

The truth about Boris Johnson in his own words

“Chicken feed”

- Boris’ description of the £250k a year he earns for his Telegraph columns.

“The right problem to have”

- The Mayor’s take on London’s high house prices locking people out of the housing market.

“Under this Mayor there will be absolutely no reduction in fire cover”

- Boris in Jan 2012, two years before he shut 10 fire stations and axed 13 fire engines

“Every station that has a ticket office will continue to have one.”

- By 2016 EVERY tube station ticket office will have been closed.

**Len Duvall is the Leader of the
London Assembly Labour Group**



Contact: Len.Duvall@london.gov.uk

Copyright: Greater London Authority, 2015.

THE COST OF BORIS

The Mayor Behind the Mask

Len Duvall AM

LONDON **ASSEMBLY** LABOUR

The Mayor behind the Mask

If dangling on a zip wire waving Union Jacks was all it took to be a good Mayor of London Boris Johnson would be a in a league of his own.

Sadly for Londoners, whilst arguably one of the most well-known politicians in the country, behind his ruthless publicity machine and bumbling image, Boris' record as Mayor reveals years of policy failures, missed opportunities and reneged promises.

At the heart of the problem has been a failure to get stuck in. From the start Boris adopted a 'chairman of the board' style - very much aloof and clearly focused on using the Mayoralty as a stepping stone back onto the national stage. The problem is that means assiduously avoiding controversy as opposed to actively tackling the challenges facing London.

As a result, the legacy left behind him will be stark. The housing shortage inherited in 2008 is now an entrenched crisis with the Mayor having missed even modest house building targets each and every year since he was elected. London's cost of living crisis has grown unchecked as wages stagnate, housing costs rocket and the cost of commuting hits global highs.

'Vital investment shunned'

Vital investment in transport infrastructure, for example the tube upgrade and bus network extension, has been shunned in favour of publicity projects like the Garden Bridge or Thames Cable Car. Perhaps this should all come as no surprise from a Mayor who believes high property prices are "the right problem to have". The same Mayor who considers his £250,000 a year income for newspaper columns to be little more than "chicken feed."

After eight years of inertia, London is crying out for a workhorse, someone who will tirelessly set about tackling these problems before they become unassailable. Londoners now know that is simply not Johnson's pedigree. Maybe that's why a national YouGov poll in April showed that of all the UK regions, Londoners had the lowest view of Johnson's prime ministerial abilities.

Boris on being Mayor of London:

2008 **"The greatest job in the world"**

2014 **Just an opportunity to "show what he could do" and "gain some administrative experience."**

Boris has adopted a 'chairman of the board' style - very much aloof and clearly focused on using the Mayoralty as a stepping stone back onto the national stage

"It is easy to make promises - it is hard work to keep them"

- Boris Johnson

'No benefit to Londoners'

Yes, we need a mayor with character, someone who can inspire others to follow their lead and promote the capital on the world stage. In fairness, as a profile raiser, Boris excels. But too often London is left out in the cold. Take the Mayor's official visit to Iraq in January. It's hard to envisage how Boris Johnson posing with a Kalashnikov on the front page of The Sun will bring any real benefit to the capital.

Despite stunts like this, we've seen little in terms of policy delivery. The pledges made in his manifestos have in large parts fallen by the wayside, embarrassments dismissed with empty quips that "It is easy to make promises - it is hard work to keep them." Quite.

'Broken Promises'

For Boris Johnson, promises made are easily broken.

- Remember the pledge not to close a single tube ticket office? By the end of 2016 every single one will be permanently shut.
- How about the no strike deal he pledged to negotiate? Despite a crisis entirely of his own making, the Mayor refused point blank to meet staff representatives when, during the summer, tube strikes over the Night Tube brought London to a standstill.
- End rough sleeping by the Olympics? It's almost doubled since 2008.
- No cuts to the fire brigade? Better close ten stations and axe 13 fire engines.
- The pledge to help hard-pressed Londoners? Not hugely helped by eight years of transport fare increases pushing average ticket prices up 40%, with bus fares up by almost half.

And that cast iron promise not to run for Parliament? How quickly the Mayoralty went from the "greatest job in the world" that "cannot be combined with any other political capacity" to merely an opportunity to "show what he could do" and "gain some administrative experience."

'Dire legacy'

When Boris finally departs, London will have endured eight years of his leadership. Whilst much has changed, as it always will in a global city like ours, the challenges of eight years ago all remain, many having grown far worse. The legacy Boris has to bequeath to the next Mayor is dire. A deep housing crisis, a wider gap than ever between rich and poor, an £800m hole in the Met Police budget, toxic air pollution levels, the most expensive transport fares in the world and more Londoners than ever paid below a living wage.

For a household name like Boris separating out rhetoric from reality is a real challenge. but take a minute to peek at the Mayor behind the mask and you may find that you do not like what you see.

