

# London Assembly Liberal Democrat Group

## Spring Report 2022



**Hina Bokhari AM**



**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM**



## What does good leadership look like?

Welcome to the latest report back from City Hall by Liberal Democrat Assembly Members, Caroline Pidgeon MBE and Hina Bokhari.

As public servants, Caroline and Hina hold themselves to the highest levels of conduct and transparency. In doing this, they also strive to shine a light on behaviour that falls short of these standards. The last six months have seen a series of shocking revelations from the Conservative Party about breaking lockdown rules, including from colleagues at the London Assembly. Caroline commented widely on the conduct of Shaun Bailey AM, and as Chair of the Oversight Committee, is also leading the ongoing investigation into London and Partners and City Hall's overseas trade visits and sponsorship, including with Jennifer Arcuri while Boris Johnson was Mayor of London.

When news broke about a series of parties at No.10 in 2020, Caroline wrote to the Met Commissioner, Cressida Dick, urging an investigation into the alleged breaches of regulations and laws in place at the time. Caroline further questioned her at a Police and Crime Committee meeting in February this year, demanding to know how the investigation would run and what evidence would be used. **Behaviour like this cannot be left unchallenged.**

### Standing up for Londoners at City Hall

*October 2021 - March 2022*

- ✓ Over 40 visits to London Boroughs
- ✓ 430 written questions to the Mayor
- ✓ 45 committee sessions attended
- ✓ 6 consultation responses
- ✓ 25 letters to the Mayor, Deputy Mayors, Government departments and other organisations



## Supporting Londoners affected by the Building Safety Crisis

Since the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017, many Londoners living in unsafe buildings have faced spiralling costs and declining mental health. Standing up for these Londoners and ensuring they are supported and treated fairly is critical work for the Liberal Democrat Assembly Members, Hina Bokhari and Caroline Pidgeon.

Over the last few months, the Mayor's budget process afforded an opportunity to press the issue of support for affected Londoners like never before. On 24th February, the Mayor held his final meeting to review his annual Budget for 2022-23. Hina Bokhari AM proposed an amendment which would see the inclusion of a fully funded Building Safety Crisis Support Hub offering practical advice and mental health support to affected Londoners. The Assembly had previously voted in favour of the idea, but the Hub had received some criticism from Labour members and the Mayor about insufficient funding.

Thus the proposal was taken back with additional funding included. This should have silenced any objections. Yet the Labour group refused to support the amendment with no clear or logical explanation why. As the amendment needed a two-thirds majority to pass, it was defeated. Labour members have embarrassed themselves by playing party politics and not supporting Londoners affected by the Building Safety Crisis.

Hina and Caroline did not want to let this issue rest, and so took the idea back to the Assembly at the Plenary meeting on 3rd March. Again the Assembly voted in favour of it - along with the proposition that the Mayor should refuse to work with building developers who are passing costs on to leaseholders - with only Labour members abstaining.

Both Hina and Caroline will continue to push these issues and pressure the Mayor to take effective action, rather than simply waiting for the Government to do something.



Caroline and Hina at a Building Safety Protest in Parliament Square with Daisy Cooper MP and Baroness Kath Pinnock



## Standing up for the future of our Police Services

The Met is filled with committed and dedicated officers, but in recent months we've seen our police service beset with increasing reports of serious officer misconduct and facing drastically falling public confidence.

In June 2017, the Mayor's own data showed confidence in the police in London was at 69%. It has since fallen consistently and now stands at just 52%. These figures are coupled with some high profile and deeply concerning criticisms of the Met in recent months, including the charge of institutional corruption by the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel and the inquest into the Port murders, which contained significant criticisms of the Met, and of course the tragic murder of Sarah Everard.

Caroline continues to call for the review into culture and standards in the Met to specifically include a commitment to look at homophobia, sexism and racism in the service.

In late February, Caroline wrote an article for Politics Home outlining her view that the next commissioner must be bold, brave and brutally honest about the challenges facing the Met and needs to be mindful that the first job of the Met is to protect the public, not its own reputation.





## Cleaning up London's Toxic Air

Air pollution is stunting lungs and shortening lives, especially in children and Londoners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

**As a mum, Hina is incredibly passionate about making sure that every Londoner has access to air that is both clean and safe to breathe.**

Through working together with action groups like Mums for Lungs, and organisations such as Pedal Me and Fare City, Hina has routinely urged the Mayor to strengthen his efforts to improve London's air quality by calling for wide-ranging informative public awareness campaigns on the harmful effects of wood burning and idling, ensuring that our city's air monitoring systems are sufficiently robust and rolling out the use of more sustainable zero-emission freight transport, including cargo bikes.

*Hina visiting Pedal Me to look at and learn more about how the wider roll-out of cargo bikes could help to reduce carbon emissions across London*



## The Silvertown Tunnel Project

The Mayor's Silvertown tunnel project is set to lead to an increase in traffic on London's roads and a failure to meet our net zero-carbon target by 2030.

At the Environment Committee meeting in December, Hina questioned the Deputy Mayor for Environment on whether the Mayor would consider cancelling his costly and polluting project, and in January, challenged the Head of Air Quality at the GLA on the same issue. Hina has also continued to raise concerns around the lack of particulate matter (PM2.5) monitoring stations around access roads to the construction site.

**Both Hina and Caroline continue to actively work with campaigners from Stop the Silvertown Tunnel Coalition.**



*Caroline and Hina showing their support for the Stop the Silvertown Tunnel Coalition, February 2022*



# E-scooters - Raising Fire Safety Concerns

Following several fires involving privately owned e-scooters, it is being more widely recognised that their lithium-ion batteries pose a particular fire safety risk.

At Mayor's Question Time in January, Hina successfully ensured that information about e-scooters and lithium-ion batteries more widely was included on the electrical safety section of the London Fire Brigade's website.

Hina also called for closer collaboration between the Mayor, the Fire Brigade and housing associations by launching an effective publicity campaign to highlight the risks posed by lithium-ion batteries, particularly given that hundreds of buildings across the capital are blighted with fire safety defects.



## Demanding a properly funded service for London's commuters

**TfL has not been treated fairly by this Government.**

Despite being a former Mayor of London, Boris Johnson has now decided to turn against London. It is clear the votes of Londoners no longer matter to him and his Government.

This year the Government imposed higher fare rises on TfL services than for train services around the country.

Throughout the Covid pandemic the Government has given generous long-term finance contracts to support private train companies, but in complete contrast has repeatedly imposed short-term finance agreements on Transport for London (TfL) which runs the Tube, London Overground, Tram, Docklands Light Railway and buses.

Caroline said "TfL has been paralysed by the actions of this Government. TfL cannot plan ahead to efficiently and effectively deliver and invest in our transport services with short term finance deals. It is only fair that TfL is treated as fairly as the private train companies."



## In the news...

**"City Hall pensions have £5million tied up in Russian investments"** – Caroline Pidgeon calls for the London Pensions Fund Authority to divest from Russian interests immediately, *MyLondon* March 2022

**"International Women's Day: Meet some of the women leading the fight against climate change in London"** – Hina Bokhari and Caroline Pidgeon are instrumental in holding the Mayor to account on climate change. *Evening Standard*, March 2022

**"The new Met Commissioner must be brutally honest about the challenges facing the force"** – Caroline Pidgeon on the future of the Met, *politicshome.com*, March 2022

**"Fire risk building with unsafe cladding listed on City Hall housing portal"** – Hina Bokhari calls out critical errors on the Mayor's housing portal. *Evening Standard*, February 2022

**"Sadiq Khan rejects London Assembly cladding support hub vote"** Lib Dem Assembly Members successfully pass amendment seeking support for Londoners, only to be rejected by the Mayor. *Evening Standard*, February 2022

**"Act now to prevent another Hammersmith Bridge farce"** – Caroline Pidgeon is right to call for long-term investment in London's bridges, *Evening Standard Comment*, November 2021

**"Boris Johnson's flagship London dock scheme on brink of collapse"** – Caroline Pidgeon on Boris's bad business deals, *The Guardian*, February 2022

**"Politicians on their battle with Islamophobia"** – Hina Bokhari on being one of the few Muslim women in politics "Our struggle is a shared struggle." *The Guardian*, February 2022

**"Scotland Yard urged to probe bombshell email into 'Downing Street lockdown party'"** – Caroline Pidgeon calls on Met Commissioner to investigate the shocking allegations, *Evening Standard*, January 2022

**"Muslim assembly member joins Makes Votes Matter Rally"** Hina Bokhari gives impassioned speech on electoral reform and why the current system is discriminatory. *Muslim News*, March 2022



# Out and about!



Hina marking Diwali at Neasden Temple



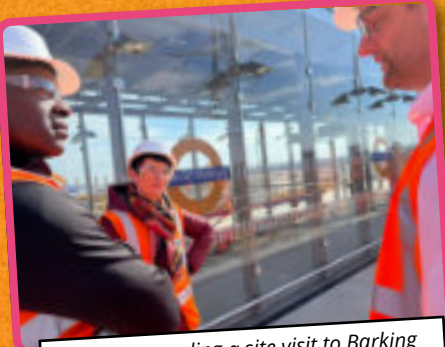
Hina and Caroline at the last Mayor's Question Time session at the old City Hall



Hina speaking to BBC Politics London about the City Hall move



Caroline and Hina visiting the London Cancer Hub in Sutton



Caroline attending a site visit to Barking Riverside Overground station with the Transport Committee



Caroline answering questions from the public at People's Question Time



Hina thanking local posties for their work ahead of the Christmas period



Caroline visiting the Counter Terrorism Operations Centre in West London with members of the Police & Crime Committee



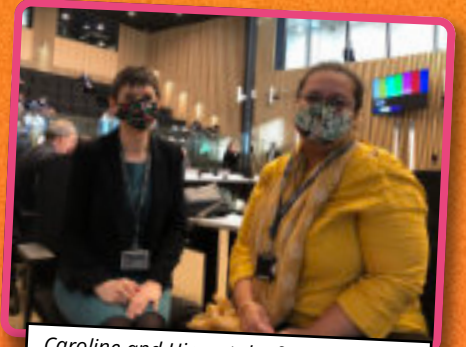
Hina and Caroline at Southwark Cathedral, attending a Remembrance Day service



Hina addressing the Make Votes Matter protest in Parliament Square



Hina on a site visit to Lee Valley Park with members of the Environment Committee



Caroline and Hina at the first Mayor's Question Time session at the Crystal





## Get in touch!



### Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

*Caroline is Chair of the Transport Committee and the GLA Oversight Committee. She is also a member of the Police and Crime Committee and the Budget and Performance Committee.*

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