

MAYOR OF LONDON

Andrew Boff AM

Chair of the London Assembly
C/o AssemblyChair@london.gov.uk

Our ref: MGLA130623-9729

Date: 29 August 2023

Dear Andrew,

London Assembly (Plenary) Meeting 8 June 2023 – Motions

Thank you for your letter about the motions agreed at the London Assembly (Plenary) meeting. My reply to each motion is set out below.

Motion 1 – Solar Panels on listed buildings

I welcome the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's introduction of a Local Listed Building Consent Order (LLBCO) which will remove the need to apply for listed building consent when installing solar panels on Grade II and some Grade II* listed buildings, subject to conditions on design and siting.

I encourage other boroughs to carefully consider the best way to promote the uptake of solar panels in their area, balancing the need to preserve local heritage in consultation with Historic England. In some cases it may be more appropriate to develop specific planning policies, design codes, guidance or programmes rather than a LLBCO. Local authorities are best placed to develop strategies that are appropriate and tailored for their areas.

There are currently no plans to produce new London Plan Guidance on the promotion of renewable energy sources, however, my [Energy Guidance 2022](#) sets out how new developments should comply with the London Plan climate mitigation policies. This includes guidance on how to ensure that the provision of new onsite renewable energy has been maximised, as required by the London Plan. I also publish monitoring information in the [2021 Energy Monitoring Report](#). This includes information about solar PV on strategic development proposals. These do not, however, monitor changes brought about through the borough's own policies and decisions.

Guidance is also published by Historic England on the installation of solar panels on buildings of heritage significance, advice on the use of LLBCOs and updated technical advice about [low and zero carbon technologies](#).

Developments that install renewable energy sources into existing buildings are generally not of strategic scale. As such I do not have planning powers to intervene or shape these decisions at the planning application stage.

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My London Plan Annual Monitoring Report is the most important document for assessing the effectiveness of the London Plan and its policies. This monitors planning decisions across the capital against a number of Key Performance Indicators including on issues of reducing carbon dioxide emissions as well as heritage.

The Planning London DataHub collects data from all applications for development. However, where no application is required (such as where there is a LLBCO in place), no planning record is created. It therefore cannot be monitored or reported through the datahub. In light of this, my team are unable to monitor and report on the impact of such a policy.

Motion 2 – Levelling down London’s Arts and Culture

I continue to urge the Government to reconsider the consequences of arts and culture funding cuts in London. I am working closely with the London Area Council, and I hope for a positive outcome between Arts Council England and English National Opera (ENO) to enable them to stay in London and continue their work around the country.

I met with the previous Secretary of State for Culture, the Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP, to call on the Government to urgently review the cuts to arts and culture in the capital, including those impacting the ENO. I am in the process of organising a meeting with the current Secretary of State, where we will discuss levelling up. I have also recently published research into the impact of the Government’s levelling up policies on the creative sector in London and the UK.

The creative industries in London contributed £13 billion in taxes in 2019/20, which could grow with further investment. Government support has been directed away from London to the detriment of the UK and London, both culturally and economically. London trades more with the rest of the UK than the rest of the world, and for every pound consumed or invested in London, 24p of production is generated elsewhere in the UK.

Motion 3 – Renters Reform Bill and Section 21

I welcomed the long-overdue introduction of the Renters (Reform) Bill, including provisions to remove Section 21 ‘no fault’ evictions into Parliament, but I am very concerned that it has not been seen since. The Government must bring forward these much needed reforms as a matter of urgency. I share the Assembly’s concern that the Bill does little to mitigate the sharp increase in private rents in London.

I support the Assembly’s call for the Government to urgently bring forward legislation to introduce a Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector, to raise standards and conditions.

I remain committed to establishing a London Private Rent Commission, which the Assembly calls for, the details of which are in my Blueprint report published in 2019. It is important that we get the detail right. The Assembly rightly recognises that we need London-specific solutions to tackle the affordability crisis.

Finally, the best way to address the crisis of unaffordable housing in London is to accelerate the delivery of affordable homes. As highlighted by the Assembly, in May, I announced that City Hall funded a record-breaking number of affordable homes last year, meeting the ambitious target set by the Affordable Homes Programme 2016-23 of 116,000 starts. It is vital that the Government increases the funding available if we are going to continue this and create the homes London desperately needs. London requires £4.9 billion annually to meet need, against the £800 million I currently receive.

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Motion 4 – Stratford Station: Redevelopment

Stratford is one of the busiest stations in the country and is a vital contributor to the economic prosperity of London and the UK. Demand has recovered more quickly at Stratford than many other stations, reflecting the local economic base and the wide variety of journeys supported by its range of rail, London Underground and DLR services, which see more than 150 departures every hour at busier times. Stratford is also London's most well-used bus station, providing an efficient passenger and operational facility, serving thousands of passengers per hour.

However, as the Assembly notes, growth pressures mean that the station already faces severe crowding, and further demand is predicted to put pressure on performance and reliability. Failure to provide sufficient capacity will restrict growth, jobs and housing, not just in the immediate vicinity but also in areas dependent on Stratford as an interchange; elsewhere in East London as well as parts of the South East and East Anglia such as Essex and Hertfordshire which have also experienced significant population and economic growth.


Over the past two years my office, Transport for London (TfL) and the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) have been working with Network Rail and the London Borough of Newham to identify solutions to these challenges. I am supportive of the imminent submission of a Strategic Outline Business Case that summarises the work to date. TfL, LLDC and partners are in the process of committing to fund the next stage of work and are seeking to work with the Government as the scheme develops.

Motion 5 – Removal of housing protections from asylum seekers

I share the Assembly's serious concerns that we ensure that asylum seekers are housed in safe and secure accommodation while their claims are assessed, and that removing the licensing requirement from houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) accommodating asylum seekers is a very dangerous development. I made this clear in my response to the introduction of the Renters (Reform) Bill. It is an issue regularly discussed at the London Strategic Migration Partnership Board, chaired by my Deputy Mayor for Communities and Social Justice, Dr Debbie Weekes-Barnard.

The Greater London Authority also convenes a monthly London Regional Asylum Plan Oversight Group, chaired by the Chief Executives London Committee Lead on Refugees and Asylum and co-chaired by the Home Office, focused on this subject. This group has looked at the removal of the HMO licensing regulations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London