

London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time) – 15 July 2015

Transcript of Agenda Item 4 – Report of the Mayor

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The Assembly has not asked for any specific oral updates, but I will tell you a few things that have happened since we last met.

The day before yesterday we had the first meeting of the London Land Commission, a very successful meeting with Brandon Lewis [Brandon Lewis MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning] and the boroughs to free up public land that should be available for development across London. As the Assembly will be aware, since this administration came into office in 2008, we have already sold off for development about 95% of the land that was available to us under the old London Development Agency (LDA) and we need to go forward with other brownfield land owned by Network Rail, National Health Service (NHS) England and all sorts of bodies that should be putting that land forward. A great effort is now going on to get that done.

We had a successful export programme mission to Hong Kong and Macau.

We commemorated, as the Assembly will remember – and I was glad to see all Members in the excellent commemoration service in St Paul's – the 7/7 bombings and the attacks on London, quite fittingly.

I want to make a final announcement about air quality in this city because, as you know, this is something we take extremely seriously. We published a world-first study in 2010 estimating the impacts of air pollution on life expectancy and this is now a figure that has entered into the general debate. We said that there were 4,300 premature deaths as a result of poor air quality in this city. That was done in collaboration with King's College London.

I can now tell the Assembly that we have done further work not just on particulates, which were the subject of the previous study, but on the impacts of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). King's has quantified those impacts and suggests that the deaths are equivalent to another 5,900 attributable to long-term exposure to NO₂ in London. Altogether, therefore, there are 9,400 deaths being brought forward every year in London as a result of poor air quality.

Those numbers are coming down and air quality is improving in our city, but I think everybody will agree that those figures are far too high. It makes our case for going forward with the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) and indeed for fighting off real challenges to air quality in London, such as a third runway at Heathrow Airport, ever more pressing. I thought it would be right in this forum to let you know the latest studies we have on air quality.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Any questions to the Mayor? No? Thank you.

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