

## Mayor's Question Time – Monday 24 February 2020

### Transcript of Item 4A – Report of the Mayor

**Sadiq Khan (Mayor of London):** Chair and Assembly Members, I am pleased to present my fourth budget to you. I want to start by thanking Martin Clarke, the Executive Director of Resources, David Gallie, the Assistant Director for Finance, and finance colleagues across the Greater London Authority (GLA) Group for all their hard work. Some of them are with us this morning.

This budget sets out the investments we are making to improve Londoners' lives and builds on what my administration has delivered so far: more council homes started than in any year since 1984, the boldest and most ambitious actions of any major city in the world to tackle air pollution and the climate emergency, and a four-year freeze on Transport for London (TfL) fares as well as the introduction of the Hopper, which together have helped make commuting more affordable for millions of Londoners. Moreover, it provides significant resources to support jobs and growth, help rough sleepers and make London a fairer, greener and healthier place to live.

Crucially, this budget also outlines the action we are taking to keep Londoners safe in the face of huge Government cuts to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and youth services since 2010. This budget contains more than £100 million in additional funding to help tackle the scourge of violent crime which is having such devastating consequences for our communities. This budget allocates an extra £25 million to our Young Londoners Fund, which is designed to steer disadvantaged young people away from trouble and towards constructive activities and positive opportunities. This budget includes £30.5 million for new violence reduction schemes that deal with the underlying causes of crime.

This is on top of the other funding in this budget, £3.2 million extra for the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and a £45.1 million cash injection for the MPS, allowing us to bring forward the recruitment of 600 extra police officers in addition to the 1,300 new police officers already funded by City Hall. These record investments from City Hall are integral to our approach of being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. However, if I am being honest, Chair, they are only a fraction compared to the huge funding cuts that central Government has inflicted on our police and youth services in the last decade.

As well as providing funds to make our city safer, this budget also sets out new money to tackle the climate emergency. Since we last met, an additional £50 million has been earmarked to support a Green New Deal for London in this budget. Not only will this enable us to speed up the transition to a zero-carbon London but it demonstrates my determination that London will remain at the forefront of efforts to combat the climate emergency.

Before I finish, Chair, there are two other allocations in the final budget that it is worth drawing Assembly Members' attention to. First, the funding to improve bus driver retention rates. Bus operators are currently finding it increasingly difficult to keep their staff, with around 30% of drivers quitting in their first two years on the job, so we have launched a major new reward and retention initiative aimed at retaining bus drivers, delivering a better service for Londoners and keeping our city running.

Secondly, the budget sets out how the London Fire Brigade's (LFB) Transformation Plan will be funded. As Assembly Members will be aware, the new [Fire] Commissioner [Andy Roe] is setting out far-reaching proposals in response to the Grenfell Inquiry and the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue

Services (HMICFRS) report. Two years of funding have been allocated, giving LFB the ability to make the necessary changes and deliver efficiencies to offset necessary additional cost.

Finally, Chair, I think it is worth highlighting that this is the GLA Group's 20th budget, a clear milestone for our organisation. The GLA's first budget was just £35 million so it is fair to say we have come a long way in that time. One thing in finance, however, has remained constant, and that is the pivotal contribution of Martin Clarke, who retires from the GLA, as you said, at the end of March. First at the Greater London Council (GLC), then at the LFB before being part of the GLA Transition Team, Martin has played a central role in London's finances and the GLA's achievements, from maximising affordable housing at the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) to funding more than 1,000 extra police officers. I am personally grateful to Martin for the advice he has provided to me and my team and the sound judgement he has shown. I do not just say this because, Chair, he is a Liverpool fan. Seriously, I know the Assembly will join me in wishing Martin well for a long and happy retirement and expressing our thanks to him for an entire career in the service of London.

Can I thank, Chair, the Assembly and colleagues for that well-deserved round of applause for Martin? Chair, Martin, David and I look forward to answering your questions during the course of this morning.

**Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair):** Yes. Thank you very much for that, Mr Mayor. Formally, can I say as Chair, on behalf of the Assembly, we agree with everything that you have said about Martin. A few of us will recall him starting in his first role with us and have, if you like, grown with him as he has taken on the key roles that he has had within the GLA. Members will agree with me, I am sure, that Martin has always been honest, open and respectful of the roles that we have to play and his advice has always been authoritative. We absolutely thank him for his service and we wish him, like you, all the very best for his retirement.