

Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee

21 October 2009

Transcript of Item 6: Olympic Park Legacy Company

Dee Doocey (Chair): Thank you. I would like to welcome our guests, Margaret Ford and Andrew Altman. Thank you very much indeed for giving up your time. I would like to draw Members' attention to the fact that we have got one hour, and one hour only, for this section because we then have Munira Mirza and we only have half an hour with Munira [Mirza], so I want to make sure that we do keep strictly to time.

So, Margaret, I think you were going to make an opening statement, is that right?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Thanks very much, Dee. I will keep it very brief given that we only have an hour, because I think Andrew [Altman] and I would prefer to respond to questions and have a discussion. The only thing I would say is that we are very, very pleased to be here and we look forward to a good fruitful relationship with the Committee in the years to come. We have already had the pleasure of meeting with some Members of the Committee individually, and we will make sure that we do one-to-ones before very much longer.

Just by way of background I think there are a couple of things I would like to say. The company was set up on 1 May 2009 and I was appointed from 1 May. There was intended to be a six-month period finishing at the end of October which would be the set-up or the mobilisation of the company. We are pretty well on track for all of that. The company has moved and set up shop just off Stratford High Street on West Ham Lane, which we are delighted about as we feel we are right in the middle of the action now, which is great. Our colleagues from the LDA staff, who are still part of the Olympic directorate of the LDA, are there. We hope that that transfer will take place just as soon as the current discussions on land and debt are resolved, but operationally we are working with the staff very happily. We have a good relationship with the LDA, where, if any formal decisions need to be taken, for example, to keep the Olympic Delivery Authority's (ODA) programme on track, we have just taken those decisions together and that has not been a problem.

I am pleased that we have got there and we are set up. Of course, we are delighted also that Andrew [Altman] joined us just two months ago and we are in the process of putting together a senior team there. Also, I hope we will be in a position to announce the rest of our board members probably next week. So, I think we are in pretty good shape. We are working hard and we know we have got a big task ahead of us, but I feel very confident that we are starting to get all the building blocks in place.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Great, lovely. Andrew, did you want to add anything to that?

Andrew Altman (Chief Executive, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I would just briefly add that, as Margaret said, I have been here two months now and there has been a tremendously enthusiastic reception, doing a lot of meetings in the boroughs, a lot of meetings with all the different stakeholders, a tremendous amount of support for the company for the work of legacy and people have been very generous with the learning process. It has been very important to listen to all of the stakeholders as we define the company and define our objectives. So, I have just been very excited to come over and to be a part of this.

Dee Doocey (Chair): OK, great. The process is that we have six main questions that we will put to you and then Members will ask supplementaries depending on your responses. I will start off by saying we know that, Margaret, when you were appointed that you said you were reviewing the plans. Could you perhaps outline to us what parts are you reviewing and what parts, if any, are set in stone?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I thought I was reasonably clear both with colleagues in the LDA and others to say that we thought about 80 per cent of the masterplan was quite right. The parts of the Park that are intended to be residential have not really changed since the first masterplan of 2004.

The things that I felt - and Andy [Altman] confirmed this when he came - needed to be done, partly as a consequence of the consultation that the LDA took on with all the stakeholders, were that we felt the sporting legacy was not singing out strongly enough from the Park. All the sports bodies certainly felt that they could have been more involved in terms of shaping some of the legacy offer for the Park. An example would be, although part of what we want to do is have promising athletes come and train there, there was nowhere in the masterplan that was set aside, for example, for sensible and affordable accommodation for people visiting the Park. It might seem like a small thing but actually it is a very important thing in terms of making maximum use of those facilities.

So, we have spent quite a lot of time and are still in a process of talking with all of the sporting stakeholders. We also wanted to talk more to Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, who we have already formed a really good close relationship with, around making sure that it is a seamless experience for the people coming to the Park and they do not say, "Well, I'm walking out of one bit and into another bit here." That needed to be done.

The other thing we really wanted to look at was the housing offer in the Park. A lot of the density and a lot of the plans seemed to me to be predicated on a lot of high-rise in the Park, which I do not think either of us thinks is sensible. We think we need to put a lot more family housing in the Park and a lot more homes with gardens that are affordable for families. It is an interesting statistic - Andy will correct me if I get this wrong - I think we understand that there is something like 25,000 apartments already with planning consent across the five boroughs. Well, if there are 25,000 flatted accommodation that is going to come on stream, I think that is suggesting to us even more that the Park should really be a statement about family housing. So, these are the things that we are working with as well as taking on board very specific pieces of feedback from the boroughs and from other important stakeholders. We are certainly not ripping it up and starting again, Dee. I think at the 75 to 80 per cent level it will be fine.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Indeed. I would certainly welcome more family accommodation - I cannot imagine that anyone would not. My only concern is to make sure that it does not become an oasis for yuppies because I guess with a park of that nature, which is really going to be a very nice place to live served by ten train lines, etc, I can just imagine family accommodation being for very, very wealthy families. Have you considered that element of it?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Yes. One of the big risks that Andy [Altman] and I are very alive to - and I do not want to be critical of this - is that frankly we do not want it to turn into something like Canary Wharf where it is extremely successful within certain confines, but as soon as you cross the road none of that wealth creation spills out the way you would hope it would. So, we are very, very alive to the fact that a big risk here would be that you would create something within the Park that was not linked properly into all of the neighbourhoods and was not producing the type of housing product that was affordable and accessible for local people. So, it is an act of faith with me that we must do that. I feel that very strongly.

Dee Doocey (Chair): OK, I have just got one final supplementary. You have talked about the possibility of the stadium capacity not reducing from 80,000 to 25,000. I just wondered if that happens, presumably all of the calculations have been done so far within the current budgets on the basis of providing temporary eating points, toilets, etc. Who would take on that expenditure? Would it be the Legacy Company or would it be the ODA? I am not entirely clear.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, it is a good point, Dee [Doocey] and I think it goes to more than just the stadium. There is an amount of money ring-fenced within the Olympic budget, £350 million including value added tax (VAT), which is what the ODA calls transformation, which is essentially the reinstatement of the Park after the Games. A lot of that is not discretionary expenditure in the sense that a lot of it is linked to the initial planning application of the Park and is there to discharge Section 106 obligations. So, reinstating the roads and the bridges and so on is a big part of that. In there also there is an amount for the stadium. So, it is within the overall Olympic budget but after the Games if the ODA carries out those transformation works it would do it on our behalf as an agent of our Board. So, we would be directing, as it were, and prioritising that spend after the Games is where we are currently at in terms of our understanding of that.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Presumably that money was never planned to put in permanent facilities to make an 80,000-seater stadium, it was for temporary facilities so that it would eventually go back to 25,000. Do you think it could be done within the £350 million?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, what we are doing just now is between now and Christmas a specialist technical piece of work is being done that is looking at all of the options for the stadium, everything from remaining at 80,000 down to 28,000, which would be the Grand Prix athletics offer. Until we get all of that work done, such as is it technically feasible, how much will it cost and so on, we will not be able to say definitively what we can do. At this point it is quite good because I think we need to keep our options open

around how we make the stadium viable and sensible at the same time as keeping the Olympic promise. That work is quite literally ongoing at the moment.

Dee Doocey (Chair): OK, fine. Len?

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Are we continuing on the theme of your question, Chair?

Dee Doocey (Chair): Yes.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): To make that stadium viable then, in terms of reviewing the classic tension between the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Limited's (LOCOG) commitment, the ODA's commitment, the Mayor's commitment, the previous Mayor's [Ken Livingstone] commitment to the stadium being for athletics, you are not ruling out football.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): No, and I think what I have agreed with the Olympics Minister [Tessa Jowell] and the Mayor is that we would go and do this work and we would look at it, but the bottom line would be that we would not compromise the athletics legacy from it. I do not think that maintaining the athletics promise and having something like football in the stadium are mutually exclusive.

People talk about the problems with a running track. Well, I am old enough to remember when there was a dog track going round Stamford Bridge and four of the last five World Cups have been in stadia where there was a running track. So, we do not think that keeping that promise and putting football, rugby or something alongside are necessarily mutually exclusive. That is why I have been at pains to say we are not ruling anything in or out at this stage.

Given where we are in terms of the likely fiscal environment over the next five to ten years, I think we have to really look at value for money and make sure that with all of these venues that the taxpayer is getting value for money and that there is not a constant drain on public money in the venues. That is our strong concern.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Do you want to move onto your question, Len?

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Yes. My question is really about what is different. You have been given three years' head-start in terms of other legacy bodies, so what is there to learn from the way previous host cities have tried to deliver the legacy from the Games in general terms?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I will perhaps stop talking for a minute and let Andy get a word in edgeways.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Yes, fine. We will come back to you.

Andrew Altman (Chief Executive, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, I think the first most important lesson is the one that you just said which is the fact that setting up the Company today focused solely and exclusively on legacy and thinking through the questions

that you are asking: the uses of the stadia post-Games, how the Park will be operated, how the commercial development will happen. We are thinking about that ahead of time and we have the opportunity to do that very thoughtfully as we are doing. That is a huge lesson that has been learned from other places.

The key of programming the work about each of the venues is critical that a lesson from other cities that those have waited too long for that and then had the problem of uses afterwards. Thinking through those issues right now and getting those programmes so there is continuity is very, very important.

You can learn from places like Barcelona, obviously, that have done a pretty good job in terms of the Olympic housing and the way they use that as part of the redevelopment along their waterfront. The Olympic Village offers that opportunity here, as one of the first neighbourhoods within the park is doing that. There is a lot that we can learn from the quality of the housing and how that environment is created.

We are very fortunate with a lot of the transportation infrastructure that is being put in as part of the Olympics, which will make this site very competitive afterwards. There are lessons from other cities as to how they have done that. That is going to be a great selling point; the centrality of the transportation network. So, I think there are a lot of pieces from other places.

One of the key ones, as Margaret [Ford] said, is we are very focused on making sure we get all the venues right; making sure we understand how we can all be used after the Games; how you also programme the Park in terms of the activities animating the Park. That all needs to be very carefully done so that the place really continues to be a destination after the Olympics and I think all those pieces are there to put in place now.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): In terms of the structure, if we have got the first decision we have taken right, doing it early rather than later in terms of establishing your body, the relationships that you have with others and over the coming years and the hand of cards that you have been given to play with, there are some constraints. We talked about some of those with the stadium that you seem to have some narrative to get through it. It would be very interesting when you get to the hard bits of trying to cut a deal or trying to work that through.

You have not been given a great hand, have you, in the sense of clarity about the budgets that you have and about the potential issues you will have to deal with? Some of the decisions that you are going to have to pick up are really a legacy of other previous decisions. In terms of the bit that you can shape yourself, how are you going to handle those tensions between your shareholders, never mind the relationships with the different partners and everybody thinking they can do your job?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): OK, for me there is a bit of déjà vu here because I went to English Partnerships in the final year at the sale of the [Millennium] Dome, and there are lots of similarities actually and lots of things to be learned from that. I knew I was coming into this with my eyes open. I was very frank with Andy [Altman] when he was thinking about the job about what we would come into. I do not

see it quite the same way. It is not that the hand of cards we have got is duff. I think we have not been given all of the cards yet and that is how I would prefer to look at it, Len.

The fact is that apart from the masterplanning framework there has not been a proper and coherent business plan thought through for the company that actually makes sense. We are in the business of doing that just now. So, until we have done that, it's coherent, it's credible, I cannot say whether the shareholders have resourced the company or not. I fully expect that they will because that is all of the steer we have been given, but it is our job to make sure that the business plan is absolutely credible, sensible, phased properly, takes account of both the fiscal environment that is likely to be in place for the next decade at least, but also where we are in the commercial property cycle.

We need to hit the cycle when it is rising again, as it will. I am just glad we are not trying to do it tomorrow. By the time we come to the market hopefully the property sector will be in a better place. I think until we have been able to do that piece of work properly our shareholders would legitimately say, "Well, that ask hasn't been there yet." I think we are in good shape to do that. It is an important piece of work. We get one shot at getting this right.

John Biggs (AM): I would like to start by saying I do not mind yuppies but they have got to be the right sort of yuppies, if you like. They have got to be ones who embrace the East End, because my constituency covers most of the Olympic Park, rather than being ones who hide behind a drawbridge, if you like.

I would start by asking you, do you see yourselves as being a company whose job it is to regenerate a park around the edge of which there will be various things happening like housing and employment, or, do you see yourselves as a regeneration company which happens to have a park stuck in the middle?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I will have a crack at that. If I thought it was just the Park and nothing else I would not have wanted to do this job.

John Biggs (AM): I do not think that was one my options actually!

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): The idea that the Park can just become a Canary Wharf is just not my idea of what should happen there and it is not the Government's or the Mayor's idea of it either, and I know it is not yours, John. It is really important for us in this masterplanning, is that one of the key things that we are doing is looking at the curtilage of the Park to see where, in the early phases, in the first five years, things can be done to make sure that we start the way we mean to go on at the Park: that there are not hoardings up and there is not some kind of - I will not use the word drawbridge - moat round the Park. That actually, the first things we do make that point explicitly; that the Park bleeds into the surrounding areas and vice-versa. That is, again, an article of faith with me that we will do it that way.

John Biggs (AM): So, one of your first challenges will be to tear down the barriers that are built around the Olympic Park to stop people from getting in for security reasons, or whatever.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, it is perfectly reasonable the Park is to be kept secure at the moment, we all understand why. One of the first things I would like our Board to address is their philosophy around will there be a fence round the Park and what will access to the Park be like. These are really, really important fundamental questions. The first thing I really want the board to address is the feel of the Park in the neighbourhoods.

Andrew Altman (Chief Executive, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I would just like to add also on a personal note, my whole career has been in regeneration in different cities. So, the perspective coming into this is one of looking at how the Olympic Park is a catalyst for regeneration, is connected to the surrounding neighbourhoods so that, even if they are not responsible for the broader area outside of the Park, we are very much going to have partnerships and relationships with part of the broader regeneration. I think that is what this great opportunity is that has been created with the Olympics and the immediate infrastructure and benefits that are there from the first day. Our job is how to connect those with the local community and neighbourhoods.

John Biggs (AM): So, the question I was meant ask, which I sort of asked in a different way, is what are the key challenges you face in regenerating the area in and around the Park? What are the three or four key challenges?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, I think the challenges actually are more generic rather than just facing the area in and around the Park. We need to write and be able to present a compelling enough business case that Government will want to prioritise investment into the area, whether it is in the Park or round about.

The second thing, as I said earlier, we need to work with the grain of the commercial property sector and the cycle as it comes back. Thirdly, one of the things we do have to, I think, worry about is the fact that our ownership is only partial in this sense, our company will not own even when the land is transferred by the LDA all of the land within that area. London and Continental Railways (LCR) own a very big important piece of land just to the south of the Westfield development and, of course, to the north the Olympic Village is not in our ownership either at this point.

These are challenges for us because how both of those things are treated fundamentally affect people's view of what the Park would be like because they are right on that important gateway into the Park. That is a challenge for us to get to a position where we can influence and have some feeling of control or direction around those two important sites.

John Biggs (AM): So, you will have targets as part of your business plan? Will you have a whole-life business plan, as you are a ten-year body, and then a three-year business plan which is for the immediate future with your funding available?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): In terms of the business plan we will do both. In a sense, a bit like - I hesitate to use the phrase 'development corporations' because it has got a particular connotation, but you know what I mean - other bodies that are in the long-term game of regenerating a major space tend to do a business plan over 25 years to look at how the value is built out.

It is very important for us that we would then have a very detailed five-year plan - Andy [Altman] has been working on that - so by the end of those five years we will say, "Here are the things we are attempting to accomplish" and we are absolutely keen to be measured on those over that five-year period. We have got to get some focus into it.

John Biggs (AM): How do you see yourselves working with the five boroughs, or perhaps it is actually only four boroughs, isn't it?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, no, we regard the five boroughs as important to us. Andy [Altman] said he had a great welcome. We have been formally adopted by the boroughs in the sense they regard us, as I said, as a sixth borough. So, they have invited Andy to meet every week when those chief executives meet, and when the leaders meet, I am invited, so I think that is really good. We cannot do this job unless we have got a great relationship with the boroughs. It is very similar to the way I was used to working at English Partnerships. If you have not got the right relationship with the local authority it makes your life very difficult.

John Biggs (AM): My final question is about one of my concerns about mission creep, or alternatively the fact that there may be challenges which no one grabs. So, the mission creep thing is that people see you as a cookie jar from which they can solve all of their problems. The opposite of that is that it is something we expect out of the Olympic legacy but it is not your problem, it is not the boroughs' problem and it is not the LDA's problem so no one actually grabs it. How are you going to ensure that it works holistically?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, I think again we are pretty clear that of the five Olympic promises we are in the business of being absolutely accountable for delivering one of them and some of all of the others. That is not to try to avoid responsibility for things but it is to say realistically, "Here are the things that we, out of our own hand, can absolutely deliver and here are things that we need to deliver as part of the scene with other people."

Mission creep is a good point, John, people have been saying, "Could you take on other sites in and around?" and so on. I think our instinct is to stay focused on the first few years so we actually get the job done there. Frankly, if we were then asked to work as an agent for or with some of the landholdings of the other boroughs, I think that would ultimately make great sense for the reasons we said earlier. It is a yes and no answer I am afraid.

Andrew Boff (AM): I have been very encouraged by what you said about how you view the role of the company in the context of the wider community. I am very conscious that actually in the setup document for the Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) there are lots of words like regeneration, redevelopment and putting in diverse, vibrant communities, but scarcely no reference to improving the life chances of the people in that part of London. How can we ensure that that is going to be at the centre of regeneration by the OPLC?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): The decision was taken pretty much before we were in place, Andrew, that the socio-economic programmes which the LDA

were running as part of the Olympics were not to come to the Olympic Park Legacy Company and you could argue about whether that was a sensible decision or not a sensible decision. It is quite clear from our perspective that if the Olympic Park Legacy Company is only about bricks and mortar we are not going to succeed. If we do not make sure that everything we do ties in with the employment programmes, with training programmes, with providing opportunities, for example, for social enterprise in the Park and for small businesses then we will not have done our job properly.

I would hate anyone to think that reading the description of what we are doing would get the impression that these things are not really important to us. At the moment we are working quite closely with Geoff Newton [Director of Olympic Opportunity, LDA], who runs those programmes, to make sure that in this separation we do not lose the very, very close links that we have got there. It is quite important to us that we get that right.

Andrew Altman (Chief Executive, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I would just also add - going back to a point that John [Biggs] was making - in meeting with the five chief executives of the host boroughs who come together and have invited us to meet with them every two weeks, that they have produced a strategic regeneration framework which is very helpful. It has the concept of convergence, looking at the socio-economic aspect within East London and how to bring them to the overall average of London to raise the life chances and create a better environment.

We are working closely with them on that framework and the role that we can play within the Park, but connected to the broader strategic regeneration framework so that we can find those linkages; whether it is in employment, whether it is housing, whether it is social programming and all kinds of different possibilities. We do not necessarily have to deliver it but we are a part of the partnerships that I think will be formed around the larger concept of convergence and regeneration.

Andrew Boff (AM): Bearing in mind part of the objective of the Olympic Village was to provide some social housing, how are we going to be able to use that for social housing bearing in mind it is a block of flats or lots of blocks of flats?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): At the moment in terms of our locus in the Village we do not have one, which is a problem to me, because our Board cannot directly influence anything at the moment that goes on in the Village. Again, that was a decision that was taken before the Company was set up.

Our understanding is that the joint venture that was done with Triathlon Homes, which is East Thames Group, Southern Housing Group and First Base, was done specifically to ensure that 25 per cent of the houses in the Village are for social rent, 25 per cent are for wider affordable and 50 per cent are for market sales, I understand, Andrew.

I think there are challenges in social housing in that particular built form, eight or ten-storey apartment blocks and I think the key to that will be great management of that Village, the nomination policy and the way in which people are brought into that to have the opportunity of living in the Olympic Village. You can have good quality social housing in apartment blocks

so long as those things are in place, the nominations are sensible, the deal which people are given to come there makes sense; they understand they are coming into a shared environment and that there are certain things that we know will happen there in terms of the management that they have to abide by.

I do not think it is ideal. You and I have had this conversation before. I do not think social housing in high-rise blocks is ideal but that is part of what will happen.

Andrew Boff (AM): Well now it is what we have got. I have tried to move on myself from it but it is there now.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I think the risk can be mitigated but I would like to have more of an influence around those discussions and I know Andrew [Altman] would too.

Andrew Boff (AM): What would be the difficulties if the company is not given responsibility for the Olympic Village? How would you deal with that?

Andrew Altman (Chief Executive, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, as Margaret [Ford] said, then there would have to be a very strong relationship that would have to be built with how that is managed. I think the management is absolutely critical. This is the first neighbourhood that will be within the Park so the 2,800 units of housing is what will be there. It will be delivered and it will be there from day one. So, it is very, very important because it will set the whole tone in terms of the other development on the site.

There would have to be in place very strong relationships in terms of the management, who is going to manage the overall neighbourhood, if you will; everything from the details of the landscaping to the nominations process to the market rate housing unit. That is why there is concern about it, because it is very important to get that right.

Victoria Borwick (AM): Just a quick follow-up from that. We visited a month or six weeks ago now to look specifically at the Olympic Village. I was slightly horrified that the residents are seemed to be forced to go across to shop at Westfield which meant, to me, there was no community feel to the Village, it was still, as we said, a block of flats, some maybe better than others. I was very concerned that you make a community because people have places that they can gather, whether it is a post office, a cinema or all the local things that we all use locally.

I am just a bit concerned that it looked a bit sterile - and I appreciate you are saying that you will not necessarily have control over that - but we are all here interested in legacy and economic success of this project. Andrew [Boff] and I share our views and disappointment on the amount of family housing and the way it is positioned but that is, as you say, something we cannot go back on now. I am concerned about the future and making it a success. I have been aware from previous experience when I have been involved with companies which have built just blocks of flats but they are not making a community. A block of flats is not a community.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I think we would agree with you on that. Those are exactly our concerns around it. At the moment as things stand we have

absolutely no locus on influencing any of those decisions. That is something we are working on with our shareholders to try to, frankly, elbow our way into those decisions and to have some say around some of that. As Andy [Altman] says, it is the first neighbourhood in the Park and the whole look, feel and tone of it will frankly determine, I think after the Games, how people look at the Village and the stadium and the Broadcast Centre. These are the things that will shape their view on whether this is turning into a successful place or not. So, we are as concerned as you are about that.

Victoria Borwick (AM): Exactly. I received lovely pictures from British Waterways with children frolicking in bits of stream but that is not quite the same.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Just before I come to Victoria for her question, I would like to say that my concern on this is slightly different. It is on the financial side of it. I can quite see that you will be successful and it is entirely possible that somebody will say to you, "OK, you can manage it," but I have always said the difference in a five-star hotel and a block of council flats is not so much the structure, it is the design, it is the way it is finished, it is having a concierge, and it is having maintenance. That actually costs quite a bit of money, so in addition to trying to get some say in how it is going to be managed, are you also looking for a budget to go with that?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Not necessarily. I think that question would probably be more appropriately put to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) who have frankly answered it by writing a cheque for £100 million. The HCA have got a huge interest in making sure that the very significant investment they make on the affordable section of the Village is managed to their standards. One of the things that I think is good news about it is that the private developer who is there on the affordable side, First Base, did some really very good work for us at English Partnerships around exactly that, mixed tenure but with very, very strong management, places like Adelaide Wharf at Hackney is a good example of that.

So, I am hoping and I have some faith that HCA, First Base and the two housing associations there will not tolerate anything that quickly becomes denigrated or degraded; that they will be very keen to make sure that their end of the management of that is done properly. I think the bigger challenge is the prospect that the market housing is going to be sold off to a single investor. Well, I cannot see who that person is at the moment and we do not have any sense of how that will be managed and that is a huge issue for all of us.

Victoria Borwick (AM): Some of the questions have been touched on earlier, but really it is just continuing on about the legacy and the balancing of the potentially competing demands of London and national Government. I know you have talked about certain elements of it. So, what are your priorities when you are balancing those demands of what London needs and what national Government needs?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I suppose we can only explain that by saying what our experience to date has been. The experience to date has been an entirely functional relationship. We have two shareholders, one is the Mayor, one is the Government and the Government shareholding is split into two between the Olympics Minister

and the Communities and Local Government department. After the Games that 50 per cent shareholding will be completely owned by the Communities and Local Government department.

So far, although there are potentially three shareholders there, we have not had a situation yet where we have had to be the referee, as it were, between those shareholders. I am not naïve enough to think that that will always be the case. There will be situations where the shareholders may well have different objectives. Our view is just to call it as we see it frankly and provide the best advice to shareholders at that point and they will have to figure out how they get to an accommodation with each other. There has been no need for that so far and we have actually had some quite tricky things to deal with and it has worked out pretty well.

Victoria Borwick (AM): Obviously we have talked briefly about the stadium, and I am happy if you want to talk more about that, and also perhaps the university campus that is proposed. It is all those sorts of longer term projects. Could you give us some insight into how you think you are going to take those forward and balance them?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, those kinds of projects, the high education campus for example, is something that the Mayor began. There is a steering group in place there which has done a lot of initial feasibility work, but it has formally handed over to us now to say, "Well, you need to look at this. You need to see if this is deliverable and come back to us with your recommendations."

I think quite a lot of things have been floated in the last year by different sets of people, frankly because there was not a legacy client in place. I do get the impression now that people are quite happy to hand things over to us and say, "Figure it out and come back to us when you've got something that's a bit more cooked."

Undoubtedly there will be times from time to time when shareholders may well have different views around key things and at that point the only thing Andy [Altman] and I can do is to let the facts speak for themselves. If we have done our homework properly and we have worked things up properly then we would hope that eventually sensible recommendations would be accepted, but who knows.

Andrew Altman (Chief Executive, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I would just add to a point Margaret made earlier, I think going back to the idea of having a business plan that lays out very clearly what you are going to do over the next five-year period will start to build the consensus, not only with the Board but with the shareholders, so they know exactly, "Here are the priorities over the next five years. Here is what we are going to focus on, here is the funding that will be required," or whatever necessary.

I think that will be a means of bringing a lot of focus, discipline and building the agreement among the different partnerships. All these complex projects have multiple partners. I think it just takes working closely with all of them.

Andrew Boff (AM): Have you identified any organisations or companies who might be interested to be tenants of the International Broadcast Centre?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): The Broadcast Centre is an interesting project because I meet lots of people who tell me that they have been doing work to get tenants to the Broadcast Centre and then when I talk to the people they say, "Well, not really."

So, we are in the situation just now where we have got a reasonably clear idea of how we think the Broadcast Centre would work. We are in discussions with two or three different people, but when you are in those discussions the essence of them is that you keep them to yourselves until you have got something cooked and you are ready to do it. I think part of the problem with the Broadcast Centre is people have been flying too many public kites about it, it has become confused and actually none of those things are actually viable.

So, we are in, we believe, a serious set of discussions with two or three different sets of people that I think would make a sensible, viable future for the Broadcast Centre, but by definition I am not trumpeting any of those at the moment because I want to be sure that when we are ready we will have something that actually we can deliver.

Andrew Boff (AM): Is there a problem with the Broadcast Centre in terms of its scale? It is an enormous building. Would you have more flexibility with it if it were perhaps smaller units or broken down?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I think the Broadcast Centre is big; let's face it, it is a great big building. The way it has been designed, it can be either resized, it can be taken down a bit, it can be put into five self-contained units and you can have a three and a two. It is actually a really flexible building which we think is its appeal.

So, we think the sensible thing we would be to get some kind of relatively significant outfit there that other organisations could then cluster around and small companies and local people could come in around and that would suggest a kind of three-one-one set-up, probably. The great thing about it, Andrew, is that it is very flexible, so the scale of it is not really daunting. It is not what I am losing sleep about at night that is for sure. I think we will get there with the Broadcast Centre.

Roger Evans (AM): How much of the Olympic land debt are you expecting to have to pick up?

Andrew Altman (Chief Executive, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Right now those discussions are ones that are ongoing between Government and the Mayor. The key focus for us has been that the land has a clear and unfettered title transfer over to the company. I think that is our fundamental principle and that the Government and the Mayor sorting through the debt so that the land is not really excessively burdened by the debt so that it can do all the things that we want to do in terms of regeneration. Those discussions are ongoing and we fully expect that those will be resolved.

Roger Evans (AM): Are you playing a part in that negotiation? Are you actually feeding in what you would like to see so that someone is putting your case?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): In a sense it has not really been necessary to do that because since the beginning all of our shareholders have been clear that the best position for the company is to have the land unencumbered by debt. The fact is we were set up under the Companies Act so we could not take a load of debt that the land value would not sustain at the moment because we would be technically insolvent, so there has never been any suggestion that we would take a significant amount of the debt that goes with the land asset.

I think the other thing that is worth thinking about is that the debt was never secured in any land parcels. The debt was a corporate debt that was simply secured against the LDA's corporate covenant, so the idea that bits of land and bits of debt fit together - I know you are not suggesting that, but some people have suggested that - is misplaced. There is a debt amount there which the LDA has used to assemble the land compensation and so on, but we have certainly never had any steer that we would be expected to take, and technically we could not take, on any more debt than the current land value would sustain. So, it is not really our expectation that we would be asked to take that on.

Roger Evans (AM): So there is a limit to the amount of debt that you could end up taking on here?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): It is at the moment, and for as long as we continue to be constituted as we are under the Companies Act, it is very evident that your balance sheet has to be well in balance and that cannot happen if there is a debt burden that is not matched by the asset. I do not think anybody is suggesting that. It has never been raised in the discussions with us that we would be expected to shoulder the debt.

What we will be expected to do, and this is fine, is to repay the Lottery monies. If the land and debt is resolved by Government and the Mayor there will need to be some kind of alteration, I think, to the Memorandum of Understanding. That is fine and we will bear our share of that quite happily over the 25-year development piece. Those discussions, we think, are going on very positively at the moment. That is the feedback we get.

Roger Evans (AM): So aside from the possibility of being insolvent, which you say is something that is going to limit the amount of debt they can transfer to you, what other risks are there attached to some of the debt that you might get? Is that going to make your job of providing a legacy harder if you have to carry a debt with you?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, it does because the debt burden of any land asset tends to drive densities, it tends to drive what you want to do, is it commercial use, is it residential and so on. One of the great freedoms we would be given if this all works out successfully, as we hope it will, is if we then could sit back down and really revisit those densities, think about more homes with gardens, all of that, if we have a sensible situation in terms of what we then need to pay back and at what period. So, that would be a great step forward if this is resolved the way we hope it is resolved.

Roger Evans (AM): So low density means you have to have low debts; high debts mean you have to have high density properties to be able to generate the money from the land to make up that gap?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Not necessarily but the two things do tend to go together in urban environments, yes.

Dee Doocey (Chair): I would like to ask one specific question on that, I think you said you will repay the Lottery, did I hear you correctly?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Correct.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Does that mean that you are going to repay the Lottery over the original timescale that was in the Memorandum of Understanding?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I do not think we can answer that question today, Dee, because until the discussions on the debt repayment are finalised I do not know what effect that will have on the Memorandum of Understanding. I do not think Andy [Altman] and I have any problem with operating commercially and having repayment schedules to meet, but I think we would have a problem with a repayment schedule that was not particularly sensible. We are not expecting that to happen; we are expecting that there will be a good outcome here, but we do know that we have obligations as a company and to pay back the Lottery, and also, as all the new towns did, to pay back into the public purse is part and parcel of what the developments intended to do over time.

Dee Doocey (Chair): I understand that. I think the issue is that so many people were promised money from the Lottery and then it was taken for the Olympics. It seemed a double whammy since they were already paying in council tax. So, it is almost a moral obligation, as soon as you can, so that these people really are not disenfranchised.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I think we accept that.

John Biggs (AM): To follow this up actually, I welcome the question you have asked, Dee, about the Lottery, but as I understand it, by some means or another, the LDA's expectation - and I think this is public record - is something like £800 million was spent procuring the land and doing stuff to it so it could be used for the Olympics and something like another £300 million was donated towards the Olympic funding agreement. The expectation was that that £1.1 billion would be got back by the LDA through the disposal of land as part of the Memorandum [of Understanding].

So, if you are not going to inherit that £1.1 billion liability someone else is, pretty obviously - it is not going to be the tooth fairy. I guess it is going to be either the Mayor or the Government, is that a fair summation of where we are? Or, it could be something clever. So, for example, the freehold of the land is vested in your company and over the next 1,000 years the money gets back by some miracle.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, John, I think there are probably smarter people than me working on this just now.

John Biggs (AM): I doubt it very much actually otherwise you would not be here, but carry on.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): No, I am pretty sure there are. All I can say is this is not our shout. If I knew the answer to it I would tell you today.

John Biggs (AM): OK, there is roughly just over £1 billion which has to be funded from somewhere.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Yes. Our understanding originally that the original LDA business plan had about £1 billion that needed to be repaid over a particular profile. It is true to say that that debt profile and the timing drove a lot of the commercial end of the masterplan, so those two things were sensibly linked. We are in a different place now and I hope we will be in quite a different place within two or three weeks when this gets resolved and that will let us look again at things like density in the masterplan.

John Biggs (AM): So, you could perhaps tolerate an arrangement in which way off in the distant future some of that money came back through land proceeds but it would cripple your aspirations if it were to call on your immediate potential sources of income?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I think when the current discussions are at an end we will then work very actively with both of our shareholders to see what is a sensible repayment profile there and we will understand the consequences of that. I have always said that I was not concerned about the company having debt and lottery monies to repay because it will incentivise us to behave commercially and it will keep us on our toes, but we need to have that within the right timescale.

John Biggs (AM): You have been either indirectly or directly quoted in the press - maybe not directly - but it has become known that someone who might be you takes the view that the land debts should not attach themselves to the company. I think you said that today.

Does that imply then that if there was an arrangement in which you were expected to pay onerous capital repayments to the Government or somebody, you would say, "Look, it's not really worth it, we're not going to be able to operate."?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I do not think we will get to that place, John, but I suppose that is a possibility. I do not think we will get to that place anyway.

John Biggs (AM): That is a good answer, but there is a bottom line there, if you like, implicitly that says, "If you want this thing to work someone else has to take the burden," at least in the short and medium term.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, the basis on which Andy [Altman] and I came into our jobs was a very clear steer from both of our shareholders

that they wanted to solve this problem. They also wanted the land to come back to the company unencumbered by the debt profile that the LDA had in respect of the land. I do not have any reason to think that there are not huge amounts of goodwill and energy going into all of that just now, and I think we will get a resolution that is satisfactory.

John Biggs (AM): Can I ask one other question? Are you going to have a skills strategy – that is a left-field question – because if you are not presumably someone else will? It is a question about the sort of people who are going to live in the social housing or the sort of yuppies we are going to have, or whatever?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): What do you mean by skills strategy?

John Biggs (AM): OK, well do you, as part of your vision, masterplan, have an idea of who will be living in the Park and how they will relate to London's economy and how they will relate to jobs in that immediate area and so on?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I think the answer to that must be yes. Here is an example, we were looking at the so-called polyclinic that might be in part of the Park and we had a great session with Queen Mary College. They would like to put ten dentistry chairs in there, but they would also like to create a training centre for youngsters coming through from the schools there, who could then train as dental technicians, as hygienists and so on.

Every opportunity we get to add the value of training and apprenticeships and so on we will take and we will be looking for those opportunities every time any of those discussions are in place, John.

Andrew Altman (Chief Executive, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I would just add to that. The point that Margaret made before which is that even if we are not the direct provider of the services we are going to be making the connections to organisations who are doing those things. When you asked the question about regeneration, I think it is taking a regeneration lens to all the different activities in the Park and part of that means if it is a venue, if it is the operation of the Park, if it is the direct employment, or if it is university, and how we make those linkages is critical. It is a mindset and how we build the partnerships that the company would adopt to achieve that.

Andrew Boff (AM): Could you tell me when the next iteration of legacy masterplan framework will be? I am very much working on the basis that the one we have already seen is an outline, but I am very conscious that the Olympic Village was originally an outline and it ended up being built. So, what is the process going to be for modifying that masterplan?

Andrew Altman (Chief Executive, Olympic Park Legacy Company): A couple of points there. First, when Margaret [Ford] came on board she initiated a study and the study said 80% of it seemed reasonable and it was well conceptualised but really needed more of a focus on sports, also on sustainability. So, over the past couple of months there has been a lot of effort meeting with all the different sporting bodies looking at what the sports offer is in the

masterplan, how we make it more prominent, are there features that are missing. We have been doing a lot of outreach as well as with the boroughs, to make sure that that is a prominent part of it. That should be concluded over the next couple of months.

As Margaret said earlier, we are also in a way taking a look at the legacy masterplan, not just as 2025 but also what happens in the first 5 years; what is the first phase. We may have mentioned this earlier but let us think about three phases that we are focused on right now: you have the Games phase which is the building of the Games and what we do then in terms of working with ODA, working with LOCOG, everything to make the Games successful; looking at the programming of the venues post-Games, you have 2012 to 2014, the reinstatement that happens of the Park which is the actual Park going in on the north part of the site, what happens with the different venues that are put in place, building of some of the roads, how it will be left after Games; and then you have the third phase which is 2013/14 and the next 5 years, of its first phase of development post-Games and post-reinstatement.

In a way we are complementing work of the legacy masterplan by saying, "How will we really get started?" We are going to be left with an incredible set of assets. You will have benefits of the Olympics from day one and we have already talked about the Village, the Park and about venues. There will be a tremendous legacy of success there, "How do we build on that?" those first five years. So, we will be taking a critical look at things.

As Margaret said, "What is the housing product that really makes the most sense?" We are taking another look at where the market is. It is hard to predict but I think in 2013/14 we will clearly be in a better place. What is the housing product that will be most competitive on the site given what else is happening with housing developments in the surrounding area, given what is happening with the Olympic Village and given some of the parcels we do not control, like LCR? How do we look at what the right product is? Also looking at the programming and the animation of the Park, which will be absolutely critical in those first years. How to make this the must-see destination so everybody comes from the boroughs, from London and from abroad? So, the programming and how that translates into what we need to do to fit out the Park will be critical.

We are taking a view not just the legacy masterplan but also how you start to implement that plan over these three phases - well, I would say three phases - but those first five years in particular. We are going through that now. The direct answer to your question in terms of timing is we are looking in the April period to finish up our five-year business plan. A part of that will be the phasing plan. I think we will be out having discussions I would say at the start of the New Year with people about these issues on sports, about sustainability, about the type of housing product and about the first phase. There is still a target date of looking in the summer in terms of outlying planning permission and we are still taking a pretty critical look at that in terms of what would actually be proposed.

Andrew Boff (AM): Thank you, and finally from me, who will hold you to account and will we be seeing you frequently?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Well, I think we will firstly be held to account probably by our shareholders, plainly. In the corporate plan Andy [Altman] talked

about between now and March we need to set out what we will be delivering in that period and set out very clear markers for what success will look like. We are all very happy to be held to account by that.

I imagine we will see a lot of you, which would be fine. I imagine the Select Committee in Parliament will want to have discussions with us as well. Already people are stopping me in the Stratford shopping centre and having a little word with me, which is perfect and was part of the reason we were there. So, at all different layers we expect to be held to account, Andrew, and maybe we are masochists but we are quite happy to be as accountable as you like. That is the job.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Good. Final question from me. You talked about the period 2012 to 2014 when the Park is being reinstated into legacy mode, what do you think will happen in particular to the two main venues during those two years? Do you think they will be mothballed or will they be open? I know you have not got any final plans, but what is your instinctive view of it?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): When you talk about the two main venues do you mean ...?

Dee Doocey (Chair): The stadium and the Aquatic Centre. During those two years, 2012 to 2014.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Part of the work we are doing at the moment is when we are looking again at the masterplan we have been knitting it together with, what the ODA call, the transformation planning applications. They have to make dozens of planning applications to do all of this reinstatement. What we are trying to do at the moment is to work through together what the more sensible phasing would be of the Park.

I think it would be a shame if any venues were mothballed for a minute longer than they possibly had to be. We would like to have a programme of works that meant the biggest amount of parkland and access to the venues, the greatest access possible, is in place while we are still doing the work consistent with the actual work itself, safety and all of those other things.

I think all of us would have the same objectives that we would want people to be able to come in to enjoy the Park and enjoy the venues just as quickly as they could, because otherwise people get, I think quite rightly, fed up with that if the blue hoarding goes up again round the Park. That would not be a great outcome at all.

Dee Doocey (Chair): So would it be correct to say that in your view it is unlikely that the venues will not be in use immediately after the Games, or, is there going to be a period, realistically of at least a year, where they cannot be used because of other work going on?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I cannot answer that and I would be guessing or fibbing if I said I could answer that just now, Dee. We just still have to go

through that work over the next two months and then we can give you - and I am happy to write to the Committee - a proper answer to that.

Dee Doocey (Chair): I think that would be very helpful. Is there anything else that either of you would like to add?

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): I do not think so.

Dee Doocey (Chair): I would like to say thank you very much indeed for being so open and transparent, it is very nice. It has been a delight having you here. Thank you very much indeed.

Margaret Ford (Chair, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Thank you.

Andrew Altman (Chief Executive, Olympic Park Legacy Company): Thank you.

Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee

21 October 2009

Transcript of Item 6: The Mayor's Cultural Policies

Dee Doocey (Chair): Welcome, Munira [Mirza], thank you very much for coming. Would you like to make any comments before we start? We have not got any fixed questions, because we have only got half an hour we are just going to react to anything that you want to tell us and ask some related questions in the broader spectrum about the arts.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Thank you. The last time I sat in front of this Committee was about 18 months ago and I had just started the job. I listed a number of Mayoral priorities for culture and gave an outline of the kinds of projects and themes that we would want to develop, so I am very pleased to be able to talk to you now about the progress that we have made and the kinds of initiatives that we started.

Some of the themes that I will discuss have been set out already in our *Cultural Metropolis* document which was published last November, which was our direction of travel document and the precursor to the statutory Cultural Strategy which the Mayor has to produce which we are currently developing. Broadly the themes were to maintain London as a centre for cultural excellence in the world and we have done this through a number of ways: through funding major capital projects like the British Film Institute (BFI) National Film Centre which we announced last week, funding for the Museum of London which recently came into our control along with the City, and through our events programme: by refreshing the events programme and creating new events like the Story of London or expanding some of the existing events that we run like St George's Day.

Other themes that we have pursued: ensuring a successful Cultural Olympiad in 2012 and that there is a strong cultural legacy; we have established a Cultural Olympiad Board, which is chaired by Tony Hall of the Royal Opera House, and which I sit on; and we are working with the City Operations Group here at the Greater London Authority (GLA) to ensure that culture is a key part of what happens in 2012.

When I came in front of the Committee last year I talked about the importance of engaging young people through culture, which was a large element in the Mayor's manifesto and his commitment to London. We have started a large piece of work on music education and a number of initiatives that have come out of that. We are also very keen to promote access and participation to culture across London, particularly in looking at the issues facing outer London. We have already begun to look at how our events programme might support events in outer London through things like the Story of London and our funding for events like the Jazz Festival.

Importantly the most important thing that we have tried to do is to ensure that culture remains at the heart of what the Mayor does and that we continue to advocate for it in the current economic climate because we know that our funding from corporate sponsors has declined. We know that it will be very difficult for local boroughs to maintain their funding. So, the Mayor has said publicly that he thinks it is important that culture is so important to what London does and its success. So, I think that is probably where we have tried to do the most and put a lot of our energy.

Victoria Borwick (AM): Could I just ask you a bit more about the Cultural Olympiad. I know it is only part of your brief, but I think it came up this morning at the [Assembly Plenary] meeting – if you hadn't had the chance to watch the webcast - that most people have very little idea that there will be a Cultural Olympiad and also do not really know what to do or where they fit in. I am sure all the boroughs have got little committees beavering away doing things. How do we get a sense of bringing that in collectively to help London as a whole? That is the first part of my question.

The second part is Dee [Doocey] chairs the security committee for the Olympics [at the Metropolitan Police Authority] and one of the concerns has been that if boroughs organise something too successful for the Cultural Olympiad, that would increase and detract from the requirements that are already quite severe for policing all the events that are already happening that summer.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Well, on your second point we have established a cultural planning group at City Hall which brings together the cultural agencies around London, including The Arts Council London, MLA London [strategic development agency for museums, libraries and archives], London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), the LDA and Visit London. That group sits within a broader piece of work under the City Operations Group.

In our work, in thinking about the cultural activities and the events going on in 2012, we will be working closely with that City Operations Group to ensure that questions like security and crowd management are thought through and that we do not want chaos in 2012. Obviously everyone is very concerned that we have great outdoor events where lots of people can congregate but there is not a pressure on other things that we need to do.

In terms of broadening participation in the Cultural Olympiad and ensuring that people know that it is happening, I think that establishing that Cultural Olympiad Board with Tony Hall chairing that is a really important step. It creates a platform to talk about the Cultural Olympiad, to talk about the major projects that are currently in train, but importantly to focus attention on the year of 2012 itself because that really will be the point where you will begin to see tangible projects and events that you can actually go and visit and can enjoy.

At the moment obviously there is a huge amount of build up to the festival and I think that Tony Hall's ability to speak to the cultural sector and to excite people about what will happen is going to make people aware of the amazing things that will be going on. What we have said is that it is very important that London and the London boroughs in particular are involved in that

process because you cannot have a successful festival in London unless there are grassroots organisations involved and everyone can feel part of it. It is not just the big institutions.

Victoria Borwick (AM): I do think it is very, very important to have events in the boroughs that people can participate in. I mean it would be nice if everyone could participate in the Olympics in some way but realistically this is the one time that they can do it. So, to me just having ornamental pictures is not really the point. I think the point is, if possible, rather than something that is just visual we really want something that people can participate in. I am very encouraged to hear that, thank you.

Andrew Boff (AM): You mentioned St George's Day and there has been increased activity. From what I perceived of St George's Day there was higher profile coverage of it in terms of the Mayor's events and something going on in Trafalgar Square. I would be more interested to see something that tried to spread the celebration of that day around the boroughs.

Indeed I had put a question down to the Mayor, which he had agreed to, that he should approach the boroughs, asking them in particular in good time for St George's Day, what it is that they would be doing to celebrate that day. Unfortunately he did not do that. What he actually did is he issued an invitation for their St George's Day events to appear on the website.

Can we get some assurance that we will get that happening for next year's St George's Day? We can have some central coordination to identify what each individual borough is doing for that particular event.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): The letter that the Mayor sent was actually prompted by your question. It was to alert all the boroughs that the Mayor was planning to make a big celebration of St George's Day in a way that had not been done previously. I think the wording in that letter was done in a way to encourage boroughs to participate, but I take your point. If you think that we should be doing more to encourage boroughs and there is more that we can do then we are very pleased to do that.

What I would say is that it is great to have a central focus on St George's Day in Trafalgar Square. I think that is one thing that will inspire other boroughs to see that it can be very popular. We had 20,000 people come to St George's Day in April which was a really fantastic achievement and shows that there is real popular appetite for this.

Through other events that we do, like the Story of London and the other cultural campaigns, we are trying to encourage boroughs to work with their local cultural institutions and organisations to do events that are grassroots which more Londoners can get access to, because obviously not everyone will be able to travel into Trafalgar Square.

I take your point that for all these cultural events to be successful they have to have some kind of local resonance and they have to be things that people feel that they can participate in and it is not just something that happens at a distance.

Andrew Boff (AM): So, is this an undertaking you can make that we will be getting communications with the boroughs that ask them what it is they are going to be doing for St George's Day in good time for St George's Day?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Yes, I can say more on that. As the Mayor said at the time in the letters if they wanted to do events and they wanted publicity as well then we would advertise those.

Andrew Boff (AM): I do not want to spend time on what I asked him to do and what the letter actually said, but I am grateful for your help.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Andrew, I am very happy to ask them what they are doing or for the Mayor to ask them what they are doing and also to offer them the chance to publicise that event so that they have more profile.

Andrew Boff (AM): Thank you.

Roger Evans (AM): Could you tell us in hindsight do you feel the Story of London Festival was a successful initiative?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Yes, it was. I think for the first year we had 150,000 people who came, we had 520 events across London, 30 boroughs, and we had over 300,000 page views on the website and lots of interest; 90% of people who came to events thought that the events were high quality and 70% of the 200 organisations that we worked with said that they would like us to do it again and we are planning to do it again next year.

I think that as an event it was a very ambitious programme and we tried to make it genuinely Londonwide and, of course, there are lessons that we would like to learn for next year. I think on the whole it was a success and that people related to it because it meant that everyone could be involved and it was not targeted at any single community but at every Londoner.

Roger Evans (AM): Yes, are you going to do it next year and what are the lessons that you are going to learn for that?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Yes, we will do it next year. We will do it probably in October but we have not confirmed the date. One of the lessons we learned was because the new administration had started in May and we trying to do it in less than a year it did not give cultural organisations a great deal of lead time to organise events, so we have agreed to shift the date so that they have longer to plan events.

We managed to raise quite large amounts of money from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the London museums hub that were very generous in supporting the event, and they gave £350,000 to go directly to cultural organisations to put on events. We have gone back to them this year and in some cases have agreed to increase that funding so that we can enable more organisations to be part of it.

We will work on our branding and our marketing and try to build up a greater profile through our media work. I think that on the whole the event was a really good framework and we would like to develop better relationships with the boroughs who participated. We did not previously have a relationship with some of these organisations and I think it was a great way of trying to develop a close working relationship.

Roger Evans (AM): Do you think 520 events are too many or is that the same number you will look at next year?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): I think what we would like to do next year is to target it and to shorten the amount of time that the festival goes on for; it was a month this year. The intention really was to try to make it as broad and inclusive as possible because we knew that we were asking cultural organisations to do quite a lot with not very much time. So, next year we will have more time, we will probably focus on a smaller number of events but we will ask organisations to do more to create special events for the festival.

I have got the figures here somewhere, but the majority of the events that were created last year were created specially for the festival. Obviously there was a great deal of pressure and they were struggling to make things work in the time available, so I am hoping that next year they will have a bit more freedom and flexibility to devise new programmes.

Roger Evans (AM): I attended and spoke at an event in Ilford. I can tell you the people who arranged it and the people who were there and enjoyed it were actually very grateful and hope it could happen again next year. It was quite a diffuse gathering. There did not seem to be a key message and I had some difficulty in articulating the Mayor's key message when it was my turn to stand up and speak. I felt really that that is something that we should try to get a bit clearer next time. What do you think the key message should be?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Well, this year the focus is very much on the history and the diverse stories of London and next year we will have a theme, but I do not want to give it away just yet. I would like to be able to announce with some fanfare what we are planning to do next year. So, if you will bear with me, we will let you know in due course.

Roger Evans (AM): Will there be a tighter theme?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Yes, there will be a theme and a hook and there will be things that people can create programmes around.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Top secret at the moment.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): It is top secret I am afraid. You will have to wait.

Roger Evans (AM): I do not think we are going to get much further with that line of questioning. I shall come back.

Dee Doocey (Chair): I do not think you are. Top secret is top secret, you see.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): It is not that secret I have to say.

Roger Evans (AM): It is not as secret as the LDA.

Dee Doocey (Chair): No, indeed. Well, nothing is as secret as the LDA!

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Can we turn to the Veronica Wadley [Mayor's nominee to chair Arts Council London] saga? Why does the Mayor's Office or the Mayor believe that they do not need to follow Nolan Principles* on this appointment?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): We do feel that we should follow Nolan Principles and we did follow Nolan Principles in the process. We followed fully the GLA protocol, which the Mayor signed in May this year, which means that we have to be clear and transparent in the way that we run public appointments like this. We took advice from GLA officers all the way throughout the process to ensure that we were following Nolan Principles.

It is an open secret that there was a disagreement on the panel between myself and the other member of the panel, Liz Forgan, who is the chair of National Arts Council England, but we took advice on how to resolve that disagreement.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Sorry, there was a third member of the panel, Sir David Durie [Independent Member of the GLA Standards Committee]. What was his role in the panel then?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): There was an independent element in the room. He was not on the selection panel but he was there. He is a requirement of the GLA protocol which is to confirm that the appointment is one that the Mayor can reasonably make and that is set out in the protocol. He also expressed a view about the merits of the different candidates but it was not his role to express a view about the preferences or the relative merits, but he was in the room.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): It is very unusual to have a two-member panel when there are disagreements and impasses are reached or whatever. So, what advice did you take in the first stage of this panel, or was there one stage, and maybe you can tell us at the same time when the Mayor decided to interview all of the candidates for the job?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Well, there was a disagreement between the two of us and the officers advised that because there was a disagreement it was --

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Officers were present in the room were they?

*Nolan Principles, also known as the Seven Principles of Public Life: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty and leadership

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): No, the officers who we spoke to and I took advice from.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): So there were no GLA officers present during the interview? It was just you, Liz Forgan and Sir David Durie? No GLA officers taking notes?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): No. No one. On that panel in the first stage, we had a disagreement and the advice that we took from the officers and that I advised the Mayor as well was that he should see all our preferred candidates rather than excluding anybody's preference.

We made that very clear to both Sir David Durie and Liz Forgan. I also advised the Mayor that he takes seriously their views and he consult with them on their views about the different candidates before he interviewed all four of them, which he did.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Alone.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): No, he interviewed them with Deputy Chief Executive Jeff Jacobs in the room. I was not in the second interviews in order to ensure that it was as fair as possible, so Jeff Jacobs was in the room as well.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): He participated in the interview?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Yes.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): He asked questions of people?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): I am afraid I do not know if he did ask questions but he was in the room and notes were taken of the interviews that the Mayor did.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): So just help me here then, we had a difference of opinion at the first stage between you and Liz Forgan; the independent member expressed a view on the candidates; and, even though Liz Forgan and you disagreed, Sir David Durie echoed the view of Liz Forgan about the qualities of Veronica Wadley?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): He did, but he did not have a vote as such. He was not on the selection panel, so that was not his role to express a view.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): He did establish the fact that she was not as good as some other candidates at that stage?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): That was his opinion. It was not my opinion and I was on the selection panel.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): OK. It was at that stage when there was a disagreement that another element of the process came into being with the interview the Mayor had with all four candidates?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): There was always an intention that the Mayor would interview any shortlist of candidates from that meeting. The disagreement was about how many candidates he should see and who he should see. I felt that it was important, because this was a Mayoral appointment, that he should see all four candidates and make the decision himself based on the fact that there was a disagreement between the two of us. I think that is actually quite reasonable. We have a record of a telephone conversation that Liz Forgan had with the Mayor where she agreed that she could not say fairer than that and she accepted that the Mayor would see all four candidates.

I think the important point here is that the Mayor is elected to make decisions about who should be suitable for public appointment and all the way throughout we tried to consult and seek the views from Liz Forgan and from Sir David Durie. The Mayor took those seriously and then he interviewed the candidates and made his own decision. I think that is a decision we can explain. I am very happy to explain to the Committee why we put Veronica Wadley forward and why we thought that she would be --

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): It is one of my next questions. Just before we go onto that, just to help us even further, did the Mayor then change the criteria at that second stage of the interview?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Not at all. In fact what I should explain is that the initial list of applications that we received for the position Liz Forgan and I went through all of them and we shortlisted six candidates for interview based on the published criteria. We agreed that those six candidates met the basic criteria.

One of the candidates withdrew before we interviewed them but then there was a disagreement on the day of the interviews about who was the best candidate. The Mayor did not change the criteria. He interviewed four candidates against those criteria and made a very clear decision based on who met the criteria that was published. So, it was consistent all the way through. There was no change of policy or no change of what we were looking for and what he was looking for.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): So, the Mayor came to the decision based on the job description and the person specification?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Yes.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): OK, so if we can turn to Veronica Wadley then in terms of why you think she deserved a second interview, if that is the case, if it was a two-stage process. We have seen in the press the fact that she had chaired the *Evening Standard's* Theatre Awards. What made her then become the best candidate in the Mayor's eyes on that second interview when it was actually only you in the first interview that thought she was worth going forward to that stage?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Veronica Wadley is one of the top women journalists in the UK; when she was editor at the *Evening Standard* it won a number of awards for its arts coverage; she is a very good communicator, a very good advocate for the arts; she is very well respected in the arts sector and she had a very good understanding both of London and the broader political context of London, but also of the Mayor's priorities for culture and she had a very strong understanding of issues that I have already discussed such as the importance of provision in outer London, the importance of London's international arts scene and the importance of engaging with young people.

I think that she demonstrated a very clear understanding of what it was that made the arts sector so successful in London and she demonstrated that she had commitment and she had passion to deliver those priorities. I think that she is highly qualified for the job and it is dismaying and disappointing that correspondence was leaked on the day that we received the letter from Ben Bradshaw [Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport] that put her in a bad light. I personally was very impressed with her at the interview and I would say that she is extremely well qualified for that role.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Still, two people of the first process who were there, albeit the role of Sir David Durie as you have described it, were not very supportive of that view of Veronica Wadley that you are outlining to us. Why would that be the case?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): There was a disagreement between the two of us; I think disagreements do happen on interview panels.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Most of us have been on interview panels and we never seem to have two people. It is always odd numbers to stop that disagreement. We find that very strange. That is why we are confused about Sir David Durie's role in this.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): It was always clear that there were two people on the panel. There was a disagreement. I am going on the correspondence that Liz Forgan sent so I am not putting words into her mouth, but she felt that Veronica Wadley did not have sufficient arts experience. I think it is important to say that for roles like this it is not required, it was never put in the published criteria, for instance, that the person who would do this job needs to have professional experience working in the arts. In fact, Liz Forgan herself has a professional background in journalism. In previous appointments to the Arts Council there have been people who have come from outside the sector.

I think what Veronica Wadley brought was the fact that she did come from outside the sector but she had a very strong understanding of the arts. She did not bring any sector interests or any kind of bias towards one sector or another, but she did have a very good understanding of the arts scene in London and I think she was very committed. There was a disagreement between the two of us but that is why it was important for the Mayor to see all the candidates and to make the decision himself.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Two very quick questions. If the role of Sir David Durie was meant to be an observer in the first case, why did he not observe the second part of the process for the integrity of that process? Can you just explain that very quickly?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Well, the officers advised that Jeff Jacobs being in the room would be the other panel member or he would be involved in that interview.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Was Jeff Jacobs an observer or panel member? Did he have a vote? Did he persuade the Mayor? Did he talk about the merits of candidates?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): I am afraid I cannot say because I was not in that room. I am sure that we can find that information and send it to you. What I can say is, and this was recorded in the interview notes, that Jeff Jacobs agreed that Veronica Wadley was the strongest candidate on the day with the Mayor and that was recorded.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): So, we can assume that he was on the panel then?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): What I can say is that I think we can assume that he agreed with the Mayor, whether that was formally put to a vote as such I am not sure, but I am sure we can find out.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): My last question then. We have got a very important position [Chair of the Arts Council London] that is left vacant at the moment. Is there any chance that you are going to be asked to do this and would you accept it if the Mayor puts you in that position on an interim basis then?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Well, what I would say is it is an extremely important position and the Mayor has to consider all the options and take advice on the process and the next steps. He only received the letter less than two weeks ago from Ben Bradshaw's office so he has to think about what the next steps will be. One of the options we are looking at is whether we need an interim chair until the situation about the permanent chair is resolved. That person could be from the existing council so it could be one of the existing members.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): It could be you?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Well, I am on the existing council so it could be.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Oh, so it could be you.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Well, one of the options is it could be me or it could be somebody else.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): That is under active consideration?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Yes, all these options are being considered now.

John Biggs (AM): I have three questions. The first is why do you think that Liz Forgan wrote to the Secretary of State or the Secretary of State's office very clearly stating her views about what she felt was the inappropriateness of the recommendation by the Mayor?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): I think you would have to ask Liz Forgan why she felt compelled to do that.

John Biggs (AM): OK, why do you think? I asked you why you thought.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): I think she had a preference that I did not.

John Biggs (AM): Yes, because you are normally very sharp and bright on these things. This is a matter on which you have no view, is that right?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Her explanation for why she wrote was because she felt that Veronica Wadley was not the strongest candidate and she disagreed with me. I thought she was the strongest candidate. Whether she had any other reasons that I am not aware of, I think you would have to ask her.

John Biggs (AM): Second question then is do you not think there is a problem with the appearance of what happened? I have never met Veronica Wadley, I do not think - I might have done by accident or something - and she may be superbly compatible with this post, but what has happened is an unseemly mess in which it looks as if it has been stitched up and that the Mayor has ignored the proper process.

It may be that someone has spun badly. There has been lots of spinning. For example, someone in the Mayor's Office apparently spun that the reason Liz Forgan said what she said was that she was a lefty - whatever that is; does that mean she is left-handed or something?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): I am sure you know what that is, John.

John Biggs (AM): Of course I do, but I think it is pretty derogatory stuff and presumably that person was too cowardly to be identified. Do you not agree that there is in the public interest a problem with the appearance of what happened?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): What I would say is that the correspondence that was leaked clearly did not come from the Mayor's Office.

John Biggs (AM): That is unusual, yes.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): There was correspondence though from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS); it did not come from us. We are just as dismayed that was made so public and the media coverage was so partial and gave a very, I think, inaccurate picture of what actually happened.

John Biggs (AM): I have been in this business for a fair few years and it is not common to have three people on a panel but only one of them has a vote. There is that old joke about the Transport & General Workers' Union (T&G) meeting where everyone wants tea but the T&G representative has 1.2 million votes and therefore they all have to have coffee. So, you are all in the room but some of you are not as equal as each other, and some of you have more votes than the other. When it is a tie you get two votes and when it is not you only have one, and when everyone agrees everyone has one. It just seems bizarre.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): You are presenting it as if it was not clear.

John Biggs (AM): Well, it is pretty unclear to me.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): It was clear in the protocol the role of the independent element. We might have disagreements about how the panel was constructed but it was not like there was a sudden change half way through where we decided somebody did not have a vote after all. It was clear from the outset and I made that clear to the officers who helped organise it.

John Biggs (AM): My final question is I do understand that your job is partly to take bullets for the Mayor and you do it very well as well, of course, and there are a few apparent holes as well - to extend the metaphor - but do you think more light would be shed on this process if - by the way I am happy to withdraw the comments I made at Mayor's Question Time (MQT) on this to help this along - the process was considered in detail by the Standards Committee? I do think it raises questions on probity, confusion, committees of one in smoked-filled rooms and whether people in the room have a say or not.

It is fundamentally unsatisfactory and I think the purpose of such a reference might be to help lefties like myself, and Liz Forgan perhaps, but it might also be to help the Mayor to ensure that he is insulated from what might be viewed as dodgy decisions. You do not need to be a history freak to remember the dying days of the John Major administration when there was all sorts of stuff about standards in public life and everyone was considered to be a crook. We are now in a climate again where people in politics are considered to be dodgy by virtue of being in politics. This, I think, raises an unhelpful cloud for everyone. Would you not agree that that is a problem for us?

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): I recognise that there is a problem about public trust in politics and politicians.

John Biggs (AM): Not on this occasion and not with this politician.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): One of the reasons why the Mayor did sign the GLA protocol on appointments was to ensure that these processes were transparent. I would say that actually they are far more transparent than they were perhaps previously because there is an attempt and an effort to ensure that everything we do can be explained and can be made clear to the public. I am willing to take questions about the process and I think that everybody who was involved would be prepared to do that as long as we did not expose the candidates unfairly and the comments about them to the public. We took advice all the way through the process to ensure that we were meeting Nolan Principles and we took decisions that we knew we could justify publicly.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Why did officers here brief against that in the press? Press journalists were saying to us that the Mayor's Office is saying they do not have to follow Nolan Principles on the basis that they signed this protocol.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): I am sorry I do not know who said that to you. I should explain that we do not follow a particular process that is set out by DCMS because they have a different way of doing appointments, but we do have a process and a protocol which is based on the essential elements of Nolan. Nolan is a set of principles, it is not a set of processes and as long as we can say that we have followed the principles I think that is what the public care about. Did the Mayor suggest Veronica Wadley because he felt that she was the best candidate able to do the job?

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): She was his mate.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Yes, he did and he can explain why. I am very happy to explain why and go into more detail about why I thought she was qualified.

Dee Doocey (Chair): I am moving on to Roger [Evans] and then I am finishing this session. The only thing I would say is we have all been in politics for a very long time between us and I do not think any of us has ever heard of a panel consisting of two people. I think by having a panel of two people you left yourself wide open to all sorts of suggestions. Then when we are told that an officer was on the second interview with the Mayor, and then we are told that the officer agreed with the Mayor, I have never heard of an officer that agrees because normally an officer is in the room to give advice, so I do think you have left yourself open.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): You will have to forgive me because I am not sure about that exact process because I was not involved in the second interview on the advice of the officers themselves.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Sure, I accept that. The officer seems to have played a very unusual role, shall I say.

Roger Evans (AM): Chair, I think your comment about a panel of three is a wise comment which the Mayor's Office would do well to take on board actually to avoid these situations in future. All I have seen about this really are the somewhat confusing reports I have read in the press and the evidence session that we have had this afternoon. I do think that it would help

me, and probably colleagues, to make a judgement about this if we actually knew a bit more about the people who Liz Forgan felt were suitable for the job.

Victoria Borwick (AM): I do not think we ought to know the candidates' names.

Roger Evans (AM): Were we talking about opponents who were Michelangelo or were they political appointments or what, then we could actually form a judgement ourselves. I think really without knowing that, this debate is all a bit one-sided and it takes place in a vacuum and it is probably not going to go much further.

All right, I see Victoria [Borwick] has got some concerns about exposing the names in public. I have to say I personally do not. I think when you put yourself forward for a public position you put yourself in the limelight. If you were just going to let us know privately then that, I guess, would have to be acceptable.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Yes. I hear what you are coming from. I also sort of sense Victoria's [Borwick] concerns. I think I am probably more with you [to Roger Evans] on this particular occasion.

Could I ask, Munira [Mirza], if you could just look at what additional information - you do not have to decide now - you could give the Committee in order to assuage our concerns a bit? I would also like to say before you leave that clearly half an hour is a very short amount of time, particularly when there is an important element like this. We will be writing to you, and I hope that is OK, with some other areas that we were hoping to cover this afternoon which we have not managed to get to.

Andrew Boff (AM): Could we get the salary of the Arts Council for London job that was being looked for as well, please?

Victoria Borwick (AM): The job description.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Yes, could we know that?

Roger Evans (AM): I am sure that is public information.

Len Duvall (Deputy Chair): Chair, it may help, I have got an outstanding letter with the Mayor, and I presume he is going to respond to it some time. I am more than happy for this Committee to have full copies of that at the same time.

Dee Doocey (Chair): Thank you. Munira, I would like to thank you very much indeed for your attendance here this afternoon.

Munira Mirza (Mayoral Adviser on Culture and the Arts): Thank you.