

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA251120-0771

21 December 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your further request for information which the GLA received on 24 November 2020. Your request has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and our response to your request is as follows:

1. *How many times in total did Mr Supperstone provide legal services for Mayor of London Boris Johnson during his two terms as Mayor?*
2. *How much money public funds were spent on this advice, instance by instance?*

*(We have no interest in the advice provided to Mayor Johnson by Mr Supperstone, only the number of times it was provided and the financial cost to the public purse. This request does not challenge legal professional privilege and given the public interest in ensuring trust in the judicial process and the scrutiny of public expenditure it is only right that the Greater London Authority release this information.)*

3. *We also wish to ask how it is that records for the use of public funds have been lost. You stated the following:*

*"The payment you have identified was made in 2008 and was recorded in an accounts system in which we no longer hold the data. We do not hold any other supporting documentation for the payment you referenced."*

*"From our search of records, we have identified a purchase order for the sum of £4,950.00 for advice given by Michael Supperstone QC to the GLA's legal team between May and June 2008."*

*"We cannot find any payments which relate to Michael Supperstone Q.C, 11KBW or Jason Coppel on our Finance system. The payment you have identified was made in 2008 and was recorded in an accounts system in which we no longer hold the data. We do not hold any other supporting documentation for the payment you referenced."*

*It is highly concerning that payments from the public purse appear to have been lost from your records. We request that you search all of your data to discover how much money was spent on Mr Supperstone QC's legal advices for Mayor Johnson.*

4. *You stated that "As you are aware, the records we hold of the former Mayor's diary are published on our Disclosure Log." We have been unable to find the 2008 diary entries in the disclosure log. The disclosure log intentionally has no search function, making it very difficult to find the information we need. Please provide us with a copy of the 2008 diary entries.*

In response to the first three parts of your request I would again confirm that we have provided you with the information we hold. As we explained in our previous response<sup>1</sup>, the GLA holds limited records relating to your request. The information you sought covers payments over 11 years old.

Furthermore, the information you are seeking has not been 'lost' as you claim; it is no longer held. Your use of the word 'lost' implies negligence on our behalf, which we strongly refute.

Public Authorities are not required to retain all financial records indefinitely, and this is explained in our Records Retention Schedule in our Records Management Policy.<sup>2</sup> Generally speaking, in line with the provisions found under the Companies Act 2006 and the Finance Act 1998, the GLA is not required to retain transactional finance records for more than six years after the end of the financial year in which they were created.

Public authorities are not required to retain any information indefinitely solely for the purposes of answering potential future FoIA requests. Our Records Management Policy and our records retention guidance reflects the Records Management Code of Practice issued under Section 46 of FoIA.

Our response to your previous request explained that we no longer held records covering transactions for this period, so I will again emphasise that the information you sought has not been lost.

Moving on to the fourth part of your request, the publication of Boris Johnson Diary (2008-2016) can be easily located by using the search term '*Boris Johnson Diary*' on the GLA website's search bar - <https://www.london.gov.uk/search?s=Boris%20Johnson%20diary>

The top search result takes you to the publication in question <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information/foi-disclosure-log/foi-boris-johnson-diary>

We would again contest your allegation that our Disclosure Log '*intentionally*' has no search functionality. This implies that a conscious deliberate decision was made to limit the accessibility to information which we publish there. This is a misleading statement and it is not the case.

All of the information published on our disclosure log can be located using the general search functionality on our website, as I have hopefully demonstrated above. You can refine your search results using the filters on the left of the page. Our publications on the GLA FoIA Disclosure Log can often be identified using either the 'Governance' filter under 'Content Type', or by selecting the appropriate business area of the GLA to which the request or information relates to.

Finally, I would like to make the following points to the following statement in your email of 24 November:

*Your response may be quoted from and used within the film. Please keep this in mind when formulating your final response.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information/foi-disclosure-log/foi-legal-fees-aug-2020>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/records\\_management\\_policy\\_v3.3.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/records_management_policy_v3.3.pdf)

- All of our responses to FoIA requests are compliant with the spirit and letter of the legislation, and in line with the Mayor's commitment to openness and transparency.<sup>3</sup> The fact you have stated you may quote our response in another publication or film has had no bearing on our response.
- Both this, and our previous, FoI response will be published on our Disclosure Log. If you wish to quote from them, please reference them in full.
- If you are intending to quote directly from either this or our previous response, please refer to "*an FoIA response issued by the GLA*".
- If you want a direct quote from the Greater London Authority, please contact the GLA Press Team at [mayorspresso@london.gov.uk](mailto:mayorspresso@london.gov.uk)

I hope this letter has helped to clarify these matters for you. If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

**Ian Lister**  
**Information Governance Manager**

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>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/openness-and-transparency>