

London Assembly (Plenary) Meeting – 8 March 2018

Transcript of Agenda Item 4 Oral Update – Mayor's draft Transport Strategy

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Thank you, Chair. Can I thank you for what you said about People's Question Time and also about International Women's Day? I am sure those sentiments are felt by everyone in the Chamber today.

It is a pleasure to be here today to discuss the final draft of my Transport Strategy. It is a Strategy that the Transport Commissioner, the Deputy Mayor for Transport, the wider team and I are really excited about because we think it does something that has never been done before in London or any comparable global city. By looking beyond pure transport to health, wellbeing and quality of life, I really believe we have developed the best, most ambitious and most realistic Transport Strategy of any major city in the world.

To do this, we have captured the unique opportunity transport provides to make life better for Londoners. Transport brings our city together and helps Londoners make the most of the opportunities our city offers, but it also shapes Londoners' lives in countless different ways from unlocking job creation and homebuilding to making our city more affordable, improving Londoners' health, shaping communities, and making our city a better place to live, work and visit.

I am pleased to report that we received more than 6,500 responses, the vast majority of which were positive. During the consultation process, we engaged with Londoners, charities, local government, campaign groups and organisations across our city. This ambitious vision for transport, health and quality of life has captured the imagination and support of Londoners, and we now have a really strong mandate to put it into practice.

At the heart of this Strategy is our Healthy Streets approach, with a relentless focus on creating a cleaner, greener and safer city. I want to see 80% of all travel in London made by foot, by cycle or on public transport by 2041. This is a hugely ambitious target, but one we must meet together. This includes tackling London's terrible air pollution crisis, which causes huge damage to Londoners' health. It builds on the work we have already done by introducing the world's first toxicity charge and Low Emission Bus Zones, and works towards the introduction of the world's first Ultra Low Emission Zone next year in central London and its eventual expansion.

This Strategy covers some hugely transformational projects that will change the face of our city for future generations and are coming sooner than many realise, from the opening of the Elizabeth Line later this year to the transformation of Oxford Street also starting this year. Both of these have been talked about since the early 1970s. We continue to work with the Government to make progress on Crossrail 2. This will help to unlock hundreds of thousands of new jobs and homes for Londoners.

It also comes against the backdrop of a difficult financial situation for Transport for London (TfL) caused by the previous Mayor accepting the withdrawal of the Government's operating grant, leaving London as the only major city in Europe where a transport system operates without Government funding. I have been left the difficult job of clearing up the mess and that is exactly what I am doing, pushing TfL to become more efficient without impacting upon customers. TfL has realised over £700 million of cost savings since I became Mayor, almost 9% of operating costs over the last two years. It is now on track to achieving an operating surplus by

the end of this Business Plan, a stark contrast to the £572 million deficit forecast at the end of the previous Mayor's plan. Crucially, all of this will be achieved without the crippling fare rises we saw under the previous Mayor, an increase of more than 42% and also those that were planned to continue to rise from 2016, an additional 13% increase planned by the previous Mayor.

I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved on transport since I became Mayor, not just freezing all TfL fares and introducing the Hopper fare, but getting the Night Tube and Overground up and running, increasing capacity across the Tube network; bringing land forward to build new genuinely affordable homes; establishing Low Emission Bus Zones and introducing the toxicity charge; record investment in walking and cycling; increasing the number of step-free stations across our city and reducing the number of days lost to strikes on the Tube network by a staggering 66% compared to the previous Mayor, to name just a few. I am convinced that this Transport Strategy lays out deliverable plans for doing much more to improve Londoners' lives over the years ahead.

Finally, Chair, as the Assembly knows, I am running a year-long gender equality campaign, Behind Every Great City. The campaign celebrates the historic and current achievements of women in London and, crucially, tries to drive change to make gender equality a reality in our city. This Plenary [meeting] comes, as you said, on International Women's Day, and I wanted to take a moment to inform Assembly Members of a new collaboration announced today between TfL and the leading domestic abuse refuge provider, Hestia. It will explore how victims of domestic abuse can seek the help and support they desperately need as part of their regular journeys, which is less likely to cause suspicion from an abuser. This new pilot project seeks to provide safe private spaces that could be the first step for a victim of domestic abuse to access the services and support they need. This is yet another example of how TfL can shape Londoners' lives far beyond how they get from A to B and a reminder of why this Strategy has so much potential to improve the lives of the people we represent.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you for that opening statement and the announcement, Mr Mayor. Deputy Mayor Shawcross?

Val Shawcross CBE (Deputy Mayor for Transport): I just would say thank you to everybody who has contributed to the development of what I would say is not just the Mayor's Transport Strategy; it is London's Transport Strategy, and that includes the Assembly and the [London] Assembly's Transport Committee. It has been a very good and constructive dialogue.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Thank you for that feedback.