

Thursday, 26 November 2015

PEOPLE'S QUESTION TIME

(7.00 pm)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Welcome to the 31st People's Question Time. This is the first time it's come to Hillingdon and it's great to see so many of you here tonight. I just have few brief announcements before we hear from the Mayor and Chair of the London Assembly and then we can take your questions. If there is an emergency then please use the fire exit nearest to you. Please switch your devices to silent mode (and that includes the Mayor and the Assembly members).

The Mayor and the London Assembly work to improve life for Londoners and make London a better place. People's Question Time is your chance to voice your concerns and ask the Mayor and Assembly members what we are doing for the capital and its people.

To help the evening flow we will divide up our questions into some broad subject matters spending about 20 minutes on each area.

I know that many of you will ask questions about Heathrow Airport and so we've given extra time to that section under the transport and environment topic.

There is a lot to get through so please keep your questions short and precise and then we can get through many more questions.

I hope the Mayor and my fellow Assembly members will also keep

their answers precise, short and focused and that will give us more time for people here to ask questions.

For each topic I will take your questions by a show of hands.

Please wait for a member of staff with a microphone before you speak.

If you are able to stand to ask your question the cameras will find it easier to locate you.

I will take one question at a time and then I will direct those questions to the Mayor or an Assembly Member. We don't have advance notice of any of your questions.

With so many of you here tonight we won't have time to take all your questions. But if you don't get to ask your questions then there is a team in the foyer throughout the evening who can get an answer to your question from City Hall. Please remember to fill in the feedback form and hand it to the member of the staff at the end.

We will finish at nine o'clock.

So, before we begin with your questions, we'll have a few introductory remarks from the Chair of the London Assembly and the Mayor. Ladies and gentlemen, the Chair of London Assembly, Jennette Arnold (**...Applause...**)

JENNETTE ARNOLD: Thank you very much and good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Can I join your Assembly Member in welcoming you to People's Question Time. Or, if we can get

digital, for those of you out there who are tweeting will you add "#PQT". If you didn't understand a word of what I've just said, don't worry about that! Those hash-taggers amongst us know what we need to do.

It's a delight to be here in Hillingdon, the constituency of my colleague and our Health Committee Chair, Dr Onkar Sahota.

I am just going to ask you to put your hands together for your Assembly Member. He works very hard on your behalf. Thank you (**...Applause...**)

Thank you.

Now, we know, because we've done many of these, that we're in for a treat and that we're going to hear from you about the problems about living in our expanding cities. Of course, you will be focusing on the issues that are impacting on you in your wonderful borough of Hillingdon.

Before, though, I would just like to update you and give you a little taster about what the Assembly continues to do on your behalf at City Hall.

I am really happy to say that we have achieved some great, solid progress in recent months. Our Environment Committee Report on emissions in July this year has contributed to the Mayor's taking forward discussions with inner London boroughs on extending the ultra-low emission zone. A very important act.

The Police and Crime Committee's 2014 investigation into water

cannon concluded the Met had not made a convincing case for why they needed as part of their policing tool kit water cannons. The Secretary of State agreed with us, and we know that she announced this summer that she would not be authorising the use of water cannon.

We recently focused our attention on tackling TB in London.

Some of you in this audience will absolutely know that TB is associated with poverty. So it must really concern us that we have levels of TB in our city that is equal to the levels to be found in less developed countries.

The work was led by your Assembly Member, who is Chair of the Health Committee, and the work was so wonderful it attracted local, national and international media attention.

Our Economy Committee has just done a fabulous piece of work that many of you working in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector I am sure will appreciate. One of the things that we always are striving for is the impact on our work so that, when we do the investigation, when we produce the report, it's not just about the press coverage, it's about how organisations, like many of you work in, the public sector, how you pick up that evidence which is absolutely thorough and then you can then use that as part of your argument in terms of moving your agendas forward. We're also very pleased that over the years our work has reached such credibility that Government now regularly quotes our work in terms

of decision-making.

Every day we try to influence the Mayor and make sure that we're in front of this decision-making so that, once we've done our investigation, he will then accept our recommendations. He does accept a good few. Not as many, of course, as we would like. But we will continue to carry on with the work that we're doing on your behalf.

I just want to touch on the work of the Police and Crime Committee, and in the run-up to Christmas they will be looking at the effects of alcohol-fuelled crime on the police in London, a very important area, I am sure you will agree.

On the role of licensing, and in terms of what can that area play in kerbing crime, whilst at the same time understanding that we need a healthy nighttime economy.

A political meeting is not complete if there is not a discussion about housing. It is my pleasure to say that, when you look at the work of the Housing Committee currently led by Assembly Member Copley in terms of the charge that that Committee has made on so many aspects of the area of housing, looking at the consequences of the Government's proposal to extend right to buy, they carry on putting argument for the need, the desperate need, for more affordable housing in London.

The other committees that I haven't mentioned, because I don't have time, you will hear about their work, I hope, when the lead

members or the chairs respond to some of the questions that you will be putting tonight.

So there will be plenty of room for disagreement on this platform, as you will experience tonight. But I just to assure you, you can see from what I've said, that when we are in Committee format, when we've got an issue that impacts on you, that we work together because we know that that's our job and that together we can come out with the recommendations that can then bring about a change and then that can then impact on your lives.

So let me finish by saying our job on the London Assembly is to watch the Mayor day in, day out, and we do, and we do it so much that we like sharing it. So we're delighted that tonight you will be sharing that task with us. So enjoy your platform and the Mayor is here to answer your questions and Assembly members as well.

Thank you

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Jennette. May I ask the Mayor of London to give a five-minute address.

BORIS JOHNSON: Thank you very much, Jennette. Thank you for your characteristically neutral exposition of the role of the Assembly. Great to see you all here tonight. Thank you very much for coming along. I have a real sense of sentimentality because I think it was here that we came -- I don't think I had the Assembly -- I came here about six or seven years ago for one of the first business meetings that we had. That's right, Dominic

remembers it. We had a session here, and of course the economic condition of London was then very different. We had rising unemployment, we had rising repossessions, we had confidence going down, everybody said the city was -- all the investment was going to be drifting off to Asia, it was going to be Shanghai, Mumbai, Dubai, bye-bye London was what they said. So I am absolutely thrilled to see the way Hillingdon is doing. By the way, Hillingdon is, I think, demographically speaking, the fastest growing borough in the whole of London. Well done Hillingdon, whatever you are on, it seems to be working.

This is the fastest growing urban economy in Europe. Britain is the fastest growing economy in Europe. We are seeing a huge progress in combating unemployment. We've got people not in education, employment or training down to lows we haven't seen for 25 years, which is incredibly important for our young people.

Employment at record highs. Construction now in London -- Jennette is absolutely right to highlight the importance of housing -- but construction now is taking place at a rate we've not seen for about 40 years. It's amazing to watch the cranes go up around town.

Now, what is the origin of the economic success of our city at the moment? I would say it's very simple: it's one-nation policies, moderate one-nation policies, focusing on the stuff that really matters to people. Getting crime down. The murder rate in

London has now been cut by about 50 per cent since I came to office. Crime here in Hillingdon, I am delighted to see the Borough Commander here in the front row, so we are very safe tonight, folks. Crime in Hillingdon, I think the burglary rate down about 30 per cent; crime overall down about 9 per cent, just since 2012, about 18 per cent over the last seven years. Bus crime, which we all -- so many of us campaigned on in 2007/2008 -- bus crime down 48 per cent. That's obviously crime committed on buses rather than crime committed by buses, which is very rare indeed!

We've been concentrating on the big stuff, getting in the transport infrastructure investment that the city needs. Crossrail is coming into this right nearby. It's going to be absolutely transformative for this part of the city - on time, on budget, the biggest engineering project in Europe. The Piccadilly line, new trains coming in, new signalling. Going to be 20 kilometres an hour faster. I don't know why it's in kilometres but that's what it's going to be, 20 kilometres an hour faster. And lots of other things to improve the quality of life.

We've been concentrating on things that you don't really read about much in the newspapers but matter tremendously to people, like reducing deaths on the roads. Deaths of vulnerable road users, pedestrians, cyclists, are now down to a low -- I think an all time low. We've got death from fire, cut 50 per cent. We're investing in parks, we're investing in greening up outer London, planting

thousands and thousands of trees. And, of course, investing in outer London high streets and public spaces, and we've put a lot into this borough at Ruislip Manor and elsewhere. We've managed to do all this investment by following the precepts of the great, local politicians. Of course, I don't necessarily mean the Maoist leader John McDonnell, the Shadow Chancellor, who unfortunately can't be with us here tonight. Although I was very pleased because I was with him in the House of Commons today and I was very pleased that we were on the same side in a debate on Heathrow Airport. We had a big moral victory, **I can tell you (...Applause...)** I don't necessarily agree with his policies of, you know, whatever it is, collectivisation and the dictatorship of the proletariat, hanging the last banker with the guts of the last management consultant, or whatever the Labour Party now stands for. I mean the sensible, moderate, cost-cutting policies of Hillingdon Council. I'm delighted to see Hillingdon Council represented here tonight, I'm delighted to see the Mayor and Mayoress of Hillingdon. They have been able to continue to cut council tax, just as we have done in City Hall, whilst simultaneously looking after the most vulnerable people in our society. The one thing that unites absolutely everybody here, me and the whole of the London Assembly, is the London Living Wage, looking after the poorest and the neediest. That has massively expanded over the last few years and it's growing ever faster. That is the way forward

for our city, investing in the things that matter for everybody but looking after the neediest. That is why London is now generating 25 per cent of our national wealth. We export, as you know, tea to China, we export cake to France, we export bikes to Holland and we export bus stops to Las Vegas made in where? In Hillingdon, my friends. When Tesla, the great high-tech American electric car firm, when they wanted to invest in London and build a plant here, where did they come? Hillingdon. Absolutely. Where was the lightsaber invented? That's right, it was invented in Hillingdon. I'm very proud to represent this borough both in Parliament and of course as your Mayor.

I will continue to work flat out for you as your Mayor until I leave office round about May 4 next year. Until then may I say to you all "May the 4th be with you!"

Thank you very much. Thank you for coming tonight

(...Applause...)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Boris.

Now it's time to hear from you. So the first area of questioning is growing London's economy. That's our first topic. So any questions on growing London's economy?

FROM THE FLOOR: Hi, Mr Johnson. How are you? I've got a rather direct question for you. As you know, I've been looking and working to open London's ghost tube stations to bring GBP 200 million to the economy and the tourist economy specifically.

We're at a point now that Transport for London has moved into the procurement process in an unlawful manner and I would like you to personally investigate this. If I can just finish. I can't deliver this to you in London without this procurement process being put and done properly.

Ajit Chambers from the Old London Underground Company.

BORIS JOHNSON: Thank you very much. Thank you, Ajit. As some of you will detect from the relationship that Ajit and I have built up over the years, this is something that Ajit has brought to us many times. I'm sorry that we haven't yet got a satisfactory outcome for you. I'm aware that you have some complaints about the procurement process, I will undertake now to look into them.

What Ajit wants to do is to use underground tube stations that have been disused for a long time. Like, for instance, at Down Street where I think they were used by Churchill in the Second World War, there's some famous disused bits of the network.

The question is to what extent can they be brought back into use without interrupting the service as we have it and without causing real difficulties for TfL? That's really the issue.

We are going ahead with the programme to try and liberate those, what space we can. If you feel you've been hard done by, Ajit, and I know we've really, really tried, you've had loads of meetings at City Hall with Isabel and others, if you still feel you've been hard done by I undertake now to have another look at it and see what

I can do to help you.

But you've been valiantly, valiantly campaigning on this, and I am sorry you still feel you're not getting what you need.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good evening, Mr Mayor.

We are talking about the economic regeneration of London and sustainability for London. We have a little bit of a problem because now we have the lowest ever energy overhead in this country ever. We are expanding the city, we're expanding London, London is based on energy, if you don't have energy for computers, for the banks, for data centres, for various -- for the Internet and for various other industries, you have no London because that's what generates most of the income from London. And it's all very well talking about renewables, they don't work at night, or they don't work when the wind drops or when it's blowing too hard.

We need power stations. If we're going to expand London and put in all those affordable homes, and all of those new jobs and all of those new offices we need electricity. What is being done in order to fast track gas-fired power stations for London before the nuclear stations eventually come on, assuming they work, in 2025?

(...Applause...)

BORIS JOHNSON: Well, thank you very much. You are completely right in what you say and your analysis, I'm afraid, is chillingly accurate. If we go on at the current rate we are at serious risk of "brownouts", as they are called, of flickering

electricity supplies. And only the other day, if you'll remember, the power authorities had to tell people to go easy on their consumption. I mean, this is like going back to the 1970s, it's totally ridiculous. Now, it is idle for me to put the blame where it lies, which is of course with the last Labour Government and their total failure to invest in sufficient, you know, really powerful generators of electricity such as gas. There was an awful lot of investment, an awful lot of energy -- commitment went to renewables, to wind, to solar and so on and so forth. In the end those are all very valid, they are all very attractive and exciting, but relatively speaking they don't pull the skin off a rice pudding. You need the big stuff. You need nuclear, and you know the financial costs of that, you know, GBP 95 per kilowatt hour for 35 years we're going to be paying the French, I'm afraid to say, under the deal that we've done. Going to be built by the Chinese. It's not, in my view, a totally wonderful situation to have found ourselves in. That's nonetheless where we are. We've got to get through that, we've got to invest in that.

But you are totally right, we've got to have a big push on gas. That is what the Government is doing. Gas prices are currently low, the opportunity is there, we should be building loads of gas-fired power stations. That is the way forward for London.

I am not going to build a gas-fired power station here in Hillingdon, however. Rest assured, anybody looking a bit anxious, there are

no plans to build a gas-fired power station here in Hayes. Okay.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Well, there will be other alternative views, and I know my colleagues, Murad Qureshi and Jenny Jones, want to come in. So first Murad.

MURAD QURESHI: -- it has, actually, because the I think the juice that we need to run London is critical and I'm not surprised of what Boris has said, blaming it on the previous Government, the Labour Government. I don't think Boris has actually done enough on this front. I have been hassling for a number of years to show us a London Energy Plan. London only produces 2 per cent of its total energy and takes 13 per cent out of the National Grid. I don't think we should be totally dependent on the National Grid. There are many things the Mayor could have done in his time here so far. He could have encouraged renewables, he could have got solar off the ground much more successfully in our homes. All these can make a vital contribution on reducing our reliance on the energy sources we've got so far.

The critical thing as well is that actually, in a planning context, we're getting all these new structures like the Shard near to us at City Hall, it consumes more electricity than the whole of Colchester. Now, I don't think that's sound at all, and actually it lies empty most of the time. So we've got to look at that in the planning context as well.

But I have been pressing the Mayor, and I hope the Mayor will do

this before he leaves his post, for a London Energy Plan, and he uses his bargaining power through Transport for London, who happen to be the biggest energy purchasers in the whole of London, to actually buy in a lot more energy and encourage new sources.

Because I know out there there's a lot of community energy initiatives which have to be encouraged, and the best way the Mayor can do that is actually buying that in through TfL.

So let's hear what the Mayor has got to say on that front.

BORIS JOHNSON: Just on that, we in fact do, the GLA does buy in energy from groups of producers, including renewable energy generators, and we then -- and then we then sell it on to TfL. So we act -- there's a system called Licence Light that we have --

MURAD QURESHI: That hasn't come into place yet --

ONKAR SAHOTA: Folks, there is a Chair here. We need to make sure that we get short, sharp answers from the panel, so we can get more questions here. Boris, you've had a go. Murad, you've had a go. Jenny, do you want to say something on this? And then I've got two more questions coming up.

JENNY JONES: I'll be very quick. The Mayor is talking nonsense, because if gas-fired power stations are so good why not have one here in Hayes? If it is so good why not have one here in Hayes? You'd all like a nuclear power station on your doorsteps, wouldn't you? It's just like Cameron, our Prime Minister, who is saying fracking is the answer, we've got to frack. Except in his

constituency of Witney not one licence. It's classic, it's beautiful fracking ground in Witney.

The fact is we should be going for renewables -- it's my turn, Boris -- we should be going for renewables. Every single house, every single building that's built should be its own small power station. And renewables are the way forward. If we're not going to pollute the planet and if we're going to leave something for our children and grandchildren renewables are the way forward and not all these gas-fired power stations and nuclear power stations

(...Applause...)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you. There's a gentleman there with a red tie -- hang on -- look, can we please -- look, we're not having a debate here, you asked your question, you've had the answers. If you want to ask more questions then fill in the card. The gentleman over there with the red tie.

FROM THE FLOOR: Mayor, you speak so much, if everybody listens every time you speak self-fulfilling prophecy you would have tonight. The fact is that young people will not be able to live in London in the next 20 years. We know that young people will not be in London to do the job because they can't afford housing. What will happen to the police force who are supposed to protect the citizens in London like Paris and also in Belgium? They wouldn't be there to do the job because the economy is making money but yet you are cutting the police forces. And that's what's

important.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Sir, I'm going to go to park that question, that will come under the housing section. There's a police section also. But it's only questions on the economy at the moment because we have seven minutes left on the economy.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good evening. Boris, my question is the economy seems to be growing but it doesn't seem to be including everybody. A homeless guy of 25 came up to me last night and said to me, "It's my birthday, I'm very upset, I've got no one left in the world." This guy's slipped through the net. There seems to be a huge homeless problem in London. Why do homeless people have to pay to go and stay somewhere which encourages begging? Which nobody likes, everybody feels guilty when they walk past someone homeless who is begging.

I would like to know what is being done about the homeless problem in London. I think it does link to the economy because it's a question of inclusiveness. **(...Applause...)**

ONKAR SAHOTA: Boris.

BORIS JOHNSON: Thank you. Well, shall I take both questions together?

Just on the first question, which was really about young people and their ability to live in London and what's going to happen, how are we going to be able to afford to keep police in London when the cost of housing is so huge.

It's related to the second question, because the crisis is housing. All that stuff I said earlier on about the success of the city, the most attractive economy in Europe, that is putting huge pressure on our housing market. It's not the same across the country, there are other parts of this country, alas, where they have the opposite problem, they have a great deal of urban decay, they have homes going for not very much money at all. Here in London it's incredibly hard.

The only answer is to build more housing. I know it's tough, and I know that we don't want to change the look and feel, the quality, the character of London. We don't want to destroy our leafy suburbs. You don't have to, you can build great homes, great new homes, on brownfield sites. 400,000 we can do on brownfield sites across the city. We've done about 100,000 low-cost homes over the lifetime of this mayoralty, that's a great achievement, it's more than ever before, but every time we build -- the target becomes more and more challenging as the numbers rise. In fact, we have more young people now in London than ever before. It's not that young people are fleeing London. We're producing more people, naturally. Also -- which is a benign change -- families in their 30s, in their 20s and 30s, they are staying in the city to bring up their children rather than leave in the way that perhaps they used to do about 20, 30, 40 years ago.

So there's a big change in the character of life in London.

Yes, of course it's putting huge pressure on people, as you rightly say, who fall through the cracks. I'm going to hold my hands up and say that the homelessness problem is something that really, really concerns me at the moment. We are seeing too many people on our streets. Rick Blakeway, who is here in the front row, has done a fantastic job of chairing the London Delivery Board which concerns the activity of people dealing with homelessness in London. We have a great institution called No Second Night Out. What that means is, if you get on the streets, it is now overwhelmingly likely that someone will come and find you and help you into accommodation on that first night.

I slept rough to see what it was like and went around some of these hostels, and indeed I'd no sooner dosed down in a churchyard then some outreach people came and tried to move me on and gave me advice and help. That was entirely coincidental, they didn't I know was there. There are a lot of people out there trying to help. The numbers, though, are very high. Some of them have a complex series of problems, some of them are people in search of work from other European Community countries, alas. It is a real struggle, I won't hide it from you and we've got to deal with it. We are working flat out to cope with it.

But the long-term answer is to build more homes in the great city that people want to be in.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Boris. I'm going to ask Fiona

Twycross, who is the Chair of the Economy Committee, to come in, please.

FIONA TWYXCROSS: Thank you. I want to address the principal question that came first which was about young people not being able to afford to live in London. It's great we've got a Mayor who can turn everything into a joke, but the truth is that London is the most unequal region in the country. We actually had a debate last week, as you'll remember, Mayor, about young people not being able to afford to live in London, about the fact that increasing numbers of young people actually have to share rooms because they are not paid enough to even rent their own room.

I appreciate that the broader things around that are housing questions that we'll come on to later. But this economy in London, and for all the growth we're seeing in London, isn't including everyone and I think the question is it isn't including everyone.

The Living Wage shouldn't just be about press releases announcing the latest raise, it should be about making sure that people get paid enough to live on for working a hard day's work. I think that we've got almost a million people in London who are paid below the Living Wage and there are 30,000 jobs that are linked to it. So there's a big disparity there. We need opportunities for young people, we do need people to working in the essential and emergency services, as the gentleman suggested, but I think the fact that all of us in this room will agree that if people are working work should pay, is

actually why we had to see the Chancellor climb down on tax credits yesterday. Because, ultimately, people are doing a fair day's work, they deserve a fair day's pay. I think we should all agree that that is what we want for everybody in work in London

(...Applause...)

ONKAR SAHOTA: We'll come to the police in a minute, okay?
That gentleman -- yes, great, thanks.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. Mr Johnson, I know that you are Mayor in London and also an MP for Uxbridge, but have you been to Hayes Town? I mean, you talk about the economy being great, but there's a huge disparity, there's a huge disparity. If you go through in London you might pick up the stats that says that a lot of people are into jobs, but the younger -- the youth are not into jobs. And what have you done? I want to know exactly at grass root level.

ONKAR SAHOTA: So the question is what have you done for jobs for the young? Okay, thank you. Boris.

BORIS JOHNSON: Well, as I said earlier on, the rate of youth unemployment in this area has come down massively. If you're looking at the things we've done specifically for Hayes then I'd cite some of the investments that we've made through the new homes bonus into Hayes Parade and the shop fronts there. We've done a lot to help retail units in that area. The intention is to help those small, medium-sized businesses that are very often the most likely

generators of employment, particularly for young people, and are capable of taking on apprentices. The whole apprentice movement has I think been one of the reasons why we've been successful in tackling youth unemployment. Where we had a huge target to deliver about 250,000 new apprenticeships, we've done so far I think about 180,000, and 84 per cent of the kids who get these apprenticeships stay on and get full-time jobs.

So it is changing. Don't forget that this area, the Hayes area, will really benefit when Crossrail comes in in 2018. You will see a huge increase in opportunity, in business, in confidence in the area. So I would be very positive and optimistic about this part of London.

I totally appreciate what you are saying about the feeling of exclusion that people can have at the moment. The opportunities really are there and they will be coming, more of them will be coming on stream.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Boris.

We are out of questions on the section on the economy. If you still have your question unanswered please don't forget there are people in the foyer who can take your question and make sure we get the answer from City Hall.

But the next section is housing. So we have about 20 minutes on housing. If you put your hands up then I'll try to catch it.

FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you, Chair, much appreciated.

Mr Johnson, I'm a local resident and have lived in this area for almost 40 years. My concern is housing and that's why I've put myself up for this question. I've not only worked in the housing field for 28 years but I've seen the issues that have affected the quality of life that have been homeless and put into bed and breakfast, etc.

I know we've touched on the severe shortage of housing already, but there is a mega big crisis in the London area, especially when all London councils are sending homeless people who work locally but been sent to as far out as Birmingham. That's what they call "temporary accommodation". Because I worked in this field and I can tell you that is happening quite badly.

So I would to like to know what you're going to do to address this type of issue.

Recently also I've seen --

ONKAR SAHOTA: Excuse me, please ask your question very concisely. I don't want to hear speeches from the panel or from the audience. So if your ask your question, then let's get it answered, please. The more we can get shorter questions the more we can get through.

FROM THE FLOOR: It was actually a hyphenated question. The other one is on street homeless. I've seen quite a lot on street homeless. I understand Boris Johnson has said that he's been to one of these areas where they've you know -- been like a street

homeless person. But in reality I have seen this going up and up and up and not everybody gets rescued. I think everybody needs to be rescued. What's going to be done about it?

(...Applause...)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Boris.

BORIS JOHNSON: Thank you so much, and thank you for what you are doing working in housing, because it is the crucial, crucial area.

I can only repeat the answer I've given, it is that we're building hundreds of thousands of new affordable and low cost homes, homes for rent, homes for part buy, part rent. We are on target to, as I say, to deliver a record number. I inherited, when I came in there was about 670-hectares of public land that the GLA Group owned, and 99 per cent of that is now under development. We put it all forward, we are getting it moving and you can see the cranes around the city as evidence of the energy that is going into building homes for Londoners.

On the homeless, I just remind you of what we're trying to do with No Second Night Out. I'm not going to hide it from you, I do think there's an issue and a real, real problem with homelessness at the moment. But the numbers who are being helped off the streets fast are increasing. There's a proportion of those sleeping rough. 81 per cent of those we found did not spend a second night out. That's gone up from 51 per cent in 2007 and 2008.

So yes, I perfectly accept that there is a homelessness crisis and we must tackle it. But the No Second Night Out formula is proving helpful in the cases that we've got on our streets at the moment.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Nicky, you wanted to come in?

NICKY GAVRON: I want to address the supply issue, because Hillingdon is growing in area -- we heard that earlier -- it's growing in population, it's growing, it's got a resident population which is mainly owning homes and it desperately needs more rented accommodation and affordable rented accommodation. At the moment it's meant to build 500 homes a year, and Hillingdon is doing about -- I mean, it's doing less than half that. Now, that's exactly what the Mayor is doing right across London, he's delivering less than half his target, whatever he says about the supply and the cranes, that's the truth. Last year only 18,000 homes, when the London Plan said it should be 32,000.

Now, let's take RAF Uxbridge, for instance, and let's take what's happening there. 1300 homes, how many are going to be affordable? 100 affordable rent, 100 social rent, which is really the income level that is desperately needed in this borough so you don't get so much overcrowding. Let's take Fassnidge, the Memorial Trust. What did the borough do there? They allowed a developer to build 48 homes on the land at the back but only four were affordable. They didn't even have to pay for the land, the developers.

So what's happening is Hillingdon is letting greenfield sites go, , letting metropolitan open land go, but they're not releasing their own land and they are leading by example in terms of affordable housing. Ditto the Mayor: where is the affordable housing on this land that he is developing? What's going to happen with all those TfL sites? Is he going to lead by example? Are we really going to get the level of housing that we need? **(...Applause...)**

FROM THE FLOOR: Hi. Everybody knows that the prices of rent in London is extremely expensive. Yesterday our Chancellor said that he was going to increase the Stamp Duty Tax. What I'm concerned about is that I feel that this is going to have an adverse effect in terms landlords might seek to cover the losses that they consider from this tax by increasing the price of rent.

Now, I'm really worried about the second year university student from London who is going to be kicked out of halls and has to find private accommodation. I want to know what you're going to do as the Mayor of London if the private accommodation prices increase. Because, as a student, you can't afford to pay really high rent prices.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you. Thank you, Boris.

BORIS JOHNSON: I just want to take -- look, first of all, on the buy to let, the Stamp Duty on the buy to let, what the Chancellor is trying to do there, as I understand it, is to make sure that people aren't just buying homes in London as an investment and then

renting them out and stopping Londoners and young London families from having the chance to buy them themselves.

Because it seems totally unfair that people should be using second or third or fourth homes if they are international investors and thereby buying up a huge amount of the stock in the city that should be available for Londoners. There's a massive programme of building homes for rental to people in this city and I totally encourage that.

In addition to a programme for part buy, part rent there is absolutely no reason at all why people on incomes, say a joint household income of about GBP 37,500, that's the median of our programme, should not be able to get onto our First Steps Programme and buy a home of about 300,000 -- a cost of about GBP 300,000. Go on to our website and you will see the kind of deals that are available. And that is -- that, I think, is the way forward. Most people, given the chance, would like to own a share in the value of their home. I think the part buy, part rent model is a huge part of what we can do.

On what Nicky has said about social housing and the need to build ever more social housing here in Hillingdon, and she talks about the site at RAF Uxbridge. Well, that's a classic example of how the -- as I recall the previous Mayor was going to impose on this borough, a load of high-rise rabbit hutches in that area which were completely unsuitable, which would have destroyed the quality and

the character of the area and would have done absolutely nothing for this part of the city. There is a huge amount of housing being built now, but it is housing that is respectful of the area. We do not want to destroy the quality of life for people in this city.

By the way, Hillingdon, contrary to what you say, Nicky, Hillingdon has built, as far as I can see, more affordable homes over the last few years than Labour-run Harrow. So they are not actually doing too badly.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Boris. I want to bring in Tom Copley, the Chairman of the Housing Committee. Tom.

TOM COPLEY: Thank you very much. Well, first of all, it's a bit rich of the Mayor to go on about high-rise because it's the Mayor that's authorised I think more skyscrapers than we've ever seen before, and many people would say -- hang on, I'm speaking at the moment, Boris, you've had your say.

I want to start with the point about renting, because more and more Londoners are renting now, 30 per cent, and that's gone up from about 10 per cent 15 years ago. The cost of renting is soaring. It's not actually often that I agree with anything that George Osborne does but I do think the Stamp Duty on the second homes and on buy to let is the right thing to do.

The landlords and the letting agents have all come out and said it will be passed on to tenants, but these are the same landlords and letting agents that say, "We only charge what tenants can afford to

pay."

So it's a little bit of a contradiction there.

I do think it's important because we need to take some of the demand for housing out of the market, a lot of that demand comes from investor landlords. But the crucial things that we need, and something the Mayor does not support and the Government does not support, we're the only major city in western Europe that does not operate some form of rent control. That's not -- you know, the Mayor will go on about, oh, Venezuelan-style rent capping, and things like that. Absolute nonsense. All this simply means is longer tenancies with limits on how much the landlord can increase the rent during that tenancy. That gives, particularly the increasing number of families who live in the private rented housing, stability. It means that landlords can't kick them out by putting the rent up by 20 per cent. It gives them certainty and it holds rents down over the long term, while we get to the point where we start building the quantity of homes that we need to really get to grips with the cost of housing.

That's what we need in the short-term. In the longer term absolutely more house-building (...**Applause...**)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you. Stephen Knight.

STEPHEN KNIGHT: Thank you. I think it's absolutely clear that London has a crisis in house prices and housing costs, and that's not just the cost of buying, it's the cost of renting, it's the cost of

putting a roof over your head in London. But the critical thing for me is you'll hear very few politicians tell you they want to bring house prices down in London. Everyone will agree they're too high. Typically house prices are 15 times -- an average house in London is almost 15 times the average income in London.

Historically the ratio has been 4 times and it was up until 15 years ago. This is a relatively short-term surge in house prices we've seen.

Everyone will agree they're too high. No one will say they want to bring house prices down because there are a lot of people, including myself, who own homes.

But the reality is, unless we make homes more affordable, that we are pricing out a whole generation of people from the future of our city, we're putting huge amounts of our incomes into paying rents and mortgages which could otherwise be in more productive transactions, boosting jobs in the economy, and it is ultimately bad for our city that so much money is going into rents.

I just want to -- Tom is absolutely right that we need to depress demand from investors in London's housing market because it's not just the lack of house-building over the last 30 years, since we stopped building council houses in about 1980, that's the major problem on the supply; but on the demand side everybody in the world with money in their pocket right now wants to buy a home in London because the returns they are getting are vast, absolutely

huge profitable returns, both in terms of the high rents they can charge but more critically in terms of the huge capital gains that people have made. People are making more from owning a flat in London than they make through their earned income. The tax levels that they face are very low. We still have mortgage interest tax relief if you are a second home owner --

ONKAR SAHOTA: Okay, Stephen, can you --

FROM THE PANEL: -- so we need -- we can tackle the housing problem in London if we build more homes and we suppress demand. We've got to do both and we've got to do it proactively in order to bring prices down.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you.

FROM THE FLOOR: My name is David Bishop and I've lived in Northwood Hills for 50 years. I'm referring to an article here in the Evening Standard that was on 13 July when it said that "Boris Johnson announced today that he's creating a Domesday Book of publicly-owned land by the end of this year to help solve London's housing crisis".

Now, I understand that you are going to employ Savills, the estate agents, together with the London Land Commission -- whatever they are, it sounds like another quango to me, another load of civil servants -- they're going to free up the sites by working together, apparently, to speed up the sale of these sites.

Now, I expect, Mr Johnson, you remember Northwood Hills very

well, you came last year on the Metropolitan Line. Trees down the middle of the road, right? Well, we have a disused hospital in Northwood Hills that has been empty for 20 years. Right? The Primary Care Trust, they passed it from one to the other. The National Health Service Property Services, I've been to see them both at Lower Marsh in Waterloo and also at the Elephant and Castle and I just cannot get any joy from them.

If you could kick their backsides to get something done about this site, because it's a very valuable, big site that can be developed

(...Applause...)

BORIS JOHNSON: Thank you. Well, that is exactly why we set up the London Land Commission. I wish to reassure you, it's not a new quango, it consists entirely of me and Brandon Lewis, who is the minister concerned, and Rick Blakeway. We sit there with various London council leaders and decide how we can cut these Gordian knots, particularly NHS land where what you very often have is the people who founded the hospital in the 18th century have left these very, very complicated legal covenants that it must be used for medical purposes, all this kind of malarkey, where you have Network Rail sites where they have special obligations towards the train operating companies which they can't break. So there's a lot of legalistic stuff you've got to cut through before you can get this land built on.

I am delighted that you brought Northwood Hills -- I am looking

beadily here at Rick -- what is going wrong with Northwood Hills?
Why aren't we demolishing it and building it? **(Pause)** We're
going to look into it.

I just want to say, everybody cheers and claps for rent controls and
the ability to control the rents in London, but I just would remind you
that the Mayor of Ho Chi Minh city famously said that the only thing
more destructive of Ho Chi Minh city than the United States Air
Force was rent controls, because all you do is you discourage
people from putting their property on the market to rent and they
insist on flogging it and you -- and you put even more -- it does not
work in New York and it doesn't work in Germany. It does not.
No, it doesn't. It doesn't work in either of those cities. They've
got an even worse crisis. Anyway, if you want to keep barracking
me from the side I'll just keep recalling. It doesn't work in either of
those cities and it wouldn't work here. The answer is to build --

ONKAR SAHOTA: Boris, have you finished with the answer?

BORIS JOHNSON: Yes.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Great, okay, thanks.

Look, we only have two minutes left.

FROM THE FLOOR: I'd just like to say my mother and gran would
turn in their grave if they actually knew that I voted Conservative
this time round. It's mainly because of the help to buy and, you
know, shared ownership and I do think it gives people
an opportunity to buy a house. I do blame the council house

situation or, you know, the Housing Association on Labour, to be quite honest. I know people that laugh about --

ONKAR SAHOTA: What's the question?

FROM THE FLOOR: I'll get there. You said two minutes.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Two minutes for the whole section.

FROM THE FLOOR: All right, all right. All right then. Yeah, okay. Well, you've put me out of flow now.

Basically, anyway, I think that -- I think they've -- the Conservatives have done a good job, they've picked up a real mess.

ONKAR SAHOTA: I am sure the Mayor would love this question.

FROM THE FLOOR: A real mess. For me to turn to Conservative, that's a lot.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Okay. Right.

FROM THE FLOOR: Good evening everybody. I'm feeling quite queasy, actually, with the discussion that's just happened because we're all talking about housing and we're one of the richest countries in the world, yet we have a huge proportion of our citizens living on the streets homeless. A lot are mentally ill and ex-service people. So what on earth are we doing talking about people who already live in houses and what we're doing about rent control? What about our citizens who are living on the streets and are homeless? (...Applause...)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Mr Mayor, do you want to come back on this?

BORIS JOHNSON: Look, I think I've said, I completely, I

passionately agree with you about the homelessness situation in London. I think that every night in London there are about 300 on our streets and we're doing our absolute best to help them. As I say, 80 per cent of them spend only one night on the streets.

But I would just remind you, and you talk about one of the richest countries in the world, and indeed we are, but if you go to New York or you go to Washington -- and that is absolutely no consolation to us -- but they have tens of thousands of homeless every night.

The situation -- our approach is very, very different, and I don't think we should in any way minimise the fantastic work that is done by the charities, by organisations across London who are working very, very hard at the moment to deal with this problem.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Mr Mayor. We are out of time for housing now. But, again, there are people in the foyer who can take your questions and make sure you get the answers from the City Hall.

The next section is transport and environment, and the section after that will be policing and community safety. So they are questions now on transport and environment, please.

FROM THE FLOOR: I've got a question for Boris Johnson and the Assembly. Why don't the Assembly do more for cyclist safety by making it a regulation for the cyclist to wear a high visibility waistcoat? Thank you.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Mr Mayor.

BORIS JOHNSON: Well, we don't believe in -- I don't believe in that kind of detail of regulation of what cyclists should wear. What I do believe is enforcing the law when they break the rules of the Highway Code, when they jump the traffic lights, when they mount the pavement, when they terrorise pedestrians in one way or the other.

So we had a big operation called Operation Safeway, we flooded the streets with police at intervals in the city. It's not popular with cyclists, by the way, and they shout at me. I'm standing at the red lights and they say, "You Tory tosser. You -- why have you ..." You know, they complain, they say, "I advanced beyond the stop box, the ASL, just a couple of feet and they nabbed me" --

ONKAR SAHOTA: Okay, Mr Mayor, you've answered the question. Okay. Right, that gentleman over there.

FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you. I'm a resident of Harmondsworth and for the last 20 years my family have been under threat of eviction from our homes for a third runway. The trauma and stress of being forcibly evicted from one's home is second only to bereavement.

I have previously asked Heathrow Limited not to send letters to my home threatening compulsory purchase and eviction as it causes my wife a very great deal of distress. My requests have gone completely unheeded.

Do you think that we should be compensated for this distress and able to seek a legal remedy, particularly in view of the recent media blitz that has been launched against us? (...Applause...)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Yes, Mr Mayor.

BORIS JOHNSON: Thank you. Well, I absolutely vehemently sympathise with your position and with the position of people in west London who feel threatened by the Heathrow expansion and by the third runway. It's the wrong policy for the city, it's wrong for the country, it's undeliverable and completely unfair that someone like you should feel under this chronic sentence of execution, as it were, threatened with eviction from your home and never really having any closure, never knowing when it is going to end. This is the wrong project in the wrong place. There are far, far better places to build new aviation capacity in our country and we should be looking there. Heathrow is right in the middle of the western suburbs of London, it is not the right place to be expanding a hub airport.

I totally agree. If there's something I can do to take up your particular case, your sense of harassment by Heathrow, I'd be happy to do so. If you'd share the letters that you've had with me I'd be happy to take it up (...Applause...)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Can I ask Val Shawcross, the Chairman of the Transport Committee, to come in, please.

VALERIE SHAWCROSS: Yes, thank you, Chair.

I am the Chair of the Transport Committee, and I have to say, although you have four political parties here and there are 25 members of the Assembly, there is one thing that actually we've all come to the same conclusion on, and perhaps from different directions, but we do, everybody on the Assembly, believe that the expansion of Heathrow Airport is the wrong policy for London. It's not just the fact that obviously the communities of Harmondsworth and Sipson would be affected, we are deeply concerned about the air quality problems, the air pollution problems with the area in and around Heathrow being one of the most polluted in the whole of the UK. We're deeply concerned about what seems to us -- and we've had very good advice from Transport for London who are the experts on this -- it would be a very inadequate plan, a very, very inadequate plan, for providing public and other sorts of transport and to from the airport, and of course we are concerned about the noise impact of the airport on probably three quarters of a million Londoners.

Now, where we get to from that is that different members of the Assembly will come up with different alternative solutions.

Certainly, you know, I would not want to see Heathrow Airport as it is closed, it's really important to the economy here. I think our -- my view would be we should be improving the airport where it is but actually looking for expansion elsewhere. Let's have a multi-airport system city, there are other cities in the world that

function like that. Certainly as a south London representative I would say that there's a lot of support in south London for expanding Gatwick because they've got the space, they really want it, there's a big market for it, and all of south London would actually benefit economically from the expansion of Gatwick.

So, you know, a very, very big issue, but I think there's one thing I will say that everybody on the Assembly agrees with, that the case for expanding Heathrow has not been made (**...Applause...**)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you. I would like to bring Richard in.

RICHARD TRACEY: Thank you, Onkar. Yes, I'm actually Conservative leader on transport and I also live in Wandsworth under the flight path, so I absolutely agree with the gentleman who asked the question because these planes coming in wake me up very often at four o'clock in the morning and carry on disturbing my rest. I am sure there are a good many of you here that feel exactly the same. I know my colleague on my left here, Tony Arbour, who is in Richmond, feels exactly the same.

The fact is there is no case for expanding Heathrow any more, and it's about time the Government accepted that view and came out with the view.

I just cannot understand how they can vacillate any more about this except that we all know that they are being constantly lectured by the business lobby in London who don't care about all of those of us who live underneath the flight path at all, clearly they obviously

live very far away themselves.

But I do agree with Val, I think that the Government has got to come to a decision and probably it should be Gatwick.

(...Applause...)

FROM THE FLOOR: It's a question for Mr Johnson. Hello. Hi. My question is, since David Cameron appointed a committee to look at making a decision on expansion, it seems to me that every single member of that committee is pro-Heathrow.

BORIS JOHNSON: Look, I think that Howard Davies basically came up with the answer that he thought that his political supervisors, masters, call them what you will, wanted him to come up with. You know, the whole process of putting it beyond the general election, the whole process was intended to get round the political difficulty. Frankly, you know, David Cameron said in 2009, 2010, no ifs, no buts, no third runway. That was right then, it's right today.

Why on earth -- I mean, what people don't understand -- and Val and Richard are completely right in what they say about the noise, about the air quality -- but it's not just in west London, folks, you've got to spread the news, it's going to be in Pimlico, it's going to be in Chelsea, it's going to be in Hammersmith, it's going to be in Shepherd's Bush. You've got lots of parts of London that are not yet affected by aviation noise pollution. New Cross is going to be hit. Those areas are going to wake up and wake up at four o'clock

in the morning and hear --

ONKAR SAHOTA: Mr Mayor --

BORIS JOHNSON: -- that is no way forward for our city.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. Hello, good evening Onkar, and welcome to Hillingdon, good to see you. Can I ask you, Onkar, and all the Labour Assembly members why they chose not to support the local residents and they voted not against expansion? When all the other assembly members voted against expansion you, as a Labour group, abstained. Can you justify that to these people? Because you said you were against it but you abstained when the vote took place. Please explain that. (...Applause...)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Well, we know who you are, Dominic. Yes. Well, you asked me a question very specifically. I am the Chair of the meeting and I -- but I am not going to duck this question. I stand with the Labour Group at London Assembly. I've never been for a bigger Heathrow, I've been for a better Heathrow. I do not think the case has been made for expansion of Heathrow, and I fully subscribe to the Labour Party line at the Assembly. So I'm not going to do any more than that, Dominic, but I am going to ask my colleague, Val Shawcross, the Chairman of the Transport Committee, to come back.

VALERIE SHAWCROSS: Thank you. I will because I am also the Labour spokesman on transport.

Now, you know, I think one of the most damaging things we can do

with this really important debate is start playing petty party political games. What happened was that the Labour Group said that we were going to receive the Davies Report and study it and analyse it and critique it before we came to a conclusion. We did that, we analysed the report, we found a lot of really serious flaws in the report and we feel that the arguments we have made, therefore, by doing that analysis, are much stronger.

So the last opportunity we had at the Assembly to state our position -- and we've done it at the Transport Committee as well -- we have put on record the fact that we do not believe that the case for expansion of Heathrow has been proven. We've been very vocal about the criticisms we've got. But, you know, this is not a kind of matter of religious belief, this is actually a clear technical analysis we've done. Actually we believe that our arguments are stronger and stack up because of it.

I think it would be much better if Londoners stood united on this issue rather than tried to knock chips off each other for it. Thank you.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you.

FROM THE FLOOR: Can we have the Assembly's opinion on the wisdom of going ahead and spending GBP 50 billion on HS2, and how the assembly can help protect Hillingdon and the rest of west London against the devastating effects of HS2 in this area? I'd like to hear from some of the other assembly members as well, please.

Thank you (...**Applause...**)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Can I ask Caroline Pidgeon to come in.

CAROLINE PIDGEON: Thank you very much. I am Caroline Pidgeon, I lead for the Liberal Democrats on transport.

I think High Speed 2 overall is a good project, but clearly there are problems at places like Hillingdon, there are huge problems around Camden and Euston, and they need to be resolved and properly dealt with. I don't think the Government has got to grips with this, and the latest plans particularly for Euston station are pretty appalling, I think, and they really have got to start looking at some of those issues and looking at some of the issues in places like Hillingdon and have got to put in far more mitigation in order for this to go ahead.

I think High Speed Rail has to go ahead because I think we need more rail capacity in this country, we need more High Speed Rail going up to the north and beyond and into Scotland. But we need to get this project right. I don't think -- right from the start High Speed 2 have been poor. We tried to get them to come before the Transport Committee, they wouldn't even come to give evidence, that's their disregard for us.

So I think it's really important that we look at that going forward and make sure we get the right mitigation in place.

I would also say, if we're looking at transport, where I think we are wasting money in London is the Mayor and the Government are

supporting the Garden Bridge, which is going across the Thames, it's going to cost over GBP 100 million -- 175 million, I think is the latest figure. There's been all sorts of strange goings on around the procurement of this. We've clearly favoured people getting certain bits of the project. I think that's where we need to stop wasting money and putting in infrastructure, bridges and the like, where people actually want it and it's desperately needed. I think that's where we can start looking to save some money and putting it into proper projects.

Just on Heathrow, because it has come up several times, the Liberal Democrats remain absolutely opposed to any expansion and we're opposed to any expansion of airports in London and the south-east. There is existing capacity at Stansted, at Gatwick, at Luton. If we improve the transport infrastructure to get to those airports we can meet some of the increasing demand.

(...Applause...)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Jenny, did you want to come in? Yes.

JENNY JONES: Thank you, Chair.

HS2 is a ridiculous scheme. It's going to shave 20 minutes off the journey to Birmingham for business people who will be working on the train anyway. Why bother? Billions of money. It's also, because it's not even a high speed train, it's actually an ultra-speed train, which means it can't go round corners very well, which means it goes in straight lines through things like sites of scientific interest.

Like Frays Farm -- is that it? -- Frays Farm Meadow, which is here in your area. The fact is that's only one of 37 sites of that kind in Britain. So we should be protecting it. It's a stupid scheme. On Heathrow, a madness, an absolute madness. Sir, if you want to take my card I'd be happy to write to Heathrow and threaten them with a visit. I would be more than happy to take up your case. **(...Applause...)**

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Jenny. Richard, do you want to come in quickly?

RICHARD TRACEY: Very quickly, Onkar, yes. I want to say to the lady who asked this question that I believe that the jury is still very much out on HS2. I don't think the decision is in any way made because, as you rightly suggested, the cost is going higher and higher and at some point the Chancellor and the Prime Minister have got to say "We can't go on with this".

But I will say one thing to you. In the Conservative party in the Assembly we've always said that if it was going to go ahead in this part of the world it had got to be in the tunnel because there's no way that you can have your lives disrupted by rail -- a great railway running past.

The other thing I think is that just to build HS2 to Birmingham would be pretty pointless. It's got to be to the other end of the country as well to make it sensible.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Richard. I just want to get the

Mayor's view on this.

BORIS JOHNSON: I am familiar with you and thank you for raising this.

I totally agree about HS2. I'm a sceptic about this particular project, though, I think like other members of this panel, I'm a believer in having great infrastructure for our country, we do need to hook up the north and south, we do need to do all that kind of thing. But currently I don't accept, as Chair of TfL, I don't accept -- and TfL corporately doesn't accept -- the proposals.

There are three problems we've got. The first, as you know, is the mitigations in west London, we don't think the tunnels are yet adequate, we don't think there's an adequate plan for dealing with the spoil and we discussed that recently in the House of Commons and indeed elsewhere. We don't think that the proposals for Euston make any kind of sense at all, they're massively disruptive of that part of Camden and they haven't really worked out what they are doing there. They're not really achieving regeneration of that area in spite of all the disruption. The third thing is that there's no real connection between HS1 and HS2, so you've got this crazy thing of building a high speed rail into London and you're not even hooking it up with the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. So there's going to be about a mile between them. Suppose you wanted to go from Birmingham to France, you'd have to get off, walk a mile, and then take the next -- the -- (...Laughter...) it has not been properly

thought through.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Boris.

BORIS JOHNSON: So until we have -- until we have better satisfaction on that, TfL remains unconvinced.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you very much. This will be the last question on this section. So everyone else can put their hands down on this section.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello. My question is in terms of the London Underground. It's about basically safety on the London underground. What I want to ask you is about platform edge doors. What a lot of people might not know is the they are the doors that are on a lot of the Jubilee tube stations, which basically the glass coverings and they cover the tracks, which is obviously very safe for when people are travelling.

My question to you is, in terms of safety, we've all seen the videos that have come out about people getting pushed onto the tracks or people falling off the tracks, what is being done in terms of safety on the London Underground? Why is it that we can spend so much on things like digital marketing and billboards and we don't have the money to spend on things like these platform edge doors. My last point would be a lot of people -- I have asked this question before -- a lot of people have said that, in terms of reliability, they might not be reliable, but I'm pretty sure a lot of people would prefer to be safe on the tube rather than a delay here and there

(...Applause...)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Mr Mayor.

BORIS JOHNSON: Thank you very much. Well, you know, we do have a very, very safe network. I don't want to sound -- we have the safest tube network anywhere in Europe, in terms of numbers of deaths, in terms of accidents, your risk of being mugged, it is a very, very safe network. By the way, it has been getting safer and safer over the last few years. So, in terms of safety, the tube has an incredible record.

On platform edge doors and on suicides -- which I'm afraid, let's not beat about the bush, that is the tragic reality of what tube drivers have to face about roughly one a week, and it is absolutely devastating for drivers when this happens to them. You'll be familiar with standing on a platform and hearing that there's a person underneath the train. I'm afraid that is almost always a suicide. The answer, as you rightly say, is platform edge doors, putting in the screens like on the Jubilee Line, that is what we need. We are moving forward with a big programme to do that. It will be part of the move towards automated trains and those will be coming in -- they will be the next generation of tube trains in London. We will not buy an unautomated train ever again in the future. The new Piccadilly Line trains will be automated. If you talk to Mike Brown his ambition is to put platform edge doors on those lines in order to protect passengers and to allow the running of fully

automated trains.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Mr Mayor. We have no more time left for transport questions. But, again, there are officers of the Assembly in the foyer, you can give your question to them and then we can give the answers back to you from City Hall.

So this next section is on policing and community safety. This includes the Fire Brigade service.

So any questions on that?

FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you. Thank you very much. Hello. My name is Sadio Kapapula, I'm from Enfield. My question is on policing.

A lot of our police officers are not up to the highest educational level. I will tell you that I have worked with Met police and there was no special programme for training and retraining and encouraging these police to have higher education or degree which will make them to be able to communicate with both citizens, ethnic minority, and there would be no racial discrimination effects on the job they did. Which is making people to show -- feel that police are not very friendly. Thank you. **(...Applause...)**

ONKAR SAHOTA: So your question is that you are concerned about the education of the police officers. Mr Mayor?

BORIS JOHNSON: I come to the defence of the police and say that I've always found all the officers I've talked to to be readily comprehensible and to be doing a fantastic job. But, look, I think

there's a -- if I may say so there's an important issue that you alluded to which is how can we have a police force that commands the confidence of everybody in London? In my view the only way of achieving that is to have a police force that looks like London and that is fully representative of every community in London. That is what we are trying to achieve. The numbers from black and minority ethnic groups have gone up considerably since I've been Mayor. I think we now have quite a large proportion of new entrants to the police are from those groups. I think overall across the force it's gone up from about 8 per cent to about 12 per cent. Where is Stephen [Greenhalgh, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime]? Something like that.

Which is progress.

For new recruits, PCSOs, it's even higher up at about 25 per cent. Clearly there's still a way to go if it's to be truly representative of London, but if you remember what Bernard Hogan-Howe did, he said that for a period we were only going to be recruiting from London itself. That was a bit annoying for people who wanted to join the Met from outside London, but it has helped us in that effort. We are about the only force in the country that has been recruiting over the last few years.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you. Kemi, you wanted to come in?

KEMI BADENOCH: Thank you. I'm the Conservative spokesperson for policing and crime on the Assembly and I'd like to

echo what Boris Johnson has just said. You don't actually need to have a Ph.D to be a police officer, and I think that what they are doing in 2015 is amazing. There's so many things a policeman has to do today they never had to do before, the counter terrorism levels, cyber crime and so on. I was actually at the Met a couple of weeks ago and I was looking at the education programmes that they're going through, things like unconscious bias where they are making sure that are treating all citizens fairly. I think that you are not right on that, that the police are doing a really good job, and if you have had a negative experience it will be a minority of policemen who you will have that experience from. Most of them are doing a fantastic job and I support them all the way.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Kemi (...**Applause...**)

FROM THE FLOOR: Good evening. This question does involve the Fire Brigade and the police, but it does also involve Heathrow, because I think this is an essential topic that has to be discussed. So can you please tell me when the official Airports Commission Report recommends expansion at Heathrow nobody seems to want to discuss the increased crash risk posed by more planes flying over densely populated parts of our capital city? Surely increasing the number of flights using Heathrow only raises the chances that one will crash on London, either through a technical problem or, more likely in the current climate, terrorism.

I wonder if you or any of the officials deciding this issue has ever

read the 1977 book entitled Sam 7. This novel graphically records what would happen when an airliner approaching Heathrow is shot down by Arab terrorists with a Sam 7 guided missile. The plane misses Westminster, or the Houses of Parliament, but it crashes onto Victoria Railway Station at the start of the rush hour. Now, if you think the book is far-fetched, can I tell you that the story starts with terrorists shooting people in a café in Paris.

Coming back to the Fire Brigade aspect -- so I can get on track -- ironically in the book the first London Fire Brigade response to the crash is from Westminster Fire Station. That station is one of ten closed by the Mayor last year when he axed ten stations, and I think about 28 fire engines, acting against the Fire Authority. I am told there are -- in fact, one of the engines axed was here in Hayes so if this catches fire tonight we are less safe. I'm also told at the moment there are 13 other fire engines that are temporarily mothballed in theory to provide resilience in case of a fire-fighter strike.

Can people here give me the assurance tonight that, due to the terrorist risk, those 13 fire engines will immediately be put back on the run? I am paying my council tax for them so why aren't they being used? Can we have an assurance that they will not be permanently axed? Thank you (**...Applause...**)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Mr Mayor.

BORIS JOHNSON: Thank you. Thank you very much.

ONKAR SAHOTA: The Mayor has probably already read it.

BORIS JOHNSON: On the risk of catastrophic incident over London or a plane crashing on Londoners as a result of the greater density of planes over London, I mean there's no question that that is an appreciable risk and I think it should be taken into account. I saw nowhere in the Airports Commission, they made absolutely no account of that risk whatever. It was one of the reasons why that report is profoundly flawed and I think it will go down in -- it will be filed vertically, that report, along with many other previous reports on aviation. It is -- it's not the right -- **(Pause)**

ONKAR SAHOTA: Can we please listen to the Mayor. **(Pause)**

BORIS JOHNSON: I'll come to Northolt in a second. But let me just address the gentleman's point about fire and the risk of terrorism. Because we have absolutely no reason to think that London today is at greater risk of a terrorist attack than it was two weeks ago. I know that may sound complacent, but there's no intelligence that we have to show that there is a particular extra threat. Clearly what happened in Paris was not just appalling but very, very sobering and has made us think about our preparations and what we need to do. There's a great deal of work going on, as you can imagine, with the Met about armed officers and the need to be properly equipped to deal with multiple locations. You refer to terrorists attacking in a café. That is the problem, it is the risk of a Mumbai-style Paris-style operation, when you've loads

of venues at once. The question is, is the Met properly equipped? Does it have the proper weaponry, does it have the units to deal with that kind of event?

On the Fire Brigade, we have no reason to think we don't have extremely good cover at the moment. Indeed, I may say that -- I said in my opening remarks that deaths by fire and indeed fires altogether have been steadily coming down thanks to the great work of the London Fire Brigade. I think that the London Fire Safety Plan 5 that we introduced has certainly proved its worth and continues to deliver great results.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Fiona, you wanted to come in.

FIONA TWYGCROSS: Yes, thank you. I think the point about fire is that when there's a fire you need a fire engine then and there. It doesn't matter how infrequently you have fires in your area. For every two minutes a fire can quadruple in intensity. So every single second counts, we know that.

Here in Hillingdon the Fire Brigade is actually missing the target time for attending fires in 17 out of 22 wards. So it's already an issue here. The gentleman referred to a fire engine went from the fire station here in Hayes, obviously Westminster is closed, one of the 13 appliances that might be at risk if the Mayor doesn't listen to the alternative being put forward by Labour and other groups on the Fire Authority is actually in Ealing which might have an impact

on the time it will take for fire engines to reach here as well. I think we're concerned about cutting further fire engines permanently, and we really hope that the Mayor listens to the alternative because we know that, as the gentleman said, people in London are really concerned about safety. At the end of the day that's what we want to put first, and we hope that the Mayor will go along and actually listen to the alternative being put forward by the Chair of the Resources Committee and by other members on the Fire Authority.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Fiona.

FROM THE FLOOR: Since 2012 I have been in a wheelchair because of the medical condition I've got. I think about all my life, and only once in my entire life have I been attacked on the street and that's before I become a wheelchair user, actually. But since I've been a wheelchair user I felt more vulnerable because not everyone uses a wheelchair.

One of the main issues is like on a few occasions people -- someone randomly come up to me and like I don't know -- I don't even know them -- but I feel safe when I'm with someone because like tonight I've to travel from north Hillingdon and I've got to go back and I feel like -- I'm just wondering -- like we've got -- I just really want to feel safe. I do, but sometimes I feel vulnerable. **(...Applause...)**

ONKAR SAHOTA: Is your question about police numbers? Is

that your question? That you feel --

BORIS JOHNSON: I think it's about hate crime. If I understood you -- I think what -- thank you very much for your question.

I think what you are saying is that you've had at least a couple of times when people have been abusive to you. Did I understand that correctly? And I look -- you know, this is absolutely despicable, that kind of hate crime against people with disabilities or indeed any kind of hate crime. I'm afraid to say it is one -- I talked earlier on about London becoming safer, but if I'm honest with you hate crime is one of the types of crime that is going up in our city. I think it's absolutely despicable.

The only possible mitigation I can offer is that it may possibly be because people are more confident about reporting hate crime, it's becoming more familiar as something that they can go to the police about. But I want you to know that the police take it incredibly seriously. Nick is nodding here in the front row. If you have names, if you have identities of people who have been abusive to you, or if people feel that they've been exposed to hate crime of any kind, then they should let the authorities know and let the police know because we will come down very hard. This is a great, great city. We have a huge numbers of people from different communities around the world, 300 languages spoken on the streets of London. The strength of our city, the dynamism comes from the diversity of London. We've got to stamp out hate crime of

all kinds (...**Applause...**)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Mr Mayor.

FROM THE FLOOR: Despite the difficulties we are facing here I'm so happy to living in Hillingdon as a teacher to know that our police does a good job. No matter what this young man has just said -- I call him a young man -- we have a good police force in this borough and they do a good job for us.

Although, Boris, your party are trying to trip away their finances, remember they have families like us too. Not you, but your party. They need to spend more and help the police more and help their family because they're people just like all of us. Invest in the police force so that we can have a strong community.

Thank you very much (...**Applause...**)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Let me just say -- carry on.

CAROLINE PIDGEON: Thank you very much. We have noticed a worrying trend of hate crime going up, and I think it isn't just a case of more people having confidence to report it, it is a worrying sign that many communities in London are experiencing that kind of crime. But the key thing is about visible policing. I think that would really help the gentleman who answered earlier. The point that we need to make sure we keep PCSOs on our streets and PCs. Make sure we have the officers on the streets reassuring our communities. I want to make sure we keep that visible neighbourhood policing presence.

But alongside that, travelling on the transport network -- and that was the point of the gentleman earlier -- is making sure we have fully staffed stations from first to last train, whether it's the underground or the railway, to make sure people feel safe. I think if we've got that visible presence and everyone working together that can help all of the community feel safe going around and enjoying their life in London.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you. Boris?

BORIS JOHNSON: Obviously totally agree with what Caroline just had to say. But, on police numbers, there is a -- you know, what the Chancellor had to say, what George had to say in the Spending Review actually was fantastically good news for this city. There is a real terms freeze, I think, in the budget, if I understood what he said in the statement yesterday. That -- actually, talking to Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe last night, my impression is that that will not only enable us to keep numbers high but perhaps even to recruit more. It's a quite extraordinary state of affairs, we never thought we would be in that position.

It is vital, though, that we use that money sensibly. It may be that there are things the police need to invest in that are not just investing in safer neighbourhood teams and putting police on the beat, vital though that, there are all sorts of ways in which we need to improving the technology that the police use to be able to respond to all sorts of eventualities. I've already discussed the

terrorist threat. The gentleman in the front row wants water cannons as well. We have some of them -- (...Laughter...)

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you. Jennette.

JENNETTE ARNOLD: Boris, I just want to bring you up-to-date on our meeting this morning with the Deputy Commissioner. Now, we all welcome the decision that has come out from the Government. But let's just be clear where we are still. That, whilst the budget has been protected, the Deputy Commissioner said:

"I don't think that the work we've got to do is over, and I think that what the Government did was to remove 400 million of the 800 million pressure."

So there is still a need for a 10 per cent cut at this time.

But, put that in perspective, to know that we have seen over the last four years police numbers fall under Boris's mayoralty. We've lost 23 per cent of our police front line presence and he has closed 63 police stations. Now, they are heckling me because they're telling me that they've done all this and crime has gone down. Some crimes have gone down, but when I say to you that you will know from reading your newspaper that there are some serious crimes that are on the rise and one of them is knife-enabled crime. This Monday the latest young man, a 17-year-old, died on the streets of my borough that I represent. This morning I was able to get the Deputy Commissioner and the Mayor's Deputy for Policing and Crime to accept that we may have to be considering another knife

amnesty at this time. Because we've got to get the message over to our young people that carrying knives is the start of the dangerous road. When somebody slashes somebody's neck they are going to more likely die than live.

So I want to know will Boris support this call and this review to see whether we can have a knife amnesty? Because at the moment the police are overstretched, and especially given our circumstances where they're now more or less on critical alert given the circumstances that we're experiencing coming out of Paris and Brussels.

So can we get some knives off the road to see if we can reduce or do something about the increasing number of our young people who are dying on our streets because of knife crime?

ONKAR SAHOTA: Boris, quick answer (**...Applause...**)

BORIS JOHNSON: Just quickly, I just point out that actually here in this neighbourhood, for instance, officer numbers are up, I think about 507 I think you told me the other day. Robberies are down by 63 per cent, knife crime with injury actually here is down by 32 per cent. Jennette rightly says that the police are doing a good job. What we need to do, in my view, is get the message to young people if they carry a knife, if they go equipped with a knife, and they do it more than once, they will face a custodial sentence.

Two strikes and you're out. That's what we want.

We want some polite and sensitive use of stop-and-search for kids

who, by carrying knives, are not only endangering other people but putting their own lives at risk. Because, overwhelmingly, if you carry a knife you are more likely to be the victim of knife crime yourself.

Those are some of the things that we are accelerating now and you are seeing the results in the fall of knife crime of all kinds.

Jennette wants a knife amnesty, which I am sure has some practical benefit, we've done it a few times and we can certainly look at doing it again. I don't want to see people just handing in their knives from their mum's kitchen and so on and so forth.

I want to see a proper knife --

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you very much for that. Look, that has brought this section on policing and community to the end. But we do have 15 minutes left to ask questions on areas which we may not have covered before. So try to bring up areas which we haven't covered before which may include health, culture, sport, volunteering or anything else, but we haven't covered before. So if you still have a question in those areas then I'll take them, but if you start going back to areas we've already covered --

FROM THE FLOOR: My question relates to urgent matters of safety concerning the MOD's VIP commercial jet business at Northolt Airport. It's imposed 12,000 aircraft movements affecting north Hillingdon. On 10 November Gareth Thomas, MP for Harrow West, asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether

the safety review carried out by the CAA since July will be made public.

The report will only be made available to operators, not to thousands of people like us here that are affected by this imposed business.

The Project Ark Report that concluded --

ONKAR SAHOTA: Can we have the question please? We are under pressure.

FROM THE FLOOR: The Project Ark Report that concluded that the aerodrome could not be licensed was, like this recent report, buried. Will Mr Johnson take personal, ongoing control of this major issue of safety?

ONKAR SAHOTA: Mr Mayor.

BORIS JOHNSON: Yes. The short answer is yes, of course I will. You know my views on Northolt, I hope, which is that I think Northolt has a proper place, it's an historic RAF base, it actually fulfils a huge variety of military purposes of one kind or another. If you go down and you talk to the staff there it's a fascinating place. But I don't think that we should be seeing an increase at all in commercial flights from Northolt. It is absolutely preposterous.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you. So the answer is "yes".

BORIS JOHNSON: The answer is "yes".

NAVIN SHAH: Chair, as someone who lives in Harrow and represents Harrow I support the whole business about commercial

flights, which is a huge concern not only for people in Northolt but around in the west -- north-west, like Harrow. Gareth Thomas has supported this issue -- has raised this issue in Parliament about the safety review.

It is paramount, absolutely important that it is made public. I don't see why they've got to hide the review about safety because that affects every single resident who lives around and far afield.

Thank you.

FROM THE FLOOR: Hello, yeah, I'd like to talk about youth centres and youth work and specifically in Harrow as well. My name is Jayshan and I am from the Harrow Youth Parliament and I live in Harrow as well. Recently there has been a proposal to move the Harrow civic centre to a new location in Willesden. This will get rid of the only youth centre we have left that's run by Harrow council in the whole borough. Although it's not in a prime location and it is well run -- I can tell you from personal experience it has helped me with personal problems and just a place for me to go to chill.

But my question to you, Mr Mayor, and to Mr Shah, is what's happening with children's services and with youth services?

Because all over the borough, all over the city, all over the country these places are being closed and places for the youth to go are being shut off more and more and more.

ONKAR SAHOTA: I think we will answer the question. Thank

you. (...**Applause**...). Mr Mayor.

BORIS JOHNSON: Well, I'm very sorry to hear that the Labour-run Harrow Council is closing your youth centre. I will look into it. But there are plenty of boroughs such as Hillingdon where they are able to cut council tax and maintain fantastic public services. Actually, I think they opened 17 libraries where young people could go and improve themselves in all kinds of ways. Six were closed in Harrow, but I don't want to belabour this point: Harrow is not run by the Conservatives.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Okay, Mr Mayor, thank you. I know that Mr Shah has been named by the questioner so Mr Shah, do you want to come in?

NAVIN SHAH: Yes, thank you, Chair.

On the question of youth facilities in Willesden, I will be very happy to pick up this issue. I'm aware about the proposals. These are proposals at the moment to have -- as part of the regeneration scheme a civic centre within the Willesden area. One thing which is very important, it doesn't matter what the colour of the Local Authority is, wherever it is, if any facility is lost, like a youth facility, that there is an equivalent actually enhanced facility available elsewhere.

This is something I give a commitment, I will work with you to make sure that the youth do not suffer in any shape or form in terms of facilities that you have.

With regards to other aspects, let's remember why local authorities like Harrow have to make cuts that they don't want to. Because there's 30 per cent cuts right across imposed by the Government, a Tory Government. You know, so this is the root cause of the problem why councils are forced into taking unpalatable --

ONKAR SAHOTA: Right, Mr Shah, thanks very much for that.

FROM THE FLOOR: Yes, thank you.

FROM THE FLOOR: Right. I'm just going to go back to housing. Because you didn't give me the opportunity initially. So, what everyone has said about housing, I wrote to Mr Boris's office a couple of weeks ago about housing. I own my property and I've worked hard for it. So we have a big problem with housing within Hillingdon -- well, generally in London. To find out -- I mean, I have an uncle who lives in Hackney and for me I believe that there should be consistency all through. He's lived there in his flat, a two-bedroom flat on his own, he works, he's well in his 60s. Two-bedroom flat he had, a flat he lives in, he was evicted about, say, earlier on in the year because he lives on his own in a two-bedroom flat and he had to downsize.

Bedroom tax.

Whereas in Hillingdon -- I'm going to go back to the lady who works for the council who spoke earlier about housing in the pink, that's her -- I think you should get back to your writing board, to your board, and do more work where you can get back to the office and

look into people, tenants, Hillingdon tenants, living in a three-bedroomed house, two adults living in three-bedroom, a massive house, on benefit, not working, living a better life, to downsize. That's what I think should happen across the board.

ONKAR SAHOTA: What's your question please?

FROM THE FLOOR: My question is why isn't that happening in Hillingdon? Why is the council -- the lady has worked with the council for several years -- not looking into that? I would like that to be looked into because I know a few people who actually live in that sort of accommodation that are not meant to be, they are meant to be downsized.

So, I mean, I put the question through to the Assembly. Please. Thank you.

BORIS JOHNSON: Look, it's a very, very difficult and emotionally-charged question because what you are saying is can the rule that has led to your uncle being removed from his flat and forced to downsize in Hackney, you want to see that applied elsewhere in London and people living in this borough in large -- in homes with three bedrooms or two people should downsize as well. Look, I -- and you say that they sublet as well.

All I can say is Hillingdon Council are here in force. Here they all are. I will make sure we take up your point. I have had -- in my surgery I have had people come to see me about this very problem, but I think really you ought to talk to Hillingdon Council.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you. Tom, did you want to come in quickly?

TOM COPLEY: Yes. Just quickly on the issue of the bedroom tax. I mean, the bedroom tax was imposed nationwide by the Conservative Government. Obviously we'd have to look at the specific instances that you mentioned, but it's a nationwide scheme whether or not you are in Hackney or you are in Hillingdon. You are affected by it if you are deemed to be under-occupying a property and happen to be claiming benefits.

Of course one of the problems that was faced was there simply weren't enough properties, smaller properties, for people to downsize into. Often people were pushed from lower rent social housing into the private rented sector into a smaller property, but having to claim more in benefits because it happened to be in the private rented sector. So it was a policy that made very little sense.

I just want to say this. The assault by the Government on benefits I think is particularly pernicious, because most of us at some points were not always on benefits or always in work, we go between.

I've been on benefits, many people have been on benefits.

There's very few people who spend their entire lives on benefits.

Yet you have a government which is mischaracterising people

I think in a very cynical way. I think that's something we need to

fight back against. When people are in need they require support.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you, Tom. (...Applause...) FROM

THE FLOOR: I promise I'll be quick.

There's a question for Dr Sahota, actually. I'd like to know, Dr Sahota, why have you been lying about the potential closure of Ealing Hospital. No one has proposed that Ealing Hospital is going to close. Why have you been spreading this fear mongering and lying about it?

ONKAR SAHOTA: Well, again this is a question which I wasn't going to answer because I'm the Chair of the meeting, but I am not going to to duck it.

Let me tell you, when a hospital loses its maternity department, loses its pediatrics, loses its A&E department that it can't accept the blue lights, when it's a hospital which loses all its beds; if it doesn't walk like a duck, it doesn't look like a duck, it doesn't have the feathers of a duck, it isn't a duck. It's a hospital without an A&E department, a hospital without a maternity department, a hospital without a paediatric isn't called a hospital, it's just a building of bricks. That's the answer.

So thank you very much for that last question and giving me the opportunity of answering it. I'm really delighted by having the opportunity to clarify that issue.

And, look -- no, well you'll be dead. You'll be dead, my friend, if you turn up at that one. Okay. So, look, I am chairing this meeting and I want to -- I think there are probably two minutes left,

we'll take the last question.

FROM THE FLOOR: I've been trying to downsize. I want to go on to the Mayor's Seaside and Country Home Scheme through medical reasons.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Yes.

FROM THE FLOOR: My husband is over 60, but because I am just under 60, under Hillingdon Council we are joint tenants. Under the Mayor's scheme I am not allowed to be a tenant, I have no rights to succession. What happens to me if my husband dies before I reach 60? Am I on the streets?

We've also --

ONKAR SAHOTA: We'll ask the Mayor to answer the question.

FROM THE FLOOR: We've also registered with the locator scheme under Hillingdon. Three months I'm still waiting for my registration and in that time they lost all my identity documents.

ONKAR SAHOTA: Thank you. Look, I really feel your pain. Mr Mayor.

BORIS JOHNSON: Well, if you are trying to downsize through the Seaside and Country Homes Scheme and you are worried that you will lose your tenancy, is that right? I don't think there's any risk -- I don't think there's any risk of that. **(Pause)**. So if he dies before you turn 60 you are worried that you will forfeit your rights. Would you -- that's exactly -- I understand the problem.

I understand the problem.

I don't think you will forfeit your rights because you will have gone on to the scheme, but you've got in the front row all the expertise you could possibly need. Sir Edward Lister, who is there, because I see Rick has left, I don't know where Rick has gone. He ran. We're going to help you. Look, I'm going to put my hands up, I don't know what the answer is but we're going to help you.

(Pause)

ONKAR SAHOTA: I think, Mr Mayor has -- Boris has said that he'll take your case on. We need to bring this to an end. A lot of my Assembly members have to go back a long way.

Thank you very much for attending and participating. If your question hasn't been answered please put it into the foyer and we'll get it answered to you within six weeks. Don't forget to give your feedback. Thank you very much. Have a safe journey home.

Thank you very much.

(9.00 pm)

(The Meeting Concluded)
