

**LONDON**ASSEMBLY

Gareth Bacon AM  
Chairman of the Budget and Performance Committee

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18 July 2016

*Dear Mr. Mayor,*

**The Mayor's Budget Guidance for 2017-18**

On 14 July, the Budget and Performance Committee held a meeting with your Chief of Staff and GLA officers to discuss the Mayor's Budget Guidance for 2017-18, which was published on 1 July. The Committee welcomes the rigorous approach you are taking to identify savings and efficiencies across the GLA Group in order to free up resources to spend on London's priorities.

At the meeting, however, there was some concern among Committee Members that the Assembly and the public will be excluded from a key new stage of the process. The budget guidance states "initial budget submissions" due by 14 October will not be public documents and will be issued as "private advice" to the Mayor.<sup>1</sup> While we understand that functional bodies need to be able to offer you frank advice in private meetings, we do not feel it is appropriate to withhold these documents – in particular, the templates for efficiencies and savings, adjustments to revenue budgets, adjustments to capital programmes and growth proposals laid out in Annex B of the guidance. In order to scrutinise your decisions, we must be clear what choices you had to make during the budget process, especially given that you expect to see a "major re-alignment of resources" in the 2017-18 budget.<sup>2</sup> Without access to the initial budget submissions, we will not be in a position to undertake our role as fully as Londoners would expect.

**The Committee requests that you publish initial budget submission documents – along with the templates set out in Annex B of the budget guidance – on the GLA website before you publish the draft consultation budget in mid-December, redacted only where necessary.**

There is already a precedent for publishing information such as this. In the previous Mayoralty, the Committee repeatedly requested that the previous Mayor published the advice he received from TfL prior to making his fares decision. In the end, the Committee appealed to the Information

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayor\\_budget\\_guidance\\_2017-18.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayor_budget_guidance_2017-18.pdf) page 7, para 3.2.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayor\\_budget\\_guidance\\_2017-18.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mayor_budget_guidance_2017-18.pdf) page 5.

Commissioner who provisionally ruled that the public interest in favour of disclosing the information outweighed the public interest from maintaining the FOI exemption.<sup>3</sup>

I would be grateful if you could respond to this letter by 15 August 2016. Please copy your response to Lucy Pickering, Scrutiny Manager ([Lucy.Pickering@london.gov.uk](mailto:Lucy.Pickering@london.gov.uk)).

Yours sincerely



**Gareth Bacon AM**  
Chairman of the Budget and Performance Committee

Cc. Tony Arbour AM, Chairman of the London Assembly

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<sup>3</sup> Letter from Information Commissioner to John Biggs AM, former Chairman of the Budget and Performance Committee, 4 April 2014, ICO Complaint Ref: F550511917