

London Assembly GLA Oversight Committee – 1 July 2019

Transcript Item 6 – The Mayor’s Annual Equality Report 2018-19

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Then we come to Item 6, which is our main piece of business at today’s meeting, on the Mayor’s Annual Equality Report 2018-19. I reiterate my welcome to Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement, along with your officer team.

I have explained to our Members that, much as you are overseeing this work, there are some detailed questions that you might not be able to answer, or you might be able to answer. We are quite relaxed about getting written answers on some of those issues. We may reserve the right to call some of your colleagues appropriate to those areas back before this Committee if we feel there is further questioning about their remit in terms of their contribution to this Equality Report.

Do you want to do an opening statement, and do you want to introduce the officers you have brought with you?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes, let me do that. I would like to introduce the officers who are sitting with me. This is Alice Wilcock. She leads our Team London and our Sport Team. This is Kathleen Kelly and Jeanette Bain-Burnette, who are my Assistant Directors (ADs) for Communities and Social Policy.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Is there anything you want to do by way of an introduction or shall we go straight into some questions?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I wondered if I could make a brief opening statement to provide some context for the report for Members.

I will start by saying thank you, Chair and Assembly Members, for inviting me to come along to talk about the Mayor’s Annual Equality Report. I am going to call it the ‘Equality Report’ because it is a bit of a mouthful when I refer to it.

I wanted to provide a little bit of context for the report itself because it is linked very clearly to aspects of my remit, which are to promote social integration, social mobility and community engagement. The Annual Equality Report is our first opportunity to measure progress against the 39 objectives that were set out in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy that the Mayor launched last May [2018]. We have responsibility for working with strategic leads across various teams in the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the GLA functional bodies to ensure that they are monitoring their progress in relation to those 39 objectives. My Equality and Fairness Team are those who have that responsibility for setting up regular meetings with those strategic leads so that they can take responsibility for monitoring their own progress against those objectives and indeed the indicators that sit just beneath them.

The Equality and Fairness Team is one of five teams that sits within my remit. The additional teams that I have responsibility for are Team London and Community Sport – I have already introduced Alice [Wilcock], who has

responsibility for leading those teams - and also Social Integration and Community Engagement, which sits within the responsibilities of Jeanette [Bain-Burnette] and Kathleen [Kelly].

I wanted to say, by way of explanation for the way in which we collect information for the content of that report, just three aspects of the way that we do so, as this is relevant both to the way that we have collected the content for the report and the work that we do generally, which is to promote equality to assist the Mayor in creating a city that is very and more equal, but also one in which people from a range of different backgrounds can make more meaningful connections with each other to bridge some of those divides and those tensions, which can often lead to hate crime and a variety of other different tensions in society. There are three main approaches that we take.

The first, which is incredibly important for our discussion today, is mainstreaming. We think it is incredibly important that if we are to make any real tangible impacts in the lives of those individuals who are experiencing barriers to progress or to take advantage of all the benefits that London has to offer, that every group within the GLA and the GLA functional bodies take some responsibility for promoting equality. The responsibility for promoting equality does not sit exclusively with me and with my team. We work with other teams to ensure that they are helping the Mayor to meet his duties under the Equality Act [2010]. That is massively important if we want to make any real difference in trying to reduce those equality gaps, which we know exist for many vulnerable groups in society.

The second approach, which is important to this discussion, is that the Mayor has gone further than simply meeting his duty under the Equality Act. In addition to supporting and promoting equality for those who come from the nine protected characteristics that the equality legislation protects, we also have included in that list of individuals those whom we think experience real vulnerabilities in society. These individuals include single parents, young people who are in care, young people who are care leavers, refugees and migrants and those on low incomes and those in low socioeconomic groups. Our equality legislation does not include a focus on those who come from low socioeconomic groups. We also recognise that those who come from those additional groups that I have mentioned also experience some real challenges that we feel we have some responsibility to do our best to support and to tackle.

Finally, the other distinctive approach that we take is to work very closely with civil society and the charitable sector. Before I came to this role - I started this role in November [2018] - I spent the majority of my professional career working in the charitable sector, either in small third-sector organisations or in foundations that gave support to charities to do important work. The reason that I mentioned civil society organisations is because we know that in times of real financial stress or austerity, often those civil society organisations pick up the slack in relation to the gaps that are left in some of our essential public services, which many vulnerable groups rely on. We take our responsibility to both support and champion those who work in civil society, supporting them in capacity building where possible and championing the work that they do. Also, once I took up the role in November [2018], I recruited 18 experts from a range of different backgrounds, representing those from grassroots organisations who come from across those nine protected characteristics and also those who support young people and those who come from low-income groups. We have done that principally so that we can bring the voices of those sectors who are doing that important work on the ground and also to make sure that everything we do across the GLA, all the decisions that we make and all the interventions that we come up with are actually meeting the needs of those individuals.

I just wanted to provide a bit of context for the work that we do. There are a range of other responsibilities that I have that sit under my portfolio. I do have an incredibly long title, but all the elements of the work in

that title are equally as important as each other. I would be happy to take any questions on any elements of my other responsibilities and indeed on the report itself.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): We are concentrating on the report today. We might bring you back and talk about the other aspects of your work.

If I can kick off, generally, with this Committee - it is not you; I do not want you to think it is you and I do not want you to think it is this piece of work - there seems to be a problem in terms of the Mayor's office around some of the issues around specific measurable targets. How can we demonstrate that we are succeeding in addressing an issue? There is a lot of work that has gone into this report.

If I could just add to that so that it is there, how does the Mayor or a reader of this report determine whether you are getting on top of this if there are no performance targets set out in the departments? Can we just have your initial comments on that?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Thank you. That is an important question. I certainly do agree that when it comes to trying to make a difference in the lives of those individuals who are struggling in society, we have to show that we are making a difference to their lives. The best way to do that is to show how we are progressing in reducing any of the gaps that they are experiencing.

The Annual Equality Report is the attempt by all the GLA bodies and teams across the GLA to meet their progress against the 39 objectives that we set out in the Strategy. The Strategy has those 39 objectives and underneath each of those objectives is a set of indicators that we feel fully represent some of the areas sitting underneath those objectives.

If we look at some of the chapters that are included within the Mayor's Equality Report, when we think about whether London is a good place to live, we include indicators that focus on housing affordability, on homelessness, on rough sleeping. Beneath all those indicators, all those indicators then have an equality issue attached to them. If there are groups of individuals whom we know are suffering in relation to homelessness or in relation to being unable to afford housing in the city, we will ensure that those equality groups are then attached to those indicators so that those in the Housing Team can more adequately measure how they are achieving progress against those indicators.

It is also important to state that the objectives themselves are ones that we derived and developed in conjunction and consultation with lots of experts across London, those from the civil society organisations I have mentioned, but also in association with the GLA City Intelligence Unit. We know that these objectives should fully capture the sorts of experiences that we want Londoners to be able to have. If there are groups that we feel are not having a such a positive experience of London across those objectives, then we have listed indicators and equality groups that we feel those teams should be paying due regard to and monitoring their progress in relation to.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): I suppose I should have started with this question. You covered it briefly in your opening statement. In terms of key achievements, what would you highlight from this particular report? What are the key messages that we should take from this plan?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): There are a number of key achievements. One of the biggest for me is that we have been able

to have each of the teams across the GLA conduct their own equality work. That for me is important. I come from a sector in which it was often difficult to get people to take equality seriously. It is important and something to celebrate that we have teams across the GLA that are monitoring equality themselves. Yes, we support them as much as we can. We develop action plans with them. We help them to think about the best ways to monitor it, but ultimately it is the responsibility of the Housing Team, the Planning Team and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to monitor their own progress. That for me is a big achievement. I was heartened when I came to the GLA to see that that was happening.

Also, the achievements that we have been able to outline in relation to housing are worth noting. I have come from a sector in which the main aim was to tackle poverty and, in London, one of the biggest drivers for poverty is high housing costs. I am enthused to see that the Mayor has developed his affordable housing scheme, which, importantly, is trying to bring down the cost of housing and trying to address bringing down the cost of living more widely for many groups. The work we are doing in relation to education and skills is also incredibly important because it is enabling those who are on some of the lowest-paid jobs in our city to access some of the skills they need to be able to progress out of low-pay, to move out of poverty and to move out of financial hardship. Those are some of the things that we have done well on and I am heartened to see that there are teams across the GLA that have been doing this work well.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Lastly, I suppose, more about presentational issues about this report, just a reflection on the messages that come out. I suppose it is about a personal preference, but can we be clearer about those messages in future presentations and about the issues that we are trying to get across?

Equally, can future reports support the areas of additional funding allocations with actual amounts spent so that we can see between investment versus outcomes? If anything, just reading the overall report, there is lots about inputs, but the outputs are the bits that were missing for me. How do we address that presentational issue in that last set of questions?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): That is a good suggestion. I can only speak in relation to my team, but I know certainly in comparison to many of the other teams that exist across the GLA, the funds that we have at our disposal to take action on tackling inequality are much smaller, but it would be quite important for us to talk about how much we have invested as a way of measuring progress. That is an important one to take away and is something we could look at for future reports.

It is important I suppose to note that this is the very first occasion that we have had to measure progress against those objectives. It is a learning document. It is something that we have developed. We want to put it out there and see how people respond to it. If you feel that we should be adding information about expenditure in relation to seeing how much we are spending and how much we can show progress, then we would be very happy to do that.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Thank you. Let us move on then to the next set of questions.

Navin Shah AM: My questions are on the section "A great place to live", which in the main covers housing, infrastructure, social infrastructure and issues like air quality.

The report quite rightly says that there is great progress in terms of additional funding, which is in the region of £1.67 billion, to deliver additional affordable home starts, etc, but what we do not have - going back to the Chair's point - is the actual outcomes at an annual level. I understand it is challenging, but it is something that

we need to have. Looking at the red-amber-green (RAG) ratings both on housing affordability and on accessible housing, which is about adaptability as well and wheelchair access, the ratings are very low. There is a problem there.

Can you tell us what the key indicators are that London is improving as a great place to live, generally, despite what I have just indicated? What is your take on that?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Thank you for your question, Navin. There are a number of indicators that sit within this particular chapter and they range, as you have rightly noted, from housing affordability and accessibility to homelessness and rough sleeping.

I would like to focus just on two of those, if I may, as it may be necessary for me to go back to James Murray [Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development] and his team to seek some of that detail to the question, which I can do in writing if you would be agreeable, but I would like to focus initially on housing affordability and rough sleeping because one of those is an area where our team has worked quite closely with James Murray and his team and can talk a little bit about some of the progress that we have made in respect of that.

In relation to rough sleeping, I know that the report outlines that there has been a 25% increase in the numbers who are rough sleeping and we know that quite a significant proportion of that group are non-United Kingdom (UK) nationals and indeed from Central and Eastern Europe. We have supported James Murray and his team quite specifically in trying to advocate on behalf of those specific groups of individuals because we know that if they were to have access to proper legal advice and also to have access to welfare support, which many are denied because they are not eligible, that would help to move them off the streets into more secure tenancies and into work and would reduce those rough sleeping figures. We have worked quite closely with James and his team in providing him with some of the advice and support that he needs to ensure that we can continue to advocate on behalf of those groups of individuals.

We have also done quite a bit of work through our teams on the European Union (EU) Londoners Hub, which many of you may be aware of. We have been supporting the 1 million EU nationals who are seeking to regularise their status. In addition to that hub, we have provided some microgrants to organisations that work with some of the most vulnerable EU nationals, particularly with Roma communities, with those for whom English is a challenge, with those for whom, because of the nature of their English skills, digital access is a challenge and also with those for whom there is a real lack of trust in the Government and so would be less likely to want to put themselves forward in order to regularise their status. We recognise that if we do not do all we can to work with those groups of individuals, we will be contributing to a larger pool of individuals who will ultimately have insecure status should they not apply by the time of the deadline.

The reason I raise this is because those individuals I have mentioned have a greater risk of being homeless and indeed many of them are homeless. We have been supporting the Roma Support Group, which has been working very closely with Roma communities that are on the streets, supporting them to recognise that they do need to think about regularising their status and also helping to bring them into the fold, as it were, so that they can do all they can to support bringing them off the streets.

If I turn to housing affordability, in the report we noted that there has been an increase in the number of people who are spending up to a third of their income on housing. We know that certainly in London the amount spent on housing can exacerbate the risk of falling into poverty. We know that the sorts of individuals

who fall within this group tend to be people in the private rented sector, minority ethnic individuals and those are in the lowest fifth of the income distribution and so those who on some of the very lowest incomes in our city. The Mayor is doing all he can to address at least bringing down the housing costs, as I have mentioned, because housing cost exacerbates poverty risk. He has gone to the Government and has asked for more funding. He has used £1 billion of that funding to work with local authorities so that they can increase the building of council homes, which is one of the first times that we have done something of that scale at City Hall, which is incredibly important.

All this work is necessary to make a difference where we can in trying to reduce the numbers of individuals who are very vulnerable to financial hardship, vulnerable to poverty and vulnerable to destitution. We are trying to do all we can to support those groups.

In relation to the accessibility point, though, I would be very happy to go to James Murray and his team and get a more detailed answer to your question and come back to in writing.

Navin Shah AM: Can you also come back on something I would very much like you to bear in mind and have as part of your key achievements or targets and something that does not appear here - and I am not surprised - and talk about specialist housing for older people? You mentioned affordability, etc, but this is something that in a sense is a backward step in my view in terms of the Mayor's Strategy, which is reflected in the new London Plan. That is a lack of emphasis on family-sized dwellings. I would like your Housing colleagues to strictly monitor what is happening London-wide. Certainly, in outer London boroughs, etc, there is glut of smaller units but, as far as family-sized dwellings are concerned, it is an issue and something that the new London Plan does not give the priority that it should be given. That is something I would like you to look at.

In terms of social infrastructure, yes, we have a housing crisis. There is all this funding, lots of units being built, high densities, etc, but with that, again, a key area to monitor and deliver is social infrastructure, i.e. what goes together with the housing, the medical, the education facilities, etc. There is objective 8 within this section and that needs to be very critically and carefully monitored to see what targets you come up with.

Peter Whittle AM: Good morning, Debbie. You mentioned a statistic there. It was about the number of Londoners now paying more than a third on their rent. Can you just go through that bit again?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes. In the Mayor's Annual Equality Report, we noted that there is been an increase in the number of those who are spending more than a third of their income on housing. This is the first increase that we have seen in the past three years.

Peter Whittle AM: Do you know any figures?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I do not know the exact figures, no.

Peter Whittle AM: I am rather surprised, and I think loads of people will be surprised that it is just a third. Most people are spending about half their income, are they not? I know I am.

Jeanette Bain-Burnette (Assistant Director – Communities and Social Policy, Greater London Authority): The figure is more than a third. We are capturing anything that is more than a third. There has been an increase in people who are spending more than a third of their income.

Peter Whittle AM: I see. You do not have figures, sorry?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): No, I do not have figures in relation to that, but your point is important. What it speaks to is the fact that we have increasing numbers of people who are working in this city in jobs that are very low paid or that are insecure and so the amount they are bringing into their homes in terms of household income is lower than it used to be. Also, the amount that they are bringing in in terms of wages is not rising in line with inflation and so the cost of living and the cost of housing takes up a greater amount of their household income. That statistic of 33% reflects the increasing numbers of people who are in low-paid and insecure work in our city.

Peter Whittle AM: Thank you.

Navin Shah AM: What can realistically be achieved over the four years of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy to improve housing affordability, which you have been talking about, London-wide?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): It might be useful to talk about some of the projects we are running in relation to trying to improve the way that people, residents and individuals who are living in an area can have say in regeneration projects, estate regeneration projects, planning and all the sorts of things that impact directly on their experience of living in an area.

Very recently we have been running something called the Social Integration Design Lab. We are working with 17 authorities across London. The work they are doing is principally about trying to make sure that they are designing spaces that are more inclusive, that can promote social integration, and reduce inequalities for the individuals who live there, which they can do just by the way in which they are designed. I know that there has been a lot of discussion in the past about some of the estate regeneration projects where you have 'poor doors', for example, or certain facilities that are for wealthier homeowners in comparison to those who are in council social housing. With our Social Integration Design Lab, we are trying to work directly with local authorities so that they can increase the liaison they have with their residents and those who work as well in the areas to make sure that the future plans they have for regeneration in an area properly take into consideration the views of those individuals. Some of those 17 projects are about estate regeneration. They are working quite closely with residents who want to have more of a say in the way their estates are designed or are regenerated.

Also, in respect to your question, the Mayor recently launched the London Housing Panel and that panel is made up of 15 representatives from voluntary and community sector organisations. What is important about that is that they have the opportunity to oversee the development of housing policy going forward. It is important that we have that partnership working with those individuals who have not just lived experience but real access to the concerns that ordinary Londoners have about housing policy going forward.

Navin Shah AM: You mentioned in your earlier commentary estate regeneration. What has the impact been of the new funding condition for GLA-funded estate regeneration projects to address the objective of better protecting Londoners living in social housing?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Thank you so much for that question. This, again, is a detailed answer that I am afraid,

unfortunately, I cannot necessarily give. I would be happy, though, to ask James Murray or his team to come to answer that.

Part of the way we can do better in relation to the way we work with residents and with local individuals is to do some of that work that I have mentioned before where we are trying to change the way we design spaces and to work more closely with those who have the responsibility for creating those spaces, which will provide better opportunities for people to mix and to get together but also to reduce some of those inequalities between different groups. I would be very happy to ask James to come to answer that question for you.

Navin Shah AM: Please. Thank you. My last question on this one is to do with air quality. Of course, the Mayor has recently introduced the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) and with that there is also the issue about a scrappage scheme. Can you tell us how much of the ULEZ scrappage scheme has been used? What is the take-up?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I know that the low-income scrappage scheme is going to be launched later this year. The way in which we have been defining who is on a low income is something that my team and I have been working closely with both the Deputy Mayor for Transport and the Deputy Mayor for Environment [and Energy] to determine. We know that we are currently in a period in which in-work poverty is rising and so we need to have a better understanding of what 'low income' means for those individuals who will need to have some financial assistance to replace their noncompliant cars so that they will be able to drive within the ULEZ should they wish to do so.

With regard to the van scrappage scheme and the scheme to support microbusinesses and small to medium enterprises, I know that we have received about 1,000 applications so far for that scheme. It is important to note that we have been able to do that without any assistance from the Government, which we have continuously asked for in relation to the scheme.

In relation to how much has been spent, I can certainly go to both Heidi Alexander [Deputy Mayor for Transport] and Shirley Rodrigues [Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy] to get a specific detailed answer to that question. We know that about 1,000 have already applied for the van scrappage scheme and we are hopeful that the low-income scrappage scheme, which will be for ordinary Londoners and will be in line with the rollout of the ULEZ to the North and South Circulars by 2021, should definitely include, as far as we are concerned, the groups that we think will need our support to be able to replace their noncompliant vehicles.

Navin Shah AM: Chair, if I can just indulge, there is something entirely different I picked up from your introduction. You picked up the very important issue about mainstreaming. Mainstreaming can be effectively only if there is the right culture and capacity within an organisation.

Since you have taken up your position and from your work and analysis, do you think that we as the regional body have the capacity and particularly the culture at every department's level, within individuals and directors, etc, to have that inclusivity so that we have effective mainstreaming?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Can I just ask a point of clarity? By the question, do you mean in terms of a working culture or do you mean in terms of representation?

Navin Shah AM: The working culture. It is great that everyone accepts that equality should not be an

add-on but should be part of what we do. That is what I mean by 'culture'. Have you found that culture to make sure that it actually happens and is not just one of those tick-box aspects?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes. We do have the right culture certainly here at the GLA. I think I can still say that as a person who is new to the GLA because I have certainly noticed since coming here that, as I mentioned before, there are a range of different teams across the GLA that have taken on their own responsibility for promoting equality. I am not saying that that is unheard of in other public sector bodies, but certainly it is still quite a cultural shift to have every single department, regardless of what they are promoting, making sure that the decisions they make are not impacting negatively on groups from certain protected characteristics. Certainly, here at the GLA, in comparison to a range of other bodies I have come into contact with in my previous professional career, we do have the tools and the skills and also the will to tackle these issues effectively.

I say that because we do have a lot of cross-cutting responsibilities. My remit does cover the full range of everything to do with equality, all those nine characteristics, as I have mentioned, in addition to those other groups I have talked about. We would be run ragged if we were working and supporting every single team to fill in the gaps when they are not doing what they need to be doing effectively. I can happily say that there is the real will to tackle many of these issues. Transport for London (TfL), for example, has a great Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and works well to ensure that it is promoting equality for staff and customers. I know that there are teams across the GLA. The Skills Team, for example, is working hard to ensure that when we gain access to the adult education budget (AEB) later this year [2019] there is a focus on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and a priority on those groups of individuals whom they know need to have access to good English language training to prosper in the workplace. They are ensuring that the skills plan they are developing takes into consideration the needs of young people, focusing on careers and guidance. Across business, I know that the team working on employment is also very clear that we have to do better in supporting other employers to adopt more inclusive recruitment and indeed retention processes. I am heartened that the activities that many of our teams are engaged in are doing all that they can to promote equality.

Kathleen Kelly (Assistant Director – Communities and Social Policy, Greater London Authority): To support that operationally, we meet regularly with other teams across the GLA Group to talk to them about the indicators, which are city-wide, about the objectives in the Mayor's Annual Equality Report and about what actions flow from that in terms of action planning. As a result of that, we have revised budget guidance so that teams can think much more carefully about how they do equalities assessments across their policy areas.

Underlining what Debbie has said, we go beyond the statutory equality duties as well, which demonstrates the culture of wanting to do more and do better in this area. We take that very seriously in the regular meetings we have across the GLA Group around how all the different teams are doing on equalities and how they are meeting the 39 objectives in the Mayor's Annual Equality Report.

Alice Wilcock (Assistant Director, Team London (Volunteering) and Sport, Greater London Authority): More than that, you asked about the internal culture within the GLA. You should know that the Chief Officer has made it very clear that there is a responsibility on each and every one of the Executive Directors, Assistant Directors and their teams to think about this in every way that we run our team. It is part of our performance objectives and it is something that we have regular one-to-one discussions with the Chief Officer about to ensure that we are building the way that we run our teams, making sure that is absolutely in line with diversity and inclusion. The work of the Diversity and Inclusion Management Board is also a key part, looking at how the GLA functions internally to embed those principles within the way that we work.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Let us move on to “A great place for young people”, Assembly Member [Dr] Onkar Sahota.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Great. As the Chair says, we are going to look at the area of “A great place for young people” and particularly look at the measures you are using, which are childhood obesity, early years education, educational attainment and exclusions. In London, 28% of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) children are obese. Do you think that that is acceptable?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): No, certainly not at all. I know that the Mayor has made tackling what we think are the drivers of childhood obesity a principal part of his mayoralty. The high rates of child obesity are clearly driven by the high rates of child poverty that exist in our city. I know that the Mayor has taken advice from and has developed the Child Obesity Taskforce. I know that he has actively banned advertising on TfL of foods that are high in fat, salt or sugar. I know that through the Healthy Early Years London Awards, he is trying to promote those who are doing all they can across London to address high child obesity rates.

However, it is also symptomatic of that wider problem in relation to the way in which poverty is impacting on the lives of children and their families. We know that lack of access to a good income really impacts on the ability of parents to provide their children with a diet that is healthy when it is not as affordable as it should be to be able to access fresh fruit and fresh vegetables. One of the things that is incredibly important is to do all we can to reduce the impact that poverty is having on the lives of too many families in our city.

We know that poverty is also impacting on the access by individuals to food at all. Last week we published our Survey of Londoners, which showed that there are 2 million people in London who are in food insecurity and that 400,000 of those individuals are children. Food insecurity effectively means that people cannot afford to have access to food. About 60% of those people altogether are individuals who are in paid work. This suggests that there is an issue that we have with regards to making sure that people have access to better pay so that they avoid in-work poverty, which means encouraging employees to pay at least the London Living Wage.

We also need to do all we can to work with other stakeholders within the city to bring down those high rates of poverty. One of the ways that we have tried to do that is through work. We have the Good Work Standard, which challenges employers to pay their employees at least the London Living Wage and more importantly to make sure they show their low-paid employees the clear routes they can take to move out of low pay. We know that there are too many people who are currently trapped in some of the lowest paid and most insecure jobs in our city.

The Mayor is doing all he can to bring down the cost of living for Londoners by freezing fares, by introducing the Hopper fare and by promoting good quality, affordable childcare. We have also tried to do all we can to support those parents who are in poverty to give their children the support they need so that they are able to thrive in the education system. We support three Early Years Hubs, which is our attempt to get at that quite clear problem that we have in this city of parents not taking up their free access to childcare for two-year-olds, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, which would give those two-year-olds and those families access to the support they need to make them school-ready and to ensure that they have a better experience at school and do not have to experience some of the negative impacts of being in poverty. We know that being in poverty creates real educational gaps for children.

Trying to bring down or tackle some of the drivers of poverty as best as we can with the powers that the Mayor has at his disposal would be an important way of tackling those high rates of child obesity and those clearly shockingly high rates of food insecurity. However, we know that there are levers that he does not have and so my team has a clear responsibility for supporting the Mayor to ask the Government to have a better welfare system that can provide that helping hand or that safety net for those individuals who are in some of the lowest-paid jobs in our city.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: You have outlined a whole range of underlying factors and some of the interventions the Mayor is making. When you reflect on this in a year's time, what level of decrease do you want to see to say that you have been successful? It is 28% now. How will you recognise that you have had any impact at all and realise what more you need to do or can do?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): That is a good question. What we would need to do would be twofold. We would need to increase our advocacy asks of the Government. If we are being brutally honest, the welfare system as it is currently constituted is pushing quite a lot of people into poverty. I know that the Institute for Fiscal Studies has predicted that by 2025 there will be an even larger group of children who will be in poverty, not just in London but across the nation. Many thinktanks have argued that much of what is driving that child poverty rate is to do with policy decisions at the national Government level that are not helping people to make ends meet. We would need to make sure that we continue advocating and arguing on behalf of some of the lowest-income Londoners in our city so that we can get a welfare system that can provide the support they need and the buffer they need to enable them to have better incomes.

On the other side of that, I would hope that we would be able to harness all those activities that the Mayor is engaged in to bring down as much as possible that very high rate of child obesity in those minority --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Put a figure on it, Debbie.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): It would be difficult to put a figure on it. I am going to be completely honest with you. The reason I do not want to put a figure on it is because I come from a background where research and evidence is paramount. I would not want to put a figure on something that I have not researched myself effectively yet. I would need to engage in proper forecasting before I could say, "By this time next year, this is the sort of reduction I would like to see". I would like to be able to say that. I have not done that forecasting and this might be something that I work with the Intelligence Unit to do, but I am not an individual who wants to say, "All right, by this time we are going to do this", if it is something that is practically impossible to do. I would like to make sure that we are using the evidence at our disposal to be able to do it.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Do we have any figures for comparison with any other European countries about child obesity? Do you have that sort of data for what the child obesity levels are in other countries in Europe?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): No, I do not have that data.

Kathleen Kelly (Assistant Director – Communities and Social Policy, Greater London Authority): Particularly in terms of child obesity, we need to do that in conjunction with our Health colleagues. In terms of putting figures on it, we need to look at the Health Inequalities Strategy and we will probably need to go back

to Tom Coffey [OBE, Senior Mayoral Health Advisor] and have a conversation with him about specific figures. It would not be fair if we did not do that.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes, we can do that for you, Onkar.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: That is fine. Maybe you can get back to me about this.

Tony Devenish AM: Perhaps you should look at what [Mayor] Andy Burnham is doing in Greater Manchester because he is looking at this, I believe. We do need some figures. We keep on making the same point: if you do not have a figure, you are not going to be able to measure whether you have succeeded or not succeeded.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): That is a good point, yes.

Tony Devenish AM: If you could come back to us on that afterwards in writing, it would be great.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): It is also probably worth noting that we have a Child Obesity Taskforce and it will be soon be publishing some figures in relation to child poverty. We could come back to this group with some of that information if it would be of interest to Members.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: That would be very helpful, Debbie.

Keith Prince AM: Just to back up what Dr Sahota is saying, without any targets, all you are doing is tracking what is happening. You are not achieving anything. You are not doing anything. You are not setting yourself any stretched targets. You are just tracking what is going on. To be very blunt - and it is not personally at you - we could get an accountant to track the figures. We want someone who is going to lead the charge, someone who is going to push the Mayor and set challenging targets so that we improve the situation, not just look at what is going on. Anyone can do that.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): In relation to the target point, it is important to say that this remit is massive. It is an incredibly big remit. It is difficult to set targets on certain issues when we do not have responsibility for being able to use our levers on some of those issues. When it comes to some of the issues that I cover under my remit, I have talked about poverty. I have not talked about employment. There is also education. There are some targets that the Mayor could intervene on because he has levers under which he could do something practical, but with the vast majority of the issues included in the Annual Equality Report, because they also rely on others having a stake in helping us to achieve those targets, it is very difficult for us to set a target that we do not have full responsibility for. I have talked a little bit about poverty and poverty is one of those issues where there are inroads that we can make, but if we are to reduce some of those indicators we have outlined, we would need others to take responsibility for helping us to bring those down.

When it comes to employment, for example, there are certain things that we can do. We can work with employers. We can ask them to ensure that they are paying as many of their employees the London Living Wage. We can ask them to monitor how many members of their workforce come from certain minority ethnic backgrounds and how many women are in senior positions. We can ask them to do that by having our benchmark. You get our benchmark only if you are able to show that you have done that. However,

ultimately, if an employer decides that they do not feel as though these are not targets that they want to meet because their productivity relates to something else, our ability to influence them to do what we would like them to do is reduced.

I take your point around targets, but all we can do is outline what we believe are the indicators that, if they are acted upon, would have a meaningful change in the lives of individuals. If we get others across the GLA to monitor progress against those, then we can show that we are having some real difference in the lives of those individuals.

The targets themselves will change because there are lots of external environments that impact upon our ability to meet certain targets. We have Brexit. We have austerity. There are other external issues that can impact upon our ability to make the difference and to have targets that we can meet from year to year.

Keith Prince AM: That is very helpful, but just bear with me for one minute. I do not want to labour this point. When you are talking about what the Mayor has influence over, clearly, when it comes to unemployment, the Mayor singlehandedly in this building is trying to solve the unemployment problem in London. Frankly, if you are saying, "We cannot influence it. We cannot do anything about these things", what are you doing?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): That is not what I am saying. I am not saying we cannot influence. I was just saying that --

Keith Prince AM: If you believe, Debbie, that you have the power to influence, then you can set yourself a target. If you do not believe that you have the power to influence, I can understand why you would not set a target but, by doing that, why are you here?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I am here because the Mayor asked me to come and do this job because he cares about trying to make a difference in the lives of Londoners. It is important that you have a person who has oversight of issues like this. Otherwise, no one has responsibility for them.

Keith Prince AM: If you cannot make an impact, what is the --

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Other people have to come in. Assembly Member Berry and then we are returning to [Dr] Onkar Sahota [AM] to finish off his questions.

Sian Berry AM: I have a couple more questions about food poverty, which you raised in your initial comments. It was a big shock when lots of new data came out in the Survey of Londoners last week about food security and it is really great that the Mayor is asking questions about that to nail down some of it.

I have a couple of questions. Your current objective 13 in the Equality Report talks about child poverty but does not talk about food poverty. I appreciate that you have a target for child obesity and that those two things are linked together, but not all food-poor children are obese. Will you consider adding a target about child food poverty to that objective and actions to achieve it?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): That is an important question. The Survey of Londoners was our first attempt to get access to the figures on food insecurity in London. I know that there are national figures that we have. I am pleased

that the Government has been committed to publishing annual statistics on food insecurity for the whole of the UK. We had not up until this point had the data for food insecurity in London. That is an important point you raise because, now that we do have access to that information, we should be able to use that as a way of looking at child poverty going forward.

There are many different ways in which people experience poverty and the thing about food insecurity is that it is one of the ways in which most people would understand what poverty looks like. I know that generally when it comes to talking about child poverty, because it is such a big subject, it is often very difficult to get the messaging across to Londoners and others about what it practically looks like. The fact that we have increasing numbers of parents and families that are using food banks because of food insecurity is a tangible, visual, visceral way of demonstrating what child poverty looks like in this city.

I welcome your question and it is certainly something that we need to consider adding to the Annual Report going forward. As I said, this is our first attempt to look at measuring those objectives, but now that we have that data, we need to think about using it more practically going forward.

Sian Berry AM: Absolutely. In terms of your own actions and looking at the data that came out of the survey, one of the groups with the highest levels of food insecurity amongst families who have food insecurity was parents who are aged under 25. The average overall was 17% of parents with low food security. Of that group, 70% of 16-24-year-old parents reported that they were in low food security. It is a smallish number. It is about 2% of the sample and so there is potentially a margin of error as well, but 70% is so far ahead. That must mean that that group is in terrible trouble in lots of ways.

It is obvious why in relation to some of the things that were said before about wages. The National Living Wage does not apply to that group, for example, although the London Living Wage does. In terms of your own work, that being a group that could be helped specifically with a programme from the Mayor, that number seems to me to mean that you need to do further work first of all to research how accurate it is and also what the factors are behind it, including wages, I would imagine, and the welfare system, and seeing what can be done. Again, looking at the problems we have with young people, we know that adverse childhood experiences - and being in poverty as a young person is one - have such an impact throughout lives. It seems to me like there is a group there that we can identify and help from City Hall and it could make a real difference.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes. I completely agree with everything that you have said, Sian. I certainly know that a year or so ago the Young Women's Trust that talked about the high numbers of young women who are parents and who are in economic inactivity. They are out of work and they cannot access work. Also, they are out of work largely because of their caring responsibilities. I would imagine that a significant proportion of those young parents are perhaps on their own with a young child and are unable to get into work because they have caring responsibilities.

In relation to what you have said, there is work we can do across remits that is important. It would be worth me also speaking to the Skills Team about the work we will be doing once the GLA gets hold of the AEB, making sure that we are supporting those young parents to make sure they can access the skills they need to go into work. I know that there are plans to do some work to provide work to those who are definitely earning under the London Living Wage and to support parents to get into work. Routes into teaching assistant roles, for example, are also included.

What is so important about that survey is that it has revealed a whole set of issues that we need to be mindful of. That young group that you mentioned is also the group that is most likely to be socially isolated. When you think that a third of people aged 16 to 24 do not think they have anyone they can call on in case of an emergency, that in addition to the food insecurity issue signals a huge problem.

We do have a lot of work that we are doing with young people. We have a lot of work that Team London is engaged in to support young people and give them careers opportunities and access to work. With that data, we can develop further projects in addition to other groups to make sure that we are addressing those very specific issues. Thank you for raising it, Sian. I do agree with you.

Sian Berry AM: Thank you. What I am suggesting is going a bit further than the broader root causes as you are talking about. Because this group may be small, potentially direct prevention in terms of the ongoing impact that would have - the sort of work the Young Women's Trust does - might well be something that is justified by those figures.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Let move back to [Dr] Onkar Sahota [AM].

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Debbie, back to the question of child obesity. You said earlier on that there is evidence today that stopping the adverts on the Tube for foods high in fat, sugar and salt has an impact. How did you measure this impact? Have you measured this impact?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I have not measured that impact. This would be another detailed question that TfL should perhaps come to you to answer on that particular issue. I know that they have a very good Action on Equality and Diversity Strategy. Within that Diversity Strategy, they may have some metrics and some measurements in relation to that very issue. I would be very happy to speak to Heidi Alexander [Deputy Mayor for Transport] about that.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: What we are interested to know is whether it has had any impact and, if it has had any impact, how you have measured the impact and, if you have not measured it, when we can expect you to give the measurements to us so that we can see what the impact is. That is what we are interested in. If you can get back to us, that would be very helpful.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes, sure.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I want to talk to you about the two-year-olds. What is the right level of access to early years education is right for two-year-olds? What level of access do you want to achieve for them?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): I know that at the moment we have the lowest take-up among parents of two-year-olds from disadvantaged groups of that free childcare. As far as I am concerned, the level of access that we need is for all those individuals whom we would term as being disadvantaged or on low incomes to access that childcare. That is largely because we know that access to that childcare will help those children to be school-ready and also it will help parents to have the skills and support they need to better support their children once they are ready for school.

I know that we have the three Early Years Hubs that I have mentioned. Hubs are useful because they can provide a wealth of different levels of support for an individual seeking support. Within those hubs, you can increase access to childcare for children and you can also engage parents and give them access to the training they need to get into work if that is what they are looking for. We know that when it comes to increasing or improving access for some parents into the labour market, we need to provide them with the opportunities and the support they need to do so because the balancing of work and care is very difficult, particularly for those on very low incomes. The hubs are an important way of providing both that childcare and also that support for parents to access training, support, advice, guidance and all those things that should help them to better support their families and also better support themselves to become more employable. Having access to skills is good in and of itself because it helps you to participate as a member of society.

I suppose my answer to you is that having as many if not all of those who are deemed eligible would be the best way forward.

There are some additional projects that we are running which are supporting parents in a number of different ways. We run the London Families Fund, which is a programme that gives parents access to a range of skills, such as cooking skills and gardening skills, to help them to feel that they are better parents. In addition to doing that work, they are also meeting with people from a range of different backgrounds. It is a way of us trying to promote social integration, helping people who come from lower-income backgrounds to meet with parents who come from higher-income backgrounds, and helping all those groups to work with each other, to support each other and also to benefit all parents as much as possible. We know from some of our initial evaluations of that work that low-income parents feel the benefit of being part of those groups. They, too, often feel socially isolated. Bringing them into these spaces is also massively important.

In addition, we are also trying to do our own work in relation to addressing child poverty where we can. We think that there are roles that schools can play. Schools are often those sites that see children when they are coming in and can see some of the real signifiers of a child being in poverty. There are lots of schools in our city and indeed up and down the country that are doing important work and are supporting families in poverty. We will shortly be beginning a piece of work where we will be working with schools to help them to do what they can to support those on lower incomes. Sometimes that means thinking more proactively or practically about, I suppose, asking parents to make donations to charitable causes when there are parents who are on lower incomes and recognising that this is not something that all parents feel able to do.

Also, we are going to be trialling income maximisation work where possible where we bring into a school those who have expertise in helping parents to think about what benefits they are entitled to so that they can better maximise their incomes and, as a result, do what we can to increase their incomes and tackle poverty in that way.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Thank you for that answer. How many young people have taken advantage of the actions to create more opportunities for young people to gain work experience and wider career employment opportunities?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): That is a good question. We have a range of interventions that we are engaged in. Some of those activities are programmes that we run ourselves through Team London. Some are activities that are being run by the Skills Team.

There are two programmes I would like to highlight initially. One is our Team London Young Ambassadors Programme, which provides support to young people and engages them in social action projects. We know that last year [2018] about 46,000 young people were supported through that programme and this year [2019] to date about 30,000 young people have been helped through that programme.

This is in combination with a number of projects that we have with the title 'HeadStart' in front of them. One of those projects is HeadStart Action, which is specifically working with young people from certain parts of the city that one would classify as holding a high number of people from disadvantaged backgrounds. We are working with young people who are at risk of being not in education, employment or training (NEET). We are providing them with the opportunity to engage in volunteering. Volunteering is one of those areas which, certainly for young people or those who are not able to access the labour market or are not quite work-ready, gives them access to a range of important skills. It enables them to learn some of those soft skills. Certainly, for some of the young people we are supporting, it gives them the opportunity to learn how to speak to adults. It gives them the opportunity to develop a piece of work that they can have pride in and looks great on their curriculum vitae (CV). When you are 14, you are not thinking about your CV. We have been able to support a huge number of children already to engage in volunteering. We have supported about 1,600 young people and already they have engaged to date in 25,000 hours of volunteering. They volunteer on a range of issues, which are part of many of the mayoral priorities such as knife crime and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and others (LGBT+) bullying. They take pride in the work they are doing. We think that is important.

In addition, we run a programme called the London Enterprise Adviser Network. This is a programme where we work very closely with business mentors, who support careers advisers in schools. It is incredibly important that we do what we can to rectify the very patchy quality of careers advice that has historically existed in schools by making sure that those careers advisers have access to those who are working in a business, who know how that business runs and who know the skills, qualifications and routes a young person would need to take to access a job in that particular sector. That gives those careers advisers access to real-time on-the-ground support for the work they are doing.

This is in conjunction with the work that the Skills Team is doing. They have developed 12 clusters around the city. In these 12 clusters, they are working with around 300 organisations. These are employers and higher education institutions (HEIs) and they are working with careers experts in those organisations and in those HEIs. They are working exclusively with careers advisors in about 200 schools and then linking up expertise, making sure that, if it is a HEI, they are providing them with the information they need to give to the young people about the qualifications, the opportunities they could get if they wanted to go into an HEI and what they can do with that once they decide to leave. We have been trying to do all we can to marshal the expertise that exists outside of City Hall to help us to improve the careers advice that young people get so that they can make more informed choices about what they want to do once they are older.

Alice Wilcock (Assistant Director, Team London (Volunteering) and Sport, Greater London

Authority): Can I add something? Debbie talked about our Team London Young Ambassador Programme. I just wanted to make the point that over the last year and a half we have increased our focus on targeting schools, particularly in lower super output areas, where we can see that there are high numbers of young people living in poverty. We have worked to ensure that when we are delivering programmes in schools, those young people accessing it are very much those who might be considered to be at risk of being NEET, those who are not achieving necessarily as well as they could be or those who have behavioural issues. Those are exactly the young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who often do not get to participate in volunteering and social action, and yet they can get so much benefit from it in terms of not only mental health and emotional resilience but also their general motivation to engage with school, learning and education. We

have had encouraging feedback from schools and teachers about the fact that because these young people are engaged in a different way, it helps to capture their enthusiasm and keeps them in the education system better and more effectively.

Kathleen Kelly (Assistant Director – Communities and Social Policy, Greater London Authority): We also have a pilot project with the Workforce Integration Network, which is working directly with employers in construction and digital to encourage them to recruit more young black men because we know that that is where one of the biggest employment gaps is. At our last jobs fair, we attracted interest from nearly 500 young men and around 125 attended. Big employers like Laing O'Rourke, Waites and the like were involved in that. We are continuing that pilot project to get more young black men into work and we will be evaluating that initiative this year.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: That seems like a good amount of work has been done in this area. Of course, you will note that the amount of permanent and fixed-term exclusions from school have gone up. Particularly with the likelihood that this may be leading to violent crime, I know that the Mayor cannot be content with this. What is he doing about it, particularly in the context of him talking about a public health approach to crime? Can you tell us what the Mayor's position is on that, please?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement): That is a good question. Since I took up my role, I have been working quite closely with the Deputy Mayor for Policing [and Crime] and the new Director of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and I have been a regular member of the Partnership Reference Group that has been overseeing the mobilisation of the VRU. We have been very clear about recognising that there is a correlation between those who are involved in violent crime and a variety of different other areas of criminality and their experience of having been excluded from school. This is something that the Mayor is particularly concerned about. He has spoken out about it frequently.

I know that we will be making our own response to the *Timpson Review [of School Exclusion, May 2019]*, which is currently out and is looking at ways of reforming school exclusions. Within that, we will be talking quite candidly about ways to make sure we are doing all we can to support those young people who are at risk of exclusion and who may have a set of vulnerabilities in their home lives and in their personal circumstances and better working with schools and teachers to ensure we can do all we can to support those young people. As part of the Partnership Reference Group we heard from the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, which is indeed concerned about some of the high rates of exclusions from a number of schools, not just across London but across the country and the risk that that puts those young people at once they have left those schools. This is certainly something that I know the Mayor is incredibly concerned about and he will be expressing his concern through our response to that consultation.

We are also continuously trying to engage with the Department for Education on this very issue. We certainly know that there are a number of links between negative school experience and the risk of being in criminality, either as a victim or as a perpetrator of crime, and so we are trying to do all we can to address that.

We know also that the Education and Youth Team has produced a report called *Boys on Track*, which talks about the real discrepancies that exist for young people from black Caribbean backgrounds and for young white boys who are eligible for free school meals. This report talks very clearly about these two particular groups, which are at greater risk of underperforming at school but also at greater risk of high school exclusion rates. Some of the recommendations they included focused on trying to ensure that we have a teaching workforce which better reflects London and ensuring that there are role models that many young people from

these backgrounds are able to look up to. More importantly, from my perspective, it is that they have teachers who represent London, who represent these young people, who these young people feel they can go to in times of distress, or who they can speak to, who they feel are individuals who might be on their side, as it were.

We know that there are a number of areas of work that we are involved in where we are trying to collect the evidence and the data and use that to make recommendations. We are trying to provide a better educational experience for those young people who are at risk of having a very negative school experience and monitoring that for the link there is between that and falling into criminality.

Alice Wilcock (Assistant Director, Team London (Volunteering) and Sport, Greater London

Authority): Debbie mentioned HeadStart Action earlier. HeadStart Action is a programme that is absolutely targeted on young people who the schools feel are at risk of exclusion, are at risk of becoming NEET. The idea is that by the school identifying these young people, we are able to work with them to give them volunteering and social action opportunities but also increase their understanding of employability and employment so that they are less likely to be excluded.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I just want to go back to the issue of early years, which you have talked about, and how important getting that early years education is. A policy idea I had which the Mayor took on board was the Childcare Deposit Loan Scheme, but only two GLA employees have taken up the Childcare Deposit Loan Scheme since it started in January 2017.

I am wondering what work you are doing to promote this scheme across the GLA and then wider in terms of the GLA Group. I notice TfL, a bigger organisation, had 30 employees take it up. That initial cost of childcare when you are returning to work is eye-watering. What are you doing to promote that scheme?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community

Engagement): This is not something that I am involved in myself, but I was very aware, and I saw the announcement which highlighted how few people are taking it up. There is a job of work that we have to do in relation to promoting it more widely to our employees and ensuring that everyone is aware of the benefits to be gained from having it. We are not as aware as we could be as to the reasons why there is not such a great take-up, and perhaps there is a piece of work that we need to do in relation to trying to find out what the barriers are to applying. This is not something that I have responsibility for, but I would be quite happy to go back to Joanne [McCartney AM, Deputy Mayor for Education and Childcare] and her team to find out more detailed information as to whether there are interventions that she has taken to increase the take-up. Certainly, it would be worth trying to find out what the barriers are to people taking it up. Why are they reluctant to do so? Is it about our messaging? It may well be a combination of both of those things.

Alice Wilcock (Assistant Director, Team London (Volunteering) and Sport, Greater London

Authority): There is an emerging parent and carers network for GLA staff, which is just in the throes of getting going now, and it could be that one of the things that network could look at is how we promote internally the policies and arrangements that are available to us as staff in case people just do not know about them.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): OK, let us move on the section "A great place to work and do business", Assembly Member Devenish.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you, Chair. Debbie, we have talked a lot this morning about whether you and the Mayor have levers to pull to make these things happen. Clearly one lever you have - £311 million worth of

lever - is the AEB that has moved across to you, or rather to Jules Pipe [CBE, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills]. Can I ask in that context particularly what more could be done to reduce the employment gap between the genders and disabled, please?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): That is a good question. I would like to take it in two parts. I know that in relation to gender we have a pay gap in London which has been slowly reducing. The latest data that I have seen is that if you were working full-time and a woman in 1997, the pay gap between you and your male counterpart was around 15.1%, but by 2017 it had reduced to 14.6%, which meant that it had gone down by about 0.5% over 20 years. Progress on this issue has been incredibly slow.

One of the things that we are trying to do here at the GLA is to lead by example. If we are to make any real, meaningful change on the gender pay gap issue, not only do we have to make pay gap reporting mandatory, but we also have to try to make sure it is enforceable, particularly for those organisations which refuse to give up their data. Also, it would be important for us to reduce the benchmark for reporting. At the moment it is for organisations which are 250 employees and above, and that should be reduced to 50. In a city like London, the majority of people who are in work are not necessarily in some of the larger anchor institutions that we know of, which are dotted around the city, but the majority of people are working for small to medium-sized organisations. If there is a gender pay gap that we need to look at, we probably need to be looking at what it looks like in those places.

In relation to the gender pay gap, leading by example is important. What the Mayor has done in making sure that he reported on the gender pay gap a year before he was legally required to do so was important, and I know that we have also reported for two years on our ethnicity pay gap and we are not legally required to do so. Making sure that we are not necessarily doing what the law says we should do but doing it because it is morally right to do so is also important.

I know that we need to also improve opportunities for flexible working. We have been working actively with Timewise, which I know is very good at working with employers to make sure that we increase the numbers of flexible jobs that are available, making sure that they are good-quality jobs, that they are senior-level jobs, which are good ways of bringing women into the workforce. I am delighted that I have four women in my team who are both working two jobs. I have two here who are sharing a job. I also have two women who are leading my Social Integration Team and sharing a job there. It is about making sure that you bring more flexible opportunities for women so that they can enter the workforce, and also part-time working, and Our Time. I have some effective officers.

The Mayor has also made it very clear that he wants to ensure that he has good representation at senior levels. There are a number of boards which are associated with the GLA and GLA functional bodies which have at least 50% of their board members who are women. It is about trying to provide those better recruitment opportunities, doing work where we match people in senior-level positions with those who have potential, as we have been doing through Our Time, which is another initiative that we are running here at City Hall, and trying to use what we are doing here to send a signal out to other employers.

On the disability pay gap, I have to thank the Committee for the report that you produced on the disability pay gap. It included some important recommendations that could add to the debate on this issue. We certainly know, in the engagement that we have had with many of our stakeholders, that underrepresentation of disabled Londoners in London's workforce is an issue, as is taking action on the disability pay gap. We know that the work you have started here is also important in our engagement with those stakeholders.

Earlier on in the year, myself and the Mayor met with a group of deaf and disabled people's organisations, and this is a stakeholder group which we met with which is part of my EDI Advisory Group - sorry, another acronym - and we have representatives in that group who lead stakeholder meetings for us. They are going to be leading two per year, and we had one earlier this year with our deaf and disabled people's organisations and stakeholders. They raised directly with the Mayor the issue of not only just access to work, but the measurement of the disability pay gap.

With respect to this, there are a couple of issues. One is certainly in relation to disclosure. We know that there are barriers to disclosure of disabled workers in workforces, and there is a piece of work that we need to do to encourage better disclosure from those individuals with disabilities so that we can more actively, proactively and accurately measure who is in the workforce and what the gaps are that exist in terms of their pay.

Tony Devenish AM: That is all very good, but you have talked a lot about how you are getting more women in your team. Do you have any disabled people in your team? Are you living what you are preaching?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes, I do have a disabled person [in my team]. Yes, I do. In addition to what Alice [Wilcock] raised in relation to the last question, we should also be making better use of our staff networks. We do have a disability staff network. We have a BAME staff network, we have a women's staff network, and we also have a network which is coming together for parents. What is important about those networks is that they have a good relationship with employers across the GLA. GLA employers may feel better able to speak to their peers about the issues that they are experiencing, and those groups may also be the better-placed groups to help us to do that work around improving disclosure for disabled workers.

We are also trying to measure or think about ways to measure socioeconomic pay gaps and LGBT+ pay gaps. When it comes to many of these pay gaps, again it is down to disclosure, but there is a piece of work that we are very keen to do around trying to address that issue.

There is also a broader issue around making sure that employers feel that they have access to the support and guidance that they need to recruit more effectively. We will shortly be launching the Good Work Standard, and part of that standard will include a requirement for employers to ensure that they are engaging in more diverse and inclusive recruitment practices as well as retention. Part of that means giving them the support and the advice and the guidance that they need to do that work effectively. There are many employers who feel that they do not have the access to the advice and the guidance that they need to diversify their workforces in that way. If we could support them as much as possible, that would be a useful thing for us to do.

Tony Devenish AM: OK, thank you. You did not mention the AEB at all in your answer. Carrying on to my second question, can more be done to help increase the number and diversity of people getting the skills they need? As you have a budget of over £300 million - not you personally, but Jules [Pipe CBE] - perhaps you can illustrate that, please.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes. I mentioned before that the AEB, once we have access to it, will be thinking more proactively about ways to support a range of Londoners to access skills. One of the ways in which they can do that is to address ESOL in relation to those individuals who do not have access to English as a second language and they need additional training to do so. Also, it is about ensuring that we are providing skills to those individuals who need to access the labour market, and that will include those individuals who identify as

disabled as well as others who come from a range of different protected characteristics. The Mayor is committed to supporting those individuals who are on low incomes. He is also committed to making sure that we are using that fund effectively to tackle all of the nine protected characteristics, but specifically where there are gaps in relation to the labour market. That will be part of us ensuring that we are providing the right sorts of skills for Londoners.

Engaging the stakeholders is also an important part of that. We do a great deal of community engagement ourselves in our team, and we need to make sure that if we are to provide the skills that Londoners need, they are responsive to the needs that Londoners tell us they have, and that we are targeting it as effectively as possible.

Tony Devenish AM: Without trying to repeat the record, can I go back to the measurement question that some of my colleagues have asked? In terms of the AEB, what are you asking that team to measure to meet these very commendable aims?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): We are not asking them to measure anything in relation to the AEB as yet because they do not have access to it. Once they do have access to the skills budget, then we will be working with them. We have been working with them to make sure that the skills budget is spent on the groups that we think need to have that additional access. We will be asking them. We have asked them, and we have worked with them on ESOL, for example. We have asked them, and we have worked with them on making sure that they are providing support and guidance for those on low incomes. We have a piece of work specifically working with those who are paid less than the London Living Wage, that they have access to funding for skills. We have also worked with them in respect of supporting parents to be able to access the training that they need to get into the labour market. We are working with them to ensure that they are meeting the requirements that we feel properly reflect the needs of Londoners in respect of a range of areas. We are engaging with them as much as possible. As Kathleen [Kelly] said, we are having those regular meetings with the team.

I know that the skills team has spent some time talking to a range of different groups across the GLA. They also spoke to us. They spoke to the Economic Fairness Team. They are seeking guidance from the teams across the GLA to make sure that they are spending the fund as accurately and as adequately as possible.

Tony Devenish AM: OK. I will leave it there. Could you write to us with some specifics in terms of what you will by the autumn be asking them to measure on? Otherwise, as we said before, if we do not have targets that we can measure, it is all talk. Thank you very much.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Let us move on then to the section "Getting around". Caroline Pidgeon?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, I am afraid it is going to sound a bit like a stuck record because I want to pick up this issue of how you are measuring this. Your metrics are over-65s, BAME, public transport usage and how satisfied people are with public transport, but if you look at the objectives below that, it is far wider than those groups. What metrics could you publish that are more aligned to those objectives, and why haven't you included, for example, any crime statistics to demonstrate progress against objective 27, which is about helping to reduce crime and fear of crime on public transport?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): In respect of the metrics that TfL has, TfL has an Action on Equality Strategy, and the metrics it has included within that Strategy are in line with the indicators on the EDI Strategy. For detail on those

metrics I will be happy to go to TfL itself so that it can come back and provide you with an answer on the metrics specifically. We know that what it is trying or hoping to measure in respect of its Action on Equality Strategy is very much in line with our EDI Strategy, and we are happy with that in relation to that. I would be happy to go to Heidi Alexander [Deputy Mayor for Transport] and get her to provide you with more detailed information on the metrics within that Strategy specifically.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: In the Mayor's Annual Equality Report, what you are doing is so high-level it is almost meaningless, when you have much more detail below it of what your objectives are. Let us show how you are meeting those objectives, something broader, taking a bigger chunk out of TfL's work. Is that something you will consider for the future?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): As I mentioned before, this is our first attempt to measure those objectives. It is the first time we have done a report of this nature. We need to make sure that we are learning from the sorts of questions that people have about whether it is measuring effectively what you all feel it should be measuring, and it is certainly something that we can look at whilst working and talking with TfL and with Heidi's [Alexander] team going forward. It is an important suggestion, Caroline. I would be happy to look into doing that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Will that include the issue around crime statistics? You have not included any crime statistics to demonstrate progress against objective 27, which is to help reduce crime. Is that something you will consider going forward?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes. In respect of the work that we have been doing with MOPAC, I know that MOPAC collects its own crime statistics. What we importantly wanted to do was not to, I suppose, reproduce a lot of what people are doing but not to reinvent the wheel so much. MOPAC does itself collect its own crime statistics.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: This is different. This is not MOPAC. Because this is on the transport network, it is the British Transport Police (BTP), and TfL pays for some officers. TfL would probably collect that.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): We can go back to TfL and get those detailed statistics for you, if that would be helpful. I can do that in writing.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, you can share that information now. I am just thinking how you can improve this strategy going forward. For example, why are you measuring public transport usage for BAME Londoners? You have that as a measure, but it is not actually an objective. It does not make sense.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): When it comes to groups like that, having it as an indicator or as a measure rather than as an objective is our way of identifying some of those equalities trends that we think are important. There are groups that we know have challenges when it comes to travelling around. Some of that is in relation to what you say around safety, but some of it is also in relation to feeling that they are able to travel around without fear of being abused or experiencing the network in a negative way. It is part of our attempt to ensure that travelling around London is not something which is negative for an individual simply by virtue of their ethnicity or their religious affiliation. Some of that may well pick up some of the issues that you have raised in relation

to safety and crime, and it is important to make that link there, but it is also in relation to making sure that we are aware that there are some groups for whom travelling on public transport is difficult and challenging.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Also, it would be interesting if you are looking at cycling. Making sure more women cycle and more BAME Londoners cycle, there are challenges there. It is whether you are targeting that in your work as well or with TfL.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes, absolutely. I know that we have been supporting some of the initiatives that TfL is engaged in in relation to trying to ensure that the network is safer for women. There are a variety of different projects that it runs, such as Project Guardian and other similar types of projects, which are about protecting women so that they are free from sexual harassment or they can report or feel able to report sexual harassment or sexual offences on the transport network. I completely take your point. There are groups for whom travelling is difficult. We need to do all we can to make sure that we are using the evidence at our disposal to identify those groups who are experiencing the network and other parts of the city more negatively than other groups. That is certainly one of them.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You are working with TfL and it has a huge, established body of work in this area, but what more can be done to make transport more inclusive and accessible? What are you doing around that?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): This is a good question. I know that TfL has engaged in quite a lot of engagement with a number of the stakeholders who we also engage with, and it is quite commendable that it does a lot of the engagement that it does, certainly with older Londoners and with disabled Londoners. As the Annual Report outlines, it has been working quite closely with the Design Council to support engineers and architects to make the transport system more inclusive for all Londoners, including disabled Londoners and older Londoners. Also, there will be a roll-out of the Dementia Friends project, which will be rolled out to other bus drivers, which will help them to be better able to identify and support, where possible, a traveller who is showing signs of dementia. I know that it is also engaging in increasing better disability training for its staff to make sure that it is providing a more inclusive service for travellers on the network.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Obviously we have seen a spate of knife crime headlines and terrible incidents across the capital. Do you believe that the Mayor has helped to reduce crime and the fear of crime in relation to public transport?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): I know that there was a very recent incident where two women experienced a very serious homophobic attack when they were just going about their everyday business on one of the buses in London, and I, like anyone, was as appalled and disgusted by that incident as anyone else. The Mayor, I know, has committed to providing support certainly to LGBT+ groups, but also to all groups who experience hate crime, regardless of where they are. It is incredibly important that we recognise that there are lots of opportunities where people have experienced hate crime on the bus network, on the Tube and on the trains. He is committed to supporting around 250 events for National Hate Crime Awareness Week, which will take place later on in October [2019]. I know that he supports some of those initiatives that we spoke about a short while ago in relation to making sure women feel safer on the network, and I know that he is keen to ensure that we send out that message of safety to groups of individuals.

In relation to hate crime, but also in relation to knife crime, I know that there are plans certainly with the VRU to focus on some of those transport hubs which I know can create great risks for young people whilst going about travelling in relation to being a victim of knife crime or any other type of serious violence, and the Mayor, with Lib Peck [Director, VRU], is working very carefully to ensure that we are doing all we can to make those transport networks safer.

Certainly in relation to hate crime, there is a broader issue to highlight, which is that a lot of the work that we do is around trying to do that preventative piece, so trying to provide the sorts of initiatives that will help people to make those links across boundaries, to break down all of those tensions, but we also need to recognise that there are lots of groups who are experiencing increased levels of hate crime both on the transport network and in other areas of their lives. There are a couple of things that we are trying to do to raise awareness.

Later on this week we will be holding an event here at London's Living Room where we will be celebrating 50 years of the Stonewall uprising and 30 years of Stonewall, the organisation, and we will be celebrating Ruth Hunt's [Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Stonewall] tenure as CEO, but we are also specifically at that event promoting and highlighting the experiences of young LGBT+ individuals but also BAME LGBT+ individuals and young trans individuals. These are groups who often remain quite voiceless. We do not hear as much about their experiences, and we want to use that event as an opportunity to highlight some of the quite negative experiences that many young BAME and trans groups are currently experiencing. I know this is taking it slightly away from the focus on the Tube network, but it speaks to a wider piece of work that we are doing to raise awareness of the sorts of quite negative experiences that some vulnerable groups are experiencing in the city.

We have also done quite a bit of engagement with the Mayor's Community Alliance to Combat Hate (CATCH) team, which is a coalition of organisations which support particular groups of individuals who experience hate crime across London, and that group includes Galop, which supports those who experience LGBT+ hate crime, Community Security Trust, which supports those who experience antisemitic hate crime, and Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks), which works to rid society of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate, as well as a number of other organisations. It is important to champion their work, and we will be doing wider engagement both with them and with other teams to increase, I suppose, the ability of individuals who are nearby an incident to feel empowered, to not just be a bystander, not to intervene when it will be putting their lives at risk but to feel more empowered to support an individual by sitting next to them or just helping them to feel as though they are not alone when they are experiencing hate crime on a public transport network, which we know can be rife at times. We are doing lots of work ourselves to raise awareness about crimes on the network but also in relation to hate crime so that we can raise awareness amongst the general public about ways that we can better support each other.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): If I can just interrupt there, for the sake of our webcast viewers, welcome the boys and girls of the Dorothy Barley Junior Academy from Barking and Dagenham. Opposite me is the Deputy Mayor, who is answering questions from the politicians around this table. We are talking about transport and we are talking about the Mayor's Equalities Plan and we are particularly focusing on questions around crimes on public transport and hate crimes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I realise, because we have got into transport and crime, some of it has taken a little bit from Assembly Member Whittle's questions, so apologies on that.

I have wanted to raise with you about hate crime, and you have talked extensively about some programmes and things you have going on. Obviously in the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan it states that part of your role is to support and increase community cohesion and resilience. Are there any other particular programmes you want to outline for us - we were talking about transport, but beyond - that you are doing just to conclude that piece of work, to build that resilience as well as empowerment in the community and also prevent hate crimes from occurring in the first place?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Absolutely. I have mentioned the London Family Fund, which is an attempt by us to bring different groups together around, I suppose, just their identities as parents, but we are also doing quite a lot of work through Sport Unites, which is our way to promote social integration through sport. At the basis of all of these types of activities are attempts to build some of those bridges and break down some of those misconceptions that exist between groups about each other as much as possible. We recognise that this work is preventative, but we think it is important to do all we can to build some of those bridges between different groups. Our Sport Unites initiatives are about trying to bring individuals together quite simply through their love of sport and either as participants or just as fans of sports, and we have spent a great deal of time supporting some of those smaller organisations that are doing important bits of work in their local communities to break down barriers.

One of the projects that I could cite here is a group called Muslim Girls Fence, which is an initiative which brings together Muslim women and non-Muslim women to do fencing. These initiatives may seem quite simplistic to a lot of people, but these are groups of women who may not ordinarily spend any time in each other's company but have come together principally to learn how to fence, but also to talk about their local area. They talk about safety in their local area, how they move about their local area, what it means to be a woman in the place in which they are.

These are the sorts of initiatives which are very small-scale, I completely recognise, but they are important in trying to show the similarity that exists between people, that we are all the same. If we can do as many as those types of initiatives as possible, we can begin to break down some of those barriers that cause some of those real difficulties that exist between groups.

We have also been involved with something that we have called citizen-led engagement. It is a programme of work where we support groups of individuals who people may ordinarily term as being hard to reach. These are groups of individuals who will never come to City Hall, who have a fear of this institution and everyone who works within it. What we have done is we have given them some funding. We have given them the tools to conduct their own research so that they can tackle the problems which are of importance to them. They can go into their communities. They can speak to the individuals that we at City Hall do not ordinarily have the opportunity to speak to. They can get the evidence that they need to say, "This is an issue for us, and we know because we have conducted that research", and then they can bring it to us and we can act with our powers, with our support, with our funding, to tackle the issues that they have raised for us. That is about trying to give them the opportunity to take control of their own lives, but take control over the way in which they determine what the problem is, they determine what the solution is, they determine how they think it should be addressed, and we do as we are told, quite effectively, because they are the experts on that particular issue.

Alice Wilcock (Assistant Director, Team London (Volunteering) and Sport, Greater London Authority): That kind of bottom-up approach is very much one that we also use in the Model City project that we are running partnership with Laureus Sport for Good, where we are working in three areas in London

on an asset base, community development, bottom-up basis, using sport to increase the resilience and the social integration in those areas. As Debbie was mentioning, this is an engagement project. It is very much community led.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You have mentioned the London Family Fund and possibly a couple of other things this morning. I wonder if in the follow-up correspondence we could have information on that because it is the sort of thing, when we are out talking to groups, we might want to mention, "If you have this project in mind, this is possibly somewhere you could secure funding".

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Absolutely. We would be happy to do that. Thank you.

Sian Berry AM: I just wanted to go back to people using transport and the equalities issues that exist there. Your metrics are for increasing older people and BAME people on public transport. Your objective 23 says you want to be addressing barriers to walking and cycling, and objective 24 is about spreading the news about the cheapest way to travel. Obviously, walking and cycling are the cheapest ways to travel because there are no fares at all. I just wanted to raise that issue ask whether or not you should not be having a metric that looks at increasing participation among particular groups who are hard to get walking and cycling. That includes older people, some younger people, and certain BAME groups particularly, and women in general. Those are all issues for them.

There was in terms of measuring this a survey published every year by TfL called *Attitudes towards Cycling*, and it tracked different demographics and their experiences with cycling and was useful. It has not been published properly since 2016. It is unclear from inquiries our team has made here whether it is still being collected. Some information was able to be brought out in 2017. It would be good if you could get back to TfL and ask about this because it particularly relates to your work. TfL feels like the Travel Demand Survey covers this, but when it comes to attitudes and barriers, which is your specific objective, it might be worth chasing that up. I want to ask if you could speak to them and get back to us.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes, I can absolutely do that. I would be very happy to do that.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): A last section, "Safe and health and enjoyable cities". Peter Whittle [AM].

Peter Whittle AM: Thank you, Chair. Yes, Debbie, this is a bit of a wide-ranging one, so I will be quite specific. I have a couple of questions already, but before I ask those I just want to ask one of my statistical questions. In the table here we are talking about, we have figures for cultural participation. These all appear to be worsening except for arts events, which are improving. I just wondered, could you explain what would come under arts events? The others are quite clear: heritage sites, library use, museum and gallery attendance. What would it cover, arts events?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): I am going to make a massive assumption here. We have worked very closely with the Culture Team, trying to increase the diversification of those who are participating in various cultural events around the city. I know that the Culture Team has a programme of work called the Culture Seeds, which is a micro-grant programme which it gives to small groups who are running various arts and culture-based events. Around half of the recipients of the Culture Seeds programme are from minority ethnic backgrounds. It is incredibly likely

that those organisations are working with audiences or groups who might want to enjoy the arts materials that they are producing, so they are directly working with diverse audiences, which could contribute towards that.

We are also ourselves engaged in a number of initiatives which are specifically around increasing access to the arts for particular groups. For example, we launched something recently which was called Africa in London, which was principally around bringing together as much as possible all of the events which are taking place throughout the summer between now and September [2019] which are focusing on either the African diaspora or are arts-based initiatives which are run by people of African descent. We had a launch here at City Hall. It was incredibly well attended. We have a website which is principally messaging to the city all of the events that people can go to. We know that this is something that those individuals who are of African heritage have specifically asked for. We have been working with the Africa Centre, with the Black Cultural Archives and a range of other groups who have said to us, "These are the sorts of events that people of African heritage want to attend. If you put them on in this way, then they will go to them". We are being guided by what our stakeholders are telling us, and that is no doubt clearly contributing to increased interest in arts and cultural events in the city.

Peter Whittle AM: I see. It would be true to say this is like a festival? This is a sort of festival?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes.

Peter Whittle AM: You would have, what, visual arts and performing arts and everything?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes. We would have a range of different arts. There will be exhibitions. There is also music. There are also plays. There are also a range of different activities. The theme that runs through all of them is that they are either focused specifically on representing the African diaspora, representing Africa generally, or they are events that have been led or designed or curated by people of African descent.

Peter Whittle AM: I see. Just one more. What about the Society of London Theatre, West End theatres, things like that? They have various initiatives. Would you work hand-in-hand with the National Theatre and people like that?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): This is important. I know that the Culture Team themselves have been working with the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Communications and Theatre Union, which is the group which represents those --

Peter Whittle AM: They are production people.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes. I know that they are actively involved in doing work themselves, so that is not necessarily work that I am directly involved in, but I am constantly talking with Justine [Simons OBE, Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries] and her team about the work that they are doing. Should they need any advice or guidance from any of us, we would be happy to provide it, but they have a good engagement programme with a range of different theatres across the city. It may well be that they are engaging with the National Theatre in that way.

Peter Whittle AM: OK. Thank you. A rather clumsy segue-way from cultural activity to safety. Caroline [Pidgeon MBE AM] has already, I know, touched on this. Recently we had a most appalling - it shocked people, the pictures - attack on a lesbian couple on a London bus. What steps have there been? This is almost one for the Police and Crime Committee (PCC). Anyway, what steps have there been to curtail attacks on buses, particularly on buses, when it comes to the LGBT+ community and to reassure gay people that they are going to be safe on buses? What steps have been taken that you know of? Presumably you work with MOPAC and people.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): That is a good question and I kind of answered some of it in relation to Caroline's question, but I know that we are doing an awareness-raising piece around hate crime and around supporting LGBT+ communities. I mentioned earlier that we are running an event later this week. This is Pride Week also and so there are a range of different events that the Mayor himself will be involved in. There is a reception here in the middle of the week, and we will be starting off Pride on Saturday.

Peter Whittle AM: Sorry, I do not want to interrupt too much, but the awareness is there. People do not need to be made aware. What I want to know is how people will be made safe. We all know, so how will they be made safe?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): That is a question for the PCC. That is definitely a question for MOPAC. I know that there are initiatives that the Mayor is directly involved in to do the awareness-raising piece, which you say we may not need to do, but what we are doing to make people safe on the transport network would be one for MOPAC.

I have mentioned before in the answer that I gave to Caroline [Pidgeon MBE AM] that I know the VRU is focusing on transport hubs because these are particular places in which certainly young people, but also other individuals experience real difficulty when it comes to avoiding serious violence. There is a piece of work that the VRU is doing in respect of that, working very closely with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Certainly, in respect to ways of making people feel safe, that is definitely a question for MOPAC. I would be happy to go back to Sophie [Linden, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime] and her team to get a more detailed question on the steps they have been taking since that attack.

We are certainly aware that this is a clear issue for our EDI advisors, whom we have met with during this year already. In our inaugural meeting with them they raised the very important issue of safety and hate crime particularly for LGBT+ groups but also those who come from a range of protected characteristics who we know are experiencing increased harms. It is something that we ourselves will be trying to work more closely with MOPAC on, and we have held one event where we have linked up our EDI advisors with the CATCH team, as I have mentioned, but also a representative from the MPS who works specifically on hate crime, to reassure our EDI members of the initiatives and interventions that they are working on to make people safer. I know that there are a variety of different initiatives that MOPAC is involved in.

It might also be worth noting, whilst this was an event that clearly took place on a bus, there is a consultation that is out at the moment which is perhaps taking it slightly away from what we are focusing on, but there is a Government consultation out at the moment which is on ways to tackle online harm. We certainly know that when it comes to amplifying homophobia, transphobia, racism and Islamophobia, all of those different experiences, there are certain social media platforms on which this type of discourse is rife. We are going to be part of the response that we will give back to the Government on ensuring that we have regulations for the

ways in which online platforms deal with perpetrators of online hate. We know that LGBT+, Muslims, women and people of colour – those individuals who are just trying to use social media for the reasons that perhaps those who have designed the platforms wanted them to be used for – are experiencing almost on a daily basis levels of hate which are clearly unacceptable.

Peter Whittle AM: Is transport a particular flashpoint for attacks? We were talking about buses here.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes. Certainly, in relation to serious youth violence, there are certain transport hubs which are flashpoints for the risk of violence for some young people. That is why that has been particularly prioritised within the VRU by Lib Peck, and it is something that she is clear we need to do specific pieces of work on, given that there are real issues that we need to pay attention to in that space.

Peter Whittle AM: When it comes to the details in this particular case, that will be something to ask MOPAC and the PCC, won't it?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): Yes, definitely.

Peter Whittle AM: There is some confusion – because there is lots of closed-circuit television (CCTV) on buses and it has never been released. Why do we not know who did this?

Len Duvall AM (Chair): The PCC is inviting in the BTP, and we will be able to --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Buses, though, are the MPS [responsibility], aren't they?

Len Duvall AM (Chair): On buses, the BTP does that as well as the MPS. The PCC is inviting in the BTP and the MPS to talk about some of these issues further and so we will discuss it at the PCC.

Peter Whittle AM: One more, then. It is going on to healthiness. What can the Mayor reasonably be expected to achieve in addressing health inequalities. What can he reasonably be expected to achieve? Not much, eh?

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Sociality Mobility and Community Engagement): I would not say that. I know that he has a strategy specifically addressing this issue. In relation to the work they are doing, this will be another occasion where I can get them to come back to you to talk about what plans they have for the Mayor to address with health inequalities.

When it comes to the way that certain groups experience health equality, there is a lot of work that we need to do, certainly in relation to the relationship that exists between poverty and health and the fact that that is having that severe impact on particular groups of individuals, so those who come from some minority ethnic groups certainly, who have worse health outcomes than other groups. I would clearly imagine that there is a relationship between the Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy but also the work that we are doing more broadly to tackle poverty because the two are clearly interlinked.

Kathleen Kelly (Assistant Director, Communities and Social Policy, Greater London Authority): There is also an implementation plan on the Health Inequalities Strategy that the Health Committee is fully

engaged in. They are aware of the implementation plan on that, but we can follow up, as Debbie suggests, and give you more information on that.

Alice Wilcock (Assistant Director, Team London (Volunteering) and Sport, Greater London Authority): The Health Inequalities Strategy also has an obvious linkage to the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy of the Mayor. One very important strand of Sport Unites's programme is the Active Londoners strand, which represents £1.25 million of grant funding available over a three-year period. That is particularly intended to enable Londoners who are less physically active. Also, the fund is focused on using sport to overcome mental health issues as well. It is aligned very closely with the Health Inequalities Strategy in terms of using sport as a way of improving both physical and mental health.

Peter Whittle AM: There is follow-up, in other words?

Alice Wilcock (Assistant Director, Team London (Volunteering) and Sport, Greater London Authority): Yes.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): At this point I want to thank the Deputy Mayor for the way that she has answered our questions, and her team. I would like us to reflect on your answers. We need to pick up the bits and pieces and who we need to write to for further information, and we would like to use you as the conduit to the rest of your colleagues. Then what I would like to do via email, if we can, is decide whether we want to call back any of those other colleagues for further questioning, if there is merit in some of the answers we have.

I do want to pick up the theme - it is not just this area - about the measurement issues. It is something that has gone on for too long, and I do need to pick it up with the Head of Paid Service and the Chief of Staff. That is who we have been dealing with on this in terms of mayoral reports. It is not just your particular one. It has been an issue on other reports as well. Thank you again.