

Mayor's Question Time – Thursday 15 October 2020

Transcript of Item 5 – Questions to the Mayor

2020/3509 - Transport for London: Extraordinary Funding and Financing Agreement

Dr Alison Moore AM

Please provide an update on the status of the new funding agreement covering the period from 18 October 2020 onwards.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): As you know, the current funding agreement runs until 17 October [2020]. That is this Saturday. We continue to discuss the next emergency funding package with the Government. I appreciate you are keen to know what the new deal will look like but this is a live negotiation and so there is a limit to what I can say publicly at this stage.

Transport for London (TfL) has asked for financial support for the next 18 months. It is clear that passenger numbers are not going to return to pre-pandemic levels anytime soon. With a funding model that is so heavily reliant on fares income, COVID-19 has left TfL dangerously exposed. Back in May [2020], I said the funding deal was a sticking plaster. I appreciate there are competing demands and difficult choices to be made in all of this under great time pressure, but I fear we are yet again on course for another short term make-do-and-mend fix while the privately-owned train operating companies have been given an 18 month bailout, which still allows them to make a profit.

Let me put it plainly. TfL cannot invest in London's future when we do not know where the next pound is coming from. I will also remind colleagues and those watching from the Government that London contributes more than £38 billion net to the country's economy. TfL is a huge investor in supply chains across the country. It matters also to the United Kingdom (UK) what happens to TfL. The London Underground investment programme, for example, directly supports 43,000 jobs, 68% of which are outside London. Londoners and London businesses recognise the importance of TfL to London's success and to the nation's success. A drip-feed approach to funding might suit the Government but it would be catastrophic for London and our country.

If TfL does not know how much income it is going to be getting in a year or 18 months, how can it deliver the balanced budget it is legally required to produce? TfL has already applied tight spending controls across the board including pausing entry into any new contracts, but continually deferring things is a false economy. You end up paying more in the long term.

I have to be candid. If TfL does not get appropriate funding, it will be unable to run safe, reliable and frequent transport services. Any deal cannot seek to punish Londoners for doing what has been asked of them by the Government: staying at home and away from public transport. I have always fought for the right and fair deal for London and I will continue to do so in the coming hours and days.

Dr Alison Moore AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Given we are within two days of the 17 October deadline and on the brink of going into, it would appear, tier 2 arrangements across London and with business leaders across London calling for the Government to provide a sustainable funding deal going forward, it is very frustrating for everyone.

At the 1 October Budget [and Performance] Committee meeting, Andy Byford [Commissioner of Transport for London] said that two thirds of the KPMG review of TfL's future financial position and future financial structure have been redacted. Has the Government explained how it thinks TfL can discuss a future funding package when the Government's thinking remains secret?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): No, it has not explained that. I am not sure how much that report cost but it was paid for by taxpayers' money. Not only can I not see it and Londoners not see it but TfL's Commissioner cannot see it. Frankly, it is breath-taking.

Dr Alison Moore AM: Has a redacted copy of the review been provided to TfL now and will that unredacted copy be published along with the new funding agreement?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): No. We have not seen an unredacted copy, neither the Commissioner, his top team or the TfL Finance Committee. I would be astonished if the Government still sought to keep it a secret. It needs to make it available to TfL's team and in due course it should be made public.

Dr Alison Moore AM: Transparency is clearly an issue for us on this and it must be frustrating for everybody involved. It took 14 days between the May [2020] funding package being agreed and the DfT giving TfL permission to publish a copy of the agreement.

Have you sought permission to publish this next agreement as soon as it is agreed? Could you tell me whether that permission has been granted?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): It is a really good question, Dr Moore. TfL's Finance Committee meets tomorrow. For the reasons you have alluded to in your question and your follow-up, you will be aware that 17 October is when the deal comes to an end. It is important for the Finance Committee to have sight of the correspondence between me and the Secretary of State, which I am sure it will want to do for tomorrow. I will be speaking later on today with the Transport Commissioner [Andy Byford] and my Deputy Mayor for Transport [Heidi Alexander] about what information is made available to the Finance Committee. As you suggest, it should have sight of those documents. As and when agreement is reached with the Government, I would expect that to be made public as well.

Dr Alison Moore AM: Yes. It does feel like they are negotiating with one hand tied behind their back. Finally from me, you understandably have complained about several of the conditions attached to the original funding package, most notably the suspension of free travel for under-18s.

Can you confirm what conditions you are trying to remove from the new agreement and whether you have had any success in doing that?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): It is worth reminding you, colleagues and more importantly Londoners that last time it was a couple of days before the deadline that the Government introduced these conditions for the first time. We were ready to begin negotiations on the second half of the year in early August but the Government only began talking to us in earnest over the last few days.

If past evidence is anything to go by, we cannot be too surprised if the Government tries to impose new conditions between now and the deadline. Clearly, if they are detrimental to TfL or to Londoners, we will resist those.

I have also been in the discussions raising some of the conditions attached in the first half because, as you will appreciate, some of them do not make economic sense but also are extremely hard on some of the most vulnerable Londoners. If the Government wants to pursue those conditions, extend them or introduce new ones, it will have to explain publicly the justification for doing so. As I said earlier on, it gave funding for 18 months to privatised train operating companies without any conditions attached.

Dr Alison Moore AM: It clearly is not a level playing field. This is a really difficult time for London and it does not seem that the Government is playing fair by Londoners. Thank you very much for your time, Mr Mayor.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Assembly Member McCartney has a follow-up question.

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes, thank you, Mr Mayor. A fair funding deal for TfL means jobs retained and created across the UK. In your opening answer you said that there are some 43,000 jobs in TfL's supply chain and I understand 68% of them are outside of London.

Can you just explain a little bit more what happens to those 43,000 UK-wide jobs if investment is not forthcoming?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): That is a really important question. One of the things I have tried to get across to the Government, which seems unaware of this, is that being pro-London is being pro-UK. We are the engine of the country. The 'levelling-up agenda', in inverted commas, is being used as a proxy to be anti-London. What the Government needs to realise is that if London fails, the country fails. If TfL fails, our businesses in London fail. You will have seen the letter from businesses across the country today that was reported in one of the newspapers earlier on this week.

I will just give you one example. Many of the bus manufacturers are based outside of London from Falkirk and Belfast to Guildford and other parts of the country. If we cannot agree contracts with the bus operating companies, that could lead to job losses elsewhere in the country and we need to make sure that we are a going concern and are good for the money when it comes to these contracts.

I will give you another example. The Prime Minister visited not too long ago a factory in Goole that is making the new Piccadilly line trains. I can go on: the taxis in East Midlands, the bicycles in West Midlands and so forth.

The Government has to realise that by playing political games with the Labour Mayor of London, it is putting at risk not just businesses and jobs in London but businesses and jobs around the country. My message to the Government is to stop playing games. Let us get around the table as grownups and do a deal as soon as possible.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you for that. That is very clear. Can I just ask you though if TfL has to date had to stop the signing of new supply contracts?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): No, we have not, but one of the things, Chair, that I am concerned about is to make sure that we can continue to honour the contracts we have and also that the market, contractors and subcontractors have confidence in TfL. I am sure that is one of the things that will be discussed at the TfL Finance Committee, which meets tomorrow.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. I wonder, Mr Mayor, whether Members of Parliament of all political parties are exactly aware of the number of jobs in their constituencies dependent on TfL's supply chain. Thank you for that.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Assembly Member Devenish?

Tony Devenish AM: Good morning, Mr Mayor. I want to slightly change the tone on this. This is a completely non-political question. With 10 weeks to go before Christmas, I wanted to ask you to really consider - and I have given your office notice of this question - a special Christmas present for the West End, where one in 10 London jobs come from.

Will you please consider for the four Saturdays before Christmas and for Boxing Day suspending the Congestion Charge on those four days? It will really help save jobs in the West End businesses and particularly young Londoners' jobs as well, Mr Mayor. Will you please consider that?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The condition to both raise the amount of the Congestion Charge to £15 and to extend it to 10pm every day of the week including Saturday and Sunday was something that the Government imposed on TfL. Without giving a running commentary on the negotiations, I have been saying to the Government that I am aware from my conversations with businesses in the West End how detrimental that has been, particularly weekends, for businesses in the West End. That is one of the things I am asking the Government to reconsider because you are absolutely right that these conditions imposed by the Government are causing huge damage to businesses across our city. I am keen to do what I can, particularly as we alert level 2 to support our businesses. I would hope that the Government would remove some of these conditions and shackles from us so that we can be in charge of our own destiny.

Tony Devenish AM: We could argue over the details of the politics, but I do not want to on this question. You have the power, do you not, to suspend the Congestion Charge for those four Saturdays if you wish to?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): No. If I breach the conditions the Government has placed on TfL for the giving of the grant and the loan, it could quite easily not give us any further sums of money. That is why it is really important during the negotiation phase we are in with the Government for you to support me in saying to the Government, "No to these conditions and strings because you are causing huge damage to London businesses. Allow the Mayor and his experts at TfL to decide what should happen to the Congestion Charge because they understand London's businesses far better than members of the Cabinet or civil servants in Whitehall".

Tony Devenish AM: To put it on the record, Mr Mayor, you are saying you do not have the power as the Mayor of London to suspend that Congestion Charge for a Saturday?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I am saying quite clearly - and I will say it again - that the conditions that the Government has imposed on TfL on the issue of the grant and the loan means that if I fail to abide by those conditions, the Government is able to remove the grant and the loan terms, which could mean TfL not being able to make ends meet. The only way we could then spend within our limits is to reduce services.

Tony Devenish AM: I do not believe that is correct, but I will leave it there. Thank you.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Thank you. Can I request Members when they ask follow-up questions that they relate to the main question rather than bringing in another matter? It does not quite help. The Mayor was

happy to answer the question, but if we can stick to the subject matter with each of the questions in the follow-up questions, it will be extremely helpful. Thank you.

Tony Devenish AM: Just so you are aware, Chair, I did advise the office of the Mayor of the question in advance and it does relate to TfL finances, but I respect your decision.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Thank you very much.

2020/3705 - Police Officer Safety

[Steve O'Connell AM](#)

What progress has been made on providing greater protections for police officers?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Can I thank the Assembly Member for his question? I know he has been concerned about this for a number of years.

The death of Sergeant Matt Ratana is an absolute tragedy. My heart goes out to the family and loved ones of this brave officer, who has paid the ultimate price for helping to keep Londoners safe. I know from my visit to Croydon last week the impact this has had on his fellow officers, friends and the entire Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) family. They mourn their colleague deeply at this extremely difficult time.

Both the MPS and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) are conducting live independent investigations into this incident and we must allow them to complete their enquiries.

Tragic incidents like this are terrible reminders of the dangers our police officers face every single day to protect our city. Our officers work tirelessly to keep us safe and we in turn should keep them safe. It is appalling that we have seen a 16% rise in attacks on our officers in London. Assaults on our police officers will not be tolerated and anyone who commits this type of crime will feel the full force of the law.

That is why I have called on the Government for a further uplift to the assault on emergency workers legislation from a maximum of 12 months to two years, reflecting the seriousness with which assaults on emergency workers should be viewed. The Commissioner [of Police of the Metropolis] asked for funding to increase the provision of tasers and we have invested an additional £1 million into this. We have all seen the biggest-ever rollout of body-worn video, ensuring that when officers are attacked evidence is captured to help bring their attackers to justice.

Following the shocking murder of Sergeant Ratana, the Commissioner took swift action to protect officers while investigations are ongoing. She reissued all safety guidance. She introduced a new requirement for officers to wear a stab [proof] vest throughout the custody process. She initiated a further rollout of search wands in vehicles that will carry people to check for concealed weapons before transporting. [Deputy] Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor is conducting an MPS custody safety review and the MPS is fully engaged with the National Police Chiefs Council's (NPCC) review of officer and staff safety and will ensure that improvements are made where appropriate.

Operation Hampshire continues to establish a clear picture of assaults and is supporting those who have been assaulted on duty and is working to prosecute offenders. So far this year there have been nearly 4,000 sanctioned detections for assaults on police officers.

Our officers and staff come to work every day to protect the public, minimise harm, prevent crime and bring offenders to justice. We will continue, Chair, to ensure our officers and staff are provided with the best-quality training and equipment and that those who do attack our officers are prosecuted.

Steve O'Connell AM: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor. I thank you and others for your support and condolences at the loss of Sergeant Ratana. Our officers risk their lives daily to protect us and we must do all we can to protect them.

This was a question that I was going to pose at the last MQT but we ran out of time and it has taken a tragic turn since then with the incident and I thank you for your response.

I understand it is an ongoing investigation and that is absolutely right, but you did also mention that there was going to be a review of officer safety run by the MPS in custody suites. They were going to review processes because something clearly went wrong with the process. Have you any update on that particular aspect, Mr Mayor?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, it is really important to say this for those watching. Since I have been Mayor, Assembly Member O'Connell has been assiduous in raising this issue and it is a good example of cross-party working together to challenge me to make sure we do what we can to keep our officers safe. I thank him on behalf of officers, their families and Londoners for continuing to do.

I can say Assembly Member O'Connell that what the MPS are not doing is waiting for the end of the process to make any changes. They are making any changes in real time. I mentioned the Laurence Taylor review. I also mentioned in my answer the issue of the wands and so forth in custody suites.

I can also give you the good news that the Croydon custody centre has now reopened. I was there the day before. It was very moving and quite emotional. You will be really proud that officers were back and civilian staff were back ready for the reopening, even though many of them - and I say this not in any way to amplify the grief they are going through - were quite traumatised. It is a good example of their professionalism.

I reassure you that the Commissioner [Dame Cressida Dick DBE QPM], her Deputy [Commissioner Sir Stephen House QPM] and her top team are making sure that in real time any improvements are made that need making.

Steve O'Connell AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. On the process aspect, I know there will be an investigation with live-time adjustments, but we will need to understand the process from the beginning of the interaction with the individual on the Croydon streets to how that was managed. We will look forward to those.

On your comments around the increased number of assaults on officers, these have gone up immensely. In 2018/19 in the MPS just under 3,400 were assaulted. The NPCC has just published a report about protections UK-wide for officers. Have you or your leading officers had the opportunity to look at that report and liaise with the MPS around its conclusions?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): We have, Chair. My Deputy Mayor [for Policing and Crime] Sophie Linden has been working closely on this. I also use the opportunity to put on record my thanks to the [Metropolitan] Police Federation. I meet Ken Marsh [Chairman, Metropolitan Police Federation] regularly and speak to him, as does Sophie Linden. We are following that through.

I can also reassure you that the London Ambulance Service and other blue-light services are using Operation Hampshire as a template to improve the protection of their frontline staff as well.

Steve O'Connell AM: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor. We will continue to look at the issue of officer safety and to make sure that we protect those who protect us.

I would add to your comments around the pride in our officers in Croydon. I attended on the couple of days after with other political leaders and spoke to the Borough Commander. The pride of our officers under great stress and upset returning to their duties to keep Croydon safe is absolutely wonderful. I thank you again for your interest and support. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

2020/3293 - Safeguarding the interests of disabled people

[Caroline Russell AM](#)

With a winter of further physical distancing ahead, how will you safeguard the interests of disabled people in Streetspace schemes?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Our bold Streetspace plans are transforming London's streets, providing space to enable social distancing and preserving precious capacity on public transport for those less able to walk or cycle. Working with the boroughs so far we have finished or are building almost 80 kilometres of new cycle lanes, created over 22,000 square metres of new space for pedestrians, put in place 75 low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) and implemented more than 214 School Streets so far. As part of an ongoing trial, TfL is extending the hours of over 270 bus lanes on London's Red Routes so that they operate at all times.

However, any changes to our streets cannot adversely impact on vulnerable groups and I am committed to ensuring that the interests of disabled people are safeguarded. TfL carries out equality impact assessments on every scheme it leads on. Over 60 Streetspace assessments are currently in progress, the results of which will be made available online. TfL also works closely with boroughs, reminding them of their public sector duties to ensure accessibility is embedded in all designs and decisions and issuing guidance to support them. TfL is also engaging directly with organisations representing people with specific accessibility requirements in addition to engagement with its Independent Disability Advisory Group. TfL hosted a series of working groups with representatives including Transport for All, Disability Rights UK, Inclusion London, Scope and the Royal Institute of Blind People to hear their views.

All Streetspace measures are temporary changes and TfL and boroughs are listening to feedback and making changes where they are needed. On Cycleway 7, for example, we have upgraded the provision for cyclists. Changes have been made at several locations to create more space for emergency vehicles. TfL is currently engaging with local charity Merton Vision on the design of bus stop bypasses in Colliers Wood.

Our data shows that disabled people are more reliant on walking and using the bus than non-disabled people and are less likely to drive, which is why our Streetspace programme is so important for helping disabled people to continue to get around London safely. This is especially important given the findings of the rapid evidence review I commissioned, which showed the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on disabled people. TfL will continue to engage with stakeholders to ensure its work protects their needs.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. It is very good to hear you recognise that many disabled people are dependent on walking and taking the bus. I am worried that the debate about changing our streets has

become very polarised and people are claiming to speak for disabled people without thinking clearly about what helps people get around on an everyday basis.

I have been to visit schemes on the ground all over London and I have met recently with Transport for All, Guide Dogs and Wheels for Wellbeing and they have all raised good points about how Streetspace can be more inclusive. They tell me one problem for a lot of disabled Londoners is a lack of level pavements before or after Streetspace. Too many Streetspace measures are using ramps and barriers as we would for roadworks but these measures are now set to be lasting right through the winter for months and months ahead. In Brixton and Camden, for example, you delivered fully accessible wider pavements at bus stops using rubber kerbs and an asphalt infill, which is a temporary measure but is much more accessible.

With physical distancing set to run through the winter, will you ensure that the pavements that are widened are fully accessible like the ones in Brixton and Camden.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, I am not sighted on the details but I am more than happy to look at the suggestion that Assembly Member Russell raises. I understand why she raises it. Can I take that away and come back to you?

Caroline Russell AM: Absolutely. Thank you very much. I have also seen a few Streetspace schemes where tactile or blister paving, which enables visually impaired people to find a crossing, is in place, for example, on Park Lane for the bus stop bypasses. It can be done. Why is tactile paving not being used on all Streetspace schemes including the borough ones?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Firstly, I am not excusing. I am just explaining. It was the speed of getting them done in light of the deadlines set by the Government. This is not a criticism of the Government, either.

Again, if there are examples where we are not using the right equipment like the tactile stuff that is really important for visually impaired people, I am really happy offline to speak to the Assembly Member, Chair. What all of us want is to make sure that everyone will take advantage, including those with disability issues. I am more than happy to look into that.

Caroline Russell AM: That is great. Thank you very much. The groups that I have spoken with have raised specific concerns about equality impact assessments on Streetspace schemes. Will you ensure that the equality impact assessments are, as Transport for All have asked, robust, meaningful and coproduced so that you can fully involve local disabled people in checking the impact of any schemes on their neighbouring streets?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): We are in danger of being in agreement on everything.

Caroline Russell AM: That is marvellous.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I am not sure that does her street cred much good. That makes perfect sense to me.

Caroline Russell AM: I am almost out of time here. I just wanted to say that these simple things like having very smooth pavements, dropped curves and tactile paving are absolutely crucial for disabled Londoners to get around safely. New temporary measures can be accompanied with details like a tapping rail to indicate where space is being used for tables and chairs to help visually impaired people get past safely.

I will write you with more details on those ideas. As we go into winter with this need to stay physically apart, these Streetspace schemes need improving, not removing. Thank you. I have no further questions.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Thank you. I am really happy to work with the Assembly Member on this. It is a really good example of ideas she has that we can action that will improve life for everyone.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): There is a follow-up from Assembly Member Hall.

Susan Hall AM: Thank you. I hope that we are in agreement, Mr Mayor. That would be good. One of the simplest changes that you could make to protect the interests of disabled people in Streetspace schemes would be to ensure that wherever buses go, black cabs can go as well. I was really reassured when Andy Byford told me at the Budget and Performance [Committee] meeting that, I quote:

"I consider black cabs to be part of the public transport offer and there is certainly no intention to treat them in some inferior way or degrade them in terms of a mode. Where we, for example, have been introducing 24-hour bus lanes, the taxis can go along the bus lanes."

Are you willing to look at this very closely in all aspects given the obvious advantages for disabled people, as they are the ones who very often need the black cabs?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): It is an important point that the Assembly Member raises about our black taxis being fully accessible to disabled Londoners. That is a really important point and I am pleased the Assembly Member mentioned the pilot of the 24-hour bus lanes. Black taxis are allowed in those bus lanes. It is really important that the pilot pans out and we see if it is a success. I am hoping it is.

Susan Hall AM: Thank you.

2020/3773 - London Demonstrations

[David Kurten AM](#)

Why did the Metropolitan Police take vastly different approaches towards protestors in different demonstrations in London over the last few weeks?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Good morning. The right to peaceful protest is a vital part of an open and democratic society and I have always been clear about my support for peaceful and lawful protests.

The MPS has operational independence on how it polices protests and I have confidence in the Commissioner [of Police of the Metropolis] and her team. London has one of the most experienced police forces in the world at dealing with public events and disorder. I know that the Commissioner has worked very hard to make sure people are still able to peacefully and lawfully protest whilst remaining mindful of the potential impact this has on the spread of coronavirus. I want to take this opportunity to thank the police who have been working tirelessly throughout this pandemic under extremely difficult circumstances to prevent disorder and to keep us safe.

Managing protests has been particularly challenging during this period with the rules around gatherings changing repeatedly. Since 20 August [2020] national legislation changes have meant that gatherings of more

than 30 people have been banned. Some gatherings are exempt from this but the organisers must carry out a risk assessment and make sure that all reasonable measures to limit the transmission of the virus are taken. The police plan for and respond to each protest based on the intelligence available and the specific situation they face, taking into account the latest rules. Each protest or demonstration is reviewed on its own merits. There is no one-size-fits-all response to public order.

Highly trained public order Commanders make up the gold, silver and bronze command structure for any public event. Prior to the event, the gold command sets the strategy for the policing style that will be used, based on the intelligence available to them. On the day, this structure is supported by the special operations room, otherwise known as the Lambeth Room. This is the central hub at which all pre-planned and spontaneous events are managed and co-ordinated. Fast-paced operational decisions are made by silver command on the ground, taking into account the impact their decisions will have across the capital. Their decisions are supported by bronze command, who usually have geographical responsibility of the area within which the event is taking place. Debriefs take place with the command teams and partners as standard to review where improvements can be made.

David Kurten AM: OK. Thank you, Mr Mayor, and good morning. You mentioned that there have been a lot of demonstrations over the last few months and there certainly have been. I have been at many of them. I was at the three different freedom rallies that took place in Trafalgar Square on 26 August, 19 September and 26 September [2020] and I spoke at one of them on 19 September.

I was quite shocked particularly by the behaviour of the Territorial Support Group (TSG) riot police on the 26 September because the demonstration was absolutely and completely peaceful, unlike some of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) demonstrations where police were attacked, a woman was thrown off a horse, flares were lit and the flag at the Cenotaph was burned. That happened at the BLM demonstrations. On 26 September columns of riot police waded into the crowds, batons drawn. People were injured. People's faces were bloodied. A woman was pushed off her chair. That, to me, is unacceptable behaviour from that unit of the MPS. Who gave the order for that to happen?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, I just do not know about the facts. I am not sure if I can accept the premise and the facts as set out by the Assembly Member. I actually --

David Kurten AM: Would you accept that that is acceptable behaviour by that unit of the MPS?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, I gave quite a full answer explaining how operationally these things work with gold, silver and bronze and the experience of individual Commanders. If the Member has particular issues or a complaint to make about police conduct on that day, I suggest he takes them up with both the MPS and the IOPC, which is the appropriate thing to do rather than to use this forum. I am not abreast of the facts and I cannot determine --

David Kurten AM: What I can ask you about is your tweets because on 26 September you tweeted:

"This is unacceptable. I urge all protestors to leave now. Large gatherings are banned for a reason - you are putting the safety of our city at risk."

That was you. On the BLM demonstration, you put out a statement saying, "I stand with you and I share your anger and your pain". They are completely different messages you put out about the BLM one, at which actually there was a lot of violence. You seemed to support it but the other one, the entirely peaceful

demonstration, the freedom rally, you said it is not acceptable. Why did you put out the different statements there?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, the Member is in danger of not telling the entire picture, which is that since 20 August, which is the after the BLM demonstrations that are being talked about, national legislation has changed, which has meant that gatherings of more than 30 people have been banned save for specific circumstances. He also omits to mention that on 26 September, nine police officers were injured at that demonstration. It is really important to tell the complete picture rather than cherry-picking some of it.

David Kurten AM: Sorry, Mr Mayor. Those nine police officers would not have been injured if they had not waded into the crowd.

You mentioned 20 August. Let us look at last week because last weekend there was a rally of 3,000 Shia Muslims gathered in Marble Arch for Ashura and marched up Edgware Road. Then, on Sunday, the next day, there was another gathering where, again, a large crowd of Shia Muslims gathered at Marble Arch for Arba'een and marched down Park Lane.

Are you saying, then, on the basis of what you have just said, that large gatherings should not be allowed? Why were those demonstrations allowed and why did you not say anything about those whereas you did say something about the 26 September freedom rally?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I do not have those facts with me, Chair. I am happy to take them away and get a response sent to the Member offline.

David Kurten AM: Fine. You should be consistent, Mr Mayor, if you are putting out the message there. There is one thing that was very disturbing also about 26 September, which was later on in the day. A very well-respected German doctor, Dr Heiko Schöning, who is the Chair of the World Doctors Alliance, was arrested in Speakers Corner just for speaking the truth about coronavirus. I might not agree with you but certainly I would agree with what he says. Why was he arrested? He was held for 22 hours without charge by the police for speaking at Speakers Corner. Do you agree with that, Mr Mayor?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, we are in danger of becoming ridiculous with me being asked about individual cases. The MPS deals with more than 2,000 protests and demonstrations a year. In 2018 there were 2479 and in 2019 there were 2,491. Up to now [in 2020] we have had more than 1,500. If there are any particular cases for which the Member is concerned, rather than raising them at MQT, I am more than happy if he writes to me in advance or speaks to me or gives me notice. I will get the facts and I am happy to debate them.

David Kurten AM: Mr Mayor, it is not ridiculous at all because you are the Mayor of London and you are the Police and Crime Commissioner for London. These are all cases that have had high recognition and that a lot of people are concerned about, but I see that you are not able to give me any answers about that at the moment and so I will have to end my questioning here and hope that you can explain those incidents to me in a letter. Thank you.

2020/3351 - Economic Support during COVID-19

[Léonie Cooper AM](#)

Will the Chancellor's 'Winter Plan' be enough to prevent a rise in unemployment in London?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Our capital faces both an ongoing health crisis, which we cannot afford to be complacent about, and an economic crisis, which could lead to major job losses unless further action is taken. Ministers need to wake up to the looming unemployment crisis as businesses are faced with no choice but to cut jobs as they struggle to survive. Many are on a financial knife-edge, facing a perfect storm of continued homeworking, a lack of confidence in the testing regime, the collapse of domestic and international tourism and the potential for further restrictions.

We must strike a balance in the measures we take, always led by the science. That is why, having seen evidence from around the country that the measure may be counterproductive, I have called for the Government to review the 10pm closure of hospitality businesses. What is currently on offer is not enough. The new Job Support Scheme is far less generous than other countries, with the Government paying only 22% of someone's usual wage.

London is now at a serious tipping point in the spread of this virus and we need to start preparing for additional restrictions. I have serious concerns that the Government's new measures for employees who work for UK firms forced to shut by law will not be enough to save thousands of jobs in London's key retail hospitality, leisure and cultural sectors. It is essential that the Government puts proper financial support in place for all affected workers, businesses, local authorities and households, not just those in very high tier 3 level, as has been announced this week. I will continue to advocate for a much bigger and more expansive job protection scheme, targeted grants, loans for the worst-affected sectors and geographic areas and an extension to the business rate holiday, which is due to end in March [2021].

Léonie Cooper AM: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor. Before I go into my questions, unlike Assembly Member Hall, who appears to be watching Sky, I have had a message from one of my constituents who insisted that I tell you that you look like a film star wearing your padded jacket under your other jacket.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Did they say which one, Chair?

Léonie Cooper AM: It was not your wife, Mr Mayor. I should say to you that she is not sending me private messages. It was someone who thinks you look fabulous.

Anyway, that is not what I wanted to ask you about. We know that the number of claimants is up by almost 300,000 people. That is 161%. Unemployment currently stands at 5.3% amongst Londoners. They are new figures this week. Furloughed staff in London are at almost 720,000, which is 17% of all London employees.

I noted what you were saying about feeling that we need more targeted support. Are these figures ones that you think are going to be able to persuade the Government to give that to Londoners? It is impossible, particularly if you are self-employed, if you are asked to cover from the money that you have coming in - just 20%. How can you feed your family and your children on 20% of your normal income? I do not understand how that works.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): What is remarkable is that this Government has it wrong in terms of both health and the economy. We have the largest number of excess deaths of any country in Europe and the deepest recession of any country in Europe. When I speak to counterparts in Germany, France and other European countries, the assistance their governments are giving their businesses and workers is far better than ours. Last night the French President, for example, announced a 9pm curfew but also announced a fully funded furlough scheme.

It is so important that when businesses are struggling, particularly in hospitality, culture, retail, leisure and tourism, those businesses are kept afloat - on life support, if you like - with assistance from the Government. It is far more effective in the medium to long term to do that than allow them to go bust and workers be made redundant, which is the alternative that the Government is considering.

I will continue to lobby the Government - indeed, in my meeting this morning I was lobbying the Government Ministers - about the importance of a decent financial package scheme. I am hoping the Chancellor, who was quite happy to be photographed smiling in food stores in August, will spend some time working on a plan to support our businesses, workers and families, who are really struggling.

Léonie Cooper AM: Mr Mayor, I want to compliment the Chancellor because his first set of arrangements for furloughed and self-employed individuals was actually quite helpful, but we are now in a situation where we really need targeted help for certain sectors. Your Deputy Mayor [for Culture and the Creative Industries] Justine Simons [OBE] said, in terms of the cultural sector, it is such an important sector not just for London in terms of tourism and also our own enjoyment but it also brings all those benefits to the rest of the country that you were just talking about in terms of TfL.

Is there anything that can be done to get something that is similar to what they have implemented in France and other countries?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The Chancellor's new offer to self-employed Londoners is to cover just 20% of average monthly profits. If he can also negotiate a 20% payment of rents, overheads and food bills, then it is worth talking about, but he needs to be doing what colleagues across Europe are doing. It is so important.

To give you an idea of the contribution made by culture - and I know some Members on the Conservative side criticise our investment in culture - it contributes more than £52 billion to our economy. One out of six jobs in our city is in culture. This idea that they can retrain into cyber is not just offensive but does not understand the contribution made by culture to our economy. It was the fastest-growing sector in our economy before this pandemic and it is really important that the Government gives support to this really important sector. I am particularly worried about freelancers and others who have had no assistance at all from the first wave of support from the Chancellor. They have now had six months of no support and I am really worried about their viability in relation to the bills they have to pay and the jobs they used to do going forward. That is why it is really important the Government fills the gaps in the previous plan and also supports businesses as we enter a second wave.

Léonie Cooper AM: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.

2020/3667 - Crime during lockdown

[Shaun Bailey AM](#)

What lessons have been learned from lockdown on tackling crime in London?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Good morning. Throughout this pandemic the MPS has continued to work day and night to keep our city safe under extremely difficult circumstances. During the lockdown different patterns of crime emerged, which meant that the police used this time to target prolific offenders responsible for the most serious crimes. Our new Violence Suppression Units, which we established with over 600 officers working at a local level, seized over 450 offensive weapons across London including knives and firearms.

The lockdown also highlighted the need to do more to protect vulnerable people subjected to domestic abuse. That is why I created a new £1.5 million emergency fund to provide victims of domestic abuse with safe accommodation and support to flee their homes. By the end of September we had helped over 300 individuals escape from abuse.

While crime and violence fell during lockdown, much of this was due to the restrictions placed on people's lives. Unfortunately, as the MPS expected and predicted, crime has gone back to near pre-lockdown levels because the root causes of crime are not only very much still present but have been exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19. The reality is that deep-seated issues like poverty, inequality and lack of opportunities for young people, which have been made far worse by the Government's austerity of the past decade, are continuing to drive crime and violence in our city.

That is why we will continue with our relentless approach in London, being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. Our dedicated Violent Crime Taskforce is arresting violent offenders and taking weapons off the street. The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) is tackling the underlying causes of crime in London and our Young Londoners Fund is providing young people with opportunities to get out of gangs and violence and into employment and training.

We also need the Government to step up and take responsibility. I have written to the Home Secretary [The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP] warning that her failure to support our police as well as local and regional government to meet the financial challenges caused by COVID-19 will jeopardise our ability to tackle violent crime at this crucial moment. The Government announced a £60 million surge fund last week for the police and councils, but this falls far short of the spiralling costs faced by both the MPS and local government as a result of the pandemic. The truth is, unless the Government takes urgent action, there will be more cuts to policing in London and across the UK at the worst possible time. Now is the time for investment in our police and preventative services, not more cuts.

Shaun Bailey AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Before I start, we should be clear about Assembly Member Hall. What she said was that she was reading social media that said you had made an announcement on Sky, which you subsequently said you did not. That is important to say.

Thank you for your answer. During lockdown, the police used the time to redeploy some of its assets and clear some of the most dangerous criminals off London's streets, which was a very good tactic. Which of these tactics were the most successful and are any of them going to remain permanent?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): A lot of the tactics used by the police because of the -- I do not want to say "free time" because that does a disservice to the policing they do. They had time to do the investigative work that they otherwise do not do because they are, metaphorically speaking, firefighting. A lot of work is not directly frontline police officers. It is forensics work and the conversations with the CPS that they cannot do on a day-to-day basis. The additional police officers we have invested in free up more police officers to do more of this sort of stuff.

The Violence Suppression Units we have found really effective. These are in hyper wards and localised areas. The police have used the time to calculate which parts of a ward or, a borough's previous history tells us have large levels of crime. It could be robbery. It could be knife crime. Then the Violence Suppression Units are targeting those areas. It could be after school. Schoolchildren are often the victims of muggings. A lot of that is taking place. You will see if you go around London more high-visibility policing, particularly in those areas at those times where there can be high crimes.

One of the points I should say is you will have noticed robbery went down in some parts of London during lockdown for obvious reasons. People were not around. Westminster saw a big reduction and continues to do so in robbery because there are fewer tourists, domestic and international. Again, it provides opportunities for other sorts of policing work. You will be seeing across London different patterns emerging. Boroughs may have more antisocial behaviour as more people are breaching the rules around lockdown. There are different patterns across London. You are right. They have used the time quite sensibly to be proactive around this area.

Shaun Bailey AM: As you say, crime is rising. It is coming back to pre-COVID levels. This morning I spoke to a group of Somali mothers who were very concerned about knife crime in particular and the steep rise we have seen since lockdown as measures were eased. Is there anything in particular that you can do to help fight that particular type of crime?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): There are a lot of things we are doing particularly towards that: the work we are doing with the Young Londoners Fund, giving young people constructive things to do, the work we are doing with the VRU, treating crime, particularly knife crime, as a public health issue. We had a very good meeting yesterday with the Partnership Reference Group including a presentation from an excellent group that has done work around therapeutic interventions around young people, families and those who work in the area.

We are also, you will be interested to know, speaking to colleagues around the country and around the world. Around the world during lockdown there was a reduction but also around the world, I am afraid, there was an increase - a spike, if you like - after lockdown was lifted and so we are speaking to them as well. You will be particularly keen to report back to colleagues you spoke to about the work around county lines, the rescue and respond work. We have done really good work, not just the National Crime Agency (NCA) but the MPS, speaking to police forces around the country, particularly around young people who are vulnerable. The rescue and response team had £3 million pounds originally from City Hall and an additional fund from me of £800,000 for working with individuals involved in gangs, young men and boys and young girls as well who get involved in county lines. I am really happy to offline let you know of some of the work we are doing there, which is really encouraging.

Shaun Bailey AM: Thank you. To take a slightly different tack here, we have seen a 29% increase in the number of TfL staff taking days off and citing mental health as a problem. I do not know if you have seen there have been a lot more attacks on TfL staff as well in this COVID period and it is having some effect on their mental health.

I am wondering. Would you join me in calls for a mental health covenant for TfL staff in much the same way we have one for the police and for the armed forces?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The best thing you can do if you really care about TfL staff is not criticise the work that their trade unions do, making the very points that you claim to be making over the last few days. One of the reasons why people join a trade union is because a trade union can represent the concerns they have. What the trade unions do if they have access to the Mayor, as this Mayor does unlike the previous Mayor, is to listen to the concerns they raise on behalf of their members.

It is because this Mayor engages with very good trade unions that represent their workers that we are having a rollout of body-worn videos to our workers on TfL to make sure they can capture any example of abuse of a

member of staff. Also, that evidence can be used in a prosecution undertaken by not just the MPS but the British Transport Police as well with the help of TfL.

Another really good thing we can do because we engage with trade unions is understand the concerns TfL staff have. That involves issues around bus driver fatigue. We also listen to their concerns around COVID. Some of the measures we brought in in London were because we engaged with the trade unions around, for example, stopping the front-door entry of our buses – really important because we lost 29 bus drivers during this awful virus in phase one – and also the improvements we have seen around the enhanced cleaning regime across TfL.

Another big thing we are doing because we work with the trade unions is working with staff around mental ill health. The previous Commissioner [of TfL, Sir Mike Brown CBE MVO] – and I am sure the new Commissioner [Andy Byford] will do so as well – is trained in first aid mental health, as indeed I am. Also, we have made sure we have mental first aid trainers and assistants to make sure that any staff who suffers mental ill health has assistance.

One of the reasons why I talked about my own mental ill health, although I have been criticised for doing so by some Members of this Assembly, is to give people confidence to talk about mental ill health and to avoid the stigma. It is really important we do that.

Shaun Bailey AM: I am sure the work of the trade unions is very good around this. It is their job to do so, but I am asking whether you will do something about it. Will you make it something that TfL has a covenant around to increase TfL's awareness of these things and to make sure things happen? The work of the trade unions is a separate situation and that is great, but what are you going to do? Will you do it, yes or no?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I am sure the Chair would rule you out of order if you were asking a question that goes beyond the remit of a question on crime, but as far as the mental ill health of our TfL staff is concerned, it is quite clear to me that we need to continue to engage with trade unions. We need to continue to give those who work for the trade unions time to engage with us. I will continue to make sure I address any concerns raised by staff either through the trade unions or directly to me.

The other thing we do really well is our regular surveys of staff. In fact, last year we had a better response from our staff than in previous years. They raised the issue of concerns around the pressure they have.

One of the reasons I am so grateful to them is the TfL staff working with me have managed to reduce the operating deficit of TfL by 86%. They have managed to work with me to reduce office accommodation. They have managed to work with me to reduce back-office and middle-office staff as well. It is really important to also put on record my thanks to them because we have reduced strikes by more than 74% since I became Mayor.

Shaun Bailey AM: This question is not about strikes. It is about the mental wellbeing of your staff at TfL, but that is enough for me, Chair. Thank you.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Thank you. I have an indication from Assembly Member Duvall.

Len Duvall AM: Thank you very much, Chair. For the period that the previous question was asking about the rise in crime, do you think those tactics that you did and the work of the borough Violent Suppression Units, even though crime has risen and crime rise is going to be bad, made it less though in London than the rest of

the country? England was much higher than where we were in London. Do you think those tactics contributed to that?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Without a doubt. It is really important to put on record my thanks to those Members of the Assembly who supported us in doing so because you are right. What we have seen across the country are far bigger increases and we have not seen the reductions we have seen in some areas. We have made big progress in London. Also, big thanks to police, youth workers, families and others in communities who have done a huge amount.

Len Duvall AM: You were the first Mayor to make that a major part of your Policing and Crime Strategy in terms of tackling violence across the piece and making sure that you gave your voice to that. It was the first time it has ever happened in any Policing Strategy since we were established in 2000.

In terms of that, police numbers come into it. Is it not important that we continue to highlight that we should not be short-changed by this Government in terms of the extra investment in policing that it is allocating? What enabled us to do those tactics that you described earlier on was the extra policing, which you had put in and was fed into the system. Of course the Government has given us some but it is not giving us our fair share of those resources. Do you think we need to continually highlight that and expose the Government for its weakness in not giving a fair share to Londoners in terms of what we contribute for our taxes?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): You raise a really important point on a number of levels. Number one: we do not receive the full allocation of the National and International Capital Cities grant we are due. We are short-changed by about £180 million.

Number two: the Government announced 20,000 additional officers for the country. We should get 6,000 of those. We have been given only 1,300 so far. It is really important that we get all 6,000 as soon as possible.

Number three: some of the additional money we spend we are promised by a special grant and when we spend it we do not get it. The MPS suffers hugely as a consequence of that. It is really important we get proper remuneration for that.

Number four: I am the Mayor, unlike the previous Mayor, who has increased the police precept to the maximum I am allowed to do so to pay for police officers. The previous Mayor either froze the precept or cut it so that there was no police precept, which left us in a perilous state. The additional thousands of officers we have are thanks to a contribution made by City Hall. We must not allow some people to try to claim the credit for additional policies and resources thanks to a Labour Mayor but then criticise us when we lobby the Government to do so and not help us to get more resources from the Government.

Len Duvall AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor.

2020/3502 - Food Insecurity during COVID-19 Second Wave

[Joanne McCartney AM](#)

Is enough being done to prevent Londoners from becoming 'food insecure' during this second wave of COVID-19 which will coincide with increasing unemployment and job insecurity?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): London's already high levels of food insecurity have risen during the pandemic and I am very concerned about further spikes in the coming months. That is why I have been

working with central and local government and voluntary and community sector partners to do three things: monitor demand for food aid across London, ensure all local authorities have a food transition plan in place, and help central Government partners to understand and unlock the resources local authorities and voluntary and community sector partners need to support Londoners in the months ahead.

I am particularly concerned that a number of Government funding streams are coming to a close just as food insecurity may be about to rise again. Local authorities' initial response to COVID-19 was based on the assumption that the costs incurred, for some boroughs running up to £80,000 per week on food alone, would be reimbursed, but this has not happened. We cannot assume local authorities will be able to respond in the same way without that guarantee.

I will continue to work with the London Transition Board and the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) to ensure the focus on this issue is not lost. The Government must also, Chair, now reimburse local authorities fully for the cost they have incurred to date and make funding available to support them and their voluntary and community sector partners to meet the food needs of vulnerable Londoners in the months ahead.

It should also be clear that food insecurity is a manifestation of poverty and the tools to tackle this lay with the Government. More needs to be done to ensure all Londoners who need it can not only access the food they need in the months ahead but are supported to escape financial hardship.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. As you rightly say, food insecurity and poverty were rising before the pandemic hit and what this pandemic has done is highlighted the precarious nature of many Londoners' finances.

This week is London Challenge Poverty Week and today the focus is on children. You and I have campaigned for the extension of free school meal entitlements to cover school holidays, as have child poverty groups and individual food and insecurity and poverty campaigners such as Marcus Rashford [MBE, professional footballer], but I am quite tired of having to do that every time a holiday is coming up.

Do you agree with me that with the October half term coming up the Government should say it is going to allow those entitlements to be extended over all holidays while the pandemic is taking place? The Welsh Government announced yesterday that it will do that up until next Easter.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, can I, as the Mayor of this great city, pay tribute to Marcus Rashford, a Manchester United player. It pains me to say so as a Liverpool fan, but he has been brilliant in relation to his campaigning. It was his campaigning that led to the U-turn from the Government in relation to free school meals for children during the summer holidays.

I am really concerned because this October half term for some children will be two weeks rather than one. That means that if you receive free school meals in normal school term time, for two weeks potentially you may go without a decent, hot, nourishing meal. It is really important that the Government therefore provides the support needed for those families to receive free school meals for their children during the half term.

Also, let us not wait until December to start discussing the Christmas holidays and let us not wait for Marcus Rashford to have a campaign. We need to lobby the Government. Look, half term is next week. Many families are thinking about what they are going to do in the half term. It should do what the Welsh Government has done and say that during the half term this entitlement that these children, some of the most vulnerable, have will continue during that half term.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you for that and thank you for the promise to lobby the Government on this issue. I would be also grateful if you could lobby it to perhaps extend free school meal provision to cover all those families perhaps that are in receipt of Universal Credit or other equivalent benefits. As you said earlier and as your letter to the Government clearly states today, those particular families are in a financially precarious situation.

You mentioned also the fact that the Government has not funded local authorities for the work they did during the first wave of COVID. With a second wave now happening, what does the Government need to do to support not only local authorities but also the wonderful community and voluntary sector, which really stepped up over the last few months and has really delivered food in particular and support to the most vulnerable people in our communities?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Yes, it is a really important point you raised and I also echo your comments about the voluntary and community sector, which does an amazing job in this area.

Look, the point I make to the Government is that our councils in London are suffering a massive funding gap between the money they have spent in extra costs and the lost income. It is about £1.4 billion gap for our councils. Similarly, many in our voluntary and community sector have not been able to do the fundraising they do because of COVID-19. The marathon runs, the sponsorship there, the autumn fairs, the summer sales and the various events they do they have not been able to do. They are already struggling with the monies they normally have. That is why it is really important the Government steps in to support councils and community and voluntary groups.

Also, I would say to those supermarkets and food providers who are doing very well that they should think about whether they can also contribute towards foodbanks. Many foodbanks, as you know, rely upon the contributions of surplus shopping by ordinary people. Many families are struggling to even feed their own families without doing these additional surplus shops to give to foodbanks. We have a perfect storm here where there is the greatest demand for foodbanks and help but foodbanks and others have a real shortage of supplies. That is why it is so important the Government steps in to support these vulnerable families.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you and thank you for your lobbying efforts. It is appreciated.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Deputy Chairman, I am asking the next question, if you can kindly step in for that, please? Thank you.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman in the Chair): Chair, go ahead.

2020/3588 - Training and Support Needed to Prevent Mass Unemployment

[Navin Shah AM](#)

Official figures show that the UK's unemployment rate has risen to its highest level for two years and the GLA's own figures confirm a looming employment crisis. What can you do from City Hall to provide training and support for unemployed Londoners and what action are you lobbying for central government to take?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): London is facing an unemployment crisis but one that could be averted by Government action. I have written to the Chancellor to urge him to extend the furlough scheme for particular sectors as his new job protection scheme will fail to prevent mass redundancy in otherwise viable businesses. I

have also provided the Government with a list of shovel-ready projects and investment opportunities that could kickstart growth and create jobs in London.

At City Hall we acted quickly to ensure unemployed Londoners affected by the pandemic are benefiting from the devolved adult education budget. After taking immediate steps to ensure the financial security of adult education providers in May [2020], I launched the £11 million COVID-19 Response Fund to help meet the training needs of key groups affected by the pandemic including those made redundant as a result of COVID-19. From this academic year, we have also introduced new flexibility to fund more pre-employment and job-focused training. In August, well ahead of the Government's lifetime skills announcement, I extended fully funded level-3 qualifications to all unemployed Londoners to help them retrain and find new employment opportunities. My Construction Academy and Digital Talent programme, the London Enterprise Adviser Network and the Workforce Integration Network are also helping Londoners most need to access opportunities and career support. The Employment Rights Hub is helping Londoners to understand their rights at work.

I should say this, Deputy Chairman. Unemployment and supporting Londoners into good work is also a key priority for the London Recovery Board. The Board is currently developing action plans including how we can expand access to schools training and good employment opportunities.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Young people are particularly hard hit during these very difficult times, with those aged 16 to 24 suffering the biggest drop in employment compared with other age groups. One of the eight missions promoted by you, Mr Mayor, and the Recovery Board is the New Deal for Young People.

How will you make sure you help employ young people in the industries London needs to build a better London and get back better such as green jobs, digital jobs, jobs in creative industries and jobs in local high streets?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): That is a really important point you raise. Firstly, I should say we are still lobbying the Government to get devolution for 16-to-18-year-olds. We do not have that yet. We have 19 and above.

With the adult education monies we have, we are prioritising the areas you have talked about, not just those who need reskilling and who may have lost their jobs - it is really important we get them back into work as possible - but also futureproofed jobs when the new normal begins.

There are a number of things we are doing, Deputy Chairman. The Mayor's Construction Academy is doing lots of work in relation to supporting these young Londoners. We are making sure that they receive the right careers advice. The London Enterprise Adviser Network has businesses who go in to give the right advice to young people. One of the worst things we can do is send people in the wrong direction to jobs that are not futureproof or helpful.

The final part of the equation is to make sure that we support businesses to be able to access the skilled young people, whether they are apprentices or working with adult colleges to make sure there is a connection between the jobs that employers are creating and the skills they need and the young people having the skills to do the jobs created by these employers in London.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you. The rise in unemployment is not only impacting young people, as we discussed. In fact, between May and July [2020] over-65s experienced the largest increase in economic inactivity across UK. Some of these people may be choosing to retire but others may be forced out of jobs as well.

How are you ensuring that you also provide targeted support to older Londoners looking for employment?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): You are right. The analysis shows that those who suffered the worst in the job market are younger Londoners and those above 50. It is really important we help older Londoners as well. We cannot just focus on young Londoners, important though they are.

There are a number of things we are doing. We still have the European Social Fund and something called the Sector Skills Programme and we are investing £6 million of that money to give unemployed Londoners skills to progress in those industries that are doing well and where there is a demand. We have also introduced adult education budget flexibility to allow unemployed learners who have achieved their first level 3 qualification to go further as well.

The other thing you will be aware of, Deputy Chairman, from a previous MQT is that we are giving a free adult education to those who receive the Minimum Wage to get the skills to get the Living Wage and more as well.

You are right to remind me that we have to focus on older Londoners as well, particularly those above 50 and those above 65. You will be aware that the damage to retail has meant that many older Londoners have lost their jobs. We are keen to make sure we get them skilled up for any jobs that are available in other sectors.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. That is the end of my questions. Thank you.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman in the Chair): Thank you. We will go on to the question from Assembly Member Hall and it is back to you, Chair.

2020/3718 - Housing

[Susan Hall AM](#)

Are you confident you can deliver your housing targets in the remaining time available?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I am very proud of what we have already achieved in beginning to deliver the genuinely affordable homes that Londoners so desperately need. We have hit every one of our annual delivery targets and last year we started the most new affordable homes in London since GLA records began in 2002, as the recent cross-party report from the Assembly Housing Committee recognised.

That report also found that more affordable homes have been started in the first four years of this mayoral term than in either of the previous two. The renewed emphasis I put on council housing delivery has been particularly effective, with 2019/20 seeing the most new council home starts since 1983. As well as delivering more genuinely affordable housing, bringing councils back as a major player in housebuilding also helps diversify the sector, making it more resilient to the ups and downs of the market.

In delivering the current programme we have, however, faced a number of challenges not of our own making including Brexit, the urgent need for cladding remediation and most recently the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying work restrictions and economic upheaval. At the outset of the pandemic we acted quickly to convene a cross-sector Housing Delivery Taskforce to identify how to keep on track with our ambitions to build homes of all tenures. The Taskforce issued its report in July [2020] calling for a Government-funded recovery package to give affordable housing providers and private developers the support and confidence they need to keep building. The Government has given a year's extension to the current

Affordable Homes Programme to account for the impact of COVID-19 and my team has worked closely with providers to support their delivery work throughout this period. In particular, we have had some very positive discussions with councils about driving forward and even increasing their programmes over the next few years.

As a result of all this work, I believe we are in the strongest position we could be but hitting the targets will still be a real challenge given the circumstances. The outlook remains uncertain as COVID cases continue to rise and protecting public health must of course come first. We will keep on working hard to try to hit our targets, keeping the Assembly updated in the usual ways.

Susan Hall AM: OK. Thank you. You have been given a total of £4.82 billion from the Government to start 116,000 affordable homes by - and you have said it - the extended deadline of March 2023. Why has over £500 million of this funding not yet been allocated?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): We have allocated the numbers of homes for the 116,000 and we are having discussions with housing associations and other developers in relation to challenges they have, but the allocations of the monies for the 116,000 have been done.

Susan Hall AM: What makes you think you could spend any further money from the Government if you have not even managed to spend all the money that you have?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): We have allocated the housing starts. You will be aware of the needs there are in London. We are working with developers and others to make sure we can meet the target that we have agreed with the Government. As I said in my answer, we have met every target so far during this programme.

Susan Hall AM: There are 116,000 Government-funded homes. You still have 57,000 to start by March 2023. How many of these homes do you expect to start each year and will you start setting annual targets for each of these?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The targets are agreed with the Government and so there are targets with the Government. On average we will be starting 19,000 homes during the course of the next couple of years because of the extension the Government has given us.

By the way, the Government also gave an extension to Homes England for homes outside London because it is an issue the entire country has. The targets are agreed with Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). What we have published is over and above what Homes England published in the agreement it has with MHCLG because we are trying to provide as much information as we can to colleagues.

Susan Hall AM: We were recently told in the Budget and Performance Committee by your Assistant Director of Housing that at least 10,000 homes could be started this year. Will you commit to this as a minimum?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The reason why he gave you that figure was because of the negotiations we have. It is 19,000, we think, over the course of the next two years because of the Government extension. According to conversations we have had with housing providers and those who build the homes, we think we could start 10,300 in this financial year. That is the agreement we have with the providers.

Susan Hall AM: What would be the impact if you do not even deliver that number this year?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): They are starts, not houses completed. Often during the course of the six-year deal with the Government there may be ebbs and flows. The key thing is the agreement with the Government is for 116,000 affordable homes to be started by March 2023 and we have agreed with the Government yearly targets to get to 2023. So far we have exceeded all of those and we will continue to make sure that we do our best to exceed them again and break records in the course.

Susan Hall AM: It would be a lot clearer for us all to hold you to account if you agreed specific numbers to be started and completed per year so that we could hold you to account for what is and is not being delivered.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): That may be above your pay grade because it is what the Secretary of State for MHCLG agrees with us, but if you have concerns with this you can raise them with MHCLG.

Susan Hall AM: It is the transparency from you, Mr Mayor, that I am asking for. I will leave it at that, Chair. Thank you.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): You will be aware, Assembly Member Hall, that we publish far more than Homes England publishes even though it has the same agreement with MHCLG. If there are any particular concerns the Member has with the agreement we have with MHCLG, she can of course take it up with MHCLG if she is not happy with the response I have given.

Susan Hall AM: I am very often not happy with the responses you give, Mr Mayor, but we have to put up with it, I am afraid.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Such is life, I am afraid, Chair. I am always happy with the questions she asks.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): I assume that is the end of that communication. Can I ask Assembly Member Boff for his follow-up question? Thank you.

Andrew Boff AM: Mr Mayor, now you have asked the Government to review its policies in the light of the problems encountered by those in overcrowded accommodation during the pandemic, will you now review yours?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): We always keep our policies under review.

Andrew Boff AM: Mr Mayor, you point-blank refused to review your Housing Strategy at previous meetings. Have you decided that perhaps you should now?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): No. The fact that you are always reviewing your policy does not mean that any individual strategy or plan should change. Once we have, finally, from the Government, approval of the draft London Plan so that it can become a London Plan, other things may flow from that, but a lot of those things are contingent upon the Government finally signing off the London Plan. It has been with them since December [2019] now. Once we have that agreed from the Government, we can then look at what other things flow from that. There could be Supplementary Planning Guidance or other things to amend policies. If the Member is keen for us to change any particular strategy, he should try to persuade the Government to sign off our London Plan at last.

Andrew Boff AM: My job is to try to persuade you, Mr Mayor, as is the Assembly's, which has unanimously agreed that your housing policies need to be reviewed. Thank you.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Is that a question there?

Andrew Boff AM: I think it was a flourish.

2020/3638 - Barkingside South LTN

[Keith Prince AM](#)

What support did TfL provide to Redbridge Council in introducing the Barkingside South LTN?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The London Borough of Redbridge successfully bid for Streetspace funding in June [2020] to deliver a number of LTNs including Barkingside South and School Streets. This funding formed part of a package announced by the Secretary of State for Transport [The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP] in May as an emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The only money made available by the DfT for TfL to share with local authorities was for the express purpose of supporting measures to enable more walking and cycling, including LTNs, to ease pressure on public transport and prevent a spike in car use. The allocation of more funding was jointly agreed by TfL, City Hall, the DfT and Number 10.

While the borough is ultimately responsible for the design and implementation of the scheme as well as engagement, TfL has provided a range of support throughout the planning implementation. TfL has developed guidance informed by the DfT and local authorities to plan, design and implement effective walking and cycling schemes. This is available on the TfL website. TfL provided specific technical support to Redbridge Council during the development of the Barkingside South scheme, including guidance on traffic implications for surrounding roads, impact on bus services in the area and mapping the scheme onto emergency services navigation schemes. Following the scheme's introduction TfL is monitoring bus journey times and traffic data and is adjusting traffic signal times.

I am aware there are local concerns about this scheme and it is right that the borough continues to engage with the local community to make sure any issues that have become apparent are considered and dealt with appropriately. However, we must not lose sight of what is hoped to be achieved by introducing these types of schemes. By providing alternatives to car use for those who can walk or cycle, the Streetspace programme seeks to prevent a damaging and unsustainable car-based recovery, which would increase congestion and road danger and negatively impact air quality and public health.

Keith Prince AM: Can I start, Mr Mayor, by thanking you for the reintroduction of motorcycle training? As you are aware, there has been an increase in motorcycle deaths over the last figures. I was wondering whether you would be able to help me and agree that I could organise a roundtable with the Deputy Mayor for Transport to discuss this issue around motorcycle deaths, bringing in experts like Motorcycle Action Group and so on, so that we can see what we can do about that.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Assembly Member Prince has been a really good champion for motorcycle safety and some of the issues that have been brought to my attention. I am more than happy - because he is always very collegiate and always has good ideas - to arrange for a meeting, a roundtable as he has suggested, with Deputy Mayor for Transport Heidi Alexander.

Keith Prince AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Moving on to Barkingside South, thanks for the very full response. You probably are aware, Mr Mayor, there has been a 4,000-person petition. You will not be aware hundreds of people have contacted me. There is the Twitter campaign #barkingsidechaos.

I am wondering, Mr Mayor, what you could do to help the people of Redbridge who are clearly opposed to this scheme. What could you do to help the people in Redbridge, Mr Mayor?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): What I would say, Chair, respectfully, is the Council is engaging and listening, as they are across London Councils where they have LTNs. He mentions those people who have signed a petition. A council will also take the views of those who have not signed a petition but who may have views and who could be argued are in the silent majority.

The key thing I would say to the Assembly Member - and I know he has done a good job in engaging with the Council and with residents - is to continue to do so. One of the things the Government required councils to do was to have these schemes up and ready to go very swiftly. That has led to some challenges across the city, Redbridge is not alone in this. He needs to continue doing what he is doing, which is to work with residents, work with the Council, work with businesses and work with emergency services to get the best possible scheme in that part of London.

Keith Prince AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Do you think it is right that there was little or no consultation with the blue light services, which has resulted in a number of delays in them attending emergency callouts and there does seem to be a need for urgent change to some of the schemes just to allow access for emergency services?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): It is worth reminding all of us that the schemes across London arose from an Emergency Traffic Order that the Government introduced for good reasons. The Government was keen to avoid a car-led recovery but also deal with the pandemic and to allow social distance to be kept and the rest of it. My understanding is that the councils have been speaking regularly with the blue-light services and they will continue to do so. Any changes that need to be made because of concerns raised by blue-light services are made by councils across London, I have seen for myself them doing so, and indeed by TfL on some of its schemes.

However, if he is aware of any particular issues in Redbridge that are causing the emergency services problems, please, if he has not had any success with the Council or anybody else, let us know and we can make sure we raise any concerns from the emergency services with the Council and make any changes that are required to be made.

Keith Prince AM: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor. That is really helpful, thank you.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): I have two follow-up questions, Mr Mayor. One is from Assembly Member Devenish and the other is from Assembly Member Bailey, in that order.

Tony Devenish AM: Mr Mayor, is the issue really about public consultation? You will be aware that during COVID, public consultation has become much better across London boroughs with online forms of communication, on planning for example. All we really need to do on transport so that it does not become a political hot potato is to have more public consultation. Therefore, will you make sure that TfL now does start public consultation for all of the emergency schemes that have gone in during COVID?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): There is a basic ignorance about these schemes, which is worth educating Conservative Members about. These are council schemes. Now, if he is being critical of [Royal Borough of] Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster [City Council] but is scared to say so, then he should say that.

Tony Devenish AM: Yes, I was very much involved in most, if not all, of these schemes, Mr Mayor, and it is the point about public consultation. If you are saying it is the boroughs, can you support them in terms of improving public consultation? We do not want to argue about this. We just want to let Londoners actually have a choice in how these are implemented. They are not having their say quite often.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The problem, Chair, is he is danger of misleading Londoners by what he is reading out. I am sorry --

Tony Devenish AM: You should know.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): -- he did Keith Prince [AM] a discourtesy by not listening to the answer I gave him, which answered this question.

These are council schemes which we help administer for the DfT. One of the things the Government requires is for these schemes to be in place very quickly from the councils or they will be unsuccessful in securing the money and getting the schemes off the ground. I accept though that because the councils were required to get the schemes off the ground very quickly, often there has not been a chance to have proper public consultation. That is why the good councils - and I do not include [Royal Borough of] Kensington and Chelsea or Westminster [City Council] in this or [London Borough of] Wandsworth - have been listening, engaging and working with residents and emergency services to ameliorate any problems and to improve the schemes.

Tony Devenish AM: I am sorry he took a very passing view, Chair, but I will leave it there.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Thank you. Assembly Member Bailey?

Shaun Bailey AM: Mr Mayor, you say these are council schemes and they are being supported by TfL. That is correct, I am sure. However, in the Redbridge case in particular there are some real safety concerns. I am wondering if you can prompt TfL to support the Council more because the Council is not listening to local residents. The very particular safety concern I am talking about is the signage. Much of the signage for the low-traffic neighbourhoods is incorrect and in one example in particular there is no signage and so cars are turning off the A12, being confronted with a barrier and then having to back onto the A12, which is, of course, highly dangerous. I wonder if you can get TfL to have a look at that because the residents have not been able to get the Council to do anything about it.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, you will appreciate I am not fully sighted on an issue with the A12. However, if the Member wants to email my office I am more than happy to look at particular concerns, particularly if they are safety concerns.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): That is a good way forward. Can you agree to that?

Shaun Bailey AM: Thank you.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Thank you. OK, I have a further intervention from Assembly Member Steve O'Connell, please.

Steve O'Connell AM: Thank you very much, Chair. Mr Mayor, I will be brief on this. I have listened to the debate. The issue in my neck of the woods is a cross-border consultation. I am talking about the Crystal Palace area that is the conjunction of five boroughs. The main effect, I believe, is the imposition of the LTNs - which in principle, with proper consultation, I have no objection to - and the effect on the adjoining borough of Bromley. I would urge - I have written to TfL - your support that there is proper consultation and indeed that that consultation cuts across adjoining boroughs because it does affect residents in their normal business running across both boroughs. Would you accept and confirm that, Mr Mayor, if possible?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Yes, I know the area well. He is right. It is literally five boroughs in that Palace area. There are consequences in relation to what Borough A may do on other boroughs and there are other examples across London as well.

Steve O'Connell AM: Exactly.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I am more than happy if he wants me to look into any particular cases. [Deputy Mayor for Transport] Heidi Alexander is doing a good job trying to negotiate them. However, he is absolutely right. There is an anomaly - I do not want to call it a loophole - that means that Borough B can often have adverse consequences because of very good policies in Borough A that are working for Borough A but lead to displacement and other challenges.

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

Navin Shah AM (Chair): The next question is from Assembly Member Pidgeon [MBE] on Silvertown Tunnel.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, before I get to Assembly Pidgeon's question, can I - with your permission - make a short statement?

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Yes. We are facing a very fast-moving situation. I believe there has been an announcement in the House of Commons. It is only appropriate and important that we allow Mr Mayor to have a short statement on that. Thank you.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Thank you, Chair. Apologies for the interruption, Chair, but it is very important for me to keep the Assembly updated with developments on an important issue.

I have just received confirmation that the Government has now confirmed and announced that London will be going into tier 2 or the high alert level of restrictions. This means from midnight tomorrow Londoners will not be allowed to meet socially with people they do not live with indoors. This includes private homes as well as pubs or restaurants. Londoners can meet friends and families outdoors, but only in groups of up to six people. People in support bubbles can go on meeting as before and informal childcare may also be provided.

As I have repeatedly said, nobody wants more restrictions but these additional measures have been deemed necessary in order to save Londoner's lives by me, London council leaders and the Government based on the latest expert scientific and public health advice. I know these further restrictions will require Londoners to make even more sacrifices but I am afraid we have been left with no other choice.

The Government has been working with us on this issue. However, I am afraid it is really important that I put on record that in my view the increase in the virus was not inevitable had the Government not failed to get a working test, trace and isolate system in place.

Moving London to tier 2 will, we hope, help to slow the spread of the virus, take pressure off the NHS and help avert the possibility of a full lockdown lasting months, which would be the worst possible outcome for Londoners and our economy. I urge all Londoners today to follow the new rules so that we can support our NHS, save lives and protect our economy.

I understand, Chair, the Secretary of State for Health [The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP] has made a statement in Parliament and I thought it proper that the Assembly is notified as soon as I could.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): We appreciate, Mr Mayor, the announcement. Given the seriousness of the implications of this situation we find ourselves in I am happy for any follow-up questions, within the normal mayoral report arrangements that we have, if any Member wants to raise any questions. However, just a caution that the time will need to come out of the Group time if you do want to raise any question. Otherwise you are welcome to take up whatever issues you may have with the Mayor after MQT.

No, I do not believe anyone wants to have a question immediately to the Mayor and so we resume MQT as per the agenda.

2020/3249 – Silvertown Tunnel

[Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM](#)

What is the true cost of the Silvertown Tunnel?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Investment in the Silvertown Tunnel will bring widespread benefits to London. By finally addressing the longstanding issues at the Blackwall Tunnel it will massively reduce congestion in the area, improve air quality and support economic growth in east London.

The construction cost of the project, anticipated to be around £1 billion, has been regularly published since 2014 and has not significantly changed in that time.

The costs to Londoners of existing congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel are huge. TfL estimates more than one million hours are wasted each year in traffic queueing for the Blackwall Tunnel. The areas around the tunnel suffer from some of the worst air quality in London. The tunnel has had to close over 300 times this year alone, even with lockdown impacting traffic levels. This leads to traffic chaos, with miles of standing traffic emitting fumes across areas of South and East London. Doing nothing to address these problems is not an option.

TfL awarded a design-build-finance-maintain contract to the Riverlinks Consortium at the end of 2019. Only once the Tunnel has been built and is open will TfL begin to make repayments to Riverlinks. This means that TfL is not liable for additional payments or delays in the same way as more traditional construction contracts. Riverlinks will be responsible for maintenance and the renewal of the systems and equipment for over 25 years. TfL currently anticipates repayments will amount to around £65 million in the first year but the actual amount will vary depending on inflation and the performance of Riverlinks. TfL anticipates that revenue received from user charging at the Blackwall and Silvertown Tunnels will cover these payments and generate a surplus that will be reinvested in the transport network. Riverlinks has no entitlement to this revenue or interest in the operation of the user charge being to manage traffic and environmental impacts.

Even as traffic has decreased dramatically on some roads in London during the COVID-19 pandemic, congestion has continued at the Blackwall Tunnel throughout and traffic levels through the Tunnel have

already returned to pre-pandemic levels. This vital river crossing will reduce congestion, transform cross-river public transport connections and improve some of the worst air quality anywhere in London.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Less than a year ago TfL issued a press release stating that the Silvertown Tunnel was a £1 billion project and you have confirmed that today. Do you accept, including all the annual payments up to 2050, its real cost will actually be £2 billion?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): No, because you are not comparing like with like. I know you like comparing like with like. If you look at other construction projects --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: This is from a TfL Audit and Assurance Committee paper on 11 September [2020], Mr Mayor, for reference. It is not a figure I have made up.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Let us talk about like for like. When it comes to construction projects, you are including the cost of maintenance and including the cost of finance. When it comes, for example, to a comparable project, the cost of Bank Station capacity upgrade, we do not include in that construction cost the cost of the maintenance over the next 25 years or the costs of us borrowing the money to do so. You are in danger of not comparing apples with apples.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. Let us move on to another cost I would like to look at today. The financial package for the road tunnel relies on income from tolls but the deal really relies on the tolls being buoyant. They can never be set at a level that would actively deter people from driving. Even long-distance commuting by car cannot be effectively challenged as the tolls need to pay for this huge bill.

How do you square your support for the Silvertown Tunnel with your commitment to avoid a car-led recovery from COVID?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): A number of reasons why. Firstly, you will be aware from the answer I gave we already have a car-led recovery in the Tunnel. The number of people using Blackwall Tunnel has not gone down. The number of times it has been closed is not going down. The cost to health, in terms of air quality, and the cost to businesses, in terms of lost productivity from congestion, has been increasing.

One of the things we managed to secure in relation to the Silvertown Tunnel was a lane reserved for buses. You will be aware our buses now, thanks to the policies of this Mayor, are fully Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) compliant and we are getting more and more electric buses going forward. In that reserved lane we will have buses, starting off at 24 buses per hour. You will also be aware currently public transport in that part of London is very haphazard and unreliable because the buses cannot rely on the Tunnel, the single-decker buses getting through the Tunnel, which means people do not use the bus and instead drive. We are also working on schemes to enable pedestrians to be able to cross from one side of the Tunnel to the other without paying a fare and also bicycles for cyclists to go from one side of the Tunnel to the other without having to pay additional cost. We have also undertaken an assessment of the impact of our policies on the new Silvertown Tunnel on the environment. Add to that the extension of ULEZ up to the North and South Circular, this will be within the ULEZ area. The independent evidence we have is that this will not make air quality worse and will not make congestion worse but will, in fact, improve both those things.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I wanted to come on to the environmental cost. There are issues where you build roads and, quite honestly, I have never seen a road scheme that actually has led to a decrease in traffic.

On air monitoring, Mr Mayor, I am concerned that at present the new monitoring stations appear to only cover nitrogen dioxide but not harmful particulate matter (PM). I am wondering. Will you give a firm commitment today to guarantee extensive monitoring of all forms of harmful pollutants on both sides of the Tunnel - Greenwich, Deptford, New Cross, Tower Hamlets and throughout Newham - to assess the true impact of your Silvertown Tunnel?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Yes, my air quality team is considering options for further PM 2.5 monitoring in support of the work already underway. You will be aware that the monitors at the moment do not do that and that is some work we are exploring.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is something you would potentially commit to, if it is possible? Yes, you are happy to commit to that if the equipment is available?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I commit to the answer I just gave, which is that my air quality team is considering options for further PM 2.5 monitoring in support of the work already underway in relation to nitrogen dioxide.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you very much.

2020/3336 – COVID-19 testing in education settings

[Jennette Arnold OBE AM](#)

Will you write to the Secretary of State for Education to address the need for testing to keep schools and universities open in London?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): From the very start of this pandemic it has been absolutely clear that testing, contact tracing and self-isolation are the most important ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Without testing we simply do not have a clear picture of who is carrying this awful disease.

With cases continuing to increase across the capital it is unbelievable that the Government has still not put in place adequate testing, something I have been pressing on it for some time. I know access to testing is causing real challenges for our schools, colleges, universities, students and parents and that it is currently keeping too many children and staff away from the classroom. Over a period of just six days, one school reported 82 lost teaching days as staff waited for tests and results and 360 lost learning days as children self-isolated or parents decided to keep their children at home due to anxiety about the spread of the virus.

We are at a crucial moment with young people back at school and college and students having returned to university. That is why last month I wrote to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care stressing how vital it is that some testing capacity is ring fenced specifically for nurseries, schools and colleges. I have yet to receive a response. The allocation to schools and colleges of 10 test kits per 1,000 students with a 21-day wait to reorder is simply not good enough. The Government needs to act urgently so that test centres across London prioritise all education staff - including those working in early years, college and university - with results available within 24 hours.

My Deputy Mayor for Education and Childcare, Assembly Member Joanne McCartney, has been working with representatives from schools, universities and local and central Government to co-ordinate London's education response to the challenge of COVID-19. I understand how crucial it is that the capital's schools, colleges and universities remain open. I will continue to press through whichever channels are necessary for a testing system that will allow them to do so.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor, for that full answer. Can I take you back to the statement you just made? Do you have any information about what impact London being in tier 2 will now have on the education establishments?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Tier 2, which is high alert level, will not directly affect education establishments. What it will have an impact on is the issue of households mixing when it comes to those in families either inside the home or outside the home. We are hoping there is no adverse effect on that.

One thing I spoke to the Secretary of State for Health [The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP] about yesterday and today was the issue of increased testing, which is really important and linked to your main question as well.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: The frustration is that we do not seem to be able to get any movement on such a common-sense approach.

In tier 2 we will have students, if you like, held in their faculties and in their universities. Who is going to be looking after their welfare? I know there is university provision but is there an overview? Is somebody planning to look at the impact this is going to have on our students, especially those in universities?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): You will be aware as a Londoner that we have hundreds of thousands of students from outside London at universities in London. The last figure I saw was 500,000. I am really worried about not just their physical health caused by COVID-19 but their mental ill health caused by COVID-19 - the stress, the anxiety, the worry - and it is a real concern. They are away from their families, often for the first time, in unfamiliar surroundings with people they do not really know and they could be being told to stay in their halls of residence or their home and also told they cannot mix with others.

There is an issue also, Assembly Member Arnold, with people returning 'home' from other parts of the country and potentially carrying this virus and they could be asymptomatic. That is why at the root of this is an effective testing system, then contact tracing and --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Mr Mayor, I will finish it by saying you will know and I know - but people forget - that 25% of London's population is aged under 25 and they are so often overlooked. I know that you are as committed as I am and others are to ensuring their welfare. Please get somebody on this case and keep your foot on the pedal because somebody has to be speaking up for our young people. Otherwise, we are going to have a lost generation in London because of this virus. Thank you.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Thank you.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): The next question, 3774, has been withdrawn.

2020/3578 – London’s Campaign to Boost Flu Vaccination Rates

Dr Onkar Sahota AM

What discussions have you had with Council Leaders to improve flu vaccination rates in London which will reduce winter pressures on the NHS to better cope with COVID-19?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): With the risk of COVID-19 and flu both circulating this winter, this year’s flu campaign is more important and larger than ever. Not only is it the best way to protect yourself and people around you but it will also help protect the NHS, which is already under huge pressure. I am doing all I can to promote the NHS’s winter flu campaign through London. I get a flu jab due to my asthma and I had this year’s vaccine two weeks ago. I urge all Londoners who are eligible to have the vaccination.

This year the NHS has extended the eligibility for a funded vaccine to a wider range of individuals to protect more vulnerable people and to support the resilience of the NHS. The NHS aims to deliver the vaccination to approximately 30 million people, almost double last year’s target. I have been working with partners to make sure this message gets to the right people. I have discussed the issue as part of my regular meetings with Council Leaders and public health officials, and this also remains a live conversation for the SCG. I particularly want to make sure messages about the flu vaccine reach London’s black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities as well as our more deprived communities that have been so disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and are more likely to be at risk of flu due to underlying health conditions. I am supporting London’s boroughs to increase levels of flu vaccination also amongst children and young people through my Healthy Early Years and Healthy Schools programmes, as well as helping to ensure that preschool children are up to date with their routine immunisations.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor, for that answer. The issue of transparency has been raised a number of times during this MQT. Of course, one of the things that is really missing in the debate is the minutes of the Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies (SAGE) meeting on 24 September [2020] that the Government has not published for some reason. I hope the Government will publish that information to ensure that all people who live in this country are aware that we follow the scientific advice rather than any other source of advice.

One of the things it did publish, of course, was the co-relationship between flu vaccinations and COVID deaths. As you may know already, 43% of people who died had a co-infection of influenza and of COVID rather than people who just had COVID. Only 27% died in that group so the infection is very important. What have we done across London and what has the NHS done particularly to ensure the rate of vaccination goes up in London? I know that you have been a good example but what has the London NHS done about this?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Thank you for that. Can I underscore your point about the link between those who have respiratory conditions and the impact of COVID-19, particularly with flu as well? We are doing a huge amount, more so than ever before, Dr Sahota.

The other point to make is we are making sure the messaging is culturally competent so that it can reach London’s diverse communities. One of the lessons we learnt from the first wave was the disproportionate impact on BAME Londoners, particularly those with underlying health conditions who are susceptible to a bad case of flu as well. Therefore, we are hoping to reach double the number of Londoners we already do. NHS London has done a huge amount in relation to its workers, in relation to TfL, the MPS and others, particularly those with underlying health conditions. Many general practitioners (GPs) I know are running mass vaccination programmes because GPs often are the best route in to meet many Londoners.

If there are any other ideas you have, I know NHS London is in the ideas business but it does not pretend it has all the answers. It is really important we reach as many people as we can because that will mean, if they catch the COVID virus and they have been vaccinated against catching the flu and they do not get it, they have a better chance of coming through COVID-19.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: The other thing, Mr Mayor - going back to the issue raised by my colleague, Assembly Member Jennette Arnold [OBE] - is the question about universities. As you know, universities are autonomous institutions and there is no legislation that has been implemented to control the virus nationally on university campuses.

We have 500,000 students in London. What can we do to make sure there is a co-ordinated approach of controlling the virus in universities? Is there a case for you to pull the universities and further education colleges together to see if we can have a consistent policy right across London?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I have been really impressed with how the higher education institutions are working together and with us during this pandemic. We have on the London Transition Board a piece of work where we work closely with the universities and it is really important that Professor Kevin Fenton [Regional Director, Public Health England] continues to have a good relationship with the universities. [Baroness] Deborah Bull [Vice President, Kings College London], who is on that relevant subgroup and on the Transition Board, leads on some of that work for us. To reassure you, we are working with the universities across London. We are aware of this being an issue.

I also should put on the record my thanks to the universities that have offered up their laboratories to increase capacity when it comes to testing with MedCity as well. That has been really helpful.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Finally, Mr Mayor, we are now at tier 2 tomorrow. However, of course, the Government will have looked at some metrics to say why it has gone for this policy rather than a local lockdown, which was recommended by the SAGE meeting some weeks ago.

Are you privy to those discussions so that you can be preparing London for the right response or are you kept in the dark entirely on the reasoning behind the Government's policies?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I have to be honest. I saw the SAGE reports at the same time as you did when they were made public. I was shocked when I read them. They were three weeks old and it was quite clear what the SAGE advice was. The most effective way to slow down the spread of the virus is by a national circuit-breaker. It also talked about those policies that would have a marginal impact.

I am worried the Government is making the wrong call yet again and is being slow to respond. I continue to call on the Government to have a national short circuit-breaker. In the absence of that we in London are doing the prudent thing and going to alert level 2 from tomorrow night and it is really important Londoners follow the rules.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I agree, Mr Mayor. We should all follow the advice of the Government, but I wish the Government was following the advice of SAGE rather than making its own mind up on this matter. Thank you very much.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Assembly Member Boff, you have a follow-up on this?

Andrew Boff AM: Will you be restoring the flu jab campaign for TfL staff that was discontinued when you became Mayor?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): TfL staff are encouraged to have the flu jab. I am not sure about the particular campaign you refer to. I am more than happy to look at it to see if that campaign needs to be reinstated. However, the measures we are taking already will lead to more people taking that up but I am more than happy to take that away because I cannot, off the top of my head, remember it.

Andrew Boff AM: What I mean is will such campaign include the free flu voucher scheme for frontline staff that was provided by your predecessor?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I do not have sight of that, Chair. I am happy to go away and look into it.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Thank you. The next question on the Order Paper, 3619, has been withdrawn.

2020/3485 – Brexit Negotiations and Impact in London

[Len Duvall AM](#)

Covid-19 is a public health emergency on a scale not seen in living memory. Today is the deadline arbitrarily set by the Prime Minister for Britain to reach a Brexit deal with the EU. Do you agree the Government should secure a good Brexit Deal or agree to a 12-month extension to the transition period, as you have urged the Prime Minister, so that we can focus all of our attention on tackling the virus?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Yes, I absolutely agree. The European Union (EU) Council meeting finishes tomorrow. If no trade deal is agreed by the end of this crunch I understand there will be real challenges for us going forward. I urge the Government to put the British people first and to seek immediate extension to the transition period until we have managed to turn the tables on COVID-19.

The pandemic has already triggered the most far-reaching public health and economic emergency since the Second World War with more emotional heartache, economic suffering and job losses expected in the months ahead. It would be the worst possible moment and deeply irresponsible for the Government to choose to inflict a further economic shock on our country by leaving the EU with no trade deal in place. Independent research shows that in London alone this would mean 87,000 fewer jobs by 2030, which is on top of the catastrophic impact of the pandemic on jobs and income. The looming failure to agree a deal for our services sector is especially worrying. You will be aware London's world-leading finance, professional services, tech and creative industries account for over two-fifths of UK exports in services.

Rather than wasting precious time and resources preparing for a Brexit cliff-edge, the overriding priority for everyone in Government must be to get this deadly virus under control and protecting jobs and livelihoods. This is not about whether people supported remaining in the EU or leaving. That debate is over. Brexit is happening. This is about doing the right thing for our country at a moment of acute national crisis.

Len Duvall AM: It is just another promise broken by the Prime Minister for the 'oven-ready' deal. In terms of the money that has been spent on the issue, the Institute of Government, which we have used as a think tank and which is highly respected by all political wings, has calculated that £4.4 billion was spent by early 2020 on Brexit preparations. It expects by 2021 that we will have spent a further £3.7 billion on these issues.

Now, even if we get a deal in the coming weeks, the preparation issues of alerting business to the rules and all the agencies that need to be involved - you, local government throughout the country, points of entry and everything else - that we are working within, do you feel that in light of what has happened with Roche and the fragility of its supply chain to the NHS we are going to see further a piece of that? Can you build that into your COVID-19 preparations around that fragility? We do not just have the normal issues of dealing with a pandemic. We are going to have the added issues of Brexit. It will not always be like it but it is coming at the wrong time for this country. It is coming at the wrong time.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): As ever, an astute observation. To reassure you, the SCG has also been tasked with some of the Brexit preparation stuff. You are absolutely right that it is linked. There is a link. You gave a really good example with the availability of testing and medicines in relation to what happens there.

It is also, frankly, offensive when you talk about those Londoners who are struggling to make ends meet with what the future holds, the lack of support from the Chancellor [The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP], and then to be told all this money is being wasted on preparations as the Institute of Government and others have said. You are absolutely right in relation to this.

There is another point you failed to mention - the impact on businesses and the mountain of red tape that is going to be created with a basic trade deal, let alone with no trade deal, in relation to regulatory rules they have to follow, in relation to rules on imports, rules on exports and how you attract talent. The Conservative Party used to be a party of business. I cannot think of anything more anti-business than a red-tape mountain or having no decent trade deal with our biggest trading partner.

Len Duvall AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Thank you.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Assembly Member Kurten has indicated on this.

David Kurten AM: Thank you, Chair. Mr Mayor, it seems like we are back in 2016 with all of these statements you are making and the points you are putting to the Assembly. We have had four and a half years since the referendum and the right thing to do is actually to push ahead and make sure that we come out of the EU properly on 31 December [2020]. We should not be using COVID as an excuse to delay Brexit for another year and have another year of transition as you are saying we should do.

Do you not see the point that we should come out and get Brexit done? Then we will be free to make our own laws and our own trade deals and to enjoy all the benefits that coming out of the EU will bring.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Maybe the Member can explain the process by which we will be alerted about a dangerous criminal coming from an EU country to our country; maybe he can tell me how we will extradite a dangerous criminal from a country in Europe to our country who has committed a serious offence; maybe he can explain to me how we are going to share intelligence that we currently receive in relation to passengers leaving or arriving in our country; maybe he can explain to me the terms of trade for those doing finance, law, professional services, tech or the creative industries.

David Kurten AM: This is MQT and so I put the questions to you, Mr Mayor, rather than the other way around. The point is --

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Four and a half years, man. How much more time do you need?

David Kurten AM: The thing is, Mr Mayor, the position you are taking is a very weak negotiating position. I am glad you are not the chief negotiator because you are saying that if we do not get a deal then we should just extend for another 12 months. How long does this go on? You have been calling for this for four and a half years. Extend, extend, extend. You are calling for it now. If we get another 12 months you will be calling for it again, "Let us extend to 2022 or 2025". We have to get on with this and we have to get out of the EU. We should not be using COVID as an excuse for doing that.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Can we have a question, please?

David Kurten AM: Do you not agree, Mr Mayor?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I would like to reassure Londoners that I do not agree with this man.

David Kurten AM: There are many millions of Londoners who voted for Brexit and so they would agree with me. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

2020/3294 – Public-private space and the Public London Charter

[Siân Berry AM](#)

Why has there been such a delay on the new rules to govern public spaces which you promised me in November 2017?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): In November 2017, I said that my new London Plan will include a policy to address the public realm and promote the highest level of access to public spaces. I also committed to developing a Public London Charter. Because the Public London Charter is linked to a policy in the Plan, we need to get the Plan in place to give the Charter statutory teeth. I published my draft London Plan in December 2017 and it includes a policy on public access to public spaces.

Since then, the Plan has been through a lengthy statutory process towards final publication. Last October, I received the Planning Inspectorate's report and recommendations. In December [2019], I submitted my intent to publish the London Plan to the Secretary of State [for Housing, Communities and Local Government, The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP]. Ten months later he still has not approved it. It is unfortunate the Secretary of State is holding up the progress of the plan, despite having had it since Christmas last year. The Public London Charter cannot be finally adopted until my new London Plan is published.

While the Plan has been sitting with the Government, work on the Charter and on policy affecting London's public realm more widely have been moving forward. This includes two research projects, one led by the Centre for London on how the public realm is managed and used and the other by the GLA's Intelligence Unit exploring Londoner's perspectives of the public realm. As well as this research, my team is running engagement workshops with a range of stakeholders to help develop the Charter, involving my design advocates, the London boroughs and organisations such as the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England - London, Just Space and the Open Spaces Society.

In March [2020], I published an informal draft of the Public London Charter for information. Despite the disruption caused to all our policy work by COVID-19 my team has been preparing the draft Charter for formal consultation, which will launch later this month. This consultation will involve further engagement with a range of stakeholders, including community and voluntary sector organisations, to ensure the Charter will be

robust and useful to all Londoners. Through my Good Growth by Design initiative I have also developed a good practice design guide for London's public realm and this will be published in the autumn.

Siân Berry AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. I hope you will see my separate statement backing up your comments on the circuit breaker earlier.

Please forgive my frustration on this issue because the Assembly has been waiting for three years since we passed our motion. Two years ago, in response to question 2019/0272, you promised it would be policy alongside the London Plan and yet we still only have this draft document which is not policy. It is full of the word "should". It is not a policy that can actually be enacted. I am very frustrated about this.

To cut a long story short, Mr Mayor, would you like me to draft a policy for you for consultation on this and cut out the middleman?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): No.

Siân Berry AM: I swear the Assembly Members here, who voted for that motion three years ago, could have written this policy for you based on existing research and experience from Londoners, got that through consultation and got it to the position of being published alongside the London Plan, which is what your answer to my 2019 Mayor's Question says.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Maybe where the Member can help me is in persuading the Secretary of State to finally allow the London Plan to do what it is supposed to do. It has been sitting on his desk now for eight months. If she wants to help, she can maybe exert influence on the Government.

Siân Berry AM: I am over my time. Thank you.

2020/3734 – Face to face GP Appointments

[Tony Devenish AM](#)

Given your remit for addressing health inequalities, will you conduct a survey of London GPs and Londoners to ensure that in addition to utilising video appointments, Londoners can still meet face to face with GPs where appropriate?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The NHS has responded magnificently to the COVID-19 pandemic. London's GPs have developed a range of innovative solutions to provide advice and treatment with telephone and online consultations including video, expanding in a way few expected, offering alternative methods of access. During the pandemic, the quick shift to digital appointments has helped slow the spread of the virus by enabling people to seek care from home. This has also helped vulnerable people reduce their risk to exposure.

However, while digital appointments can improve access for many, they can also create a barrier to access for others. I therefore share the Assembly Member's concern that some of the most vulnerable Londoners may be left behind. Everyone should be able to access their GP in a way that works for them, whether that is online, by phone or in person. It is crucial that the NHS considers the possible impacts of the digital model on health inequalities and particularly those who are most likely to face digital exclusion. We know this will largely be older people, but also many others, including people with both physical and learning disabilities and people who speak English as an additional language.

I understand the NHS will now be offering a mix of face-to-face, telephone and online GP appointments, and I am reassured to hear that if patients need to be seen face-to-face, they will be. The NHS must continue to offer face-to-face appointments. A new services model of care must be designed and planned carefully and with close engagement with the communities who will be most affected. I will continue to discuss the important issue with the NHS London Regional Director [Sir David Sloman] and I will ask my Health Advisor, Dr Tom Coffey [OBE], to take this issue up at his next GP roundtable.

Tony Devenish AM: In terms of conducting a survey of London GPs directly to see and to encourage them to do both face-to-face as well as video appointments, as my question says, will you conduct a survey of London GPs to ensure, in addition to utilising video appointments, that you do encourage face-to-face?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): As the NHS will continue to offer the mixed model, I am not sure what purpose a survey would serve. However, for the reasons you allude to in your question, I am more than happy for my Health Adviser to raise it at the GP roundtable. If there is a need to undertake a survey, we can do so, but I am slightly puzzled as to the point. If it is the case that the NHS is offering a mixed model for the reasons that we agree on, I am unsure what purpose a survey serves.

Tony Devenish AM: It is just one method, Mr Mayor, to try and use your office to publicise within London that this is very important. I think we would agree that during COVID-19, many people were too scared to use the NHS, which is not a good thing as we can all agree on. It is how we can use your office - and again, I often use the example of TfL hoardings on buses or the Tube - to encourage people to seek face-to-face medical treatment when necessary.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): We are in agreement and so I suggest that my Health Advisor speaks to the Assembly Member to discuss any ideas he has because we both want the same thing. We may well agree on the means as well and so, rather than give the impression that we do not agree, let me ask Dr Coffey to speak with Assembly Member Devenish and see if we can do what is required.

Tony Devenish AM: I will leave it there.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Colleagues, we are close to 12.30pm and so can the Assembly agree to suspend Standing Order 2.9B in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 1.1H in order to allow the remaining business on the agenda to be completed?

All: Agreed.

2020/3413 – European Security Cooperation

[Unmesh Desai AM](#)

What indication have you and the Commissioner received from government that progress has been made towards securing an agreement that will allow the Met the same levels of cooperation with other European states that is currently enjoys, after the 31st December?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I have recently written to the Home Secretary [The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP] to once again outline my concerns about the loss of security co-operation. I was disappointed by her response, which indicated that the Government was satisfied for the UK to fall back on outdated and inefficient

procedures. The policing and security benefits of working within the EU have been significant, undoubtedly making cross-border cooperation much more efficient for the MPS and making Londoners safer as a result.

My fear is that we are in danger of sleepwalking into a scenario where our nation is faced with a combined impact of a global pandemic and an unnecessarily damaging separation from the EU. National policing experts have warned that losing access to the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) and to Europol, to name just two examples, will make it harder to keep track of terrorists and serious organised criminal networks.

I know that the MPS has been working collaboratively to prepare for the effects of Brexit on law enforcement. I have repeatedly made it clear to the Government that any loss of access to the existing tools will unnecessarily risk the safety and security of our citizens by removing access to vital intelligence and our ability to bring offenders to justice.

Unmesh Desai AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Sleepwalking, indeed. You got it right there. Let us look at the EAW. Acting against the warnings of senior law enforcement officers, the Government has said it would not be seeking to participate in this particular scheme as part of a future relationship with the EU. Under an EAW, the average time for extradition of a criminal wanted in Europe is just 48 days. Whereas in the European Convention on Extradition, which is the precedent that we will fall back on in December [2020], it can take up to a year and in some cases much longer. The loss of this and other tools will irrefutably impact on the safety of Londoners and on the ability of the MPS to bring perpetrators to justice.

How important is it, Mr Mayor, that we seek cross-party cooperation in lobbying the Government to secure continued use of these tools as a matter of priority?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): It is crucial. If you are a criminal, you will be looking forward to next year when there is no EAW if you want to flee to Europe. You have given a really good example of the compare and contrast. It takes 48 days on average to bring somebody back under the EAW versus more than a year under an alternative scheme. It will be slower, it will be clunkier, it will be more expensive and it will cause huge distress to the victims of crime.

Unmesh Desai AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. I did note your answers to Assembly Member Kurten, but as it is such an important area, can you remind this Assembly that in the event of no deal, what it would mean for Londoners in plain terms, if we do not get an agreement before the end of the year?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The best I can do is to quote the words of the police officer in charge of our counter-terrorism, I quote, "It would create an immediate risk that people could come to this country who were serious offenders ... and we would not know about it." This is the most senior counter-terrorism officer in the country.

What I would say to those who for ideological reasons are obsessed with leaving the EU without a deal or with a poor deal is make sure then that, God forbid, if that happens, you own some of the consequences of a no-deal Brexit or a bad-deal Brexit.

Unmesh Desai AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor.

2020/3432 – Budget challenges to the implementation of recommendations from Grenfell Fire Inquiry phase 1

[Andrew Dismore AM](#)

How will progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Grenfell Fire Inquiry Phase 1 report be impacted by cuts to LFB's budget?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The GLA Group faces a forecast £493 million budget shortfall over the next two years due to the impact of COVID-19. Along with the MPS, I have asked the London Fire Brigade (LFB) to make the smallest percentage of savings across the GLA group. When I published my budget guidance in June [2020], I asked the LFB to find £10 million in savings in 2020/21 and £15 million in 2021/22. I have since decided to use GLA reserves to give extra support to the LFB, reducing the savings required in 2020/21 to just £5 million. I have protected the LFB's budget as much as possible and I am now awaiting the outcome of their detailed budget work to be submitted in November [2020]. The LFB accepted in full the recommendations of the phase 1 report and is committed to making the improvements required. I have made it clear to the [London Fire] Commissioner [Andy Roe] that despite the budget challenges London faces, the LFB must continue to deliver on the phase 1 recommendations.

The LFB's Transformation Delivery Plan is supporting the effective delivery of actions to address the recommendations of both the phase 1 report and the issues raised in the report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) [of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services]. Despite some delays owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, good progress has been made, with the LFB having taken delivery of the new 32-metre turntable ladders and the 64-metre appliances arriving early next year. As you know, transforming the LFB will take time and this is a long-term programme of work and change.

Andrew Dismore AM: Thank you for your answer. The Grenfell Fire Inquiry phase 1 report, which was published a year ago, included 14 recommendations directed to the LFB and you rightly committed to implementing them fully. This is being done through the transformation project, which is changing root and branch the way the LFB works. You have also contributed a welcome £2.2 million towards the cost of this. However, recently the Deputy Mayor [for Fire and Resilience, Dr Fiona Twycross] said that the estimated cost of the transformation project was £4.1 million, whilst the demands of the LFB were ever-increasing. The Commissioner recently said,

"We don't know the full limit of what has happened inside the built environment over the past 10 to 15 years. Residential buildings which have been found to pose a considerable danger to life and fire - and not just from ACM cladding, that is - now require the Brigade safety monitoring through fortnightly site visits, with clear financial implications for the Brigade."

What impact will the proposed reductions to the LFB's finances have on its ability to deliver on the Grenfell fire report recommendations and to complete the transformation project?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Thank you for your question. It is really important that we do not allow the financial situation that we are facing because of COVID-19 to have an impact on the ability of the LFB to do the inspections, the business that you referred to and the transformation required. I accept that it is a big challenge to undertake transformation and make savings and to make sure there are not consequences on Londoners. The Commissioner reassures me that he will do his utmost to make sure that there is not a compromise in either of those two things - transformation or savings - and I will be in a position to report back more once he submits the budget response in November.

Andrew Dismore AM: It is the case that the LFB has received no additional Government funding to help implement Grenfell phase 1. It is also the case that the Government previously failed to provide the necessary additional funding soon after the fire, when the then Home Secretary refused the required £6 million for extra equipment and £6 million for revenue costs; for example, for fire safety inspecting officers to restore those cut

by [The Rt Hon] Boris Johnson [MP, Prime Minister]. It is also the case that the Government voted against Labour's amendment to the Fire Safety Bill, and by doing so refused to give legal force to the Grenfell phase 1 recommendations. These would have required building managers to share information with the local fire service about the design of external walls and materials, carry out regular inspections of lifts and individual flat doors, and ensure evacuation and fire safety instructions for residents in buildings.

Would it be fair to say that all of this shows the Conservative Government to be at best indifferent to supporting the LFB's work to implement the recommendations of Grenfell and to keep Londoners safe?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Absolutely, and we have seen the situation where there are more obligations being placed on the fire service because of phase 1 of the Inquiry and the HMICFRS report. There are no additional monies from Government. In fact, money is being taken away. At the same time, when the Government had a chance to enshrine the phase 1 recommendations, it voted against the amendment to do so. You will be aware from your long experience on the Assembly of the previous Mayor's record of closing down fire stations, I think 10, removing fire firefighters from our city, I think 550, and removing fire appliances, I think 27. I know that you held the previous Mayor to account. Londoners know the track record of this Prime Minister when it comes to fire safety. The job of the Mayor and the Assembly is to make sure that we give our firefighters the resources, support and equipment they need to be able to look after our city.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Assembly Member Boff, do you want to come in?

Andrew Boff AM: Last Thursday, the Tower Hamlets Development Committee considered an infill development at Brunton Wharf, which would prevent direct access by fire tenders to a block on the estate. Despite the safety concerns of the residents, some of whom live in a 16-storey block, the Committee were unwilling to wait for a report by the LFB and decided to give those plans permission anyway.

Will you write to the Mayor of Tower Hamlets expressing your concerns and asking whether Tower Hamlets residents can feel safe with the decisions made by their Council?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I am more than happy for the Assembly Member to write to me with the details. I am more than happy to follow that up.

Andrew Dismore AM: A point of order, if I may Chair. I am sure that the Assembly Member does not wish to mislead the Mayor or the Assembly, but after what happened at the Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning (FREP) [Committee meeting] on Tuesday, we looked into the details of the planning decision made by Tower Hamlets. The Chair of the Committee has confirmed that permission was given for the planning but with the condition attached that construction will not be allowed to proceed unless it has the LFB's support and officers will work with the LFB and the applicants to achieve that. It is not quite as Assembly Member Boff indicated.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you for that helpful intervention, Assembly Member Dismore. Is it good practice to always grant planning permissions and then wait afterwards for the comments of the LFB? I would suggest not, but I would welcome the Mayor's intervention on this, merely because Londoners need to feel safe in the properties that are being built.

Andrew Dismore AM: The condition was attached and that is quite frequently what happens in planning, as you well know.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Assembly Member Boff, if you can write in with clear details to the Mayor as he has indicated, he will respond to you.

Andrew Boff AM: I will do so, complete with the comments of local residents as well.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): Thank you very much.

2020/3525 – Supporting leaseholders left ‘mortgage prisoners’ by EWS1 forms

[Murad Qureshi AM](#)

EWS1 forms are causing misery to leaseholders seeking to move properties and failure to have them completed is leaving some mortgage prisoners, unable to re-mortgage or to move until their freeholder allows an EWS1 assessment. What are you doing to overcome this log-jam in the housing industry and to support leaseholders to move on with their lives?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The External Wall Survey (EWS) 1 issues left these leaseholders stuck in limbo and many under immense financial pressure, unable to borrow, sell and move on with their lives. Of the nation’s high-rise buildings, 63% are in London, and more than half of the city’s housing stock is flats and maisonettes. Building safety problems affect Londoners disproportionately, but this is a national crisis that requires a national solution.

On 21 September [2020], I wrote on this specific issue to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government [The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP] and I am still waiting for a response. First and foremost, I am calling for a long-term funding solution to address the scale of remediation work required to protect leaseholders from costs. The Government’s £1 billion Building Safety Fund provides enough money for only around 600 buildings and there have been nearly 3,000 registrations. The Government also needs a new system for tracking and enforcing safety checks and provide a clearer guidance on EWS1.

I have also urged the Government to commit to a training and accreditation programme for external wall safety assessments and to address the problems in the professional indemnity insurance market. I am proud to be a signatory of the End Our Cladding Scandal campaign led by affected leaseholders with input from the survivors of the Grenfell Tower tragedy and *Inside Housing*. I will continue to pressure on the Government to resolve this crisis urgently so that leaseholders can get on with their lives.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor, for your response. When I became the Chair of the Housing Committee, I have had the most correspondence on this issue, the cladding scandal. It has stopped people moving, re-mortgaging and also added to their annual insurance bills, so thank you. Not just thousands, but tens of thousands of Londoners are affected.

On that basis, both Andrew Dismore [AM] and I did write to you about a few London-specific proposals, if I can focus on that. For example, we suggested that the London Housing Taskforce be set up because there are some specific things you can do as Mayor. The first of those is to look at housing association involvement. It strikes me that there is a high incidence of housing associations involved in many of these very difficult situations that leaseholders find themselves in. There are examples where shareholders who only have 25% of the home as ownership are being asked to pay 100% of the remediation costs. Those kinds of things are something you can look into and I hope you are keen to do that - undoubtedly the involvement of housing associations who are acting as freeholders here.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Chair, to be fair, I saw the letter last week and will respond in due course. The Assembly Member has articulated some of the practical problems people are facing because of the

complex nature of this. I will see if there are any London bespoke solutions to try to ameliorate the quality of life for Londoners in the absence of any national response.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you for that. There is another ask in a London context. There is great difficulty getting data on buildings that are under 18 metres that may have dangerous cladding. Is it possible for the LFB to collate data from their fire safety inspections to be made publicly available?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I will have to look into that. I am not aware of what information the LFB have or who owns it. Each have their own data protection. I am more than happy to look into what the Assembly Member raises for the obvious reassurance reasons it servers. I am happy to write to him in relation to that.

Murad Qureshi AM: I have a final comment. It really does highlight the problems between freeholders and leaseholders and the need for commonhold, like we have in Scotland, and that is just a comment.

2020/3433 – Frontline services and reductions in LFB finance

[Andrew Dismore AM](#)

What impact will the proposed reductions in finance for the LFB have on its front line, including personnel, fire stations, fire appliances, and specialised equipment?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): The COVID-19 pandemic has left public finances in a perilous state. We are having to make savings across the GLA family that were totally unexpected this time last year. Despite this, I have been clear that I will do everything in my power to protect frontline emergency services and their critical public safety roles. That is why, along with the MPS, I have asked the LFB to make the smallest percentage of savings across the GLA Group and I have given the LFB an extra £5 million from GLA reserves to halve the savings they need to make this year. I protect the LFB budget as much as possible and I am now awaiting the outcome of the detailed budget work in November.

The Commissioner has been clear that his overarching aim is never to increase risk to Londoners. He will continue to ensure that the LFB meets its response-time standards with the first fire engine on the scene at an incident within six minutes and a second fire engine when needed within eight minutes on average across London. It is too soon to talk about specifics beyond that at this stage, but I will be discussing these matters with the [London Fire] Commissioner [Andy Roe] as these proposals develop. He will of course be working with and consulting staff and trade unions throughout.

Andrew Dismore AM: Thank you for that answer. As you previously mentioned, after [The Rt Hon] Boris Johnson [MP, Prime Minister], when he was the Mayor, cut over 500 firefighter posts and closed 10 fire stations, when you were elected in 2016, you rightly commissioned the Mayer Review to examine the impact of the Johnson cuts on core aims around prevention, protection and response. Anthony Mayer reported that the LFB could not face more frontline cuts safely if it was to have the ability to manage effectively civil contingencies as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act [2004]. He also said:

“Further cuts would particularly affect capacity to manage new challenges and major incidents where the Brigade needs to co-respond with the London Ambulance Service, such as major health emergencies or terrorist attacks.”

Since the report, we have seen additional demands due to the consequences of terrorist attacks and the health implications of the virus and on top of that, above all, the consequences of Grenfell. Do you still agree with

Mayer's findings and do you trust Boris Johnson's Government to take seriously the risk that an underfunded LFB represents?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): You have raised a really important point. The combination of terrorism, pandemic and the concerns about the built environment mean that we have to be very careful before we make any cuts to the LFB. That is why I have said that the fewest savings required in the GLA group should be the LFB and the MPS. We have had good conversations with the Minister, who the Assembly Member will know, one Lord Stephen Greenhalgh in relation to this issue. He is the Fire Minister and it is very important that the Home Secretary [The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP] and he, as the Fire Minister, give the fire service the resources that they need in an environment where there are additional burdens on the fire service rather than less.

Andrew Dismore AM: You are right and it is good that proportionally the LFB has taken one the least hits in this year and next year's budget cuts. However, it is still facing cuts of £25 million as a result of COVID-19 and its impact on City Hall funding. This is at a time when demand on the brigade is increasing. For example, the Commission overspent on supplies by £5 million for extra personal protective equipment (PPE).

What will you do to ensure there will be no frontline fire brigade cuts affecting fire and other emergency cover in London?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I will wait to see the Commissioner's budget process, but one of the good examples of excellent trade union work is when the Fire Brigades Union [FBU] - and other trade unions, by the way - are raising their concerns. It is not just about the safety of their members, it is the safety of Londoners as well. That is why it is so important that we do right by the fire service as indeed by the MPS and so I cannot comment on all the details. You are absolutely right to remind me as the Mayor and I know the Commissioner knows this, but we have to ensure we deal with any concerns that staff may have and also to ensure the fire service has the resources, the kit, the tools and support they need to do their job properly.

Andrew Dismore AM: It is fair to say the FBU has always tried to adopt a constructive approach in relation to protecting the public. It is not just about members. First and foremost, firefighters want to protect the public and rescue the public when they are in danger and it is important that we do recognise that work.

2020/3601 – Air quality and the School Streets Scheme

[Léonie Cooper AM](#)

What benefits do you expect the air quality monitoring project, recently announced to measure the impact of School Streets, to deliver for Londoners?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): As part of our world leading Streetspace Programme over 400 more School Streets are being introduced to allow social distancing at the school gate, improve air quality, reduce road danger and incentivise walking, scootering and cycling. Last month I announced a new study that will capture the air-quality benefits of these new School Streets. Existing evidence already shows School Streets can reduce pollution, especially at pickup and drop-off times. One school that introduced their School Street as part of my school's air quality audit programme, reported a 35% reduction in parents driving to school.

Earlier this month, I published new evidence showing the dramatic improvements in London's air quality since I became Mayor. This includes a 97% reduction in the number of state primary and secondary schools located in areas exceeding legal limits for nitrogen dioxide, from 455 in 2016 to just 14 in 2019. There is much more work to do before Londoners can breathe clean air. Tens of thousands of Londoners still live in areas that

exceed legal limits for nitrogen dioxide, and only 1% of London meets World Health Organization limits for particulate matter. I will continue to work to improve London's air quality including by expanding the ULEZ up to the North and South Circular Roads in October 2021.

Léonie Cooper AM: Thank you very much for everything you have done since you were elected in 2016 to push forward with improvements to London's air quality. You mentioned that over 400, in fact 430 schools have signed up for School Streets projects and they have invested in improving their local air quality with all the associated health benefits for children. It would be beneficial for all schools to be involved and I wonder if you have any idea of how many more schools are expected to sign up for the Emergency Schools Streets project.

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): We are currently negotiating with the DfT for the second half of TfL funding. There is no money left in the monies we have. What we have done in the meantime also is to have a toolkit which can be used by schools and boroughs to bring about School Streets. It does not cost a lot of money and so I am hoping that boroughs will work with schools over and above the 431 to get more School Streets going.

Léonie Cooper AM: There are clearly some slightly cheaper options and that includes removable bollards rather than putting in number-plate recognition cameras and things like that. Do you have any information about the monitoring that has been going on to make sure that we are getting the schools that are in most need prioritised, because some schools are nearer to dirtier streets than others?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): You are absolutely right. What we cannot do is have those schools who have the keenest headteachers who have put in the bids but may not need these improvements, getting the resources and those schools that need it, not getting it. We are working closely with the boroughs who have been working with their schools, who need the changes to apply for the monies. We are monitoring a selection of schools to see the difference we make and we will be using those lessons to cascade to other schools. As you say, the ambition must be that all schools benefit, not just the 431.

Léonie Cooper AM: No, absolutely. I just wondered if you would like to say how important you think retaining the under-18 Zip Travelcard for 11-to-18-year-olds will be as we go forward with that negotiation with Government for funding for TfL. It is a great way of keeping pupils out of cars and helping to make London's air cleaner and encouraging them to use public transport to get to school. Is that something you are able to prioritise in that negotiation?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Absolutely. If you are a parent or carer with two, three or four children, you may choose to drive your children to school or schools rather than paying for public transport, which you will be required to do if the Government gets its way. You are also giving young people an experience of public transport, which you hope they take with them when they become adults as well.

All the evidence says that if you use public transport, you are taking part in active travel - walking to the station, walking to the bus stop - rather than jumping into a car outside your home. The other point, which is really important and you will be aware, is that it is the poorest Londoners who suffer the worst quality air, who use the free under-18 Travelcard and 60% of them are BAME Londoners. You are absolutely right. It is really important that we persuade the Government to do a U-turn and not take away free travel for under-18s in London.

Léonie Cooper AM: Thank you very much. I could not agree more. Let us cross our fingers and hope that the Government sees sense. Thank you, Chair. I am finished.

Andrew Boff AM: Can you write to me on how you will enhance the air-quality monitoring arrangements around schools on the routes to the Silvertown Tunnel before, during and after its construction?

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): I already gave an answer to your previous question - I am not sure if the Assembly Member was listening, maybe a bad connection - in relation to a question asked by Assembly Member Pidgeon [MBE]. In addition to the work the air quality team does in relation nitrogen dioxide, we are going to look into the possibility of looking at PM as well. That will give us an idea of where things are now and in the future as well.

Andrew Boff AM: I did hear the contribution earlier. She [Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM] did not actually ask for you to write to me, which is what I am asking you.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): I will take that as a comment and we will leave it at that.

Andrew Boff AM: One last flourish.

Navin Shah AM (Chair): That ends MQT. Thank you, Mr Mayor, for your answers.