



**Hina Bokhari AM**  
**Chair of the Economy Committee**

Sadiq Khan  
Mayor of London  
(Sent by email)

CC: Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor Planning, Regeneration and Skills

6 December 2022

Dear Sadiq,

## **London's street and covered markets**

I am writing to you in my position as Chair of the London Assembly Economy Committee regarding the Committee's investigation into London's street and covered markets. This follows a meeting held by the Committee on 18 May 2022, which was attended by the following guests:

- Jules Pipe CBE, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills
- David Preston, Chief Executive, National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA)
- Joe Harrison, Chief Executive, National Market Traders Federation (NMTF)
- Nicholas Kasic, Markets Manager, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Following the meeting, Committee members visited Brixton street market, where we had the opportunity to speak to street traders and market operators. We also received written evidence from representatives of the street markets sector. These activities all informed the recommendations in this letter, which we encourage you to consider and act upon.

Our investigation aimed to understand how London's street and covered markets are faring in the current climate, with a particular focus on markets that serve Londoners on lower incomes. We asked how the current legislative framework governing markets in London is working and whether it needs

reform. We also scrutinised the actions taken by the Mayor in relation to London's markets, the impact of these programmes and what learning has been taken from them in order to inform future work.

At our meeting, the Committee heard that market traders and operators struggled at the start of the pandemic, and many incurred financial losses. However, guests told the Committee that the pandemic also created opportunities for London's markets. It forced traders to become more creative and innovative in order to attract customers, for example moving to cashless payments and using delivery apps. In some areas, there has been a growth in the number of market traders and an increase in footfall. Guests also argued that markets have become more connected with local communities as a consequence of the pandemic. It is therefore vital that the GLA continues to support London's markets, to help them recover from the setbacks experienced during the pandemic and build on the opportunities it created.

### **London Markets Board**

We were pleased to learn that you appointed members to the new London Markets Board on 29 September 2022, and that the Board subsequently met on 4 October. However, this was more than 15 months since the Board had last met, during a critical period for London's markets. At the Committee's meeting in May, David Preston noted the 'great frustration' at the delay to appointing the new Board.

The Deputy Mayor told the Committee that the Board would decide its priorities for the rest of the Mayoral term at its first meeting. Guests told the Committee that it was important for an action plan to be put in place in order to understand the Mayor's priorities in relation to markets.

***Recommendation 1:*** *The London Markets Board should set out an action plan to deliver its priorities, with a clear set of objectives and a delivery timeline for the remainder of the Mayoral term. This action plan should be shared with the Economy Committee.*

### **Legislation governing London's markets**

Guests at the meeting were in agreement that the legislation governing street markets in London needs reviewing and updating. The GLA's 2017 research into London's markets concluded that the 'lack of a clear legislative framework for the operation of markets is widely agreed to lie behind many of the issues facing markets in London'.<sup>1</sup> However, guests at the Committee's meeting acknowledged that there are contrasting views on the legislation amongst London's boroughs.

We understand that the London Markets Board commissioned a review of the legislation in the previous Mayoral term. Differences of opinion amongst boroughs meant that the review was unable to reach a collective position over reforming the legislation. However, guests at the meeting expressed support for returning to the issue during the current Mayoral term, with the aim of agreeing a collective position and lobbying the Government for reform.

The London Markets Board's original action plan committed to producing a practical guidance document for the sector to understand the existing legislation. This work was not carried out during the last Mayoral term. The Deputy Mayor told the Committee that the new London Markets Board will undertake this piece of work. Given the challenges around the current legislation, and given that

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<sup>1</sup> Mayor of London, [Understanding London's Markets](#), 2017, p. 28

the legislation is unlikely to be reformed imminently, we would like to see this work begin as a matter of urgency.

***Recommendation 2:*** *It is widely acknowledged that the legislation governing London's street markets needs updating. The London Markets Board should therefore work with boroughs to review the legislation, with the aim of agreeing a collective position and lobbying the Government for a change in the legislation.*

***Recommendation 3:*** *The Mayor and the London Markets Board should ensure that the guidance document to help the sector understand the existing legislation that governs London's street markets is produced as a matter of urgency.*

## **Mapping of London's street and covered markets**

The GLA last mapped all of London's markets in 2017 and found that there were around 280 street and covered markets in operation across the city. This exercise has not been repeated since, and the GLA's street market mapping tool is mostly based on markets identified in the research from 2017. The Committee heard that the tool now operates through 'self-reporting', whereby markets have to notify the GLA in order to be added in or removed from the map.

The Deputy Mayor told the Committee that he did not know how many markets were operating in London since the pandemic. When asked if the GLA intends to repeat its research to map the number of markets in London, the Deputy Mayor replied that this work would not 'add value'. In his subsequent letter to the Committee, the Deputy Mayor stated that 'GLA officers are currently taking stock to optimise the functionality of the map and ensure that it works as an effective tool for London'. The letter did not provide any additional detail about what this work will involve.

The Committee acknowledges that there are resource implications to mapping all of London's markets. However, we believe it is important to understand how the picture has changed since London's markets were last mapped in 2017, particularly given the impact of the pandemic. Maintaining up-to-date data on the number, type and location of markets in London will enable the Mayor to understand which types of markets are growing and which types have been forced to close. This data will be important in informing the priorities of the London Markets Board and the Mayor's other interventions related to street and covered markets.

***Recommendation 4:*** *The Mayor should explore options for updating the mapping tool for London's markets to ensure it contains up-to-date data on the number and location of markets in London, and should inform the Committee of the action he will take.*

## **Tomorrow's Market Programme**

The Committee heard that the 2019 Tomorrow's Market pilot helped to train 30 new market traders, 28 of whom were still operating at the start of the pandemic, and that the programme has since been extended.

In the Deputy Mayor's response to the Committee's letter, he stated that the Tomorrow's Market 2.0 programme is 'supporting local authorities to address short, medium and longer-term challenges faced by their markets, link into their town centre recovery efforts, and deliver on programme priorities to help build resilient markets that: support market teams engaged in economic recovery planning; create diversified markets; and explore ways to innovate market management and operation'.

***Recommendation 5:*** The Mayor should keep the Committee updated on the progress of the Tomorrow's Market 2.0 programme. This should include an evaluation of the programme's impact and progress against the following objectives: to support market teams engaged in economic recovery planning; to create diversified markets; and to explore ways to innovate market management and operation.

### **Further support from the Mayor**

Guests at the Committee's meeting were broadly supportive of the London Markets Board and the actions taken by the Mayor in relation to street and covered markets. They also highlighted areas where the Mayor could provide further support. These areas mostly relate to the legislation, but also include supporting the sector with recovery from the pandemic and sharing best practice across London's boroughs.

***Recommendation 6:*** Building on the Tomorrow's Market programme, the Mayor and the London Markets Board should consult with local authorities to understand what further actions they can undertake to add value for London's markets. These actions could involve collecting and sharing examples of best practice, supporting councils to develop new markets and providing further financial support to help markets innovate and recover from the pandemic.

The Committee would welcome a response to this letter by Friday 20 January 2023. Please send your response by email to the Committee's clerk, Jack Booth ([jack.booth@london.gov.uk](mailto:jack.booth@london.gov.uk)).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hina Bokhari". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Hina" and last name "Bokhari" clearly distinguishable.

Hina Bokhari AM

**Chair of the Economy Committee**