

## Mayor's Question Time – Thursday, 12 September 2019

### Transcript of Item 5 – Questions to the Mayor

#### 2019/17388 - Greenest Mayor or business as usual

Caroline Russell AM

*Are you set to be the “greenest Mayor ever” as claimed in your manifesto, or are you doing more to support business as usual?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Can I again, as I do on this issue, thank the Assembly Member for her continued support on this very important issue?

My ambition was and still is to be the greenest Mayor ever and I am on track to achieve. I have been clear that we face a climate emergency and there is an urgent need to clean up London's toxic air. Since becoming Mayor, I have set ambitious targets that are some of the boldest in the world. I want London to become a zero-carbon and -waste city and to have the best air quality of any major world city.

Since taking office, we have made significant progress in delivering on these goals. London was one of the first three megacities to produce a Climate Action Plan to be compatible with the Paris Agreement. This year the Carbon Disclosure Project rated London as one of only 7% of cities globally to receive an exclusive A grade for climate and environment actions. I have introduced the world's toughest emission standard, the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), to clean up London's filthy air. The Conservatives opposed bringing this in this year, but this has already seen almost 75% compliance and 9,400 fewer cars driving into central London per day.

We have created a new on-street rapid electric vehicle charging point network, from two points when I became elected to over 200 points now, more than in New York or Paris. There are now over 200 electric buses operating in London, now the largest fleet in Europe, and we have two exclusively electric double-decker bus routes in London, 43 and 134. These are not just a first in London or a first in the UK; they are a first for Europe. I have also delivered on my manifesto commitment to deliver 12 Low Emission Bus Zones ahead of schedule.

I have also delivered on my commitment to make London the world's first National Park City and I have planted more trees in my first three years as Mayor than the previous Mayor did in eight years. I am also taking an international lead. I am the Vice Chair of C40 [Cities Climate Leadership Group] and I am working with partners to bring down the price of electric buses and lobby for greater climate action and tighter environmental standards. However, I only have powers to deliver less than half the emission cuts required to make London zero-carbon. We urgently need new policies and funding at a national level.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Thank you, Mr Mayor, and you know I support several of your initiatives, but it is my job to push you further and to share good ideas from the Greens and the community that can help when there is so much at stake with the climate emergency.

Do you have a plan to decarbonise transport in London by 2030?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** The plans we have published are, as you know, to 2050 with timelines and resources. The big issue in relation to transport is the grid and so one of things we are doing is lobbying the

Government for both powers and resources. If we get more powers and resources, we can quite easily move towards 2030.

My concern is that at the moment, without the Government's support, it is difficult to see how to get to 2050 and that is why I mentioned the fact that only half of the emissions are from transport. The other half - from construction, housing, the River Thames - are not within our powers. At the moment, it is difficult to get to zero carbon by 2050, let alone 2030.

**Caroline Russell AM:** At the moment there is not a plan. You have been clear that you are against Heathrow expansion but you do support expansion at Gatwick. Does that not undermine your climate emergency declaration?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Firstly, there is a premise at the beginning of your second question, which is wrong. You said there was no plan to get to 2030 zero-carbon. There would be very easily if the Government was to give us the powers and resources. Once we know we can get to zero carbon by 2050, it is not difficult, bearing in mind the climate emergency, to move forward to 2030.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Yes, but, Mr Mayor, you could have a plan, but can you answer my question about Gatwick, please?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** We have declared a climate emergency and we have a plan to get us to 2050. With the right support, we can move there to 2030 as well.

In relation to aviation expansion, you will be aware that I have joined the judicial review in relation to the decision of the Government to have a new third runway. We have been given leave to appeal and that hearing will be held in October [2019].

One of the concerns I have is that Heathrow appeared to be bagging the improvements we have made to air quality through our policies from City Hall as a way of justifying the expansion they wanted to do at Heathrow. I am quite clear in relation to expansion in London that I will not support expansion of airports in London if it leads to poor air quality or poor noise pollution --

**Caroline Russell AM:** To be clear, you do support expansion at Gatwick?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** No, I have been quite clear. If the argument is that there needs to be increased aviation capacity in the southeast of the country, there is a much better solution to Heathrow, which is both less environmentally damaging and less damaging to air quality. It is a cheaper and can happen quicker --

**Caroline Russell AM:** Mr Mayor, you support aviation expansion at Gatwick.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** That is an assertion, not a question. The question you are asking is whether I support --

**Caroline Russell AM:** What I am hearing you say --

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** What I am explaining to you is: if the argument is that we need increased aviation capacity, the answer is to have that increased aviation capacity not at Heathrow's third runway but to have --

**Caroline Russell AM:** Do you accept that we need more aviation capacity?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** It depends. That is an argument that has to be made. We know that the Climate Change Committee has said that there is a number of things that have to be satisfied if they are going to support aviation capacity being increased. I am saying that if the argument is that we must have increased aviation capacity in the southeast of the country, the answer is not Heathrow.

**Caroline Russell AM:** Thank you. Would the greenest Mayor ever build a new motorway tunnel at Silvertown?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** There is no motorway tunnel being built at Silvertown. That misrepresentation of what is happening leads to the public being cynical about politicians, whatever colour you are on the ballot paper. The reality is this: we have a position in that part of London where the air is toxic, where there can be two-hour traffic jams caused by Blackwall [Tunnel] closing down on average 700 times a year, leading to children in those schools breathing in toxic, poisonous air. We have the least reliable bus going through that tunnel. People do not use it because it is so unreliable.

What we are proposing is not to stick our head in the sand and have the status quo but to have a solution to the gridlock that exists around that part of London. That solution --

**Caroline Russell AM:** Mr Mayor, every time you answer this, it gets a bit worse and you sound a bit less convincing.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** What? Chair, I have to answer the question.

**Caroline Russell AM:** The greenest Mayor ever would not be supporting business-as-usual at Gatwick or at Silvertown. I have no further questions.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Assembly Member Russell is out of time.

## **2019/17620 - No-Deal Brexit & London's economy**

[Leonie Cooper AM](#)

*Is London's economy at risk of recession due to a No-Deal Brexit?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. You have ruled this question in order and so it must be appropriate, Chair, for me to answer this question, which is on a no-deal Brexit.

According to the Bank of England and the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), there is a very real risk of a recession if the UK crashes out of the EU without a deal. A no-deal Brexit would cause huge disruption, making us poorer and less safe, and diminishing our global standing. It would endanger hundreds of thousands of jobs and tens of billions of pounds in investment and would put the rights and freedoms of EU Londoners at risk.

Last week saw Members of Parliament (MPs) from all political parties, including Conservatives, bring forward legislation to rule out a potentially devastating no-deal Brexit at the end of October [2019]. The Prime Minister must now seek an extension from the EU by 9 October to prevent this from happening, but that only

means that the threat of a no-deal Brexit will be delayed unless the country can figure out how to move forward.

I am concerned that a no-deal Brexit is the Government's preferred scenario, despite its own assessment warning that it could lead to consumer panic, rising crime, food shortages and economic chaos, the Government's own assessment.

It is now a year since I asked the London Resilience Forum to establish the impact of a no-deal Brexit. While I have been doing everything within my power to plan for a no-deal Brexit, the very best that can be achieved is merely a mitigation of the worst impacts on Londoners and our city. I have also written to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, to request a meeting to ensure the Government is clear about the grave concerns we have and I will be meeting him next week.

Let us be under no illusions about the dangers of a no-deal Brexit, both here in London and across the UK. These are unprecedented times. The new Prime Minister has no mandate to gamble with the future of the economy and people's livelihoods. The huge risk we now face of a no-deal Brexit means that giving people a fresh say on our future is now the right and only approach left for the good of London and the country.

**Leonie Cooper AM:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you for that, Mr Mayor, and also your initial comments in your statement.

We have seen very recently - given moves in Parliament on an absolutely cross-party basis, as you say, to block a no-deal Brexit - that the pound has actually increased in value. Does that show confidence and investing has grown? Do you think that this is something that we need to be worrying about, the effect on the pound and the effect on the City of London and London as a whole?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** There are some responsible businesses that are worried about instability. By the way, there are some hedge fund managers, many of whom supported and funded this Prime Minister, who will do very well and who are doing very well out of instability, out of chaos, out of a no-deal Brexit. Some of these people, by the way, made a fortune when the country voted to leave the EU in June 2016 and the pound crashed on that date. I am worried about the currency markets. I was speaking to brokers yesterday morning in relation to some of their concerns about the instability and uncertainty and damage to our economy.

Let us be frank. Some people will make a fortune out of a no-deal Brexit. A few people who support this Prime Minister will make a fortune. The vast majority of businesses will suffer hugely. Do not just take my word for it. Look at what the OBR is saying. Look at what the Bank of England is saying. Yesterday I also met with the Confederation of British Industry, the London Chamber of Commerce, London First, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Institute of Directors. Nobody is talking about sunny uplands.

**Leonie Cooper AM:** There is a very long list of bodies and people who are very concerned, particularly about a no-deal Brexit. The last Prime Minister did spend a lot of time talking about an orderly transition and leaving the EU on an orderly basis to try to mitigate some of these problems.

However, there is someone in this room, one of the other Assembly Members, who says that a no-deal Brexit is not the greatest challenge facing ordinary Londoners or businesses. Do you agree with that at all?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** No. Anybody who is not willing to stand up to Boris Johnson's [Prime Minister] no-deal Brexit is unfit to be a Member of the Assembly let alone a Londoner. It is quite clear that no

deal would be catastrophic for jobs, for growth, for families. Look at what the [Operation] Yellowhammer document published last night in full says. In the short term --

**Leonie Cooper AM:** We are going to come back to Yellowhammer in a minute with another Assembly Member.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** -- there will be public disorder, medicine shortages and an increase in food prices. If you are not willing to say boo to a goose when the consequences are this catastrophic, what is the point of running to be Mayor?

**Leonie Cooper AM:** We have seen a number of Conservative members expelled from the Conservative Party in Parliament and we have seen some of them standing up and being counted and leaving the Cabinet. That has been very brave and very welcome. Some of them are people who support Brexit but do not support a no-deal Brexit because of the likely impact.

Do you think that a no-deal Brexit is going to increase the cost of living in London for Londoners?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** We already know. You mentioned in your first question the importance of the currency markets. If the pound goes down versus the euro or the dollar - and bear in mind we import so much stuff in this country; 40% of our food comes from the EU - it is hardly surprising to expect the price of food to go up. What the Yellowhammer document shows is that the people who will suffer the most from the increase in food prices are the poorest Londoners.

That is why sensible people understand the consequences of a no-deal Brexit and are campaigning, lobbying and changing the law to make sure that does not happen, even jeopardising their personal careers. Some of these people, by the way, who are friends of mine, Conservative MPs, have dreamed of being MPs and love being Conservative MPs and are giving up that career and the job they love because they think the national interest trumps party political interest and certainly trumps Boris Johnson's interest.

**Leonie Cooper AM:** Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Assembly Member Dismore?

**Andrew Dismore AM:** Mr Mayor, what would be the impact on London's economy of increasing the salary threshold for overseas workers coming here to £36,700, as proposed by the new Conservative Home Secretary Priti Patel?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** It is economic madness. Look, at the moment, using the £30,000 figure that was previously published by the previous Home Secretary, half of Londoners earn less than £30,000. When you bear in mind that many of those are EU citizens, that means they would not be eligible using that £30,000 threshold. If you increase that to £37,000, it means even fewer Londoners earn that sum of money and so, if you are somebody we need from the EU - a nurse, a social care worker, somebody in construction, somebody in hospitality - you simply will not be able to come here. The economy will suffer. Jobs will go down. That does not do our city or country any good whatsoever.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** Yes. I assume, therefore, you agree that there is a significant risk to London's services and the economy if we cannot recruit the skilled workers we need whose incomes do not meet the Conservatives' threshold, for example those in social care and the National Health Service (NHS). A junior doctor would start on £35,750, below the threshold, and a nurse on £21,347, below the threshold. London

already has the highest vacancy rate in the country for the NHS at 14% with over 9,000 posts unfilled and 51% of the EU nurses and midwives who left the register post-Brexit gave that as the reason why they were leaving the NHS and going elsewhere.

What would you say to those such as one Assembly Member who said that the poorest Londoners suffer as a result of immigration because foreign citizens compete with Londoners for jobs, that being Assembly Member Bailey?

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Can I come in here, Mr Mayor? The questions from Assembly Members to you are not about the behaviours or comments made by other Assembly Members. They are about your positioning.

I am going to stop this here because we are getting into dangerous territory here with known candidates for the mayoralty sitting around this table. Can I just finish? I am going to rule and I am going to say, Mr Mayor, can you focus your responses on your responsibilities and your opinions, please?

**Len Duvall AM:** Point of order, Chair. Look, we are aware of those issues and Chair's rulings in the past and we have challenged and we have supported those rulings. We are not naming individuals but it is right to challenge the views of others in this Chamber. It is right for the Mayor to counter those views if he disagrees with them. We on this side will continue to ask questions. We will respectfully try to work within your guidelines around that, but we are not going to be constrained by that. If Members utter statements that are actually causing great damage to Londoners, then we on this side will continue to raise these points in the way that we will raise them within your guidelines, but we are working within those guidelines.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** I will come back to you and say that I shall be very carefully listening to what is being said and done, and at this moment I am just saying to the Mayor that I would ask him to consider answering questions from Assembly Members about his responsibilities and about his opinions on the questions being put.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** Further to that point of order, Madam Chair, I am happy to withdraw the name of Assembly Member Bailey from the question I put, but the issue raised still stands.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Thank you. That is better.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, I will say I am also happy not to mention that these comments were made by Assembly Member Bailey. I am also happy, Chair --

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** No. Do you know? We were just going so well. Let us start again.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Let me rephrase. Let me answer the question by saying, Chair -- I would be very surprised and disappointed if somebody elected to this Assembly thought that the poorest Londoners suffer as a result of immigration because foreign citizens compete with Londoners for jobs, homes and healthcare. If anybody says that and wants to be Mayor, he is not going to win in this city.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Thank you. Assembly Member Shah.

**Navin Shah AM:** Thank you, Mr Mayor. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr Mayor, you already mentioned the Cabinet Office's report on Operation Yellowhammer. Do you think it is scaremongering or does the report have any substance? Following that, do you think London is ready to face the shortages and chaos it will

result in and what steps are you able to take to protect Londoners from acute shortages and the disastrous impact it will have on the economic development of London?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** These are three really important issues you have raised in one question.

Firstly, can I just say this? Look, we know from the Government's own document published last night in full save for one paragraph and published in *The Sunday Times* two weeks ago by Rosamund Urwin [Senior Reporter, *The Sunday Times*] that the Government's own assessment, whether it is a base assessment or a reasonable worst assessment, shows that in the short term there could be public disorder, there could be a shortage of medicines, and food prices could go up. Also, having to reduce tariffs on imports of petrol could lead to jobs being lost and disorder.

This side says that I should not be talking about Brexit or doing any work on Brexit. If I listened to this side, I would be doing nothing whatsoever to address the challenges facing our city. Fortunately, this Mayor does not listen to this side because they talk rubbish a lot of time.

Since last summer, we have been working assiduously on the London Resilience Forum, getting ready for preparedness in preparation for the possibility of leaving the EU, including on 31 October [2019] at 11.00pm. That means Fiona Twycross [AM, Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience] chairing the police, the emergency services, the NHS, the utilities and other experts to make sure we are as ready as we can be for a no-deal Brexit. What the documents published from the Government show is that there are reasons we should be concerned, not just the long-term loss of growth, jobs and prosperity for our city, but in the short term as well.

Now I am being heckled by the Conservatives. They want to shut down Parliament and now they want to shut me up as well. I am not going to let them. I am not going to let them. We know why they want to shut us down: because they are scared about scrutiny and they are scared about being checked and balanced. Here we go. I am being heckled by Conservatives for pointing out to London the risks of a no-deal Brexit.

You are right to be concerned. What we are doing from City Hall, over the objections of the Conservatives, is getting as ready as we can for a no-deal Brexit, which could happen at 11.00pm on 31 October.

**Navin Shah AM:** Mr Mayor, we had a lot of information from this report out in the public domain when it was leaked, but what is more worrying, having looked at the details from that 2 August [2019] report, is the specific worry related to medicines and the shortage that it will have. Particularly, there is reference to social care, which will have a severe impact both in London and right across the nation.

There is a specific reference in the report on fuel shortage in London. Are you able to deal with this from your perspective to protect London from this disorder and the bleak scenario that we will potentially face if there is no deal?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** One of the things I will be asking my Michael Gove [Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster] when I meet him next week is to release to us the information upon which the assessment is based. That is really very important. The Chair of the British Medical Association and others have expressed real concern about not just the NHS directly but social care as well.

These guys will heckle and moan and complain. What they should be doing is addressing the concerns that people have.

**Navin Shah AM:** Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Standing Order 4.4 gives a Member who has been named the right of personal explanation. Does any Member named, especially you Assembly Member Bailey, want your right to give a personal explanation?

**Shaun Bailey AM:** I am aware of Standing Order 4.4 --

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** I am glad you are.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** -- and when I feel like I need to represent myself, I will do so.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** No, he is too scared. He is frit. He is a wuss.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** No, excuse me, Mr Mayor. No.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** He is wrapped in cotton wool. Come on, Shaun. Say something.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** OK. I will tell you what I will say.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Yes, come on.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** We are all in here, trying to conduct our business, working for Londoners and you have taken every opportunity you can to act like a child. Answer the questions --

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Is that it?

**Shaun Bailey AM:** -- and we can get on with our business or you can behave like a child. You talk to us about heckling you. It is because you will not answer the questions. We all know - and so does London know - that you are not doing your job. You speak about everything other than what is important to people and so that is what I would say.

Chair, at some point, he is going to have to behave. If he will not behave, why should I?

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** No, I did not hear anything about your personal position, but that is it. You have been given the opportunity.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, please, can he speak longer?

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** No, Mr Mayor. No, I want to move on because we have just started.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** The more he speaks the better it is for me.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** No, let us move on to the next question.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Gareth [Bacon AM] is not happy, is he? Gareth is not happy with you, Shaun.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Assembly Member Cooper, you wanted to come back?



**Leonie Cooper AM:** Yes. Thank you very much. It is still on the subject of Brexit and it is about --

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, can I just say: do not allow the Conservatives heckling you to put you off raising the important issues.

**Leonie Cooper AM:** I will not. It is a very serious question about things that the Mayor has been doing and the impact on Londoners who may need to seek settled or pre-settled status. The figures nationally show that only 1 million of the 3 million affected and who need to apply have applied. Is that proportion the same in London? Do we know?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, can I just say: your question highlights why this issue is so important to our friends, family and neighbours.

What the current Home Secretary and Prime Minister have said is that the free movement of people will end once we leave the EU without a deal on 31 October. These guys may not want to talk about it, but it is important because, if free movement ends, the right of a Londoner - and they are Londoners, by the way - to leave the UK and then come back could be made more difficult. It could make it more difficult to reunite families. It could make it more difficult for employers to recruit people from the EU. That is why it is so important.

Let me tell you the really shocking figure. The Government does not even know how many people in London have applied and registered for secured status. What we know from the Government is that, roughly speaking, of the 3.3 million people in the country, about 1 million have registered. Just do the maths. If in London there are 1 million EU citizens - Londoners, by the way - and 10% do not register, that is a 100,000 Londoners. That is why, rather than shutting us up, as these guys want to do, we should be talking about it and shouting about it from the rooftops.

The good news is that on 21 September, despite protests from these guys, I will be opening up City Hall and having lawyers present here and advisers present here to give advice to Londoners who are EU citizens about how they can make sure their rights are stabilised and made secure.

**Leonie Cooper AM:** I am very glad to hear that because, like many Londoners, my family came here and at one point my grandmother had problems getting back into the country in a certain situation and was helped by her Labour MP.

I noticed that one of the things that was very helpful was the setting up of the EU portal. We had some disgraceful statements from the current Home Secretary in early August [2019] when she said that immediately free movement would end. I have no idea how she thought this would ever happen. It was a grossly misleading statement. She has been forced to row back from that appalling comment.

Was there a spike in portal access around the time that [Rt Hon Priti] Patel [MP, Home Secretary] said those things?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** We have seen good use of the portal throughout the time. The e-portal is doing good work and people have carried on using the portal. We also have the 21 September event.

What you are seeing is, I am afraid, also, a potential spike in hate crime. We have seen some examples of hate crimes and so we are a bit careful with language. That is why Assembly Member Dismore was right to call out what some people are saying about the impact on people who have been a while by immigrants/EU citizens.

**Leonie Cooper AM:** Thank you very much, Mr Mayor, and thank you for being here to answer our questions, unlike Parliament and unlike people who shut themselves up.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Answer Assembly Member Kurten's question on the taxi fleet.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair.

**Tony Devenish AM:** A real question.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** We have a coalition here. The Brexit Party and the Conservatives have already formed. Forget Nigel Farage [Leader, Brexit Party] and Boris Johnson [Leader, Conservative Party].

## **2019/17346 - Taxi Fleet**

[David Kurten AM](#)

*The number of London registered black cabs has fallen dramatically since May 2016. How will you ensure that the size of London's taxi fleet is not further reduced?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** London's iconic taxis are an important part of our heritage and provide a vital service to people across the city. However, neither TfL nor I have control over the number of licences applied for.

I have made my support for the taxi trade and its place in London's transport network very clear. Both my Transport Strategy and my comprehensive Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan show this support. For example, TfL is investing £600,000 to increase the number of taxi ranks across the capital. Since 2016 we have already created an additional 77 taxi ranks. TfL has introduced mandatory card and contactless payment and enabled taxis to access 18 additional bus lanes on the road network. These initiatives have made customer journeys quicker and more convenient.

TfL is promoting the benefits of being a London taxi driver to those looking for new careers by raising the profile of the Knowledge of London. Recently TfL officers discussed the Knowledge on a podcast run by the Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association. After listening to the views of the taxi trade in the recent Tooley Street consultation, TfL confirmed that black cab drivers will continue to be able to access the road from Borough High Street.

At the same time, tackling London's air pollution is a public health priority. Taxis have an important role to play in combating poor air quality and protecting Londoners' health. That is why I have provided significant funding and financial incentives to the trade. I have created a £42 million fund, which offers payment of up to £10,000 for taxi owners who choose to retire their older, more polluting vehicles. £5 million of this is available to help eligible taxi owners convert to liquid petroleum gas systems. I continue to contribute a grant offering £7,500 off the purchase of a zero-emission-capable (ZEC) taxi.

To support the uptake of cleaner, greener vehicles, TfL is investing £18 billion to deliver a rapid-charging network across the capital. TfL already has more than 200 charging points, 73 of which are dedicated to taxis. London now has over 2,100 ZEC taxis licensed and I am delighted that the first pure electric taxi, the Dynamo, has just been licensed by TfL, providing taxi drivers with a choice of two ZEC taxis.

**David Kurten AM:** Thank you for your answer, Mr Mayor. I would like to say thank you, first of all, because one of the things I have asked you about a lot is continuing to allow taxis to go along Tooley Street and Duke Street Hill and you have listened to me and you have listened to the consultation. Thank you for acting on behalf of taxis on that small point.

However, my question was: what are you going to do to stop the reduction in the size of the taxi fleet? Since you became Mayor in 2016, the taxi fleet has gone down from 21,759 to 19,122 today. There are over 2,600 taxis that have left the fleet. The number of taxi drivers has gone down by more than that, by nearly 3,000. The size is reducing dramatically, whether that is by design or by unintended consequences.

You have mentioned some things here, but one of the biggest things that taxi drivers are concerned about is your recent announcement that you are going to reduce the maximum age of a taxi licence from 15 years to 12 years. That will reduce the size of the fleet even more. We had a motion last week in the Assembly asking for you to reconsider. Will you reconsider that point?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Let me unpack the two-minute question, Chair, into the various points.

The numbers of vehicles and drivers have been going down since 2009/10. That did not begin in May 2016. In 2009/10 there were 22,500 vehicles and 25,000 drivers. The dip did not begin in May 2016. There are a number of reasons that you are well aware of for the reduction since 2009/10: increased competition from private hire vehicles (PHVs), the general macroeconomic factors resulting in reduced public spend on taxis, as well as more taxis being decommissioned, as you have referred to at the end of your question.

The increased compensation we are giving makes it more attractive for taxi drivers to do so. We should be proud of the fact that we have more than 2,000 ZEC taxis and proud of the fact that rather than taxis contributing more toxic stuff to the air, they are now taking steps to address that.

You are right. There are challenges in relation to the numbers of new people doing the Knowledge and the numbers of new people applying for licences. That is why TfL is working with those who want to be black cab drivers to make it easier to do so and also to raise awareness of it.

**David Kurten AM:** You have just given a figure in your answer there and you have said that the taxi fleet was 22,500 in 2010 and, therefore, it has been going down since then. However, looking at those numbers, that means that in six years from 2010 to 2016 it has gone down by 741, but in the three and a half years since you have been Mayor it has gone down by 2,637. That is over three times as much in your tenure.

You have to be responsible for the reduction in the fleet while you have been the Mayor and it is going down at a rate that is unprecedented. Some of the things you have said there are fine but have not had any effect on stopping the haemorrhaging of the numbers of taxis.

What would you like to see the taxi fleet be by the time you finish your term here in May 2020? Would you like to see the numbers go up again?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Again, you referred to vehicles, not drivers. There are more drivers sharing vehicles now, which was not the case before. Often you would have a driver with one vehicle and now you have two drivers and sometimes three drivers sharing a vehicle. There is also the phenomenon of renting vehicles as well.

I am quite clear. I have examined the policies of the first Mayor and the second Mayor. We have the most pro black taxi policies of all three Mayors and I include myself as the third Mayor. I am happy to be examined by the previous two Mayors. We are doing what we can to try to help the black taxi trade, but it is a fact that in the last eight years before I became Mayor the number of PHVs doubled almost. You know this because you talked about it in the past before.

**David Kurten AM:** Indeed. Obviously. We know that.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** You cannot have selective amnesia and pretend there was a great time between 2008 and 2016 and suddenly things have gone bad since 2016. We are doing all the things we said we would do in our Action Plan: more bus lanes that can be used, increased marshalling, making sure we tackle those who are plying for hire illegally, making sure we financially assist the black taxi trade.

By the way, I am criticised by private vehicles for subsidising the black taxi trade and I am criticised by you for not doing enough.

**David Kurten AM:** Mr Mayor, you have a big decision to make this month, which is whether to re-licence Uber or not and that is going to have a big effect on the size of the PHV part of the trade. If you do not re-licence Uber because you think it is not fit and proper because it has not fulfilled all the conditions in the probationary 15-month licence you have given, that will help the taxi trade.

What is your position on that or are you not ready to make an announcement on it yet?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, as much as the Assembly Member wants me to break the law as a regulator and licenser and announce to the Assembly --

**David Kurten AM:** I was asking you if you are ready to make an announcement or not. Obviously, from that comment, you are not ready to make an announcement. Unfortunately, I have run out of time and so I will leave it there. Thank you, Chair.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Thank you. Assembly Member Prince?

**Keith Prince AM:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr Mayor, I am delighted that you believe yourself to be the most pro black taxi Mayor of all. You obviously do not look at your Twitter.

In your manifesto, Mr Mayor, you promised - let me just have a look at the manifesto here - "special privileges built in, as they always have been, for those who become a licensed London taxi driver". You also mentioned retaining "the exclusive right of licensed black taxi drivers to use bus lanes and ply for hire". You promised special privileges to the black cab drivers.

I have listened very carefully to what you have said. I have not heard any but perhaps you could give us some of those special privileges, Mr Mayor, that you have introduced.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I am happy to reread the answer I gave to Assembly Member Kurten in relation to the special privileges again. Let me give you some of them. Let me give you some of the special privileges. Eighteen additional bus lanes can be used by black taxis. That is a privilege nobody else has save for buses.

**Keith Prince AM:** They already had that.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I will give you another one. We have given financial assistance to black taxis to scrap their vehicles. Nobody gets that level of assistance besides black taxis.

**Keith Prince AM:** That is not a privilege.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** That is a privilege. I am sorry. If vehicle A gets a big sum of money to scrap the vehicle and other vehicles do not, that is a privilege that vehicle A has and other vehicles do not.

Another privilege I can give, Chair, is the privilege of an additional grant towards buying a ZEC taxi. Again, that is a privilege. We are not giving that sort of sum to any other vehicle purchaser. If you speak to an electrician, an electrician would love to have a ZEC van but does not get the same sort of privilege a black --

**Keith Prince AM:** They have no choice. They have to buy it. That is not a privilege. They have to buy it. That is not a privilege.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I am sorry. Being given a grant towards --

**Keith Prince AM:** You should be sorry. I agree with you. You should be sorry. Shall I give you an idea of what you are --

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** We have on the one hand complaints about schoolboy politics --

**Keith Prince AM:** Do your privileges include --

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** -- and on the other hand a grown man playing schoolboy politics.

**Keith Prince AM:** Well, you are giving the examples.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** This must have looked really good when you were rehearsing this morning, but not so good in the Assembly.

**Keith Prince AM:** Do you think that your privileges include, Mr Mayor, reducing the working age of older cabs, thus destroying older drivers' retirement plans? Is that a privilege? Relicensing PHV companies that are still flaunting the rules? Is that a privilege? Stopping cabs from using bus lanes? Should it not be that where buses go, taxis go? Is that a privilege? Not acknowledging black cabs as part of the transport network? Is that a privilege? Not giving black cab drivers a choice of five electric cabs to choose from, as you promised, thus forcing them to buy - with, of course, the privilege of your subsidy - an expensive cab from a monopoly supplier? Admittedly, there is now one more, but that is not five, Mr Mayor. Not providing enough electric charging points and so the fact is that most electric cabs are running on their petrol range extenders the bulk of the time, and of course tripling the reduction of the fleet, as we have just heard today? Are those some of the special privileges that you promised, Mr Mayor?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, can I have some guidance? The question was two and a half minutes. How long should my answer be?

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Well, let us go. Let us hear it.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** All right. It is a human right, not a privilege, to breathe clean air. We have in London an invisible killer, which is the toxic air, and half of this toxic air comes from transport, nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter and nitrogen oxides. To me, it is not a privilege to breathe clean air. It is a human right. One of the ways we are going to have this human right protected in London is by tackling those vehicles that are emitting nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter. That is why we have introduced this year in London, despite opposition from the Conservatives, the world's first ULEZ. That has seen progress already in cleaning up the air. In the first monitoring, there was 20% less toxic in those parts of London that have the ULEZ.

Here is the point. We know that taxis contribute a disproportionate amount of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter. That is why we have to clean up our taxis. Even though the ULEZ will lead to other vehicles being less polluting, it will take no action in relation to black taxis. That is where the bold plans we are talking about come in.

Black taxis get a privilege that other vehicles do not, which is a huge subsidy towards scrapping a polluting diesel vehicle.

**Keith Prince AM:** Thank you. That is enough for this question.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** They receive a privilege that other new purchasers do not receive, which is a grant towards buying a ZEC vehicle.

The other point of this investment in clean air is that the cost to the NHS is much less. We spend billions of pounds helping people with asthma, with stunted lungs, with heart disease, with cancer caused by the poor-quality air. Also, it is unacceptable for somebody who is polluting not to pay towards the cost of doing that.

On the one hand I am supporting black taxis by making sure they can use contactless in their cabs, more bus lanes for them to use, listening to consultations, giving them financial support, making sure the taxis are built in the country, advertising and publicising the Knowledge, having more enforcement officers to take action against PHVs plying for hire and acting illegally, and on the other hand cleaning up the air in London.

By the way, who suffers the worst air in London? Black taxi drivers. They all benefit from some of our policies. He can call it a privilege. I call it a human right.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Thank you for that answer. Anybody else? No.

## **2019/17457 - Gants Hill Library**

[Keith Prince AM](#)

*Having previously promised that residents would be able to choose between keeping Gants Hill Library as a library or replacing it with a Hub, the Leader of Redbridge Council is now seeking to renege on his promise to hold a Consultation which gives residents a real choice as to whether they want the hub or retain the library, by not including the option to retain the library in the ongoing consultation. Will you stand up for Barkingside residents and, in keeping with your promise to protect culture including libraries in your answer to question 2019/9294, seek to persuade Redbridge Council to keep the library? Will you also provide further support to the library via the Good Growth Fund?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. Libraries across London play a hugely important role in local communities, offering places to meet, learn and connect, often supporting some of our most vulnerable

Londoners. Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide a library service. It is a matter for each authority to decide how this is delivered.

However, achieving this has been made hugely challenging due to swingeing cuts to councils' funding. The Government has reduced funding by close to 60% since 2010. Rob Whiteman, CEO of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accounting (CIPFA) recently said that libraries are - and I quote - "a canary in the coalmine for what is happening across the local government sector" and - and I quote - "a lack of funds is forcing many councils to be creative in how they deliver their services". Just under 1,000 of the country's public libraries have been closed since 2010.

Despite this, the London Borough of Redbridge has pledged to retain all 12 libraries in the borough. With such severe Government cuts, innovation and modernisation is vital to ensure residents have access to libraries in the future. It is worth reminding the Assembly that Redbridge Council is keeping more of its libraries open than its neighbouring Havering Council and Redbridge has not closed a single library despite Government cuts.

I am assured by Redbridge that Gants Hill Library will not close. It will become part of a community hub, bringing library services alongside other council services under one roof, and benefiting many more people. The local community is actively involved in the hub. The City Hall Social Integration Design Lab is providing support for the new space, as well as for four other community hubs in Redbridge.

My Good Growth Fund has awarded £51 million since 2016 and has recently reopened, making a further £20 million of funding available. I have already funded two projects that support the development and innovation of additional services linked to libraries through my Good Growth Fund. Any council is welcome to contact my team, who will provide support and advice to all Good Growth Fund applicants in developing their proposals.

While libraries play an important community role, they are also an economic enabler. Earlier this week, working with the British Library, we launched Start-ups in London Libraries, which supports aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs across 10 London boroughs. I remain committed to supporting them to innovate and deliver for their communities.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Assembly Member Prince?

**Keith Prince AM:** Thank you for that, Mr Mayor. It is very helpful. Would you agree, Mr Mayor, that when a politician makes a promise, he or she should keep it?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Absolutely. Are you talking about the Prime Minister?

**Keith Prince AM:** Could I ask you, Mr Mayor? I know you are very friendly with Councillor [Jas] Athwal [Leader, Redbridge Council] and that is a good thing. Could I ask you to encourage him to keep the promise that he made to the people of Redbridge that when he did the consultation on the library, one of the options would be that the library be kept as it currently is? The consultation that is out at the moment does not give people the option to retain the library as it is. It talks about all the good things that the hub may provide and I am not against the hub. I am just saying that people were promised that there would be a choice of either having the hub and the extra 100 apartments and the other facilities that that might provide or keeping the library and the carpark. That is not in the consultation.

I am asking you, Mr Mayor, if you would use your good offices to have a friendly word with your friend Councillor Athwal to see if they would redo the consultation but include in that consultation a real choice of either keeping the 1930s library and the carpark or going for the offer that is the hub.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, the Council is consulting on its plans but, as I have explained, the economic context is one that it has to take into account. One of the things I would hope it would do is to make sure that the offer local residents receive is better after the plans are developed rather than less good. I understand that libraries are crucial lifelines for many, particularly poorer people who do not have space in their homes for books and all the rest of it. It is really important that there is an improved offer if possible. I hope any consultation is meaningful and genuine and I am positive that this very good Council Leader will make sure he listens to his constituents. I also am aware that the excellent local MP Wes Streeting is also working with the Council to make sure residents have their views heard. I am sure that working together they can get the best deal for local residents in the context of the massive cuts since 2010.

**Keith Prince AM:** The question I put to you again, Mr Mayor, is: will you speak to Councillor Athwal and ask him to redo the consultation with an option to retain the library so that we have a genuine consultation? I am not saying we should keep the library. I am not saying we should not do the hub. I am just asking for a genuine consultation that gives people a choice.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Sure. Let me be clear, Chair. Chair, it is my fault. I did not hear properly the question.

I have no intention of asking the Council to redo the consultation. It is really important that the consultation is done properly. I hope it is done properly the first time around.

What I would recommend to the Assembly Member is to respond to the consultation to make sure he has his views heard by the Council and tries to influence the consultation. While he is at it, can he also speak to Havering, where there are fewer libraries than there are in Redbridge?

**Keith Prince AM:** What you are saying is that you will not lend your support to the people of Redbridge to get a genuine consultation? That is your answer, Mr Mayor?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I am saying that it is really important, Chair, for the people of Redbridge and neighbouring boroughs who use the library to respond to the consultation. It is really important for them to be aware about some of the tough choices made by good councils in the context of 60% cuts since 2010.

I am really reassured by the fact that no libraries have been closed despite massive cuts from central Government. I am reassured by the fact that local authorities have to be creative when it comes to keeping libraries open. Also, as I have announced in my original answer, from City Hall, we are trying to help libraries do even more by having facilities for entrepreneurs to be in libraries to start up businesses. That will be another service that libraries can offer, which provides a revenue stream and support for libraries to be even more successful going forward.

**Keith Prince AM:** Thank you, Mr Mayor. The answer is no. Thank you. There you are, residents. You have heard it. Thank you.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Assembly Member Copley?



**Tom Copley AM:** Thank you, Chair. Mr Mayor, sorry, I did not quite catch the last bit you said. Could you remind us what has happened to local authority budgets since 2010 under successive Conservative Governments?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Assembly Member Prince now coughs when you ask your question. For those of you who did not hear because of the cough from Assembly Member Price, since 2010 --

**Keith Prince AM:** That is because I have a cold, Mr Mayor.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** -- councils across the country have lost 60% of the monies they received from central Government. We are a centralised democracy. Because they have lost so much money from central Government, they are making tough choices. Great councils are making those tough choices and being creative and finding solutions, but the responsibility for these cuts lies at the top in central Government.

I would remind colleagues that there is somebody in this room who was an advisor in Number 10 when these cuts were being made and so he will be able to explain why those cuts were made in 2010. It was not me, by the way, Chair.

**Tom Copley AM:** Help me out here, Mr Mayor. Do you think it is possible that there is a link between library closures in London and the cuts inflicted on local authorities in London by the Government since 2010?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I have been saying for some time now that cuts have consequences. The premise of your question is a good one, which is that there is a link between the cuts made by this Government consistently since 2010 and the consequences that people see on the ground with, for example, libraries having consultations about their futures.

**Tom Copley AM:** Do you think therefore it might be a better use of GLA Conservatives' time to lobby their own Government Ministers to reverse these cuts?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** The point I would make is that if you are not willing as a Member of the Assembly to stand up for Londoners against Boris Johnson [Prime Minister] and this Government, you do not deserve to be a Member of the Assembly, let alone run to be the Mayor.

**Tom Copley AM:** Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.

## **2019/17304 - Use of hand free mobile phones**

[Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM](#)

*How concerned are you about the use of hand free mobile phones in vehicles on London's streets?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. Thanks for the question. My Vision Zero approach means that TfL and I are exploring all opportunities to minimise danger for people using the capital's streets. I am concerned about the potential for any distraction for motorists, especially if it may impair their ability to drive safely, which can put them and other road users at risk.

The law currently only prohibits using a handheld mobile phone or other device while driving. A hands-free device can be used lawfully. However, we must be aware that this does not mean there is no potential for distraction from hands-free mobile phone use. There is some evidence to suggest that holding a conversation on a mobile phone, even if it is hands-free, can distract and impair a driver's ability to react. For this reason

the MPS and the City of London Police enforce against any driving behaviour that is deemed to be dangerous or careless, including if this is a result of using a hands-free mobile phone.

A police officer has to use judgement in determining whether an instance of interacting with a mobile phone is considered to be careless. While it is not possible to isolate offences caused by hands-free mobile phone use, in 2017/18 the police made 2,259 traffic offence reports, fixed penalty notices or arrests for driving without due care and attention. This is in addition to a further 10,778 for handheld phone use.

The recent Transport Select Committee inquiry into driving while using a mobile phone recommended that the Government should explore options for extending the ban on driving while using handheld devices to include hands-free devices. I support the recommendation that the Government should look into this issue further and it is my view that this should include drivers' use of cradled hands-free mobile phones for use other than telephone calls. I will ask the TfL officials to make themselves available to support this work.

There are practical challenges to the enforcement of a law that includes hands-free mobile phone use. These should be explored and discussed at a national level through appropriate consultation.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** Thank you for your answer. I welcome the recent Transport Select Committee's report on the use of mobile phones and, as you say, calling for tougher restrictions on drivers using mobile phones, including looking at the case for extending the ban to hands-free devices.

My questions today relate to the private hire and taxi industry. Over two years ago I asked you about this and you stated that TfL is exploring the available technology that could limit the use of electronic devices and mobile phones while driving a vehicle that is moving. I am wondering. What is the outcome of that work?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Can I just put on record, Chair, that this Assembly Member has been assiduous on this issue? She raised it most recently earlier this year as well. I am happy for them to brief the Assembly Member in relation to the progress made. There has been some work taking place. It is cutting-edge stuff. I am happy for her to be briefed personally about the work they have done. We are not quite ready to roll it out. We have to work with the police in relation to enforcement. There are challenges in relation to enforcement, but I am more than happy for her to be briefed in relation to this. We are not quite ready to use that. The issue is about a driver being distracted by the various devices on his or her screen, leading to driving without due care and attention.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** It is a serious safety issue and it fits in with your Vision Zero. What I really want to understand is what you are doing to ensure there are some limiters in place so that no driver can interact with a mobile phone while they are driving?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** The blocking technology is not there to be used yet and so the concern is that, while driving, you are touching and playing with the device on the screen. That is what we discussed at the previous exchange. TfL will look into what steps could be taken to use technology to, in inverted commas, 'jam' these devices. They are not there yet and there are concerns about use but, again, I am very happy for her to be reassured by the briefing in relation to the work we are doing. We have not fallen asleep on the job. We do take it seriously, but it is difficult stuff.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** Thank you. I will take your offer up on that briefing. PHV drivers are under immense pressure to read and to immediately respond to booking requests being sent to them while they are driving other passengers. TfL's latest statistics show that there is a large number of people slightly injured using minicabs and taxis every year but the data is not broken down by company or by type of vehicle.

I am wondering whether breaking down this data would help TfL in making a decision perhaps on whether a company should have its licence renewed or who is a fit and proper operator. I am wondering whether you would ask TfL to provide greater detail in these statistics and to perhaps use that as part of the licensing process?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** One of the challenges is that the data comes to TfL from the police. You will be aware - I am speaking directly to the Assembly Member - of the progress made sometimes by these questions. The police can now disentangle black taxi cabs and PHVs. That is progress. You will remember when we first spoke, however many years ago, that was not happening.

I have to be honest, Chair. What I do not want to do is, without seeing the evidence, add additional bureaucracy on police officers who are making these stops. The key thing is to make sure somebody who is driving without due care and attention is properly penalised.

The question is what more data could they get from the individual driver, individual operator, etc. I am not sure about that. I can look into this. The other point is that there are some drivers who drive for more than one operator. I can foresee just talking to you some challenges.

I am happy to take it away and see how realistic it is, but what I do not want to do is to put additional, in inverted commas, 'red tape' on police officers who are dealing with the real mischief, which is driving without due care and attention.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** I appreciate that, but if there is a way to capture that data --

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I get that. I understand.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** -- then it might point to a particular company and that there needs to be a focus on safety and driver training.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Also, there are perverse incentives. That is why it is useful as well. Some operators maybe have a perverse incentive to respond quickly, which can lead to -- I get the point. I will look into it to see what we can do.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** I really welcome that. There was a [*The*] *Times* article a few weeks ago. It described a reporter going undercover as a driver for Uber and described the constant phone beeping as they were driving passengers. There is a real worry that that could add to danger on our streets and I would appreciate some action on that. Thank you.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Assembly Member.

## **2019/17654 - Deadline for fixing ACM cladding**

[Len Duvall AM](#)

*The GLA is administering the social sector and private sector aluminium composite material cladding remediation funds for London. Does City Hall's experience of this so far indicate that all ACM cladding will be fixed by the Government's deadlines and do you think that a no deal Brexit will jeopardise any progress?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. More than two years on from the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, the Government's delays, failures and broken promises, both in helping those directly affected and in making buildings across the country safe, have been appalling. After two years of pressure, the Government finally made some funding available to remove and replace unsafe aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding from high-rise buildings, but I have said repeatedly that funding should be available to cover all types of unsafe cladding and the costs of interim fire safety measures, too, not just a specific type of unsafe cladding.

The GLA's role in these programmes is purely administrative, but we will continue to work with councils, housing associations and campaigners to pressure on the Government to make sure this funding is put into use quickly and effectively. Removing and replacing unsafe cladding of all types and protecting leaseholders from the costs should be an urgent priority for the Government.

Before the summer recess, the outgoing Secretary of State [for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)] said that the remediation of all buildings with ACM would be complete by June 2020. This remark was unrealistic and irresponsible, particularly in light of the Government's approach to Brexit. The pace of building remediation across both sectors is reliant on access to trained workers and materials. I have highlighted many times the crucial role European workers play in the construction workforce, including scaffolders and cladders. What is more, I also understand that much of the replacement cladding we need is imported into the UK. The previous Secretary of State's deadline looks set to be yet another broken promise from the Government on building safety.

You are absolutely right to highlight the risk of a chaotic no-deal Brexit. A no-deal Brexit must be avoided for the safety of Londoners and, as I have said before, the Prime Minister must urgently revoke Article 50 and give the British public the final say.

**Len Duvall AM:** We do not just have a problem about a no-deal Brexit but also about the length of time it is taking. There is some outstanding research that has been done to highlight just one aspect of the cladding issues but there is other cladding under testing.

Can we just go back? The London Fire Brigade recently emphasised the need for a risk-based approach on other issues. The Government fund only considers buildings over 18 metres. We really ought to be looking at, as the Fire Brigade says, our care homes and other buildings, schools in particular.

Do you think there is a pressing need to discover the extent of other dangerous cladding or fire risks on these buildings?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Absolutely. I met the [London Fire] Commissioner yesterday and she is really worried about the Government's failure to address the issue of care homes and schools. We appear to have a two-tier system. We are just going on height, important though it is.

I will give you an example of Samuel Garside House in Barking. Assembly Member Boff, who lives in that area, knows it very well. He was there on the night of the fire. This was a four-storey building where this fire spread quickly. It was not covered by the Government's proposals and not covered by remediation. We had a fire last week in Sutton and that fire spread in minutes as well. That was not ACM cladding and not necessarily a cladding issue. We are looking at the investigation. Imagine if they were care homes, though. In the middle of the night, can you imagine evacuating a care home with that sort of speed?

The Commissioner is extremely worried. She has been lobbying the Government. I have been lobbying the Government. I am concerned about the lack of response from the Government on this issue.

**Len Duvall AM:** Can we write to our colleagues? I know you are constantly talking to colleagues in local government. Can we try to widen out the pressure on the Government about that, just seeing to the extent of what the research may have uncovered and may well not be publicly available – maybe it should or should not; I think it should – so that we have sufficient plans to protect those issues, particularly around care homes? It is quite worrying.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thanks for that. On the day of the Sutton fire, I put in a call to Robert Genrick, the new Secretary of State for MHCLG, and I was impressed with his response. We spoke on the day. The Commissioner was on the line with her top team, as indeed was the Secretary of State's top team. We agreed to take some steps to address the issue you have raised and I will be writing to him to make some further points. With the speed of his response – and he seemed well briefed on the issues – we can now start to make some progress, but watch this space.

**Len Duvall AM:** Is the worry, Mayor, in the sense that the testing that is going on, which needs to be done not just on the ACM but also on other materials, is still not there for the construction industry and others in local government planning offices to consider and take the appropriate steps? Do you think we potentially could be facing, considering you have mentioned other fires that were not around cladding issues but around design, cavity fillers and the rest of it, and looking at a much wider list once we get through the 'Grenfell list', if I can call it that?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Without a doubt. That is one of the things that worries the Commissioner and worries her team and worries me. We simply cannot answer how many of our buildings are safe and unsafe. We simply cannot answer what happens to some of our building as if there is a fire. Put aside ACM cladding. Put aside above 18 metres. Even buildings without ACM cladding and buildings of less than 18 metres, hand on heart, no one can say they are all safe.

**Len Duvall AM:** I am grateful for Assembly Member Andrew Dismore in terms of his earlier question and others around this table. It is not just an issue for my Party Group. Some of these sentiments are shared by others on the other side of this horseshoe.

The issue is what we need to do as an Assembly. Mr Mayor, what could we do to help you in terms of getting the Government to speed up some of these actions so that we can get ahead of the game rather than being at the back of it? We know Brexit will cause problems in terms of some of the manufacturing and some of the supply labours, but in terms of just getting to grips with this issue and making sure that we minimise any future loss of life or any risk to people as much as possible.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Yes, the key thing, Chair, is that what we should not be having an argy-bargy argument between leaseholders and building owners, tenants and councils, care home users and those who run care homes. What would be sensible, Chair, is if the Government was to remediate and repair and make safe those buildings that need making safe and then, later on, the Government can get the compensation and monies back from the building owners and stuff.

There is a first issue, which is identifying which buildings are at risk. The Commissioner has already identified some of her concerns. You have mentioned care homes in particular and schools in particular and those buildings above a certain level. We need some expediency from central Government in relation to addressing this.

**Len Duvall AM:** Thank you very much. Thank you.

## **2019/17453 - Housing**

**Gareth Bacon AM**

*Are your housing policies workable for Londoners?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. Thank you for the question. Londoners desperately need more affordable houses. That is why I have made building more council, social rented and other genuinely affordable homes a top priority.

The record shows that our approach is working. Last year we started 14,544 affordable homes in London, more than in any year since City Hall took control of housing investment. Through Building Council Homes for Londoners, the first ever City Hall programme dedicated to council homebuilding, we also helped councils to get to 1,916 new council homes underway, more than in any year since 1985. More widely, my new approach to affordable housing requirements in planning policy has dramatically boosted the level of affordable housing and new planning permissions while giving homebuilders much more needed certainty in the planning process.

The success of this approach is clear. Towards the end of the previous Mayor's time in office, even using his dodgy definition, affordable housing fell to just 13% of new homes being given planning permission. A recent Grant Thornton report found that the level of affordable housing and planning permissions had risen to 36% in 2018. In 2017/18, 12,555 affordable houses were started. In 2018/19, 14,544 affordable houses were started. In 2015/16, by comparison, under the previous Mayor, just 7,189 were started. That is even using the previous definition.

Since I became Mayor, we have set up the new London Land Fund, a £736 million fund, to buy land and support developments that will include high proportions of affordable housing. I have already approved investments to deliver 50% affordable housing at North Middlesex University Hospital, 800 with a minimum of 50% affordable at the former St Ann's Hospital site, and over 1,000 homes with at least 60% affordable on the former Holloway Prison site.

We are using all the powers and resources we have to get new homes built in London and, crucially, to put more affordable housing in first, but we urgently need the Government to play its part, too. The Government needs to give us a step change in our powers and investment so that we can truly fix London's housing crisis. It is essential that we rule out a no-deal Brexit, which would be catastrophic in the homebuilding environment.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Thank you very much for the answer, Mr Mayor. In July of this year [2019], you announced support for rent control in London and requested the powers to implement it. In an exchange with my colleague Andrew Boff at your first Mayor's Question Time in May 2016 you said - and I quote - "I have no plans to introduce rent controls, nor the powers to do so". What has changed since then?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I still have no powers to do so and I will continue to lobby the Government. We have been successful in some lobbying of the Government in other areas where we were told we had no powers to do so and so, because of the confidence there, we think we can move the Government in relation to rent controls as well.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** You said at the time you had no plans to reduce rent controls. Why do you have plans to do so now?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** We are working on plans to lobby the Government and so the plans we have now are at an early stage. To get those plans into more fruition, we need the Government to establish a London Private Rent Commission. The New Economics Foundation and City Hall have done some work around how we would get a route map to get to rent controls. You will be aware of the progress we made from banning tenants' agents fees to section 21. We are optimistic that with the right Government and the right Minister we can make progress here as well.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** What do you anticipate will be the impact of rent controls on London?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** The idea would be to reduce the levels of rent private tenants are paying. To give you an idea of the scale of the challenge, the average - average for obvious reasons - cost of a one-bedroom home in London is more than the average cost of a three-bedroom home anywhere in the rest of England.

The end result of rent controls would be to reduce the cost of renting in London, but it has to go side by side with the provision of more housing. You have to deal with the supply side. There is not just one thing. It is sort of like whack-a-mole. You cannot just fix one part of the housing market. We need a new supply of affordable homes. That will take some time to do. Fixing the rental market is part and parcel of that as well, but it is part of a package of measures we need to do. There have been successive decades of failure in our city.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Are you not concerned that rent control can actually end up leading to higher rents, reduced housing supply and poorer property conditions?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** If done wrongly and if that is the only part of the housing equation, it can do. That is why it is going to be part of a package of measures. That is one of the reasons why we have now had a 'big bang' approach and published what it should be, set it in stone. We have deliberately been iterative in relation to how we should get there, listening to developers, listening to the quite new build-to-rent market, listening to those who currently are private tenants and landlords as well. We are also working with the Government.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** You are quite fond, it is fair to say, of quoting experts. Which experts have you spoken to about this?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** The New Economics Foundation spoke to numbers around the world. They did desktop research as well. Deputy Mayor [for Housing and Residential Development] James Murray spoke to a number of experts, both in this country and in others around the world as well. I am happy to send you the New Economics Foundation research they did.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** OK. We can do a swap because I have looked this up and I will give you a few of the quotes that I have. There are a lot more.

In 2017 a study of San Francisco's rent controls concluded that - and I am quoting - "rent control reduced rental housing supply by 15%, causing a 5.1% citywide rent increase". In 2018 the Stanford Associate Professor of Economics Rebecca Diamond concluded that rent control decreases affordability, fuels gentrification and creates negative spill-overs on the surrounding neighbourhood. In 2018, closer to home, the London School of Economics Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion stated that rent controls lead to a

steady decline in both the quality and quantity of private renting. I have 12 pages of quotes like this, which I will be happy to send to you.

In that light, Mr Mayor, does that cause you any concern?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** There are mixed views on all sides. We also have many people on the other side of the equation as well. That is why I have been quite careful in saying that by itself rent controls are not the solution to the housing crisis in our city. It is part of a package of measures.

We have rent control in London already. The rent control that already exists in London is council housing. We have rent control in London already with housing association housing. We have a form of rent control in London already with the new London Living Rent.

The point is that it has to be part of a package of measures. We have to increase hugely the supply of housing. You will be aware that using the same criteria used by the previous Mayor, the estimates are that we need 65,000 new homes a year in London. Unless there is a massive increase in the supply, rent controls by themselves will not address the overwhelming issue of the lack of homes that Londoners can afford. It is part of a package of measures.

That it is also one of the reasons why we deliberately did not just get off the shelf a rent control model. We have deliberately published the research from the [New] Economics Foundation and have come up with a route map for how we get to rent controls in the future.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** In 2015 the Housing Committee of the London Assembly commissioned Cambridge University to publish an investigation of rent control and it found that any form of rent control would certainly reduce the number of homes in London, in some cases by up to 62% by 2025. That surely must be of concern to you.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** That is an argument not to build council homes. That is the argument not to build council homes and that is one of the reasons why I suspect council homes were not started when the Prime Minister was the Mayor.

Rent control is part of a package of measures. The idea is to reduce the rents in London, bearing in mind that a large proportion of people's disposable income goes on rent. Therefore, I do not apologise for wanting to reduce the rents in London. That is why we have to, at the same time as increasing the supply of homes, deal with the issue of rent controls in London. One of the reasons why you have many talented Londoners aged between 30 and 40 leaving London and going to other parts of the country is their inability to rent in London let alone rent and save money to buy a home in London. It is part of a package of measures to address the housing crisis in London.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Under what circumstances would you not introduce rent controls in London if you had the power to do it?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I would want rent controls introduced at the same time as we start building many more houses, including affordable housing, when we could --

**Gareth Bacon AM:** At the same time as you start building them?



**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** We are starting to build significantly more than before but nowhere near enough. We are, roughly speaking, in an average year, with good winds now, at about 30,000, 32,000, 35,000 or 36,000. We need to double that.

If the Government was to double the amount of investment we receive, if the Government was to give us the powers around, for example, land assembly and compulsory purchase orders (CPOs), and if the Government gave councils more powers, we could start making real progress on housebuilding. There is no reason at all why the Government cannot give us the powers now to start doing work on a London Private Rent Commission.

The first part of it, I would remind you, is to get the data in from landlords in relation to rent. Scotland, for example, has a national register a relation to this and so it can be done. The first part of the plan is to get that data in: what the landlords are taking in rent, what is happening across London. Some local authorities have the data. They are required to have details as licensing authorities. That is the first part of moving towards rent controls. Once the data is in, we can then move forward.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** You will not introduce rent controls, even if you have the powers to do it, unless there is a massive increase in the supply of housing in London?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** No, I would introduce rent controls if the Government gave me the power to do so. The first part of introducing rent controls is setting up the London Private Rent Commission and the first thing that will do is to get the data in from landlords across London to see what rents are currently being paid. We can then get an idea of the right level of rents.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Some of that data is already available, Mr Mayor, is it not? The Office of National Statistics has looked into that and has shown that since you had the exchange with Andrew Boff [AM] in May 2016, the average increase in rents across London has been only 1% per year, despite the fact that inflation has been running at 2.1% over that period of time.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** The question demonstrates the ignorance in the area. The rent increase in Kensington and Chelsea (K&C) is different to the rent increase in Havering. The rent increase in Camden is different to the rent increase in Sutton. Therefore, a pan-London figure does not really help. It would help if you want to live in a city like Paris where poorer people live on the outskirts and wealthier people live in the inner city. That is not the city I want to be the Mayor of. First, we need genuine information about the rents in London. We need proper information from all parts of London, inner and outer, more affluent and less affluent.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** You are not concerned about the opinions of experts from all around the world, which are probably best summed up by the Nobel Prize-winning Swedish economist Karl Gunnar Myrdal who said rent control is “the worst example of poor planning by governments lacking courage and vision”?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** That is one of the reasons why we are not taking off the shelf a rent control model used in another part of the world. We want our own --

**Gareth Bacon AM:** You cannot, can you, because you do not have the power?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** We are not taking off the shelf a rent control model used in another part of the world. We are deliberately having a bespoke model for London. Any dip in any part of London in

increases in rent is just that, a dip. The level of rents in London for the last two decades has been going up consistently and anybody who claims it has not is just out of touch.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Yes, rents have increased since 2005 by 38%, of course inflation since then has increased by 37% so in actual fact they have been keeping pace with inflation. We are not seeing sharp rises in private rents at all, are we?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** That is exactly the point. The Assembly Member wants to focus on the market rather than the real experience of Londoners and their wages. It is not the case that Londoners' wages have increased with the rents that have increased over the last period. We know that Londoners cannot afford to pay rent and live in London. We know because of rent pressures in particular they cannot afford to live in London.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Mr Mayor, you know very well the Government is not going to grant you permission to do this. This is a nonsensical policy, Mr Mayor. It is going to lead to a decrease in rented housing in London, you know that very well. You have cynically introduced this policy, knowing full well you will never have to implement it, because there is an election in six months and you want to appeal to a large number of Londoners. That is what you are doing, is it not, Mr Mayor?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** This was the very same point made when many of us lobbied to end the fees paid by tenants to letting agents; the very same points made by that part of the Chamber saying, "Why are you wasting your time?" and, lo and behold, we persuaded even a Conservative Government to outlaw tenants having to pay a fee to letting agents.

We said for some time that no-fault evictions are really bad because they mean that tenants have no security of tenure. These guys said, "This is a cheap stunt to win votes". What happened? The Government has announced plans to consult on the removal of section 21 on no-fault evictions. These very same people are now saying, "There is no point campaigning or lobbying for rent control because this Government will not do it".

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Mr Mayor, I am not asking you about no-fault evictions, I am asking about rent control.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** The good news is this Prime Minister will not be around for much longer.

**Tom Copley AM:** Point of order, Chair.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Point of order, yes.

**Tom Copley AM:** Assembly Member Bacon referred to some work that the Housing Committee did on rent control a few years ago. I know this well because I was chairing the Committee at the time. I think he inadvertently slightly misled us in the sense that he said all the scenarios we modelled in that would result in shrinkage of the private rented stock. It would not, except in one scenario at the upper level where it would only reduce it relative to what had already happened. It would not reduce the size in absolute terms under any scenario bar the upper estimate in one.

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

**Gareth Bacon AM:** I said "in some circumstances" but in every single scenario in that report it shows a decrease in the number of private rented homes.

**Tom Copley AM:** No, it does not.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** You are not going to have a conversation. You have made a challenge and the Assembly Member --

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Every single scenario shows a reduction.

**Tom Copley AM:** No, not in absolute terms.

**Tony Arbour AM:** This is angels dancing on the head of a pin.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** No, it is not. I think the Member has quite rightly challenged something and then the Assembly Member has used documentation to respond so I am going to leave it at that. Thank you.

### **2019/17623 - Review of Rape Cases**

[Unmesh Desai AM](#)

*The Victim's Commissioner's review into rape cases in London found that only 3% of allegations result in conviction. How are you working with the Metropolitan Police Service and partners in the criminal justice system to improve this?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I welcome the review into rape cases conducted by my Victims' Commissioner, Claire Waxman; London's first. It amplifies the experience of victims of one of the most heinous and harmful crimes. This excellent work is helping to drive change at a national level and is exactly the kind of work envisaged when I created the post of a Victims' Commissioner for London.

This dark report highlights the urgent work needed across the criminal justice system to ensure victims achieve swifter justice and are supported throughout the process. It is shocking that 58% of victims feel unable to continue and withdraw from the process and only 3% of reported rapes result in conviction; it is even less around the country. The review uncovered key learnings such as showing that if victims had easily accessible, appropriate and timely information with trauma-informed support then chances of withdrawal decrease. This insight has already been taken forward through additional money allocated from our Violence Against Women and Girls Fund to improve and increase capacity at the London Havens, including helping provide video-recorded interviews and early evidence kits.

More generally, I am pleased that all parties have welcomed the report and are committed to working with the Victims' Commissioner. Working together we can ensure that victims are not forced to choose between their right to privacy or access to justice, or feel they have to withdraw in order to access support for their recovery. My Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime will be convening a Justice Matters [meeting] as an opportunity for partners to come together to discuss the recommendations and agree an action plan.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** Thank you for that, Mr Mayor. I am going to put two questions to you. There was a report released by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) this morning showing that despite increases in the number of offences fewer cases are going to court than ever before. This is clearly a national problem. The average amount of time for a survivor to reach a trial outcome in London was in the region of 18 months, clearly unacceptable. The Victims' Commissioner was before the Police and Crime Committee last week. She

told us that this rate had gotten worse after the disclosure issues arising from the well-known case of *R v Allan*. What can reduce the time it takes for a decision to be made in court?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** This is a really important point. One of the things I have done is – despite objections from some in this Assembly – increase the amount of money we give to victims and survivors to help pay for Independent Sexual Violence Advocates, which is really important, and to support London Havens. More support for victims and survivors is important. Also we need to speed up the time between a report being made to police and it reaching trial; which means the police, the CPS and the courts condensing the length of time it takes for a trial to reach court. In my view we should have swifter justice than we currently do. It is hardly surprising that somebody who has made a complaint may not proceed with it if it takes 18 months between making the complaint and it reaching trial. It is a very, very stressful and really anxious time and you can understand why victims and survivors do not want to relive the trauma.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** There are specific things that can be done, as you yourself said, which will help victims decide to go forward with allegations and we have talked about the length of time. For instance – I think the Victims' Commissioner talked about this – if the survivor participated in a video-recorded interview they are six times less likely to withdraw from the process. Are there any other form of actions you think we can take to reduce the number of allegations?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** This is a really important point here, Chair. I was criticised by some Members for MOPAC giving money to those who are the victims of violence against women and girls and criticised for investing in these projects. It is really important we do so and you highlight the reasons why. The Havens, which we support from MOPAC, help pay for support and help with video-recorded interviews and forensic medical suites that are so, so important. We do need more resources. It is a travesty that there is a waiting list in some of our rape crisis centres and people cannot receive the help they need. That is one of the reasons why I had the new funding in the last financial year, to help them deal with the waiting list.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** Mr Mayor, I will finish on this one but I really have to point this out to you because we have been talking about this issue for the last 20 or 30 years --

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Correct.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** -- and it is like a sense of *déjà vu*.

Yesterday there was a report about the increase in reported homophobic hate crimes. The picture is the same, the level of prosecutions has actually gone down by half. I will be writing to the CPS in due course.

From the victims' perspective the reasons for withdrawal are stress, trauma, lack of police contact, lack of information and the sheer length of time it takes for investigation. The CPS, this is the report that came out this morning, seems to be blaming the police. It is saying it has fewer rape referrals, a 12% fall from the previous year, and cases are taking longer because of digital evidence and demands for discovery from the defence. Campaigners from End Violence Against Women are now blaming the CPS, they are saying CPS lawyers have quietly changed their approach, are no longer building rape prosecutions and are screening cases out if they think it will not convict. It is basically this pattern of people passing the blame on to other agencies. This really has to stop.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** It is heart breaking because we heard these same points made 20 years ago. The good news is the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and the Commissioner have discussed this

issue, and the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and the Victims' Commissioner have discussed this issue. I think the CPS and the police understand the importance of working together to get the right conclusion.

**Unmesh Desai AM:** OK, I will be writing to them.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Yes, please.

## **2019/17473 - Housing and Infrastructure**

[Shaun Bailey AM](#)

*Should new housing be supported by sufficient infrastructure?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. New housing should be supported by sufficient infrastructure. My new London Plan puts the issue of infrastructure right at the heart of planning for London's future growth. Analysis undertaken by City Hall using the same methodology used by the previous Mayor shows that we need to deliver around 65,000 new homes every year to meet London's housing needs. This will only be sustainable if the new homes are accompanied by the necessary investment in infrastructure, including transport, utilities, social and green infrastructure. My London Plan is unequivocal; new development proposals must be proportionate to the capacity of the existing and planned infrastructure. It also places a clear requirement on boroughs to proactively plan for the delivery of future infrastructure to support new housing. The housing crisis in London, which has been decades in the making, means that many Londoners cannot afford to buy a home of their own. Too many people are living in overcrowded housing and the level of rough sleeping has increased. Contrary to what people say, this is not hype.

Due to our focus on housing since 2016 we have started building a record number of new social and genuinely-affordable homes, at the same time as ensuring that new housing developments make a contribution towards infrastructure provision. As Mayor I have secured nearly £800 million to provide new infrastructure that will enable the delivery of an extra 44,000 new homes. We want to get on with investing this money but, unfortunately, the Government has been slowing down our progress. The reality is that when it comes to national infrastructure we have had a decade of drift, delay and failure under this Government. The Spending Review last week was yet another missed opportunity. Instead of wasting so much money on planning for a no-deal Brexit the Government should have galvanised growth through a long-term commitment to investing in the critical infrastructure we need.

I welcome this Assembly Member's newfound interest in infrastructure and I urge him to join me in speaking up for London by calling on the Government to meet all the recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission as well as committing to funding Crossrail 2 and the Bakerloo line southern extension.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** Are you satisfied that in all your developments to be built on TfL car parks you are providing enough parking for residents and commuters?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** In which particular development?

**Shaun Bailey AM:** All of them.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** What a silly question, it depends what development you are talking about. In the centre of London, where there is a car park next to a station with very good links, clearly the need for a car park is less than it was years ago. In other parts of London - in outer London, for example - where the

transport links may be less good and people are commuting there may be a greater need. I am not really sure how to answer that question, Chair.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** Let me give you an example.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Here we go.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** For example, in Finchley Central you are removing all of the car parking, you propose to build a development of 668 flats and are only providing 11 parking spaces. Are you happy with that?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I would need to look at the particular development each time and I do not know what the deal is with that particular site. What the planning team does is look at what the public transport provisions are in the area, which is called a public transport accessibility level, where there are various criteria in relation to poor public transport links and better public transport links. The local planning committee, if it is happy with the public transport provision versus car parking spaces, can use that as a reason to refuse a site. I expect the council, whichever one it is, to make a decision based on the merits of the application rather than prejudices it might have had.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** What would you say to residents of places like Northwood, Stanmore, Canons Park, Arnos Grove and Cockfosters who are all very distressed about the removal of this amenity? They need this amenity if they want to make family life workable so they can get on to the Tube system and can move around. What would you say to them about what is being proposed on their local carpark?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I cannot speak about the specific site but in general terms it is worth looking at who is using the carpark and it is worth looking to see if there are other public transport links. I was given an example recently of a station in Waltham Forest where there was a carpark next to the station and when there was some work done the Leader found out that the users of the station were not Waltham Forest residents. When there were genuinely-affordable homes built on that carpark all the residents locally were welcoming of the development. The people who had complained about the carparks did not live locally anyway; they were using it as a way to travel long distances and park their car, sometimes for free or very low sums of money, and then use TfL facilities.

I am in favour of addressing the issue of poor-quality air in London by increasing the numbers using public transport. We want to get to a position where more people walk, cycle and use public transport. It is currently 64%, we want to get to 80% by 2041.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** Can residents rely on you to support them when they go back to their councils and complain about the loss of this amenity, are you saying you will support them in that and they will not just get bulldozed and rolled over?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I do not at the moment sit as a councillor on that planning committee so I cannot decide what happens on that planning application. What will happen is that the councillors on that planning application will decide whether to give permission or not. If a scheme is above a certain size it comes to me. If it comes to me I will consider it on its merits. However, because I have a quasi-judicial function it would be inappropriate – anybody who is even thinking about running for Mayor should know this – for me to prejudice my view by giving a view on applications that come before me. It is an astonishing question.

**Shaun Bailey AM:** It is not inappropriate for me to ask you to support residents across London. Thank you very much, Chair.

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

**Tom Copley AM:** Thank you, Chair. In terms of housing infrastructure, Mr Mayor, I would have thought our priority should be public transport infrastructure, things like Crossrail 2 and devolution of metro services to London rather than car parking.

I wanted to ask you a quick question on the compulsory purchase of land, which is often the barrier to delivering both new housing and new infrastructure. Both Labour and the Conservative parties in 2017 pledged to reform compulsory purchase laws to make it easier for local councils to buy land for housing and for infrastructure. I wondered if you have made any progress, or if you knew if the Government was making any progress, on actually implementing those reforms?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Can I ask, Chair, why I let him speak and when he has spoken he leaves the Chamber? That is quite astonishing but there you go.

In relation to land assembly reform, we have been lobbying the Government in relation to this area. It is really important to get land assembly reform because it is difficult to buy pockets of land next to a bigger piece of land that could really provide much more opportunity for regeneration. We will continue to lobby the Government to make progress here. The good news is that it is cross-party - maybe not in the Chamber and maybe not in the Assembly - across London with the Council Leaders and also across the country. We will carry on trying to lobby the Government.

**Tom Copley AM:** Thank you, Mr Mayor.

## **2019/17690 - Police Numbers**

[Joanne McCartney AM](#)

*The government states that it plans to increase police officer numbers after nearly a decade of severe cuts to police funding. How many of these officers are earmarked for London?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. It is noteworthy we are talking about police numbers and Assembly Member Bailey has left the Chamber. It is a really important issue. I am really pleased, Chair, the rest of you stayed for this important issue.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Mr Mayor, can I just say every time you mention Assembly Member Bailey you do give him the right to come back. We do not really need that.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** That is what I am hoping for, Chair. We want him to take part in this debate, it is the Assembly.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** No, it is not for you to goad him.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** He is not here to respond. He has run away.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Please, can you just answer Assembly Member McCartney's question?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I thank you for this question, the sort of question I expect from somebody who is serious about representing Londoners and being a member of this Assembly as a fulltime job.

I welcome the fact the Government has finally woken up to the reality that cuts to policing have contributed to the rise in violence and crime nationally. You can understand why Assembly Member Bailey has fled the Chamber. It is a shame that Conservative Members of this Assembly and the previous Conservative Government have stubbornly refused to accept this link. Government cuts have led to the MPS having the lowest number of officers for 16 years. Therefore, the announcement of the intention to recruit 20,000 police officers across the country is welcome. However, it remains to be seen if there will be sufficient funding to pay for these officers and how many will be allocated to the MPS. We urgently need clarity from the Government on funding numbers so we can get on and recruit, not least because of the long timeline to recruit officers in London.

The Commissioner and I seek an increase of 6,000 officers above the additional 1,300 officers I provided funding for. This would represent a fair allocation to London in line with the MPS representing around a quarter of national policing. It also recognises the particular challenges around violence and the historic underfunding of the National and International Capital City Grant. That increase will see London's officer numbers increase to 37,000, putting us on par with New York, which is also a global city, albeit smaller. It is worth noting that the New York Department has 15,000 staff on top of this, significantly more than the MPS's 10,000. Anything less is a failure of the Government to get a grip on violence and crime and contrary to the new current Prime Minister's commitment.

The Government must also ensure it fully funds this commitment, not just the salaries of the new officers but the additional funding needed for the equipment, accommodation and support staff. I am also concerned at reports that some of the proposed 20,000 officers might be allocated to the National Crime Agency and counterterrorism. While it is clearly essential that these agencies receive additional resources, they should not come at the cost of the additional frontline officers that the Prime Minister promised. It has been clear the Government needs to properly fund preventative services to tackle crime. The approach must be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. I am doing all I can in London, including investing in the police and the £45 million Young Londoners Fund. The Government cannot shirk its responsibility. This is a national problem that requires national solutions.

**Joanne McCartney AM:** Thank you, Mr Mayor. We in this Chamber have been very clear that we want the Government to act and increase funding to police officers.

Would it surprise you if an Assembly Member had previously stated that increasing police numbers is absolutely useless in deterring crime?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I simply do not believe that a Member of this Assembly would believe that or say that.

**Joanne McCartney AM:** Would it surprise you if that same Assembly Member had previously stated that the police should not deal with low-level crimes, such as abusive behaviour or antisocial behaviour?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Again, I do not believe a Member of this Assembly would say that. Anybody who has experienced alarm, harassment or distress and anybody who has met constituents who have experienced harassment, alarm or distress - which basically violates the basic rights of human beings - understands how distressing and harmful it is. The idea that the police are either absolutely useless in deterring crime or that the police should not deal with antisocial behaviour I find inexplicable.



**Joanne McCartney AM:** As do I, Mr Mayor. You have recently had a meeting with the new Home Secretary and talked about police funding. We know that police officer numbers have been slashed due to this Government's funding, the austerity that has happened. You mentioned in your answer to me that police staff, including Police Community Support Officers, who provide vital backup to our frontline officers, have also been slashed under your predecessor, Mayor Johnson, now Prime Minister. Was there any indication that funding would be given, in addition to the funding for these extra police officers, for the support they need to do their jobs out on the street?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** No, there was not. First, we should give credit where it is due. We should give credit to this Prime Minister and this Home Secretary for performing a u-turn. I have been saying since May 2016 that cuts have consequences and they have gone too far. The Conservatives in this Assembly, the Conservatives in Parliament and in Government, have been saying, "No, the cuts have not had consequences. The reason for the increase in violent crime is not because of cuts." To be fair to this Prime Minister and this Home Secretary, they accept cuts have gone too far and they will invest in policing. The bad news is there is no real detail about the numbers of police we will get or the additional support you refer to; support staff, Community Support Officers, the estate, lockers and information technology equipment, the kit they need. We need reassurance from the Government that any new investment will be frontline police officers and also for the other support they need.

**Joanne McCartney AM:** At a recent Police and Crime Committee the Deputy Commissioner of the MPS stated they wanted to ask:

*"... for additional assistance. Some of that will be additional military assistance, some of it will be to look at support services that we rely on so heavily and our partners such as mental health, youth outreach workers, social services and diversion schemes".*

He went on to say:

*"As a result of reduction in police budgets we have seen a drawing down, a drawing back, in all of these services and that has, we believe, impacted on the situation we are seeing today."*

Was there any talk about putting money into those services?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** So far we have had no commitment from the Government to give us support towards preventative services. I raised this in the meeting with the Home Secretary who seemed receptive and did seem to understand the prevention side of the equation. This is one of the legacies of receiving poor advice from your Youth Advisor when you are in Number 10 in 2010.

**Joanne McCartney AM:** Thank you.

## **2019/17510 - Spit Guards**

[Susan Hall AM](#)

*Please can you provide an update on the roll out of spit guards by the Metropolitan Police Service?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. Thank you for your question. Any assault on officers in the line of duty is totally unacceptable. I would like to take this opportunity, as I am sure you and the Assembly would, to pay tribute to MPS Police Constable (PC) Stuart Outten who was injured in the line of duty in London on 8 August [2019]. I hope the Assembly Members will join me in wishing him a full recovery. I

also, Chair - through you - want to pay tribute to PC Andrew Harper who was killed in August [2019]. Whilst PC Harper was not a London MPS officer, I know we are all shocked and saddened by his death.

The MPS Commissioner is clear that if somebody attacks a police officer this must not be considered a minor issue and I fully agree with that. I am absolutely committed to keeping officers safe. They must have the right protection as they go about their duties. One of the awful ways they are attacked is by being spat at or bitten. That is why I supported the Commissioner's operational decision for a staged rollout of spit and bite guards beyond their previous use just in custody, which began during my time as Mayor. While supporting this measure, obviously they must always be in a proportionate and transparent way. That is why spit and bite guards can only be issued to officers trained in their use. As of July 2019 all officers attending their individual safety training have received training in the use of spit and bite guards, which is 6,037 police officers and 208 Dedicated Detention Officers. The full rollout of training should be completed by April 2020. As with any police use of force, spit and bite guard deployment is recorded to provide transparency and accountability and these are made publicly available on a monthly basis on the MPS website.

While we are discussing officer safety, with permission, I want to mention Tasers.

**Susan Hall AM:** No, not in my time at the moment. I am running out of time. I will happily have a discussion about that at another time.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** If that is not a concern we will not discuss that.

**Susan Hall AM:** Mr Mayor, while your eyes are firmly on Brexit mine are firmly on the safety of Londoners and particularly our incredible police officers. It was eventually agreed by Cressida Dick [DBE QPM, Commissioner, MPS] that frontline officers could have spit guards on 7 February 2019. If you are telling me they are not getting them until April 2020 that is an absolute disgrace. Perhaps you could concentrate more on what is going on in London. The fact BTP officers have them and City of London Police officers have them but the MPS officers have not is absolute scandal. Teaching people to put spit hoods on does not take a couple of years. I would urge you to make sure that this rollout goes out very, very quickly. It is totally inappropriate that other police officers that work on our street have access to spit guards but our MPS police officers do not.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, is that a question? I do not know what that was.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** No, I think it was commentary. What was the question?

**Susan Hall AM:** Do you not agree they should have them before 2020?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** OK, let me deal with it if it is a question. I am surprised that any Assembly Member does not realise the size of our police service in London. Notwithstanding the massive cuts we have 30,000 police officers, which is about a quarter of the police officers in the country. To compare the size of the MPS with the size of small forces across the country beggars belief.

What we have in London is a situation where every officer who uses a bite guard needs to be trained to use them. If the Assembly Member is suggesting that we have all staff taken off frontline policing to be trained to use them at the same time that is a recommendation I cannot accede to.

What I will do, Chair, is listen to the advice of the Commissioner and those who have expertise in policing, which is to train officers as soon as possible in the use of bite guards. MPS officers are being trained more

rapidly than any police service around the country. We have a situation where huge progress has been made, this is on top of the other training police officers receive, with that training to be completed by April 2020.

**Susan Hall AM:** Ridiculous. Thank you, Chair.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I am surprised at the same time we are commending our Commissioner for being appointed a Dame Commander of the British Empire she is being criticised by an Assembly Member who has no experience or expertise in policing.

**Susan Hall AM:** It is you who is being criticised. Thank you, Chair.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** To play party politics --

**Susan Hall AM:** Coming from you?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** -- with Dame Commander of the British Empire Cressida Dick is astonishing. I hope she will reflect on this and withdraw her comments.

**Susan Hall AM:** Thank you.

## **2019/17574 - Homelessness**

[Tom Copley AM](#)

*With summer coming to an end, homeless shelters will be ramping up preparations for the approaching cold weather, after a record number of people were seen sleeping rough in London last year. It is now more than a year since you set out your Plan of Action– what progress are you making with Government to secure the £574m needed to eradicate rough sleeping?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Can I thank you for your question? The rise in homelessness in recent years is a national disgrace. I know some Members of the Assembly think that this is hype; it is not hype, it is a national disgrace. That is why my plan of action sets out what investment we need from the Government to help everyone off the streets for good and what Ministers must do to stop people being forced into homelessness in the first place.

Over the last three years we have been doing everything we can at City Hall to offer new and expanded services to help rough sleepers in London all year round. For example, when I first came to office emergency winter shelters only opened when three consecutive days of freezing temperatures were forecast. That was unacceptable and I changed this to make them open on any day that temperatures fell below zero anywhere in London. This year we will be going much further. We will be opening our shelters continuously from the end of the Christmas period until at least the end of February. I want councils and charities to do the same so I have launched my £2.2 million Life Off the Streets Winter Programme to support them in doing so. As a result of the extra funding I have agreed and money we have secured from the Government City Hall's Rough Sleeping Budget this year will be more than double the £8.5 million it was when I came to office.

Our services helped more people last year than ever before but the Government has then to play its part. Whilst my plan of action sets out how £574 million is needed, since it was published last year the Government has given just £39 million to London. What is more, the Government continues to ignore that its policies, like cuts to the welfare system and public services for the most vulnerable, which are forcing more people onto the

streets in the first place. Until the Government steps up and addresses these root causes we will never be able to end homelessness.

**Tom Copley AM:** Thank you very much for that response, Mr Mayor. I was pleased to see from your response to one of my written questions that the GLA does not pass on rough sleepers' details to the Home Office. I am also pleased that Haringey and Islington Councils have done similar.

What can you do to make sure that no London boroughs see deportation as the answer to our homelessness crisis?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you for your comments and your question. I do not think enforcement is the way to solve rough sleeping. Obviously I do not have the power to tell councils what to do. What we are doing is working with London Councils, which represents 33 boroughs, so they understand our experience in trying to help a rough sleeper and that being seen to be an enforcer can prevent that rough sleeper seeking assistance. I am going to carry on trying to work with London Councils so there is the same sort of good practice we see from Haringey and Islington spread to other councils as well.

**Tom Copley AM:** Thank you very much. Of course, another thing that might be seen by people who are sleeping rough as a threat of deportation may come as a result of a no-deal Brexit and the possible end of freedom of movement. Do you think there is a risk that some of the most vulnerable Londoners on our streets will get caught up in this and either be denied access to vital services or be scared of accessing those services for the fear of deportation?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** That is the concern. That is one of the reasons why we have stepped up efforts to do outreach work. We have, on 21 September [2019], an open day here in City Hall. I am really concerned about people who are vulnerable rough sleepers being scared about their future status in the country because of fears of a no-deal Brexit, the end of free movement and the end of their rights as EU citizens. The Government has said that EU citizens' rights will be the same after a no-deal Brexit. I am not sure that is the case legally by the way, which is the view that some EU citizens sent back to us. It is really important we clarify the position. If you are a rough sleeper and vulnerable you are probably not conducive to receiving good legal advice or are receiving good legal advice. I am really concerned about the consequences on rough sleepers and also people being hidden away because they are worried about being caught and deported.

**Tom Copley AM:** Absolutely. We have known for some time now the leading cause not just of rough sleeping but of homelessness in general has been the end of a private tenancy. That is one of the reasons why I would agree with an approach that involves rent controls, because it is about stability for people and not just about affordability. One of the biggest drivers has, of course, been people not being able to pay the rent because of austerity and because of welfare cuts. We had the Chancellor's Statement the other day. Did you hear anything about that that made you think that perhaps the Government was going to be changing its policy on welfare that of course has seen people's incomes reduced significantly over the last few years?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** We had literally this time last year the former Prime Minister saying it was the end of austerity and I have no evidence in relation to the Government's policies around welfare reform - around Universal Credit rollout and in relation to some of the consequences of its policies leading to rough sleeping - of any change in tack. What we need the Government to understand is that rough sleeping is the symptom of some of the policies it has, it is a pipeline. No-fault evictions are one example of why people become homeless, it could be a lack of benefits to top up private rents, it could be health issues, it could be the break-up of family life, it could be the loss of job and the pipeline needs to be addressed. The figure you

quoted in your first question was the cost of stopping a pipeline of people becoming rough sleepers in the first place. We will do our bit helping those who are vulnerable but would it not be far better to stop them being rough sleepers in the first place?

**Tom Copley AM:** Absolutely. Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Thank you. I would like to welcome a group of service users from Harrow Mencap, who have just joined us in the gallery, welcome.

## **2019/17660 - Car Free Day**

**Florence Eshalomi AM**

*Ahead of Car Free Day next week, what work are you and TfL doing to raise awareness of events across participating boroughs?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you. Toxic air pollution in our city is a public health crisis. We know that more than 50% of London's harmful air is caused by vehicles. As part of our ongoing commitment to make London a greener and healthier city for Londoners I am working with a number of London boroughs to deliver London's biggest ever Car Free Day celebration on Sunday, 22 September [2019]. Car Free Day will allow hundreds of thousands of Londoners of all ages to leave the car at home, explore our city by foot or on bike and get involved in hundreds of free activities.

As well as my Central London Car Free Day event, at least 13 boroughs will be hosting their own community events on Car Free Day and a number of boroughs will be supporting local 'play streets', where streets will be closed for local residents. In total there will be over 200 'play streets' running across London on that day. I have provided funding through my Air Quality Fund to boroughs and residents to help them develop local programmes. This includes funding 250 car-free schemes ranging from 'play streets' and one-off events like e-bike trials, bike repairs and pocket parks through to more permanent pedestrianisation schemes. To ensure Londoners hear about these incredible events TfL has been promoting them through its advertising channels with community organisations including RideLondon, Open House, the City of London and Living Streets as well as TfL's School Travel Programme.

We are also providing boroughs with a pack of free promotional materials they can customise. Ten boroughs are already using the materials to promote their events and tell residents about fun activities, street picnics to music and entertainment. My team is working closely with London boroughs to co-ordinate all our many Car Free Day activities.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Great. Thank you for that, Mr Mayor. It is really important. I know you are working with a number of boroughs and I am quite proud that my two boroughs, Lambeth and Southwark, are two of the boroughs working with you and TfL.

You said in July [2019] 19 boroughs had already signed up to take part. Do you know what the final tally of all the participating boroughs is in London? Has there been more of a take up, especially by some of the outer London boroughs?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, in July I said that 19 boroughs were taking part in this Scheme and I am really happy to correct the record today to say it is not 19 taking part, there are now 27 taking part which is fantastic news.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** That is fantastic. You have already said that this is a really big issue. Obviously you will recall that I think it was in 2016 the Environmental Audit Committee at Parliament said this is a national health emergency. The fact is 10,000 people in London are dying a year from this and we need to get more people out of their cars. Cars are the most polluting thing in terms of air quality. Do you think then that is quite worrying that the Conservatives have branded this Car Free Day as a public relations (PR) stunt when Londoners are dying from poor air quality?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I would be astonished if Conservatives call this a PR stunt but then these are the same Conservatives that opposed bringing in the ULEZ this year and the same Conservatives who think carparks are infrastructure rather than encouraging people to walk, cycle and use public transport. That is why it is really important for Londoners to know if you want an administration that is on the side of cleaning up the air, that is on the side of walking, cycling and public transport do not vote Conservative.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Yes. 'Play streets' and car-free days are really important. I live in a flat with two young children, a four-year-old and a two-year-old. Going from our flat to the park the biggest barrier sometimes is crossing the roads with the number of cars. Is there more that you and TfL could be doing to try to promote more regular car-free days and looking at opportunities where there may be redundant roads, redundant spaces, to get more pedestrianised areas so we can get more people out of their cars, out enjoying the roads and the clean air?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** This is the crux of what the Car Free Day is about, it is us reimagining our city. If you have been raised in a city where you assume everyone is going to drive and park next to a Tube station, or if you assume our roads have to be dangerous you cannot imagine the alternative. I will not apologise for trying to address the fact that every year in London 4,000 people either lose their lives or are seriously injured on our roads or apologise for taking action to fix some of the junctions around our city. We need Londoners on our side. We need Londoners to pressure us to go even further. That is why I do not criticise people challenging me and telling me to go even further on some of the issues. We want Londoners to enjoy the Car Free Day on 22 September [2019] and use that as a springboard to get your imagination thinking about what more we can do, to put pressure on local councils and to put pressure on me, and put pressure on the Government if need be, to make sure more and more of London is friendly to people walking, cycling and using public transport. It means us taking on those people who think carparks in the heart of our city are infrastructure, they are not.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Thank you, Mr Mayor, I will leave it there.

## **2019/17475 - Operation Midland**

[Steve O'Connell AM](#)

*What is the status of the investigation/review of the Met handling of Operation Midland?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. Thank you for your question. Operation Midland was started in November 2014 and was closed in March 2016. The impact of Carl Beech's false allegations and the subsequent Operation Midland investigation has been truly dreadful for those who were accused and their families. It is absolutely right that Carl Beech has been held to account and is facing justice for his actions.

The then Commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM, apologised in person to those affected and the MPS has expressed deep regret for what happened. In February 2016 the MPS commissioned retired High Court Judge Sir Richard Henriques to undertake a review of Operation Midland to learn lessons about the handling of the investigation. That was the right thing to do as clearly a number of serious errors were made. The MPS

has already enacted the majority of Sir Richard's recommendations and MOPAC has been working closely with it to ensure lessons have been learnt. It is also right that the MPS is going to publish as full a version of the Henriques Report as possible so there can be no doubt about the analysis of the failings. I have been assured this will be done as quickly as possible.

As a result of Sir Richard's report the MPS voluntarily referred itself to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), now the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC). This referral included applications for search warrants. The MPS fully co-operated with the independent investigation that lasted more than two years. It examined all the evidence and did not identify any criminal offence of misconduct. The IPCC was the appropriate body to conduct this investigation. The IOPC has recently completed its investigation and has said it will publish its report this month. The MPS is committed to ensuring that any further lessons from the report will be taken on board and implemented.

**Steve O'Connell AM:** Thank you very much, Mr Mayor, for your full response. It was only last week in this Chamber that the Police and Crime Committee had an exchange with the Deputy Commissioner on this subject. I raise this with you particularly because of your role of being responsible for holding the MPS to account. I know the investigations were launched pre your mayoralty but you still have that responsibility.

The investigation itself cost - the costs are still rising upwards - £4 million. We talked about the police budget and what could be done with that sort of money. We also know the reputations of public figures with a lifetime of public service were trashed as a result of that investigation. Mr Mayor, do you believe the MPS has learnt the lessons and what we have seen will not be repeated? Are you satisfied with the investigation?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** When you see the impact on some of the innocent people affected and their families it is heart breaking and I also apologise to them as well. I hope the lessons are learnt. The honest answer is I cannot say for sure until we have an example where the public can be reassured the right lessons have been learnt and the proof will be in the pudding. I am reassured we are doing what we can to hold the MPS to account. I am reassured that the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner understand the seriousness of the lessons that are to be learnt and we have to make sure that all of us - the Police and Crime Committee, myself as the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime as well - do what we can to make sure the right lessons are learnt.

**Steve O'Connell AM:** Mr Mayor, there was a catastrophic failure of performance. You are here to hold the performance of the MPS to account. This is not about a witch hunt against frontline officers because there has been enough of a witch hunt around the whole [Carl] Beech affair. I believe this is about controls, checks and supervision above that, which was commented on last week in the Police and Crime Committee. It is a breakdown in the controls, checks and supervision of officers dealing with these affairs.

The Henriques Review that you refer to has not yet been published in unredacted form. The author of that Report himself said there is no reason why it should be unredacted. Would you like to comment briefly on those two points?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** My understanding is that the concerns are to the some of the nature of the allegations made by Carl Beech. Chair, I am guided by you but they are quite salacious and quite inappropriate.

**Steve O'Connell AM:** Yes, that is correct.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** My understanding is that the police will share the report with the families and their representatives and it is in their hands in relation to what is redacted and what is not. They may well ask, not because they have anything to hide but because of some of the nature of the allegations that are really not very nice --

**Steve O'Connell AM:** No, I get that.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Subject to that a complete version as possible will be made public.

**Steve O'Connell AM:** This is lastly from me, as I say this has cost the public purse upwards of £4 million. Public figures have been ruined, partly with the support of your Deputy Leader in Parliament, it must be said, without --

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Hold on, Chair. That is inappropriate, Chair. Let us be quite clear, an allegation was made which was investigated by the police. The police made mistakes that were investigated by the IPCC, the IOPC and now a retired High Court Judge. For the Assembly Member to bring in others who brought the complaints to the attention of police to try cast aspersions I think is inappropriate. On reflection --

**Steve O'Connell AM:** That is a comment of fact but let us put that to one side. My final point is will you be continuing to take an interest in this investigation? The cost is running to the public purse. There are still structures that need to be looked at. Will you continue to take an interest in this investigation?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I do and there is still, of course, ongoing litigation as well.

**Steve O'Connell AM:** OK, thank you.

## **2019/17500 - Indian High Commission Protests**

[Susan Hall AM](#)

*What assurances can you give to London's Indian community that the events of 15th August, which saw people celebrating Indian Independence Day outside the High Commission heckled and threatened by protestors, are being thoroughly investigated?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. Londoners of Indian origin and London's Indian community make a huge contribution to this great city, from helping to power our economy through businesses both big and small to enhancing London's vibrant arts and culture scene to being a valued part of our NHS workforce. Londoners of Indian origin have demonstrated time and time again that our diversity is one of our city's greatest strengths. At a time when many are trying to divide us Londoners of Indian origin and London's Indian community have demonstrated to the rest of the world that in London we celebrate and embrace our diversity and differences.

Whilst I support the right to protest when it is peaceful and lawful, I condemn in the strongest terms the violence and damage to property from a small minority of protestors that took place on 15 August [2019] and at subsequent protests outside the Indian High Commission. These acts are completely unacceptable and my team has been in touch with the Indian High Commission with which my office has a great working relationship. I want to be clear that anyone who is found to have acted unlawfully will be pursued by the MPS. I have personally raised this issue with the MPS and it is my understanding that four individuals were arrested for offences including public order and possession of an offensive weapon, investigations concerning two of those individuals are ongoing.



As the Assembly knows, as Mayor I do not have the power to ban marches and protests in London, these powers lie with the Home Secretary. They are an important part of our democracy though and I support protest as long as it is peaceful. The Assembly will also be aware that the policing response to protest is led as an operational matter by the MPS which was and are in touch with the Indian High Commission.

**Susan Hall AM:** Thank you, Mr Mayor. I am glad to hear you say you condemn this. However, when I was looking at your Twitter feed there is nothing about it on there. You congratulated people on their A-level results, which is appropriate of course. You obviously tweeted about fighting against Brexit because that is what you seem to do all the time. However, given this was such a serious event nothing, absolutely nothing.

I am sure you understand why people are feeling disappointed by your initial non-response. One email said, I am quoting:

*"The Mayor failed to condemn the attack, has maintained complete silence on this issue with no acknowledgement of the significant harm caused to the community, the Indian community."*

I am not surprised given some of the reports I have heard - burning of flags, throwing of eggs, aggression - and yet you feel you do not need to comment on it at the time when you can also comment about the fact that it is hot, we had five tweets about it being hot.

I am so sorry if you are bored looking everywhere. I am so sorry if you think these points I am making are inappropriate but I think it is totally inappropriate that we have a Mayor who will constantly mention Brexit and yet we have thousands of people on the street burning the Indian flag and throwing eggs and yet you say nothing. What is your defence for saying absolutely nothing on this issue, Mr Mayor?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, some guidance, how much time do I have to respond to that?

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** I am happy to give you the same time that the question took.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Correct. Chair, I am really pleased that the Assembly Member, like more than a million Londoners, follows me on Twitter. It is really important to understand that on Twitter you can get across lots of points of view. Twitter is not the only way I communicate with Londoners and those around the globe. I also use Facebook and I also have other forms of communication such as press releases. I also speak to people, which is really important, and use the mainstream media as well.

In relation to the incident outside the Indian High Commission, it was disgraceful that some people appear to have broken the law. It is really important that people, of course, are allowed to protest peacefully and lawfully but they must obey the law. That is why I enjoy living in a democracy where the police are in charge of operational management when it comes to policing protests. I personally spoke to and was in touch with the Deputy Commission of the police service, Sir Steve House [Sir Stephen House QPM], to discuss my concerns about what happened outside the Indian High Commission.

I did tweet about this and I will share with the Assembly Member Susan Hall who clearly does not follow me as assiduously as she should in relation to my tweets. I will show her the tweet that I sent in relation to this particular issue. The Deputy Mayor for Business, Rajesh Agrawal, also tweeted about this matter.

**Susan Hall AM:** That was the third incident.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** What I am happy to do, Chair, is to take advice from Assembly Members about how better I can communicate with Londoners in relation to what we are doing in London. Any assistance in amplifying our social media messages is gratefully received.

Here is the important point; the important point is in relation to the power to ban protests and marches and that power does not lie with the Mayor of London, it lies with the Home Secretary. If it is the case that she --

**Susan Hall AM:** No, it is about your comments.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** No, you will listen to the answer, Assembly Member Hall.

**Susan Hall AM:** He is filibustering but if you say so, Madam Chair.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Yes, you will.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, the rudeness of some Members is outrageous.

**Susan Hall AM:** We are reflecting you, Mr Mayor.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Please, continue with your answer.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** I just think what is sauce for the goose, Chair --

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** No, please continue with your answer.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** The point, Chair, is if the Assembly Member is concerned about protests and marches being unlawful what she should be doing is lobbying the Home Secretary. The Home Secretary has powers to ban marches and ban protests. If she wants to lobby the Home Secretary in relation to those particular issues of course we will want to see what the grounds are and see if we will support those applications.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** The Conservative Group is now out of time.

## **2019/17719 - Lobbying the Government for NHS Funding**

[Navin Shah AM](#)

*The Prime Minister's £1.8 billion cash injection for the NHS in his spending pledge provides virtually no benefits to the health service in London. What are the priorities to improve the NHS in London and what plans do you have to lobby the PM for adequate resources for London in this instance?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. After about a decade of Conservative Government the NHS has been starved of resources. Despite warm words from the Prime Minister and the Chancellor our NHS and local government are struggling under immense pressure. NHS Trusts have a £6 billion backlog in maintenance alone and that is why the recent announcement of £1.8 billion for capital development is merely a drop in the ocean. In London we need more funding so that our NHS stays fit for purpose, both now and in the future. We need strategic decisions about estates to be taken by London; a journey we have begun through the London Estates Board with the ambition of having a capital settlement devolved to London.

The NHS also faces wider issues such as workforce. The Government is yet to address this and Brexit is making a bad situation worse. Investment in health and care is urgently needed beyond the NHS itself. The NHS Long Term Plan will only be deliverable if the Government invests in all parts of the system. Social care funding cuts are pushing services to the edge and despite repeat promises from the Government about the social care Green Paper all the Chancellor announced last year were further sticking plasters. I have repeatedly called for the Government to fully reverse cuts to the Local Government Public Health Grant as well as the cuts that have decimated youth and community services. I will continue to call on the Government to give us the powers and resources we need and I remain committed to championing the NHS and arguing for the resources it needs to provide the best health and care services for Londoners.

**Navin Shah AM:** Thank you, Mr Mayor, for your full reply. The fact is that the funding commitment for London is only £17 million, which means London will be receiving less than 2% of the overall funding that was announced.

In the absence of leadership and commitment from central Government, how are you working with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in London to develop a long-term plan for healthcare in London? If Government will not do anything certainly we need to invest and that is where we want your response, please.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Your question has highlighted that the announcement from the Chancellor last year relating to the NHS was a big 'con' so I am worried about the NHS in London for a variety of reasons. I do not have direct powers over many of these things. What I can do, as Chair of the London Health Board, is work with colleagues around London. The good news is that on our Board we have the Lead Chair of London's CCG, Sir Sam Everington, and so I will work with him in relation this area and also work in partnership with other key players around the room to make sure we can respond to what the Government is saying about a national NHS Long Term Plan.

I do not want you to be under any illusion, I am worried about the NHS going forward, not just physical health and mental health issues but social care as well. That is why working together we are going to try to champion London's NHS and also be advocates for more resources and support from central Government.

**Navin Shah AM:** It is very reassuring that you are working in partnership with local CCGs etc, and doing the best that you can for Londoners. Thank you very much.

## **2019/17766 - Electricity supply resilience**

[Andrew Dismore AM](#)

*What are you doing to investigate the resilience of electrical supply to the capital, in light of the major power outages in August, which also brought chaos to major rail lines?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** The power outage on 9 August [2019] caused serious problems for Londoners and it is right that everyone involved does their bit to avoid it happening again. My officers work closely with the energy suppliers to improve and maintain the resilience of the network to help keep London running smoothly. My Infrastructure High Level Group - chaired by my Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills, Jules Pipe - convened senior representatives from the city's infrastructure sectors, including energy suppliers and National Grid, to plan for the future, embedding resilience into their work as London changes and grows. The London Resilience Partnership, over 170 organisations including energy suppliers and National Grid, work together to prepare for and respond to emergencies in our city. My Deputy Mayor for and Resilience chairs regular meetings of the London Resilience Forum, setting the strategic direction for the wider partnership.

In this case London Resilience made contact with the network operators and power was restored relatively quickly. However, the resilience of the national network is the responsibility of National Grid and ultimately central Government. The Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) is now investigating the circumstances surrounding the outage and could take enforcement action against National Grid if necessary.

Meanwhile in London we continue to work on energy resilience issues. In December [2018] I created an infrastructure called Nation Team, which creates collaboration across organisations. With increasing local renewable energy generation and electrification of heating transfer networks we are running smart energy programmes to pilot how we can store and use energy to reduce pressure on the grid.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** Thank you for that reply. It is clear you do agree that the impact on London was serious, with hundreds of people stranded at King's Cross, at some Tube stations lights went out and staff had to guide passengers with torches and at Kentish Town, in my constituency, passengers had to leave the train and walk along the track.

The London Resilience Partnerships risk register rates the risk of failure of the national electricity transmission as very high. Do you believe increasing numbers of severe weather events due to climate change make future power cuts more likely? Could Brexit impact on electricity supply? If so, what plans have been made to respond to these risks with ever-growing demand for electricity from homes, businesses and transport?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** There are concerns many have raised in relation to the impact of Brexit on energy supply. We have been reassured by the Government there is no reason to be concerned or alarmed, the problem is they have not shared some of their analysis and the information they have used for their analysis with us. We have been told there is enough resilience there.

Your other question though is really important, about the impact of climate change on energy security. It is a more medium to long-term issue where we need reassurance in relation to energy supplies. One of the reasons why I mentioned the pilots we are doing in relation to the local work taking place is that it helps take some of the pressure off the national grid. All of us will be looking with interest at what Ofgem says in relation to its investigation into National Grid and how it has dealt with the outage you refer to.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** Thank you for that. On the Brexit issue, it is actually referred to in the Operation Yellowhammer document that was published yesterday. It says there will not be immediate disruption to electricity or gas interconnectors but it could occur rapidly within months or years after EU exit. It says in that event there would not be security of supply issues. In any event it says there will be likely significant electricity price increases for consumers, business and domestic, with associated wider economic and political impacts. Therefore, it is the case that Brexit is likely to impact on electricity supply in the medium to longer term. In any event, prices are going to go up affecting Londoners, especially the less well off.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Absolutely. In my opening statement I referred to the long-term impacts of Brexit on our city in terms of our economy, jobs and growth. The Yellowhammer document – by the way, we have not seen the redacted paragraph in relation to petrol tariffs – the Government's own assessment is a reason to be concerned. That is why it is important the Government is straight with us in relation to what the future holds with Brexit or even worse with a catastrophic no-deal Brexit.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** OK, thank you for that. Will the Assembly Members agree to suspend Standing Order 2.9(b) in order that we finish the remaining business on the agenda?

**All:** Agreed.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Agreed, thank you very much.

### **2019/17701 - Environmental oversight of building on contaminated sites.**

**Dr Onkar Sahota AM**

*With a great deal of interest in building on Brownfield sites across London, what responsibility does the Mayor's Office have for ensuring that the public can trust there is no negative environmental impact from these developments?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. Redevelopment of brownfield sites is essential to deliver the homes and infrastructure Londoners need while preserving the Green Belt and metropolitan land. This must always be done safely, without risking public health. Responsibility for this lies primarily at the local level. Local authorities are required to maintain a register of potentially contaminated sites in their area and remediate the worst sites. National planning policy is clear that planning policies should only be supported if the local authority is satisfied that any contamination will be effectively treated, contained and controlled and will not pose an unacceptable risk. Local authorities then use planning conditions to ensure developers deal with any contamination issues during redevelopment. This means they can take enforcement action against developers who are not acting properly. Some onsite activities also need a permit from the Environment Agency, which can also take enforcement action if there is a failure to comply.

Once planning permission has been granted it is ultimately the developer's responsibility to comply with planning conditions and environmental regulations but the local authority and Environment Agency are responsible for monitoring compliance and taking enforcement action where the rules are broken. Under the GLA Act [1999] I have no responsibilities or enforcement powers over development on contaminated land or land remediation. My draft London Plan does, however, encourage strategic approaches to addressing land contamination as part of mitigating negative environment impacts from development and ensuring good growth for Londoners.

**Dr Onkar Sahota AM:** Thank you, Mr Mayor, for that answer. Of course I know there is a big push for building more houses and, of course, all the sites that are contaminated are remediated through the planning process. There is a report saying that from 2000 to 2013 83% of all the sites that came into use came through the planning process. However, a report of the House of Commons Select Committee in 2016 said, when taking evidence from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, there is ambiguity in the national planning framework about whose responsibility it is to set the environmental standards in planning. Mr Howard Price [Principal Policy Planner, Institute of Environmental Health] was giving evidence expressing concern that the planning guidance on this matter has reduced dramatically in the nation planning framework.

The question I am really asking is who is responsible? I have been involved in a personal case with a constituent. Where does the buck stop? The Environment Agency says it does not have any responsibility to monitor air quality and I know you have been tackling air quality also. If you ask Public Health, it has no responsibility for it either because it only acts on the instruction of a local authority if they are asked to do so. Local authorities do not have the funds and money to monitor those things. It is left all to the developers. Where is the neutral player in the whole system looking after the interests of the residents?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Ultimately with every council. There is the local council, Public Health England and the Environment Agency but it is a local council that gives permission and lays down conditions of planning and must be in charge of enforcement. If there are breaches of the conditions there is enforcement

action that the local council can take. The frustration may be that the evidence the council is receiving from the so-called experts is inconsistent with what the residents experience when it comes to smelling stuff. Ultimately responsibility lies with the local councils who are supposed to provide a level of oversight and scrutiny to any application given permission.

**Dr Onkar Sahota AM:** The problem is we are relying on the developer to do a lot of the monitoring, Mr Mayor. Supposing the local authority is letting down the residents, the Environment Agency is letting down the residents and Public Health is letting down the residents, where can those residents go?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** In a real case, rather than a hypothetical one, the council needs to provide the recourse because they gave permission. The council may commission Public Health England or others to do a review of the monitoring data if they do not trust what the developers are saying. Although the data comes from the developer there is nothing stopping the council having that checked by Public Health England or doing their own monitoring. The council gave permission. On any application if you give permission and the developer is breaching those conditions there are enforcement options available.

**Dr Onkar Sahota AM:** Mr Mayor, there is a case - this is a gasworks site - that was opposed by the local authority at the time. It was brought in by the Mayor at that time, 2010, Mayor Johnson, who gave permission for this development on the gasworks site. The monitoring was left to the developer because the local authority felt that they could trust it. Now the residents are suffering because of poor air quality, are suffering from pollution from the environment and possibly carcinogens coming out of the site, and there has been no independent monitoring by the Environment Agency, there has been no independent monitoring by the local authority and people are concerned. I am concerned that we may allow a lot more sites to come to development across London without proper regulatory processes being put in place. That is why I have written this letter. If we are pushing for more houses to be built, which are not to be built on the Green Belt, there will be more brownfield sites, particularly contaminated sites, and we must be taking responsibility for making sure there are proper regulatory processes.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** It is a very good point. The legacy is not just the potential poor health to your constituents but the precedent it sets for future confidence, or lack of confidence, in contaminated sites that we need to bring forward. That is one of the reasons why Jules Pipe [Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills] is encouraging a strategic approach to addressing land contamination.

You are right, we cannot on the one hand say we need to build on this industrial land that is contaminated and there be no confidence about it. You are right to address the issue and that is one of the reasons why Jules [Pipe] is doing what we can but we do not have formal power to do so. We are doing it because of the issues you have raised.

**Dr Onkar Sahota AM:** Great, thank you, Mr Mayor.

## **2019/17536 - Is London ready for Artificial Intelligence?**

[Jennette Arnold OBE AM](#)

*You recently warned that Britain 'should be much further ahead than we are now' not only in terms of making sure we can make the most of what AI has to offer, but also in educating the public, encouraging public debate and preparing for the potential impact on our society. In the absence of Government attention on AI, how are you ensuring that London is well placed in this exciting but problematic field?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. There are few areas of technology that will impact on our future economy and society more than AI. Last year I commissioned a report *London: The AI Growth Capital of Europe*. This confirmed that London is the AI capital of Europe. It identified over 750 businesses supplying AI technologies and products in London, more than Paris and Berlin combined. Our universities produce some of the world's leading AI experts and we have some real home-grown success stories to celebrate.

It is my aim to ensure that London is leading in both developing and capitalising on these new technologies. That is why I launched my Technology for Business Programme, helping small businesses to take advantage of the new productivity boosting technologies that big companies are already using. In addition, in line with my Economic Development Strategy and Schools for London Strategy, I am running a number of programmes to empower all Londoners to access the education skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow; these include my £7 million Digital Talent Programme, helping young Londoners into digital careers; my £6.4 million Adult Education Budget Innovation Fund aimed at increasing the digital capabilities of Londoners and tackling digital exclusion; and taking control of London's Adult Education Budget, prioritising improving digital skills in Londoners, careers advice focused on digital and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and support for digital apprenticeships. However, more needs to be done, particularly around data, the crucial component of AI from a national level.

In June the Government issued a call for evidence for its proposed National Data Strategy. This is important work that should have been taking place before but has been delayed by the Government's focus on Brexit.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Thank you for that answer, Mr Mayor. As you say, London has a strong global position in AI in its leading industries, especially finance, insurance and law. The evidence that I gained through investigation prior to this question is that the rate of AI supplier formation in London is 42% per annum, significantly faster than the global rate of 24% per annum. The other thing I found out that was London is an attractor city for this and so many of the start-ups have now got EU residence as part of their business grouping. Is your Chief Officer doing some work to see how this will impact on this, if you like, selling point for the city?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, thank you. I appointed London's first ever Chief Digital Officer. Theo Blackwell is doing a great job in this area. We are doing lots of exciting work around the Datastore and making London an attractive place for innovators and start-ups to come, to incubate and then fly. I am really proud that we have more AI companies in London than Paris and Berlin combined.

We cannot be complacent though because it is very mobile. You mention these talented people. They can move, the facilities they need are very minimal. That is why we have to keep what we have and attract more. Some of the work Theo [Blackwell] is doing is to address some of the challenges - the slow pace of regulation, the slow rules of the game - and to address some of the concerns around human rights that people have legitimately and also to make sure we continue to be an attractive place for AI. These jobs are future proof and we must not be scared of them. In my view we have to make sure we are ready for this.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** As with everything in life there is a downside. I am making reference to Assembly Member Berry's question this morning about the dangers, if you like, with our growing dependence on AI and how it really is just part and parcel of our lives.

Do you have any plans to work with the Information Commissioner's Office to ensure that the public are informed about when and how their data is collected? People think AI is separate but AI is central to our Oyster card so we are all carrying around a piece of AI technology. That could be used to track us

inappropriately. Of course, going back, we heard about what I think sounds like inappropriate use of facial recognition scanning by a number of bodies. Are you working with the Information Commissioner's Office to protect us?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Yes. One of the roles of the Chief Digital Officer is to make sure we speak to all the regulators. I am afraid it is not just the one Commissioner; there is the Information Commissioner, there is the Surveillance Commissioner and there is the Biometrics Commissioner. We have to make sure that we keep abreast of concerns. However, also you cannot disaggregate data from privacy, they are linked. That is why it is really important that we lobby the Government to bring in legislation and regulation as soon as possible.

By the way, the innovators and those who do this are crying out for it. They are saying, "Give us some rules of the game". They want the rules of the game. Yes, it is exciting we are using AI to improve the quality of services from chatbots to air quality monitoring to - as you mentioned - contactless payments to some of the work we are doing in City Hall. This is pioneering stuff but we need some rules of the game from the Government and then the Commissioner will enforce the rules through regulation. Theo [Blackwell] and the team are spending a lot of time making sure we do not inadvertently breach people's right to privacy. That is why the London Datastore is doing lots of checks and balances. We are working closely with local authorities and other public service providers on how we use the data. People do not mind so much anonymised data and people do not mind giving data where there is consent but when there is no consent and it is not anonymised you can understand legitimately why people have concerns about this and civil liberties and human rights. That is why it is really important that rather than ducking this challenge we try to address them head on. General Data Protection Regulation changes have educated the public to some extent but you cannot have a well enough educated public, the more educated the public are the better it is.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Thank you. Well your Chief Digital Officer is joining Assembly Members for a briefing and we will also be joined by a senior officer from the Alan Turing Institute, who, of course, was the father of AI.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Correct, that is right.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** We are looking forward to that. Thank you for the work that is going on.

## **2019/17347 - Police Recruitment**

[Peter Whittle AM](#)

*On 25 July 2019 during Boris Johnson's first speech as the country's prime minister, he vowed to recruit an extra 20,000 police officers to 'make our streets safer'. The recruitment drive will begin this month and Mr Johnson said he wants it completed within three years. Many of these officers will be recruited into the Metropolitan Police. Given the current level of recruitment required to address existing staff turnover, is this target realistic?*

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Deputy Chair. I am glad the Government has woken up to the devastating impact their cuts to police are having, which includes cutting the MPS budget by £1 billion since 2010. Already we have had to lose £850 million of that £1 billion worth of cuts. Twenty thousand additional police officers nationally will, of course, be welcome. However, it remains to be seen if there will be sufficient funding to pay for these officers, how many they allocate to the MPS and how many officers will be frontline



officers. We urgently need clarity from the Government on funding and numbers so we can get on and recruit, not least because of the long recruitment timelines.

The MPS has already grown at a pace to meet my commitment to provide 1,300 officers funded from City Hall than would otherwise have been the case. We are aiming to have 31,000 officers by the end of 2019. I am confident that if the Government gets on and provides sufficient certainty on funding we can drive forward recruitment and provide London with the officers we desperately need.

**Peter Whittle AM:** Thank you very much, Mr Mayor. Given the urgency of this I wondered whether you agreed with the policy the College of Policing announced in 2016 that will come into practice as of next year, i.e. when this is going on, that all new officers should have degrees.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** It is not degrees; it is 'or equivalent' so they can come without a degree. What the College of Policing is saying is there should be a route in so people joining their training can do degree-equivalent training in the police service. What the MPS is doing is getting ready for that, to make sure we do not deter people applying to be police officers who may be deterred by the degree-equivalent training.

**Peter Whittle AM:** It does specifically say 'degrees', Mr Mayor, and it also has been talking to about 12 universities so this will be a university degree. The crucial point is that given the reason for this increase, which is obviously that people are not safe on the streets, Lincolnshire Police has calculated in fact it would be like taking, I think, about 10% of its officers off the street one day a week. I wonder whether that would concern you from the point of view of the MPS.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** There is good news, which is the MPS is not Lincolnshire Police - we are not Lincolnshire Police, we are a very different police force - and this applies to new recruits joining, as you are aware. I have seen no evidence so far that there is slowness of applying because of this requirement from the College of Policing. What I have seen is a police service working closely with the College of Policing to make sure it is not a reason not to recruit. The good news is we have turned the taps on completely in relation to getting new recruits in. If there are concerns the MPS has in relation to this having an impact on recruitment it will raise them with the College of Policing and the Home Secretary. The good news is that we are making good progress in relation to that. We are now recruiting more than we have for some time and we have reduced from nine months to eight months. If there are concerns I can assure you the Commissioner will raise them.

**Peter Whittle AM:** It is more than concerns, Mr Mayor, because the Lincolnshire Police is launching a judicial review of that decision. I will finish by saying the BBC reported a retired policeman, Norman Brennan, with 31 years in service who said:

*"The only degree a policeman needs is a degree of common sense and he will learn on the job."*

Would you not say that is the correct, and probably most effective, way now given the situation we are in?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Yes, I have some sympathy with that. It is also the classic distinction between nurses and doctors with the old saying that nurses care and doctors treat. With police officers their life skills are really important, their rapport with individuals is really important. The way I describe it is who could be against anybody having continuing professional development? Who can be against anybody continuing to train? I was criticised by some for wanting officers to be trained in using protective equipment. I think it is important for them to be trained. I think you are right to question whether it needs to be a degree.

**Peter Whittle AM:** Also it is a matter of emphasis surely, given the situation we are now facing. This will possibly prolong and inhibit the fight against crime on the frontline.

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** There is no evidence so far in the MPS in relation to this. Our biggest inhibitor is Government cuts.

**Peter Whittle AM:** I will leave it there, Mr Mayor, thank you.

**Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman):** Assembly Member McCartney.

**Joanne McCartney AM:** Thank you, Mr Mayor. Earlier you said you welcomed the Prime Minister's U-turn on cuts to police numbers and police funding. Is it not the case that in fact the cuts to the MPS have been greater than they needed because when he was sitting in that chair he refused to raise the police precept to pay for additional officers?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** In 2010, on the advice of the Youth Advisor, the Government cut the police budget by £1 billion. In 2010 the Mayor at the time knew there was £1 billion worth of cuts coming. Between 2010 and 2016 you would have thought a prudent Mayor would raise the council tax precept to try to fill the massive hole left by central Government and/or use Business Rates to fill the massive hole left by central Government cuts. However, between 2010 and 2016 the previous Mayor, in my view, negligently failed to support London by increasing investment in our policing.

Here is the irony, when I became Mayor in my first year the then Home Secretary, [the Rt Hon] Amber Rudd [MP], criticised me, did not give me the resources we needed and blamed the lack of the increase in Council Tax in the year before I became Mayor. In my first three years I have invested more in policing in London than the previous Mayor did in eight years, and certainly in the six years since he knew the cuts were coming.

I welcome his U-turn. I would just hope some of the Conservative Members of this Assembly would also do a U-turn and apologise for opposing my lobbying for extra resources over the last three years and apologise for accepting that cuts have consequences and one of the reasons for the increase in violent crime in London is the cuts made by a Conservative Government supported by the Conservative Assembly.

**Joanne McCartney AM:** Thank you. We welcome the announcement about extra money for extra police officers. I recently saw an interview that Kit Malthouse [Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service] gave. He was also Deputy Mayor for Policing in this place. He conceded that no work had been done on the practicalities of delivering that promise. He pointed out the loss of police estate over the last nine years and made a particular point about lockers and the need for places to put lockers for police equipment.

Do you get the sense that this announcement was made without - as the policing Minister admits - the practicalities of delivering it being done? Are you convinced that the MPS is putting sufficient resources into remedying that?

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair, if the suggestion is that Boris Johnson [Prime Minister] makes announcements without planning, without preparation and thinks on the hoof I say guilty as charged.

**Joanne McCartney AM:** Thank you.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Mr Mayor, thank you for your answers. We look forward to seeing you in October.