

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Darren Johnson AM**  
Chair of the London Assembly  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
More London  
London SE1 2AA

Our ref: MGLA180214-9516

Date: **07 APR 2014**

Dear Darren

I am writing in response to the Motions that were attached in Ed Williams' letter to me of 14 February. I will respond to each of your Motions in turn:

## **Motion 1 - Water Cannon Budget related Motion**

Following six weeks of public engagement, I have announced that I have agreed to support the Metropolitan Police Service's call to purchase water cannon to help enhance their response to riots or other serious and exceptional public disorder. Over two thirds of Londoners are in favour of the introduction of water cannon in these extreme situations and their views, along with the views of the Assembly, were taken into consideration. The final decision on whether to license the water cannon for use on the UK mainland now rests with the Home Secretary.

## **Motion 2 - Housing Budget Related Motion**

**Accelerate the supply of affordable housing in the capital, particularly family-sized homes', and 'Increase the proportion of homes with three and more bedrooms in developments subsidised by the GLA'**

A record 58,000 affordable homes were delivered in my first term and we are on course to deliver 100,000 over both terms. The largest proportion of family-sized affordable housing was also delivered during my first term, and we continue to seek a significant proportion to be built in my draft London Housing Strategy.

**Re-appraise the headline environmental standards for construction of GLA-subsidised housing and consider a target of building to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5, or higher**

Planning primarily deals with new build, although we do have policies in the London Plan to encourage local policies on retro-fitting sustainability measures to address the existing stock – which the motion is primarily about. Housing and Land are actively promoting sustainability retro-fit work on residential and commercial properties. Regarding the Code 5 point - planning policy applies to development regardless of the developer/tenure. The London Plan does not require compliance with an overall specific level of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

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My London Plan, Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance and emerging Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Guidance encourage high quality housing in terms of design as well as social and environmental sustainability. These documents include specific targets for carbon dioxide emissions and water use by occupants. An analysis of the energy assessments submitted alongside Stage II planning applications determined by me between 1 January and 31 December 2012 showed an approximate 36 per cent reduction in regulated carbon dioxide emissions beyond the requirements of the 2010 building regulations. Where larger developments do not meet the carbon dioxide reduction target set out in the London Plan, the Plan encourages boroughs to seek a financial contribution to reduce carbon dioxide emissions elsewhere in the borough, including through retro-fitting existing building with energy efficiency measures. The Supplementary Planning Guidance also include targets for the use of materials with low embodied energy and that are sustainable sourced.

The quality of construction is regulated by the Building Regulations. These are national regulations set by the Government and are enforced through the building control system and not the planning system.

## **Set up a 'Decent Homes Fund' to provide low cost loans to landlords to improve the quality of homes in the private rented sector**

There are no resources or funding available to set up such a fund, but the RE:NEW domestic retrofitting programme has put in place measures to assist all large landlords in London to identify works that can be carried out to their stock, procure the works, access finance and manage contractors.

## **Ensure that minimum energy efficiency standards are achieved in the private rented section by 2018**

Through my RE:NEW programme and the London rental standard, I will engage with, support and encourage private landlords to retrofit their stock in preparation for the forthcoming national legislation in 2018. The RE:NEW programme will work with landlords directly, and will also work with local authority led private landlord programmes to develop retrofit schemes, identify funding and procure delivery partners. The London Rental Standard will ensure training which will raise awareness of the forthcoming legislation with landlords and will provide guidance and recommended action.

## **Assist boroughs in using the full range of enforcement powers at their disposal to crack down on rogue landlords operating in the private rented sector**

The draft London Housing Strategy encourages boroughs to use their enforcement powers against rogue landlords, but it is important to stress that the statutory responsibilities, powers and resources to carry out this work all rest with the boroughs.

## **Fund a 'know your rights' website aimed at private sector tenants and promote this widely using his unique access to the advertising space available through Transport for London**

Expert housing advice agencies already exist and do not see it as a good use of scarce resources to duplicate their efforts. Furthermore, there is an opportunity cost through using Transport for London advertising space, in the form of foregone revenues which would otherwise go towards increasing investment or bearing down on fares.

## **Motion 3 - River Restoration Urgent Motion**

I strongly support the objective of restoring London's rivers. I have a dedicated policy (Policy 7.28) in the London Plan to promote the restoration of rivers.

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I also have one of the London Plan's Key Performance Indicators (KPI 24) to measure progress in restoring rivers. KPI 24 set a target of restoring 15km of river between 2009-2015. The update on performance against this target is due to be published in the March 2014 London Plan Annual Monitoring Report, this will indicate that over 12km has now been restored. This means I am broadly on target to meet the 15km target. It is not clear why this figure is different to the Assembly's figure of 14km. The KPI goes on to set a further target of an additional 10km of river restoration to 2020.

I have delivered significant restoration of rivers and wetlands through the Help a London Park project, with seven of the projects directly delivering such improvements.

Therefore, it is clear that I am committed to restoring London's rivers.

However, the restoration must be undertaken with multiple objectives including improved amenity and attractiveness of the rivers/wetlands, improved ecological value, improved drainage and flood risk management, improvements to local access and footpaths. The achievements so far have been delivered by combining elements of various budgets and/or funding from partners along with contributions by developers when securing new development. Such contributions can come either directly by developers undertaking works within their sites, or indirectly by developers making S106 contributions to other projects.

Given the above success using a range of activities and potential sources of funding and given the continued tight control of budgets it is not appropriate to establish a new allocation of funding specifically for river restoration.

GLA officers and I are continuing to work with the Environment Agency to establish the projects that can provide the most cost effective flood risk management in London. The EA has identified 24,000 homes at significant risk of flooding from rivers in London. Projects have been developed (but not delivered) to protect 10,000 of these and many of these projects have funding assigned to them. The EA is working with the GLA and London boroughs to develop projects to manage the risk to the remaining 14,000 homes. It would therefore make sense to wait for this list to be prioritised before any funding discussions are had. Some of these projects may include river restoration; others may be more engineering based.

## **Motion 4 - Ticket office Urgent Motion**

As you know, following constructive talks with the trades unions they suspended further strike action originally planned for 11-13 February. There are now two months of intensive talks underway to examine London Underground's (LU's) proposals in detail, as was always intended as part of the formal consultation, during which time the trades unions have committed to no further industrial action. LU has previously made a commitment to staff that no compulsory redundancies will be made and there will be a job for everyone at LU who wants to continue working and is willing to embrace change.

The details of proposed staffing levels at individual stations will obviously be part of the discussions with the trades unions, and LU will share those details with stakeholders once these discussions are complete. I am sure you would agree that this is the right and proper approach and that it would be premature to publish details while genuine and intensive talks are going on.

Of course, LU will continue to engage with stakeholders and Londoners to listen carefully to any concerns or issues they might raise to inform the changes that will eventually take place in 2015. This is what it has been doing continuously since last autumn.

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I have noted your suggestion for a 'Passenger Charter'. As you know, I have made a clear commitment to Londoners that all LU stations have staff on duty all day, with more staff visible in public areas where our customers need and want them most; not behind panes of glass but out in ticket halls, at ticket machines and on the platforms helping customers to make their journeys easier. LU will make journeys easier for our customers, with staff on hand to give advice and assistance, supported by the technology that is so vital to our customers now. Under our proposals, the current "turn up and go" assistance service for disabled and visually impaired passengers, and the disability training given to staff, will also continue and we will continue to prioritise personal assistance for those who need help. These proposals do not introduce any safety risk whatsoever. I would simply not sanction any proposals that had any detrimental effect on safety and nor would Mike Brown. LU's proposals – which recent research showed to have the clear support of Londoners – represent a fantastic opportunity to build on recent successes and modernise the Tube. I am very confident that everyone shares that objective and that the detailed discussions now underway again will enable us to take the opportunity.

Yours ever,



**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London

Cc: Ed Williams, Head of Committee and Member Services