

MAYOR OF LONDON

Darren Johnson AM
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

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Dear Darren

London Assembly (Plenary) meeting 5 March - Motions

Thank you for your letter of 11 March about the Motions agreed by the London Assembly at the plenary meeting of 5 March. I apologise for the delay in responding to you. I will respond to each of your Motions in turn:

Motion 1

As you will be aware, I have lobbied for London to receive an equitable share of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and its predecessor schemes. I intend to continue to do this.

I view the extension of the ECO targets to 2017 as a step which provides more certainty to the market, and aligns well with planned strategic delivery through the proposed RE:NEW Support Team over the next three years. This time extension, and the proposed introduction of heat networks as a primary measure under ECO, also allows for the possibility of integration of larger decentralised energy schemes, which require long lead-in times, to be funded under ECO.

Changes to ECO are likely to reduce the amount of solid wall insulation delivered in London. In my response to the consultation on the future of the ECO, I have called for the minimum number of solid wall measures to be doubled to 200,000. However, the reintroduction of loft and cavity wall insulation as eligible measures under ECO means there is now an opportunity to complete the rollout of this low-cost insulation in London. To date we have received low levels of loft and cavity insulation in London, so the inclusion of measures to insulate remaining lofts and cavity walls is a positive step.

However, I am clear that this is the last time that there will be an option to deliver the ECO through loft and cavity wall insulation, and have communicated this in my response to the Government's consultation on the future of the energy company obligation.

I have included in my business plan for 2014/15 a project to develop a spatial energy infrastructure plan for London which I intend will include retrofitting homes. I will certainly be requesting Government support for this plan.

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Motion 2

I consider that planning decisions should generally be left to local authorities where possible, and I only take over an application where there is likely to be a genuine strategic impact on the implementation of my London Plan. The criteria for me to take over an application is strictly defined through the Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008. All relevant applications are assessed in full against this criteria, and as such additional guidance is unnecessary.

Motion 3

As you are aware, my manifesto pledged to lead a campaign for 20,000 part-time jobs to help parents back into work. Since then I have reported to the Assembly on the number of jobs that my 200,000 jobs campaign has created which is at the forefront of this campaign. The paper submitted to the Investment and Performance Board in February, outlined that 84,400 jobs were created and supported in 2012/13 and the first half of the 2013/14 financial year by GLA Group projects and that I am on track to meet the 200,000 target for job creation over this Mayoral term. Given that 23 per cent of total employment in London is made up of part-time workers (using data from the Annual Population Survey from the Office of National Statistics), then we are well on the way to exceeding the Mayoral target for part-time jobs.

In addition, I have tasked my London Enterprise Panel, which I personally chair, with increasing employment and skills in the capital for all Londoners. In particular, my Panel has published the European Structural and Investment Funds London strategy which sets out as one of its priorities (in consultation with the Child Poverty Action Group and London Councils) the need to address raising women's and parental employment. This will ensure that the £502 million of European Social Funds (including Youth Employment Initiative Funds) will be directed in some way to support women into employment.

Motion 4

At this stage, I do not consider it necessary to include a specific policy in the London Plan restricting basement development. My emerging Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance encourages boroughs to develop local policies, where required, and I have already used this strategic position to actively support the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in developing local policy to protect against inappropriate basement development in light of its local circumstances.

As the Assembly recognises, my London Plan and associated guidance already supports boroughs in resisting this type of development where it would compromise the need for sustainable design and construction, including measures to ensure effective construction waste management and those to encourage retrofitting homes to address climate change such as overheating and cooling, flood risk, sustainable drainage, efficient water use as well as those to protect trees and biodiversity. Listed buildings and those in conservations already have statutory protection to protect their historic and architectural significance.

Motion 5

I recognise the important role played by pubs in the social fabric of communities and I am aware that a number of these facilities have changed to alternative uses in London. Proposed further alterations to the London Plan provide support to boroughs to maintain, manage and enhance public houses where there is sufficient evidence of need, community asset value and viability in pub use. I will carefully consider all properly made consultation responses on the further alterations to the London Plan which will strengthen it as the strategic planning framework for London.

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Motion 6

I am concerned by the number of Londoners that are experiencing food poverty, that is why I have asked Rosie Boycott, Chair of my London Food Board, and officers in my Economic and Business Policy Unit to focus their attention on this issue and to develop innovative ways to tackle food poverty across the city.

I welcomed the announcement of last year's School Food Plan by the Government and its endorsement of universality for school meals for children between the ages of 4-7, a stance to which I have given my support. Many London Boroughs have already made the commitment to roll out universality. Through my Flagship Food Boroughs project I will be encouraging boroughs across London to look at innovative ways of increasing the uptake of school meals.

As you will know, the London Food Strategy was launched in 2006, and it set an initial vision to 2016. A great deal has been achieved since then, and London has come to be seen as a world leader in urban food strategy implementation.

I am keen that officers in my Economic and Business Policy Unit continue to work to develop priority interventions which reflect the needs of London and Londoners, and I will ensure that they engage across City Hall, and of course more broadly, to make those interventions as effective as possible.

Yours ever,



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London