

MINUTES

Meeting: London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time)

Date: Wednesday 25 May 2016

Time: 10.00 am

Place: Chamber, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1 2AA

Copies of the minutes may be found at: <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/whole-assembly>

Present:

Tony Arbour AM (Chairman)

Florence Eshalomi AM

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Deputy Chair)

Nicky Gavron AM

Gareth Bacon AM

David Kurten AM

Kemi Badenoch AM

Joanne McCartney AM

Shaun Bailey AM

Steve O'Connell AM

Sian Berry AM

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

Andrew Boff AM

Keith Prince AM

Leonie Cooper AM

Caroline Russell AM

Tom Copley AM

Dr Onkar Sahota AM

Unmesh Desai AM

Navin Shah AM

Tony Devenish AM

Fiona Twycross AM

Andrew Dismore AM

Peter Whittle AM

Len Duvall AM

1 Apologies for Absence and Chairman's Announcements (Item 1)

- 1.1 There were no apologies for absence.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed the Mayor and Assembly Members to the first London Assembly Mayor's Question Time meeting of the new Mayoral and Assembly term. He requested that the Mayor and Members use formal terms of address, in keeping with the formality of the meeting, and also reminded the Mayor and Members that the purpose of the meeting was to put questions to the Mayor and receive answers.

2 Declarations of Interests (Item 2)

- 2.1 The Assembly received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat.

2.2 **Resolved:**

That the list of offices held by Assembly Members, as set out in the table at Agenda Item 2, be noted as disclosable pecuniary interests.

3 Mayor's Report (Item 3)

3.1 **Resolved:**

That the Mayor's Report covering the period from 3 March 2016 to 11 May 2016 be noted.

- 3.2 In accordance with Standing Order 5.4A, the Mayor gave an oral update on matters occurring since the publication of his report. The record of the oral update is attached at **Appendix 1**.

4 Questions to the Mayor (Item 4)

- 4.1 The record of the discussion with the Mayor, including oral answers given by the Mayor to Members' questions, is attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 4.2 The written answers to those questions not asked or unanswered during the meeting is attached as **Appendix 3**.
- 4.3 At the end of the question and answer session, the Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, that Standing Order 2.9B be suspended to extend the meeting in order to allow the remaining items of business on the agenda to be considered.

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4.4 At the conclusion of the question and answer session, the Chairman formally moved the motion set out on the agenda in his name, namely:

“That the Assembly notes the answers to the questions asked”.

4.5 Len Duvall AM moved and Sian Berry AM and Caroline Pidgeon AM jointly seconded an amendment to the motion, as follows:

Amend to read:

“That the Assembly notes the answers to the questions asked.

“This Assembly supports the United Kingdom’s continued membership of the European Union and, in particular, the economic, workplace, security, and environmental benefits this brings to the people of London.

“This Assembly notes the advantages of remaining within the European Union in the following areas:

Economic benefits to London of EU membership

Trade: The EU’s single market is London’s most important trade relationship – responsible for 30-40% of the capital’s total exports; being part of the single market supports London’s status as an international economic hub; and 40% of the world’s largest 250 companies choose London for their headquarters, with almost half citing access to Europe as the core reason for investing¹.

Business: The Confederation of British Industry reports that “71% of CBI member businesses report that the UK’s membership of the EU has had an overall positive impact on their business, including 67% of SME members.”²

Immigration: Despite the scaremongering and inflammatory rhetoric³ surrounding EU migration, European migrants to the UK are not a drain on Britain’s finances and, instead, pay £20bn more in taxes than they receive in state benefits⁴.

Social benefits to London of EU membership:

Maternity Rights: The EU Pregnant Workers Directive (1994) introduced a right to paid time off for ante-natal care; got rid of the qualifying period for unfair dismissal in pregnancy and maternity cases; and gave women the right to a suitable alternative job if they were made redundant while on maternity leave⁵.

Protection against working excessive hours: Working time protections have been targeted by leading ‘Brexit’ campaigners, who claim they are red-tape that should be scrapped^{6,7}. In

¹ London First (2013), *London and the EU*, p.4

² Confederation of British Industry (2013), *Our Global Future: Factsheet 2 - Benefits of EU membership outweigh costs*

³ DAILY EXPRESS, *EXCLUSIVE POLL: 12 MILLION TURKS SAY THEY’LL COME TO THE UK ONCE EU DEAL IS SIGNED*, 24.05.16

⁴ Alan Travis, UK gains £20bn from European migrants, UCL economists reveal, *Guardian*, 05.11.14

⁵ Trades Union Congress, *WORKING PARENTS & CARERS: Risks of Brexit*, 09.05.16

⁶ Trades Union Congress, Priti Patel reveals Leave campaign agenda to reduce workers’ rights, says TUC, 17.05.16

⁷ Matt Dathan, Boris Johnson: Of course I could see myself voting to quit the EU, *Independent*, 01.09.15

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fact, the EU Working Time Directive's rules have deterred many bosses from forcing London's workers into an average working week of longer than 48 hours. Since its introduction, over a million workers across the UK are no longer compelled to work excessive hours.⁸

Minimum workplace protections: Improvement of working conditions; freedom of association and collective bargaining; equal treatment for men and women; information, consultation and participation of workers; health protection and safety at the workplace; and protection of children, adolescents, elderly persons, and disabled persons from labour market exploitation are provided as minimum protections for workers in all Member States⁹. Withdrawal from the EU threatens these protections for workers in the London, as U.K Governments would no longer be required to provide them.

Security benefits to London of EU membership

Extradition: The European Arrest Warrant allows the UK to extradite individuals from other member states to face prosecution or to serve a prison sentence for an existing conviction. In the period 2011-2015 the Met made 1,735 arrests under the EAW. It is because of this that Hussein Osman, a terrorist involved in the failed 21/7 London bomb plot, was sentenced to 40 years in prison after being returned to Britain from Italy.¹⁰

Cross Border Crime: Britain's membership of the EU allows the Metropolitan Police to engage in extensive police co-operation through Europol. This has helped combat the trafficking of drugs and human beings as well as cyber-crime and money laundering.¹¹

Information Sharing: Although part of the Schengen information sharing area, the UK is not part of the Schengen passport free area. Security controls remain in place at UK borders and the UK can return migrants to the European country they first arrived to be processed. Under the Schengen Information System 11, it is possible to issue Europe-wide alerts for missing people and property.¹²

Environmental benefits to London of EU membership

Air Quality: The EU Air Quality Directive has compelled the Mayor of London to look at policy measures such as the Ultra-Low Emission Zone. Without the pressure of directives such as these, the Mayor and UK Government would have a reduced obligation to tackle London's toxic air. Boris Johnson's apparent suppression of a report – while Mayor of London – linking air pollution and deprived schools¹³, provides the strongest possible insight in to likely impact on pollution in the capital following a vote to leave the EU.

LBC interview on whether Boris Johnson would support an EU exit campaign (01.09.15):

"But I think, I looked at the headlines this morning, about the possibility of Britain dropping its insistence on changes to employment law... And I thought that was very disappointing, I think we need to move forward on that... we've got too much regulation, too much stuff coming from Brussels, too many laws that are promulgated by Brussels that make it hard for business. I think we need to weigh in on all that stuff, all that social chapter stuff. And, you know, I've got every confidence that the Prime Minister will do that."

⁸ Trades Union Congress, A million more UK workers could be forced to work excessive hours without EU protections, says TUC, 10.05.16

⁹ Eur-Lex, *Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights of Workers*, Please note: It was adopted by the United Kingdom in 1998 as part of the integration of the principles of the Charter into the Amsterdam Treaty.

¹⁰ National Crime Agency [Data](#) 7.8.15

¹¹ [Europol Website 21.4.16](#)

¹² [European Commission Memo](#) 21.4.16

¹³ Boris Johnson accused of hiding study linking air pollution and deprived schools, *Daily Telegraph*, 17.05.16

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The Thames: European regulations on sewage discharges have provided a major impetus for action to clean up the Thames. The Thames was declared “biologically dead” in the 1950s. Its modern renaissance with the return of fish and mammals has been in no small part down to the impact of EU law¹⁴. Leaving the EU would put that progress at risk.

Climate Change: Four-fifths of the environmental legislation now in force in the UK derives from EU law.¹⁵ Leaving the EU would seriously inhibit our ability to work co-operatively with our neighbours on issues that transcend borders, such as the existential threat of climate change. As London is a climate estuarial city, reducing the UK’s influence over the global response to climate change represents a direct threat to the long-term viability of the capital.

“While far superior to the isolationist alternative offered by those campaigning for ‘Brexit’, this Assembly does not view the current European Union a ‘finished product’. Rather, the EU is an evolving institution, which is a product of those nations that actively participate in it.

“This Assembly wishes to see a reformed European Union, which is more democratically accountable, as part of a drive towards a ‘Social Europe’ – characterised by greater prosperity, high living standards, and good working conditions for *all*.

“This Assembly believes Londoners should reject the shallow, populist rhetoric of those encouraging Londoners to vote for ‘Brexit’, and encourages the people of London to vote for the United Kingdom to remain part of the European Union.”

4.6 The Chairman additionally explained that, in the interests of the effective management of the agenda, he was proposing a combined debate on both the amendment in the name of Len Duvall AM and the motion set out at Item 5 of the agenda, in the name of David Kurten AM, which also related to the UK’s membership of the EU.

4.7 In accordance with Standing Order 3.6, David Kurten AM moved and Peter Whittle AM seconded the following altered motion:

“This Assembly supports the United Kingdom leaving the European Union and re-establishing itself as an independent sovereign nation.”

4.8 Following debate and upon being put to the vote, the motion in the name of David Kurten AM was not agreed (9 votes cast in favour and 15 votes cast against).

4.9 Upon being put to the vote, the amendment in the name of Len Duvall AM, namely:

“That the Assembly notes the answers to the questions asked.

“This Assembly supports the United Kingdom’s continued membership of the European Union and, in particular, the economic, workplace, security, and environmental benefits this brings to the people of London.

¹⁴ HELENE MULHOLLAND, UK FACES EUROPEAN COURT FOR ALLOWING RAW SEWAGE TO ENTER THAMES, *GUARDIAN*, 09.10.09

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Protection against working excessive hours: Working time protections have been targeted by leading ‘Brexit’ campaigners, who claim they are red-tape that should be scrapped^{21,22}. In fact, the EU Working Time Directive’s rules have deterred many bosses from forcing London’s workers into an average working week of longer than 48 hours. Since its introduction, over a million workers across the UK are no longer compelled to work excessive hours.²³

Minimum workplace protections: Improvement of working conditions; freedom of association and collective bargaining; equal treatment for men and women; information, consultation and participation of workers; health protection and safety at the workplace; and protection of children, adolescents, elderly persons, and disabled persons from labour market exploitation are provided as minimum

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was agreed (15 votes cast in favour and 9 votes cast against). The substantive motion as amended was agreed by general consensus.

5 Motion (Item 5)

- 5.1 The motion, and subsequent debate, on the motion proposed at the meeting is set out in the minute of Item 4 (above).

6 Date of Next Meeting (Item 6)

- 6.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Assembly would be the Plenary meeting which would take place at 10am on 8 June 2016 in the Chamber, City Hall.

7 Any Other Business the Chairman Considers Urgent (Item 7)

- 7.1 There was no urgent business.

8 Close of Meeting

- 8.1 The meeting closed at 1.34pm.

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Chairman

Date

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