

People's Question Time, Islington

Lord Mayor, Sadiq Khan

London Assembly Members

23.10.18

TANNOY: In the event of an emergency, follow the instructions given by the staff. Please switch your mobile devices to silent now. We have six topics this evening. With several of you here, won't have the time to take everyone's questions, so if you don't get to ask yours tonight, give your questions to one of the team in the foyer and we will answer it later.

Please also remember to fill in the feedback form and hand it to a member of staff at the end. We will finish tonight at nine o'clock sharp.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, without any further ado, please give a warm welcome to your chair this evening. Please welcome Jennette Arnold, OBE

JENNETTE: Good evening everyone. Thank you so much. Welcome to the 37th People's Question Time. The first time this event has been held in Islington. This is the 5th People's Question Time, for the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. It is great to see so many of you here tonight. A full house. Can I make a special welcome to the Mayor of the Borough ...

(Applause)

And someone who I have had the pleasure of working with, I have been your Assembly Member for 18 years at City Hall, I have worked with this gentlemen

during his time as leader of this council, so can we have a warm welcome for the councillor, Richard Watts, your leader.

(Applause)

Richard, it is great to see you, and to see members of your Cabinet here, and just keep doing what you are doing. We really appreciate all that you do for us in Islington. OK. I have some announcements before we start. People's Question Time, you've heard the announcements, but can I just ask you once again, to remember that we are here together for a short period, we have to finish at 9pm. You all have questions, I want you to ask the questions, I'll be taking them in series of threes. If you can make your questions as short as possible, then, there is a requirement on the Mayor and the Assembly members who are going to give you short, concise answers. We have a number of areas that we are going through. These are the areas where the Mayor has strategic responsibilities for. The areas will be: Transport, safety, air quality and the environment, housing, growing London's economy, and hopefully some time at the end where we will cover what we call the other area.

So, I'm in your hands. I'm here, we are working together. In the same way, when I am Chairing the Assembly, my job is to ensure that the assembly members ask the questions of the Mayor, tonight I want you to be able to ask the Mayor questions you have brought here. I would just ask for us all to work here tonight together with respect for each other. We have a tradition of respect in Islington. We are going to be showing ourselves to be able to ask questions. Answers may not be what we want them to be but that's what you will get. If you don't get your questions answered here tonight, then we will, we

do have a way of getting the questions from you and I will touch on that later. So, let me make sure that you are all ready and to remind you that there will be eight members of staff and eight microphones. You have two up there and there are six on the floor here. I will be looking at the start of each session to see who has their hands up and calling on the mic numbers. So, we are just about ready, please, put your hands together and welcome to the stage your London Assembly members. Thank you!

(Applause)

Welcome assembly members. And now, put your hands together to welcome Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London to the stage.

(Applause)

Can we have a few moments before the we start the Q and A. I will call my colleague and Chairman of the London Assembly, Tony Arbour, to address you.

(Applause)

TONY: Good evening, thank you so much for coming. I'm not sure what an address is, as opposed to an introduction remark, but my job it is to say how wonderful the Assembly is, how busy we are, how hard we work, and that we are absolutely tireless in working for London. Some of the things that we look at over a year are the obvious, important things like the police, the Fire Brigade, planning, the Underground, all of those sorts of things. But I'm inclined to think that the most important of the issues in the year was in the unflushables, you

recall the cases of fat-berg during the year, when we were determined to see that the most important thing as far as Londoners is concerned is that we don't get clogged up, London is not flooded and getting rid of the fat-berger.

The feature of the People's Question Time, enshrined in the legislation, is that we should tour the London boroughs. Pretty soon, we will have done each London borough twice. I'm not sure where Islington is on this but Jennette and I have travelled around and attended 35 Question Times together and becoming more adept at it. Of course, one of the differences is there have been different Mayors on each occasion, and this is the second, I beg his pardon, third, People's Question Time, so we are getting a professional display from the Mayor. But what is important is that you should feel free to ask us questions, to ask the Mayor questions and we will endeavour to be as honest and straight with you as we possibly can. Islington deserves the best and they're here tonight. I will ask Sadiq Khan to speak now.

(Applause)

SADIQ: Well, thank you everyone for coming here this evening to People's Question Time in the People's Republic of Islington!

(Laughter)

Tonight, we are making history. It is the first time ever a People's Question Time has been held in your borough. I would like to start by thanking our Chair for the evening, Jennette Arnold, who is the local Assembly Member. Not only for welcoming us here this evening but for her work as a London Assembly member

since 2000, day in, day out, focusing on the key issues that impact on the lives of her constituents from transport, to violent crime, to affordable housing. Over many years she's been a champion in the fight against injustice and discrimination. Let's give her, please, a round of applause.

(Applause)

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the leader of the council, councillor Richard Watts, here tonight. As well as all of the other councillors in the borough and the excellent Members of Parliament, Emily Thornberry and Jeremy Corbyn for everything that they are doing to improve the lives of the local residents.

The last two years have been tough for London, for our city. We have had a number of terrorist attacks including one here in Islington. We still remember Mukram Ali, who was murdered and all of those injured. We have had in our city, the shameful tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire. The chaos of Brexit, and the continued Government cuts which has hit our employers and youth services hard, resulting in a national rise in violent crime, including in our city. For many Londoners, the future does not look any easier. For many families, they are struggling to make ends meet, the housing crisis is preventing Londoners from buying their own homes and our celebrated diversity is under attack not just in London but around the world. I could promise you tonight that I'll fix the problems overnight but it simply would not be true. Some of the problems have been decades in the making, it will take time to fix. Others, you need extra funding and powers we simply don't have. but it doesn't mean that there is no hope, far from it. I remain optimistic about our future.

Over the last two years, despite the major challenges we have managed to make real progress. Started to fix the mess we inherited, laying the foundations to build a better city that works for all Londoners. This includes building more social homes, than ever before, reducing the number of rough sleepers on our streets, giving residents the right to vote on regeneration plans. Introducing the Hopper bus fare and freezing Transport for London fares making transport affordable. Supporting boroughs to build 11,000 new council homes over four years, including here in Islington. Tackling London's dangerously polluted air, and loudly and proudly standing up for London's values, defending our diversity and respect for one another in the face of an increasingly divided world.

My ambition is the same today as when I first became Mayor. For every Londoner, to get the opportunities, to get on in life, that our city gave to me and my family. We have made a great start over the last two years but as ever, there is much, much more still to do. One key priority for me, will be continuing to tackle violent crime, which is still unacceptably high. Every death, as a result of violent crime is an utter tragedy, leaving lives destroyed and families heartbroken. The causes of crime are complex and involve poverty and a lack of opportunities for young people. But there is no doubt that all of these problems have been made much worse by huge Government cuts. I'm going to continue leading from the front on this issue, not only working with the Met Police service to fund the Violent Crime Taskforce but with the councils and communities and others to roll out a new violence and reduction unit to focus on tackling the root causes of crime too.

Let me end by saying, I know that Brexit is on everyone's mind at the moment, particularly for EU citizens worried about their future. We must never forget

when talking about EU citizens in our city, we are talking about our friends, our neighbours and our colleagues. People who not only make a massive contribution, to our economy but to our society and to our thriving communities too. I have said it before, I will say it again, my message to the EU citizens is this: You are Londoners. You will always be welcome here.

(Applause)

And you'll always be welcome here and I'll continue to fight for your rights in our city. Thank you and I look forward, like the assembly, to answer your questions.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Now, it's your time. So let me see the first three questions. Microphone number 1, the guest with his hand up just on the third row.

FLOOR: Good evening to all of the assembly members and the Mayor. Mr Mayor, you pledged before the election which appointed you to office to meet with disability organisations. Can you tell us what the timetable is for that meeting and what format it will take?

JENNETTE: Mic 2, the gentleman just there.

FLOOR: Good evening, Assembly Members and Mr Mayor. Mr Mayor, when you promised Londoners back in 2016 they wouldn't pay a penny more for their travel in 2020 than they do today, did you expect them to

realise it was those of us who use a travelcard.

JENNETTE: Mic six.

FLOOR: Hi. My question is actually for Mr Bailey. As a woman, I find it incredibly insulting that you believe single mums deliberately become pregnant for benefits, something you once described as a "cottage industry". Do you stand by those comments you made in 2006 or do you apologise to women for the offence that you have caused them?

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Let me just say that I totally understand what you did there but we are on questions about transport. So I'm now... [Laughter] ... so I'm now going to ask for an answer to the first two questions and it means that a transport question has fallen. This is serious stuff here tonight.

Mr Mayor.

SADIQ: Can I thank you for your question? I have already met with a number of disabled groups and I do so regularly. I will carry on meeting groups. But to give you some other good news, we're about to launch our new equality, diversity and inclusion advisory group, which signals a new way for City Hall to engage with equality stakeholders like yourself. It will contain a number of individuals who have direct lived experiences, that's why I was keen to meet with disabled Londoners, and so these are appointed to work with me in my offices so that our policies address the real experience that you have. I will give you a real experience of public

transport.

Public transport must be accessible for all Londoners, which is why I have announced record sums so that as many stations as possible have step-free access, and that our staff are dementia friendly. Those are two examples of what we are doing. Hardeep is the Deputy Mayor for Transport. I will make sure you exchange details so you can be part of that stakeholder group. It is important that we take on board your experiences of being a Londoner.

The second question which was read out by somebody over there about the TfL fares freeze. Let me just remind all of you here who are Londoners. In the eight years before I became Mayor, TfL fares went up by more than 42%, so the fares that you pay in our city were the most expensive in all of Europe. And so the promise I made when I was running to be the Mayor for London was to freeze all TfL fares during my first term as Mayor. We're now into year three and I've kept my promise of freezing all TfL fares.

The question that reminds us that one of the reasons that those of you who have travelcards have not seen the benefit of that freeze is because the train operating companies in London, Southern, Southwestern and Southeastern who, by the way, make record cancellations, but are not freezing their fares, even though the Secretary of State, a man called Chris Grayling, has the powers to make them to. My simple point is this, if I can cut the flab in TfL and freeze TfL fares, why can't Chris Grayling do the same to these privatised companies making record profits? By the way,

I will just say this for the remaining 18 months of my first term, I'll continue to freeze TfL fares. I wish Chris Grayling would stand up to these companies rather than letting them get away with the awful service at the same time as raising fares above inflation.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Three more transport questions. Microphone five, the gentleman there. Is there anybody over at microphone three?

FLOOR: We hear a lot about emissions and so forth, but the one word that's always missing and has been since 1965 is the word "trolley bus". Now, trolley buses work by electricity, which is collected from wires overhead. A lot of people under the age of 53 will never have seen one in London, but they are almost silent except for the sound of the tyres on the road and, of course, there are no -- I repeat no -- emissions. So if you are serious about emissions, then something needs to be done about this.

JENNETTE: Let's go to the balcony. Microphone 7. Two questions there.

FLOOR: Mr Mayor, two years ago, Frank Field, the MP, wrote a report declaring Uber labour in London as sweated labour. In two years, nothing much has happened at Transport for London. What actions will you take in your remaining term to ensure that sweated labour has no part in the licensed transportation system in London?

FLOOR: My name is Mark. I want to know what form of oversight does

the Mayor intend using to ensure that Uber's clean air levy of 15p a mile will actually be passed on to drivers to help them fund Uber's new fleet of electric vehicles?

JENNETTE: Mr Mayor.

SADIQ: Thank you for all of those questions. The gentleman downstairs who asked about emissions is alluding to poor air quality in our city. To remind you, the air in our city leads to thousands of premature deaths, leads to children having under developed lungs and adults having a whole host of health issues from asthma to dementia, heart disease and some cancers have been linked to poor air quality. One of the things that I've been gaining for, sir, is a new Clean Air Act for the 21st century, like we had in the '50s, that cleaned up in the smog in our city and in our country. The good news is that we have managed to win that battle and Michael Gove has introduced a new Clean Air Act. We have a whole host of policies to clean the air in London, the world's first T Charge, and the world's first ultra-low emissions zone.

I see Councillor Claudia Webb here. Islington has worked with Transport for London to widen super highway six. We are encouraging more people to walk and cycle. You ask specifically about the trolley bus. What I can promise you is TfL are looking at all forms of public transport that reduces zero emission. I've got to be honest, in my current transport plan the trolley bus isn't there, but we will listen to any good ideas. So, 64% of Londoners walk, cycle or use public transport. The ambition is to get that to 80%, which is why we are making Transport for London fares the fairest

we possibly can.

The questions at the top were both about Uber. I met with Frank Field. You are right, Frank has done lots of good work around the working conditions of those in the gig economy. A particular issue in relation to those, forget the living wage, they are not even receiving the minimum wage in relation to many of those who are minicab drivers, Uber drivers included. One of the things I looked into is the current conditions that TfL as the regulator regulates private hire vehicles under is whether we're allowed to look at the working conditions of drivers. I'm afraid the advice we have is that that is not a licensing condition. Notwithstanding that, we are impressing upon employers and others and businesses the importance of treating staff with dignity and think of the delivery drivers who deliver food that many order via the web, or via phones, think of the drivers that you are referring to. We're going to carry on pressurising businesses to do the right thing as a consequence of our commitment to people being able to have dignity in work. We'll be shortly launching a good work standard and it talks about a decent pay, that talks about treating employees with respect, it talks about recognising trade unions, and the sort of things that I know you would care about.

One of the things I have been announcing shortly is the new London Living Wage, one of the promises I made during my campaign was to try and have a London Living Wage above £10. The good news is in my second year as Mayor, it went above £10, it is currently £10.20. We will see if we can raise it even more.

The question asked by the gentleman next to you, Mark, was in relation to the announcement today from the global CEO of Uber in relation to a new fund to try and help clean up the air in our city. And Mark, I'd make this point. Last year, when Transport for London and me as their chair stood up to Uber, we were criticised. We were saying it was a bad mistake, you will scare away business. By the way, members of this platform criticised me for doing so, one of them is running to be the Tory Mayor for London! I thought it was really important on your behalf to stand up to Uber and say the way you've been operating in our city is not good enough.

I believe in being pro-business and pro-tech. What I don't believe is you trying to run rings around the rules and regulations we have, they apply to big business and to small business. Lo and behold, when it came to the court case, Uber accepted that I was right to reject their licence. The magistrate has put them on probation. Whilst I welcome any announcement from Uber or others to clean up our air in London, this by itself won't be enough.

Electric vehicles. I'm looking for the powers which I currently don't have to cap the number of private hire vehicles in London. I know it will be unpopular with some people. We currently have 120,000 private hire vehicles in London, roughly speaking 20,000 black cabs, one of the reasons for the congestion and the poor-quality air and the emissions is the number of vehicles in the streets of our city. I will carry on lobbying the Government to have these powers.

JENNETTE: Can I call assembly member Caroline Pidgeon who has been leading the assembly's work on transport and I know has done a lot in this

area?

CAROLINE: Thank you very much, Jeanette. In terms of trolley buses, transport enthusiasts often talk about trolley buses, I found over my decade on the assembly. The equivalent is a tram. It is something I'm passionate about. I want to see the funding sorted to extend the tram to Sutton, which is this Mayor's transport strategy. I also supported the fantastic cross river tram which was a previous proposal from Lambeth and Southwark into central London, which sadly the previous mayor cancelled, but I think trams have a lot to offer and certainly get more people out of their car and on to trams than you do in terms of buses. But what we've got to do actually, if we're going to tackle emissions in London, is tackle congestion, and that's why the Transport Committee has put forward the idea that we need to look at some form of road pricing going forward in London and we've encouraged the Mayor and Transport for London in the future to be looking at this in order to make sure we can get around our city as well as clean up our air. In terms of the questions from private hire drivers, this is something the Transport Committee is currently looking at the moment. We are looking at taxis and private hire and how we can make sure that passengers always get a safe journey but also that it is safe for other road users and for those drivers and we are very concerned about the lengthy hours they're driving and the idea the Mayor is developing a good work is something we will feed into the work we are doing at the moment. We need a kitemark to say this is a good operator who doesn't exploit its workforce and the drivers are not driving crazy hours to make ends meet every week. There is a race to the bottom in this industry and we need to be pushing up standards.

Picking up the point about fares, the Mayor, we can debate about whether he broke the promise or not, but the challenge is the budget. The Government has taken £700 million a year from the TfL budget, Crossrail, that is more fare income gone, and the Mayor has chosen to freeze fares. There are challenges for Transport for London. There will be difficult decisions going forward to fund the services that we want in London and in my view, it would have been that it would have been better for a targeted fare measure, such as half price fares before 7.30am, rather than a blanket freeze of fares but we will see what happens with the way going forward with the Mayor.

FLOOR: Good evening, as an as an asthmatic, I support the low emissions in London. I'm having just bought a new van to replace one that unfortunately was stolen in February. I am not in a position to buy a new vehicle, my vehicle is unfortunately just out of the window by six months for emissions dispensation. So I'm not in a position. I suspect that there are thousands of professional musicians, tradesmen and people, self-employed professionals forging their own careers who simply cannot afford to buy a new vehicle or one that is less than four years old ... and the question is, can you possibly look at some kind of dispensation for these groups of people? Something to help us. There are, £25, I know it was £12.50 but if we leave at 8am in the morning, £25 is a fair percentage of earnings in the week.

FLOOR: A controversial subject but my observation as a doctor, for what it is worth, is the amount of pollution pumping out is largely from black taxi cabs. But considering that they are regulated heavily, wouldn't it be nice if they could be funded to become hybrid and to become environmentally friendly and to preserve their working rights?

JENNETTE: Question 8.

FLOOR: Thank you. With regards to the culling of buses that appears to be going ahead. You say you are having a consultation on it but a lot of us do seriously wonder. In Islington we have two major buses which people really rely on for work. There are plenty of hospitals around here as well and other bus routes that night-time workers, people like that, also need. In particular, I am thinking of the 271, the 205, the number 4 bus that takes people all the way to Waterloo Station. I found it so convenient with a small child in a buggy with luggage to visit my family and also the 19 which goes as far as Battersea Bridge. You are going to cut these. The other part is with regards to closing down the ticket offices in the over ground stations. Most over ground stations, apart from Highbury and Islington are quite isolated, thinking of Canonbury, I would not like it if there was no-one to contact should I need. If all of the moves are short-sighted considering we are all agreed that we need public transport, we need it to be used by more people and to be widened. Please will you work on this as Transport for London Chief? Thank you.

JENNETTE: Sadiq, we are now eating into the next section, if you can give short answers and we will follow-up.

SADIQ: They are very good questions, in relation to the ultra-low emissions zones. We announced to people to give time to move to the cleaner forms of vehicles. For those who are not aware, the ultra-low emission zone, basically, with a petrol vehicle that is 2005 or newer you should not pay the ultra-low emission zone. Anything less than that you probably have to pay. We are trying to lobby the Government for a diesel scrappage fund to help people move away,

especially families, charities, businesses, to move away from the polluting vehicles to the less polluting vehicles and I continue to lobby the Government for that. There have been scrappage schemes in the past, some manufactures have started them, I continue to lobby for a fund who help people like you and others.

To give an idea to the cost, to the doctor's question, the cost to our city in relation to the human misery of poor-quality air, is not just the poor-quality air but it costs the NHS £3.7 billion in health questions of emissions and the economy, with productivity and people being off sick, up to £10 billion. So it is an important issue to grapple with and get on top of. And it leads to the question of the biggest pollutants, 50% of the nitrogen dioxide comes from transport, the other 50% is from construction, housing and from the River Thames. The black taxis have been an important partner to move away from the most polluting vehicles, the traditional taxis are the older diesels, the most polluting, but the black taxis get a subsidy for scrapping diesel, I think it is £7,000, and an additional source of money when they move to electric. So there is a carrot towards the black cab drivers to move from older diesels to a cleaner form of transport, which is important. Black taxi is a public transport, it enables people in wheelchairs to access them and they are moving towards different types of payment and they are becoming more environmentally friendly.

And on the last question on buses, the frequency of buses and the routes, your Assembly Member Jennette Arnold and other members have been in touch to highlight the issues you raised. I spent three years studying at the London Metropolitan, and on a daily basis I know how important it is to get into the West End. You mentioned the number 19. It is a genuine consultation but it is happening as in London there are 9,000 buses, 700 routes, we are consulting on

changing the frequency of 30 of the buses, the reason, is that a number of buses in Central London are empty during the course of the day. London Bridge, or Kingsway or Park Lane, there are buses empty in the day time and we trying to move them where there is a greater need in outer London. So there is a configuration to moving the buses to where we need it. It is a genuine consultation and we take on the concerns raised in the local communities.

The second question is important in relation to safety. That was your concern but as a consequence of ARRIVA closing the ticket offices that leads to staff being lost from the stations. A lesson I learned from the huge error made by Boris Johnson when he closed down ticket offices on our Tubes was the staff lost and the people having a lack of confidence when using the tubes. So when I became the Mayor I asked Travel Watch to do a review and we re-employed hundreds of new staff so that people felt safer. And in the plans consulted on by ARRIVA, we ensure that each station has a human being that we can speak to when we use the stations rather than disappearing. So the fact that the ticket office may close down, doesn't mean you lose the staff. A staff member is by the barrier or on the platform with the commuters, rather than behind glass. But it is a consultation that we are undertaking. And we are losing every year from the Government £700 million, we will be the only public transport system in the Western world not subsidised by central Government, so ARRIVA have to make savings but we have to learn the lessons from the previous ticket closures to have a human being at a station when you use it.

JENNETTE: The applause shows the importance of the questions and the detailed answer from you, Sadiq. We have to leave transport, I am sorry. We have taken five minutes out of another section. if you didn't get your question,

remember, leave your question tonight or get in touch with the Assembly Member and we shall get them answered. The next topic is safety. Questions on community safety, policing and if you like your experience and how you perceive safety. OK. Let's go ... paddle number 7. Can you pass that along for the first question? Anybody else? Yes, can we have the question?

FLOOR: Hello. Mr Mayor, in August of this year you wrote to the Home Secretary to recommend the Home Office to introduce guidelines to support victims with insecure immigration status. As you said, victim safety was a priority above immigration status. Following on this, will you introduce guidelines within the Met Police and all statutory agencies to ensure that all victims can report abuse safely without being left destitute or being detained or deported? Thank you.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Mic number 8.

FLOOR: Hi. What measures are put in place to prevent the rise in knife crime in London?

JENNETTE: Thank you. Mic number 1.

FLOOR: A few weeks ago, I live here, I have done for ten years, I grew up in Manor Park, it is a bit of a dive. I moved here as it is quite safe. A few weeks ago, I left on a Friday night, I left my house, I came back and there were a group hanging around, I got bottled by one of them as someone was taking a dump on

the front door. I reported to the police, they came from Cricklewood. And they did not investigate. They said it was in line, in an e-mail, that they would not investigate this type of crime. What do you say to someone like me to make me feel more safe here in Islington?

(Applause)

SADIQ: Thank you for all of those three really important questions. The woman at the top. For those not aware of this, the issue is that victims of domestic violence, domestic abuse, modern slavery, are often suffering serious sexual abuse and violence, when reporting to the police, as the immigration status is insecure, they are supporting to an agency and the victims are worried about reporting a serious criminal offence. So I have written to say that this is not on to the Home Secretary. It is this case that the victims will not come forward. We have not had a satisfactory response yet.

There is a conundrum, for the Met Police have to report to the authorities if there are immigration offences but there needs to be a common-sense approach and management from the Met Police Service. We don't want the victims to lack confidence to come forward to report things to the police. I have reported to a commissioner, Clare Waxman, doing work around this area. If you can, through Jennette, give details of the work that Clare is doing in the area to work with the Government to change this, so there is not an effect in relation to the victims coming forward. We suspect that the reason that crimes are unreported is because of the immigration status, we need charities and women's groups to get a better revolution to the issue.

The second question is the issue raised in the opening about the increase in violent crime, in particular, knife crime. In Islington in the last year, there have been four people who have lost their lives as a consequence of stabbings in public places. There is nothing more tragic than having to contact a family or meet a bereaved family when it happens. It is a tragic waste of life and it is heart-breaking to the family and has a really important effect on the community who feel scared about their personal safety.

Violent crime has been going up for the last four years, since 2014, across the country and also in London. I've got to say it is not helped by the fact -- and Home Office civil servants actually say this -- of the massive cuts made in policing over the last eight years. There is a link, I'm afraid, between cutting police officers, cutting youth services, cutting preventive services with an increase in violent crime. I'm sorry, there is.

We can't wait for the Government to do something. What have we done in London? In London, we're doing two main things. One is, we've set up a violent crime taskforce and that's me raising council tax being brutally honest but diverting rates from businesses towards a special team of 270 police officers who focus and work in those areas of high knife crime, using targeted, intelligence-led stop and search. They all wear body videos to record the interactions. There have been thousands of charges, and hundreds of knives and guns taken off our streets by the violent crime taskforce work.

The second really important piece of work is the violence reduction unit. Look, we're going to be tough on knife crime and the causes, there are

complex, deep societal reasons why young people think it is okay to pick up a knife or join a criminal gang. I'm not excusing criminality, but I'm explaining the complex reasons. The taskforce is learning lessons from Glasgow and others. We want to look at the root causes of violent crime. I compare it to a public health approach. So in a public health approach, if there is an infection, you stop the infection, you treat the infection, you stop it spreading and then you make sure there are no infections in the future. I will use the same approach when it comes to violent crime. I won't pretend we will solve it overnight but we will carry on doing what we are to deal with the causes and the enforcement. I've been criticised for doing so but I don't apologise for investing £45 million in the young Londoners.

The new Mayor's Young Londoners' Fund is giving young people who have seen cuts in services and they are given constructive things to do. All of us have a role to play. There's a famous African proverb: It takes a village to raise a child. I genuinely think it will take us, whether you are a parent, big sister, big brother, teacher, councillor, medic or politician, you can play a role to solve this issue of the increase in violent crime.

The third question from the gentleman who lives in Manor Park. That's not good enough. Before you leave, if you could come to the front and give us your details. That is a serious assault and it shouldn't be triaged out. If we can make sure that -- I'm looking around. Nick, if you can put up your hand please. Nick has put up his hand. If you come to the front, I will take your details, speak to the basic command team tomorrow and we will come back to you tomorrow. That's a serious assault. It shouldn't

be triaged out.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: It is so important. There are those personal questions that no answer from the platform can deal with. Please speak to Nick and Nick and myself and others, we will pick that up. I just want to bring in two Assembly Members. Assembly Member Connell, you chair the assembly's police and crime committee. Is the Mayor doing enough?

STEVE: I'm Steve O'Connell. I represent Croydon and Sutton and chair the London Assembly police and crime committee. I would like to respond to the second question with a strong nod to the third question. We have seen in London a dramatic rise in violent crime and our committee is doing some work on that and publishing a report that I commend to you next month, but we have also seen a rise, a very big rise in volume crime and what I would call neighbourhood crimes, which the gentleman I think arguably on that third question is to be noted. Now, I agree, and we agree completely with the Mayor that it is a complex picture, that we have to look at the root causes of crime and our committee visited the West Midlands area to look at what they are doing. The fact of the matter is -- I will also say actually we have written to the Home Office seeking a fair settlement for London policing but it is fair to say that Londoners do expect the Mayor to take a responsibility for the position that we're in and we've heard from the Mayor that he is taking some action and investing some money but there is an expectation that both the Met Police and the Mayor and the Government do more to protect Londoners, chair.

JENNETTE: Thank you. Assembly Member Desai, you have been doing some work on victims. You have heard the first question ably put. Have you got anything to say?

UNMESH: The first question to the Mayor, which is about the reporting of crime by people whose English status is in doubt, this is a delicate area. You also have a situation not just in London but around the country where there are ruthless people out there exploiting people's immigration statuses and committing all sorts of horrendous crimes, particularly in the area of modern slavery. I published a report on this issue. You can get it by going to my website or writing to me at City Hall. I have called on the Home Office to issue guidelines to the Met Police. It is an important area. There are hundreds and thousands of people out there, there is sexual exploitation, it is human trafficking and it is also exploitation. Just because somebody's immigration status is in doubt, it is not an excuse to commit these terrible crimes. They need the same protection as the rest of us.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Let's go for three more questions. I can't see any action around here! Microphone number five. Let's take those two questions.

FLOOR: We are talking a lot about violence and I want to really press you to stop focusing so much on policing when we know that the most marginalised people and the most vulnerable people to violence are unlikely to report it to the police and are unlikely to be safe to report it to the police. Something that you could do that is really concrete to shows

that you want to end violence and you want to create transformative and healing spaces for survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence is to put the pressure on for us to get the women's building at the site of Holloway Prison.

(Cheering)

JENNETTE: We have heard your ask. Pass the microphone on. Can you pass the mic on?

FLOOR: We were double teaming to get this question asked!

JENNETTE: I like it. I like the style. [Laughter]

Can I take... mic one. Mic three. Okay.

FLOOR: BME women are being failed. We are being told that our immigration status matters more than the fact that we have suffered sexual offences, that we should go home if perpetrators are threatening our lives and that our lived experiences are not what we live and breathe every day. Particularly in policing responses to BME and migrant women reporting violence and abuse are down to the discretion of that individual officer or detective that happens to attend. I would like to ask what you are doing and further will do to ensure that BME and migrant women can report violence and abuse safely and to receive the support they need and how you intend to champion the specialist BME ending violence against women and girls sector without which BME and migrant women would

have nowhere to turn.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Yes. Mic 8.

FLOOR: Hello, Mr Mayor. So, you addressed a gentleman who spoke about being bottled and you rightly acknowledged it's a crime that should be dealt with, but surely the police didn't deal with at the time and this is a problem of culture. It's something to do with the police not doing their jobs properly, it is not competent. Shouldn't you, like, be tackling... shouldn't you be focusing on the police force and how they... shouldn't you ensure that they shouldn't allow this to happen in the future? This is an individual case, but it should be sorted throughout.

JENNETTE: Okay, thank you. Mr Mayor.

SADIQ: Let me deal with that question first. Look, I'm the first person, as indeed is Steve O'Connell, the chair of the committee, to hold the police to account and make sure they are held to account. But you've got to give due regard to the facts they're working under. We have fewer police officers than any time in the last 20 years. For every 1,000 Londoners there were four officers. Now, there are three officers to every thousand. We are fewer than 30,000 police officers, when our population is nine million. So the short point I make to you, look, I hold the police to account and make sure they work hard but actually you have to realise that they are having to ration the time they have because there are so few officers.

I speak to officers who are cancelling rest days and cancelling holidays and having fewer sick days, even though they're sick and they're coming into work. We will hold them to account. The police service, since it was first formed under Robert Peel, have managed a system where they prioritise their services. The right question to ask is to make sure they triage in a way that is not making sure that serious offences are properly investigated. We have to realise, you know, that the police service, the police officers are demoralised and they're working incredibly hard.

By the way, the context is that the Government in 2014 said -- police officers by the way cannot go on strike or have industrial action -- it will be an independent body that will decide the pay increases for police officers. The Government has rejected the advice from this independent body. It's a big slap in the face for the police officers. They are not receiving the remuneration they deserve. But in reverse, let's be clear where the responsibility lies for us having a decent number of police officers and that's central Government. 80% of our police service is funded by central Government. We have lost millions of pounds since 2010, £730 million so far and we have to find more over the next three years. I will do my best to make sure we have the police officers working incredibly hard that we already have, but to lobby for more police officers as well and ask you to join me to lobby the Government for more police officers.

In relation to the question asked here about Holloway Prison. You know what compounds your question and makes it even worse is the Government decided to close Holloway Prison without consulting City Hall or anybody in London who knows about London. So Holloway Prison was

closed down without notice, those women in Holloway didn't know it was going to be closed down, let alone the staff. And there's a really good piece of work -- and Sian Berry can talk about the work herself -- a really good piece of work done by one of our committees about the consequence of the Government's policies on women. A disproportionate high number of women who should not be in prison are in prison for committing non-violent offences, often they're the victims of domestic violence, domestic abuse, sexual offences, and they're receiving harsher sentences. I have read recently the new book by Helena Kennedy, *Eve Was Shamed*, which talks about some of the injustices towards women in the criminal justice system. But can I tell you this? I've been incredibly impressed with this council because all across London, when there is surplus public land available, it is sold off to the highest bidder and that highest bidder says to me I have to build 100% market value properties because we've paid too much for the land. This Council worked on a planning brief which sends a message to any developer saying the expectation of this council if you buy this land at least half of the homes have to be genuinely affordable, and interest should be a women's centre on this land. That's why the council deserve credit for the work they're doing in this area.

In relation to the point about the assistance I can give to women in London who are the victims of crime but then go on to commit an offence, we have to do more to help them in relation to women's visit centres, I'm a big fan of a report by Baroness Corsted who recommended visit centres, rather than prisons, to work with the council and the Ministry of Justice to ensure a decent criminal

justices is in service for women in our country and Sian Berry will talk about that work shortly. In relation to the question at the back, similar to the top, when Unmesh was speaking, it reminded me of violence against women and girls, I will make sure you contact Jennette, to have in mind Government national legislation, we have also invested £40 million, to assist not just women's refugees, women's groups, and not just safe havens, and you are right, it goes back to the question of third-party reporting. Some people feel nervous and anxious going directly to the police. That is why we have made it easier in reporting via the internet, other forms of social media, the phones and third-party reporting to make it easier to report these sorts of offences.

JENNETTE: Thank you. And the lady who asked the second question, I will be down front and get details from you. I want to bring in Assembly Member Hall, a member of the police and the crime committee.

SUSAN: I feel for any of you that have been victims of crime and I'm sure that we all do. It is dreadful. We will all fight for more funding to go into the police. I want to point out several things, we must make sure that the Met Police Force is efficient in the spending of its money. The Met Police spent twice as much money for helmets as Derbyshire forces and to get a laptop analysed. That cannot be right, the number of people working in the Met Force has increased by 39%. It has been warned it is failing to spend taxpayer's money and has a limited understanding of the level of quality of the service it provides. It requires improvement in the efficiency report. I know Sadiq is forever moaning about Boris Johnson but it was claimed good under him. We have to look at the way that the money is spent. Many agree it should go on the frontline officers. There is enough money in the budget, as we have freedom of information things

sent through. There is money in the budget for 30,750 police officers. We are down to under 30,000. The Mayor, to be fair, put in £5 million and announced this in February, yet they announced that they started to recruit properly in September, allowing for the fact it was going into the new budget. We should be training up more police officers now.

I would suggest that is what everyone in here wants. More police on the beat. With money being wasted like this, not to mention the extra £9 million spent on culture that could have gone into the policing, there are many areas that the Mayor could put more money into policing and make all of us safer.

(Applause)

SADIQ: Can I say ...

JENNETTE: Can you hold it a minute?

SADIQ: It is difficult with what has been said.

JENNETTE: It is difficult but hold it for a minute!

(Laughter)

Assembly Member Berry, I know that you have been working on this area about the Holloway Women's Centre, do you have anything to add quickly?

SIAN: I am the chair of Housing. But I want to save my time but to say that the Mayor has mentioned a couple of times that the work that the police and the

crime committee did on the women in the Criminal Justice System. We looked at the 1200 women a year in London who are put in prison, we looked at the kinds of crimes that they were committing, we looked at the fact that basically they are all to do with poverty, they are all crimes of theft. We didn't meet a women offender who had not also suffered abuse and violence in her own life and the poverty was just making it worse. We recognised as a committee that most of the women did not need to be in prison, that what they needed instead was women centres and support to get over it. Sadiq has talked about a public health approach to crime, this is where it really works if we treat the women as needing help and support to get out of crime. We discussed that at the Mayor's Question Time, the work at Holloway and possibly the use of that building while it is still there, so we are committed as a whole in the GLA to sort out a women's centre, to get more women centres across London.

JENNETTE: As well as being the Mayor of London, Sadiq is the commissioner of the police. So, Sadiq, can you respond quickly to what Susan has said in terms of the Met being inefficient and not spending the money properly?

SADIQ: Theresa May is saying that her police cuts are not responsible for the increase in crime. Susan Hall, the Conservative Member of the Assembly says we need more police. Susan, speak to your boss, to reverse the cuts and give us the police officers we need!

(Applause)

JENNETTE: OK. OK. at that point, at that point we are going to move on from safety but remember what I have said, we can take your questions if they have not been asked. We need now to go on to as important, air quality and

environment. So, can I now see hands up? Paddle number 4 there. Paddle 5. To that lady there. OK. Start and then I will find somebody else.

FLOOR: Thank you very much. Sadiq, my question is about how are you going to tackle your pledge to reduce air pollution around schools? There was an audit done where one of the schools in my ward was found to have a lot of toxic fumes. Given we will have the Silver Town Tunnel that will increase the air pollution in the area.

FLOOR: Good evening, I would like to ask if there is plan to fund more bike hangers in the street to give possibility to people with no outdoor space to safely keep a bike close to home? So to encourage a more green transport.

JENNETTE: Thank you. Mic 7.

FLOOR: My question is for the Mayor. DEFRA launched their plastics ban up for consultation, I was wondering what are the plans across London given the impact of plastics recently, well, in the Metro being about plastic being present and what else are we doing in addition to all of your refill schemes you have launched.

JENNETTE: Great questions. Mr Mayor?

SADIQ: I will do the third question first, I may regret saying this, it will be held against me but Michael Gove deserves credit ...

(Applause)

Yep, you heard it here first! Caroline is saying to stop. To give him credit, as the Secretary of State for DEFRA he seized the initiative and he is working with us. He said publicly in relation to the whole area. There are things we have to do on the international level, things to do nationally and locally. You will be aware of the announcement to have water fountains installed across our city over the course of the next year. We have announced 20 earlier on this year, 100 over the course of the next year. It will really change habits in relation to drinking water, an issue in relation to obesity in children and others, and it means we can carry the bottles and refill rather than buying plastic. And we have worked with the private sector restaurants and others to have free water available and seeing if we can use it in tubes and stations to make free water available.

We are doing work around sewers and getting rid of the stuff we know is causing problems in the River Thames and in the sea. Part of this is working with the good councils in relation to recycle., so what does the council do with its recycling. We have had an argument with Barnet about their recycling policies, we want to work with them to ensure we get this right. You have a huge role to play as citizens in lobbying us to ensure this goes further. It is an impact on climate change, to living things dying in the rivers and the seas because of swallowing things and there is a quality of life issue in relation to obesity and being overweight. We are working with the Government to make sure we go further and faster in the area.

In relation to the question on bike hanging, the local authorities are doing work on this, in Islington they are making this available for their residents. I saw a local cycling group who had five questions on this for the council, most of the points were met and the council is meeting more in relation to cycling hanging. My job is to persuade the other councils for people to hang their bikes and ways

of keeping their bikes safe. And we are working on places to have lock-ups near the station. We hope to have cycle storage schemes that don't take up space so you can park your bike safely when using community services across our city. It leads on to the Silver Tunnel question. At that moment in south-east London, there is huge congestion and poor-quality air, partly caused by the backlog in relation to the tunnel. It closes down, there is a broken vehicle, it causes huge problems in that part of London. One of the things we are hoping to do is by reducing the congestion, by having the tunnel, one lane of it reserved for buses, which takes free cyclists and pedestrian from one side of the river to the other to encourage people to cycle in that part of London and also, and to remind me to remind you, that one of the pieces of work buried by the previous Mayor, Boris Johnson, was a survey done of the air in London. It showed that the worst air was in the most deprived parts of London which had 400 schools in the areas. So poor quality air is an issue of social justice. It is children in the most deprived parts of the city breathing the worst air.

What we have done from City Hall is to give schools some expertise to do an audit of what causes the problems around the school, and also what are the solutions. For some schools it can be simple like moving the entrance from the front to the back. Planting trees, turning a car park into a garden. Working with the council to ensure that the daytime cars cannot use the road. Encouraging children with parents and carers to walk, scooters to school and other policies. And TfL, notwithstanding the pressures from the Government cuts are investing in the local councils to do this work and your council will receive money from TfL to do this work and Islington has and Greenwich. But it is important to do the work around the schools as they are the most vulnerable Londoners suffering the worst air.

JENNETTE: Assembly Member Russell?

CAROLINE: Thank you assembly member Arnold. Starting on the plastics question. I am the chair of the environment committee at the moment. The committee has produced a report in which the Assembly Member Arbour mentioned unflushables. We are looking at plastics in wet wipes, period products and incontinent and nappy products which are flushed inappropriately, causing the fat bergers, we have written recommendations to the Mayor, we are waiting for the response. So we will hopefully get that soon. But this is one of those really important issues where the absorbent hygiene product manufactures have us hooked on throw away disposable items. Last Friday at City Hall, Assembly Member Cooper and I hosted an environmental event that had the water companies, the environmental campaigners and the period poverty campaigners all together for an evening of sharing ideas. It is very exciting, the potential for getting some of the plastic products out of our sewer system and out of our lives entirely. In terms of bike hangers, I am not sure we need to hang the bikes but to ride them too. This is where the Mayor has to promise to triple the amount of protected bike routes and he is going to need the boroughs to work with him on this, because if we are going to triple the amount of protected bike routes in the four years of this mayoral term, the Mayor needs boroughs to be prepared to take out some parking on some of their roads. It requires not just the Mayor but also the boroughs to work hard if this is done, if these bike routes are to be delivered.

On Silvertown and schools. First of all, the IPCC report that came out just the beginning of last week, which said basically we have to take climate

change much more seriously than we have been taking it. The Mayor told me last week at Mayor's questions that it is already challenging to meet our climate goals. So projects like the Silvertown tunnel should be re-evaluated in the light of the need to reduce carbon in our transport system. Beyond that, obviously, if we're going to have our schools as places where children are protected from air pollution, we need to reduce traffic and we need to clean up our air by that traffic reduction, that will give us less congested streets, places where it's safer to walk and cycle.

And the final thing I want to say on that is that the way that the Ultra-Low Emission Zone should be being funded or paid for is through a road pricing system because at the moment the system of paying these air pollution charges is through a big chunky fee that you pay each day when you drive into the congestion zone. If we had a road pricing system where you were paying just for the amount that you were driving, it would tackle some of the questions like the drummer who asked a question earlier, it would raise revenue from people who are driving and causing congestion into TfL finances, which would help to fill the hole that is caused by the fare freeze which is for our travelcards.

JENNETTE: Thank you. Assembly Member Cooper.

LEONIE: We did a report on single use plastic bottles and the Mayor and his team took that on board and he's just been telling you about the water fountains across London. Carol was talking about the unflushables that go down the toilet. What we really need is everybody to look not just at items in your bathroom and what you are doing with them and not just to

look at plastic water bottles when you're out and about, but to look at every single aspect of your life because there's so much plastic in my life, in your life, if we're seriously saying we want to deal with plastic, which the Mayor said that Michael Gove has stepped up, but actually I think we should complement the Mayor and his team because they've been pestering Michael Gove behind the scenes to step up. I believe since Blue Planet happened and everyone saw that on the television and seen the utter devastation around the world, we have had a wake-up call on this, including air quality, and we have been talking about improving air quality and what we can personally do to try and reduce our own use of plastic in all of our lives. It is not something that we can impose from City Hall without help from Londoners. We can try and make it easier by looking at the different things that need to be done but it is not just about what is in your bathroom, it is also what is in your kitchen and how you behave when you're out on the go, and all of those plastic sandwich cases and all of those single-use plastic bottles. We're not going to stop using plastic but using much less of the single-use plastic because it lasts a really long time and using things over and over again, no-one's saying that we're actually going to get plastic out of our lives but we need to re-think our relationship with our world generally but certainly how we ends up throwing plastic and a lot of other rubbish down all over it. Thank you, Chair.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Thank you very much. All of the reports that have heard the members talk about, they're all available at [london.gov](http://london.gov).

We have got to move on now. We're going to housing. Again, you can get answers to your questions, I promise, just let us have them in writing.

Okay, so we're now on the housing section. Can I see hands? Mic number two. Can we take those questions, a couple of questions there?

FLOOR: Hi. I'm from the clean air for Southall and Hayes campaign. We have a massive development of over 3,000 homes. It is on contaminated land on the old gasworks site and it is causing horrible odour all over Southall and it contains chemicals. People are getting ill, they're getting breathless and asthma attacks. We have found out that there is benzene, arsenic and cadmium, amongst some of the chemicals, in that land. There were supposed to be monitors around the site and monitoring the air around the site. The monitors disappeared just before the work started in 2016, all of the monitors from around the site have been taken away. So the planning...

JENNETTE: I will have your housing-related question.

FLOOR: Are you going to stop this development?

JENNETTE: A question from mic number seven.

FLOOR: Hello. I'd like to ask the Mayor and anyone else who is aware of this on the panel, what is your opinion of the proliferation of LHCs amongst London boroughs. These are private limited companies who are charged from all the Mayor of London's publicity and also borough's publicity with building council homes. Given they build out of the private

revenue account, the PVA -- sorry, HRA, Housing Revenue Account, they are unable to build council housing. They can only do a short-term tenancies and/or replace existing council tenants' rights. This means that the potential for this over time could possibly and this is my question, mean the end of council housing as we know it. That's my question. Do you think this is possible? Is it happening? [Applause]

JENNETTE: Mic number five, that gentleman there. Pass it along, thank you.

FLOOR: Hi. My question is: How is the Mayor planning to deal with single mothers who are living in poor housing conditions and on temporary accommodation for over 24 months?

JENNETTE: Thank you. I'm going to go to the Assembly Member, Dr Onkar Sahota, because the first question was about housing within your constituency.

ONKAR: Thank you, Chair. I am, of course, concerned about this issue. Right across London, we are building more and more houses we build them on greenfield sites which are contaminated. This is a problem which is right across London. We have had a problem with the London Olympic site and, of course, in Southall. Who is monitoring the contaminants which are coming out of the sites? I want to ask the Environment Agency about this question, they passed it on to the Public Health, when I asked Public Health about it, they passed it to the local authorities. I really think that we should put this in a plan and an obligation that the monitoring of

this pollutants is done by an independent body so that residents can be reassured that they're breathing good-quality air and it has implications. I'm concerned about this.

JENNETTE: Mayor.

SADIQ: Let me deal with the two later questions because Onkar knows about that question and I don't.

The HRA rules have been so rigid that they're not being allowed to build council homes like we want them to do so. Also they've been worried about the right-to-buy scheme and policies from the Government would mean they build a home, and they would be required to sell that off and not use the proceeds locally. The good news is as a result of monies we secured this year from the Government, we secured £1 billion from the Government and the Government agreed to allow us to work with good councils across London for them to build proper council housing. And so we've announced today, 26 councils across London, including Islington and many others, have agreed to build more than 11,000 council houses on a social rent over the next four years. I'm hoping that the Government will realise that councils need to build proper council homes rather than the sort of homes you're talking about, which is if you like a way of avoiding Government rules.

Just to amplify your point of why it is so important, since the right-to-buy scheme began in 1979/1980, the number of homes sold off under right-to-buy is more than 300,000. The numbers of council homes built is

60,000. So for every five being sold off, only one have been built. That's why it is really important we get three big things from the Government. One is, them relaxing the rules around councils' ability to borrow to build council homes, the HRA cap. The good news is that the Government has made a concession on that. The second thing is to give councils the right to assemble land to build more homes. The third thing is we need more money. The amount of money we spend on affordable housing is still half of what was spent in 2009, 2010, the last year of the Labour Government. Experts say we need to quadruple the amount of money we spend in affordable housing to get the homes you know from personal experience we so desperately need in our city. One thing I will do in City Hall, as the Mayor of London, is to lobby the Government for more funds, so more good councils can build proper council housing.

JENNETTE: Let's take three more questions. Mic eight.

FLOOR: Thank you. Good evening. One of the few groups to benefit from the housing crisis are unscrupulous landlords, many of whom charge DWP enormous amounts in housing benefit for sub-standard and sometimes dangerous properties. The tenants of whom are often vulnerable and face a choice between putting up and shutting up, or out on the streets. Certainly increasing the availability of social housing will decrease it but it will take a long time for that to come online. We would like to know what the GLA are doing now to address this issue. Specifically what do you need from central Government. If I can be cheeky because you've used --

JENNETTE: You can't be cheeky! Paddle number six. Mic number 6. You

can only be cheeky if you have quick questions.

FLOOR: So, the Mayor talked about lobbying the Government. Will he now lobby the Government to build some social housing on the Holloway Prison site and the Holloway Police Station site, which he actually shut?

JENNETTE: One more. Paddle number one into that gentleman there.

FLOOR: Hi. My question is for the Mayor. I just wanted to know whether or not he is thinking about putting any policies in or plans like rent control or anything to stop Londoners from being pushed out of their communities.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: I'm going to bring in Assembly Member Copley. Can you pick up any of those three questions?

TOM: I wanted to pick up the question around landlords and private renting because I am a private tenant. To put it mildly, it is not brilliant. In fact, so many people now are renting from private landlords in London not because they want to, but because they can't afford to buy and because we don't have enough social housing. The Mayor has talked a bit already about the work he's doing to support social housing. But even when we build more, as we should, if we can get to build more social housing, we need more security for private tenants and more security and affordability. Unfortunately, the Mayor of London and the GLA doesn't

have any powers over the private rented sector. I think that the GLA should have devolved powers over the private rented sector, they do in Scotland and they do in Wales.

(Applause)

The Government are, having spent many years telling us we could not possibly have anything better than a six months or a 12 months tenancy, it is now realising the way that the wind is blowing, consulting on longer tenancies but we are getting mixed messages, as we have been told they may stop the consultation as they are worried about the backbench MPs vetoing it. I think we have to move to open-ended tenancies that they have in Scotland and Germany and to get rid of the ability of landlords to issue the section 21 eviction notice, it is a no-fault eviction, you can be kicked out for no reason. This, it makes tenants worried for example about making legitimate complaints about the state of their property to the landlord. I don't think we are ever going to love renting from proved landlords in this country but we could create a system we can like a little bit more.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Assembly Berry?

SIAN: I'm the chair of the housing committee at the London Assembly. Tom is the deputy chair, so we work closely on some of the issues. I wanted to say two things, one is about the new council homes. It is really important to get new council homes built but also not to demolish the ones we already have.

(Applause)

I have been looking at the numbers for so-called estate regeneration schemes in the past in London. I have found in the last 15 years we have lost 4,142 council homes in regeneration schemes across London. I have looked at what planning permission is to be done over the next few years. There is a net loss of 7,612 council homes in regeneration schemes across London, that is councils and Housing Associations on sites, where there is already social housing. That must be stopped. The Mayor is doing something about that. The assembly passed a motion last year asking him to put ballots in place so residents on estates with estate regeneration plans put forward that lead to demolition, they get a plot and a vote and soon after the Mayor published proposals to do that, and for major schemes, where there is 150 homes or more the residents get a ballot. It helps to stop some of the big schemes I have been adding up in the numbers, to stop that in the future. The other thing that is important, the lady in the back there, I cannot remember your name, highlighted this, we can build 50,000 affordable homes a year but that only helps 5% of the 1 million people who rent in the private sector, and all of us, I'm a private renter too, we pay too much in rent, the rent is half of the average take home pay. The Mayor spent time telling us the powers he doesn't have. One power that really we should have been fighting for, the Mayor should have been asking the Government for from the start of this mayoralty is the power to do more to control rents, I am happy to support the campaign to end no fault evictions from Generation Rent and Acorn and the grass roots groups, that is great, but he has to fight for the powers for rent controls.

At the moment there is the London model of renting, within that, when it is finished, that it has some better processes for the landlords and tenants, then he will consider the measures to do on things like rent levels. It is not good enough. This is in the early stages of development, the London model. It will be years before it is finished and then to consider rent controls, I don't think it is good enough. I would like to hear the Mayor to say he is talking to the Government seriously about getting the power to control rents in London devolved in London and in other cities, as we really, really need it.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Mayor, can you address the question as from the audience and somebody did raise ...

SADIQ: I asked the question from the single mum. Can I do that first. So, the question you asked was that people like you who are waiting more than two years to be rehoused, so you know, there are 240,000 people on waiting lists across London. So when people talk about a housing crisis, you are an example of the consequences of the housing crisis. That is one of the reasons why we have to build more genuinely affordable homes for Londoners like you. We have sold off homes that are affordable, not replaced them, it is a reason I'm determined to build affordable homes and it leads on to the second question, what is an affordable house? It is so dodgy, no-one believes it. The previous Mayor called it 80% of market value. I don't think that is affordable. In Islington, 8% of the market value is expensive. I have thrown it in the bin. Three, one is a council house where you pay social rent or two, a home where you pay a London living rent, a third of average earnings, based on average earnings, rather than

the market value of a property to rent or three, part by part shared ownership. So when I say to a developer, you have to make sure that half of the homes are affordable or fast track it, I mean those sorts of homes rather than the council under the previous Mayor.

It is important to understand the difference that there is. The question at the top raised the issue of what to do in relation to the private rented sector and the bad news for Sian is that I cannot declare independence for London. OK? I can't do it. I quite like "El Presidente" but I can't do it. I believe in the nation state. That means, although I have powers and resources, they are limited. The first communication I had with the Secretary of State for the Government when I became the Mayor was the issue over powers for the rented sector and to build the homes that we need, there will be renters in London renting from a private landlord. More than half rent from a private landlord. The Government is not acceding to the requests and the demands from me. So I carry on lobbying the Government for the powers. In the meantime I can cross my arms and get a megaphone it or do something about it. What am I doing? We have set up the first ever rogue landlord register. So every dodgy landlord in every borough in London is on the register so a tenant can see if he is a rogue landlord and lists from the London Fire Brigade so you are aware of who the rogue landlord is before getting the property. We are working on a housing model to see in absence from powers from Government get a model to go forward, and the issues on security of tenure, is the tenure long enough? Three at least? And the increase in rent should not be hyperinflation but should be inflation or thereabouts during the three years with the ability to extend the tenancy going forward.

I have met too many families where the children go to local school and the families move six to 12 months as the landlord says that they have to go unless they pay 10% increase in rent. So the children then travel two hours a day each way to go to school or live in poor accommodation. I say this as someone raised on a council estate and knows the importance of this and the reason why so many Tory MPs are against having the rights for the tenants at the expense of landlords is that so many of them are landlords as well as being MPs. So we recognise that. In relation to the question about Holloway Prison and Holloway police station, in relation to the police station, we are in talks with the party to build affordable homes, I cannot talk about details but on Holloway Prison, as I have said, the way that the council is approaching things in relation to the planning brief means at least half of the homes will be affordable, and because of the money secured from Government, there is more of a chance than less of a chance of them being council homes, depending on who buys the land. If it is a registered social landlord, we would make sure that the types of homes that they build are homes for a social rent, equivalent to a council property or a home where you pay a London living rent or shared ownership, rather than penthouses left empty as many are across London, gold bricks for the investors overseas or the dodgy 80% market value like you had with the previous Mayor.

JENNETTE: Somebody spoke about pollution and bringing up the point in building homes we are exposing our Londoners to unacceptable levels of pollution. What is your powers in the areas? If you can touch on that quickly?

SADIQ: The plan is to look at how, the way that the planning rules work is that the planners now are relying on a London plan written by the previous Mayor. There are legal reasons why a new London plan takes a number of years before becoming a new plan. So the developers and the councils are using the old

London plan. What was referred to was the draft London plan I have drafted that is being consulted on. There will be a public inquiry where people can make amendments and submissions to the judge. In the meantime we have to rely on the London plan written by the previous Mayor and using those tools in our tool kit to do what we can.

JENNETTE: You wanted to carry on the debate but I will ask you to write to the Assembly Member or direct to the Mayor on that one. We have to move on now. We are going to move on to growing London's economy. Then I would like us to have the last five minutes to take one other topic. So growing London's economy, we are fighting poverty, we want a city that we can all live/work in. Can I see some hands? Mic number 4. Growing London's economy.

FLOOR: Thank you Mayor for your support for the European immigrants and for the supporting of the demonstration on Saturday. Also, thank you very much for your message for the communities supported by you, the Mayor of London. And the question is, if the community is so important for London, what will you do to save Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters from demolition? Thank you very much.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Mic number 7, economy?

FLOOR: It is a question on homelessness.

JENNETTE: I want economy.

FLOOR: Don't we all!

JENNETTE: Mic 8.

FLOOR: My name is Mr Khan. I studied at the same university as you and the same subject, law. My first question is to you is, as a first-world country, why we have failed to boroughs an app like Uber when they are taking billions from us each month and the second part is that private hire and black cabs, both are organised and managed by TfL, why are private hire not allowed to take up on these points like the black cab? The third is about the tuition fees ...

JENNETTE: No. No. No. No. You will not get away with it. I will come down to mic number 4. The young man here.

FLOOR: Good evening Mr Mayor. £200,000 of taxpayers' money was spent on a beach party in the Royal Docks. You claimed that it was part of growing London's economy. How does a beach party grow London's economy? I heard it from a news article or something.

JENNETTE: Oh, well done! Definitely made in Islington!

(Laughter)

Well, Mr Mayor? Let's start with the beach party. We all want to know the answer.

SADIQ: Can you give me four more years as well. A good question. How old are you, sir?

FLOOR: 13.

SADIQ: 13. So the question to the front is a question that was in the press, a misleading report that we had spent thousands of pounds on a frivolous beach party. What this was, it was the London Enterprise Panel, Leap. It supports the businesses across the city and districts across the city, the Royal Docks in the east of London is an exciting place of development going forward. There are some small businesses there. We have encouraged and brought in huge investment from China and elsewhere. The London Borough of Newham were involved in the project. We have learned the lessons from speaking to small businesses how to encourage the local community to visit the site to have a sense of belonging with the site, to ensure that local businesses flourish in the meantime.

Leap invested, they are made up of business people, councillors and invested in the Royal Docks. Part of that was around a beach experience in relation to getting people there, to the restaurants, to help with the businesses. I think it is important that we support the Royal Docks. You will not remember this but in the east of London at Stratford, before the Olympics, that part of the London was horrible. There were sewers there, underinvested in and deprived. As a consequence of investing in Stratford, there has been huge regeneration and soon will have one of the world's biggest cultural areas. I am hoping by the time you are the Mayor, the Royal Docks is an exciting part of London with lots of jobs created because of the investment initially, criticised by some but those with

confidence and vision saw it as an important stepping stone in that part of London.

The other two questions -- Sir, I can tell you are a Khan because you bend the rules and you try to ask 17 questions in one chance! The question was why aren't global companies like Uber paying the taxes they should be. You're right, one of the things that Governments do is to make sure we keep abreast with technology and just like new companies evolve and adapt, HMRC, evolves and adapts to make sure that they tax the companies the right amounts that they pay. It is really important that we do so. Again, one will complain that I don't have the powers to do so, but I haven't. It is important we work with the powers we have got and lobby the Government to have fairer taxation.

TfL is a regulator in relation to private hire vehicles and black taxis. I'm afraid what we are not in favour of is PHVs having the same rights and privileges that black taxis have. Black taxis are a form of public transport, they take disabled people, they have other privileges in relation to taxi cabs, in relation to bus lanes, in relation to hail and raid, the facility you're talking about, there are no plans from me to extend those two private hire vehicles going forward. What I'm in favour of is making sure those private hire vehicles play by the rules, that applies to Uber and other operators as well.

The first question, a really important question, about the survival of our markets and our city in this context in relation to markets where market stall holders often are of Latin American origin. In relation to markets generally, I have set up our first ever London market board because I think

markets are really important to our economy, not just to small businesses but also to how many of us remember shopping and also how many of us want to shop in the future. The monies that market stall holders gets tends to support their family and other family members in the economy. It is good that it goes to these people rather than global companies, where we don't see the money. I support markets and that's why we set up the global market board.

In relation to Seven Sisters, the deal was done ten years ago before I became the Mayor. I can't untangle the deal. What I can reassure you about is my office is speaking to Haringey Council. Television own some of the land there and we are speaking to the council and those involved in running the markets to see what can be done going forward. Some market stall holders are concerned about their future viability once that area and that part is developed. In relation to Elephant and Castle, that application made to Elephant and Castle will come to me as the Mayor of London something of a quasi-judicial role I have as the Mayor. I can't prejudice my decision. It is sort of like a judge, by giving you a comment on that. What I can tell you is, it will come to me in the near future, and I understand the sensitivities but the council has made a decision and I've got to -- I hope you respect my role in the Mayor in a quasi-judicial role, I can't give a decision on something that will come to me in the future.

JENNETTE: Elephant has been mentioned. It is in your constituency. FThe  
>> Royal Docks is in my constituency.

>> I was talking about Elephant and Castle.

FLORENCE: On Elephant and Castle, the Mayor has commented that he can't give a response. As the Assembly Member, I have written to the Mayor after the planning committee, where Southwark decided to plan consent for that, and outlining my concern about the Latin American community and some of the traders. What we cannot have is those traders being displaced. Yes, there are real improvements to the transport community and to the shopping centre, what cannot have is the cultural communities who have been there a long time, who provide a valuable service, being displaced. My letter was sent on 4th July, I still haven't received a reply. I will chase that up with the Mayor. The other thing we need to do is make sure we recognise some of these important market holders which have been there for quite a long time. There are many issues around London, around big areas being re-developed and a number of people who have lived in those communities feel don't have a stake in that, we need to look at when people are coming in to do those big developments that they do not displace the communities who have worked long and hard, when times weren't great, when no-one was there and they still stayed with the markets so it is about making sure there is a space for them in any of the new developments that come forward.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Can I hear from the Deputy Mayor whose constituency contains Seven Sisters market?

JOANNE: Thank you for raising this again. Thank you for allowing me to

meet the traders last year, we had a fruitful meeting. There was concern from traders about the management of the market currently. I raised that with TfL. The management company was talked to. I know you have written to the Mayor again because the issues have not been resolved. I know there has been a response from the Mayor's office today saying those issues will be looked at further. Of course the market at Seven Sisters will be relocated temporarily and then moved back into the space at Wards Corner, and I know that the leader of Haringey Council has recently stated he wants to make sure that the traders have more of a say in the running of the market and where their pitches will be and how that transition should take place. So just to assure you that I will keep an eye on this as well. Thank you.

JENNETTE: Thank you. The mics have disappeared. There is a lady there at mic number four. I'm looking for an economy-related question.

FLOOR: My question touches on the economy because obviously in order to build an economy we have to bring people into London and not drive them out. But in relation to that, my question is also around governance and it is a serious question. My question is what does it take, obviously we know that we need redevelopment for people to come in and to live in London, but if that development brings up significant problems such as toxicity, such as making residents' lives very difficult, why is it acceptable and why is nobody really picking up the point this evening that all the data monitoring areas have been removed around that site in Southall? Why is the Mayor, as the Mayor of London, not looking too interested in this and deflecting the questions we have been asking? [Applause]

JENNETTE: That's not my remit of that but I respect what you have said. Mr Mayor, can you add something to the London plan? As I understand it, the answer is that there is work in progress dealing with this important issue of the toxic soil that we have around us and when we're involved with major development. That's a summary.

SADIQ: Yes. If it assists when it comes to applications being made on contaminated land, as part of the conditions of permission being granted, the developer undertakes to sort out the problem of contaminated land in a safe way. Clearly, in this application, which wasn't done when I was Mayor, before I became Mayor, there is a problem. As I explained, I'm not on top of the detail which is why I welcome the local Assembly Member, Dr Onkar Sahota's response. I'm happy, Jennette, work with Onkar to do a response. If the people who have come along tonight and let you know their details. I can't run away from the fact that we're working on a London plan that was written by the previous Mayor and although some people may not like the fact, we're looking at a redraft of the plan which we hope to have in place by the end of next year but it won't help retrospectively those sites already given permission. Where there are breaches of contaminated conditions given, action should be given. In this case, it would I suspect by the HSE or by some public health authorities. Working with Onkar Sahota, we can get an answer to that.

JENNETTE: I hope you accept that. There is no intention here to respond openly to the questions here tonight. We can get responses back.

Now, we're at the last section and that is now, we have got five minutes. We have got other areas of responsibilities at City Hall, culture, health, sports, volunteering, those are just examples. Can I see three quick questions about any other subject that we haven't touched on? Can we have mic four there? Can we have mic five there? And one from the back. The gentleman sitting down the front here. Okay, three quick questions.

FLOOR: Very quickly, thank you very much for supporting the Spanish and Portuguese community. Three years ago, I told you I don't want to be invisible. Thank you very much for that, I'm not invisible. When are you going to come and visit our community, please? [Applause]

JENNETTE: Where did I go to? Who else did I call?

FLOOR: Good evening. Question for Shaun Bailey. With Diwali coming up very, very soon and with Islington being quite an inclusive community, some of the comments that you've made as a career politician, are you willing to offer everyone here an apology for the derogatory comments that you have made historically?

(Cheering and applause)

JENNETTE: Mic number seven.

FLOOR: Hello. My question is for Sadiq and Shaun. My favourite thing about being a Londoner, wherever I look around here and on the panel, I see lots of different cultures. Susan divided us when she said they spent

money on culture.

(Cheering)

JENNETTE: We have to finish in three minutes.

FLOOR: Recently, I would say the divisions within London have been far greater than any I've seen before in my lifetime. What are we doing at the moment to help those divisions and is there anything we can do to help?

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Assembly Member Bailey, you've been named. A quick apology?

SHAUN: Thank you very much. I'm glad to speak on this subject. The comments I made were very tough. I make no bones about it, I apologise. Let's be clear of the context. I'm a youth worker for 26 years, I was working with the poorest communities in London and it was a plea from the streets, I was replaying the conversations I was having with parents. The day I remember people interviewing me from this way and interviewing me about these things, one of my young people had been stabbed. It was a raw comment from a person who was not a career politician, I was a youth worker then. I'm super sorry I have caused offence to people. I come from a diverse community, my parents are of Windrush ilk. If I have caused anyone offence, don't take offence. What it was me talking about the lives, the toughest lives that the poorest

Londoners lead. I said it and I wrote it as a plea to career politicians to make sure that they heard what was going on. I remember at the time when I gave evidence to the Commons Select Committee, everybody said, oh, what a good thing it is, Shaun is speaking like he's from the streets and now people are replaying it to me like I'm some sort of villain. I value diversity in London. I consider myself part of that diversity. I've worked for a number of different communities in London and I will continue to do that. The only reason I'm in politics to make sure the voiceless and the poorest communities and the communities facing the most violence and crime have their lived experience heard by politicians. That's why I'm involved.

JENNETTE: Thank you very much, Shaun. Mr Mayor, you have got 30 second, you have a date there, can you say yes?

SADIQ: Can I say this? I was raised in a Council estate and raised poor. Being poor is no excuse for making offensive comments. [Cheering]

When I was raised on my council estate as a poor Londoner, I learnt about the teachings of Diwali, about Rama and Sita and the lights guiding you home at time of division and evil. I learned about the goddess Lakshmi, let's not blame poor people because of the comments made by politicians who should know better. One of the things we have got to call out is politicians who play on people's fear to win votes, whether you're Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, or whether you are Shaun Bailey.

(Cheering)

It comes to the question at the top, the question at the top about uniting Londoners rather than dividing Londoners. So in answer to that, I will say, of course, I would love to meet the Latin American community here in London!

(Cheering)

You know what... you know what... all of us should this Sunday celebrate Diwali in the square in Trafalgar Square and show to the world that diversity is a strength. We will not let anybody divide our city.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: It's nine o'clock, so we're out of time. I'm so, so sorry. But that's how it is. Thank you all for attending and participating. Thank you! Thank you.

(Applause)

JENNETTE: Don't forget, written answers will be provided and remember to complete your feedback forms. If you want a full transcript from tonight, it will be available on the [www.london.gov](http://www.london.gov) website. Save journeys homes, good night. Tonight's subtitles were provided by My Clear Text. Visit our website for more details about live subtitles.

