

London Assembly (Plenary) Meeting – 15 January 2013
Transcript of Agenda Item 4:
Question and Answer Session – London Legacy Development Corporation

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): We now come to today's session with the London Legacy Development Corporation. We will have two question-and-answer sessions at today's meeting. Later we will be joined by the Chair of the Commons Communities and Local Government (CLG) (Select) Committee, Clive Betts MP, to discuss their recent report on the Greater London Authority (GLA) Act 2007 and the London Assembly.

Firstly, however, we will be discussing the work of the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), so I welcome to the meeting our guests today: Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, in his capacity as Chairman of the LLDC; Neale Coleman CBE, Deputy Chairman of the LLDC and the Mayor's Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy; and Dennis Hone CBE, Chief Executive of the LLDC.

Can I first invite the Mayor to make a short opening statement?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Yes, thank you very much, Darren. As I said to the Budget and Performance Committee yesterday, the achievements of the LLDC are now putting London some way ahead of any other previous Olympic city in delivering a legacy from the Games, a concrete legacy and an economic legacy from what we put on in the summer of 2012.

Just to recapitulate briefly some of the things we have done; all eight of the venues now have a secure long-term private sector future, including the Stadium, the Orbit, the Village, the Copper Box, the Aquatic Centre and so on. The International Broadcast Centre/Main Press Centre (IBC/MPC) is an extraordinary tale of confidence in that venue. You now have 40% of the space taken up. You have a huge new sports broadcasting studio there, BT Sport, and all sorts of other things coming down the track. We had fantastic events last year, the Anniversary Games, concerts, the National Paralympic Day and so on. The north of the [Queen Elizabeth Olympic] Park and the Copper Box Arena were opened to the public. More than one million visitors have already enjoyed the Park since it started to open in July last year.

We have helped local workers to gain a third of the 2,000 construction jobs created on the Park and 90% of the jobs at the Copper Box Arena. We have placed 60 apprentices onsite, the highest number on a single site in London, and 95% from the local area. We have gained approval for 828 homes in Chobham Manor, the first new neighbourhood on the Park. We are launching the opportunity for a further 1,500 homes in the East Wick and Sweetwater neighbourhoods.

2014 is going to be a very exciting year for London and for the Park and the Olympic legacy. We have the Aquatic Centre reopening to the public on 1 March. The Lee Valley VeloPark, a cycling paradise reopens to the public on 31 March and the Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre in May. Construction starts on the family homes at Chobham Manor. We are seeking a developer for our neighbourhood housing scheme at East Wick and Sweetwater. As I am sure the Assembly already knows, we are taking forward detailed plans for an Olympicopolis, our very ambitious plan for a cultural and academic legacy on that site commensurate with the achievement of London in 1851 after the Great Exhibition. We are of course not complacent about what is going on. We are working very, very hard. I am confident that we are achieving a great deal.

I should end by saying this. On 5 April this year, the newly landscaped South Park, the south part of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, will be opened to the public and it will be an absolutely fantastic place to come.

I am sure we are going to have a great deal of interest. In the words of the famous song, "I'm goin' down to South Park, gonna have myself a time", ladies and gentlemen. That is what I propose. I do not know if you have seen South Park, but I am sure it will be as popular with the people of London as that great television (TV) show.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you very much.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): We took the precaution of killing Kenny!

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): We will go straight into the tabled lead-off questions from the four groups. If there are any miscellaneous questions that come at the end on that statement, if there is time left, we can come to those.

2014/0001 - LLDC Funding

[Andrew Boff](#)

Will the additional money to be provided by the Mayor to the LLDC be sufficient to enable the creation of a thriving Olympic Park?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Yes. I am absolutely sure that it will, Andrew. The £8 million in addition to the original £10 million that we had will allow the LLDC to balance its budgets. If you look at what has been happening over the last couple of years, we reduced our spending from £40 million a year, which was the money that was allocated under the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) up to 2015. This is now going to go down to £18 million in 2015/16 and we aim to be self-financing by 2017/18. That is a very considerable achievement.

I know that we are going to come to this later and I do not want to anticipate this question, but the deal that we have done on the Stadium will actually mean that, unlike virtually any other Olympic stadium I can think of around the world, there will be no extra revenue funding going into the Stadium.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Of course, when you say you are going to be self-financing by 2017, you are saying that revenue-wise you will be self-funding, as if you can just ignore the £150 million-odd that is being put into adapting the Stadium. Am I right in saying that that £150 million was not anticipated in the original plans for the Olympic Stadium?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): No. I do not quite know what you mean by the 'original plans', but if you spool back to the time when I became Mayor, it was perfectly obvious that we had a ludicrous prospectus for that Stadium. The intention was to reduce it to an athletics venue that would not have been well attended throughout the year. It would, I am afraid, not have had a viable commercial future. The idea was to take it down, to level it off and to have a 25,000-seat stadium. It would have been a virtual dustbowl, in my view. It was not a viable solution.

One of the first things I said when I became Mayor was that we had to have a long-term commercial future for the Stadium. It was perfectly obvious that for some political reasons that obviously I cannot comment on, a bad decision was taken in about 2006/07 to go for a suboptimal structure, one that would not readily allow for Premiership football, so we had to take a hard decision to put in the infrastructure changes that would actually make it viable for Premiership football. In that sense, Andrew, that cost was always anticipated. It was always expected. For a long time now, that extra capital cost has been foreseen.

Andrew Boff AM: Can I detect a change in your mood towards your explanations about the Olympic Stadium? I have been questioning you for some years now about the Olympic Stadium and you have never before admitted that a mistake was made. You have now admitted that a mistake was made in 2006/07 about delivering a suboptimal --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Come on. Irenic figure though I am and reluctant though I always am to cast any aspersions on the record of the previous Mayor, you have to prise these things from my lips. I have to say, Andrew, I disagree with you there. I have said it repeatedly - I think to you, actually - in this place and I have certainly said it elsewhere on TV and what-have-you. Darren is nodding. Thank goodness someone remembers this. I have said repeatedly that I thought it was a goof. I do not know what it was. Dennis [Hone] and Neale [Coleman] may want to elaborate the reasons because, after all - and I am not blaming either of them - they were around. They will at least know what happened. If I had to guess, I think it was partly to do with a pressure to keep the overall bill down and also I think it was to do with the need to reassure the athletics world that there was going to be a long-term athletics future. There were two factors there.

Anyway, a decision was taken which I do not think was future-proof. It was not sustainable. We are on the right track now. I am afraid, Chair, through you, we are anticipating a lot of the Stadium questioning, but now with the cash we are putting in we will be able to deliver a solution for the Stadium that gives Premiership football in the winter - which I always said was the right way forward - and athletics in the summer, plus a whole load of other things; an knockout, iconic venue for London. Thanks to the deal that we have done, once this capital investment is made, there will be no further charge to the public purse from the Stadium. Indeed, I believe we may even make a return on it and that, again, is very different from any other Olympic city. If you go around other Olympic cities, they have had real difficulties with their stadia.

Andrew Boff AM: For the price of that substantial capital investment, you are saying, you will get that revenue return. I take the point and I am quite willing to accept that I am wrong and you have not changed your tune on it. That is fine. I accept that.

However, you did describe that decision as 'suboptimal' and it was suboptimal because of the need to try to accommodate the athletics track, as I understand it, if I am not misrepresenting you. You considered it suboptimal because it was trying to accommodate athletics in the Stadium and yet we still try to accommodate an athletics track in the Stadium. It is those modifications that are costing the vast capital sum of £154 million. It is to accommodate that athletics track.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Actually, no, it is the other way around. Dennis [Hone], who has been actually engaged in the reconstruction, will be able to give you the actual facts.

What we are trying to do is to create the sightlines in the Stadium and to create the retractable seating that will enable world-class football matches to be put on. At the moment, you could not use the Stadium to watch a world-class football match because the seating is in the wrong configuration. We are putting in the retractable seating, but we are retaining the athletics facilities, so we will be able to have the Diamond League athletics in 2015 and we will be able to do other stuff. We will be able to do the rugby. For the Rugby World Cup we will have five matches in the Olympic Stadium in 2015. It is going to be a sensational thing for east London. That is just one of the types of things that we will be able to do.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you very much, but do you not accept that trying to retrofit retractable seating into the wrong shape of stadium is going to present problems for those people who want to attend? If you look at the examples that I have seen of how the retractable seating is going to be provided, it creates a ledge as the

retractable seating comes out. The sightlines are not optimal. It will never be as good, for example, in terms of sightlines as the Stade de France, where the retractable seating was designed from day one.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): We are going back a bit to the original problem, which in my view was a defect in the plans. It was not built like the Stade de France. I think the bill for the Stade de France was very considerable. You could argue that if you add the cost of the existing Stadium to the retrofit, it is a pretty substantial bill, too. I would not dispute that point. However, what we are producing is a stadium that West Ham itself, a Premiership football club - or a current Premiership football club; we have to back them - that is very exacting in its demands about what its fans will be able to see. It is very happy with the sightlines and I have no cause for criticism whatever.

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): First of all, we could obviously go back to the decisions that were taken way back in 2006/07. As the Mayor said, they were a product of the time available and a desire to make sure that the Stadium was completed a year before the Games, which I would still say was a sensible decision.

In terms of the lack of anybody coming forward to form a formal commitment, the Icelandic owners of West Ham, as you know, flirted with whether they would make a commitment to the Stadium but did not. Eventually, we know what happened to those owners in terms of what commitment they could have given would have been worth in the longer term. The decision was taken to do that. It was always known that you would have to look again at it, but we also made commitments to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and others about retaining the athletics track. They were formal commitments that were given as part of winning the bid.

Andrew Boff AM: What happens if we do not hold up that side of the bargain? Are they going to sue us?

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): No, but it would be intensely damaging to London's reputation for running sporting events. It was a contractual promise signed off by the Mayor.

Andrew Boff AM: Did we sign off the Marathon in the East End of London?

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): It would also have meant, for example, that we were going to have to hand back the 2017 World Athletics Championships to the national governing body, which we have actually done once before in London, rather unfortunately, under the previous Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): More than once.

This is a great solution. It is a fantastic solution and it delivers a huge opportunity for young people in east London and across the whole of London to use an amazing athletics facility as well as all the other opportunities in the Park.

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): The point I wanted to make and get across is those decisions were taken in 2006/07. They went through the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. They went through the Ministers and Mayor at that time and those decisions were taken. What we have to do now is concentrate on how we are going to make the best of the Olympic Stadium going forward. We can harp back to 2006 and say whether it was right or wrong. What I think is the most important thing, and the thing we have been concentrating on, is how you are going to use that Stadium productively into the future and make sure that it is not a white elephant on the Park that drags down all the other regeneration and the good intentions we are trying to bring forward. The way to do that is to make sure that it has a vibrant use

and that it has a commercial use that does not have a further impact on the taxpayer. Unfortunately, a side-effect of that is that you need to make an investment now to secure that benefit over the next 100 years. That is exactly what we are doing.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Far from being a white elephant, I think it is going to be one of the great poles of attraction. It is one of the things that is going to continue to drive footfall to the Park.

Andrew Boff AM: The only difference in interpretation I would have with you, Mr Mayor, is that it is currently a white elephant. Now you have to use public funds in order to stop it being so.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): They said that about the Millennium Dome for a while. It is now the most successful live music venue anywhere in the world. I have great confidence in this Stadium. We have the right solution. We have a solution that is very flexible and that hits all the nails on the head.

Andrew Boff AM: Absolutely. I wonder in years to come if we will look back on the £880 million that we spent on the Millennium Dome and see how much we got back to the taxpayer after spending that money. I would much rather have seen 880 £1 million schemes than one big scheme on the Millennium Dome, but that is the past.

If we can move on, what is the effect that the contribution from your office to the LLDC can have on other schemes? You are still propping up the LLDC.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Yes. I see what you mean.

Andrew Boff AM: What effect is that going to have on the finances of other services in the GLA?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): As you know, we are currently going through a budget round and I am assured that all our programmes will be unaffected.

Andrew Boff AM: Unaffected? Is that free money that has no implications, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): There is always scope for economies. The Assembly.

Andrew Boff AM: Mr Mayor, to move on to a slightly different area of questioning, if I may, do you think that you are on course to make the Olympic Park a 'paradise for cycling'?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): The VeloPark sounds absolutely fantastic, yes. I am looking forward to that very much. A great deal of care and a great deal of thought has gone into it. Some of the greatest cycling experts in the world have been involved in not just making the Velodrome but being around it. You can cycle over the river. We insisted that you be able to cycle over the river. It is going to be superb. The River Lee, that is, not the River Thames.

Andrew Boff AM: Fantastic. It would be great if it was, but it makes you wonder, if so, why, in the recently submitted reserve matters planning application for Chobham Manor it states that cycle lanes will stop at junctions and therefore make cyclists get off their bikes. There will be loads of signs saying, "Cyclists dismount". How does that make it a paradise for cyclists?

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): Shall I take these more detailed questions? In terms of looking at cycling in the Park, there are three areas of cycling that we need to just contextualise.

One is obviously what we are doing at the VeloPark where we have four forms of cycling discipline from road and track cycling to BMX and mountain trails. As we know, that is going to open on 31 March, so we have a facility that encourages mass participation in cycling across four cycling disciplines in the Park.

The second thing about the Park is that we want it to be a leisure destination and we want leisure cycling on the Park. The third thing - and this is what I have been talking and working with Andrew Gilligan [Cycling Commissioner, GLA] on - is around cycling routes through the Park and making sure they are safe and that people can move from A to B.

There is a debate to be had around this and I have been working on the changes we can make in terms of improvements on the Park, whether that is where the cyclists dismount or where they just continue straight through the Park. We are looking at a series of adaptations and we are working through the design of those at the moment. We are moving towards our ambition of being a great place for cyclists to come and a great means of cyclists moving through the East End of London as well. We are working with the Mayor's Cycling Commissioner on that. We need to do that in a way that does not have a situation where pedestrians running through the Park are in conflict with cyclists who are hurtling through the Park to get to a destination somewhere else. It is getting that balance right and that is the bit I am working through at the moment.

Andrew Boff AM: Do you think Taylor Wimpey has sufficient knowledge and experience of cycling to ensure that Chobham Manor is a paradise for cycling?

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): If you look at Chobham Manor, as you know, that is our first neighbourhood coming on to the Park.

Andrew Boff AM: Let us get it right straight away.

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): It is in planning at the moment, so detailed planning of all the first phase and the outline and the other phases is going to be determined, I hope, successfully at the end of this month. The Planning Decisions Committee [of the LLDC] will consider the cycling implications as part of that. We are making provision for the Mayor's cycling scheme and provision for cyclists to be there. We are looking at cycle storage and other things on there, so all of these are taken in the round through the planning process. As I say, I hope that will be determined at the end of the month successfully and then, after the judicial review period, they will be starting onsite there.

Andrew Boff AM: Would you consider making the velo route a no-through road so that it does not become a rat-run?

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): That is an important part. Having built these neighbourhoods, we do not want them to become rat-runs. We have been working with the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority about the routing that coaches will take to de-conflict that with the new neighbourhood. We do not want coaches running through the centre of the neighbourhood. We have looked at junction improvements to make that more easily done. Both are our intentions there. I cannot give you a confirmation on whether that will become a no-through road or not, but what we are saying is we share the aspiration to make sure there is that de-conflict.

Andrew Boff AM: It is well-known in this Chamber that I rarely say something nice about Hackney or the council, anyway. One of the things they do extraordinarily well is cycling. Their commitment to permeability is

exemplary and it is probably one of the best places in London to cycle. Are you talking to their cycle team? The London Cycling Campaign (LCC) is saying that Chobham Manor, for example, is “sadly, a further example of a development that seeks only to meet minimum standards and which makes ill-thought-out provision for cycling”.

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): What I would say to you is that we are talking to all of the host boroughs around the impact of cycling in the area.

Andrew Boff AM: Hackney is good at cycling; Newham is not good at cycling. It is as simple as that. Newham are not very good at cycling. It is a shambles whilst Hackney is exemplary.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): It is going to be fantastic. The beauty of it is, speaking as somebody who cycles into the Olympic Park now, that you can get to it at White Post Lane and then there are going to be other points at which you can get into the Park from the west. It is going to be transformatory. I completely accept your point that we need to make it as permeable as possible. We are going to make it as permeable as possible. I think it genuinely will be a paradise for cycling.

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): Do not get me wrong on this. I am quite happy to take good ideas from anybody who has them. If there is expertise in any Host Borough or any organisation, that improves that. What I have done is I have actually walked the course with Andrew Gilligan. We have walked all the way through the Park. We have looked at all of the junctions. We have a whole list of suggested improvements that we are working through at the moment.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): I tell you. I am a very slow cyclist and it takes me about 15 minutes to get from Angel through into the Olympic Park. It is fantastic. It is going to be a real revolution.

Andrew Boff AM: I want it to be and I think the Assembly wants the Olympic Park to be an example of what the rest of London could look like, but at these early stages for cyclists to be faced with ‘cyclists dismount’ signs is just ridiculous.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): That is to do with the construction. That is nothing to do with --

Andrew Boff AM: No, this is a part of the plans. This is a part of the plans for Chobham Manor.

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): The point that I hope I have not overlaboured is that we are actually working through all of these issues now. Our intention and aspiration is the same as yours: that we make this a very successful Park for cyclists, pedestrians and others who visit the Park.

Andrew Boff AM: Yes, thank you.

Richard Tracey AM: Yes, just one slightly peripheral question. I notice that Dennis Hone has produced a press release or he is quoted in a press release about various facilities in the Park and the potential great success of some of them, particularly including the Velodrome. Some of the features of the Park are, of course, in the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. If it is all going to be such a great success, could you move some persuasion to Lee Valley to stop charging the rest of the boroughs of London and taking a subsidy and perhaps they could finance themselves?

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you. A very quick answer to this because the Conservative group is running out of time.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Dick is, of course, rightly campaigning for the Wandle Valley to receive the same kind of support as the Lee Valley has done over many years, indeed I think decades. This would require an Act of Parliament, as I am sure Dick is aware. I would be more in favour of bigging up the Wandle than of doing down the Lee.

John Biggs AM: It is interesting to note that you advocate an additional levy on Council Tax payers. That is how the Lee Valley Park is funded.

I have two questions. The first is that I think the LLDC is doing a good job in fitting out the Olympic Park and getting it ready for sustainable long-term use and I like the Olympicopolis or whatever it is called. That is all fine stuff. Where there is a fundamental betrayal of the objectives of the Olympics - and I say so as a representative of the area - is that there is not any serious observance or commitment in the objectives of the LLDC to the convergence criteria, which involves bringing to bear its powers to facilitate the upskilling and employment and greater prosperity of the local communities. There is very little of that happening. There are little bits and pieces in terms of jobs in construction, but in terms of the wider hinterland, which was always an objective in the Olympic bid, that is simply not happening.

We could spend the whole morning arguing about it, but I have quite limited time and I have abused my brief. I do feel that very strongly. I think there is a fundamental betrayal in the foundations of the LLDC. It is doing the job it was set up to do, but the job it was set up to do is not the job that was envisaged when the Olympics was founded in the first place. I feel very strongly about that and my constituents are being let down in that objective and convergence is simply not happening.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): I do not think so, John. Can I come back on that because --

John Biggs AM: My substantive question - and I am sure you will come back on that - is about negotiations with the Treasury about the memorandum and the repayment of lottery funding in the event of shortfalls. We get two sets of figures, one set of figures from you suggesting there is no shortfall in 2015/16 and a further analysis suggesting there might be about £8 million or £9 million still to be found in your budgets. You have been bailed out this year by City Hall and we need to have a sustainable budget into the future for the LLDC.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you. I will invite the Mayor to respond to both of those questions.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Thank you very much, Darren and, through you, John. I do not agree at all. I understand what you are saying about the wider economic legacy and the benefits. You have heard what I have said about the thousands of jobs that are going to local people with the emphasis on local skills, on apprenticeships and on all the things we are trying to do to bring in young people from those communities and actually quite successfully, as we were during the Games.

You were kind enough to say that the thrust was right, which was to say, "Look, this is a great chance not just to build new housing but to create a centre of economic activity". That is what the Olympicopolis idea is. The spill-over benefits will be very considerable. If you can get a cluster around University College London (UCL) of tech companies and if you can get a cluster of media-type tech companies around the IBC/MPC going, you will start to see a Hackney-style spill-over effect into that part of London. That will be a massive change. It will be immensely beneficial to your constituents, to my constituents and to that area. That is the ambition. I

guess it is not going to happen overnight, but I do believe that the path we have set out is the right way to achieve it.

On the budgetary question, I just want to repeat what I said. The funds that we have in hand will enable us to deliver our commitments. They are budgeted for and we will become self-financing by 2017/18.

John Biggs AM: And the repaying the lottery part of it? It would be quite nice if we could have that.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): On repaying the lottery, yes, obviously that is an important commitment. Under the memorandum, there was no timetable set out for that, but we believe that looking at the pattern of receipts that we expect and the economic growth that we expect to generate as a result of the programme we are setting out, we expect to repay the lottery in the mid-2020s.

John Biggs AM: It would be quite helpful for London if the lottery was repaid by another means and the value was recycled into other regeneration objectives in east London or beyond in London. I put it to you that as an ambitious Mayor you should be pursuing such an objective.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Yes. I agree with that. The lottery repayment deal was not one that I negotiated. We nonetheless intend to honour it, but in the fullness and richness and maturity of time rather than overnight.

Len Duvall AM: What if the Government changes its mind and says, "2020 is not good enough. We want you to make some payments earlier"? What would have to give in your budget? What would change? Can you outline those issues? Is it never going to happen, in your view? What happens if it does?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Let me try to give some colour to that. The Government cannot. That is the simple fact. It cannot simply snap its fingers and demand a fire sale of Olympic assets and nobody would allow that to happen.

By the way, the Treasury - just for context - thinks this is completely the right thing to do and the pathway that we are setting out on, the ambitious economic programme that we have for the Olympic Park. It thinks that is right. It would much rather see that than just putting in another 1,000 homes or whatever we would get. It would much rather see a genuine pole of economic activity there than simple housing.

The programme we have is supported across Whitehall. I cannot see any future Government really wanting to dispute it. I think it highly unlikely.

Len Duvall AM: Can we return back to the Stadium? I should declare, Chair, I am a season ticketholder at West Ham United Football Club. I am not convinced about the economics of the club's move into the site, but I do recognise the point you made earlier in your contribution about sustainable use and an anchor tenant for the Stadium. If we go back to the £154 million that has been reported --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): You should be jubilant.

Len Duvall AM: I do not mind watching my football at Wembley on good occasions. I do not particularly want to watch a Wembley-style football match all the time. You have to understand. If you go to football, you will understand what I mean.

On the issues about the £154 million, we are told that West Ham United will only pay 10% of the contributions. I have been trying to look at your budgets. Are the remaining capital funds coming from naming rights? Where is the rest of the money coming from?

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): If you do not mind, I will come back on some of the points. First of all, I understand what you are talking about in terms of spectator experience --

Len Duvall AM: Forget that. It is a good deal for London. We have an anchor tenant, a Premiership club. Hopefully it is going to remain in the Premiership.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): With your support, Len, how can it lose?

Len Duvall AM: In terms of the rest of the £154 million that has been reported, where does it feature? Is it coming from the naming rights that have been mentioned? Where is the £154 million coming from?

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): As you know, we are getting some from the London Borough of Newham and we are getting some money out of Government. When we announced the deal with West Ham in March last year, we announced at the same time that we are getting £25 million from Government, £40 million from the London Borough of Newham and £15 million from West Ham. They are figures that are in the public domain. In addition to that, there was the CSR settlement and the LLDC was able to deploy resources from that towards schemes on the Park. It is, as I say and as I believe, absolutely fundamental to the overall regeneration of the Park that the Stadium is thriving and active. The money is coming out of that pot, so money that has previously been allocated is going into this.

I do want to come back on your experience because the very fact that we are putting in movable seats that take them close to the pitch and that over 25,000 spectators, which is quite a big proportion of West Ham's gate, will be in those seats --

Len Duvall AM: If you can afford them as a spectator of Premiership football. If you can afford to be part of that 25,000, then you might get some good sightlines. If you cannot afford the ticket prices, you do not get good sightlines. That is the economics of football at this moment in time. It is not your problem. That is for others to deal with.

Can we go back? Forget my angst about football. Let us separate this out. Let us talk about the deal. Is there not a case? I think it is quite important in terms of some of Andrew Boff's questions. You will hand over the next stage of the Stadium to a management company to run on behalf of London or will you hold it yourself?

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): We are going out to the market to put a stadium operator in place. The stadium operator will manage our long-term concession agreements with West Ham, which is a 99-year concession agreement, and with UK Athletics, which is a 50-year concession agreement. They will also be charged with bringing other profitable uses in to the Stadium year-round. Those uses could be to use the hospitality facilities for meetings, weddings or whatever, but they could also be to run concerts or fit in other events and activities across the piece. We are out in the market. We hope to make a decision on that before this time next year.

Len Duvall AM: Mr Mayor, you were so gung-ho earlier on and rightly so. It is your job as Mayor to be so. Do you want to consider whether we ring-fence the finances around the Stadium? You said there would be no funding over and above public money coming into the Stadium. Are we prepared to ring-fence it in this

budget so we can monitor against it? We are not going to let this fail. We are not going to let this become a white elephant. Let us just test in terms of how good this deal is.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Yes, I will do that.

Len Duvall AM: Will you look at that and see if you can in terms of giving some confidence not just to colleagues across the floor in the Assembly - and Andrew Boff has been quite vocal on this issue - but to other Londoners around whether this is going to require a further subsidy on our part in the future?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): I can well understand why people would want to have that assurance. I see no good reason at all why we should not make it possible for the Assembly to have sight of that. Is that right, Dennis?

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): Yes, sure.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): We can genuinely test what I have said which is that once we have made the capital changes, which were always going to be necessary, this will not only be self-financing but might even make a small return for London.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you. We then move on to the next question on the order paper.

2014/0002 - Community land trusts

[Jenny Jones](#)

Will you deliver your manifesto promise to make part of the Chobham Manor site a community-led development through a community land trust?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): The answer is yes, but I want to stress that this is not something that is easy. I just want to caution you against expecting a very rapid emergence of white smoke.

There are two problems that must be overcome. One is just the cost and the loss of receipts to the public purse and to the LLDC involved in the community land trust (CLT) on the Chobham Manor site. The second, in my mind, is the slight legal tangle about enfranchisement and how you make sure that the right to buy does not kick in whatever instruments you set up. Those things being solvable, we are going to go ahead.

Jenny Jones AM: I am concerned because I have seen what the LLDC has said about other means of developing community leadership in the management of homes. That means that you are losing out, in a sense, on the two things that make CLTs so useful for London.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): You are jumping the gun. I think I understand what you are anxious about.

Jenny Jones AM: Really?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): The LLDC is keen to explore all types of community involvement but I, as the Chair, am content that we should still keep on the table a full CLT as I think you understand it and support it.

Jenny Jones AM: That does involve the community in designing the project and also, as you have suggested, selling it to them. It is a way of achieving one of your other aims, which is to keep a good balance of tenure in London. At least I hope that is one of your other aims. It means that you would keep some affordable housing not just until it is sold the first time but in perpetuity.

I am very sorry, Dennis and Neale. I just do not want to hear from you because I know you know the answers and the Mayor might not know the answers.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Is the purpose of this conversation to elucidate the public or as a kind of exam for me? What are you trying to do?

Jenny Jones AM: I am very disappointed that you have not yet honoured your election promise.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Chobham Manor has not yet been built. If you go down to the Olympic Park, you will observe that it is not yet constructed.

Jenny Jones AM: Your LLDC has dropped the commitment on Chobham Manor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): No, that is not true and I cannot allow you to make that claim without correcting it.

Jenny Jones AM: It is in their minutes. Anyway, at the moment you are procuring developers for the East Wick site and the Sweetwater site. Would you perhaps make sure that those agreements have a condition that they work with local communities and that part of those sites has a CLT?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): They will certainly work with local communities.

Jenny Jones AM: That is not what I asked, is it?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): You are asking me for two more CLTs on the Sweetwater and East Wick sites.

Jenny Jones AM: If you are not going to do it properly.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): We are dealing with the manifesto commitment that I have made and that I intend to honour, which is to do a CLT at Chobham Manor. I propose to fulfil that pledge before I make any more pledges to you.

Jenny Jones AM: Would you keep your mind open to it? Of course, it does mean that we have affordable homes in perpetuity, which is very difficult in any other way.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): We are going to have 2,000 affordable homes on this site --

Jenny Jones AM: Not in perpetuity. That is the problem.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): As you know, there is a legal problem about the perpetual nature of the CLT anyway and it has not yet been fully tested in law whether the CLT provisions override the right to buy. That is one of the problems we have.

Jenny Jones AM: They are done in loads of other countries. In Canada, 12% of the housing stock is in CLTs.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Unfortunately, this is Britain. This is not Vermont. We must work with the law that we have in this country rather than --

Jenny Jones AM: Why did you make the manifesto promise if you knew that it was complicated? Did you make it in ignorance?

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): A quick answer because the Green Group is now running out of time.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): As you know, unlike the previous Mayor whose boots you licked, we have delivered London's first CLT in St Clement's and --

Jenny Jones AM: You struggled.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): We struggled and we succeeded - and we are still pushing on to fulfil what I said was my manifesto commitment to deliver a second CLT on the Chobham Manor site. I know that if and when it happens it will be greeted by Jenny with great hosannas and acclaim, which will be a change, actually.

Jenny Jones AM: It will. A bit of a surprise.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you. We will then move on to the third question on the order paper.

2014/0003 - Number of homes to be built on the former Olympic site

[Stephen Knight](#)

How many homes will be built in each of the five new neighbourhoods being created across the former Olympic site?

The Liberal Democrat Group has stressed to me that they were looking for specific figures on those.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): I will try. The Legacy Communities Scheme, which outlines planning permission for the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, includes a programme to create up to 6,800 homes across the five new neighbourhoods. This includes a site-wide target of 35% affordable housing and a minimum target of 20%.

Chobham Manor will deliver 830 homes, a joint development between London and Quadrant (L&Q) and Taylor Wimpey. It is set to deliver 28% affordable housing and at least 75% family housing. That is three bedrooms or more. East Wick and Sweetwater we have accelerated, by the way. They are coming forward six years from 2029 to 2023. They will deliver up to 1,500 homes.

Marshgate Wharf could deliver about 2,600. The Marshgate Wharf site is the one south of the Aquatic Centre and the Orbit. As I was saying earlier to Len [Duvall AM] and to John [Biggs AM], the issue there on the Marshgate Wharf site is there may be an impact from the Olympicopolis vision on the housing numbers but I think, and it is generally agreed across Government, that is a price well worth paying.

The Pudding Mill neighbourhood will provide about 1,700 units, including 1,300 units on the Pudding Mill Lane site and 400 units on the site at Rick Roberts Way.

Stephen Knight AM: Thank you, Mr Mayor. Clearly you have said that the development on the Marshgate Wharf site is likely to be 1,000 fewer than the 2,600 figures that you have just given to me if the Olympicopolis plan goes ahead with UCL and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A). Clearly that could result, assuming that the 35% affordable homes proportion is maintained across the total numbers, in 350 fewer affordable homes across the scheme than would otherwise be built. Can you commit to trying to increase the proportion of affordable homes on the other parts of the development in order to make up that shortfall so that London does not lose out in terms of overall affordable housing?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): I see what you are saying. I think that would be the wrong way to go. We are determined to build a high proportion of affordable housing across the area but what I do not think we should be doing is fundamentally changing the plans we have now set out. The issue in that part of London is not so much the capacity to build more affordable homes, because that capacity is certainly there in that part of Newham, in that area there is the space to build more affordable homes. The issue is jobs. The issue is, what are we doing to get the economy going, and that is why I think the strategy that we have is the right one and that is why it is transformational. It is by creating jobs, by getting the transport infrastructure right and creating a zone of economic activity that you enable housing to go ahead across the area and indeed you enable a higher share of affordable homes because developers have the incentive to build more homes.

Stephen Knight AM: I think all of us welcome more jobs, particularly in east London, but I think Londoners would be surprised to hear you say that the supply of affordable housing was not a key issue almost anywhere in London.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): That is not what I said. They would be surprised to hear that because that was not what I said.

Stephen Knight AM: Even in Newham I think the supply of new affordable homes must be a priority for you and I think for Londoners. Therefore, would you not agree with me that it is important that the Olympicopolis project, to bring jobs to the Olympic Park, is not done at the expense of new affordable housing?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): No, on the contrary, it will trigger more affordable housing.

Stephen Knight AM: It will trigger more affordable housing, so you will achieve a greater number of affordable houses?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): In the surrounding area, yes, as a result of the economic transformation that we think we can bring about, you will be able to generate more housing and therefore more affordable housing as well.

Stephen Knight AM: How many and where?

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): A quick answer to this because that will be time.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): I cannot give you an exact figure but I can tell you that there will be many more as a result of the plans we have put in train than would be the case if we simply left the vision for that Olympic area as a new housing estate without any economic activity. I think anybody around this horseshoe, if you seriously think that is the way forward, then I think you are out of your mind and you would be consigning that area to a most uncertain future and you would not do anything to trigger the creation of housing at all, let alone more affordable housing.

Nicky Gavron AM: Mayor, we have just heard that there is a site-wide target of 35% and also we have heard that there is now going to be a range, which can be as low as 20%, up to 35%. When was this range and this minimum 20% introduced?

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): In the planning consent that was granted; it has always been there. It was granted just before the Games and it was finalised with the section 106 agreement in September 2012 and it always had an objective of 35% and a minimum to be achieved of 20%.

Nicky Gavron AM: Right, OK.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Which is acceptable to the borough.

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): That was negotiated.

Nicky Gavron AM: Given that you have a split within your affordable housing between tenures and it goes 40% part-rent/part-buy, 30% affordable rent and 30% social rent. That could be of 20%. That means that you could have as few out of 100 as six social-rented homes if you are going down to 20%, correct?

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): Yes, that is true, if you did drop down to 20%.

Nicky Gavron AM: If you went up to 35% --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): But you would still have 20% affordable.

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): You would still have 20% affordable housing and --

Nicky Gavron AM: You would still have six affordable rented. But six houses for families on low income, and if you went up to 35% you would have ten.

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): Yes, that is right.

Nicky Gavron AM: OK, I just wanted to get clear what we mean by affordable housing and how it breaks down.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): By affordable housing, it would be 35%, not 10%.

Nicky Gavron AM: Yes, or 20%, but I am saying the range would be six to ten social rented, six to ten affordable rent, and the rest would be part-rent/part-buy. I am just pointing that out. That is out of 100 houses. I just want everyone to get this into proportion, how many homes there will be at low-cost rent.

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): I think it is worth saying that we are still delivering very significant numbers of affordable housing, both on Chobham and we anticipate on the site we have out to market at the moment, and we are having to work

closely with the local authorities around this and on planning. The planning consent was negotiated with a lot of input from them, and we are delivering, there is very good comparison --

Nicky Gavron AM: Chobham is what I said, it is what you said, it is 35%, so it adds ten.

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): Chobham is 28%.

Nicky Gavron AM: OK, so it is lower affordable housing, OK. I thought it was going to be ten so it is lower than that for social rent. OK, let us see how this plays out in the site you have just spoken about, the ones that I applaud you for accelerating and bringing forward, that is East Wick and Sweetwater. On those, you are accelerating it; what is going to be the level of affordable housing on that?

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): We are currently looking at and talking to Hackney and to Newham about that and I think we obviously would like to get as close as possible to the 35% number. I am confident - and I think I have said this before to the Assembly in committee - that we will get it up to 30% and I believe we will try and go higher and closer to the 35%. We will, I think, deliver more than at Chobham at Sweetwater and East Wick, it is a big scheme and we are bringing it forward more quickly, and if you look at it in terms of actual delivery of affordable homes on the ground, by bringing it forward by about six years, the actual level of affordable housing delivery over the next period is very much better than was originally anticipated.

Nicky Gavron AM: Originally, this site was in the consent you discussed earlier and the actual target was going to be 40% and of course, if you have a minimum of 20% and you are not hitting your 35% as you are not in Chobham, you have to have some that go higher. Do you acknowledge that?

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): Yes, absolutely.

Nicky Gavron AM: Higher than 35%.

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): If we are going to get to 35% then we do, but there is inevitably a trade-off between how quickly you deliver affordable homes and affordable homes that are urgently needed now. The overall level of quantum that you may achieve if you push this delivery into the late 2020s and the early 2030s might be more, but I think it is better for us to deliver more homes more quickly than we otherwise would have done in order to achieve quicker housing delivery. Remember it will not just be delivery of the affordable homes, there will be a very significant private rented delivery here we anticipate and I think accelerating that housing, getting those neighbourhoods built, getting the regeneration that people want to see there, particularly the links over to Hackney is important.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): People need housing now; not in the late 2020s.

Nicky Gavron AM: You are saying that East Wick and Sweetwater will be nudging 30% affordable homes?

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): I have said I am confident we can achieve 30% and we will be trying to go higher than that.

Nicky Gavron AM: Trying to go higher, and you have acknowledged that the target was originally 40%, so it has now come down for those two sites, and therefore it means that any sites after that have to have in the

range of 50% to 60% as their target for affordable homes, otherwise you are not going to meet that 35% target.

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): As I said, we will look at the viability of each scheme as it comes forward and that is what the planning consent says. As the Mayor said, we are now looking at some very ambitious other plans for the area, which we have been pushed to do, frankly, the people who have been most pushing us to do this have been Newham Council and Hackney Council and they have said to us, "Our priority for this area is jobs and growth". They have said that very firmly to us and in doing that we will need to look at the viability of schemes in all their aspects as they come forward.

Nicky Gavron AM: I want to just remind you, and I am now talking to the Mayor, that you have been absolutely clear that, whatever you do with affordable housing anywhere else in London, the Olympic Park will be different. It will be a very mixed development and you constantly said that; that it will be mixed.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): There is 50% on the Village already, Nicky.

Nicky Gavron AM: It will be mixed. You have to get the 35% across, and I just want to remind you, 35% only means 10 per 100, 100 per 1,000, of homes for families on low income.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): I understand that.

Nicky Gavron AM: I want to make sure that we get that 35% across the whole of the Park and even then it is not very good. We do not want this to be a gilded enclave.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): All right, but on the other hand we want it to be a place where there are jobs, where there is opportunity, and a mixed community where there is plenty of aspiration and all the rest of it. That is a vision shared by Newham emphatically and it is something that we can achieve and I think what people want to see is homes on the ground in London, homes built in London, rather than some windy aspiration for a higher and higher proportion of affordable that is completely unachievable and never gets built.

Nicky Gavron AM: Homes for whom?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Homes for Londoners.

Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, I just wanted to come back quickly to the Olympicopolis, as you have dubbed it. On the site that is now going to be built on, how many homes would have been built on that site?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): It depends on what you do, but I think there could be about 1,000 units.

Tom Copley AM: We are going to lose 1,000 units from the site?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Yes. What you are getting is --

Tom Copley AM: A significant amount of the total number of homes that were due to be built.

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): Within the Olympic Park.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): The Olympic Park, but ultimately within the area there is going to be about 24,000 new homes.

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): At least.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): You are talking about a tiny proportion of the eventual new homes that will be created in the area in order to create a massive pole of economic activity and that is completely the right thing to do. If you think we are wrong then say so. If you think that is the wrong thing to do then say so.

Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, when Stephen Knight [AM] was questioning you, your argument was that, even though you were losing – correct me if I am wrong – these homes in that particular area of the site, more homes would be built elsewhere, is that what you are saying?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Yes.

Tom Copley AM: First of all, do you have any projection of how many extra homes this development would support?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Overall, across the area, we think there will be about 24,000 new homes, and clearly those are homes whose construction depends on the level of confidence, the level of interest there is in the area. You will not get that going unless you create economic activity at the core and you continue to turn Stratford into a destination, a pole of attraction; that is what is going to get the house-building going.

Tom Copley AM: I understand that. Just to clarify, the sites where we are losing the homes, those homes will be subject to the affordability targets for the Park, 35% I assume?

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): 20% to 35%.

Tom Copley AM: Minimum 20%, 35% target. Will the homes that you are talking about that could potentially result from the added economic development, will they also be subject to that same minimum and the same target?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): They will be subject to the usual strictures in the borough.

Tom Copley AM: But we are going to lose 1,000 homes that would have been minimum 20% but target 35% across the affordable, you cannot guarantee that the homes that will result from the economic development will be subject to the same targets?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): What is Newham's target?

Neale Coleman (Mayoral Adviser for Olympic and Paralympic Legacy and Deputy Chair, LLDC): I think what is being said is that there is land right down the Lower Lee Valley, some of which is in public hands, some of which is in private hands. I think the case that is being put, which I think is right, is that, if we do succeed with the very ambitious economic ambitions for Stratford that those developments will come forward

more quickly and you will see much more housing built on them and you will probably see it built at higher densities as well, therefore you will see more homes more quickly.

The affordable percentages on those homes will obviously be a matter for the individual planning applications as they come forward. There are some very big GLA-owned sites down there, for example there is the site next to West Ham Station where I am sure that these proposals will make it much more likely that development on that site will come more quickly and you would expect on that site - because it is publicly-owned land - to achieve a higher percentage of affordable homes. It will vary from site to site but that will be within the context of both the overall planning policies for the area, but also the individual sites.

Tom Copley AM: I will leave the questioning there.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Let me just say, so people can understand, if you go to Olympic parks around the world, if you fail to get economic activity into that park the thing sinks. You cannot just build homes without --

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you.

2014/0004 - LLDC Budget Settlements

[Jennette Arnold OBE](#)

Are you confident that, over the medium-term, the LLDC's budget settlements will be sufficient to enable it to realise its housing and built environment, economic development and employment, transport, and public realm regeneration goals?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Yes, Jennette, thank you. I am confident that we will be able to achieve those goals. I can go through some of those if you want.

We are going to deliver the 850 new homes in Chobham Manor, as I have said we are accelerating the East Wick and the Sweetwater developments, we have a commitment from the Chancellor of the Exchequer [George Osborne], as you know, as you will have seen in the Autumn Statement, for funding towards the cultural and educational quarter, the Olympicopolis, that we have been talking about. We have had very considerable success with our employment and apprenticeship programme and there was an apprenticeship event in the New Year at City Hall and apprentices are gaining experience across a wide range of projects in the partnership. In addition to the massive tranche of investment we saw in the run-up to the Games, we have received £8.5 million from the London Enterprise Partnership for the regeneration of Hackney Wick Station and extraordinary new spaces, fabulous spaces that are going to be open to the public to enjoy in the north of the Park and, as I say, in the south of the Park from 5 April, the south of the Park will be open, including park trails, mini theatres and landscaped spaces and kids' stuff, play spaces. Wonderful new things.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Thank you for that upbeat answer, but even the best plans in the world have hitches, and when we visited as the Regeneration Committee we did discuss concerns about the budget settlement for the LLDC. I am not bringing negativity into the room; I am just trying to bring some reality and some clarity. Can you talk about the contingency plans that there are if there is a shortfall; should you have a problem with the current budget settlement?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Thank you. I do not think there will be a problem but I do think that the Government is very interested in what we are trying to do and sees the economic logic of what is admittedly a bold idea and I am sure that they will want to be supportive and George Osborne, the Chancellor, has certainly been personally very committed to what we are trying to do.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Are you saying that you would be going directly to the Chancellor? Because a former colleague of ours who is now in the Upper House, Lord [Toby] Harris, they just did a review there and I met him yesterday and one of the things we discussed was the difficulty of finding anyone in Government who has the buck stop on their desk. Maria Miller [Culture Secretary] says it is hers for culture. Are you saying that you would have direct access to the Chancellor and that you have already started those talks so that we can be confident that you would be able to get more money?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): You can, Jennette.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: That is now on record.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London and Chairman, LLDC): Yes, and there is no reason for secrecy about this, I think Neale, Dennis and I, and indeed the V&A and UCL and others, have made presentations to the Treasury, to the Chancellor, about what we have in mind, and the Government - as you saw in the Autumn Statement - is very supportive. Obviously you have to fight for every penny you get from Government but there is a large measure of Government understanding and support for what we are doing.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Could we also get a commitment from you that you would then not ask the LLDC to trim back on the quality aspect of the Park? For instance, the day to day - and maybe this is a question for Dennis - one of the great things about the Park, and anyone who visits it will say this, it is the sense of quality.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): A very quick response to that because the Labour Group are about to run out of time.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Can you give us that guarantee you will not downgrade the quality of the park, especially the public realm?

Dennis Hone CBE (Chief Executive, LLDC): The short answer is yes, I can give that. In terms of Olympicopolis, what we are trying to do in creating economic growth, it has to be founded on the quality of what we put there, both in terms of the built estate and the public realm, but also in terms of the institutions and the companies that go into there. Yes, quality and hitting those thresholds is absolutely imperative. We have worked very constructively on the budget settlement, we are confident we can work within those areas, we have protected our spending in terms of employment and education and skills within those budget settlements. It is tight, but it is an appropriate budget and I am confident we can work within it.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you. That concludes the questioning now. Can I thank the Mayor, Neale and Dennis, for their attendance today.