

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP

House of Commons
Houses of Parliament
London
SW1 0AA

10 April 2018

Dear Boris,

GLA Oversight Meeting, 1 March 2018 - Question and Answer Session on the Garden Bridge Project

On behalf of the GLA Oversight Committee, I would like to thank you for your attendance at our 1 March 2018 meeting, and to also thank you for your contributions to the discussion on the day.

Nonetheless, I believe there continue to be important issues regarding your involvement in and advocacy for the Garden Bridge project that deserve further scrutiny and answers from you.

The first of these concerns statements made by you relating to the further expenditure of monies associated with the project by the current Mayor, Sadiq Khan. The transcript of our discussions at the Committee meeting on 1 March 2018 record the following statement from you:

"In the interim, further cost was racked up of about £9 million, I believe. Since the new Mayor, Sadiq Khan, came into office, a further £9 million was racked up during a period of indecision. The worst thing you can do, really, with something like that is to not make up your mind, be warm towards it one day and then listen to the sceptics the other day. To get anything done in London you have to push, push, push and really believe in it. By the end, as I understand it, he just decided that it was not invented here, not his baby, and it was very sad. Further cost was racked up. In the end, the bill is about £46 million. That is a great shame.

If you ask me now to say if the Mayor should be accountable for that expenditure, yes, the Mayor certainly should be accountable for that expenditure."

My question to you is whether you were entirely honest and accurate in your statement to the Committee concerning the expenditure of the additional £9m on the project following your departure from office as Mayor of London? Is it not the case that this was expenditure

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committed to while you were in post as Mayor, and that it was, in fact, Government expenditure rather than being anything authorised by Sadiq Khan, as you suggested?

On another matter, you made serious accusations concerning the Assembly's treatment of Mr Richard de Cani, former Transport for London (TfL) Managing Director for Planning. You stated:

"... , I have to say that it is not in my view the job of the London Assembly to allow officials in TfL, hardworking, honourable people to be subjected to that kind of abuse. On the contrary, I believe it is the job of the London Assembly to protect such officials, and to protect them from the kind of abuse that they have suffered. There is one gentleman in particular whose reputation has been continuously attacked and we know who it is: Richard de Cani. Many people around this horseshoe will remember Richard, the work he did and what an effective officer he was. He has been, frankly, vilified in a wholly unappealing and inaccurate way."

You may recall that included in your briefing pack for the meeting was correspondence from Mike Brown, London's Transport Commissioner, regarding extensive changes made to TfL's governance processes as a result of shortcomings identified with the Garden Bridge procurement process. Mr Brown mentions writing to all senior staff to stress the importance of full compliance with procurement processes. He also makes the point that employment conditions for senior staff have been reviewed with a view to ensuring that where a possible conflict of interest may occur, responsibilities are reallocated accordingly.

In defending Mr de Cani in such vigorous terms, are you suggesting that the review of practices and procedures instigated by the Commissioner for Transport, as a result of the failings in processes in relation to the Garden Bridge project, was unnecessary? Is it your belief that Mr Brown is incorrect in his assessment of the steps TfL needed to take to ensure there was no repetition of the issues surrounding the project?

Furthermore, during the course of the question and answer session you undertook to:

- Provide information on to what extent the Transport for London Board was kept informed of progress on the Garden Bridge project; and
- Examine the four Mayoral Directions associated with the Garden Bridge and provide the Committee with an explanation regarding the change in the conditions for the Garden Bridge Trust's Deed of Grant as set out in the decision box of MD1647.

This has not yet been received. I would be grateful for this information and your response to the other issues raised above within 21 days of receipt of this letter. If it is not, I will ask the Committee to consider taking further action.

A draft transcript of the question and answer session was forwarded to your office Wednesday 7 March 2018. If you have any amendments of a factual nature or if there is anything else in relation to this session you wish to discuss, please contact Lorena Alcorta, Principal Committee Manager, on telephone 020 7983 4425 or at lorena.alcorta@london.gov.uk.

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In the meantime, the transcript has been published on the GLA's website as a draft, until it is confirmed by the Committee at the next appropriate meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Len Duvall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

Len Duvall AM
Chair of the GLA Oversight Committee