

This transcript has been disclosed by the GLA in response to a request under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

In accordance with our obligations to liaise with third-parties whose information is subject to an EIR request, the GLA has engaged with the interviewee(s) covered by this transcript.

As part of this process, and following our own review of the transcripts, the GLA identified errors in the transcription of the audio recordings of the interviews. These included

- typographical errors;
- comments being attributed to the wrong person;
- text being omitted in the transcription; and
- instances where the transcriber completely misunderstood what was being said, and writing something wholly incorrect.

Where the GLA has identified genuine errors in the transcription when compared to the audio recording, we have made corrections to these transcripts using “tracked-changes”.

In each case, the corrected text is shown in the margins of the page and is accompanied by a brief explanation for that correction.

The GLA has taken this approach to ensure both the corrections and original text are available, and so we can balance our legal obligations under the EIR with our duty to help ensure accurate information is released in respect of the individuals interviewed as part of the Garden Bridge Review.

In some case, the parties interviewed have asked the GLA to include certain comments regarding their comments to help provide some clarification about what they were intending to convey. Again, these are clearly marked on the transcripts.

Please note however, the transcript may, despite our best endeavours, contain errors due the transcription process itself.

## Garden Bridge Review Meeting Transcript

*Event:* *MH/Sarah Sands*

*Date:* *22 November 2016*

*Interviewer:* *Dame Margaret Hodge MP*  
*Sarah Sands*  
*Claire Hamilton*

DAME MARGARET HODGE (MH): Just tell me anything you want to tell me and then I'll ask questions if I may?

SARAH SANDS (SS): Yes, well what I would say about the Garden Bridge is I'm sort of puzzled about what happened, really because it started --

MH: So am I.

SS: Yes so if you think about the sort of context -- we had the Olympics -- we had this Olympic cauldron; you know, a tremendous sort of feel good. Thomas Heatherwick just sort of "beloved", you know, and not just by us but round the world. So we have this sort of treasure and so then we think, you know, "What next for London, after the Olympics?" and this idea of the bridge comes up. And so, you know, it's a garden on the Thames.

And Thomas's point -- so I could see why there was some discussion about, "Was it in the right place?" and I would follow the sort of artistic imperative that Thomas says the whole point about the bridge; that it needs to be because a very sort of lane lines and so on, between the template -- it has to be where it is and that's what gives it its prospectus. So it was a sort of aesthetic choice.

So if you sort of believe in him -- if you believe in the artistic concept and if you believe in the sort of wider idea that, how do you symbolise London? Now, remember he'd done the -- whatever it's called -- the Exhibition that goes round the world --

MH: Shanghai or whatever it was?

SS: Yes, the (Overspeaking). So he had to evoke the United Kingdom and what was best about it. And what I thought was so lovely about that was that he didn't just do, you know, sodding bowler hats. He came up with the idea: what if you did a Cathedral of seeds? It nearly makes you cry, thinking about it, doesn't it? So that was the idea. So it was a sort of glass Cathedral made out of all the seeds that came from Que, I think, originally. And so this was an idea seriously beautiful and original and that's what he said, you know, he wanted to say about Britain. So I was sort of quite won over, you know, from that point.

So then you have this -- and once you get interested in what that garden is and realise that, you know, you've got Dan Pearson involved, that it's somehow evoking, you know, ancient sort of Britain but on the Thames in London in -- and the other point that Thomas made was that, you know, what made London great under the Victorians were those parks -- it's still the greenest place of all the capitals.

MH: Yes.

SS: So again, so if you thought: what is London? It's the greenest capital. We have this sort of, you know, ancient sense of sort of woodland and plants and gardens. It's an absolutely sort of harmonious reconciling thing. It's open for everybody. You're giving the public a garden on the Thames. So I thought, you know, what -- how could you not love that? So you had the person who was the sort of golden boy at the time, you had this beautiful idea, you had people -- so the early polls on it, you know, had about ---

MH: Eighty-five per cent --

SS: -- sort of 80 per cent, yeah. Everyone was for it --

MH: It's very rare that it's moved. I can't quite understand it.

SS: Yes so what has -- so it's fascinating, to me, of what happened and I was taking about it -- the design with him yesterday, with Anthony Gormley, sort of how a project can just -- you know, just lose it --

MH: Yes.

SS: And you had some very, very vehement - tiny but very potent - opposition, as far as I can see, coming from the Observer. The Observer took it up as a -- so if you look at Rowan Moore, who was the critic --

MH: Right (Overspeaking)

SS: Who was vehemently against it --

MH: Right.

SS: He took up -- so there was a small group -- there was someone called --

MH: Does he live round there; he's not a Coin Street person?

SS: No, I think he's a -- maybe he does, actually. Maybe he's got a city -- some sort of city connection or maybe it's more East End. But anyway, he just didn't like the idea. And then you had a small group of -- a small opposition someone called Ball; there was a guy called Ball or -- not Michael Ball, something Ball. Anyway.

CLAIRE HAMILTON (CH): I think it is actually Michael Ball.

MH: He is the one who did the judicial review, isn't he?

CH: Yes.

SS: Yes. So you would say, you know, "Here's Thomas Heatherwick, here's this idea, here's, you know, the Olympic Cauldron. Mr Ball doesn't like it". So he'd always be quoted, like, as if that was equal, you know. And, I mean, I would sort of hand it to him, in terms of sort of PR; he's been amazing because he's just -- you know, just been at it -- so whenever -- just gone for it. And so that it -- and the thing is, about, you know, artists - as we know - is they're thin skinned too. So, you know, they kind of get upset thinking, "Why doesn't he like -- what doesn't he like?" --

MH: Yes.

SS: So then, once that sort of took hold, then I think it suddenly became sort of politicised in a way that, you know, it wasn't before.

MH: Yes.

SS: So then it became, "Oh it's Boris's bridge". And then it became -- and, you know, Anthony Gormley - who we love obviously - it was last night he said, "Yeah but it's really bad because, you know, it's for the bankers". And I went, "But what sense it is for the bankers?" So the argument seemed sort of fairly illogical that you say, you know, "We want private people to pay for this bridge because we, you know, obviously much better than tax payers having to stump up for it". People wanted to pay for the bridge, you know, people like Google.

MH: Well, I'm not sure now.

SS: Well, if you -- not now they don't because what they see -- what the donors have seen is a sort of, you know, hostility to it, which makes them think, "Well, hang on, I don't want to give this money to something that people don't even want". So that sort of took hold -- so what happens is, it's all, you know, it has become very sort of unseated and the arguments -- you know, if you look back -- so it was: too much private money; too much public money; not open to the public; too much open to the public so that it couldn't deal with the demand and so on. So utterly sort of, you know, unreasonable arguments in that the strengths became, you know, weakness and so on. And then somehow, you know, the sense that it couldn't happen. So that was what was -- so before it had a kind of momentum. As I say, people were coming behind it, you had to just sort of push on. Thomas was sort of fundraising, you know, he should probably never been involved in all that, you know.

MH: He doesn't think about it. I've met him. I know --

(Overspeaking)

SS: He's having to sort of absolutely sell himself to all the donors.

MH: Yes.

SS: And then you think, you know, if you -- if a project like that faces that kind of hostility it can stop it, you know. And actually, it was interesting we -- Joy Lo Dico, on the paper, wrote a piece comparing it to that tower -- to Big Ben, you know, when that first happened. When the idea was building it, you know, everyone said, "Well, you've got a tower at the House of Lords; you don't need a second tower". So same with the bridge. You didn't need a second Tower or why do you have a bridge in London? It should be in Halse --

CH: East End.

SS: Or East End or whatever. So those are all -- but then that became the kind of dominant voice. So what makes me sad is I sort of feel we've moved into a different era. So when we thought we could do great things, you know, this will be fabulous and it actually has a totally sort of logical sense once you see that it needed to be there and that it somehow evoked London and it, you know, would obviously have attracted lots of people to come to London. And it was for everyone to go and, you know, walk across the Thames. So I thought, you know, it was a great idea and then it made -- as I said, a sort of really kind of toxic opposition so that then it became --

MH: I think he set about it in the wrong way. You're not using any of this, are you?

SS: What?

MH: You won't use any of this?

SS: No, no, no, no.

MH: But I just think he set about it in the wrong way.

SS: Do you?

MH: I think he's just -- he's stupid the way he set about it.

SS: What should he have done differently?

MH: He should have just done it -- just done it.

SS: I know. I think that's the thing that they kept waiting --

MH: Just done it.

SS: -- go and dig the sodding bridge and then people --

MH: He just sort of done it, yes. And instead he tried to do it in a -- you know, pretend it was all a proper process.

SS: Yes.

MH: And then he goes wrong.

SS: Yeah because then it can get -- you can stop; you know, you can derail something, can't you?

MH: Well, I think (Overspeaking)

SS: And if it ends up with a Coin Street --

MH: What interests me is why they didn't talk to Coin Street. You know, if it had been me, Coin Street are renowned for being sort of quite a belligerent --

SS: Are they?

MH: Yes.

SS: Yes.

MH: They always -- you know, they look after their (Inaudible). They have fought in their history for everything they've got. So I think, "Oh, I've got to sort this lot out" and I can't work out why they didn't think that.

SS: I suppose because they were -- I mean, actually, you did have Mervyn Davies, didn't you? So you do have people who should have been the sappier -- and I guess --

MH: I think they put the wrong people -- that's the other thing; I'd have put a much more inclusive board together.

SS: Right.

MH: So they put a rather elitist board together.

SS: Into what sense?

MH: It's all sort of a -- it's a sort of (Several inaudible words).

SS: Right, you want someone who gets something done.

MH: No, you want communities trying to put something from Coin Street down but, you know, it just made it a more inclusive -- it looks like the great, the rich -- and the great and the rich.

SS: That's interesting.

MH: And so everything is for them, not for me.

SS: Yeah, yeah, that's interesting.

MH: So I think they set about it in a completely, you know ...

SS: And, actually -- I mean, part of it, I think --

MH: And now it's a lot of money. It is a lot of money.

SS: Well, it's a lot of money to -- oh, it's a lot of money, if they don't go ahead now, isn't it? A lot of money wasted.

MH: But it's a lot of money that they haven't raised.

SS: But the trouble is -- so that's what I think -- that's why I think people have behaved irresponsibly on the other side; is that they've stopped, you know -- all cleverly --

MH: But they're now saying it's my fault that they can't raise money so how can you have --

SS: Well -- but if -- the point about -- I've spoken to -- you know when Google were involved and they just went, "Hey, this is a great idea but is there a problem?" And I went, "Well, I don't see why there's a problem because it is a lovely -- you're right, it's a lovely idea". And they went, "Yeah but there's people don't like -- you know, people are against it". And, you know, obviously rich donors are kind of highly strung -- you know, they want to do something that's going to be -- everyone's going to welcome. So I think that is the trouble; is that now the mood has changed, so people are thinking, "Oh so this is a bad thing, somehow, to put my name to".

MH: Yes.

SS: So I think when -- actually, I first realised that, you know, last year, when -- I can't remember who - maybe it was Bloomberg who were going to come up with their deal - but said, "Could they do it anonymously?" I said, "If you've come to that, that you'd need to do it anonymously because you're frightened of the, you know, publicity". That's bad, isn't it?

MH: Yes.

SS: So you're saying to one hand, "Go and fundraise and get this thing done". And then saying, "Oh but, you know, we're all, you know, we're not -- there's issues (Several inaudible words)". And I think the trouble with -- I mean, anything you're involved with, you know, is magnificent but I think that the -- by the sense of saying, "Oh and there's an inquiry", that you immediately think, you know, that it's like it's a -- you know, child sex inquiry or something that people think, "Oh so there must be something really bad about that".

Now, you may well find -- what I'm not party to is the process. So if it was not, you know, financially responsible, I'd need to defer to you on that.

MH: The problem was -- is the public money.

SS: Yes.

MH: You've got to -- when you're doing public money, you've got to do it properly.

SS: Sure, sure.

MH: Which is why -- I think he stupidly -- I don't know what -- he was just stupid.



SS: Yes. But I think probably it was because -- maybe because they all thought they were doing a nice thing, you know, because they all say, "Well, it's a Garden on the Thames" so that people didn't think of it in that way. So how would you not -- and then I think they were so surprised to come across people saying, "No, we don't like your floating garden on the Thames".

MH: Yes, yes.

SS: So they just sort of weren't prepared for that, you know; that they weren't seeing it in those terms, of it being building something of -- that they had to sort of win over the argument. Once they said, "Do you like the idea?" and everyone went, "Yeah, we love the idea". Then why would you -- I think maybe that's what sort of threw them. And as they say, I think because of the context of it that, it was -- you know, it was Thomas Heatherwick post-Olympics. And they start to think, "Oh, well, he was chosen --" that somehow there was something deeply corrupt that he was chosen. That's like saying, "Oh, it's deeply corrupt that Simon Rattle was chosen to do" -- you know, it's just, he was a good guy.

MH: Yes.

SS: And that, you know, I still think that he -- it would be really sad if, as we know, you know, that Korea and Moscow and possibly someone else who said, "No, we'll have the bridge if you don't have it".

SS: It was our guy and it was our bridge and you go and take the idea because we not only couldn't make up our minds about it, in the end, but, you know, drove that man out. And I think that would be terrible. So that's my view of the bridge. And I do think that it's a sort of dishonesty, as you say, of that sort of an Observer-led group of --

MH: I didn't realise (Several inaudible words).

SS: Yeah, if you look at everything, it started with the Observer, I think. Quite early on, I think it did start with (Inaudible) who I think, you know, for perfectly fine reasons, just didn't like it. But I think it became a kind of vendetta against Thomas. So then it became a -- that somehow, as I say, it was a sort of capitalist conspiracy this bridge. When you thought -- they're just trying to pay for it, you know?

MH: Yes.

SS: I don't think, you know, Thomas has a sort of political thought in his head. He just wants to get the bridge built.

MH: Yes.

SS: And I think the idea that, you know, we know trees are being grown, now, in places -- you know, that the bits are being built for it --

MH: Are they?

SS: -- yes so it's kind of good to go but we've reached this sort of impasse now and I notice, you know, people were saying at the Designer Museum last night, you know, it's something everyone's interested in, is, "Oh, how sad so the bridge won't be built?" And I said, "Well, how did we come to 'It won't be built' from 'It was going to be built'?" They just have to -- they've raised enough money to start, surely, and then once they've done it -- once it's up and running, it's the kind of thing people will be attracted to. People will pay for the Design Museum; I don't see why they wouldn't pay for the bridge.

MH: I don't know. Well, I'm trying to find some examples of where they went -- I don't know whether Tate -- whether they raised the money before they started or whether they had it all --

SS: Switch -- that's an interesting point.

MH: And the other --

SS: They certainly didn't have it all.

MH: They didn't have it.

SS: No.

MH: We're just trying to establish that.

SS: Yes.

MH: And then similarly, with the National Theatre and the Dorfman, whether they had all that --

SS: The Dorfman is an interesting one.

MH: Did you say he was going to fund the lot?

SS: I would have thought more likely that that was -- but I don't know, to be honest.

MH: I might check that.

(Overspeaking)

SS: I'm sure the Tate wasn't all paid for.

MH: Is it normal to set off before you've got the lot?

SS: Yes.

MH: Or do you normally wait for -- because you take a view that they won't get anymore.

SS: No.

MH: And the costs have now gone up because it's all too late.

SS: And (Several inaudible words).

MH: I hadn't even thought about that.

SS: Yes so they've been unlucky on that, I think.

MH: So the costs are much higher so they've got a huge gap and they haven't -- and then you've got the management and operations staff.

SS: Yes.

MH: And they've really not even started raising for that. And they've got hugely optimistic views on what they can get from individuals and philanthropists out of that, you know. I mean, I'm not sure whether you take out a corporate membership on the Corin -- which I can see, you know, I'd take out a corporate membership on historic buildings, for example, historic palaces because you can go to Hampton Court, you can go to, you know -- I don't know which one -- you can go to Hampton Court and you can go to the Tower of London -- they've got three or four and you can do corporate events there and things and on the bridge ...

SS: Well, the idea was to have some corporate parties -- sort of month you'd have a corporate party or something. So I can see how it's immensely annoying for people looking at bankers on a bridge --

MH: But you're not going to raise a huge amount of money that way. I've done a party -- I'm trying to find out. I went to a party the other -- it must be five years ago in town. Have you been to a Tower of London party in there?

SS: Oh, how brilliant.

CH: (Overspeaking)

MH: It is actually really very nice. What you do is you've got the two Towers and then you've got a corridor along the middle and so you've got one bunch of people there and the other bunch of people there and then you have to go through this rather weird corridor, where you can't see very much because it's sort of -- presumably health and safety.

SS: It's actually rather awkward then?

MH: And that's the only (Several inaudible words). I thought, before I went, "Oh, God, this will be fun".

CH: Well, I thought the only thing about the bridge was presumably it would be a bit like the Chelsea Flower Show; like the whole year.

MH: Yes.

SS: And everyone can go.

MH: Yes.

SS: That's what I thought.

MH: Yes, yes.

SS: But if you say you would have it --

MH: They've got to raise money to run it.

SS: Yes.

MH: They've got to raise money to go it and they've got to raise money to run it. They've lost money from building and I don't think that they can retrieve that and that's what I mean. I've got to have a think about, you know, who else has done a similar sort of project and have they managed?

SS: Yes. And the other thing is that's a lot -- because the other thing that made it appealing was that they could get in before the --

(Overspeaking)

SS: But they need to start presumably digging -- they've past a few deadlines.

MH: (Several inaudible words).

SS: But they've also been unlucky, haven't they, with sort of Lambeth giving them permission and withdrawing permission and -- you know, they've kind of been unlucky on that.

MH: Yes but some of it --

SS: And I think a few people have been holding them to ransom --

MH: Well, Coin Street.

SS: -- with our own Coin Street being the obvious one.

MH: And if Coin Street don't give permission, there's no bridge.

SS: No. But I think that's pretty ...

MH: I haven't met Coin Street so I haven't a clue what they're thinking.

SS: Yes, who are these Coin Streeters? I think the idea that you hold, as it were, kind of, London to ransom over -- just wanting to jack up more fees.

MH: But if I'd been them I'd have got Coin's view from the inside, not just the (Several inaudible words).

SS: Yeah, maybe they hadn't foreseen Coin Street?

MH: I can't remember when I first came across Coin Street. They have been pretty tough customers for years and years and years and years. I mean, even when they originally got the land, I remember that and they were very, very tough (Several inaudible words).

SS: Goodness. So they're a bit like a sort of capitalist version of the --

MH: But what was the thought for the fundraising? Would your view be, if they got the green light from everybody, that they could -- I mean, they have now got to fundraise I would think probably another hundred million.

SS: I think as much as that.

MH: Well, 85 I think they're admitting to?

SS: Yes.

MH: I mean, I think it's even worse -- 85 they're admitting to and I think costs are just, you know, eventually it's going to go up; costs will go up.

SS: Yes.

MH: So I'd put that up a bit and then they've got sort of 90 and then they've to raise an endowment of 80 for management and maintenance. And even with that, that leaves 70 per cent of their money for management and maintenance coming from philanthropy which is, if you look at sort of (Several inaudible words). So they've got a very optimistic view of the cost of managing it. But even if you accept that view they've still got to raise that 80 so I think you're looking at about 100. That's my view.

SS: Well, I've never had to fundraise so I'm not sure -- I wouldn't know except that I think their only chance is to have, not only green lit but, you know, wholehearted enthusiasm. I think that's what almost you need and maybe that's too hard to win

back now. Maybe it's ... you know, the whole thing has become too sort of politicised and, as you said, bit sort of toxic. But if you just went back to where we were at the start, you know --

MH: Yes, 85 per cent people thinking --

SS: -- 85 per cent people think it's great. And it will be, you know, I've no doubt it would be beautiful and would bring a lot of sort of, you know, joy to the Capital. And I think once something is there and it's beautiful -- obviously you would much rather be associated in that -- if I were very rich I would give money to that rather than something else.

MH: The other thing that's a bit worrying is -- I mean, does it, you know, their costs for running are about 3.5 million and you can raise capital. It's much more difficult to raise revenue.

SS: Of course, yeah.

MH: In a sustained way, which is why all the stuff -- would corporate really -- would Google want to give money every year? They might do. I mean, I can't tell. I haven't tried to raise money for it.

SS: No.

MH: But it's a big ask now.

SS: It's a big ask. I mean, I think --

MH: And you sort of somehow wish they were further --

SS: Yeah.

MH: And I can see it's a chicken-eggy thing, you know --

SS: Yeah and I can see how it's sort of -- I mean, I don't know what the costs are compared to the High Line, you know, or sort of comparable things --

MH: I think the High Line was underwritten, I think.

SS: By who?

MH: By the State. I mean, you know, if you had -- I mean, the other thing is that I think we've got a different Chancellor this time round.

SS: Yeah. I think that's been the big switch --

CH: I think it's like Parks and Recreation, rather than -- I think that was one of the issues; that it is seen as a public space, whereas the Garden Bridge has got its funding from TfL and TfT, rather than other bits, they might have been able to do more of the ongoing funding --

SS: That's fantastic. And presumably they've tried -- the Royal Parks Airway, they can't fund it; they're too busy trying to raise money themselves.

MH: Royal Parks, I think, have been private. You've got them, haven't you? Have they gone to the GLA?

CH: No, they're still their own function. I think they're reporting to --

MH: They went private because it was around when I was Culture Minister. We were just thinking about privatising them all, certainly take them off government books because it was an early, "How can we get rid of this?" I don't know what happened to that; that's years ago now. So it's hard. So there's got to be a judgement -- can they ...?

SS: Can they do it?

MH: And if not ...

SS: Well, if they don't -- see, I think that's the thing to think about. If they don't, obviously you've wasted whatever it is -- \$40 million or something. It's a sort of tremendous downer somehow. It's the idea that, you know, this was conceived in a spirit where we thought London could do all these things - Golden age of London, post-Olympics - and suddenly it becomes rather sort of, you know, bitter and utilitarian and we don't need a bridge, we don't do things anymore. I felt slightly the same about the Concert Hall of thinking --

MH: They're going to do that, though. I was at the barbeque last --

SS: Oh, really, you think they will?

MH: I think they will.

SS: But I thought that was a really bad message from the government --

MH: Yeah but that is government. That's the other bit of the --

SS: Yes. But I think -- yes but it is a thing that you do need to --

MH: So I think it Osborne was much more --

SS: Osborne had the kind of romantic sense that, you know, what makes a city great?

MH: Yes.

SS: And I do think that somehow the Garden Bridge and the Concert Hall were two big statements about what London could be.

MH: Yes.

SS: And I do think it goes absolutely down to the sort of soul of London is the love of gardens.

MH: Yes.

SS: So that's what was so magical about this; you know, I thought, this idea.

MH: Yes.

SS: And so I think it's a kind of failure of every -- if it doesn't work, you know, as I say, Thomas will be -- go and do it somewhere else, I guess. So somehow I feel we sort of failed, you know, a great Olympic talent but he'll -- we can't be personally responsible for him, I'm sure he'll be fine. I just feel it becomes terribly emblematic of London --

MH: (Several inaudible words) but it's hard.

SS: Yes. But if it just had -- I just think if it had had that firm, you know, if something happened that I think that opposition, as you say, that started the opposition -- then to turn the mood sour and then it therefore loses its momentum and so it's whether you can capture that again.

MH: Yes.

SS: Because I think, with that momentum, you know, it's a lot of money but actually there is a lot of money. I do think, you know, obviously Boris was being too flippant when he talks about "shaking the tree". But, you know, there are very rich people in London and something like that would --

MH: That's why the Tate was probably more than \$100 million --

SS: Much more, I think; let me check what that was but I thought it was much more than \$100 million.

MH: I'm trying to check the Tate -- I think the guy had fundraised for and we were trying to trace it. I just don't know how they did.

SS: Well, I do remember Nick Cerota saying when it opened, "You wouldn't be able to do this now". And I think that was a sort of interesting point that somehow -- again, it was that change of, you know, the sort of --

MH: Yes.



SS: A lot of this is will and faith, I think. Financial guarantees are a hard thing because you can just say, "Can you absolutely guarantee you can get the money?"

MH: Yes. I'll tell you my feel, is that -- well, I don't know, I haven't got the -- and this is me just thinking aloud. I think if you're in a government -- I haven't talked to them -- but you know there was a letter of direction the government -- the civil servants were against. Did you know that?

SS: What -- the civil servants post in this government?

MH: Under Boris, were against giving -- which bit of money was it? It was the --

CH: DfT because they asked for a direction from the Minister to release.

MH: Yes, I know. When was that?

CH: I think it was about the third time because they changed the -- (Overspeaking)

MH: Right, I remember it's coming back to me now. Things started going a little bit awry so they then needed -- and they did let that contract and I can't work out -- I mean, I don't think you and I had been sitting there before that contract (Several inaudible words). We'd probably get a little bit further down the road, trying to secure the resources, before they let it -- for whatever reason, they let it. Then all these questions started being asked so then they were worried about if they had to close the contract, you know, what loss of profit etc, etc they'd have to pay. So they went to the government, to give them some underwriting on that, and they got one lot and then they went for it and that wasn't enough. And then they went back for a second lot and that's been another feature of it. They went back for a second lot, got that; then they went back for a third lot and at that point the civil servants said, "This not value for money" and wouldn't do it so this -- a letter of direction went, which meant the Minister had to take the decision. The Minister did -- this was under Cameron --

SS: So which Minister was that then?

CH: It was the Transport Minister at the time --

MH: He's now --

CH: Patrick McLaughlin

SS: Oh, Patrick, I see.

MH: Then we had the change of government --

SS: Yes, Grayling is much less keen.

MH: And Grayling didn't cut it. And I think they're waiting for me.

SS: Yes.

MH: Thank you. And Phillip Hammond -- (Several inaudible words).

SS: No, you only have to look at them obviously. They have absolutely no understanding.

MH: So I would have thought that, for Sadiq to do it, he needs government to hold his hand.

SS: Yes.