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Anthony Browne
Mayoral Policy Director for
Economic Development

25 October 2010

Dear Anthony

Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee Meeting

Thank you for attending the Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee meeting last week. Further to this meeting, I am writing on behalf of the Committee to seek urgent clarification on the consequences of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) for economic development in London.

At last week's meeting you outlined the Mayor's three key priorities relating to functions currently carried out by the London Development Agency (LDA) and which are expected to be folded into the Greater London Authority. These priorities were: regeneration; youth programmes and international promotion. You outlined plans for an international promotion board which would bring together the functions of various existing agencies. You also expected that around 150 existing LDA staff would transfer to the GLA after the abolition of the LDA.

It is far from clear from the CSR announcement that there will be any specific funding sources for these activities after the expected abolition of the LDA in 2012. In light of this, I would be grateful if you could set out for the Committee whether you still expect the Mayor to have the capacity to deliver the priorities you described. More fundamentally, how will the Mayor fulfil one of the principal purposes of the GLA, to promote economic development in London, in the absence of any obvious funding stream?

You also said at the meeting that central government had provided a commitment to provide grant income to meet the outstanding LDA debts relating to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. I would be grateful if you could provide details of the LDA's total assets and liabilities and a copy of the Mayor's submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review on economic development as promised.

I am aware that our discussion took place in a period of uncertainty prior to the CSR and would like to give you the opportunity to provide further clarification in the light of subsequent announcements. The information that has been published since the meeting appears to raise serious doubts about the feasibility of the plans you set out. I would therefore be grateful if you could update the Committee on the latest position by 5 November.

We do have some additional outstanding questions from the meeting, which we will send to you in due course.

If you or your officers have any queries please contact either myself or Elizabeth Williams, Scrutiny Manager on Elizabeth.Williams@london.gov.uk or 020 7983 4394, to whom I would be grateful if a copy of your reply could be sent.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Len Duvall'.

Len Duvall OBE AM
Chair of the Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee