

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA060420-8019

24 April 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your further correspondence which the Greater London Authority (GLA) received on 6 April 2020. I am sorry that you were not happy with the way the GLA has responded to a request for information (ref MGLA030320-4212). I am now responding to you under the GLA's internal review procedure.

Background

On 3 March 2020, you submitted the following request for information (ref MGLA030320-4212);

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/03/03/coronavirus-london-tube-sadiq-khan-12339239/>

In relation to the above. Please provide copies of any formal advice provided to the mayor in relation to Coronavirus and the risks of travelling on the Tube.

The GLA responded on 30 March 2020 with the information that GLA officers had identified as within scope of your request.

Your complaint

In your correspondence of 6 April 2020, you submitted the following complaint:

My request asked for copies of Advice given to the Mayor, what you have supplied me with is trite conversations and "to be used" soundbites" and irrelevant twaddle about the number of hand sanitises available. I was not asking for conversations discussing what to say to Joe public or information about hand washing.

You have failed to provide me with the advice that shows the Mayor wasn't talking complete rubbish when he said it was safe for people to continue to use the Underground. They make passing reference to Public Health England, but tell me nothing in terms of their stance on the use of the Tube. These trivial pieces of correspondence were either released in an attempt to protect the office and make my request go away or they are damning proof that the only "expert" advice sought by the Mayor as that of his

media team and he in fact had no oversight of the safety issues. If it is the fact that he was not advised directly on whether it was safe to travel, other than "repeat this parrot fashion Mr Mayor", then I will happily accept "information not held" in relation to any actual advice on safety being provided to him. (sic)

Internal review

I have carried out this internal review as someone who was not involved in handling your original request. Where appropriate we will provide additional background information to help explain the initial response or add context to the information released. I have therefore focussed on the following areas of your complaint; Information held by a public authority for the purpose of the FOIA and whether all information been considered in scope of your request?

As part of this review, I have asked the relevant GLA officers whether there is any further information held within the scope of your request – i.e. any information which we had not referred you to in our initial response letter. They have confirmed that no further information is held.

The Mayor engaged in conversations with Public Health England (PHE) which informed his guidance at that time. The FOIA provides access to recorded information (not unrecorded conversations), and GLA officers searched for information which may fall either entirely or in part of your request. You asked;

Please provide copies of any formal advice provided to the mayor in relation to Coronavirus and the risks of travelling on the Tube.

Whilst there is no document entitled 'Advice to the Mayor - Coronavirus and the risks of travelling on the Tube', The subject matter is relayed within the information we provided to you. The source of the advice is explained within the information provided at page 16 of our response: *Press release on 27 February: "Mayor calls key meeting over preparedness for coronavirus"*;

While Sadiq and his team have been in continuous contact with Public Health England, and the UK Chief Medical Officers have assessed the risk to individuals as low, the Mayor is taking further steps to ensure the city is prepared and that all organisations in the capital are working together and sharing information.

Since then, the advice from PHE has been updated as the COVID-19 situation has evolved.

Outcome

In summary, I am satisfied the GLA does not hold additional information which was in-scope of your request, and that the GLA fully complied with our obligations under Section 1(1) to the extent that:

- You informed in writing whether the information they have requested is held, and;
- where it is held, to have the information provided to them.

I hope this review has helped to address your concerns. If you remain dissatisfied, you may take your complaint¹ to the Information Commissioner at the following address:

*Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF*

However, if you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me and I will be happy to help where I can.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'I. Lister', written in a cursive style.

Ian Lister
Information Governance Manager

¹ <http://www.ico.org.uk/complaints>