



**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **BORIS JOHNSON: IT'S TIME TO STRIKE OUT THE STRIKES**

Commenting on the announcement of strike action by the RMT, Conservative Candidate for Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, said:

"Once again under Mayor Livingstone, Londoners will have to face hours of misery on the tube – all because the Labour Mayor hasn't got a plan to work with the unions.

"Ken Livingstone has repeatedly shown himself to be unwilling to deal with the problem of strikes and the deeper issues behind them. He has been in office for eight years; in that time there have been 16 incidents of industrial action, which have led to a disruption of services.

"London needs a forceful advocate on behalf of Londoners to work constructively with all the unions to solve this problem. I will be pro-active, and seek to negotiate - in good faith - a no strike deal with the unions. In return, they will have a guarantee of independent arbitration that will rule on pay and working conditions. This is a fair solution that is designed to build bridges with a fresh approach. It would guarantee union members long-term job safety, while ensuring that London is kept moving.

“The current Mayor has simply stopped trying to deal with London’s problems. London needs to vote for change on May 1<sup>st</sup> to find solutions to London’s problems - and to strike out the strikes.”

ENDS

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**Notes to Editors**

**Striking Out Unnecessary Strikes**

Currently, disputes between the unions and London Underground frequently result in strikes, severely inconveniencing Londoners.<sup>[1]</sup> We want to introduce no-strike deals, and bind London Underground to independent arbitration when negotiating pay settlements.

In addition to the massive disruption to ordinary Londoners, industrial action also has a huge cost to the London economy. For example, the strike in 2004 is estimated to have cost £60 million in lost productivity.<sup>[2]</sup>

The London Underground is like no other public service, in that strikes can paralyse the whole city. This is why a special arrangement needs implementing to protect Londoners from disagreements between London Underground management and union leaders.

A no-strike agreement is a voluntary, private contract between a union and an employer, which agrees ‘in principle’, that unions will not stage strikes. In return for this agreement London Underground would pledge to submit pay negotiations to independent arbitration.

This is not removing the right to strike, as the agreement is voluntary and requires both sides to support it.

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As part of the agreement, the Mayor would voluntarily absolve himself of any power to direct the Arbiter, and we would consult the unions on the best way to appoint the arbiter to ensure fairness and transparency.

We believe that this is the fairest way to protect Londoners against unnecessary industrial action, and the fairest way to ensure ordinary union members get the long term job security they need.

### **Ken Livingstone's Misspends Money on the Tube**

Chronic mismanagement of the London Underground PPP by both the company involved, Metronet and London Underground, contributed to the collapse of Metronet, which has cost the taxpayer £2billion – and possibly even more - in a government bail out. (*source: Parliamentary Question 176782*).

This has also resulted in a period of uncertainty about how the tube will be upgraded, with £5-£7.5 billion –in five years - at least £1 billion per year - being squandered with virtually no end result. As London School of Economics expert, Tony Travers, has said, 'between 5-7.5 billion has been spent on the tube in the last five years... a huge amount of money to have delivered – at the very best – a service that's overall no different from when we begun.' (*source: Travers, T 'Is this a New Metronet Timebomb?' Evening Standard Oct 2007*)

Ken Livingstone has repeatedly stated that Londoners' should choose their Mayor based upon who would best deliver the planned £1 billion per year tube modernisation programme (*source: Transport Manifesto, Ken Livingstone*).

Read more about Boris Johnson's campaign to be Mayor of London at: [www.backboris.com](http://www.backboris.com)

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