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## People's Question Time

02.03.23

ANNOUNCEMENT: Welcome to People's Question Time, Ealing. Before we start, take a moment to look around and note the fire exit near you. In the event of emergency, follow instructions given by the staff. Switch electronic devices to silent mode, to tweet tonight, please use #PQT. For each topic the Chairman takes 3 questions at a time. The first two questions are taken from those of you in the audience with a hand raised. The third question taken from the chatroom of the online registered audience participating via the live stream. For the topic, the most liked questioned as voted for by the online audience is asked. The Chairman to direct the questions from the topics to the Mayor or to an Assembly Member. We have no advance notice of questions. If you are in the audience, if you can stand to ask a question, please do this, it makes it easier for those on stage and the cameras to see you. Wait for a Member of staff with a micro-phone to reach you before you start speaking. Make your question short so we can get to as many of you as possible. Please, ask questions, rather than make speeches. With so many of you in person and online, we don't have time for everybody to ask a question. So, if you don't get yours asked tonight, email the Mayor of London. Gov. UK. Remember to fill in the feedback form online. There are QR codes to scan a device or log on to the dedicated webpage.

We will finish tonight at 9pm sharp. Now, everyone, without any further ado, please put your hands together for your Chair this evening, Assembly, Member, Dr Onkar Sahota.

[Applause]

ONKAR: Good evening, the last time I was here with a hall so full, you were campaigning to savour hospitals and NHS, and some things have not changed but tonight, let me welcome you to the 46th People's Question Time this evening and for all of you watching online. This

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is the second time that the event has been held in Ealing. The 14th People's Question Time for the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. It is great to see so many of you here this evening. I have a few announcements to make before introducing to the London Assembly Members and the Mayor and taking questions. The Mayor and the Assembly work to improve life for Londoners and to make life in London a better place. People's Question Time is a time to voice concerns and to ask the Mayor what we are doing for the capital and its people. Welcome to stage, the London Assembly Members.

[Applause]

ONKAR: Now, please welcome the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan.

[Applause]

This evening, we are taking questions under the following sections: Transport, policing and safety, air quality and environment, housing, London's economic recovery, and finally anything else not already covered. If you pre-registered to watch from home you can submit questions throughout the evening. The chat is for questions only and comments will not be published.

Try to ask your questions early to avoid them being missed. Do not forget to like each other's questions. For each topic we begin with two questions taken from the live audience here, followed by one question online. If you have time, if we have time for additional questions they will be taken from the live audience. I want to remind you to keep questions short, I also ask the Mayor and the Assembly Members to keep your answers succinct and short and to point out that the more questions we get in, the better for all of us. Listen to the questions and the answers with respect and dignity, do not hackle or disrupt the meeting, please.

Electronic devices should be on silent mode and the same applies to the Mayor and to the London Assembly Members here on the stage.

Before we begin, I do want to take a few moments to welcome you all here, not just as the Chair for the meeting, as this is my constituency of Ealing but also as the Chair of the London

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Assembly. The London Assembly is 25 Assembly Members elected at the same time as the Mayor.

To ensure, that your money is well spent, the Assembly scrutinises the Mayor's plans to hold them to account to ensure that they deliver for Londoners. This year, the Assembly is focused on five key priorities. Firstly, London's safety, amidst mounting concerns about the conduct of some Met police officers, the Members of the police and the crime committee questioned the Met Commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley about his plans to restore trust and confidence in the force. Secondly, climate change. At the end of last year, the Environment Committee met with the London's representatives on London hospitality businesses and the steps that they take to help create a green economy. Yesterday, the Members of the planning and the regenerative committee met to talk about an environment friendly modifying of buildings to make them LED efficient and to also possibly demolish and rebuilding them. Thirdly to recover from COVID, as we recover from COVID, we have outlined steps to support the capital's early sector following the pandemic sickle cell the committee held a roundtable event with smaller cultural organisations across London to hear about the help needed to bounce back from the impact of COVID-19. Fourthly, the cost of living which is continuing to be the front and the centre of Londoner's minds. Inflation, high food prices, mortgages and rent rising and the housing committee published an affordable housing monitor in October, to benchmark the Mayor's delivery of affordable homes against the commitments. And the Members looked into the food insecurity, to look into hearing from food organisations and food bank volunteers and the challengers for Londoners when it comes to accessing food. And for older Londoners, many of which the challenges will be more difficult this year, so there is a focus on the group throughout the investigations, for example, into the impact of public transport, the fare reforms, healthy living for Londoners and scrutiny of the GLA beg plans. To deep you up-to-date with the with the work, follow us on Twitter and watch in the meetings in person or on YouTube. The Assembly continues to voice the concerns of Londoners, to champion and to investigate the

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issues that matter to you. You leave it to us, we will look out for you. Now to invite the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, to give his address. Over to you Mr Mayor.

SADIQ: Good evening, everyone. Can I begin by thanking the Chair of the London Assembly, who is also your local Assembly Member, Dr Onkar Sahota, for his opening remarks. Thank you for the work you do as a politicians, and also as a local doctor, particularly during the awful pandemic we are coming out of now. It is lovely to see the local MPs, James Murray and Rupert Huck and Peter Mason and the public servants who are here tonight working so hard for this community.

It is great to be here in Ealing.

And to have the opportunity to listen to your experiences and to answer your questions. As the title of this event suggests, People's Question Time is about you, not me, so I will keep my opening remarks short. I do, though, want to make, to take a moment to acknowledge the extreme financial pressures many in our communities are under. As a result of 13 years of austerity and the cost-of-living and touching on what we are doing in City Hall to help.

Last week, I announced an unprecedented £130 million in funding to provide free school meals to ALL primary schoolchildren in London for the next academic year.

[Applause]

On average it will save parents around £440 per child, per year.

What should be the job of national Government to tackle childhood hunger and poverty they failed to do this, so I could not be prouder to step up and to offer a crucial lifeline. As someone who benefited from free school meals myself, I know it will be a game-changer, not only for the children at risk of going hungry but for families struggling to make ends meet.

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We are also spending a further £80 million to provide the cost-of-living support to our communities. This includes helping Londoners to access vital advice, to improve energy efficiency, and to keep their homes warmer.

However, the unprecedented nature of this economic crisis means the Government must do more ... that's why I am coming on them to give me the powers to immediately freeze private rents in London.

[Applause]

During a period of intense hardship, it is wrong to adopt a sink or swim attitude towards our communities, instead, as the Mayor, I seek to extend a helping hand to enable Londoners to keep their heads above water. My administration will also continue to focus strongly on the issues that matter the most to our communities and residents in Ealing. Issues like violent crime, thanks to our approach of being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, is continuing to fall. In fact, here in London, we are bucking the national trend with knife crime, gun crime, homicides and teenage homicides all down, unlike the rest of the country. (disruption) ...

SADIQ: Not only is this the result of investment in the police but it is achieved through the record investment of providing positive opportunities for our young people, ensuring that they don't get caught up in crime and gangs in the first place but we are not complacent. I can assure you we will continue the approach and the issue with further focus and the resolve it deserves. As the Mayor I am passionate to ensure to continue to deliver for Londoners across a range of other areas from housing and transport, to our environment and to the economy.

Since 2016, we have taken some huge strides, building record numbers of genuinely affordable homes, including more council homes than at any time since the 1970s, cleaning up London's air – cutting toxic air by half in Central London [inaudible shouting]. Making transport around the city easier, greener, more affordable for millions of commuters.

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Skilling up Londoners with the offer of free training to anyone unemployed or in low-paid work. Delivering the Elizabeth Line, addressing funding for homelessness and rough sleeping to help bring jobs, supporting businesses, bringing jobs, tourism and investment back to the city. It is a record of progress and delivery but there is so much more to do. And I am just as determined to continue building a better London for everyone. A London that is fairer, safer, greener, more affordable, and more prosperous for all of our communities. I look forward to answering your questions tonight.

[Applause] [Booing]

ONKAR: Thank you, Mr Mayor. I wanted to set the tone right for the meeting - hackling, or being derogatory in any way is not allowed [inaudible shouting]. I have no hesitation in removing the hacklers from the room. The Assembly and the Mayor are here to answer your questions, and you should ask those questions respectfully, if you hackle, I will get you removed. So, let's get this absolutely straight, this is an opportunity to have a dialogue with the Assembly Members and the Mayor but not to hackle or to shout abuse at anyone. So the first action to ask questions on is on transport, this topic will be for 18 minutes, I will take questions in 3s, the first two will be from the hall here and the third from the live chat, which will be referred to me on my iPad. All of those who want to ask a question on transport, please.

Paddle number 6.

Wearing a grey jacket.

Sorry, number 7. Yes.

QUESTION: Thank you very much. Thank you very much for taking my question. I want to ask about the ULEZ. I want to ask you, if you think it is fair and democratic to be pushing a measure through which was not in your manifesto and which, clearly, when people were consulted, they said they did not want. So, that is my question to you, thank you.

[Applause]

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ONKAR: Anyone else? The lady with the mask on in the blue.

QUESTION: Mr Khan, I would like to say what are you going to do for people like me who cannot afford to buy a ULEZ compliant car and do not fulfil the scrappage scheme criteria?

[Applause]

ONKAR: And the question which is online is: If toxic air concerns the Mayor so much why is not addressing the high levels of toxic air on the tube?

[Applause]

OK.

Now, we will listen to the answers from the Mayor.

SADIQ: Thank you for all three questions in relation to the Ultra Low Emission Zone and toxic air. All three questions are clearly linked. Let me be frank and unapologetic in saying that I think it outrageous that about 4,000 people in our city every year die prematurely because of the toxic air [applause, boeing, inaudible shouts]... in the London borough of Ealing, that figure is almost 200. It is a fact that toxic air is a matter of life and death. Not only around 4,000 people die in our city every year but there are children with stunted lungs forever because of the poison in our air. There are adults with a host of conditions from cancer, heart disease to dementia. But the good news is we've shown by the Ultra Low Emission Zone in central and inner London, that it is a game changer. Because in the centre of our city, it's reduced toxic air by almost a half and in inner London it has reduced toxic air by a further 20%. What that means is there are now, 1,360 schools in Central inner London breathe in cleaner air. But in outer London ...

[Applause]

... But in outer London is where the largest portion of people with respiratory issues live in our great city. There are 500,000 people with asthma or other related illnesses; more than 300,000 live in outer London. The 10 boroughs with the worse premature deaths because of air quality, are all in outer London and they include Ealing. These policies will lead to the air

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being cleaner in outer London, so an additional 5 million Londoners can breathe cleaner air. That means 1,700 schools, the children there breathing cleaner air. But also importantly [inaudible shout] But also importantly, there are 282 hospitals and care homes in outer London who are breathing the poison. So what we've done is announce that from August this year we will be expanding the ULEZ to cover all of London but we've also announced a package of £110 million to support those who will have to move from a polluting vehicle, to a less polluting vehicle. Not a penny of support given from the Government, even though they have given support to Birmingham, Bristol and other parts of the country. We will be supporting those who are low income, we will be supporting sole traders, we will be supporting small businesses, we will be supporting charities, we will be supporting those who are disabled, we will be supporting those by given them a grace period as well. What we have done is make sure that all of them can benefit from clean air. And I make this point: the objections made in the 1950s when we had the Clean Air Act and removed power stations from the centre of our city; there were objections in 2006 when we banned smoking from public places; and there are objections now. What I find unacceptable, though, is some of those who've got legitimate objections joining hands with some of those outside who are part of a far-right group [applause, inaudible shouting, booing], who are ... some of those outside ... some of those outside ... let's be frank, let's call, let's call a spade a spade. Some of those outside are part of the far-right, some are COVID deniers, some are vaccine deniers and some are Tories.

ONKAR: Hang on, – Look, hang on, hang on. The Mayor has a right to be heard. Right? Don't [inaudible shouting] This People's Question Time is an opportunity to have an exchange of views, not to hackle or shout. It is to hear people's views. Otherwise we will end this, it can end very quickly.

SADIQ: To those – [inaudible shouting] to those people who have got legitimate concerns ... [inaudible shouting]



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ONKAR: Excuse me, no hackling, and if you do, I will get some people removed, please.

[inaudible shouting, booing]

Let's hear what the Mayor has to say. [inaudible shouting]

SADIQ: So, for those who have, and there are people with legitimate concerns we are seeking to address those and will carry on listening to make sure that the ULEZ is a success.

[Applause]

ONKAR: Mr Mayor? [inaudible shouting] Have you finished? I want to bring in Assembly Member Caroline Pigeon who is from the Liberal Democrat Group next.

CAROLINE P: Thank you, Chair. Really, really important questions that you have raised this evening. I think it is really important that we need to clean up the air in London. We need to make sure that the hidden killer in the air is tackled. Where I disagree with the Mayor is the speed he is going at this. We want a longer lead-in time to make it easier for people to move over. But more than that, practically as Liberal Democrats, last week we proposed two budget amendments to the Mayor's budget, the first would have doubled the scrappage scheme to make it open to everyone, not just those on benefits, to address the point we had earlier, secondly to put in £50 million into area bus services in outer London as you need a viable alternative. We were really pleased that the Greens came on Board, the Conservatives came on board but Labour did not. Sorry but we have tried to make ULEZ work in a better way but at every turn, Labour blocked it. We also are calling for a scrappage scheme for the south-east, to help those who live just outside of London as well as those in outer London that the Government helps to fund. They have spent £880 million funding scrappage schemes in other cities around the country but London is being left out. We are trying to do all that we can to make ULEZ work to clean up the air. I hope that at some point,

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the Mayor will listen to us and we can move on to tackle other areas, such as the tube, mentioned earlier.

ONKAR: I want to bring in Assembly Member Fortune.

PETER: Thank you. You heard it, didn't you? If you disagree with the Mayor he's going to paint you as far right. If you disagree with the Mayor he's going to say you are a science denier, he's going to say you're a COVID denier, he's going to say you're a flat-earther, he's going to say you think there are aliens in Buckingham Palace and Mr Blobby shot Kennedy. He's going to throw all this crazy stuff at you this because he doesn't want to address the fact that you've got legitimate concerns. Now, I used this analogy the other week. The Mayor talks about – he says it's similar to banning smoking in pubs, it isn't. What the Mayor is saying you can't smoke in pubs unless, unless you pay me £12.50 and then you can smoke in pubs. Also, if you are going to pay £12.50 and smoke in pubs, you need to buy the cigarettes off me. Because that's what it's about. It's about finance. At the end of the day it's about the mismanagement of TfL. And he never talks about the financial impact on people. People come and make reasonable concerns about how it's going to impact them visiting family, there are small businesses, how it's going to interrupt their daily lives and he never wants to address that. Because the reality is he is filling a financial hole in TfL because of his mismanagement. That's why. That's why. [applause] That is why the cameras were ordered before the consultation even started, because the journey here is, once he's bled you dry with his ULEZ over the next two years, once people have taken out loans and gone out of business, then road user charging is going to come in and there will be a whole other level of charge. This needs to stop and it needs to stop now.

ONKAR: Any other Assembly members want to come in?  
Assembly Member Devonish.

TONY: When we had Ken Livingston or Boris Johnson they listened to people. They wouldn't do what Mr Khan does. The Jacob's report, the TfL report says there is no improvement in outer London in air quality with this scheme. It's a stealth tax by a Mayor who never listens to Londoners.

ONKAR: Assembly Member McCartney.

JOANNE: I think everyone would say that Boris Johnson is not perfect. I am proud to stand alongside Sadiq Khan that rather than taking decisions for his own personal interest takes decisions that yes are bold and difficult, but they are the right decisions to for the health and wellbeing of Londoners. Let's be clear, this is about clean air, it's about making sure our children are able to breathe properly. It's about making sure that elder people do not get those respiratory illnesses and die prematurely. It's about making sure that all of us have a better quality of life.

Can I say the Mayor has announced a 110 million scrappage scheme. He is right, the Government has failed to include London in any national funding scheme. It is funding other cities but not London. You ask yourself why is that if it's not pure politics? Can I say that also

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when last week, at the Assembly we voted to say that the Government should step up and actually include London in its National Scrappage Scheme it was the Tories on the Assembly that voted against it. So they are happy to criticise the mayor, they are not happy to criticise their own Government.

ONKAR: The Mayor.

SADIQ: It's really important to understand what is happening here. You are being asked that actually to follow the former Mayor who was having parties in Downing Street while the Queen was burying her husband and not to follow the evidence which is what the Chief Medical Officer is saying, what Imperial College is saying, what a 200-page report from Jacob's is saying, what clinicians at Imperial College are saying, what clinicians at University College are saying, what Great Ormond Street are saying, what the Ealing Children's Hospital are saying that is when you drive a polluting vehicle you are breathing in poison, you're breathing in particulate matter, you're breathing in NOX.. What this policy is about is cleaning up the air in London. We've seen the difference it's made in central London, a reduction of almost 50% in nitrogen dioxide. Experts around the world have never seen a policy so transformative. If it's good enough for those in central London why isn't it good enough for those in outer London? [applause]

Unlike, unlike, unlike Boris Johnson, I don't think it's one rule for one in central London and one rule for another. I think clean air is a human right, not a privilege. And the reason – and the reason – [applause, booing] and let's be frank, because of my policies now, only 6% of vehicles in central London and inner London are not compliant. It used to be a massive 70% because people are cleaning up their cars and that's leading to the air being cleaner. I want the same for outer London as well. As it is half of London don't even own a car and those that do 94% are compliant in Inner London, 85% in outer London. And it's a fact by the way, it's a fact: some of you have got good reasons to oppose ULEZ but you're in coalition with COVID deniers, [booing, inaudible shouting] you are in coalition – you may not like it – you may not like it – you may not like it. You are in coalition with the far right and you are in coalition with vaccine deniers as well [booing, inaudible shouting, applause].

ONKAR: I am now going to ask Assembly Member Berry to come in, please.

SIAN: Thank you, chair, sorry I thought you hadn't seen me. I am from the Green Party and I chair the Transport Committee at the moment. We started this debate with three very practical and reasonable questions from the audience. That is our job in the London Assembly, to listen to those practical questions that come up when there is a policy proposed. We have listened and we did, as Assembly Member Pidgeon pointed out, come up with practical solutions to those issues that you face when a policy is put forward. Now, as a Green the first question wasn't entirely right, it wasn't in the Mayor's original manifesto for this election, but it should have been London-wide from the first place. It should have been London-wide straight away, as soon as he came in in 2016. Those should have been his plans. Alongside helping people in outer London to get around more easily.

Now, I am here to say that you need help, you need better bus, you need cheaper public transport. The zonal system makes you pay more to use the Tube. All of those things should

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have been being brought in, but it isn't the case that we should be arguing to stop ULEZ now. Clean air is a human right. I think we all, I hope we all, share the goal of making our air clean enough for our children to breathe and reducing the traffic on our streets so that it's safe enough for our children to play out. We should have a vision for a better London than this. I think there are different kinds of people who are opposed to this. There are people who are raising practical suggestions, asking the Assembly and the Mayor for help and who want to get out of their cars but cannot at the moment and need that support to do it. And then there are people I think who, whatever we were doing about this problem of too much traffic in London, would be against it. They're not constructive and I do worry that the Conservatives are teaming up with just about anybody, no matter what their background, who is opposed to the Mayor's proposals now. And some of them are from the far right, so I think the mayor makes a real genuine point here. [applause, booing] That we need – it's true. We need to argue in a way that is reasonable, about reasonable policies, which these basically are. Let's not get into a violent fight about all of this, because it's more important than that. Thank you.

ONKAR: We are out of time on this section now. We are out on time on transport. If you didn't get your question in, please do visit the People's Question Time Ealing page on the London.gov site which tells you how you can submit one in writing. The next section is on police and safety. This is our topic for the next 18 minutes, it's on policing and safety and includes any questions about community safety, policing and the London Fire Brigade. I will take three questions. Please raise your hand if you would like to ask a question. In this section there are no questions online on policing so I will take three questions from the audience.

Can I have paddle number two and this lady with the yellow scarf.

QUESTION: My question is now that you have a new commissioner what action can the BAME communities expect to see to demonstrate that the Met is rooting out racism that still exists within?

ONKAR: Thank you. Number, maybe we will come to this part of the room. Number 4. This gentleman over here.

QUESTION: Hello. I would like to ask the Mayor what are we doing to tackle rising crime? We sure have seen a decrease in crime in the wider London region but we saw, I mean I used to work in law enforcement and we have seen 36 cases of sexual violent offences in January alone. What can we do in Ealing to reduce the level of serious and organised crime and violent crime? Thank you very much.

ONKAR: And paddle 5. The lady next to paddle 5.

QUESTION: Hi. So I would like to address, I am very scared about the safety, specifically women's safety. There is a rise in sexual assaults, rape, muggings and the list goes on. There aren't enough cameras, brighter lighting and police on our streets in Ealing. What actions are being put in place to protect women and girls some of whom have been attacked and are scared to walk the streets especially when it's dark.

ONKAR: Thank you for those three questions. And we will get the Mayor to answer them first.

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SADIQ: Can I thank all three questioners for their important questions. The first question is intrinsic when you police by consent. It's having trust and confidence in our police service. It's really important. The new Commissioner has a nice phrase. The more trust the higher standards there are the less crime there will be because people will come forward to report crime, and they will join the police service. We have to be honest there are systemic and cultural problems in our police service that require addressing. I don't think you can solve a problem without recognising the problem is there. The good news is both the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner understand there are systemic cultural issues which has been confirmed not just by a report, but the experience that many black and ethnic Londoners have had, the LGBT community and the murders by Stephen Port. What they want to do is root out the cultures in the police service. We have invested from City Hall in more people to support the police when it comes to vetting, to support the police when it comes to a hotline for people to report any had issues against the police. Also they agreed to go back ten years and look at any allegation against a police officer that is relevant to some of the concerns many people in London have. I think we have to give them time. This didn't happen overnight and it deserves time to turn things around. Dame Casey will be providing her report shortly. But it's important to understand that there are thousands of dedicated decent brave officers in the police service and they are as desperate for change as the public is. They see This Commissioner as an ally in the police service. We should see him as an ally in the police service. And the proof will be more people willing to come forward to report crime, more people willing to come forward to be witnesses and more people to come forward and join the police services. We are recruiting for more police officers and police community officers so I would encourage anyone who loves their community to be part of the change they want to see in the police service in London. In relation to the second and third question which are linked is the bad news is I mentioned in my opening, we have managed to buck the national trend in some violent crimes. Knife crime, gun crime, homicide. We haven't when it comes to sexual offences and we haven't when it comes to rape and it goes to both the questions asked by the last two questioners. There was a number of things we are trying to do to address that. It's a nationwide problem we have. Firstly it takes a long time when someone reports a rape for that to reach trial. It can take three years. So the attrition is a problem. So what we need do is make people have confidence to report crimes and support them, we are investing 140 million in this area from City Hall. But it's better to prevent a crime than to support a victim to survive afterwards. You are spot on about the importance of the public realm lighting and how we design public spaces. In my view, it's a societal problem. We should start in our primary school teaching boys how to respect girls. Teaching boys... teaching boys about healthy relationships. We had a campaign last year, Have a Word. It was seen by 65 million men. Sometimes realise that often their banter is not received well by a woman and that sometimes their friends say things. I think misogyny should be a hate crime. You have a societal approach to those issues. So we are doing what we can from City Hall. We have written to the Government to ask for support in this area, but all of us have a role to play. But men in particular have to provide allyship on this issue.

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ONKAR: Mr Mayor, I have had one question online, which I will pass over to you before I go to other members. What can we do to help educate the police about the most optimal way to assist people with mental health conditions?

SADIQ: So when many of us were growing up the police were often the port of last call. The last people you would ring is the police, now I am afraid because of a variety of issues I mentioned in my opening, the cuts from the Government over 13 years, but the police are often the first port of call when people have a mental health crisis and issues. The best place for them is with a doctor, rather than with a police officer. The police spend a lot of time with people in crisis with mental ill-health. We are going to free up our police to fight crime. What we are doing is speaking to the NHS in London to see what they can do to support people with medical ill-health and separately we are doing work with the community around Thrive London and other people to support young people who have mental health challenges, particularly with the issues with CAMHS there are. One of the things that the Commissioner has done is quantify the cost of mental ill-health on policing. It's huge. The amount of hours that police spend on people who aren't criminals but are having a crisis. If we could free up the police to not do that and deal with criminals and bad people, I think it would make the city safer.

ONKAR: Assembly Member Desai.

UNMESH: I am aware of what goes on around London. The not so new Commissioner has lots on his plate and the serious issue of violence against women and girls. Also let us acknowledge the solid work that is being done in and around London. I am aware that the local council, Ealing Council last summer carried out a major exercise called Safer Ealing For Women. Thousands of women informed the action plan. There is not just rhetoric, their views, formed the basis for the Council looking at improved lighting, CCTV, a website information, signposting services and support to engagement in schools to better inform our young people which is where it all starts. Educating young people. Ealing's strategy forms the foundation of this exercise, new housing sustainment and I was speaking to the Borough commander this evening who told me there was an exercise locally recently tackling county line gang helping young vulnerable people. So there are initiatives out there helping local communities, but let's also look at the use of resources. This Mayor, Sadiq Khan, in his recent budget has found funding for 500 extra PSOs which were desperately needed. It was this Mayor, the first London Mayor to use his budgetary powers to recruit and retain £1,300 extra police officers. In contrast with the last decade where the Metropolitan Police budget was slashed by one billion pounds. So when the Government talks about slashing them nationally, they are not talking about new officers they are talking about replacing officers they already got rid of. So it does come down to central Government helping local Government and City Hall in particular. We need these resources...

ONKAR: Can you speed up?

UNMESH: So lots is being done for City Hall and all I will say is we work with the serious crime issues that our city faces but let us also acknowledge that work is being done by the Mayor and by the police.

ONKAR: Okay. Assembly Member Hall.



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SUSAN: First of all, it's a great shame that a lot of you have come here to talk about ULEZ, he gets three questions and doesn't answer any of them properly. The trouble is, I don't think he fully understands that it's not the same in outer London as it is in Inner London. You can't just pop on a bus, pop on a train, because we don't have that. I think it's a great shame that when people come here to ask questions.

ONKAR: Assembly Member Hall. This is the transport section, you know the rules of the game. This is, sorry a police question.

SUSAN: It's amazing, you have allowed the Mayor to speak and come back and I am just addressing the issues that the residents have taken the trouble to come here and want to talk about.

Okay so now we are in the police section, so I will talk about that. Very sadly our Metropolitan Police are under special measures under this Mayor. As indeed are our very fine fire brigade under this Mayor. When you hear the Mayor talk he will use the statistics that are good, but he will never refer to things that aren't going right. Knife crime in 2022 is up almost 15%. He needs to face the issues, he needs to help the Metropolitan Police as best he can. Let me assure you there are officers out there that are more horrified by some of the things that have happened than any of us are, truly. They are an incredible force but they should get far more support from this Mayor. I want to come in on other sections so I will stop now, but I do think it is pretty poor that all of you want to get your message across over this wretched ULEZ and you are not allowed to.

ONKAR: Assembly Member Hall. You know the rules of engagement and hang on, I have been doing this job for ten years and I have sat on Mayor's Question Times. So I think you, I would expect better standards from you.

SUSAN: It's a crime they are not allowed to ask their questions.

ONKAR: You should know better. I am going to bring in Assembly Member Sem Moema.

SEM: Good evening. I am a member of the Labour group and I represent Hackney and Waltham Forest. I think it's a crying shame that the current chair of the police and crime committee doesn't want to talk about policing because there are really serious issues in the capital right now. But, as to the points that this woman here and the woman over there to the left-hand side raised about, I think the interplay of misogyny and race when it comes to being a Londoner, there are issues in our capital with trust and confidence in the police from black and minoritised communities. There are issues of trust and confidence in the police from women. I fully understand that perspective and it is just different.

The thing that I would say is that having sat through the previous Commissioner and the previous Deputy Commissioner coming to the Police and Crime Committee and the current commissioner and the current Deputy Commissioner coming to the Police and Crime Committee the fact is they do understand and acknowledge that the police does have a problem with race, they do have a problem with trust and confidence with women and they are willing to accept it. Every single time I am out in my own constituency I have three Borough commands and the officers there want to make sure that London is policed well and safely and they have the license now to go out and root out the bad people in the force

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that shouldn't be there in the first place. So that the likes of us in this room can travel around our capital really safely exactly the same as any other Londoner. I want you to continue to raise those problems that we have with the police, because if we don't raise the alarm we won't ever have a police force that is fit to police our capital.

[ APPLAUSE ]

ONKAR: Okay, we are now out of this section on policing and now we move on to air quality and the environment. We have 18 minutes for this section, we will take two questions from the audience and one from live chat. So this is on air quality and the environment.

Paddle number 3.

QUESTION: While I understand the need for additional housing, how are you going to ensure that Metropolitan open land is not declassified and built on as this is essential for maintaining open spaces and biodiversity in London?

[ APPLAUSE ]

ONKAR: And over there, paddle number 8.

QUESTION: I am from Southall... there we are. Why hasn't the Mayor still contacted us in Southall regarding the Clean Air Campaign which has been ongoing for about four-and-a-half years and not helping clean up the air in Southall and just pump the air with more vehicles than he wants to mention ULEZ. A bit of a contradiction I think.

ONKAR: And one more question.

Paddle number 2.

Who are you? Which one?

QUESTION: Good evening. My name is Scott Farley, I am a local councillor in Hillingdon. We are against the ULEZ expansion in Hillingdon as Labour group. We have made this point clear in our manifesto that we stood on in election in 2022. We all want clean air, we all want that, but the way this is being implemented we feel the mitigations are not there. It's not good enough for the outer boroughs. In Hillingdon we have carer, we have our police and our nurses. Nurses using food banks adding on these extra costs and they can't afford to change their cars. It's not right, we want to work with the Mayor, we want to see clean air, but what we want is better mitigations for those that cannot afford and are not qualifying for scrappage. Thank you.

ONKAR: I have a question online: I am worried about my children developing asthma, what more can be done to reduce toxic air? So this is a question online. Over to Mr Mayor.

SADIQ: I did not hear the question.

ONKAR: Can we have silence: I am worried about children developing asthma, what more can be done to reduce toxic air. Over to Mr Mayor to answer the four questions.

SADIQ: Can I ask the person that asked the question about fresh water overland sickle cell and biodiversity, really important issues, although we are a global city, we should be proud we are quite green. Almost 44% is green. And to be careful as there is temptation to build on the land, if that is green belt or open land. In London we have satisfied the authorities to become a National Park City. We have policies to keep what we have, to green even more city, not just for biodiversity ... (disruption).



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...

ONKAR: Hang on, please let the Mayor ask the question, please. Please, listen to him.

SADIQ: Not to keep what we have but with better biodiversity, we have better quality of life. During the pandemic, one of the things we all appreciated was the importance of good quality green spaces as well. So, from City Hall, what we are doing is supporting communities green in their areas as it helps also to adapt our city towards the heatwaves that we had last summer, to help our city when it comes to flash-floods as well. So the we have policies in the London Plan to support local communities and local councils to keep even more of our city that is green as well. The question in relationship to the gentleman from the back from Southall, just tackling vehicles is not enough, I agree. Vehicles is the main source, though, of the poor quality air in our city. Other issues around construction are important. Other issues in relation to the built environment are really important ... (disruption).

ONKAR: The Mayor cannot hear you. You are distracting other people listening to answers from the Mayor. Can we listen to what the Mayor has to say.

QUESTION: It is not about vehicles, it is about the air quality in Southall, the pollution is ridiculous. Five years, it has been ongoing. The gas works has been sold to a private developer, for what? (disruption)

... the chemicals that you mentioned earlier, they are there.

What is being done? Absolute jack crap. Nothing! Nothing!

ONKAR: OK, this is a specific issue, Mr Mayor. About the gas works on the site. This is what it is about.

SADIQ: I'm not aware of the particular case. I will have to look into it. Maybe ...

ONKAR: Hang on. This is a specific issue to Southall, the London Assembly does not have specific responsibilities on that area but the Mayor is trying to answer the question best, although he may not have all of the details of the matter. I do, although I am the Chair of the meeting so I cannot answer the question sickle cell.

SADIQ: The relation to Scot's question from Hillingdon, as I said, we always keep the scrappage scheme under review. The previous scrappage scheme, £6 million, began at £25 million and we increased it and learned lessons from the previous scrappage scheme, who are now eligible and in Hillingdon, for the last year that we had figures, 155 people died prematurely because of air quality. People may ... people, I can hear people questioning the science. All I suggest ...

ONKAR: Hang on.

SADIQ: Is that they speak to the experts at the Imperial College. In relation to the work that they have done. The question from the internet, I could not hear, it was about how to restocks unionist, as the person has asthma and a few people in the room groaned, I don't think it is a groaning issue ...

[Applause]

When you speak to the mother of a nine-year-old child who has died because of asthma, it is not a reason to groan but a reason to be appalled that in one of the greatest cities in the world, there are about 4,000 people a year dying because of the poor quality in the city. You can put your head in the sands to pretend it is not happening. Kick the can down the road or take action to clean up the inner-city.

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[Applause]

I'm determined to take action to clean up the air in our city.

ONKAR: Thank you.

The more interruptions we have, the less time we have to ask questions. We can't have it both ways. Please, refrain yourself. If you have asked a question to let the Assembly Members to answer. I want to give other Members a chance too. This is an Assembly where all Assembly Members can contribute, I will ask Zack Polanski to speak to his question.

ZACK: Thank you, when I work with the Mayor, I like to work constructively, so I will applaud when he gets things right and expose the gaps when there are things done wrong. The Mayor is doing lots of work to tackle biodiversity and tackling the climate emergency but in Ealing there is a relevant site, it is Warren Farm Nature Reserve. We have a Labour council in Ealing they must hear the call of the campaigners clearly. A third of London's skylarks are breeding on the site. The point of skylarks it is not just about the birds, they are a landmark species so where there are landmark sky larks, lots of other species must be protected. It is not just about the nature, it is about our people, people's access to green space, environmental justice links in with social justice. It is vital that Ealing couple change their minds on this to protect that green space.

[Applause]

ZACK: So, briefly, this links to a wider issue as well. With the Mayor I have been campaigning for a London Climate Panel. The Mayor often interacts with big climate groups but sometimes groups as we have heard tonight don't get a look in as they are not known about. I would like to see a panel so that the Assembly Members don't only amplify your voices but that they are heard in City Hall, and people are paid for time and labour, if you expect people to volunteer space and team for free, lots of people will be locked from the conversation. We have done work with the Ealing Greens, I would love to come and visit, because the pollution there is not acceptable and I would love to have that conversation with you.

ONKAR: Assembly Member ...

>> I was standing outside of the Town Hall last week, where there were thousands of people from Ealing saying, "Save Warren Farm." It's about time that Ealing council and the Mayor of London listens to you. People in Ealing want to save Warren Farm for an incredibly important reason. This is really important, an open space that has taken ten years of rewilding. It will be a beautiful area that needs to be saved and the Ealing Liberal Democrats did bring it to the attention of Ealing council and they are not listening. We will make sure you are heard on this matter. On the other issues of ULEZ, frankly, it is not fit for purpose. It is why the Liberal Democrats made sure that we are moving to ensure that YOU, have got better transport links in outer London. It is why we warranted to invest more from the Mayor's budget on buses. Unfortunately, the Labour Party Group voted against that. That is simply the case. The Labour Group voted against that. This is the case. We have a plan. It will not work without the support of Labour. We wanted to make sure that the scrappage works for you. Again, Labour voted against that. We all have to be united to make sure that air quality is dealt with, it cannot be a political party approach. Everyone needs to work together. It is a real shame that Labour did not support the Liberal Democrats on the two

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amendments, I am pleased that the others did. A final point it is a shame we are not talking about other things that we have to deal with air quality. There was a news broadcast the other day about wood burning, so many things we should be talking about when it comes to air quality and to tackle that, the Liberal Democrats are listening to you. I will ensure that I continue to campaign for you and make sure that we do save that beautiful Warren Farm. [Applause]

ONKAR: Assembly Member Nick Rogers.

NICK: Thank you, Chair, the Ultra Low Emission Zone let's be clear, TfL's data showed that ULEZ expansion will have a negligible effect on air quality, yet we know it will have a devastating impact on outer London, businesses, charities, residents will be unfairly penalised for going about their daily business. The Mayor spoke of extreme financial pressures but he is the one putting extreme financial pressures on thousands and thousands of Londoners. Financial pressures on Londoners who said that they don't want the policy. At thing the Mayor, loud and clear in the public consultation, he ignored them. Just as he ignored the public back lash that happened since announcing his decision. Now, the ULEZ expansion is about making money, we know that. Labour showed true colours by voting against a Conservative proposal to invest £550 million in zero emission buses and tackling lower local pollution hotspots. To vote against measures that would have cleaned up the air to protect the damaging ULEZ expansion. Labour ... effectively, the Mayor needs to cancel ULEZ expansion ... and invest in policies that will actually clean up London's air. Thank you.

ONKAR: OK. We are out of time on this section.

We now go on to housing.

We will move on to housing for the next 18 minutes. I will take two questions from the audience, one from online.

Pardon? Hang on.

Hang on. I make the decisions. Because you have done that, you may have prejudiced someone.

Hang on. Look, can I have paddle 4. The gentleman with the white piece of paper.

QUESTION: Is everyone ready? I am waiting for people. You say a lot about helping people to insulate homes which is great. But in London in particular, especially with the new housing to come in, it is likely to be flat. Why is there no support to help people to protect their properties from overheating? It feels very much with the climate change we are just like frogs, boiling in the pan, where it slowly gets hotter and we cannot escape.

ONKAR: OK.

Number 7.

QUESTION: It is great you are building homes and houses but they are not, they are not the everyday homes and houses that everyone should have with a little bit of garden, a little bit of space. They are huge, flat, 24 stories, 26 storeys, that you want to build here, in places, we don't need flats. We need homes, houses, to be able to meld the area to be the same. Not to have this odd flats here and there, like you are planning in Greenford that is going on at the moment. 14 storeys. Why?

ONKAR: OK. We get the question.

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So, can I ask the Mayor and the Assembly Members to be succinct, the more we can get through the answers, the more we can get from the audience. Over to the Mayor, please.

SADIQ: The question at the back is important: How to adapt our homes, bear in mind the heatwaves that we had last year that will be more regular. It is important to invest. The phrase, the jargon is retro fit to adapt homes to deal with the extreme weathers that we have, cold in the winter, sometimes, very hot in the summer. So, we are investing with Government support in relation to retro fitting homes and public building, not enough but we need to do far more. The volume of addressing the issue, it reduces the bills as well. Reducing the bills in the summer as you need to put on less fans to have the air conditioning and reducing the bill in winter as you use heating less as you have better insulation. So the same solution helps with cooling homes in the summer that heat up homes in the winter. We have a grant of £80 million but we need more support to ensure that more homes are retro fitted to go forward. The good thing, it creates good jobs, to have jobs in retro fitting homes and supporting families like yours well. The second question in relation to gardens and spaces, we have a requirement in relation to the London Plan, whether it comes to homes being built they have to build in space, and requiring councils to carry out assessment of the number of family homes that are needed. Not just 1 and 2 bedrooms that you see in the big flats but the 3 and the 4 bedrooms as well. It is really important as obviously some families in particular need the bigger homes. As Zack mentioned during the pandemic, the importance of green space to mental health.

So we are supporting those developers to build those homes. One of the problems is, one of the problems is, the way that the grant system works from Government in affordable housing there is no incentive for the developers to build those homes but to build the flats, so we must work with the Government to ensure that the grant system works better. The good news is that we are building record numbers of all size of homes, 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom homes but the supply of new homes is not meeting demand, for the future, that is why there are people living in the private reasonable sector and the rents are expensive and the quality and the standard is poor and there is no security of tenure. So we must build more family homes, build more homes for Fowler families and in the meantime to fix the private reasonable sector, to freeze rents now to have the power for rent controls get rid of no-fault evictions and ensure better quality housing for everyone.

[Applause]

ONKAR: Hello. Hang on. Hang on.

That question does not need to be answered. You did not ask it properly. Next is Assembly Member Tony Devenish. No. Hang on. Listen to me. If you don't stop you don't stop, I will ask you to be removed. Security, please remove that gentleman if he does not stop. (disruption).

ONKAR: Over to Tony Devenish, please.

TONY: In 2016, Sadiq Khan and I and many people here were elected for the first time. One of the big issues was the housing crisis. There was cross-party consensus we needed to do more in London for housing. So, what has Mr Khan done in seven years? Not a lot. He has not spent the billions of pounds that Government have given him to build homes. At the start of tonight he said something that I have to pick up, it is one of the most irresponsible

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things he has said and he has said it before, talking of rent controls. Rent controls will destroy the housing market in London. Increasing rent levels. People would not rent their homes and as Scotland has found and Berlin and Ireland, it is an irresponsible policy, Mr Mayor, do something on housing, it is a huge issue, we agreed in 2016, you have done absolutely zilch.

[Applause]

ONKAR: Assembly Member Sheikh.

SAKINA: To push back on what is the Mayor doing on housing, it is an area where the statistics and the evidence so clear in terms of the record of building social housing and affordable housing. The gentleman removed, although unfortunate his point was valid. Let's talk about homelessness, it is at the core of all of the housing crisis. All of what Sadiq Khan is calling for, a rent freezes and a ban on section 2, is no fault evictions it will stop homelessness. You want to stop homelessness, stop developers and landlords from kicking people on to the street as they cannot afford the rent. That is why it is dangerous when the Tories stand up to spew information about the rent freezing crumbling the housing crisis but the Tory Government has created the housing crisis. It has come about as we have no controls on the rent, because the house is unaffordable to buy, to have a deposit. Many of my friends cannot afford a deposit. You are trapped in a rental cycle, it is why we are lucky to have a Mayor in City Hall, calling to are rent freezes, calling for a ban on Section 2, is pushing back on no ... (disruption) status, also to speak on the London [inaudible] the spatial planning documents that has been referred to. London is leading when it comes to housing design. Setting a precedent. Setting precedence to ask the Government to catch up with, if it is how big the bedrooms are, the living rooms, the access to sun light and to green spaces in the pandemic we realised that the way that the city is designed has a huge impact on mental health. Come to City Hall, watch the planning and the regeneration committee, you will see that the guidance is showing Government what to do in order to set the standards to meet the housing needs of Londoners like Sadiq is doing. Thank you.

[Applause]

ONKAR: Assembly Member Andrew Boff.

ANDREW: You know, it's funny: if you disagree with the Mayor on homeless, you get thrown out, if you disagree with him on ULEZ, you get called a Nazi. The Mayor's record on housing is uniquely poor and he has been given a record amount of money to spend on housing in London. Government has been generous, over £9 billion in order to get the affordable housing down and he still, he still has 18,000 homes to build by the end, to start by the end of this month. The fact is that the reason that the lady was mentioning earlier, mentioning about the lack of, about the tower blocks is that his administration is so panic stricken that they are trying to chuck up any old crap in order to get the numbers going. So, we have tower blocks built where people don't want them. And the very kind of home that Londoners need, family-sized homes with a door at the front and a small garden at the back, that is exactly what he is NOT building. I know! I know it does not ... I know that the affects do not appeal to the Labour Party, yet the Labour Party on the Assembly, along with the rest

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of us, said, as a committee, united that tower blocks are not the solution to London's housing problems!

[Applause]

And it's curious, what is curious is when the Mayor's around, they change their opinions. They join the people, you know, the paid clappers in the front row here. To get the real feeling of the meeting you have to go about three rows back, you know?! I know it makes them feel uncomfortable, to go back to the Labour councillor's question earlier on another subject, look, on a very, on very few occasions does the London Assembly have power but we do at budget time. At budget time all the parties except Labour supported increase scrappage scheme, they supported more buses for outer London and they supported more disabled toilets on the TfL system, and do you know who the only politicians that voted against, were the Labour ones, so, Sir, I absolutely agree with you, I admire your courage for breaking the party line but the guy you have to have a chat to is the Assembly Member, Dr Onkar Sahota. He voted against those too. Thank you.

ONKAR: Andrew Boff ... you know the rules very well. I will get the Mayor to answer the question.

SADIQ: Let's be clear.

At the budget meeting, the Conservatives voted against universal free school meals.

>> No we did not!

ANDREW: That is a complete fiction, you know it. You are happy to sit there and to say a fiction to the public.

ONKAR: Andrew Boff, the Mayor has a right to answer the question.

SADIQ: Let's be clear, and let's be clear ... Government is responsible for the deregulation, the party responsible for running the council that led to the Grenfell Tower tragedy are in no fit state to lecture me about the quality of housing and the concerns around tall buildings. But let's look ... let's look ...

ANDREW: Paid clappers.

SADIQ: Let's look at the record in Boris Johnson's last year as Mayor, three social rent home began in London, last year, 9,698, that is the difference between a Tory and a Labour. Last year! Last year, we began building more council homes than any year since the 1970s. That's the difference between the Tories and Labour. And by the way, last year, last year we completed more homes in London than any time since the 1930s, that's the different between the Tories and Labour. They don't like it but those are the facts

ANDREW: If you believe that, I have a bridge to sell you!

ONKAR: OK. On.

We now go on to the next section, London's economic recovery.

We have 18 minutes on this topic.

Look, we do have rules for the whole game. It is best that we stick to the topics. I know that the Assembly Members forget it and I have to remind them, they think it is City Hall, I have to remind them over there but can we stick to the questions to the section which is London's economical recovery? So, I will take two questions from the audience and one from online.

Paddle 3. This gentleman holding a piece of paper up. Yes, you.



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QUESTION: Thank you very much. We are talking about London's economic recovery, London is not affordable for a young person like me. We all received your pamphlet on the ULEZ containing no facts or figures about the impact assessment that this is going to make a difference, cos it is not. So when we talk about London's economic recovery, your ULEZ will put young people like me further away from London. So, how is that going to help businesses? How is it going to help the charities, the shops and the local High Streets? It will push them under. Especially after COVID, you said yourself, we are recovering after COVID but you are ... your ULEZ is pushing businesses, charities, residents under, during a cost of living ... so, I am sorry but follow the fact as you probably cut down forests to print this out and it has no facts in it! You are our Mayor. This is People's Question Time! Follow and listen to the people!

ONKAR: Okay, this lady here.

QUESTION: So I am super proud to have a Labour Mayor who is really radical. Thank you for everything you do, Sadiq. I think you're great. In terms of our, oh, dear. Could you tell me about what opportunities we have got for young people in London and how you are working, post-Brexit to continue to ensure that we are the strongest and the best city for people in Europe to come and work in and for all of our children to live in and work in?

ONKAR: I have a question online. Which says, thank you for making free school meals universal for a year. When so many families in Ealing are struggling with the cost of living and children are going hungry, how can we get the Government to make universal free school meals a permanent policy in the rest of the country?

SADIQ: Let me be clear to the person who asked the person. Let me ask a question back to you. What is the cost of a life lost because of air quality? What is the cost of a mother having to do CPR on a child to have to bring her back to life? What is the cost to the NHS in treating people who suffer illness because of poor health? I can tell you the cost to the NHS it's £10 billion. The cost to businesses by the time taken off by illness is £1.5 billion. And the benefits...

ONKAR: Can we listen to the answer, please.

SADIQ: Although it might be convenient for your narrative to blame me for inflation being at record highs, it's not. It's a direct consequence of this Government's policies. There are consequences to Government austerity, we have inflation and interest rates at a four-year high. You can't blame the Labour Mayor for that. What we are trying to do is improve the quality of air in London. Without a penny of support from the Government we have a £110 million scrappage scheme. At the same time as improving public transport. That is the difference we are making in relation to addressed cost of living crisis. It's not the case. That is not the case. It is not the case that... it is not the case that there are 4,000 deaths because of public transport. It might be convenient to what you are posing but it's not the case. By the way, this is a good example of the vocal minority drowning out the silent majority.

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So I am not going to apologise in investing in young people by reopening youth clubs Boris Johnson closed down. I am not going to apologise for employing youth workers that lost their jobs because of the former Mayor, Boris Johnson. They may not like it, but this extreme hard Brexit is leading to some of the challenges we have in our cities and our country now. If we had. If we had an oven-ready deal from Boris Johnson, why has Rishi Sunak spent the last six months trying to get a new deal in Northern Ireland? That shows the charlatan he was and we are living with the consequences of those policies.

In relation to the Tories and the platform with their mock horror. When I outed them... when I outed them for voting against universal free school meals. They had a... what did the former Mayor do when he was Prime Minister? What did the former Mayor do when he was Mayor for eight years? Nothing to help those children. The Labour group on the Assembly, with the support of the Labour Mayor, the greens and the Liberal Democrats have voted for universal free school meals. The Tories voted against that.

And the short answer to the last question is if London can do it why can't the rest of the country? The answer is very simple, we have got a Tory Government and a Labour mayor.

ONKAR: Zack Polanski.

ZACK: Thank you very much, Chair. These are serious issues. A report out last week showed that 19% of low-income households can't afford basics so it's clear what the austerity under this Tory Government have done to this country and to London. There is no point in me repeating history, this isn't even an attack on the Government we have to look for solutions. One of these solutions is a universal basic income. To be fair to the Mayor he has co-signed a layer calling for one nationally, but this is one area where the Mayor should be showing leadership. I have launched a report today that demonstrates how the Mayor could talk to Londoners and involve Londoners in the process to design a basic income in London so we can show the rest of the country how it's done.

[ APPLAUSE ]

ONKAR: Assembly Member Fortune.

PETER: Thank you very much. Let me put some context around the Mayor's budget. It is over £20 billion. He is currently carrying 2.1 billion in reserve. With that, you have to ask yourself why then is there an 8.8% increase in your council tax this year from this Mayor? You have to ask yourself why over this Mayor's term he has increased his section of the council tax by 57%? Now that is the bill he has given you as Londoners in his role as Mayor. Anyone who is working you go to your one-to-ones and you think about your job description. Let's think about the Mayor's, he is the commission for the police, the police is in special measures. Responsible for firework special measures. Housing hasn't made his targets in fact he may have to return money because he hasn't built enough houses. TfL is broke and he is topping up that gap by taking money off you by ULEZ. By the way that telling you that £2,000 is going to buy you a new car. That goes to show you someone who is far removed from reality, right. So what you have to ask yourself is when he is not accusing you of being far right, when he is not saying you are denying science, when he is not completely obsessed about Boris Johnson, now look, there is somebody living rent-free in London right in the middle of Sadiq Khan's head. What he is doing is blaming Government. He is always



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talking about what Government should do. Because he never wants to talk about what he hasn't done.

ONKAR: Assembly Member Ahmad.

MARINA: My name is Marina Ahmad, I am the Labour member for Lambeth and Southwark. The free school meal is an emergency measure to support families in the cost of living crisis to step up where the Government inaction has taken place. In November we had a missed opportunity by Jeremy Hunt the chancellor to help feed children and families when he left the threshold at £7,400. It means that, what that means is that denied meals and nutritious food to children, hundreds and thousands of children. The Conservatives are not going to help you. Since November, since September at the Assembly, we have had three motions about the cost of living crisis and they have either voted against or they have abstained on those. In the city, in this city there are 210,000 children who are missing out on free school meals. 10,144 of those are in Ealing. And those children, over 10,000 children in this Borough will go to bed hungry tonight. The mayor and a number of Labour councils across London have shown leadership on this issue. We have the budget coming up and it's time for the Government to step up and follow that leadership. We live in the sixth richest country in the world. It is unacceptable in 2023 for children in the capital city of the sixth richest country in the world to be hungry.

ONKAR: Assembly Member Leonie Cooper.

LEONIE: Thanks very much, Onkar. My name is Leonie Cooper, I am the Assembly Member for Merton and Wandsworth. I am the Deputy Chair of the Environment Committee. I think it's a shame that we have been a bit rowdy this evening, it's been fun, but it has meant that we have heard less questions from you, so I am going to try and keep my remarks brief. I do think when we make points about the things that the Mayor has done, I think we have got quite a long list now since 2016. The launch of the night tube has made a huge difference, including for a lot of young people. Introducing the hopper fare has made use of buses a lot cheaper. Issues relating to the culture in the police force, which, I think my colleague Sem Moema was particularly eloquent about. But also the fire brigade. I sit on the Fire Committee. I find it offensive it's suggested this has happened on the Mayor's watch. We know that this reflects, hang on a second, this reflects society. Is the Mayor responsible for what is going on in the fire services around the rest of the country or other police services? No, he is not. He has a big budget running London, but he is only running London. He is not running the other fire services where there has also been found to be racism and sexism going on. He doesn't run the other police service, he doesn't run Yorkshire Cricket Club where appalling racism was found. The fact that we have a mixture of people sitting up here on this platform who are diverse and who represent London is a big step forward, but it doesn't mean to say that society has actually caught up with the fact that these are still things that are there out there in society. And therefore, we need, the Mayor took a lot of flak over what happened with parting company with the last Police Commissioner. It's good to hear from the new Police Commissioner how much he is going to start to root out the problem areas. There is a lot that has been done, no one is sitting on this platform is saying that there is still not much to do, but we have confidence that the Mayor is taking things forward with the new Metropolitan Police commissioner and a fire commissioner who commissioned his own report into the culture and the fire brigade and is working closely

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with the Mayor to move the fire brigade forward. These things are not finished, but they are under way. Thank you.

ONKAR: Assembly Member Hall.

SUSAN: Thank you. Do you know I thought you weren't going to ask me then, thank you so much. Well done, audience, you certainly got Sadiq Khan rattled, because whenever I rattles he says, "*I am not going to apologise for this, I'm not going to apologise for that.*" Yes, you do, I will remind you every time you do it. Then he goes on about Boris. So this section is about London's economic recovery. I do not know what the Mayor thinks small businesses on the outskirts of London are going to do when their customers don't come over the border because it will cost them £12.50 on top of going to the local shop for a loaf of bread. They are not going to do it. I walked up and down the high street I live with the Telegraph the other day. We went in most of the shops and not one of them thought the ULEZ was a good idea. Not one of them. I hope you are listening, Sadiq. People are very upset about the ULEZ. If you ask people here today their main concern it's clear it's ULEZ and yet we have been rushed on to other subjects. You haven't answered their questions. It wasn't in your manifesto. It wasn't in your manifesto, you are not giving people enough time to sort this out, gradually people's cars will go anyway. In our amendment to the budget we looked at replacing buses. Buses are on the road the whole time spewing out fumes. If we electrified bus fleet the air quality would improve but to shove a £12.50 on the poorest in society is dreadful. That is and that, Ladies and Gentlemen, is your Mayor. He doesn't listen to a word any of us say unless of course you are Labour.

ONKAR: Okay. Mr mayor, do you want to come back? Okay. Okay, we go on to the next section then. This is a section where we have 15 minutes to take your questions on topics that haven't been covered so far. That haven't been covered so far. I will be taking no more questions on things we have already been covered. So this could cover culture, health, or education for example. I will take two questions from the audience and one from the chat. So I will have number 3, paddle number 3, this lady with the yellow...

QUESTION: (Inaudible)... as a young person in Ealing there are only three statutory youth clubs one of which was set for closure until us young people lobbied for it to be saved. What are you doing to ensure that young people across London have access to opportunities and trusted adults in safe places?

ONKAR: Thank you. That gentleman with paddle number one.

QUESTION: Thank you. First you can apologise to me, Mr Mayor, because I'm not right wing, I am left wing and I voted Labour all my life. Secondly, Ealing Council don't care about air quality, as said by Julian Bell who said the need for houses far outweighs the need of people's health. That is his words. Not my words, I've got it in an email, I have kept it for about seven years, you can have it any time you want. This is about health. My wife has had cancer three times. She has had hysterectomy, breast cancer twice, she died on the operating table once, her heart stopped, she was in intensive care for five or six days. She has had septicaemia about seven times and had to be rushed into hospital. And at one point she was about 30 minutes away from dying. Two years ago she was in hospital because her kidney stones burst inside her. She was in a coma for seven days and miraculously she is still alive. My question to you, do I turn the heating on in my house to keep her warm and keep

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her alive, or do I take out an enormous loan to buy a new car because you're expanding ULEZ? I only bought my car a few years ago, before you announced this new expansion. I bought the car because I knew where the North Circular and the South Circular are. I bought the car because it suited my wife's needs. You are putting me into poverty. I earn a good wage, but you are putting me into poverty. I have saved all my life to have a –I am 60 years old. I have just turned 60, I have saved all my life to have the next five ten years with my wife, to have an enjoyable time. You carry on with ULEZ, you have to make a choice for me. Do I turn the heating off or do I buy a new car? You decide.

ONKAR: Hang on. Paddle number 6. The gentleman over there. Paddle number 6.

QUESTION: Sorry, I thought you said gentleman.

ONKAR: I am sorry, but I can't see very clearly.

QUESTION: Hi. I just wanted to raise a question which I think underlines many of the issues which have been asked about today. That is a question of local democracy. Because I have been in Ealing now for about 18 years and I have seen a marked deterioration in the whole system I have to say. I will just give you one example. In the last local elections I know personally four people in West London very eminently qualified, amazing track record who wanted to stand as councillors, Labour councillors. As soon as they announced they were going to stand they got almost identical emails telling them they had been suspended or expelled. Okay, now, I mean you can object to this and you can appeal, but that takes months, possibly years. So I am just saying, I am appealing really to the Labour group here to try and fight this ongoing purge. It's not just London, obviously it's nationwide. To fight this purge and try and bring back democracy locally and nationally, thank you.

ONKAR: I have one question online which is how are you helping adults to gain new skills and jobs? Over to you, Mr Mayor.

SADIQ: Thank you for the four questions. Firstly congratulations on keeping the youth club open. A great piece of campaigning which is really important. So we in City Hall on the Labour side and the greens and the Lib Dems think it's important to invest in young people. Over the last 13 years many youth clubs have closed down across the city. Sian Berry, who is behind me did a report about three or four years ago, and she has updated it since, I am coming to that, Sian. What she does is updates and the good news and it's important that I give public consider.

In 2016 when I first became mayor Sian lobbied me in doing what we can do to support young people. Because we could see the consequences of youth clubs closing down. Don't be surprised if people are bored and drive a criminal gang. Idle hands lead to the devil's work. We have invested in young people. There is something called a Young Londoners' Fund. It's supported many youth clubs reopening. Secondly we set up the violence reduction unit. We are going to plan to have 100,000 people to have mentors. Often a youth worker is a mentor. He or she can be a proxy mum, dad, big brother or sister. Afterwards speak to Onker and we will see what we can do to support your youth club. Most crimes are committed between 4.00pm and 10.00pm. Most victims of crime are young people. So keeping young people busy active and constructive they flourish and thrive rather than the

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alternatives. We are doing a lot of work in that area and I am keen to work with you in relation to that.

In relation to – first I am really sorry about your wife's ill-health [inaudible shouting]. I am glad to see you are doing better. By the way there are far-right people outside. They were outside [inaudible shouting]. If you – if you – if you – if you – you should be careful who you campaign with, you know. And so, in relation to – [inaudible shouting] in relation to your particular circumstances, it is worth you looking into whether you are eligible, because your wife may qualify as someone who is disabled, or someone with particular health conditions. We do know that, as a consequence of listening to people like you, we have extended our grace periods in relation to people who are unwell and also the exemptions as well in relation to this. I make this point. If you are inside a vehicle that is polluting you are breathing in the particulate matter, you are breathing in the nitrogen dioxide. As somebody who has got health issues, the last place they want to be is in a polluting vehicle. And that's why I say to people who drive a vehicle that is not ULEZ compliant, you are breathing in this poison. It's probably leading to some of the issues we have talked about from asthma to cancer, from dementia to cancer as well. And there's research there to suggest that. So you may want to speak to your clinicians about how some of your wife's conditions may be exacerbated by the air quality.

In relation to the question at the back, in relation to local democracy. It is important for local people to get involved in democracy. We have heard how young people, not party political have got involved in campaigning to keep their youth club open and I will encourage anyone interested in politics to join a mainstream political party. It could be to be a councillor. I am not aware of the three or four people you mentioned but all political parties you mentioned have appeal rights so it's worth looking into appealing, particularly with the next council elections which are around the corner in 2026. In relation to the question that was emailed in about new skills. One of the things we are responsible for in City Hall is the budget for training those above the age of 19. Since it was devolved to me, the mayor, we have made sure there is now free training available to anyone who is unemployed, who is on a minimum wage job, who is low-skilled, or someone who has been out of work for a long time. So I would encourage the person who has emailed in to go to the City Hall website and to see what courses they may be eligible for which are free and will hopefully skill them up to get a better paid job or if they are out of work to get a job full stop. It's really important that we carry on providing the helping hand.

ONKAR: Thank you. Assembly Member Unmesh Desai.

UNMESH: Thank you, chair. Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime, it's not just a cliché, it's more than that. You have to be tough on crime enforcement, it's also investing in our young people and the sort of work that goes on that doesn't get publicity in the press. The Mayor's Young Londoners' Fund is a good example of how young people are being helped. In Tower Hamlets the violence reduction fund youth work and football tournaments to offer people a diverse and put them on the right path. There is also opportunities for our young people that are so important. That is why it's important to invest in them, in youth

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services, which the mayor is doing through the Young Londoner's Fund which is the important part in the fight against crime.

ONKAR: Assembly Member Devonish.

TONY: I can agree with the Mayor on one thing, the best job in London is the Mayor of London. Next year you will get to vote on who you want to be the next Mayor of London. As you have seen in the last seven years, Mayor of London has spent 25% talking about Boris, 50% blaming the Government and about the rest of the time putting up stealth taxes. So all I will say is please think who you vote for next time. We can't have another four years of this man.

ONKAR: Assembly Member Berry.

SIAN: Thank you very much and thank you for drawing attention to the reports I did that helped you to invest back in youth centres. The first time I brought it up with you, you said basically that is not the Mayor of London's job and local councils should do it. But the fact is councils across London were cutting back on their youth centres because, as my colleague Zack said earlier on because of austerity. Because the government were squeezing their funding streams to death. The Mayor didn't want to chip in, but they did in the end. I hope you like the last thing I sent him which was about the dead spaces we notice in our communities of all kinds. It isn't just youth centres that councils have been closing down, it's community centres, it's libraries. It's depots and shops that the councils run. I looked at them across London. I found over 400 dead spaces owned by councils. Going to the point about local democracy. I think one of the most important things is not just austerity and the ability for councils to provide public services but for local communities to take them over. I know there are youth centres across London which people have opened up, they have taken them over again and managed to do that as a local community. I think that is what is the solution to all of this as well as stopping the cuts to the funding. So I hope the Mayor will listen and do some more to help with dead spaces as well as our youth centres.

ONKAR: Okay. That is all we have time for this evening. Thank you for attending and participating. Don't forget to keep an eye on our website for details of the next People's Question Time. If your question wasn't answered you can contact the Mayor on the London gov site. You should receive a response within 20 days. Remember to complete the online feedback form. The QR code is also available on posters around the room. Good night and have a safe journey home. Thank you very much.



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