

London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time) - 17 September 2014**Transcript of Agenda Item 3 – Oral Update on the Mayor's Report**

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Mr Mayor, can I ask you to provide an oral update of up to five minutes in length on matters occurring since the publication of the report. We have asked you to specifically update us on Uxbridge [the outcome of the Conservative Party Uxbridge and South Ruislip parliamentary candidate selection meeting], the Sutton Tramlink, tackling air pollution and proposals for the London Resilience Team. There is also a late request for an update on the ticketing arrangements for New Year celebrations.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I was going to lead off with that anyway, Roger. You will have seen and I think it has been announced already this morning by Sir Eddie Lister [Chief of Staff and Deputy Mayor for Planning] that from the 1 January celebrations at New Year's Eve, we will be ticketing for the first time, following in the footsteps of other cities around the world that do this. Indeed, Sydney, which has fantastic fireworks, does this. Edinburgh does this.

The reason is very simple. This has become huge. Everybody will have seen the colossal numbers of people. The overwhelming advice I have had, which I cannot really ignore, from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), from the London Ambulance Service, from the Fire Brigade and from Transport for London (TfL) is that we need to look at ways of trying to reduce the sheer press of humanity that there is, in the vicinity of the London Eye and thereabouts and all the viewing places.

I hope people will understand that this is the best and most practical way forward. It will still be a fantastic evening for Londoners and there will still be plenty of places to watch it. There will be 100,000 places in prime viewing areas where there will be a ticketing system, just to avoid the huge crush. I stress that the fee that is being charged, which is £10 a head, is not a money-making exercise. I know people are suspicious of this. It will barely cover the cost of the ticketing. It is, I am afraid, a congestion charge. That is what it is. There seemed little for it. It will still be, though, a fantastic evening.

The second thing I should say is that we are publishing housing data in yet more detail, an unprecedented volume and breadth of data, to make it available to Londoners so they can look at what is happening. Obviously, the figures on homebuilding in London are very various and controversial, but you will get a lot more texture and a lot more detail from these things.

A group called The Tailormade has been crowned Gigs Champion [a competition to find London's best busker] for this year, which is very exciting.

You have asked me for updates on the Sutton Tramlink, Steve [Steve O'Connell AM]. You are quite right that the boroughs concerned, Merton and Sutton, have come up with some very, very strong support after their surveys from the public for this Tramlink. We are looking at it actively, as you know. We are talking to you and to the councils concerned. The issue is going to be cost. It is going to be whether TfL can afford to do it. All the legions of TfL graduate trainees here [in the public gallery] will know that we cannot do this sort of thing unless we get a lot of active buy-in from the boroughs, and that includes coming up with a financing package that really shows commitment. That means, I am afraid, quite a lot of thought about development that may take place in those boroughs in order to finance that transport project.

You have asked me about recent developments in the Uxbridge and South Ruislip Conservative Association, Len [Len Duvall AM]. I can tell you that my adoption as their Prospective Parliamentary Candidate will make absolutely no difference to the discharge of my function as Mayor. If anything, you will see an even greater intensification of the already volcanic levels of activity that you have come to expect.

The Liberal Democrats have asked for an update on air pollution and the date by which we are going to achieve European standards for nitrogen dioxide. The roadmap that we have set out should achieve that, we think, by 2020 or, in a sense, from 2020 we will have that Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in place. That will more or less halve nitrogen dioxide and of course greatly reduce particulate matter up to 10 microns in size (PM10s) and particulate matter up to 2.5 microns in size (PM2.5s), because of the changes to the fleet. We expect, obviously, to discourage people using old diesel vehicles.

Labour has asked another question about the London Resilience Team. This is really a fairly minor and technical change and is really for the sake of efficiency and practicality. It is something that has been requested by the London Fire Brigade (LFB) to bring together the people responsible for resilience under the management of the Fire Brigade. The idea is to have a much closer working relationship between the Greater London Authority (GLA) guys and the LFB people. They will be there, based under the control of the LFB. That was a suggestion of Ron Dobson [Commissioner, London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority] and I think it is a good idea.

Finally, since TfL is here in such massed ranks [members of the TfL graduate scheme in the public gallery], I should just apologise to everybody for what obviously was a very difficult journey in this morning for many people. We have had some difficulties on the Tube but they are being rapidly rectified. Things have been returning to normal, even as I have been talking to you. I remind you that delays on the Tube over the last six years - to pick a period entirely at random - are down 40% and they are continuing to come down.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Thank you, Mr Mayor. I have seen quite a lot of Members indicating that they wish to ask supplementary questions. We have a variety of subjects you have updated us on. To maintain a level of structure, I am going to take the questions in blocks referring to those subjects and finish off with anything else you have referred to during your update.

Can I just remind colleagues that for this session, the time does come out Groups' allocated times. If you use it all up now you will have less for the questions you have tabled later on.

First of all, can I take questions about the New Year arrangements.

Darren Johnson AM: If the objective of charging for tickets for New Year's Eve is to tackle overcrowding rather than to make money, would an alternative solution not be better, if you were to sponsor a series of local events with the boroughs throughout London, so that there are alternatives that Londoners could go to, rather than simply cramming more and more people into central London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes. Obviously, I should remind everybody that there are fantastic borough events. There are many alternative attractions and many places to watch great fireworks displays across London without the need to go into the centre. Yes, it obviously is part of our strategy to talk up the many other fireworks displays taking place across the city.

Darren Johnson AM: Will you work with the boroughs to actually ensure there is a good series of alternative attractions around London? That has to be a better solution, rather than trying to deliberately restrict access to central London.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): With great respect, Darren, I am not certain that the two things cannot be done together. The point about the central London fireworks display is it is totally fantastic and people love it. It has become one of the great fireworks displays in the world. All the news bulletins go to London to see our fireworks display. It would be a great shame not to do it and we are going to continue with the fireworks display, although lots of people say we should just cut it and solve the problem that way. We are going to continue with the fireworks display.

Darren, you will have seen the pictures of the crowds going over the bridges and the sheer number of people and the close-packed nature of those crowds. If you look at those, you have to listen to some of the experts from the emergency services and from TfL, who say the time has come to recognise that this event is now colossal and we need to ticket it. Obviously, I regret it and I would love it to be free for everybody, but it will still be a wonderful night out.

Darren Johnson AM: OK. Thank you.

Len Duvall AM: Mayor, I recognise why you are taking the steps for this but, look, half a million people attended last year and we are offering 100,000 this year. The price of a £10 ticket will quickly escalate. I presume we will have a strategy of stopping ticket-touts or having non-transferrable tickets. It will be difficult to do. Is that the reason why the £1 million that we might raise when we sell all these tickets is going towards the ticketing process, not towards the cost of policing and other ancillary issues to do with the fireworks?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You raise a very good point, Len. Clearly, we will have to see how demand goes. However, my information is that the cost of the ticket for everybody is basically going to cover the cost of the ticketing system. I cannot give you the full information, but it may be that some of that cost is going towards the kinds of controls and measures you described. I would be very happy to give you further details as soon as possible.

Len Duvall AM: I very much welcome that because presumably, on a ticketed affair, we would have to take out insurance, which would be pretty substantial, I would have thought, for a central London event of this magnitude.

In terms of managing crowd control, then, can you confirm today that you are not considering - or you are considering - suspending the TfL fares issue into central London? Would that not be a barrier to people participating in this event and push down the numbers?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will look at that, Len --

Len Duvall AM: No, I am not asking you to look at it. I want to know what your views are. I have not made up my mind, Mr Mayor. Have you not considered it?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No. The truth is I have not been advised on the possible impact of that change. Really, rather than just extemporising an answer, I would need to talk to TfL about what they

thought the impact of that change would be and then give you a proper answer. I would be very happy to come back to you.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Any more supplementary questions on the New Year arrangements? All right. I will now take questions on the outcome of the Conservative Party Uxbridge and South Ruislip parliamentary candidate selection meeting.

Tom Copley AM: First of all, congratulations to you --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you.

Tom Copley AM: -- and commiserations to the people of Uxbridge and South Ruislip. Being a Member of Parliament (MP) is one thing, but taking up a Cabinet post or running for the leadership of the Conservative Party would be quite different, and both would require an immense amount of time and energy and would be entirely incompatible with remaining Mayor of London.

Will you today make a firm commitment that you will not take up a Government post or run for the leadership of the Conservative Party whilst you are Mayor of London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Obviously, Tom --

Tom Copley AM: You can just say yes or no.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- I am flattered by the line of interrogation that you have chosen to adopt. All I can tell you is that there is no vacancy for either of the posts that you described. I can hear just in my right ear my great friend Mr Biggs [John Biggs AM] saying, "There will be from Friday night", or something. On the contrary, if you look at what is happening, I think our great union is going to be preserved. I am absolutely confident that Britain is going to remain intact [following the 18 September 2014 referendum on Scottish independence] and --

Tom Copley AM: I am glad to hear that, Mr Mayor, but I am just trying to get an answer from you about this particular issue. It is a simple question.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- if you look at what -- and I think that --

Tom Copley AM: It is a simple question. If there were a vacancy --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It did not sound very simple to me. It seemed to involve a lot of completely outrageous hypotheses and conjectures.

Tom Copley AM: If there were a vacancy, Mr Mayor, or if you were offered a position in Government, would you take up either of those roles, yes or no?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): There is no vacancy so the answer is that --

Tom Copley AM: Will you rule out taking up either of those positions, running for the Conservative leadership or taking up a Cabinet post? Will you rule that out while you are Mayor of London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): There is no remote chance of being -- what is my normal formulation for this? I am more likely to be reincarnated as an olive or locked in a disused fridge or decapitated by a Frisbee or emerge as --

Tom Copley AM: Will you rule it out? Let me put it a different way, Mr Mayor. I will give you another hypothetical situation. Do you think it is possible for --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Or, indeed, to be injured whilst travelling on a bicycle in London.

Tom Copley AM: Hang on a minute. Do you think it is possible --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You have a 1-in-14 million chance of being injured --

Tom Copley AM: Stop chuntering. Do you think it is possible, Mr Mayor, for someone to hold the position of Mayor of London and run for Leader of the Conservative Party at the same time? Imagine that hypothetical situation. Do you think it is possible?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think you are in the realms of fantasy because the Conservative leadership is absolutely not in doubt and --

Tom Copley AM: He is not answering. I think Londoners will note --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- there is no vacancy and it is perfectly obvious that --

Tom Copley AM: I am glad --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- David Cameron, in my view, is going to be Prime Minister not just until 2015 but beyond 2015 and that is what I will be fighting for and --

Andrew Dismore AM: He is not going to answer.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- it is on that basis that I presented myself for selection to the Uxbridge and South Ruislip Conservative Association.

Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, we are clearly not going to get an answer from you on this point --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You are not getting an answer to a useless concatenation of absurd hypotheses which I do not accept.

Tom Copley AM: -- but, frankly, Mr Mayor, I do not know --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Why should I? Why should I engage in your mad speculations about possible worlds? I am not going to.

Tom Copley AM: I will give you one last chance. I will give you one last chance to rule out holding the position of Mayor of London and a Cabinet position or leadership of the Conservative Party, at the same time.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think we should all get back to planet Earth, Tom, where what is going to happen is that the Conservative Party is going to win the election and there is no conceivable vacancy --

Tom Copley AM: There is a hypothetical. He is willing to indulge in a hypothetical here, is he not? Why not go one step further and imagine what might happen after the election, Mr Mayor, or is that simply not possible?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): One thing I will say and it is very important to say this and to repeat what I have said to you about a billion times --

Tom Copley AM: You are the Mayor who completes six impossible things before breakfast, are you not?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I will tell you is - and this is very important because I have made this absolutely clear to Londoners - that I will discharge my mandate. When I came in this morning, John [John Biggs AM] said, "Congratulations. We will be looking forward to getting rid of you".

Tom Copley AM: Ignore Assembly Member Biggs. Can I question you --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I said, "You are not going to get rid of me. In fact, I am going to make sure that this mayoralty goes on and on and on like a kind of Beethoven symphony, failing to come to any conspicuous -- a crescendo of juddering climaxes!

Tom Copley AM: Mr Mayor, the only one who is going on and on here is you. Can I ask you something else? I almost do not know why I am trying to get a pledge out of you because we know what your pledges are worth, do we not? You already pledged that you would not run to be a Member of Parliament in 2015 while you were still Mayor of London, did you not? You made that pledge on several occasions.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I said I would lead London out of recession and if you look at what has happened --

Tom Copley AM: You said in September 2012, "I am absolutely not going to be returning to Parliament". People might be interested to hear this: "I am absolutely not going to be returning to Parliament. I have to do a job here in London and that is what I want to do, and it is a massive, engaging job." You said that in September 2012.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is the job that I described, which was leading the city out of recession, building a record number of affordable homes, cutting crime by about 17%, reducing Tube delays --

Tom Copley AM: That is it. No, he is going off topic now, Chair. I think I will have to leave it there.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- in spite of the experience of people this morning. by 40%, getting on with delivering the greatest Olympic legacy that any city has ever achieved --

Jenny Jones AM: Deviation!

Tom Copley AM: Deviation!

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am not deviating. This is absolutely germane to the argument.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Are there any other people who wish to ask questions on this subject? No. Then we will move on.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): In my view, that is very wise.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): We will move on. I am sure we have not heard the last of it. We will move on to questions on the Sutton Tramlink.

Steve O'Connell AM: Mr Mayor, I heard your earlier comments. You and TfL did ask for evidence of Sutton's appetite for the tram. You now have it with 85% of the response being very positive across both boroughs [the London boroughs of Sutton and Merton]. You did ask - and TfL did ask - for a business plan with details of significant development in the town centre, significant regeneration and income uplift, and I suggest you and TfL now have that also. Would you therefore not agree that the case for the Sutton tram extension is in fact now irresistible?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I certainly think there is a strong case for further tram links in south London. I am interested in the details of the business case that you describe and obviously how much the uplift in property will help the boroughs concerned - Sutton and Merton - to help us to deliver. We should join forces. If there is serious dosh available from the councils and if there is a real scheme to make this thing work, then of course we will want to progress it.

What we cannot just do is have a project like the West London Tram, on which the previous administration spent £34 million. Then, as soon as people discovered what it would do to their streets and their neighbourhoods, they became violently hostile to it and it all had to be cancelled. I look at the survey that you have. Just be careful because light rail going through suburban neighbourhoods can sound very popular at first, but when people dig into it and they look at what is actually going to happen to the area, suddenly all that popularity and support can melt away. We need to work on that and we need to work on the funding as well.

Steve O'Connell AM: I understand that. The councils' information was very detailed around the roads it went through. Clearly, any council of any stripe would be conscious of upsetting or not upsetting its residents. That is a point well made.

However, frankly, Mr Mayor, Sutton is almost uniquely a borough neglected by transport infrastructure investment over the last few years and we have looked jealously at our neighbours with Tube upgrades, Underground investment, Crossrail 2, new Routemasters and, perhaps not so jealously, cable cars and the Garden Bridge. Now is really the time for investment for Sutton and I would ask you, Mr Mayor, to seriously consider that. In essence, this will be a legacy from you for south London. I am a great champion of south London and I feel outside zones 1 and 2 we still do not get our fair share and this is your opportunity.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Do not forget what Crossrail 2 will bring. Crossrail 2 will be immense for southwest London, absolutely immense. Admittedly, the details of the route have yet to be finalised, but that will do a huge amount of good. We are looking at the scheme, Steve. What I cannot do is now sit here and promise that we are going to write out a cheque for £16 billion that we do not have. It has to stack up.

Steve O'Connell AM: Lastly, Mr Mayor, I have been going around telling colleagues in Sutton that mayors do not come along and write big cheques anymore and that is accepted. I have been an advocate of that and I have demanded, along with others, that the council and the partners come up to speed and make the offering. I believe that they have to the best part done that and now, largely, the ball is back in TfL's court. I would ask you on behalf of Sutton and my residents to instruct TfL to look at this very seriously.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): All right. I certainly shall, Steve. I am conscious of the longstanding representations you have made on this and you have done a terrific job, in my view, of getting TfL to focus on this part of south London. It does have huge economic prospects. We have talked about the life sciences sector that will benefit immensely from the Tramlink extension. We are thinking about it. We do want to help if we possibly can. It is a question of cash. Also, I am just conscious of the disaster with the West London Tram project. I want to be absolutely sure that this thing has strong local support and there will not suddenly be a backlash.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Sutton really has the case together here and the support, as has been mentioned, actually is of the specific route. This is not just a general concept, "Do you like the idea of having a tram?" It is actually the specific route.

You have said today that you will look at progressing it. What I would like is for you to commit. You mentioned earlier your volcanic energy. Will you put your volcanic energy behind this and actually give us a date today when you think we could see the tram come to Sutton?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will give you a date by which I will give you an answer. I will give you an answer by the end of the year. I will give you an answer on that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: By the end of this calendar year?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): By the end of this calendar year. I tell you what. I do not want to --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Will you promise to put your volcanic energy behind it?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not want to monkey around about this. If the answer is no - and it is a tragic no - then I will be straight with you. If we can do it, I will try to give you an answer by the end of the year. That will mean looking at all the things that I have mentioned - the cost and the politics.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: The case absolutely stacks up and, if you put your energy behind it, this could be part of your legacy. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Energetic though I am, I do not personally have £16 billion, but there you go. Not yet.

Richard Tracey AM: Mr Mayor, you will by now have received a joint letter about this very topic signed by the two Assembly Members, Steve O'Connell and me, by the MPs in Merton and in Sutton and indeed by the council leaders for both boroughs, very much promoting the cause of the Tramlink. Of course, it is often referred to as the 'Croydon Tramlink' when it then runs to Wimbledon, which is in my constituency. The importance of this project, which has received very great support from the public, is that it would allow massive regeneration of Morden, which of course would put up values of commercial properties. Also, there is a very large mosque - possibly the largest in Europe - at Morden, which would be served also by this.

Can I implore you? I believe that probably this is a much better project than others TfL has on the books. What about that?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Really?

Richard Tracey AM: Yes.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Do you think it is better than Crossrail 2?

Richard Tracey AM: No, not better than Crossrail 2, but certainly in local terms it is of equal importance.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not know about that. OK. I am not certain that is the case, Dick. We will show you all our modelling and all our projections about the benefits of the tram versus Crossrail 2. You should have a look at that.

I will say what I have said this morning. I do want to do it if we possibly can. I do foresee problems. However, your basic argument is a very good one. The population of London is growing very fast. There are huge opportunities to develop in south London. If you put in good transport links, you will get those sorts of things going. It requires a two-way conversation.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Any more questions on the Sutton Tramlink? No. I will now take questions on the oral update in relation to air quality.

Stephen Knight AM: Mr Mayor, in response to my request, you earlier said that your measures, including the ULEZ, would ensure compliance in London with the European Union (EU) legal limits by 2020. Mr Mayor, that was not quite accurate, was it, because your own --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): For nitrogen dioxide, I said.

Stephen Knight AM: Yes, for nitrogen dioxide. Your own document, which I have in front of me here, says, and I quote, roughly, "This takes us two-thirds of the way to compliance with EU legal limits for nitrogen dioxide". The truth is that the measures you have in this document do not deliver nitrogen dioxide compliance across London by 2020.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): They assume that the Government --

Stephen Knight AM: In fact, as shown by the table on page 37, even by 2025, 15 years after these limits are supposed to be complied with, your own plans do not show us compliant in central London with nitrogen dioxide legal limits. Is it not time you did more, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Actually, the achievement in halving the limits by 2020 will be very considerable and it will be done by all the expedients that you are familiar with in the ULEZ. Unless they are Euro 6 compliant, diesel vehicles more than six years old will not be allowed into central London without paying another charge, probably about £12. That will be very difficult for people. I am already getting --

Stephen Knight AM: Mr Mayor, this list of measures that you have --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Could I just finish my answer? Would you mind if I --

Stephen Knight AM: -- introduced, it acknowledges, it does not get us to legal compliance. Is it time you did more than this list and added measures to your list?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes, it is time, but what certainly should happen is that the Government or the European Union or whoever should accept responsibility for the huge failure of public policy that enabled millions of people to buy diesel vehicles in good faith, thinking that they were doing the green, clean thing. We can get two-thirds of the way there, but what we are saying to the Government and to the EU is, "We need your help to get the rest of the way there and, frankly, it is your fault", because they totally failed to take proper account of the effectiveness of the Euro 4 and Euro 5 converters. That failure of public policy needs recompense. We need support in London for that failure.

However - and this is my point - even if we do not get it, it would be a great shame if we did not, but we will be able to halve nitrogen dioxide and roughly to halve PM10s and PM2.5s. That is revolutionary. London will be leading the way with ultra-low emissions. We will have all new taxis, as you know. There will be zero tailpipe as well --

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Could I stop you there? We have not even reached the questions on the priority order paper yet and they are stacking up.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As you know, I can go on for ages about this. The ULEZ will be a very significant step forward.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Are there any other questions on air quality? I will now take questions on the oral update in relation to the London Resilience Team proposals.

Len Duvall AM: Mr Mayor, you say they are minor changes. I do not understand what the rush is, then, in the way you have introduced these proposals. Why can there not be consultation? I am neither for nor against what you are trying to do, but there are other options. It seems to me that this is a good time to reflect about this important piece of work in terms of both preparation and, response to various civil contingencies and emergencies we may face.

I do not understand why you are not talking to London boroughs about it. I do not understand why you do not have opportunities between the Fire Service or the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) or even the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) in some of that co-ordinating role, because of some of the changes being proposed long-term. I do not understand. What is the rush? Why is it done this way in your name? That is what leads to a suspicion that it is not just a minor change and there are some other issues. It is about the central focus of this work. This is work that has been raised by this Assembly in the past about maintaining that and making sure there is some political control over that.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Obviously, as you know, the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) remains under the political control and oversight of the GLA. I do not think there is any loss of accountability.

I hesitate to say this, but I think you might be slightly startling at shadows here, Len. There is no intention to do anything except to try to make a small change for the purpose of efficiency. It seems odd to have two groups of people, one at the GLA and one under the Fire Brigade. The idea is to bring them together. We do

not foresee any immediate need for staffing changes, but long-term efficiency gains for LFEPA. It is what we try to do. It is about shared services and trying to run the city more efficiently. It is one of the reasons we have been able to cut council tax year after year after year, unlike our predecessors.

Len Duvall AM: Mr Mayor, this is not going to save money. This is about, as you said, some of the issues. It is not clear if it is saving money because you are not being very transparent about it in terms of making the case there. That is the first time that argument has been made in terms of these issues. There are any number of bodies that have teams dealing with this issue. We are not suggesting merging those and bringing those in. There is no reason the relationship is not working.

Mr Mayor, you have taken a decision to leave us. You have said you are going to spend your time on some of these issues, but the legacy of some of your decisions needs to be thought through. In this period that we are in now of no-man's-land, whether you are here or not here, I am not saying you are not going to do the work, but you need to be mindful and make sure that there is some consultation and transparency in these arrangements. That is the legacy you are leaving behind and there may well be some further changes.

You talked about putting volcanic energy into this. Actually, volcanic energy is a bit about hot air and also noxious gases! We need you to do some proper consultation on this. Your timescales allow this to happen. Use this to re-energise this important piece of work for Londoners. That is all that is being asked. Actually, be big enough to recognise that you have made a critical decision about your personal future - that is fine - and on decisions like this and others in the future, you are going to talk to people a bit more and get a bit more feedback and look at the options. I do not know what options you have examined because you are not transparent about it.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): With great respect, Len, to your line of questioning, you began by saying that you did not know what you thought about this and that you were willing to be persuaded either way. Honestly, I will therefore undertake to do that. The changes seem to me to make sense and seem to me to be relatively uncontroversial and do not seem to me to entail a massive revolution in the way we handle resilience in London. It is a simple question of efficiency and getting people to understand what everybody else is doing and where everybody else is at. If there is more information I can give you to reassure you about the sense of these proposals, obviously, I will be very happy to do so.

Roger Evans AM (Chairman): Any more questions on resilience? No. That just leaves the matter of the King's Cross chaos this morning. Does anyone wish to ask any supplementary questions on that? No. We will move on.