

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Roger Evans AM**

City Hall  
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More London  
London SE1 2AA

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Dear Roger

## **London Assembly (Plenary) meeting 5 November 2014 – Motions**

Thank you for your letter of 7 November 2014, which I received on 2 March. My response to each of the Motions is below.

### **Motion 1**

I fully support the extensive efforts the Fire Minister has made to resolve the pension dispute which the Fire Brigades Union has with the Government. As this is a national dispute, I do not regard it as appropriate for me to intervene directly and I have consistently made that position clear to Members when the issue has arisen in Assembly meetings. In general terms, I would urge the Fire Brigades Union to desist from strike action and adopt a more constructive approach in its negotiations with Government and others.

### **Motion 2**

Whilst London has not been immune from the national decline in species and habitats, mostly driven by the intensification of the UK's agricultural system, the policies in the London Plan, the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy, and the resulting programmes implemented by a wide range of partner organisations, has resulted in some positive outcomes for wildlife in London. In particular, the area of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation across London has remained stable despite a growing population and the increased development needed to accommodate this growth.

More work needs to be done on the management of these sites. Inappropriate or ineffective management is one of the major reasons for the decline in the diversity of both habitats and species.

This is why I am happy to support the principles espoused by the proposal from the RSPB and The Wildlife Trusts – although I remain to be persuaded that new legislation is required. We should ensure that we properly account for the role that green spaces and the natural environment ('green infrastructure') can play in improving health outcomes, flood resilience, walking and cycling, and social cohesion, all of which are essential to the sustained economic growth.

This is why I have identified green infrastructure policies alongside policies for biodiversity protection in the London Plan, and have recognised green infrastructure as an integral part of the London Infrastructure Plan 2050. By better articulating the wider benefits of green infrastructure I aim to encourage the investment needed to support the recovery of London's natural environment.

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## **Motion 3**

Transport for London (TfL) and I have supported Very Important Pedestrians (VIP) days and other similar events in the West End. The staging of future events will be guided by those organisations that are best placed to judge the need and success, such as the New West End Company (NWE), businesses and Westminster City Council.

TfL is already working with Westminster City Council, NWE and the West End Partnership (WEP) to explore a wide range of options for the West End area and for Oxford Street, including partial pedestrianisation. This work is considering the effectiveness of each option in supporting the growth and prosperity of the West End, including its accessibility for people and freight, as well as the impact on residents and businesses. The WEP Board, Westminster and TfL will review the analysis of options during the course of this year and Westminster and TfL will take forward measures accordingly.

London's air quality has improved significantly in recent years but we still have areas across London, such as Oxford Street, where the EU annual mean limit value for NO<sub>2</sub> is exceeded and there is high human exposure. Reducing air pollutant emissions in these areas is a priority for me, which is why I am introducing my Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to reduce exhaust emissions and help meet the EU limit values. By requiring vehicles to meet emission standards for NO<sub>x</sub> and particulate matter PM<sub>10</sub>/PM<sub>2.5</sub>, or pay a daily charge to travel in the zone, ULEZ will make central London a healthier and more pleasant place to live in, work in and visit. TfL undertook a consultation to understand Londoners' views on air quality and ULEZ. 79 per cent of respondents said it was important or very important to tackle poor air quality in London and 58 per cent said they supported or strongly supported the introduction of the ULEZ.

In September 2014, TfL published the Transport Emissions Roadmap on my behalf. It provides a range of possible new measures that the Greater London Authority, TfL, the London boroughs, the Government, the EU and other parties should consider to help meet the challenge of reducing air pollutants and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in London.

Since 2006, we have put 1,200 hybrid buses on London's roads, and by 2016 we will have 1,700 hybrids in the fleet, including 600 of the iconic 'New Buses for London' - the cleanest and greenest bus of its type. This will mean around 20 per cent of the fleet are hybrid vehicles.

We are retiring the last Euro III buses in TfL's fleet and replacing them with super-clean Euro VI buses at a cost of £18m.

We have taken over 6,000 of the oldest, dirtiest taxis off the roads by introducing London's first taxi age limits. In 2018, we are introducing an even stricter age limit, and all newly licensed taxis will have to be zero-emission capable (hybrid) and as traffic on Oxford Street is primarily composed of buses and taxis, these measures will help to target emissions on the street.

Westminster Council is delivering a number of air quality projects and further details can be found in its Air Quality Action Plan, which is available to view on its website at [https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/workspace/assets/publications/AQAP\\_2013-2018\\_FinalDraft\\_V1-re-1368525818.pdf](https://www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/workspace/assets/publications/AQAP_2013-2018_FinalDraft_V1-re-1368525818.pdf). The Council is currently delivering several innovative air quality projects funded by the Mayor's Air Quality Fund.

We are developing plans to deliver a bespoke Local Air Quality Management system for London which will enable us further to enhance and co-ordinate the way that local air quality action is delivered. Through the new scheme we will provide boroughs with a researched and prioritised Action Matrix of projects they are recommended to deliver.

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To help fund improvements to air quality on a local level, I have set up the Air Quality Fund which will provide £20m funding over ten years. The next round of funding will be available for projects from April 2016. This year, boroughs, businesses and other organisations will be invited to bid for this money to help improve local air quality for residents, businesses and visitors.

Turning to your point about road safety, TfL has set the challenging target of reducing all killed and serious injury (KSI) casualties on London's roads by 40 per cent by 2020. Those walking, cycling and riding motorcycles accounted for almost 80 per cent of all those killed or seriously injured on London's roads in 2013. Therefore, progress in reducing casualties among these three groups will need to be made to achieve the 2020 target. As pedestrians make up the largest group of vulnerable road user KSIs, the largest reductions are needed among this group.

As part of its commitment to pedestrian safety, TfL launched the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan in July 2014. The document set out 31 actions further to improve pedestrian safety in London. It was developed in partnership with the Pedestrian Safety Working Group and TfL continues to work with interested parties through this group to inform the delivery of the plan. Some of the key action areas can be applied to Westminster and Oxford Street. This includes drafting London's first Pedestrian Design Guidance to be published later this year, developing a 'Gold Standard' pedestrian crossing that will utilise the latest technology to improve safety, trialling 20mph limits on the TfL Road Network and supporting the implementation of 20mph limits on borough roads. TfL is also currently trialling vehicle technologies on London buses to understand their potential for improving cyclist and pedestrian safety. Trials are being run of both Intelligent Speed Assistance and Cyclist and Pedestrian Detection technology and, if successful, will be rolled out on the network.

TfL is also working with boroughs that have high numbers of pedestrian KSIs, including Westminster, to ensure that Local Implementation Plan funding is being spent on schemes at key collision hotspots and that boroughs are taking advantage of the central resources available to them. These include borough officer training, design guidance, road safety audits for borough schemes, campaigns toolkits and education programmes. TfL and Westminster are currently working together to identify possible ways to improve safety throughout the borough, including on Oxford Street.

## **Motion 4**

I support the Assembly's call on Government to improve enforcement of the National Minimum Wage. However, whilst it is a nationally set rate, its enforcement is a matter for Government to resolve. As the Assembly is aware, I am committed to the promotion of the London Living Wage (LLW) to businesses in the capital and continue to work towards making this the norm by 2020.

The GLA is working closely with the Living Wage Foundation to engage and increase the number of employers in the capital to pay the rate, which has almost reached 500. The Living Wage Foundation frequently monitors employers with LLW accreditation or who are working towards accreditation to ensure that they are complying with living wage pay commitments and/or that plans are in place for respective employers to move towards paying the living wage rate to all staff.

The GLA Group is leading by example and is committed to paying the LLW to all staff members including contracted staff. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is currently undergoing phased implementation of the Living Wage. This means that all staff directly employed by the MPS receive the Living Wage and they are rolling it out across contracts as they come up for renewal. The MPS currently expects all contracts to be fully compliant with the Living Wage by January 2016.



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The GLA Group's Responsible Procurement Policy sets out the minimum standards for payment and monitoring of the LLW including the requirement for contractors to retain sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the rate is being paid for Audit and Inspection. Therefore, I am confident that the GLA Group is compliant with the living wage accreditation requirements.

## **Motion 5**

TfL has already undertaken significant work to ensure that London's bus fleet remains one of the cleanest and youngest fleets of any major world city, including by using selective catalytic reduction (SCR) retrofit technology, which reduces nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions by up to 88 per cent, rolling out hybrid buses, trialling electric and hydrogen buses and accelerating the uptake of Euro VI buses. By the end of 2015, all buses in London will meet the Euro IV standard for NOx. The measures I have put in place will more than halve NOx emissions by 2016 compared to 2008. Following the success of the original retrofit programme, TfL has put in place plans to retrofit a further 400 Euro III buses with SCR technology.

My Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), which I confirmed on 26 March, will require all buses in central London to meet the Euro VI emission standard – with the exception of 300 New Routemasters purchased before this year which are Euro V and have a near-equivalent emissions performance. TfL buses operating in the zone will also all be either hybrid (for double-deck buses) or zero emission (for single-deck buses). This is expected to reduce emissions of NOx from buses in central London by over 70 per cent.

Given this context, I do not see the value at this time of putting in place significant additional funding, as proposed by the budget amendment, to support bus retrofitting beyond the total value of the measures highlighted above. TfL is planning to retrofit existing diesel Euro IV and Euro V vehicles and Euro VI hybrids, which will further reduce emissions on these. On this basis, I think the best value for money is delivered by focusing on the accelerated rollout of the proven technology of hybrid and electric buses, which will deliver the best overall outcome for London, given that these also tackle carbon emissions. However, I will continue to monitor developments in vehicle technology so that my approach to reducing emissions from the bus fleet continues to be the leading programme of its type in the world.

When drawing up the ULEZ proposals, several options were considered, including an outright ban on non-compliant vehicles and a zero or near zero-emission requirement for all vehicles.

An outright ban on vehicles would require a traffic regulation order (TRO) signed by all affected highway authorities. While this is, in principle, feasible, albeit complicated, a 24-hour per day ban is not legally enforceable. TROs can only ban vehicles for a maximum of eight hours in every 24-hour period, unless it is for the purposes of "avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road to which the order relates or any other road". Legal advice to TfL has confirmed that this requirement is unlikely to be met in relation to air quality purposes for an area the size of central London.

Setting a high charge for non-compliance, as has been proposed for heavy vehicles, would have a similar impact to a ban. However, I recognise the need for an acceptable balance between the projected reduction in emissions and likely cost of compliance for Londoners, businesses and visitors to the capital. The ULEZ proposals considered the balance between the requirement for a significant charge to be implemented in order to generate behaviour change and the need to avoid causing economic damage to an extent that would not be justified. I believe that introducing the option to pay a charge is fairer than instigating an outright ban or punitive charge. The proposed charge level achieves a balance that generates substantial emissions savings without negatively impacting on the economy.

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The current ULEZ boundary has been proposed because it is where air pollution levels are consistently the highest in London and people experience the greatest exposure. Additionally, it has the advantage of using the existing Congestion Charge zone. This is a natural boundary for central London, shaped by the inner ring road, well understood by road users. It has an existing camera enforcement network along its border, which can be utilised to manage compliance of ULEZ, significantly reducing the capital investment required to implement the proposed scheme. A larger zone would necessitate the introduction of an additional set of infrastructure, systems and signage, as well as the development of driver information. I have made clear in my Transport Emissions Road Map that we should consider future extensions of the zone and tightening of the Low Emission Zone requirements to further address air pollution.

I have stated my intention to accelerate the uptake of zero and near-zero emission vehicles in London. Setting a near-zero emission standard for 2020 was considered, but given the high cost of compliance and limited range of vehicles currently available, it was decided not to take this option forward. Nevertheless, I am keen that standards are tightened in the future. The ULEZ consultation responses showed public support for this. As indicated above, my Transport Emissions Road Map sets out how further reductions can be achieved. This could position London as a leader in this field and support the UK in this rapidly developing economic sector. Again, any such further proposal is not ruled out, but would be subject to detailed feasibility work, public and stakeholder consultation

## **Motion 6**

My London Plan sets out very clearly that tall buildings should be in planned locations and sets out criteria that the London boroughs should follow in identifying those locations. Policy 7.7 in particular provides a framework which states that tall buildings should generally be located in the Central Activity Zone (CAZ), Opportunity Areas, town centres and areas with good transport accessibility. The majority of the London boroughs have already set out where tall buildings should be located in their adopted local plans. Recent research by GL Hearn shows that the majority of tall buildings permitted in London are located within these areas which illustrates the effectiveness of the policy and the clarity it provides to developers.

Policy 7.7 also sets out the need to assess tall buildings in terms of their impact on micro-climate, contribution to regeneration, impact on the skyline, character, heritage, contribution to the public realm and legibility. All these aspects are carefully scrutinised and balanced against all other policies in the London Plan. My London Plan already sets out the importance of heritage considerations and of local context and the need to consider the impact on World Heritage sites and my designated strategic views as set out in the London View Management Framework.

My Opportunity Area Frameworks provide more detailed guidance about the implementation of the London Plan including the location of tall buildings. They establish a set of principles which provide clarity and certainty to developers and the wider public. They are rigorously developed and include an extensive urban design analysis of the likely impact of tall buildings. For some years now, my planning team has been using 3d modelling to undertake this analysis. This modelling has proved to be a very effective way of engaging with local residents groups. In developing these frameworks, my planning team engages with the public fully through meetings with residents groups and amenity societies and through presentations to groups and attendance at public drop ins.

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Proposals for tall buildings already undergo a high level of scrutiny, through the London Design Council/CABE and English Heritage. Many boroughs also have their own Design Review Panels, where the designs of major planning proposals are debated. In addition, the GLA and the boroughs have their own skilled design officers. As such, a high benchmark has to be passed in order to get planning permission; as London already possess the requisite plans, and means to implement them effectively. Therefore, I do not think a Skyline Commission is either desirable or necessary.

I fully support the idea of a fully interactive 3D model of London which could be used to further assess the impact of tall buildings as making it easier and more engaging for the public to know what is being considered. My planning team are currently in the process of procuring additional coverage of London, in partnership with the boroughs, and updating the models that we already have.

## **Motion 7**

In my response to Government, I made clear my concerns that the office to residential permitted development rights proposals could have perverse impacts which could cumulatively have an adverse strategic effect on London's overall development. I urged the Government to reconsider the proposals and in particular to maintain the current exemptions covering the Central Activities Zone, Tech City, the Isle of Dogs and the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone. I also raised these concerns with Government in a joint letter with the Planning Officers Society London, the British Property Federation and London First. In this letter, we expressed our shared view that the Government's proposal to remove the exemptions would be a very real threat to the future of nationally and internationally significant business locations. In my technical response I stated that a full assessment should be made before extending the office to residential permitted development right. I also made clear that the proposal to extend permitted development rights to changes from industrial and warehousing to residential will lead to unwarranted increases to the cost of doing business, place constraints on business and industrial activities, and cause significant damage to the economy of London.

Yours ever,



**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London