

Standing up for London

London Assembly's Annual Report 2012-13

September 2013



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Welcome

Welcome to the latest London Assembly annual report, which sets out the work we have done over the year to April 2013. The Assembly is required by law to produce this report but, more importantly, it is a chance for us to tell Londoners what we have been doing on your behalf. From our regular Q&A sessions with Mayor Boris Johnson and other senior figures in London government, to investigating a raft of important London issues, to dealing with thousands of Londoners' concerns, Assembly Members have been your voice at City Hall. This report gives a brief summary of that work and how you can find out more about a particular subject.

We have grouped our work around eight subject headings. The first details how the Assembly has looked at the actions of the Mayor and his senior advisers and appointees, and examined the finances and performance of the Greater London Authority (GLA) group, which includes Transport for London (TfL), the mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) and the London Legacy Development Corporation.

The remaining sections reflect the priorities of Londoners: safety and policing; housing and planning; transport; health and community; London's economy; environment and climate change; and the 2012 Games.

Who we are

The London Assembly is made up of 25 Members elected by Londoners at the same time as the Mayor. Eleven represent the whole of the capital with fourteen elected by constituencies made up of two or three London boroughs.

On 3 May 2012 more than two million Londoners cast their vote to elect the fourth London Assembly since the GLA was created. The Assembly consists of twelve Labour, nine Conservative, two Green and two Liberal Democrat Assembly Members. [Biographies of Assembly Members](#).

Our role



The London Assembly is a watchdog for London. It holds Mayor Boris Johnson and his advisers to account by publicly examining policies, activities and decisions in key areas like policing; housing and planning; transport; economic development; health and community services; the environment; and the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Mayor is required to consult Assembly Members ahead of producing his statutory strategies and his £16.5 billion a year budget, which includes the GLA portion of your council tax. As well as examining the Mayor's policies through its meetings and committees, the Assembly directly questions the Mayor ten times a year at Mayor's Question Time.

In addition to their City Hall duties eight Assembly Members represented Londoners on the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.

Assembly Members are champions for London, investigating issues that affect everyday life in the capital to find ways of improving our city. The Assembly publishes reports recommending action by the Mayor, central government, local authorities and others.

All London Assembly meetings are held in public and broadcast on the GLA website so Londoners can see and hear what is being done on their behalf. The Assembly has an active programme of engagement with schools,

colleges and universities, encouraging students to come to City Hall to learn about their city government and watch it in action at meetings like Mayor's Question Time. The Assembly also hosts an increasing number of visits from overseas delegations who want to learn more about how London is governed. In the past year the Assembly has hosted official visits from Denmark, the Netherlands, Kosovo, India, Sri Lanka, China, Japan, and Vietnam.

Twice a year Assembly Members and the Mayor hold People's Question Time, giving Londoners an opportunity to ask them directly what they are doing to improve life in London. This year's events were held in Stratford and Lewisham.

The Mayor has to answer to Londoners at the ballot box every four years; the London Assembly's job is to ensure the Mayor is held democratically accountable every day.

What do Assembly Members do?

The Mayor is the most powerful directly elected politician in the UK, Assembly Members have a vital role in holding him to account on behalf of Londoners in between elections. The most visible example of this is Mayor's Question Time where the Mayor answers to Assembly Members during two and a half hours of questions in City Hall's Chamber ten times a year.

Mayor's Question Time and other Assembly meetings provide a public forum for discussing alternative ideas and challenging policies that affect the daily lives of Londoners. As well as cross-examination during these sessions, Assembly Members submit written questions to the Mayor, often at the suggestion of their constituents. In the last year the Mayor was asked 4,439 questions. Like all Assembly meetings these sessions are public so Londoners can stay informed about the Mayor's activities, and the Assembly can provide public critical challenge and review of his performance – an established principle of representative democracies.

Assembly Members also hold regular discussions with the Chairs, Commissioners and Chief Executives of TfL, the Metropolitan Police, LFEPA and the London Legacy Development Corporation in order to press for improvements to services and ensure the organisations are accountable to Londoners. The Mayor sets the priorities for these Greater London Authority group organisations, which have a combined budget of £16.5bn. During preparations for the 2012 Games the Chairs and Chief Executives of the Olympic Delivery Authority, which got part of its funding from Londoners' council tax, the Olympic Park Legacy Company and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games also appeared in front of Assembly Members so they could monitor preparations for the 2012 Games and the legacy they promised to leave behind.

Members propose and vote on motions raising issues of importance to the capital at Assembly meetings and can agree to petition the Mayor or organisations within the GLA group on behalf of Londoners. The Assembly also makes the case for London in response to consultations from government and other organisations whose proposals will have an impact on the capital, for example, changes to the provision of NHS services in London and hospital closures.

The Assembly conducts its investigations through committees, which meet regularly in public and publish their findings and recommendations, making proposals to the Mayor and government organisations about ways to improve the capital. A committee may also ask an individual member to carry out a special investigation on its behalf, and Assembly Members produce their own reports.

Assembly Members investigate and publish reports on actions and decisions the Mayor takes, and anything else the Assembly considers to be of importance to Greater London. To help conduct investigations the Assembly has the power to summons documents and relevant people before itself and its committees. Londoners are also asked for their views on subjects under investigation and these are reflected in Assembly reports.

A great deal of an Assembly Member's work takes place in public to ensure the maximum amount of transparency and accountability, but there is plenty of behind-the-scenes activity too. Assembly meetings and investigations all require preparation with lots of background research, including briefings with experts, site visits and meetings with people who use the services being examined.

Every year Assembly Members receive thousands of emails and letters raising concerns or asking for help in dealing with a particular problem. Assembly Members take up the case with the appropriate organisation and press for solutions. Sometimes these postbag issues will become the focus of formal Assembly investigations with public meetings to air the complaints and question the organisations involved, for example cycle safety in London. Assembly Members also spend a lot of time outside City Hall meeting constituents face-to-face.

Simply put, the job of an Assembly Member is to stand up for Londoners.

Holding the Mayor to Account



The Assembly's primary responsibility is to monitor and review how the Mayor exercises his powers, investigating his actions and decisions and those of his staff, and contribute to the development of policy.

Mayor's Question Time

The Mayor must present a written report to the Assembly detailing his decisions and the reasons for them, and his responses to proposals submitted by the Assembly, before Mayor's Question Time (MQT), held ten times a year. At MQT, the Mayor is questioned on a wide range of subjects. Among the 4,439 questions asked in 2012/13, issues raised included: the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games; police and fire station closures; public transport fares; housing; and welfare reform. Assembly Members also submit written questions to the Mayor designed to obtain information, often at the suggestion of their constituents.

The Mayor's Budget for 2013/14

On 25 February, the Assembly considered the Mayor's final 2013/14 £16.5 billion budget for the GLA group and a 1.2 per cent reduction in City Hall's portion of Londoners' council tax to £303 for a Band D property. Assembly Members proposed three amendments to the budget but as none achieved the necessary two-thirds majority the Mayor's spending plans were formally approved unchanged.

Two weeks before consideration of the final budget the Mayor presented his draft budget for the Assembly to look at and propose changes. At the end of an extensive debate the Assembly approved an amendment proposed by the Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat Groups to freeze the GLA portion of the council tax instead of reducing it by 7 pence a week. The amendment proposed using the extra £9.5 million raised to protect the frontline emergency services provided by the Metropolitan Police and London Fire Brigade. A Conservative proposal to provide £300,000 to support housing homeless veterans was included in the Mayor's final budget. Long before the votes on the Mayor's spending plans the Budget and Performance Committee began probing the proposals, examining how promised projects could be delivered within proposed spending plans. In its response to the draft budget, the Committee highlighted significant gaps in information which made it difficult - if not impossible - to judge how effective and efficient the Mayor's budget would be. It urged the Mayor to publish all the detailed advice which led him to decide to increase public transport fares by above inflation. The Committee also pressed for greater transparency about the savings that would be made from each police and fire station proposed for closure and the costs of replacement police contact points.

The Mayor's advisers

The Mayor can appoint 12 paid staff to act as his advisers and must appoint one Assembly Member to be the Deputy Mayor of London. The Mayor may appoint a Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime to supervise the operation of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime. The Mayor has also chosen to appoint advisers to a number of unpaid posts. The Assembly examines these direct appointees in public about their responsibilities and specific policy initiatives.

Confirmation hearings

The Assembly has the power to hold confirmation hearings in advance of mayoral appointments to specific posts at important organisations that are responsible for helping to implement the Mayor's policies. The hearings provide an opportunity to interview appointees in public about their qualifications and fitness for the role. The Assembly can then make an advisory recommendation

to the Mayor about confirming the appointment or a binding recommendation about the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime if the appointee is not an Assembly Member.

This year the Assembly held confirmation hearings into the following appointments: Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Chair of LFEPA, Chair of the LLDC, Deputy Chair of TfL and Chair of the London Waste and Recycling Board.

The Assembly recommended that the Mayor not proceed with the appointment of Councillor Daniel Moylan as Chair of the London Legacy Development Corporation. The Mayor chose to proceed with the appointment and Councillor Moylan served for four months before being replaced.

An ethical GLA

The London Assembly has a significant role in ensuring the GLA group operates in an ethical and transparent manner in accordance with the law and proper standards. The Assembly Audit Panel receives regular reports from internal and external auditors and examines the systems in place to ensure proper use of Londoners' money. The Assembly's GLA Oversight Committee monitors staff deployment at City Hall and reviews the GLA's administrative rules to ensure they are efficient and transparent.

The Assembly and the Mayor jointly appoint the GLA's three Statutory Officers: the Head of Paid Service, Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer, who are legally responsible for the proper administration of City Hall. Assembly Members fulfil similar roles on LFEPA to promote effective governance and transparency.

Safety and Policing



The Police and Crime Committee

The Assembly's Police and Crime Committee is established by law to review and recommend improvements to the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan, which sets out the policing priorities for the capital. The Committee also examines the operation and decisions of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and investigates any other matter of importance to policing and crime reduction in London.

As well as conducting investigations into specific issues, the Committee regularly questions the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner in open meetings at City Hall. Assembly Members use these meetings to pursue issues of concern to constituents and challenge MOPAC about its performance and supervision of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Subjects raised at these meetings have included trust and integrity in the MPS, domestic violence and sentencing in London, stop and search, MPS performance and detection rates.

Police and Crime Plan

The Police and Crime Plan sets out the Mayor's plan for policing the capital and reducing crime over the next four years. The Plan aims to reduce selected crimes by 20 per cent, to cut the MPS budget by 20 per cent, and to increase public confidence in policing by 20 per cent. In its response to the draft plan, the Police and Crime Committee argued that the Mayor

should include more sophisticated targets based on clear evidence explaining how and why they were chosen.

To meet the 20 per cent budget cut, the plan includes proposals to reshape neighbourhood policing and change the way people are able to contact the police, including closing a significant number of police station front counters. The Committee challenged the Mayor to provide clear case by case evidence to support counter closures and demonstrate how new access arrangements would benefit people. It was also concerned that the new structure for neighbourhood policing should continue to engage local people and be accountable to them. The Committee also wanted the Mayor to demonstrate how the MPS would be challenged about its performance in reducing and solving some of the most harmful crimes including murder, rape and serious sexual assault.



Duty of Care: Improving support to victims of crime

The MPS needs to up its game when it comes to dealing with the victims of crime, a Police and Crime Committee investigation concluded. It found that London's police have the worst victim satisfaction rating of any police service in the country, with up to 115,000 victims of crime in the year to June 2012 dissatisfied with the performance of the police. The MPS is rated more than 10 per cent below the satisfaction ratings for West Midlands and Greater Manchester police forces. The Committee's report made ten recommendations for action to reverse the MPS's declining performance in supporting victims of crime. It emphasised providing better training for

front-line police officers, ensuring suitable public access points for all victims to report crime, equal respect for all crime victims and closer cooperation in dealing with victims across the whole criminal justice system.

The Future of Community Safety Funding

The Community Safety Fund was established in 1998 to support a wide range of locally-based programmes aimed at preventing crime. In 2012 responsibility for crime prevention funding transferred to MOPAC from the Home Office. From 2014/15 crime prevention funding will be combined into the general police grant and it will be for MOPAC to decide what programmes it supports and how much funding they get.

Following a series of public meetings examining the future development of Community Safety Funding, the Police and Crime Committee made a number of recommendations to MOPAC to help get the most benefit from the cash. These included a set of basic principles that MOPAC should adopt for commissioning community safety projects and an appeal to fund schemes over a reasonable length of time to allow them to build their impact in communities without having to bid for renewed funding every year or two.

Anti-gangs strategy

While violent crime in London has been falling for many years, gangs continue to cause real harm in many neighborhoods, ruining the lives of not just their victims but also the young people involved in them. That's why the Police and Crime Committee carefully examined the London Crime Reduction Board's draft *Partnership Anti-Gangs Strategy* and made a number of recommendations for improvements.

The Committee was concerned that there is a growing gap between the speed and scale of enforcement activity and preventative programmes. It concluded that while action by the Metropolitan Police to ramp up arrests for gang related crimes is welcome, the benefits to communities will be short-term without prevention and diversion programmes to change young people's behaviour in the long-term. In particular the Committee urged the LCRB to focus on support for borough based partnerships designed to meet

local needs. It also called for greater emphasis on the unique role the voluntary and community sectors can play in developing meaningful engagement with those young people most at risk of becoming gang members or their victims.

The Year Ahead

The expanded deployment of Taser and proposals to use other 'less-lethal weapons' on London's streets is being examined by an Assembly working group, and a report will be published in the summer.

The Police and Crime Committee will also be looking at the establishment of Safer Neighbourhood Boards across London, the use of Stop and Search powers, the policing of migrant communities, and the MPS's progress in improving child protection.

Housing and Planning



Turning offices into housing

Allowing developers to convert offices into blocks of flats without needing planning permission is no long-term solution to London's housing crisis, the Planning Committee has told the Government. Its investigation into the proposal heard unanimous opposition to the changes from a wide range of people from both public and private sectors. There is great concern that the chance to cash in on conversions would result in sub-standard homes without the necessary amenities and infrastructure. The proposals could also harm London's economic recovery, making offices too expensive and pushing potential job creation elsewhere. The Committee has written to the Secretary of State urging him to rethink his plans.

Wharves

Only 50 of the 1,700 wharves once operating in London remain, yet they still have an important role for the capital's industries and have the opportunity to play a big part in the development of the eco industries of the future. But the housing crisis and their relatively low land values means wharves could become an even more endangered species without protection from planning laws.

That's why the Planning Committee was concerned at the Mayor's proposal to remove that protection from nine wharves deemed surplus to current requirements. Following its examination of the Mayor's proposal, the Committee wrote to him and to government warning about the negative impact of removing protection from some of the remaining riverside wharves.



Private rented Sector

Private rents in London are shooting ahead of salaries, rising by as much as four times pay increases. With one in four Londoners living in private rented accommodation, that's having a big impact on the capital's affordability.

The private rented sector is also increasingly used to house homeless people, low-income families and other vulnerable households who would previously have lived in social housing - without the standards or security of that tenure, and at a cost of around £400 million a year to the public purse.

Our Housing and Regeneration Committee conducted a detailed review of ways to improve the quality of the sector, and make it more secure and affordable – particularly for families and vulnerable people.

Community Infrastructure levy

Our Planning Committee calls on the Mayor to lobby the Government for extra guidance to ensure successful introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) across London boroughs.

The Mayor has adopted a London-wide CIL to raise £300m toward the cost of the Crossrail project and boroughs now also have the option to impose a levy on developers to help fund local infrastructure projects.

In a formal consultation response to the Mayor's draft Supplementary Planning Guidance on the use of planning obligations in funding Crossrail and the Mayoral CIL - which also addresses the borough level CIL - the Committee recommends the guidance go further and provides concrete advice to ensure boroughs set appropriate CIL levels, work together on cross-borough projects and ensure raising funds through CIL does not come at the expense of funding affordable housing using other planning agreements.

The year ahead

Over the next twelve months the Housing Committee will be looking a wide range of issues, including reducing the number of people sleeping on the capital's streets, the impact of welfare reform on housing in London, how best to renew existing housing estates, and the provision of retirement and sheltered accommodation. The Planning Committee will be asking questions about how London can accommodate a million more people over the next ten years in a way that is both sustainable and will not adversely affect Londoners quality of life.

Transport



Cycling safely

The past decade has seen substantial growth in the number of Londoners cycling, but still only seven per cent of suitable journeys are taken by bike. While overall cycle safety has improved since 2001, the last six years have seen injuries on the increase. So it's no surprise that evidence collected by the Transport Committee showed safety is the main concern holding people back from climbing on the saddle. Its report *Gearing Up* outlined a range of measures the Mayor should take to encourage more people on to bikes and reduce serious cycling incidents on London's roads at the same time.

For starters, cycling should get its fair share of the transport budget so that spending matches the percentage of overall journeys made by bike. That would mean doubling the amount of cash spent on measures like new bike corridors and expanding the amount of road space available for cyclists, including dedicated cycle lanes.

It's also important that cyclists take responsibility for their safety and that of other road users so the Committee wants to see a plan in place to ensure all children in London receive cycle training. The Mayor has already started to take action on many of these recommendations, including appointing a Cycling Commissioner, but the Committee wants to see even greater ambition by doubling the long-term target for journeys made by bike so that it reaches ten per cent by 2026.

River Crossings

The Thames was once the great thoroughfare of London, the very heart of its transport network, but now it's often a major barrier to getting across the city, especially in east London. As Transport for London (TfL) considers options for new river crossings, possibly paid for by new tolls, the Transport Committee held an open seminar to examine the proposals.

After hearing from invited experts and interested organisations from east London the Committee called for TfL to be clear about the objectives for its proposed plans and to examine the result of past consultations, such as the Thames Gateway Bridge. It also suggested looking into conducting pilots of alternative ideas to cut congestion and urged TfL to be far more transparent in providing all the background information and modeling relevant to proposed new river crossings.

Our crowded roads

London's roads account for 20 per cent of the UK's congestion; five of the country's top ten congestion hotspots are in the capital. This overcrowding makes doing business in London more expensive, takes valuable time out of busy Londoners days and adds to the risk of accidents and injuries.

With London's population set to continue growing, congestion is likely to get worse without a coordinated approach to making the best use of London's roads and making them safe.

The majority of the Transport Committee urged the Mayor to prioritise sustainable and public transport, as well as economically essential services, over private car use. The Committee also made a series of recommendations to improve safety, with particular emphasis on protecting vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists including trialling borough-wide 20mph residential speed limits.



Rail Franchising

London's commuter trains play an essential part in keeping the city moving, yet too often they are overcrowded and unreliable. That's why the Assembly has been pressing government to devolve responsibility for suburban rail franchising to Transport for London.

In the five years since TfL took control of the London Overground, the service has improved dramatically. Passenger numbers have more than quadrupled, reliability improved, train frequency increased and passenger satisfaction is higher than any other rail service.

Given that track record of success, it is time Ministers - who may represent constituencies hundreds of miles from London - hand over control of the capital's rail services.

Ticketing

The Transport Committee has established a set of principles it believes must underpin the Government's approach to rail fares and ticketing. First, the use of new technologies must guarantee the security of passengers' personal information and allow them access to full details of their spending.

Secondly, new ways of issuing tickets must not discriminate against people on lower incomes who might, for example, not have access to bank accounts. The Committee also believes any new systems should, as far as possible, be compatible with other transport operators and be backed up with properly trained staff and adequate customer service to assist passengers with their introduction. Finally, more sophisticated fares should

be used to encourage the use of off peak services, rather than managing demand by hiking the cost of peak time travel beyond the reach of many passengers.

The year ahead

London's buses are the workhorse of the city's public transport system, providing more than a billion passenger journeys a year. The Transport Committee is investigating TfL's planning for the bus network, looking at how it will help keep London's expanding population moving and provide suitable access to relocated public services. Among other projects for the year, the Committee will also look at proposed routes for Crossrail 2, TfL's record on delivering value for money and a review of progress on improving cycle safety.

Health and Community



NHS and public health reforms: the outlook for London

The National Health Service in London is undergoing significant changes to how health care is delivered, where health care is delivered and the structures in place to deliver that health care. The Health and Environment Committee held a series of meetings to examine how these changes are affecting Londoners access to health services and how new arrangements for promoting general public health will work.

The Committee identified four big challenges that must be addressed to ensure the transition to new structures did not compromise quality of healthcare across the capital.

- To complete the transition, deliver efficiency savings and develop a fitting legacy within the remaining timeframe.
- The urgent need to substantially improve the productivity of acute hospital trusts and, where it is not possible to do so by April 2013, to put an appropriate strategy in place.
- On public health specifically, the challenge to manage the transfer of responsibility, secure sufficient funding for London and ensure equity in individual borough funding allocations.
- The lack of clarity on how a strategic overview on NHS services and public health will be maintained within the new structures.

South London Healthcare NHS Trust

Burgeoning debts have led to the closure of the South London Healthcare NHS Trust, resulting in major changes to the provision of hospital care in south London. Proposals for these changes included the closure of Lewisham Hospital's Accident and Emergency department.

As part of its on-going review of the changes to the NHS in the capital, the Health and Environment Committee met with health experts and issued a response to the Government's consultation about the South London Health NHS Trust.

The Committee expressed serious concerns about proposals to close Lewisham A&E. It said more analysis and modeling was needed to assess the impact of the proposals – particularly on whether the new hospital structure will be able to cope with the population's needs, both now and in the future. Committee Members also questioned the robustness of data in the consultation document used for estimating travel times to remaining A&E units and asked for assurances that the London Ambulance Service has sufficient capacity to cope with the additional journey times for Lewisham residents.

Following the Committee's submission the Secretary of State for Health announced changes to the proposals for Lewisham A&E which are designed to enable it to continue to treat 75% of patients requiring emergency treatment.

Food Poverty

Despite London being one of the richest cities in the world, thousands of people in the capital – including school children and older people – are going hungry. Our Health and Environment Committee report warned the problem would continue to escalate.

A Zero Hunger City – Tackling food poverty in London says children and older people are especially at risk of food poverty and sets out the potential impact on Londoners, including poor physical and mental health heart disease, diabetes, low birth weights and poor child development.

A survey of teachers by the Committee found that more than 95 per cent of teachers reported some children arriving at school hungry and over 60 per cent had given pupils food at their own expense.

The report says food banks risk being overwhelmed in the near future as the economic downturn persists and living costs rise. The report calls on the Mayor and his London Food Board to take a strategic lead on tackling food poverty with the aim of turning London into a zero hunger city. It says there should be a more coherent approach to emergency measures such as food banks and better long-term support for those at risk of food poverty.

The report's recommendations included:

- Working with partners to establish sustainable free breakfast clubs in schools;
- Lobbying the government to agree eligibility for free healthy school meals for all families in receipt of Universal Credit, with the London Food Board asked to identify ways to providing universal healthy free school meals for all children across the capital;
- Monitoring risk factors for food poverty, including welfare reform;
- Ensuring any response to food poverty helps all groups, including older people;
- Schools having a plan to identify and address hunger throughout the school day and to support families in food poverty.

The Year Ahead

As well as continuing to monitor the impact of changes to the NHS in London, the new Health Committee will be reviewing diabetes care, looking at mental health and in particular, depression and dementia, and examining the quality and affordability of care for the elderly in the capital.

London's economy



Open for Business - Empty Shops on London's High Streets

Close to 3,500 shops in London stand empty, a testament to tough times on the high street. It's not just the businesses that have closed that suffer; empty shops can be an eyesore that discourage shoppers leading to further closures of businesses that might otherwise survive. It's a growing problem with numbers of empty shops increasing by 5 per cent over the last two years, with outer London particularly hard hit.

An Economy Committee report set out a package of emergency and longer-term measures to break the vicious cycle on the high streets because of tough economic conditions and competition from out-of-town centers and online. These include support for renegotiating rents, the expansion of small business rate relief, a register of owners so landlords of empty shops can be easily traced, imaginative ideas for temporarily filling empty sites with the likes of pop-up shops and greater powers for local authorities to address the rise in the number of bookies, payday loan and pawnbrokers which can dominate some high streets.

Picking up the pieces: how businesses were helped to recover from the 2011 riots

The August riots in 2011 left many people with shattered lives and devastated businesses, especially small traders and family firms. Getting those businesses back up and running, and repairing and restocking

premises, was a significant part of restoring hope and rebuilding the communities worst affected by the violence.

But a report from the Budget and Performance Committee found that that more should and could have been done to speed up compensation payments and provide aid for businesses hit by the riots.

The report '*Picking up the pieces*' outlines a series of recommendations designed to apply not only to the aftermath of rioting, but also to other events like flooding or major fires. It argued that poor coordination immediately after the riots and lack of urgency from Government and the insurance industry to settle claims held back the recovery process. Despite having the knowledge, resources and skills available, the report warned that a comprehensive recovery service was not put in place and many small businesses were left confused about where to look for help.

Insurance companies are subject to particular criticism, with the report pointing out that four months after the riots, a third of businesses were yet to receive a penny from their claim, with many relying on charity handouts from organisations like the High Street Fund to keep afloat.

The report made a number of recommendations to improve the ease and speed of claims in the aftermath of a major incident and to address under-insurance among small businesses. It also asked government to review the outdated nineteenth century Riot Damages Act, a review which is now underway.

Speedy connection? Broadband and Wi-Fi

The Economy Committee examined the impact of broadband speed on the capital's economic performance and what could be done to boost the service. Assembly Members asked about the progress of the Government's broadband strategy and BT's upgrade programme. They also looked at the rollout of Wi-Fi in public places and on the Tube network.

Business representatives told the Committee that London was lagging behind competitor cities in establishing the truly high speed broadband access required for modern commerce, warning that London's attractiveness as a location was suffering as a result.

The year ahead

The scale of low pay in London and the importance of the London Living Wage will be investigated by the Economy Committee this year. The Committee will also look at the challenges facing London's construction industry, parental employment and childcare and questioning the Mayor's advisors about what they are doing to address a range of economic issues facing the capital.



Environment and climate change



Air Pollution

The costs of poor air quality in London are staggering: it is estimated there are over 4,000 extra deaths each year as a result of particulates and health costs of up to £20 billion a year – twice the cost of obesity. The Health and Environment Committee's examination of air pollution highlighted the health risks of toxic pollutants, including life-shortening lung and heart conditions, breast cancer and diabetes.

The percentage of deaths attributable to man-made airborne particulates in every London borough is higher than the UK average, with the greatest risks in City of London (9 per cent), Westminster (8.3 per cent), Kensington and Chelsea (8.3 per cent) and Tower Hamlets (8.1 per cent).

The Committee emphasised a number of areas that require urgent action to reduce concentrations of pollutants to improve Londoners health and avoid costly EU fines. These include considering stricter standards for the most polluting diesel vehicles, retrofitting older buses to more than halve their particulate emissions, and encouraging more electric vehicles, walking and cycling. There was also support for changes to the Congestion Charge to update discounts for less pollution vehicles.

Airport noise pollution

London's airports play a vital role in the economy of the capital and the country as a whole, but they also carry an environmental cost, predominately from air and noise pollution that affects the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of Londoners.

In its response to the Government's consultation on aviation policy, the Health and Environment Committee said noise measurement should be consistent, the detrimental impact on local residents should be reduced, and suggests airports work together to organise flight times to help reduce noise. The Committee also made the case for developing combined noise maps for Heathrow and London City Airport, as residents are increasingly affected by the combined impact of aircraft noise from both airports. It also concluded that runway alteration is a valuable way of providing relief from aircraft noise.

The London Assembly reaffirmed its position on Heathrow this year, unanimously opposing expansion at Heathrow.

Water Matters: Efficient water management in London

After the lashings of rain this year, it is easy to forget that a year ago hosepipe bans were commonplace and the threat of water shortages real.

While exceptionally heavy rain lifted the restrictions, uncertainties about future levels of rainfall, an increasing population and the effects of climate change are placing more pressure on London's precious water supplies.

A Health and Environment Committee investigation set out a range of measures to help London manage its limited water supplies more effectively and avoid drought restrictions in the future. These include installing water meters in every property, a concerted battle to reduce the quarter of London's drinking water wasted through leaks each year, and the introduction of special charging rates to support essential water usage by vulnerable people.



The playing fields of London

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games produced inspirational performances and sporting heroics by the hatful, but where will the stars of the future hone their sporting prowess if the playing fields of London disappear under a slew of concrete and tarmac? The Health and Environment Committee wrote to the Minister for Sport and Tourism to warn of potentially serious gaps in information and strategies designed to monitor and protect London's playing fields.

The year ahead

The environmental impact of the proposed High Speed 2 rail line plans to generate energy from waste, green space and biodiversity in London and the demand for residential moorings on London's waterways are all set to be examined in the year ahead. The Assembly will also be looking at the Mayor's plans for dealing with the impact of climate change and recent proposals to combat air pollution.

London 2012



A summer like no other

Medals by the hatful, joyful crowds, dedicated volunteers, spectacular ceremonies, inspiring performances and the Mobot – London 2012 certainly lived up to expectations as the best biggest sporting show on earth, and even the weather was great.

Of course, what looked for the most part like a seamless operation was the result of years of planning, millions of hours of careful preparation and the sweat, toil and occasionally tears of dedicated staff at the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), the Olympic Delivery Authority, all the contractors, people working across the GLA Group and last, but not least, the Armed Forces who stepped up to fill the security gap left by the dismal failure of G4S to fulfil their contract.

All these people deserve London's thanks for putting on the Olympic and Paralympic Games and setting a new standard other host cities will have to aspire to match.

But while the Olympic and Paralympic families may have moved on with an eye to Sochi and Rio de Janeiro the task of fulfilling all the promises of the London Games is far from complete.

The London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) must now meet the challenge of permanently re-opening the Olympic Park with financially secure facilities that can be used by the widest possible range of Londoners.

The LLDC and the Mayor must make sure the nearly £10 billion pounds spent on the Games bring real long term economic and social benefits to an area of east London that has been blighted by decline for a century.

And we all have a part to play in ensuring that young people inspired by the Games have the opportunity, facilities and coaching to achieve their best at their chosen sport and live a healthier lifestyle as a result.

Since London won the right to host the 2012 Games, the Assembly and its committees have remained focused on how those long-term promises of economic regeneration, new homes, no white elephants and greater sporting participation will be achieved. The Games may be over, but the Assembly will continue to monitor progress in achieving those legacy benefits.

Ticketing the Games

They were the hottest tickets in town and if you could get one from the LOCOG website it often felt like more of a marathon than a sprint. Watching the Olympics in their home city was an amazing experience for tens of thousands of Londoners, but many were left frustrated by their failure to get, or to be able to afford, the tickets available. For example, analysis by our Economy Committee found that no one was able to buy a ticket for Olympic athletics, track cycling or swimming medal sessions for less than £50, the average price to see Mo Farah win gold in the men's 5,000 metres was £333, and fewer than half of tickets for Olympic track cycling were allocated to the UK public.

With London hosting or bidding to host several major sporting events in the next five years, the Committee set out recommendations for the Mayor, government and sporting bodies to ensure that tickets are available and affordable for ordinary people for future championships held in the capital. The Committee also shared the findings of its report with the organisers of the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi and the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio.

The report also found that LOCOG met its overall pledge that at least 75 per cent of all Games tickets would be sold to the UK public, but there was huge variation between different sports and sessions. In swimming medal sessions just 45 per cent of tickets in the 17,500 capacity Aquatic Centre went to the public. The rest went to client groups, including sponsors, public from overseas, the International Olympic Committee, media, competitors and their families.

Overall 11 million tickets were sold to the Games and LOCOG exceeded its ticket sales target by 32 per cent. This was a significant achievement but the Committee suggested LOCOG could have made many more affordable tickets available and still met its target.

London 2012 and the Transport Legacy

London's public transport also won gold successfully delivering record-breaking passenger numbers during the Olympics, leaving many Londoners wondering why it doesn't always perform so well. A Transport Committee investigation looked at how things which worked well during the Games can be permanently built in to London's transport system. With more than £7.2 billion invested in transport in the run-up to London 2012, the Committee's report calls on the Mayor and Transport for London to ensure that the wider legacy of the Olympics includes high-performing London transport becoming a daily reality.

The primary and most obvious lesson from the Games is that investment is vital to achieving and maintaining long-term reliability and meeting London's transport capacity needs. The Committee recommended re-activating 'co-ordination teams' between transport operators for major events, building on the improved accessibility arrangements in place for the Games and encouraging permanent changes to commuters' travel behaviour.

The lessons learnt by London could also prove useful to future hosts of the Olympics, World Cup and other major events and the Committee has written to Brazilian Embassy with some useful advice for ensuring transport is able

to cope with the pressure of additional visitors, deliver athletes to events swiftly and allow residents to get to work.

Policing the Games

Ensuring the security for the Olympic site, competitors and officials and everyone attending the Games at their many London venues was always going to be a major task requiring extensive work and spending.

After the Games, the Police and Crime Committee questioned senior representatives from the Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police and City of London Police to review the successes and challenges of the policing operation and what lessons could be carried forward for future large scale policing operations in London.

But in the run up to the opening ceremony all that hard work looked at risk because of the failure of G4S to provide the security staff they were contracted to supply. Fortunately the Armed Forces were able to step in, deploying thousands of extra personnel at short notice. To recognise that significant contribution, the Assembly hosted a thank you reception at City Hall for representatives of the forces who played a significant part in making the Games safe.

How the Assembly uses your money



The Greater London Authority is paid for by a levy on London council tax bills (the GLA precept), grants from central government and other bodies, and income from interest, sales, fees and charges.

In 2012/13 the GLA precept for a Band D property was £306 a year. Most of the £935 million raised by the precept was spent on the Metropolitan Police Service and the London Fire Brigade. The London Assembly's budget was £7.7 million, costing Band D council taxpayers less than £3 a year – or just under £1 for every Londoner and a tiny fraction of the GLA Group's total budget of £14.7 billion. The Assembly's budget for 2013-14 will be £7.4 million out of the total GLA Group budget of £16.5 billion.

Nearly one sixth of the Assembly's budget funds London TravelWatch, which deals with specific complaints from public transport users in London. London TravelWatch received £1.2 million from the Assembly's £7.7 million budget in 2012/13.

Four fifths of the Assembly budget was spent on staff costs and salaries, £6.4 million a year. The twenty-five Assembly Members have direct support from assistants and researchers, helping to respond to correspondence from Londoners, following up constituents' complaints and concerns about services, and examining the Mayor's proposals and policies. The Assembly, as a whole, has a team of officers arranging and supporting its public meetings, researching and drafting Assembly reports, publicising its work

and organising events.

The remainder of the Assembly's budget paid for the occasional use of external research, to provide information for investigations, and the usual requirements for a busy office including printing, IT equipment, postage and telephones.

	2012/13	2013/14
	£'000	£'000
Assembly Members pay	1,745	1,745
Assembly Member support	2,286	2,193
Scrutiny and Investigations	1,209	1,273
Committee and Legal Services	519	546
External Relations	311	331
Director/ Business Support	453	242
Elections and Special Projects	18	18
London TravelWatch	1,203	1,103
Total	7,744	7,451

