

London Assembly Plenary Meeting: Wednesday 29 January 2020

Transcript of Item 3a - Mayor's Opening Statement

Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London): Good morning, Chair and Assembly Members. I am pleased to be with you here today to discuss the budget, ably assisted by my two wings, Martin Clarke [Executive Director of Resources, Greater London Authority (GLA)] and David Bellamy [Mayor's Chief of Staff]. I am looking forward to your questions later on.

This budget sets out how I will continue to deliver real results for Londoners at record speed with positive changes that make a tangible difference to Londoners' lives. This includes using the budget to continue to build on our world-leading plans to tackle air pollution and to continue to tackle London's housing crisis.

Vitality, this budget also outlines the action we are taking to keep Londoners safe despite the Government's massive cuts to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and youth services since 2010. As I announced in December [2019], we have decided to increase investment in London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), which is leading our public health approach to tackling the complex causes of crime. We are proposing to increase the VRU's annual core budget from £1.8 million to £5 million and this will allow us to invest in more projects and programmes to make early interventions in young Londoners' lives.

We are also proposing to commit additional funding to the MPS. This is on top of the record amount of investment we have already made from City Hall. The funding confirmed last week by the Government for policing in London does not go nearly far enough and fails to make up for the number of police officers lost since 2010, even though the capital's population has grown. In addition, there is still uncertainty about how much money the Government will allocate to the MPS in future years.

This means that I am once again left with no choice but to raise council tax in order to help tackle violent crime and so today we are announcing that we are proposing to increase council tax by 22 pence a week or £11.56 over the year from this April [2020]. This increase will raise an additional £15.7 million for policing and crime reduction, which will allow me to fast-track funding and bring forward the recruitment of 600 additional police officers into 2020/21 who would otherwise not have been recruited until 2021/22. As Mayor, I will always do what is necessary to help to keep our city safe.

Chair, as always, I am grateful for the hard work of the Members of the Budget and Performance Committee. I value feedback and suggestions for this budget from Members of the Budget and Performance Committee and from the wider Assembly, too. I look forward, Chair, to answering questions during the course of the morning. Thank you.