me that if you wanted to target you could target those specific boroughs –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You could. Look, I do not want to sound negative about suggestion or proposal. I just have long memories of this now and –

Joanne McCartney AM: Eight years ago –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Certainly, if you look at the movement of offences overall and, indeed, knife crime with injury, it is way down on seven or eight years ago.

Joanne McCartney AM: It is going up and it seems to be a trend.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is up on 2013/14 but it is down from a peak. It peaked, as Caroline [Pidgeon MBE AM] was saying, around about 2011/12. As Kit [Malthouse AM MP, former Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime] used to say, it is like going down a ski slope. You go down and down like that –

Joanne McCartney AM: It is going back up again.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): – and we have had peaks and troughs on the way down. There is a mixture of solutions. I would be very happy to look at your proposal. If you send it in, I will see what I can do with it.

[...]

Joanne McCartney AM: Can I ask my final question, then, on the availability of knives? In Scotland, all shops that sell knives or any weapons over 8.9 centimetres long have to be licensed and a record has to be kept that has to be kept for three years as to who bought that knife. Is that something that you think we should have in this country?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will look at what has happened in Scotland and whether that has worked. We have to go with what works and what is practical.

Joanne McCartney AM: You will look at it. Thank you.

Knife Crime in London

Question Number: 2015/3989

07 Dec 2015

Joanne McCartney AM

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Chair, thank you for bringing me in. Mr Mayor, we have touched on this briefly but I did not have time to really put a full call to you. You talked earlier about the mixture of solutions. Can I just say that I welcome the support that you have given to the Ben Kinsella Trust and the work that it does in terms of the education package it delivers across London? Members will remember that Ben was tragically murdered in the week of his 16th birthday on 28 June 2008.

I am calling on you for a knife amnesty. If you cannot commit to seeing it across London, let me just say why it should be targeted and let me speak firstly about my constituency. In the last year, what we have seen in my constituency is we have seen seven young people under 25 murdered on our streets because of knife crime. That is certainly by itself an awful number that we all regret, but there have been 15 murders across London so far this year. In 2014, there was a total of just 11. It is not 'just' because every life matters but there were 11 deaths.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That is right. It was eight the year before.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM : We know that when we have had these amnesties they do work in that we get a sense there. Can you see that as a response?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. I am not against that, Jennette.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM : If you are not against it, then will you give your full support to it?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Can I make a proposal that I respond in more or less the same way as I have to Joanne [McCartney AM] and take it away? I will look at what area, whether it is your constituency or Islington or Hackney, and what the most appropriate way of doing that might be. I will talk to Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe [QPM, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] about whether he thinks it would be of real practical benefit right now. If he does, I have absolutely no problem with that at all. We have done it before; I see no reason why we should not do it again.

[...]

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is important to see the figures in context and to recognise that murders in London are currently running at about 100 a year and they were running at 150 a year. Overall, crime continues to be well down.

Listen. The amnesty proposal is something that should be considered. We do not want a ludicrous situation in which people are handing in the wrong types of weapons and all of that sort of thing.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: No, that does not happen.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Let us see what practical steps we can take and what geographical zone would be most appropriate.

Knife crime in London

Question Number: 2015/4243

07 Dec 2015

Caroline Pidgeon AM

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: What I wanted to pick up on was – you are aware because I sent it to you – that I produced a report last month looking at the issue of how we could try to reduce knife crime in London. I have three specific asks for you today.

One is around the issue of education and engagement with young people. Chief Superintendent John Sutherland [MPS] last week on the *Today* programme said, “We can’t just talk about enforcement. We have to look at education”. When I have spoken to various charities, it is clear that many schools are choosing to opt out of having any kind of knife crime education programmes because they want to avoid a stigma. Actually, we probably need to have this rolled out to all schools so that there is not then a stigma and it is just something that routinely happens in every school in London.

Will you ask MOPAC to look at funding and developing knife crime education programmes that can be rolled out to every school in London?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will certainly consider that, Caroline. There was excellent work done by, for instance, the Ben Kinsella Trust –

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, absolutely.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): – which you are familiar with. I am sure you will have been around the amazing exhibition and educational experience that they offer and –

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is one of the charities that raised this with me.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): – I have been to see it myself. MOPAC has given that organisation funding on at least one occasion and we are looking at giving it some more.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You will consider that? Thank you for that. Secondly, we have mentioned the Cardiff Model and A&E departments sharing this non-confidential data to reduce violent crime. Yesterday, coincidentally, I had a nice long letter from MOPAC arrive in the afternoon updating me on this issue. It is a year since I raised this with you last, yet still a third of A&Es in London are not taking part.

Will you now get the Chief Executives of hospital trusts into City Hall to get this resolved once and for all so that we can share this anonymised data and start to make progress?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, I totally agree with you. I will find out what is going on with the Chief Executives and why some of them have not agreed. Clearly, the priority has to be the care of our population.

[...]

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You are going to get the Chief Executives in to sort that? That is fantastic.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We have made a great deal of progress on it already.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Finally, MOPAC has just started recently funding Red Thread, which is an organisation that has youth workers in major trauma centres in London. They are doing some great work diverting young people at that crossroads when they come in.

Would you consider extending this further and helping other similar projects such as groups like Oasis Youth, which has youth workers in St Thomas’ A&E, where they are able to reduce the escalation of violence? Will you look at that issue?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. Look, when you say “reduce the escalation of violence”, it is very important to say that violence has been diminishing in any event –

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It is to help these young people steer away from –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): – and so possibly a more felicitous way of saying it is “accelerate the de-escalation of violence” or “keep violence coming down faster”.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Will you consider looking at other funding? Just a simple yes or no. Will you consider that?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, in that case.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Fantastic. Thank you very much for your support of those suggestions this morning.

Advice for Londoners in the event of a Paris style attack

Question Number: 2015/4353

07 Dec 2015

Kemi Badenoch AM

Kemi Badenoch AM: Is it time to introduce gunfire detectors? They have been shown to significantly police response times and to save lives. You may remember that my colleague Roger Evans [AM] recently proposed that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) should introduce them.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am very happy to look at that proposal and to see whether it would add value. I am aware that Roger has tabled that proposal for gunfire detectors. They have been used in some places in the United States (US).

Kemi Badenoch AM: Yes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): If it can be made to work here, then we will certainly have a look at it.

Kemi Badenoch AM: Thank you.

Breathalyser tests

Question Number: 2015/4371

07 Dec 2015

Steve O'Connell AM

Steve O'Connell AM: The idea here is that the door supervisors are now empowered very much, if they have the kit and if they identify someone coming along in the queue who does look particularly worse for wear, to ask them to breathe into a breathalyser. The level of that breathalyser is something like three times the drink-drive [limit] and so it is going to hit people who are heavily preloading. The door supervisors are then allowed to eject those people and also to notify the police that these guys and girls are out there. It is a scheme that has a lot of value. It is used, as I said, in several district centres.

Mr Mayor, you said that you think this is a good idea, but is this something that you could ask MOPAC and also other boroughs to enforce? It is a pilot at the moment but it does have worth particularly at this time of year when there are obviously a lot of people enjoying themselves. Is this something that you think we could roll out in the New Year?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Let us see how it goes, Steve. It is very interesting. I am not certain that I want to be breathalysed every time I walk into a pub but –

Steve O'Connell AM: Me neither. Mr Mayor, what we are talking about is using it post 1.00am in the morning, say, outside clubs in the district centres when people have already had the opportunity to have a good evening out drinking. It gives the possibility to reduce the antisocial behaviour that also imposes upon our police resources and our district centres. It has been very successful across Haringey and Croydon and in other cities.

I would ask you to look very seriously at the project and to instruct colleagues in MOPAC and elsewhere to implement it in other parts.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, I am very grateful to you for your initiative in this area. Let me see whether we think it can deliver the value, the costs, the benefits and the extra imposition upon businesses. It might be something that late-night entertainment businesses would welcome. Some of them might think it would be burdensome. Let us see how it works.

Business and Enterprise

Outer London small business premises

Question Number: 2015/1258

12 May 2015

Nicky Gavron AM

Nicky Gavron AM: That is very good to hear. There is a saving grace – you know that, do you not – because this policy is due to expire in 2016. It is a three-year policy. Unfortunately, the Government came in last summer with a new consultation, saying that they wanted to turn over the CAZ exemption and they wanted to make permanent office permitted development right across the country, and of course including the whole of London. You are now in a better position even than you were before: you are now in Government you are a member of the Government; you are in the political Cabinet. You have a great opportunity, because that has not been brought forward. That consultation has not been answered.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will look at it.

Nicky Gavron AM: Wait a minute. It has not been brought forward, and we are all very concerned that it will be. It is going to be absolutely catastrophic for London's economy if this goes through, and you absolutely have to make sure that it is ruled out in London, that we do not have permitted development from office to residential. Will you end it? Will you fight to end it?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will see what I can do. I will study the implications for outer London in more detail. I am concerned about some of the reports I am getting from outer London town centres, and I will see what I can do. I will get back to you on that, Nicky.

Pressure on small businesses

Question Number: 2015/4392

07 Dec 2015

Jenny Jones AM

Jenny Jones AM: My problem is that there is a squeeze on existing businesses. It is all very well to develop an area and say, "The number of jobs is going up", but what is happening in several places is that businesses that have been there sometimes for many years are being squeezed out because of the rent rises that you are talking about.

Here is one example. TfL has a lot of space that it is redeveloping. At Parsons Green Depot, TfL is clearing out about a dozen very successful businesses of all kinds including furniture makers, photographers and so on. They are offering them places

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Where is this, Jenny?

Jenny Jones AM: Parsons Green. I would like to ask you perhaps to work with TfL to see if anything can be done about this.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, I will. I am not aware of that.

Jenny Jones AM: It is not good enough to say, "There are more jobs and these people can be relocated nine miles away". It is just not good enough when it is a local workforce quite often and there are people working locally. Will you speak to TfL about this particular issue? You have some influence with TfL.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, I certainly shall. I am not aware of the Parsons Green problem. You may remember that there was a great deal of concern about buildings in Hackney Wick and we were –

Jenny Jones AM: Yes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Actually, there is a huge amount of new space that has been created there for businesses of sizes –

Jenny Jones AM: Yes, but I have visited there as well and you are driving out businesses that are there already, brewers and all sorts of people who have –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Perhaps you are right, but my impression was that we had created a huge amount of extra space and that is what I want to achieve. I will look at the Parsons Green problem.

Jenny Jones AM: I would be very grateful. One of the things that you could do is to stabilise rents in some way on TfL's commercial premises and to perhaps link them to inflation or something like that so that the businesses can project what their costs will be over the next few years. At the moment, just as you said, rents are rising exponentially and it would help the businesses there already to stay put.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will certainly look at that. Do not forget, folks, that we have all these conflicting objectives. TfL is also told that it is the biggest landlord in London with space the size of Hyde Park. Why does it not get on and develop these sites for residential [use]? Yet of course it has conflicting obligations towards worthwhile businesses that are perhaps obstructing the creation of the very residential [space] that the city needs.

Jenny Jones AM: I do understand that, but –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): What I am saying to you, Jenny, is that it is possible for TfL to be between a rock and hard place and it will be damned either way, but I will certainly look at it.

Jenny Jones AM: For example, you have supported Tech City, where offices are being turned into flats and so on. People there as well are struggling because of rents. Another constituent, Tom, runs a small web design company. It took him a year to find a new office and his rent has doubled. It just does not seem logical when you have a creative business that is a good business, functions well and has local people to drive it out because of the rents.

I do not know if you have spoken already to the Federation of Small Businesses, but perhaps talk to them about how to stabilise rents to some extent so that such businesses do not get pushed away. I understand about the competing priorities but the fact is that if you drive some businesses out, you are losing the character of a place as well as local jobs.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I completely agree. We have just established something called the Open Workspace Providers Group, which is looking at this whole problem. We have set up quite a lot of hub spaces. You will be familiar with the 639 Enterprise Centre in the Tottenham High Road. The Camden Collective is providing co-working space and pop-up retail in vacant shops and ex-office buildings. We have funded something called the Blackhorse Workshop from the Outer London Fund. The Outer London Fund has put a lot of money into this kind of thing and –

Jenny Jones AM: No, I know that you are doing good work and I accept that it is very difficult, but at the same time it is good to understand where things are getting squeezed out.

Your officers at the moment are putting together all sorts of evidence for the new London Plan for the new Mayor and the Federation of Small Businesses could do some research into this specific thing for those officers for the next London Plan. Would you consider some sort of approach to do that? Then you would have the facts and figures and it would not just be me lobbying you here at Mayor's Question Time.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Of course, this is something that City Hall takes incredibly seriously. As I said right at the beginning, I believe that this is one of the real challenges that we are facing as a result of the colossal economic success of London. It is just that the pressure on workspace is overwhelming. Yes, we are totally focused on it.

If we can supply you, Jenny, with a clearer picture of what is happening, the spaces that are being lost and the plans we have to redeem that, we would be very happy to do so. Talk to Eddie [Lister] and we will keep you informed.

Health

Sexual Health

Question Number: 2015/4341

07 Dec 2015

Andrew Boff AM

Andrew Boff AM: According to the ChemSex study that is referred to by the RCGP, the practice has become popular in the boroughs of Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark. What work do you think should be done to tackle the practice specifically in those boroughs?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): At this stage, we would really want to try to understand the extent of the problem. What I will do, if you will forgive me, is I will consult Yvonne on how we could be most useful. There are two basic problems in this. One is the extent to which consent may or may not be given to various activities and the second is the spread of HIV. On both issues we may have points to make and there may be useful things we could contribute, but before we do that we would really need to understand better exactly what the problem is.

Andrew Boff AM: I hope you could copy me in on the communication that you get from your advisors because it is something that the public feels is probably getting out of hand. Thank you.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): All right. Well, thank you. I will certainly do that without delay.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you.

Other

Food poverty

Question Number: 2015/0109

11 Jan 2015

Fiona Twycross AM

Fiona Twycross AM: In one case I heard recently of a delay of over a year for somebody to get their Personal Independence Payment. If this is the case, we have a real issue with people actually having access to the money they are entitled to.

I wondered on the specific point what more you would do to lobby the Government to make sure that it is running the benefit system effectively to make sure it does not let down Londoners who are down on their luck, and whether you would personally write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to highlight concerns raised by the report, raised by the all-party investigation and raised by Oxfam and the Child Poverty Action Group on how the benefits system is operating and the impact it has on Londoners.

[...]

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I would need to do is to work in concert with an MP on particular cases to help draw the issue to the attention of the Secretary of State. I am more than happy to do so. I am just trying to draft the letter in my head. I would need to have specific cases that I would –

Fiona Twycross AM: We can find you plenty of specific cases.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That would be kind. That is what I am really asking for.

Fiona Twycross AM: I will find an MP who will come forward with dozens of cases that you can raise.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I would be more than happy to support in that case, but we need to have a bit of chapter and verse. That is all I am saying.

Fiona Twycross AM: Yes, thank you.

Young people in London

Question Number: 2015/3764

09 Nov 2015

Fiona Twycross AM

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 –

Report of the Mayor

Question Number: 2015/1601

19 May 2015

Roger Evans AM

Kit Malthouse AM: Is there any chance you could ask the Commissioner to increase capacity on the Dangerous Dogs Unit?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will certainly look. We have this Dangerous Dogs Unit which we set up, as you know, and I totally agree with you about the air of menace and the intimidation that one of those dogs can bring with it. I do not like it. I want them properly controlled. I think the difficulty is that one man's dangerous dog is another man's beloved old pooch, and that is the problem. We had that problem, if you remember, with the original dangerous dogs legislation in the 1980s.

Kit Malthouse AM: It is quite clear. There are illegal breeds of dog which are still openly paraded on the streets of London with no enforcement. If someone was wandering around with a revolver, the police would be there like a shot, but the fact that this thing is a dog does not seem to attract the same level of importance, even though it is not nearly as frightening.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): When I refer to a dangerous dog being a beloved old pooch, some of the dogs that have been involved in attacks, as far as I understand it, are not illegal breeds. It is very difficult to produce perfectly drafted legislation on this. I will certainly make enquiries, Kit --

Kit Malthouse AM: Thanks.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- about whether the MPS feels that it could do more about dangerous dogs and weapon dogs.

Kit Malthouse AM: That would be very kind. Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): They are a scourge.

Report of the Mayor

Question Number: 2015/1601

19 May 2015

Roger Evans AM

Richard Tracey AM: Indeed. A couple more possible savings that we suggest. You will remember that we made a proposal to fund a rollout of 1,000 GPS panic buttons to protect front line TfL staff.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. I had forgotten that.

Richard Tracey AM: Bearing in mind that the purchase of these would cost under a fifth of what workplace violence costs TfL every year, it is clearly a worthwhile investment and a sensible one.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am interested in that idea. As you will know, we now have CCTV on all buses. Crime on buses is down now by 45% since I was elected and continues to fall. When I was campaigning in 2007 and 2008, it was a thing that people were bringing up everywhere, argy-bargy on the buses. That is now well down. The Tube is now the safest metro system anywhere in Europe. We should be very proud of that. If we can drive crime down still further -- we have spoken a little bit about sexual harassment; I am concerned about that -- against our employees with panic buttons, I will have a look at it. What happens is you have a button about your person and you just press it.

Mayor's Oral Report

Question Number: 2015/1603

21 May 2015

Jennette Arnold AM

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I have received one particular question from Jenny [Jenny Jones AM] about the tragic accident involving a lorry driver. I want to offer my deep condolences to the family and friends of Alan Neve, who died. Jenny, the difficulty is I cannot comment on why the MPS or the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have made the individual decisions that they have in that case, although I understand people's deep feelings of anxiety and outrage. What I can propose and what I will offer is that the MPS contacts you directly for a briefing about that, although clearly the intention and our ambition is to make cycling ever safer. That is the purpose of our current investments.

[...]

Jenny Jones AM: Thank you for the offer of the briefing from the MPS about the cyclist's death and I will say yes to that, but I want a bit more than that. This is the second time recently that the MPS has backed off from prosecuting a driver who has actually killed somebody. This particular driver should never have been employed in the first place. The judge actually said, "Heavens know why the lorry owners let you drive that vehicle without checking you had a valid –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sorry, I could not hear that, Jenny.

Jenny Jones AM: Basically, the judge in the case said that the licensed operators were at fault. Could you please ask the MPS Commissioner next time you see him for a personal explanation of why they will not pursue that licensed operator?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I shall, but you will understand the difficulty I have in relaying now any details that I may have to you about the thinking. It is better if they brief you directly.

Mayor's Oral Report

Question Number: 2015/1996

17 Jun 2015

Jennette Arnold AM

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thanks very much, Joanne, and you are quite right to take this up, frankly. On the first point on what the police are doing, I do not know the extent to which the police have so far detected illicit use of these scanners. You are right in what you say about the possibility of buying them on the market. I cannot give you any information about that, but I would be happy to write to you and of course I will be taking it up with Sir Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis].

On the second point, it is absolutely correct. To the best of my memory, in the old days when everybody used landlines, if the police or the security services wanted to intercept a phone conversation, they had to get an individual warrant from the Home Secretary for the wiretap. What seems to be at least plausible from this account is that the police and the security services are able to listen in randomly, as it were, to all the conversations that may be taking place in a certain vicinity of this 'stingray' scanner.

If that is going on, it is clearly unacceptable. That is *Stasi*-like monitoring of people's private conversations and transactions in a way that I do not think we would want to see in London. I very much share your concerns about that and I would want to establish that it was not going on. On the other hand, if they are validly in pursuit of known suspects, people who might mean us serious harm who are making use of mobile telephony or other means of communication to plan outrages against this city and this country, then clearly they are right to do what they do. In either event, there needs to be proper judicial supervision or some proper accountability and control of what is going on.

Joanne McCartney AM: Mr Mayor, therefore, as Mayor of London and as the Member of Parliament (MP)

now for a London constituency, would you be able to write to the Home Office expressing that concern and the concern that has been expressed by the Independent Reviewer and saying that there needs to be some legal framework for the oversight of this apparatus?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Do you mean following David Anderson's words?

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. What I will perhaps do, if I may, is wait until I get an answer back from Sir Christopher Rose, see exactly how he accounts for what is going on and see whether he is willing to share information. Then, depending on his account of it, we will definitely take it up with the Home Secretary.

Joanne McCartney AM: Mr Mayor, when you get that response, will you send it to the Chairs of the --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will make sure to. It will all be obtainable under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and transparent. You will get it all.

Mayor's Oral Report

Question Number: 2015/1996

17 Jun 2015

Jennette Arnold AM

Joanne McCartney AM: Good morning, Mr Mayor. Thank you for your response in regard to my request about these fake mobile phone towers or 'stingrays', as they are known colloquially. Sky News undertook an investigation and said that it found 20 in London that appeared to be intercepting Londoner's phone calls before they reached the official mobile phone towers, which obviously gives great concerns for Londoner's security of their personal information. There are two main issues with this.

Firstly, I understand that they can be bought for about £1,000 and so they are relatively cheap. I understand that criminals can use them to intercept personal data. My first question is: what are the police doing about ensuring that criminals are not using this bit of equipment?

Secondly, of course, the police and security services may be using them for counterterrorism purposes. Mr Mayor, you may not be aware that David Anderson QC, the Government's Reviewer of Counterterrorism Legislation, [Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation] brought out a report last week that cited that these surveillance instruments in particular - and I quote him here - "do not have a clear and explicit basis in legislation". There were concerns about the judicial or otherwise oversight of these. I wondered whether you can just answer those two questions.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thanks very much, Joanne, and you are quite right to take this up, frankly. On the first point on what the police are doing, I do not know the extent to which the police have so far detected illicit use of these scanners. You are right in what you say about the possibility of buying them on the market. I cannot give you any information about that, but I would be happy to write to you and of course I will be taking it up with Sir Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis].

Mayor's Oral Report

Question Number: 2015/1996

17 Jun 2015

Jennette Arnold AM

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thanks very much, Joanne, and you are quite right to take this up, frankly. On the first point on what the police are doing, I do not know the extent to which the police have so far detected illicit use of these scanners. You are right in what you say about the possibility of buying them on the market. I cannot give you any information about that, but I would be happy to write to you and of course

I will be taking it up with Sir Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis].

On the second point, it is absolutely correct. To the best of my memory, in the old days when everybody used landlines, if the police or the security services wanted to intercept a phone conversation, they had to get an individual warrant from the Home Secretary for the wiretap. What seems to be at least plausible from this account is that the police and the security services are able to listen in randomly, as it were, to all the conversations that may be taking place in a certain vicinity of this 'stingray' scanner.

If that is going on, it is clearly unacceptable. That is *Stasi*-like monitoring of people's private conversations and transactions in a way that I do not think we would want to see in London. I very much share your concerns about that and I would want to establish that it was not going on. On the other hand, if they are validly in pursuit of known suspects, people who might mean us serious harm who are making use of mobile telephony or other means of communication to plan outrages against this city and this country, then clearly they are right to do what they do. In either event, there needs to be proper judicial supervision or some proper accountability and control of what is going on.

Joanne McCartney AM: Mr Mayor, therefore, as Mayor of London and as the Member of Parliament (MP) now for a London constituency, would you be able to write to the Home Office expressing that concern and the concern that has been expressed by the Independent Reviewer and saying that there needs to be some legal framework for the oversight of this apparatus?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Do you mean following David Anderson's words?

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. What I will perhaps do, if I may, is wait until I get an answer back from Sir Christopher Rose, see exactly how he accounts for what is going on and see whether he is willing to share information. Then, depending on his account of it, we will definitely take it up with the Home Secretary.

Joanne McCartney AM: Mr Mayor, when you get that response, will you send it to the Chairs of the --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will make sure to. It will all be obtainable under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and transparent. You will get it all.

Public Houses

Question Number: 2015/2189

06 Jul 2015

Steve O'Connell AM

Steve O'Connell AM: Exactly. My last point – and this is really something that you do have some responsibility around – is talking about the Great Beer Festival this year, which we had upwards of 50,000 people enjoying. It was a fantastic event in London. TfL this year decided not to run the Earls Court-to-Olympia Tube line during that beer festival. It has done it in previous years. This is something that is very disappointing. There are upwards of 50,000 Londoners going and enjoying themselves. Apparently TfL has made the decision not to run it this year. I have written to TfL and to you. Can I urge you to look at that decision and see if you can rescind that?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sorry, a decision?

Steve O'Connell AM: Each year, there is an extra shuttle service during the CAMRA beer festival to run the Earls Court-to-Olympia Tube line. TfL has decided – on cost reasons, apparently, I am told – not to do it this year and I am appealing you to review that decision.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Let me look into it. I am sorry. I will not give you that guarantee now but I will certainly raise it with TfL.

Steve O'Connell AM: I would like you to look into it.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I certainly will.

Steve O'Connell AM: That is all I need.

Summer Budget

Question Number: 2015/2216

06 Jul 2015

Len Duvall AM

Len Duvall AM: Can you also give an undertaking that as part of your renewed commitment to the real London Living Wage, you will undertake a study through the Greater London Authority (GLA) Living Wage Unit of what the National Living Wage in London will need to be set at to compensate for the cuts in in-work benefits announced by the Chancellor in 2015 –

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. I understand, Len, yes.

Len Duvall AM: – because that must have a say in terms of where you are coming from about the real London Living Wage?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Len, you are right that we should be looking into whether there should be a National London Living Wage weighting. The trouble is that this conversation is now going to get so complicated that people will cease to follow which living wage we are talking about. We could get to a new National London Living Wage weighting, just as there is under the existing Minimum Wage. There is a London weighting and I think that is what you are driving at. That is one conversation.

[...]

Len Duvall AM: Mr Mayor, I am under pressure on time. I take it that somewhere in that answer was a yes to the study that you will do with the GLA unit to help us with the lobbying.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes.

Len Duvall AM: Then there is one further group that I would ask you to consider lobbying for. In London's

demographics, we have approximately 50% more 20-to-24-year-olds than the national average. Will you also lobby for a full or partial exemption for London from the rule that only people aged over 25 will receive the National Living Wage? There does seem to be a big problem here for London and for that section of our community and it makes no sense at all.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I understand that.

Len Duvall AM: Is that a simple yes or no?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes.

Len Duvall AM: Will you look into it? Maybe there might well be some further support from the Assembly for these particular areas because they will have a major impact on our young people.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): What I certainly will undertake, Len, is to look at the particular impacts of the Budget on under-25s. That is reasonable. People should bear in mind that on the whole in London, in spite of the costs of living here, people do better. They are paid more. There are more opportunities here in London. To put it mildly, there are considerable advantages of living in London, which we should not neglect as well. However, given the threshold that was established in the Budget for the National Living Wage of only over-25s, it is reasonable that we should look at the impacts for under-25s as well.

Len Duvall AM: Thank you.

Summer Budget

Question Number: 2015/2216

06 Jul 2015

Len Duvall AM

Fiona Twycross AM: Can you tell me how many of the 3 million families whom the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has said will be hit by this change live in London?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I cannot give you that.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): You should know.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I would be happy to write to you with the details. I do not have that figure off the top of my head.

Fiona Twycross AM: If you could establish it? Obviously, we know that previous changes to welfare disproportionately hit Londoners and about half of those affected lived in London.

Questions to the Mayor on his Final Draft Consolidated Budget

Question Number: 2015/0816

26 Feb 2015

Jenny Jones AM

Joanne McCartney AM: We asked you to look at having a victims' champion at MOPAC and to look at having an independent advocacy pilot for those with learning disabilities and mental health issues.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. I am interested in this kind of thing.

Joanne McCartney AM: Would you write to me about this, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I certainly will write to you, Joanne.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you.

Questions to the Mayor on his Final Draft Consolidated Budget

Question Number: 2015/0816

26 Feb 2015

Jenny Jones AM

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Did you know that London is now the highest fare city in the world?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, it is not.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Independent studies have shown that.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is not true.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: London is the highest fare city in the world.

[...]

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: If you will write to me and tell me which city in the world is more expensive to travel in than London –

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I certainly will. There are several more expensive and you are talking total tripe.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: – I will write to you with a full account of the £500 million of Londoners' money that you have wasted. Thank you, Chairman.

Food poverty

Question Number: 2015/3991

07 Dec 2015

Fiona Twycross AM

Fiona Twycross AM: What I would ask you to look at would be whether you could establish some sort of taskforce in London to look at the issue of malnutrition in older people - as you say, the estimate is around 100,000 older people in London suffering from malnutrition - and specifically to look at how you can address the issue of the almost complete loss of Meals on Wheels and look at a 21st-century solution to this.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thanks. On Meals on Wheels, Rosie [Boycott, Chair, London Food Board] and the London Food Board are producing some guidance and a plan to try to help local authorities to come up with innovative ways of retaining the Meals on Wheels service. That might be working with supermarkets or working with schools to keep the facilities going. What I had probably better do, as I do not have a very full briefing on it here now, is give you some more details about what that involves and how we are trying to keep food getting to people who need it in that way. You will be familiar with the work of the social supermarkets and all those efforts, but there is a particular effort now being made on Meals on Wheels and I would be happy to share it with you.

Oral Update on the Report of the Mayor

Question Number: 2015/4451

16 Dec 2015

Jennette Arnold AM

Steve O'Connell AM: Mr Mayor, back on the subject of protecting green spaces, thank you for your earlier comments. Your London Plan does have significant protections around back garden development. I would like to see it strengthened but, at the moment, it is strong.

Mr Mayor, would you be instructing your planners to ensure that any submissions on draft changes to borough plans that specifically weaken the protection of back gardens are looked at and to object to those sorts of proposals?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, if there are any such proposals, Steve, of course we will make sure that we object to them. The loss of back gardens is particularly detrimental to the character of London and outer London in particular.

Steve O'Connell AM: Also, Mr Mayor, if you have such a draft plan in front of you that looks at re-designating swathes of green MOL back down and reducing the protection, I would again ask you to instruct your planners to look at those deeply and to consider objecting to such proposals.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will certainly look at that. I am not aware of the de-designation of MOL, but I will certainly have a look at it. Are you thinking about Croydon?

Steve O'Connell AM: There are some plans submitted by one of my boroughs that I have spoken to Sir Edward [Lister] about and I expect your very professional planners to give them due close attention.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you very much, Steve. We will make sure that we follow up.

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