

**London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time) – 19 May 2010**

**Transcript: Mayor's Oral Update**

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** The Mayor will provide an oral update of five minutes on matters occurring since the publication of his report and, as part of that, Assembly party Groups have asked the Mayor to provide an update on the Transport for London (TfL) takeover of Tube Lines and the future of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) – and, since there is a question on that later on, I intend to take that at the beginning – and an update on the implementation of the Corporate Governance Review across the GLA group; in particular, whether he is satisfied that the recommendations of the review have been implemented by all of the functional bodies.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Chair. Can I welcome you to your chair and say what a joy it is to see you there.

I will be as brief as I can. Members of the Assembly will be aware that, around the time of the election, there was a change in the governance of Tube Lines in the sense that we made an offer which has been accepted, though the deal has not been concluded, for the shares of Bechtel and Amey in Tube Lines. I do think it is a very good deal for Londoners and it is a good deal for the travelling public in the sense that it will allow us to get on with the upgrades in a timely and efficient way, and to avoid some of the closures that I think we would otherwise have experienced on the Northern line. I think it is very important to stress that there will be closures and there will be periods in which the Northern line is put out of action as a result of the upgrades, but the point I want to make to Londoners is that it is considerably better than it might otherwise have been. The critical thing is that this deal gets rid of the Public Private Partnership structure, which I do not think served London well, and it will save taxpayers considerable sums of money whilst allowing us to get on with the upgrades.

You want me also, Chair, to say something about the Corporate Governance Review across the GLA group. Is that right?

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Yes.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am afraid that all I can tell you is that I have signed off various changes. Amongst the most important, I would single out the insistence that we now have that all GLA payments over £1,000 are listed on the web. I think that a lot of what we have done in the GLA group is actually serving, and has served, as a template for governmental reforms across Whitehall and I think that people involved in the GLA who have been part of this Corporate Governance Review do deserve congratulations for the way they have done it.

I want to say one final thing, which is, of course, that in the interval since we last met we have had a General Election and we have a wonderful new Government and a new era of politics and a new era of cooperation, which is wonderful. A new light has broken from the rear end of this fantastic new coalition and it is a wonderful thing to behold! I hope it will work. Certainly for my part, Chair, I have talked to you – we have had a good exchange already about this – and I intend to do whatever I can to make it work. In that spirit, in the spirit of the new politics and the new Mayor's Question Times that we have ushered in, I propose to make my answers positively terse in future in deference to your wishes and in deference, Chair, to the new Liberal Democrat/Conservative coalition that exists.

**Jenny Jones (AM):** And accurate?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** They will be terse, they will be accurate and they will be everything you could possibly desire.

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Thank you.

**Richard Tracey (AM):** I have several questions, particularly about the Transport for London takeover of Tube Lines. First of all, how long is it actually going to take? As I recollect, the PPP was put in place by an Act of Parliament. Are we looking for primary legislation to be involved in this or is it going to be done quickly as a result of a ministerial order and you taking the powers over?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Dick, my understanding is that we are very much hoping that we can get the deal squared away by 30 June 2010 and, as far as I am aware, we do not need primary legislation in order to do it.

**Richard Tracey (AM):** The second question is about the rumours that the Jubilee line works – the end date for which was, I think, about September or October – are now going to be prolonged. Is that correct and how is that going to affect the programme on the Northern line, which many of us in this Chamber are very concerned about?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** To go back to my original point, nobody should be under any illusions that there will be delays and there will be closures on the Northern line. All we have done is save the taxpayer huge sums of money in getting rid of a lot of the secondment fees that were going to be paid and we have got rid of the terrible litigation that went on between Tube Lines and London Underground (LU), which was pointlessly draining the intellectual capabilities and the financial resources of both sides. We are confident we can save significant sums of money.

What I cannot promise you is that there will be no delays on the Northern line because we have got to upgrade this Tube and we need those improvements.

**Richard Tracey (AM):** We had of course received a draft timetable for closures on the Northern line and I seem to recollect there were over 20 weekend closures. There have been rumours that that will be capable of being cut under this new arrangement. Is that correct? Will we be able to look forward to far less disruption for the travelling public?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** We are going to have far less disruption than there would have been under the Tube Lines arrangement; that is certainly clear. We are able to look at an overlay type system to get the signalling done, rather than the system that was employed on the Jubilee line, and we do think that there will be scope to make serious changes to the way things are done and get it done more rapidly.

I do not want, Dick, to make extravagant promises now about how we can do it in a click of the fingers with no fuss and no difficulty at all. These are major upgrades of one of the biggest transport arteries in the United Kingdom. There will be pain; there will be closures involved. It would be foolish to pretend otherwise.

**Richard Tracey (AM):** My last question relates to alternative transport measures. Can we make sure that there are totally efficient bus alternatives and, indeed, other information that is useful to the public about the alternatives they can take when there are these closures?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Of course. I think one of the advantages of taking this in-house, as it were, one of the advantages of what we have done with the PPP is it will now of course be possible for LU to concert, in advance, far more proactively with the rest of TfL in order to make sure that the travelling public is properly provided for.

**Richard Tracey (AM):** Thank you.

**Brian Coleman (AM):** Mr Mayor, in the spirit of new politics I welcome this nationalisation of Tube Lines!

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I do not think I have received enough tributes, by the way, yet! What has happened to those? Unbelievable! Where is their sense of generosity?

**Brian Coleman (AM):** Mr Mayor, I will be first in the queue for tributes if you can sort out the concerns of my constituents and other colleagues around this table over the Northern line upgrade. What my constituents seek is clarity and information so they can plan their lives. Now, sadly, TfL does not exactly have a very good track record of either engaging with democratically elected Members of this Assembly or local councils or, indeed, with communities over matters such as closures for engineering work. Will you ensure that there is proper consultation with boroughs that are involved, with the Assembly Members who represent the areas, and with the communities, and will you ensure that, once a timetable for closures - which members of the community accept there have to be - is agreed, that timetable is stuck to, so that people can plan their lives accordingly?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am sure that your words, as ever, will be heard with great attention by TfL. I hear what you say. We will make sure that we have as much coordination as possible with you and with other locally elected representatives.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** I think Londoners will be very happy if there is a more moderate and better managed programme of closures on the Tube upgrade programme. Do you see any difficulties arising from that? Do you think it is possible that some of the upgrade work will have to take longer if there are fewer closures? I think we would have a particular concern about the Northern line, because the phase one programme was, of course, already quite tight and due to finish in January 2012, and there is a commitment to the Olympic movement that we should have the Northern line completed by the Olympics.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I understand. As I say, the deal has not yet been completed. We are waiting until the end of next month for that. I do not think I want to set out now for you, Val, a complete and detailed programme of closures on the Northern line. All I am trying to say is that --

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Could you tell me what you are aiming to achieve? I think that would be helpful.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** What we want to do, and what I am confident we will be able to do, is get the programme of upgrading the Northern line done in a way that suits the interests of the London travelling public and not the interests of Tube Lines' shareholders. That is the key point and that is the key change.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** In general, are you aiming to stick to the broad timetables for the upgrades that were previously published?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Obviously we want to do the upgrades as fast as possible.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Can I just quickly follow that up. We do have a situation now with a new Government looking to make enormous cuts or savings, or whatever you want to call them, in the public sector. It does appear that the Underground upgrade could be a potential target. If asked by the Government to descope, or reduce, the Tube upgrade programme, what would your response to them be?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think it is a very good question. I think it would be complete folly on the part of the Government to seek to descope the upgrade programme. We want to complete the Jubilee upgrades this year and we want to do the Northern line and we want the Piccadilly line upgrades. They are all three, in my view, essential for London.

I think the advantage of what we are doing and what we have been able to achieve with this takeover of Tube Lines' shares is we will be able to get on with those upgrades and a timetable in a manner that suits us, suits Londoners and suits the taxpayer.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** There are some sections of the programme - which came into the programme quite late actually; I never quite understood why - for the subsurface part of the system, where I am told that the signalling is very old and very fragile. What is your view on protecting those within the programme?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think the subsurface line signalling is a critical part of the programme and we will certainly be advocating very, very strongly to central government that it would be very unwise to think of encouraging us to cut that. I think it would be absolutely folly. How many times do you want me to repeat it? London is the motor of the UK economy. If you stop Londoners and people commuting into London from getting to work then you starve the motor of the UK economy of fuel. It is utter lunacy. I think everybody in this Chamber should be - and I am sure we all are - making that message loud and clear to all our friends in government.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Do you think there are some sections of the Tube that could, potentially, collapse if the signalling is not upgraded?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I do not want to --

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Be alarmist!

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** No. What is certainly true is that we have an underground network currently carrying about four million people per day, which is well in excess of what planners thought was the optimum number. We need to upgrade it; we need the capacity gains that are made possible by the upgrades. The city needs it and we are going to fight for it.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Thank you.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** In terms of the Northern line, as I have raised with you before, local businesses are very concerned about the programme that already exists. Given that it is coming back into TfL, can you reassure businesses that you will look at, perhaps, short blockades of

intense work, rather than this constant flow of occasional weekends here, there and everywhere? Can you reassure businesses in London of that?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I know, Caroline, that you have previously advocated closing it for a month at a time or something like that, rather than a series of weekend closures. The difficulty with that is really practicality, as I understand it. Clearly, we will look at all options that maximise benefits to the London travelling public and to business.

I do want to repeat this message. We have done a great thing, I think, in scrapping the PPP and getting on with the Tube upgrades in a way that suits London. What we cannot pretend is that it is possible to upgrade the London Underground network without having some closures of the Tubes. That is just ludicrous.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** Given that there is this commitment to the International Olympic Committee that the Northern line upgrade will be finished in time for the Games, can you guarantee this before us today?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** As I say, as I said I think to Val [Valerie Shawcross AM] and to Dick [Richard Tracey AM], I do not want, now, to get into details of the timetable. Clearly there is going to be a trade off between inconvenience and the overall speed of getting the thing done and we will have to see how fast we can get it done and see how conveniently we can get it done.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** Thank you.

**Darren Johnson (AM):** Are you going to publish the full figures of the final amount of public money that has been wasted on the PPP over the past ten years? I think that would be useful information for the public in London and I think it should serve as a warning to any future government, should it try to do something as ridiculous and as stupid as the PPP ever again.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** That is right. I do not know whether we will also find senior civil servants who warned the Government against such profligacy - as I read in my *Guardian* today, that they did in Whitehall. It said it in the *Guardian*. If you cannot believe the *Guardian* what can you believe!

The answer is, yes, Darren. I think it is a very good idea.

**Richard Barnes (AM):** Mr Mayor, I understand why colleagues have concentrated on the Northern line, but those of us who live in the west are serviced by the Metropolitan, the Jubilee, the District line and the Piccadilly. We have endured months - it certainly feels like years - of disruption and of virtually no service at weekends. Can we have a date published when the work on these lines should be finished so that we can at least give the local residents and travelling public hope that by whatever month of whichever year they will be back to a normal and proper weekend service?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes. Obviously we are now in the process of going over the Tube Lines programme to try to work out exactly how we can take forward these things in the fastest possible way. It is our intention to get the Jubilee done this year and then the Northern line as fast as we possibly can. I take note of what Caroline [Caroline Pidgeon AM] and Val [Valerie Shawcross AM] say about the Olympic obligations that we have. I do not think it would be helpful to anybody if we set out now some arbitrary timetable of closures and then had to withdraw it in view of the things that we discover and to disappoint people further.

The message I think is very clear. It is possible for us to do this in a way that is much more convenient but we cannot minimise the impact that this will have on Londoners completely. There will, inevitably, be closures and disruption.

**Dee Doocay (Chair):** We will now move on to corporate governance.

**Nicky Gavron (AM):** You have just announced an important contribution to good corporate governance, which is that all GLA payments over £1,000 will be put up on the website. Is that extended to TfL, the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) and the London Development Agency (LDA)?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** If it is all GLA group payments, Nicky, I see no reason why it should not be so extended. To the best of my knowledge I do not know whether --

**Nicky Gavron (AM):** Because that would be good corporate governance; if it were right across the corporate family.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am not certain that TfL and the other bodies you mention are yet in compliance with this, but I agree with you; it would be a good thing if they were.

**Nicky Gavron (AM):** Can you tell us by when that will happen then?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** No, I cannot, because you have just put the idea into my head! I am going to do my best to follow it up as soon as I can.

**Nicky Gavron (AM):** Thank you.

**John Biggs (AM):** This is what lay behind our request that you update us on this at this Assembly Meeting. It is that you have freely admitted that you are not yet in compliance and yet the Corporate Governance Review was instituted by you upon your election to tidy up what you felt, or argued, were abuses under the previous regime.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Which there clearly were.

**John Biggs (AM):** You are now confirming that that is your view that there were. Is there not a problem then if, on the one hand, you have an urgent review with recommendations and, on the other hand, two years later you have not got round to working out whether you have implemented them or not?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Sorry, John, you will have to forgive me while I quickly read this paper in front of me. There is some confusion apparently over the register of gifts and hospitality in these other bodies. What we have found is a brilliant solution, apparently, which ensures that all GLA group registers cross-refer to one another on the web. I think that has achieved the outcome that the review was looking for.

**John Biggs (AM):** OK. So you are now saying there is a flaw. You have identified one to Nicky Gavron which is you are not recording payments. You have now identified another which is register of interests and hospitality I think. Otherwise the implementation is flawless you are saying?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I hesitate to break the spirit of the new politics. I have to say I find this a bit much coming from a man who sat on the Board of the LDA at a time when it poured cash without any accountability whatever down the gullets of all sorts of completely unaccountable bodies, who presided over unbelievable waste of public money. We are putting all this stuff out there on the web and here he is nitpicking over some Corporate Governance Review. We have actually put this stuff on the web for the first time. I, frankly, refuse to take lessons in corporate governance from the previous regime. I think it is unbelievable.

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Mr Mayor, it is a great shame that your self-denying ordinance lasted all of 25 minutes!

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** When I am provoked, Chair, by completely fatuous questions from representatives of the former governing party, demonstrating why they are now the former governing party, because of their profligate attitude to expenditure and public body, their complete refusal to get a grip whilst they were charged with managing public funds, I think I am entitled to have a quick rant.

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** No, I do not think you are entitled to any rant at all and, when we spoke yesterday, we talked about getting these meetings done in an orderly fashion and one of your main concerns was that they went on for too long. Now, one of the reasons they go on too long is you speak too much! Mr Biggs has shown himself to be a model of restraint, so far. Can I ask, in the spirit of new cooperation, can we start again please? Now, John Biggs?

**John Biggs (AM):** For the help of members of the public, this is a classic Boris tactic of blustering when he does not want to answer a question, and that is fairly evident. He could have taken a more constructive path. Perhaps I should cut to the point of this question as well which is there is clearly a generic problem. There was an instance in the General Election campaign where the Mayor sought repeatedly to override what we consider to be, across all the other party Groups, very clear advice that he should not engage in what appeared to be electioneering around the opening of the new railway in east London. That highlighted to us the fact that Transport for London did not appear to have implemented the recommendations of the Corporate Governance Review, and appeared to be being used, wittingly or unwittingly --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I now see the point of his fatuous question. He wants to disinter some completely pointless controversy --

**John Biggs (AM):** -- wittingly or otherwise, allowed himself to be party to a bit of crude electioneering. That matter will be addressed elsewhere, Chair, but I wanted to give the Mayor a very brief opportunity, given the shortage of time and the amount of our time he has wasted already in his non-answer, to address that.

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Mr Mayor, can you just answer the question?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Can I just say that if he wants an answer to a question then he should ask the question about the rules relating to electioneering or whatever he is really driving at, rather than some stupid smokescreen about corporate governance in order to get it in.

**John Biggs (AM):** It is not a stupid question.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** This is a grown up Assembly - or it certainly should be, John. The answer, quite frankly, is that yes, it was necessary to open the East London line then

because I think it would have been demented for us to postpone such an opening, keeping people from using a wonderful new service for political reasons and depriving TfL of the consequent revenue. Only a Labour politician could think that was a worthwhile set of priorities.

**John Biggs (AM):** With respect, Chair, that response cannot really be left lying there. There was no suggestion whatsoever that the railway not open and my constituents greatly welcome it. It is a tribute to the work of our previous Mayor, Ken Livingstone, that it was extended in the first place. It is an excellent celebration of London's success in investment, Chair.

**Brian Coleman (AM):** Chair, what of course *is* a tribute to the previous Mayor, Mr Livingstone, is the Corporate Governance Review, because, as you will recall, the Corporate Governance Review, contrary to what Mr Biggs said, was set up by Mr Mayer [former Chief Executive of the GLA], with all party support, before the last Mayoral election, indeed, as a piece of work carried on during the Mayoral election, and reported under the new. It was set up, Chair, wasn't it, by Mr Mayer, in direct response to issues around the London Development Agency --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am afraid so.

**Brian Coleman (AM):** -- of which Mr Biggs was Vice Chairman at the time. Those are the facts, are they not, Mr Mayor, behind the issue of the Corporate Governance Review?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** They are. I am delighted, Brian, that you have dragged the conversation back to reality.

**Len Duvall (AM):** I am grateful for Brian Coleman pointing that out in a sense because it was this Assembly that asked the past previous Mayor to do it and it was something we should celebrate in terms of our scrutiny role. You signed up to that hook, line and sinker; every part of that. How is it that, under your chairmanship, TfL does not think that it should have a standards body, that it should not have a Monitoring Officer, that the policeman polices the policeman role, and how is it, if you put so great an emphasis on probity and good governance during the two years you have been presiding, that TfL officers do not actually fulfil the terms of reference and the recommendations of that governance review? Can you tell us when TfL will have a standards board for its governance issues, as that was what was agreed by all parties? Can you tell us when you will have a Monitoring Officer at TfL?

Let us get back on to the main points. I know that is a very simple and straightforward question. You are signed up to it; you believe it is important. When is TfL going to come in to the GLA group, act like the GLA group, and are you going to stick by your principles that you fought your election on, about good governance, and stop waffling and prevaricating and get on with it?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I know that you will stop at nothing, Len, to increase the size of the bureaucracy --

**Len Duvall (AM):** Good governance. You do not want scrutiny.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** -- and I know that that has been the hallmark of Labour government for a very long time, and you are merely concerned to inflate the public sector wage bill by one way or another.

My intention is to govern in a way that is scrupulous with public funds and to be as simple as possible and to have as much cross-reference as possible between the functional bodies for which I am responsible. That is why we have got the arrangements that we have. I am very pleased that the outcome that we have is the one that the review was looking for.

**Len Duvall (AM):** So you are not signed up to the recommendation for Transport for London to have a standards board in terms of overseeing any complaints made by people that want to make representations, or an independent Monitoring Officer, as per the GLA group and those recommendations? You are saying TfL will not implement those issues? You are not agreeing to that now?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** No.

**Len Duvall (AM):** You are moving off. You have changed your position from when you entered this Chamber as Mayor of London. You have changed your position.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** TfL, in common with all other Mayoral bodies, has to comply with corporate governance standards. The way we do this is with the minimum bureaucracy by putting things on the web and by not creating new bodies of public sector officials to invigilate other public sector officials. That is what has gone wrong, frankly, with the Government of this country over the last 13 years. That is why the public finances are in the mess they are in.

**John Biggs (AM):** I have a point of personal explanation, Chair. It is that the Mayor and Mr Coleman, I think, essentially alleged that I had acted improperly in my role on the LDA Board --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** No, just pathetically. Not improperly.

**John Biggs (AM):** If I could continue? For the record, there has not been a single suggestion of any kind of that type. I think it is quite improper that they should simply try to scatter manure to cover their own failure to implement their policies, Chair.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I do not think anybody has accused - if I can just gloss John's statement of the explanation - the Member of acting improperly. What we have said is that he has been incompetent.

London Assembly (Mayor's Question Time) – 19 May 2010

Transcript: Question and Answer Session with the Mayor

1382/2010 – Heathrow and air quality (1)

**Darren Johnson**

*Do you agree that the recent halting of flights from Heathrow and other airports has shown conclusively that these facilities are the main source of nitrogen dioxide concentration in the area? Will you include this evidence in the final version of your air quality strategy?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Darren. Your question is about Heathrow and air quality. I do agree that nitrous oxide from Heathrow seriously erodes air quality in London and that point is indeed made in the Mayoral Air Quality Strategy.

**Darren Johnson (AM):** It is obviously good news that the third runway is not now going to get the go-ahead, but the figures show that even with the existing arrangements, without the third runway, capacity is predicted to rise to 80 million passengers per annum from 63 million passengers per annum. That is going to put more restraint on air pollution, as your Air Quality Strategy makes clear. Are you opposing any increase in capacity at Heathrow?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I certainly do not think that Heathrow can be relied upon to be Britain's hub international airport for the future. I think that is absolutely crazy. I think that Londoners do not deserve to have the quality of their life significantly eroded with hundreds of thousands more flights over London.

I congratulate all Members of the Liberal Democrat/Conservative coalition who have fought – unlike the Labour lackeys and lickspittles – against this third runway. It has been a great success as a campaign because it has been the first thing that the new coalition said. I think, here in the London Assembly, we should allow ourselves a small measure of self-congratulation for the role that we played in that. I think, without very strong representations from democratically elected London politicians, that point would not have gone over nearly as powerfully as it did. It is a very, very good thing for London that we have scrapped the third runway.

I am not, Darren, an expert on quite how much more you can cram in to the existing runway capacity at Heathrow but, plainly, I do not want to see huge numbers of more flights coming over the skies of London and I do not want to see more nitrous oxide being emitted by traffic congestion and aviation congestion around west London.

**Darren Johnson (AM):** Good. Are you then going to play a leadership role in actively opposing any creeping increase in capacity, even without the third runway?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** As I say, I do not want to see hundreds of thousands more flights over west London, or indeed over north London, as the proposals were. I do not think it makes sense to try to squeeze a quart into a pint pot in terms of Heathrow.

**Darren Johnson (AM):** OK. It is a fairly clear question, though. You were very, very clear on opposing a third runway at Heathrow. We are facing the problems of a creeping increase in passenger numbers anyway, under the existing arrangements, especially when Terminal 5 comes

into full operation. Are you going to play a very clear role in opposing an increase in passenger numbers?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think it follows very clearly from what I have just said, Darren, that I am opposed to big increases in aviation over the skies of London.

**Darren Johnson (AM):** So you think that passenger numbers should be capped as they are, at the current level?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I did not say that.

**Darren Johnson (AM):** Well that is not very clear then!

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** With great respect, you are saying 'not one more flight'. You are saying 'not one more passenger at Heathrow'; that seems to be your position. Is that your position?

**Darren Johnson (AM):** I think there are lots of Londoners who would agree that Heathrow capacity should not be increased whatsoever; that they have suffered enough for many, many years: pollution and noise and so on. I think many Londoners would agree that capacity should not increase.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I certainly agree that there should be no expansion of Heathrow and I think it cannot be used or envisaged in the long term as the solution to London's aviation needs. I am flatly opposed to the third runway. I am very pleased that we have stopped it.

I am not quite sure whether you are saying you, personally, do not want to see a single more flight going into Heathrow, even though it has just built Terminal 5. I do not know whether that is a realistic demand. I have not seen the proposals --

**Darren Johnson (AM):** It is a realistic response to the air pollution problem.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** -- and I have not seen quite how much more they are trying to squeeze out of it.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** I just want to take us back to the air quality aspects of this question. A quick observation: one of the other fruits of the coalition is an agreement to switch taxation from per passenger to per plane, which should have a modest effect on encouraging full planes and reducing the total numbers.

I have two quick points on air quality. I have a question later on the central London area and we will come back to that. This is just about Heathrow. There are health aspects of these nitrogen dioxide exceedances in Heathrow. When are you going to publish your health study of the impact of air quality because it has been promised as shortly, but shortly is as long as a piece of string?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am sorry, I do not know when the health study into the impacts of air quality --

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Of poor air quality, yes. Can you just give us a commitment to?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** If you apply to Isabel Dedring [Mayoral Advisor on the Environment] I am sure we will get you the study as soon as it is out.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** There has been a Freedom of Information request which has been refused on the ground that it is about to be published.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Well there you go.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Exactly. When is it going to be published? If you do not know let us just take a commitment that you want it to be published rapidly and we will take that away.

The second question is, in terms of dealing with the air quality aspects of Heathrow, an awful lot of that is surface transport in and out. The studies of the ash cloud effect are as much about reduced vehicles in and around Heathrow as the airplanes themselves.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** That is right.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Will you look at concerted measures, local measures, around Heathrow to improve air quality and to reduce traffic movements, because you have the powers under the old Congestion Charge regime to do that. I am encouraging you to use powers that you have for a good --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** So you would like me to impose a Congestion Charge around Heathrow?

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** I would like you to implement a clean air zone around Heathrow, in coordination with BAA.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Right. I am interested by your proposal to impose a Congestion Charge in west London --

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Around Heathrow, for air quality benefits.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I will examine it and I will consult Members of the Liberal Democrat/Conservative coalition about what kind of Congestion Charge they might support in west London.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Right. Thank you.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am interested; it is a Liberal Democrat proposition.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** Bearing in mind the subject that Darren Johnson has raised, have you had a chance to review your decision not to oppose the increased flights at City Airport?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am mindful of the concerns that have been raised and the matter is certainly under discussion at the moment.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** Also bearing in mind the health impacts associated with nitrous oxide, and of course that part of London is one that is associated with some health challenges with regard to air quality, so could the health agenda be a part of any future decision related to, not jus, the capacity of City Airport, but also its flight paths as well?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes. Plainly the reduction of nitrous oxide around Heathrow during the volcanic ash cloud is a very powerful indicator of the effect of aviation on pollution. It has armed us all, I think, with a very good argument against expansion of Heathrow.

I just want to come back to Darren's point. Darren is trying to get me now to declare that I will not accept a single more flight into Heathrow. I cannot say that. What I can say is I do not want any significant expansion and I certainly do not want to see any more runway space in west London.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** Certainly, Mr Mayor, but your reference earlier was that you do not want to see a large increase of flights over London. Was that response just about Heathrow?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** It is my general view that this city should not be constantly overflowed by planes in a way that disrupts the lives of Londoners.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** You seem to have undertaken to look again at this. When might we see a result of your deliberations on the capacity?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You will see a result in due course.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** Due course. Is 'due course' three months or six months?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** It will be in the fullness of time.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** OK. Is the fullness of time half the amount of due course? How are we judging?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** It will be within a reasonable delay.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** A reasonable delay. A whole new system of measurement to rival the international system! Thank you very much indeed.

**Richard Barnes (AM):** Mr Mayor, success has many fathers and there are more people claiming success for leading the campaign against the third runway and the sixth terminal than there ever were marching the streets. None are more opportunistic than John McDonnell [Member of Parliament] from Hayes and Harlington. Mr Mayor, the true people who deserve congratulations are those who live in the villages of Sipson, Harlington, Longford and Harmondsworth, who have fought for years to protect the place where they live --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** They have.

**Richard Barnes (AM):** -- and, indeed, the ancient buildings. I feel sure that you and the Assembly will join me in congratulating them on their true success.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I do.

**Richard Barnes (AM):** Mr Mayor, expansion does not necessarily need to be physical at Heathrow. There can be mixed mode landing and take offs, there can be a squeeze on night flight and a re-definition of what is an emergency landing. Can you assure us that you will demand that this Assembly be fully consulted on any change in flight patterns and, indeed, air routes across London, that the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), or others, may propose?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Of course. I am certainly opposed to mixed mode or anything - as I said just now - that greatly increases the number of flight movements over our skies and, indeed, to subsequent pollution on the ground.

**Richard Barnes (AM):** Thank you.

**Len Duvall (AM):** We have got a problem here haven't we? You have got one of your strategies saying we need extra air transport capacity for south east London. The Government has come out and said no to Stansted, no to Gatwick and no to Heathrow.

I just want to go back to the issue of your powers. You really did fail to intervene on City Airport, didn't you? Was that a mistake or was that a deliberate issue; that you chose to allow a local authority to take a strategic decision that should have been taken in this building?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am not aware that any Labour Member of this Assembly decided to protest against the decision of the London Borough of Newham to --

**Len Duvall (AM):** We have got an all party position here in the Assembly around this issue. We have raised the issue and we are asking questions. You had the information. I have been raising some issues locally. You had the power to do something about increased flights coming out of City Airport. Andrew Boff has reminded you of the words you told this Assembly and this Chamber. I do not want any of the public to go away and be misled. Somewhere, in the offices you hold, your staff, you, decided to let it go. You either let it go by mistake as you were not on top of the job, or you deliberately let it go because you are actually quite happy to have increased flights elsewhere at City Airport. You cocked a snook at that. You let it go because you knew Newham would take that decision because you will have talked to Newham. You were not aware there was all party support. A number of boroughs are affected by this, the lack of consultation. You ducked the issue. Was it a mistake or was it deliberate? Will you share all the powers then, and deliberations, around those instances, what you did with Newham over this issues and why you failed to use your powers to defend the interests of Londoners, and to promote the policy that you are telling us that you agree with, that you want to see less flights? Who do we believe?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** The answer is that the London Borough of Newham decided to give approval to an expansion of flights from London City. That is, last time I looked, a Labour led borough. It made a very strong argument in favour of an increase in employment that would result from this decision. I listened to that case very early on in my Mayoralty, as you rightly say, Len. Since then, I have certainly received strong representations from people who claim that they would be affected by that decision in other parts of London and I am considering what action I am going to take, as I said to Andrew Boff.

**Len Duvall (AM):** So you made a mistake.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** That is not what I said.

**Len Duvall (AM):** So you agreed with Newham and you thought it was right to do what it did. It is either one way or the other isn't it? You either made a mistake, fair cop, early in the administration - "I had this issue, I would do it differently now"; I think most people would accept that - or you agreed with Newham's position and were not aware that Newham was taking that position without talking to anybody else and that this local issue, a strategic issue, was best dealt with at local level? You made a mistake or you agreed with Newham?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am not going to answer the question until he stops talking.

**Len Duvall (AM):** I have stopped talking. I am saying to you that the choice is simple. Just to clarify, Mr Mayor, did you agree with Newham or did you make a mistake and, with hindsight, you would not have taken that decision?

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** I think the question is now clear.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** As I say, the Labour Borough of Newham made a very strong case; the Labour led London Borough of Newham. I think that, as far as I can tell, the Leader of Newham has been returned overwhelmingly. My friend Sir Robin [Sir Robin Wales, Mayor of Newham] seems still to be very much there. It does not seem to have affected his democratic chance. I note that point.

As I say, Len, I have received representations from people elsewhere in London since taking that decision, which was made on the basis of the employment impact for Newham. I have received representations from people who say it would have an adverse impact on other parts of London. As I said to Andrew [Andrew Boff AM], I am considering the implications of what they say and I am considering whether or not they are correct in their assertions.

**Murad Qureshi (AM):** Can I come back to Heathrow and air quality and firstly deal with the slur that Richard [Richard Barnes AM] made on John McDonnell. He just recently won the Hayes and Harlington seat at the General Election with a 10,000 majority.

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Sorry, this is not what your question is about.

**Murad Qureshi (AM):** I am coming to my question. I think I can deal with it given he has made a direct attack on an elected Member, with a majority of 10,000, representing the villages of South Hillingdon, which he has failed to do in his lack of attendance at the Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee in all the years that he was the London Assembly representative.

In your Air Quality Strategy, the one you released during purdah, you mention the Heathrow problem on air quality but do not actually offer much at all to the suffering residents of west London suburbs, in Ealing, Hillingdon and Hounslow. Mike [Mike Tuffrey AM] has suggested an area that we do need to look into, subsurface transport measures, but there is nothing actually that has come from you here or in your Strategy, and I wondered how that neglect reflects on you?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Can I say what complete tripe that is because, if you look at our Strategy and, indeed, if you think about what we have just been saying, we have successfully contested and now defeated a Labour proposal to inflict a third runway on Heathrow. It is hard to think of anything that could do more damage to air quality in west London. I think that we should all be very proud of that achievement and I think that is the single best thing that we are able to do for air quality in the boroughs that you mention.

**Murad Qureshi (AM):** Can I suggest, given that now Mike Brown [Managing Director, London Underground] has come back to London Underground, it is worth talking to him, as he was the Chief Executive of Heathrow Airport and he knows half a dozen things that BAA could do overnight, like reduce the price of Heathrow Connect to encourage more Londoners to go in

that way. Those are the kinds of things we need and your Strategy does not have any of that at all.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You would like to reduce the price of Heathrow Connect?

**Murad Qureshi (AM):** BAA can do that sort of stuff overnight if it wanted to.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** And your proposal is that BAA should subsidise that?

**Murad Qureshi (AM):** Talk to Mike Brown. Mike Brown used to be at Heathrow Airport.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Murad, I do not want to sound dismissive. That is an interesting proposal. If BAA could be persuaded to subsidise Heathrow Connect in order to make it more attractive as a service, then certainly let us try it.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Just while we are talking about air pollution and air quality, can I draw your attention and ask you again about when you are going to reduce congestion and the pollution on Oxford Street caused by the up to 300 buses an hour running in both directions. We have had a cross-party report from the Assembly's Transport Committee and I urge you to bring it forward again because this has meant that Oxford Street, Marylebone and the surrounding area of course now have the highest areas of air pollution in London, particularly nitrous oxides and particulates. Please can I urge you, once again, to look at this. Perhaps we could have some sort of timetable as to how that is progressing?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am grateful to you, Victoria, for your work on this. We are removing 10% of the buses a year. That ought to be having a substantial impact. Of course, when we get in new cleaner greener buses the impact will be all the greater.

## **1514/2010 – Local Elections**

### **Joanne McCartney**

*Do you think that the results of the recent local elections in London reflect the unpopularity of policies you have implemented?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Joanne. You are asking about the local election results and whether the results reflect me or the unpopularity of the policies I have implemented. I am afraid all the evidence I have, Joanne - obviously you may contest this - is the Mayoralty does not seem to have come up on the doorstep when I was going around, which I find personally humiliating, frankly! It is certainly the case that, according to the annual London Survey that we have - and this is coming out now - there is a very high level broad satisfaction with the policies we are pursuing, and I am very reassured by that.

**Joanne McCartney (AM):** The reason I asked the question is that we have seen a dramatic change in the municipal make up of London. We now have 17 councils that are Labour controlled, giving Labour the majority of councils in London. Until the election you were the leading Conservative in London. Do you take any responsibility for the fact that voters seem to have rejected Conservative administration across huge swathes of London?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Obviously it is the vice of politicians to think that they are responsible for everything. In some infantile way we believe that we control the world and everything happens because we want it to happen. I am afraid, if I was to follow that line of thought, I would have to take credit for the Conservative gains in parliamentary seats. I think we gained seven seats or something there.

The truth is that there are all sorts of factors at play in the London elections and, as far as we can tell from our survey, there is a great deal of support for the policies that we are pursuing.

**Joanne McCartney (AM):** You have often said to David Cameron, “Look what we are doing in London, and learn”, in effect. Well it appears to me that Conservative policies have been rejected across huge swathes of London. Do you think that is still good advice to him?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I do think that what we are doing is the right thing to do. I think that if you look at what the incoming Government is having to cope with there can be no doubt that it is very difficult clearing up after a Labour mess, but there are plenty of lessons to learn.

**Joanne McCartney (AM):** Obviously the make up of London Councils has changed and there will now be a very strong lobby group defending the interests of London against expected cuts from the new coalition government. Are you envisaging doing your utmost to work with that Labour led London Councils to protect London from disadvantage?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Of course.

**Joanne McCartney (AM):** On the election campaign itself I did not actually see you out and about much. Did the Conservative high command use you to your best advantage do you think?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Hang on, Joanne. You have got to get your argument straight. You are either saying I was a great deterrent to the Conservative vote in London or you are saying that somehow I was not deployed enough! Which is it? Come on.

**Joanne McCartney (AM):** They did not seem to let you out very often. In fact the only time I really saw you on the television was when you upstaged David Cameron about his volunteering commitments. I was just wondering whether that was a deliberate act?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I find it very, very difficult to try to respond to these Labour attacks, Chair, because I get beaten up for trying to open a very, very important new addition to London’s transport infrastructure on time and on budget, and then I get accused of not going out in the election enough and not appearing on television! It is very, very hard to know how to cope with this sort of inconsistency. All I can say is that colleagues and friends would say that they probably saw me on the streets about as much as was reasonable, given that there is a big job to do here and there is a lot of work to be done.

**Brian Coleman (AM):** Mr Mayor, would you take note, in fact, that the seven Conservative Members of this Assembly who offered themselves to local electorates for re-election were overwhelmingly re-elected in their boroughs, and no doubt the fact that we were working with you helped us all on this side in our re-election attempts? Would you also congratulate the people of London for ensuring there are no British National Party councillors left on councils in London?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I would.

**Richard Tracey (AM):** Mr Mayor, in answer to this question you mentioned the annual London survey. Did you notice that one of the facts in it is that most Londoners, or certainly the highest percentage, talking about transport, are worried about the roads --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Roadworks. I did.

**Richard Tracey (AM):** -- and road improvements. I take that to mean patching up potholes and so on. Now when you meet these new powerful Labour councils that we have just heard about and the London Councils group, can you tell them to follow the example of Wandsworth and undergo a systematic patching of potholes, which has been very successful in Wandsworth? Clearly there are large areas of London where there are a hell of a lot of potholes still existing and they need to be filled in.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You are quite right, Dick, and I am sure that your words will strike like thunderbolts in Labour councils; they should certainly follow the example of Wandsworth.

**Richard Tracey (AM):** Thank you.

**Roger Evans (AM):** Clearly the Labour Group is scratching around for crumbs of comfort today. Next thing it will be asking us to congratulate the Labour party in Havering for doubling the size of its Group to five in the recent election!

To move away from the party points which have been made so far, do you think there are wider lessons to be learned, for your election and ours in two years time, from the way that the London elections were administered and some of the complaints that were made around them?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes. I think the last GLA elections, to the best of my memory, were actually models of efficiency and it all worked very well. Patently we need to make sure that we do learn the lessons of the last General Election and we do not have the appalling spectacle of people being turned away from the polling booths when they have been queuing for a long time to vote. That cannot happen in 2012.

**Roger Evans (AM):** Four years ago the Assembly had a review of the conduct of the election and what we could learn from it. Do you think it would be useful for us to do that again and look particularly at the fact that some people who were not entitled to vote allegedly did - and there are several cases out there being investigated at the moment - and that many people who were entitled to vote did not because they were shut out of polling stations late in the evening, particularly in some of the boroughs like Hackney.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** There were disgraceful scenes and they must not be repeated. I think it is London Elects that handles our elections. I am sure that it will make sure that we have no such repetition.

**John Biggs (AM):** As I think was said once in another setting, Boris, you were the future once. I think that is interesting because you have moved overnight with this election from being the most senior elected Conservative in the country to being not only number 248, or something, but, in fact, behind the Liberal Democrat Party. I do understand the discomfort you must feel in that position. The Labour narrative on this is very straightforward.

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** So what is your question, Mr Biggs?

**John Biggs (AM):** It is that you were tucked away because of the muddled --

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** No, that is not a question; that is an opinion.

**John Biggs (AM):** It is a question. I am sure you would disagree with this but is it not the case --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** No, I do not. I do not disagree at all. Sad but true.

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Would you ask your question so that the Mayor can answer?

**John Biggs (AM):** Is it not the case that you were tucked away because of the relative incoherence of your administration and its muddledness and that is why the Conservatives won far fewer seats in London than they anticipated? Perhaps answer this question; are you a Liberal Democrat Conservative or just a plain old Conservative? Are you a Liberal Democrat Conservative now?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** What I really love about John's questions is they are always tending in the direction of wanting to ascribe more power, more influence and more authority to me. I know it must be a sad thing --

**John Biggs (AM):** Not any more though.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I know, John, that you feel my pain at being, as you so brutally put it, overtaken and being banished to the municipal margins of life where I belong, and all the rest of it. I think that we have the most wonderful job here in City Hall. We, all of us, are engaged on the most exciting project. We are very, very lucky to be doing what we are doing and we should be grateful for, in what small way, we are allowed to serve the public. I must say that when you look at the -- how long can this answer last? When you look at the Olympic project alone, it is a huge, huge honour for us to be asked to serve here.

**John Biggs (AM):** If you are saying then that in this new phase of your administration you are going to join with the Assembly in standing up for Londoners against the brutal anticipated cuts from the Government, then we will stand alongside you. Could you state whether you think that will be your position?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Of course.

**John Biggs (AM):** Of course. OK. I have a final question then. I would agree with Brian Coleman on this and it is particularly sensitive in the part of London I represent. I acknowledge and welcome your joy, which I think crosses all the legitimate parties in the Assembly, at party Groups, at the demise of the BNP in Barking and Dagenham and elsewhere. Would you join me in anticipating and hoping that in the next GLA election we will finally remove that blemish of intolerance and ignorance from London?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I certainly do agree with that and I am sure that the generous openhearted policies that all of us support around this Assembly, with notable exceptions, will be successful.

**James Cleverly (AM):** Mr Mayor, do you think that the local election results for the Conservative councils in outer London might have been different if they were in receipt of the kind of grant settlements that Labour controlled inner London boroughs received?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I do not want to try a detailed post-mortem of the election results in London boroughs now. We are going to work with whichever leadership of London Councils there is. I am sure Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative boroughs will work together for the interests of London.

**James Cleverly (AM):** Indeed, Mr Mayor. Would you share my surprise upon discovering that if the London Borough of Bromley, for example, were to receive the per capita grant settlement that its neighbouring borough of Lewisham received, it would not only be able to reduce its Council Tax dramatically, but would be in a position where it could actually pay money to its residents? If that efficiency of delivery of local services was supported by a much fairer grant settlement by central government then the outer London councils that were controlled by Conservatives would have been able to demonstrate to their residents the value in voting Conservative again.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am sure that is true, James. I note the success, though, of councillors in the London Borough of Bromley in being re-elected.

**Richard Barnes (AM):** Mr Mayor, much has been made of suicide notes by previous ministers as they have lost office, for their successor. Did the previous Mayor leave you any notes that you wanted to expose two years on?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** None that I could discover, though he did, very generously, leave, as I never tire of saying, a very considerable quantity of fine wine, not all of which has yet been exhausted.

**Richard Barnes (AM):** No, indeed I have tasted it.

**Richard Barnbrook (AM):** Laugh it up fuzzballs. I do not think anybody here got anything out of these elections at all. As regards the Conservative/Liberal Democrats, let us give it 6 months or 12 years.

Moving to the question, through yourself, Chair, would the Mayor agree that where electoral fraud takes place it should be investigated? I, along with the British National Party in Barking and Dagenham, with 100 cases of direct electoral fraud, are now going through the electoral petition. Regarding my own ward of Goresbrook, a Labour candidate elected was unduly elected because she works for the council. Her excuse is, "Terribly sorry. My agent did not inform me that I cannot stand for the council if employed by a council". The fact is, dear old John [John Biggs AM] and Boris [Johnson], I will be back in Goresbrook, elected by the council, if the electorate decides that fraud is not acceptable in Barking and Dagenham and they duly elect me again.

As regards two more years, if you look at the vote in London for the BNP, you will find that --

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Your question, Mr Barnbrook?

**Richard Barnbrook (AM):** The question is, Boris, do you really think it is possible that we will not be elected when the election returns for this year's elections show an increase for the British

National Party, across London, and therefore one, maybe two people, will be elected to the GLA in 2012?

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Mr Mayor?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes, Chair, I do think it is possible that that will not happen.

## **1603/2010 – Post-election Secretary of State for Transport**

**Caroline Pidgeon**

*When is your first meeting scheduled with the new Secretary of State for Transport?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Caroline, the answer is Thursday, 27 May 2010.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** Fantastic. Have you had any conversations with Government Ministers about transport issues?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** OK. Fantastic. There are clearly a number of key transport issues in London that you need to be championing on behalf of Londoners. In the light of the note that we know that was left from the previous Chief Secretary to the Treasury saying there is no money left, have you had discussions to absolutely confirm that Crossrail will go ahead as planned?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** Fantastic. Can you guarantee that the completion date will be by 2017?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I can tell you that the case I have made and the case that I think everybody understands. What you cannot do with a massive project like Crossrail is think you can conceivably save money by extending the timescale. That is the point that I have made.

If I can just be allowed a slightly longer answer, do not get the impression that this is all over, folks. There is a huge campaign of lobbying still to be done. There are huge points that need to be made. I think, generally, we made a lot of progress over Crossrail in the last year or so. There was built up a very considerable coalition of support for Crossrail across all parties. That might not, necessarily, have been the case. There was a time when Crossrail, I think, did look very fragile as a proposition. It is looking much more robust now. We need to keep going with that. We need to keep making the points about the Tube upgrades with which I began this morning; we need to make the point about bus subsidy; we need to stress the vital importance of investment in transport in London generally. Those points cannot be made vehemently enough.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** I am glad the reassurance you have had so far is that Crossrail, as it is, with both branches, is looking like it will go ahead. We are happy to join you in lobbying for that.

The other issue I wanted to raise with you is linked to the East London line --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Hang on, Caroline, you have got to be careful. Crossrail will go ahead; there is no doubt about it. They will come in and they will kick the tires and they will say, "Can we descope it? Can we change this? Can we change that? Can we spin that bit out?" We have got to make the case for getting on with that project. I do not want you to rush away from today with the idea that it is all signed, sealed and delivered, because that is simply not the case.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** OK. Then there is an issue linked to the East London line I wanted to raise with you. The previous Government failed to deliver the promised £7 million that would allow the Surrey Canal Road Station to be built.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** That is right.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** As you know, this is absolutely time sensitive. Will you try to secure this much needed funding from the new Secretary of State for Transport when you meet with him?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** So it is on your agenda already is it?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** The Surrey Road Station is on the agenda. As you can imagine, we are going in now with a massive list of things that are important for London. I am hoping for the maximum possible support from everybody for that list.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** Given it was only £7 million, we were told it was in the budget, the money has been raised to match it; can you make sure that you do raise it and report back to us on that?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I cannot make sure I am going to raise £7 million but I am certainly going to raise the issue --

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** No, raise the issue with the Secretary of State is what I meant.

**Richard Tracey (AM):** Mr Mayor, in this conversation with Philip Hammond [Secretary of State for Transport], when you meet him, can you raise two points that are very relevant to our earlier discussions about the use of Heathrow? One is can you encourage him to go ahead with the high speed rail links which will indeed encourage people to travel by rail, rather than using the internal flights to get to Heathrow. The second one is could you press him to stop the early flights that creep in between 4am and 6am, when 6am is supposed to be the cut off, and wake a good many of us up far too early.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Absolutely right. This is one of the reasons why, like Darren [Darren Johnson AM], I oppose the expansion of aviation movements over London.

On your point about high speed rail, you are completely correct. If we are going to build these high speed rail links, as I think we should, to the north of the country, then you have got to remember the huge impact that those services would have on London mainline stations. All the more reason to put in Crossrail and all the more reason to upgrade the Tube.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** As you know, Crossrail is one of those London united issues and I think we are all pleased to hear you have already started lobbying on the issue.

One of the anxieties that people are feeling at the moment is that there may possibly be a proposal to chop off one of these important spurs of the Crossrail project, either out at the Maidenhead end or down to Abbey Wood. In your view, would it damage the business case for the whole of Crossrail if any part of the project, as now planned, was to be lost?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** That is why I gave the answer I did to Caroline [Caroline Pidgeon AM], Val, because be in no doubt the Government will try. It will say, "We face appalling circumstances. The Labour Government left the cupboard completely bare. Indeed, the outgoing Labour Government boasted that it had left the cupboard completely bare." It will try to descope. I will be fighting very, very hard to protect the project in its entirety. As I say, whether we are successful in that is yet to be established, but I think it is absolutely vital that we mount a Stalingrad-like defence of the London transport settlement.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** The project is roughly costed at £16 billion but, in fact, national government is contributing, I think, about £5 billion. What do you think the response would be of the other donors, the participants and the businesses contributing if the Government was to take away any of that contribution? Do you think it would threaten their donations and participation?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes. Do not forget that businesses around London, with a rateable value of over £55,000, as you know, are paying for Crossrail. They will say, "What is going on?" This is a very intricate piece of arithmetic to get the budget necessary for the project. I do not want to see any part of that threatened. I am broadly confident that we can keep the project going, but it is going to take a huge amount of political effort to do so.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** One of the things I understood in terms of how the Government has put together some of the funding is that Network Rail had plans to refurbish some of the outer parts of the lines. They need working up. Do you not think that Network Rail would anyway have to go ahead with some of the line upgrade programmes on the spurs of the Crossrail project so there is not as much money to be saved as the Government might think?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Actually, Val, it is an interesting point which I was not aware of. It is another piece of ammunition in our general case that you will not really save money by trying to descope this project, or by trying to protract the interval in which it is delivered.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** I think we are all agreed this is hugely important to the population of London and to the economy of London and I think, if I can suggest to you, Mr Mayor, it would probably be helpful to publish the whole --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You are going to propose a cross-party mission.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** I am happy to come and do that with you.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You want to come in and see the Minister. I have done that too often.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** If that would help, Mr Mayor, I would be very happy.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** It would be lovely but I do not think it would help!

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Do you think it would help if you published the entire business case for Crossrail, and then it would be obvious I think to everybody, for example, that the Abbey Wood spur has, in fact, got the best cost benefit analysis of the entire scheme?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I do think it is fascinating the degree of ignorance about Crossrail still in the minds of the public and, indeed, the minds of many of our important political colleagues. The more we can explain why it matters to London, the more we can explain about the relief of congestion on the underground that it will provide and the economic benefits of this east/west link, the better.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Thank you.

**Roger Evans (AM):** Mr Mayor, the previous regime at Whitehall always prevented its ministers giving evidence to this Assembly. They could come along and meet us informally in the basement but they never sat where you are and gave evidence to us.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Is that right?

**Roger Evans (AM):** We know that the new regime is talking about sending ministers to give evidence to the Welsh Assembly and to the Scottish Parliament so, when you meet government ministers to talk about London, could you urge them to come and answer questions directly before this Assembly, when they discharge their London responsibilities? Perhaps that might obviate the need for a London Select Committee at the House of Commons.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think that that is an interesting suggestion. I think that this is the natural home of democratic scrutiny in London and I know that Labour Members and Labour friends and colleagues agree with me about that. It may be of interest to colleagues to know that actually I did decide - Chair, perhaps I should have mentioned this to you before - that I thought it would be the right thing to do to invite Nick Clegg, who is the Deputy Prime Minister and generally responsible for political reform, is he not, to come and talk to us all. What do you think?

**Roger Evans (AM):** Good idea.

**Dee Dooney (Chair):** Splendid idea.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Who wants to hear from Mr Clegg?

**Roger Evans (AM):** Mr Mayor, one of my colleagues reminds me that that prohibition applied to leading civil servants in the past as well so if you could extend the invitation to those people too, that would be very useful.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I understand what you are saying. I think it would be helpful. I cannot see any reason why that should not take place. There might be doctrines of reciprocity we might have to consider. What we certainly do not want to have is our people being endlessly summoned by this or that body.

**Roger Evans (AM):** We have been there. We have done it.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think you should resist all this nonsense of me having to go to talk to these select committees. It is ridiculous.

## **1693/2010 – Small shops**

**Andrew Boff**

*What will your small shops review be considering?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Andrew. The point of the review on small shops is to make an assessment of the need for small shops and the benefits of small shops and also, as I am sure you are aware, to look at the potential for large retail developments to support small shops in London. I have got all sorts of stuff in fluorescent pen here warning me not to make any commitments to you now about the extent to which we are actually going to be gauging money out of these retail developments. We are studying the effectiveness of this idea, the potential of this idea, getting a pot of cash from retail developments to rejuvenate small shops in London.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** That is very encouraging. Mr Mayor, in your manifesto for election you made a very strong commitment to small shops identifying the problems that they had. We know, for example, that small shops tend to employ more people per square foot, they reduce the need to travel and result in more retail spend being kept in the communities where it is spent. They increase choice and they are great incubators for new enterprises to create the new jobs that this economy will need. Yet they are suffering, often for environmental reasons rather than neglect, because they do not have the large bucks that the large corporates can invest in those environments.

I welcome that you are looking into this and would ask that you do look into setting up some kind of arrangement or fund to allow a town centre rejuvenation fund that, like where section 106 agreements currently apply to housing, where we can get similar agreements applied to new large retail developments where the resources can be spent on encouraging people to shop locally in those local shopping parades that are so vital to so many Londoners. I ask that you consider those in your review of small shops.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Andrew. That is exactly what we are doing. You put the point very eloquently and powerfully and that is why we are mounting the review. I think the case you make for the contribution of small shops to the vibrancy of the local economy is a powerful one.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** I look forward, Mr Mayor, to there being the same enthusiasm for our small shops and the small shopping parades that we currently throw into developments like Westfield, and that we can celebrate our small shops as enthusiastically as we do the large corporate supermarkets as well.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I certainly think that that is another good point. I have, in the course of the last two years, found myself, I may say, celebrating loads of small shops and I am happy to join you in celebrating loads more.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** I am sure Londoners will be pleased to know that somebody with those sympathies is at the helm and going to deliver on something because, for too long, Mr Mayor, we have bemoaned the decline of small shops in London but so few politicians have been willing

to take action. I am delighted that here we have one who is going to take action. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

**Navin Shah (AM):** Mr Mayor, the decline of small shops and local district centres is a major issue in outer London areas in particular. You are very enthusiastic about super hubs like Brent Cross. What policy commitments, in principle, are you able to give to the Assembly today to actually reverse the problems that outer London is facing in terms of this serious decline?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think, Navin, if you look at the difficulties small shops have, there are loads of problems; I would cite the business rates which have been particularly onerous and there has been, as everybody knows, a decision by the Labour Government to inflict a great deal of business rate suffering on this part of the country, with the review. I think that did a lot of damage to small shops. That is why the Conservative manifesto contains, as far as I can remember, a commitment to automatic business rate relief. That is an important thing for many small shops.

Generally I think that what these businesses benefit from is security and a pleasant urban environment where they can do their business. One of the things that we have been championing, particularly in outer London centres, are the Safer Neighbourhood Teams that drive down shoplifting; that is a particular scourge for small businesses. As I said just now to Andrew [Andrew Boff AM], we are looking at a particular scheme to see whether there might be scope to support small shops from the proceeds of larger developments.

**Navin Shah (AM):** Mr Mayor, are you at all going to look into a review of the situation whereby a lot of supermarkets - which are growing everywhere - are actually seen to be a threat to the small businesses? Are you going to look at that policy aspect as to what the actual situation is and how far that growth could be diminished?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** If you study some of the planning decisions that we have made, Navin, you will see that we are very, very reluctant to allow through big supermarket developments where those would do significant damage to local retail.

One really damaging thing that the previous Government did - can I just remind you of one thing; when it put VAT up and then it took it down again you had all these small shops having to take stickers off and put them back on again in a way that was completely crazy.

**Navin Shah (AM):** Can we get away from business rates and VAT? Will there be any major policy aspects in terms of controlling the growth of supermarkets in strategic locations, where they would be, actually, harmful to the local shopping areas?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I believe there already are provisions in the --

**Navin Shah (AM):** I do not believe so.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** -- current London Plan, and in the draft London Plan, to make sure that you take account of the impact on small businesses and the local economy of any big new retail developments.

**Navin Shah (AM):** Is there going to be any investment in local infrastructure to improve the environment of those small shopping areas which will anchor a better footprint?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes, there is. Just to get back to that point; I do think it is vital that we improve the quality and the security of local areas, and that is why we have got a £200 million budget for urban realm projects of one kind or another, to make places attractive to linger in and to shop in.

**Nicky Gavron (AM):** Would you consider lobbying for the business rate, or a proportion of it, to be returned to local councils?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** As far as I can remember that is a Conservative policy. Or it used to be.

**Steve O'Connell (AM):** Mr Mayor, that was one of the points, picking up on Nicky's [Nicky Gavron AM] comment. As the husband of a small shop owner, the two pressures that come to bear on our shops are twofold; mainly rent and rent reviews, which are out of the control of this building, and also business rates. They are the two main demands upon small businesses. The councils, as has been pointed out, are merely collecting the business rate. I think it would be helpful if we were all to lobby and support a retention, in part, of business rates by local authorities to invest in the infrastructure as mentioned by Navin [Navin Shah AM]. Hopefully, Mr Mayor, you will support that.

We all agree that supermarkets are often the ruination of our high streets but the market will prevail and as long as they are within our planning policies, Mr Mayor, and your planning policies, the opportunity for councils to refuse damaging supermarket applications has to be welcome.

The two points I would pick up on and, I think, the two things that we can do as councillors and as a Mayorality to support our shops are around a safe environment, I would urge your continuing commitment to invest in the safer neighbourhood projects to make our high streets safer. So that is the one thing that businesses do come to us to talk about.

The second point, quite simply, is parking. If I ask any of my businesses in my high streets, "What would help me?" they would say, "More parking".

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** That is absolutely true.

**Steve O'Connell (AM):** I urge you, Mr Mayor, to somehow put in your planning strategies some encouragement for councils to supply proper parking around their high streets, but also, more strategically, picking up on an earlier point, which was around urging all councils to have a fairer deal, particularly the London boroughs who get a particularly bad governance deal, whereby we should take the pressure off their finances which would then alleviate the parking revenue pressures which would, therefore, make cheaper parking in those high street areas.

A couple of points, Mr Mayor, for your support.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think the point you make about parking, Steve, is very powerful and absolutely true. If you talk to any shopkeeper around London that is one of the things that will come up time after time after time. It is a borough issue and the boroughs have to strike a balance between supporting local business and keeping the traffic moving on their roads and getting the revenues that they think they need from parking. I am acutely conscious of the threat that over-restrictive parking controls can pose to local business and I think it is a point that is certainly worth making to London Councils.

**Jenny Jones (AM):** Your concern about small shops surviving does not sit very well with your having waved through the Brent Cross development does it?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I do not agree with that, Jenny. I think, if you look at the Brent Cross development, it is a very fine and very interesting proposal that has been put to that area. I have lost count of the number of supermarkets that, one way or another, have been turned down or dismissed in the last two years. There is a great reluctance, as I say, not just in the boroughs but also in the GLA, to allow supermarkets to sprout unnecessarily and to do damage to the local economy.

**Jenny Jones (AM):** But your GLA Economics are not doing the sums then are they because if you have developments like Brent Cross you lose the small shops. You cannot have both.

## **1401/2010 – Routemaster Bus**

### **Valerie Shawcross**

*How can you justify the cost of nearly £1.6m each for just five route-master buses – eight times the cost of a conventional £190,000 double-decker?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Val. The question is completely misconceived because the cost of each new generation bus will be no more than the current hybrids, some of which are already on the streets. The bus design that we unveiled the other day will actually form the basis of all future orders of buses in London, so your figures are not accurate.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Thank you, Mr Mayor. If you dispute the figures that were in the *Times*, that this question is based on, perhaps you could write to me with the details of exactly how much the contract for the development of the new Routemaster has cost. That would be very interesting.

My follow up question is actually about the staffing on the bus. Is it the case that these buses are going to be operated like Routemasters, with the back door open? If so, will they have to have staff on board the bus? What financial provision are you therefore making for the extra costs of staffing the new Routemasters as you roll them out in the future?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You will be aware that there is an open platform at the back which, actually, is very cunningly designed. It has got a shower curtain type design so that it can actually close up again. When it is running in open platform mode, as it will through busy streets in the centre of town, Oxford Street, giving people the hop-on/hop-off advantage that they enjoy, then, clearly, there will be someone on the bus, in uniform, who will be helping passengers. He will not be an old fashioned conductor because there is no need to take tickets in the same way. He will not have a machine. That is all nonsense. There will be someone, in uniform, on the bus to help passengers. I think that that is going to be a very good thing and a very popular thing --

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** So does your business plan make provision for the extra cost of running these buses?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** If you just let me finish the answer. We have, already on the buses, I think, 2,200 people, in uniform, that we did not have ten years ago. There has

been a very, very substantial increase in the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), of revenue protection inspectors and, even of police constables of one kind or another. We see --

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Sorry, Mr Mayor, can I just check what you are saying there?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Can I just finish by saying we see no difficulty whatever in having someone in uniform on the new generation bus when the platform is open. I think it is the right thing to do. It is going to be very proper. Having had --

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Can I just ask you a question to understand better what you are saying?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Having had people in uniform on the buses has been one of the reasons why bus crime has come down 18%.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Are you saying therefore that the existing Transport Operational Command Unit (TOCU) police on the bus system will basically have to be focused on the Routemasters, or are you saying that you will be putting additional revenue money in the business plan to cover the cost of providing extra staff for these buses?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** We are confident that we can use our existing resources to make sure that whenever the open platform is open - which will be a lot of the time - there will be someone in uniform to help oversee. I think that will be immensely popular. I think it is what people want to see and people enjoy seeing someone on the buses, giving a sense of security and order.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** Are you proposing, therefore, to move the immensely popular police on the buses in areas of high security issues and safety concerns onto the Routemasters? Will we see a reduction of staffing elsewhere on the bus network in order to cover the Routemaster? I am a bit confused about what exactly is planned here in terms of the costs. Do you see this as costing additional money or not?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think you will see an overall improvement in the service and we are confident, as I say, that we can do this. We already have a huge number of people in uniform on the buses. We are confident, for the period in which the platform is open on the new generation bus, we will be able to have someone in uniform on that bus to make sure that it feels secure and to help people get on and off, if necessary.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** So TfL, from what you are saying, is going to be paying for police officers who were operating at transport hubs to be helping people on and off the Routemaster bus. Is that correct? Yes or no?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think you have just said, Val, that having an increase in the number of people in uniform on buses has been very popular and very successful. It has actually driven down bus crime by 18%. It is what Londoners want to see. We see no particular reason why you should not have them on the Routemaster buses when the platform is open.

**Valerie Shawcross (AM):** I think the point, Mr Mayor, is that we do not want to lose them from high security and crime areas in order to put them on the Routemasters, but I will leave it there. Thank you.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think you will find, Val, it is not beyond the wit of man to satisfy both objectives.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** Given that TfL is paying for the design of the new bus, have you ensured that London will be able to profit from any future sales of it outside London?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** The intellectual property remains with TfL.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** So that is a yes. Thank you.

**Richard Tracey (AM):** Mr Mayor, I wonder whether the other side understand anything about research and development costs for various things that are being developed. Would it be fair, do you reckon, to say that, when the first 100 Olympic tickets have been sold, that each one of them has cost £90 million?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You make a brilliant point, Dick. That is the arithmetic that they are trying to struggle with there. It does represent a very good investment and I think, actually, that it will be of great advantage, not just because it will bring back the open platform and all the rest of it but, actually, because of the air.

We have spent a long time this morning discussing air quality. The key advantage of this bus is that it emits 40% less fumes than a current double-decker bus, and 15% less than a hybrid bus. This is going to be the cleanest bus on the streets. It is going to be the object of worldwide admiration and envy. I think we should be proud that it is going to be built in this country and it is going to be a new generation bus for London.

The point about the Routemaster which was so globally successful is it was designed by London Transport. We are going back to the traditions of this city and its transport system to build something for the future that will be a fantastic environmental importance and benefit.

**Jenny Jones (AM):** You did promise this Assembly in September last year that the cost of this new bus would be much less than the cost of a bendy bus, which is about £250,000. I take the point about research and development; we do not know yet the final cost of each of the buses. However, you are going to need 50% more because a bendy bus takes 120 people and your bus only takes about 80. We are going to need three of your buses for every two bendy buses, or are you going to cut services?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** As far as I can remember the complement of the new buses is going to be 87. The project is not to replace each bendy bus with one of these, the project --

**Jenny Jones (AM):** So you will cut services instead?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** -- is to introduce into London a new type of bus. I think what people are missing in their --

**Jenny Jones (AM):** I am really sorry, I am trying to get the point --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I can understand why people are focusing on the open platform and the Routemaster aspect of it. The real significance of this development is in the drive train and in the nature of the --

**Jenny Jones (AM):** He is not answering my question, Chair.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** -- green technology that we are introducing.

**Jenny Jones (AM):** You are not answering my question.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am answering your question--

**Jenny Jones (AM):** You promised to be terse.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** -- you are just not listening to the answer.

**Jenny Jones (AM):** No, no, no. You are talking about a completely different topic.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** The answer is that this new technology will be used throughout the London bus fleet.

**Jenny Jones (AM):** I am talking about spaces on the bus.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Actually, the drive train and the electric technology will be influential --

**Jenny Jones (AM):** I am talking about space on the buses, not about ...

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** -- on all new buses, whether they are single-decker or double-decker.

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** I think you are in danger of repeating yourself. Jenny, could you, very succinctly, put the question that you think the Mayor is not answering please?

**Jenny Jones (AM):** I cannot even be bothered anymore because he will not answer it.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Chair, I promise you I gave her the answer. She just did not want to hear it.

**Jenny Jones (AM):** You did not give me the answer about space.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I gave you the answer. I gave you the right answer.

**Len Duvall (AM):** I tell you what is missing from this debate - and you keep hectoring us about it - is value for money; value for money and all those issues. Where is the value for money concept in this proposal, that you keep hectoring us about, that we have to have? Where is that applied, in terms of TfL, on this project?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** As you perhaps know, Len, we had a long discussion earlier on. We face, in this city, potential fines of £300 million for breaches of air quality standards. We need a new generation bus. Even if it did not have an open platform at the back, as some of them will, we are going to need new bus technology. I think the investment of £7.8 million to develop a new generation of buses for London is extremely good. These buses are going to be built in the United Kingdom. They are going to set a world standard for cleaner greener technology, which is where we think the jobs of the future are going to come. I defy anybody to say that it does not represent value for money considering that - to get back to

Jenny's [Jenny Jones AM] point - they will cost roughly the same as the current hybrid buses. This is a brave and right thing to do for our city. It is putting London back at the centre of generating new cleaner greener technology and I think we should be proud of the achievement of Transport for London.

**Len Duvall (AM):** Proud of that but, actually, on the rest of the value for money concept, does not stand up to scrutiny. It does not come up to scratch. You are only going through with this because of the vanity issue that it was in your manifesto and you feel you have to replace the bendy bus.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Oh I see. Hang on. Let us be absolutely clear, "fulfilling your manifesto" --

**Len Duvall (AM):** Can we go back? I have got one more question, Chair. One more question to ask. You were very bold in that last answer to me. You were very hesitant in terms of the detail of the scheme. Are we going to have police officers helping people on and off the platform? I think, at this stage of the project, we want to see a sense of direction here. We want you to be a bit more confident about some of the detail. We want to know exactly when and who are going to be on these buses; if you are going to put the new form of conductors; how you are spending this money on this project. You do not seem to have the answers, Mr Mayor, again, and it is really worrying. When will these platforms be open? When will they not be open? I think, in this climate, as the Members opposite keep telling us, I do not think they will be open that much because you will not be able to afford to put the people on there, whether it is unpaid police officers or not, because they will be doing other jobs. I want confidence in the way that you answer the question about the detail of this project and you do not seem to have it, Mr Mayor.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Have you finished your question? I must say I do think it depressing. This is a great project. It represents sensational value for money. I think that the Labour Group is so contorted with self-loathing and general bitterness and resentment. This is going to be a wonderful thing for London. You are snarling and snarling and sneering about it when I think, actually, lots of people will greatly value the ability to get on and get off on an open platform again, and also will think we are doing the right thing to be pioneering new cleaner greener technology.

I cannot remember really what your question was, Len, but the platform will be open whilst the bus is going through heavy traffic in the middle of town. Clearly, in other areas, when there is no particular need to have it open, then we have the advantage, with this technology, of being able to close it and to make the bus more versatile and more practical. I think that is a great thing. I hope to welcome you aboard the new generation bus when it is here --

**Len Duvall (AM):** I use buses, Mr Mayor. I am not sure if you do. I am not sure if the Members opposite do.

**Roger Evans (AM):** Mr Mayor, some of us will recall your predecessor sitting where you are now and telling us that he was going to use the police to ensure people queued for the buses in London. An approach which was universally welcomed by the Labour Group at the time so, possibly, it has changed its tune since then.

Meanwhile, in Redbridge, we are very keen to see the number 25, a bendy bus route which is plagued by high levels of crime and fare evasion --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** It is going.

**Roger Evans (AM):** -- replaced with this new, iconic, clean Routemaster design. Can you tell us when that is going to happen?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I know that the 25 is going fairly soon. I would have to get back to you exactly, Roger. I have it in my head the 25 is going by the end of this year, but I will come back to you.

**Roger Evans (AM):** I hope that when it is replaced you will be on the first bus and we will be able to welcome you to Redbridge.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** It will be a historic ride. I hope that, by then, Len [Len Duvall AM] will have sufficiently mastered his emotions to join us. Do you not think it will be a wonderful thing? They love buses as much as I love buses and they are going to want to be on that bus. They are.

**Roger Evans (AM):** I do hope, Mr Mayor, that you will resist any blandishment to retain bendy buses on heritage routes.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I know that there are some conservative spirits in this room, particularly Val [Val Shawcross AM], who loves bendy buses. She wants to protect the bendy bus. I have to tell you, Val, that the last breeding pair of bendy buses is going to be removed from our streets by the end of next year!

**James Cleverly (AM):** Mr Mayor, do you share my confusion at the amazing hypocrisy of the Labour Group? You were criticised earlier on for not doing enough to improve air quality and yet they criticise a bus that will be greener than the current fleet. You are criticised by the Labour Group here for spending money on a new and exciting project, yet we hear in the news that civil servants had to demand written instructions to go through with the inappropriate spending that was going on by Labour ministers at central government. On the one hand we hear from the Labour Group that not enough is being done to support manufacturing in the UK, and yet they criticise your project which will be built by British industry --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Absolutely right.

**James Cleverly (AM):** I am finding it difficult to comprehend. Do you share my bemusement at their decisions?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I do. I think you have done something to begin to summarise the pitiful incoherence, drift and dither. Never in their wildest dreams would they have produced something as wonderful as this. I think what you are seeing is the rage of Caliban as they behold themselves in the mirror. Hideous lumpen cavortings. I just think it is very, very sad.

**James Cleverly (AM):** Do you also think, as I do, that the party who has so habitually failed to deliver on manifesto promises at local, regional and national government level find it incomprehensible that someone actually is sitting here proudly saying, "I said I was going to deliver a new bus for London and I am now delivering a new bus"?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think, in a hotly contested field, this is Labour's most idiotic attack to date. I am now being attacked for fulfilling a manifesto promise which was

voted on by the people of London and which received overwhelming support and the biggest mandate in the history of this country.

**Darren Johnson (AM):** You reassured us all that the environmental implications of phasing out bendy buses and replacing them with other buses was properly thought through, but when we put in a freedom of information request to Transport for London we got the following response, “There has been no correspondence, including reports and presentations, between TfL and the GLA or the Mayor’s office on the environmental impact of a switch from articulated buses to other buses on routes 38, 507 and 521”. Have you got a response?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I do not know about those particular routes but it is certainly the case - and we had this discussion quite a lot I remember with Val [Val Shawcross AM] and with others about the respective environmental merits of the bendies and the replacement buses. We were able to show that, actually, there was a net reduction in carbon dioxide, from my memory, and what we were producing was to the benefit of the environment. I would be happy, Darren, to supply you with the relevant data.

## **1697/2010 – Congestion Charge Administration**

**Victoria Borwick**

*Are you satisfied with the standard of the administration of the Congestion Charge?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Victoria, I am sorry about your experience with the Congestion Charge and I apologise to you and to everybody else who had that experience, and I know there were a few who were wrongly issued with penalty charge notices when they should not have been. Obviously the overwhelming majority of people did not experience that. I am told that the glitches have now been cleaned up, as far as I know, and that the overall savings of the new system amount to £200 million, so that is an important saving, but I apologise for the inconvenience you suffered.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** I think the point is it follows on really from the point about the small shops. I have always campaigned, as have other members of this group, about the Congestion Charge. We urge you - again it came up on the doorsteps, “Boris campaigned about getting rid of the Congestion Charge and we are delighted to hear that you are proceeding with that, but, for heaven’s sake, can we speed the process up?” We talked about small shops. We talked about parking. We talked about the implications actually on the high street. We talked to the shopkeepers and residents in Portobello. We talked to the small shops and coteries around my own area, which happens to be on the border of the Congestion Charge and the not-Congestion Charge. The small shops around me do feel they have suffered as a result; the services and the service providers. They are suffering every single day that we still have the Congestion Charge.

As far as I can see - and I am delighted we have saved some money - but, for heaven’s sake, the angst caused by some of the people around -- and, OK, I have been a channel for various Congestion Charge complaints and am happy to do so because I have to say Transport for London has responded well. I have no complaints about that. Obviously it is very distressing to people who then have to find all their paperwork and photocopy and send it off to TfL. As far as I am concerned, not only do we not need this tax, but it is also being incompetently delivered.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I hear what you say, Victoria, and, again, I apologise for the aggravation you have suffered.

On the Western Extension Zone, clearly we are where we have been over the last few months in the sense that the Western Extension Zone will come out, consultation permitting, by the end of this year.

**Victoria Borwick (AM):** Thank you. That reassurance of, once again, fulfilling one of your obligations.

## **1327/2010 – Metropolitan Police Spending**

### **Richard Barnbrook**

*With public finances being put under the spotlight to limit any excesses, does the Mayor think London taxpayers are being well served with the Metropolitan Police spend on translation costs in the year 2008/09 being £10,663,034?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I have to say that I found this figure slightly startling myself when I first saw it, but this is the cost of making sure that we get proper translation and, therefore, we are able to get accurate statements into courts, statements that are watertight, and that can, therefore, be used to secure convictions.

**Richard Barnbrook (AM):** I thought you might have popped up with the idea of tourism, but, you haven't brought that old red herring up. On value for money, the question mentions, quite clearly, that in this tight recession and with the cuts about to happen with the Liberal Democrat/ Conservative partnership - which is quite clear with Nick Clegg working towards this - is there anything about value for money? Maybe we could use this £10 million to put the police on the buses; what a perfect use. It deals with both problems. Obviously that is not going to happen. What is the Mayor's comment with regards to a possible increase in 2012 of £20 million we are about to spend just on the police? That is the first part of the question.

The second part: is the Mayor aware of how much money is being spent in translations and interpretations - the figures are correct; they are from the Metropolitan Police Service under the Freedom of Information Act - on fire, health and local government?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** My answer is really just to repeat the point that if translation needs to be done by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) and other bodies, I am sure the figures can be provided. It is vital, in a huge metropolis like ours, that if we are going to have people who give accounts of themselves in foreign languages and their witness statements or whatever it happens to be, that they are properly translated so that they are secure and can be used as secure convictions in court.

**Richard Barnbrook (AM):** Chair, would the Mayor agree with Mr Clegg's comments that he made it quite clear that people in Britain that wish to stay here that are illegal - and Boris is pushing for this amnesty - and those coming in to Britain in the future have to have English as their first language before they really enter into the country to make any residency on a long term basis?

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** First of all, can I just say before the Mayor responds that this is nothing whatsoever to do with the Metropolitan Police Service budget so could you confine your questions to that.

**Richard Barnbrook (AM):** I will restructure the question then. Does the Mayor agree with Mr Clegg that with this amount of money being spent - and the Mayor is indicating that to get a fair crime court conviction with somebody not using English as their first language after committing a crime - anybody entering this country, anybody on his idea of an amnesty, should speak English clearly, therefore reducing the cost to the taxpayers on this interpretation and translation budget, which is massively out of control?

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Mr Mayor?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I certainly think that people should speak English clearly and I commend that course to the Member.

**Richard Barnbrook (AM):** Let us go back to it again. What part of English do you not understand? Maybe Latin is so far in your fuzzy little head that you have lost the idea of what English is, so let us start again.

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Mr Barnbrook, can you remember you are in a debating chamber please.

**Richard Barnbrook (AM):** I am fully aware of that. His hair is fuzzy; although not so much today. Again, what part does the Mayor not understand? It is agreed with his coalition, by Mr Clegg, that English should be the first language if entering or wishing to stay in this country, under any sort of amnesty. Do you agree that English should be used? If that is the case, how do you justify this budget?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Chair, we live in a great multicultural multiracial city where, I think, 300 languages are spoken. There will inevitably be cases in the Criminal Justice System where witness statements have to be taken in a foreign language. It is vital that they are taken down correctly and that they are sustainable and they can be used securely in court.

**Richard Barnbrook (AM):** So you think that the taxpayer will be happy with that as an answer?

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Mr Barnbrook is now out of time.

## **1678/2010 – 101 Single Telephone Number**

### **Tony Arbour**

*Is the proposal for a single '101' telephone number too vast in scope, since this one number is intended to provide access to the majority of public services across London, to report non-emergency issues such as crime and anti-social behaviour, and to provide information to tourists?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Tony, I think you are worried about a plan for a vast new service. The objective of the 101 scheme, if it is proceeded with, would be to reduce bureaucracy and to reduce the number of call centres there are in London. I think there are currently 2,400 phone lines of various kinds that you can ring across London to get information

of one kind or another. We are looking at the potential for some sort of internet based rationalisation for the convenience of the public without in any way - and I know where you will be coming from on this - wishing to infringe upon the prerogatives of the boroughs.

**Tony Arbour (AM):** This would have been a suitable project ten years ago when it was first aired, when we lived in an analogue age, where the solutions were analogue. We are now in a digital age where many of these things are provided elsewhere. Why on earth should you be spending, at this time, this money on a pilot for something which could easily be provided by two men in moustaches?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Two men in moustaches?

**Tony Arbour (AM):** You are obviously not familiar with --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Oh 118 118.

**Tony Arbour (AM):** You have got it.

**Brian Coleman (AM):** Other services are available!

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You are making a very good point. We do not want to have huge banks of people manning the phones. That is not the idea. The idea is to see whether there is something that can be done with the web, as you rightly say.

**Tony Arbour (AM):** If that is so, why do you think it is the London Development Agency's (LDA) responsibility and it is the responsibility of a public body to do this? New York is often given as an example where this thing works terribly well. Of course that was set up ten years ago in New York. The boroughs do not provide the facilities which boroughs have here in London where they nearly all have a single number where the person who deals with the inquiry is familiar with the problem. It really is terribly hard to understand - and you, yourself, have said there are 2,000 odd call centres in London - why a public body should be encouraging the rationalisation of this. If there really is a requirement for this - bearing in mind that the police already have a single non-emergency number - would it not be a good thing, in these straitened times, for you to strangle this project at birth, withdraw your direction and be able to demonstrate that you are now realising that this is something which ought to be done by the private sector, it is not the role of the public sector, and you are tightening your belt straightaway?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You are absolutely right, but the trouble is that all these services are provided by the public sector at the moment and there is a huge proliferation of them and a great deal of confusion about where to go to. All we are trying to investigate is whether, or not, we can simplify things for people in London, so that they have a single contact point for any non-emergency issue they want to raise. I still think that that is something that not only offers benefits in terms of convenience but might also save money.

**Tony Arbour (AM):** I repeat; why should it be done out of public funds? There are large numbers of telecommunications companies who would be very happy to have a contract to provide such a thing. They should be making the investment. They should be carrying out the investigations. If I may say so, it is a very un-Conservative thing to do. It may be quite a Liberal Democrat thing to do, but it is certainly not a Conservative thing to do.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** There you go. Oh dear! I may have to stand convicted, Chair, of a rare lapse of my normal pure, stern, unbending Conservative principles in trying to think of ways of making life easier and more convenient for Londoners.

I would say, Tony, to save money, that is what we want to do. If it proves that this is just going to add a tier of complication to things then, obviously, we will not proceed, but it has been very successful in American cities. People have greatly valued. In Wales they have such a system. People value a simple memorable number that they can use to get in touch with the authorities of one kind or another and be directed to whichever service they want. We are seeing whether we can make that work in London with the minimum possible public expenditure. If we can get a private sector contractor to take the whole thing on then all the better.

**Tony Arbour (AM):** Can I ask if, in the interim, before you proceed with this expenditure, that you ask Nick Griffin, your new budget adviser, to investigate whether or not this is going to be value for money, before the capital that you are already putting up is spent?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Nick Griffin is already casting his eagle eye over all such expenditures and, clearly, he will have views. He is an enthusiastic supporter of the wonderful new clean bus for London.

**Brian Coleman (AM):** Mr Mayor, is the problem, though, with this that it raises public expectations?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** The 101 idea?

**Brian Coleman (AM):** Yes. You will be aware there is a website, I think, called theyworkforyou.com. I am sure Members of this Assembly constantly receive emails sent via that. During the recent volcanic ash issue I received an email from a constituent who was on holiday in Sharm-el-Sheikh with her husband and two young children and asked me what I was going to do to get her home.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Quite right. What did you do? I hope you sent her some money?

**Brian Coleman (AM):** Mr Mayor, I did offer to send the fire boat to Sharm-el-Sheikh but I am not sure we would have got permission for a passage through the Suez Canal! There is an expectation, is there not, amongst a certain section of society that, somehow, the public sector, the state, the GLA and the borough council can answer all their problems. We just simply cannot. Would you not agree?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** That is the authentic voice of Conservative scepticism. It is important that it should be heard. I think that there is another approach, which is to say, "Yes, that is a very good point but let's see if we can scope this thing out and see if, actually, there's something we can do that might add to the convenience and happiness of Londoners whilst not costing a whole shedload of money".

## 1701/2010 – Police Officers (2)

### James Cleverly

*Please outline the steps being taken to reduce the proportion of police officers on restricted duties or long-term sick leave.*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Thank you, James. The answer is that the Metropolitan Police Service is undertaking a review of the restricted duties' system and the activities officers are not expected to perform whilst on restricted duties. The result of that review will be presented to the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) on 20 May 2010.

**James Cleverly (AM):** Thank you, Mr Mayor. I look forward to the details of that coming forward to the MPA. I would make the point that, according to a report by Personnel Today, it found that, in the financial year 2008/09, 6% of the Metropolitan Police Service workforce were on restricted or recuperative duties, compared with the best performing police authority area which was the Cheshire police force at 1%.

Much is made - and much was made, particularly during the election - about the total number of police officers. Would you agree with me that, whilst the total number of police officers does not take into account those police officers who are, to all intents and purposes, unable to perform their core function, that it is a bit of an abstract figure to be bandying around?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** In the sense that you should really include the number who are also on sick leave, or you should deduct that from the total. Is that what you are saying?

**James Cleverly (AM):** The point that we are making is there are many ways of getting more operational police officers and I would suggest that a very cost effective and time effective method would be to find ways of driving down the proportion of Metropolitan Police Service officers who are on restricted or recuperative duties.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes. I am told that the total number is 1,012 at present, which is 3% of the total force. I think it has come down but, clearly, there are steps that we are looking at to drive it down further. There are 347 officers who are on long term sick leave, which is about 1% of the total number of police officers. What we are looking at - and you are making a very good point - is ways in which those officers who are currently on restricted duties can be encouraged to unrestrict their duties.

**James Cleverly (AM):** Indeed. I would also draw your attention to a written question that I have submitted - and I am not going to try to ask you to provide the detailed response to that here in the Chamber. I have anecdotal feedback that there is a huge variation between the best performing boroughs and the worst performing boroughs, best performing operational command units (OCUs) and the worst performing OCUs in this area. It seems to be particularly problematic for the outer London boroughs, that their percentage of police officers on restricted duties is making it difficult to provide the optimum level of policing within their borough, particularly when they then have other officers taken off them for mutual aid in more central London boroughs.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I completely agree with what you say.

**James Cleverly (AM):** Thank you.

## 1714/2010 – London HCA

### Steve O’Connell

*What would the Mayor do differently if he had direct control over the Homes and Communities Agency in London as has been suggested under Conservative proposals?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Thanks, Steve. The answer is that we would be able to do even more to deliver on our target of affordable homes. We are going to be building, we are pretty confident, 50,000 more affordable homes in this term of the Mayoralty, which is far more than the previous Mayor and far more, I think, than people expected. What we want to do with the reforms of the HCA that are envisaged is just to be able to get things done, like the Kickstart programme, or whatever it happens to be, without the risk of it all being held up by ministers.

Certainly it is very important for London that we are able to take control of the budgets ourselves and not have government ministers deciding they are going to take, say, £350 million away, as they did, and shunt it to areas with far less housing need, but where they think there is a greater chance of getting votes, or whatever.

**Steve O’Connell (AM):** Thank you, Mr Mayor. On the same theme I believe there has been some speculation that, when and if you get some direct control of the London HCA, you will be minded to make it more of an arm’s length operation, thereby devolving more powers and funding directly down to the boroughs. Is that your intention, Mr Mayor?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** It is certainly not possible to do that as long as London decisions are being second-guessed and thwarted by ministerial fiat.

**Steve O’Connell (AM):** Equally, Mr Mayor, again on the same theme, will you be lobbying the new coalition government that is minded towards localism, both parties of that coalition, to include, perhaps, a new GLA bill which will give you, the Mayor of London, more powers at the earliest possible opportunity?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Steve, I think there is envisaged in the Queen’s Speech a devolution bill or a constitution bill of one kind or another. I am hopeful that we will get some good stuff in that, though we have yet to see the detail.

**Steve O’Connell (AM):** OK. Lastly, I hope you will share with me, that when you do get that responsibility around the HCA funding, you will be minded to have more control about building more family sized homes that are desperately needed by Londoners.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Absolutely right. That is the reason why, in the London Plan, we put the provisions we have about the proportions; 43% of three bedrooms or more we want to see in the affordable homes quotient.

**Steve O’Connell (AM):** Thank you, Mr Mayor.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Can I come in and agree with Steve [O’Connell] in terms of the opportunity to have a new local government bill for London. Would you not agree that there are a number of areas where we need powers devolving from national government to region, and onwards to local, but if we are to have more powers for the GLA we need to have more scrutiny powers for the Assembly? I hope that all the parties round the Assembly would join in

that process to look at how to increase the powers of both sides of the GLA. Would you not agree that is a good thing to do?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Absolutely right. Let us suppose that the HCA was to become a Mayoral body in some way, then there would be a scrutiny of that body and its Chief Executive here in this place.

**Caroline Pidgeon (AM):** Right. Good.

## **1609/2010 – Central London Low Emission Zone**

**Mike Tuffrey**

*Will you give serious consideration to introducing a Clean Air Zone for central London, with measures to exclude old polluting diesel engines in particular, rather than the short-term, unpredictable road closures and traffic diversions proposed in your draft air quality strategy?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Mike, you want a quick answer? The answer is no.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** I was hoping for a quick answer of yes. Let me explain the thinking behind the question. Your Strategy which you published is very welcome in many parts but there is a hole at the heart of it, literally. When you look at the maps of where the pollution is worst and therefore the health impacts are worst, it is Heathrow, as we have already discussed, and central London, and yet your policies to deal with that are, essentially, London-wide.

Are you aware that, certainly from our perspective and from the Assembly's scrutiny perspective, there is a gap in that respect? Certainly, from the Liberal Democrat point of view we want you to do is to have proper effective measures for central London in a way that what you are currently proposing, which is washing the roads and ad hoc closures on days when it is terribly bad, piecemeal ad hoc instead of a concerted plan.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** OK. I understand. You want a central London Low Emission Zone?

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Yes.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am in favour of improving the air quality and I understand your objective. We think that we can accomplish it with the current Air Quality Strategy and that the limit values for particulate matter (PM)<sub>10</sub> will be met by next year. We want to go ahead with our current Strategy augmented by the radical measures that we are prepared to take and which are set out in the Strategy.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** I would say there is a real question whether you can meet the European Union (EU) limit values through the measures that are proposed, and they are not very effective measures, they are quite confusing with road closures and so forth. There are things in here, for example, saying that local councils should be encouraged or allowed to have their own local air quality zones, which would be total chaos driving from one borough to another borough and different rules. Your own Strategy says that the EU limit values are not good enough and we should seek to exceed them. One of the --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You mean do better than them.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** To do better than them. Yes, sorry: to have better health. Are you aware that removing the Western Extension cameras is going to cost £5 million? Instead of wasting that £5 million on removing cameras, why not turn those cameras over to keeping out of the central zone very polluting old diesel cars and have a scrappage scheme and a retro-fitting scheme to help people in inner London who have old polluting diesel cars --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Mike, it is an interesting idea. I just think the compliance costs of putting in a new Low Emission Zone in central London would be very great. I want to see what we can do with the current Greater London Low Emission Zone (LEZ). As I have said many times before to everybody, I think that has great potential and we will be proceeding. We postponed the third phase of the LEZ. We never said we were going to abandon it completely. We will be proceeding with the third phase of the LEZ because you do need to have cleaner vehicles in London. It is absolutely essential. I think that is the way to go. I think if you combine what we want to do with the LEZ, with our Air Quality Strategy and the emergency measures that we want to bring in, I think that is a better way forward than the costs of a --

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Of the third phase.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** -- new central London zone.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** The advantage of a central zone is, essentially, that you do not have to bring in the third phase of the LEZ in outer London. The projections show that you could actually, in outer London where the problem is not as acute, save the burden on all the small businesses, which you were eloquent about a few months ago. You might very well not have to do that in outer London if you concentrated your fire on inner London.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** What you are really suggesting is to move the third phase of the LEZ inwards into central London?

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** It would have to do more because you would have to do private vehicles as well, which is the politically controversial stuff.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You mean you would have to do domestic cars?

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Ten year old diesel cars would have to be encouraged off the road. The prize I put to you, Mr Mayor, is that your predecessor, who is still here --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** This is about the most interesting discussion we have had all morning.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** There we are. You see. You wait; it comes along. Your predecessor --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** All of you who want to just criticise and complain, here it is; a very interesting idea. All you can do is barrack and complain.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Can I just get back to the point here? Your predecessor is arguably known, singly, for the Congestion Charge Zone. You could be known, if you think of your legacy, as the man who cleaned up air in central London, to the huge health benefits of London. Think of that prize that I am dangling before you.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** You are a great man and I am grateful to you for dangling a prize. Obviously I think that our Air Quality Strategy is very bold, very ambitious and does --

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** It just needs to go a little bit further.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** -- hold out the hope of really reducing pollution in central London in the way we all want to see. Your idea is extremely interesting. I can see several pitfalls in it but I will certainly make sure that we have a proper discussion about it in our ongoing Liberal Democrat Conservative deliberations.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Can I just tempt fate by drawing one thing to your attention?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Is it on your Blackberry?

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** It is on my Blackberry.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Are you allowed to consult your Blackberry to ask questions?

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** This morning I have heard that the new Conservative, alas, controlled council in Richmond is tearing up the differential parking charge scheme, which has the effect of encouraging people to have clean and green cars. It is a very retrograde reactionary step. In the new politics --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** We cannot allow the coalition to break up now!

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** What is your question, Mr Tuffrey?

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** The question is why did you drop from your Air Quality Strategy that you published, the public consultation one, the commitment that was in the Assembly consultation one, "The Mayor will support boroughs that want to incentivise low emission vehicles through pricing mechanisms such as differential parking charges, both for CO<sub>2</sub> and air quality pollutant emissions." So the previous version of this, a few months ago, had your positive support for these innovative parking charge schemes that Kensington and Chelsea are bringing in. It got dropped.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Mike, the coalition is only about a week old --

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Why did it get dropped?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I think it is a week to the day since the glorious dawn broke over this country and I think it is too soon for you to try to cause strife between us over this matter, which is a question for Richmond rather than me.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** It is the Strategy. I will pursue it elsewhere. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Hang on. Richmond has taken this decision.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** It was in your Strategy.

**Gareth Bacon (AM):** Mr Mayor, the spirit of the new politics actually started long before the General Election because there was some consensus on the Environment Committee between the Conservative group and the Liberal Democrats and, in fairness, I think some of the Labour Members as well with regard to the possibility of an inner London Low Emission Zone, provided that it could be accompanied by a government-subsidised vehicle retro-fitting scheme. This is something that obviously the Government did not want to play ball with at all and did not engage full stop. Will your environmental advisers be speaking to the new Secretary of State and seeing if there might be some scope for that going forward?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Gareth, I do think that that is the way forward. I think that you have to look at the financial impact of these schemes on businesses and on people who need to use vehicles of one kind or another and I am in favour of encouraging scrappage schemes where we can.

**Gareth Bacon (AM):** I am very pleased to hear that, Mr Mayor. One of the reasons - and we supported you completely on this - for postponing the initiation of LEZ III was because of that reason; because it would tip businesses, potentially, into bankruptcy in one of the toughest economic cycles that we have ever faced. That economic cycle has not gone away and, for a variety of correct reasons, you are proposing to implement LEZ III but we still do not have that commitment from the Government --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** We do not.

**Gareth Bacon (AM):** -- and that is a substantially missing part, and I would encourage --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** It is. I think it would be a great thing if there could be a scrappage scheme. Personally what I would like to see is some sort of incentive so that people are not just buying Euro IV compliant vehicle, or whatever, but were actually buying electric vehicles (EVs) or whatever it happens to be. I think that would be the best possible thing. The timing for this is now quite tight but it would be, certainly in my view, the best way forward.

## **1679/2010 – Olympic Lanes (1)**

### **Gareth Bacon**

*When will a decision be made on the creation of Olympic lanes on the approach to the Blackwall Tunnel?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes. Gareth, the answer is that a decision will be made shortly.

**Gareth Bacon (AM):** Thank you, Mr Mayor. I feel we have been here before slightly earlier today but I will not push that too hard. What discussions have taken place with The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) on the competition schedule for events in Greenwich? When I asked this question back in the February 2010 Mayor's Question Time (MQT) you specifically ruled out Olympic lanes going through the tunnel, which I think we were very, very pleased to hear about. Then there was the question about using the roads leading up to the Blackwall Tunnel which, of course, from the south side, is the A2. I was quite concerned where that would actually stop and the impact that would have on the surrounding roads.

You wrote to me on 1 April 2010 and indicated that some sensible planning in terms of when the events happen in Greenwich could actually alleviate the need for a substantial use of any of the support roads for an Olympic lane. So I am quite interested in what discussions have taken place around the scheduling between yourself and LOCOG.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Gareth, I think the best thing really is if I organise for you to have a discussion with LOCOG about the scheduling. What we cannot do is promise that there will be no Olympic lanes around the Blackwall Tunnel at all. This is not realistic. We have to keep the city moving. We are not going to have one through the Blackwall Tunnel but there are going to be Olympic lanes. That is just a fact of life. They will not be in operation for very long but, if we are going to deliver on our promise to move people around during the Games, we have got to have them.

**Gareth Bacon (AM):** OK. I am happy to take your assurance then that we can have that meeting with LOCOG. I will approach your office outside of this meeting and we can set it up.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes. That is fine.

**Gareth Bacon (AM):** Thank you.

## 1708/2010 – London priorities

### Roger Evans

*What are your first priorities for London in lobbying the new government?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Roger. I think the priorities are pretty much as we have discussed already this morning, particularly securing the budgets for housing and for transport and all the other good things that we want to see for the city.

**Roger Evans (AM):** That is quite reassuring. We have covered a lot of the ground already but will you lobby Government to ensure that next time train operating contracts are re-tendered they include a requirement to use Oyster Pay-as-You-Go on mainline services and to provide sufficient machines for people to be able to purchase tickets at mainline stations?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Very good point, Roger. As you know, one of the things that was in the Powers Paper that the then opposition published before the election was to give TfL more of a say in the franchising of overground rail and we hope, thereby, to achieve that kind of outcome. If you look at the last couple of years I think the Oysterisation of the overground has been one of the most popular things that I can think of. It has been incredibly successful. We do need to make sure that there are enough machines where people can update their Oyster cards at mainline stations. That is something that we will certainly be pushing for.

**Roger Evans (AM):** Will you also lobby for greater control over the Olympic legacy so that we can ensure that London really does get something out of the Games once it is all over?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes. There is going to be a lot of lobbying that needs to be done. We will have to fight very hard. I am hopeful, if not confident, that we will be able to get a change in the Government's arrangements, we will have some clarity and give us the ability to direct the Olympic legacy in a way that will benefit London and will not leave the site vulnerable to the larceny of the Treasury. There is obviously a risk that people will look at that

investment with an eye to immediately recouping what is being spent on the Games, rather than the long term legacy benefits.

**Roger Evans (AM):** Obviously it is the role of Members around this Chamber to scrutinise what you do but we also have a role to represent Londoners and stand up for them in debates with the Government. Will you make sure you include Assembly Members and make use of them, as appropriate, to lobby figures in government into get your way. Particularly, of course, as former Members of this Assembly are now sitting in Government as Ministers. I refer to Mr Bob Neill and Lynne Featherstone, an excellent Equalities Minister.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** There you go. Absolutely. I am sure they will both be very conscious of the need to defend the London settlement and to get us more. I know there is a fair degree of unanimity around this horseshoe about that.

### **1737/2010 – Flooding on A1 and A41**

**Brian Coleman**

*Sections of the A1 and A41 consistently flood following heavy rainfall, especially in the Hendon area, leading to road closures and inconvenience for my constituents. Will the Mayor instruct TfL to investigate why this is the case and how drainage can be improved?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** The answer is, yes, of course TfL is aware of the problem that you mention. It is doing extensive investigations. It is to do with a flaw in a Thames Water sewer. It is not big enough to deal with the water that accumulates. I am raising the matter with Thames Water on 28 May 2010.

**Brian Coleman (AM):** I am grateful for that, Mr Mayor. I am sure my constituents are. There have been several occasions in the last six months on the A41, at different points along the A41, but particularly focused at Brent Cross, of flooding. Whilst I recognise you are omnipotent I know you cannot control the weather, but this problem is not new and TfL --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** We can control the weather. What are we doing with our Mayor's Air Quality Strategy and our climate change? That is exactly what we are trying to do; is to control the weather. I just point that out.

**Brian Coleman (AM):** Until the improvements from your strategies come along to the benefit of my constituents, can we just kick TfL where it needs to be kicked to make sure this does not continually happen month in month out?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** OK. I certainly will kick TfL wherever they need to be kicked on this, though the issue seems to be that £15 million of Thames Water needs to spend on this sewer --

**Brian Coleman (AM):** I am sorry, Mr Mayor. This is where your 101 number comes in. The trouble is, public bodies - we have all done it in our lives haven't we? Blame every other public body. So if there is an issue in my ward that I cannot deal with I blame TfL or I blame Hertfordshire County Council or I blame Thames Water --

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Your question, Mr Coleman?

**Brian Coleman (AM):** -- and therefore, Mr Mayor, you are not falling into the trap, are you, of allowing one public body to get away by blaming another are you?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** No, of course not, Brian. I was conscious as I said those words that you would come back, quite rightly, in the way that you did. I will be raising this not just with TfL but with Thames Water and any other guilty parties I can find.

## **1687/2010 – City Operations**

**Andrew Boff**

*Why will the City Operations team in the GLA be spending £473,000 on consultants in 2010/11?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes, Andrew, your question is about why are we spending - and, by implication, wasting - £473,000 on consultants for City Operations. Two points. One. That is not the spend; that is just the budget. Even if we do spend all that I have to tell you I do think that this is a legitimate expenditure and a necessary expenditure for this city. We are tasked with a most amazing responsibility in London. We have got to do the live sites, the look of London. We have got to do the non-accredited media centre, the whole cultural programme, ceremonies, London events, co-operation, hospitality, brokerage, protocol for unaccredited dignitaries, public information. We have got to do a way of finding signage successfully for visitors. We - as the city authority - are going to be put to the test as never before in 2012. We are going to have to lay on a fanfare. I do not think that, as the GLA, we are yet getting our heads round the extent to which we are going to be tested by all this. We really need to focus on this. This is going to be huge for our city. I think that this expenditure is justified.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** Could you tell me, Mr Mayor, one of the things that the City Operations team is involved in is the provision of the London media centre. That is not the international broadcast centre --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** It is not.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** This is not the main press centre in the Olympic Park which is covered by the £9.3 billion --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I can tell you what that is about.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** This is in addition to and separate from the £9.3 billion. This London media centre for less accredited media is going to cost the LDA £5.8 million and is going to leave no legacy whatsoever. Could you tell me the justification for that particular investment?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I can do my best, Andrew [Boff]. Let me explain that every Olympic Games has a non-accredited media centre in the host city. The accredited media, the people who do the broadcasts that the world sees and then, I am afraid, there is a whole number of media from around the world who want to come to the host city and who want to cover the Games but simply cannot get, through shortage of space, into the Olympic Park. It is always necessary to produce a non-accredited centre. There are going to be 15,000 journalists in that centre. It falls to the city, to us, to organise it. If you look back at previous Olympic Games, if you think about the experience in, say, Atlanta, it is vital that we, as a city, give the best possible account of ourselves.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** So is your justification, Mr Mayor, for the London media centre that every other Olympics has done it so we will just do it as well?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** My justification is that if you have, speaking as someone with some passing background understanding of the media, that if you leave these creatures to their own devices and you do not provide for them in a systematic way and you do not give them a source of reliable information, then you will be doing the project that you want to explain to the world a grave disservice. I think that the non-accredited media centre does make sense for London and it is one of the reasons why I defend this consultancy work.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** It may make sense but does £5.8 million make sense in order to provide for them, which has no legacy return at all?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I understand what you are saying, Andrew. This is the kind of point that can be made time and time again about almost anything that we do in London in the run up to the Olympics in order to make the world feel welcome to London and in order to show off our city to the best possible advantage. I think, if you look at the long term reputational benefits that will flow from a great Olympics, I think it is money well spent. If you look at the long term reputational damage sustained by a city like Atlanta as a result of its bad experience, I think the same point can be made.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** This is just another scheme, as I have emphasised earlier, in addition to the £9.3 billion. I am quite confident, as you are, Mr Mayor, that you will deliver the Olympic Games within the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding within that £9.3 billion. What we are talking about here is expenditure in addition to that. Now members of the public feel that £9.3 billion is the final bill but time after time we are getting bill after bill which is not expressed within that £9.3 billion. So, actually, we have well broken through that £9.3 billion already have we not, Mr Mayor?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Two points. The answer is sort of yes and no. I think it is possible that, actually, there will be significant savings on the £9.3 billion overall, just because, if you look at the achievement of the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA), it is coming in well under budget at the moment. I am not saying there will be colossal savings and we should not run away with large sums of money that we will be able to claw back now because there will be expenditures that will be necessary in the run up to the Games.

I do not want you to run away with the idea that all these extra expenditures in the city are outside the £9.3 billion. That is not true. A lot of what we are envisaging will be within that budget and that is why it is important that the new Government does not come in and hack huge sums out of it now. Every host city finds this; there will be expenditures in the final six months that will put fresh pressure on the budget.

**Andrew Boff (AM):** Thank you, Mr Mayor.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** Can I just check, because I think Andrew is right to talk about the £9.3 billion because my information is that, within that £9.3 billion - in other words within the LOCOG allocation - there is already a non-accredited media operation planned for, so that this spending is actually in addition to what is already being spent on non-accredited media in the £9.3 billion.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I am not certain. I have allowed Andrew [Boff] to assert that the £5.8 million that he refers to is from some £9.3 billion budget. I am not actually certain that you are correct about that, Andrew or Mike. If you will forgive me --

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Could you come back to the Assembly?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** -- I think we need to pin down exactly where that £5.8 million is coming from. It is our intention to keep as much as we possibly can within the £9.3 billion. I am confident we can deliver the Olympic Games for less than £9.325 billion.

Your question was really about the consultancy budget for the City Operations unit. Do not forget, people, the huge job this is going to be and we are tasked with delivering it. There is no one else. It is us.

## 1342/2010 – Walking

**Jenny Jones**

*Will you make 2011 London's Year of Walking?*

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Thank you, Jenny. The answer is yes, next year, 2011, is going to be, apparently, the year of walking. 2012 the year of breathing! I could go on.

**Jenny Jones (AM):** I just want to say that you have my full support for that year on that topic.

**Darren Johnson (AM):** On everything!

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** On everything!

**Jenny Jones (AM):** On that topic. There is just one thing that worries me because one of the things that we found is pedestrian casualties are not very good where you have heavy traffic. Victoria's [Victoria Borwick AM] report highlighted the huge number of pedestrian casualties where you have lots of traffic, for example, in Oxford Street. Yet you are introducing SCOOT. I do not understand why you are introducing that in heavy congestion areas --

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Sorry, Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique?

**Jenny Jones (AM):** Yes. Well done.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Which has been in use in this city for about 20 years.

**Jenny Jones (AM):** I know but it recognises cars so you are going to give more time to cars. What happens in Oxford Street and places is you are getting a huge build up of pedestrians who will then start running across the road. Would you commit to re-assessing introducing SCOOT into areas where there are lots of pedestrian traffic?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** I will.

**Jenny Jones (AM):** I am glad you are interested in this topic because obviously it is one I can work with you on.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** It is very, very important. You are completely right to raise the question because I often feel in our discussions about transport in London we never talk enough about pedestrians. We never talk enough about the impact of our policies on pedestrians. We have got to think about their safety and their confidence as well.

I will look at your SCOOT suggestion and I will talk it over with David Brown [Managing Director, Surface Transport, TfL] and Kulveer [Kulveer Ranger, Mayoral Adviser on Transport].

**Jenny Jones (AM):** Brilliant.

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Kulveer is in charge of the year of walking by the way. If you want to go for a walk ...

**Jenny Jones (AM):** OK. The SCOOT website does not mention pedestrians. Absolutely no comment on the topic at all. It is all about its facts and figures on traffic --

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** The Green Group is now out of time. Gareth Bacon wants to come in.

**Gareth Bacon (AM):** Thank you, Chair. The Greens are absolutely right, Mr Mayor. Walking is terribly important. Can you guarantee that, so long as you are Mayor, walking will be allowed at any time and not just in 2011?!

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Obviously I do not want to discriminate against running or, indeed, sitting still! Walking is going to be a top priority under this Mayoralty.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** What is your long term goal for greenhouse gas emissions?

**Boris Johnson (Mayor of London):** Yes, in the spirit of coalition partnership why do we not have a look at this one. We think we are being very ambitious in wanting to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 60% by 2025. If you can actually plot out a realistic graph that gets us to zero carbon by 2050 then I am certainly willing to look at it.

**Mike Tuffrey (AM):** There it is; there is the graph. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

**Dee Doocey (Chair):** Thank you very much, Mr Mayor.