

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Tony Arbour AM**

Chairman of the London Assembly  
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Thank you for your letter of 21 December 2016 about the motions agreed at the London Assembly (Plenary) meeting on 7 December. I am sorry for the delay in responding. My reply to each motion is set out below.

**Motion 1 – Electrical Safety First**

I am very supportive of the work that has been done by Electrical Safety First and others to encourage Government to introduce mandatory electrical safety testing for the private rented sector. I congratulate them on their success in securing provision for this via an amendment to the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

My team has already made representations to the Department of Communities and Local Government regarding this clause of the Act and has encouraged the Government to introduce the necessary regulations for mandatory five year testing as soon as possible. I will continue to engage with Government on this issue.

**Motion 2 – Dangerous Dogs Act**

The motion calls on me to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to request a formal review of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

Having looked at the motion in detail, it is clear that the main concern is around the increase in seizures and in dog bites. However, this increase is not an accurate reflection of an increased issue. It is more likely a reaction to the change in the law and therefore recording. An amendment in 2014 to the current legislation (following lobbying from my predecessor), led to the location in which a recorded offence could be made changing from a 'public place' to 'any place in England and Wales' (whether or not a public place).

This consequently increased the range of incidents that could be recorded under the act, and it is highly likely that this has led to the increase in recorded dog bites that we have subsequently seen. The argument is therefore flawed and as such, I will not be supporting this motion at this time. My office continues to support and fund the Status Dogs Unit in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), which is a specific unit dedicated to policing dangerous dogs. The Unit works closely with local communities to eliminate this type of crime. My Office for Policing And Crime is supportive of responsible dog ownership and welcomed the initiative of the MPS in introducing a Dog Awareness Course to educate those dog owners who fall foul of the law to encourage better dog ownership.

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## **Motion 3 – ClientEarth**

I very much welcome the support of the Assembly on this matter. It is a scandal that in a wonderful, modern world city like London, thousands of people are dying because of the air they breathe. I am absolutely committed to speeding up our efforts and making sure I do everything possible to improve air quality in the capital.

I put forward a range of measures in my first week, which have since been carefully assessed and taken forward with huge support from Londoners.

I am confident my plan will improve the lives of Londoners over the coming years. Importantly, I have set aside the money to make it happen, committing £875m fund in the latest Transport for London Business Plan – more than double that committed by my predecessor. Over the coming years I will be:

- Introducing the Emissions Surcharge (dubbed the ‘T-Charge’), which would remove older polluting vehicles from central London this year (starting on 23 October 2017).
- Launching the world’s first Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). TfL has sought the views of Londoners on plans to introduce ULEZ early (from 2019), extending it to the North and South Circulars for all vehicles; and London-wide for lorries, coaches and buses.
- Spending more than £300m transforming London’s bus fleet by phasing out of pure diesel buses and a commitment to purchase only hybrid or zero-emission double decker buses from 2018.
- Rolling out 12 Low Emission Bus Zones deploying the greenest buses on the capital’s most polluted routes to cut harmful nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions.
- Taking forward a comprehensive plan to deliver the greenest taxi fleet in the world, with no more new diesel taxis being licensed in London from 2018.
- Introducing Five Low Emission Neighbourhoods, spanning eight boroughs and involving a range of local businesses. In addition to continuing the Mayor’s Air Quality Fund, these targeted actions will tackle some of the worst pollution hotspots across London, with TfL contributing £14m.

Regarding the need for a study to assess the potential of a range of further measures, I would like to reassure the Assembly that this work is already underway as part of a new Environment strategy for London that I will be consulting on later this year. It will set out the necessary measures to achieve safe levels of air quality in the city, as soon as possible, and ensure London is seen as one of the world’s greenest cities.

We are clearly yet to see such a comprehensive plan from Government. I have written to the Prime Minister with the leaders of the five UK cities worst affected by air pollution calling for urgent action. Following the High Court ruling quashing their existing plan, the Government now needs to be much more ambitious by introducing a national diesel scrappage fund, reforming fiscal incentives like Vehicle Excise Duty and giving me more power to tackle construction, building and river emissions through a new 21<sup>st</sup> Century Clean Air Act. This should be an Act that can deliver real change in the war against toxic air, so that we can address the scourge of air pollution once and for all.

## **Motion 4 – Divestment**

My team have been working with representatives of the London Pensions Fund Authority (LPFA) to progress my manifesto commitment on divestment.

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As a result the LPFA Board considered this issue at its meeting on 13 December 2016 and “agreed that an Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) policy would be further developed, taking account of the GLA Group’s position on responsible investment (including divestment) and with input from other relevant organisations, whilst noting that the position should also be acceptable to Local Pension Partnership’s pooling partners, for presentation to a future meeting of the Board.”

The LPFA is committed to working closely with me and my office around my manifesto promise to take all possible steps to divest from fossil fuels industries where appropriate and to address the investment risks associated with climate change. Detailed discussions are continuing to take place about how suitable divestment can be best achieved, and are progressing well. The LPFA has also held a climate change seminar with other leading pension funds who have engaged on this issue to inform its thinking going forward.

## **Motion 5 – Homelessness**

I very much share your concern about the increase in the number of people sleeping on London’s streets that we’ve seen in recent years. I am working closely with London boroughs and other partners, including charities and central Government, to tackle the scourge of rough sleeping in London, both through my ‘No Nights Sleeping Rough’ taskforce and by investing £8.4m a year in services to help rough sleepers off the streets that complement those provided by local authorities.

My flagship ‘No Second Night Out’ service provides a rapid intervention for those who are new to the streets, carefully assessing their needs and offering a route off the streets that is tailored to these. Those who have, in the past, spent time in care or in the armed services, are among those assisted by ‘No Second Night Out’ and the other rough sleeping services I commission. But of course we should all be seeking to prevent either of these groups from ending up on the streets in the first place. And the sharp reduction we’ve seen in former military personnel sleeping rough over the last couple of decades is testament to what can be achieved through concerted, coordinated work of the sort that my ‘No Nights Sleeping Rough’ taskforce is enabling – as demonstrated by its recent success in securing an additional £4.2m from Government to help address rough sleeping.

Securing accommodation for growing numbers of homeless households represents an increasing challenge and cost to London boroughs, as the shortfalls between the Government subsidy available for this accommodation and its actual costs grow. Homeless households suffer too, as a growing proportion are accommodated away from familiar neighbourhoods and support networks and small but increasing numbers are placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. I therefore welcome Government’s steps to put in place new subsidy arrangements. I have pushed them to ensure that their new model reflects the disproportionate pressures experienced in London, to relieve the acute pressures faced by boroughs and help them to offer improved solutions to homeless households.

I have also taken a leadership role in a way that the previous Mayor did not. My *Homes for Londoners: Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21* not only addresses the issues of supply and affordability that are at the root of rising homelessness in the capital, but includes an Innovation Fund and up to £50m for accommodation for those ready to move on from hostels. I hope boroughs and their partners will use this funding to provide better options for homeless households, including those who are currently stuck in hostels. My Deputy Mayor for Housing is also supporting the work of a group of London’s Housing Directors to identify new and improved ways of sourcing accommodation for homeless households - approaches that build on existing collaboration between boroughs, to strengthen their leverage in a fiercely competitive market. I have provisionally agreed to contribute funding to their detailed assessment of different options.

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## **Motion 6 – MedCity**

The life sciences sector is incredibly important for London's business, research, innovation, skills and health landscape.

I am determined to ensure that the life sciences sector continues to flourish and thrive not only through my dialogue with Government but also to make MedCity a great success reaching out to Cambridge, Oxford and other centres of excellence to promote the whole region's capabilities in this arena.

Whilst we do not yet know what the details of the UK's future relationship with the EU will be, I am leading the charge to ensure that we are open for business, that we welcome all nationalities including those from the EU, and that our life sciences sector grows even stronger and remains as competitive as ever. For example, I met with Sir Paul Nurse, Chief Executive and Director of the Francis Crick Institute last year, to understand better the work of the Institute, and to see how we can work together to ensure that London continues to develop a vibrant life-sciences ecosystem.

I also visited the Institute of Cancer Research and the Royal Marsden in Sutton in November, not only to officially open UK's first MR Linac facility to help treat cancer using radiotherapy but also learn more about the creation of a London Cancer Hub which will be based there - potentially delivering at least two extra cancer drugs every five years and creating more than 13,000 jobs.

I recently discussed the importance of life sciences to London and the UK's economy with the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU in one of our monthly meetings. I stressed to him how vital it is for London to maintain it - it provides jobs for Londoners and London thrives by being open: to talent, to ideas and to people. I am absolutely determined that this will continue, and that we not only retain the world's best scientists but continue to attract them to our world-leading cluster. I also emphasised the importance of the life sciences sector in my recent response to the Government's White Brexit Paper.

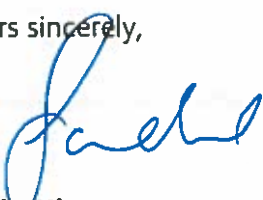
Given my recent representations to Government seeking reassurance from the Government that London's life science sector will be protected as part of any Brexit negotiations I do not think it necessary for me to sign a joint letter at this stage, but I am grateful for the suggestion and for the support the Assembly is giving to London's life sciences sector.

## **Motion 7 – Private Rented Sector**

Since I was elected, my team has been lobbying hard for the Government to ban letting agent fees to tenants. These unfair fees pile on up-front costs for renters while delivering little benefit to anyone but agents themselves.

I am delighted that the Chancellor has listened to the many voices across the sector who have been calling for an end to this practice, and announced in the Autumn Statement his intention to introduce a ban. My team will work closely with the Department of Communities and Local Government to ensure that this pledge is enacted swiftly and comprehensively without leaving any loopholes.

Yours sincerely,



**Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London