

London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time) – 22 February 2016

Transcript of Agenda Item 4a – Final Draft Consolidated Budget 2016/17: Report of the Mayor

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Firstly, can I welcome Sir Eddie Lister [Sir Edward Lister, Chief of Staff and Deputy Mayor for Planning and Police] and Martin Clarke [Executive Director - Resources, Greater London Authority] who are here to support the Mayor. Can I now ask the Mayor to present his Final Draft Budget Proposals.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you very much, Jennette. I am going to be very quick because I know that Members of the Assembly have changed the time of this meeting. I am very grateful to you, Jennette, for your efforts in doing that. I have to be away, as you know, because my wife is being made a Queen's Counsel (QC) and I absolutely have to be there.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I am sure that the Assembly would like you to pass on to her our congratulations.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you very much. She will be very grateful indeed.

I just want to say that the last few years have been one of the great periods in London's history in the sense that the Olympics have helped to produce an unprecedented period of regeneration, growth, investment and confidence in this city. I pay tribute to everybody here who has been involved in that, past and present, by the way. This has been a huge effort by City Hall for a long time.

I thank everybody here who has helped us to prepare this budget, which leaves the Greater London Authority's (GLA) finances and leaves London's finances in very good shape for my successor, whoever he or she may be.

This budget allows us to continue with an unprecedented level of investment in transport, the biggest since the Victorian times. We are getting on with it. The Northern Line extension is cracking on apace. Crossrail is virtually on time and on budget and will be in by 2018. Crossrail 2 is now very much more than a twinkle in people's eyes. We have plans for 13 new river crossings and extensions of the Tube and of the tramways.

We are keeping crime coming down across our city. It is already down 19% since I have been Mayor. There are provisions in this budget to get the police out on the street, to build confidence and to keep crime coming down further. We built a record number of affordable homes and we will hit our target of 100,000.

We are able in this budget to support the outstanding work that has been led by Sir Eddie [Sir Edward Lister] on the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation, which will be effectively an extraordinary new city, the biggest regeneration site in Europe. It will be a quite amazing opportunity for London, as well of course as supporting the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and all of the developments there.

Over the last few years we have been able not just to concentrate on opportunities in the Central Activity Zone of London but to support Outer London as well through the Outer London Fund and through the High Streets Fund. We have been investing in our town centres and in greenery - 100,000 street trees have been planted - and we have supported 100 new Pocket Parks. There are bicycles pullulating across the city, as everybody knows, and there is provision in this budget to keep that going. Air quality has improved and we will make sure that there is provision in this budget for that to continue to be the case.

We have been able to do all of these things, my friends, by bearing down on waste and by running sensible finances here in City Hall. That has enabled us – unlike a previous administration, which put up council tax by 152%, I would remind you – to cut council tax by a total of 28% in real terms over this mayoralty. I therefore commend this progressive, one-nation, dynamic, conservative budget to the Assembly. Thank you very much.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. If we had known the secret to keeping you brief, we would have given your wife a number of awards! It is always good to see a man hurrying towards a wife and partner to be supportive.