

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
London SW1A 0AA

Date: 3 August 2020

Dear Prime Minister

It is with great surprise that we read in the Sunday papers that Government held a critical exercise last week in which a major resurgence in Covid-19 infections in London was a central scenario. According to media reports, the plans included using the M25 as a quarantine ring – effectively sealing off the city.

Our surprise is that such far reaching contingency plans have been discussed and tested without the involvement or awareness of London's government. This is clearly totally unacceptable and an affront to London and Londoners.

We are accountable to nine million Londoners and have a duty to represent their views and best interests. We also know our communities and their needs far better than national Government. As Category 1 responders we have a legal duty towards our city and cannot do what is right for Londoners if we are excluded from key planning sessions in this way.

Transitional arrangements for London were established specifically so that all levels of Government and key partners were involved in ensuring coordination of planning and the response to Covid-19. This was to ensure the best outcome for our city. It is highly regrettable that these appear to have been ignored.

It is now 12 weeks since I, as Mayor, was last invited to COBR on behalf of London and its nine million citizens. Decisions continue to be taken without consultation with those who run and understand the country's biggest city. Some of these decisions – and the public messaging which flows from them – do not work for the unique nature of a major metropolitan area the size of London. The Government would better understand that, if London's government were treated properly, and brought into decision making.

Time and again throughout this crisis, the Government has been slow to take decisions or has taken the wrong decisions – the confusion and delay over going into lockdown, the way Transport for London has been penalised despite doing everything ministers asked, a test and trace system that is not up to the standard required to contain outbreaks and the failure to deliver on promises that the Government will fully compensate local and regional government for the cost of tackling this virus.

This must stop. Riding roughshod over democratically elected representatives who understand their communities better than central government will lead to worse outcomes for Londoners, and the country as a whole.

Yours sincerely,

Personal Data

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Personal Data

Cllr Peter John OBE
Chair, London Councils

Cc Paul Scully MP, Minister for London
Sir Edward Lister, 10 Downing Street