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| **London Assembly** **Mayor's Question Time** **20 th July 2016**   **Witnesses:** * Sadiq Khan, mayor of London

 **Overview** Assembly members questioned mayor of London Sadiq Khan on issues affecting London, with several questions being posed in relation to Brexit and Khan's stance going forward. **Oral update** Sadiq Khan, mayor of London, provided an oral update to matters occurring since the mayor's report.Khan noted Govia Thameslink's emergency timetable and stated the situation was a 'disgrace to London'. He advised he had requested that the DfT put a top TfL team in charge of the Southern Rail franchise.He said he had published an agenda pay audit of city hall staff as a result of his campaign for gender pay equality.Khan also spoke about his devolution summit which had included council leaders and business representatives.Finally, Khan noted the #londonisopen campaign which he said was aimed to provide reassurance in the wake of the referendum result. **#londonisopen** In response to a question by Andrew Boff (Con, Londonwide), Khan said the work on #londonisopen had not produced any additional costs to the overall GLA budget and was relying on pro bono work. **Southern Rail** Asked by Florence Eshalomi (Lab, Lambeth and Southwark) if TfL had capacity to run Southern rail, Khan said the franchise should be stripped from Govia and TfL should run the service in the 'short term'. **Trade unions** In response to Gareth Bacon (Con, Bexley and Bromley), Khan stressed the positive role of trade unions and said he would work in partnership with them, in contrast to Boris Johnson.He said new technology and approaches needed to be sued to deal with rising demand on the public transport network.Khan added that he would soon be meeting with trade unions to explain his vision for London transport.He then described the meetings he had already had with unions in response to a further question by Bacon.The Mayor confirmed he had not yet spoken to RMT about Govia regarding the guards' dispute, which Bacon felt was remiss given the scale of the possible industrial action.Khan added in response to an additional question from Bacon that he did not think there was an issue with regard to possible industrial action affecting the new Night Tube. **Single market / EU** In response to a question from Fiona Twycross (Lab, Londonwide), Khan said he had requested that Theresa May negotiate for Britain to remain in the single market, saying this was the best course of action to secure London's economic position as well as adding value to other areas such as higher education.Khan said 'London should have a seat at the negotiating table' and that he was actively lobbying for this at present.He added he was encouraged by the positive response from government to the #londonisopen campaign, and spoke further about work by his deputy mayor for business. **Estate regeneration** In response to a question from Sian Berry (Green, Londonwide), the Mayor spoke about the benefits of various regeneration approaches. He said he was going to develop further guidance on the issue and added that in his view it should only happen where there was resident support.Khan added that it was important to include private tenants within the guidance on regeneration.He added that he was currently collecting best practice with regard to the consultation process.  Berry suggested balloting of residents should be used because previous consultation processes had been loaded in favour of the preferred options.Khan added in response to a question by Boff that he thought it was important to consult with the estate regeneration Panel.He said it was important to speak to leaseholders regarding the issue of loss of full equity rights in new developments. **Gatwick** In response to David Kurten (UKIP, Londonwide), Khan reiterated his support for a second runway at Gatwick.  He urged the new government to act faster on airport capacity issues.He welcomed the decision to spend an additional £200m on Gatwick Airport and added he was meeting Chris Grayling shortly face to face to discuss this.On Heathrow, the Mayor made clear he remained opposed to expansion. **Terrorist flags at London Rallies** Kemi Badenoch (Con, Londonwide) raised the issue of terrorist flags at London rallies, to which Khan replied that the Metropolitan Police had 'operational difficulties' with respect to policing political marches.He advised that the police were currently gathering evidence regarding an event on July 30th and stated 'we cannot have people supporting terrorism on the streets of London'.Asked by Badenoch whether waving Hezbollah flags constituted an incitement to hate crime, Khan said the Terrorism Act was clear on this issue.In response to a question by Andrew Dismore (Lab, Barnet and Camden) Khan said he was concerned about low level of arrests in subsequent investigations where it had been shown terrorist / extremist flags were being waved. **London Economic Zone / EU** In response to a question from Dismore, Khan said due to the situation regarding the EU there was need for Whitehall to be more ambitious in providing additional powers to London, including extra tax-raising powers.He repeated his view that membership of the Single Market was essential for London's economic development.He said with regard to possible avenues for London's economy that 'nothing is off the table'. **Childcare** Caroline Pidgeon (Lib Dem, Londonwide) enquired about childcare costs in London, which the Mayor acknowledged were problematic.He said there was no silver bullet on the issue and London would need to be creative in finding solutions.  Some measures included redefining childcare workers as keyworkers, as well as changing GLA policies and other forms of incentives, he added.Pidgeon followed up and requested the Mayor comment on an interest free childcare loan scheme for all GLA staff, which he advised would be addressed as a part of an action plan in relation to GLA employment. **Transport – crowdfunding** In response to a question from Keith Prince (Con, Havering and Redbridge), Khan said he was exploring additional funding opportunities to improve transport in London, though he was against imposing additional charges for transport on Londoners. **Brexit – skills** Len Duvall (Lab, Greenwich and Lewisham) wanted to know about the long term implications of Brexit on skills. It was a serious matter of concern according to the Mayor, which was one reason why he urged government to protect the rights of present EU migrants.He spoke in support of his new Skills for London taskforce which aims to address skills deficits in London.Khan added that London needed to be a high-skilled, diverse economy rather than relying disproportionately on financial services, and that Brexit may prove an opportunity to diversify the London economy. **Housebuilding – Brexit** Tom Copley (Lab, Londonwide) following this with a query about the impact on housebuilding.Khan advised that around 25 per cent jobs in London's housebuilding industry were taken by workers from EEA countries, and that their removal would negatively affect London housebuilding.He added in relation to housebuilding apprenticeships that the lack of funding commitments from central government meant he could not give any estimate of their possible future level. **Tube Noise** Tony Devonish (Con, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, City of Westminster) posed a question on tube noise, to which Khan replied that he had established a working group.In addition to this he said TfL was working across the capital to address noise and vibration issues, and that new track fixings to address noise problems were being installed at various tube stations. **Private rented sector** Replying to Copley, the Mayor affirmed his determination to support those renting privately.There was still a minority of rogue landlords, he added, which was why he had requested additional powers over landlord licensing schemes.The Mayor felt that the London Rental Standard was not working and said he was determined to help renters by building new affordable homes. **London Living Rent** In response to a question from Copley, Khan said he had been making good progress with the previous secretary of state on the idea of a London Living Rent, but was unsure of the situation with the new minister, who he would be meeting shortly. **Frequent Flyer levy** In response to a question from Caroline Russell (Green, Londonwide) Khan said the government would have to be aware of the risks regarding the effect on key business workers with regard to the possible introduction of a Frequent Flyer Levy.He added that in his view the proposal would also contain practical difficulties, though he was unwilling to undertake a study into the idea. **Tourism** The Mayor noted the appointment of his deputy mayor as chair of London and Partners and outlined how the organisation would lobby for tourism from different countries.Twycross requested a comment on the idea of a London visa for Indians, to which Khan said the London chamber of Commerce had argued for this. **Citizens Initiatives** Replying to Boff Khan said he wanted Londoners to be engaged in their communities and his decision making which, he said,  meant that he would be engaging in additional consultation processes, noting the success of the recent consultation on air quality.Boff thought this did not go far enough as people should be determining issues to be consulted upon rather than the politicians.  Khan stressed he believed in representative rather than delegated democracy. **Brexit – transport** In response to Eshalomi, Khan confirmed the downgrade of the UK credit rating due to Brexit had affected the credit rating of TfL.He said the vote to leave the EU would have no impact on his fare freeze but that it underlined the need for new investment in transport infrastructure through schemes such as Crossrail 2.The Mayor advised that investment earmarked for TfL from government was still going ahead, and that he would be discussing with the chancellor issues related to investment going forward, though he was impressed with the new governments' attitude to infrastructure.There was uncertainty about whether possible increases in construction costs could have a knock on effect on TfL, he added. **Children's festival** Replying to Peter Whittle (UKIP, Londonwide) Khan outlined his support for dedicated initiatives for children to engage with the arts, with a view to providing additional events for children.  When Whittle followed up to request a specific children's festival for London, Khan confirmed he would not rule this out. **Brexit – environment** On the effect of Brexit on the environment, the Mayor did not want the referendum result to act as an excuse for watering down environmental protection. A part of advocating for remaining in the Single Market was to preserve the benefits of environmental regulation, he advised. Khan confirmed he was due to meet Ministers soon and would establish the new government's position on this, and that he would write to the prime minister with regard to urging her to sign up to the Paris climate agreement. **Public Health** Khan echoed the concerns of Onkar Sahota (Lab, Ealing and Hillingdon) about London's TB rates, and also raised the STDs and obesity as well as mental illness as problems which cost a lot of public money.Khan said he wished to address such public health issues through the use of all available powers, mentioning the development of a London Mental Health Roadmap. Khan added he felt devolution would help London obtain better outcomes with regard to public health, and that he did not feel at present there was any real leadership with regard to London public health. **Night Tube** Khan told Eshalomi that all 45 toilets operated by London Underground and Overground would remain open overnight, and that in his view London boroughs also needed to ensure there was increased toilet provision.He also confirmed that he was talking to local authorities to try and address antisocial behaviour issues related to the night tube. **Policing budget** In response to a question by Unmesh Desai (Lab, Barking & Dagenham, City of London, Newham, Tower Hamlets), Khan said whilst it was good that funding for police had not been reduced further by the government, it was still the case that police budgets remained under pressure. It looked like additional savings of £300-400m for the current police and crime plan period needed to be made, he thought.The Mayor added there was some uncertainty as to whether a shelved Home Office plan for reducing police budgets would reappear under the new home secretary, and he criticised the Home Office for allocating less money for London than the independent review had proposed.Khan spoke further on his desire to prioritise neighbourhood policing, with particular concern for front line officer resources.Dismore noted at yesterday's police and crime committee the deputy commissioner said 500 police officers had been taken out of neighbourhood policing to fund the increase in firearms officers.  He wanted to know if these cuts could be reversed.In response, Khan said he was committed to ensure the police and crime budget going forward protected neighbourhood policing. The decision mentioned by Dismore had been based on the previous plan but his clear priority was to have more frontline officers, he stated. **Tall buildings** Nicky Gavron asked about the impact of tall buildings, to which the Mayor advised an assessment should be made in the new London Plan.Whilst he was not opposed to them he criticised the previous administration for being 'too passive' in their impact on local communities, and he would consider having consultation standards as a part of the London Plan. **London Borough of Culture** In response to a question by Navin Shah (Lab, Brent and Harrow) Khan spoke of the aim to deliver ambitious cultural programmes and increase participation in the arts through the idea of having a London Borough of Culture.        |

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