

How the  
**London Assembly**  
works for you



**LONDON** ASSEMBLY

## YOUR LONDON ASSEMBLY MEMBERS 2020-2021



**Tony Arbour AM**  
GLA Conservatives



**Jennette Arnold AM**  
London Assembly  
Labour Group



**Gareth Bacon AM**  
GLA Conservatives



**Shaun Bailey AM**  
GLA Conservatives



**Sian Berry AM**  
City Hall Greens



**Andrew Boff AM**  
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**Leonie Cooper AM**  
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**Unmesh Desai AM**  
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**Tony Devenish AM**  
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**Andrew Dismore AM**  
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**Len Duvall AM**  
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**Florence Eshalomi AM**  
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**Nicky Gavron AM**

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**Susan Hall AM**

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**David Kurten AM**

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**Joanne McCartney AM**

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**Dr Alison Moore AM**

London Assembly  
Labour Group



**Steve O'Connell AM**

GLA Conservatives



**Caroline Pidgeon AM**

Liberal Democrat



**Keith Prince AM**

GLA Conservatives



**Caroline Russell AM**

City Hall Greens



**Dr Onkar Sahota AM**

London Assembly  
Labour Group



**Navin Shah AM**

London Assembly  
Labour Group



**Murad Qureshi AM**

London Assembly  
Labour Group



**Peter Whittle AM**

Brexit Alliance Group

This annual report covers the Assembly's last year of activity from May 2020 - March 2021. On Page 51 you can find an updated list of Assembly Members and the map.

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### **Navin Shah AM**

**Chair of the London Assembly 2020-2021**



The pandemic has completely transformed our way of life. As Assembly Members, we've seen London hit by the spread of COVID-19. In turn we have focused our time and effort on the work being done to protect Londoners' lives, health, learning, safety and incomes.

As the beating heart of the UK, the effort to control the pandemic in London has been critical. The Assembly and Mayoral elections were pushed back a year as the city turned its attention to tackling the virus. People up and down the country stayed at home, work and school life was uprooted, and the nation worked hard to combat the spread of COVID-19.

The Assembly's focus changed almost daily in response to the pandemic. We ensured that the Mayor's actions were held to account at Mayor's Question Time, and we virtually met with Londoners at People's Question Time to put your voices at the centre of everything we did. We held plenary meetings dedicated to issues surrounding COVID-19 and addressing its impact on London and Londoners. At a specially convened plenary session we met the Minister for Vaccine Deployment, Nadhim Zahawi MP, to examine vaccination capacity in the capital and discuss major concerns about vaccine hesitancy among ethnic minority Londoners.

Our committees shone a light on the work of the Mayor and London's key organisations - Transport for London (TfL), the NHS, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the Metropolitan Police Service, and the London Fire Brigade.

Assembly Members championed causes that matter most to Londoners, putting sexual offences, housing, economic and health issues at the heart of their work. Over the year we highlighted what pandemic support London's businesses needed and called on the Mayor to help high street businesses safely reopen their stores or sell their wares online.

The Assembly looked at social care, mental health, NHS workers and communities throughout the pandemic. Our research analysed what caused pockets of the capital to be more affected by COVID-19, investigating concerns about institutional racism, stigma, discrimination, fear and trust across the health sectors. We discovered that a staggering 140,000 Londoners were suffering with life-changing Long-Covid symptoms and called on the Mayor to ensure London's health system can deal with the lasting health effects of this virus. The Assembly's forensic focus on rough sleeping showed that the pandemic response needed tailored action plans to protect up to 10,000 vulnerable rough sleepers.

The Assembly also questioned those in charge of policing and safety. We found that rape and sexual offences rose by a quarter in London over the last five years but, shockingly, successful prosecutions dropped from one in nine down to one in 16. We also revealed that waking watches cost Londoners who live in fire-risk buildings a huge £16,000 an hour. Assembly Members scrutinised the safety of transport workers and pushed for better measures, and we looked at whether the Government's bailout of TfL would keep London moving through 2020 and beyond.



It has been an immense honour to be Chair of the London Assembly and to have served as an Assembly Member for the past 13 years. I want to pay my condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives to the pandemic, and pay a heartfelt tribute to those who have worked so hard to protect our city from it. There is a strong message of hope in Londoners' resilience as we battled the scary unknowns of the pandemic. There is a clear message of inspiration as communities drew together to help those in need. And there is a message of strength in how we all united to defend the city from the virus. London's diversity is a powerful gift and there is a clear commitment in the London Assembly and our city to rapidly tackle structural racism and inequality.







# INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 will have a deep and lasting impact on our city and every step taken by the leaders of our country and city must ensure London recovers and rebuilds.

The twenty first year of the London Assembly was spent responding to the enormous impact of COVID-19 on the capital. In the last year, the Assembly has worked remotely, complying with COVID restrictions and ensuring the safety of staff, Members and guests in order to maintain our scrutiny on the Mayor and examine how the pandemic transformed our way of life, our behaviour, and our city. We investigated how the pandemic had worsened existing problems for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable Londoners, including devastating and disproportionate impacts on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

Assembly Members stood up for Londoners and held the actions and decisions of the Mayor to account. We asked the difficult questions and embodied diversity and inclusion in all our work.



## ACHIEVEMENTS



### **Blue Plaque to honour Diana, Princess of Wales**

By 2019, only 132 of London's 944 Blue Plaques honoured women in the city. Assembly Members launched a campaign to ask Londoners to suggest 100 names of women who they thought deserved the recognition of a Blue Plaque and presented these to English Heritage. We are delighted that this year, Diana, Princess of Wales, will be honoured with an English Heritage Blue Plaque at her apartment in Colherne Court in Knightsbridge. Londoners nominated Diana as many thought her work should be recognised – her landmine campaign and HIV/AIDS awareness work were truly global and made an enormous difference to countless lives.

### **Credit checks stopping Londoners getting COVID-19 tests**

In September 2020, we uncovered that some Londoners could not book or get a home test for COVID-19 as they are invisible on the credit system.

To book or get a home COVID-19 test, people must complete a TransUnion credit check on the Gov.uk website. The Assembly called

on the Mayor to raise this with the Government, so it could take concrete steps to ensure that everyone who needs one could access a COVID-19 test, credit history or not.

## **#MeetTheHeroes**



Thousands of Londoners, from nurses to delivery drivers, put their lives at risk to keep Londoners safe during the pandemic. In March 2020, during the first national lockdown, the London Assembly highlighted the stories of those working on the front line, going above and beyond to help protect the city.

## **Domestic Abusers Register**

Since 2017, the London Assembly has lobbied for a register of serial domestic abusers. The introduction of a register would shift focus from dealing with the life-changing effects of domestic abuse after it occurs, towards more action to deal with abusive attitudes and behaviour before it ever happens.

The number of victims of domestic violence in London has significantly risen in recent years. New research by the London Assembly showed domestic abuse offences in December grew by a third over the past

10 years. In December 2019, 2,031 domestic abuse incidents with injury were recorded in London compared to 1,554 in 2010.

This year, the Assembly supported an amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill that would have seen serial stalkers and domestic abusers monitored. While the amendment was passed by the House of Lords, the Assembly was disappointed that it was ultimately rejected by the House of Commons. The Assembly will continue to campaign for the introduction of a domestic abuse register in the coming year.

### **Vaccines Minister answers questions about London's COVID-19 vaccines**

The Minister for Vaccine Deployment, Nadhim Zahawi MP, spoke to the London Assembly just one month after the roll out of the national vaccination programme. He answered Assembly Member questions over meeting London's vaccination targets, how to reassure the most vulnerable or hesitant Londoners of vaccine safety, and the Government's plans to guarantee London got its fair share of



vaccines.

## MOTIONS

These are statements put forward by individual Assembly Members and agreed by the whole of the Assembly, sometimes unanimously but sometimes by majority.

Among the highlights this year:

### Met Police unconscious bias



### Keep free travel for under-18's



### Tackling overcrowding



### Hammersmith Bridge



## Publish a disability pay gap



## EWS1 forms leaving Londoners stuck in their homes



## Dedicated fund for young people on the streets



## Unequal COVID-19 impacts on Londoners with disabilities





## IN THE MEDIA

### COVID-19

We broke news on expats in London struggling to get COVID tests; rough sleeping during the pandemic and 140k Londoners suffering from life-changing Long-Covid.



### SAFETY IN THE CITY

We focused on Londoners' safety, investigating the cladding costs of waking watches and questioning the Metropolitan Police Service over the Sarah Everard vigil.

### STAYING ON BOARD

We pushed for the Thameslink line addition to the Tube Map and called on TfL and the Mayor to have a Sherlock-style forensic focus on delivering Crossrail.



## HOW WE SHARED YOUR STORIES

72k



Views on  
YouTube

21k



Clicks, Likes, Views  
and Retweets of our  
Twitter posts

21k



Engagements with  
our Facebook  
page

**NHS COVID  
VACCINATION  
CENTRE**

## THIS WAY



● KEEP  
● PRINT  
● SAFE

**NHS**  
COVID-19  
Vaccination Centre

**QUINTAIN**  
LIVING

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## Health

*The Health Committee reviews health and wellbeing issues for Londoners.*

This year the Health Committee concentrated on the huge impacts of COVID-19 across the city. The Committee also monitors how well the Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy is being implemented in London, the NHS and social care.

Over the summer, the Committee explored the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on London's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population and on the capital's health and care services. We focused on racism, stigma, discrimination, fear and trust, and knock-on effects of the pandemic on social care.

The Committee then published new data emerging from research into the impact of COVID-19 on London's population, showing a link between higher levels of deprivation, poorer ratings of GP satisfaction and higher numbers of BAME residents to higher rates of COVID-19 deaths. The Committee also published four policy briefings on the importance of a community-led approach to tackling COVID-19; supporting Londoners' mental health; protecting London's health and care workforce; and the role of prevention in keeping the public's health safe during the pandemic.

In September 2020, the London Assembly uncovered that some Londoners could not book or get a home test for COVID-19 as they are invisible on the credit system. To book or get a home COVID-19 test, people needed to complete a TransUnion credit check on the Gov.uk website. The Assembly called on the Mayor to raise this with the Government, so it could take concrete steps to ensure that everyone who needs one could access a COVID-19 test.

During the third lockdown, when schools closed again in January 2021, the Committee researched the impact of the pandemic on the

mental health of children and young people. We focused on disabled youth, Londoners in low-income homes and young carers. As well as hearing from a range of policy experts, charities and mental health specialists, we reached out to over 300 Londoners under the age of 25 for their views.

Their experiences helped develop a new report, revealing that young people's mental health hit a 'crunch point' in the pandemic, outlining what the Mayor and Government need to do to put mental health at the centre of COVID-19 plans. Young people were concerned that decisions about their health and schooling were being made without their input, events felt out of their control and respondents did not think they could get the help they needed for their mental health. The Committee developed a plan calling for the Mayor to:

1. Consult: Put young people at the heart of London's COVID-19 recovery and involve them in decision making. Their diverse views and needs should be built in every step of the way.

2. Make help easier: Improve access to the right mental health support and services, and there should be strategies within London's COVID-19 recovery plans.

3. No-one left behind: Many young people hit hardest by the pandemic already had the poorest mental health. They cannot be not left behind.



### Economy

*The Economy Committee investigates economic issues that matter to Londoners.*

From May 2020, the Committee focused on the immediate impact of COVID-19 on London's economy. The pandemic turned the way employers and employees worked upside down, as the city transitioned to lockdown working. The Committee assessed what public health advice meant for the future of London's businesses and the economy. It focused on those worst affected, including high street shops, pubs, restaurants and cafes in the pandemic recovery. Members concentrated on what COVID-19 restrictions meant for employees and what more needed to be done to support them. The Committee also looked at the city's recovery options, investigating the potential for cooperatives and universal basic income.

As COVID-19 restrictions were introduced in London, the Committee explored how the shift to working from home might affect businesses across the city. We heard expert evidence from trade unions, think tanks and London's Deputy Mayors on how the low footfall in London's commercial areas was impacting businesses.



We looked in-depth at the effect of COVID-19 on London's cultural and creative industries. A pillar of our vibrant city, entertainment centres like theatres and music venues were hard-hit by closures. As a result, the Committee wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in September 2020 calling for sector-specific business support measures, including for the hospitality, tourism, cultural and creative industries.

Just as the second wave of COVID-19 hit the capital in October 2020, the Committee examined what this would change for companies in the Christmas trading period. Our survey of Londoners revealed that **four in five people planned to avoid pounding the pavements**, choosing to shop online instead. The Committee urged the Mayor to provide support for businesses to get online, so that they could create online trading platforms and make the most of virtual shopping over the festive period.

Throughout the year the Committee catalogued a flood of evidence on how local businesses were adapting to new consumer habits during the pandemic. The findings highlighted that a slow economic recovery was far more likely without strategic support from the Mayor for high streets.

The Committee **put forward solutions** for the Mayor to support London's 1,204 high streets, including:

- Establishing a London High Streets Board to advise on economic recovery.
- Ensuring that high streets are not damaged by premises like gyms, shops or banks being turned into residential properties without properly going through the planning system.
- Working with Government to ensure that business rates reforms deliver for London's businesses.



- Increasing Business Improvement Districts' financial support with a specific fund from the Government.
- Developing a London-wide long-term strategy to drive visitors to high streets, and help businesses take advantage of new technology and prepare for new consumer behaviours.

## **Budget and Performance**

*The Budget and Performance Committee examines the Mayor's draft budget before it is voted on by London Assembly Members. The Mayor's budget totals nearly £19.4bn, so the Assembly's work is crucial in ensuring that the best spending decisions are made for the city.*

This year saw London's budgets and spending plans threatened by the pandemic. The Mayor issued new budget guidance in June 2020 with expected savings targets of £493 million by the end of 2021-22.



The Committee investigated budget plans for: TfL, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), London Fire Brigade (LFB), Greater London Authority (GLA), London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) and Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC).

Following its line-by-line detailed analysis of the Mayor's proposed budget, the **Committee highlighted that:**

- The further delay of Crossrail has cost an extra £1.1 billion in the past 12 months. The GLA will borrow a further £825 million to complete the project.
- The London Fire Brigade should be much clearer about its long-term finances and strategy to deliver its transformation plans and to cut overspends.
- MOPAC continues to plan to recruit up to 6,000 new officers despite growing evidence that London's share of the 20,000 additional officers nationally will be less than the 6,000 with no funding agreed.
- The Mayor needs to ensure that the costs of estates such as the LLDC and OPDC do not skyrocket.
- The London Stadium, home of West Ham United, is costing Londoners more than £8 million per year to run.
- The OPDC has spent £42.7 million, even though five years on, limited progress has been made on the ground to bring new jobs or homes to the area.

## **The Impact of Leaving the EU in London**

*The role of the EU Exit Working Group is to examine the impact of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union on London and Londoners.*



Over the past year, the EU Exit Working Group held sessions on the future relationship between the UK and EU, focusing on the impact of Brexit on the lives of EU citizens in the capital, future migration and immigration in London and the influence of the deal on health and social care, construction, and financial services.

In 2019, it was estimated that 3.7 million EU nationals were living and working in the UK, yet a far larger number of 4.5 million have applied for the EU Settlement Scheme. There is a lack of data collection on EU citizens which leaves organisations “chasing their tails” when trying to reach them before the 30th June 2021 deadline to apply for settled or pre-settled status. The Committee raised this issue with the Mayor, asking him to advocate for the Home Office to release estimates of the number of EU citizens living in the UK who have not yet applied to the scheme.

Music tourists spent £1.2 billion in London in 2019, and the capital’s live gig scene adds 20 per cent of the £5.8 billion in the UK’s music economy. The EU Exit Working Group wrote to the Mayor, recommending that he ask the Government to put in place arrangements that allow musicians to tour freely between the UK and Europe, something which is not included in the current Free Trade Agreement.

New immigration rules could also have big knock-on effects for workforces in health and social care and the construction sector. The Working Group asked the Mayor to monitor ongoing immigrant workforce issues to see what steps are needed to support these sectors.



### Police and Crime

*The Police and Crime Committee raises policing concerns from around the capital with the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS).*

From March 2020, the Committee focused on how the pandemic critically delayed court cases for rape and sexual offences, caused likely rises in domestic abuse during lockdown, and the police response to the Sarah Everard vigil.

The Committee revealed that recorded rape and sexual offences rose by **an alarming 25 per cent** in London over the last five years. However, data showed a staggering disconnect between offences and prosecutions. Between April 2015 and March 2019, the number of successful prosecutions in London for rape and sexual offences had dropped abruptly from one in nine, down to one in 16, the lowest level since records began.



The Committee **wrote to the Secretary of State for Justice**, urging him to take swift action to tackle the backlog of criminal cases that needed processing. The letter highlighted the devastating effects of long timelines on victims and stressed that prosecutions have fallen to a frighteningly low level despite rising reports of rape.

We examined how the MPS, MOPAC and the Mayor's Violence Reduction Unit were tackling drugs transportation across county lines, confidence in policing, and violent crimes in the capital. The Committee looked closely at the roll-out of body-worn video cameras and we evaluated the Independent Office for Police Conduct's (IOPC) report on the use of Stop and Search powers, meeting with the IOPC Regional Director to review the findings and next steps for the city's police.

While domestic abuse cases have risen year on year since 2010, **our analysis** showed there is a disturbing trend that cases are annually higher in December when compared to November and January.

The Police and Crime Committee wrote to the Met Police Commissioner about how the lockdown isolation mixed with the typical rise in domestic abuse could create a pressure cooker. We quizzed Met Police on

how Mayoral funding is being used to protect victims of domestic abuse and bring perpetrators to justice.



With the nation's COVID-19 vaccination programme kicking off in January 2021, the Committee urged the Minister for Vaccine Deployment and the Mayor that frontline police officers should be put on the COVID-19 vaccine priority list because of their key public-facing roles.



In March 2021, we met the Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Stephen House QPM, to assess police responses to the Sarah Everard memorial vigil.

We pressed MPS Commissioner, Dame Cressida Dick QPM, to rebuild the confidence of women in London, increase the number of officers assigned to the 'Predatory Offender Units' in the next year, and to respond strongly to reports of abuse and violence. The Committee outlined three key concerns:

- The footage that emerged from the vigil that showed MPS officers pulling women out of the crowd as they made arrests.
- The MPS' engagement with the organisers of the vigil and the failure to agree on arrangements for a COVID-19 secure event.
- The loss of confidence in the MPS by many women who felt they had been let down by the very force that is meant to protect them.



## Fire and Emergency

*The Fire, Resilience, and Emergency Planning Committee focussed much of its work on tackling the cladding crisis in London.*

Since the Grenfell Tower fire, the Committee has worked to ensure that the London Fire Brigade implements much-needed actions in its transformation plan. From this work, we learned of the crippling costs that thousands of Londoners are facing due to the cladding crisis. The Committee wrote to the Mayor in September and October 2020, outlining what he could do to help Londoners who are stuck in possibly dangerous homes, due to not having an External Wall Survey form (EWS1) for their property. An EWS1 form is needed for the sale of a property, to confirm that the building has been assessed for safety issues by an expert.

We met with Londoners to hear their stories and experiences of cladding and other fire safety defects. Residents from all areas of the city are in homes too small for growing families, unable to sell without an EWS1 form, facing thousands of pounds of bills to remove cladding and coping with the constant worry of a life-threatening fire breaking out.

Residents told Assembly Members they also pay for waking watches out of their own pockets to keep themselves and their families safe. There are nearly 600 buildings in London that need waking watches every day. In February 2021, [new committee analysis](#) found that waking watches cost Londoners living in fire-risk buildings £16,000 an hour due to the current cladding crisis.

Following a meeting with the London Fire Commissioner and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, [we published a report](#) calling on the Mayor to provide a support hub to help Londoners with mental health and legal advice on cladding.



The Committee also called on the Mayor to lobby the Government to ensure that residents would not have to foot the bill for the repairs to their unsafe homes.

In March 2021, the Committee urged the adoption of a new plan to help those living in buildings with cladding and other fire safety defects.

We pushed the Mayor of London and the Government to provide more support for homeowners including:

- The Mayor to set up a task force with representatives from each of the property areas to ensure Londoners stuck in unsafe homes 'have their voices heard'.
- The Mayor to work with councils and the London Fire Commissioner to audit how many buildings in London have cladding.
- The removal of the terms of certain leases which state that residents of a shared ownership property, regardless of what percentage they own, are required to pay full costs for the removal of cladding.
- A plan of action to be published by the Government on how it will deal with other fire safety defects such as timber balconies and flammable insulation.

### Travel

*The Transport Committee presses the Mayor for improvements to the capital's travel network.*

During this unique and most challenging of years, the Transport Committee chose to focus on the impact of the pandemic on transport in London and held a series of in-depth meetings with the Deputy Mayor for Transport and Transport for London's Commissioner in the wake of COVID-19. The Assembly played an important role in scrutinising TfL and the impact of the Government's financial packages, and supporting more sustainable, long-term funding streams. We also investigated the delayed Crossrail opening, the dangers of COVID-19 for transport workers as well as passenger safety, and the impact of the implementation of the new Streetspace schemes on Londoners.

When Londoners followed guidance to stay at home during the pandemic, TfL's passenger numbers and fares income dropped dramatically. This caused catastrophic financial impacts, and we looked closely at the two short-term funding packages from the Government that helped keep public transport across the city moving to support essential workers.



The Committee pressed the Government to **publish its independently commissioned assessment of TfL finances**, urged Government for timely and sustainable funding, and examined the long-term plans for TfL's financial management and post-COVID transport recovery.

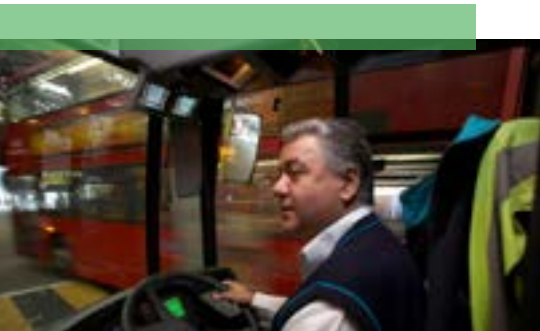
We also questioned the Transport Commissioner, Deputy Mayor for Transport and Network Rail on essential transport staff and public safety measures, including the enforcement of wearing face masks and cleaning across the transport system as lockdowns eased. The Committee asked how safety messages were being communicated and managed across transport services, stressing particular actions needed to protect BAME members of staff most at risk.



As the Crossrail project management transferred to TfL to complete the final phases of work in autumn 2020, the Transport Committee looked at the vital steps in the transformation from a construction project to a functional railway. Our inquiry highlighted that close management and a forensic attention to detail was needed for Crossrail to deliver the Elizabeth line within its latest budget and timescale.

**Our report** pinpointed five areas that TfL and the Mayor needed to focus on including:

- Refining Crossrail's new leadership and governance structure.
- The financial stability of TfL and Crossrail.
- Staff wellbeing and proper staff deployment.
- Evaluating lessons learned and develop better ways of working
- Clear timelines to include delays like COVID-19 impacts and extra costs.



During the year the Transport Committee shone a spotlight on London's transport accessibility as COVID-19 spread across the capital. **Our investigation** into bus and tram safety after the Croydon Sandilands crash, called for urgent changes to support driver, passenger and

pedestrian safety, including improving toilet, handwashing and rest facilities to improve driver welfare and combat driver-fatigue. The Committee recommended that TfL research driver fatigue, and actively encourage a culture of honest reporting to ensure problems were identified so that such a tragedy could never happened again.

Following the Transport Committee's persistent lobbying on the issue, **Thameslink was finally added to the Tube map** as a response to COVID-19 travel needs.

We also reviewed how the new Streetspace schemes could provide effective social distancing and free up space on public transport. We called on the Deputy Mayor to monitor the benefits to Londoners and businesses, ensuring borough schemes were properly designed and consulted upon and fairly funded.



# SOCIAL DISTANCING



## Environment

*The Environment Committee investigates key environmental issues including the impact of poor air quality on Londoners, access to green spaces and the Mayor's 'Green New Deal'.*

Air pollution was a key theme for the Committee's work this year. COVID-19 brought outdoor spaces and clean air into focus as more Londoners chose to cycle, walk and socialise outside during the COVID-19 restrictions.

The London Assembly and the Environment Committee have a long history of campaigning against the expansion of airports across London. With the Supreme Court overturning the block on Heathrow's third runway project in January 2021, the Environment Committee pointed out that Heathrow is already the largest single emitter of carbon dioxide in the UK. Outside of the pandemic, the international and scheduled passenger flights using the airport pump more CO2 emissions into the air than any other airport in the world. While Heathrow can now seek planning permission for a third runway, the expansion remains uncertain. The Committee plans to continue leading the way in highlighting the airport's huge noise and air pollution impact on Londoners' quality of life and health. The committee also continued dialogue with the Civil Aviation Authority and Airspace Change Organising Group (ACOG) on the potential impacts of changes to flight paths on emissions and noise for Londoners.

Concerns about tube dust were expected to be addressed this year but were subsumed by concerns about the spread



of COVID-19 on TfL services. However, the committee has kept in touch with the issue to pick up in future years.

**Our investigation** into air pollution in London used new analysis supplied by the Environmental Defense Fund Europe. The research is based on data produced by Cambridge Environmental Research Consultants (CERC) as part of the Breathe London pilot project on the levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) in London, particularly around schools. The data found that:

- There is a clear peak in NO<sub>2</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations during the morning school run.
- Road transport is the single biggest local source of PM<sub>2.5</sub> at London primary schools.
- Although progress has been made, 14 schools are at, or exceed, the legal limit of NO<sub>2</sub>. All these schools are contained in six inner London boroughs: Westminster, Tower Hamlets, Camden, Lambeth, Hammersmith & Fulham, and Islington.

The Committee launched a plan on how the Mayor of London could clean up the air at our schools and in city streets. Some of our key asks were for the Mayor to:

- Lead the way in exploring the impact of air pollution on COVID-19 and Londoners' health.
- Confirm when all schools will be within the legal NO<sub>2</sub> limit. This includes the 14 London schools in areas at or exceeding the legal NO<sub>2</sub> limit.
- Review the impact of London's busiest roads, the Red Route network, on school air pollution by December 2021.



In collaboration with the Transport Committee, we sent a joint response to the Department for Transport's call for ideas to influence their transport decarbonisation plan. This laid out clear positions on how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars, buses, coaches, freight and aviation.

The Environment Committee later reviewed the Mayor's Green New Deal Fund, announced by the Mayor as part of London's COVID-19 recovery missions, aimed at boosting jobs and tackling air pollution. The Committee asked the Deputy Mayor for Environment how the £10 million package from the Fund would be spent in the capital and how the plans to create 1,000 new green jobs across London would work.



### Education

*The Education Panel reviews and investigates the Mayor's education policies, particularly further studying and training for adults aged 19 and above through the Adult Education Budget and looks into inequalities for young people across London.*

This year, we concentrated on the effect of COVID-19 on exams, school delays and on young Londoners, digital connectivity for learning across the capital, and the spend of the Mayor's £318 million Adult Education Budget.

Following the reopening of schools after the first lockdown, we reflected on emerging research showing that not all young people were impacted equally by schools closing. Experts from teaching unions, social mobility think tanks and education charities told us about the isolation some schoolchildren felt from remote studying and raised issues of digital and social divides across London. The Panel then wrote to the Mayor highlighting the importance of robust data collection to understand the effects of COVID-19 school closures on education inequality in London.

The Panel went on to look at the impact of exam delays and focused on concerns about how decisions were made over new types of exams for the 2020/21 academic year to overcome pandemic restrictions. We wrote to the Secretary of State for Education to request the analysis behind the three-week exam delay, querying if this would be enough time to level up student learning.

The Panel also met to understand the challenges faced by further education providers due to the pandemic and to consider what backing could be provided from the Mayor's Adult Education Budget. We investigated how further education students adapted to the shift to online learning and recognised how some have been disproportionately affected by the changes over the last year.





# YOUR HOME AND COMMUNITY

## Housing

*The London Assembly Housing Committee looks at the Mayor's housing delivery record.*

We scrutinised schemes tackling homelessness or rough sleeping during the pandemic and investigated the Mayor's housebuilding and the types of homes London has to offer. This includes affordable housing, shared ownership and family-sized homes.

This year the Housing Committee's annual **Affordable Housing Monitor** reported concerns over whether enough homes were being built in the city. We revealed that an average of 19,013 new houses needed to be started per year, for the next three years, to meet targets. If this target is to be reached, the Mayor must deliver sizeable increases in how many homes he is building compared to recent statistics.



As the pandemic unfolded, Londoners stayed at home under Government guidance. A large theme of our work this year investigated if Londoners were living in homes that give them enough space

to live, work and play during lockdowns. The Committee consulted the private housing industry, academics, and housing association trade bodies, and we ran two surveys for Londoners to raise their concerns, following the first and third lockdowns.

Our surveys underscored worries about space at home for working and families, suggesting a third of Londoners wanted to move to a new home. We found that **one in seven Londoners wanted to leave the city** because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and respondents said they highly valued the green spaces in our city.



Our investigations this year covered shared ownership, the damaging effect that incomplete EWS1 cladding forms have on Londoners’ mortgages, and transparency around leasehold properties. The Committee submitted responses to several Mayoral and Governmental consultations on these issues. We also co-authored a letter to the Mayor with the Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee about Londoners’ distress and financial loss caused by their inability to move because of the delays in obtaining EWS1 forms. One housing association even stated that their EWS1 survey programme may take “ten years to deliver”.

The Housing Committee investigated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rough sleeping in London, including the Mayor’s coordination of the ‘Everyone In’ programme that provided emergency accommodation in hotels. We found that rough sleepers who aren’t struggling with alcohol, drugs or mental health issues soared by 84 per cent in London after the first lockdown and continued to remain high. While numbers of rough sleepers with addiction and mental health struggles also rose, the reasons many people slept on the streets during the pandemic were rapidly changing. The Housing Committee

developed a plan to tackle homelessness as the pandemic's second wave hit the city, aimed at supporting at least 10,000 rough sleepers a year to find a long-term home. The strategy called for:

- Mayoral leadership to build better collaboration between health workers, charities and local authorities.
- Tailored support for people needing more attention, for example to help with extreme addictions.
- Improved support for side-lined groups like Londoners under 25, LGBT+ and ethnic minorities.
- Improved legal advice for European nationals and people who cannot get state welfare.
- Security of long-term housing so people can leave rough sleeping for good.

## Planning and Regeneration

*The Planning and Regeneration Committee leads the London Assembly's responses to the Mayor's London Plan, the capital's key strategic planning document which promotes the economic, social and environmental development of the capital, as well as setting the direction for planning of properties, high streets and land.*

A key theme of our work has been looking at planning policies and what kind of homes, streets and commerce Londoners needed throughout the pandemic. We studied how local authorities in London adapted rapidly to working virtually and saw innovations that could improve the planning system in the longer term.

As part of our work on the London Plan, we discussed how COVID-19 and the lockdown impacted the experience of living close together. We submitted evidence to the Mayor's consultation on London Plan

Guidance and the Government's Planning for the Future White Paper. We also investigated **the future of high streets and tall buildings**, making a range of recommendations including; the Mayor should have put community-led ideas into his post-pandemic recovery plans, and develop more guidance to ensure residential tall buildings provide quality homes for Londoners.

On tall buildings in particular, the Committee raised a number of key concerns. We do not believe tall buildings are the answer to London's housing needs. Our reservations relate to how tall buildings affect neighbourhoods and London's character. High rise buildings can also be costly to build, operate and maintain, are not best suited for family housing (which is much needed in London), and can have large environmental footprints.

The Committee also acted as a strong advocate for London on the issue of Permitted Development Rights, responding to multiple Government consultations. We urged against expansion of the policy which would mean that buildings like cafes, shops and gyms could be changed to residential properties without going through the planning permission system. The Committee argued that expanding the policy could result in low-quality housing and endanger the many high streets in the capital.



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## EVENTS

### **The Annual Chair's Event - Celebrating Strength in Diversity During the COVID-19 Crisis**



The Chair of the London Assembly, Navin Shah AM, hosted an online event to commemorate the inspiring acts of kindness seen throughout the pandemic.

The Chair, in his introduction to the event, acknowledged how the pandemic has transformed our way of life, our behaviour and our city. He shared how it has worsened existing problems for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, including the devastating and disproportionate impact on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The Chair also referred to the tragic killing of George Floyd as a devastating reminder of the inequality and racism in society.

The event showcased the community spirit, strength and resilience Londoners have shown through the worst peacetime crisis the city has known. The evening featured a mixture of personal experiences, stories told by trailblazing charities of how they helped communities respond to the pandemic, and entertainment from Bollywood and African dance acts that celebrated the cultural melting pot that is London.

We heard from Sanjay Bhandari, Chair of Kick it Out about tackling racism in sport, and Safia Jama, Director of the Women's Inclusive Team, about supporting Somali women and children in the city.

We also heard about personal encounters with community spirit from notable Londoners such as the Rt. Hon David Lammy MP; Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan; Tony Arbour, Deputy Chair of the London Assembly; and Jennette Arnold AM OBE.

The event celebrated London's diverse spirit and recognised diversity as a force for good.



## Assembly Talks Seminar Series

Over the course of late 2020 and early 2021, the London Assembly arranged its first ever three-part seminar series, Assembly Talks.

Seminars related to how COVID-19 affected different parts of Londoners lives. These virtual events were held in October on Domestic abuse, in December on Homelessness and in February on working from home during the pandemic.

Over our three events we welcomed more than 1,000 guests to hear the expertise of our panellists and Assembly Members. A range of high-profile speakers and organisations took part including Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales; Brenda Edwards, singer, actress and television personality; and Joe Fox, Singer/Songwriter from London. We also heard fascinating reports from representatives at the Institute of Economic Affairs, the Trades Union Congress, Centrepoint and Refuge.

The seminars were chaired by journalists, including the Independent's Women's Correspondent, Maya Oppenheim, and the Editor of OnLondon, Dave Hill. You can read Dave's insights on the rough sleeping and homelessness seminar he chaired in [this article](#).



## WHAT DOES THE LONDON ASSEMBLY DO?

The London Assembly is a crucial check on the powers of the Mayor of London. As the most powerful directly elected politician in the UK, it is important the Mayor is held publicly and democratically accountable.

The Assembly examines the decisions and actions of the Mayor to ensure promises to Londoners are delivered and the money he controls, collected from Londoners, is wisely spent.

The 25 London Assembly Members are elected every four years at the same time as the Mayor of London. The 2020 election was suspended until 2021 due to the pandemic. Eleven Assembly Members represent the whole capital and 14 are elected by constituencies. The Assembly holds the Mayor and mayoral advisers to account by publicly examining policies and programmes through committee meetings, plenary sessions, site visits and investigations.

In addition, the Assembly questions the Mayor ten times a year at Mayor's Question Time.

The Mayor must also consult Assembly Members before producing statutory strategies and the multi-billion-pound budget for the GLA Group. The Assembly can reject the Mayor's strategies and amend the draft budget if a majority of two-thirds agrees to do so.



Assembly meetings are open to the public so Londoners can stay informed about the activities of the Mayor and the Assembly.

As well as examining the Mayor's actions and decisions, Assembly Members act as champions for Londoners by investigating issues that are important to the capital.

Assembly investigations are carried out by cross-party committees which cover vital areas like transport, policing, housing and planning, the economy, health and the environment. The Assembly can press for changes to national, mayoral or local policy.



## OUR COMMITTEES

- Audit Panel
- Budget and Performance Committee
- Economy Committee
- Education Panel
- Environment Committee
- EU Exit Working Group
- Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee
- GLA Oversight Committee
- Health Committee
- Housing Committee
- Planning and Regeneration Committee
- Police and Crime Committee
- Transport Committee

## KEEP IN TOUCH

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Website: [www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly](http://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly)



# London Assembly - as of May 2021

