

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Roger Evans AM**

Chairman of the London Assembly  
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**Date:** 11 MAY 2015

Dear Roger

## **London assembly (Plenary) 11 March 2015 – Motions**

Thank you for your letter of 13 March. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

My response to the London Assembly's motions is set out below.

### **Motion 1**

The historic failure to build enough homes means that Londoners are affected by housing costs. To help Londoners with housing costs, I will deliver 100,000 affordable homes over the course of my two terms as Mayor, including tens of thousands of First Steps homes to help people into home ownership. Previous attempts to target 'key workers' inevitably led to somewhat arbitrary and unfair distinctions being made, and my First Steps programme is therefore open to all those who need help; including NHS staff.

I am encouraging the NHS to engage with the London Land Commission so that we can compile a comprehensive list of sites that can be re-purposed. There is a considerable amount of under-utilised NHS estate in London which could be freed up for housing, renewed health and care services or school places.

One of my earliest commitments on election as Mayor of London in 2008 was to support the London Living Wage and it is my ambition to make the London Living Wage the norm across the capital by 2020. Working in partnership with the Living Wage Foundation I am continuing to promote the London Living Wage and I am writing to employers to encourage them to sign up to paying it. To date, this has been a highly successful campaign, increasing the number of organisations paying the London Living Wage from fewer than 30 before my election in 2008 to over 550 accredited by April 2015.

I fully appreciate that families and working Londoners who have helped drive the economic recovery still face real pressure over the cost of living. Transport costs are one of the biggest pressures on working Londoners and household budgets and for this reason I am absolutely committed to bearing down on fares to ensure they remain affordable. Transport for London's (TfL) major savings and efficiencies programme helps ensure it can protect essential upgrades and frontline services, while ensuring that fares increases are only considered as a last resort.

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In January, I announced that I had frozen the cost of fares in real terms. My new fares package also means the maximum daily cost of travel using pay as you go at 20 per cent of the weekly ticket. This means a three-days-a-week commuter pays no more than 60 per cent of the cost of a weekly ticket – down from over 80 per cent in 2014. The new all-day caps save 200,000 people money every day and are a significant change for part-time workers, many of whom earn lower incomes. I have also protected and extended concessionary travel for young people, veterans and older and disabled Londoners during my time in office.

## **Motion 2**

I have already provided a response through a written Mayoral Question ([http://questions.london.gov.uk/QuestionSearch/searchclient/questions/question\\_280488](http://questions.london.gov.uk/QuestionSearch/searchclient/questions/question_280488)).

Policies set out in my Housing Strategy that will help to alleviate overcrowding include the following:

- Increasing the supply of all tenures, with specific targets for affordable homes and private rented homes, and thereby addressing the under-supply that fuels high housing costs and means Londoners on low incomes are more likely to become overcrowded;
- A long-term commitment to deliver the family sized homes that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies London needs; and
- Freeing up more of the capital's existing family sized affordable housing, so that overcrowded families in homes of all tenures can benefit from this vital resource.

## **Motion 3**

I am committed to environmental policies which stimulate London's Low Carbon Goods and Services Economy.

My Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Strategy contains some of the most challenging CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets of any global city and has identified cost effective delivery programmes for energy efficiency retrofit and decentralised energy that will go some way towards achieving our targets. As you know, achieving our targets also requires government action.

London remains one of the most engaged cities in the C40 Cities Network and is currently leading the Low Emission Vehicles network and work streams of the Private Building Efficiency and Connecting Delta Cities networks. London also participates in the Covenant of Mayors and the Compact of Mayors and is seen in these Networks as a leading global city in tackling climate change and a repository of information and knowledge that cities can benefit from. In addition to this, I was represented at a meeting of European City Mayors in Paris and signed a declaration committing to increased collaboration in the procurement of low carbon goods and services.

## **Motion 4**

I have strongly supported the London Pension Fund Authority's long-standing commitment to responsible investment. I have urged the LPFA to use its influence as a large institutional investor to encourage long-term behaviour in the companies in which they invest and through the mandates it gives to its fund managers.

However, my approach embodies a realism that there needs to be a transition away from fossil fuels and not a sudden cliff edge. Because of policy failures, largely by the last Government in not investing in new nuclear energy a decade ago, we are going to need natural gas for the medium term. Natural gas if burnt in CHP, which we are encouraging, becomes a low carbon fuel. The question then is where does one source this natural gas? From Russia and the Gulf or from beneath our own feet? That

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question clearly answers itself and we are therefore going to need to invest in exploiting our own domestic energy reserves and explore the potential for fracking in the UK.

Therefore, I cannot accept the Assembly's motion on divestment. In addition, I have no power of direction over the LPFA. The LPFA Board must ensure that investments they make are in accordance with their fiduciary duty although responsible investment factors, such as low carbon, may be relevant as an additional consideration.

Additionally, I cannot make a commitment not to accept sponsorship and advertising from fossil fuel companies, as this could unnecessarily constrain activities across the GLA Group, particularly in TfL. Further, it is not possible for LPFA to "offer a fossil fuel free pension scheme to members" as benefits of all members are guaranteed irrespective of how investments have performed.

## **Motion 5**

It is simply untrue to suggest that funding for low cost rented housing has been marginalised. I have set the most ambitious housing targets in the history of the Greater London Authority, and a range of pioneering new policies, to double housebuilding and provide the homes hard working Londoners need. I am on track to deliver a record 100,000 new low cost homes for Londoners over my two terms, and in this financial year, more affordable homes being built than in any other year since 1981.

## **Motion 6**

For ease, I will answer each of your points in turn:

### **The latest predictions for investment in cycling that will be undertaken by the end of the financial year 2014/15**

The total forecast spend for cycling in 2014/15, as revised for Quarter 3, is now £57m (£69m including an estimated £12m of over-programming as revised in Quarter 2 and reported at the Budget Monitoring Sub-Committee in October 2014). This reflects a carry-over of programme delivery into future years, for example, on Cycle Superhighways. The decision to extend or delay a number of the public consultations and the need to make some design changes following these consultations meant the construction start date moved by a small number of weeks, which meant that expenditure slipped into the start of the next financial year. The completion date for the schemes remains unchanged.

### **Details of the cycling investment that has been allocated to each London Borough in 2014/15 and for the year 2015/16**

In the financial year 2014/15, over £15m has been allocated to the London boroughs specifically for investment in cycling. This includes £1.7m for the Quietways programme, £2.9m for Mini-Hollands, £5.1m for the Central London Grid and £5.7m of funding awarded to boroughs through the Borough Cycling Programme for investment in borough-led cycle training, freight and fleet safety improvements, cycle parking, monitoring and research of cycling schemes and staffing. Investment for 2015/16 is still being planned and it is therefore not possible to provide an accurate breakdown of this funding at this stage.

In addition to this, Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding is provided to the London boroughs and also supports the delivery of improvements for cycling. These improvements often form part of larger schemes, such as the Harlesden Town Centre project, which was completed in February with £3.8m of TfL LIP funding. This project provides priority for cyclists, buses and pedestrians using the High Street, as well as delivering a range of wider improvements which will help enhance the environment, reduce congestion and support the local economy.

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## **The Mayor's specific plans to ensure that in 2015/16 the planned investment in cycling is fully spent**

TfL's focus is on delivering the improvements set out in my *Vision for Cycling in London* rather than trying to spend any particular cash budget in a given year. TfL has clear delivery plans through which it is working with the boroughs to deliver cycling interventions, as set out in my *Vision*.

Delivery is undertaken through established best practice procedures and includes extensive consultation with partners and stakeholders, which can extend planned timescales to ensure all views are taken into account when developing projects. The delivery of interventions is overseen by Andrew Gilligan, my Cycling Commissioner, who works closely with TfL. Furthermore, all project delivery is subject to TfL's internal, robust, governance processes.

## **Allocation of greater funds to London Boroughs who have cycling schemes that are ready to be delivered**

There is currently more funding allocated to cycling in London than ever before, and TfL and the boroughs are working hard to deliver their full agendas. The London Assembly Transport Committee recently raised concerns around the capacity of boroughs to deliver elements of my *Vision* in the face of such unprecedented levels of funding. TfL and its delivery partners are working closely with boroughs to ensure that the necessary support is made available to them to help with delivery of schemes.

Yours ever,



**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London