Section 60 Response

Youth Expenditure in the GLA Group

Response to the recommendations of the London Assembly's Budget and Performance Committee as set out in the Committee's report: *Youth Expenditure in the GLA Group.*

Recommendation 1
The GLA group budgets and corporate plans for 2010/11 to 2012/13 should include specific youth outcome and value for money measures and baseline data, and the outcomes should align with Mayoral priorities and strategies such as Time for Action.

Response
The GLA's role in youth policy work as in other policy areas is strategic; seeking to influence partner organisations both from within the GLA group and from outside it. The GLA is therefore looking to raise standards in youth provision across the capital whether that be, for example, through the LDA's work on implementation of GLA youth policy (which already has specific outcomes attached to it) or through broader work with Whitehall and the boroughs.

Project Oracle within the GLA's Time for Action programme will be playing a key role in analysing and disseminating "what works" in cost-benefit and other terms for children and young people's services, with an initial focus on serious youth violence and crime.

There is also a current GLA project which is collating and analysing all the strands of children and young people's programmes and projects across the GLA group; to show the progress being made; to continue to prioritise children and young people; and to identify any gaps in provision.

There are no current plans to change the format of the budget documents or the corporate planning documents. Both already provide a transparent account of future Mayoral plans and experience has shown that they serve the purpose for which they are designed well. There are plenty of opportunities for Members to scrutinise their contents and ask for additional information should that be required; for example through Mayor's Question Time, through budget meetings and through functional body plenaries.

Recommendation 2
In his budget discussions with the functional bodies during the summer of 2009, and in his response under Section 60 of the GLA Act 1999, the Mayor should make clear what level of resources, compared to 2009/10, should be given to the youth priority in 2010/11 and future years.

Response
My priority is to mainstream youth expenditure across the GLA group so that investment in youth activities, whether it be, for example, through TfL's cycling programme or through the LDA's sport programme, is factored into as many flagship programmes as possible. I do not see the benefit in disaggregating youth expenditure for its own sake.

Children and young people's issues are a cross-cutting element of GLA strategic policy work and as such the full range of 'youth outcomes' cannot easily be drawn out. For example, the

Housing, Violence against Women, Health Inequalities and Refugee Integration Strategies all include children and youth strands.

I also know from Recommendation 1 above that Members, like me, are keen to see an emphasis on outcomes rather than inputs. It would not present the full picture if outcomes arising for young Londoners from a range of intervention from the state, voluntary and private sectors were merely measured by GLA group inputs, which represent a small (albeit strategic) proportion of the total investment into children and young people in London.

We are keen to work with agencies from other tiers of government and from other sectors to draw down additional funding, secure services during a period of economic uncertainty and improve young Londoners' life chances. Judging GLA performance in isolation would not therefore appear to be a fruitful exercise.

The budget documents that I shall be presenting to the Assembly shortly will of course continue to make a robust case for the investment I intend to make in young Londoners as well as in a number of other priority areas. My budget guidance makes it clear that Time for Action and other youth programmes are among my top priorities. I have also made it clear through my announcement on fares that the zip card providing free bus travel for many young Londoners will continue.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor should require functional bodies in their budget submissions to make clear which elements of expenditure are to contribute to which Mayoral priority outcomes and how the functional body's objectives link with Mayoral outcomes (such as those identified in this report). The Mayor should show these linkages in his budget proposals.

Response

As noted above, my budget guidance makes clear that youth is a priority area and that I expect it to feature heavily in functional bodies' submissions to me next month.

I shall then use the submissions to shape my initial set of budget proposals which will go to the Assembly and others in December. At that stage Members will be able to form judgements as to the policy outcomes I am seeking to bring about and the relative level of resources available in each case.

There are no proposals at this stage to change the format of the budget documents. Experience has shown that the current format provides a clear statement of what is being proposed. As ever, officials will be on hand through the budget setting process to provide answers to detailed questions at short notice.