

MAYOR OF LONDON

Jennette Arnold OBE AM
Chair of the London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

Our ref: MGLA080615-7139

Date: 17 JUL 2015

Dear Jennette

Re: London Assembly (Plenary) Meeting 3 June 2015 – Motions

Thank you for your letter of 5 June. My response to the London Assembly's motions is set out below.

Motion 1- Greater London National park

I welcome the primary aim of the campaign which is to promote the importance and value of London's parks, green spaces and natural environment and commend the organisers of the campaign for their inventiveness in raising awareness of this issue.

Greater London Authority Officers have participated in workshops with the campaign organisers and spoke at the campaign conference at the Southbank last February.

I am already contributing to the broad aims of the campaign through the policy framework set out in the London Plan and through my programmes to improve London's parks and green spaces. I have also established a Green Infrastructure Task Force to provide advice and recommendations on the strategic issues that need to be addressed in relation to the design, management and operation of London's green infrastructure¹.

The campaign organisers have stated that they will prepare a full proposal for a 'National Park City' in this month. I look forward to reviewing this proposal and considering how it relates to the work of the Green Infrastructure Task Force which will publish its report later this year. Until this proposal for a 'National Park City' is published I cannot set out how the GLA and the GLA group could contribute further to the specific aims and objectives of the campaign.

¹ Green infrastructure is defined as:

A network of green spaces - and features such as street trees and green roofs - that is planned, designed and managed to deliver a range of benefits, including: recreation and amenity, healthy living, mitigating flooding, improving air quality, cooling the urban environment, encouraging walking and cycling, and enhancing biodiversity and ecological resilience.

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Motion 2 - Electoral Reform

In May 2011, more than two thirds of those who voted in the referendum on changing the way MPs are elected from First Past the Post to the Alternative Vote system voted against the proposal. Therefore, given the overwhelming rejection of electoral reform only four years ago, I believe that we should focus on other more pressing priorities facing the nation, and I do not see a need for a reopening of this debate.

Motion 3 - Garden Bridge

The Garden Bridge will make a significant contribution towards making central London easier and more attractive for people to walk around, in turn contributing to improving health and quality of life in the City.

The Bridge has been designed specifically for pedestrians and as I have already stated is wholly consistent with and complementary to proposals in the London Plan and my Transport Strategy for achieving a step-change in the quality of facilities for pedestrians in central London. It will be integrated with a high quality public space and garden. Cyclists will be able to walk cycles across the bridge and at the same time there will be substantial enhancements for cyclists on adjoining bridges as part of my *Cycling Vision*.

It has an extremely positive business case and will directly support both London wide and local policies to make London a more walkable and liveable city and support the economic development of the capital.

I have asked Transport for London (TfL) to contribute £30m to the proposed project on the basis that this contribution will help leverage a large amount of other funding sources to deliver the project. The Government has matched this contribution with £30m of their own for the same reasons. The remaining funds are being raised by the Garden Bridge Trust, which is responsible for the construction, operation and maintenance of the bridge, through private donations. Already, private donations exceed the public funding package and the Trust's fundraising programme is ongoing.

Through discussion with the two local authorities, the Garden Bridge Trust submitted a planning application that assumes it will open between 6am and 12 midnight. This covers the times when the demand for movement across the river is greatest and outside of these hours the likely number of expected users will fall considerably. Opening hours will be kept under review, and the potential for longer opening hours will be explored if there is a strong demand to use the bridge at night and in agreement with both local authorities.

The Garden Bridge is just one of six new river crossings I want to see brought forward over the next decade. TfL is progressing with the Silvertown Tunnel, crossings at both Gallions Reach and Belvedere. We are following with keen interest the design competition run by the London Borough of Wandsworth for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge between Nine Elms and Pimlico.

TfL has also recently granted funding, alongside local businesses, to Sustrans to examine the feasibility of a pedestrian and cycle bridge between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf and I await the outcome of that study with interest. The creation of new connections across the Thames will deliver huge economic benefits linking people with jobs, relieving congestion on existing crossings, improving resilience and enabling more direct journeys - clear benefits for the efficient movement of people, goods and services in our rapidly growing city.

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Given the significant level of interest in this project, and in particular in the procurement of design contracts by TfL, I understand that before he stood down as Commissioner, Sir Peter Hendy, instructed a review of those processes which will be published in due course.

Motion 4 - Low pay

Last year I wrote to London's Premier League football clubs to encourage them to pay the London Living Wage and I was very pleased to hear of their decision to pay all of their full-time staff the Living Wage from the start of the 2016-17 season. However, I will continue to urge them to follow Chelsea Football Club's admirable example and sign up to become London Living Wage accredited employers which would include committing to pay the London Living Wage to all of their subcontractors such as matchday stewards and catering staff who make up the majority of low-paid employees at Premier League clubs.

I believe that employers across all sectors in London should pay the London Living Wage and I continue to write to businesses to encourage them to become London Living Wage accredited. In the case of the Olympic Stadium the opportunity has already been taken to promote the London Living Wage. As I explained in my letter to Gareth Bacon AM dated 7 May, (following the receipt of the Assembly Regeneration Committee's report 'The Regeneration Game'), Vinci, who have been appointed as the operator for the Olympic Stadium, are obliged to pay their staff the London Living Wage and this obligation is also passed on to any sub-contractors whom they employ, such as catering suppliers.

Motion 5 - Air Quality

As you know, air quality has been a priority for me since I was first elected in 2008 and I have delivered an ambitious package of measures to improve air quality. These include tightening Low Emission Zone standards, retiring more than 6,000 of the oldest taxis, building Europe's largest fleet of more than 1,300 hybrid buses and developing the Source London network of 1,400 charge points for electric vehicles. This has reduced emissions of harmful particles (PM10 and PM2.5) by 15 per cent and emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NOx) by 20 per cent and London now meets the legal requirements for eight out of the nine legally regulated pollutants. These measures have also more than halved the number of Londoners living in areas exceeding the EU legal limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO2).

Of course much more needs to be done before Londoners have the air quality they deserve. I have always said that London should be compliant with nitrogen dioxide (NO2) legal limits by 2020 at the latest. I set out a road map to compliance in my Air Quality Manifesto published in summer 2014 and in TfL's Transport Emissions Road Map. This would require additional action by and financial support from Government to match the ambitious measures I have already put in place.

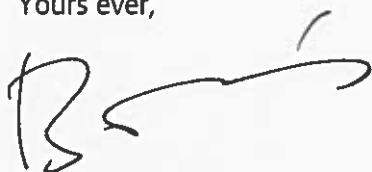
The Ultra Low Emission Zone, cleaner buses and new requirements for zero emission capable taxis will ensure more than 80 per cent of central London is compliant with EU legal limits for NO2 by 2020. I am working with Government to make sure they fill the remaining gap, including by providing more support to London to accelerate the introduction of zero emission capable buses and taxis, a national diesel scrappage scheme to retire the oldest most polluting vehicles as soon as possible and amending current fiscal incentives so they only encourage the purchase of the cleanest vehicles.

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It should also be remembered that the EU must also play its role and make sure the new Euro 6 standard works effectively by adopting new real world testing rules as quickly as possible, with an introduction date for the new test protocol no later than 2017. If Euro 4 and 5 had achieved their aims we would be in compliance with NO2 legal limits this year. Until the EU get this right we will be fighting with one hand tied behind our backs.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Boris Johnson', written in a cursive style.

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London