

## London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time) – 16 November 2017

### Transcript of Agenda Item 3 – Oral Update on the Report of the Mayor

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Good morning to you and to everyone here in the Chamber. Today, I am pleased to confirm that, as promised, the fare set for Transport for London (TfL) will again be frozen in 2018. It is worth reminding ourselves they went up by more than 42% in the eight years before I became Mayor. Passengers using TfL services in London will now also benefit further, as I am delighted to announce that the unlimited one hour hopper fare for bus and trams will be introduced in the first half of next year, and weekly capping will be brought to Oyster cards later in the year. The Government must now follow my lead and freeze national rail fares especially for London suburban rail services: if I can do it, why can't they?

The latest figures by the Office of Rail Regulators show that, thanks to my fares freeze, London Overground was the only one of the four main train operators within London and the Southeast to see passenger numbers rise. Passengers on Govia Thames Link Railway, South Trains and Southeastern all fell by more than 5% in April to June 2017/2018, compared to the previous years as their fares rose. If TfL assumes responsibility for more suburban rail services, fares on these services would be covered by my fares freeze.

Yesterday, I launched a major new anti-crime movement: "London Needs You Alive - Don't Carry a Knife". I am working with some of London's most influential young artists and campaigners, from grime and rap stars to poets, bloggers and photographers, in order to put forward a positive message and influence young Londoners to make an active choice not to carry a knife. I want this to become a new movement owned by Londoners and for the campaign to highlight how valuable young Londoners are to London, to their family, to their friends and how, by using their talent and not picking up a knife, they can accomplish great things. By showing the incredible young people of our city how much we need and value them, we could save countless lives. I would hope all Assembly Members will promote and support this campaign.

Last week, I was delighted to announce a landmark increase in the London Living Wage from £9.75 an hour to £10.20 per hour; the first time the London Living Wage has been more than £10. I am also pleased that another 470 employers signed up to pay their staff the London Living Wage over the last 12 months, bringing the total number of accredited businesses in London to 1,502. Since I became Mayor, the number of businesses paying the London Living Wage has increased by 50%.

Finally, alongside the Deputy Leader of Westminster City Council, Councillor Robert Davies, we revealed ambitious plans for the start of the transformation of the Oxford Street area. If approved, the plans which are being publicly consulted on until 17 December, would turn the Oxford Street district into the world's best outdoor shopping experience and create new traffic-free public spaces in the heart of London.

I have also been asked as you said, Chair, to give two oral updates. The first one is from Assembly Member Steve O'Connell about HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) efficiency. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) was assessed as requiring improvement in two of three areas: how well does the force understand demand; and how well does the force use its resources. It was assessed as good in how well it plans for the future. A key theme which brings judgement down is that the transformation programme is in too early a stage in its implementation to get a full picture to see the results. The MPS is making changes to address the issue of resources. The MPS transformation programme is wide ranging. The aim is to join up the data systems which feed into officers' mobile devices which would mean officers can give better, quicker service to the public, and to change the operating model, like basic command units (BCUs), not just to save costs, but to

improve a number of areas like policing, such as investigations and safeguarding too. This change is needed as the MPS is challenged by technology which is out of date and at the end of its life. This contributes to the judgement in the report - poor technology, not replaced when it could have been in previous years, affects how efficiently the service can run. The two week assessment in the summer also included response times in the East London BCU pathfinder. The performance, particularly in BCU East, was not good enough. When the HMIC FRS inspected in May, they were below the MPS average at 70% for Central North and 52% for East. However, for the month of October, the response times were better than the MPS average at 87% of immediate calls being answered in 50 minutes or less for Central North, and 82% for East. Finally, we must remember that whilst officers in the MPS are working hard to transform, they are also working to save £1 billion by 2021. My Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and I will of course continue to work with the MPS to seek out any opportunities to make savings, but these are diminishing as the Force is being cut to the bone. Unless the government's funding cuts stop now, officer numbers could fall below 30,000 in 2018, and 27,500 by 2121, a dangerous low.

I have also received a second request for an oral update from Assembly Member Sian Berry about Holloway Prison. The Ministry of Justice Holloway Prison site in Islington, is a large and well-located site that could see in the region of 1,000 homes built on it. It is crucial for me that the opportunity of it being released is taken to build as many genuinely affordable homes as possible and to ensure the development includes community facilities that local people and services need. This is why my team has been working with the local council on the draft supplementary planning document, SPD, for the site. This SPD sets out that a development here could viably include 50% affordable housing and should include other benefits such as the provision of a centre, supporting women in the criminal justice system. The Ministry of Justice is now seeking a buyer for the land, and I was concerned that the current marketing approach, a straightforward and unencumbered freehold disposal, runs the risk of the site being sold to a land banker, a land trader, or a developer whose bid might not reflect the planning guidance for the site. We know that, more widely, there is no incentive for government departments to sell to developers who are actually going to get on and build homes. Both the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee have raised concerns about this. It would be an outrage if the Holloway Prison site were to lie empty for years rather than being built up with new and affordable homes as quickly as possible. That is why I have written to the Justice Secretary, David Lidington [The Rt Hon David Lidington MP], offering the expertise of my Homes for Londoners team. Given their extensive experience of bringing forward GLA owned sites for development, they are well placed to work with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) officials and advisors in the assessment of bids. I have not heard back from the Justice Secretary but I am happy to update Members when I do.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Assembly Member Hall.

**Susan Hall AM:** Thank you, Mr Mayor, do you not think that undermines your case of further funding?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I am sure you have read the report and you will have seen, the report said that one of the reasons for the efficiencies not being made is the transformation programme not having good command of control systems, not having good IT systems, and the responsibility lies with the lack of investment and decisions made by the previous administration. I am trying to remedy that and the Transformation Board has the senior officer responsible for the progress in each of the ten strands and I hope there will be progress in the near future.

**Susan Hall AM:** I do not see that, because you are the one that has taken £38 million out of recruitment. If you look at the Public Access Strategy, everything revolves around the 101 system and that is why we are shutting front counters because so many people are going to the phone, and yet 29% of 101 calls, people are just giving up because they cannot get through. Surely you should actually use all efficiencies that you can

before you start screaming at the Government for more money. The service should be as efficient as it could be, and it is clearly not, otherwise we would not have been downgraded after three years.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Let me unpack what you have just asked and raised. I was at the Home Affairs Select Committee earlier this week where there were police and crime commissioners, who are members of your party, in your words “screaming at the Government”; in my words, “lobbying on behalf of resources for their citizens”, to get the funding required to keep their communities safe. I will not apologise for making the point, but your government is cutting £1 billion from my city. My job, as the Mayor, is to make sure that our police have the resources they need to keep our city safe. I wish you would bat for London as well. You are on this Assembly to make sure London gets the resources she needs. Cutting funding from our police makes our city less safe. I will not apologise for making the case to this government.

**Susan Hall AM:** Mr Mayor, other forces have had reductions and they have not had reductions in their efficiencies. If you actually look at it, you must use your resources to their best before you start looking for more money because it is Londoners’ money. The money that goes into the MPS has got to be used properly and if you do not use your resources in an efficient way, then yet more money goes into a service that is not efficient. That is not good enough, and it is our London, if I may remind you, and we want proper efficiencies and we need resources used as the best they can be.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I wish you would start acting like it was your London rather than you being a Conservative representative here to justify what your government’s doing. Your government is making massive cuts to our city. Our job, as the GLA, is to represent our city, not our party here. That is why I am saying to you, if you are concerned about 101, we need the resources to make sure that the increased number of calls, that 999 receives which are diverted to 101, they have got the staff there to answer these calls. Because of the cuts made by your government, we cannot invest in these resources. We are invested in digital. We are invested in making sure that our officers have the tablets they need, but cutting a billion pounds from our budget, £600 million already, £400 million going forward does not make it easier, it makes it harder.

**Susan Hall AM:** No, our job is to hold you to account, and you have to remember that the buck stops with you. You are responsible for the MPS and you are therefore responsible that it uses its resources in the most efficient way it can, which an independent group has said it is not happening. You, therefore, should actually take responsibility for this and make sure that your house in order before you start, as I put it, “screaming at” others for more resources because we would rather know that any additional money, that we will all fight for, will go into a system that is using the resources to the best of its ability because that is what it is about, Mr. Mayor.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, let me address that speech, which is this: since 2010, the Metropolitan Police Service has lost more than 65% of its police and community support officers. Since 2010, the MPS has lost more than 30% of its civilian police staff. Since 2010, the Metropolitan Police Service has had to sell off more than 170 police buildings. Since 2010, more than 120 police station front counters have been closed down. You cannot pretend that some of this is not the fault of your government.

**Susan Hall AM:** The question I put to you is about use of resources so if you keep that in your mind, that is what I am talking to you about, efficiency and use of resource, and if you cannot get that right then it is no point in throwing more money into something that is not efficient and it is not using its resources properly.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Only a Conservative politician would think investing in our police is throwing money at the police. And can I just say, every victim of crime, or every person who receives a bad quality of service because of lack of police officers remember the Conservatives think we are throwing money at the police.

**Susan Hall AM:** No, the Conservatives like good use of money, efficient use of money and good use of resources, and that is what it is about, Mr Mayor. That is what I am talking about.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Okay. Okay. We are now getting into a party broadcast situation. Do you have another question, Assembly Member Hall?

**Susan Hall AM:** No. I will leave it there. Thank you.