

London Assembly Oversight Committee - 20 June 2023**Transcript of Agenda Item 5 - GLA Domestic and International Trips**

Emma Best AM (Chairman): We now move on to the main item of business today, a discussion on Greater London Authority (GLA) domestic and international trips. I would like to welcome our invited guests who have joined us for the discussion. The Committee would also like to extend a congratulations to David Bellamy, the Mayor's Chief of Staff, who has received the Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the King's Birthday Honours List.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Thank you, Chairman.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): You are welcome and many congratulations. We are also joined by Mary Harpley, Chief Officer of the GLA, Enver Enver, the Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director; and Philip Graham, the Executive Director of Good Growth, GLA. We had hoped to get the Mayor's Director of Operations, Ali Picton, here today, but unfortunately not. Therefore hopefully, David, you will be able to cover those questions.

I am going to leap in straight away and this is to everyone on the panel. What are the key potential benefits and disadvantages the GLA assesses when undertaking domestic and international trips?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Thank you, Chairman. Good morning. Clearly, the purpose of any travel undertaken by the GLA is, as with other expenditure and other activities, is tied back to the purposes of the GLA, principally the general powers set out in section 30 of the [Greater London Authority] Act [1999] in terms of promoting the economic development and wealth creation in Greater London, the social development in Greater London, or improvement in the environment. As the Committee will be aware, there are other subsidiary duties on the GLA, for instance promoting tourism into London and therefore all the GLA activity, and travel would be no exception, would fall into that category. Obviously the benefits will flow from the specifics of the matter in question that has led to travel.

In terms of costs, they probably would fall into two categories, first is obviously financial costs associated with the trip where those are borne by the GLA because in many cases they are borne by the people we have been invited to visit and thus no cost to the GLA. Or secondly would be, as with all activities, whether undertaken in this building or anywhere else, would be the issue of opportunity cost.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thanks, David. Therefore, when you are looking at the potential benefits and disadvantages, I did not hear you mention the environment at all. Is that not a consideration that is currently made?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Chairman, as you will know from the policy, we have an offsetting policy, which is carried out for all travel. I know there are some concerns, rightly, about some carbon offsetting schemes in use, but we believe the one the GLA uses is strong and effective and therefore that mitigates that concern.

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): We also have policies in place regarding the use of rail travel wherever possible. The policies specifically mention Paris and Brussels in terms of international travel. However, in practice we use rail often for trips rather further afield where it is feasible to do so.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. Did anybody else on the panel want to come in on some of the benefits or disadvantages that are looked at?

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): I can talk a little in terms of the benefits of staff, of travel undertaken by staff, particularly within Good Growth, but this applies to some other teams as well. I would say there are three predominant reasons for which staff within Good Growth travel overseas, one of which is around supporting the Mayor's work on economic growth and investment. That has included supporting trips that the Mayor himself has undertaken, but also supporting wider activity led by London and Partners (L&P) and by others to continue to promote economic growth, seek investment in London, and so on.

Alongside that, we are part of a number of international fora. In most cases, we engage with those fora remotely, but there are occasional meetings and conferences where it is important for the GLA to have a presence there to set the agenda, to make sure that we are informing and influencing the work of those groups. I think the C40 [Cities Climate Leadership Group] is a good example of that.

Then, finally, there is opportunities to learn from experience in other cities, to talk about best practice in London, but particularly to bring back best practice from other places. In those cases, again you can do some of that remotely, but there are real benefits from meeting people face-to-face and seeing what has happened in real life, in the flesh.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): On the flipside of that, Philip, what considerations would you make when perhaps turning down an opportunity to travel?

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): Exactly the same considerations that David has made. Clearly there is an environmental consideration, as you have identified, but generally speaking, where travel is in compliance with or goes beyond the GLA's policies in terms of the environment, we would be supportive. However, there is an opportunity cost in terms of time away from the office. People can continue to work while on international travel, but a big proportion of their time is going to be taken up with those wider conversations. To some degree there is a cost implication, and therefore we would think about whether the costs of travel are justified. Clearly that does not apply in the same way where those costs are funded by external organisations. However, we would still want to know that the benefits outweigh the impacts in terms of time and staff availability for other matters.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thanks, Philip. Enver, how much money has the GLA spent on trips over the last few years and how has this spend changed over time?

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): I will give you the exact numbers; it is not massive in the grand scheme of the GLA budget. The expenditure totals just over £800 million last year and the spend on travel was just over £100,000 last year. The two years before that was --

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Enver, would it be possible, just for my brain to work better, to give me the financial year alongside that?

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): Yes, if we go to 2018/19 financial year, the total spend according to the ledger was £163,000. The 2019/20 year,

the total spend was £77,000. The 2020/21 year was £25,000. 2021/22 was £28,000. Then £103,000 in the last year (2022/23). In the 2020/21 year there was no international travel, therefore in that figure that I gave you none of that was international travel in 2020/21, it was all domestic. I am assuming it was domestic travel before lockdown because I was not expecting to see any there, but I am guessing it was just before lockdown.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thanks, Enver. I would just like to bring in Assembly Member Russell.

Caroline Russell AM: Good morning, everyone. Enver, what has been the total environmental impact of the GLA's trips over the last few years and how has this impact changed over time?

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): I cannot answer the impact question. The company that is used to record the travel is Agiito and part of the contract is that they do the carbon offsetting. But I do not have the carbon offsetting figures to hand. I can look that up and get back to you. In terms of cost, it looks like there is a bit of catch-up in 2022/23 but it is less than it was. If you take the 2018/19 year as the proper full year pre-pandemic, it is significantly less than that year. Therefore, from a cost point of view, it has come down. If you look at the fact there is a lot more online facility, there is a lot more meetings that take place without requiring travel. The number of trips has come down, but there are still some trips.

Caroline Russell AM: Yes, I was absolutely going to just say do you think that the pandemic has enabled people to use international travel less because it is possible to do a lot of that engagement in terms of online meetings?

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): To an extent. As we have described before, I went to an event, it was for four days, I could not have stayed online for four days. There is an attention span and the repertoire you pick up with other cities around the world in between those focus points and meeting them and then bringing that knowledge back. From my own personal experience, that climate budgeting that you have all recognised before, that came off the back of an international trip to Oslo, which first of all I was quite surprised that they were making us fly, but it paid for itself by being there and making that contact and in September [2023] we host, therefore they come to us.

Caroline Russell AM: Therefore, I suppose you are making the case for face-to-face meetings because that does make a difference when you are trying to engage with people.

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): It does. It is hard when you are in another city for somebody to walk around with a laptop showing it to you. If you are there and you are talking to people and they are explaining what they are doing and then they come back to our city and we show them what we do. You cannot really do that online for a sustained period. It is not the same as dialling into a two or three-hour meeting.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): It is the same reason, is it not, why we have offices, in that we recognise that, while it is possible to some extent to work from home and for some tasks that can be quite effective, when it comes to interaction and building relationships just as human beings, that is much better done in person. When you get those relationships that makes it more possible to do that online interaction and hence the GLA's hybrid approach to office working. You will probably see something similar in terms of the impact on travel.

Caroline Russell AM: My next question is for Mary. Does the GLA publish its rationale for undertaking international trips or flights when public transport or virtual attendance options are available?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): I do not believe we publish them. We think through the rationale, as you have heard people talk about, but it is not published.

Caroline Russell AM: Do you think you might, given that, in terms of the climate crisis, everyone is really thinking about how to reduce carbon emissions from travel, and it is not just about offsetting, it is about there being fewer emissions from international travel, do you think you might think about publishing a rationale so that is clear and transparent?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We probably should think about it. In preparing for this panel and putting together all the information that has been asked for and that we have gathered, a few things have struck us about this data and how we use it and what we want to do is reflect, after this meeting, and see what we might do differently. That might be one example but there may be others that come up too.

Caroline Russell AM: That would be very useful to understand that. David, in May 2022 the Mayor, two Deputy Mayors, and eight GLA officers, took a five-day trip to the United States (US). The cost of the flights was over £32,000 and it was paid for by United Airlines following a partnership agreement, which reduced the GLA costs to £2,800 of taxes and fees. That looks like a great deal, but what did United Airlines get in return?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I will be honest; I am not sighted. My understanding was that we approached them looking for a group booking in the way that any group travel arrangement could. Obviously, it is not just about the travel of the Mayor and the GLA party, there are also some members of the media travel on these bigger trips. Therefore, we were able to negotiate that, and I am not aware of anything specifically we did for them in exchange.

Caroline Russell AM: There was a note in the Mayor's press release about the trip, which says,

"United Airlines is proud to be flying the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and his team on their trade mission to the United States. United Airlines is set to operate 22 flights per day from London Heathrow to the United States for summer 2022."

Therefore, it looks like it was a United Airlines sponsored trip.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I would not describe it as a United Airlines sponsored trip. What I would say is that, in the nature of any mayoral trip, we are dealing with a number of businesses and organisations and helping them do business with London. On that trip, for example, Major League Baseball, clearly the Mayor was promoting Major League Baseball and the fixtures; we have the first one coming up in London this weekend. It is a natural part of these trips that businesses doing business with London get some publicity out of it and that to me seems just like one example where clearly United Airlines, post-pandemic, have increased the service that they provide between London and the United States.

Caroline Russell AM: Are you saying that there is no partnership agreement with United Airlines?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I am not saying anything specific because I was not involved in it and do not have the facts. However, there is no ongoing relationship that I am aware of. It specifically was an announcement made about that time with United Airlines because they were looking to promote their increased service.

Caroline Russell AM: If you could take away finding out whether there was any kind of partnership arrangement and, if so, please publish it.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): We do that in the usual way, happy to.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. Now the Mayor's team of 11 flew business class from London to New York, then to San Francisco. The group then flew from San Francisco to Los Angeles, a journey shorter than London to Edinburgh, and then business class again from Los Angeles to London. Now I have calculated the approximate emissions for that trip and it is a total of 64 tonne of carbon dioxide (CO₂), which is equivalent to nearly 20 times the climate footprint that most Londoners manage in a whole year. Therefore, in just five days, and without counting the 11 UK journalists who travelled alongside them, and that was apparently to promote UK/US tourism, which is also about more flights, predominantly taken by people who fly very frequently. Therefore, David and Mary, and Mary as authorising officer of the Mayor's expenses claims, do you think that can be justified in a climate emergency?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Yes, it is clearly the case that, as part of the move to net-zero, there will need to be changes to all sectors of travel. We know that as a base matter of engineering and science that changes to aviation is probably the most challenging area, but nonetheless it is happening. I know for instance that one of the trips the Mayor has been on used sustainable aviation fuels and is an opportunity to promote that and encourage that. It is difficult, one can take a view of course that any form of air travel is unacceptable in the current situation, but clearly that is not the position of the Mayor and the economic impact of adopting such approach on London and Londoners' livelihoods would be very significant.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. I just have one final question for Enver Enver. In practice, how does the GLA apply its framework to determine whether an alternative mode of transport to flying is practical and available and how does the GLA ensure it applies this aspect of the framework consistently and fairly?

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): The guidance is public and that tells every individual what they need to consider before making the decision. The line manager who would authorise it would have to ensure that the officer who is travelling has justified that. Depending on the seniority of the person travelling, it would escalate up to Corporate Management Team level and that individual would still check that. Therefore, when it is being signed, the person who is authorising it is effectively saying, "I have had this conversation and I have agreed this under the terms of the policy." While I do not know every single trip, the individual who is authorising it should be ensuring that the compliance with the policy is there and that the form to travel abroad has to justify what mode of transport is being used. The default should not be air, especially for internal travel. There should be a question whether travel is needed in the first place and whether if, the travel is needed, if it is the most economical way to get there. The policy does say you could take a bus, you could cycle, therefore the policy is quite up to date from that point of view. I am not saying it is perfect but it does reflect on the environmental impact and there is always the balance between value for money from a financial point of view, value for money from an environment point of view, and it takes somebody many, many hours to travel via another route, there is still the cost of the person getting there and how long they are taking to get there as well. Therefore, all of those factors need to be considered.

Caroline Russell AM: I am just about to hand back to the Chairman, but I think that then raises the question, when you have a sponsorship deal where the material cost or a deal of cheap flights with an airline company, were those decisions applied, particularly for one of the flights that was a distance shorter than London to Edinburgh. Were those tests applied in that case?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I can answer directly in terms of I apply those tests when I look at travel from members of the Mayor's office and what you have to consider for that trip, a journey between San Francisco and Los Angeles, firstly one has to reflect that the US is a very different place to this country in terms of rail infrastructure and the options that we have in this country and one has going to continental Europe, and not in general options that you get in the US. I speak there as somebody who, in my previous role, used to regularly take a train between Boston and New York, therefore I am familiar with the US rail network.

The other factor of course is the schedule and the itinerary for that trip. "Packed" does not begin to describe it. It is also the elapsed time is a very important consideration.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. I will hand back to the Chairman.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thanks. I just wanted to briefly come back, David, to those questions Assembly Member Russell was asking about the relationship with the plane provider and that trip. You were saying you were not clear on the detail. That is exactly why we had tried as a Committee to ask Ali Picton to come because we thought as [Mayoral] Director of Operations [at the GLA] she would be closer to that detail. We were assured you would know the detail. Therefore, who is the person who possesses that detail that should be here?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): The arrangements for international travel would be done through the GLA's International Relations Team and they would be. As discussed, that trip involved the Mayor, members of the Mayor's office, a couple of colleagues from other teams, and obviously external media. Therefore, they would take on the organisation of that trip. In terms of reporting lines, they are within the Strategy and Communications Directorate.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): OK. Who do you think, should we have the Communications Director then?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): The Executive Director for Strategy and Communications is Niran Mothada

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Right, therefore it would have been helpful perhaps to suggest that, because we come to a situation then where we are in this meeting and we are not getting all the facts that we wanted from that meeting.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Chairman, to be very frank, if I had known you were going to ask about this specific topic, either I could have suggested that Niran attend or I would have found out more detail myself and answered it. With respect, sometimes it is very difficult to sit this side of the room and anticipate what is going to be asked and we put quite a bit of time into preparing and trying to anticipate what questions we will get, with very little information about what that might be. More briefing and insight from the Committee about what you would want to talk about will enable us to be either better prepared or to ensure we have the right people in front of you.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): No, I am sorry that it came as a surprise we were questioning the America trip when we were looking at overseas trips, one of the biggest trips the Mayor has had in the last year. I will pass over to Assembly Member Fortune wanting to come in.

Peter Fortune AM: Thank you very much. It was just a quick thing to pick up on what Assembly Member Russell was asking about the sponsored trips. By the way, I do not have an issue with the Mayor of London going around and visiting other countries. You will do it when you are Mayor, I am sure, Assembly Member Hall.

Susan Hall AM: I will, I will.

Peter Fortune AM: The look of fear that went over Mary's face then is fantastic. When you have sponsored or paid-for trips, who owns that carbon footprint?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Assembly Member, I think you might be confusing two things. If you are meaning a trip in which somebody is invited by another city government to go and visit that city and they want us there, they want our expertise, they therefore agree to pay for the cost of travel, that then would sit with them because they would have the responsibility for the decision-making. If it is the case - and this is where it can get complicated sometimes in terms of the transparency and things that would go to Audit Panel - they may say, "We will pay for it, but can you book it and we will pay you back?" If that happens, then the GLA approaches the booking in terms of its policies and the environmental impact and the offsetting exactly the same way we would as if the GLA was paying itself.

Peter Fortune AM: I do not think I have confused the question then. If we are paying for it, we will own that carbon footprint. If the Mayor is travelling, or anyone in the Mayor's team, I am not having a go, I am just trying to work out the way it is audited, if a trip is paid for by somebody else, that will not add on to the balance of the carbon footprint of the Mayor, for example. It is not a cumulative process in terms of carbon footprint.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I guess what I am saying, if it comes through the GLA, you have the GLA's offsetting approach will apply. I am not quite following you in terms of beyond that, because we will report about the trips, but I do not quite get the point about ownership.

Peter Fortune AM: The United Airlines trip was funded by United Airlines. It was not booked through the mayoral agency, the travel agency, was it?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): No, it was a group booking, therefore it probably was separate.

Peter Fortune AM: It was a big old size nine carbon footprint that goes with the flights over to the US. Would that cumulatively go on the bottom line of the carbon footprint created by the Mayor and the team or, because it is paid for somewhere else, does it not come on our books as it were?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): We would report the air miles, indeed I have in front of me the air miles figure for that trip. I would have to ask officers about how that ties in with any carbon footprint reporting. I am not sighted.

Peter Fortune AM: That is the question. Hypothetically speaking, let us say there is one trip next year and it is a trip to China. If it is booked by the GLA, the carbon footprint created by that trip will go on to a ledger somewhere as the carbon footprint. However, if that trip is paid for by an external company, China Airways, whoever, then the carbon footprint would be zero because it has not gone through our accounting system.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): It is about where it was booked. If we booked it and then somebody else paid for it, then it would come through our systems, it would come out in our reporting. The question is, if it is not coming through GLA systems, do we then get the carbon information to include in our reporting? The answer is I do not know.

Peter Fortune AM: OK, I think that might be worth going and having a look at, because that will give us a true reflection of the footprint that is being created, especially for big trips like to the US, etc. Thank you.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Bokhari.

Hina Bokhari AM: Thank you. Excellent questioning from my colleague next to me because I was going to ask a very similar question. But I do want to talk a little bit more about these externally funded trips. David, can you just give me a little bit of understanding of people who have funded other trips? It does not necessarily have to be abroad, but has anyone ever, from other companies, funded trips for us, other than United Airlines?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): To start with full transparency, I once was asked to go and speak at the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives Conference in Manchester, and they paid for part of the cost of going up to Manchester to do that; the GLA paid the other part. That would be one example. Another example would be, for instance, C40 and certainly where the Mayor travels as Chair of C40, they would pick up that cost. Then I am not familiar, but it is possible that some of the costs in terms of the GLA's membership of C40 may give us some to travel to some of their events. Similarly, there are arrangements like that for the World Cities Culture Forum. Then there will be other examples of that where for a particular city or event that a member of staff is visiting they would pick up the cost of the travel.

Hina Bokhari AM: Why do they agree to pay for these trips? What is their reasoning?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): In general, because they want to learn from London's experience and the things we have achieved.

Hina Bokhari AM: Do they have their name mentioned in any publications or is there may be a banner anywhere in any rooms or any publicity at all with any of these companies that have paid for trips?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): We are not really talking about companies; we are talking about organisations, public sector and third sector. The publicity flows because they have got a member of GLA staff on stage at the event.

Hina Bokhari AM: Are all of the ways that all these trips have been funded publicly available, easily accessible and transparent?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Yes, because all members of staff - and elected Members as well, I would add - need to complete a gift and hospitality form. If somebody offers to pay for their travel to come and speak at an event, for example, then they would complete that form. Then those are reported

through to the Audit Panel and to the established arrangements. For Mayoral appointees/senior staff, those gifts and hospitalities are declared on their pages on our website.

Hina Bokhari AM: Can you tell me a little bit about why the Mayor's Director of Political and Public Affairs [Felicity Appleby] needed to attend the Durham Miners' Gala in 2022/23? Does she go every year?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): No. I believe that's a one-off, but it was an opportunity to meet with a number of important stakeholders who were gathered there. It was a very useful thing to do there after a period, of course, in which a lot of in-person meetings had not been happening for obvious reasons.

Hina Bokhari AM: The Durham Miners' Gala was an important event to go to for the Mayor and the work of the Mayor?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): The Mayor did not attend. It was --

Hina Bokhari AM: But it was for the Mayor?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): -- it was for the Mayor, and it was an important opportunity to meet with senior figures from a number of the trade unions that the Mayor deals with, both in his role as an employer and in terms of roles as representatives--

Hina Bokhari AM: I am just trying to see the connection with London though.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Well --

Hina Bokhari AM: London and miners.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I was trying to --

Hina Bokhari AM: What is the connection?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): -- I was trying to answer that. As I was saying, they are both unions the Mayor deals with in his role as an employer and also unions the Mayor deals with in their representative role for millions of Londoners who work in this city. Durham Miners' Gala - and, as it happens, in a personal capacity I was in Durham on Friday - is probably the leading event outside the Trades Union Congress Annual Meeting where members of the Labour movement gather together. In that context, it was an opportunity for a lot of meetings to be held that were needed, as I say, after a period in the pandemic when in-person meetings could not happen.

Hina Bokhari AM: Can you perhaps give us an evaluation of that meeting, what is going to happen out of that as a result and the next steps? Is that something that you can share with us?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I am not going to get into a world where we try to do that for every single bit of travel that goes on. In this specific instance, I probably could not give you a detailed readout because the Mayoral Director concerned is on maternity leave so clearly I cannot speak to her to get the details you are after.

Hina Bokhari AM: Enver, when I was reading through the notes, it was very clear that there has always got to be a thinking process before we do anything when we are spending money - public money - that we think, "Is it worth spending the money?" This is public money, and the use of this money has to be carefully thought about. All my colleagues know this: I have been a teacher for years. I was paid by public money, every time we ran out of pencils, felt tips and paper I spent my money, my wages, and never asked the school for any money because I knew that they were strapped for cash. Lots of teachers are doing that right now. Do you think that it is enough for us to have that kind of premise before we spend money, to think "It's public money"? At the end of the day, if we thought about it in a more personal level, "This is my wage", would you spend that money? Do you think we are doing enough when we are thinking about our thought processes about spending the money?

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA):

Everyone that works in the public sector should be thinking about that in everything that they do. The rigour that goes into every decision is what I said before. It should be justified between the individuals before they even ask for it, the manager should make them really prove that and that discussion should be documented when the approval is made. I am not quite sure what more I can say. I genuinely think if it is public money we need to be considering it. We are not awash with public money, every trip needs to be justified and Mr Bellamy has explained what he knows about individual, specific trips. There are five years of trips here that we have been looking at and I am assuming that the right checks and balances were done before each of those trips did take place.

Hina Bokhari AM: Has any Mayor or any Deputy Mayor ever said, "You know what? I think I will spend my own wages on this trip because I think it's quite expensive so I'll do that instead"? Has that ever happened?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): If we go down that path, Assembly Member, we end up in a world in which people are expected to do their jobs for free. We end up back in the situation we were in in Parliament in the early part of the 20th century where Parliament was only open to those who could independently support themselves. It is the right and professional thing to do that if a trip is needed for the benefit of Londoners for the reasons the GLA was established, the GLA should fund it in just the same way as the GLA would do other expenses. I remind you that the total expenditure incurred last year on travel is a thousandth of a percentage of the GLA's income, one thousandth of 1%. We can be clear that this is a very limited expenditure and we have transparency arrangements about it. We have a review of the Policy coming up as a scheduled review next spring [2024] and so it is a good opportunity for us to think about what can be done better, but we need to keep this in a sense of proportion.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thanks. Assembly Member Prince?

Keith Prince AM: Thank you. I am again looking at the Director of Political and Public Affairs. I can understand why she might want to, and we should fund her going to the [World Union of] Olympic Cities meeting. Also, I can understand why we funded her to go to Liverpool for the Labour Party Conference, not that I would choose to go to either, myself. Where it digs a bit is the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Champions League Final. Now, that has to be a jolly. That just has to be a jolly and I would have thought that if I had had the privilege of being invited to the Champions League Final, I would have funded that trip myself.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): One of the responsibilities that post-holder holds, Assembly Member, is for major sporting events and bringing those to London. As you will know, the [UEFA] Champions League Final is in London next year [2024], and so in that context arrangements with UEFA and,

indeed, previous host cities to get that learning are absolutely critical. That final is now the fourth biggest sporting event in the world, after the Olympics, the UEFA European Championships and the World Cup. It is a huge event that we will be staging next year. It is absolutely right that we take every opportunity to look at how the event is staged and the arrangements around it and have those relationships with UEFA and the host city. The event next June will absolutely see all of Europe and, indeed, people all around the world with their eyes on London and there will be a great number of people, both with tickets and without tickets, visiting the city. It is a really, really significant undertaking for the GLA and one we have got to get right.

Keith Prince AM: Thank you.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. David, did you have any more information around the Mayor's diary on that time that perhaps you could send to the Committee afterwards? I take the point around the learning that was done there so --

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): We were not talking about the Mayor there. We were talking about the Mayoral Director for Political and Public Affairs.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Sorry, the Mayoral Director at the Champions League Final. If we could have some of the engagements?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I will see what I can do. As I noted earlier, she is on maternity leave so it is a question of what records we can access in her absence.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thanks. Assembly Member Hall?

Susan Hall AM: There are always questions about trips. I think that the Mayor should be out there selling London and that is part of his job so I do not have a problem with that personally, but there are always questions about trips, how they have been paid for and all the rest of it. However, whilst the GLA provides cost breakdowns of trips when it is responding to individual Freedom of Information requests, there is no single online repository that anybody could go to. Bearing in mind that the Mayor said he was going to be "the most transparent" Mayor ever, which has been a joke in itself. Do you not think it would be more sensible if all of these trips were put in one place and, to go back to Assembly Member Russell's point, a reason for why somebody else is paying for that trip? Then it would clear all this up just by being online, and it would be interesting to know why other people are paying for things if it is not obvious for the Mayor.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): The trips for the Mayor and senior staff are reported to the Audit Panel regularly and that is public. All the gifts and hospitality information are public. I think I am right in saying that that there is a web page that pulls together all the gift and hospitality information into one place. If not, we can certainly look at that.

A reflection from me would be that the GLA invested a lot in its systems and processes in its early days and we recognise the need to modernise those now. The Committee will be aware of the establishment of the Digital Experience Unit and part of that is about the internal processes we follow. Hopefully, as we improve those processes, which includes things like approvals around travel, we can look at that in terms of the range of information that we can generate. Of course, what we need to be mindful of is ensuring we are generating information that is useful to those interested in it rather than just a big data dump, and also that it is proportionate in terms of the effort required to produce it, recognising that that has a cost to the taxpayer as well.

Susan Hall AM: Yes, I accept that, but equally when you say you are going to be “the most transparent” person ever, I am afraid that that is a cost implication to your pledge, is it not? It was a pledge and pledges have to be costed out and then delivered upon. We are constantly bringing this up and will constantly bring it up, I imagine.

Last month, I submitted Mayoral Questions, which I am yet to receive answers to, on the Deputy Mayor for Business’ [Rajesh Agrawal] four-day trade mission to India and the Night Czar’s [Amy Lamé] visit to Sydney, Australia. Can you provide me with an update on these, including costs - internal and external - key performance indicators and carbon footprint?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor’s Chief of Staff): Trying to answer all that in detail probably needs to be done in writing.

Susan Hall AM: Yes, please.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor’s Chief of Staff): The Deputy Mayor’s trip you are talking about was an L&P trip so I do not have details about that in front of me. I do have the approval form for the Night Czar and her trip to Australia, which was at the request of and funded by the Government of New South Wales.

Susan Hall AM: That is interesting. I wonder why they would want that, but no doubt it will emerge and if you send me some of the details we can no doubt ask you questions another time.

What are the GLA’s main reasons for rejecting trip proposals and what do you think is the impact of you not taking them up? I know earlier, Mary, you said you gave everything great thought, but your great thought is not written down anywhere so we do not know what your great thought is. Why would you reject a trip proposal?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Right, I am going to ask Phil to answer that if that is OK --

Susan Hall AM: Yes.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): -- because it is the Executive Directors who are essentially making those decisions.

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): Essentially, it is for the reasons that we have previously discussed. That is that we either think the environmental impact, particularly where it would require a short-haul flight or a long-haul flight, is not justified by the benefits to London or to Londoners or where we do not think that the information that would be gathered or the connections that might be made would be sufficiently valuable to justify the time away from other duties.

It has to be said, certainly from my perspective in Good Growth, London is a regional authority. There is a lot more travel from City Hall to other parts of the capital to cement those relationships - on the Tube and so forth - than there is internationally or even to other parts of the UK. The bar has been set pretty high for people to come to me to ask for permission because we are very much focused on our role within London, but generally speaking I do look at those carefully because the bar is set very high. In most cases, the justification

is well made, but there have been one or two occasions where we have decided that it is not the best use of time or money or, indeed, the environmental impact perhaps is not justified.

Susan Hall AM: It is interesting that you say most of the trips are made around London. It begs the question why the Mayor put us here in one of the most inaccessible places in London you could hope to or dread to go to. If you are looking then at the Night Czar's visit to Sydney, that was absolutely justified, was it, regardless that there is anybody else paying for it and whatever carbon footprint that caused?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Yes.

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): I think it was. There is a genuine value for London, particularly in terms of it continuing to be seen as a magnet for tourism, for investment, for talent, for being seen to be leading the world in some of these areas around the night-time economy, around its cultural and creative industries and so on. Both being able to promote London's position internationally but also learn from best practice in other parts of the world seems to me a valuable thing for us to be doing. Cementing London's position at the forefront of work on the 24-hour economy is exactly what the Night Czar was trying to do through that travel.

Susan Hall AM: Well, I give you something definitely does need to be done, but we will wait and see if anything comes of it, will we not?

Mary, have you had to approve international travel expenses from the Mayor, Statutory Deputy Mayor and Executive Officers and can you confirm if you have ever rejected a claim from the Mayor? Have you ever told him he cannot go somewhere?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): No.

Susan Hall AM: No. Could you provide the Committee with a breakdown of all -- well, you said you have not though. I will leave it at that. You have never said, "No" to him at all.

Could the GLA routinely publish a full list of all the GLA trips covering the purpose, total cost and impact of each trip? It is more the impact that we are interested in.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): As I said to Assembly Member Russell earlier on in the meeting, we are doing two things. We are considering the work we have had to do to pull all this information together for today because the information, as you observed, does not all sit in one place. We wanted to hear the thoughts of the Committee in terms of your response to some of this information. As David has said, the [Expenses and] Benefits Framework is up for review next April [2024] anyway. That comes up every two years and we also just need to reflect on the environmental impact of some of this. With the challenge from Assembly Member Russell about how hard we test that and those choices about trips and how trips are made, what I want to do is take all of this reflection away and then we will work it out. As David has said, there is a balance between what more work we should do to make some of this information easier to find because it would have been good for us if some of it had been easier to find in preparation for today, but also balance that with the effort needed to do that for the value it provides. We are listening to what you are saying and we have got our own reflections based on our preparation for this event.

Susan Hall AM: Yes. You see, I was mentioning it all being in one place, David was suggesting that it was and now you are saying it took you ages to get all of the information together to give us answers. That is exactly where I was coming from.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I think we are referring to two slightly different aspects of information there.

Susan Hall AM: If it was available, it would be so much easier and you probably would not have needed this meeting.

Some of the travel expenses only seem to show the details of journeys one way. Why was the return journey for all those trips not added?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We might have to look at individual examples to answer that.

Susan Hall AM: OK.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We might get a list --

Enver Enver (Interim Chief Finance Officer, Greater London Authority): The information that we supplied had to come from the system so if someone has booked a return trip it should be on there. Whether it was clear from the data download that it was a return trip, I am not sure, but sometimes one line referred to the return booking so one booking and sometimes there were two separate bookings so it is two lines.

Susan Hall AM: OK, I will look into that and send you the details.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Yes, we all know, do we not, from our experience of booking train travel for ourselves that sometimes you buy two single tickets and sometimes you buy a return?

Enver Enver (Interim Chief Finance Officer, Greater London Authority): Yes, exactly.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): It may just be how the system feeds that through.

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): Exactly.

Susan Hall AM: OK. If there is something that does not look right, we will send it to you and perhaps you will answer us separately. Thank you.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Russell?

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. It is a very short follow-up about the quality of the data. I have noticed that most of the descriptions do say where the trip was to, which provides some context, but there is one that is just recorded as "site visit" and another one "conference attendance". When you are doing your review of how this data is collected so it is easy for you to keep track of what is going on, it would be good to make sure that that kind of transparency is properly picked up. Is that something you can pick up on?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): Yes, that sounds very sensible.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thanks very much. I have had an indication that we would welcome some more information on the carbon offsetting procedures and process and I wondered just quickly if anyone on the panel knows how we are offsetting our carbon?

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): I do not have the details of that. I am aware, as David said, that we have looked carefully at different offsetting systems and have sought to choose an offset provider who we think meets the criteria for an effective offsetting scheme. However, I would need to come back to you with exactly who the provider is with Enver's support and how and what particular offsetting mechanisms they use.

Enver Enver (Interim Chief Finance Officer, Greater London Authority): I have just --

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We purchase our credits from Carbon Footprint Limited - that is all I have got here - but, again, we can probably provide some more.

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): Yes, I asked our Transport for London (TfL) Procurement Team how that works when the current contract was awarded to the operator, Agiito. I am just looking for the contract so maybe I can share that with you because that should detail the carbon offsetting, what they agreed as part of that.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Please. Is it --

Susan Hall AM: I am just concerned about that because I often hear, "We are offsetting our footprint" and all the rest of it and I just assumed you knew exactly how you are offsetting it. It is so easy to say, "Oh, we're offsetting our ... We're flying here, there and everywhere else" and to talk about the environment. Everybody seems to be flying off somewhere to talk about the environment and then they say, "... and we're offsetting our footprint". Assembly Member Russell would know where all the offsetting goes, but I would absolutely expect you, Phil, to know exactly where it goes because it is churned out by all of you so often, "Oh, yes, we're offsetting that". Well, to where? To what? I am just looking at blank faces. To be honest with you, it is something I thought earlier and I thought, "I'm going to look ridiculous asking that" because everybody is talking about the offsetting of their carbon footprint all the time. I thought to myself earlier, "I should know the answer to that", not dreaming that nobody on the panel knew the answer to that. I am astonished.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): It is entirely integrated. The delivery of that is integrated into our Agiito contract and that is the point.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thanks. Assembly Member Russell, Assembly Member Hall has made quite a bold statement that you know where all the offset carbon in the world is going. Are you going to tell us that now?

Caroline Russell AM: I certainly do not know. Offsetting carbon is very often a bit of a greenwash and I am very glad that Assembly Member Hall has been raising this because you are sounding rather like a Green today. However, seriously, we do need to be thinking how we can reduce the overall emissions and that means reducing the amount of offsetting as well. We do need to be tracking that, making sure that we are flying less and reducing the amount of offsetting that we end up needing to do.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you and the point has been well made. Assembly Member Duvall?

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): It does beg the question - and this is a question to you, Mary - about the history of the organisation and where different bits are. In your pre-meeting conversations, hopefully you would have touched on about how the transparency of trips made by the Mayor and the Mayoral Team has changed over the history of the GLA. Did that come up in your conversation? I want to go back to the earlier point. Whether it is greenwashing or not, I remember in previous administrations people talking about offsetting their carbon as being part of the deal when we have talked about travel abroad and when particular trips come up. I am surprised that some of the history has not carried forward. It may well be different contracts and there may well be different ways of doing it as we get better at it or not or we move away from greenwashing around that. Tell us about what you have got historically about different ways things were recorded or not or changes that have occurred.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): At the moment, Assembly Member Duvall, not very much. Enver, myself and others have focused on 2018 onwards for this Committee. To be fair, Gino [Brand, Senior Policy Adviser, Greater London Authority], did ask us, "Have you got anything before that?" but we have not been able to spend much time on pre-2018 at the moment. We have focused on 2018 onwards in preparation of the meeting so we really have not delved back into the past.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Assembly Member, if you are interested, the one thing that I have been given is a list of international trips made by the current Mayor and previous Mayor, number of air miles, how many were on Eurostar, etc. If you want that, I can provide you with that information.

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): We might need it written, but in terms of that I want to go back to an earlier one. One of the scandals in the previous administration was the mismatch between Mayoral staff using L&P and GLA, jumping between the two and not being as transparent as they should. In answer to an earlier question, I think it was you, Phil, who gave me the impression that still might be the case. That is that we are not auditing, we are not collecting data, if you are part of the Mayoral Team or any part of this organisation you can rush off and do it under L&P and it might not be as transparent as we want it to be. Is that still the case or has that door been closed because that door should have been closed under this new administration? It should have been one of the lessons or through the scrutiny that we had carried out and raised with you as a particular concern. Where are we on this issue? Have you a very clear answer?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Yes. A very clear answer would be that if, for instance, I were to be funded to travel by L&P - I never have been, but if I were - then that would need to be declared as a gift and hospitality because I do not have a relationship with them. If you are - for instance, the Deputy Mayor for Business is the Chair of L&P - that is out in his register of interests. You would thus expect him to travel as part of his responsibilities at L&P and that is where the L&P disclosure regime would kick in.

What I would say is the Deputy Chief of Staff and I talked about this about a month or so ago. We came to the conclusion that the existing Policy of the Authority - and it is an Authority policy, ultimately approved by Mary [Harpley] and by elected [Assembly] Members - is not as clear on this as we would like to be. Therefore, it is on the list of things that I want to see in the next revision of this Policy to bring more clarity to that than historically we have had.

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): Let us not wait for a revision because I think you can voluntarily do that from this meeting today to make sure there is transparency about those issues. L&P is to an extent, 90%

funded by us, as far as I am concerned that is a GLA body whether it is separate or not and we should be able to scrutinise what goes on there. It has made changes, partly because of the [Jennifer] Arcuri affair. It seems to have made them; we seem to have been catching up here.

Thank you for the way you answered the question, David, because you are clear. I am now going back to Mary [Harpley] and Philip [Graham] because I am not sure whether you officers are clear. One of the other little mini scandals was between the International Section and L&P, which bits of bodies were funded. Can you tell me that that no longer goes on and that that bit is transparent? I am not clear from the answers you have given me historically - and I cannot check from previous administrations to this administration - that those changes have been made.

I am embarrassed. I am embarrassed by this Authority to be honest because at this stage of the game we should be able to deal with questions like offsetting carbon. We should be able to answer issues about things that we have learnt in the past that were not working in the way they should have to be honest. That is about recording, data collection and being able to access it and if we cannot access it, there must be a big worry about where we are going. I know we are dealing with it in the future and I am very grateful for it being in there but, given the history of what went on in the past, we should be on top of this and closing some of these issues down because they were in previous administrations. Given the Mayor's commitment about transparency, I want to be able to see that through in terms of this administration. Where are we on those issues that I have just raised?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): I am going to ask Phil to come in on L&P because for staff that is very clear.

On your point on learning from the past, Assembly Member Duvall, we have not gone and interrogated expenses and flights and things like that pre-2018 for this meeting, but of course the Expenses and Benefits Framework is updated every two years and it is formally approved by Mayor, Assembly and me. I am confident that some of these lessons that you are talking about have, indeed, been learned and picked up in these reviews. I know that is not quite the point you are making, but that is the mechanism and we are saying, "No, this is now the way we do this". As David has alluded to, there is still work to be done even now to make this even tighter. You are saying, "Don't wait until April 2024" and I agree with you. We can do some earlier work again, as I said, on some of the reflections we have had as a result of this meeting.

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): The simple answer on L&P is that L&P does not - and certainly has not since I have been in the GLA - fund travel for GLA staff. That is certainly the case within Good Growth, but when I have spoken to Laura Citron [Chief Executive Officer, London & Partners] about this, she has been clear that it does not fund travel for GLA staff across the board.

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): Look, I do not mind whether it funds it or not.

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): No, I appreciate that.

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): What I want is clarity and I know that that is somewhere where we can go -

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): Absolutely.

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): -- and we can see where it is. I am not one. Like many of these people around the table, there is one criticism around here which may not be mentioned by others. Are we doing enough of that overseas engagement for our staff, not particularly about politicians but for our staff in terms of where it is? We can learn as much as they can learn from us and there is an issue there. I would not want to get that lost in amongst everyone saying, "Oh, we shouldn't be doing this" and "We shouldn't be doing that". The City of London does an amazing job for London and for this country and I am not comparing us in terms of the financial services, because the GLA is a different organisation, but they do use their trips in a way that benefits the economy and around that. We are trying to understand. I think you can justify using your trips for the benefit of Londoners, that is where we want to get to and they spend far more than anything you do.

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): I certainly agree that we cannot --

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): We should be doing joint work with them to be honest. Those are the questions we should be saying about this policy.

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): If I may say so, we are increasingly working with them jointly on that.

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): Good.

Philip Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): We have now set up and are funding the Opportunity London Partnership where we work with the City of London and with London Councils and the boroughs to make sure that we are presenting a united front. We are moving in that direction.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Also, to add to that, when the International Team is doing the research ahead of options for future Mayoral trips, as well as talking to L&P and the various GLA Teams one would expect they also speak to the City of London Corporation so that we do have that join-up.

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): I am going to get into my formal questions now in terms of justifying and perceptions and in terms of when you come to look at the future arrangements about justification and the issues. We heard earlier on about the ones that you reject or do not reject and that may be some of the issues, and it will be interesting to see a list of some of the things that you do turn down. I suspect it is not just for environment; it is also time and capacity in some cases. Other people may have a different view on whether you should turn it down and that might be the risk of it all because there is an issue of us around this table understanding some of that need for international interaction. It can take place in many forms, but for the public to understand it, "Well, you've all got your noses in the trough". What are the other issues in your considerations that you are thinking about? What could we also publish that would give some reassurance to the public about GLA trips or in terms of international travel or even domestic travel? Have you given the presentation of this information any thought?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): I would say, reflecting again on looking at all of this material, that in my role as Chief Officer I have not seen anything that has made me think, "Goodness, gracious. Why did so-and-so go on that trip?" It is the first time I have looked hard at this information in the round. Everything falls into the categories that we have described through this meeting so I do not think we have anything that we need to be worried about saying, "Actually, this is what we have done and why". We choose not to at the moment. I think that is the point that you are making, Assembly Member Duvall, and that

others have made. We have not really thought like that, probably because - and, again, the point has been made - we think very carefully about how we spend this money, and in the grand scheme of things not very much money is being spent. However, particularly on the GLA staff side there are a few teams that are doing some travel for, as far as I am concerned, the right reasons.

Should we be sharing that more with Londoners and describing that work as part of pursuing business for London, profile for London and learning for London? That is a good question. That is a good question and that is a question we need to ask ourselves coming out of this Committee because at the moment we choose not to do it. However, from everything that I have seen in looking at what we have been doing over the past four/five years, I do not see that there is a reason why we should not, but we do not currently do that.

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): Let us go to Enver in terms of my next question. Presumably, you have interrogated some of the historical issues. Over the years, has the GLA Internal Audit Team ever raised concerns with regard to an application of GLA expenses regimes when claiming for trips? Have there been any issues internally where you would say, "Well, actually there's been some questioning"?

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): As you know, I have only been doing this particular role for a couple of weeks. I did ask the Internal Auditors and they said, "No". That was one of the first things I thought about as to what other issues there are so that we can look at this holistically. We did put together the Agiito information with the travel expenses information when we passed it over to Scrutiny so that you had all of it in one place. As we have discussed at length, there are some gaps in the way that this could all be pulled together and presented in a single way that would help us analyse. Nothing has been brought to my attention yet about any concerns about any trips or anything untoward.

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): You are not aware of anything historically?

Enver Enver (Interim Chief Finance Officer, Greater London Authority): I am not. That does not mean that there has not been, but I have been focusing on this particular time period because that is what we got out of Agiito. I have not had the opportunity yet to go any further back because of dealing with other issues as well and at the moment I have not.

Len Duvall AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Bokhari?

Hina Bokhari AM: Thank you. Mary, I want to ask about the travel expenses within London. There are quite a few that we have seen in our brief that have a destination of St Pancras and Euston stations and they are quite expensive. Is there any consideration about how that costing is worked out? Are these particular trips from the home of that individual or from work? How do we make sure that this is not something where somebody could have paid for themselves from their home destination like they would if they were going to work, for example? How do we make sure that that does not happen?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): The Expenses and Benefits Framework is very clear in terms of what is claimable and not and your point is generally the trip from home is not, but it depends. There is extraordinary detail in the Expenses and Benefits Framework about incremental costs or not from that. The framework is very clear. When people submit their expenses they need to justify what they are claiming for. Then, according to the hierarchy laid out in the framework, those are signed off. Those are the

controls around that. I do not sign off many, because I do not get many claims. Phil probably signs off more than I do. Anybody who signs off those is expected to ask the right questions before signing off. Those are the controls.

Hina Bokhari AM: Who is asking those questions, specifically?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): I have to sign off expenses, Phil's expenses for example, if I were to see something in the lines in Phil's expenses that I think does not seem to me to fit with what I am expecting, I would ask Phil. Phil would do the same.

Hina Bokhari AM: It seems quite a lot of money, that is all.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We would have to look at the individual case you are talking about to check. We would be happy to do that. Broadly, it is very clearly what people can and cannot claim. People's travel patterns are very different as well, are they not? It may well be that for somebody a trip up to St Pancras is an expense whereas for somebody else it is not, because it would be contained in their general daily costs. That is all laid out in detail in the framework.

Hina Bokhari AM: You said earlier that you have never refused any trip from the Mayor, has that been the case with Deputy Mayors as well?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): I do not sign off for Deputy Mayors.

Hina Bokhari AM: Who does that? That would be you, David?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Yes. As set out in the policy that you have approved as an Assembly Member, I would approve all international travel by people in the Mayor's Office Directorate, which would include Deputy Mayors.

Hina Bokhari AM: When we were looking through trips made by the Deputy Mayor for Business there was a trip made to Delhi and Mumbai in November 2016 then he returned in 2017 --

Léonie Cooper AM: Chair, these might be Dr Sahota's questions.

Hina Bokhari AM: OK, just very quickly on to another question, a trip in 2022 to 2023, four people from the Communities and Skills Directorate went to Abu Dhabi at the cost of £5,600. How does that sit with the Mayor's ban on TfL advertising with the Emirates? I know he had some concerns about that. What exactly does the GLA staff have to learn from Abu Dhabi itself, when it comes to communities and skills? I do not mind if David or Mary answers that.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): That is in the Communities and Skills Directorate, so we would need to ask the relevant Executive Director about that trip. I am entirely unaware of it.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): We will have to answer that separately. We can respond to that one.

Hina Bokhari AM: You will find out why that trip happened and why the fact that the Mayor has banned TfL advertising by the Emirates we are still working with Abu Dhabi? That is the concern that I have.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): No, I understand the question.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Somebody having gone to Abu Dhabi, which you say is the case, of course, does not necessarily mean they were working with Abu Dhabi. It may have been a conference with people from other cities, for instance. We will have to look into the detail.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): I know a couple of Assembly Members want to come in, but I am keen to move to Assembly Member Dr Sahota.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Thank you. My question is to you, Enver. Are you comfortable with the current way of authorising international travel expenses claims? Do you think it should be reassessed?

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): There is a little bit of scope for improvement and that is one of the things that we have already said that we are going to be looking at. I am comfortable with the way our booking system works. I am comfortable with the travel and expenses system. When there is a third party involved, we could do with a little bit more tightening up there.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Thank you. David, in terms of international travel and the system for authorising trips, how does the current Mayor, his deputies and political appointments compare to the system you inherited in 2016?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Your question is quite a technical one about the systems then I am not well-placed to comment because I do not use the systems. There are approval forms that are sent to the relevant approver, as set out in the policy and they are then considered. As I indicated to Assembly Member Duvall, I can talk a little about how international travel from the current and previous Mayor have changed, but that is really all I have.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: I am really wanting to know how the authorisation of these trips happen, what you inherited and what you currently have. What improvements have you made if any at all?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): It is all governed in terms of the policy which, as I say, is a policy approved by the Mayor, the Assembly and Chief Officer. The Assembly is cited in that policy. It is fair to say it has evolved through the years, rather than there being revolutionary change. The other side of it, of course, then is decision-making within that policy about whether ultimately to undertake a particular trip or not. Clearly, I am not in a position to be able to talk about decision-making in the Mayor's office under the previous Mayor.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Thank you.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Assembly Member Fortune.

Peter Fortune AM: Thank you very much. It is building on what we were talking about with the train trips and some of the data. The data we have gives us destination dates. If you look at the Chief Officer's Directorate, the majority of the trips listed are into London. The St Pancras one that was talked about - and I do not expect you to have the detail - was £156 for the two trips that were taken. We are going to need more

data on this to look at who it was travelling and where they were travelling from. Is there a policy to say that there is a hub, i.e., there is a point from which everybody works and then the travel is taken from there?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): On your first point, you will see a lot in the data of people who have done daytrips to, say, Birmingham or Manchester and then the return journey will be into Euston or St Pancras, places like that.

Peter Fortune AM: If that was the destination, we would not have the first part of the trip then - the reason I looked at the Chief Officer's Directorate is we have Leeds Liverpool, London Euston, London Kings Cross and St Pancras. They are all destinations.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): They are all destinations for the return journey, are they not?

Peter Fortune AM: Yes.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Sorry, can you remind you of your second point?

Peter Fortune AM: Is there a hub point? If somebody is based at City Hall, do we do the travel from there or do we do it from their home location?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Let us say somebody is going to Manchester for the day, the question would be: how much of the trip is covered by -- if they have, for instance, a season ticket or something like that, then that will get them as far as London Bridge, for instance, well then that has covered that cost and the GLA would pick up the cost from London Bridge. If they do not or if they have come to the office and are then subsequently going on the journey, we would pick up from where the trip starts.

Peter Fortune AM: So, there is not a hub point. It could start from their home location.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Yes, if they are one of these out the door at 6.30am in the morning to get up to Manchester for a 9am conference or whatever it is, then quite possibly you would be buying a ticket from Bromley South to Manchester Piccadilly.

Peter Fortune AM: The reason I ask is in the corporate world you normally claim your mileage from your office is all and it is your responsibility to get into the office.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Yes, we do not do mileage claims, because we do not do cars.

Peter Fortune AM: I was using that as an example. For rail claims, same thing.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Yes. It is about what ticket needs to be bought for the journey. If somebody has a ticket already that would get them into Central London to the mainline station the GLA would not need to pay for that because they have already paid for it and we would buy the ticket from London Euston and St Pancras, etc.

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): That is a very important underpinning principle of the expenses and benefits framework. If it is already covered by your travel card or whatever it is, you do not claim again. You only claim for additional expenses.

Peter Fortune AM: No, I get that. The question was about is there a hub point? But, no, there is not.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Russell.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. I have been looking through the Mayor's register of interest and expenses reporting because I wanted to understand a bit more about the trip to America with the £32,000 of flights that were being paid for by United Airlines, following what was called a Partnership Agreement. Interestingly the Mayor's hotel expenses for that May trip in 2022 are recorded properly in his expenses register. I then looked at the gifts and hospitality and there is another trip that year, the October trip, where travel and accommodation for the C40 Mayor's Summit was provided to the Mayor as Chair of C40 Cities.

There was about £11,000 of travel costs and £680 of hotel costs, which are rightly presented as gifts and hospitality. The principle of the Gifts and Hospitality Policy is that you do not accept a gift or hospitality as an inducement or reward for anything you do at the GLA. It is obviously right that the £32,000 for the United Airlines sponsored trip is not registered as a gift and hospitality. However, the Partnership Agreement is not public, and we do not know what United Airlines got for that £32,000 of flight donations. I am just wondering in terms of transparency where that should be reported?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): If I am honest, I am not an expert on this, Assembly Member, but you are possibly looking at this as something bigger than it is. I am very happy to set it all out in writing. If that raises issues about whether something should have been published earlier then obviously, we can deal with that and I am very happy to -- but let us just set out the facts clearly, because neither of us have them.

Caroline Russell AM: It is very important for transparency that those facts are set out.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I am really happy to write publicly and do that.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you very much.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. To reiterate again, it is a shame that we do not have those facts today. Assembly Member Cooper.

Léonie Cooper AM: Thank you. I have been looking at the data that we have been provided with on flights. We, as the Assembly, have agreed that we will not fly to Paris, Brussels, destinations really easily reached on Eurostar in a matter of hours, and also destinations in mainland Britain as well where alternative modes of transport are available, because we believe that going by train has a much lower carbon impact. We have just had a discussion where we did not seem to be able to identify the carbon offsetting. I did not quite understand where we came to on that. Looking through the list of all the international trips and it is not very apparent to me in the data that we have been provided with how many of these were made by train. For example, there is a full list of all the trips made by the Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy (Shirley Rodrigues), for example, from May 2016 to May 2019, and I assume there are trips that have been made post-pandemic as well.

There are a number of those trips that say Brussels, Paris, Paris, Paris, Brussels, Brussels, all for reasons that we would completely understand, to do with air quality conferences, speaking to the European Commission and so on and so forth. Would it be possible to clarify for us whether all of these trips were all definitely made, particularly to Paris and Brussels, by train?

Enver Enver (Interim Chief Finance Officer, Greater London Authority): Each spreadsheet had two tabs. One was for air; one was for rail. If you look on the air one, for each one --

Léonie Cooper AM: This is a list of international trips. On a separate page I have separately --

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): On a separate thing, OK.

Léonie Cooper AM: -- and it does not tell me who has made the trip. So those are the trips made Deputy Mayor for --

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): The detail we have provided gave a spreadsheet for each year and we split that between air and rail. If you open the air sheet on each one, any trip that covers Brussels and Paris, if it is has got "air" that means someone has flown there, otherwise it is not. We did provide that. The system that we use, somehow defaulted Eurostar into the air category. We did go through and manually move Eurostar from air into rail, because unless there is something about Eurostar that I do not know, it is not air.

Léonie Cooper AM: Not usually, no. That would be quite an unusual way to board it.

Enver Enver (Acting Chief Finance Officer and Director, Group Finance Performance, GLA): As a result of this, I was quite comfortable that the data that we had given had been manually checked line by line for that reason.

Léonie Cooper AM: If I go to the page where it talks about Mayoral appointees' trips by air and there appears to be quite a lot of them at quite a cost, and some of them are obviously ones that it would be more difficult to get there if you were not flying, but then there are some, and Assembly Member Fortune was picking this up, which say "London Gatwick". Did someone fly from London City Airport to London Gatwick? That seems unlikely. I assume that London Gatwick was the starting point for two people who went somewhere, but I cannot see where. Then it says "Luton". Did someone fly from Gatwick to Luton or did someone leave from Luton to go somewhere? Then it says "Stanstead". Likewise, it is not very clear. Then there is a list also under Mayoral appointees' trips air to Amsterdam, Berlin, Copenhagen, Glasgow and Rotterdam. Some of those possibly much faster, for example, Copenhagen is quite difficult to get to, but they are all listed under air. That includes going to Rotterdam and Amsterdam, which are really easy on the Eurostar. What has happened there? That is the Mayoral appointees.

Then I have GLA officer trips by air 2018 / 2019, includes Edinburgh, the Isle of Man. Then I have the same problem, it says London City, London Gatwick and London Heathrow. That is the place where we started not the place where we went to, I am assuming. Edinburgh again, somebody went there. There is a very long list of flights in 2018/2019, a very long list of GLA officer air flights in 2019/2020. One of them ironically says Brussels Midi/Zuid, which are definitely the train stations in Brussels, because I have been to them both. It seems strange that someone flew there. I am wondering why there appear to be so many flights when there are these alternatives. What is going on here?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): There are probably three things to say in response to that, Assembly Member. The first is you have given a brilliant exposition of why data dumps and throwing things out there can be misleading. I am sure that some of those things absolutely were train journeys to Brussels

Midi/Zuid as you say. As was reflected earlier with the confusion about singles and returns, the way the data comes out of our travel system in its raw form, which we have given the Committee, is not necessarily very helpful to understand what has happened. Yes, we need to think if we are going to make any changes to the information, we present publicly how we ensure it is really clear as otherwise it creates more questions than illumination for anybody. That would be the first point.

The second thing I would say in terms of the Mayor's Office is that it is clear in the policy, not just the view of the Assembly, it is the view of the GLA, that wherever possible we will use trains for Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Edinburgh, all places like that. That is absolutely policy. My policy when I receive Foreign Travel Approval (FTA) forms is if they are not explicit that this has been done by train, sometimes whoever administratively fills in the form forgets to write that on it, I send it back for clarification. The third thing I would say, and the policy recognises this, is that there may very occasionally be exceptions. I am thinking for instance of a conversation with somebody known to the Assembly Member who does not work for the GLA Group, works elsewhere in the public sector, who with the train strikes, etc, this year got stranded in Glasgow.

Clearly, in that sort of situation a flight ends up being the only thing that can be done. We know we have had Eurostar strikes as well as strikes on the National Rail Network over the last year. So --

Léonie Cooper AM: We will accept that there will always be exceptions and you have outlined a perfect example. Do we have a list of the kind of things that mean that there would be an exception to the no-fly to the mainland and very easily accessible places in Europe? Do we have some sort of list of: these might be the times when this would be an exception?

Mary Harpley (Chief Officer, Greater London Authority): I do not think we do. People probably have sensible conversations, but we do not have a list. That might be something else we need to consider.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Part of the problem there is that we try to book travel well in advance. Sometimes it has to be done at fairly short notice. I do not know about Eurostar, but under UK law, unions have to give two weeks' notice of strikes. In a lot of the cases where we have booked tickets already and you can then get into relatively short notice, in the example, I gave, nothing is being done through their travel system, because it has been done as an absolute emergency. Obviously, there are procedures with expenses that are incurred. If somebody finds themselves stranded and they have no choice but to get their own personal credit card out and pay for whatever it is, they will then need to make an expense claim and, because it is outside policy, that ultimately will come to the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) for signoff. I believe they are summarised and reported to Audit Panel.

Léonie Cooper AM: What I would like to see rather than going back into the weeds of the report is would you be able to tidy this up so that it makes more sense. I cannot believe that somebody flew to Brussels Midi/Zuid because those are stations. That would be a really weird thing for somebody to have done and also the issue with the return travel and showing London Gatwick and someone coming back to Gatwick, which it clearly must be. Could we get something that makes sense rather than, as you yourself called it, a data dump. It would be really helpful to have that. Also, would it be possible to establish a list of for examples where people might be "forced" to fly when there is the opportunity to take public transport that stays on the ground instead? The difference in terms of the carbon impact and all of the rest of it, the environment impact, is really so dramatically more. I would really like us to have something firm there as well. Would both of those things be possible?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Absolutely we can look into that. Some of it, yes, will need to be change the systems and processes as well as how we report, but we should be able to do that. The fundamental point about not flying for things that can be done by train is absolutely GLA policy. As I say, it is something that I, as an approver, personally enforce and I would absolutely expect all other approvers in the GLA do, because that is what the policy says, and it is there for good reason.

Léonie Cooper AM: Thank you. To come back to Enver, you said that we have the tabs. The figures that I have for the Deputy Mayor for Business. The Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy includes a total in terms of the cash cost of the flights and train journeys that she made. I have a long list of all the international trips made by the Deputy Mayor for Business, May 2016 to March 2021, but there is no figure for how much all of those cost. It was Assembly Member Hall who said she would fully expect the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for Business and others to be selling London abroad, so I can see the nature of the trips that have been taken, but I would like to see how much they cost. When we see the figures from the gross value added from various other reports that might come to the Economy Committee or in L&P reports to their board, these kinds of figures are useful in assessing the input costs as well as seeing the outputs.

Enver Enver (Interim Chief Finance Officer, Greater London Authority): I will endeavour to try and get the cost of those. A lot of those were not funded by GLA, so I need to --

Léonie Cooper AM: OK, in that case that would also be of interest. Assembly Member Russell has pursued the point about United Airlines, but it might be that there is a lot more sponsorship going on in here that we now cannot see of other trips, possibly by other airlines or indeed other entities. That would also be of interest, not just to Assembly Member Russell, who is giving me that look, but of interest to a number of the Assembly Members as to how these trips were being funded then. Transparency here would be of use. Finally, I have a question about the rules determining the class of travel. There are issues here where we were talking about, please take the train rather than flying, because of the lesser impact in terms of CO₂.

Taking the train to Edinburgh rather than flying to Edinburgh is going to cost more, which is one of those ridiculous things that I wish the Government would get around to doing something about, any Government, of any complexion, but it has never been fixed. What are the current rules determining the class of travel? Economy class is only warranted for flights or train journeys of up to three hours, you might consider going First Class or Business Class if you are flying for longer, because obviously if someone has a packed schedule at the other end if they have flown for 12 hours to Singapore in Economy and had not slept a wink then they might not arrive in the best shape. What are the decisions around that? What are the rules?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): The policy is set out in the framework approved by the Assembly. For rail everyone should travel Standard Class, except when non-Standard Class is cheaper, which occasionally randomly happens.

Léonie Cooper AM: Yes, it certainly does happen, yes. It is another one of those bizarre railway things.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I came up with my daughter on Friday and she was astounded by this, but it does sometimes happen. In terms of air travel, the GLA policy is flights up to three hours would be Economy; For three to six hours in duration, Premium Economy is permitted; and for six hours or over, Business Class. There is never First Class for air travel.

Léonie Cooper AM: Same question was asked before, are there ever exceptions made? If there are exceptions, do we have a set of parameters that would guide when an exception might be made or do staff, if

they want to, have the option to upgrade from Premium Economy to business class if their flight is six hours, if it is on the cusp?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): The policy does not get into that detail, because we are talking about quite rare situations here. Clearly, this policy interacts with other policies where we consider staff's health and well-being. There may be staff with particular medical conditions that mean that we have to reflect that in how we apply the travel framework. As a general case, we are not in the business of giving exceptions and allowing people to upgrade, as it were.

Léonie Cooper AM: OK, but you have just mentioned another exception that is very valid, if someone is travelling and has particular health conditions or needs or is travelling with a guide dog, we might make a number of different adjustments to allow them to travel. I will leave it there. Thanks very much to all of you for your answers. Thank you, Chairman.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Bokhari.

Hina Bokhari AM: Thank you. I wanted to clarify a couple of points that I was going to make earlier about the Deputy Mayor trips. As there were trips that were made to Delhi and Mumbai so close together, do you think that in the future maybe you will reconsider not doing those types of trips when they are so close together in the future? David.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I am unclear which trips you are referring to.

Hina Bokhari AM: These are two trips in 2017. There was November 2016 then September 2017. There are two trips in 2017 to South Asia. Then back to a day trip in April 2019. There were lots of trips back and forth to India and Pakistan very close together in time.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): I am not quite seeing that. I find it hard to believe there was a day trip to India. The details I am looking at the moment do not reflect that at all.

Hina Bokhari AM: I have it as April 2019. Maybe we can look into that further.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): In April 2019, the Deputy Mayor was in Berlin, which is Germany not India.

Hina Bokhari AM: OK, maybe there is lack of clarity there, because we are just looking at the facts that we have been given. I can go back at my team and ask them to clarify this. Also, there are trips to China that are, again, very close together. I am wondering at the appropriateness of having these types of trips abroad, in terms of time, whether they could have been done in a one-off trip or there could have been more opportunities of doing online business meetings instead.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): We absolutely would have to look at the justification for the specific trips. There is not a general answer to that, but each trip needs to be appropriately justified as it would even if there was just one of them.

Phil Graham (Executive Director, Good Growth, Greater London Authority): That is absolutely right. I do not know the detail of all of those trips. I am aware of the trips that were undertaken to China and that was the Deputy Mayor accompanying groups of businesses going out through the Mayor's International Business

Programme. Effectively, the timing of those trips was reflected by the cohorts going through Mayor's International Business Programme and the Deputy Mayor was accompanying those. I am not ruling out the possibility that there may be scope to look at doing two cohorts at once or something like that. However, it is important to say it was driven by the needs of the investment programmes that were being run rather than by the needs of the Deputy Mayor's schedule.

Hina Bokhari AM: Right. I wanted to thank you also for the earlier answer about the funding of the Night Czar's trip to Australia by the Government of New South Wales and was not GLA funded.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): Yes, not GLA funded.

Hina Bokhari AM: That is great to know, because I asked specifically 11 questions to the Mayor on this and not one of them were answered. It would have been brilliant to have had those answers beforehand. This is one of the reasons why we are having this meeting today, is that when we ask these questions they are not answered, and we are having to do meetings like this. It is such a shame because I asked all of these questions before. Will those questions now be answered? It helps the Night Czar because she does not want to have negative press either. If those questions were answered earlier, we would not be in this situation. Will those questions be answered soon?

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): All Mayoral questions will be answered. I am not cited on those specific ones. We try to answer questions as quickly as we can. Sometimes there are rather a lot of them, and we get to it as quickly as we can. I do not know whether I am going to be asked to clear the answers to those, but if so it has not reached me yet, so I did not know those questions existed, but I will ask colleagues about it.

Hina Bokhari AM: Thank you. Mark Drakeford would probably appreciate if we clarify that we mean New South Wales, the Australian Territory with Sydney in it, not Wales. One more thing from me, David. We are clearly going to be looking into this carbon offset issue, so I want to add if we could get a steer on the Mayor's preferred method of carbon offset that would be really appreciated. I would like to know, and I am sure the Committee would, what is his preferred method for carbon offset.

David Bellamy CBE (Mayor's Chief of Staff): There is a policy view on that as well as what specifically the GLA does. We can happily set all that out.

Emma Best AM (Chairman): Thank you. In that case, I would like to thank the panel for coming today and for your answers in this session.