

London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time) - 22 October 2014

Transcript of Agenda Item 5 – Questions to the Mayor

2014/4042 - Cycle superhighways**Darren Johnson**

How many Cycle Superhighways will be delivered by 2016?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you, Darren. The answer to your question - the short answer - is that there will be 11 completed or virtually completed, I believe, and one irreversibly begun. It will be unstoppable! It will be *unumstoßbar*, as they say in Germany. I could give you the list of those if you would like.

Darren Johnson AM: No, that is OK. No-one doubts now the quality of the new Cycle Superhighway plans that are coming forward compared to the original round. However, in terms of actual completion, you are leaving an awful lot to the next Mayor of London, aren't you?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have just explained to you that actually we will do 11 out of 12. I am sure the next Mayor of London will be a Conservative, but even if by some disaster, *per impossibile*, there should be a Mayor from some other party, it will not be beyond his or her powers I would have thought to complete one Cycle Superhighway if we have left that unfinished by 2016.

Darren Johnson AM: Cycle Superhighway (CS) 1 and CS11 are not due to be built by autumn 2016 and the CS4 extensions not finished until 2017. The outer section of CS5 will be complete but not the inner extension. You are leaving quite a lot to the next Mayor, are you not?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No. My information is that we are going to have delivered all except one by 2016. Therefore, I think you should rejoice. Obviously, it is our job to get as much done as fast as possible.

However, to get back to your first point, which was about the initial round of Cycle Superhighways, I reject the insinuation that they were all substandard schemes. Obviously, some of them have worked extremely well. Others like CS2 we have had to revise and to improve. That will be the case, by the way, even with these schemes. I do not think Londoners should run away with the idea that you can always model these things right in the abstract first time. We will do our level best, but every scheme is going to be subject to improvement and revision.

Darren Johnson AM: Your own Cycling Commissioner, Andrew Gilligan, has been quite --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): He is London's Cycling Commissioner.

Darren Johnson AM: -- scathing about some of the original Cycle Superhighways that were put in before he came into office.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is a feature of those arriving in office not necessarily to be full of praise for everything that has gone before in order thereby to intensify the magnificence of their own achievements! That is just a fact of human nature that we have to grapple with. I differ from Andrew [Gilligan]

on that. I think that actually what we did with the Cycle Superhighways was right. Yes, you could improve them and we are improving them, but there is a great legacy to build on.

Darren Johnson AM: You are redoing a number of sections of them and that suggests that you do concede there were major shortcomings with the original round of Cycle Superhighways.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I always approach these things in a spirit of absolute humility because you can never be certain when you embark on an intervention on the roads whether it is actually going to work in the way that you think it is going to work.

Darren Johnson AM: People told you at the time --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Some of them are working fantastically well. On some of them obviously - like at Bow Roundabout - it was necessary to make significant improvements. Now, as a habitual user, for instance, of CS2 at Bow Roundabout - and I do not whether anybody else uses it a lot - I think it is vastly improved.

Darren Johnson AM: People told you --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That junction is now superb and it is infuriating when I see people actually ignoring the very, very useful traffic lights that we have installed and still jumping the lights. They are absolutely crazy to do so.

Darren Johnson AM: People warned you at the time, though, as the plans were coming forward that merely splashing blue paint on the road, not providing segregation and not redoing the junctions properly would actually lull people into a false sense of security and would not provide any real protection for cyclists. That has been proved right, has it not?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I disagree. I do have a fundamental disagreement about this with many people. I do not think that it is actually sensible everywhere to provide full-scale segregation. You cannot do it on London's streets. They are too narrow. The space is too heavily contested. It would be disastrous for the economy and it would be disastrous for other road users. Therefore, it is not a runner.

I do not despise the use of blue paint. Blue paint can actually make a huge psychological difference to the environment. It makes it clear to motorists that this is a place --

Darren Johnson AM: If it is done with other measures, yes.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- where they are going to find cyclists. All I am telling you is that I just think it is a shot that we need to keep in our repertoire because, if you want to expand cycling in London, you are going to have to continue to be inventive.

Darren Johnson AM: Finally, huge numbers of cyclists have expressed deep concern about the chairing arrangements for Transport for London's (TfL) Finance Committee and the fact that the chairman of that committee, which will be making decisions on the funding for the Cycle Superhighways, is a senior director of one of the main companies that have been lobbying against the Cycle Superhighways. Surely there is a conflict of interest there.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Peter Anderson [Managing Director of Finance, Canary Wharf Group plc] is a distinguished member of the TfL Board and at the beginning of every Board meeting he rightly declares and registers his interest, as do the representatives of the private hire vehicle trade, the taxi trade and everybody who has a very serious interest in this matter.

Darren Johnson AM: When you have a pecuniary interest, the expectation should be that you leave the room and not take part in the decisions.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It would be very rude if people who knew about this matter were forbidden from discussing it. Clearly, the taxi trade and the private hire trade likewise could be said to have a direct pecuniary interest in the outcome of the Cycle Superhighway plans because it is their contention - and we have to take it very seriously - that this would lead to substantial delays in London and make it more difficult to get around. We want a Cycle Superhighway. However we are going to have to get one that is optimal rather than maximalist, if I can put it that way.

Darren Johnson AM: It means one that Peter Anderson has to be happy with, then, clearly.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is not necessarily the case. It may be that into every life some rain must fall, Darren, and that is the way it is sometimes.

Darren Johnson AM: Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Sometimes a city has to do some bold and ambitious things.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Just continuing this theme of promoting cycling safety in London, I asked a written question at the last Mayor's Question Time about how things were going with the 33 dangerous junctions that were being worked on under the Better Junctions programme. I was given no answer and was told this information would be released in coming months, despite the fact that the Assembly had had no detailed information on this for an entire year and it is an important issue.

I spoke to the 'cycling czar' [Andrew Gilligan, Cycling Commissioner] only yesterday and he told me that only 11 junctions under that programme of 33 will be completed by 2016. Mr Mayor, given that you wanted to promote a 'cycling revolution' and it was your key message when you came into office in 2008, are you not ashamed that you will have improved only 11 junctions under this programme?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No. Do not be absurd. It is a daily source of wonderment and joy to me that we are doing so much. If you look at the cuts to budgets around the country that every public institution had to face, it is amazing that we have been able to consecrate £913 million to the improvement of roads and junctions. I do not have the advantage of the figures that you mentioned just now, but I have no doubt at all that we are going to blast on with a programme of not just putting in the Cycle Superhighways that I have mentioned to Darren [Johnson], but also the Quietways, the inner London cycle grid, the expansion of the cycle hire scheme and the improvements to the roundabouts and junctions that you specify.

I want to stress that this is not being done solely in the interests of cyclists; it will be to the advantage of all road users.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: The thing is, Mr Mayor, that there has been cross-party support for this programme. We are all keen to see these dangerous junctions improved and 70% of accidents happen at junctions. We started off with a desktop list of 500 junctions to be looked at. That list went down to 100.

Some of those projects went into the Cycle Superhighways. We are now down at 33. Actually, there is a huge overhang. You are going to get only 11 of these junctions completed --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Come on.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: -- by 2016. Sadly, one of the junctions that was on the list of 100 has been the scene of the latest very tragic incident. The London Cycling Campaign Chief Executive said, when talking about Ludgate Circus,

"This is a junction we have complained about for some time. There was a death there earlier this year and obviously it's still a dangerous junction."

Can we have some sense of urgency about this issue and can we have some transparency and openness because --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I really think, Val, you sat there -- come on --

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: -- we all want to see you actually leave a good legacy in this area. We would like to see you get this work done.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Your wishes are going to be fulfilled, Val, because we are putting in huge amounts of money to our roads and to our junctions. Actually, as Londoners will know, we are seeing a considerable fall in people killed or seriously injured (KSIs) and that has been achieved not just through the interventions we are making in the road surface but also particularly by Operation Safeway, which the police launched. This, if you will remember, was initially the subject of a great deal of suspicion by cyclists. However, they have fined loads of motorists and loads of cyclists and they have brought down deaths and serious injuries on the roads. That is what this is all about. We are also seeing a huge expansion in the number of cyclists and I am very proud of that.

Richard Tracey AM: Mr Mayor, do you ever feel the same suspicions that I have that if you were a member of the Green Party, the Labour Party or the Liberal Democrat Party, there would be much more praise coming from them of your cycling plans and of what you have achieved since 2008?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I certainly think that it comes a little oddly from them that they seek to beat me up quite so much about this matter when we really have put it front and centre of our plans and have achieved a huge amount.

Darren Johnson AM: You had some praise.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We had some praise? Sorry. I had some praise from my cousin Darren. I am obliged to him.

Richard Tracey AM: I think there is a general view that the whole network that you have been producing over the last six years is actually pretty impressive, despite this sort of carping criticism you are getting from the other parties.

However, can I pursue one other point? The network will be near to completion only when you have done far more in the outer London boroughs, the mini-Hollands and the Quietways. You have mentioned the Quietways. When are we going to have the final specific figures for the spending? I know there was a press

release issued by TfL yesterday about the outer London boroughs, but we really do need to know precise figures pretty quickly from, I guess, TfL as well as Andrew Gilligan [Cycling Commissioner].

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. I should have said that the mini-Hollands are another feature of the cycling revolution and several outer London boroughs are now getting that going.

The exact sums I cannot give you off the top of my head. The £913 million you know. That is the overall package. I cannot tell you what we have pushed out of the door so far, but I would be happy to try to find that if we can.

Richard Tracey AM: I have put down a written question to you asking that and perhaps you will answer it quickly.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): OK. I will do my best to get an answer to you as fast as possible.

Richard Tracey AM: Thank you.

**2014/3606 - Oxford Street
Stephen Knight**

Will you look again at plans to pedestrianise Oxford Street?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. Thank you very much, Stephen. This is the sort of Schleswig-Holstein question of London traffic because everybody in abstract would love to do what you would propose and just pedestrianise it. It is only when they start to look at the consequences for retail and the actual economic impact that they shy away.

Whilst I am very interested in your study and I see that you have some people who support it, the problem I have is that the West End Partnership of big shops does not want it. The New West End Company (NWEC) does not want it. The residents of course would suffer grievously from buses that had been diverted off Oxford Street going up their streets. It would be absolute hell for many people living in the vicinity.

Therefore, we need to look at some very cunning solutions and we are. We are looking at all sorts of ways of connecting the shops higher up with *passerelles* or skyways or whatever. Other schemes like that are now under consideration.

I am going to be honest with you; full pedestrianisation of Oxford Street, Stephen, is just not something that we can impose against the very clear wishes of the major retailers, who would, they believe, lose footfall.

Stephen Knight AM: Thank you, Mayor, for that answer and for having looked at the report that I published yesterday as my contribution to this debate.

You talked about the consequences and there are clearly consequences for the people using the shops, the customers, as well as for the shops. In terms of trade, when we have had very-important-person (VIP) days, we have seen the footfall on Oxford Street massively increasing. In other words, more people flock to Oxford Street to do their shopping when it is traffic-free.

The consequences at the moment of the traffic on Oxford Street are that shoppers face one of the most dangerous streets in London. In terms of road traffic accidents with one person knocked down on Oxford Street

every five days on average and we know that in terms of nitrogen dioxide pollution, we have the highest recorded rates of that pollutant in Oxford Street of anywhere in the world that has been measured.

In terms of the current situation, it clearly is not sustainable and there is a huge impact. We have some evidence that pedestrianising it increases the number of people wanting to use it.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is not true. Unfortunately, what happens is --

Stephen Knight AM: If you talk to shoppers they all want to see it.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is not true. Actually, when they have the traffic-free days there, their footfall goes down.

Stephen Knight AM: That is not, Mr Mayor, what you and indeed the NWEA were saying when they were promoting the car-free days, is it, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am afraid that is not what happens. The second point is -- I do not buy clothes very often. I buy clothes about once every two years.

Two years ago, I had a brilliant idea and I thought I would go to Marks & Spencer on Oxford Street and just stock up on clothes. The way I did it was I caught a bus because I thought it would be too difficult to drive. It was absolutely fantastic. The bus took me virtually door-to-door. I loaded on all sorts of stuff and Bob's your uncle. I would not have been able to do that under your crazy pedestrianisation scheme.

Stephen Knight AM: Lots of people do their shopping in pedestrianised shopping centres, don't they?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Most of the retailers in Oxford Street - virtually all of them - agree with this fundamental point. Although they want fewer buses, they do not want no buses.

Stephen Knight AM: As my report points out, we could have an electric shuttle bus.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Can I advise you to consult with your neighbour on your immediate right, who has actually --

Stephen Knight AM: I do, frequently.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- produced some very good work on this and understands the problems extremely well. With Victoria's [Victoria Borwick AM] investigations into Oxford Street - and I do not wish in any to minimise what you have done - she has really spent a long time looking at it, thinking about it, and representing the views of everybody on Oxford Street. The solution that you propose, whilst dramatic and interesting, is not one that in the end is going to commend itself to anyone.

I will give you another reason. If you look at long pedestrian precincts anywhere in this country or indeed around the world, if you deprive them of the activating effect and the enlivening effect of at least some traffic, they can become very dead and very different in their characters. Not every pedestrian precinct around the world is always an attractive place to be; I just saw that thought in your mind, Stephen. When you call for complete pedestrianisation, I do not think it is the way forward.

Stephen Knight AM: Thank you for that. What I will say is that it is astonishing that you think it is beyond human ingenuity to find solutions to pedestrianising Oxford Street.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, I do not, but all I am saying is --

Stephen Knight AM: I am not calling for you to reroute the Nile. I am asking you to reroute some buses.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not think that. I am just saying that your particular solution is not, I think, one that will succeed.

There are fantastic solutions. You could do a tram. However, the difficulty would then be that you would have huge termini at either end, you would have to work out the interchange between the buses and the tram at both ends and you would have a big land take, to say nothing of the expense involved. You could do a cable car. You could.

Stephen Knight AM: Perhaps on that note, Mr Chairman --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You could try a cable car. I will --

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): I think we are speculating now. Assembly Member --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, I am not. I am not. No, on the contrary --

Stephen Knight AM: I hope, Mr Mayor, you will read my report and give it very thorough consideration.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): These are not my proposals, by the way, but proposals by private sector developers who came forward with an interesting scheme for a cable car. I do not think that is likely, unfortunately, to commend itself, either.

Richard Tracey AM: I was actually going to raise the impracticality of this questioning, particularly as regards deliveries, but I think you have answered that.

However, the other thing that I would like to raise - talking about Oxford Street and its traffic - is that of course once Crossrail with its stations at Tottenham Court Road and at Bond Street appears, it will cause further problems with congestion on Oxford Street. This is going to require some very serious consideration of the bus ideas that Victoria Borwick produced and so on. Is this in the consideration of TfL?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am not certain that it will cause more. What will happen in 2018 is that there will be a period in which the combination of the Central line and Crossrail actually could do something to alleviate east-west traffic. At that moment, it might be possible to do something with the buses and I can assure that that is the view. Your point is well made.

I do not, as it happens, think that full-scale pedestrianisation is likely to be the right answer, but it is certainly up there in TfL's plans.

Kit Malthouse AM: Mr Mayor, I am sure you are aware that this is a chestnut that the city has been chewing on for at least all of my political life in London, which is now, sadly, approaching 20 years, and that nobody has yet come up with a workable solution.

However, are you aware that pedestrianisation has been tried in the West End before? Back when I was a councillor at Westminster, on the urging of the businesses in and around Soho to the south of Oxford Street, we put in a pedestrianisation scheme. We had rising bollards and it was closed for certain times of the day. Within six weeks of us putting in the scheme, they were screaming to take it out because of exactly what you said; the cleansing nature, if you like, of traffic and the animating nature of traffic.

The other issue, which is one I am sure you would agree with, is that pedestrianisation often makes life a nightmare for people who live in and around the area in terms of both access and the type of activity that they get taking place. Would you agree that one of the key points of success of the West End and particularly the area around Oxford Street is that there is a large residential population that is maintained in that area and is constantly under threat, not least from commercial development, and that the consideration of the maintenance of them in the centre of town is as important as the perceived success of the businesses?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Absolutely. There are many competing interests. There is probably a very ingenious solution out there and we are working on it now. Isabel Dedring [Deputy Mayor for Transport] is tasked with it. One of the many nuts she has to crack is this problem and I am determined to do it. All I am signalling this morning is that I am not convinced that full-scale pedestrianisation is likely to be the winner.

Kit Malthouse AM: Would you also agree that part of the attraction of the West End and Oxford Street in particular is - and I know it is a slightly odd thing to say - its slightly chaotic nature and that if we try, as many people try, to turn Oxford Street and the West End into Westfield without the parking, it will fail?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is a very shrewd and interesting point, one that Simon Milton [former Chief of Staff] often used to make to me about Oxford Street. It does have an extraordinary organic vibrancy and success. In spite of being bookended now by Westfield, it continues to do amazing well. They obviously have something right.

2014/3658 - Local Policing - Resources and Visibility

Joanne McCartney

In your review on the Local Policing Model what areas have you so far identified for change or improvement?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The Local Policing Model (LPM) is barely a year old and we are still drawing conclusions about its operation. However, just so you know, we are doing a review and, as soon as we have more to give you about the changes that we think are necessary, we will of course share them.

The objective is, as you know, to get more officers into neighbourhood teams and to get more visibility. I know you have a concern about visibility in some areas and, where we can address those, we will.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. Mr Mayor, we were told by the Deputy Commissioner at our last Police and Crime Committee that the Metropolitan Police Service's review into the LPM was going to the management board last Tuesday and that it would be sent straight away the following day to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). Have you actually seen that?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have not seen it, I am sorry to say, but as soon as we have something to give you, we shall.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. Mr Mayor, can I just check a few things with you, though? When we changed to the LPM, you assured Londoners that the minimum they would have per ward would be one police

constable (PC) and one police community support officer (PCSO). Is that still a commitment that you are prepared to make?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The LPM guarantees one PC and one PCSO per ward and guarantees that they will not be extracted except for exceptional events.

Joanne McCartney AM: OK. Is that a commitment you are prepared to make going forward and that you are not going to strip that down further?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. Just so you know, in Haringey and Enfield, which you represent, there has been an increase in officers, for instance --

Joanne McCartney AM: I am asking about the minimum per ward. Are you guaranteeing going forward that that one PC and one PCSO will be the minimum?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, that is the commitment under the LPM.

Joanne McCartney AM: OK. You are going to have that commitment going forward?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): To the best of my knowledge, that is the intention.

Joanne McCartney AM: The reason I ask is because the Commissioner told us in July that he thought the balance had gone the wrong way and that he might need to put some more dedicated officers back in.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Back into Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs)?

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes. However, Stephen Greenhalgh, your Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, on 9 October said that he was actually unsure and I am quoting him,

“Creating a universal entitlement of ‘these are the number of officers in neighbourhoods’ at a ward level is [certainly] not ... right either.”

There seems to be some difference between the two and I want your guarantee that you are not going to strip it back further.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I see what you are driving at, but I do not think there is much inconsistency there, really. Both Stephen and Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] are committing to having an SNT per ward, as we always have been.

The exact numbers clearly have to be a bit flexible. That is what I have always said. The original geometry of the SNTs and endlessly telling Londoners that every ward would have a certain pyramid formation of officers and PCSOs I thought was always unrealistic and not likely to be the best formula for fighting crime. The acid test is what is happening with the numbers and crime is coming down, as you know, very substantially and is down about 6% just in one year.

Joanne McCartney AM: Can I just come to that point you have just made, Mr Mayor. I am glad you have made the commitment that it is not going to be stripped down further. Residents are telling me and I am going to quote from a couple of residents here, one from the Green Street area in North Enfield, who says,

“Over the last year things have got worse around here. We don’t ever see police patrolling the streets.”

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Green Street?

Joanne McCartney AM: Hold on. I have already quoted at the last meeting to you that residents associations are complaining that their policing teams do not report back to them anymore and that they often cancel attendance at very short notice.

I have tried to find out by putting Mayor’s Questions to you how many officers I have in my wards who are dedicated and how many are in this flexible number that can move around. You have been unable to give that to me, saying that the Metropolitan Police Service does not hold that data centrally. It begs the question to me how you can know what is going on and monitor it if the Metropolitan Police Service is not actually providing that --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Presumably, you have raised it with the Borough Commander, have you?

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes, but I am asking --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What has he told you?

Joanne McCartney AM: Hold on. I am asking across London and I am told that the Metropolitan Police Service does not hold it centrally. How can they monitor and how can you then monitor them and have oversight? Will you look into that, Mr Mayor? It seems to be a gap in the data collection.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am interested by what you say. All I can say is that in the figures I have - and I have figures for Enfield and Haringey - for the officers appointed to neighbourhoods, for instance, in Enfield there will be by next year 144 compared to 61 in 2011. That is an increase of 136%.

Joanne McCartney AM: You are talking about neighbourhoods as a whole. Mr Mayor, I think you are missing the point.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): In Haringey, there will be an increase from 55 to 144 and that is a 162% increase. What we are trying to do is to get officers out on the streets.

Joanne McCartney AM: Mr Mayor, I think you are missing the point. We have this number of officers, but the Metropolitan Police Service does not hold data centrally as to how many of them are dedicated to wards and how many of them are in a flexible model. We know that they are abstracted. I want that data --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course, one of the things that we have been very clear on is that you have to give Borough Commanders some flexibility as to how they run their SNTs. That is the way to bring down crime. I repeat what I said: crime is coming down very substantially. The commitment that we have made is that there will be one PC and one PCSO in every ward.

I am very happy, obviously, to find out from your Borough Commanders - and I am sure you can do it yourself, but I am very happy to do it on your behalf - the composition of the SNTs in your constituency.

Joanne McCartney AM: I am interested in it across London as a whole, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am sure that information is not too difficult to obtain from your Borough Commander.

Len Duvall AM: Mr Mayor, back in July you were in attendance at the Police and Crime Committee with the Commissioner. I then asked you a question around sanction detections. "Crime is coming down. We have less crime to investigate. A renewed focus locally.", is what you are trying to tell us around this table. Sanction detections are getting worse. I asked you in July what we should be doing. You agreed with me that it was an issue.

What have we done since July in terms of improving sanction detections? Are you bringing people to book, getting results and solving crime?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I share your concern, Len, about the sanction detection rates and it is one of the things that we bring up regularly with the Metropolitan Police Service.

There are all sorts of issues that we also need to address. One of them is obviously that we need to make sure the criminal justice system is working fluently and successfully to make sure that when a crime is committed it is properly dealt with and properly punished. That is one of the reasons why the London Crime Reduction Board (LCRB) has been trying to bring together all the parties to make sure that files are properly processed and that much better use is made of electronic communication between the parties to speed things up.

I do not have the figures here before me, Len, I am afraid, about what is happening with sanction detection --

Len Duvall AM: Mr Mayor, on a rolling programme, let me help you--

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- but you can take it from me that, as crime comes down, we may face the possibility that we are getting better at cracking the easier crimes and therefore the sanction detection rate may not be so easy to bring down. I will undertake to go back and look at the figures since we last spoke and see what success we have been having. Failures on sanction detection have not been brought to my attention recently by MOPAC but I am certainly happy to look at them.

Len Duvall AM: It is a poor record, Mr Mayor. It is not moving in the way that maybe it should be moving. Really, I do not think it is unreasonable for me to ask what progress has been made since July.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is not at all unreasonable and I accept it. It is not at all unreasonable, Len, and I know that Londoners want to see criminals punished. They want to see the mills of justice grind small and they should be. There are many moving parts in this, not all of which are directly under the control of the Metropolitan Police Service. However we are working very hard to bring together all the parties concerned to try to make sure that criminals get properly caught and punished.

Len Duvall AM: Mr Mayor, will you write to Members of this Assembly just outlining that progress and what steps you are going to take?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I shall. I am more than happy to do that. Just do not be in any doubt, Len, that we do take sanction detection extremely seriously. As crime has been falling, our focus has moved on to that and we want to do better. I understand your impatience.

2014/3634 - Sir Peter Hendy

Richard Tracey

Were you made aware of Sir Peter Hendy's intended newspaper interview remarks regarding potential 'riots' over transport services in London and the level of fares?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Dick, I read Sir Peter's [Sir Peter Hendy, Commissioner, TfL] interview and I have to say I thought he made a very good point because what he was arguing, which is a point I have made many times myself, is that you need to invest in transport infrastructure. That was the gist of what Sir Peter was saying. A fine servant of London he is and indeed a fine advocate of the cause of investing in public transport.

Richard Tracey AM: Mr Mayor, it is very kind of you to say that about the Commissioner. What I am more concerned about is that we have talked about provision of facilities, buses, trains, boats, bikes and all the rest of it, but had he ever mentioned this point about civil unrest to you privately?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): A chap is entitled to reach for a colourful metaphor in the course of an interview with the *Guardian*. He was trying in some way to animate a debate and a conversation about investment in transport infrastructure, which does not always get absolutely everybody going. He needed to get the *Guardian* to focus on what he was saying - which is not always easy - and he plucked an idea out of the sky.

His general point was a very good one, which was that London is growing very fast, we have a huge and growing population and we need to invest in transport. What he was arguing, which is absolutely true, is that with the cost of housing being what it is, you have to be able to move your workforce as quickly and as cheaply as possible from their place of work to where they live and I completely agree.

Richard Tracey AM: There is no denying that, but had he ever mentioned to you that it could lead to civil unrest?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): He is not honour-bound to clear every colourful metaphor that he wishes to use. That is totally absurd. I am sure he was speaking in a -- He was trying to grip the attention of his audience and of his readers and he did. Let us face it; unless you invest properly in this great city, you will have social injustices and you will have people facing real hardship. His point was very well made.

Richard Tracey AM: You will probably recollect, it was on that very spot that he and you were questioned by us in the Plenary Assembly about all the matters of transport and TfL and he never hinted at any point during that session on 10 September that he was fearing civil unrest if there were not various provisions of transport and --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not --

Richard Tracey AM: Could I just finish, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course, yes.

Richard Tracey AM: It seems rather extraordinary that then, on 21 September - which incidentally I think was the beginning of the Labour Party conference week - he gave an interview along these lines to the *Guardian*.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No. Peter noticed that his words had been slightly shall we say 'glammed up' by the headline writers and he was good enough to tell me spontaneously that the interview was not given, as I think you suspect, in the context of some Labour Party meeting. He gave the interview over the phone when he was on holiday and he was searching for a metaphor to describe the consequences of a failure to invest in transport. It was perhaps hyperbolic, but hyperbole is not the worst of sins. Perhaps it was an exaggeration; however, it was a rhetorical trick to make a point.

The point is a very good one and it is that you have to invest in transport infrastructure. Unless you invest in transport infrastructure and unless you enable people to live near their places of work, there will be a risk of hardship and injustice.

Richard Tracey AM: On 10 September, we put various points to him --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Do you disagree with that? It seems common sense to me. I do not know why this is going on and on.

Richard Tracey AM: No, I would not disagree that you have to invest and we have joined you in the past in lobbying the Government for just that.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is the spirit. Let us unite.

Richard Tracey AM: Of course, we shall continue to do so. However, on 10 September, Sir Peter Hendy was asked about various costings. We put to him then various Greater London Authority (GLA) Conservatives policies for raising money for TfL and indeed for cutting some of the costs. He did not say anything then about the potential for civil unrest, did he?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): All I can repeat is that a chap is perfectly entitled in the course of an interview with the *Guardian* to reach for a metaphor, image or a hyperbolic expression to get over what he is trying to say about the importance of investing in transport without having his words endlessly thereafter crawled over. I do not think it is a matter of great reproach.

Actually, as I say, the point he was making is fundamentally valid. You have to invest in transport to enable good housing to go ahead. If you fail to have enough good housing that is accessible for people, you will get problems. Look at what is happening in Hong Kong, which is not exclusively about democracy but also about housing. Sorry, I am being heckled as usual by my friend Mr Biggs --

Richard Tracey AM: You are.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You can only make the places affordable, you can only make them viable, and you can only create the housing if you put in the transport infrastructure. That is what we are doing. That is why we are going ahead with all of the schemes that we are.

Richard Tracey AM: I do not deny that. It is the specific timing of this interview.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am at a loss, frankly. What is the conspiracy here? Why should he not say that?

Richard Tracey AM: Partly, as I started, I asked you whether he had ever had this discussion with you privately, which --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We have had endless discussions about the need to invest in transport infrastructure. Actually, Peter has always made the point to me that it is grossly unjust to expect people to live a long way away from their place of work and to spend huge amounts of time commuting. That is true. People need good housing and they need housing that is well connected with the economic centre of this city. That is why you have to invest in transport. I fail to see in what way Sir Peter has erred.

Richard Tracey AM: Given his position as a public servant, I would say that if an equivalent like a Permanent Secretary in a Government department gave an interview like this without any kind of explanation or discussion with the Secretary of State of that department, it would be severely criticised.

The other thing, Mr Mayor, is that we felt on this side of the Chamber that this interview appeared on 21 September and that he may have given the interview while he was on holiday but --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will tell you. Let me try. I understand what you are saying. If I had to read some purpose into what Sir Peter was trying to say, there is obviously always a vanishingly small but theoretical risk that there could be a Labour Government and there is a theoretical risk that there could be a Labour Mayor. What he is trying to get over is that it has been the policy of previous Labour candidates supported by the party opposite to offer absolutely ludicrous cuts in budgets in the form of fare cuts that they know the city simply cannot afford. What Sir Peter is trying to argue is that any Labour manifesto, any proposal or any ludicrous 'Milibandary' of that kind would be disastrous and would be absolutely against the interests of this city. He is completely right.

Richard Tracey AM: It just seemed to us rather unfortunate that the interview appeared on 21 September, which happened to coincide with the beginning of the Labour Party conference, and then of course the TfL Commissioner was at the conference and was interviewed on the television about this very point. Do you not think that was all rather unfortunate, given his position as a public servant?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If I may say so, Dick, I must say that unusually you are belabouring a complete non-point and have done now for quite some time. I do not see any problem at all. He was making a perfectly valid point about the need to invest in transport infrastructure in order to deliver the housing developments we all need. It was a very sensible point and it goes to the heart of the debate about how London needs to grow and expand. I do not see any problem in him using colourful language to get that message over.

Richard Tracey AM: OK. I will leave it there. Thank you.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: I am interested to hear that you agreed with Sir Peter Hendy because, as well as a colourful metaphor, as you call it, he made some very clear analytical factual statements. One was that the growth in bus demand has far outstripped the mileage because we have not had the money. Another was that he talked about people on low pay and said, "A future mayor is going to have to make sure they can afford to get to work".

Do you not think, Mr Mayor, that this is actually quite a serious indictment of your treatment of bus passengers in this city? They have had a particularly poor deal under your mayoralty.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Come on! Under this mayoralty, as you know, we have been able to hold down fares at the retail price index (RPI) rather than RPI plus 1% now for the second year running. We maintain concessions in London of a kind that no other place in the country has like a 24-hour Freedom Pass

for those over 60, concessions for young people which are not available anywhere else in the country, for those in search of work, for injured war veterans and so on. We have an absolutely massive and growing bus service and we also have massive and growing demand.

What Peter is rightly saying is that you cannot go to Londoners or to the country promising huge cuts in budgets for buses caused by fare cuts. As you will remember, you campaigned only a couple of years ago on a manifesto to take more than £1 billion out of TfL's budgets with a ludicrous fare cut that you knew the city could not possibly afford. It was a 7% fare cut. Buses are the most subsidised form of public transport. They require more subsidy per mile than any other form. What your policy would have ended up doing is leaving people on street corners unable to get to work.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Mr Mayor, I do not know if you have ever been on a proper bus in London and not just there for a photo opportunity.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not think you were paying attention to my answer. I am sorry.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Can I just ask you, Mr Mayor --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): She was not even listening to what I said.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Mr Mayor, can I ask you --

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Can we let Assembly Member Shawcross finish her question?

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Sorry. I hope my clock was stopped there, Chair.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): It did. Please carry on.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Thank you, Chair. Mr Mayor, there is a distinct lack of awareness of what you have done to bus passengers in London in your statements there. This is increasingly a rather glass bubble you are sitting in here at City Hall because you have actually disproportionately put bus passengers' fares up in the last six years. We have had a 43.7% increase in bus fares, which is actually more than 10% higher than the increases that Tube passengers have faced. We have had a 40% cut in the bus subsidy in London.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Sorry, you are talking complete nonsense.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: I think you said there has been massive bus growth. There has not been massive bus growth. The whole point of what Peter Hendy was saying was that the bus service has stayed at the same level. It has flat-lined. There has not been any significant growth to deal with the population demand. We know that people are being left at bus stops in the morning rush-hour. The buses are getting really overcrowded. If there are any bus passengers watching this, please email the Mayor and tell him what your bus journey is like in the mornings because he clearly does not know. Are you going to do something, Mr Mayor, to help the bus passengers in your last year of office?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is considerably longer than that, I am proud to say.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: You have sadly neglected the needs of some of London's lowest-paid workers in this city. For bus passengers, what are you going to do?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): On the contrary, as you know very well. You have just talked a load of absolute nonsense because what you were proposing was to take about £1.6 billion out of our budgets, a lot of which of course goes into bus subsidies and --

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Will you answer my question, please, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I am answering your question and --

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: What are you going to do for the bus passengers in your last year of office?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What we have done is, by continuing support for bus passengers and by maintaining all of the concessions that we have, we still have an average bus fare per journey in London of 65 pence compared to well over £1 in other cities in this country.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: What are you going to do for the bus passengers in your last year of office, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I am going to do is I am going to join Sir Peter Hendy who has the right arguments, to campaign for proper funding for transport in this city - all modes of transport - and not to go around making rash promises to cut fares one year and then whack them up by dizzying amounts the next year, which is of course what the previous Mayor did.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: I think that was nothing, from what you said.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We have been completely straight with Londoners about what we have done.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: I will leave it there, Chair, because I do not think the Mayor is going to reply.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We have not only maintained but we have extended the Freedom Pass and all the other concessions. We will maintain support of London's bus fleet.

2014/3659 - Front Counters and Contact Points **Joanne McCartney**

Do you agree with me that MOPAC and the MPS needs to make a substantial improvement to how contact points and front counters are managed?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you. Joanne, you have asked already about the Local Policing Model (LPM). Actually, on the contact points, there is always room for revision and improvement but in many ways things are going well. Across London, we have seen a big increase in appointments with the police with 178,999 more appointments this year than last year. That is a 35% increase, just in case you need to know. There is all-time satisfaction now amongst the public about the ease of contact with the police. Satisfaction about ease of contact with the Metropolitan Police Service is now running at 94%.

Joanne McCartney AM: Mr Mayor, my question was on contact points and police stations and you have not answered that, but let me just say what I --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, I did. I said there was always room for revision and improvement but it was early days.

Joanne McCartney AM: That is what I am going to ask you because you made the pledge when you closed police stations that you would put in place an equivalent or better service. That was your contact point model.

I have the Metropolitan Police Service's own review here into those contact points and that review says that they are not fit for purpose, that they do not offer good value for money and that their mandatory opening times fail to take into account local demand and demographic. One of the options in that for resolving this was actually to cut the number of contact points or to make them better. Which would you prefer?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Obviously, what we want to do is make sure the public gets the best possible service. Some contact points work better than others.

Joanne McCartney AM: Are you thinking of cutting some of them?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am told that the ones that seem to be most popular and successful are the ones, say, in supermarkets and areas like that. They are working well. Ones that are associated, for instance, with crime prevention initiatives like bicycle marking and so on are apparently working less well. We can learn from this.

Joanne McCartney AM: Are you planning to cut any? That is my question.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I cannot give you the answer at the moment to that, Joanne.

Joanne McCartney AM: You are not ruling out cutting some?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The situation is under review, but there has been a big increase in people's general satisfaction with how they meet the Metropolitan Police Service.

The important point is what Sir Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] said to everybody, which is, "We will come to you". The police will come to you. You report a crime or you want the police to attend to you, they will be there. There has been a big increase in public satisfaction about the way it is working.

Joanne McCartney AM: Mr Mayor, I am holding you to account for your promise to put a better or equivalent service into a closed police station.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You have a better service because the public says it is better. How about that?

Joanne McCartney AM: No, these are the contact points. Are you thinking of cutting some of them? Can I just get that straight answer from you? May you cut some contact points?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are reviewing them. Some of them work better than others. I am afraid I cannot give you the answer. If they are no good, of course we will cut them, but I do not know. I cannot give you the answer.

Joanne McCartney AM: Can I raise an issue that Jennette Arnold, my colleague, has raised with me. She cannot be here today because she is unwell.

This is about Waltham House police station in Kirkdale Road, Leytonstone, which is actually currently a contact point. That police station is actually to close without reference to local stakeholders, to Jennette or to councillors. It appears that that came about because the Metropolitan Police Service and MOPAC, which you head, were not aware that the lease was actually up until the last minute. The Borough Commander has apologised for this oversight. Would you apologise to the people of Leytonstone for this oversight, too?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am certainly sorry for some oversight and we will make sure that the people of that area do get the contact points that they need.

However, I repeat what I have said earlier on: There is a big increase in the number of appointments and there is a big increase in people's satisfaction. In the 21st century, this is increasingly the way people want to interact with the police and it seems to be working so far.

Joanne McCartney AM: The Borough Commander has said that there is still a need for a police station in the south of that borough and that is not likely to happen until 2020 and, in the meantime, there needs to be a contact point. He said that. Would you just promise me that you will write to Jennette [Jennette Arnold AM] to let her know how this situation came about and what plans there are to put a contact point in this part of the borough as soon as possible?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course. I am very happy to take that up on Jennette's behalf. I cannot respond in detail because I do not have the details, but I would be very happy to do that.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you.

2014/3653 - Oil and gas reserves around London Tony Arbour

Given that prospectors have recently struck oil in Surrey and that the well in question could alone be worth £2 billion, is the Mayor receptive to the idea of further and increased oil and shale gas exploration in the London region? Does he think such a development could well make London the Aberdeen of the South?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Tony, absolutely right. I would love to get fracking in London. Unfortunately, it looks unlikely that there is any exploitable shale gas in the London region, much to my disappointment, if I may say. That is what the geological survey says. Of course, we are doing all sorts of things and working with a company called KiWi Power to reward householders for their surplus energy and installing loads of solar and so on but, alas, I cannot pretend to you that London is going to turn into the Dallas of the 21st century.

Tony Arbour AM: I do not know where you get your figures from, Mr Mayor. If you are talking about the strict boundaries of London, you may be right. However, my question talks about neighbouring areas of London, viz the Weald Basin. I have in front of me the central estimate from the British Geological Survey (BGS) which says there are 4.4 billion barrels there, which will create, again at a very low estimate, 46,000 jobs. Do bear in mind of course that the jobs, even in Aberdeen and in Dallas, are probably reflected in the numbers of people who are employed even in this city.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I understand.

Tony Arbour AM: To believe that the only people who are employed in drilling for oil are people who wear high-visibility jackets and yellow helmets is completely wrong. Therefore, with the greatest respect - and you know I have the greatest respect for you and your researchers - I would say that the central premise of your answer is wrong.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Do you think there is shale gas to be fracked under London?

Tony Arbour AM: No, I did not say that. I said that the central premise is wrong. Your premise is not based on the question I asked you about the areas adjacent to London, viz the Weald Basin.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I see. I am with you. Yes. I will get you the figures. You are quite right. It is about the ambient 'shot', yes.

Tony Arbour AM: The point that I am making is that, indeed, the 'shot in the arm' to the economy would be vast. Is it not a fact, Mr Mayor, that most of the objections to exploiting natural resources such as oil and gas on mainland England come from scaremongering by Greens and Liberal Democrats and people of that kind?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is total rubbish, yes.

Tony Arbour AM: Are you familiar and do you think Londoners are familiar, Mr Mayor, with Wytch Farm in Dorset, which is the largest onshore oilfield in the whole of Western Europe and which is generating 20,000 barrels of oil a day? There are no complaints about it. The locals think it is wonderful. They welcome the great shot in the arm it gives to that local economy. On that basis, do you not think it would be a good thing for you to advocate the exploitation of these natural resources that I have indicated?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do, Tony. I do not know whether you have but you possibly have not studied many of the articles I have written recently about this in the *Daily Telegraph*.

Tony Arbour AM: I have memorised them, Mr Mayor!

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I now understand your question and I completely agree with you, of course. Although London does not have any reserves itself, there is no reason why the bonanza should not lead to benefits for the London economy.

There is at the moment nothing like a bonanza, basically because of the way the rights are structured. We have a deferential and monarchical system in this country that assigns all these mineral rights to the Queen. She has control over any oil, gas and coal. I am a fervent opponent of this and for these purposes I am a strong republican.

Tom Copley AM: Hooray!

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is completely ridiculous that landowners and householders have rights to diamonds and titanium - or something like that - and other precious metals but not to hydrocarbons. That is, in my view, why there is a huge fracking revolution going on in America and there is not one here. There is absolutely no incentive for the householder or the property owner to get on and do it. It is all taken by the state and there is no motive to get going. That is the change that needs to be brought into the law to give people the rights to the stuff that exists beneath their properties.

Tony Arbour AM: Given your powers of persuasion, why are you dismissing the fact that you will be able, for those people who live close to London, to get exactly the same benefits from Her Majesty as the residents of Dorset are currently getting from Wytch Farm?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am not dismissing that. They should. The trouble is that they are being frustrated by 'not-in-my-backyard' people (NIMBYs) and also by the fact that there is no clear financial incentive for them to get fracking. That is why, to the best of my knowledge, I do not think we have fracked a cubic centimetre of gas in this whole so-called 'fracking revolution'. They have not taken anything.

Tony Arbour AM: Of course, I am not simply referring to fracking. I am referring to drilling and I have given you the figures which have been produced by the BGS. The fact of the matter is that you are the most powerful voice that we have for London and I suspect that when you become the Member of Parliament (MP) for Uxbridge you will continue to be the most powerful voice for London.

Therefore, I would like to ask you in the light of your reply - which I have to say was quite unexpected in the sense that you have criticised the rules for extracting minerals - whether when you get into Parliament you will promote a Private Member's Bill.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Tony, you need to look at it. That is the problem.

Tony Arbour AM: I am just putting a suggestion to you, Mr Mayor, that when you get into Parliament you might like to promote a Private Bill which will do something to liberate these riches.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. The paradox --

Darren Johnson AM: You are assuming he is going to be on the back benches, then?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will just briefly explain. What happened was that in about 1918 or 1919 or something like that the whole thing got going in the United States of America and it was obvious that oil wells were being created everywhere in America and people wondered whether we could have a similar thing in this country. However, it was decided that there would be too many rows between neighbours about whose hydrocarbons or gas they were because obviously they can flow beneath the ground from one property to another. It was decided that in order to get extraction going, you should make it a public good and you should assign the rights to the Queen.

The paradox has been of course that by making it everybody's it has become nobody's and nobody actually wants to extract it. Nobody has a powerful financial incentive to extract it. That is what we should deal with.

Tony Arbour AM: Will you respond to the point that I made? You will have the opportunity and it may well be that you are not going to be restricted to the back benches when you return to Parliament.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If I return to Parliament, you mean. Let us not count our chickens.

Tony Arbour AM: Yes, indeed, if the residents of Uxbridge do something --

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Can I just stop you? We are supposed to question the Mayor on his role as the Mayor rather than speculating about other jobs that he may hold.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Hear, hear. A future of Secretary of State for Energy.

Tony Arbour AM: In the remaining 18 months of your mayoralty, Mr Mayor --

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Yes, that is better.

Tony Arbour AM: -- and wearing your two hats, will you promote a change in the law to enable this to happen?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You can rest assured that I will be wearing my 'ten-gallon' hat as a proud promoter of hydrocarbon extraction in this country and particularly in London.

Tony Arbour AM: You will be the J R Ewing [character in the US television series *Dallas*] of City Hall. Thank you.

Jenny Jones AM: It is interesting this idea of a 'shot in the arm' for the economy because if you invest in solar, wind and wave energy, you actually get more jobs than if you invest in fracking, which of course has the likelihood of poisoning water supplies and upsetting an awful lot of London's residents. Would you agree with that?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The trouble with solar and wind energy is that although they are very expensive to install, the amount of power that they generate is relatively small. We need a mixed approach. I am not opposed to wind farms everywhere. I do think they are horrendously ugly in many parts of this country and it is very sad that they have been installed in the way that they have. However, I am certainly not against offshore wind farms and I am certainly in favour of much more solar energy. You need a mixture.

It would be very foolish of us as a country to ignore the benefits of gas that we apparently have in such quantities. Kit [Kit Malthouse AM], who has had the advantage of the internet, has been able to tell me that we do have one fracking site in Lancashire, but it is only one. It has not produced very much.

Jenny Jones AM: Could you stop the clock? I do not want a dialogue between the two of you, if you do not mind. My question is over. Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Forgive me.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Thank you. We will move on to the next question.

2014/3660 - Emergency response

Andrew Dismore

When Londoners call their emergency services will they get the response they need?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, thank you, Andrew. In the vast majority of cases - and I speak as somebody obviously who over the years has had to call out the London Ambulance Service (LAS) several times - they have an extremely fine record. The London Fire Brigade (LFB) has a fine record.

The Metropolitan Police Service figures at the moment show that for average response times to emergency calls, we had 93.1% meeting the target of arriving within 15 minutes. For the LFB, average London-wide

attendance times for first and second appliances were 5.23 minutes and 6.45 minutes. That is well within the targets that everybody knows of six minutes for the first appliance and eight minutes for the second appliance.

Andrew Dismore AM: We still do not know what the impact of the Draft Fifth London Safety Plan (LSP5) will be on the fire service because the detailed figures simply are not available yet.

As far as the police are concerned, we have explored before the impact in Barnet, for example, which has the second worst in attendance times in London and is routed in the red in your spreadsheet league table. If they had been a football club, they would have been relegated long ago. The concern is not the average. The concern is the real emergencies and individual calls that are outside and not met within that target. In Barnet, in June, it took 67 minutes to answer an incident involving children. In Camden it took 58 minutes to attend an incident involving a knife.

The problem is there are just not enough police officers, are there? In May 2010 compared to now, Barnet has 50 fewer police officers than we had four years ago. That is down to your cuts, is it not?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It depends where you take the figures from. As you know perfectly well --

Andrew Dismore AM: I take the figures from May 2010 when this Government came to power, not your artificial figure that you try to massage to pretend there are more when there are not.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- the numbers are going up across London. We are putting 2,600 more into policing. As we have discussed before, I believe, in this place there has been a particular question, you have asked it before, about Barnet's response times. They are 2.5% under the target of 90%. They could be better. I am told that is a function of the size of the borough. Clearly that is something I imagine you will have taken up with your Borough Commander.

Andrew Dismore AM: Of course. It is due to the size of the borough. The fact is --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Is that what he has told you?

Andrew Dismore AM: -- we do not have enough police officers to cover a borough of that size.

Let us look at the Ambulance Service. You mentioned that earlier on. It is your job to deal with health and equalities across London. Across London, in August, the Ambulance Service met its target times for only 62% of calls. If you had broken the ankle of that nine-year-old boy you fouled in that football match that had more coverage than 'Match of the Day', how long do you think it would have taken an ambulance to come? How long?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is a hypothetical question. What I can tell you from my own experience --

Andrew Dismore AM: How long do you think it would have taken for someone to come and attend to a broken ankle like that?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- I did attend a cycling accident not far from Tooley Street. I called an ambulance and it was there in less than five minutes. It was extraordinary. They were fantastic and the guy was treated on the spot.

Andrew Dismore AM: Let me tell you, Mr Mayor --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That has happened several times while cycling. I do not think it is just that they are responding fast because they are getting to talk to me.

Andrew Dismore AM: -- in Southwark ambulances only arrive on time, on target, in 69% of cases. In Barnet it is just 56%. Almost half of calls are not met within the target time, compared of course to Kensington where it is --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You are talking now about ambulances?

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes. That is compared to Kensington where it is 72%. Now, 10% of calls are not going to be answered by the ambulance service at all. Is it not time --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Hang on.

Andrew Dismore AM: -- that instead of tackling nine-year-olds you tackled this delay in the Ambulance Service and deal with this health and equalities?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Everybody who studies this problem seriously knows that the Ambulance Service is seeing an escalating demand. On the whole it does an amazing job. If you look at what is happening in London on, for instance, the murder rate or fatalities generally, fatalities on our roads and KSIs, a lot of the success that the city has enjoyed - an amazing success with a 50% reduction in the murder rate and big reductions in injuries and deaths of --

Andrew Dismore AM: Not in violent crime. Violent crime is up, is it not?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- pedestrians - is because of the prompt attendance --

Andrew Dismore AM: Violent crime is dramatically up, isn't it?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- of the Ambulance Service. It is under pressure. People will understand the reasons for this because there are problems in accident and emergency departments (A&Es) and problems in primary care that will be familiar to many people in this city. They are not, unfortunately, the direct responsibility of this mayoralty.

One of the side effects is that people go for an ambulance when they do not necessarily need one. It is very difficult to reproach people for this because after all human nature is what it is. You do not feel you can take a risk with your child. If your child seems to be unwell, you are entitled to want the best and the promptest service. However, on an awful lot of occasions, people are summoning ambulances when, frankly, they do not need them and some other mode of transport would do just as well.

Andrew Dismore AM: It is the public's fault, not your fault?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What the Ambulance Service is trying to do is to try to restrict people from making use of what should be an emergency service that should be there to save lives.

Andrew Dismore AM: We blame the public, not your failures on the health service.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is why in September --

Andrew Dismore AM: I am finished.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- to get back to your 10% point, a decision was taken by the LAS to try to prioritise calls and to try to say, "Look, if you have a non-urgent call, then we will not necessarily attend at the same speed we would attend a cardiac arrest or a cycling accident". That has to be reasonable.

Andrew Dismore AM: He has run the clock down as usual.

2014/3623 - Possible Olympic Stadium ground share

Andrew Boff

If Tottenham Hotspur were to approach the London Legacy Development Corporation regarding the possible ground sharing of the Olympic Stadium for the 2017/18 season, would West Ham United have the power to veto such an approach?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you, Andrew. I know this is something on which you feel strongly. We have not, I must say, had an approach from any other football club to share the stadium with West Ham. Because of the rules of the Premiership, we would have to be pretty clever to work out a way of actually allowing two Premiership clubs to share it. I am not certain it would work. However, we are about to appoint an operator for the stadium. Their job will be to maximise revenue and to get the best possible deal for London. I want to see all sorts of things in that stadium, not just Premiership football but athletics, rugby, all sorts of stuff as well; rock concerts, you name it. We are going to have loads of stuff in that stadium. [Inaudible speaking from an Assembly Member.] We could frack it, except I happen to know what is underneath the stadium. What is underneath the stadium are the carcasses of about 20 million salmon, if you remember, from the salmon factory. That is what is beneath the stadium. There is no point fracking the stadium because it has fish underneath.

Andrew Boff AM: Mr Mayor, it is a very simple question in response to a quote from a spokesperson for West Ham United who had stated that they would probably say no to any approach to share the Olympic Stadium for one season. The question asks you whether that tenant has the right of veto with regard to the use of the stadium.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is probably fair to say that the Premier League would have to approve any sharing and therefore the co-operation of West Ham would be essential.

Andrew Boff AM: Yes, absolutely. However, would they have the right of veto?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Whether we could force two Premiership clubs to share the same bed, I do not know. We could try it. No one is currently approaching us with that as a proposal.

Andrew Boff AM: Mr Mayor, this is not *À la recherche du temps perdu*, in the original foreign language. It is a simple question.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is not a simple question. If I may say, it is a hypothetical question about an eventuality that has not arisen. If you own a Premiership club and you want to install it in the Olympic Stadium, by all means approach them.

Andrew Boff AM: It is not hypothetical, Mr Mayor. It is not hypothetical that West Ham is the favoured tenant. Therefore, as a part of that tenancy, does it have the right of veto? That is not a hypothetical question.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is not. What is hypothetical is the possibility that there could be such a thing. I have given you a very clear answer, which is that as far as I know you would have to get the co-operation of West Ham. As you rightly point out, they do not seem very thrilled by the idea at the moment.

If we were to be approached by a club that wanted to install themselves simultaneously in the stadium, in spite of all the timetabling difficulties that it would present and in spite of the rules of the Premiership which basically say you cannot do this, we would certainly look at the legal position because I want to maximise the use of the stadium. Whether or not anybody wants to do that is very far from clear.

If you know better than that, if you represent a football club that wants to be in the stadium, then make yourself known to our people.

Andrew Boff AM: It was the understanding that West Ham had of its role in the stadium. I do not want to drag this on. Would it help to get an answer if I feared civil unrest as a result of not securing an answer to this question?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If you want to go and riot, Andrew, you can riot. If you want to go and riot you can 'riot on your own', as I think The Clash once said. You can go and riot by yourself in the stadium and see what happens. I am not going to discourage you, provided you do no damage to any property or disturb anybody.

Andrew Boff AM: You are aware of your answers.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): My answer is that in an ideal world, obviously, we would fill the stadium every single day with different attractions and entertainments. It will be very, very popular. It will be very well used. At the moment, as far as I can see, there are difficulties in jamming two Premiership clubs together.

Andrew Boff AM: There are.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I would personally be very attracted to that solution, but no club has so far approached us.

Andrew Boff AM: I absolutely understand that you would seek the consent. This is my last attempt for anyone else and I am sorry to keep the Assembly. I absolutely understand that you would seek the consent of West Ham for any other uses of the stadium.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We would have to look at our legal position.

Andrew Boff AM: I absolutely understand that. Consent is what we try to get. In the event of that consent not being given, does West Ham have the right or the power to veto any other club?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We would have to look at the law and we would have to see what was practicable. At the moment it is, I am afraid, a hypothetical question. West Ham has one view of this hypothetical question and you have another. Until we actually see a proposal, it is very difficult to give an answer.

Andrew Boff AM: I will dispute another time whether or not it is a hypothetical question as to the main tenant for West Ham and whether it has at the moment the power of veto over who else goes in the stadium.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We have no proposal. It depends what the proposal is.

Andrew Boff AM: That is not hypothetical, Mr Mayor. That is actual. Anyway, I will give in.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Good.

2014/3661 - Domestic violence victims' housing

Andrew Dismore

Do you agree that access to safe, secure and stable housing is vital for all those fleeing home as a consequence of domestic violence?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): This is a crucial issue. We must ensure that there is secure housing for victims of domestic violence. It was one of the reasons we launched the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy some years ago now, I remember. Such housing is the duty of local authorities to make sure people do have somewhere they can go. Because of the rise in domestic violence, one of the few crime types that is going up, MOPAC is actively studying now what boroughs are doing to ensure that they have adequate accommodation for those seeking refuge.

Andrew Dismore AM: Thank you. That is a very helpful answer, Mr Mayor. Do you agree that victims who are secure council tenants should not have to give up their secure tenancy rights to get help with emergency housing?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Normally speaking, you have some line of questioning that is designed to attack Barnet Council. I suspect that is what is at the end of this. There will be some detailed case that you wish to draw to my attention. Often it might be more helpful if you just tipped your hand and told us what your problem was and then we could try to --

Andrew Dismore AM: You will not answer that one?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am in favour of councils making proper provision for those in refuge from domestic violence.

Andrew Dismore AM: You will not answer that one. Do you think victims should have to declare themselves homeless to get a safe place to go?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I believe that councils have a legal duty to provide accommodation as fast as they possibly can.

Andrew Dismore AM: Do you think victims should have to go to the back of the housing queue if they have to go for emergency accommodation?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will just repeat the answer. If this is about Barnet Council and its strategies for dealing with it, I am told it has recently proposed a change to its housing allocation policy. It thinks there is merit in the statutory homeless route because it would actually accelerate the provision of accommodation for women who are in refuge from domestic violence. I understand that thinking is disputed.

Andrew Dismore AM: Let me put this to you. Under the scenario I have put to you --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are certainly in conversation with Barnet about how it thinks it can provide such accommodation.

Andrew Dismore AM: -- loss of security, being declared homeless and the back of the housing queue are all major disincentives. Does that not create a risk of under-reporting, a risk of victims continuing to suffer in silence and a risk of perpetrators being allowed to continue undetected and punished? Is that not a consequence of those things I have put to you?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I am told - and I am grateful that we are digging now into the issue - is that Barnet thinks, although we are trying to get the bottom of this, that this is the fastest and most effective way to help somebody to get the accommodation that they need. Whether it is correct in that or not - and Joanne [Joanne McCartney AM] believes that they are not - is something MOPAC is working on.

Andrew Dismore AM: It is the Conservative Barnet Council, surprise, surprise, your old friends. Do you agree with them about this? Do you agree it is --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I --

Andrew Dismore AM: Do you agree that people should go to the back of the housing queue? Do you agree people should have to give up their secure tenancy rights? Doing that puts domestic violence victims in precisely that position with their policy. Finding a safe place for usually women and children, who are

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Look, the answer --

Andrew Dismore AM: -- the victims and requiring them to declare themselves homeless, give up secure tenancy rights and be put to the back of the queue is a real disincentive to reporting. It is a real disincentive to perpetrators being punished. Victims will continue to suffer in silence, which is entirely the opposite of what you wanted to see and what we want to see at the beginning of this exchange.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I cannot give you --

Andrew Dismore AM: If you are not prepared to make

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am afraid I --

Andrew Dismore AM: -- representations to Barnet Council about this, you are being hypocritical about this. You want to see one thing and you are not prepared to do anything about it when a Conservative council is going to make things ten times worse.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You are making a series of assertions about Barnet Council, which is your prerogative.

Andrew Dismore AM: I have the policy here.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You are using this to --

Andrew Dismore AM: Have you read this policy? No, you have not.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- bash them up. They say that the policy will produce one effect and you say it will produce another effect.

Andrew Dismore AM: It is self-evident, is it not? Self-evident.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Their intention is to help women in refuge from domestic violence to get accommodation

Andrew Dismore AM: It is self-evident.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- as fast as possible. That is their claim. We want to test that. We are not necessarily convinced of that, nor are we unconvinced of it. We want to test that claim.

Andrew Dismore AM: Complacency, as usual.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is the sensible thing to do. That is why MOPAC has launched this evaluation.

Andrew Dismore AM: You are not prepared to engage, are you? I have finished.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): On the contrary. The record of this mayoralty on this issue has been exemplary.

Andrew Dismore AM: I have finished.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We have invested and we continue to invest far more than the previous administration in rape crisis centres. We expanded rape crisis provision --

Andrew Dismore AM: I have finished. He is waffling again.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- massively in this city. We have hugely escalated the issue.

Andrew Dismore AM: Waffling as usual. He will not engage the--

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): One of the reasons, as most people who

Andrew Dismore AM: Waffle, waffle, waffle.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- know about this issue will say, why we are seeing --

Andrew Dismore AM: Waffle, waffle, waffle.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- an increase in reporting is because people feel more confident to come forward and that is a good thing. That is because we have put in the rape crisis centres and taken the issue as seriously as we have.

Andrew Dismore AM: He is just repeating himself. Waffle, waffle.

2014/3662 - Child sexual abuse

Fiona Twycross

Recently much public attention has been paid to the fact that hotels and bed-and-breakfasts (B&Bs) have no protection obligations to children staying on their premises. Specifically, for example, they are not required to report child sexual abuse if they suspect it is happening on their premises. What representations are you making in your capacity as head of MOPAC to the Government to lobby for a change to protection obligations?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We have discussed this a couple of times. What is absolutely right, and I completely agree with you, is that anybody who is aware of a crime of the type you are describing of possible child abuse on their premises or whatever should report it. In my view, they have an absolute legal obligation already to report it. There is lots of statute on aiding and abetting and that kind of thing, which means that accommodation providers such as hotels or bed-and-breakfasts (B&Bs), if they know that abuse or grooming is taking place on their premises, should be able to report it.

The question that you are digging into is whether we should be following the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) which wants a particular new offence of failing to report abuse. We are looking into that. We are trying to see whether that makes legal sense in view of the statute that already exists.

We have, as you know, already Operation Make Safe and people who might come into contact with this kind of appalling stuff - hotel staff, cab drivers, those sorts of people - are aware of the issues and are aware of their duties to report what they have become aware of.

Fiona Twycross AM: The specific reason I wanted to raise it was because of some of the information coming out of recent cases of child grooming in Rochdale, Kirklees and elsewhere, which have actually highlighted hotels and B&Bs as being a particular issue. You mentioned the lack of specific legal duty but currently hotels do not have a specific legal responsibility to register anyone on their premises who is under 16. Also, they do not need a specific licence to operate unless they are licensed to sell alcohol. They have no specific duty, as mentioned, to report suspected child abuse.

In Kirklees, police have actually undertaken to visit every hotel in the area and to inform hotel owners of the signs to watch out for which may indicate that child sex abuse is taking place on their premises. Obviously, this would be a massive undertaking in London where we have thousands of such premises, but actually the very number of premises makes this an issue that needs to be considered.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Difficult, yes.

Fiona Twycross AM: I appreciate you are aware of the NSPCC recommendations. I wanted to make sure you were aware of what I view as quite a sensible approach recommended by Lisa Nandy, MP, who has requested a cross-departmental working group to look into this issue specifically. She is proposing that representatives from the hotel industry, child protection experts and others should be formed to identify ways in which the law, practice and regulation could be strengthened.

Given I am sure you agree with me that we should take every action possible to ensure prevention of child abuse, will you write to the Home Secretary urging her to establish a group? I understand that she is slightly reluctant to do so.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will certainly take advice on that and have a look at that. It is very, very important that people are aware of these issues.

The MPS puts quite a lot of money into training people to recognise signs of child sexual abuse and exploitation. We have trained 3,000 staff to recognise this. We also provide funds through the London Crime Prevention Fund and we have a pilot study in five London boroughs - in Croydon, Hackney, Greenwich, Kensington and Chelsea and Waltham Forest - to focus on child sexual exploitation.

I will look at the proposed letter. If you would be kind enough to send it through to me, we will study it and see what use we can be.

Fiona Twycross AM: Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): One must be just clear. It may be that it is decided that the existing statute is good enough and what we need to do is make people aware of their legal responsibilities.

Fiona Twycross AM: This is where a working group would be quite useful. That could actually look into whether it was just the application of existing law or whether something new was required as well.

It has also occurred to me that because of your responsibility for policing - and obviously you have MOPAC - something that you could look at is whether it would be appropriate for us to have something specific from MOPAC in terms of a working group that would look specifically at this issue for London.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am sure that is a good subject for MOPAC work and I will ask Stephen Greenhalgh [Deputy Mayor of Policing and Crime] to have a look at it.

Fiona Twycross AM: Thank you.

Andrew Boff AM: Following on from that, Mr Mayor, can I recommend most strongly that you do look at the initiative being taken by three London boroughs - Croydon, Southwark and Lambeth - with regard to the information-sharing over existing Social Services casework that they have with a view to identifying those victims of trafficking? Often those victims of trafficking cannot really be seen unless you have been trained to see that. Croydon, particularly, has developed some ground-breaking training programmes which need to be distributed to the rest of London, quite frankly, in order to inform professionals - and indeed hotels may come into this as well - of the very clear signs that there are of victims of trafficking, which obviously includes child sexual abuse. If you can take that forward --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will make sure that is built into the MOPAC consideration.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you very much..

2014/3626 - Bakerloo line extension (1)

James Cleverly

If the Bakerloo line extension to Hayes goes ahead and includes the conversion of the Hayes Line, what would be the effect on hourly capacity?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Very simply, James, currently there are six trains per hour that use the Hayes Line. The Bakerloo extension would increase that to 15 trains per hour between Hayes and New Beckenham, 21 between New Beckenham and Catford Bridge and 27 between Catford Bridge and Lewisham.

James Cleverly AM: You may well be aware that some concerns have been expressed about the journey times. If you have details, could you give an insight into what the likely change to the journey times would be?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. You and I have discussed this before. To the best of my recollection, it means a reduction in journey times, even though you might have to change. It will mean a faster service but a more frequent service.

James Cleverly AM: Thank you. This is going out to consultation at the moment. Can you give us an indication of what the likely timescales will be, once the consultation has closed, for people to know whether this is a plan that is likely to progress?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. Obviously, this is part of the 2050 Infrastructure Plan, but we would hope to get the Bakerloo extension going well before then. I cannot give you an exact timetable. This is something that has really come on stream quite recently. We would be looking to get things going very speedily. I would certainly want it running at the same time as Crossrail 2.

James Cleverly AM: Finally, one of the other plans that has been discussed with regard to greater connectivity for my constituency is a better connection, whether that be through heavy rail or light rail, to Bromley North. People have expressed concerns to me that the Bakerloo line extension proposal would in some way mean greater connectivity to Bromley North would be off the table. Can you confirm whether or not these projects could both happen?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): There is strong support, I can tell you, for the Bakerloo extension to run both to Hayes and to Bromley town centre. I suppose by that you mean that it might preclude running to Bromley North as well. Obviously there is a scheme to run the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), as you know, to Bromley North. I am not convinced we can necessarily do them all. I will look at it. Looking at it superficially, it looks to me if you go for Bromley town centre you are probably making it less likely that you will have DLR running to Bromley North.

James Cleverly AM: Thank you.

Steve O'Connell AM: Generally south London always welcomes investment in transport. Probably for far too long we have not been well served. However, my constituents have been very alarmed around some of the narrative in this consultation.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I regret some of the language that was used in this consultation. It should be "and". This is where Peter Hendy [Commissioner, TfL] joins me in regretting this language, by the way, for avoidance of doubt. We want to do the Bakerloo line extension and the tram extension, Steve. And.

Steve O'Connell AM: Thank you for that and I take that and pocket that with glee. The narrative in the consultation, which actually said referring to - for some strange reason in the plural - what on earth the Bakerloo line running through to Hayes has to do with an extension to Sutton is beyond anybody, frankly.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Sorry, what did you say?

Steve O'Connell AM: The narrative was, therefore, I quote, "These extensions are not being actively progressed at this time". You appear to be disowning that narrative.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): These are being actively progressed and considered. As you know, the issue really is --

Steve O'Connell AM: These are being actively progressed?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- what the business case is. There is the Crystal Palace scheme and there is the Sutton scheme. There are strong proponents of both. I would be interested to know which of the two you prefer.

Steve O'Connell AM: I do not answer questions today.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): There has to be some leadership from that area --

Steve O'Connell AM: I take the point.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- in deciding which scheme that area would like to progress. It would be good to get a bit more clarity on that. Our proposal is that the schemes should be done by 2021, when we will be disbursing cash for these schemes.

I am grateful that, contrary to the impression I had in Sutton, there is actually strong support in Sutton for such a tram scheme. I look forward to further conversations with the council about how we are going to fund it. I am not necessarily convinced that we can do Crystal Palace and Sutton at the same time.

Steve O'Connell AM: You have given a commitment in an earlier question that you will give an answer on the Sutton extension by the end of the year. I just heard you mention funding by the end of 2021. When will you be giving Croydon and Sutton what I would hope will be a good answer? What is your timescale on both the schemes? Are they both at the end of the year?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I would like to do them all. There is no doubt about it, you can make a case for all of these schemes because London is growing very fast. What you cannot remotely do is hope to progress these schemes while simultaneously taking billions out of TfL budgets, which is the policy of those guys [indicates London Assembly Labour Group].

I would like to do all these schemes because London is developing very fast and we need good transport to provide the accommodation the city needs. I am proud that under this mayoralty we are extending the Tube for the first time in 25 years. There are many other great schemes underway.

What we need is clarity from south London about which of the schemes it really favours and how it proposes to join us in funding them.

Steve O'Connell AM: Just to try and get some detail and to conclude, is what you are saying that if either or both boroughs came up with a good business case

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, very keen.

Steve O'Connell AM: -- you and TfL would be very keen to progress that?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Very keen.

Steve O'Connell AM: You said you will be talking about giving answers possibly by the end of the year. You mentioned something about 2021 that I did not quite catch. Are you saying that it could be in the business plan for 2021?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is right.

Steve O'Connell AM: You are saying that is a fact. Finally, what you are saying is that the narrative in the consultation was wrong and it was incorrect?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I wish to disown and disassociate myself wholly from that consultation and that narrative. We are progressing that option of extending light rail in that part of London. However, as I have said repeatedly, the councils concerned need to meet us halfway and explain how they are going to help fund it. They need to have a development vision that will enable us to raise the funds necessary. That is not always easy and it can mean big changes in the landscape of those boroughs.

Steve O'Connell AM: I get it.

2014/3652 - Testing new flight paths at Heathrow Airport

Tony Arbour

Has the Secretary of State for Transport given you a satisfactory explanation as to why the recent flight path trials at Heathrow took place with no warning to you or to local residents?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have to say that it was outrageous that the flight path variations took place without adequate warning. There was a meeting attended by an official of TfL, apparently, in which the subject was vaguely mentioned. That was supposed to constitute consultation of this mayoralty. I was not properly consulted. I certainly was not made aware of it. The trials have now been cancelled in ignominy and chaos after the massive rejection of those trials by local residents.

Tony Arbour AM: Thank you for that, Mr Mayor. This is an example of the arrogance of supporters of the Heathrow expansion in thinking that they can do this kind of thing. If I can add to the fact about lack of consultation, the boroughs were not consulted either, so far as this is concerned.

You have already mentioned the weight of objections to this experiment. They were running at 500 per day. These were formal objections notified through the proper channels, which would be a tiny fraction of the people who were actually disturbed by this. In the light of this, do you not think it shows the incompetence of the Heathrow campaigners in shooting themselves in the foot in this way in determining that the third runway will never be built?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Totally. Absolutely right. What it underscores is the sheer impossibility of building a third runway at Heathrow when even a relatively minor variation in flight paths can produce such an immediate public outcry and unrest. It is perfectly obvious that that is a non-starter. In that sense, actually, you could argue that Heathrow might have shot itself in the foot but it has done everyone a great favour.

Tony Arbour AM: Yes. Given that it is clearly a blessing in disguise, do you find it astonishing that Howard Davies [Sir Howard Davies, Chairman, Airports Commission] has not commented on this, given the enormous weight of objection there has been already to what it has done?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have made my views pretty well known about Sir Howard's report so far. I do not think it will stand the test of time. This is helping to speed it on its way down the oubliette of history. It will be forgotten in a year's time.

Tony Arbour AM: Would it be appropriate for you to prompt him into commenting on this or into incorporating what has happened in his report simply by you saying there has been this great weight of evidence? I can assure you that local authorities under the flight path will be taking this line. They will be making formal objection to [Sir Howard] Davies, if not saying that he should reopen the matter and that there certainly should be an addendum to his final report saying, if you like, what has happened post his mistaken original decision in ruling out the Estuary Airport.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): To be fair to Howard, I do not know what account they are taking of what has happened on the flight paths, but it would be interesting to know. Perhaps it might be a good idea for us to get something on the record. I will be writing to him and making sure he has properly understood the impossibility of delivering the sorts of changes at Heathrow that he is still canvassing.

Tony Arbour AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor.

2014/3663 - Rise of Muslim hate crime in London

Murad Qureshi

What are you doing to counter the rise in hate crime against Muslims in London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is absolutely right that faith hate offences generally have increased in the last three years, including Islamophobic hate crime. There was a spike in that following the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in May 2013.

We are obviously working very hard to reassure local communities, to make sure that people feel safe, to know that everybody is being looked after and to make it clear that London absolutely deplores any such crime. I have some slightly confused figures here because I am also told that there has been a fall in Islamophobic hate crime recently. We are trying to dig into why there is confusion in the figures.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. I will acknowledge that there is probably a general increase in faith hate crime. I am just asking specifically on Muslim hate crime. If you go by the recent British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reports, they suggest that it has increased by about 65%. You are right. The figures are being disputed by the MPS but I have waited a year before I have said anything on this issue. I do not want to argue about the figures. I just want an honest and frank discussion about the reality and what we can do to stop the trend.

What I really want to know is what concrete and tangible actions you are taking to address this issue.

My nose tells me in places like the Edgware Road it is not just the indigenous population. It is probably also tourists that are being affected by this. I just want to be reassured that the MPS acknowledges this and is seeking to address it.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. The picture is very mixed. I am looking at the victims of Islamophobic hate crime across London. The figure of a 65% increase I do not recognise. According to this here, there has been a 1% decrease, which does not really cohere with what you and I both think about what is going on.

What we have is 500 specialist hate crime investigators in the MPS. We have dedicated hate crime community safety units across London. They work with mosques. They work with everybody that they can in the Muslim community to try to tackle the problem.

The most important way to do it is for us to make it clear as Londoners that we absolutely will not tolerate discrimination against Muslims in any way. This is something that is odious and not part of our lives. We reject it and we come down very hard on it. The Muslim community makes an absolutely extraordinary contribution to London.

Murad Qureshi AM: You do not need to convince me. It is the public out there.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, but sometimes these things are worth saying.

Murad Qureshi AM: Yes, that is true. There are two aspects. No doubt a lot of it is aimed at women. Perpetrators by-and-large are men and it is being targeted at visible Muslim women. I just want to be sure you are aware of that. If you do not have the time to respond now, if you could write to me addressing that issue, it would be very useful.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is interesting. That is not part of the details I have about that. I am not aware of that phenomenon. I will dig into it and see what information we can provide.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you. The other aspect is that I suspect - and this has been backed up by academic research - that there is a fair amount of under-reporting, like with other types of crime, sexual or whatever. There has been a recent study done by Teesside University which showed clearly there were about 700-odd incidents over a nine-month period between 2013 and 2014. They concluded that under-reporting remains a challenge in analysing the crime data, particularly for hate crime.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): In London?

Murad Qureshi AM: Again, I suspect you are not going to be able to respond, but if you could ask the Commissioner or MOPAC to meet me or to write to me in order to outline their course of action, I would be most grateful.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will certainly do that. You mentioned the Edgware Road. This year we saw a 30% decrease in Islamophobic offending in the Edgware Road because we led a specific operation there.

One of the interesting things actually has been that we thought there might be a spike in this type of Islamophobic incident following the 'Jihadi John' videos and that kind of thing. Actually, that did not happen.

It is wonderful that actually people are making the distinction between Islam and this foul perversion of Islam that is publicised by terrorists.

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you.

2014/4044 - Metropolitan Police Service's use of RIPA 2000

Jenny Jones

Following your comments at the London Press Club Ball on 9 October that "we are going to have to insist in future the police will not be able to see a journalist's phone records without some kind of prior judicial approval", will you now ensure that the Metropolitan Police Service seeks judicial approval to access phone records rather than use the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I cannot use my powers to give immediate effect to the change that I think you want. This needs to be part of a national framework. What is happening is that the Home Office is consulting on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) code of practice. We will be responding as well to that consultation. I imagine that our response will very largely reflect what I have said earlier on.

Jenny Jones AM: The thing is I know we are both libertarians and we believe in freedom of speech and also the protection of journalistic sources. What is happening at the moment is the MPS is using the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) to get access to journalists' records and for all I know lawyers' and clients' records as well. They only have to ask an inspector from another team and that seems to me far too easy to get.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Jenny Jones AM: What RIPA says is that it ought to be a judge.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I understand that.

Jenny Jones AM: I would imagine you could say to the Metropolitan Police Service, "Look, it is likely the Conservative Government is going to bring this in. Could you please do it now, because you are simply not --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not think I do have. I am not certain that would be --

Jenny Jones AM: You could ask, could you not?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- the right thing to do because it is not in my power to direct the police in that way. They must operate within the existing law and I would be wrong to try to encourage them to do anything else. What is happening is that --

Jenny Jones AM: Do you not think it is a little bit easy at the moment? Remember that the protection for journalists' records has been a component of our British system for a long time and it seems to me that using PACE is --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We must be very clear: no one is above the law and there is nothing sacrosanct about a journalist's records. Let us be absolutely clear about this. What we are saying is that it is not reasonable for these records to be produced willy-nilly and that the idea of protection of sources is important if we are going to continue to have a free press, the exposure of wrongdoing and if whistle-blowers

are going to continue to come forward. What we are arguing is that there should be a check on the production of these records --

Jenny Jones AM: Do you not think that just asking a mate on another team in the police is willy-nilly?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- and that it should be a judicial check.

Jenny Jones AM: I am really disappointed. I really thought you would have a bit more backbone on this.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not think we are in disagreement. I am interested that you think that I should instruct the police not to obey the existing law.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): You do not need add to this. The Green group has run out of time.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): All right. I think we are at one on this.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): I think we know where you --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am delighted that you have escaped custody [Jenny Jones]!

Joanne McCartney AM: I think Jenny had her legislation the wrong way round. It is actually that RIPA is too easy to apply for --

Jenny Jones AM: I am so sorry. Yes, that is right.

Joanne McCartney AM: -- and it is PACE that has to go before a judge.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is right.

Jenny Jones AM: It is the impact.

Joanne McCartney AM: Mr Mayor, in an interview with LBC radio, you said that you had concerns about this and wanted to look into it - which I welcomed - and said that you thought it was wrong for the police just to go on a fishing expedition. The public concern about this is as to whether there are sufficient safeguards to stop the police from overreaching.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, and Sir Paul Kennedy, the Interception of Communications Commissioner, is looking into this and I hope very much that where we will get to is the state that I think you and I and Jenny [Jenny Jones AM] want to see, which is that there should be the extra safeguard of judicial approval before the police can do this. What would be difficult, Joanne, would be to say that there are some bits of information that journalists may have that the police can never have access to because, obviously, when a serious crime is being investigated, no one can be above the law.

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes, and obviously it is right that journalists have to act within the law as well, but the concern is that there are two pieces of legislation and the Metropolitan Police Service takes the easy option rather than what may be considered the better option to ensure transparency.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I understand.

Joanne McCartney AM: There are some things that you can do. You have talked about your concerns. I suggested to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime a couple of weeks ago that the Ethics Panel could look into this. Would that be something that you would support? He suggested that it could be helpful and he would suggest it to them.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It might well be. I can talk to Stephen [Stephen Greenhalgh, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime] and Alex Carlile [Chairman, London Panel on Ethics in Policing] and see how they feel about that. I am not certain that it will be necessary given that Sir Paul Kennedy is already quite far down the track and we are likely to get the change that we want pretty soon anyway.

Joanne McCartney AM: One other thing that you could do, for example, if you are concerned is you could retain the services of a retired judge who could be there to advise the Metropolitan Police Service if they are to make applications under this. You would have the power to do that. Would you be prepared to do that?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As I say, I am reluctant to duplicate work that is already being done in the sense that the --

Joanne McCartney AM: That work is not being done.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The Interception of Communications Commissioner's Office (IOCCO) is currently engaged and has asked the police to give evidence of all the information that they have obtained about journalist sources and contacts and all the rest of it and they are making recommendations. It is very likely that that will lead to the judicial safeguard that we all want to see. What I will say to you is this: if it fails to produce the change I think we are going to get, then I might consider something of the kind that you are describing.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. Can I also suggest that a lot of the RIPA requests are not about journalists? They are about ongoing investigations and a lot of them are sourced from borough policing. Would you ask MOPAC to look at the level of authorisations and supervision that has taken place on those and just to do a quick review to check that appropriate supervision has taken place for those?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Obviously it is something I have taken up repeatedly now with Sir Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] and I would be very happy to raise it again.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you.

Kit Malthouse AM: I was going to ask you, Mr Mayor, how you define a journalist, but we are short of time and I will leave it there.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That will be difficult because it is going to be a --

Kit Malthouse AM: A blogger, a tweeter, anybody who calls themselves a journalist? There are quite a lot of people who masquerade as journalists and who are actually amateurs.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is right, yes.

Kit Malthouse AM: We are short of time and I will leave it at that. National Union of Journalists (NUJ) members? Who knows?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Anyway, that is one of the problems.

2014/3664 - Edward Lister comments

Tom Copley

Do you agree with your Chief of Staff that “£360 a week [for an apartment at the Mount Pleasant site] ... is very much affordable”?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course I agree, as ever, with Eddie Lister [Chief of Staff and Deputy Mayor for Policy and Planning] and I would point out that the rent you are referring to, £360 a week, is for a three-bedroom flat in the Mount Pleasant scheme, which at 40% of market rent is almost entirely covered by the Local Housing Allowance (LHA). There you go. What could be more affordable than that? I would just remind you that the success of the GLA negotiators was to get the Mount Pleasant scheme to double its quotient of affordable housing.

Tom Copley AM: LHA? Sorry, are these properties going to be rented out privately, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, we are talking here about --

Tom Copley AM: It is not the LHA you should be referring to; it is the Housing Benefit, which you ought to know is different.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are talking here about the LHA, which will cover the vast bulk of the cost, 40% of the market rent.

Tom Copley AM: Even if it did not, we are talking about the Housing Benefit on properties let out by housing associations here at £360 a week. The Housing Benefit cap at the moment is £500 a week. That is correct, is it not, yes? You look like you are trying to catch up. That leaves, by my calculation, £140 a week for everything else.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, it is 40% of the market rent. For a three-bedroom flat, we are talking about £340 per week.

Tom Copley AM: Sorry, the total benefit cap is £500 a week, yes. That leaves £140 a week left over for the household after the rent has been paid. If you take all the sort of household essentials; food, heating, lighting, transport --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, the LHA will cover £350.95 per week for a three-bedroom flat. You are covering the entire cost --

Tom Copley AM: I was referring to the total. I was referring --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- of a home at 40% of market rent. That is what you want, the whole thing paid for by the taxpayer, and of course that is a fantastic thing for those who are living in that accommodation --

Tom Copley AM: Hang on a minute, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- and there will be lots of people who do not qualify for those benefits.

Tom Copley AM: I am referring here to the total cap of £500 a week and the rent is £360 a week. That leaves £140 a week left over for people to spend. If you look at household essentials like food, clothing --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): £140 of benefits left over.

Tom Copley AM: -- like transport, like heating and things like that, it comes, by my calculation, to about £190 a week. People are not going to be able to afford to live in these properties under the caps which have been implemented by your Government.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No. Most people will think it very fair and indeed more than fair that there are a lot of people - double the number that were previously going to be able to do it - who will be able to live on affordable rents under the Mount Pleasant scheme. The registered providers will be obliged to ensure the rents do not exceed the LHA. Imagine being able to live in a fantastic scheme like that entirely at the taxpayers' expense. That is fantastic. That is the Labour vision. That is what you want. Is that not wonderful? There will be lots of people who think, "Actually, it is all right for them. What about us who do not qualify?"

Tom Copley AM: We can talk about the fact that it is £360 --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): "What about us who do not qualify for an entirely taxpayer-funded scheme?"

Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, £360 --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): With your vision, we understand what you are trying to do.

Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, your vision is to be --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We understand what you are trying to do, but in the end what you have to do is build housing for absolutely everybody, not just for people

Tom Copley AM: Hang on. Your vision appears to be here, your proposed --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- who qualify for their entire rent to be paid for by the taxpayer and --

Tom Copley AM: Hang on, you have imposed this so-called affordable rent on London, which means that a three-bed property, so-called affordable, is going to be let out for £360 a week, paid for by the Housing Benefit; whereas if you had stuck with social rent, which is let out at 30% to 40% of market rents, the rents would be lower. What you are essentially doing is you are pushing up the Housing Benefit bill by imposing this ridiculous affordable rent, are you not?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I thought you were in favour of it. I thought you were in favour of affordable rent.

Tom Copley AM: We are in favour of social rent, not this up-to-80% affordable that you have imposed on London, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Then you are going to get what you want because at social rents levels --

Tom Copley AM: It is not just me. Let us talk about --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- you will have families who are paying for three-beds.

Tom Copley AM: I have here - hang on, Mr Mayor - Keith Exford, Chief Executive of Affinity Sutton --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): They will be paying £340 per week. The registered providers will not be able to go above the LHA rate and you will get your dream.

Tom Copley AM: -- who said,

"We are concerned because many of the boroughs nominate traditional social housing tenants who cannot afford the higher rents."

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You will get your dream, which is people living in flats entirely at the taxpayers' expense with £350 a week in LHA covering the entire rent.

Tom Copley AM: What do you say to Keith Exford

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I say to you is you need to think --

Tom Copley AM: -- and other Housing Association chief executives who say that people cannot afford to live in this so-called affordable housing that you have created?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): On the contrary, we have created more affordable housing and we have increased the number of social rents and mixed tenures and the whole gamut of products, but what you need to consider --

Tom Copley AM: OK. We will come to that in my next question.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- is the number of council homes that you built --

Tom Copley AM: No, I have finished.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- under Labour and you need to apologise.

Tom Copley AM: No, now he is moving on to other things.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You need to apologise for 13 years of Labour misrule --

Tom Copley AM: You are not answering the question that I asked. You have moved off --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- in which you failed and in fact you have yourself called upon the Labour Party to apologise, have you not?

Tom Copley AM: No, he is wasting time now.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. The Labour Party should apologise and you should apologise yourself.

Andrew Dismore AM: What was the point of you giving £150,000 of taxpayers' money to the Mount Pleasant Association to work up an alternative plan when you were always going to approve the Royal Mail Group scheme all along? It was sheer cynicism on your part, was it not?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No. As you are well aware, Andrew, it is possible for there to be any number of approvals on the same site. The scheme before me is good. It may be that there is a better model, one that can be equally well progressed. I am very interested in the whole Create Streets agenda. There is absolutely no reason at all why we should not support the development of another scheme. As it happens, there are all sorts of people who will tell you that the Create Streets scheme does not work, that it is not compatible with the reforms of the Mount Pleasant sorting office that they need to do and that you cannot do the platform and all the rest of it. Those are arguments that they will have to make to the Post Office. That is a discussion that needs to happen. I myself am very attracted to those drawings. They are beautiful, they are interesting and they should be developed. There is no reason at all why that scheme should not be progressed as well.

Andrew Dismore AM: The fact is you have led the local communities up the garden path and you ought to apologise to them. The fact is you took --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You should apologise. You are useless.

Andrew Dismore AM: -- only just over half an hour just before lunch to rule on your remit.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You should genuinely apologise.

Andrew Dismore AM: It was so short because presumably 'Boozy Boris' was getting tetchy waiting for your liquid lunch. Are you ready for it today? That is why you are getting tetchy now. The fact is you led people up the garden path --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Are you offering me a bottle of wine? I am not going to say no. Are you offering me a bottle of wine?

Andrew Dismore AM: You have got plenty upstairs, haven't you?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have and I will tell you whose it is. We have still not finished the Châteauneuf-du-Pape that was left behind by the last Mayor.

Andrew Dismore AM: The fact is you should apologise to those people for leading them up the garden path.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Mr Mayor --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Such has been the frugality and parsimony of this, but if you want to contribute to City Hall's wine stocks it would probably be the single most useful thing you have done in all your time sitting as a Member of the London Assembly.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Mr Mayor --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am not conscious of any other contribution you will have made, quite frankly.

Andrew Dismore AM: Boris, shut up!

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): However, if you want --

Andrew Dismore AM: He has been on the sauce already.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Just put a sock in it --

Andrew Dismore AM: He has been on the sauce already this morning.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): -- and let us try to restore some form of order here. The possession of bottles of wine and where they may or may not have come from is not remotely related to the original question. I will move on to Nicky Gavron.

Nicky Gavron AM: Mayor, I want to talk about housing in another part of London. Are you confident about the viability assessment for the Earls Court redevelopment?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Which one, the --

Nicky Gavron AM: The Capco one.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The Capco one. Obviously I have not studied it for a while, but I am very happy to have another look at for you, Nicky, if you would like me to.

Nicky Gavron AM: Wait a minute. You have waved through the planning permission on the basis of it and you have also looked very closely at it because you commissioned the District Valuation Service --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am sure it is excellent in every respect.

Nicky Gavron AM: Yes, you commissioned it.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Can I stop you again here?

Nicky Gavron AM: Let me just say you looked closely at it because you commissioned the District Valuation Service --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Sorry, the Chair is asking you to stop.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Nicky --

Nicky Gavron AM: Yes?

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): -- the question specifically refers to the comments about the Mount Pleasant site --

Nicky Gavron AM: Really?

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): -- yes, so Earls Court is not. There is actually a --

Nicky Gavron AM: I am talking about affordable housing.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): No, there is a following question about affordable housing which is going to come next, but I am going to ask Tom [Tom Copley AM] to ask his question first on that.

Nicky Gavron AM: Can I not talk about affordable housing at Earls Court?

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): We will be there in a moment. Of course, yes. You can come in after. Just to be clear, we are dealing with question 3664 headed, "Edward Lister comments", which specifically refers to comments made by the Chief of Staff on the Mount Pleasant site for a specific sum of money. That is a very specific question and we do not have much latitude. The next question, which is in Tom's name on affordable housing programmes --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You can ask next. It is all right. It is fine.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): -- gives us a great deal more room to involve other things and I will certainly call you to come in at that point if you wish.

Nicky Gavron AM: Thank you, Chair.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Any other supplementary questions on that item? No. We will move on to the aforementioned question.

2014/3665 - Affordable housing programmes

Tom Copley

Why are you pretending that the deadline for completing 55,000 affordable homes as part of the 2011/15 funding round was actually the end of December 2015?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, Tom, I do not know what you are getting at here, but the pledge is to create 100,000 homes over the lifetime of this mayoralty and we are well on target to deliver that. What I have said is that we did a huge chunk in the first term and we are doing another huge chunk this term. Both are thoroughly creditable, given the economic circumstances we face.

Tom Copley AM: Can I ask you specifically as you seem a little confused by the question? You have consistently said that you are going to deliver 55,000 affordable homes by the end of March 2015, but last month you told Stephen Knight, "My manifesto commitment is to deliver around 55,000 affordable homes". You told him that that runs until December 2015. Is it the end of March 2015 or is it December 2015?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is 2015. I will tell you that and so --

Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, let me quote a few things to you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is an unbelievable performance, given the constraints we have faced, given the --
Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, hang on. I need to pin you down on a date.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is more than any previous mayoralty and--

Tom Copley AM: No, wait a minute. The question on the paper --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not know why you are bringing this up again.

Tom Copley AM: I want a simple answer.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You have just agreed to apologise. You have just agreed to apologise for your failure.

Tom Copley AM: I want a simple answer from you, Mr Mayor. Be quiet a moment. I want a simple answer from you. Is the deadline for the 55,000 affordable homes by the end of March 2015, as has said been on the record by you and by your Deputy Mayor numerous times, or is it December 2015, which is what you have more recently told Stephen Knight?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think you are --

Tom Copley AM: Could you just say which of those it is?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As far as I can remember, it is 2015 and we are on --

Tom Copley AM: When in 2015?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not know; whenever we have done them.

Tom Copley AM: OK, let me have a --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): They will be there. I do not know what your --

Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, Mr Mayor --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Contain your impatience. They will be there in greater numbers --

Tom Copley AM: Let me quote --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): than any Labour administration ever delivered and you should rejoice.

Tom Copley AM: Let me put it you this way. March 2015 is not the deadline; it is some point in 2015?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): All I can tell you is what I --

Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, is it March 2015 or is it some point anywhere in 2015?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are going to --

Tom Copley AM: Given that he and Richard Blakeway [Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property] --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am absolutely confident --

Tom Copley AM: -- and Jamie Ratcliff [Assistant Director - Programme, Policy and Services] said at the last Housing Committee meeting that it was the end of March 2015, your officers appear to think it is the end of March 2015, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have no reason to doubt them. If that is what they say, then I am sure they are very wise and I am sure that most of them will be complete by that time.

Tom Copley AM: Let me quote this to you --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If there are a few that are not complete, we will see.

Tom Copley AM: Let me put this exchange from the Housing Committee to you --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I can tell you is that it looks overwhelmingly likely that we will deliver 100,000 homes.

Tom Copley AM: Hang on. Let me quote what Darren [Johnson] asked you. Darren asked you,

"I am going to start off with the first question. Is the Mayor still on target to deliver 55,000 affordable homes by March 2015?"

Richard Blakeway, Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property, "Yes". That is a very specific answer. Is the deadline still the end of March 2015? No answer.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As far as I know, we are going to deliver 100,000 homes over the lifetime of this mayoralty. I am not particularly --

Tom Copley AM: He does not know. He is not going to say.

Andrew Dismore AM: The present number does not count.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, that is absolutely correct, actually. I do not know what point you are trying to make, but we are going to deliver a record number of homes.

Tom Copley AM: The point I am trying to make, Mr Mayor, is that that is yet another pledge that you are not going to keep to Londoners.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If it slips by a few hundred --

Tom Copley AM: You told Londoners --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): OK, if it slips by a few hundred in March or whatever deadline --

Tom Copley AM: You are now accepting there may be some slippage?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- you arbitrarily choose to set, we will look at it then, but as far as I am aware we are on track this year --

Tom Copley AM: This is yet another pledge that you have failed to keep to Londoners. Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): This year, we have delivered or we are on track this year to deliver the highest number of affordable homes since 1980, which is before you were born, and that is an outstanding achievement.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor. I have finished.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): I will stop you there. Assembly Member Gavron.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are starting more homes in London now than any year since the 1930s, before they invented the green belt --

Nicky Gavron AM: Mayor, Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- and instead of whimpering on about --

Nicky Gavron AM: Mayor, can we go back?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- these non-questions, you should be rejoicing in the success of London --

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Assembly Member Gavron.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- and you should be

Nicky Gavron AM: I am trying to get in there, but --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- supporting what we are achieving.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Boris, you are talking to the wall. We will stop the clock. Assembly Member Gavron.

Nicky Gavron AM: Mayor, could we go back now to Earls Court? I was talking about the viability assessment and how you have looked at it very carefully because you even commissioned the District Valuer Services (DVS) to investigate Capco's viability assessment. Presumably you agree with their findings, do you?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Listen, I am afraid on the viability assessment of Capco's scheme in Earls Court, if we have given it planning permission, then we must logically think it is OK. If there is some problem with it, I am very happy to get back to you about it, Nicky. I cannot give you --

Nicky Gavron AM: Let me just tell you what the district valuer found. You have to remember you are in a joint venture with Capco and you have a 33% stake - not you, of course, TfL - but I just want to say they found that in fact you could provide more affordable housing because the whole redevelopment scheme is worth £12 billion, not the £8 billion that Capco is claiming. What Capco is doing is it is actually making - or its assessment makes - the absurd assumption that in fact the housing market is going to flat-line for the next 22

years and they are deliberately artificially lowering the rate of return. Why would they do that? In order to not get more affordable housing. Why did you let Capco off the hook and give that planning permission?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am not in a position to agree or to confirm any of the figures that you have just cited. As far as I am aware, the normal viability assessments and the normal toolkits were used to assess the scheme. Those, with the GLA planners, agreed with the conclusions. You know the various systems that are used.

Nicky Gavron AM: You have ignored your own evidence base. The district valuer found 20 instances where Capco did not stick to the standard methodology. You have ignored your own evidence base. You have let Capco off the hook. TfL is a third stakeholder in this and, in my view, the development is robbing London of affordable housing it could have had.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What we have to do is build more homes for London and that is what we are doing. We are building more homes than at any time in the history of this city since the 1930s.

Nicky Gavron AM: There is not a single additional social rented home or affordable rented home on the Earls Court development.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): When you say “affordable”, what you are talking about by “affordable homes”, let us be absolutely clear, is you want homes where the bulk of the cost of living is paid for by the taxpayer and that is fair enough. That is your philosophy. You are entitled to that view of the world.

Nicky Gavron AM: You could have done it.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is what you want to have. You want people living in those homes on that arrangement and 30% of the stock of housing in the centre of London is affordable. The people who are being absolutely stuffed at the moment by the system are the people who do not qualify for those types of homes and who do not qualify for taxpayer money to live in Central London but who want cheaper rents and who want to be able to buy new homes. The only way to help them is to build huge numbers of new homes. That is what we are doing.

Nicky Gavron AM: Do you not agree that you ignored your own evidence? You could have built more affordable housing.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We have done far better in this mayoralty than you did in your eight years, even though you were going through a colossal boom in the markets. We have built more homes and we will continue to build more homes. Look, Nicky, I do not want to steamroll or ignore your point.

Nicky Gavron AM: You have ignored your own evidence.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will look at what you say about the Capco viability assessments. It does not cohere with anything I have been told, but --

Nicky Gavron AM: A £4 million drop. That could have done a lot of affordable housing.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- it is better to build some homes than no homes at all. What has been happening for a long time in London is that great sites have simply been lying vacant because it has been impossible to get them started. That happened when you were in power and there are huge developments

going on now. That is ultimately the best way to help bring down prices in London and to give people the hope of owning at least a part of the value of their home and that is what we are doing.

Nicky Gavron AM: You are the joint developer here. You had an opportunity to create more affordable housing.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are creating huge --

Nicky Gavron AM: You have ignored your own evidence and you have let Capco walk free.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are creating huge numbers of affordable homes, more affordable homes than you ever did. All I am saying to you is that not everybody qualifies to live in taxpayer-funded accommodation and not everybody qualifies for social rent. I am delighted that you are a convert to part-rent/part-buy.

Nicky Gavron AM: You could have done more part-rent/part-buy.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No. Come on. You have spent six years complaining about the emphasis on part-rent/part-buy.

Nicky Gavron AM: No. You have the money.

Len Duvall AM: You have been promoting it.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have been promoting it. It is the right way forward.

Len Duvall AM: You are saying it's not good enough.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, it is the right way forward, but not everybody qualifies even for that and it is absolutely vital that you build a huge range of new homes --

Nicky Gavron AM: You have robbed London of more part-rent/part-buy.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- and that is the only way --

Nicky Gavron AM: You have robbed London of more affordable housing.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- to satisfy the demand and to help address the housing crisis. As you know perfectly well, if you insist on too rigid a model, if you insist that too many homes are entirely funded by the taxpayer or are lived in entirely at the taxpayers' expense, which is the model you prefer, then you will make it impossible for those developments to go ahead. I would rather see new homes built in London.

Nicky Gavron AM: You are avoiding the whole issue.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, I am not.

2014/3644 - Hackbridge Regeneration Scheme

Steve O'Connell

Out of a recent survey of 840 local residents, 802 answered that the junction was more dangerous as a result of recent work. Is this not contrary to the principles of Outer London Fund (OLF) funding?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): This is of course Sutton Council that approved this scheme and a lot of the detailed decision-making is down to them, but I am pleased in general that Outer London Fund (OLF) money is being spent on delivering great projects in Outer London.

Steve O'Connell AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Obviously we welcome very much your increased investment in the OLF and we also welcome the fact that you have reduced the heavy-hand of TfL and allowed the councils themselves to lead on the projects. Unfortunately, on the Hackbridge Scheme I have something like 1,000 replies to a survey, 95% of which tell me that the changes have made the junction more dangerous and accidents more likely. Mr Mayor, there is also evidence that vulnerable people are avoiding Hackbridge. Is this not the exact reverse of the point of the OLF?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I understand the points that you make, Steve, and you make them powerfully. You must take them up with Sutton Council, which has been responsible for the detailed implementation of this scheme. If there are defects and imperfections, then they must be sorted out.

Steve O'Connell AM: The fact that the scheme is dysfunctional and dangerous is in essence the fault of Sutton Council?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I would say so.

Steve O'Connell AM: OK. Also may I ask you - because what is concerning me is that again this is meal money and taxpayers' money that actually has been poorly and badly spent - to perhaps ask your Deputy Mayor to take a direct interest in this because it is a gross municipal incompetence in spending funds? I take your point and I know it is for me and others to take this up with Sutton Council.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is.

Steve O'Connell AM: I know residents are, but it actually is your money that is being spent and I would ask you indeed to ask your Deputy Mayor to take this up with that particular council. To try to get to the bottom of what has gone wrong on the ground, why that money has been misspent and why we now have a much more dangerous scheme than we had in the past, if I could ask for your commitment around that.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. Obviously I am not certain that my team altogether agrees with your characterisation of the effects of the scheme, but I am happy to take your points on board and to see what improvements we can make.

Steve O'Connell AM: My comments are reflecting the 1,000 local people that have responded to the survey. They are not my comments; they are those of the local constituents. I will leave it at that, Chair.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I kindly recommend that you take it up with Sutton Council.

Steve O'Connell AM: OK, thank you.

2014/3558 - Pedestrian and cycle river crossings

Caroline Pidgeon

Is the proposed Garden Bridge river crossing value for money for taxpayers?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course the scheme is superb value, Caroline, and it will lead to an increase in walking with obvious health benefits and help reduce congestion in Central London. It will support the overall growth and development of London, encourage more visitors and help to unite two very important parts of the London economy, the whole Covent Garden area and the South Bank.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. This is the sort of project we have had from you before, such as the cable car and cycle hire, for which you started off saying there would be no cost to the taxpayers and yet --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You do not like either the cable car or cycle hire?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: -- have cost millions of pounds. Will you guarantee that the £30 million transport money that you are putting in is the only money you are going to put into this project and that we will not have to bail out the Garden Bridge if the trust cannot raise the funds?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not see any reason why we should be increasing our support for the Garden Bridge.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: £30 million is the only funding you will give, even though at the moment, given it is estimated to cost £175 million, there is over £100 million funding gap for this Garden Bridge?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The Garden Bridge Trust is very confident it can raise the funds. If you want to come out against the Garden Bridge, you are welcome to do so, but it is a great scheme.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Are you against it?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Let me carry on my questioning, Mr Mayor. We know that Temple Tube station will be closed for around six months, possibly longer. The only green space on the Southbank will be lost, along with many mature trees. This is my real bugbear with it. Despite it being --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Stop whinging about everything.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: -- funded by transport funds, there is not going to be any space for cycling on the bridge and pedestrians will have to meander slowly. Do you really think this is a good use of £60 million of public money?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I do. Yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. Waterloo Bridge is about 200 metres away; Blackfriars is around 300 metres. Would it not be better to use this money to build a pedestrian and cycling bridge where it is actually needed? For example, there has been a proposal for some time for a bridge between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf and the cost, we think, would be similar but it really would meet a genuine need to get people over to Canary Wharf.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is a very interesting idea.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Is that something you would consider supporting?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I might well do. The Garden Bridge has great attractions, it is a wonderful scheme and I am surprised because my impression was that most Members of this Assembly supported the scheme, but if that is not the case, then obviously I register that with interest. It is a wonderful scheme for London; it is overwhelmingly supported by the public. It is supported by Mr Biggs [John Biggs AM], which is a great thing, and Mr Biggs has his finger on the pulse sometimes and he is generally pro-bridge, Caroline. Can I just give you a spot of advice? Do not go against the Garden Bridge. It is going to happen; it is going to be beautiful. You are backing the wrong horse.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Mr Mayor, I have not said I am against it. I am just raising that there are some very serious concerns.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What is the point of your pointless questions then?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: What I am asking is for you to guarantee that transport money will not be pushed into this when it will not allow cyclists, for example, to go across it. What I am really trying to get your --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is a garden.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE(AM: -- support for, Mr Mayor, if you will allow me to finish questioning, is that Sustrans is planning to launch a new competition to design this bridge, which it has worked on for some time, from Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf. They are calling it the Brunel Bridge. It would really increase cycling and provide a river crossing where it really is needed and it would potentially help relieve overcrowding on the Jubilee line. Will you consider supporting this project?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Please tell them to come in as soon as possible and we will have a look at it.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You will have a look at it?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am always interested in that type of scheme. I do agree there should be a crossing in that area. Let us see what they are proposing.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: They are looking at doing a really interesting competition, looking at getting architects on board and coming up with a really creative design. It would cost a similar amount of money. Is this the sort of project that you would also consider putting some transport money towards, as you have with the Garden Bridge?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If it has a good business case and it works. One of the difficulties is that in that area you have to go very high up.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It has to have a mechanism to go -- I know there are issues, but they have developed one in the past.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Is it a sort of curly wurly Fisher-Price thing where you go up --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: They are going to go out to design to try to work that out. They have had designs in the past.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That sounds brilliant.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Is this something --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Perhaps you could have a sort of catapult. Let us have a look.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: A catapult? Maybe that can be your submission to the design competition, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Have a look. Bring it. Let us have a look at it.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You will agree to meet Sustrans to look at this proposal and to help support it?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): They can come and see Isabel [Dedring, Deputy Mayor for Transport], yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Come and see Isabel, not you. OK, that is great. Thank you very much.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Brilliant.

2013/3576 - Cardiff Model

Caroline Pidgeon

Further to your response to Mayor's Question (MQ) 2014/3074, have you written to all London Hospital Trusts' chief executives about implementing the Cardiff Model and will you follow up with a roundtable discussion if you are not satisfied with their responses?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We have not yet had responses from all the Trusts that we wrote to. Caroline, I think you have a copy of the letter I wrote anyway.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I have seen that, yes.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is fairly straightforward. It makes the point that it would be a huge benefit to London if we had more data about what is happening in the A&Es and what kinds of injuries they are treating. When we get all those responses back, obviously we will share them with you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Lovely. You may well have to have a roundtable to really thrash this out because this has been going on for so long. I welcome your support and commitment to achieving this, which will help reduce violent crime in London.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you.

2014/3639 - Gallows Corner Junction

Roger Evans

Following a debate at the Havering Council Meeting on 26 September 2014, a motion was unanimously passed and it was resolved that the council will call upon TfL to undertake an early review of measures to improve the Gallows Corner Junction, which is widely regarded as one of the most congested and dangerous road hazards in North East London. Could you please provide me with an update?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you very much, Roger. The issue is topmost in TfL. Thank you very much for raising it on behalf of your constituents. TfL is commissioning design work to see if we can improve Gallows Corner Junction and those improvements should be completed by the spring of 2016. TfL is very happy to go through in detail with you what is being proposed.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): All right, thank you. I would not normally raise a question from the Chair, obviously

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, sure.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): -- but in this situation the motion was approved cross-party at Havering, which is no small feat considering they now have six different political parties on the Council. One of the things that people tell me is that you did say you would come and have a look at the junction at some time and they have not seen you there yet. Will you reaffirm your promise to pay us a visit?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If I possibly can. Obviously I have been there several times and I have seen it in a general way. I do not think I have done a public meeting there. I will do my best. What I can certainly do is make sure that you are involved personally, Roger, in the changes that are being proposed and that you can have those explained to you. We are considering Gallows Corner in the long run for more fundamental change and it may be that other solutions will be necessary in the long run.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Thank you. The Conservative Group is out of time. That concludes the questions.