

MAYOR OF LONDON

Roger Evans AM

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Dear Roger

London Assembly (Plenary) meeting 16 July 2014 - Motions

Thank you for your letter of 23 July. I apologise for the delay in responding to you, however I wanted to respond in full to each of your points:

Motion 1

The 2014 update to the Culture Strategy outlines achievements to date, and provides a comprehensive plan to make full use of the powers at my Office's disposal, to maintain and promote London's arts and cultural provision. I never felt that a new Strategy was required towards the end of my last term, when the policies outlined in 2010 were still relevant.

The updated Cultural Metropolis 2014 does not replace my 2010 Cultural Strategy. The statutory Culture Strategy, under section 41 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, only requires a replacement or revision if the policies are changed. Therefore, my Office is under no obligation to undertake statutory consultation with the Assembly and other stakeholders, under s 42 and 376. That was and remains the legal advice received. My statutory advisory group, the London Cultural Strategy Group, whose members represent London's cultural and creative sectors, has been involved in this update.

I recognise the value of cultural provision and am committed to maintaining London's position as a world city for culture. As stated during the Assembly Plenary on 16 July, I am a strong advocate for culture and the GLA Culture Team play a huge role in London's cultural success. London is now the world's most visited city, with culture cited as the top reason to visit. I delivered the most ambitious cultural festival as part of London 2012, and am committed to delivering a cultural quarter in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park as part of the legacy from the Games. I continue to support London's creative industries, which generate a staggering £21bn per annum, and my cultural events programme is the largest in the UK. Big Dance is now the largest dance festival in the world with 1.8m participants and more than 25 nations taking part. Gigs, my busking programme, is the UK's largest youth music competition and London's largest free music festival, and the Fourth Plinth is the UK's leading public art competition.

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My Deputy Mayor for Education and Culture will be responding to the letter from the Chairman of the Assembly dated 23 July 2014, providing further information as requested.

Motion 2

Ministers at the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) are considering this matter and we should await their response.

Motion 3

I welcome the support from the London Assembly for my proposal to introduce an Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). I am also aware some boroughs have expressed an interest in expanding the scheme beyond its proposed boundary. Their willingness to tackle the important issue of poor local air quality is to be commended. One of the actions proposed in my forthcoming Transport Emissions Action Plan is to consider an extension of the ULEZ in future years and to look at ways in which we can more immediately work with those boroughs keen to improve air quality on a local level.

I have chosen central London because this is where evidence shows the bulk of the worst air pollutant concentrations will be located in 2020, combined with the highest levels of daily human exposure at the roadside. We have specified the Congestion Charge Zone (CCZ) because Transport for London (TfL) already has the infrastructure to enforce a scheme of this scale, such as cameras and signs, and it is well embedded in Londoners' travel behaviour. The latter is important because we have to ensure we implement a scheme that can be communicated coherently. People need to be aware the ULEZ and the Congestion Charge operate in tandem – any disparity between the two would most likely lead to public confusion.

I have always been clear that I want the ULEZ to be fair and reasonable to all. TfL has undertaken an extensive amount of research and analysis to estimate its impact, including projections of fleet turnover and frequency of journeys. This has led to an understanding of the extent to which people travelling into central London are likely to bear cost, set against a reduction in emissions and improvements in health.

If boroughs were given the option to 'opt-in' as part of the consultation, we would need to develop a similar understanding of the travel patterns and vehicle usage in those areas before developing firm policy proposals. Our knowledge of the frequency of vehicle movements, car ownership and patterns of travel behaviour is extensive in the CCZ because of the camera network, but information is not readily available for the wider areas – time would be required to collect and analyse it.

The current ULEZ proposal provides people with five years' notice and, as such, it would be reasonable to assume extensions to the scheme would follow by a couple of years to account for further policy development and more people becoming affected. It is important we give people adequate time to prepare for compliance before the scheme is implemented.

Both these points are pertinent as an extension would also lead to an even larger number of households and businesses being affected, with greater scrutiny as a result. However, I do not wish to preclude extending the zone in the future.

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Motion 4

Having the ability to set maximum parking standards has long been recognised as a fundamental element of good integrated transport and land use planning in the UK and internationally. I believe that the ability to set maximum standards should be retained in London in certain circumstances – particularly in the context of the capital's growth – both at the local level and the London-wide level. However, I also recognised the importance of allowing flexibility to address locally specific circumstances, in particular in those areas with lower levels of public transport accessibility and thus greater reliance on the use of a car. The London Plan provides a strategic approach to car parking which also provides appropriate flexibility for local implementation. This is the most effective way of addressing the objectives of national policy, by helping to manage the unique challenges posed by traffic congestion in London, not least the costs these impose on the economy or the potential constraint on development, by optimising use of public transport and scarce land resources, and by making best use of London's distinct two tier planning arrangements. My draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP) clarify this latter point as it bears on outer London. The FALP has just finished undergoing Examination in Public (EiP), and we await the Inspector's report.

Motion 5

Like the Assembly, I am delighted that Scotland has chosen to remain part of the United Kingdom, one of the oldest and most successful political unions in history. The No vote now settles the matter for this generation.

I absolutely agree that more powers should be devolved from Whitehall to our great cities and that is why I have been campaigning for the government to implement the recommendations of the excellent London Finance Commission report to devolve the suite of 5 property taxes to London government. This proposal, which has cross party support, would help free cities from Whitehall control and give them the financial freedom to invest and grow.

Motion 6

On 5 August last year I wrote to Jo Swinson MP, Under-Secretary of State at BIS, about the government's postal reforms and since then my officers have been monitoring the proposed changes to the postal service in London. I am satisfied that Londoners continue to receive a good postal service.

While I discourage the abuse of zero-hours contracts, and insecure terms and conditions for staff, this is a separate issue to the Living Wage campaign, which does not seek to intervene in the structure of an employers' workforce in terms of hours. I have written to TNT to encourage them to adopt the London Living Wage.

Motion 7

I fully recognise the problems caused by excess alcohol consumption and the strain this places on our emergency services. Colleagues in the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) are seeking to reduce the criminal and anti-social behaviour impacts that can result, and there is ongoing work with our partners in the boroughs and the Safe Sociable London Partnership looking to support improvements in managing the night time economy. The work of the Soho Alcohol Recovery Centre and booze buses has been highlighted by the GLA previously, and we will continue to encourage the relevant agencies in developing effective responses to extreme drunkenness in our streets. In addition, my officers are currently working with the London Ambulance Service and others, on an initiative for the forthcoming festive season, which aims to make the public more aware of the impact of excessive alcohol consumption.

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Motion 8

I have pledged in my Police and Crime Plan to identify and deliver key actions to address alcohol related crime and disorder. I recently launched a new Sobriety pilot, which provides new powers to the courts to deal with troublesome drinkers, who place a massive strain on frontline services, whilst costing businesses and the taxpayer billions of pounds.

The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC) hosted a MOPAC Challenge meeting on the 25 June to explore the issues of substance misuse (both drugs and alcohol) as a driver of both crime and confidence in London and to understand what can be done with partners to tackle substance misuse in order to support delivery of the 20 per cent reduction in the MOPAC 7. Senior colleagues from the voluntary and community sector, the Metropolitan Police Service and NHS England were invited to explore with the DMPC what more could be done to address these challenges and to reduce demand on a range of public services.

MOPAC is actively working with strategic partners and the MPS, overseeing work to develop new ways to ensure effective data sharing. Partners including NHS England and representatives from hospital trusts and other health care providers have formally agreed to pursue this important work. The timing aligns to the Department of Health and Home Office programme of work to review information sharing agreements.

Motion 9

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) does not currently use a Latin American category. However, I am happy to support the Assembly's request and will ensure that ethnicity monitoring forms used by the GLA are amended to include 'Latin American' as a separate category. I will inform the relevant GLA officers to ensure that any such forms are amended and I will encourage the other parts of the GLA Group to make a similar change.

The languages on TfL's ticket machines reflect those languages that the largest proportions of London's residents speak and take into account how often that language is a first, rather than a second, language. The languages available on the machines are the same as those on the TfL website. Adding a language to the existing 17 is likely to be prohibitively expensive, but I would like to assure you that TfL has not received significant numbers of complaints about this, and the current languages offered on the machines are able to accommodate for a range of passengers and visitors.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours ever,



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London