

## London Assembly Mayor's Question Time – Friday 19 October 2018 Transcript of Item 4 – Oral Update to the Mayor's Report

**Tony Arbour AM (Chairman):** The Mayor will now provide an oral update, of up to five minutes in length, on matters occurring since the publication of his report. Assembly Members have submitted one request for topics for inclusion within this update. Mr Mayor?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chairman. Good morning.

Yesterday at Southwark Cathedral I joined over 1,000 others including Assembly Members here today to celebrate the life of Dame Tessa Jowell [British Labour politician] who sadly passed away earlier this year. Tessa was one of the most respected politicians in the country, someone full of kindness and generosity and is sorely missed by family, friends and everyone who knew her. Tessa did more than anybody to bring the 2012 Olympic Games to London and their spectacular success was a testament to her expertise, passion and energy. I was therefore pleased to announce that one of the most popular walkways in the Olympic Park is being renamed in her memory.

This morning I wrote to you, Chairman, to inform you that, following a successful two years as Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement, Matthew Ryder QC has decided to step down in order to return to his legal career. I am grateful to Matthew for forging strong relationships across London's diverse communities and the key role he played in developing our groundbreaking strategy to address social integration in London. I am delighted to announce that Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard has been appointed to succeed Matthew. Debbie is an expert on poverty and ethnicity, education and labour markets and joins my team from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. I know she will do a great job in bringing together our diverse communities and ensuring that all Londoners feel a key part of our city.

Since we last met, Chairman, I continue to stand up for our city as Mayor and to work on a number of new initiatives to improve the lives of Londoners. These include establishing a new violence reduction unit of specialists in health, police and local government to lead and deliver a long term public health approach to tackling the causes of violent crime, continuing to work with the Violent Crime Task Force funded by City Hall to crack down on violent crime across the city, providing funding to 36 projects that are delivering activities for young Londoners, including those most at risk of getting caught up in crime, launching a new programme to tackle health inequalities and stepping up London's preparations in case of a catastrophic no deal Brexit.

Tomorrow people from every corner of our country will travel to London to demand that the British people get the final say on Brexit. The Government is taking us towards either a bad Brexit deal or, worse still, no deal at all. Both these scenarios are a million miles from what was promised. People did not vote to make themselves poorer, to damage our National Health Service (NHS) or to put jobs at risk. As Mayor of London I am proud to welcome everyone joining the march for the future and I will be marching and speaking at the rally to add my voice to the calls for a public vote with the option of remaining in the EU.

I look forward to answering your questions today. I have also been asked, as you said, Chairman, to give an oral update on Scotland Yard and Pro Leave Groups. I understand the concerns regarding news reports that Scotland Yard were citing political sensitivities as the reason why potential criminality linked to Pro Leave Groups was not being investigated. Decisions about how the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) investigate

allegations are operational and I cannot interfere in the day to day decisions of matters of this nature. However, my office has been informed by the MPS that the news report is inaccurate.

The Electoral Commission has made two referrals to the MPS in relation to the European Union (EU) referendum. The first referral was received on 11 May 2018 and concerns Leave.EU. The second referral was received on 17 July 2018 and concerns Vote Leave and BeLeave. In relation to both referrals the relevant documentary evidence from the Electoral Commission was only received on 7 September 2018 when the MPS was provided with over 2,000 documents. These documents are being assessed by specialist investigators, supported with advice from the Crown Prosecution Service, in order to make an informed decision as to whether a criminal investigation is required. For clarity, the MPS has stressed that the status of its enquiries is not due to political sensitivities but due to the amount of evidential material that needs to be considered. As with previous referrals from the Electoral Commission, the MPS will make public the outcome of its assessment.

**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you very much for answering that extra question, Mr Mayor. Can I just clarify. Have you spoken with the Commissioner about the delays in this case and to get that new information and, if not, do you plan to?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** My office has spoken to the MPS. I have not spoken to the Commissioner. The explanation for the enquiries is because the documents were received literally just about a month ago, there are more than 2,000 documents, and you will appreciate the MPS has got to consider them.

**Sian Berry AM:** Yes. Have you asked the Commissioner why those statements were made to the press about political sensitivities?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I understand a press officer spoke to the media but I cannot comment on what the press officer said to the media.

**Sian Berry AM:** OK. You have not discussed that with the Commissioner?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** No.

**Sian Berry AM:** OK. Thank you.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM:** Chairman, thank you so much. Just quickly to the Mayor and his statement about Deputy Mayor Matthew Ryder leaving us. I have had the pleasure of working very closely with him both in my role as Lead of many of the areas he covers for my Group and also, as you know, someone who has had a passion on these areas for the last 40 or 50 years. I would just like to say to the Deputy through you, Mr Mayor, that on Monday night, at the event that I took part with on behalf of the Assembly, and that was the Team London Awards, that was an example of this journey that we have been on under your administration and Matthew's leadership where Londoners, old and young, black and white, Asian -- I mean it was an absolute replication of London -- gay and straight, you name it. My heart went out to a 14-year-old young woman who is in transition - I have not got the language right yet - but she is standing up for her right to be transsexual. And it was a joy. That could not have happened without the integrity, without the professionalism and, I have to say, style that Mr Ryder has in terms of getting the thing together and making it look part of us to a standard that I do hope, and I wish, that Debbie [Weekes-Bernard], the new appointment, will be able to pick up and run with. It has been a joy working with him and we have got all the amazing strategies that we have all been working hard to deliver. So, certainly from me, and I think from everybody else who has worked with him, we wish him all the best when he goes back to his home in legal.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chairman, can I say, through you, I will pass on to Matthew Ryder the comments of Assembly Member Arnold. She is right to remind me, as I said earlier, that he was the first Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement. He has done a huge amount of work. The strategies you have talked about are also a legacy of the work he has done but I am sure Debbie will build on Matthew's work and will have an even closer relationship with you, and others on the Assembly, who champion diversity and do not see it as a weakness but see it as a strength. I will be looking towards Debbie in the course of the next 18 months - and some may try to divide us - to keep us united and keep us together.