

Policing and Community Safety

Tackling FGM

Question Number: 4728/2013

18 December 2013

Victoria Borwick AM

Kit Malthouse AM (on behalf of Victoria Borwick AM): Finally, Victoria asked me to see if you would agree to write to all boroughs in London to ascertain what work they are doing to make sure that their services - health, education and childcare - are working together to identify possible victims and hence help in combating this issue.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am more than happy to do that.

Crime Statistics

Question Number: 4871/2013

18 December 2013

Joanne McCartney AM

Joanne McCartney AM: Good. Will the investigation be looking across all crime types and not just the MOPAC seven [self-defined key neighbourhood crimes]?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course.

Crime Statistics

Question Number: 4871/2013

18 December 2013

Joanne McCartney AM

Joanne McCartney AM: You are having an internal audit going in and checking. Can I ask for a guarantee from you that that will be a constant method and that actually it will not just be an in-and-out audit?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It will not, no.

Crime Statistics

Question Number: 4871/2013

18 December 2013

Joanne McCartney AM

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): I am quite interested to see those Tom Winsor figures and perhaps we can pursue them at the Police and Crime Committee tomorrow. We had a problem with the Sapphire Unit a few years ago with the number of rapes being screened out and one of the lessons that we learned from that episode is that a high level of screening-out of crimes - in other words, crimes which are not progressed completely - is often a very good indicator that there is some massaging or abuse of the statistics going on. That is why we in the GLA Conservatives have called in the past for those screening-out figures to be published on a borough-by-borough basis so we can compare boroughs and see if anything looks out of the ordinary in particular locations around London. That would be a great help in holding the police to account. Is it something that MOPAC will be able to do?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. You would like a borough-by-borough publication of the screening-out across every crime type?

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): Yes.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not see why that should be too difficult to produce, Roger. I will look into it. I do not want to make any absolute commitments now. Perhaps we could take it offline and talk to Stephen about the practicalities of that?

Unsolved Crimes in London

Question Number: 4100/2013

20 November 2013

Joanne McCartney AM

Joanne McCartney AM: You said you have now targets to increase sanction detection rates. MOPAC do not report them in their monthly report to the Police and Crime Committee. Will you ensure that they do in future record those targets?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I see no reason why you should not have access, Joanne, to the sanction detection rates. Fewer crimes, by the way, are screened out now and the figures I have suggest that far fewer crimes are being screened out, which is a point that Victoria [Borwick] and others have raised before, and we are doing our best to make sure that people who commit crimes are actually brought to justice. That is what people want to see.

Joanne McCartney AM: There has been a slight reduction in crimes that have been screened out, but we heard yesterday at the House of Commons Select Committee from two former Metropolitan Police Service officers that actually the Metropolitan Police Service and other police forces regularly massage figures.

Body-worn cameras

Question Number: 3558/2013

23 October 2013

Roger Evans AM

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): Do you expect the use of body-worn cameras by patrol officers will actually reduce the number of incidents of force used by those officers and, indeed, the numbers of incidents where force or violence is used against them?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I do. I think they will reduce all sorts of confusion and incivility generally. We are going into a world now where every time I get on the Tube, or whatever, people are instantly taking photos or recording what I say and that is fine, that is the way it is. It has a very sanitising effect, it means that you do not behave disgracefully, if you can possibly avoid it. Sunlight is the best disinfectant and what it means is that public servants, such as the police have a record of how they are behaving, but also of course a record of how the public are behaving. I think it is the way it is all going to go. In the future we are all going to have little Google implants in our retinas anyway, recording everything that goes on. It is coming.

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): I am not sure I feel enthusiastic about broadening out the trial in the way that you suggest there, but in the policing trial can you make sure that you take a look at evidence to see if it is actually able to reduce the amount of time taken to bring prosecutions to court?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, all that sort of data we will make sure we make available, how it is working, the effect it is having. We will certainly do that

Victims' funding allocations for London

Question Number: 3587/2013

23 October 2013

Joanne McCartney AM

Joanne McCartney AM: Have you let the Government know that their proposals are ludicrous though? Currently, London accounts for 24% of national funding for victims. We would be going down to about 15% which will mean that nationally there will be over £18 spent per victim.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I understand. We have written to Chris Grayling [Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice] and Stephen Greenhalgh [Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime] is in contact with him.

Joanne McCartney AM: Have you put it in those terms that these proposals are totally unacceptable and that you will resist them with all your might?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have put it in more or less those terms.

Joanne McCartney AM: Is that that you have written to them?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have written to the Justice Secretary about this.

Joanne McCartney AM: Could we have a copy of that letter?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am sure that could be made available. I see no reason at all why not.

UK Border Agency in Chinatown

Mayor's Oral Update

23 October 2013

Andrew Dismore AM

Andrew Dismore AM: Did you know that whilst you were swanning around doing your photo opportunities in Beijing with George Osborne, at home the UK Border Agency (UKBA) was harassing Chinese businesses in Chinatown? There have been 11 big raids since July. That is almost one a week and more often than not they do not find anyone illegal. It is not intelligence-led. These are fishing expeditions.

It has reached the stage that yesterday afternoon all the shops and businesses in Chinatown, 200 or more, closed for two hours in protest because they were very angry at the disruptive and discriminatory fishing raids by the Border Agency. They think they have become easy targets for the UKBA to attack. These raids are damaging the reputation of Chinatown and Chinese businesses and create and reinforce the negative stereotypes of Chinese people.

What are you doing about these raids?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I would say is that obviously I --

Andrew Dismore AM: Why are you saying one thing in China and another thing at home?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Come on. You want to hear the answer? You hear the answer. Obviously, I deprecate any activities by the UKBA that are discriminatory or unnecessarily hostile to any

community in our city and I have made that clear time and time again. If they have been heavy-handed in this instance, then certainly we will get on to it and we will take the necessary actions.

Predictive Policing

Question Number: 2888/2013

11 September 2013

Roger Evans

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. I mean, obviously I think it would be a little bit unfortunate to try to compare crime rates with Los Angeles with crime rates in London, Roger. Not even the most indefatigable British Conservative admirer of American policing could possibly think that they are doing better than us, because they are not. Our City is far safer and we have far less crime of virtually every type in London than they do in Los Angeles. That is why I slightly resist these sorts of slavish comparisons with great American urban success stories. Actually London has a very, very good record of driving down crime and we are going to continue to do it. This technique of using predictive policing maps is very interesting and we are certainly exploring it, as I say, and it will be on stream in full next year.

Confidence in the Metropolitan Police Service

Question Number: 2433/2013

17 July 2013

Joanne McCartney

Jennette Arnold OBE (AM): The Metropolitan Police Service said he was facing them; they shot him in the back of the head. The campaigners have written to me and said, can you assure them that the Metropolitan Police Service did not try to smear both the Stanley family and the campaigners working for justice for the Harry Stanley campaign. Will you write to me once you have investigated these things?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will certainly do that, Jennette.

Confidence in the Metropolitan Police Service

Question Number: 2433/2013

17 July 2013

Joanne McCartney

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am not some sort of human sponge to sit here and take abuse from somebody who, as I say, from bitter and long experience, peddles a load of nonsense. If you are right, Jenny, that the Metropolitan Police Service have not taken account of what Tom Winsor has said - and I doubt very much that you are right - but if you are right then I will certainly take it up with them.

MPS Diversity

Question Number: 1965/2013

19 June 2013

Joanne McCartney

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thanks, Joanne. Yes, there is a big effort going on now on that as part of the Recruiting of 5,000 new officers over the next three years. We are trying to increase diversity as well in the force and to make sure we have, in London, a police force that represents the city we live in and that is what Londoners want. It is part of building confidence. What we will not do is compromise on quality and I am sure nobody would want us to do that.

Joanne McCartney (AM): No but this seems to be an intractable problem that many people have tried to wrestle with over the last couple of decades. Assistant Commissioner (AC) Burn is quoted as saying that the

Metropolitan Police Service would like the Home Office to change legislation to allow it to recruit one black minority officer if one white one is recruited. Are you supporting that bold move?

Darren Johnson (Chair): OK, again a very quick answer to that because the Labour Group are out of time.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am supportive of positive action, Joanne, provided obviously it does not mean that there is any compromise on quality.

Joanne McCartney (AM): There are many people out there of good quality, Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. So the answer is yes.

Tackling extremism

Question Number: 1966/2013

19 June 2013

Joanne McCartney

Andrew Dismore (AM): On the 5 June, the Somali Bravanese Community Centre in Coppetts Ward in my constituency was burned down by arson in what appears to be a racially-motivated attack, which is clearly a great shock to the area where the community has lived harmoniously for 20 years and for Barnet as a whole where we are proud of our tolerant multi-cultural society. But the criminals responsible have achieved the direct opposite of their wicked objective of dividing our society as everyone has rallied around and in fact the first on the scene were Rabbis from the local Synagogues offering their support. I am pleased to say that the Council has agreed with my suggestion the centre must be rebuilt on the same site. As Abubakar Ali, the Chair of the centre, said, "We will rebuild our community centre; it will once again become a beacon for cohesion, social action and friendship." What will you do as Mayor to support these efforts to rebuild and restore the centre as soon as possible because this is the best and most effective response to such racist attacks to prove they will not succeed in their message of hatred?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I thank you, Andrew, and I appreciate very much the work that people are doing in the community to come together, to rebuild that centre, and I want you to know that they have my full support. If your question is really sort of, "What can we do financially to help?", I am looking interrogatively at you now, if that is really what you are asking, we will certainly look at it, I do not know the circumstances, I do not know what the insurance basis was, we will have to see what we can do there and I really would not want to make any commitments, but I certainly strongly, strongly support what people of all faiths and all communities are doing in that part of town to pull together and to put that centre back on its feet.

Street Pastors

Question Number: 1929/2013

19 June 2013

Tony Arbour

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As usual, Tony, I completely support you in what you are saying. I think the Street Pastors do a fantastic job. We have met them. I launched the Street Pastors' conference, as far as I can remember, a few years ago. I have been out with them on the streets of London several times. I think they do a wonderful job. I know that they recently met the Team London people here in City Hall to see how we could help through Team London recruit people to become Street Pastors.

Tony Arbour (AM): I am grateful to you for that. I have asked the question really to draw attention to the success of Street Pastors in my part of London where we have a substantial night-time economy, particularly in Kingston where these characters are very successful. They are endeavouring to roll out their programme across London. I am always loathe to ask for --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Money?

Tony Arbour (AM): -- indeed, assistance from the public purse but I think it is possible to demonstrate that the Street Pastors in fact, by preventing pressure on social services and preventing pressure on the justice system, are able to save the public substantial sums of money. It might be that if you were to encourage particularly borough commanders to see how in their own boroughs Street Pastors can relieve the pressure on police, that may in fact be reflected in a saving of public money and indeed a saving on the MOPAC budget. Therefore, I ask, as I say, quite uncharacteristically, that you consider that these very worthy people do receive something from the public purse.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is so rare, Tony, that you should ask for something from the public purse, I will make sure that MOPAC do look at what they can do to help Street Pastors. I cannot promise much but I certainly want to renew my commitment to supporting them and I express my appreciation and I am sure the appreciation of everybody here for the contribution that they make to safety and the friendliness of the streets of London after dark.

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): I am pleased my colleague Tony Arbour asked this question because Street Pastors form a part of the infrastructure that is in place in Romford to keep people safe in the night-time economy where they do not just reduce the incidence of antisocial behaviour and violence but they also provide care for people who have maybe drunk too much or missed the last bus home and are stuck in the town centre and would otherwise be vulnerable.

I am not going to ask you for money like my colleague but would it be possible for you at some point to visit us in Romford and see the measures that are being taken to improve safety in the high street and you could meet these marvellous people and thank them in person?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Roger, as you know, I am seldom away from Romford.

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): It seems so long since the last visit.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Come on! But next time I am there we will see what we can do to organise something to support the Street Pastors and the excellent work they do.

Police and Crime Plan and Estate Strategy

Question Number: 992/2013

20 March 2013

Joanne McCartney

Joanne McCartney OBE (AM): My question is about the process because I have had one police station close during it and I have been notified and other Assembly Members have also been notified about local stations where they have been told decisions have already been taken. So if you have not signed them off yet, I have concerns.

Can I ask will you make sure that you read all the consultation responses before you sign off the closures?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I certainly take account of the consultation responses --

Joanne McCartney OBE (AM): Will you read them?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- and I will certainly. I do not quite know how voluminous they are but I will faithfully take account of the consultation responses.

Police and Crime Plan and Estate Strategy

Question Number: 992/2013

20 March 2013

Joanne McCartney

Roger Evans (AM): Thank you, Chair. Mr Mayor, are you looking forward to reading the Assembly's Police and Crime Committee's response to the Draft Police and Crime Plan?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course I am.

Roger Evans (AM): When you read it, you will find in there evidence from academics who appeared before the Committee including Professor Marian Fitzgerald [Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent] and Professor Mike Hough [Professor of Criminal Policy and Co-Director of the Institute for Criminal Policy Research, University of London]. They talked about the Metropolitan Police Service Estates Strategy and pointed out to Members of the Committee, several times it has to be said, that the existing arrangements were not very welcoming for people who wanted to report a crime when you had to queue up with people answering bail and people filling in forms.

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

Roger Evans (AM): They felt that the new arrangements may well actually improve public access to policing. Would you be surprised to hear that?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No and I think that is entirely right and indeed that is a point that when they are being less oppositionist and hysterical that I think the Members on the Labour side also accept. The objective of these reforms is to make the police more accessible to Londoners and yes, there will be contact points and yes, they will all be spelt out but the crucial thing is that you will get, if you report a crime, you will get a visit in person. I have asked for the figures for the increases in numbers of visits for crimes reported and I hope to be able to publish those as well shortly.

IPCC Investigation

Question Number: 960/2013

20 March 2013

Roger Evans

Roger Evans (AM): Thank you for that robust response, Mr Mayor. Can you take this opportunity to reassure Londoners, particularly women in London, that supervision is now in place to ensure that claims of rape are dealt with properly by the Metropolitan Police Service and that reporting of rape is encouraged?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Absolutely. I think that this was something that the IPCC spotted relating to Southwark in 2008/09 and I think there was a great deal of shock amongst the management board of the Metropolitan Police Service about what had been going on and we want to make sure nothing like this happens again. It is absolutely vital. The result may very well be that we see an increase in reporting of this type of crime. I would much rather see that. I would much rather see a red panel in my indicators, of an indicator going in the wrong way, than people being discouraged from reporting this type of crime. It is absolutely vital that people have the confidence to do it. I do not want to see people being asked to think again about their allegation. I want these allegations properly investigated.

Roger Evans (AM): Good. I wonder if the Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) have considered the wider implications with respect to other crimes in London. I know that my colleagues, Victoria Borwick [AM] and Tony Arbour [AM] have done pieces of work with their local police over the last couple of years. This work indicated that there have been quite a lot of crimes involving theft which have been effectively screened out when the complainant has decided, after discussion with the police, that in fact no crime had taken place. Here, the targeting culture was actually encouraging fewer crimes to be declared in order to keep the crime rate down. Is that something which you will ask MOPAC to audit on a per-borough basis so that they can actually see if there are any discrepancies?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, we will look at that. There are only two types of crime at the moment that are moving in the wrong direction. Broadly speaking, over the last year, crime overall in the key areas came down by about five-and-a-bit percent, just in one year. The two types of crime of the 20 or so that you might look at on the list that are going in the wrong direction are, firstly, domestic violence, rape and sexual violence. Those are going in the wrong direction and that is why this discussion is so important and that is why it is absolutely vital that the police take these allegations seriously. Second is theft from a person and we are looking at the causes of that. We had a good discussion in the recent MOPAC Challenge Board session about that, with the Commissioner, because there is a question about certain brands of mobile phones, and we are trying to address this. We are trying to make sure the mobile phone companies understand their obligations to make sure that their phones cannot be traded and, therefore, represent a negotiable asset for people who steal them. To get to your point about under-reporting of theft, it may be that in some cases there are thefts that are not thefts, if you see what I mean and we may want to look at that as well. There may be two sides to that particular equation.

Roger Evans (AM): Would MOPAC be willing to help us to make our own minds about this by publishing the number of crimes which are effectively declared as no crimes per London borough? That way the Committee here and members of the public can see if any borough is particularly out of line with the average?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I do not see why not. It seem like a reasonable idea, Roger, I do not see why we should not do that. We need to look at that.

IPCC Investigation

Question Number: 960/2013

20 March 2013

Roger Evans

Kit Malthouse (AM): It is not necessarily the case that the underlying incidence of those crimes is rising but more that a possibly declining population are reporting it more. Actually, on the assumption that there is greater underreporting of those often domestically-based crimes, then actually a red box in your report is a positive, rather than a negative.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think you have to avoid complacency about this. Yes, you have to feed that into your calculations, and certainly we want to encourage reporting. I want to see people having the confidence to come forward and talk to the police about what has happened to them. I think it would be a mistake to be complacent and to say that simply because the figures are going up that shows what a great job we are doing. It may also show that we need to work even harder to tackle the problem.

Kit Malthouse (AM): Again on the personal robbery of telephones, one of the things that might confuse the numbers as well is I understand there is a fairly high level of fraudulent reports of robbery on the basis that insurance claims are then triggered. Would it be possible to break out the numbers that you are able to see that? Certainly I have heard instances of police officers calling the telephone number of the phone that is supposedly stolen and the reporter answering the phone themselves. Can you find out whether the insurance industry is working closely with the police to try to drive that out, so we can see the true pattern of what is actually happening?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think that is a very good thing to do, because it is, after all, deeply and bitterly unfair on everybody else who is being genuinely robbed and who is genuinely trying to do the right thing and insure their machine, if people are simply ripping off the system; so I think that is reasonable, yes.

Sanction detection rate

Question Number: 1743/2013

22 May 2013

Tony Arbour

Tony Arbour (AM): I would suggest to you that one way in which you can perhaps raise people's confidence in the fact that the police are actually doing something is to tap into this system. It might even have the merit in addition of being cheaper than sending a policeman around to the house. You just tap into the thing and it would go on. I would ask you please to lean on your office, on Mr Greenhalgh [Stephen, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime] on this one and say that this is a solution which should be zeroed on. It would do you a lot of good but, more importantly, it would do the victims of crime a lot of good.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Your labours have not been in vain. Thank you for what you have said because Track My Crime is indeed being taken up by MOPAC. We are actively looking at how to implement it and give Londoners exactly that confidence and opportunity to see what is happening.

Sanction detection rate

Question Number: 1743/2013

22 May 2013

Tony Arbour

Kit Malthouse (AM): Would you also agree with me that sanction detection rate targets can be a very dangerous thing to pursue? Certainly when sanction detection rates became a priority target under the previous national Government, there were quite a lot of unintended consequences driven by that target because it is very easy for the police to go for the easy crimes --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Round up the usual suspects?

Kit Malthouse (AM): -- round up the usual suspects and go for sanction detection and up their rate. So we used to find, if you remember, Mr Mayor, that things would be deemed to be a crime that were not previously a crime. A police officer would be called to a school, for instance, where there might have been a playground fight. That would be deemed to be an assault. Those two young people would get a criminal record. That was an easy sanction detection and diverting the police towards dealing with that I guess low-level antisocial behaviour in place of the tougher stuff would be a consequence of targeting entirely on sanction detection.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think that is a valid point. Len is interjecting that that is what they are doing now, they are screening things out, they are skewing the figures. I do not accept this, Len. I am about to say something I hope you will find favourable. I want to have a proper look at this. I think what we will do is we will get MOPAC to make a proper assessment of whether screening out is increasing and whether your charge against the police can really be sustained and let us have some real evidence on this. I do not think it is true. What Kit [Malthouse] says is right. There are particular circumstances in London which means the sanction detection rate is chronically low and always will be lower than other parts of the country. If Len is really onto something in saying that screening out is now being used as a tool to manage crime figures, then we need to be onto that. I have not seen the evidence for it yet but my undertaking to the Assembly now is I will use MOPAC to get to the bottom of it.

Challenges to the Metropolitan Police Service

Question Number: 1390/2013

22 May 2013

Joanne McCartney

Len Duvall (AM): Let us go to Operation Yewtree then. In terms of questions to the Police and Crime Committee the Deputy Commissioner [Craig Mackey] says, "There's no problem about capacity, we've got access to thousands of detectives" ho, ho, ho, "and we're OK". On 11 May 2013, it was reported that seven agency workers from Reed Specialist Recruitment, were recruited to add to the 27 officers working on Yewtree. These are agency workers who are former Police Officers. Who knew? They might have been officers that the Metropolitan Police Service has just let go, are now being re-employed back into the Metropolitan Police Service to work on that specific operation, important investigation I think you would say, into alleged sexual crimes, Jimmy Savile and others. Despite what the police gave in terms of assurance the Police and Crime Panel, are you not concerned that that those issues are coming through? When, in your conversations with Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe and his senior management team, was there any discussion with you about the move to this type of work about agency workers being introduced to an operational environment? I suppose can we question whether it is good value or not, while we are watching that, but also about accountability for mistakes and some of those issues that may come on in the future? What conversations have you had?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think those are all serious points and have I received general assurances, as we all have, that there is adequate strength and resource to cope with the incredible pressures that the Metropolitan Police Service faces to deal with issues that are of national concern.

On your specific question about the role of Reed Agency workers to supplement the Yewtree, the Savile inquiry, and whether they have been drawn from recently ex-police officers, I mean that is something we need to get to the bottom of. I cannot give you an answer now. Again, I will undertake to make sure that MOPAC looks carefully at the issue, the particular pressures that are being caused by these national investigations. The best of my information at the moment is that they are coping very well, clearly the Metropolitan Police Service is best placed to deal with this kind of thing, but it helps us in the argument to Government for funding. It is absolutely absurd that what is effectively a police force fulfilling a national function should not be properly funded. We will be making that case consistently over the next few years.

Len Duvall (AM): Do you not find it amazing that a senior Police Officer, I am quite supportive of that Police Officer, but can say something to an official body but actually the actions of an organisation is doing something different around that? It is assurances we have got the capacity to do this, we can do this and then find out later on --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): This is Craig [Mackey]?

Len Duvall (AM): Yes. Does that not really worry you in some ways?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Len, before I --

Len Duvall (AM): No, it is not meant to be a critical comment.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, I know what you are saying, but can we just dig into this because the truth is I do not know the answer? I do not know exactly how many Reed Agency workers have been employed on Yew Tree, it is the first I have --

Len Duvall (AM): Seven.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Let us dig into the question and see what answers we can get for you.

MOPAC payments to ACPO

Question Number: 155/2013

Meeting Date: 16 January 2013

Tony Arbour

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am slightly worried, Tony, because normally you and I are absolutely ad item on every issue before us, that you have taken against the Association of Chief Police Officers [ACPO] in a big way. My view is that, whatever criticisms you may make of it, is it a very good way of bringing together expertise amongst our police forces in this country. They discuss interoperability, ballistics, intelligence, they coordinate on crime information and all sorts of things that frankly police forces need to do in concert. If this body did not exist I am afraid you would need to invent it. I am reluctant, avid cost cutter though I am, to cease our payments to it.

Tony Arbour (AM): I am astonished that you should be singing the praises of ACPO. ACPO of course is a private company and not democratically accountable to anybody. Let me give you a couple of examples of the things that they spend money on, a lot of which comes from your rate payers because as I say in my question you have already given them £605,000 this year. This year in the first seven months the cost of drivers for chief officers of ACPO, of whom there are only 40 odd of course, chief constables, was £536,676.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Drivers?

Tony Arbour (AM): The cost of the cars was £269,567.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is outrageous I have to admit.

Tony Arbour (AM): Well I got this through --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is for the whole country, is it not?

Tony Arbour (AM): Yes, but you gave them, Mr Mayor, £605,000. You are accountable. You gave money to this unaccountable organisation which spends money in the most extravagant way. ACPO officers receive extremely high salaries, almost as much as the Commissioner, Sir Hugh Orde. Sir Hugh Orde is a man whom, because he is not democratically accountable, has the nerve to criticise the Government. Sir Hugh Orde criticised the Government for various --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Hang on, there are plenty of people who criticise the Government. There is nothing you can do about that. It is a democracy.

Tony Arbour (AM): This man is an official. He is funded publicly, he is not answering to anybody and he comes along and says he does not like police policy. You told me just now that if ACPO did not exist it would have to be invented. I am not sure that I would want to invent a club, a fat cat club, which provides private accommodation, drivers and cars to its members --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am with you on this one, Tony.

Tony Arbour (AM): Ah, so we are making a bit of progress.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Can I undertake, having listened to your strictures, to come back to you with further best particulars about exactly what we are subsidising in ACPO. If it is true that the taxpayers of London are really just bunging them dosh to go around in swish limos and that is it, then we will have a serious hard look at it, because I do oppose that. I think it is pointless. There are far too many public officials riding in cars at the moment already. I think the whole of Whitehall are creeping back into their cars. They should be out of their cars and on the tube, Liberal Democrat ministers included by the way. It is an utter disgrace. How can we ask these people to support investments in the tube and in mass transit in our cities when they are allowed by government to -- what is the word I want?

Police Stations

Question Number: 4045/2012

Meeting Date: 19 December 2012

Kit Malthouse

Will you join other PCCs across the country in their calls to the Home Secretary to rethink the government's dangerous strategy of imposing 20% budget cuts on police forces?

Kit Malthouse (AM): Mr Mayor, I hope you would agree with me that any decisions around closures or otherwise of police stations should be based on evidence. So also should be the participation or otherwise of Assembly Members in particular campaigns around particular police stations. On that basis, will you give us all the evidence again and send every Assembly Member a copy of the footfall survey that was conducted by the Metropolitan Police Service around every single front counter, which might illustrate that Hampstead Police Station, for instance, I think from memory - I may be wrong - was getting an average of three visitors in every 24-hour period and was costing something like £90,000 a year just to maintain the building, never mind keep it open? Will you send us all a copy of the footfall survey?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I cannot confirm those footfall figures for that particular police station, but I think your general point is well understood.

Kit Malthouse (AM): Can we have a copy of the survey circulated to everyone?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Labour Members and opposition Members generally have got to try and attack where they can. That is their constitutional duty. I do urge them in this matter to think of the logic, look at the position and do what is in the best interests of London.

Kit Malthouse (AM): But can we have a copy of the survey sent out?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I do not see why not. Absolutely.

Kit Malthouse (AM): There was a public document some time ago to remind everybody. Would you also be willing to give us --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Perhaps you could give a seminar on the survey to the Labour Members?

Kit Malthouse (AM): I am sure the MPS would be happy to give a briefing to the PCC or indeed other Members who want to participate around this. Could you also send up separate information that would show the change in pattern and method of reporting crime that has taken place over the last ten years which would illustrate the massive reduction in the reporting of crime at front counters and the enormous increase of reporting of crime online and by telephone?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That would also be, I think, helpful to inform the debate generally and amongst colleagues here in this horseshoe. Yes. Let us have the argument in public, get the facts out there; let people understand.

Police Stations (2)

Question Number: 3365/2012

Meeting Date: 21 November 2012

Roger Evans

How will you use your new budget flexibilities to protect the police budget?

Roger Evans (AM): I would like to take this opportunity Boris to commend the Acting Borough Commander at Redbridge who ran a stakeholder consultation session with us last week about the future of public access in Redbridge. I know members of the council were there really from all sides who were concerned about the robustness of some of the public access statistics which the exercise is based on. Could you just make sure that the statistics that are used to inform this process are as solid as they can be, because we do not want to undermine --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, what was the worry about the statistics?

Roger Evans (AM): I think the problem was that they were based on a couple of years ago, they were not particularly recent and the sample sizes were considered to be a little bit on the small side.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is very helpful. I will make sure that MOPAC get onto that straightaway.

Roger Evans (AM): Yes. Another possible concern that we have is what is happening across borders. At the moment the process is rightly concentrating on a particular borough but the movement of facilities across the border of the borough may affect the police in that borough because of course criminals and members of the public do not recognise borough boundaries. When the final package is put together for public consultation will there be an opportunity to take that into account?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course, and we will make sure that we take a completely strategic view, a cross-London view of provision, in order to reduce crime overall, yes.

Roger Evans (AM): Just finally, another piece of reassurance that we need, because I think Caroline [Pidgeon] raised quite a good point earlier on, that the new access facilities may attract more people to come and use them because they are in places that the public frequent more often. However, if we do not have a facility for people who are victims of serious crimes to be able to report them with some confidentiality they might be discouraged. Could we make sure that is --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes I understand that point completely. That is why one of the things I have said straight out to you this morning is that every borough must have a 24 hour police station where the public can go in confidence and report serious crime; that is absolutely essential.

Retention of DNA

Question Number: 3766/2012

Meeting Date: 21 November 2012

Roger Evans

I understand since May 2012, citizens of the UK are entitled to seek early deletion of DNA records from police systems through the Protection of Freedom Act, although this is a lengthy and laborious process. How long do you think it should take for innocent UK citizens to remove their DNA records from the system?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thanks, Roger. I understand you have a particular constituency interest in this matter. There is a balance to be struck. DNA is plainly an incredibly powerful tool of detection now and of solving crimes but where innocent people have their DNA stored by the Government, by the police and by the national DNA database they should be able, after a reasonable period of time, to withdraw it. That is the purpose of the Protection of Freedom Act. Exactly how long that period is, is not clear to me either from the notes I have before me but I will make sure that we get you an answer.

Roger Evans (AM): To be honest it is not entirely clear to me which is why I asked the question. I think there should be some sort of target for the Metropolitan Police Service to meet otherwise it makes a mockery of calling something an early deletion process.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The informal answer I was given was it was three years but I do not see that in the statute and I want to know why not.

Roger Evans (AM): I do feel that three years is an inordinately long amount of time for people who may have had their sample taken just because they were arrested and who might not even have been charged, or indeed for people who might have volunteered a sample if you have a crime that you want cleared up in the area and you ask people to come forward. It would help to encourage volunteers and to encourage confidence in the police service in London if we could have a much shorter time and if we could feel that objections to it were raised on the grounds of genuine criminal justice issues rather than just to prevent a legal or bureaucratic precedent being set which is the feeling I am getting at the moment.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes is the answer. I understand you have a constituent who is particularly concerned about the retention of his DNA. I have sympathy with him. We will do our best to give him a more positive answer about exactly when he could expect his personal DNA material to be purged from the system.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams

Question Number: 3001/2012

Meeting Date: 17 October 2012

Joanne McCartney

What risks have been identified in relation to cutting the police budget in London?

Joanne McCartney (AM): I believe we are seeing the end of Safer Neighbourhoods Teams as we know it.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, you are not.

Joanne McCartney (AM): We are. The new model stretches fewer resources over much larger geographic areas. Can I ask how many PCSOs you will have in April next year?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I would be happy to get back to you on the figure. I do not have it before me now.

ANPR camera check points

Question Number: 2967/2012

Meeting Date: 17 October 2012

Roger Evans

Do you agree that ANPR camera checkpoints, successfully organised as part of the Met's Operation Pegasus, should become a regular operational fixture?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you very much, Roger. The automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) system I think is excellent. We did make a commitment to use it. The Metropolitan Police Service, as a result of ANPR, made 1,500 arrests last year for offences including robbery and firearms, drug trafficking and serious sexual offences and since October 2011 37,000 uninsured cars have been seized and quite a few of them crushed. So I think it is a highly effective system.

Roger Evans (AM): Thank you, Mayor, that is a reassuring answer. I spent an interesting and slightly alarming Saturday night with Councillor Filly Maravala who represents Loxford ward, in the south of Ilford, looking at our red light area and clearly there are a lot of problems there with people visiting the area that we do not want with drug dealing, with prostitution and anti-social behaviour. Do you think that this is an ideal place to introduce ANPR to discourage the people who are visiting that area and causing crime from coming back in future?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well it is a very interesting thought. It seems to me that there may be all sorts of other crimes that you could intercept by using ANPR in such a context. It is something that I am certainly happy to take up with the borough commander and with the police.

Metal Theft Task Force

Question Number: 2049/2012

Meeting Date: 4 July 2012

James Cleverly

How has metal theft been affected since the creation of the MPS unit to tackle metal theft last year?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): There are good signs, James, that Operation Ferrous is making a difference: 173 arrests have been made; 98 vehicles, 6 tonnes of metal have been seized, and in Bexley, where I am sure you will know yourself because of your involvement in this, there is an inter-agency metal theft task force, which resulted in a 59% reduction in metal theft. That is the only figure I can give you for the effectiveness of our war on metal theft.

James Cleverly (AM): Thank you, Mr Mayor, I am very pleased you pre-empted me by highlighting the good work that has gone on in Bexley. I know this is a perennial issue and the task force needs to remain focused on this. I am particularly concerned about the impact on major infrastructure and the implications on resilience. As you know, in Bexley, in 2009, there was a major power outage, multi-day power outage, as a direct result of an attempted metal theft. So can we ensure that, as we move into what we know to be a difficult financial round, not necessarily that finances are ring-fenced, because that would unnecessarily tie the hands of the Deputy Mayor for Policing, but this as an issue, however it is funded, maintains its position at or near the top of our priority list?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, and it is something I have discussed repeatedly, both with Peter Hendy and of course with the [Metropolitan Police] Commissioner. Metal theft is a real scandal, it is debilitating for the transport network and occasionally it involves unbelievable desecration of war memorials and other things that people hold very dear indeed.

James Cleverly (AM): Thank you. In addition to the enforcement side of the metal theft problem, will you continue to lobby Government to tighten the legislation around the cash purchase of scrap metal and ensure that where we have easily identified ownership, for example where the copper cabling is embossed with the owner's name, that we take very firm action and send out a very powerful message to the scrap metal industry that it is no longer acceptable to deal in this situation?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I have made representations along those lines, and I will be happy to copy you in what we have sent to Government so far.

Front Counters - Hampstead

Question Number: 2545/2012

Meeting Date: 19 September 2012

Joanne McCartney

In response to my question MQ2302/2012 you listed a number of police buildings and front counters, however, you failed to include Hampstead Police Station as one of the front counters or police buildings earmarked for closure. What other buildings have you failed to include in this list?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): In the list I provided to you there was no intention to conceal any decision about Hampstead Police Station, simply because I was certainly unaware of any proposal to close it myself and as far as I am aware no proposal to close it has been put either to me or to Stephen Greenhalgh (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime).

Joanne McCartney (AM): Thank you. My question asks what other buildings have you not included in that list. We are hearing --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have not included this building, for instance, or many other buildings --

Joanne McCartney (AM): But police buildings, front counters in police stations.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I cannot give you an answer to that. All I can give you is a general state of the position which is that there is no secret list of police stations that are earmarked, in your phrase, for closure. What there is, is a desire to get the best possible value and use out of the 800 buildings in the police estate and where there are opportunities to get the police out and to be more visible, to have more front counters, to have more police locations in hospitals, in fire stations, council housing stakeholders, libraries, supermarkets, that kind of thing. Where we can do that rather than having some traditional great 'stalag' of a police station that is actually not as useful as it might be, then maybe we should consider it.

Joanne McCartney (AM): The reason I ask is because we are hearing rumours of other police stations and front counters that may be earmarked for closure. Again, in the consultation that the Metropolitan Police Service is doing at the moment, it talks about making changes to front counters and talks about public access points. When your Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Stephen Greenhalgh, was recently in front of Select Committee, he stated that there was the need to remove some police front counters. So, bearing

that in mind, can I just ask, the previous commitment that if you closed a front counter you would open another of at least good quality, has that now gone?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No. That is the key thing to say about Hampstead Police Station where I think there is some controversy. Whatever decision is taken there, there has to be adequate compensatory provision.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Because the consultation at the moment and the Deputy Mayor in front of our Police and Crime Committee talked about public access points and talked about replacing traditional front counters with, for example, a couple of hours at Tesco on a Friday morning. Do you really think that is a good enough service for Londoners?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, I do not know if that was what was proposed in respect of Hampstead.

Joanne McCartney (AM): No. In general.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, well, I do not know whether you are accurately reflecting what Stephen Greenhalgh said. I see someone is nodding there; perhaps it was what he said. Let us be absolutely clear, what we want is to have the maximum possible engagement with the public, to make the police as available to the public as possible. If that means having police counters in lots of public locations I think that is a good thing.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Can I ask that what this looks like, I think, to us and to the general public is that the danger, because there are great budget cuts that we accept are going to be very difficult, that this does not result in just a fire sale of police counters, and that at the end of the day we have a comprehensive service across London. Are you confident that will take place?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. I think Stephen [Greenhalgh] has made it absolutely clear he will not consider any proposal for closure of Hampstead or any other police station; unless and until suitable alternative provision has been made.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Can I ask how do you judge the suitability? Because when we did question Stephen Greenhalgh at our Police and Crime Committee --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is about --

Joanne McCartney (AM): I think it was Tony Arbour who said that --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- reassurance.

Joanne McCartney (AM): The experiment at his local Sainsbury's had been an absolute flop.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, there you go.

Joanne McCartney (AM): So, you know if you are going down this road you need to be evidence based and that is the concern that we have. That it is not going to be, that we are going to have police stations

and front counters closing and they are never going to be put back and the alternatives are not good enough.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, the key test is, is existing provision actually very well used? Is it as good as it could be? Are the buildings themselves being put to the best possible use, in terms of the value of the asset? If not, how can you give a better service to Londoners? How can you have more opportunities for the public to see the police out there in the community and talk to them?

Joanne McCartney (AM): What account will you take of the public's view on this?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Public reassurance and public confidence is paramount. But I think commonsensical members of the public can see that there may very well be cases where you have a big Victorian police station that is not always ideal. That possibly is not in an ideal location, and that is where there is scope for improvement. Where you could certainly dispose of the asset and use the proceeds to improve policing in London.

Joanne McCartney (AM): So will you commit to doing a full public consultation on this?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, you know, I do not know quite what you mean by a full public consultation. But what I can say is --

Joanne McCartney (AM): Will you publish plans for each borough and invite the public to consult on them?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course.

Transparency

Question Number: 1305/2012

Meeting Date: 23 May 2012

Joanne McCartney

Joanne McCartney (AM): Can I move on then to transparency in the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, because, since the abolition of the Police Authority, there does seem to have been an information deficit. I think there have been complaints from all Groups around this Assembly, so it is not just the Labour Group. I have raised this issue with you once before. Would it surprise you that, to get some knife crime figures, it took me 16 requests, both in writing and verbal, in fact once to you here, where you said I should be entitled to them, and in the end I only got them because the Met's Assistant Commissioner stepped in and gave me them directly. Is that transparency to your mind?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Joanne, I was not aware of that, the difficulty that you have had. As far as I know, the position, knife crime statistics are like all crime statistics, so it should be made readily available to you and to all Members, so I will get on top of that.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Okay. So what steps will you do to make sure that the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime responds to Members' requests with urgency and in a reasonable timescale?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will certainly make sure, and I am sure Stephen Greenhalgh, the new Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, will be studying this and he will want to make sure that he is as transparent as possible, engages with you, Joanne, to get the statistics that you need in a timely fashion.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Well I hope so because it has not been so to date. Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am sorry about that, but we will see what we can do.

Police Officers

Question Number: 1316/2012

Meeting Date: 23 May 2012

Joanne McCartney

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, thanks, Joanne. Of fully warranted officers, I am told that there were more than 1,000 more on 3 May 2012 than there were when I was elected in 2008, that is to say there were 30,659 fully warranted officers when I was elected and there were 31,992 on 3 May. Those figures obviously go up if you include trainees, but the gap remains over 1,000.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Mr Mayor, I would dispute those figures. I think this is where if you sign up to the code of practice, we might have some better figures, but the figures I have from the Metropolitan Police Service show that on 30 April 2008, there were 31,605 fulltime police officers, and on 30 April 2012, there was 31,825, so you are actually 780 fulltime officers short of 1,000 pledge.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No. As I have said in my answer, that is why I think it would be helpful to have a central store of data.

Joanne McCartney (AM): My question was fulltime officers. Are your figures for fulltime officers?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): My figures are for fully warranted officers.

Joanne McCartney (AM): They are different. There is where statistics and a code of practice would help us, you see, Mr Mayor. How many fulltime police officers, because I can tell you there are 780 short of your election pledge.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I must respectfully disagree with you and say that I actually talked to the Commissioner this morning and he thinks the numbers are higher even than I have today, but in terms of fully warranted officers, that is excluding trainees, there were 30,659 in May 2008. On 3 May this year, there were 31,992, which by my maths means there were about 1,300 more this May than there were in 2008. Now, I think most Londoners would accept that under incredibly difficult circumstances, with police budgets being cut across the country, that is a very creditable achievement; apart from London says John Biggs, quite right, and why? Because London has a Mayor who has campaigned for more policing and for more police numbers in the city and who will continue to do so.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Mr Mayor, we disagree with this, but perhaps I could ask you to write to me with those fulltime police officers, which is the question I asked.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am more than happy to write to you about anything you like, Joanne. I will certainly write to you about that.

Transport

Fit for the Future Programme

Question Number: 4865/2013

18 December 2013

Valerie Shawcross

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Mr Mayor, in fact, there was a YouGov poll published this morning that showed that 47% of over-60s in London actually oppose the massive staffing cuts, the net cut of 750 staff in Tube stations. Could you give them a guarantee that anybody with a visual disability, for example, who turns up at any Tube station at any time that station has services running through it would get help with something like managing ticket machines or navigating the station? Will you give that guarantee?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I will. Mike Brown [Managing Director, LU] has an absolutely brilliant presentation on how these reforms will help people and how there will be 30% more staff in the ticket halls and in the concourses and the advantage that the passengers will get.

Fit for the Future Programme

Question Number: 4865/2013

18 December 2013

Valerie Shawcross

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: The consultation going on now is a staff consultation. When are the public going to be able to look up their own local stations and see what the staffing will be during the hours they want to use them?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Clearly, all relevant information will be on our websites.

Fit for the Future Programme

Question Number: 4865/2013

18 December 2013

Valerie Shawcross

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Will you maintain staffing levels at a decent and safe level that will enable --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That I will do, yes.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: -- the most vulnerable in our community to get the services they need and feel secure?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I will do is keep the staffing levels at the level that we need, Val, to maintain security and to give people the service they need. The advantage of what is being proposed is that you will have more staff out with the most up-to-date technology, able to help customers where they really need it. It is really wrong in the 21st century to continue to have a 19th century approach to the use of tickets and to keep people behind plate glass when technology has moved on so fast.

Making Cycling Safer in London

Question Number: 5263/2013

18 December 2013

Caroline Pidgeon MBE

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I am asking specifically on this, Mr Mayor. There have been some specifics. I would like some specific answers. Will you look at some segregation using things like that so it can be quick and easy?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Planters and bollards? You would have to show me where and how and what you are talking about and where you would want to put some planters and some bollards. All these changes, which we are very happy to look at and we approach this with the spirit of maximum humility --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK, that is great. You are happy to look at it. Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- but you and I are not, I do not think, road traffic engineers and these things are not always as easy, perhaps, sometimes as they look at first sight.

Making Cycling Safer in London

Question Number: 5263/2013

18 December 2013

Caroline Pidgeon MBE

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Brilliant. Finally, the police have been stopping cyclists. You have mentioned that. They have been handing out copies of the *Highway Code* and reminding people about things like wearing bright clothing. Would it not have been better to actually give out things like hi-viz vests, which can cost pennies if you buy them in bulk? I was going to suggest that you get Barclays to sponsor them, but clearly that is out of the window. Will you look in the new year at handing out hi-viz vests as part of your cycle safety campaign?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Perhaps the RMT could sponsor them. TfL does give out lots of --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is a yes, is it?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, I will certainly look at it. I think we have given out --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I will take that as a yes. Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- luminous cycle clips and --

Darren Johnson (Chair): We will note that commitment.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- bells and all sorts. I would not be surprised, by the way, if we do not give out hi-viz vests from time to time.

CS2 Review

Mayor's Oral Updates

20 November 2013

Andrew Boff AM: So there is an undertaking to give a review of CS2?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It follows from everything I have said this morning, Andrew, that all our Cycle Superhighways are in a process of continuous review, so if that is the assurance you seek then you certainly have it.

Andrew Boff AM: That is not the assurance I seek. I know your reluctance to pick out one Superhighway and say, "We are going to review this one", because it in some way gives kind of credence to the narrative that in some way it is dangerous, but the public would want some reassurance on that CS2 and I think it is only fair that you can give that concession and say, "We will review CS2".

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are reviewing CS2; I do not think there is any point in saying we will review it when we are reviewing it, and we will continue to review all Cycle Superhighways.

CS2 – London Cycling Campaign Letters

Mayor's Oral Updates

20 November 2013

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Mr Mayor, I want to follow up on John Biggs' point about CS2. Cross-party, the leads on Transport Committee here have just met the London Cycling Campaign and they basically advised us that you should now have over 10,000 emails in your inbox. London's cycling community want you to respond very urgently and speedily on the specific problems of CS2 and on the need to revisit and refit some sections of the Cycling Superhighway network because quite frankly they are confusing, they are weak, they very often let cyclists down just at the moment when they need protection. I think we all understand that the earlier infrastructure was more problematic and that recent changes have been very positive and good and there has been more segregation, but I think it is important that we all admit that CS2 was substandard when it was installed and actually there is an urgent action plan from London Cycling Campaign, they want you to make some changes right away. What is your response to those tens of thousands of Londoners?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): My response is that obviously we are always open to suggestions and the whole road surface is in continual process of negotiation and improvement obviously and we are going to try to make CS2 and all the other Cycle Superhighways as safe as we possibly can.

CS2 Actions

Mayor's Oral Updates

20 November 2013

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Are you telling me you are not going to respond positively to the London Cycling Campaign's specific requests about CS2 to do things like install immediate protected space for cycling at Aldgate junction, to commit to installing cycling and pedestrian-specific lights across Bow Roundabout? Are you saying seriously that you think CS2 is good enough now? There are 10,000 people who have emailed you, Mr Mayor, to tell you, to plead with you: it is not safe enough.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As I said, we are always willing to look at suggestions; we are always willing to make improvements where we can.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: They want a commitment to action, Mr Mayor. Will you make a commitment to act now on CS2?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are acting across all Cycle Superhighways and will continue to act for the foreseeable future.

LIP Funding Protection

Question Number: 3982/2013

20 November 2013

Gareth Bacon AM

Gareth Bacon AM:

Why is the Managing Director, Planning, TfL, still telling representatives of the London boroughs that TfL is planning on cutting next year's LIP funding by 25%?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I can tell you now that it is, and always has been, my position that Local Infrastructure Plan (LIP) funding will be protected. LIP funding is going to be continued in line with the current stonking £147.8 million in funding from TfL to the boroughs to spend on the projects that they value. We are going to continue to support LIPs throughout my Mayoralty. "LIPs" is not the word for the money we are putting into this local funding. "Trout pout" is the word. We are going to stuff those LIPs so full of funding that it is going to be fantastic. I hope that all boroughs will hear the glad tidings of great joy that I bring to you.

Gareth Bacon AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Just to clarify, she did in fact say exactly that. She came to the London Councils meeting on 24 October of the Transport and Environment Committee and told the members present that TfL was planning on cutting LIP by 25%. However, that said, I am extremely grateful for what you have just said. Just for clarification, you have just said that LIP funding will not be cut at all while you remain Mayor. Is that correct?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is what I have just said.

Gareth Bacon AM: OK. In that case, then, Mr Mayor, I would like to thank you. I am sure you will be getting a flood of letters from boroughs of all political persuasions thanking you for resisting the siren calls of TfL.

Cycle Superhighways - Cobden Junction, Tottenham Hale

Mayor's Oral Updates

20 November 2013

Jenny Jones AM: Thank you for that undertaking on Cycle Superhighway 5. There are two other places that I am particularly concerned about. One is the Cobden Junction, which is up near Mornington Crescent, and the other is Tottenham Hale, where there is the removal of the one-way system. These are both actually very busy places. A lot of cyclists use them and there are times in the morning traffic when there are more cyclists than almost any other form of transport.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Tottenham Hale at the gyratory?

Jenny Jones AM: Yes, Tottenham Hale, but the cycle lane has been removed on the High Road. That is the problem there. If I send you a note on these, would you please look at them?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I will certainly look at them. On the whole, I am in favour. As far as I can remember, we are taking out the gyratory at Tottenham Hale.

Cycle Superhighways

Mayor's Oral Updates

20 November 2013

John Biggs AM: On Cycle Superhighway 2 (CS2), I think we all know that where the Cycle Superhighways are good they are actually very good and they create a sense of safety, but CS2 is not one of these. You will have been written to by the coroner in the case of two unfortunate people who died riding bicycles on CS2 in Tower Hamlets. This is an issue I have been campaigning on for many years now, so I am speaking as a constituency Member. I was hoping you would be able to make some public undertakings about what you want to do on CS2. This is not meant to be a party point.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, I understand, John.

John Biggs AM: What I would like to see happen is for us to move towards a totally segregated Cycle Superhighway on the road in Tower Hamlets.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): At the Bow Roundabout area?

John Biggs AM: On the Bow Roundabout down to Aldgate. I think that is what we want to see and there are two other particularly dangerous junctions both referred to in the coroner's report at the Bow Roundabout and at Aldgate. Public assurance requires you to give some sort of undertaking.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I understand that point completely and very sincerely. I will have to, I am afraid, just refer you to what I have already said on those particular routes and those particular junctions. As you know, at the Bow Roundabout there is a huge amount that has already now been invested and we have tried to change the configuration there.

This is always going to be an extremely difficult challenge for us on the streets of London and no solution will ever be perfect. We will do our best and we will invest what it takes, but I cannot guarantee to Londoners that we are going to be able to produce segregation everywhere that it is desired. I am afraid that is simply not a realistic objective, just because there is not the road space to do it. I know, John, that you have campaigned on this for a long time. We will certainly look at it.

Transparency

Question Number: 2013/3574

23 October 2013

Victoria Borwick AM

Victoria Borwick AM: Can TfL publish details about accidents involving TfL buses, with information separated by bus companies, so that this could act as an incentive for companies to improve their driving standards?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The answer is absolutely. I have asked TfL to look at that. I congratulate you. You have taken up these cases, particularly and personally. I think there was a particular victim in Oxford Street on whose behalf you worked and continue to work. I understand what you want.

You want to be able to compare the accident rates of different bus operators. I have asked TfL to make it possible for you to have that data.

Victoria Borwick AM: I think the point is that it does go back to the culture at TfL. In fairness, although we have been focusing here on trying to extract particular information, it would not be the first time that TfL have been accused of perhaps being less than transparent in their decision-making processes. I am urging you today to go back to TfL and ask them to not just look at this where we, for example, as a group have been waiting over six months for figures, borough by borough, on killed and seriously injured and fatalities for both pedestrians and cyclists. We are having difficulty getting truthful and honest information. Every time you start making a comment about these things, TfL seem to go back into their shell and say, "Oh, no, this is legal. This is legal". No, it is not legal. This is transparency and we need, with all of us with constituents, and we want to be able to know where we are. Are we making progress? Not only that, it enables boroughs to actually take this issue up and to go back and say, "OK, what more could they be doing locally to improve safety on our streets?" In the heart of all of this is: can you improve the transparency at TfL?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As I say, I have asked them to come up with answers to your particular questions. I think that is probably the best I can do for you today, Victoria.

2020 and nitrogen dioxide legal limits

Question Number: 3301/2013

11 September 2013

Jenny Jones

Stephen Knight (AM): Mr Mayor, fine, because my question was really about issuing warnings. You have a target of there being 250,000 Londoners signed up to the airText system. The last time we saw figures it was around 10,000 people. What are you going to do to get information out to people about the state of air pollution in London, particularly when we have bad pollution episodes? You are clearly not getting to the people that you wish to get to and that we all wish to get to.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is an interesting and important point because the airText system is valuable. Stephen, I will reflect on that. If I may, I will come back to you with an assessment of how we think the airText system is working in alerting Londoners to poor air quality days and whether there is more we can do.

2020 and nitrogen dioxide legal limits

Question Number: 3301/2013

11 September 2013

Jenny Jones

Richard Tracey (AM): Thank you, Chair. One thing, Mr Mayor, that you could do as Chairman of TfL is to instruct that drivers should not leave the buses' engines ticking over when they change drivers, which is something some of my colleagues, the councillors in Wandsworth, have been going on about for a very long time. We accept that you are bringing in more and more clean buses, but those that are not so clean should not be left ticking over.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is very interesting. I did not know that your colleagues had drawn that to our attention. I will make an inquiry as to why, if that is really happening, because it is after all paradoxical that the very buses that have an advertisement on the back saying, "Turn off your key whilst

in" -- do you remember? They now have this anti-idling advertisement, so it is bizarre if they are really letting their engines run. Is that true, Dick? Have you seen it with your own eyes?

Crossrail 2

Question Number: 2758/2013

17 July 2013

Richard Tracey

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): I just ask the question because of course that was an assurance we were given a long time ago on Crossrail 1 and we have now learned that some of the stations certainly in my constituency will not be. I was with residents of Seven Kings at the weekend who are very disappointed that their Crossrail station will not be featuring disabled access. Can you revisit that decision so that people can actually access and get benefits from Crossrail 1?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I certainly shall, Roger, I am disappointed to be told that, I will look into that.

Wave and Pay (1)

Question Number: 1805/2013

19 June 2013

Caroline Pidgeon MBE

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As you know, in the end, we will be moving away from Oyster Cards to a Wave and Pay system and in the long run, we do not want to be running a payment system. We want to be running buses and there are many people who run payment systems with bank cards and there is no reason why we should be in that particular business. We want to encourage the expansion of Wave and Pay. I do not want to penalise Oyster users. I understand what you are saying but the advice I have been given is that the Oyster does not have the flexibility to deliver the cap in the way you want.

I will go back to TfL. I will see what I can do to establish why that is and whether there is anything we can do to prevent Oyster Card users being in any way disadvantaged but it will remain the case that Oyster Cards will always have the cheapest single fare.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): Single fares. As I say, it is different to what you said two years ago. I think the reality is that the contract you have around Oyster is too expensive. We know it costs 14 pence in every pound to administer whereas your Wave and Pay is under 1 penny. I understand why TfL want to encourage people that way but the issue is if 20% of Londoners do not have access to a bank card, they are not going to get the cheapest fares and they are probably the people who really do need access to the cheapest fares. Will you go away, properly review this and make sure that Oyster always has the cheapest fares including a weekly cap?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think there is a very difficult problem which is Oyster is a relatively recent scheme. There is no reason why it should become a permanent piece of technology. Is it capable of being improved on? Can we find ways of cutting costs? Yes, we can. Can we do it without disadvantaging, as you suggest, the poorest Londoners? Well, we have to find a way of doing that. I think you are raising a serious point. That is why I wanted to dig deep really into the briefing I have.

What I am going to propose to you, Caroline, is that I will get you a serious argued answer about how we can deliver a Wave and Pay system on public transport that does not in any way disadvantage those who do not have access to bank cards.

London Pedestrians

Question Number: 887/2013

20 March 2013

Caroline Pidgeon MBE

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You are asking me about pedestrians in London and what we are doing to increase the number of pedestrian journeys. I can tell you that walking is already attracting 6.2 million journeys a day, second in terms of mode, second only to private car. The ambition is to go to up to 6.8 million by 2031 and there is a huge amount of work going on, and has already gone on, to make London more walkable, more attractive to move around on foot. I would single out really just in my time alone, the Oxford Circus diagonal crossing, that X marks the spot thing there, Exhibition Road being two-way, all the stuff we have done in urban projects in town centres, Wimbledon, Richmond and so on, Leicester Square; all of these have improved permeability. They have made the cityscape much more attractive for walkers plus, and one of the legacies of Cool Beer, you remember, was a great proponent. There was the Legs 11 nonsense. Cool Beer range had a big role in absolute nonsense in selling up the legible London signs. There are 1,100 signs now.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Can I move on to the question? Thank you for that detail Mr Mayor. Could I move into a couple of specifics? In terms of making sure and getting your increase in pedestrian journeys, which I think will be welcome, is that in 1995, the Department for Transport (DfT) recommended that all pedestrian crossings should have audible signals and/or tactile cones to help blind and partially sighted people.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Tactile cones.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): They are on the paving.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): On the edge, on the paving, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Do you think it is acceptable that 18 years later and five years into your term as Mayor that there are still 330 crossings in London which do not meet this standard? What are you going to do about that and can you bring forward the timescale to make sure all crossings meet this nearly 20-year old regulation?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): So you want audible --

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Audible and all the rotating cones, exactly.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Tactile cones; I will look into it and write back to you.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Brilliant. There are also still 70 pedestrian crossings which do not meet the DfT standard that actually allows enough time for pedestrians to be able to cross the road. Will you again look to try to bring that forward in your programme to make sure crossings are accessible for everyone?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. Do not forget we are also greatly expanding the pedestrian countdown system which is very valuable because you do not want to have that time --

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Yes but will you look at making them all meet this standard, please, as soon as possible?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will certainly look at it and I will write to you and I will give you a heads up on where we are.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Great, thank you. Finally, If you really want to increase pedestrian journeys, you could look at what they are doing in New York. I know you often say how much you admire their work on obesity and [Michael] Bloomberg's [Mayor of New York] efforts in the area of public health.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): They are fatter than us.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): I am wondering, will you trial an extremely popular --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do admire their work but they are still fatter, they are very fat, so they are fatter.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Will you trial an extremely popular New York idea around summer streets. This idea that they close seven miles of roads for three consecutive Saturday mornings in the summer so that hundreds of thousands of people can come out and enjoy walking in their streets where perhaps cars normally are? Will you look at trialling a summer streets programme for London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are looking at all sorts and I am very interested in pedestrianisation schemes. Do not forget that one of the best things you can do is to make parks ever safer. That is why we had our priority park scheme to improve them but also the safe park scheme, which was massively popular and where we've had a bigger impact in driving down crime. So Londoners can exercise in green space without any fear or indeed --

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Yes but will you look at piloting summer streets? Yes or no. Will you look at piloting summer streets?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course I will look at it.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Thank you.

Kit Malthouse (AM): Yes. Mr Mayor, when you provide Caroline Pidgeon with the data about these 330 junctions, could you also include data as to how many accidents there have been at those junctions involving blind people?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will do my best, Kit. We may not have that level of granularity but I will do my best. What I will certainly try to do is show Caroline some of the progress we have made in making public space safer to walk around and particularly green space. I think that is important.

Kit Malthouse (AM): Could you also include up to date data about accidents on Exhibition Road, the development of which was the subject of ferocious lobby by the blind lobby effectively and blind charities? It was a disastrous plan.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Crossrail

Question Number: 967/2013

20 March 2013

Richard Tracey

Gareth Bacon (AM): My colleague, Dick Tracey, made the case for Crossrail to be extended into the West to Reading. Could I just reinforce the case for the East?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It would get better, no doubt it would.

Gareth Bacon (AM): Indeed but many of us actually would like to see it extended to Ebbsfleet and I am sure you are aware of the £2 billion Paramount Park which is due to be built in the Swanscombe Peninsula which has enormous economic potential, economic benefits to the eastern side of London. An extension of Crossrail to Ebbsfleet would actually be a very powerful addition for economic benefit there. Can I ask you to lobby Mr [George] Osborne [Chancellor of the Exchequer], when he does get his scissors out, not to be cutting things like that and to actually extend it to Ebbsfleet?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, certainly, and I think we need to review the whole connectivity of that area, particularly in the light of any solutions to aviation capacity that we may need to bring forward.

Crossrail spending

Question Number: 1254/2013

22 May 2013

Caroline Pidgeon MBE

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): Good. Last autumn Crossrail put out a contract for £250,000 for crisis communications guidance. Crossrail also has awarded contracts nearing £500,000 to one single communication agency, 39 separate payments over two years, some of this for management and support consultancy for communications, without going through a normal tender process. Is there really no one within TfL who could have provided this kind of support without spending hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of public money?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am grateful to you for drawing my attention to these items in the Crossrail budget. As I say, I do think that we are going to have to change the supervision arrangements for Crossrail in the fairly near future. At the moment it is jointly governed by two sponsors in the form of us and the DfT and I am not convinced myself that that is an arrangement that is sustainable in the long term. We will sort that out.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): I welcome what you are saying because Crossrail currently employs 39 external affairs staff for just this one project and yet talking to TfL (and I am, as you know, not always the greatest fan of expenditure at TfL), they only have 40-50 staff and that covers all modes of transport and ones that are actually running rather than a project that is being built. So I really would encourage you to stop this waste and look at whether you could -- we talk about shared services all the time. Bring this in-house and let TfL actually manage this to save the waste of public money and help you in your case to Government for investment in London transport.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, Caroline, I am grateful to you for that question because you have brilliantly illustrated the difference between the way we have been running TfL and the way things can be run if not wholly and exclusively managed by this benign operation. What we certainly did was to reduce overheads at TfL very considerably and you will know that it is not just a question of reducing people in the

external affairs department of TfL. We have cut costs in TfL and we have taken costs out of about £9.8 billion and --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): Will you just agree to bring this into TfL to manage?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- what you have there is a perfect case for wanting to see (and I think you and I would agree strongly about this) closer and more direct scrutiny and management of that project by London because in the end this is a London project. By the way, I do not want to --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): Will you commit to bring this into TfL so that their team can manage this expenditure and make sure that we are getting value for money? Just yes or no.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to make sure that Crossrail was run by London since it is a London project.

Rail travel in London

Question Number: 1/2013

Meeting Date: 16 January 2013

Caroline Pidgeon MBE

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): Can we pick up on that point, Mr Mayor, because I would like to find out what progress has actually been made on getting TfL to take over these suburban rail franchises such as Southeastern and Greater Anglia.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): OK, is that what you really want to know about?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): I really want to pick up on that to start off with. What is the timescale, when can we actually expect an announcement to take over these franchises?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I can say is that I expect there to be a result in the nearish future. I am not going to be more precise than that but great progress has been made and continues to be made. You have to understand that the reason this has proved so intractable in the past and the reason it eluded the previous Mayor, for all his energy and ambition, is because there are Members of Parliament and communities outside London who worry that they will be disadvantaged if TfL have too much of a role in the franchise. You can see the problem, it is a democratic problem. We have to make sure that we set up a governing structure that enables those extra London communities, those outside London, to be properly represented and to make sure that, to put it bluntly, no future Mayor could prejudice their interests and bias the shape of the franchises of those services in favour of Londoners. I believe that it is win/win, it is an argument that we are winning and I think that we are going to see progress very soon.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): You said the nearish future. The TfL board papers that arrived at about 9.30am this morning said that you are hoping by April 2013 to finalise the devolution proposals. Is that the timescale you are looking at?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That sounds to me like a pretty good description of the nearish future.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): Good, very good. Looking forward, can you confirm that when the existing Overground franchise is renewed, which is in March 2014, you are going to continue the really high quality service, including staffing of all stations from first to last train, the station deep cleans and upgrades and the ambitious targets for passenger satisfaction and reliability?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. One of the things that we really have achieved on the rail - and if you remember it was a big issue in the first election campaign I fought in 2008 - is people's feelings of safety on suburban railway stations, boosting the Safer Transport Teams and the British Transport Police (BTP), which is what we did. Crime on --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): Staffing from first to last trains, yes?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- has fallen I think very substantially since 2007. There has been a huge increase in journeys but crimes per million passenger journeys, or however you calculate it, has fallen very substantially.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): You are confirming that the Overground franchise will have staffing from first to last train. Can you also confirm that, if in April we get to take over Southeastern or some Southeastern you will also have that high quality standard of staffing from first to last trains at stations?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The objective is to improve the service and to make sure that passengers feel safe and have a great and reliable service.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): So you are looking to have that high level of staffing?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): Great.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I mean I cannot spell out now exactly what staffing levels will be at every single station but our general view is that there is real scope for improvement in the customer and passenger experience and if you look at what we do on the Overground that is the route map.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): It is an aspiration to have full staffing rather than a guarantee?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, it is part of our negotiation and part of our promise.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): Finally, in terms of ticketing, given that some of the train companies are looking at bringing in a part time season ticket to help rail passengers - particularly an awful lot of women who work part time - will you look to introduce this on TfL, rail and other services?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Introduce a...?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): A part time Travelcard, season ticket.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will certainly look at it. You are very creative in producing new ways of getting me to spend money on new tickets of one kind or another. I will have a look at it.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): You will look at it again. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The trouble with all these suggestions, which are interesting, is that they inevitably involve a cost to someone else --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (AM): £10 million. A small amount. Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- and a corresponding increase in fares, but I will look at it.

Health and Safety at Crossrail

Mayor's Oral Update

Meeting date: 19 December 2012

John Biggs

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will certainly look at ways of improving -- if we can find a way of improving safety at Crossrail, if there is more that needs to be done, I am sure that Andrew Wolstenholme [Chief Executive, Crossrail] and Terry Morgan [Chairman, Crossrail] will be all over it and will be doing their level best.

What I would repeat to you and to the Members of the Assembly is that the Crossrail health and safety record is good. This is the largest engineering and construction project in the whole of Europe with huge numbers of people. As you know, huge numbers of jobs have been created by this. It is a massive, massive thing. Any injury or accident is one too many. But so far their health and safety performance is comparable to that which was achieved on the Olympics at a similar stage and I think they should be supported. I am sure that your interesting point about a new health and safety agreement to be negotiated with the union is one that they will bear in mind and I will certainly take it up with them to explore what the thinking may be.

John Biggs (AM): OK. I am grateful for that. It is not with one union. It is with several unions. There is a range of trades involved there. This is, as I say, their most important role. It is more important than wages and conditions.

Just to quickly follow this up, there is a question about alleged victimisation and you may be aware in your briefing that a man by the name of Ron Barron [former Industrial Relations Manager, Crossrail] was recently dismissed by Bechtel. I think dismissed is the right word. His employment was terminated because he was very clearly implicated in this process of blacklisting. I would like you to take the opportunity to publicly disassociate yourself from any such practice of blacklisting of employees.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Blacklisting? You are going to have to forgive me --

John Biggs (AM): Again, I would make the point that although some people may flippantly say it is about getting political activists out of the workplace, quite often blacklisting has been used to mark people's names who have raised health and safety concerns. It is well established in the construction industry that it has happened and it needs to be stamped out.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I hear what you say, John. I am not aware of the particular case of the gentleman in question who you say has been blacklisted or the grounds for which he has been allegedly blacklisted. I am afraid I am not really in a position to comment with authority on that.

John Biggs (AM): OK. The final question, then, is: there is a particular subcontractor at the western portal of Crossrail. Again, this may sound a rather obscure question. It is very important. They are alleging that their subcontract was terminated because they had raised health and safety concerns. I would ask you again to look into that. It may be that there are very good commercial reasons for the contract being terminated, but I would ask you to look into that very urgently and ensure that you perhaps write to the Assembly and clarify what we have learned from this and whether there are any issues of bad practice or of corporate misunderstanding of one's obligations as regards health and safety.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, absolutely. Health and safety has got to be paramount in an operation like Crossrail. That is the conviction of everybody on the Crossrail board. I know that

Terry Morgan, Andrew Wolstenholme and all the team there will be wanting to reassure Members of the Assembly about that. If there is anything that I can do to speed that up, then I will certainly do that.

John Biggs (AM): I would not normally ask this, Chair, but I think it would be very helpful if you were able to write to the Chair of the Assembly on these matters because they are --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I certainly would be more than happy to write to you, Jennette, about health and safety on Crossrail. It is obviously a matter of concern for the Assembly. It is a matter of concern for all of us. So far, the record is good but clearly you cannot be complacent.

New Bus for London (1)

Question Number: 1931/2012

Meeting Date: 17 October 2012

Caroline Pidgeon

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Mr Mayor, absolutely not, I am just saying, are you confident that they are able to fulfil this order, the largest order you said they have ever had, when they have just also had an order for 550 buses for Singapore? Are you confident? You could have just answered yes to that.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The answer is yes, of course it is, but I was surprised that you should even ask.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): For clarity on the number of buses, you have said it is 608 today, I have heard 598 from TfL. You say it is 608 buses you have ordered. When will we start to see them being rolled out onto the streets of London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I thought you had a [later] question; we are rolling together these questions? The first new route to be wholly populated by the new bus because at the moment I have to admit they are a rare and heart stopping sight when you see them but the first route that is going to be entirely populated by the new bus for London will be, I think, April next year and then on throughout the year. I can give you the rough production timetable.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): By which month are we going to start seeing them roll out?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You are going to see the first route that is wholly populated by the new bus from April next year, from memory, and the peak of the production scale is I think 2014, with about 208 buses being built in that year.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): So we are going to be seeing what, ten a month or something?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): About 150 being built next year. I can give you the figures later on if you want.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): I think the detail of that schedule would be very helpful.

New Bus for London (2)

Question Number: 1931/2012

Meeting Date: 17 October 2012

Richard Tracey

Richard Tracey (AM): Can you give me some sort of assurance that when you roll out the number of buses you have just given to us that you will send some of them to the outer London areas, particularly around Putney High Street, which has a pollution problem at the moment?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, I am certain that TfL will study your request and we will do what we can to ensure that as many parts of London as possible are served by the new bus.

New Buses for London

Question Number: 1931/2012

Meeting Date: 4 July 2012

Caroline Pidgeon

How many new buses for London will be on London's streets for the Olympics?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you, Caroline. The answer is all eight prototype new buses will be on London streets by the Olympic Games.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Thank you. You promised 600 on the road. Is that going to be just an aspiration or an absolute commitment?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is an absolute commitment. I know that you are going to say it was an absolute commitment to get eight buses on the road, that is your follow up, eight buses on the road by the end of May. There was some slippage there but we are determined to get 600 buses on the road by 2016 and as far as I understand it, at the moment, they are proving very successful and popular.

Crime reduction on public transport

Question Number: 1534/2012

Meeting Date: 13 June 2012

Steve O'Connell

Stephen O'Connell (AM): My last point really, you picked up upon fare evasion. Again, it is good that yourself and the police and TfL are bearing down on fare evasion. I would just flag up, as I normally do, trams. Trams, which are wonderful, they flow very quickly, people can access very quickly, fare evasion is something that has come up in the past on trams, and I know that the figures are bearing in the right direction, but again, I would ask you to redouble your efforts through TfL to insist fare evasion is even increasingly borne down upon, because that will help with keeping the levelling of fares at the level that we want.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I will look at that. I think one of the difficult decisions I had to take was whether or not to increase the fines for fare evasion, and a lot of people said it was unfair because typically these fines would be borne by people who really might find it very difficult to pay them, but in the end I thought it was right to do it, because fare evaders are effectively taking money from everybody else on the bus or the tram or whatever. I will look at what is happening on the trams, and if there is a significant disparity in fare evasion on the trams - and I am sure TfL will have the statistics - we will see what we can do to sort it out.

New Routemaster

Question Number: 1129/2012

Meeting Date: 23 May 2012

Roger Evans

Roger Evans (AM): I can tell you that we are very keen on the new bus in Havering and Redbridge and we are looking forward to welcoming the first ones across our border when some of the routes are changed. Could you let me know which routes are going to be the first ones that will be changed in Havering and Redbridge so that we can form a welcome party to greet the new buses as they cross the border?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not know. I will do my best to get the relevant information to you about which routes will be used, but I cannot tell you now.

Transport for London Business Plan

Question Number: 1314/2012

Meeting Date: 23 May 2012

Valerie Shawcross CBE

Valerie Shawcross (AM): So when can we expect the age of eligibility for the Freedom Pass to be reduced to the age of 60?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am delighted that you and Ken Livingstone decided to support me in reintroducing it and getting us off the age escalator that Labour cruelly decided to put us on.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): When do you think you will be able to implement this change, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The plan is to do it by September, but I will have to get back to you.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): September this year?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): September this year. I will have to get back to you about the details.

Transport for London Business Plan

Question Number: 1314/2012

Meeting Date: 23 May 2012

Roger Evans

Roger Evans (AM): You pride yourself on being more than a Zone 1 Mayor, and of course my constituents very much welcome that, but we have suffered recently through some of the downgrading of Crossrail proposals for my two constituencies in Havering and Redbridge, largely because that part of Crossrail is now being dealt with by Network Rail rather than by Transport for London. Would you agree to meet council leaders and delegations from Havering and Redbridge to talk about the design work on the stations at Ilford and Romford and to ensure that we do actually get the stations that we deserve and that we were promised?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course, Roger, and I am sure one of the reasons that Havering and Redbridge rejected the blandishments, the siren voices of Val [Shawcross] and her colleagues was that they knew how vital it was to keep investment coming into Crossrail.

Environment

Tackling excess winter deaths and fuel poverty

Question Number: 4637/2013

18 December 2013

Jenny Jones AM

Jenny Jones AM: You are guaranteeing that British Gas is actually going to spend still that £320 million on insulating homes in London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have absolutely no reason to doubt that, Jenny, but what I can tell you is that we are confident we will be able to continue with the ECO-funded programmes and to continue to retrofit homes. Clearly, this is now spread out over a longer timescale.

Hackney Wick Conservative area

Question Number: 4698/2013

18 December 2013

Andrew Boff AM

Andrew Boff AM: Will you consider extending the conservation area in Hackney Wick as a way of protecting, nurturing and developing the existing character of the area, as has been done at Creekside in Deptford?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, Andrew. We are indeed looking at extending this conservation area and the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) is consulting on it at the moment. My own view is that there are lots of wonderful buildings that need to be preserved.

Rising Fuel Bills

Question Number: 4866/2013

18 December 2013

Murad Qureshi

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Mr Mayor, what advice do you offer to my older and my vulnerable constituents who cannot afford to heat their homes and have a nutritious hot meal?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Most important is to help them and I am sure you are doing that, Jennette, and I will be glad to help you do that, to know what their rights are and what payments they have by right already and to make sure they are getting those payments.

Rising Fuel Bills

Question Number: 4866/2013

18 December 2013

Murad Qureshi

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Thank you. Can I just pick up the first point you made about the Know Your Rights campaign? When you launched this, I welcomed it, as did a number of Assembly Members. Can you say why you have not been able to provide the evaluation of this work, given that I think 18 months ago Assembly Member Qureshi first asked you for any evaluation report, so that we can know where it has worked, where it has not worked and what more we need to do given the numbers of deaths you have heard of from my colleague Dr Sahota?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. You are surprising me and actually I am just looking through my notes here because I am almost 100% certain I have seen some figures for the number of people we think have benefited from the Know Your Rights campaign. I will be very happy to get them to you.

Help a London Park

Question Number: 3990/2013 **20 November 2013**

James Cleverly

James Cleverly AM: Mr Mayor, you may recall - and I am sure you do - that during your first term of office you had an initiative called Help a London Park in which we invited people from around London to vote for their favourite park. The winners had trees and other investment made in their park. That was a fantastic scheme because it really involved local people and got them interested. We had schoolchildren coming here. We had people logging on. We had a huge amount of interest. Also, it was a fantastic scheme because the decision was made by local people rather than by a faceless team of bureaucrats or the usual suspects which we see so often when schemes are approved.

Can you commit to having another Help a London Park in the next couple of years so we can really motivate and involve Londoners in greening our city?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. It was a hugely popular policy. I remember it well. We will do it again, funds permitting. Do not forget what I said in my introduction, which you may have unaccountably not been paying attention to, Roger. We are on track to deliver 100 pocket parks. Do you remember that bit?

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): Yes, I do --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Fantastic.

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): -- but they are not voted for by the people like Help a London Park was.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, but they are strongly locally supported. I take your point. There was great excitement about the London parks with the Help a London Park scheme. We did some fantastic things. We did a huge number of parks around the city and perhaps you are right. Perhaps it is time to have another go.

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): Excellent.

Nitrogen Dioxide pollution in London during EU Year of Air

Question Number: 96/2013

Meeting Date: 16 January 2013

Jenny Jones

Jenny Jones (AM): Can you tell me if all the buses going through Putney will be clean buses?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As I said, by the summer 85% of them will be up to Euro 4. I cannot give you any further details on that yet. It is our ambition, plainly-- I would like zero tailpipe buses as soon as possible in London. We were discussing this a great deal in Transport for London (TfL) to see what we can do. The issue, as you know, is to do with range and range confidence, but we think we can make progress. What I can tell you is that there will be a substantial improvement in the quality and the cleanness of the buses this year.

Jenny Jones (AM): Are the measures you are introducing in Putney, are they actually going to bring Putney within the EU limits? Is it going to make Putney legal?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I cannot give you that kind of detail. What I can tell you, which I have said many times before, is that London does better than many other EU cities, including Paris, Rome, Barcelona and Athens, on some of the most injurious pollutants.

Jenny Jones (AM): Not on NO₂ in fact. We are the worst in Britain and Europe.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Not on NO₂, basically because of the move to diesel. Everybody was encouraged to move to diesel. We are now looking at trying to reduce the diesel consumption of the fleet by moving to, as I say, more hybrids or indeed to try to get zero tailpipe buses altogether.

Jenny Jones (AM): Are you bringing in other emergency measures in other places, as you are in Putney?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, in the sense that the clean air fund, the Air Quality fund, is there specifically to help boroughs address some of these pollution hotspots.

Jenny Jones (AM): By when do you expect London to be within the legal limits?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We already are within the legal limits and we have done very well on PM10s and some other pollutants.

Jenny Jones (AM): This question is about nitrogen dioxide pollution, specifically.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): OK. I cannot give you a timescale now, Jenny, and I am not going to extemporise one. I will make sure we write to you with the projections.

Central London consensus on improving air quality

Question Number: 2558/2012

Meeting Date: 19 September 2012

Murad Qureshi

When will you sign up to the consensus on improving poor air quality in Central London as three major boroughs have signed up to do?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am very happy to work with the boroughs concerned, to continue to clean up London's air but, unfortunately, I am not willing to agree to a programme that I think would do great damage to the interests of London's taxi drivers in requiring them to get rid of any vehicle more than ten years old. Already, very heroically, TfL has decided to launch the first ever age limit for taxis. That was done in the teeth of ferocious opposition from the taxi drivers. We have done that. I think now to tell them they have to scrap any vehicle more than ten years old would be simply brutal. I don't know whether that is your policy, but it is not one that I am going to support.

We are going to do various other things to improve air quality in London. I think Jenny (Jones) has a question later on about some of the emissions standards that we may be applying.

Murad Qureshi (AM): Many thanks, Mr Mayor for your response. Just to elaborate, the letter to the councils involved Camden Council, the City of Westminster and City of London Corporation, representing 500,000 residents of Central London as well as business, so I think they represent an interest of a major constituency of yours apart from the black cabbies that you have got a particular interest with.

They have asked for a number of things to be done across the buses, taxis, as well as the future of the London Enterprise Zone (LEZ). Can I just ask you a few specific questions, firstly in those --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Silly questions?

Murad Qureshi (AM): Specific.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Specific, sorry.

Murad Qureshi (AM): You obviously need to get your hearing tested. Specific. In the joint letter from Camden, Westminster and the City of London, they called for a better deployment of retro fitted buses across Central London. In light of that, can you tell us - after four years of office - what proportion of London buses have you retrofitted, so far?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I can tell you is that we have just put in an order for 600 of the cleanest and greenest bus in the whole world, which will be on the streets in the next four years. I cannot give you the answer about how many we have retrofitted, but we are moving towards an ever cleaner bus fleet. What I can tell you is, contrary to the absolute codswallop that was put around during the election campaign, which everybody has now forgotten about, London does not have the worst air quality in Europe. Complete fabrication by the Labour Party. Actually, it turns out, once one bothered to do the research, that Paris, Rome, Barcelona and Athens all have worse air quality, and plenty of other cities in Britain have comparable problems. I am delighted to say, that Manchester University - people were saying that we were going to have pollution during the Olympic Games - has just done a study, the Clear Flow Unit I think it is called, that concludes that we have just delivered one of the cleanest Olympic and Paralympic Games in history. The least polluted air of any Olympic Games in history.

Murad Qureshi (AM): I didn't ask those questions at all, actually. I asked you specifically --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I know, but I thought you had better get the answers.

Murad Qureshi (AM): -- how many buses you retrofitted. Can I answer your question for you, if you do not know clearly?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I will do, Murad, I will get you the answer about the number of business we have retrofitted.

Diesel cars in the congestion charge

Question Number: 2395/2012

Meeting Date: 19 September 2012

Jenny Jones

Will you look at reducing or removing exemptions from the congestion charge from those vehicles which come under the CO2 emission threshold, but which cause considerable localised pollution?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Jenny Jones (AM): Is that the answer?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Jenny Jones (AM): Wow. If you were so cooperative every time, you know, we would get on so much better.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We get on famously already, would you not say?

Jenny Jones (AM): Do you think you are going to actually look at those exemptions for diesel vehicles that are quite polluting?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, you heard what I said.

Jenny Jones (AM): Well, you will remove or tighten those exemptions?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): There is a consultation we are going to get underway. My ambition is, as we were saying earlier on, my ambition is to have many more zero tailpipe emission vehicles in London and we consider the way the congestion charge can be used to achieve that.

Jenny Jones (AM): So will you also review the greener vehicle discount scheme?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Jenny Jones (AM): Who is going to do this? It sounds quite interesting.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): TfL are going to do the work and there will be a public consultation on the changes.

Jenny Jones (AM): Have you got a timeframe for that?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, but I want to give people maximum possible notice, but this is not yet ready to announce in detail.

Jenny Jones (AM): I mean, it sounds very interesting. It sounds like the sort of thing I might want to contribute to. So you will let us know when it starts, will you?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, sure.

Jenny Jones (AM): Have you been influenced by the Policy Exchange's work on this? Their report 'Something in the Air?' Because they have actually said, I mean I do not often quote from Policy Exchange, which for the viewers is a right-wing think-tank. It actually says you should do actually this, remove or reduce exemptions.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, I had not actually seen the Policy Exchange document, but I will study it.

Jenny Jones (AM): Well, I expect there is somebody in this building who would let you have a copy of that. Thank you, that is great.

Air Quality During the Olympics

Question Number: 1875/2012

Meeting Date: 13 June 2012

Jenny Jones

Jenny Jones (AM): Since the smog alerts were launched in 2007, only 7,000 people have signed up, but in your Air Quality Strategy you set a target to have 250,000 people by 2015. If we go on at the same rate, you will only come to something like 4.5% of your target by 2015. What are you going to do to tell more people about the smog alerts?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are funding airTEXT, we have been lobbying for it, we have been publicising --

Jenny Jones (AM): If you do not tell people about it they will not know about it.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We have been publicising it.

Jenny Jones (AM): Where? Can you tell me about the publicity campaign, because I missed it?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will be happy to supply you details, Jenny, about the publicity funding we have given for airTEXT.

Jenny Jones (AM): Thank you very much.

Planning and Housing

Bury Farm Edgware

Question Number: 4101/2013

20 November 2013

Andrew Dismore

Andrew Dismore AM: In fact, it has been probably farmed since the Roman times. It is owned by Oxford University at the moment, All Souls College, who seem to want to wash their hands of their responsibilities for what they are trying to do in promoting this golf course via their agents. It is not as though there are not any other golf courses around. There are 22 golf courses within 5 miles already and their businesses and clubs will be adversely affected if this goes through. It is a very important issue which I hope you will look at personally as well.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will. I am grateful to you, Andrew, for all those points that you make and you can take it obviously that I will be taking them all into account, but I cannot say much about it now.

Andrew Dismore AM: I hope you will not consider the objectors to be NIMBYs who do not like golf, like the same people you said that about last time in relation to the schools

Housing strategy

Question Number: 3583/2013

23 October 2013

Andrew Dismore AM

Andrew Dismore AM: Back to Beaufort Park again, where you agreed to a reduction in these affordable homes. I was asked by a Beaufort Park resident, to ask you that question. In the last five years that she has lived there, her service charges have gone up by over 100% and her rent by 50% and her case is all too typical of the shared ownership schemes there and elsewhere in Barnet. She cannot afford these increases, which have pushed her into mortgage and council tax arrears to the extent that the council sent in bailiffs for her council tax and took possession of her watch. She has asked me to ask you that question. She says this.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will write back to her.

Andrew Dismore AM: Let me tell you what she says before you interrupt. She says,

“I was sold a dream which has turned into a nightmare. I would never have committed to shared affordable housing, which has brought me to financial despair, because there is no control on these landlords jacking up the rents and service charges.”

You do not want to do anything about it. What can you say to her? If you do not want to do anything about her service charges, you do not want to do anything about her rent level, how can you reassure her that you can help her?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If you will stop getting all pop-eyed and ranting, if you will just calm down and stop ranting, what I will certainly do is look at her case. I will make sure that we analyse --

Andrew Dismore AM: And all the others at Beaufort Park?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- very sincerely the problem that she faces. I will see if there is anything in my statutory powers that I can do. I am not remotely certain that there is anything, but I would just remind you and remind everybody that actually, so far, our part-buy part-rent schemes have helped about 50,000 people to have a share of their property which they would otherwise not have.

Conditions in the private rented sector

Question Number: 3584/2013

23 October 2013

Tom Copley

Tom Copley AM: I want to give you some examples. I have asked people to send in stories of the problems they have had whilst renting in the private rented sector. Lisa, who is from Lewisham, said,

“The block of 38 flats, mostly studios, where I lived was sold at auction and we were all given two months’ notice to move by the developers. I’d been there for three years, but many had been there for ten or 20 years, a few longer. One elderly gentleman had lived there for 40 years. There weren’t many studio flats in the local area and when we all flooded the market I ended up having to move half-an-hour a way to find accommodation in time. Doubly frustrating as I was caring for my mother through her treatment for breast cancer, and from living five minutes away I suddenly lived 35 minutes away.

Is it acceptable that someone renting in the private sector can be given two months’ notice to leave their property?”

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Clearly, as I was saying, I think it was to Andrew, we have to make sure that we crack down on rogue landlords and people who treat –

Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, this is not a rogue landlord, this is perfectly legal. Under the law it is perfectly legal for a landlord to evict someone at two months’ notice during their tenancy. Do you think that is acceptable, or would you like to see the law changed to get rid of no-fault eviction at two months’ notice?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I understand the point that you are making and the hardship of the case that you describe. Clearly I will look into it. If you will be so kind as to send us the letter and the details I will give you the fullest possible answer that I can

Home ownership

Question Number: 2979/ 013

11 September 2013

Tom Copley

Tom Copley (AM): As you know, the second state of the scheme that comes in, in January, does not just apply to new homes, it applies to existing properties and, therefore, if it becomes apparent, Mr Mayor, that demand is being increased more than supply that house -- hang on, that this is further inflating house prices in London, will you reassess your opinion?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Cost of Childcare in London

Question Number: 2981/ 2013

11 September 2013

Tom Copley

Joanne McCartney (AM): There were simple actions which Daycare Trust asked you to do a year ago, spearheading a campaign of knowing your rights, to include it in your education inquiry. They were just practical things that you could do quite easily, it seems to me.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We will certainly look at that.

Rough Sleeping

Question Number: 2472/2013

17 July 2013

Tom Copley

Tom Copley (AM): Yes, thank you, Mr Mayor. There wasn't an awful lot of detail there about what you intended to do about this problem. I know we have spoken in Mayor's Question Time many times about this particular issue. Particularly about the pledge you made, I think first in 2009, which was that you would end rough sleeping in London by the end of 2012, which you made in your manifesto last year, six or seven months before the election when you again said that by the end of 2012, no one should be living in the street. I just wanted to raise this with you again because the Housing Committee, just over a month ago, Rick Blakeway, your Deputy Mayor for Housing, when I questioned him about this told me, and I quote, "I think the target was never meant to finish in 2012". Who is right, you or Rick?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Rick is never wrong, so I am not going to --

Tom Copley (AM): So you are wrong.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am sure that whatever Rick and I are saying is absolutely --if you want a bit more detail, Tom, I can give you a bit more.

Rough Sleeping

Question Number: 2472/2013

17 July 2013

Tom Copley

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You know perfectly well that those figures are nonsensical and --

Tom Copley (AM): No, they are not, they are --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- I am more than happy to write to you with the true figures and I know that this has been raised. In fact, there was going to be a question on this last week, or sorry, forgive me, last month, and I had the figures before me then. You then withdrew that question last month, if I remember correctly. I do not have the figures for the empty homes we brought back into use. I would be very happy to write to you and give you those figures.

High Rise

Question Number: 1935/2013

19 June 2013

Andrew Boff

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are going to improve fire services across London and including in Pimlico. If you look at what has happened in estates around the city, in some very interesting cases you are seeing 1960s high rises torn down to make way for a new London vernacular of a more terraced approach that actually does deliver very great densities and a wonderful quality of life.

Andrew Boff (AM): I am delighted to hear your support for those concepts. As you know, it is something that this group in general has been banging on about for quite a while. I would like to see that in terms of some kind of guidance to future developers who must know that there is general disapproval from the Mayor of London for family housing to be provided in tower blocks.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): There is such disapproval. Let me see if I can get you some numbers, Andrew, about that, about how it has been going and the changes because we have been changing it.

Free schools permitted development rights

Question Number: 1967/2013

19 June 2013

Andrew Dismore

Andrew Dismore (AM): Let me put the question to you. OK. What about Avanti Free School? They have tried to muscle into a site next to Broadfields Primary --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The last thing I would accuse you of is being tedious.

Andrew Dismore (AM): -- with 1,700 children, a site that is woefully too small. They want to put ten portacabins next to Fairway Primary which brings nothing to local people except inconvenience and traffic jams. There are no places for local kids which is the intention of free schools, no places for local kids because these schools are based in Harrow where they draw their pupils from, not Barnet, completely contrary to the intention of free schools.

You have a role here. When are you going to exercise that role and make sure that proper planning arrangements are put in place so that local people's objections are properly considered? Or are you simply

going to push this to one side? I bet if they were going to do this on the playing fields of Eton you would be objecting.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Here we go. Here we go. Indeed, indeed. As you rightly say, I went to the same school as the party leader. I did. I was at the same London primary school as Ed Miliband, the Labour Party leader. A great school it is, Primrose Hill Primary School, and it made us what we are today. I have great confidence in all schools. They are improving by the way, London schools. It is a fantastic story of improvement in the last few years and --

Andrew Dismore (AM): What about the planning applications?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- I do not know why you are so hostile to this new school. I will go and read your scintillating letter and see why you object so passionately to a new school in your constituency.

Andrew Dismore (AM): Thousands of local residents are objecting, Boris.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): There you go. Some local people do not want to have their lives interrupted by schoolchildren. I will find out why. I will do my best to be reasonable with you and with these people who so dislike schoolchildren and I will see what I can do to help. But I am in favour of more school places. I think we have a problem in London. We have too few primary places, too few secondary places. We need to build more schools and the answer to your question is yes.

Public Houses

Question Number: 976/2013

20 March 2013

Steve O'Connell

Steve O'Connell (AM): Specifically on the forthcoming SPG, you do mention community assets, community hubs, but what I am urging is for you to instruct and request from your planners that there is specific mention of community public houses because at the moment they are covered in a broad generalisation. What we are asking for, and I know Tom would agree with this, is that we want specific mention for specific protection of community pubs that are seen as an asset for the local community. Would you agree with that, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do. I do completely agree, and I thank you for what you are doing.

Dalston Western Curve

Question Number: 3944/2012

Meeting Date: 19 December 2012

Andrew Boff

Your plans for the Dalston Western Curve, expressed as a planning application by TfL, seem to contradict your desire to increase public open space. Could you explain why?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): This relates to a development which you have campaigned for a long time which was a scheme initiated a while back. You ask about the open space and where is it going to be. I understand that the planning application is before Hackney. There are various places, not on that site obviously, that could be improved nearby and that is the best I am afraid that I can offer you on that.

Andrew Boff (AM): Thank you, Mr Mayor. You are not just the planning authority on this but also the developer, effectively, with TfL being the land owner. Bearing in mind your very heartening and positive comments to my colleague James Cleverly about the aim of greening London, why is it that the only green space within this development is going to be contained in a gated development?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): This was a scheme that was cooked up before I was Mayor. I will look into it. If I am indeed the planning authority, as you say, I had better be careful what I say because I may frustrate any ability that I have to vary it.

Andrew Boff (AM): I would be grateful if you would look at it. I would be grateful also if you could meet with local Dalston campaigners who want to explain their concerns about the drift of TfL schemes in Dalston. The last time TfL got involved in Dalston we ended up demolishing heritage buildings to erect the windswept Dalston Square and built a bus stop that cost £63 million and only one bus ever stops there. This is not a very good record for TfL. I would urge that we do not go through the same process again of these crazy schemes that TfL have come forward with for Dalston because I do not think TfL really cares about Dalston.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That I cannot accept.

Andrew Boff (AM): They care about their buses but they certainly do not care about their property, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I know that you dislike these schemes. I think they both antedated my tenure.

Andrew Boff (AM): We have a chance for you to change them. You could put a comment, if you like, because the deadline for comments is tomorrow for the planning application.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The difficulty I have is that you are asking me both to arbitrate on it and to comment on it. I do not think I can do both but I will have a look at it.

Andrew Boff (AM): I would be very grateful if you could see the campaigners as well so that they can explain their frustration with what TfL is doing in Dalston.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Are you a campaigner? I will meet you.

Andrew Boff (AM): No, there are plenty and we will not fill your office but we can provide you with some of the campaigners, especially from Open Dalston.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): OK, and can this be genuinely improved in time, this scheme?

Andrew Boff (AM): Yes.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): All right, let us have a look at it then, okay.

Andrew Boff (AM): Thank you, sir.

Housing Crisis

Question Number: 4042/2012

Meeting Date: 19 December 2012

Darren Johnson

Darren Johnson (Deputy Chair): You said quite rightly that London is a special case in terms of its social mix. Will you, therefore, undertake to do some independent monitoring for London of the impact of the benefit cap on Londoners?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I know we are trying. There was a story on the front page of the *Guardian* a few weeks ago based on calls that London boroughs had made to other parts of the country about rehousing. However, we have not been able to substantiate, or so far been able to substantiate the assertion made by John that there is a vast exodus. It does not seem to be happening. It may be, you know, it could be down the track, but we have to be clear; it does not seem to be happening on the scale some people have prophesied.

Darren Johnson (Deputy Chair): It is no use relying on hearsay one way or the other. We need some proper robust monitoring, particularly next year when the new regime comes in.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Sorry, it has been described as a mass exodus.

Darren Johnson (Deputy Chair): Will you undertake to do some proper monitoring of this of the impact on Londoners?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course.

Darren Johnson (Deputy Chair): Thank you.

Squatting laws

Question Number: 2524/2012

Meeting Date: 19 September 2012

Steve O'Connell

Do you welcome the recent law which now makes squatting in residential buildings a criminal offence, allowing police to arrest squatters?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do welcome it, Darren, and I think it is quite right that the law should allow owners to regain possession of their properties more quickly and more easily. There is a problem of unoccupied housing in London, but we have now got the rate of empty homes down to the lowest since the 1970s, 1.1% of the total housing stock, and we have put about 5,000 empty homes back into use with a targeted funding stream, and we are going to continue to do so.

Steve O'Connell (AM): Thank you very much, Mr Mayor. Yes, exactly, there is a balance to this story but I would like to agree with you and welcome on behalf of Londoners the fact now that London and the UK is not going to be the soft touch for squatters. Will you, Mr Mayor, confirm and indeed direct your deputy to ensure that the MPS will be fully enforcing this law with immediate effect, because clearly this does apply to existing squatters.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am sure the MPS will be enforcing the law as they always do. They do not need to be directed by me or by anybody else to enforce the law. That is what they do. I think there

are interesting and attractive things you can do to put empty homes, empty shops back into use, and that is what we want to do.

Steve O'Connell (AM): As I say, the public will very much welcome this. It will give them reassurance on something that actually has been a curse of many neighbourhoods over far too many years. However, in the spirit of sharing and giving confidence to the public, will you ensure that the MPS regularly updates the public on arrest and conviction rates for illegal squatting in their areas?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is a good point. I will find out. We will get some data for you.

Stalled Developments

Question Number: 2500/2012

Meeting Date: 19 September 2012

Andrew Boff

How many potential homes in London have planning permission but are currently in stalled developments?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The answer is 170,000.

Andrew Boff (AM): 170,000?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): 170,000.

Andrew Boff (AM): Mr Mayor, has there been some kind of analysis of the reason behind these stalled developments, because it is very difficult to judge. That one big figure is obviously astonishing but it would be interesting to know the profile of those. I mean how many, for example, do we think are awaiting finance from the banks? How many are stalled because the developers bought at a high in the market and in some cases are trying to build inappropriately high density developments? How many are stalled because of section 106 agreements?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): All those things may or may not be factors. There is also the difficulty individual people may have had in getting mortgages and the slackness in the market, so all those things are factors. What we have done is commissioned a study across quite a broad range of the stalled projects to try to identify what we can do to 'float the boat off the rocks' and what the problem is. Developments of more than 150 homes we are typically looking at, and we want to see what we can do to get things going. I doubt very much that it is anything to do with planning, obviously not, because it has been consented. I think you are on the right track when you talk about developers who have taken a bath on the value of the site. I think that is very often the problem, they do not have the cash left to develop. We are looking at what we can do to encourage greater readiness of finance, particularly for people who want to buy their own home. I think that is one of the key problems in London at the moment and I will be talking a bit more about that over the next few weeks.

Andrew Boff (AM): I welcome that intervention by itself because I think Londoners are very concerned, obviously, with the housing problem that there is, that there is a potential 170,000 homes that could be occupied by families in London.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. I mean these homes do not exist but the consent is there to build them.

Andrew Boff (AM): Precisely. I would appreciate, if possible, and I realise the data is going to be difficult to get to, an idea of the proportions that we are looking at. I think it is right that you focus on those larger developments of 150 plus, but within those developments why are they stalled? Why these in particular are stalled?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The work is going on right now and obviously I will let you have sight of whatever we get.

Darren Johnson (Chair): That is very welcome.

Beds in Sheds

Question Number: 1551/2012

Meeting Date: 13 June 2012

Tom Copley

Tom Copley (AM): You say this is something, a responsibility that primarily lies with the boroughs, but given that seven boroughs in London have now received this funding, do you accept it is a strategy issue that needs much more involvement from yourself?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think I have given you a flavour of the activity we are already engaged in, and there is a national taskforce. London has, through our efforts, not only been leading in that work, but I think I am right in saying that of the cash that has been allocated to dealing with the problem nationally, London has got the overwhelming share of it, thanks to the lobbying that we have been involved in.

Tom Copley (AM): But why didn't you support what would have been a relatively minor alteration to the London Plan which would have outlawed beds in sheds?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am not aware of the amendment. I will be happy to look at it. I think that as it happens, beds in sheds so-called are illegal for the reason I have already given, which is very often they will fall foul of fire regulations, and that is why the role of LFEPA is important in dealing with it, as well as the role of the boroughs.

Homes for London

Question Number: 1312/2012

Meeting Date: 23 May 2012

Nicky Gavron

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. Thank you very much, Nicky. The idea of Homes for London is to bring together all the reforms that we have achieved, and it came into effect on 1 April, I think, with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) land and the London Development Agency (LDA) land and the cash involved, and to organise it hereunder under one roof in the GLA. What we are not doing, just for clarity's sake, is we are not creating a vast new functional body separate from this place on the lines of TfL, called Homes for London or whatever.

Nicky Gavron (AM): Fair enough, but you actually pledged to deliver rather more than that when you signed up with the Shelter Homes for London campaign. You got a lot of publicity for that during the election, and it is still on their website, so I thought I would just ask you about some of the things you have signed up, particularly just narrowing it down to the private rented sector, where 850,000 households live -

that is millions of people - and Shelter want action on that, and you have signed up to some pledges on that. Can you tell me what those pledges are?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, the pledges that we have signed up to include, as I say, instigating Homes for London as a key department of the GLA, with a mission to improve housing in London. That obviously is something that I do not think anybody would dissent from, and as part of that, plainly we want to improve the lot of those in the rented sector. There are all sorts of steps that we are taking to increase the supply of rented accommodation, but above all, to bear down and to do what we can to drive out the kind of landlords who have been treating their tenants unacceptably by a system of accredited landlords. We have got a very considerable number on the scheme already and we want to double that number.

Nicky Gavron (AM): You have also signed up to dealing with rip-off letting agencies. You signed up to fairer rents, with a London-wide letting agency, and you signed up to protecting families by making sure they have secure tenancies. Are your Homes for London actually going to follow through on those pledges?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. What we are going to do, Nicky, is continue with a very, very energetic and aggressive policy, and in fact more aggressive even than before of building new homes, and --

Nicky Gavron (AM): No, no, I am talking about the private rented sector. Are you going to follow through on those pledges?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- that includes a huge number of homes for rent.

Nicky Gavron (AM): No, but are you going to follow through on setting up a London-wide letting agency with secure tenancies for families?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Look, I am going to have to study the detail of that.

Nicky Gavron (AM): But you have signed up that pledge.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, so you say. I am going to have to have a look at what exactly was signed up.

Nicky Gavron (AM): What do you mean, "So I said"? You have had a lot of publicity on the back of this. Are you saying that you have just abandoned Homes for London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I may have had a lot of publicity about it, but not enough for it to come to my attention. Let me have a look at it. Let me have a look at exactly what is entailed, OK?

Nicky Gavron (AM): There are millions of Londoners suffering as a result of this, what is in the private rented sector, and people are being squeezed, families they have shown on health and education for children. How can you not take this seriously? How can you be so flippant? You have a choice. You have powers, you have influence.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am sorry, I will not take any lessons from you, Nicky, about commitment to affordable housing. In the last four years, we built a record quantity of affordable housing.

We have driven the programme forward and we will go forward again over the next four years with even more, and I think what Londoners need to do is instead of listening to the posturing and the sermonising of the Labour Party, and the endless false incredible promises that you make, they should look at results and they should look at what we achieve.

Nicky Gavron (AM): You have already signed these pledges, which you do not seem to remember, and it just strikes me that you are already breaking a promise.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As I say to you, we will look at the details of what is entailed by that pledge and we will do our best to implement them.

Economic and Business Policy

Parental employment

Question Number: 3388/2013

23 October 2013

Stephen Knight

Stephen Knight AM: Mr Mayor, given the acknowledged importance of this issue, will you commit to developing a proper mayoral strategy for tackling the low levels of parental employment and the problems of childcare in London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes and we would do that through the London Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which is taking a very close interest in this work. Kit [Malthouse, Deputy Chair, LEP] is working up plans to fulfil the commitment to provide, as I say, 20,000 part-time jobs. We do see this as of critical importance for London. The statistics you use, are probably right. We find it is more difficult in London to get back into work if you have had a child than it is elsewhere in the country and that cannot be right. That is another economic inefficiency, like not being able to live near your place of work.

Stephen Knight AM: Indeed, Mr Mayor, and this is an issue the Economy Committee, which you know I chair, has been looking at very recently.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Indeed.

One of the things that our witnesses told us is they are desperately frustrated at the lack of leadership coming from City Hall on this issue. I am very glad to hear that you are now prioritising this through the LEP, and I look forward to seeing a strategy coming out of the LEP. Do you know what timeframe you have given the LEP?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I cannot give you that now but obviously we will be pursuing it urgently. I am interested by what you say about the groups that you mention. I would be very happy if you could pass their details on to Kit. We will make sure that we liaise with them directly and explain what we are doing and get their buy-in.

Stephen Knight AM: We could certainly do that. I think you said in an answer to a question from Joanne McCartney at the last MQT that there are plenty of things that can be done, including things like encouraging schools to develop wraparound care packages for pupils and so on. Are those the kind of measures that you want to see built into your strategy?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, absolutely.

Stephen Knight AM: Good. Perhaps you could let me know when the LEP will be considering this issue.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I shall

Review the LMW findings

Question Number: 4095/2013

23 October 2013

Fiona Twycross

Fiona Twycross AM: I think introducing a London minimum wage would benefit around 175,000 of London's lowest-paid workers giving them, in the short term, a 7% pay rise up to £800 a year and longer-term the proposal suggests a pay rise of 20% on the current rates could be sustained without affecting employment, which would mean up to £2,300 a year. Do you not agree that would be a valuable boost to these low-paid workers' incomes while we are campaigning jointly cross-party on the London Living Wage?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It would, yes, and I can see where you are coming from. I will study the proposals from the Centre for London. My instinctive anxiety is that we would be starting to muddy the waters and there is a clarity, there is a popularity in the idea of the London Living Wage, everybody knows what it is, everybody understands the campaign, everybody hears the arguments about benefitting their companies as well as their employees, everyone understands the arguments about fairness. I want to keep that as my focus.

Fiona Twycross AM: I have to say, for the lowest paid workers, I think they would probably understand what a 7% or 20% pay rise would mean and I think that you are not giving Londoners enough due for their intelligence, I think they are a bit more savvy than that to get too confused about the issue, and so I welcome the fact that you will review the proposals.

London Living Wage

Question Number: 4095/2013

23 October 2013

Fiona Twycross

Fiona Twycross AM: I agree that it would be hugely beneficial for their employees to be paid the London Living Wage, but I am trying to establish exactly what you have been doing to promote the London Living Wage and I understand that over the summer you wrote to 100 employers, which in my view seemed quite small, compared to the number of employers in London, and I wondered what response you had to those letters.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As soon as we have a breakdown of what the responses are I would be very happy to give you them, but do not forget some of those employers will be responsible for literally tens of thousands of Londoners on low pay.

Citizens Advice

Question Number: 4042/2013

23 October 2013

Jenny Jones

Jenny Jones AM: Would you or somebody in your office talk to Citizens Advice, just to get a feel for the misuse? I am talking about massive and inappropriate use of the sanctions. Would somebody in your office take some evidence from Citizens Advice.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am sure that Kit [Malthouse, AM], who is the Deputy Mayor for Business and Enterprise --

Jenny Jones AM: That is very kind of Kit. Kit, thank you.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): He is in charge of employment generally.

Jenny Jones AM: That is very kind. I am very happy with that. Thank you so much.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Kit is always very happy to co-operate with you, Jenny, on any matter.

Darren Johnson (Chair): We note that commitment on behalf of Assembly Member Malthouse. We will then move on to the next question on the order paper.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If Kit wants to pass that back to me or if Kit refuses that mission, then I will understand and I will do by best

Living Wages for all?

Question Number: 2978 2013

11 September 2013

Len Duvall

Jennette Arnold OBE (AM): Can I ask you to ask Kit to look into that because whether it is good or not people listen to you and you could add your voice to this campaign.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. Kit has been in touch with the [London Living Wage] Commission since its beginning. One obvious difficulty is that a national Living Wage logically starts to undermine one of the particular points we make about the London Living Wage, which is that there are increased costs of living in London and that is why we want to focus very much on the London Living Wage.

Pledge on job creation

Question Number: 2434/2013

17 July 2013

Fiona Twycross

Fiona Twycross (AM): The job situation is still lagging behind other parts of Britain and one of the reasons this might be is because small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) are finding it hard to get credit. They find it significantly harder than small and medium-sized enterprises in other parts of the country to access credit with only 5% of SMEs in London reporting credit to be affordable. During the 2012 election you pledged to put £35 million into a small-business lending scheme and in May you announced a scheme with £25 million of funding. I just wondered if you could comment on why the reality of your actions has not met the commitments made in your manifesto?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): So we are £10 million short? I will find out. I cannot give you the answer here and now. I am sure there is a perfectly good explanation for that and we will make sure we get the answer to you.

Commonwealth Games 2022 (1)

Question Number: 1768/2013

22 May 2013

Andrew Boff

Andrew Boff (AM): You are saying you are for the Commonwealth Games and you do not know what the price is.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I am. There is a risk. Tessa did a fantastic job in getting the Games and working for the Olympics. I think she later tried to clarify what she meant. I do not think that she remotely meant to say that it was a mistake to go ahead with the Olympic Games. If she did, if it came out that way, she regretted it almost immediately. I think it was a great investment for this country and indeed for London. I think the Olympics were a wonderful thing, where we really are seeing economic benefits and impact from it.

I want to see the cost benefits for the Commonwealth Games. If we bid for it, and I hope we will, I will make sure, Andrew, that you get a rundown of what we think the economic upside would be as well as the cost.

Andrew Boff (AM): Will this rundown be one that is in public, or restricted from the public, as we had in the case of the Olympic Stadium and all the other things that took place on the Olympic site that we were not privy to

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You will get a public account. Of course.

Benefit savings from the living wage

Question Number: 1318/2013

22 May 2013

Jenny Jones

Jenny Jones (AM): You have a target at the moment of 250 companies by 2015 or something. The problem is that will still leave 1,000 big companies in London not paying it [London Living Wage]. It seems to me that that is actually not fair on the taxpayer. So do you think there is something you could do, apart from these zones, just to put pressure on through all your government contacts?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. The challenge is London's citizens who started all this and who I think have the right idea have always fought shy of having a compulsory approach.

Jenny Jones (AM): That is not in your remit, you could not do that.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We could not do that anyway. So we do not want to go down that route, even if we could. I would accept your criticism. I do think that the target of 250 is possibly capable of being improved and we could do better than that.

Jenny Jones (AM): Will you?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I would like to see a lot more political awareness of the benefits of this policy. It does not really hurt corporations that much in their bottom line. It does engender a great deal of loyalty in staff. It helps reduce staff turnover. It increases productivity. I think companies in London should go for it and I would exhort them to do so.

Jenny Jones (AM): Will you in fact then put up your target? Could you do something a little more proactive and make a more ambitious target to draw in some more of these companies that we are paying --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Our target is obviously 100%. That is what I want to achieve.

Benefit savings from the living wage

Question Number: 1318/2013

22 May 2013

Jenny Jones

Jennette Arnold OBE (AM): Thank you, and good morning, Mr Mayor. Can I follow on the theme? I think we just do need this settled. Can I ask you to write to me clarifying that the whole of the GLA family is conforming with your commitment to the London Living Wage? I know that there were some outstanding issues that may have been transferred from the Metropolitan Police Authority over to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and I would welcome your assurance on that.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I certainly will write to you, Jennette. I just want to clarify that I am confident we can get the accreditation for the GLA ourselves and Transport for London (TfL) by November this year and we will then begin on the accreditation of MOPAC, LFEPA and the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC). Len [Duvall] mentions London & Partners (L&P). I do not know the status of L&P but clearly L&P must also be accredited.

Jennette Arnold OBE (AM): Yes. It is all aspects of the GLA family that I would like confirmation on. Can I just follow up then and just tease out where my colleague Assembly Member Boff started about the services, especially around the security sector and just ask you: is it not time now that we looked and that you led some sort of review at these key sectors for London? It is in these key sectors where it is part-time workers and women workers and where many members from London's diverse communities are employed that the Living Wage is not paid. Will you look to focus your attention in those sectors?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. All the points I have made this morning are good ones that apply to all those sectors as well in terms of loyalty, higher staff morale, productivity and so on. These costs are not in my view insuperable for some of the very big corporations that we are talking about. They produce very substantial revenues and I think it is the right way forward. In tough times when you are seeing a growing gap between rich and poor and huge pressures on the cost of living in London, it is morally right. So, yes, Jennette, we will make sure that all those types of business that you are talking about, contract cleaning, security, those sorts of organisations are properly addressed in the run-up to next November.

Child Poverty and Parental Employment

Question Number: 68/2013

Meeting Date: 13 January 2013

Stephen Knight

Stephen Knight (AM): Will you commit to helping to set up a London-wide at home childcare agency for parents with atypical work patterns, as recommended by the Daycare Trust? Could you commit to doing that?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): My only wariness, Stephen, is that we have tried London-wide strategic provision of this sort of thing and it has not been very successful. The value for money was not great.

Stephen Knight (AM): Mr Mayor, just because one scheme was not successful does not mean that other schemes cannot be --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, I accept that.

Stephen Knight (AM): -- and I am a bit worried that is a defeatist attitude. We have got to tackle this issue because of the impact on London's economy.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am not being defeatist. I share your concern about this. I just think you need to be very careful before we, as the GLA, leap into a massive programme of child minding.

Stephen Knight (AM): Finally, Mr Mayor, I wonder if you could update us --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It comes in Plato's Republic. Somewhere in the Republic they have such a programme for the ideal state.

Stephen Knight (AM): Finally, Mr Mayor, can you update us on your commitment that you have already given to run a campaign to encourage London employers to offer childcare vouchers? When is that going to happen?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As far as I know it is happening already but I will get back to you with further particulars about that.

Nine Elms Enterprise Zone

Question Number: 175/2013

Meeting Date: 16 January 2013

Richard Tracey

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you, Dick, and thank you for all the work that you have done, over a long period of years, to help get this thing off the ground. It is a quite remarkable thing. The Enterprise Zone regulations will be laid before Parliament this year so we will have the structure in place to help pay for the Northern line extension which has made possible the redevelopment of that power station.

Richard Tracey (AM): Thank you, Mr Mayor. This is, of course, a major step forward in a regeneration area with a lot of potential. We have got one Embassy there. Who knows; we may have some more before it is finished.

Can I ask you, on the Enterprise Zone side, what is the current consensus on the size of the enterprise zone? Will it cover the whole of the opportunity area? In addition to business rate discounts and capital allowances will you look at other areas, for example, UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) support and tax increment financing (TIFs) and so on for the Enterprise Zone?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): All that kind of stuff we will look at. There is a limit to the number of ways you can squeeze the same lemon, so to speak. Orange.

Richard Tracey (AM): Would you answer-- is the consensus for the whole opportunity area or just one part of it? We talked before about Battersea Power Station. It is now 250 acres, the whole area.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You are worried we are going to be putting a community infrastructure levy (CIL) on the whole thing are you?

Richard Tracey (AM): I am asking for the Enterprise Zone to cover the whole area ideally.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will get back to you on the exact extent of the enterprise zone. Suffice it to say we will make sure that it will be in a position to finance the Northern line Extension (NLE).

Outer London Fund

Question Number: 185/2013

Meeting Date: 16 January 2013

Steve O'Connell

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thanks, Steve. I think your question on the Outer London Fund is well posed. Central Parade in New Addington, we are very proud of what we have been able to do there. The Outer London Fund has been one of the best things we were able to do in outer London because it was, after all, an area that was neglected by the previous administration. We have re-established the Outer London Fund. I had them all in my office the other night. We have got a new agenda to continue to drive jobs and growth in outer London.

Steve O'Connell (AM): Thank you very much, Mr Mayor. First of all I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your efforts in bringing Westfield and Hammerson to Croydon, for the record. As you said, the Outer London Fund was introduced to rebalance the earlier Mayor's neglect of the outer London boroughs and it has been well received, as you say, in New Addington and also in North Cheam, another area that I represent.

When I asked you last year you were saying that you were having an evaluation to see whether you were going to continue with it. For the record, you are intending to bring forward a further round of the Outer London Fund during the course of your Mayoralty?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, that is it. We are going to continue with the Outer London Fund and, indeed, with the work of the Outer London Commission in identifying ways of expanding the Outer London economy.

Fares and the London Living Wage

Question Number: 3796/2012

Meeting Date: 21 November 2012

Andrew Boff

How did your upcoming announcement on fare levels for 2013 affect the London Living Wage rate you announced on 5th November?

Andrew Boff (AM): Mr Mayor, you are quite right that the London Living Wage should be cross-party but public agencies themselves should set an example. I raised the example the other day with you of Hackney council who are advertising jobs at £6.10 an hour and yet, at the same time, claiming that they supported the London Living Wage. Since that, Hackney have now decided they are no longer going to do that.

Could you possibly turn your attention again to the practices by Hackney which at this moment takes on employers Compass Group -- I do not wish to excoriate Compass Group. I am just saying without mentioning the London Living Wage, they have been happy to get into a contract with the Compass Group for school catering staff and I have a payslip in front of me that gives their hourly rate as £5.46. Now if supposed supporters of the London Living Wage are not even saying to their sub-contractors that there should be some kind of buy-in to the London Living Wage are we going to be successful? I hope that you are going to pay some attention to that next time you talk to Hackney council.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): To Mayor [Jules] Pipe, yes, I certainly shall. It is a very interesting point. I was not aware of that, Andrew.

Andrew Boff (AM): Arguably, that is below the minimum wage, let alone the London Living Wage.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. That is something that I will certainly make sure that - I hope someone is taking due note of this - I will bring up with Hackney next time we have that conversation. The GLA does its best to make sure all our contractors pay the London Living Wage. Where there are historic contracts - and I anticipate the objection of Andrew - that need to be changed in favour of the London Living Wage that will happen when those contracts are renewed.

London Living Wage for TFL Cleaners

Question Number: 3026/2012

Meeting Date: 17 October 2012

Andrew Dismore

Why are cleaners employed by Carlisle, contracted by TfL's franchisee Serco to provide cleaning services on Docklands Light Railway, not paid the London Living Wage?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you, Andrew, very much indeed. You ask about why cleaners employed by Carlisle who are contracted by TfL's franchisee Serco to provide cleaning services on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) are not paid the London Living Wage? Because that franchise was awarded in 2005, during Ken Livingstone's [former Mayor] last year of office, but was before the London Living Wage had been fully implemented in this place. I would just remind you that at least 2,600 staff of TfL, contracted and also sub-contracted staff, have benefited from the London Living Wage and, under this administration, under this Mayoralty, it has been massively expanded so that I think about 250 private firms in London now pay the London Living Wage which is greatly in excess of what there were under the Labour administration.

Andrew Dismore (AM): I assume you accept the DLR is part of the GLA group?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think I have not only accepted that; I have explained the historical reasons why the contract, which is a --

Andrew Dismore (AM): So having accepted that when you put in your economic manifesto --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): With Serco was not part of our London Living Wage strategy.

Andrew Dismore (AM): So when you put in your economic manifesto for the last Mayoral elections, "I have ensured that the London Living Wage was paid across the GLA group" that was not true was it?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think you asked a previous question about London Underground where we tried to do everything --

Andrew Dismore (AM): I am asking you about these workers here and I am putting to you what you put in your manifesto --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- we can't pay the London Living Wage.

Andrew Dismore (AM): -- was not true was it?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The problem is, and remains, that my predecessor, Ken Livingstone, said one thing and did another.

Andrew Dismore (AM): You have said one thing and not done it.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): He put in a contract with this DLR franchisee who have a different relationship, as you know, from London Underground (LU) than we have. They are not direct employees. There is a different set of contracts --

Andrew Dismore (AM): There is a simple answer to this. Why don't you go back to the company and renegotiate the contract to make sure the 1,500 people or so who work on the national minimum wage and in fact I understand from this morning's discussions --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think it is a very good idea.

Andrew Dismore (AM): Why don't you go back and get the contract renegotiated to get these people paid a decent amount of money?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As I say it is a point you might well have made to Ken Livingstone when you were a Labour MP in London and you allowed this. I do not know why it did not occur to you then, curiously enough. Never mind. It is certainly something that we will do when the contract comes up for renewal.

Assessment of Poverty

Question Number: 2060/2012

Meeting Date: 4 July 2012

Andrew Dismore

Fiona Twycross (AM): Mr Mayor, have you undertaken any assessment of food poverty in London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I know, Fiona, that Rosie Boycott, who is Chair of the London Food Board and works directly for me, is currently engaged in a massive effort now to analyse this problem and to see what we can do to end it. I am going to get the figure wrong now; I think she quoted a horrifying statistic to me the other day about the number of kids who get into school without having had a proper breakfast. It is quite appalling. I do think this is an area where London needs to wake up, we cannot go on having kids unable to concentrate in class because they are not getting a proper breakfast. We are supporting organisations like Magic Breakfasts that try to deal with this issue but there is a serious problem at the moment. I do not think it is so much of; there may be absolute poverty that is partly driving it but it is also I am afraid organisational problems, problems at home, all the rest of it, that are leaving kids basically going to school on a empty stomach or eating a Mars Bar or whatever on the way there or stocking up on fried chicken or whatever. What is happening at the moment is I am afraid, I do not want to sound like a nanny or bossing you or hysterical, it is a problem. As far as the analysis goes, please, I do not have it at my fingertips but Rosie Boycott is doing it and will be more than happy to supply you with it and to work with you.

Childcare

Question Number: 1544/2012

Meeting Date: 13 June 2012

Len Duvall

Len Duvall (AM): Chair, two further questions. The Daycare Trust, an important panel and is under threat. Have you made any interventions on its behalf? I think it has the support of cross-party on this Assembly. Have you written any letters to London councils? Have you sought any way to intervene to protect this important body in support of this sector across London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Len, would you forgive me if I check? I do not want to say I haven't when it is possible I have done something already. If I haven't, I will certainly look into it.

Len Duvall (AM): Will you as a matter of urgency?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Certainly.

Childcare

Question Number: 1544/2012

Meeting Date: 13 June 2012

Len Duvall

Len Duvall (AM): OK. Let's go back; you raised it, I wasn't going to raise it, but as you did, 2005, your predecessor, Ken Livingstone, met his target according to your London Development Agency (LDA) report, which was commissioned in your time, of affordable quality childcare policies.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Is that right?

Len Duvall (AM): In December 2009, you came up with a target of 1,600, which you alluded to in an earlier answer, which did not reach its target. You then decided to scrap it in 2011 and 2012. Was that wise then on the basis that where we are now, could it not have been reconfigured to meet it? Is it one around which may not be directly related to you, Mr Mayor, on this occasion, but isn't it an issue about confidence, about overseeing programmes that run from here and how can you give us confidence about the voucher programme that the officers within this building are working with employers to do? Is this not going to be another failed effort? What steps are you taking to ensure that is not the case?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think, first of all, you have to decide whether the previous effort was successful or not.

Len Duvall (AM): Sorry, Mr Mayor; let me just say this. According to your LDA report, in your time, not in Ken's [Livingstone] time which did it, Ken, met 10,000 placements. In your scheme, in 2009, revised scheme, you put down the target; it clearly failed and you scrapped it and that is what you scrapped it on. I am not sure whether you scrapped because it failed but it certainly didn't meet its targets. These are all information and figures you have provided that have been under your watch.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Sure, and I understand. Obviously, as you know, I became Mayor in 2008 and very early on in my mayoralty, I remember having meetings, in fact, with Labour Ministers whose view was that the scheme was not by any means perfect and did not represent value for money in our scheme. I was later informed that it certainly wasn't meeting its target for job entries. The information I have, Len [Duvall], is that by November 2010, the programme as a whole had delivered less than 20% of its

original target for job entries with no individual borough exceeding 35% of the targets that they agreed. This represented poor value for money for Londoners and that was why the programme was terminated.

That does not mean that I think this problem is unimportant. I think this problem is incredibly important. Yes, obviously the lesson from that is you have to work hard at these things to get them right and there is a real danger of money being wasted and a lack of success. Because of your question, because of your urging, I will take steps now to find out how our voucher scheme is going to work, what expectations we have of success and get back to you, if I may.

Direct jobs through City Hall

Question Number: 1249/2012

Meeting Date: 23 May 2012

Stephen Knight

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you. Stephen, yes, welcome. You are opening the batting here. This is an interesting question, and the answer is that the programme is a four-year programme, and I hope - just to get back to the conversations I was having with Joanne [McCartney] and others - that our achievements in creating these jobs over the next four years will be transparent and you will be able to see them through the datastore.

Stephen Knight (AM): Thank you very much. I hope it will be transparent, and I hope we can get a little bit of transparency this morning. You have said very clearly, Mr Mayor, that creating jobs and growth in the City is the centrepiece of your mayoralty for the next four years, so I wonder whether we could explore and really get to the bottom of this pledge to create 2000 new jobs over the next four years.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Stephen Knight (AM): I think you have said previously that 100,000 of these 200,000 jobs will come from your affordable house-building programme, and when I looked at the affordable house-building programme, it appears to me that we are actually talking about not 100,000 jobs, but 25,000 jobs building affordable homes for the next 4 years, and in order to get to 100,000, you seem to have multiplied each year's employment, counted each year's employment as a new job. Is that reasonable?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No.

Stephen Knight (AM): Do you think that most Londoners would consider that you have four jobs as Mayor of London over the term of this office or just the one?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No. I am afraid, with great respect to you, you are miscounting and that is not the --

Stephen Knight (AM): How am I miscounting? Could you explain?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As I remember the figures, in fact, the affordable housing programme, which is going to deliver about 54,838 houses, we think, by 2015, will deliver 104,000 jobs, and to the best of my knowledge, there is no multiplication. We are not talking about jobs per year, we are talking about new jobs created during four years.

Stephen Knight (AM): Perhaps I can remind you of your own figures, because your own figures are based on each house built creating two jobs for a year. That is what your own figures suggest, so I put it to you that you are talking about 25,000 jobs over the 4-year period and that you are not double-counting, you are quadruple-counting in order to get to 100,000.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As I say, I have heard what you have said. It is not my understanding and I will be happy to correspond with you about it.

Education and Skills

Olympic Transport Legacy

Question Number: 4711/2013

Meeting Date: 18 December 2013

Richard Tracey

Roger Evans (Deputy Chair): Thank you. I am pleased with that answer, but it is worth taking a look at the Southampton scheme even so because they have had over 1,000 young people through their scheme by now. It is a relatively small town compared to London. Do you think it would be worthwhile just getting Veronica to take a trip to Southampton to see how they do it there and if there is anything we can learn?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will take it up with Veronica if there is something we can learn. Obviously, our job at City Hall is to provide the encouragement and to provide the framework. We are not going to be organising the volunteers ourselves. There are plenty of groups across London who do that and our job is, through Team London, to provide the framework to help mobilise. The Team London Young Ambassadors Programme is there to be grit in the oyster, really. If there is something we can learn from what is going on in Southampton, I am more than happy to do so.

Abacus Free School

Question Number: 3365/2012

Meeting Date: 21 November 2012

Andrew Boff

Andrew Boff (AM): One of the other things I would like you to seriously consider Mr Mayor when reviewing Hampstead police station is the possible use of that site for the Abacus free school, which would be a primary school for residents in the area rather than the other schools in the area which just seem to import children from further afield. There is very little provision for a primary school in the area where children can walk to school. If you could seriously consider the application from Abacus I would be very grateful.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): This is in Hampstead?

Andrew Boff (AM): In Hampstead.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will certainly look at that and I wonder whether Andrew [Dismore] might want to take that up himself since he is the Member for that neighbourhood.

Andrew Boff (AM): I will forward the details to him.

Health and Public Services

Rising Fuel Bills

Question Number: 4866/2013

18 December 2013

Murad Qureshi

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: To lead a healthy life, you clearly need to have enough income to support your best needs. Staying warm in winter is a basic need. In your Health Inequality Strategy, you committed to establish what constitutes a healthy household income, bringing together issues of child poverty, pensioner poverty and fuel poverty. You have had almost four years to work on this. What is the figure of the healthy household income in London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I cannot give you that figure because I do not believe we have established it, to the best of my knowledge.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: No, but you said you would establish it and you said this about four years ago. You have not done it yet.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You must forgive me there, Onkar, because I do not have that data. I would be very happy to go and unearth whatever it is we are meant to have done.

Summer A&E Crisis

Question Number: 3926/2013

23 October 2013

Dr Onkar Sahota

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I know we have been promised £55 million and at the recent Health Committee everyone accepted that this was not enough, that there is going to be a crisis, it is going to be pretty bad this winter, and I am concerned that we do not have any plans in place. The Health Committee, in July this year, said that we should have plans in place by 30 September, across London, for what is going to happen. There are no plans in place at the moment. I am asking that you, through your Health Board, which you have established, that you find out what those plans are because London is going to suffer. Dr Rainsberry accepted and declared, rather, that this is going to be a tough winter, particularly a winter which we now know where people have a choice whether to eat their food or heat the houses up. As John Major [former Prime Minister] said yesterday that we could have a winter crisis made worse by the energy bills and I want to make sure that London is prepared for it. Will you make sure that those plans are made public and that we know what the plans are across the trusts and various hospitals?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I can certainly do is make sure that we will certainly be consulting with Anne Rainsberry [Regional Director, NHS, London Region] about how she sees things in the months ahead and if there is anything useful I can report back to you about that I will certainly do so. I will of course be lobbying with the Secretary of State for a proper share for London of A&E provision.

Rough sleeping

Question Number: 1971/2013

19 June 2013

Jennette Arnold OBE

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thanks, Jennette. Rough sleeping continues to be a serious problem but the real achievement of the London Rough Sleeping Group, formerly the London Delivery Board, is that so few people spend a second night out. More than 80% are now helped off the street before they spend a second night out. That is a great credit to the work that has been done. A lot of the rough sleepers, as I am sure you are aware, are coming from outside this city and indeed this country. I think a large proportion from central and eastern Europe. It remains a serious problem which is why we are investing £33.8 million in rough sleeping services plus the Social Impact Bond to reward those who are able to help get rough sleepers off the streets and deal particularly with entrenched rough sleeping.

Jennette Arnold OBE (AM): Thank you for that reply and I am sure everyone in this room will welcome the work that is being done and the allocation of funds. I just want to focus with my follow-up question on former rough sleeping in London.

Following the General Election, the Government increased the age threshold of the single room rate from 25 to 35, so this means that everyone 35 and under now only qualifies for a housing benefit for shared accommodation. You claimed you have successfully negotiated exemptions to this change for former rough sleepers. However, I have been informed by workers of charities in this area that the exemption is not being implemented properly because many boroughs are not aware of it and because of the level of proof of benefit claimants is so high. It means when you go to get this benefit it is very difficult for the claimant to then show where they have been for the last three months in terms of being homeless on the streets. In fact, the forms could be amended to make it easier. Are you aware of this?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Jennette Arnold OBE (AM): If yes, what are you doing about it?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The Rough Sleeping Group is working with -- we are aware and we think there is a problem to do with the advice that boroughs are giving. This is something actually I think Roger [Evans, AM] raised a while back or another Member raised a while back.

Jennette Arnold OBE (AM): It is across every constituency.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is across every constituency. We need to make sure that boroughs do more to give useful advice and help to people to prevent rough sleeping. We are not convinced that that is happening at the moment and the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Group, led by Rick Blakeway [Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property], is focusing very hard on that. That is part of what we are trying to do with the funds that we have.

Jennette Arnold OBE (AM): Can I suggest that a letter from you to leaders and chief execs would be an act that you could do and that would be welcomed?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. What I can certainly offer you, Jennette, today is I will write to you with an account of what we are doing to deal with that particular problem. But where I think we are being successful is in helping to get people off the streets after they have been there for the first night. It is a big problem. It is caused partly by inward migration. It is not necessarily caused entirely by changes to the benefit system, though I cannot exclude that that is also a factor, so there are lots of different aspects to it.

Jennette Arnold OBE (AM): So there is lots more work to do. Thank you.

Steve O'Connell (AM): Just to follow up that very good question because that had similarity to the question I asked --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Sorry. Forgive me, Steve. I am sorry. It was your question.

Steve O'Connell (AM): All this is really to say, when you write to Jennette, could you kindly copy that to me because I also have an interest in the same subject?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will copy you in on that.

A&E Crisis

Question Number: 1964/2013

19 June 2013

Dr Onkar Sahota

Joanne McCartney (AM): There are issues with primary care. Given that, can I ask you to look again at the impending A&E closures? If primary care is not there, it is my contention that actually these closures should not go ahead.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I understand that point and, as I have said to you already, Joanne, I will look into the circumstances surrounding the Chase Farm A&E.

Welfare Reform

Question Number: 987/2013

20 March 2013

Tom Copley

Onkar Sahota (AM): No, well let me pick up this question about foster carer children you talk about; this is only for a family where there is one foster child. If there are two foster children, and I can imagine situations where there is a sister and a brother who need to be fostered in the same family, they will not get an exemption at all. This policy is dividing up families who need to live in a house together. On the one hand we want more foster parents to come forward, on the other hand we are taxing them unfairly.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Sorry, do you mean, if there is a foster family with --

Onkar Sahota (AM): If a family has two foster children, they will need two separate bedrooms, but this exemption you are talking about that the Government has given only applies to one bedroom.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): So you are saying, suppose each foster child occupied one bedroom, that would be viewed by this Government as being excessive?

Onkar Sahota (AM): Exactly what I am saying, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I did not know that.

Onkar Sahota (AM): Mr Mayor, I hope you will ruthlessly pursue this and pounce upon the Government on behalf of Londoners.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am very interested in what you say, Onkar, I had not been made aware of that. The brief I have says that there are now protections for foster carers and foster children.

Onkar Sahota (AM): No, it only applies to one bedroom.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If these protections are inadequate then I am grateful to you for drawing it to my attention and we will see what we can do, but I am not certain of what that exemption is.

Onkar Sahota (AM): I can give you the references and quotation from the Foster Care Association or something, but for your information, if you look into this, it will confirm what I have said.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As members of the public and I think everyone understands, these are not my regulations. I have not promulgated these myself, but I will try to establish whether that particular adverse impact is genuinely the case and I will be happy to write to you about it.

Welfare Reform

Question Number: 987/2013

20 March 2013

Tom Copley

Joanne McCartney OBE (AM): My two boroughs are Enfield and Haringey and they are two of the four boroughs in London that are going to be testing the proposed welfare changes from this next month before it gets rolled out across London.

In Enfield and Haringey poverty is already disproportionately high. Those boroughs have both seen increases in people applying for Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and Housing Benefit. Between March 2011 and November last year, there was a 29% rise in the case of Haringey, and a 21% rise in the case of Enfield. We believe that this is due to increasing poverty, unemployment, but also that families are moving out of other boroughs. If I can quote to you what [Mayor] Jules Pipe, the Chair of London Councils, said to us when he was in this Chamber only a couple of weeks ago, he says that --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): A 29% increase in Haringey?

Joanne McCartney OBE (AM): Yes. We certainly have figures for placements, particularly in temporary accommodation, that boroughs have made and that clearly show that some boroughs, like my own, have placed a number of families in the low-tens in a three-month period in immediately adjacent boroughs. He says that is compared to, in the same quarter, boroughs who have exported hundreds to north-eastern boroughs, and Enfield and Haringey both fall in that north-eastern quadrant of London. I think we can see that there is some effect already happening. In my two boroughs, can I say, do you believe that the total benefit cap is going to adversely affect these boroughs who are already disproportionately affected by deprivation?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will look into the figures for the increase in LHA applications and Housing Benefit applications and see what we can do.

Welfare Reform

Question Number: 987/2013

20 March 2013

Tom Copley

Joanne McCartney OBE (AM): Testing two of the most deprived boroughs in London when the impact is going to be seen sooner is perhaps the wrong thing to do, and those boroughs are very concerned that they will have to make up that shortfall during that four-month test period, particularly on Housing Benefit. When I put the question to [Mayor] Jules Pipe [Chair, London Councils] whether those boroughs should receive compensation from the DWP, he said, "Yes, and London Councils have lobbied". Can I ask for you to lobby on behalf of the four boroughs?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Because they will have to make extra payments?

Joanne McCartney OBE (AM): They may well do if they choose to do that, yes.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am sure that that is a point that will be made to DWP, and if it is the case that London boroughs are now being placed under genuine and unexpected strain --

Joanne McCartney OBE (AM): I am asking, will you make the case as well?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am about to join you and say, yes, of course, it is my job to represent boroughs in that sort of situation.

Air Quality - Children's Health

Question Number: 940/2013

20 March 2013

Stephen Knight

Murad Qureshi (AM): Mr Mayor, the leaders of central London councils, City, Westminster and Camden, did write to you at the beginning of your term. In particular they were concerned about PM2.5.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Murad Qureshi (AM): As you know, they cause the most harm to the development of young children's lungs. Can you tell me to what extent your Ultra Low Emission Zone actually deals with that pollutant, if at all?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The Ultra Low Emission Discounts (ULEDs) will have a very considerable impact on that part of central London. It will also drive new technology generally. We think the impact on motor manufacturing will be very benign and they will want to comply with the Ultra Low Emission Zone and so that will have a general effect on technology and a general reduction of PM10 and PM2.5 and indeed of Nitrous Oxides Emissions. In other words, vehicles will move towards low- or zero-tailpipe emissions. I cannot give you the figures now, Murad, I am sorry to say but if we can get an estimate for you of the impact of ULEDs on PM10 and PM2.5 I would be more than happy to do so. I do think it would be a good and a generous thing if the Assembly were to acknowledge the work we have done so far in promoting clean vehicles, cycling, walking and all the other steps we have taken that has actually reduced these particulates by 15%, which is a considerable achievement.

Safety of NHS in London

Question Number: 195/2013

Meeting Date: 16 January 2013

Fiona Twycross

Fiona Twycross (AM): If we could get back to the issues at Queen's Hospital in Romford. Their solution to the problem is capping the numbers of patients they will take. They are a hospital that is due to take additional patients when a neighbouring hospital's A&E will be closed. Do you find this an acceptable solution to the problem?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Patently if that is happening -- I am afraid I do not have any direct evidence myself that that is happening. If that is happening and it is brought to my attention -- if people are being denied access to hospital treatment that is patently unacceptable.

The point that is made to me in general about aspects of this programme -- and this is the thing I have got to weigh up. I am told that if you went for rationalisation and improvements of the kind that are being proposed you could save 500 lives a year because you would have services at A&E where people appearing for acute services/treatment actually were dealt with by the consultants that needed to see them. This is what is claimed by NHS London. That is an important claim to make. It is something that you have got to take seriously. We have no means here in the GLA of independently evaluating that or second-guessing that kind of claim.

Fiona Twycross (AM): Will you take on responsibility for ensuring that the issues around -- if a hospital is capping patients in order to address issues around waiting times and that that hospital is being lined up to take additional patients from elsewhere, will you reassure Londoners that you will stand up for them and make sure that this issue is --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): My job is to stand up for Londoners and particularly about health inequalities. If there is a health inequality --

Fiona Twycross (AM): Thank you, Chair.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- being produced by that - if indeed what you say is happening is the case - then, through Victoria [Borwick], we will make what appropriate representations we can.

Possible closure of Lewisham A&E

Question Number: 3421/2012

Meeting Date: 21 November 2012

Darren Johnson

Will you be adding your voice to those opposing the closure of Lewisham Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Darren, I will be seeing the Trust special administrator responsible for the proposals for Lewisham Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department on 6 December 2012. I will seek his assurances on a number of points; what the conditions actually say, the impact on health inequalities of this proposal, the impact on travel times, blue light journeys and whether the public have been properly consulted. I will be only too happy to let you know the upshot of that meeting.

Darren Johnson (Deputy Chair): Thank you. I would welcome an update. I remember when Queen Mary in Bexley was facing similar threats back in 2008 and there you did what you could; you lobbied, you marched and you spoke out. Will you be prepared to do the same on behalf of the people in south east London if you are not satisfied with what the administrator says?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If I am not satisfied on the points that I will interrogate him about then of course I will support you.

Darren Johnson (Deputy Chair): Your own London Plan projections show an extra 85,000 people coming to live in that catchment area for the A&E of those three boroughs. 85,000 extra people. That has got to be a consideration. Will you be taking that into account?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, because we will be looking at all the impacts on health inequalities and on travel times and so on. I must repeat the point I think I have made about 58 times this morning; it is my job not just to stick up for London services and to fight for improvements but also, where there is a coherent intellectual case made for reconfiguration or changes, to be open to the views of respected clinicians who have nothing but the interests of their patients at heart. You have got to strike a balance. I cannot give you my view now. I am seeing this guy on 6 December.

Darren Johnson (Deputy Chair): Your speaking out on this could really make a difference to these ludicrous proposals which are really worrying the people of south east London and particularly of Lewisham. You said in a previous Mayor's Question Time that if these things can be all party and not simply dominated by one voice then they have more chance of success. I urge you, on that basis, to join with other politicians of all parties in opposing this closure plan and speaking out against it.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course I will in principle. The depressing truth is that a cause is not necessarily just simply because it is supported by all parties. There is a tragic reality of democratic politics that no one particular party will want to be outflanked on a very sensitive and emotive issue by another party. Where one group has managed to get up a head of steam over a particular closure or problem it would be the very, very strong temptation of other parties to row in behind. Sometimes it is my job to look at the issue as dispassionately as I possibly can - I have no view about this matter, Darren; I am not pre-judging this - and to decide where the interests of London lie.

Darren Johnson (Deputy Chair): Will you also ask TfL to have a thorough assessment of the transport implications as well?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I think that is a relevant consideration. That was something that I was able to offer to Onkar's [Sahota AM] delegation when they came to see me in the matter of Ealing Hospital. That is a relevant consideration and is something that we can be useful on.

NHS London and strategic planning around health in London

Question Number: 3797/2012

Meeting Date: 21 November 2012

Fiona Twycross

Is the Mayor concerned about the removal of integrated planning with the imminent end of NHS London at the end of the year?

Fiona Twycross (AM): Can we have a point of clarification on the funding because, previously, up to 6% of funding for health improvement in London could have been allocated to the London Health Improvement Board. Can you confirm how big a proportion will now be going to the London Health Improvement Board?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I cannot give you that now, Fiona. I would be happy to write to you.

NHS Reconfiguration

Question Number: 2997/2012

Meeting Date: 17 October 2012

Roger Evans

Roger Evans (AM): We have similar problems in north east London with proposals to close accident and emergency and maternity units at King George Hospital. I think we have been helped because we have taken a cross-party approach to opposing this rather than trying to politicise it as people have in some other parts of London. I myself gave evidence against it and my evidence was based first of all on the expected population growth that we are looking at for north east London, which sadly was not taken into account. Secondly, also by problems represented by poor public transport to the new hospital. Now that is something that you, as Mayor, can do something about. So can you commit to get TfL to work more closely in future with the NHS so that people do not find they have problems getting to hospitals under the new reorganisation.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well certainly Roger, that is something we can work on and I would be more than happy to make sure that our officials collaborate with NHS officials to mitigate the impacts of any closures.

Mental Health

Question Number: 1533/2012

Meeting Date: 13 June 2012

Fiona Twycross

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The proportion of the budget that has been allocated to mental health in London is between 5% and 10%. Obviously that is not a large sum but that doesn't mean that our team is remotely complacent about mental health issues and a huge amount of work is being done by the team here and, of course, through the Local Health Improvement Board (LHIB).

Fiona Twycross (AM): Obviously, a million Londoners face mental health issues and I am pleased there is a budget allocated. I couldn't see any detail of any budget allocated to it, to be honest. It wasn't in your manifesto and it is a major issue in respect of health inequalities. Your answer, with respect, was quite brief about the content of the budget and where it is going to go, so I just wondered what your plan is, what the plan is to tackle --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Let me tell you some of the things we are doing just to give you some reassurance about that. It is not trivial that the health team are getting mental health first training for interested GLA staff and indeed, Assembly Members, just so there is a greater awareness and we all have greater awareness and understanding of people who are suffering from that.

Fiona Twycross (AM): How many people have already taken that training?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We are going to be using the London Datastore that I have mentioned earlier on, I mentioned last month, which we are working hard to set up. Now, to capture --

Fiona Twycross (AM): Can I ask how many people have that training? You mentioned training. How many people have had that training so far?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am afraid I cannot give you anything but I would be happy to supply you with the answer. On the incidence of mental health in London, that is patently something that is

going to be captured by the Datastore. Information will be available. You rightly draw attention to the problem. You will be able to use the Datastore to indicate what is going on.

Fiona Twycross (AM): When will there be a detailed plan on how you are planning to tackle public mental health?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We have to be careful that we don't have confusion about what the functions of this body are. We are not healthcare providers. We are not here to tackle mental health in that sense.

Fiona Twycross (AM): But you are here to tackle health inequalities.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, absolutely. On 29 February, there was a discussion here; a seminar with Professor Michael Porter to discuss the concept of value in mental healthcare and we had 40 of London's most senior influential leaders in mental healthcare provisions, social care to look at how we could improve value and the follow-up work from that session is now going on and I would be very happy to make sure you get sight of what is planned.

Fiona Twycross (AM): So when will there be a plan though?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As I say, I would be very happy to give you the details. Just for the benefit of people wondering about the London Health Improvement Board, I do not want to suggest that mental health is the only thing they are doing. The key priorities for LHIB are, as you know, alcohol abuse, tackling child obesity and tackling cancer. We have a real problem in London that our cancer survival rates are not as good as they should be. We are a world City and we are, in my view, not as good as we should be. We have real problems in obesity and those are the priorities for LHIB but I would be more than happy to keep you posted on what we are doing on mental health.

2012 Olympic Games

A12 Olympic Clean Up

Question Number: 2053/2012

Meeting Date: 4 July 2012

Roger Evans

The A12 through Havering and Redbridge along with major junctions at Gants Hill, Gallows Corner and Redbridge roundabout will be a gateway route for many spectators travelling to the games. The condition of the roadside leaves much to be desired with weeds, litter and graffiti creating a poor impression for our visitors. What steps are being taken to clean up the roads before the Games begin?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The A12 is, you know, a very important artery road and we are very keen to make sure that we give the best possible impression to visitors of that area and of the A12. So, the things we are doing, you asked what steps are being taken. Removal of heavy vegetation is now going on over the next couple of weeks. There is a big programme to spray or dig out weeds and make sure that looks OK, stuff like that. A lot of that is coming out. Graffiti, there is a big programme now going on with Network Rail and with the borough to encourage them to take action on that. As for litter picking, picking up litter which degrades the view, we are working with the borough to ensure that litter is picked up in a pretty whole hearted way in the run up to the games. This is part of the overall capital cleanup programme

sponsored by Procter and Gamble, let us hear it for Procter and Gamble team. Hooray, well done, capitalism. Thank you. Procter and Gamble who are supporting capital clean up and delivering it through team London and that work is going on through the London boroughs and with community groups and others.

Roger Evans (AM): That sounds like another fine example of sponsorship getting results for Londoners, Boris. But we have the Olympic Torch procession coming to Gants Hill later this month, which we are all looking forward to. Certainly when I was there on Thursday, the vegetation was so high in parts of the central reservation, that it was higher than the heads of the cyclists who were passing. One does wonder what sort of wild life may be taking up residence within that, so can we make sure, please, that --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Are you saying we have to be careful about the wild life now?

Roger Evans (AM): Well, you do not know what is there. It could be anything. Could you make sure TfL do tidy it up before the Torch comes through? Can you also make sure that Gants Hill, which is an important centre, is provided with Olympic bunting which so many of the other centres appear to have?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I will make sure that we do that.

Greater London Authority and Functional Bodies

Greater London Authority and Functional Bodies

London Pensions Fund Authority

Question Number: 4869/2013

18 December 2013

Len Duvall

Tony Arbour AM: I am grateful to you for that, but you did not answer the first point about putting the TfL pension fund into LPFA. It cannot be right that one employer and one part of the GLA family makes a contribution of 31% to their pension whereas in the rest of the GLA family it is only 18%. That cannot be right.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You make a very interesting point and I will certainly have a look at it.

Pilot Schemes

Question Number: 4098/2013

20 November 2013

Andrew Dismore

Fiona Twycross AM: If the Food Board comes up with suggestions for pilots, for example, will you commit to supporting funding pilots to help test some solutions and to make sure the scandal of older people in London going hungry is addressed?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am more than happy to look at it, Fiona. I cannot give big funding pledges without really --

Fiona Twycross AM: For some of the pilots, hopefully, it would not be too much money, but I think it is really important that we address this serious issue that is --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I understand. I am sympathetic and I am supportive, but I would much rather Rosie Boycott find out what we can do first.

Fiona Twycross AM: Thank you.

LIP Flexibility

Question Number: 3982/2013

20 November 2013

Gareth Bacon

Steve O'Connell AM: Mr Mayor. For the sake of completeness, I have asked you this before. Will you continue to confirm that you will allow the boroughs that flexibility in how they can deliver their funding?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The flexibility I gave them?

Steve O'Connell AM: Exactly.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The previous administration did not.

Steve O'Connell AM: Exactly. You will continue with that?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will continue to protect that. Particularly for good Conservative boroughs but also for other boroughs.

Steve O'Connell AM: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.

A United Emergency Service

Question Number: 3771/2012

Meeting Date: 21 November 2012

Gareth Bacon

What will you be doing to take forward the ideas in "A United Emergency Service" regarding co-locating different emergency services?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, Gareth. I think this is an excellent idea. I look forward to discussing it with you, with James [Cleverly AM, Chair, LFEPA] and with Stephen Greenhalgh. Let's see what we can do to take this forward.

A United Emergency Service (2)

Question Number: 3771/2012

Meeting Date: 21 November 2012

Roger Evans

Roger Evans (AM): Would it not also be a good idea, Mr Mayor, to consider some work towards joint visits to communities as well? At the moment we have crime prevention officers going out and telling people to lock things up and then fire prevention officers going out and telling them to unlock them again. When the fire brigade go out to install smoke alarms it often means they have to take the fire engine and all four members of the crew out with them just to install smoke alarms at a particular location. Might it not be a good idea to actually combine a number of these visits together and use fewer people to provide a more integrated and broad reaching service?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think that is an excellent idea, Roger. Can I propose that we take that forward. I am interested in what you say about these visits; that are mutually counter productive. I will look into that.

Meetings with News International

Question Number: 2059/2012

Meeting Date: 4 July 2012

Len Duvall

Do you believe that it was right not to declare all meetings you had with News International Executives or owners?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you, Len, yes. The answer is yes and I think the particular meeting that you are interested in, the drop in for a cup of coffee, was actually put on the website some months ago.

Len Duvall (AM): Thank you, Mr Mayor, for that answer. There are two meetings I would like to draw your attention to, the 14 January 2011 with Rebekah Brooks, and 24 January 2011, “dropped into dinner”, your words, not mine, with Rupert Murdoch. That is the period of time I would like you to focus on. My first set of questions, can you confirm you were fully briefed on the News International phone hacking issues by former Assistant Commissioner (AC) Yates at your regular meetings with him, as stated by Kit Malthouse in his witness statements to the Leveson Inquiry?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, I had the relevant briefing. Could I just possibly make one point on that, which is, with the greatest respect, I think you are trying to conflate two things. It is all very well to call attention to my meetings with tycoons of one kind or another but I think what is surprising and disappointing is some suggestion that I would have, even if I had relevant information from these people about police investigations, that I would have told them.

Len Duvall (AM): This is your opportunity to enlighten us further, because these meetings we were not aware of until only recently. So, on 10 January 2011, you received a briefing from AC John Yates, do you recall what this briefing was about and would it have been at that time that you were informed Operation Weeting was about to be launched?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I honestly cannot remember what the briefing was about Operation Weeting, but what you need to focus on, Len, is I think what you are trying to imply and I deprecate very strongly, which is the suggestion that, even if I had any relevant information about a police investigation into News International, I would have passed that on to various tycoons that I met.

Len Duvall (AM): Thank you for stating that for the record. There are some further questions I need to ask, Mr Mayor, and I will focus on those, and if you could focus on the answers we might get through this rather quickly. When did you find out that the Metropolitan Police Service were going to look into phone hacking again at that time and when did you find out about Operation Weeting? Just to help you, this was quite an important weekend, I think the Prime Minister’s press officer had resigned, there was lots of news in terms, and I know you are an avid reader of newspapers, and in fact your press officer, who now works for News International, was actually in the frame for being a replacement for Mr Coulson. So it is quite a significant period of time, and it is quite an important period of time when these meetings took place, and

those police meetings. Could you just reflect and think about when you were told certain things by the police.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, I would be happy to get back to you with the dates and if I can establish when the briefings about the phone hacking took place I would be more than happy to supply them.

LFEPA

Question Number: 1548/2012

Meeting Date: 13 June 2012

Richard Tracey

Richard Tracey (AM): Mr Mayor, can I welcome the plan to build a new Mitcham Fire Station in my constituency?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, yes. Probably opposed by the Labour Party.

Richard Tracey (AM): It would not surprise me.

Jennette Arnold (Chair): I am sorry, there is a Member who has put in a question. Let us have a little bit of respect.

Richard Tracey (AM): Can I invite you, Mr Mayor --

Richard Tracey (AM): -- to come and open it when it is completed, as you did with the Merton Fire Centre a few months ago?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Which was also my idea, I seem to remember, or should have been. Yes, of course I will go there, and I think, look, what we are talking about is the necessity to modernise and improve the estate, to make sure that in tough times we do what Londoners would expect us to do and use resources to maximise fire cover, and rather than scaremonger, continue to deliver improvements in fire safety in this City, and insofar as we deliver fire cuts, it is a great thing.