

## **Boris Johnson mid-term**

*Ten examples of how a Conservative  
administration lets London down*

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## **Conservative London – for the few not the many**

Boris Johnson shows the Conservatives have not changed. As these ten examples indicate, Boris Johnson is out of touch, is for the few not the many, damages our public services, and has no clear vision for London.

Labour's London Minister **Tessa Jowell** said:

*"Boris Johnson is the most senior elected Tory in the country and his decisions are a pointer to what a Conservative Government under David Cameron and George Osborne would be like.*

*"Exactly half way into Boris Johnson's mayoralty people are rightly now turning to his record in office, which is fewer police, no guarantee about the future of our local police teams, above-inflation fare increases with a single bus fare up by a third, and a failure to get David Cameron to commit to completing Crossrail.*

*"Boris Johnson shows that the Conservatives cannot be trusted"*

**Len Duvall AM**, leader of the Labour group on the London Assembly, said:

*"Anyone wavering about who to vote for only needs to look at Boris Johnson's two years in charge of London. His Tory administration has put fares up for hard working Londoners but campaigned for bankers and against higher taxes for the very wealthiest."*

### **1. Police cuts and broken promises on crime**

Under Boris Johnson police numbers in London are being cut by a total of 455 officers<sup>1</sup>.

Over his four budgets Boris Johnson will oversee a decline in the total number of police officers for London.

At the budget-setting meeting of 10/2/10 he refused to use a council tax windfall of £5.7m<sup>2</sup> to help protect police numbers.

### **2. Safer neighbourhood teams under threat**

The future of local police teams is at risk from the Conservative mayor: at Mayor's Questions Boris Johnson has repeatedly refused to guarantee the future of the minimum deployment of neighbourhood teams, saying that would be a 'one size fits all'<sup>3</sup> policy and 'a pointless piece of top-downery.'

(Every ward in London has a minimum Safer Neighbourhood Team of beat officers comprising one sergeant, two police constables and three PCSOs to patrol local streets).

### **3. Breaking his promise to lead the fight against crime**

In his manifesto Boris Johnson said, "I will chair the Metropolitan Police Authority. I will take personal responsibility. No offence will be too trivial to demand my attention. No challenge will be so big that I shrug my shoulders and pass the buck." He said he would chair the MPA "to get more officers on the streets."<sup>4</sup>

*Boris Johnson resigned<sup>5</sup> as chair of the MPA on 27 January, just twenty months into his mayoralty.*

#### **4. Higher fares for hard working Londoners**

Since his election Boris Johnson has raised the price of a single bus fare by exactly one third.

The FT has reported<sup>6</sup> that Johnson's January 2010 fare increase is the largest in real terms in TfL's history.

He increased fares this year<sup>7</sup> by over 12 per cent on the buses and just under four per cent on the tube, with a weekly bus pass rising 20 per cent

#### **5. Wrong transport priorities - costing Londoners dear**

Though fares are rising Boris Johnson is cutting millions of pounds of revenue - £70million<sup>8</sup> per annum alone from axing the western extension of the congestion charge, which will add to traffic levels but reduce money available for investment or lower fares. He is also looking at reviewing bus services and aims to cut the bus subsidy in London.

The cost of just five of his new 'routemaster' buses is now reported to be £7.8 million, or £1.6million each, eight times the cost of a conventional double-decker.<sup>9</sup> The Times has reported (24/4/10) that no decision had been made on further orders. Contrary to what is now reported, Boris Johnson previously told the London Assembly that development costs<sup>10</sup> would be borne by the industry.

## **6. Housing - failing London's communities**

Boris Johnson's housing policies make it harder to deliver cheaper homes for those most in need.

- His plan does not show how London will meet the numbers of affordable homes the city needs. London needs 18,200 affordable homes per year. Yet the Plan proposes a target of just 13,200. This is 40% of all new housing in London, down from 50% under the last London Plan
- He is abolishing the policy that fifty per cent of new homes should be affordable
- He plans to reduce the proportion of affordable homes available for social rent from 70% to 60%.
- His plan will spread public money available to hard working families more thinly by making the same support available to those earning above £60,000 a year available to households earning up to £74,000. Giving priority to higher earning families will mean that fewer on ordinary incomes will be able to gain access to homeownership
- He has broken his election promise to build 50,000 affordable homes over three years – this has now been stretched over 4 years

Then director of Shelter, Adam Sampson, warned<sup>11</sup> in 2009 that “The mayor's proposals will, if implemented, serve merely to perpetuate the wealth and class divisions in the nation's capital.”

Housing minister John Healey MP has criticised the mayor's housing strategy, setting out his concerns to Boris Johnson in writing.<sup>12</sup>

In response to residents' concerns about whether he supported Hammersmith and Fulham Council's proposal to demolish and redevelop West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates in Earl's Court, Boris Johnson told the London Assembly he would be 'happy to take part' in the bulldozing of their homes.<sup>13</sup>

## **7. Cutting frontline services – broken promise on tube ticket offices**

Boris Johnson's transport manifesto<sup>14</sup> said he was committed to:

*"ensuring there is always a manned ticket office at every [tube] station."*

and:

*"I will also defend local ticket offices."*

He has broken this promise with a programme of cuts to opening hours at 278 Tube stations, axing up to 800 jobs, 450 of which are tube ticket office staff.<sup>15</sup>

In March he misled a meeting of the London Assembly when he said that no ticket offices would close. A consultation document issued by his own transport officials<sup>16</sup> in fact shows the mayor is planning to close several ticket offices, shut several others and plans to cut opening hours by more than 2,000 hours with many offices closing earlier in the evenings and at weekends. Some ticket offices will close altogether.

### **And yet more broken promises...**

Boris Johnson shows the Tories' promises cannot be relied on and the Conservatives cannot be trusted with our public services.

His broken promises include:

- Reinstating 'tidal flow' in the Blackwall Tunnel
- Introducing a central London cycle hire scheme "at no cost to the taxpayer" – his scheme is currently costed at £114m to the taxpayer
- Negotiating a no-strike deal on London Underground – he has not met the unions to discuss it
- Running tube services later at weekends
- A Cabinet for London
- Cutting press officers. Boris Johnson promised to "release funds that Ken Livingstone has earmarked for his own personal press officers." Boris Johnson has thirteen press officers working in his office. The same number as his predecessor.
- Personally leading the fight against crime – he's broken his promise to chair the police authority

The London Assembly passed the following motion (18/3/10): "This Assembly regrets that the Mayor has backtracked or failed to make progress on a large number of his election promises. An election is a time of serious promises and Londoners are urgently owed an explanation."

## **8. Out of touch - Boris Johnson is for the few not the many**

- Single bus fares and a weekly bus pass up by one third
- Fewer police and minimum safer neighbourhood teams threatened
- Cuts to transport services
- His housing policies make it harder to deliver cheaper homes for those most in need

But:

- He has attacked as “whingeing” public concern over bank bonuses<sup>17</sup>
- Calls government measures on banks and new higher tax rates for the most well-off “superpenalising London”<sup>18</sup>
- He described his £250,000 salary for his Daily Telegraph column as “chicken feed”<sup>19</sup>
- He calls for an end to the ban on foxhunting

## **9. Chaos and poor judgements on appointments**

- Deputy Mayor Ray Lewis resigned after lying about being a qualified magistrate.
- Deputy Mayor Ian Clement found guilty of fraud and given a suspended sentence.
- Olympics appointee and Tory donor David Ross resigned over breaches to FSA regulations.
- Deputy chief of staff James McGrath resigned after saying black Londoners who did not like Boris Johnson could leave London.
- First Deputy Mayor and chief of staff Tim Parker forced out in internal power-struggle.
- Bertha Joseph, deputy chair of the fire authority, resigned March 2010 having been suspended from Brent council after she spent almost £1,000 of cash donations intended for children’s charities in ball gowns for herself. He resisted repeated calls to remove her as deputy chair over many weeks.
- Embroiled in a row over his attempt to appoint Veronica Wadley to chair the London Arts Council

## **10. Losing London's cutting edge on the environment**

- Congestion charge zone to be halved in size. Boris Johnson has admitted that thousands of extra cars are likely to drive into the area: "TfL estimates that removing the western extension to the Central London congestion charging scheme would increase traffic entering the extension area during charging hours by 10-15% over current levels. Traffic circulating within the area would rise by some 7-12%"<sup>20</sup>
- Phase 3 of Low Emission Zone suspended, delaying plans to extend pollution controls from lorries, buses and coaches to large van<sup>21</sup>
- Abandoned 100 public spaces programme
- Cycling "triple whammy" – the London Cycling Campaign has criticised<sup>22</sup> the "triple whammy" they say will harm cycling in London.

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<sup>1</sup> Final Draft Consolidated Budget for 2010/11, Greater London Authority, 10/2/10  
<http://legacy.london.gov.uk/gla/budget/docs/1011bud-draft-all.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Transcript of London Assembly plenary, 10/2/10  
<http://legacy.london.gov.uk/assembly/assemmtgs/2010/plenaryfeb10/minutes/transcript.rtf>

<sup>3</sup> "London Mayor Boris Johnson cuts police funding," BBC News Online, 10/2/10.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/8508606.stm>

<sup>4</sup> "Making London Safer", Boris Johnson's crime manifesto, 2008.  
<http://legacy.london.gov.uk/assembly/assemmtgs/2010/plenaryfeb10/minutes/transcript.rtf>

<sup>5</sup> "Boris Johnson steps down from police authority" BBC Online, 27/1/10.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8482549.stm>

<sup>6</sup> "Big fare rises unveiled for London," Financial Times, 15 October 2009 <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e75e3a74-b980-11de-abac-00144feab49a.html>

<sup>7</sup> "Johnson announces bus fares to rise by 12%," MayorWatch, 15/10/09 <http://www.mayorwatch.co.uk/johnson-announces-bus-fares-to-rise-by-12-7/20098966>

<sup>8</sup> "Boris Johnson axes London congestion charge extension," Guardian, 27/11/08  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/nov/27/congestioncharging-london>

<sup>9</sup> "Stopping soon by request of Boris Johnson, London's £1.6m superbus," The Times, 24/4/10  
[http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry\\_sectors/transport/article7106683.ece](http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/transport/article7106683.ece)

<sup>10</sup> Boriswatch, 28/4/10 <http://www.boriswatch.co.uk/2010/04/28/standard-catches-up-on-bus-costs/comment-page-1/#comment-15216>

<sup>11</sup> "Tory home truths for London's poor," Adam Sampson, Guardian Comment is Free, 20/1/09  
<http://thecowanreport.blogspot.com/2010/01/housing-ministers-letter-to-mr-cameron.html>

<sup>12</sup> Full text available online here: <http://thecowanreport.blogspot.com/2010/01/housing-ministers-letter-to-mr-cameron.html>

<sup>13</sup> Hammersmith and Kensington Times, 4/3/10  
<http://www.hammersmithandkingtontimes.co.uk/content/hktimes/news/story.aspx?brand=HKTONline&category=news&tBrand=HKTONline&tCategory=znews&itemid=WeED04%20Mar%202010%2017%3A06%3A22%3A630>

<sup>14</sup> "Getting London Moving," Boris Johnson's transport manifesto 2008. <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2009/04/27/Transportmanifesto.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> "London Mayor Boris Johnson a 'hypocrite' over Tube cuts", BBC Online, 17/3/10.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/8572709.stm>

<sup>16</sup> Consultation document issued to trade unions, March 2010. Available at Adam Bienkov's blog:  
<http://torytroll.blogspot.com/2010/03/boris-johnsons-secret-plans-to-close.html>

<sup>17</sup> Evening Standard, 23/9/08 <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard-mayor/article-23558942-boris-stop-neo-socialist-whingeing-about-city-bankers-and-house-prices.do>

<sup>18</sup> Guardian.co.uk, 13/12/09 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/dec/13/boris-johnson-conservative-leadership>

<sup>19</sup> Boris Johnson: £250,000 wage is "chicken-feed", The Times, 14/7/09  
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article6707157.ece>

<sup>20</sup> Boris Johnson to allow in an extra 30,000 vehicles <http://torytroll.blogspot.com/2009/03/boris-johnson-to-allow-in-extra-30000.html>

<sup>21</sup> Boris Johnson to put next phase of Low Emission Zone on hold, Guardian, 2/2/09  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/feb/02/low-emission-zone>

<sup>22</sup> London Cycling Campaign, November 2008 <http://www.lcc.org.uk/index.asp?PageID=1230>