

# Subject: Secretariat Quarterly Monitoring Report February - April 2023

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>GLA Oversight Committee</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Assembly Secretariat</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>1 November 2023</b>
<b>Public Access:</b>	<b>This report will be considered in public</b>

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report presents an overview of the work and outputs of the Assembly Secretariat in February - April 2023, the last three months of the Assembly year. Overall, the period has seen a high level of activity by committees, including an increase in published outputs during the last month of the Assembly year.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **The Committee is recommended to note the Secretariat Quarterly Monitoring report for February to April 2023.**

## 3. Scrutiny Activity

- 3.1 Resourcing has remained a challenge through this period, but two additional staff members have joined, one at Policy Adviser level and one at Senior Policy Adviser (SPA) level. The latter takes up the long-awaited Transport and Environment SPA role but will initially cover only the Environment portfolio from February -April 2023, taking on the full joint portfolio from May 2023. In the meantime, a temporary cover for Transport SPA has been provided by an Acting Up role within the team.

## **4. Assembly Committee Updates**

### **Budget and Performance Committee**

- 4.1 The Budget and Performance Committee continued its scrutiny of the Mayor's Greater London Authority's (GLA) Group budget proposals for 2023-24. On 15 February the Mayor published his Final Draft Consolidated Budget. Together with the January 2023 Draft Consolidated Budget, these versions included an additional £317 million of expenditure and an extra £81 million in fares income when compared to the Mayor's Consultation Budget.
- 4.2 In an additional stage compared with the previous year's practice, these additions were considered at a further Budget and Performance Committee meeting on 21 February 2023 with the Mayor. The Mayor initially declined requests to be present at this meeting and was summonsed to attend. This meeting preceded the all-Assembly Budget Mayor's Question Time on 23 February 2023, at which the Mayor's Final Draft Consolidated Budget was considered by the London Assembly. The Mayor was questioned at the Budget and Performance Committee about his new Free School Meals for primary school children initiative, the Transport for London (TfL) fares increase from March 2023 and the budget implications of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) expansion.

### **GLA Oversight Committee**

- 4.3 On 2 February 2023, the Committee met to discuss the London Recovery Programme and its impact to date. Guests for this meeting included London Recovery Board Members, GLA representatives and a London Councils representative. On 15 March 2023 the GLA Oversight Committee met with GLA Officers to examine the impact of the City Hall relocation on staff, London's democracy and the Royal Docks area and to assess the extent to which the relocation of City Hall has been a success, one year since the building opened to staff and Assembly Members.

### **Transport Committee**

- 4.4 Following its first meeting of its investigation into the future of smarter road user charging in December 2022, the Committee held its second meeting in February 2023. The meeting looked at a number of practical questions around smarter road user charging and heard from TfL, London TravelWatch, Transport for West Midlands and the RAC Foundation. The Committee also published a call for evidence on this investigation, which closed on 10 March.
- 4.5 The final meeting of the Committee on 21 March was a Q&A with the Deputy Mayor for Transport and the Transport for London Commissioner. Topics covered in this meeting include Vision Zero, TfL finances, active travel investment, London's river crossings, the bus network in London, road user charging and rail in London.

### **Police and Crime Committee**

- 4.6 The Committee continued its scrutiny of the Met and Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) through its monthly question and answer sessions. In January, the Committee summonsed Diana Luchford, MOPAC's Chief Executive Officer, to attend the Committee's meeting on 22 February where it explored the Met's draft Turnaround Plan, Police recruitment and training, the Met's Safer Schools Officers and economic crime and money laundering.

- 4.7 On 8 February, the Committee held an informal meeting with the GLA Peer Outreach Team to hear evidence from young people for its missing children investigation. At the meeting, the Committee discussed with five Peer Outreach Workers and two Peer Outreach Team coordinators the causes of children going missing and how agencies including the Met, MOPAC and schools can prevent children from going missing. The Committee also received 18 written responses to its call for evidence, including 12 submissions from children safeguarding partnerships across London.
- 4.8 On 8 March, the Committee met with Baroness Casey following the publication of her Independent Review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Met. Following this session, the Committee also met with the DMPC and Commissioner to discuss the Met's response to Baroness Casey's findings.
- 4.9 On 8 March, the Committee held a third meeting exploring counter-terrorism and radicalisation in London. It met with MOPAC and the Met's SO15 Counter Terrorism Command to explore the findings from the independent review of Prevent.
- 4.10 On 1 March, the Committee received an informal briefing on the Met's work to tackle fraud by Detective Superintendent John Roch, Head of Economic Crime, 12 months since the Committee concluded its investigation on online fraud.
- 4.11 In March the Committee responded to the Met's draft Turnaround Plan. The Committee welcomed the Plan and its commitment and action to address the urgent change needed across the Met. In April, the Committee published its report on missing children in London, making 17 recommendations to the Mayor, the Met and MOPAC. It also published its report on counter-terrorism and radicalisation, making 12 recommendations.
- 4.12 On 6 April, the Committee visited the Met's Counter-Terrorism and Operations Centre.

### **Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee (FREP)**

- 4.13 The Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee met on 1 February to discuss the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade (LFB) which was published on 25 November 2022. The meeting was attended by Nazir Afzal OBE, former Chief Crown Prosecutor for the North West of England, who led the Culture Review, Baroness Twycross, Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience (DMFR), Andy Roe, London Fire Commissioner (LFC), and Tim Powell, Head of People, LFB. There was an in-depth discussion of the experience of Nazir Afzal in undertaking the review its findings and recommendations. The Committee heard about actions already taken to address the recommendations and work planned by the LFC. The LFC and DMFR provided assurance to the Committee that this work was being prioritised by them, but they acknowledged that achieving culture change across LFB would take time to deliver.
- 4.14 The Committee also considered LFB's national framework documents in its meeting on 1 February. The Committee is required under the GLA Act 1999 (as amended) to provide a report to the Mayor on these before they can be published. The Committee wrote to the Mayor on 3 February on LFB's Reserves Strategy and Medium-term Financial Strategy commenting that it noted LFB's intention to stabilise its reserves over the next two years. The Committee also wrote to the Mayor on LFB's Statement of Assurance commenting that it sought ongoing assurance that LFB is delivering on its Community Risk Management Plan and the recommendations remaining from the Grenfell Tower

Phase 1 report, the recommendations from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services and those from the Independent Culture Review of LFB.

### **Economy Committee**

- 4.15 The Committee met on 22 February to discuss barriers to work for people who have had contact with the criminal justice system. The Committee set out to understand why people with convictions often struggle to access employment, both upon release from prison and in the long term, and what action can be taken to address this by employers and public bodies. The Committee heard from MOPAC, Timpson Group, Unlock, Working Chance and New Futures Network about what action can be taken to reduce barriers to employment for people with convictions, including by the Mayor.
- 4.16 The Committee held its final meeting of the year on 15 March 2023, which focused on the financial security and employment opportunities of older Londoners. It considered the barriers to employment and economic activity amongst older Londoners, and what the Mayor is doing to support older Londoners into employment. The meeting was attended by guests from the London Borough of Hackney, the Centre for Ageing Better, Wise Age and Age UK London, as well as the GLA's Chief Digital Officer.
- 4.17 The Economy Committee published a series of outputs during this period. The Committee published letters to the Mayor on the Adult Education Budget, barriers to work for asylum seekers and refugees, barriers to work for people who have had contact with the criminal justice system, and older Londoners. It also published reports into 'culture off the beaten track', cargo bikes and food insecurity.

### **Health Committee**

- 4.18 The Committee wrote to London Ambulance Service on 20 February 2023 with recommendations about how the new strategy could be strengthened.
- 4.19 On 28 February 2023, as part of its investigation into 'Healthy Living', the Health Committee took part in a cycle ride led by Cycle Sisters in Valentine's Park in Richmond. Cycle Sisters are a charity that runs cycling groups across London for Muslim women. Members were able to ride bikes with the rest of the group and heard about the physical and mental benefits of participating in Cycle Sisters groups. The site visit was covered by the Evening Standard and London Live.
- 4.20 On 2 March 2023, the Committee held a meeting in City Hall on healthy eating habits, which was also part of the 'Healthy Living' investigation. The Committee heard from representatives of three community organisations, Eat Club, Highams Park Food Aid and London's Community Kitchen, as well as a public health nutritionist and GLA representatives. The Committee set out to understand what the barriers are to Londoners eating healthily, and scrutinised the Mayor's initiatives to improve healthy eating, including the TfL junk food advertising ban and free school meals.
- 4.21 The Health Committee published three outputs during this period: letters to the Mayor on the GLA Group Public Health Unit and London Ambulance Service, and a report on maternal health and care.

## **Housing Committee**

- 4.22 On 1 Feb 2023 the Housing Committee held a formal meeting on the topic of resident voice in social housing, considering how this has changed since the disaster at Grenfell in 2017. The Committee heard from a range of voices across two panels. The first panel included Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, and representatives from One Housing, Islington Council, and the Chartered Institute of Housing. The second panel consisted of housing campaigners Kwajo Tweneboa, Sam Vacciana from Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations, Pat Turnbull from the London Tenants Federation and Khalid Mair from Imani Housing Co-op and BME London Landlords tenants' forum.
- 4.23 As a result of this investigation on resident voice in social housing, the Committee wrote a letter to the Mayor in April 2023. The letter urged the GLA to establish a Social Housing Commissioner for London, to ensure tenant's rights and interests are at the forefront of housing in London.
- 4.24 On 21 February 2023 the Housing Committee published its report 'Women and housing: a gap in the market', which was reported on by Inside Housing, the BBC and the Standard. The report featured 13 recommendations to improve access to safe, secure and affordable housing for women in London.
- 4.25 On 1 March the Housing Committee held an informal session, hosting three different stakeholders who had approached the Committee for a meeting over the course of the year. The Committee heard from the Smith Institute about social housing allocations; the New Horizons Youth Centre about youth homelessness in London; and the Women's Development Unit about women experiencing rough sleeping and multiple disadvantages.
- 4.26 On 20 March, the Housing Committee published its report entitled 'Exempt supported accommodation: Unsafe and Unsupported'. Key findings included instances of poor-quality and unsafe exempt accommodation. The report included 19 recommendations to the GLA on how to tackle problems with exempt accommodation in London, and it was accompanied by a launch event in Parliament.

## **Planning and Regeneration Committee**

- 4.27 On 1 March 2023, the Committee published a letter outlining proposed amendments to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. The amendments aligned with the recommendations set out in the Committee's report on 'the Future of Planning in London' which was published in January 2023.
- 4.28 Also on 1 March 2023, the Committee held a meeting on the topic of planning and the climate emergency, considering in detail the topic of Whole Life Carbon assessments. The Committee heard from the GLA, AECOM, the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers, and Hawkins\Brown, whose speaker was also a Mayoral Design Advocate. A second meeting on the topic was held on 22 March 2023.

## **Environment Committee**

- 4.29 On 1 February, the Committee published its *London Under Water* report into Flooding which outlined the steps the Mayor should take to reduce the risk of flooding and increase London's preparedness for flooding. It included recommendations to bring together key stakeholders annually

to re-assess preparedness, expand communications, and actions to retain and increase green space to prevent flooding.

- 4.30 On 7 February, the Environment Committee held a meeting which explored the impacts of light and noise on Londoners and the natural environment. The session was split into two panels, the first of which focused on noise – and included two representatives from Heathrow airport. City Airport was also invited but did not attend. The second session heard from experts on light, including representatives from the Royal Astronomical Society, Buglife, Enfield Council and a Dark Sky Consultant and Volunteer for Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). It considered whether existing policies were sufficient to prevent increased light pollution.
- 4.31 The Environment Committee’s session on 9 March was a meeting with the Deputy Mayor on Environment and Energy to find out progress on the Mayor’s Environment Strategy and the scale of interventions needed to achieve net zero by 2030, including the environmental impacts of emissions zones. The Committee also wrote to London City Airport expressing serious concerns over their proposed expansion in March 2023.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

## **6 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

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### **List of appendices to this report:**

None.

### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

None.

### **Contact Information**

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