

GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

(By email)

Our reference: MGLA200723-2286

12 September 2023

Dear

Thank you for your request for information which the Greater London Authority (GLA) received on 20 July 2023. Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act (Fol) 2000.

You requested:

Please provide details and copies of any correspondence between the Greater London Authority and/or London's Royal Docks and the Home Office/Secretary of State for the Home Department in relation to the possibility of the Home Office placing an accommodation barge for asylum seekers at/in London's Royal Docks and/or the Greater London Authority.

Our response to your request is as follows:

Please find attached the information the GLA holds within the scope of your request. It was the Royal Docks Management Authority (RoDMA) that were approached rather than the GLA/Mayor. The Mayor issued a press release on the subject matter of the Governments Illegal Migration Bill here: [Mayor calls on Government to urgently rethink 'cruel and unworkable' Illegal Migration Bill | London City Hall](#).

Please note that some names of members of staff are exempt from disclosure under s.40 (Personal information) of the Freedom of Information Act. This information could potentially identify specific employees and as such constitutes as personal data which is defined by Article 4(1) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to mean any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual. It is considered that disclosure of this information would contravene the first data protection principle under Article 5(1) of GDPR which states that Personal data must be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference MGLA200723-2286

Yours sincerely

Information Governance Officer

GREATER**LONDON**AUTHORITY

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA's FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>

[Redacted information is section40 (Personal Information) and Information out of the scope of the request]

From: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@london.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@london.gov.uk)>

Sent: 20 July 2023 14:51

To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk)>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@london.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@london.gov.uk)>; ASRA Engagement Hub

[REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk)>;

[REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk)>; [REDACTED] ASRA Engagement Hub)

[REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk)>;

Subject: RE: London Berthed Vessel - London Asylum Oversight Group

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Thanks [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] – really helpful to be able to nip this in the bud.

I will contact [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to communicate this.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Principal Policy and Programme Officer - LSMP Manager
London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP)

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London, E16 1ZE

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>

Sent: 20 July 2023 14:14

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@london.gov.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@london.gov.uk>; ASRA Engagement Hub

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>;

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] (ASRA Engagement Hub)

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: London Berthed Vessel - London Asylum Oversight Group

Thanks [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Happy to confirm that there is no such current live plan for London Docks.

[REDACTED]

Chief Operating Officer

Asylum Support, Resettlement and Accommodation
1st Floor Peel, 2 Marsham St, London

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>

Sent: 20 July 2023 13:51

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@london.gov.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@london.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>;

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; (ASRA Engagement Hub)

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: London Berthed Vessel - London Asylum Oversight Group

Afternoon [REDACTED]

Hope you're well.

I'm not aware of any such opportunity, obviously there was the proposal that I think was rejected by City Airport, outside of that I've certainly not heard of any plans in relation to additional vessels in London. Happy to speak to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] if that is appropriate?

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@london.gov.uk>

Sent: 20 July 2023 12:15

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@london.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; ASRA Engagement Hub <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>

Subject: London Berthed Vessel - London Asylum Oversight Group

Importance: High

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Hi [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (Clearsprings) stated in a meeting just now that there are advanced plans for a 900 bedspace berthed vessel to be used in the London Docklands (separate to the proposal in Newham earlier this year that was turned down). [REDACTED] stated this in a meeting with Home Office, LSMP and [REDACTED] (Refugee Council).

[REDACTED] have agreed that proposals for berthed vessels will be brought to the London Asylum Oversight Group, on a strictly confidential basis. It is additionally important to flag that [REDACTED] will be at the Oversight Group meeting tomorrow and may raise what [REDACTED] outlined just now in the meeting. We will therefore need to add this into the agenda for the London Asylum Oversight Group tomorrow.

I can be in touch with [REDACTED] (who is standing in as chair for [REDACTED] tomorrow) directly about this, but wanted to give you the opportunity contact them first if you would like to, and also to provide any context for what [REDACTED] set out to us.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Principal Policy and Programme Officer - LSMP Manager
London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP)

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London, E16 1ZE

[REDACTED]

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Home Office

Home Secretary

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Rt Hon Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
City Hall
Kamal Chunchie Way
London, E16 1ZE

DECS Reference: MIN/0911258/23

July 2023

Thank you for your letter of 8 June regarding the Home Office's proposed use of King George V Dock as a site to provide accommodation to asylum seekers.

The pressure on the asylum system from small boat arrivals has continued to grow. Around 51,000 destitute asylum seekers are currently being accommodated in hotels and costing the taxpayer in excess of £7 million per day. This figure includes those in initial accommodation as well as hotels.

This requires the Home Office to look at a range of accommodation options which are more appropriate and offer better value for the taxpayer. This is why we will be using alternative accommodation options, such as barges, which are cheaper and more manageable for communities, as our European neighbours are also doing.

We have a legal obligation to offer support to destitute asylum seekers. Our legislation, under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act, provides that a person is destitute if they do not have adequate accommodation, or any means of obtaining it. Section 96 sets out the ways in which support may be provided, including by providing accommodation appearing to the Secretary of State to be adequate for the needs of the supported person and their dependants. The duty, therefore, requires the provision of accommodation which is adequate. All accommodation provided to asylum seekers, including vessels, will meet our legal obligations. The Home Office continues to work closely with key local stakeholders to address concerns and minimise any potential impacts on the local area.

The Government is acutely aware of the potential impact that any large site has on the local community and the associated public services. For all sites, we consider the impact on local services including the NHS, police and fire services and working with local partners to develop bespoke plans that take account of local environmental issues, heritage, and any risks associated with each site.

Thank you once again for taking the time to write to me.

Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP

MAYOR OF LONDON

Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP

Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4D
Via email

Date: 8 June 2023

Dear Suella,

I am writing to you following the recent decision by the Royal Docks Management Authority (RoDMA) to reject the use of King George V Dock as a berth to accommodate people seeking asylum.

I wish first to put on record my support for this decision and secondly to outline my absolute opposition to the Government's policy of housing asylum seekers on vessels.

The capital has a proud history of providing sanctuary for those seeking refuge, including during World War II and our most recent efforts to support those fleeing conflict in Afghanistan and Ukraine. Our city's welcoming attitude and our diverse communities are what make London so great.

I am deeply concerned by the Government's plans to place asylum seekers and refugees in vessels. It is unclear how Ministers will seek to ensure those housed in such vessels, some of whom are fleeing the most appalling of circumstances, will have access to the necessary support, both on arrival and in rebuilding their lives.

It is evident that these plans are an extension of the Government's failed 'hostile environment' approach to migration. Plans to house those seeking asylum on vessels, specifically, is based on the false assumption that this creates a disincentive for people to come to the UK. There is no evidence that the use of such accommodation would act as a deterrent, while in practice it would simply leave large numbers of people in wholly unsuitable conditions, posing significant safeguarding and health risks to very vulnerable members of our community.

It is also clear that the sites where these vessels were moored would be highly visible, presenting a significant risk to those housed on board and in the local community if targeted by far-right protests, such as those we have sadly seen outside hotel accommodation in other parts of the country.

Given the significant public outcry in London and across the country, as well as the issues I have set out above, I would urge you in the strongest possible terms to abandon the Government's plans to accommodate those seeking asylum in vessels. Instead, I would

MAYOR OF LONDON

urge ministers to work with local authorities, and other relevant partners, to ensure that those arriving in Britain seeking sanctuary are processed quickly and treated with dignity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the 'h'.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

[Remainder of email chain out of scope of the request]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 April 2023 12:58
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]@newham.gov.uk; [REDACTED]; RASI Engagement Hub;
Subject: RE: Potential Use of Berthed Vessel - Newham

Thanks [REDACTED],
And connecting [REDACTED] to my colleagues [REDACTED] in quick order!

[REDACTED]
Director, Asylum Support – Planning & Delivery
Asylum and Protection
1st Floor Peel, 2 Marsham St, London

From: [REDACTED]@london.gov.uk>

Sent: 20 April 2023 12:26

To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED].gov.uk; [REDACTED]@newham.gov.uk>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gov.uk>; RASI Engagement Hub
[REDACTED]@london.gov.uk>

Subject: Potential Use of Berthed Vessel - Newham

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Dear [REDACTED]
I hope you are well.
I am writing to connect you with [REDACTED] (cc'd) from the London Borough of Newham. Newham are seeking an appropriately senior-level conversation with the Home Office regarding the potential use of a berthed vessel in the Royal Docks to accommodate people seeking asylum. Newham were notified of this possibility by the Royal Docks Management Authority (RoDMA).
Many thanks

[REDACTED]
Principal Policy and Programme Officer - LSMP Manager
London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP)
GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY
City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, London, E16 1ZE

NHS health information and advice about coronavirus can be found at nhs.uk/coronavirus

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MAYOR OF LONDON

██████████
Managing Director
Royal Docks Management Authority
██████████

Date: 28 April 2023

Dear ██████████

I have been made aware that the Home Office has approached the Royal Docks Management Authority (RoDMA) about potentially using the King George V Dock to berth a vessel to accommodate people seeking asylum.

I am writing to oppose this proposal to put vulnerable people in an entirely unsuitable vessel in the strongest terms. I am proud of London's history of providing sanctuary for those seeking refuge. Our welcoming attitude and diverse communities are what make our city so great. I am deeply concerned that asylum seekers housed in such a vessel – many of whom are fleeing appalling circumstances – will not have access to the support they need and be put at risk. Those seeking refuge should be housed humanely and receive the support they need to rebuild their lives.

The proposed vessel would be highly visible, presenting a significant community safety risk and a risk to those housed on the vessel if targeted by far-right protests, as we have sadly seen in other parts of the country.

More widely, I am deeply concerned by the policy direction to pursue placing asylum seekers and refugees in such vessels. The policy is based on the false assumption that the use of hotel and other accommodation creates a disincentive for people to come to the UK. There is no evidence that the use of such accommodation would act as a deterrent and would simply leave large numbers of people in wholly unsuitable accommodation, posing significant safeguarding and health risks to very vulnerable members of our community.

Instead, councils and relevant partners need to retain the legal powers and crucially the funding to support asylum seekers humanely. The government's incompetence when it comes to processing asylum seekers should not be an excuse to treat people without dignity.

I trust that you will carefully consider my concerns and respond to the proposal accordingly. I look forward to hearing from you.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the 'h'.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London





LONDON'S ROYAL DOCKS

THE ROYAL DOCKS
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Pierhead, King George V Lock, Fishguard Way, London, E16 2RG
Telephone: 0207 511 5086

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
Mayor@london.gov.uk

3 May 2022

Dear Sadiq,

Thank you for your letter of 28 April outlining your opposition to potentially using King George V Dock to berth a vessel to accommodate people seeking asylum.

I have looked at the feasibility of getting the vessel in and berthed in the appropriate location and suitably supported. The practical side is not an issue. It would provide considerable income for RoDMA, which would enable us to refurbish/replace more assets in the Royal Docks.

The vessel proposed is the MS BRAEMAR which was most recently operated by Fred Olsen Cruise Lines. Indeed, it was used in the Royal Docks to house staff for the 2012 Olympics. It has much more recreation, outdoor and break out space than a hotel. Indeed, in my nearly 30-year career in the military, I lived in much more demanding conditions when being deployed overseas. The Home Office has stated that the asylum seekers will receive three meals a day, laundry, medical facilities, faith and worship opportunities, well-being/safeguarding and a programme of activity. In addition, there will be a cleaning regime, transportation from the vessel to drop off points outside the Docks and onsite management (including security). I believe all of this is more achievable on a cruise ship than in a hotel.

The principal drivers, as given by the Home office, are to alleviate the hotels of this role, permitting them to return to tourism and reduce the burden to the taxpayer.

The Home Office are engaging with the London Borough of Newham (led through their Multi Agency Forum) to understand the challenges and mitigations and where appropriate offer additional funding as required. Newham are compiling a Community Impact Assessment and if the Home Office are unable to provide sufficient mitigation and it is a 'no' from Newham, then it RoDMA will support Newham and not progress the opportunity further.

Yours sincerely,

Managing Director