

MAYOR OF LONDON

Andrew Boff AM

Chair of the London Assembly

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Date: 12 November 2021

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 9 September about the motions agreed at the London Assembly (Plenary) meeting on 2 September. My replies to motions 4, 9, 10, 11 and 12 are set out below.

Motion 4 – Brexit

On 14 September, I repeated my call for the Government to create a COVID Recovery Visa in response to alarming labour shortages affecting a wide range of industries in the wake of Brexit and the pandemic. I also called for devolved powers to create a regional shortage occupation list for London and for the Government to work with the EU on creating a reciprocal Youth Mobility Scheme. Given the urgency and the scale of the challenge, the Government should explore all policy levers to ensure that the immigration system meets our economic needs. While it is right to encourage employers to invest in the UK workforce and to seek improved conditions in sectors with lower pay, it is simply unrealistic for the Government to expect businesses grappling with the worst economic crisis since the Second World War to train the numbers needed in such a short space of time. This is why I am urging the Government to take a pragmatic approach to migration and visas; to help businesses get back on their feet as quickly as possible and protect critical services like our food and drink supply chains.

I share your concerns about the importance of protecting European Londoners' rights post-Brexit. On 29 June, my Deputy Mayor for Communities and Social Justice, Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard, sent a letter to the Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Minister of Department for Work and Pensions outlining key issues that are impacting European citizens in our communities.

My officers continue to work collaboratively with civil society stakeholders, supporting EU citizens to raise issues around the protection of their rights with the Home Office and other government departments at the London Strategic Migration Partnership, the EU Delegation's Monitoring Network and other forums that local authorities and the Home Office attend for specific vulnerable groups such as rough sleepers.

I am concerned about the issues European Londoners and their families are experiencing at the borders, when returning to the UK, particularly after hearing that over 60% of those stopped and questioned by British border officials are Romanian citizens, which gives rise to questions about possible racial profiling. I plan to continue to support those who have yet to receive status through the EU Settlement Scheme through continued development of the European Londoners Hub,

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which to date has been accessed by over two million people and through strategic investment in the immigration advice sector. So far, I have invested more than £1 million in bolstering capacity, including targeted funding for rough sleepers and children in care who face some of the highest barriers to accessing the EU Settlement Scheme.

Motion 9 – Travel for older Londoners

As the pandemic recedes, we are considering whether or not these temporary changes should be retained in the longer term, including taking into account both the impact on older people and the foregone income associated with providing free travel before 9 a.m. You will be aware that the Government has asked us to conduct a review of revenue raising options as a condition of the most recent Transport for London (TfL) funding settlement.

It is worth noting that holders of these cards are still eligible for unlimited free travel on TfL's services from 9 a.m. on Mondays to Fridays and any time at weekends and bank holidays.

Motion 10 – London Housing Panel

I am committed to addressing housing insecurity as part of my ambition to improve housing for all Londoners. Increasing the supply of genuinely affordable social rented homes and advocating for a more secure and more affordable private rented sector are priorities for me and my housing team.

In developing policies, the Greater London Authority (GLA) must use precious resources to work across a range of channels and amplify voices from the full diversity of London's communities, especially where Londoners are under-represented or face significant housing-related inequalities.

The London Housing Panel was established in 2019, initially for 12 months, with the GLA in a much stronger financial position. The Panel have been clear that they do not wish to engage in fundraising activity to maintain the forum or convene without financial backing from the GLA for a secretariat. Trust for London has been clear that their funding commitment is conditioned on GLA funding. I will, of course, continue to ensure that my housing policies reflect the needs of those Londoners who have been disadvantaged and/or are living vulnerably. Support and challenge from London's voluntary and community sector will continue, and my housing team are always willing to meet with organisations working for Londoners in housing need.

The Panel will conclude in March 2022 having completed 13 meetings, with several interventions made outside of the meeting structure. Through the recent funding agreement (ADD2525), which brings the total GLA investment in the panel since 2019 to £93,000, the Panel will work with officers over the coming months to deliver a legacy of community engagement. This will build on recent GLA initiatives. For example:

- Requiring, through my latest affordable housing programme, investment partners to commit to actions and initiatives that address barriers to inclusion for tenants and residents.
- Strengthening GLA policy to ensure residents of estates themselves vote to approve regeneration plans before GLA investment is made.
- Resuming the initiative whereby my housing team visit residents in new GLA-funded homes to hear feedback.

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Motion 11 – Equal Pavements Pledge

Proposal one of my Transport Strategy commits to improving the accessibility of streets for older and disabled Londoners through measures including removing obstacles, widening pavements for wheelchair access, introducing tactile paving, raising sections of roadway to make crossing easier, providing seating, mitigating the impact of street works and, where possible, ensuring on-street cycling facilities cater for the wide range of cycles used by disabled people.

Over the past 18 months, TfL and its borough partners have made swift and adaptive changes to walking and cycling spaces across our city, such as implementing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and School Streets through to changes to Waterloo Road and Park Lane. These changes have supported London throughout the pandemic, and TfL is now consulting on the future of many of the schemes. You can find out more on [TfL's Have Your Say website](#).

TfL has worked with a wide range of community groups, including those who represent older and disabled Londoners, to refine their approach to modernising pavement and road space. Prior to this, I supported TfL to renew its Pedestrian Comfort Guidance for London to assist those responsible for planning London's streets to create excellent pedestrian environments through a clear, consistent process during the planning and implementation of transport improvement projects.

TfL will continue to work with its borough partners to make sure pavements and road space continue to improve, taking joint experiences from the pandemic and combining them with long held expertise to make walking and cycling an option for all Londoners.

Motion 12 – Six new walking routes for London

I am committed to reducing Londoners' dependency on cars in favour of active, efficient and sustainable modes of travel. As you know, my manifesto and Transport Strategy have a core aim, which is that 80 per cent of all trips in London will be made on foot, by cycle or using public transport by 2041. This cannot be achieved without helping more Londoners to walk – one of the best ways to get around our city. The number of daily leisure walking journeys increased significantly during the pandemic, and I am supporting programmes that will help Londoners continue to maintain leisure walking as a form of recreation with huge benefits to physical and mental health.

Under my leadership, TfL is prioritising pavement space for walking. Streets are being designed and built under the guidance of the Healthy Streets approach which aims to make streets more attractive and safer for people walking, which in turn encourages more Londoners to walk. So far, under my leadership, TfL has completed works at Elephant and Castle as well as Highbury Corner, with major improvements to Old Street due to be delivered in the near future. TfL has also made great strides in delivering Green Person Authority, which sees pedestrians prioritised over vehicles at crossings. Monitoring of new Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and School Streets shows that these schemes are already encouraging Londoners to walk more.

I have asked Will Norman, my Walking and Cycling Commissioner, to lead the London Walking Forum. This Forum is shaping the planning needed to meet my ambitious target to make London the world's most walkable city. The Forum brings together TfL, Living Streets, Sustrans, Ramblers, London Councils, Transport for All, London Sport and the Canal and River Trust. The forum is currently collaborating on the topic of leisure walking. Work is underway to improve the promotion of the Walk London Network (WLN) through improved wayfinding, directions and mapping of the routes via new digital channels. This will build upon the work done so far by Ramblers which has provided new route guides for two WLN routes, and also Go Jauntly which has digitised walking

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directions for three WLN routes. In addition, the forum is looking to develop a new plan for leisure walking in London, which will focus on improving existing walking routes as well as identifying new routes that are needed in London to better connect communities with green spaces. Through this work, the forum will assess the suitability of Ramblers' Greenways map.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the 'h'.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London