

City Question Time – October 2024

Chris Hayward, Policy Chairman (CH): A very good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to our third City Question Time of this year I'm really thrilled that we've been able to hold this evening in the City of London School. It's a proud member of the City of London Corporation family, one which has ranked as 15th best school in the country. And one of the joys of moving these question times around our Square Mile is hopefully for you as residents to also be able to get to see some of the places that you might not go into normally. So I'm very grateful to the headmaster and the governors for allowing us to hold this event here this evening.

Now I see a lot of faces I know in the audience and I think I know probably quite a few of you by now and you know me, but for those of you I don't know, I'm Chris Hayward, the Policy Chairman of the Corporation, which in reality means I'm the political leader of the City of London Corporation. We organise these events with a view to hearing from you on the issues that concern you and I'll do my best along with colleagues on this panel who are Chairs of some of the other major Corporation committees to answer your questions. We'll do our very best.

Now today I'm really pleased that we will have the event chaired by Jacqui Webster on my right here, who as well as being an elected member in Cripplegate is my relatively recently appointed Lead Member for Resident Engagement, making Jacqui one of the members most important in delivering the residential reset that's so important to me and I'm delighted, Jacqui. Thank you for taking on the role and for the work you're doing and more from you in a moment.

Now, after our panel questions today, which will last until 6pm, you will have the opportunity to ask Jacqui any questions you have about resident engagement and give her ideas about what more you want the City Corporation to do better, to support and communicate with all of you and that conversation should last until quarter past six when we hope to wrap up.

Now the residential reset, and I've said this many times before but I shall go on repeating it, it's not about us just talking to you, it's about trying to deliver for you and through the feedback you give us at these events we've been able to focus on some, not all, but some of the issues that I know really matter to our residents across the City.

Now I know we won't always be able to deliver on every single task that you give us, all your asks, but we have published and you should see it on your chairs again tonight, 'You Said We

Did', which hopefully will respond to some of those things you raised at previous meetings and we've been able to do something about and it will give you some answers.

I've said before and again I make no apologies for repeating it, that it's my strong view that the City Corporation has not done enough to invest in our estates and while we're turning this around, which we cannot do overnight, we will try to ultimately get to the point where we are doing the job that those residents on our estates so richly deserve.

We've spoken before about the window and roof project of the Golden Lane Estate and we're currently in the tender process for a contractor to carry out those vital works that will ensure a meaningful improvement for the quality of life for our residents on that particular estate, a meaningful improvement for the quality of life for our residents on that particular estate. And speaking of Golden Lane, I'm pleased to announce two other updates since our last City Question Time Event First we've secured some £135,000 from the GLA to improve signage and lighting across the estate. The first refurbished signs have already gone up and in the year ahead we will be refurbishing all of the cast iron signs, steel trays and more to improve that estate. This money will also pay for the necessary survey and consulting costs to improve the lighting on the estate.

What's more, a clear political direction has been set by me to refurbish the Golden Lane Leisure Centre, which is a really important community sport asset within the Square Mile and is in much need of some TLC. This should shortly be going to the necessary committees for final approval and the funding for the refurbishment has already been identified. I'm clear that we must refurbish the Leisure Centre into one truly fit for the purpose of the modern age.

Now just very recently, a couple of weeks ago, I went for a ward visit to Portsoken at the beginning of the month accompanied by some of the elected members of that ward. There are clearly many improvements that need to be made on the Middlesex Street Estate and details of the currently planned improvements for the next 12 months are in the 'You Said We Did' document. Now for those of you new to the City Question Time, these 'You Said We Did' documents give us an opportunity to look into the questions you ask at the event and where possible make necessary improvements.

So with that, that's enough for me by way of opening remarks. I'm sure you'll have some questions to fire at me in a moment and I'll do my best to answer them. But I'm now going to hand over to Jacqui, who will take over the chairmanship and introduce the rest of the panel and set out the logistical information for the rest of this evening's event. Jacqui.

Jacqui Webster (JW): Thanks very much, Chris, and I'd just like to echo your words of welcome to everybody. So welcome. I'm going to run a very, very tight question time so that we finish at six o'clock and I've just realised the school clock is not working, so I've had to set an alarm on my watch, I'll keep the introduction really brief because we, as Chris mentioned, we have time after question time to talk about resident engagement.

But before that, it's important to set out how the event will run. And I can tell the microphone is moving around. So is it an issue? Can everybody hear all right? Okay, good. Thanks.

So if someone asks a specific question, we're going to try and cluster those questions. So for example, if you ask about crime, we'll try and make sure that we keep to that theme. No more than three questions, then we'll move on to the next topic. This is to make sure that we can get around the room, ask as many questions as possible in the time that we've got. Please do ask your question instead of making statements. That also allows us to have more questions, there'll be a microphone, please only speak when you have the microphone. This is really important because we are filming the event and this helps us to properly capture the questions in captioned video and also for everybody else to be able to hear you. We'll field questions to the relevant committee chairs and I will ask them to introduce themselves. We only have one microphone, so we're going to have to pass it around the table. Finally, there are no planned fire alarms for the session, so if one goes off, we will make our way out of the building using the following the fire exits which are behind you.

I'll now ask the panel to introduce themselves and then we'll begin with questions. I'll start with you, Tijs.

Tijs Broeke (TB): Thank you very much and good evening, everyone. I'm Tijs Broeke, I'm the Chair of the Police Authority Board, working with the city police and it's great to see a couple of our colleagues and indeed the Commander Khan to hear tonight. So any questions around that I'm happy to help.

Helen Fentiman (HF): Hello, I'm Helen Fentiman, I'm an elected member in Aldersgate Ward and I recognise quite a lot of faces here, it's good to see you. I'm here this evening as the Chair of the Community and Children's Services Committee which is responsible for housing, social services, some education and a variety of other things, so I'll be very happy to answer questions on those topics.

Peter Dunphy (PD): My name is Peter Dunphy, I'm the Deputy Chair of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee which amongst many other things looks after things like recycling, air quality, noise pollution, rubbish collection, street cleansing and toilets. Thank you.

Shravan Joshi (SJ): Shravan Joshi, I'm the Chairman of Planning and Transportation. We look after the built environment in the square mile alongside the streets and walkways, pedestrian pathways in the city. Thank you very much.

JW: Could we move to our first question please? I saw a hand go up there David. Yes, you.

Resident: Mine is education related, although it might be sort of building regulation. I don't know what it is. But okay, so I'll explain. So you may be aware of the school, COLPAI, City of London Primary Academy in Islington, my son goes there and he loves it and that's great. However, the build was a bit weird. I noticed that there's balconies overlooking, like residential balconies overlooking the school playground, which does concern me. It's just weird. Why would you have residents overlooking a school playground? It's odd. And I think it's dangerous, or I think it's potentially dangerous, it really worries me. Thank you very much. Okay, just one question.

JW: Is it on the same topic?

Resident: Kind of. It's related to children. Kind of green spaces, really. How could we develop more green forests or spaces for them to run in bigger spaces? Because actually COLPAI's school playground is tiny. And I had an idea about the school, but I'll tell you that after.

JW: Okay, thank you very much. Have we got any other questions relating to the theme of education, green spaces? Yes. Both hands went up together, actually. I'll let David choose.

Resident: Thank you. Hi. So we've recently become aware that the... Sorry. We've recently become aware that some of the children's centre services, the providers are being changed, one of the providers is currently at Aldgate School and when the funding goes away from them, they're going to no longer be able to provide the nursery services that they currently provide. I'm not sure whether this was intentional or not, but there's very few nursery services in the City of London anyway, it's also one of the few nurseries that has an outdoor space linked to the school. We just wanted some clarity on whether it was intentional that the nursery would be closed, and if so, if there's some provision to provide those services somewhere else.

JW: Thank you very much for your question. Okay, we've got three questions there, and I'm looking at my colleague Helen because we've got a question on COLPAI, green spaces, which I think in terms of children's services as well might be a question for you, and then obviously the children's centre services. Thank you.

HF: Thank you. I have to say, I was struggling to hear everything that you said about COLPAI. So I'll try my best, I hope I've picked up the points that you were making. I think the first one was about a school surrounded by and having housing above and the safeguarding and the safety of that. Is that correct? Yeah. Okay. Well, thank you, I understand that, I think that it is a really important point, and I think that one of our primary concerns, wherever we have children's facilities, is to secure safe places for the children, and so you're absolutely right to raise that with us. I think that the play area has got some protection, as I understand it, from part of the residential area, but I guess your concern is about the flats that are above the school and looking down. I have to be absolutely honest and say that I can't recall the detail of the design and whether there's any canopy that offers any kind of protection. You're telling me there's not. So I think what I'm going to have to do is take that one away and talk to my colleagues in education and in Islington, because actually the school is in Islington and it was a joint build or arrangement with City of London and Islington, and come back to that. So perhaps we could make sure that we have your details so that we can reply to you in full on that. But to be assured, safeguarding children is absolutely key to anything that we do in children's services.

My colleague is going to answer it on green spaces in a moment. But while I've got the microphone, if you don't mind, I'll just turn to the Aldgate School, and I would have been very surprised if we hadn't had a question about that this evening, so it's a great opportunity to put right some of the miscommunication that there has been to do with the school. The Community and Children's Services officer team have responded to some government advice and policy, previous government advice and policy about creating something called Children's Hubs, which is to make sure that we spread the resources that we have to support families as far as we can, and also to deliver those services to the highest possible quality that we have. A lot of our services were located in the Aldgate School as part of the childcare facilities and the nursery facilities, and that we've decided through discussion in the Community and Services Children's Committee to move that part of the service, so the advisory supportive services, away from the school and make it more accessible to other parts of the city and not least building on services that we already have in some of our libraries. The nought to two or the rising three-year-old childcare part is not closing and the nursery class is not closing, and the services that we've contracted the school to provide are not closing, but they are being located in different places., but any family who needs those services will still have access to them.

We're at the moment working through the detail of that with our colleagues in Aldgate School, and we will be agreeing with them, the communication for the future. I do know that the school did communicate with parents and unfortunately it caused a lot of anxiety and concern for people. We've talked with the school about that and we will be sending out joint communication so that we're absolutely clear that we all understand the position. We will also be holding a session for families and parents so that we can explain to everybody what is happening and how the new service will be provided, and we will also be holding sessions with

staff to talk through. Principally that will be led by the school as the employer, but we will be making sure that staff are absolutely clear about the arrangements for them in the future. Some will go with the service to new locations and some will stay in the school, the service in the school is for the school to determine and to provide, but in communication and discussion with City of London.

JW: Thank you Helen, I'm going to pass to Shravan about green spaces and play.

SJ: So let me start by saying we certainly don't have enough green space in the city, and I think everyone would agree with that. I think we have to balance that pressure that we have, we're a dense urban environment and finding the right space to actually realise green space is quite difficult, so I'm sure you'd recognise that equilibrium that we have to reach.

I think if I refer to the local plan that we've got going through right now, there is an entire chapter on biodiversity and greening in the Square Mile, and we absolutely recognise that if we're going to hit any sort of climate targets or if we're going to hit any sort of sustainability, then green space plays a big part in that within the Square Mile itself. So what we have done, and there are members, I know John Edwards in the audience, he's a prolific campaigner for more children's play areas in the Square Mile and outdoor exercise and that is something that we are building into future plans. So I've got two examples for you, one is the Barbican podium area that is going to be not just resurfaced but is going to be a new green space for residents to enjoy with play built into it, and the other one is Whitefriars Square. So this is the area near St. Paul's, it's near the 81 Newgate Street development. It's going to be quite a vast open space actually and it's going to be open mostly for families and visitors and tourists to enjoy in the Square Mile as opposed to the sort of pocket parks that we have dotted around. These are more sort of open fields, I suppose, if you want to call it a field, where people can come and enjoy and play seven days a week, and it fits into the Destination City strategy that we've got to invite more, I suppose, different demographics of people into the Square Mile throughout the course of the week.

JW: Thank you very much. I'll take the next round of questions please. So we've got a gentleman over here, a lady over there, and then we'll go to you, sir.

Resident: Hi, thanks. Can you hear me with this? Yeah, David Wilcox. It was great to see that the Paul Martin report is now published thanks to the link which you put on the leaflet, and as a resident of Smithfield, I was really interested in Paragraph 917, which emphasises the importance of the head of profession, the cultural strategy, and also the opportunities in the wider area of Smithfield, Charterhouse and Barts require a concerted effort to ensure the undoubted excellence of the new London Museum is reflected in the neighbourhoods in which the museum will be located. I think businesses and residents would agree with that. So how can

we get involved in that? Who actually will drive that forward? Where does the responsibility lie? Is it with the BIDs or the corporation?

JW: Thank you, David, and I did realise that I've given other questions the opportunity to be asked without clustering them. So let's hope they're all about Destination City, but if not, I'll come back to you. Chris, would you like to take that question? Thank you.

CH: So on Destination City, I promised, I think, at the last City Question Time that a public version of the Destination City review would be published on our website, and it has now been, as you've, I think, just indicated. I'm personally really pleased with the new recast programme. It will support growth in businesses, worker numbers and visitor numbers, and it benefits will accrue to residents as well. I genuinely believe that. We've got this Destination City Advisory Board, which will support the growth strategy of Destination City, and it is advisory and has no decision making powers, but it will comprise of City of London Corporation elected members and external experts as well, and we put out a range to a whole range of people across the square mile asking for expressions of interest and of course, we will review those and we will then, officers will recommend appointments to those roles. Now the resident voice, right, is really important as part of Destination City, you know, let nobody be in any doubt about that, and that's why I thought probably it would be good to have Jacqui Webster as our Resident Engagement Lead sit on the Destination City Advisory Board, and Jacqui you've agreed to do that, so I'm very, very grateful for you, for you for that. But we do want to get the residents involved, they're an important voice on Destination City, I want to make it beneficial. I don't know whether I've actually answered. Have I answered your question sufficiently? Sorry.

Resident: I was asking specifically about that recommendation for Smithfield Charterhouse area and who would take forward the—

CH: Oh, the Smithfield Charterhouse area. Look, I will have to get back to you on that, I haven't got that information in front of me tonight, but can I take your details and I'll actually make sure I email you or officers we email and give you the specific answer.

JW: Thanks, Chris.

Resident: So in terms of breaking barriers and calling for deaf awareness and disability inclusion training, so as a deaf individual, I've witnessed firsthand a lack of understanding and barriers that we, along with others with disabilities, face on a daily basis. This isn't just the experience of deaf people, but it's a reality for many within the community. And too often, they feel brushed aside, our needs are overlooked, and our voices are unheard, and it's time for a real change. So we're calling on all departments, social services, and companies to prioritise deaf awareness and disability inclusion training by providing staff with the training that is required, inclusivity doesn't just mean ticking a box, but generally understanding and accommodating for different and unique needs.

With proper training, staff can learn how to communicate effectively, break down barriers, and create an environment where everybody feels valued, safe, and included. Let's move forward towards a society that truly cares for its members by ensuring that deaf individuals and those with disabilities can have equal access, respect, and support in every aspect of life. But the issue is we can't do this alone, and we need all of your help for change. Can you all help us to break this barrier that we face each day that affects our daily lives?

JW: Thank you very much for the question. I'm going to pass this over.

Resident: And can I say one more thing? The City Police did an amazing job, they really did for deaf awareness, I am proud of them. How we think they did that already is just another department and new people is coming to the City and need to learn to be training about their own other disabilities.

JW: Thank you very much for the question. I'm going to hand to Helen and then maybe to Tijs for the second part of the question.

HF: Thank you, Alina, I know we've discussed this before. I think that you raised and continue to raise some extremely important points about deaf awareness, but disabilities more generally as well. I think you make some really important points about all of our staff in all departments being trained and being aware, whether it's people working internal to the corporation or people working externally and communicating with all of our population. We have a number of senior officers here today, and I think what I would offer on behalf of us as members is to talk through with the senior officers in the corporation and to challenge the training and the opportunities that are given to all of our staff, external and internal facing, to increase and improve the awareness of all disability, not just deafness, but certainly deafness, and to make a concerted effort so that whenever we are hosting occasions like this, that we make them as accessible as we can be, but that the services that we offer are just as accessible as they can be. So I think that I'm quite sure that Ian, Town Clerk, Chief Executive, will very clearly and firmly give that commitment, and we will take forward your comments, and I know you will hold us to account if we don't deliver on that one. Thank you very much.

TB: Yeah, and to the point, your point around training, training of all staff, that includes City of London Police, we have a benefit that the City Police is closely working together with the Corporation, so we share all the training, and if there is particular ones particularly important for policing, that will be rolled out as well. We just launched our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Programme, and so this is high on the agenda. I will take back and speak to our colleagues in the Communications Department just to make sure that that is covered in that area as well. Thank you.

HF: Sorry, just as Tijs was talking, there was something that I should have said absolutely upfront that one of the key objectives of the corporation is about diversity and inclusivity. Every time we open our laptops, that is there in front of us, it's taken very seriously. We do consider that when we're looking at policies and thinking about implementation of different and new services. But again, to reassure you, that is one of the very upfront, clear priority objectives for us all.

JW: Thank you, Helen. Can I go to the gentleman who had your hand up? Thank you.

Resident: My question is about noise control, and I can see that you've answered on this leaflet, but it isn't very effective with regard to licensed premises, because the nuisance we have only lasts for... Sorry? I'll start again. My question is about noise control and how effective it is for licensed premises. The typical nuisance we get is at two or three in the morning, and it only lasts for 10 or 15 minutes, when I call the noise control people, they say they'll be there in an hour, and they want to come into my residence in order to hear the noise themselves. That doesn't really work in those circumstances, so I wondered if there's any proposals to address that, to perhaps monitor some of the more troublesome premises at closing time.

JW: Thank you for the question. I'm going to hand to Peter.

PD: Yeah, so this covers, too, the committees which I'm on, the Port Health and Environmental Services, which deals with noise pollution. I also happen to sit on the licensing committee, so specifically I can talk to noise emanating from the nighttime economy. So there's a couple of things, one of which is related to specific events, specific noise events. As you mentioned, there is a team 24-7 that can be contacted if you are experiencing severe noise issues, and they are very good at responding. As you say, the issue is quite often that by the time they are on site, the noise issue has gone. So what my strong recommendation is to anybody who experiences regular noise issues is to keep a diary, report it to the noise control team every time you have an incident so that is actually officially on file, and if it can be tracked back to a particular license premises, then we will look at that very seriously, and ultimately our licensing officers will talk to that license premises.

Ultimately, they could be subject to a licensing review, which could affect things like their hours of opening so that we can make them close earlier, it can affect things like whether they have music or promoted events. What we found is that promoted events often create a lot more noise nuisance than the regular operation of license premises. The ability to have those promoted events can be removed if there is a regular transgressor, and there's other things we can do. We can force venues to put in devices that effectively limit the noise over time, and this is part of the dispersal policy, because one of the issues of people leaving licensed premises late at night is that if they are going from an environment where there has been very loud noise, very loud music, they walk out on the street and they are attuned to shouting at each other, and

so they are still screaming at each other and shouting at each other as though they are in a loud nightclub, and so one thing we can do is to have a situation, for instance, where a nightclub doesn't let new people in for two hours before it closes, and over the course of that two hours, the music is turned down gradually, and as that happens, they become attuned to sort of normal volumes of speaking to each other.

So as a licensing authority, we've got lots of tools in our toolbox that we can use. One of the challenges, and we know this, is tying particular noise nuisance to particular license premises. So anything that you can do to record that is enormously helpful, and anything that you experience like this, the noise pollution team, the licensing team, let us know about it, and if we see regular issues with a particular license premises, we'll seek to do something about it.

JW: Thank you, Peter. That was a very thorough answer. So I'm just wondering if there are any more questions relating to noise and licensing before we move on to the next.

Resident: Good evening, and thank you for taking my question. I'm a local resident, so I live at Sugar Quay, which is just up the road from here, we became residents there in 2018. We were told at the time that there would be a restaurant downstairs, which we knew was going to happen, six years later, they haven't found a tenant for the restaurant. We've now established that they have approached the port authorities, and they have asked, and I believe they've got it, the decking itself to be converted to an open restaurant. Now that is going to create a lot of havoc, currently that is like a playground for children that come along and visitors, taking photographs from Tower Bridge, taking photographs of HS Belfast, and it's an open space, and now the reason for doing that is it's used as a sweetener to get a tenant to go into the restaurant that they haven't been able to get in the last six years. Our residents' apartments and approximately 100 more open directly onto the decking. Now it's fine, we enjoy that, we have over the last six years, and during the summer and winter, your doors are mostly open. While we don't want to cause any feelings against people opening a restaurant, we don't believe it's right for us to be living where people will be singing Happy Birthday throughout the day and listening to the evening and causing problems. But it also will stop people enjoying the decking as an open space. You spoke earlier about green spaces, this is actually an open space which was supposed to be kept open by the port authorities.

JW: Thank you for your question. I'm looking at Peter actually.

PD: So my advice there, and again this is talking about, I need to talk in general terms about licensing rather than a specific location, just in case I end up on a panel. I probably have to excuse myself on this one. If the potential premises hasn't opened yet, then when they plan to do so, they will have to publicise that. They will have to put a leaflet through the door of premises within a particular circumference. They'll have to put up a notice to the effect that they are seeking a license, and it will be published in City Matters typically. It'll also be published

on our website. And the thing to do is to look at what they're applying for. Are they looking for amplified music? Are they looking for outside service? Are they looking for a late license? What time are they planning on closing? And that is your opportunity to make a representation. Generally speaking, one of the good things about the city licensing service is that we have a pre-application service so that the people, the last thing that the people making an application want is the local residents to be not on side with them. So we have a pre-application process where we talk about what is appropriate for a particular location and what is not appropriate for that location and try to get two sides together on that. But if those two sides can't come together on that, then ultimately there would be a licensing hearing where a licensing panel will apply a policy and obviously the voices of the residents will be heard at that point. Thank you very much.

JW: I do need to move on. We can catch up afterwards just because we've got five minutes left and there is a lady here with her hand up.

Resident: Jane Robinson from Middlesex Street. I have two very quick questions if I may. It's about the inclusion of payments for heating within the rent for people who live on Middlesex Street. We've had new heating systems put in and we were told that at some point the payment for heating would split away from the rent and we could become separate in the way that we now do with Thames Water. We pay direct to Thames Water whereas we used to pay for water as part of the rent. But nobody seems to be able to tell us when it's going to happen, when we're going to start paying separately for heating or whether it's going to continue.

My second question very quickly is that when I've been in the Guildhall, I've seen places where you can recycle coffee cups and I was wondering whether the recycling of coffee cups could be extended to our doorway collections because I find myself having quite a few of them but I know we're not allowed to put them into the transparent sacks and I was wondering if the recycling of cups that's done at the Guildhall could actually also be included in our doorway collections. Thank you very much.

JW: Thank you for the question. I think we might pick up on the recycling after just to move on quickly and then I don't know Helen if you want to respond very quickly because I want to take one more question.

HF: Jane, it's a very quick answer and I don't know but the officers responsible are here so perhaps in the conversation time after these formal questions you could talk with Peta Caine, you know her, she's here and you could follow that one up.

JW: So we've got one more question for the evening and I'm going to be very, very quick because we've literally got four minutes.

Resident: Hello, mine's a bit of an extension on what David was asking to do with Destination City and cultural inclusion generally within the city. During the pandemic I was lucky enough to be asked to participate in one of the Lord Mayor's commerce and culture roundtables and from what I know I don't think any of the ideas that came up have been executed for probably all sorts of reasons. This plea I'm making it's quite apt that I'm doing it in this spot because before it was a school it was my grandfather's furriers business based here, he ran the second largest fur company from here and I strongly believe that you know we often use these meetings to have little whinges occasionally about various things but a lot of us want the city to thrive and I greatly believe that encouraging more creative businesses would help and when I set mine up during the pandemic it's taken me a couple of years to find premises. I see lots of empty buildings around me that could be repurposed and used for all kinds of creative ventures.

JW: I'm going to pass to Shravan.

SJ: So two bits to this. One is I suppose generically by SMEs, we have now got a new SME strategy that we're launching and we've had a rethink about the offering we have for small businesses across the Square Mile. We are absolutely reliant on SMEs for our survival in the city. I think more than 90% of the businesses registered in the Square Mile are SMEs so they're vital to the city's sustainability.

On creative industries, again I go to our local plan, we have actually got more encouragement in the local plan for diverse sectors to come into the Square Mile and creative media and technology and innovation is one of the areas we are really pushing forward in the local plan. By coming up with flexible workspaces, by coming up with affordable workspaces in big buildings in major schemes and again using that to encourage almost an accelerated for businesses in those sectors to come through.

JW: Okay. Thank you very much. We have literally two minutes before we have to close the panel. If it can be very, very quick, we'll take a question, our final question of the evening.

Resident: Well, it's not so much a question as an observation. First of all, thank you for holding this event here at this school. I'm very pleased that you organised these things in venues like this because I have very close friends and it was one of their ancestors who set up this school originally. Now the second thing I'd like to say is that London or the City of London is actually the home of the City and Guilds. Now these were developed for trades and to further education and trades and all the rest. Well, I live on the Barbican Estate and I can assure you that some of the skills that have been put into the maintenance of our property over the last, goodness knows how many years, have been left wanting. Now this is a problem throughout the whole of the

country really and I wondered if the City of London had a little more influence in how these skills and how people are trained in these skills and give them as much importance as they give to the arts and everything else around the City.

CH: Look, I think it's a really good point you raise. I think skills in general have not always met as you've just indicated the requirements going forward. Do we have influence? Yes, we do have influence. We do make representations to government around this whole issue of skills. It's one issue of a number of issues that we try and balance in terms of residents and we had something on creatives that's important. There's all these various areas we've been discussing tonight, I think they're all really important, we will go on lobbying government. Some of these things actually are about governmental level rather than the City of London Corporation but we'll always use our influence where we can to improve the quality of life for our residents. Would you like me just to do my final remarks now to save time because we've reached the end of the 45 minutes but I know they're going to have a quarter of an hour with you, Jacqui, now to really grill you, hopefully, who knows.

Look, thanks for your questions this evening, everybody. I think we'll make sure we pick these all up as we've done each time and we'll report back to you at the you said we did that you've got on your seats. Next question time which will be in December, very quick actually after this question time. Why? Because it's Christmas time and we want to combine it with some festive drinks for all our residents, some of you came last year when we did this at the Old Bailey and we thought it was a bit of a good party. We thought you might like another party so we're going to do that after the next question time so just bear that in mind. We're also going to trial a slightly different format at the next question time because we want to find ways of using this time to best engage with you. We've got some ideas for some round tables, for some stations around specific areas so that if you've got a particular question on that's something you can go to that table, the experts will be at that table, they can give you that because I'd like to try and make this as interactive as we possibly can.

So thank you on behalf of the panel, myself, handing back to Jacqui who's going to feed a question style from you in her role as lead member for resident's engagement, and I hope you enjoy the rest of the evening. Thank you Jacqui.

JW: It's going to be a bit strange, I'm left all on my own. The trouble is if I come down there you won't be able to see me so I'm going to stay up here. I just wanted to talk to you a little bit about this role. It's a new role and I wanted to give you a little bit of a background to the role, a little bit of background to me and why I applied for this role and then some of the work I've been doing over the last few months and there will be some time, very little time to hear back from you but I will talk about everybody I'm meeting and the time I'm making to come out and

meet you. These are not always the best forums to take questions from everybody, not everybody feels comfortable asking.

So the role, I've made some notes and I'm going to try and stick to them because we haven't got a huge amount of time and I do want to take some questions. So essentially there's three areas in terms of the role, not in terms of what it's doing but where it's reporting and what it's seeking to do and that is to build a commitment to meaningful engagement with the residents in the City. I will be working closely with Helen Fentiman who is Chair of the Community and Children's Services Committee and the department and the wider team. I will be reporting and I have been reporting directly to Chris who is the Policy and Resources Chairman and his team in policy and that for me is really important because it's an open door, it's an opportunity I have to go and talk to Chris about the issues that are and the concerns that are being raised and how I can be resourced to support teams to manage those concerns, and as Chris mentioned I will also be sitting on the Destination City Advisory Board representing resident voice.

So the reason I applied really is because I've worked in community development for over 20 years now and at the moment I'm a Chief Executive of a charity. We're working with people experiencing health, economic, social inequality, I work across Hackney and the City and essentially the role has to really focus on making sure that we're putting people at the heart of designing services particularly in things like health and wellbeing and it's absolutely been fundamental to my career making sure that we're building resource resilience and power in our communities to make decisions that affect all of us.

Prior to that I worked across a very large regeneration program, not far from here is the Communications and Partnership Director and that was essentially about ensuring that residents sat at the heart of a regeneration programme. I've used the word co-design quite a lot but we managed to achieve quite significant development work through having such an active and proactive resident board. That was really my grounding and why I do what I do. And then the other reason I applied was because I've been very active door knocking probably on some fuel doors across the City of London not just in Cripplegate which is my ward. That was prior to all of the elections that we had fairly recently so for at least two years I've been walking the streets of the city knocking on doors and talking to residents about the issues that concern them but also the reasons why they love living in the city and how we can work with that and enhance that and make sure that that's at the forefront of what's driving us in terms of our energy. So what I've been doing since May, the appointment is essentially going around meeting people as many people as I possibly can.

I think one of the things that's really important for me was that I wasn't just attending ready made resident groups because I think for me what's also really important in this role is those hidden voices. Those residents who have lived here for many, many years have lots of views and

ideas and concerns but don't always feel that there's an opportunity to be able to talk about those and so my interest is really also making sure that this role includes those residents. I've met many, many people and there's quite a few people here this evening that I've met either one-to-one or in resident groups and I've been collating as much information as I can. There are obviously some themes that have been coming out in my discussions with residents and then there's been some really surprising things that I've learned both about the city, about myself but also about how we take this role forward. I'm very pleased that it's also had a lot of buy-in which is great. I was expecting perhaps a little bit of not so much pushback but trying to understand the role and think about what I could possibly do as one person in the role but what has been really important over the last few months is working with community leaders to really support this role and support me in this role and do the best I can for residents in the city. So, I've been reviewing the communications and the ways that we receive information as residents. I know in some areas of the city we're getting multiple letters through the door, lots and lots of information overwhelmed by information but not speaking to us about the things that perhaps are really relevant or we're missing the important bits. So it's thinking about how we are communicating, whether that's across our estates, which is generally about information, events, recycling, everything but thinking about clear and consistent and precise communications and working with officers to develop a framework for this.

I think we've also, Chris has mentioned the question time review and the format for question time. I think that's really important as well that we're thinking about different ways of inviting people into the conversation and that we're thinking about adding some different events to be able to do that which is really, really important. For me this role is about stronger representation for residents across the city, not just in terms of the corporation with officers but also with members and with other residents and resident groups and working towards developing consultation with residents that's about exchanging knowledge. It's not just about asking questions or consultation around requirements for certain departments in the corporation. It's got to be about exchange of knowledge, experience that people have from living in the city, from working in the city, from interacting in the City. There's lots of it and that should be helping to shape not only our services but everything we do, and then finally, a very, very, very significant theme in all of the discussions with residents is about building trust and agency. I'm trying very hard and I hope I'm succeeding at working collegiately with City of London teams and departments and encouraging cross-working on some of the key issues and areas just in terms of looking at the resource we have and how we can build departments together to actually tackle some of the concerns and issues, and also inviting and seeking out resident comment and involvement and just being really conscious that that needs to be at the forefront of this role.

So I'd really appreciate it if people have ideas on how I can be doing more of that. I'm going out to meetings, I'll meet people one-to-one, I'll try and make sure that we get information out

about events but are there some ideas of how else I could be reaching you. And I will take some questions if we've got a bit of time actually.

Resident: Yeah, I find it interesting that we, yeah, we have like little green spaces around and I always think it's a nice idea. So we've got an allotment on the Golden Lane Estate and that's great, but there's kind of issues with it in that there's a big tree that overshadows it and blocks the light. But I mean, it's fine, it's fine. I just wonder like, are there, could there be more opportunities to grow our own food to reduce food miles? Thank you for the question.

JW: I obviously haven't got any colleagues here from those departments to answer that question just in terms of space for growing. But absolutely, I mean, I think one of the best ways of engaging with residents and particularly people that don't normally attend events or are part of associations or resident groups is activity and things that we can do on our own estates that connect us, that connect us with the city, with our estates, but also with each other. And also I, you know, my day job is health and wellbeing, and so gardening, growing, doing things for ourselves, being sufficient, but also working together and connecting as a community is absolutely vital, and that is what I'm also hoping to take to the Destination City Advisory Board that we're thinking about this, as well as making sure that things are accessible, that we're doing things that are enhancing our environment.

We're also thinking about health and wellbeing as a key part of that, and things like open space, green spaces, and gardening is a really fantastic way of doing that. Are there any other questions?

Resident: Are you on the City of London website?

JW: I am, yes. And I'll make sure that I leave my details here this evening as well. I have a website, a mobile phone, but email is better because that way I can make sure I'm managing my time and getting back to people efficiently.

Resident: I want to talk about my communal heating, they made it a new heating, but it's a problem because it doesn't work proper and the residents They made it a new meeting, but it's a problem because it doesn't work proper and the residents doesn't know how the thing is working, and it's not warm enough in the house. Even now it's not to cold outside, and all of us, my neighbour, they are cold inside the house because all the people who are going to be cold inside the home, if they are not going to be hot enough in the flat. So I think they need more meetings in the Middlesex Street Estate, which is to look at that, understand why the heating doesn't work, what's going on, because I'm really worried for everybody who is going to be cold this winter.

JW: Okay, thank you. And I will make a note of that. Essentially, what I want to make sure I'm doing is talking to everybody across all of the wards, but also feeding back to Councillors in those wards, and I think that is a very key issue given we're building up to winter. So I've made a note of that and will make sure that I raise that.

Resident: I had my hand up in the previous session, so this might be for you or it might have been for the panel before. But I'd asked a question previously and I can see the answer in the book and it hadn't answered my question, so my question was basically around barriers for informal groups and individuals to apply for community funding, and what the answer in the booklet gives is about two funds, and this was actually the reason for my question. So the central grants fund and the neighbourhoods fund, neither of them allow individuals nor informal groups to apply, and it specifically states that in their FAQ, in their frequently asked questions.

So how and recently the only fund we had in the city for individuals and communities to apply was the Imagine Fund and that closed down, and all other funds in the city mean you have to be a charity. You were talking about resident engagement and there's numerous people and individuals across our estates, across all sides of the city, not just the four corners that, you know, I'm looking at people leaving this room that I know that do mindfulness groups, they have yoga groups, they have sewing groups in here, but none of us can apply. So as an idea, either the central grants fund or the city bridge foundation can have a people participate or project fund for individuals to get them off the ground so then we can apply for these. Can we make that happen or how can I make that happen? Because no one's listening.

JW: It's at the top of my list. I absolutely agree. It's, you know, there are small projects that we've been talking about, whether they be gardening, working with carers, thinking about young people, mental health, lots and lots of really interesting, powerful programs that are exactly in that position. It is on my list. I can email you separately. I have spoken to Karen about some ideas around how we do this and I'm talking to colleagues in the City of London. We'll get there. Thank you. Could I ask, because you've had a couple of questions, I just want to go to that lady. You've also had a question though, haven't you? Is this about resident engagement? Me?

Resident: No, it's actually more about health and sport that in the city we only have the one centre in the Golden Lane Estate. There's nothing where I live in Leadenhall, the eastern side, there's nothing available. There's lots of little private gyms and spaces, but they're super expensive, and I would have thought it would be in the City of London's interest to help its residents with their health and wellbeing, particularly as a lot of us are ageing, and I don't understand why that can't be addressed better, really. And going back to the funding thing, I was constantly talking to the people within the City of London who looked after the funding and they said that it's to do with due diligence that they can't trust individuals to properly spend the money, and I was advised to try and team up with the livery to see if they could kind of back me as it were. But this was during the pandemic and everybody was asleep. But it's very, very hard because most creatives when they start are sole traders. So it's missing out on a huge sway, the

creative ideas.

JW: Yes, and as I say, we are looking at that very, very closely. In terms of the green space, well, sports spaces, I'm going to take your details and ask one of my colleagues working on the sports strategy to get back to you on that. Okay, thank you. Are there any other questions from anybody who hasn't asked a question? Because we've now officially run out of time. We have literally one minute.

Resident: I think for engagement with the residents, it would be very helpful if you could make sure that any changes in City policy get emailed out to people. I mean, the people here presumably have all been contacted by email, I'm thinking of just an example. There was a recent change in recycling policy to do with bags, and I don't think you can rely on people just to be always looking at the website, and we knew nothing about it. We're enforcing the old policy in our building. So if you can make sure that anything like that gets out to the residents, then I think that will be very useful engagement.

JW: Thank you very much, and I'm now going to end our city question time at exactly 6.15. Thank you ever so much for coming and for all of your questions. I look forward to hearing from all of you, most of you, over the coming months. Thank you. And there are refreshments at the back if you'd like another cup of tea or coffee. Thank you.