

**London Assembly Economy Committee – 2 March 2021****Transcript of Agenda Item 8 – Review of the Mayoral Term**

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** We will now move on to the second part of the meeting, if you like, which is the review of the mayoral term. I am very pleased that we are going to be joined by four of the Deputy Mayors.

The first one who is joining us is Rajesh Agrawal [Deputy Mayor for Business]. We are going to be focusing first of all with you on a review of what the Mayor has been doing around business, prosperity and opportunity. We are going to reflect on the original manifesto commitments from 2016 and we are also looking at strategies that have been developed since then.

I am going to pass over to Assembly Member Susan Hall, who is going to be starting the questioning. Susan?

**Susan Hall AM:** Thank you, Chair. Hello, Rajesh. It is good to see you. I will start off with the questions.

Given the prominence of the Business Advisory Board in the mayoral manifesto and in the Economic Development Strategy, and the Board's involvement in helping the Mayor shape policy and contributing to his response to COVID-19, do you think the intentions, work or impact of the Board is sufficiently transparent?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Thank you very much and good morning, everyone. Thank you very much, Assembly Member Hall, for that question.

The Mayor's Business Advisory Board aims to help the Mayor meet his manifesto commitment, advise on the major issues facing London's economy and share creative and innovative ideas to improve City Hall policymaking. The Business Advisory Board has specifically provided significant input into the development of the Mayor's Good Work Standard, the Skills for Londoners Strategy, the Behind Every Great City campaign, the international promotion of London by London & Partners, the Smarter London Together roadmap, the London Growth Hub, the immigration policy, London's Local Industrial Strategy and of course Brexit. The Business Advisory Board members really provide very valuable insight on the challenges facing London's economy as recover from the pandemic.

The Business Advisory Board is not a statutory public forum of the Greater London Authority (GLA) and that is why --

**Susan Hall AM:** That is right. We know. The question is whether it is sufficiently transparent.

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** It is. The thing is that we do not publish the minutes, if that is what you are asking me. That is because the Business Advisory Board is not a statutory public forum of the GLA. The attendees are encouraged to provide honest input of their experience of doing business in London in a very open discussion with the Mayor. These discussions may involve commercially sensitive information. If we look at the membership, they are all top-flight business leaders who reflect the diversity and dynamism of London's economy and they participate in an open discussion with the Mayor and his Deputies.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes. Given the people you have on it, it would be very interesting for us to see those minutes, even if some parts of them were redacted, but you have said no before. I would say that that is not very transparent and so we will have to agree to differ on that one.

How many times have they met this year?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** I do not have a specific exact number to hand, but they meet on a quarterly basis and have been doing so probably for the last four years. Between 15 and 20 times they have met. I can come back to you with the exact number.

**Susan Hall AM:** I was just thinking of the last year, given that you have just reeled through the amount of things that they do, which was quite substantial. Given the position with COVID, etc, has the Board met more than four times this year?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Well, there are a number of different business forums with relation to COVID. In fact, there is the London COVID Business Forum as well, which had its first meeting in November [2020]. That forum specifically includes stakeholders who have been most impacted by the pandemic and who will play a vital and prominent role in London's recovery; for example, organisations like London First, the New West End Company, UK Hospitality, the Federation of Small Businesses, Creative England. These are the sectors that have been hardest hit and --

**Susan Hall AM:** I accept that. That is why I am surprised they perhaps have not met more often given the amount of work that you said in the first part that they do. They must manage to do an awful lot in one meeting.

Our 2018 investigation into the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP) found that whilst the LEAP was very focused on helping new businesses get started, microbusinesses requested more support to survive and grow from the LEAP. How has the LEAP supported microbusinesses to survive the COVID-19 pandemic?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** We have been supporting businesses in every way we can. One good example of how microbusinesses have really benefited is the Mayor's successful Pay It Forward [London] scheme, which has raised over £2 million to date. He has backed it with the £1 million match funding through the Back to Business Fund. Most of the beneficiaries through this scheme were microbusinesses.

There are of course a lot of culture-related business around and so a very small £2.3 million Culture at Risk Fund has helped with that.

There has been a huge challenge for not just businesses but also people who are online learning as the pandemic has happened. £11 million has been spent by the LEAP to help the city's skills providers to shift to online learning and training, including specific measures to reach Londoners who are currently less able to access online courses.

Frankly, both for microbusinesses and also for other sizes of businesses, we need more Government support. We need to extend the value-added tax (VAT) relief scheme. They have been calling for the extension of business rates relief throughout 2021. The Government's grants programme we need to continue based on that.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes. If you will forgive me, I am more interested today in what you have been doing and what the Mayor has been doing because, if not, it is like listening to Sadiq [Khan, Mayor of London], quite frankly, screaming at the Government. We want to know what you have been doing. How many times has the LEAP met this year?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** The LEAP - again - meets on a quarterly basis.

**Susan Hall AM:** Four times. And it has actually done that, has it?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Yes.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK. All right. How much money has gone through the LEAP?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** If you are asking specifically around the business support offering that LEAP does through its London Business Hub, London has 1.1 million small and medium enterprises. If you translate the amount of money that the LEAP receives for business support, it translates to about 80 pence per business in London. Still it punches above its weight. It has already exceeded its target of supporting 2,180 businesses this year. Since its inception, it has supported nearly 5,000 businesses and has engaged with many businesses.

**Susan Hall AM:** Is that 2,180 out of 1.1 million small businesses?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** There has been direct supporting but then, through the website, there is a huge amount of online reach. It has had 275,000 unique users of the website. A lot of the offering is online, but then it is combined with the offline offering as well. To date, the impressions across social media have been about 20 million. It is punching above its weight but I agree with you that the resources are limited.

**Susan Hall AM:** Going back to the question that has not quite been answered, how much money has gone through the LEAP, then, in order to help those 1.1 million businesses, the smaller businesses?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Again, some of the things I have mentioned are --

**Susan Hall AM:** No, just how much money. Just concentrate on the pounds. How much has been spent on the smaller businesses?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Well --

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** We can accept a written answer with more detail if that is easier.

**Susan Hall AM:** Léonie, no. Léonie, whenever Rajesh does not answer, you come back with that, which I suspect I would if I were in your position, but I am actually asking the question. This is the end-of-term summary. Very briefly, there are 1.1 million small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) businesses. How much money has gone through the LEAP to help those businesses?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** I can come back to you with the exact numbers but this is what I said --

**Susan Hall AM:** Approximately.

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** £2 million through the Pay It Forward scheme, £1 million through the Back to Business Fund, £2.3 million through our Culture at Risk Fund and £11 million we have repurposed for the Skills Programme.

One thing I have to highlight is that most of the funds that come through the LEAP come with strings attached and they are for strategic economic development of London. They do not go specifically to small businesses. Most of the funds that come are for very large projects of strategic importance to London.

Wherever we can, we try to repurpose the money and try to use it to support businesses because it is a tough time for businesses.

**Susan Hall AM:** You are an information technology (IT) expert and I fully accept that you are an IT expert. How many businesses do you think interact through the internet with you out of those 1.1 million?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Again, the London Business Hub site has had 275,000 unique users and so it is quite significant numbers. Then, if you combine that with social media platforms, it has had 20 million impressions to date as well. There is a combination online of the website itself and then the social media but then of course that is coupled with all the online one-to-one advisory sessions. A few thousand businesses have benefited from direct one-to-one sessions with the experts as well.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK. At the London Assembly Plenary meeting in November [2020] you were quizzed on how many businesses had received support through the London Business Hub. You said 3,000, which represents only around 0.3% of businesses. What actions --

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** That was one-to-one support. Sorry, that was one-to-one support that I was referring to with the advisory sessions.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes. What actions have you taken to improve that figure since we brought it up with you and what is the current number of businesses that have received that support?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Now all together it is about 7,000. There are 5,000 direct and then there are the more lighter-touch ones, which are 7,000. If you compare it to previously, there have been 5,000 businesses.

**Susan Hall AM:** What does 'lighter-touch' mean?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** 'Lighter-touch' means that the advice is given online rather than customised in a videocall session like this.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK. The problem is that so many businesses are not online. That is the problem.

How has the Mayor worked with the Government to support businesses in the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), which has been so badly affected by the pandemic, and how confident are you at this point that working has been sufficient to save businesses in that CAZ?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** That is such an important question and something that we have been spending a lot of time on. London is the economic engine of the United Kingdom (UK) and the CAZ is absolutely incredibly crucial to that.

One thing that we are doing I am going to talk about in a second, but also second is lobbying the Government and becoming a unified voice with businesses because part of what the Mayor does is essentially standing up for London, supporting London businesses and joining their case. First of all, we have been lobbying the

Government for more support and greater clarity on the extension of business support, VAT and the furlough scheme that the businesses have been asking for.

Officers are working with stakeholders across central London including the New West End Company, London First, Central London Forward and so on to share knowledge, collaborate and inform the Mayor's positions and future policies. Last week the Mayor announced an extra £5 million in funding to undertake an extensive campaign to encourage domestic visitors back into the CAZ once it is safe to do so and of course there are various other programmes that I have mentioned like Pay It Forward and the Culture At Risk business support. Again, a lot of that has gone into the CAZ. We also commissioned a report to understand --

**Susan Hall AM:** Can I stop you there for one second, if you will forgive me? You mentioned that £5 million that the Mayor announced. Obviously, that is very welcome, but do you agree that more needs to be done and that this gesture is a bit too little too late? After all, £5 million is only the same as what it costs to run the Mayor's own office.

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Frankly, we require a domestic tourism campaign like never before and a huge effort is required. In fact, we have yesterday written to the Chancellor [of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP] to see how if there is any way central Government can contribute towards that just as the Mayor has put in £5 million.

Also, we will be looking at opportunities whereby we can do match funding, partnering with other organisations, whether they are businesses, boroughs or whatever, to maximise the money. We cannot wait for help to come from central Government. We need to get this money out of the door as quickly as possible in the most efficient way. Maximum impact and minimum bureaucracy will be required in doing so.

The CAZ is facing a huge challenge right now. Last year it lost nearly £11 billion in tourist spending and about £2 billion in commuter-related spending. This year, even throughout the year as much as we would like, the international tourism numbers are not going back up as much as we would like. The focus is on a domestic tourism campaign and that is what we will be focusing on with this fund.

If the right steps are taken, the CAZ report, which has been published as an interim report so far from the London School of Economics spearheading it, has said that the CAZ can come back on its feet but we must not take central London's success for granted because there will be a longer-term impact as people start working from home more and so on.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes, that is right. That is what I am trying to get at because you have said that the Mayor is lobbying like mad and you keep mentioning the Government but, really, again, I am going to have to keep saying this to you. Let us draw down on what you are actually doing. I often see the Mayor frequently posting screenshots of Zoom calls with groups, but I am never quite sure what he is doing.

Given that the CAZ is so important and we are looking at £5 million, what else have you practically done to help the CAZ? What have you done, Rajesh? Tell us about your own experience? What have you done?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Well, first of all, I have been talking to businesses. I know you criticise and ask why the Mayor is lobbying. This is part of the Mayor's job to lobby for London's businesses and to stand up for them. We will make no apology for it, Assembly Member Hall. We will stand up for London businesses --

**Susan Hall AM:** Good.

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** -- and lobby for them. We will absolutely do that and we make no apology for that.

The thing is what we have been doing: talking to businesses day in and day out. Through various structures, I talk to businesses. For example, we talk about the hospitality industry, we talk about the Association for Leading Visitor Attractions and we talk about the New West End Company. All these organisations are based in the CAZ and represent businesses there. There are various Business Improvement Districts like the Heart of London Alliance. I speak to them day in and day out.

Essentially, a number of things that I have talked about, all the initiatives, a lot of those businesses are based in the CAZ. It is incredibly important that we continue to support those sectors.

**Susan Hall AM:** Thank you. It is lovely that you talk to them all the time. That is wonderful. However, what do you do to actually help them? You talk to them but try to think of something where you have helped one of these businesses in a spectacular way that we can all be pleased about.

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** We have announced £5 million in funding last week to --

**Susan Hall AM:** No, we are going back now. You were talking about specific businesses. Give me an example of where you have spoken to a business and have been able to help. I am giving you an opportunity here to say how you have helped one specific business.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** For example - and I would just point out, Susan, that Assembly Member Murad Qureshi would also like to come in - we have heard a lot about the Pay It Forward scheme and I do not know --

**Susan Hall AM:** You do not need to help him, Léonie. I am just asking Rajesh. Let me have my time with Rajesh because you always interfere.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Sorry, no, you have had 20 minutes with Rajesh. I just want to add my question to yours because there is a subsequent question that is not about the CAZ and then Murad wants to come in.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes, I know. I was getting to that. I am getting to --

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** I want to know about Pay It Forward. Has Pay It Forward, for example, gone to any of the West End companies? I do not know who is part of that scheme and who has benefited from it. Could you answer Susan Hall and also my point? Then, Susan, before we move on to your last question, we will bring in Murad as well.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK. There is the help for you, Rajesh.

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Look, of course many of the businesses have -- for example, the Culture at Risk Fund and, for example, Pay It Forward, the crowdfunding platform that we have.

Assembly Member Hall, I am not sure why you are assuming that all the businesses benefiting from it are outside the CAZ. That is not the case. All the cultural --

**Susan Hall AM:** No, I am not. I am just asking --

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** If you want me to give you a list of all the businesses that have benefited, that is a separate matter. It is inappropriate --

**Susan Hall AM:** No, before the Chair comes in, I asked for one example. That was all. It is obviously difficult, but I make no apologies for asking a question.

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Just take the example of the Hackney Theatre. The Hackney Theatre is a great cultural institution that has managed to raise a significant amount of money through the Pay It Forward London campaign. That is one example for you but there are many examples of small cafés and small retail shops that have benefited from some of this. I am very happy to give you a list of examples, but I can do it offline.

**Susan Hall AM:** Lovely. All right. Perhaps you will write to us and give us the list. That will be interesting.

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** I will give you examples --

**Susan Hall AM:** I will leave it for colleagues to come in now.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Is that OK? Can we bring Murad Qureshi [AM] in before we move to the last question? If there is something else from Murad's point, Susan, that you want to come back on, we can stay on the CAZ for a little bit longer.

**Murad Qureshi AM:** Thank you, Chair. Rajesh, I want to make two points, if you do not mind. Before COVID, the CAZ was expanded into Paddington, which was quite a major step. I find that mostly the scope seems to be on the West End, which does have a place, but there is Paddington and the W2 part of central London.

What kinds of things are you doing there? A lot of businesses have invested a lot of money and they are waiting for Crossrail and other things to come through and they have not quite come through yet. Can you tell me what you are doing in that bit of the CAZ at the moment?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Again, this is a very important point. When we say 'CAZ', it essentially means a large part of central London plus the northern Isle of Dogs, Canary Wharf and so on. The £5 million that we have announced in funding essentially is to bring more domestic tourism and people back into central London. It is not specifically for any boroughs or specifically for any areas. Central London in a way radiates. It is not one specific area. We want to bring up footfall across central London to the hospitality, the pubs, the bars, the restaurants and so on when it is safe to do so.

Paddington will be part of that. It is not specifically for one particular thing. The West End is quite important and Paddington is just on the fringe of that.

**Murad Qureshi AM:** Yes, OK. When you can, if you could write me a note to let me know what is happening in Paddington and W2, that would be handy.

The other question which my colleague Susan Hall [AM] did touch on is small businesses. It is all very well dealing with big businesses, but if you look at drycleaners, newsagents, pubs and what-have-you, as far as I can see when I daily go in and out of the CAZ, they have been hit the most. Very often, they are actually businesses run by people from other parts of London who do long commutes to come in to run these

businesses. Some of the assistance that was aimed to assist them has not actually helped, like the business rates relief and what-have-you.

To what extent are you aware of this and what can they expect from you and the Mayor to assist them to keep at least there for, hopefully, an upturn in the economy later on?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** The point I mentioned around grants and relief is so important. The thing is, when I speak to local authorities, they tell me that the Government announces grants, for example, the day they hear it also for the first time. They will announce it and the businesses are obviously queuing outside for the grants but then they are waiting for the Government to have the criteria and for the conditions of the grants. Often, they are not quite quick enough. That is why sometimes it takes time for the local authorities to release the grants.

The other issue, which I totally do not get and which does not work particularly for London, is that the Government decided to base the amount of grants on the number of residents in a borough rather than the number of businesses in a borough. In central London, of course, there are fewer people who live there and a lot of businesses. It just does not work. There have been some challenges. We have, again, raised that with the Government and raised that in different forums.

**Murad Qureshi AM:** OK.

**Susan Hall AM:** Our Committee has explored how, even prior to COVID-19, many of London's high streets were in decline. What tangible benefits had the Mayor brought to London's high street businesses before the pandemic?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Again, the high streets are hugely important. Some 90% of Londoners live within ten minutes of their local high street, before the pandemic and also through the pandemic, it has accelerated the way our high streets are changing. Even pre-pandemic, they were facing serious challenges due to changing consumer demand and more and more people buying stuff online, for example, economic restructuring and reduced public sector budgets. In fact, during COVID, footfall is down 30% in some areas.

We have established the High Streets Reopening Task and Finish Group. We will work with local authorities, the Metropolitan Police [Service], Transport for London (TfL) and other partners to continue to ensure a safe and secure reopening of London's high streets --

**Susan Hall AM:** The trouble is, Rajesh, if you do not mind me saying, when you read statements that you have in front of you, it means that you do not answer the questions, which is not very helpful. What tangible benefits had the Mayor brought to London's high street businesses before the pandemic?

Also, I have another couple of questions because you have not answered that at all. It is anticipated that this week the Chancellor [of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP] will announce a £5 billion boost to our high streets, offering grants to help shops open, etc. Do you welcome this move and will you work with the Government in rolling this out in London?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Yes.

**Susan Hall AM:** Good man. All right. That was a nice short answer. We will wait to see how you do that, but fingers crossed.

The Mayor published an interim report in February [2021] about central London's economic recovery. The final report is expected in the spring. Can you please confirm to us a date when this will be published?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Yes, I will send you the exact date, but it would be hopefully sometime this month.

**Susan Hall AM:** Definitely this month?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Yes. Are you talking about the CAZ report?

**Susan Hall AM:** The interim report, yes, on central London.

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Yes. The interim report has already been published. It is on the website. The interim report is there. The final report will be published soon as well.

**Susan Hall AM:** Soon? By the end of --

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** I am happy to give you an exact date but offline.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK. This is the last one, Chair. The London Assembly agreed a motion at the November [2020] Plenary to call on the Mayor to give the publication date for an Economic Recovery Strategy. You and the Mayor said this would be published by the [London] Recovery Board. Can you confirm the date for that publication?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Again, we have published the nine missions that they are focusing on. That has been published already and that is what they will be working for.

**Susan Hall AM:** The Economic Recovery Strategy?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** There are three times or two times at least on previous occasions that I have been in front of the Assembly. I have mentioned that there is -- you know, you can call it what you like. What we have published and what the Recovery Board has published is the nine recovery missions and that is what they are focused on. I am not sure which document you are particularly referring to. These are the nine missions and I am very happy to again share them with you. Those are the nine missions that we will be focusing on.

This is in the medium to longer term and then there is a short-term Recovery Roadmap, which was published by the COVID Business Forum. I am very happy to share both of them with you.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK. I will leave it at that. Thank you very much, Rajesh. Thank you, Chair.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Thank you, Susan. Rajesh, can I bring you back? We are going to move on because I can see that Debbie Weekes-Bernard [Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement] has kindly joined us as well and we are going to move on to the next set of questions.

Before we do, I wonder if you could touch on something you briefly mentioned in one of your answers to Susan Hall [AM] there, which is about the recovery of tourism. I know we have had previous discussions both

with you and with others about how important that is for the recovery not just of the CAZ but also for the many other tourist attractions in London.

I wondered if you could say a bit more both about international tourism, which is quite likely to stay weak just because of issues like quarantine and the vaccine rollout, which seems to be somewhat differential around the world, and about whether you think we will need to particularly rely on domestic tourism and what is being done to encourage that and to help drive the CAZ and other tourist attractions back into a more favourable position, hopefully, as we start to recover.

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Yes. Going back to what I said before, nearly £11 billion less has been spent in central London, particularly in tourism-related spending. Two thirds of that, about £7.4 billion, comes from international tourists and one third, about £3.5 billion-odd, comes from domestic tourists.

Given the COVID situation, I suspect the uptake on international tourism will be less. It will not go up very quickly. However, this is also an opportunity for us to give a boost to domestic tourism and that is why this --

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Yes, but what are we doing to make that happen?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** London & Partners and the GLA are working closely with all of the stakeholders. There is something called the Tourism Recovery Board, which has been formed basically budget-free, co-chaired by Kate Nicholls from UK Hospitality and Bernard Donoghue from the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions. We are all working together. The Mayor has announced this £5 million in funding.

Essentially, when it is safe to do so, we will run a promotional campaign to bring people back into central London. The last part of that will be also for the domestic tourism campaign, bringing people from outer London into central London, increasing footfall. Day-trippers like people who live in the Home Counties can come into London and then of course people can come for two nights or three nights from other parts of the UK into London. Domestic tourism is what there will be a big focus on in the summer.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** OK, but not until the summer. Thank you.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Hello, Rajesh. How are you?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Very good, thank you.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Can you give me the breakdown of domestic and international tourism? How much was international?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** It is £7.4 billion - this is a forecast done by GLA Economics along with Visit Britain - for international. So much less money has been spent in 2020.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** And for domestic?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** £3.5 billion, roughly.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Thank you.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Thank you for that. Whatever happens after the election, I am hoping that this is an area that the Economy Committee will be looking at because this is a major part of the lifeblood of central London. I am pretty sure it is going to be something that whoever is on the Economy Committee - or whatever it turns into - is going to be watching very closely. We live in London. We are Londoners. Some of the things that people travel here to come and see we enjoy because we are here. I am really hoping that with, hopefully, help from the Government being announced tomorrow, which is looking good as well, with the vaccine rollout and with TfL enhancing its cleaning processes and making sure that we keep people safe to travel, let us hope that this all goes in the right direction.

Talking about the right direction, it is really good to see the second Deputy Mayor of the morning, Debbie Weekes-Bernard [Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement], joining us on this section of questioning, which is going to be led by Assembly Member Shaun Bailey, the Deputy Chairman, and which is actually called "A fairer and more equal city". Hopefully, we are going to be able to talk about another good direction of travel. There is much done but much still to do. Thank you very much for joining us, second Deputy Mayor, and thanks for staying, Rajesh.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Good morning, Debbie. It is great to see you. I am going to start with the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap remains higher in London than the national average. What action has the Mayor taken to address this over the past five years through his Economic Development Strategy? Why has it proven so difficult to get any results? We still lag behind the rest of the nation. In fact, we have had a little creep backward and they have had a creep forward. What is the difference there?

**Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement):** Thanks for the question, Shaun. The gender pay gap for the GLA currently stands at just 1%. The Mayor has been very clear in calling for other businesses to continue to engage in the mandatory reporting of the gender pay gap, which we know was suspended during COVID-19 because the Government realised that businesses were going through some very difficult times. It is something that the Mayor has asked all businesses to voluntarily consider reporting this year if they can because one of the issues for us is that we know there have been some really key inequalities that have opened up during COVID and these were inequalities that existed prior to the pandemic. It is really important that as we think about our economic recovery, we also recognise that we need to make sure that that recovery continues for all groups.

What the Mayor has sought to do in relation to trying to continue to reduce the gender pay gap in London has been to lead by example, publishing his own gender pay gap for the GLA and the GLA Group and an Action Plan that sits alongside that. Also, he is encouraging businesses across London to also do what they can to reduce their own gender pay gaps through the Good Work Standard.

My apologies. I do not know if Rajesh has already referred to this in his section, but the Good Work Standard is one of the ways that the Mayor has sought to encourage businesses to try to tackle workforce inequality. All businesses that have signed up - there are 93 at the moment - have been asked to continue to publish the gender pay gap, to engage in family-friendly policies, to consider introducing flexible working, which would really benefit women who are trying to get into the workforce or trying to progress within the workforce and also will help some of the disabled workforce in many of those businesses that have signed up. He is leading by example and also trying to do as much work as possible through the Good Work Standard.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Does the Good Work Standard, which we will talk about more later on, need looking at? Of course the rest of the country has had an improvement in the gender pay gap and we have not. It is fair to say it has not been a success. Are we looking at doing something different with that? Is

the Mayor trying to do something else? It has failed to deliver any results and the rest of the country has managed to deliver fairly good results. Does that mean we need a change?

**Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement):** I do not know if Rajesh wants to come in here as well. The Good Work Standard is a really good policy. It has not failed. Increasingly, we are bringing more and more employers on board. It does more than just look at the gender pay gap. It also encourages employers to pay at least the London Living Wage, which is what we need for workers in the city to try to avoid in-work poverty. It is doing a whole raft of really important initiatives under the accreditation programme. It is really important for us to have something like this that will help employers to think about the best way to have workforce diversity, to think about ways to try to tackle in-work poverty, to think about ways to try to ensure that people are able to have a good standard of living and get employers to play their part.

There is always a lot more that we can do to try to encourage employers to do more. It is something that we should continue to roll out and continue to develop and continue to promote as widely as possible because the more employers that we bring on board, the more likely we are to try to reduce some of those inequalities that exist within our workforce.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** We can agree that we need some kind of policy and some kind of roadmap. A roadmap has been lacking and the policy simply has not worked. My point is: what can be done differently? What should the Mayor be doing? If we agree the policy should happen, we will also have to look at the success of the current policy and it just has not hit. If you look at the number of disabled workers in London, it has not had any real improvement. On the gender pay gap, we are behind the rest of the country. It is doing better; we are doing worse. My point is: what can be done? If you look at the Good Work Standard, for instance, why have so few employers signed up to it?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Can I come in if that is OK, Chair? So far, just over 90 employers have signed up. The way to look at it is not just the number of employers but also the range of the sectors they have signed up from and how many employees they represent. These 90-plus employers represent about 210,000 employees. That is a significant number.

It has also been a tough year for businesses, in all fairness. It is Brexit and COVID combined, but the number keeps on improving. The Mayor wants as many employers signed up to the Good Work Standard as possible, but we are also using this as a tool to influence the businesses within our supply chain as well. We have seen a difference where more businesses are signed up for the living wage. If you look at the London Living Wage accredited employers, that has more than doubled in the last four or five years. There used to be just under 1,000 and now there are about 2,000 employers in London paying the London Living Wage. Therefore, it is a much wider context that has to be looked at.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Agreed in one sense, but, let's face it, 210,000 employees in an employee base of five million is a very, very low figure. The argument here has to be what else can the Good Work Standard do? Why has the Mayor not been able to convince more employers, for instance, to be London Living Wage suppliers? What is the missing piece here? What more could the Mayor do? Because there is no doubt, if I take the figures that you have just given me, it has absolutely been a failure, because you are talking about a small proportion of a very large number. I am asking what in addition can be done, particularly now that we are going through the COVID period?

**Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement):** Can I come in very quickly? We have to consider this holistically. The Good Work Standard is

one way to try to encourage employers to do the right thing and pay their workers a wage that will enable them to avoid poverty. It also sits alongside a number of other initiatives that we are doing across London, which are also necessary to try to reduce those inequalities. We are using the Adult Education Budget (AEB) as a way of making sure that people can have access to have the skills that they need to retrain. We know there are lots of people who have lost work during COVID and there are lots of people who will now need to retrain into other areas to try to get work.

Also, the skills sector is important in trying to enable people to progress out of low-paid work. It gives them the skills that they need to apply for different types of jobs in different types of sectors, and sectors that have growth. It also gives them the opportunity to go for promotion. We can consider the Good Work Standard alongside the work that we are doing, importantly, using the AEB to try to improve skills and training that Londoners have access to.

We are also doing some incredible work with the Workforce Integration Network (WIN), which is a project that is specifically looking at those groups who are very far from the labour market: young black men who have some of the highest rates of unemployment among young people in our city. If we consider the Good Work Standard alongside skills, alongside the work that we are doing with WIN, in addition to all the other bits of work that we are doing, which is trying to give people access to advice and guidance so that they can either challenge their employers themselves to think about reasonable adjustments – for example if they are disabled Londoners – or also to help some of our employees who are not being paid the London Living Wage and are experiencing high rates of workplace exploitation. All of these things are necessary to try to get to that fairer, more equal London that we are seeking. While we will continue to use the Good Work Standard to work with employers, we have to think about other tools that we have in our basket, as it were, to help us try to get to the place that we all think is important.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Agreed, but of course it was the Mayor who spoke at length about the Good Work Standard and how important it was and it was a central driving vehicle. He used the words that the companies involved would use their good practice to spread across sectors. Deputy Mayor Rajesh made a comment about the broadness of the sectors involved, but ultimately this is about scale, is it not? It is about the number of employees who experience the Good Work Standard. It was this Committee who asked the Mayor for a roadmap for the use of the Good Work Standard, how it would be rolled out and how it would increase. That is why my focus here is about the effectiveness of this and the spreading of this, because the two things go hand in hand. If you believe it is effective, it seems the missing piece is how many companies are taking it up. Is there a roadmap to increase the number of companies taking on the Good Work Standard?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** There are over 250 organisations that have already started the Good Work Standard journey. The way we look at the Good Work Standard is it is not like a pass or fail certificate, whether you are a good employer or not. We believe that all businesses are on a journey and some are a little bit ahead and some are a little bit behind. There are over 250 organisations that have started this journey now and are promoting flexible working. We all know in the pandemic the businesses that signed up and were offering flexible working were immediately able to adopt so quickly and so on. Fair pay is a key tenet. Paying the London Living Wage is absolutely a key tenet for Good Work Standard. With the pandemic and so on, businesses have faced a tough time and --

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Sorry to interrupt you, Deputy Mayor. I understand what the Good Work Standard is trying to achieve and we have agreed on that. What I am talking about is how do you, as Deputy Mayors, get more and more businesses to sign up, because it is about scale. I am not disputing your aims. The aims are wonderful. I support the aims. It is about the scale and I do not see any roadmap. This

Committee asked for one, and a plan to increase the scale would increase its positive impact. That is what I am getting at.

If I can move on, because the Chair has time constraints --

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Shaun, in fact we do not. We have a good amount of time left for the subsequent questions. Can I come in behind you there on the Good Work Standard? I have just checked the WhatsApp and I have not seen if anyone else wants to come in but they may well do as well.

I know the Good Work Standard was developed in conjunction with some other organisations, and I am thinking particularly of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the London and eastern and south-east sector of the TUC. Presumably there would be some mileage in asking a body such as the TUC, which has membership of unions that are members of the TUC, how hard they are pushing the Good Work Standard from that angle, with employees as well as from the employer side? It strikes me that if they are signed up to having helped develop it, they must assume that it is going to drive some benefits for trade union members who are employed in a variety of places. The 200,000 out of the five million workforce, how can we drive this forward. That is Shaun's point. Can we co-opt some of the people who helped develop the Good Work Standard?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Yes, absolutely we will reach out. We have done a couple of things. First, we consulted a huge number of stakeholders as we were developing it and one of the stakeholders was the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), which is human resources (HR) managers and so on. Of course they have a very important role in that. CIPD was involved in the development but also at the launch the CIPD was represented, so using them as a vehicle.

Secondly, using trade unions. In fact, TUC and unions themselves have become accredited employers and other unions have started the process as well. As they sign up you are right that they can use their influence to reach out even further.

**Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement):** Can I step in very quickly? I know Rajesh was talking a little bit about the London Recovery Programme but we do have those nine missions and one of the missions is around good work for all. We can certainly use that mission to help us to continue to drive the important work of the Good Work Standard.

What is important about using the Recovery Programme as a way of doing this is we are doing it in conjunction with London councils, we are doing it in conjunction with all of the boroughs, in conjunction with all of the key anchor institutions that are huge employers across the city, like the National Health Service, the Metropolitan Police Service and a range of other big employers. We can use the London Recovery Programme and the good working relationships we have developed with all of the key partners around London to help us continue to drive and to push the Good Work Standard as a way of trying to tackle workplace inequalities. There is a lot of potential to continue to drive it and to increase take-up.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** You have built in a number of other large institutions who again could be co-opted into pushing it forward.

I have now seen an indication for Assembly Member Susan Hall.

**Susan Hall AM:** Thank you. A quick question. The Good Work Standard obviously is a good thing, but only 200,000 people on it. How many of those people work for mayoral bodies like TfL and so on?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** Obviously the Mayor is leading by example on this. It would be unfair to ask businesses to do it if we ourselves are not doing it. All the mayoral organisations, GLA group organisations, are signed up.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes, I know. I am trying to find out how many workers are signed up for the Good Work Standard who are not paid for by taxpayers. There are an awful lot of public bodies that are signed up for this, the Mayor's. He is paying for them with taxpayers' money. How many private companies have to find money out of profits to increase their wages? That is where we have to get to if this is going to work, not just divvied out to Sadiq Khan's own businesses, if you like, that he runs.

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** It is unfair to look at it like this. We are talking about employers and employees. When we talk about employers, it could be private sector, public sector or even third sector. We have great examples of employers in all these three domains signing up. You have local authorities, you have GLA group organisations, you have trade unions, you have private sector and you have a number of charities signed up as well.

**Susan Hall AM:** How many private sector people are within that 200,000?

**Rajesh Agrawal (Deputy Mayor for Business):** I am very happy to come back to you. The list is available on the website but I am happy to come back to you.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes, I know. There are going to be very few people. They are mainly people who work indirectly for Sadiq Khan. The measure of this success will be when it goes out there to people who are not paid for by taxpayers, just to make that point. Thank you, Chair, for indulging me on that.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Thank you. I am not sure of the precise split. I do know that Richer Sounds and -- I cannot remember, there were a lot of private companies at the launch, because I went to the launch. In the notes I have it says over 90 accredited employers. It would be useful to have a breakdown of those. We can seek that from the website. That equates to 210,000 Londoners, but it would be good to have a breakdown of public sector, private sector. Deputy Mayor Debbie Weekes-Bernard just mentioned the voluntary sector as well. Having the breakdown between those sectors would be helpful.

I am going to go back to Assembly Member Shaun Bailey, who has a few minutes left now to wrap up the final question or so.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Thank you, Chair. Just to reemphasise your point, a breakdown would be useful.

Debbie, you talked about all the potential ways the Good Work Standard could be elevated, expanded, amplified. Is there a written developed plan to use the ways you have just explained to grow the Good Work Standard?

**Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement):** No. I do not know, Rajesh, if there is a written developed plan. I was just responding to your initial question where you asked are there other ways in which we could think about trying to increase the reach. I think that using the London Recovery Programme and the London Recovery Board as a way of trying to do that makes sense. It is something that we set up very recently. We have a mission that is focused quite exclusively on good work and it would make absolute sense to try to use that as a way of trying to increase uptake. I do not think there is anything written down, it is a suggestion that I have just made.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Yes, a good suggestion, but it highlights the fact that this Committee asked for a roadmap and no roadmap exists. It is a shame because it seems like there is a tactic out there, a possibility out there, but the work has not been done, and this Committee likes its recommendations to be taken up.

Can I move on to talk about the disability pay gap here? The disability pay gap remains higher in London than the national average and unemployment rates for disabled people are far higher than those for people without a disability. What has the Mayor done to help alleviate this problem and is it time to set up a disability taskforce, as the Committee recommended?

**Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement):** The recommendation made by the Committee about a disability taskforce is a good one and a useful one. The recommendations within the report that the Committee produced around the disability pay gap set out a couple of priorities that would align well with some of the work that we are trying to do with the Good Work Commission. For example, I know that London Councils is doing some important analysis of where unemployment is likely to fall across all of the boroughs in the city and all of the sub-regions, and it is breaking this down by protected characteristics, which include disability. Having that kind of information would enable us to have a better, more granular understanding of where some of those workforce labour market inequalities exist for our disabled Londoners. I know these are some of the priorities that the report that the Committee produced would align with and I welcome the recommendation around having a taskforce. It is something that would align well with work that we are currently doing.

The Mayor is focused, however, on trying to tackle workforce inequalities for disabled workers. I know that the Diversity and Inclusion Management Board - which is chaired by Mary Harpley, our Chief Officer - is looking specifically at ways to try to improve opportunities for disabled employees to access senior-level jobs within the GLA. I also know that the GLA and the GLA group have committed to focusing clearly on tackling disability and inequalities in the workforce as part of their priorities for the upcoming year. There is some real energy focused around trying to tackle this at the moment. I completely hear and recognise some of those issues that you have mentioned with regards the disability pay gap.

One other thing to point out is clearly with COVID and the move to working from home that we have all currently had to engage in reflects some of the calls that have been made by disability campaigners and disabled workers for many years, when they have asked to have the ability to work from home, when they have asked for the ability to have flexible working. COVID has shown that this is something that can happen when employers are focused on trying to make sure that their workers are able to continue to participate in the workforce. It is something that can be done when the situation demands it and there are real opportunities for us to be able to start to reduce that disability pay gap now that we know just how easy it is to enable people to have that flexible working, to work from home, to do all of those things that disabled workers have called for prior to the pandemic.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** There is no disability taskforce, then? Ultimately the question was about whether the recommendation for a disability taskforce is going to be taken up. There have been clear examples across the GLA's work portfolio where disabled people have been roundly ignored in housing policy, in transport policy, roundly ignored. This taskforce would be a way to make sure that did not happen. Is the Mayor going to do it, yes or no?

**Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement):** I said that we welcomed the recommendation, we think it is a good one and it aligns with

plans that we currently have. It may not be that we need to have a taskforce if we are already doing this type of work through the Good Work Commission that is part of our recovery plans. The sentiment that has been expressed in the report that was produced by the Assembly, the notion of having a taskforce and the priorities that that taskforce would need to adhere to to try to create a better work environment for disabled workers is something that we are already working on and already planning on doing through our Good Work Commission. If we are already doing work of this nature, we will not need to have the taskforce as recommended, but the recommendation itself is something that we do welcome.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Sorry to cut across you there, Deputy Mayor, but I am under pressure of time.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Yes, we are now.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** The bottom line is it is not going to happen.

The last thing is to talk about the ethnicity pay gap. The gap in London was 27%, it is now 28.2%, so it has got even worse. This is very disappointing that it has increased. This compares to the rest of Great Britain, which has gone from 8.5% down to 5.5%, the difference there. Why has the Mayor failed to tackle the ethnicity pay gap in London and what else can be done to address this problem?

**Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement):** The ethnicity pay gap, which the Mayor has published since 2017 without being required by law to do so, is another example of his leading by example initiative. It is something that he has set out to do. By doing so, he is encouraging other employers across the city to do the same.

In the GLA the ethnicity pay gap has reduced from 16% to 11%, so it is going in the right direction in the GLA. Also, through the Good Work Standard there is a suggestion that those who sign up also commit to publishing their own ethnicity pay gaps and publishing action plans to go alongside it. The Mayor is leading by example, he is using the Good Work Standard to try to encourage others to do the same, also through the WIN, which is an initiative that is specifically targeted at young black workers. There is an attempt there to try to get those in the construction and the tech sector to improve the employment prospects of young black men to enable them to come into the workforce and also to seek progression.

The Mayor has to continue to try to set the way. It is important for us to continue to try to encourage employers to follow his example and to publish. The main thing for us would be for Government to make it mandatory for all employers to publish their ethnicity pay gap in the same way. That would then encourage all employers to have the data to hand so that they can then use the data that that pay gap reporting reveals to make clear action plans as to how they will reduce it. We can do our bit by leading by example but we do need for it to be made mandatory for all employers so that we can see that reduction across the city in the way that we know that our black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) workers would benefit from.

**Shaun Bailey AM (Deputy Chairman):** Do you think it is enough just to get employers to publish? Do you think there are other things you could be putting out to help them address this? Publishing, to my mind, is not enough. They need to understand what they actually can do. What work is being done to help them understand what they can do? This circles back to our initial conversation. The Good Work Standard seems to be a vital part of this work and there is still no roadmap to increase its ubiquity across London. That is a major failing on the part of the Mayor. Until he gets that right, many of these figures, which are going the wrong way in London but going the right way in the rest of the country, will persist. I still think we need a roadmap

for that, but please just focus on this last question. What tactics could you be telling a business to do, other than publishing?

**Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement):** I agree. I do not think it is sufficient to just publish a pay gap. It is not ever sufficient just to publish data. What you also need to have alongside that is an action plan that details how you are going to use that data to do something differently.

Here in the GLA what we have done is we have published our action plan where we have engaged in initiatives that enable BAME staff to be able to look for opportunities across the GLA and the GLA group. We have a Diversity and Inclusion Management Board that oversees a lot of that work. Also we have established a race equity group, which is chaired by senior members of staff in the GLA and is attended by BAME staff so they can make sure that they are using their lived experience to share with senior members of staff what they think are some of the key ways that they can try to progress in the GLA.

As part of the leading by example bit, the action plans are also incredibly important. I have mentioned our WIN, which is something that we have done in conjunction with civil society organisations. We have also, alongside that WIN, published a workforce equality guide that enables all of the employers across the city to know just how to collect proper, robust data about their staff, broken down by ethnicity, and then knowing what they should do with the data once they get it.

The thing that we need to make sure that we are doing from City Hall, which we have always been clear about, is that for employers it is not enough for us to tell them that they must be doing something. We have to show them how to do it. We show them how to collect proper data, how to ask sensitive questions of their staff and then also to show in a very clear and transparent way how they will reduce those inequalities, be that by ensuring that they have very clear route maps, as it were, of how a person can get from a lower-paid job to a better-paid job, be it thinking about the best way to bring in skills and training so that people are able to work out what they need to do to be able to provide for a promotion.

We are also making sure alongside, as I said before when I first started to answer your question, Shaun, that we have to do all this holistically. We need to have a skills sector that will enable people to be able to access the skills that they need to be able to apply for work that is better paid. It is only by having better-paid work and by having BAME individuals better distributed across all of the roles that are available to them and across all of the sectors that are available to them in the city that we will be able to see that gap reduce. It has been very clear through COVID that far too many people -- OK, I will stop.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** I am going to have to cut you off in your prime, both of you, because we are now running over very slightly, but I thought it was worth hearing the end of that answer. Thank you for asking those questions, Shaun.

Thank you to Rajesh Agrawal and Debbie Weekes-Bernard, the two Deputy Mayors who have been answering our questions in this section. That has been extremely helpful and I am sure many of us can feel some further recommendations forming that we might be putting to the Mayor, whoever that may be after 6 May [2021], very shortly. I am going to move on to the next section. Thank you so much again. Do feel free to stay, but if you have other things to do, feel free to go off and do them.

We are going to move on. I can see that Justine Simons [OBE], who is the Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries, has now been able to join us. We have touched on some of those issues in relation to the

CAZ, it would be fair to say, but I am going to come back to Assembly Member Caroline Russell, who is going to lead the questioning on this section with you, Justine.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Thank you, Chair, and good morning, Justine. The opening question is: we have been living through the most extraordinary year, what do you see as the biggest challenges that are currently facing the cultural and creative sectors and what have been some of the key developments in the sector since you last spoke to our Committee last June [2020]?

**Justine Simons OBE (Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries):** Thanks, Caroline. I will just do ten seconds of overview. Looking back at the term, this has been the most ambitious cultural strategy we have delivered, for any administration. We achieved a huge amount. Lots of this relates to the work we will come on to, but we have spread culture throughout the city, through London Borough of Culture. We have delivered lots around creative jobs and growth and that is a key priority moving into recovery. We have East Bank on the horizon and the Creative Economy Growth Programme, the importance of film, fashion, design and games, the six new Creative Enterprise Zones (CEZs), that have proved a real lifeline in COVID, and then the wider industry strategy for the Thames Estuary production corridor.

The third area is about the cultural infrastructure. Again, it was hard hit in COVID. We have worked with and supported about 1,000 venues. Our Creative Land Trust is all about long-term security and new, affordable creative spaces. We managed to stop the decline of lots of at-risk, small-scale infrastructure: music venues; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) clubs; and artist studios. A boost to the night-time economy. You all know about that, the work of the Night Czar and the kind of work around the public realm that we have been doing.

In terms of COVID, it has been devastating for the sector that I oversee. Thousands of businesses and creative individuals have been super hard hit, the first to close, the last to open, in respects. We have seen particular difficulties around freelancers and individuals. The creative economy is 99% SMEs and individuals. These are the parts of the economy that have been hit super hard. You have a perfect storm, in a way, because you have the structure of the labour market, which in terms of the creative economy has disadvantaged it, and also the fact that the activity largely has not been able to happen because of the social distancing restrictions. They remain the big challenges and there are still people dropped out of the net, it is fair to say. The supply chain remains a big worry. As we often say, it is about the whole cast, not just the headline acts. We have been doing a lot of advocacy around that.

In London pre-COVID, the creative economy was worth £58 billion, but there is another £40 billion in the supply chain which is not well understood. Everyone who works behind the scenes - hairdressers, carpenters, everyone who is working to support this big industry - is a bit invisible. We have been working hard to give visibility to that full picture. We understand it is likely we will see over 150,000 job losses in the creative economy because of COVID, and a loss of over £6 billion off the value of the creative economy, so it remains really serious.

One thing has changed since we last spoke. Not all of the creative economy is equal and some parts have been able to get going more effectively than others. The best example is the film industry. When COVID hit in March [2020], almost £1 billion in filming closed down immediately in London. Our agency Film London has worked super hard and we have about 85% back up and running now. They have worked hard on securing international COVID protocols. At the moment there are strict restrictions right now but by and large they have managed to get an extraordinary amount of film and television (TV) production back on track. That is a good news story and that is something in terms of recovery that we want to be putting all our energy around, because it is a massively growing sector and there are lots of jobs available there.

In terms of our work, you know - we have talked about this before - in our armoury we have the Culture at Risk Office, the extra funding we have leveraged in, support for the creative industries, moving online. We have been in conversations with our colleagues around the world to see what they are doing in other global cities. Our CEZs have pivoted to support businesses and individuals in COVID. We are just deep into it, I would say, with remaining big challenges and we are doing our best.

**Caroline Russell AM:** One of the things that I remember we talked about when the Culture Strategy was first launched was the issue of people getting into jobs in the creative industries and the way that it was very difficult. Getting a good diverse group of people from different backgrounds into the arts was very challenging because so much of it was based on being able to volunteer and do placements and things to get experience. Are you worried about the impact of the pandemic on that side of access to the arts, and are you doing anything about it?

**Justine Simons OBE (Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries):** Yes, as you say, already those challenges existed and it is fair to say COVID has amplified those challenges. COVID has not hit everyone equally. Young people have been hard hit, as have people from BAME groups. Then if you look at the profile of who is freelance and who has a safer job with an employment contract, again you get a further amplification of that. I agree it is a serious issue.

As you know, we have been doing lots of work through our agencies around young talent and apprenticeships. We have had great schemes running through Film London with Home Box Office (HBO) and lots of different industries backing those pilots. What we have done, around young people especially, is -- as you said before, Caroline, you have to know about this stuff and know that these jobs exist in order to go for them. Part of it is creating a porous system so people do find out. If you think about the work the Mayor has been doing on young people, the Young Londoners Fund (YLF), a big proportion, about £8 million of the YLF, has gone to funding young people's creative projects. Once you get familiar with the power of creativity and you get to understand the job market and you find a door into it, that is a route into it.

If you look at what Brent has been doing in the London Borough of Culture, it has had serious challenges, having a Borough of Culture in the midst of a pandemic. They have doubled down on this and worked with their young people very closely. They have prioritised that. That is what we have seen. We have seen people pivoting into the areas of most need across all of the programmes. But it remains a serious priority.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Picking up on the Borough of Culture, that was one of the other things I was wondering about. How has the Borough of Culture system fared during this pandemic year? We have seen the amazing work that was done in Waltham Forest and the halo over time, after they were Borough of Culture, of all the work that went into that. It has been Brent this year. How has that worked on the ground and what have you been doing to help them get those same kinds of benefits that Waltham Forest got from its year?

**Justine Simons OBE (Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries):** Yes, it has done amazingly well. The team and I have been working super closely with the Brent team right from the start, because it had to almost completely redesign the programme to make it COVID safe and work out what could happen. The big thing that I have talked about is it worked deeply with young people. It did, for example, a great partnership with VICE, a podcast that has won awards. It created a fantastic space for young people to have a voice and to talk about the kinds of issues they were facing during COVID. It was fantastically successful.

Obviously it could not do all the big set-piece, festival-type events. For example, it designed a new biennale, which was a public art programme on the streets, which I went to over the summer, it was commissioning. There was a public art trail and residents got involved in that, which was again brilliantly successful. It took culture out of buildings and galleries and put it on to the street, but put it on to the street designed in a COVID-safe way. You could explore it in your own time. You obviously could not come to a big festival.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Is that being shared with other boroughs as a model? Obviously with the recovery and getting people out and potentially in the future, when we are able to, buying coffee and things, are you thinking of scaling that up across London?

**Justine Simons OBE (Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries):** Yes, definitely. With the Borough of Culture itself, there is a collaborative network of all the winning boroughs. It is not the case that one stops and another starts. There is a deep relationship. Waltham Forest and Brent collaborate and talk a lot. I have had meetings with the next two, Lewisham and Croydon, and they are also learning from Brent and from Waltham Forest.

There is lots of other work feeding into that. The other week I hosted a roundtable of global cities looking at events and what is the trajectory for a major event or a festival. There is interesting work happening in some cities where, for example, rather than starting from what they want to do as the top end, the dream project, they start from what they can do if restrictions are the maximum, and then they go up. There is a lot of scenario-planning modelling that comes through from around the world that we also share with all our partners across the Borough of Culture. You have to be ready to open, close, unlock, lock again.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Moving on to the night-time economy, the Night Time Commission, it was recommended there should be an annual London at Night report. What the Mayor said he would do is do a Night Time Data Observatory. That was done and published in 2017. It has some very useful data in it about the living wage at night, and that responded to one of the recommendations that this Committee put in in our *Rewrite the Night* report, but it does not seem to have been updated since 2017. It may be that you need to come back to us on this. Do you know if the intention is to keep that data updated?

**Justine Simons OBE (Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries):** Yes, there were ten recommendations, were there not, from the Night Time Commission? You want specifically around the data?

**Caroline Russell AM:** It was particularly about the data because it is a useful way of tracking what is going on. It was launched in 2017 but it does not seem to have been updated. That may be something you want to come back to us on.

**Justine Simons OBE (Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries):** Yes, I will do.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Caroline, I know that Unmesh is very keen to come in on the Night Time Commission and I know that Murad is very keen to come in on the night-time economy. I am going to bring in Unmesh here and then perhaps Justine could reply to your point and Unmesh's simultaneously.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** Just to carry on from Assembly Member Russell's question, it is not just updating the data that I want to know about but what are you doing with the data. A lot of the answers we have had so far this morning, certainly for me, have been in very general terms. I want to know about job creation upwards. I have a couple more points to make, but do you want to respond to that, Ms Simons?

**Justine Simons OBE (Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries):** On the data piece, yes, we are still committed to capturing data. Caroline, I will update you more specifically on that. One of the things that is happening is that now we have a Recovery Programme and the night-time economy is part of that, it is feeding into that, into a wider piece of work, which might be why it does not appear to be updated, but I will definitely be coming back. To Unmesh's point about what we are doing from the data that we did not know before, 1.6 million Londoners work in the night-time economy and the night-time economy is growing faster at night than in the day. This is valuable stuff that helps us to design the right policies.

One of the useful things about that data at a more granular level, more specifically to your point, is that we have been working with all the boroughs to make their own borough-led night-time strategies. That is why they need the data, because it helps them effectively to design their own approaches at a borough-by-borough level.

We have piloted a Night Time Enterprise Zone (NTEZ) with Waltham Forest, another example of where the data feeds in. What do you do at a granular level, a borough level and a high street level? We know from the Walthamstow pilot that footfall increased 22% and 66% of businesses said their trade increased. All of this data informs local and regional Government policy. It is super useful because - forgive me for this - otherwise you are planning in the dark.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Unmesh, do you want to come back on that?

**Unmesh Desai AM:** Two very quick questions. I am conscious of the time. In terms of the London Living Wage, how have you worked with employers in London's night-time economy to improve the number of night-time economy workers who are paid the London Living Wage? With COVID it is obvious the last year has been so difficult, but what are the results of this generally over the year before that?

**Justine Simons OBE (Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries):** I myself had not led that, Unmesh, but I am happy to find that out for you and give you some detailed statistics on that.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** That will be very useful. It is better to have bit of information.

One more question. When the Mayor announced the post of the Night Czar, there were two specific objectives. One was protecting venues, and the safety of women in particular. That is very laudable and very right. Can you give us some figures on how many venues have been protected? The Vauxhall Tavern is obviously the notable example. This again affects your question because there are planning questions and so on, but how many venues have been protected, and how many have you attempted to protect and not succeeded for various reasons? If you do not have the data right now you can send it to us later, but any answer right now.

**Justine Simons OBE (Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries):** I can tell you. Having a portfolio and a particular focus on the night-time has been a good decision. It has created a focus point for an important part of London's success, its economy and its identity and success as a global city.

The work that we have been doing in support of this area, which is the Night Czar plus all the range of Culture at Risk, the planning tools, the whole raft of things that underpin this work, we have managed to halt ten years of decline of venues in London. That is what we were looking at before. We were looking at the trajectory going down. The Night Czar and the team have worked with over 200 venues at risk. The Women's Night Safety Charter has over 250 signatories now.

The other thing I would say from a COVID perspective is our Culture at Risk office covers night-time and daytime businesses. We have had about 750 cases that we have supported just in COVID. About half of those are night-time organisations and businesses. It is a significant part of the work of the whole team.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** I am not going to press you too much on those, but my view is that in the COVID recovery you have to rethink things all over again. I know that have been some difficulties with this position, but I have been on a walkabout with Amy Lamé in the City of London --

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** No, we do not have time for your walkabout stories, I am afraid.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** It was for the record. Finally an observation. In this doom and gloom, let's give ourselves some good news. Your team played a key role in helping --

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Let's stop there.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** We have to promote the thinking for the post-COVID --

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** I am sure we can but we only have five minutes.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** There is some good news as well. London will --

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Assembly Member Desai, we only have one minute left in this section of questions, so that was not so helpful. Assembly Member Murad Qureshi.

**Murad Qureshi AM:** Thank you, Chair, and hello, Justine. I will be very quick and the economy stuff has been dealt with. The concern I have had, watching from outside when I was away in between my two stints at the Assembly, was: to what extent have you taken on board residential communities that have to deal with the night community? I have no problems with having the night economy on my doorstep. I quite like having a late-night supermarket open, but I --

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Murad --

**Murad Qureshi AM:** Yes, I will keep it short. The licensing issue is pertinent and that is where most of it is dealt with in local authorities, like the City of Westminster, which predominantly deals with the vast majority. Did the Night Czar and you put in something, for example, when they were revising the whole licensing for the night-time economy at the beginning of the year?

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Murad, I think Justine can reply to you separately on that because residential communities is a bit outwith. Whether or not they responded on licensing issues to Westminster is outwith this set of questions. I am going to bring it back to Caroline Russell. We have just gone into the discussion of Culture at Risk in the answer to the issue about how many of the music venues we have saved. Could you wrap it up by touching on the issues relating to the Domestic Tourism Consortium?

**Caroline Russell AM:** Yes, indeed. Murad, you will be relieved to hear that this Committee did make some very strong recommendations about the relationship of residents to the night-time economy, particularly around noise, in a previous report.

The final question for this section is about links between culture and tourism. It would be useful to hear briefly about the Domestic Tourism Consortium. It was running for about a year and then was paused due to the

pandemic. Can you also tell us how your culture strategies have been integrated with tourism plans? Presumably that is something that is playing a part in the recovery process.

**Justine Simons OBE (Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries):** Definitely. Culture is an important part of the tourism offer. Four out of five people coming to London come for culture. That is what they consistently tell us. If you look at a West End theatre, you have 22 million people coming to watch a show in the West End, so it is super, super important.

I would say in terms of trying to be focused, the focus now is about domestic tourism more than it has ever been. In my conversations with cities all around the world, that is what we know. It is a starting on your doorstep strategy and then growing outwards. That will be the big focus. We have to encourage people to come back into London. Culture, I would say, sits at the heart of the whole ecosystem. If we can entice people back into London for culture, there is a lot of added value. It impacts on retail in a positive way, and hospitality. People are booking restaurants. It is an ecosystem and culture is a driver in the middle of that. It is absolutely central.

The work that I am doing to support, for example, the rebooting of the CEZ in the West End is all about how can we marshal the best cultural offer in the safest possible way to encourage people back out into town.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Thank you.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Sadly we are going to have to leave it there. I thank Justine on behalf of the whole Committee for your answers to our questions. That has been extremely helpful. For further details of anything we have mentioned that we have not been able to go into today, we may well write to you. Thank you very much. You are very welcome to stay.

Our next guests have arrived, who are Deputy Mayor Jules Pipe [CBE], Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills, and Michelle Cuomo-Boorer, the Assistant Director for Skills and Employment. We are going to be focusing on the skills element of the brief this morning while we reflect on the whole of the mayoral term and how well things have gone over the last almost five years.

The first question is how diverse, in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability, is the pool of Londoners who are now being supported by Skills for Londoners? That might be one for Michelle, who may be closer to some of the data on that.

**Michelle Cuomo-Boorer (Assistant Director for Skills and Employment, GLA):** Yes. We have a positive picture when we start to look at who we have engaged over this period. If we just look at the AEB, which is by far the largest proportion of funding that we direct at this, around two-thirds of that funding has been taken up by women across London, female participants, and over 50% of it has also been accessed by BAME Londoners. That shows a really good use of that funding. It is hitting those groups that we want to be hitting.

We still know we have more to do around disabled Londoners and getting them to access the funding, but that is something that we have been focusing on and we introduced into the AEB the ability to undertake qualifications around deaf learning to support that. There is further activity that we have done through our capital programmes where we have supported access and things. Broadly, on the funding that we have committed, we have a good range of diverse Londoners undertaking the activity.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** It is very encouraging to hear that because earlier on we were discussing with Deputy Mayor Debbie Weekes-Bernard the fact that in many ways the gender pay gap, the disability pay gap

and the ethnicity pay gap are not being closed. It is good to hear we are going much further in terms of who Skills for Londoners is supporting. How much does that move us towards the ambition of improving work outcomes, not just around skills, in a much fairer way? How is that starting to impact, or is it starting to impact?

**Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills):** There are a number of interventions being made to increase the impact at the lower-paid demographic of London, extending full funding of AEB courses to Londoners who are below the London Living Wage, for example, and fully funding level 3 qualifications as well, those that last less than a year, for unemployed Londoners or those earning less than the London Living Wage. That is even if they have already achieved a first full level 3 qualification. That is different to what the Government is offering, which is you have to be over 24 and you cannot have already had a level 3 qualification. Our earlier intervention and ongoing intervention is very much targeted at those at the lower end of the income spectrum.

We are making those interventions, but the actual outcomes we will only have a good handle on when we have the learning survey, which is being started around this March, is it not, Michelle? That is our first initial take at this. It is going to be touch and go how it goes because obviously these are not the circumstances in which we were expecting to launch this. Because there has been such a historic lack of data - the Department for Education does not have the data we are looking for and where some of it does exist it is not necessarily allowed to be shared from the sources that have it - we are having to come up with our own data and effectively create our own first benchmark from where we will be able to, hopefully, move upwards from in future years. The obvious piece of data in that London Learning Survey will be about destinations and about job outcomes.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** That is what I was getting at. In some ways the ethnicity pay gap, the gender pay gap and the disability pay gap are larger now, at least still in London. It seems to have been a very stubborn thing that we have not managed to address.

You also touched on another area and you can come back to me on that and the outcomes issue. You were talking about Londoners who are perhaps on the lowest pay, and addressing that group. Are we in a position yet to have any understanding? Is there a measurable impact of the success of the Skills for Londoners Strategy on those who come from the most disadvantaged groups, as well as in terms of the protected characteristics that I was asking about?

**Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills):** I will let Michelle come in but I would like to put it into context. The little that we can say about that is we will always be able to talk about inputs at this point in time than outcomes. We have only had one full year of the budget. Commitments had to be made that no radical changes were made to that budget, as a condition of devolution. It is standard to only start receiving the outcomes of those - the learning outcomes, not necessarily the destination outcomes but the learning outcomes - at the end of last year. Two months ago, we had the learning outcomes from that first year that we could not change much about. Being able to measure destinations, relate those back to the inputs and that also having been after changing the inputs, that is something in subsequent years. I do not know whether Michelle has something she wants to add to that.

**Michelle Cuomo-Boorer (Assistant Director for Skills and Employment, GLA):** Yes, there are a few things. As Jules said, we only took over the budget in the last academic year. We were hoping to have a fairly standard academic year where we would be able to see the impact of the things we had changed. Of course, we went into a national lockdown in March [2020] so that had a significant impact on the year.

Having said all of that, what we are going to be publishing on Monday is the full academic year data for 2019/20. That will be published on Monday and what that does look at is things like the introduction of full funding for those earning below the London Living Wage. Whilst I cannot go into the detail on that at the moment, what I can say is it has had a positive impact. We have a success story in that sense.

It is also about destinations and how we are trying to support people into good work because there is that huge emphasis on skills about how we get people back into work and how we use that. The London Learner Survey will be absolutely key to that because we will be able to ask Londoners what they have used their qualifications or their courses for and what work that has helped them get into. That, as I said, we will be launching after Easter. We had hoped to do that in January but obviously, the colleges being shut, or all of our learning providers being shut, has meant we have had to delay the start of that. Colleges were very keen not to delay it until September. They wanted to start that in April, therefore, we are going to do a soft start in April and then the full rollout from the new academic year. That will be the first time we have started to track this information, probably, nationally; they are very interested in the findings of that.

The other thing we are doing as well, we are very conscious that skills are going to be pivotal to recovery. We need to get people reskilled, retrained. The work around the Good Work for All mission starts to join some of these things together. Our providers have received - if they have not already received it, they will be getting it this week - and are being asked to fill in a Delivery Plan for their academic year next year, which links all of their funding to the recovery missions: how they are using that funding to help support Londoners get back into work, how they are using that funding to support Londoners' mental health or whatever else is in those recovery missions, like green jobs, all of those things. We will have a narrative plan to show how that funding is being used, as well as the outcomes at the end of the year or the outputs at the end of year and then the London Learning Survey. There is far more of a focus on how that funding is being used to support the aims and objectives that have been set up.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** Yes. I do appreciate that the devolution of the AEB was not from May 2016 so we are not assessing something that has been run by the GLA since the beginning of this mayoralty. Of course, the pandemic then intervened in the devolution of it and then that initial year has been not what anybody could have possibly anticipated.

However, you do move me on very nicely, Michelle, to the next area I wanted to ask about, which is about the whole Green New Deal and skills for that. Also, given the pandemic and the impacts on the economy, how has that shifted the focus of the AEB? Within that, we had a reply from the Mayor to an Economy Committee report in May 2020 that he had started assessing the demand for green skills in London, and by November of last year [2020], had then announced his £10 million Green New Deal investment in green projects including jobs. I just wondered if you could tell us, generally, how the AEB has been flexed as a result of the pandemic and, specifically, how it is being used to direct people towards the growth of new green economy jobs, low-carbon, circular economy, that sort of thing. Shall we start with Michelle and then Jules, or the other way around? I am happy to take both of you or either of you.

**Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills):** I can kick off. That search, unsurprisingly, found that there were major skills gaps that existed in the energy efficiency and retrofitting setup. We know all the sectors: air and ground source heat pumps, insulation. The GLA Skills and Employment unit is just about to launch some additional research to identify exactly what green skills provision is currently funded across the piece in London or what can be accessed by Londoners and what can be funded in the future, what is practical and of use to fund.

Like all these things, with any sector, it is often a challenge and unwise to rush in and for people to decide, “These are the qualifications and these are the skills that are needed”. Then you find that the sector turns around and says, “Well, no, that is not really very practical”. We have seen that repeated again and again in sectors over the decades. That piece of work is going to be useful to identify exactly the skills that the industry does want, so that people can traverse that pathway from training into jobs.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** OK. That is interesting. Can you put any more detail to what Jules was saying as well, Michelle? This is still at early stages, that is what we are saying, is it not?

**Michelle Cuomo-Boorer (Assistant Director for Skills and Employment, GLA):** Yes. There are two things we have done. One of the key things we know is the main lever that we had with the AEB. In the last two weeks, we have gone out to procure around another £30 million worth of the AEB and that is focused on the core recovery sectors, green being absolutely key to that.

We have gone out and asked for providers that we did not necessarily work with. That is one of the things that is quite important when we talk about the green skills. Whilst many of our colleges and private training providers do deliver in this space, once we started to refine down on the sectors and the growth areas, potentially we do not have those providers currently working with us. This funding is being made available. We have had two market warming events. We had over 200 providers attend those over the two sessions. We know there is a lot of appetite to help support that. That funding will kick in from 1 August [2021]. That is specifically focused on the key recovery sectors. You saw earlier that some of that funding is also aimed at the creative industries as well, to support the jobs in those sectors. That is the big funding, I suppose.

The second part of that is we spent some time, since September, as Jules said, refining what we mean by “green”. We started with big, broad brushstrokes. We have now come into four key areas - Jules mentioned some of them earlier - which also include enhancing green spaces, urban greening, and then designing, building, and maintaining active travel infrastructure. There are two additional areas in there.

We have had a number of round tables with employers and that is, again, key. One of the things we have learned - and colleges will constantly remind us of this - is that they will switch to what they think is needed, they will get it all set up and then employers will say, “No, actually, we do not want that”. That is what we need to avoid. What we are very keen to do is create an absolute partnership between our business community and our skills provider network, whether that is existing providers or the new ones that are going to come into the space, to work together to develop what we mean.

In the recovery programme, we have talked about a green academy and we are very keen to get that up and running. We are trying to work through what elements that will have. Some will be funded; some will not be funded. We will bring together those various partners to work that through.

There has been a huge amount of energy that we have seen in this space. Probably the right word, “energy”, in green. We have a number of our providers already. We had a fantastic conversation earlier this week with Capel Manor, for example, a green space provider, about how they can get involved and how we can utilise some of the things that are already happening across London in this space.

As I said, there is a lot of work going on. There is money being put into this and over the next four, five or six months, hopefully, we will have a programme of activity that we can talk about more specifically, which we can then measure as we move through.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** That sounds very encouraging. When we did our investigation into the kinds of skills that you might need for the low-carbon, circular economy, we heard from the Greener Jobs Alliance and I know they have been working extensively with all the further education colleges. Have they been involved in you taking this forward and coordinating with you?

**Michelle Cuomo-Boorer (Assistant Director for Skills and Employment, GLA):** I cannot guarantee they have but I would hope so. Let me take that away and speak to the team that have been doing all of this work. I know we have spoken to a range of partners.

The other thing I have not said is we are focusing very much on specific sectors that would have jobs in the greenspace, but there is a piece of work around how we look at the greenspace or environmental needs more broadly. We have embraced that within the curriculum that already exists.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** They have been working on this for some time. They might be worth talking to if you have not. They gave some very useful evidence when we were doing that particular investigation.

I would just like to ask a little bit about apprenticeships which again, we have looked at. They have been a thorny area and I know that both you and Jules have come and spoken to us about this before. In September 2018, the Mayor announced the Apprenticeship Pilot Programme to try to improve the offer of apprenticeships in London. 289 apprenticeship starts were reported in September 2020 and that seems to be lower than the 373 that were planned to be developed by the state. Is there some sort of pandemic related reason why it is lower than was hoped for or is there something else that is causing problems? We are aware of a number of the difficulties relating to apprenticeships. Do you want to answer on that one, Jules?

**Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills):** Yes. Obviously, the pandemic has had a huge impact across the board in terms of the interest in firms taking new staff on. The very definition of an apprenticeship, someone being present, hands on in a work environment is completely undercut by COVID-19 and the rules around COVID-19. We have had to park some of the planned contracts that we were going to let on apprenticeships.

However, what was already in flight was the London Progression Collaboration (LPC) and, rather than pausing it, it pivoted to a wider remit, both to help employers preserve existing apprenticeships who were thinking of putting them on ice or not progressing plans for apprenticeships and also, to encourage new ones. They have been engaging with employers, giving that kind of advice but also, engaging with employers to pool the unspent apprenticeship levy. They have received more than £4 million that they have managed to pool from across people like Amazon, American Express, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and a number of London boroughs as well who are not in a great position at the moment to be able to take on new staff financially. We have been able to pool that money thanks to the work they have been doing.

Of course, the LPC is a joint pilot between the GLA, the Institute for Public Policy Research and the JPMorgan Foundation. It is good that they are able to pivot their work rather from what was being planned to being reactive to the situation we found ourselves in.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** This was one of the issues that we raised, the fact that the money was not being pooled and that there were problems. There were some companies who were saying that they were not able to take people on and other people who wanted apprenticeships could not get taken on. There seemed to be a lot of problems to do with the size of companies. Pooling does seem to be a much better arrangement.

We were also very worried about the quality of some of the apprenticeships that were on offer, not just whether it was 289 or 373. Have you been able to take that any further? We know that apprenticeships are more at a government level in terms of the delivery but getting that good linkup is essential. With government business, you just mentioned JPMorgan Foundation and so on. Are we managing to make sure that the ones we have are of a high standard and delivering for people?

**Jules Pipe CBE (Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills):** The Mayor is absolutely clear. He wants these jobs to be real jobs. It cannot be a way of just cheaply funding low paid labour. This is why we have a bit of an issue with the Kickstart Scheme as well. We are adamant that the Kickstart Scheme needs to be a proper pathway into decent jobs, perhaps a pathway into a proper, fully-fledged apprenticeship. Neither of these schemes, Kickstart nor Apprenticeship, should be used as a way of just dressing up a low paid job, entry level job as an apprenticeship.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** No. Michelle, is there anything else that you want to add? This is going to be the final contribution because we are just coming to the end of the meeting now. Thank you very much for joining us. Is there anything that you wanted to add?

**Michelle Cuomo-Boorer (Assistant Director for Skills and Employment, GLA):** No.

**Léonie Cooper AM (Chair):** OK. Thanks very much for that very quick trot-through on those issues. If you are able to give us any more information on what we have just touched on, that would be great. We will look forward to that launch next week and also the further launches that are coming up in April and also from August [2021]. That is sounding very vital. I am sure whoever is on the Committee and whatever the Committee is doing after the elections, these will be areas that will definitely be relooked at again. Thank you very much for your help this morning.