

GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA040121-2978

29 January 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information which the GLA received on 4 January 2021. Your request has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked for:

Can I request to see the Mayor's communications with the British bus manufacturers Alexander Dennis, Optare & Wrightbus from May 2016 to present day under current Mayor Sadiq Khan

Our response to your request is as follows:

Please find attached the information the GLA holds within scope of your request.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Information Governance Officer

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>

20th July 2020

Mr. Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London

Greater London Authority

City Hall,

London

SE1 2AA

Dear Mayor Khan,

Re: The Electrification of London Public Transport

Firstly, let me show my deep appreciation for your tireless efforts in tackling the unprecedented pandemic crisis in London. I am confident that under your dynamic leadership, London will re-emerge as a vibrant hub of business.

On Friday 17th July, I took on the role of Chairman of Optare PLC. Optare PLC is a British manufacturer of EV Buses with an ambitious future. That ambition will put the company on the world stage as a purveyor of Electric Buses globally and in direct competition with the dominant Chinese manufacturers. However, in the short term, and in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, we face the biggest existential threat in the UK bus industries history. In many areas, bus patronage is down 90%. Despite welcome support from Government, most bus operators are generating significant and growing losses. U.K. bus sales were down 42% in the first four months of the year and could decline by as much as 60% in the next 12 months without additional support. U.K. bus manufacturing employment represents more than 10% of our motor industry total. A collapse in U.K. bus procurement will deprive the U.K. of up to 13,000 high quality jobs, many of which are based in the country's Northern industrial heartland.

Optare has invested heavily in pioneering zero emission technologies based on our efficient lightweight platforms. Optare is proud that its world leading technology has been conceived, developed and realised in U.K. Optare is embarking aggressively on export but needs a strong U.K. base to build from. U.K. bus production represents more than three quarters of domestic demand; more than double the penetration enjoyed by its car and commercial vehicle counterparts. A collapse in U.K. bus procurement will hurt U.K. jobs most. Optare employs some 400 people directly and we estimate a 1000 more across U.K. in the supply chain.

As you know well, London is the key to the U.K.'s demand for buses. Nearly half of all buses sold in the U.K. serve London. Transport for London has a vital role to play in securing the future of our industry. Optare is proud to have brought the world's first zero emission double deck to service in London. We believe that the entire London fleet of buses needs to convert to EV asap and it should be British developed, built and sourced buses that are procured. We support your vision and we cannot afford a delay in action.

We recognise that the lockdown restrictions have probably created the biggest peacetime financial threat to London's transport network in its history. We are not seeking new support from London. We merely ask that you do not slow down your strategy to #LetLondonBreathe and drive forward the pace of electrification of the London bus fleet in 2020. In support of the U.K. environment and of its jobs, we would request that future bus tenders be directed at U.K. manufacturers where there is significant U.K. content of labour and materials.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss our proposals in more detail with you at your convenience. You will be glad to know that Optare re-started production in May post lockdown. I would like to extend our invitation to visit our factory near Leeds where you will be able to see for yourself the efforts that we are taking to maintain the lead to create a green future for the UK and the world.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Andy Palmer CMG
Chairman, Optare PLC

Cc: D. Hinduja, G. Belgum



Gopichand P. Hinduja

10th October 2016

Mr Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
City Hall
Queens Walk
London SE1 2AA

Dear Mr Khan,

Please find attached the letter sent to The Rt Hon Mr Greig Clark, MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy concerning Optare, our bus manufacturer in Leeds.

With warm and personal regards

Yours Sincerely,

Gopichand P Hinduja
Co-Chairman
Hinduja Group

Govt Relations/
TT

KL

28 OCT 2016

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Gopichand P. Hinduja

10th October, 2016

The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Secretary of State for Business,
Energy and Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Dear Mr Clark,

I am writing to seek your help in securing the future of Optare, a Hinduja Group company based at Sherburn near Leeds. I attach a note on Optare which is a leading bus manufacturer. It is engaged in developing electric buses for the leading UK bus operators.

Unfortunately Optare is facing severe challenges due to the market slowing down which in turn is due to inadequate funding support to bus manufacturers. There has also been a cutback in funding of much needed electric vehicles in London. I was in discussion with the former Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, about this and he was generally supportive.

The situation has now become urgent since losses at the company have reached an unsustainable level (circa £1million per month). The future of Optare's 330 employees is at stake.

I would be grateful if you would receive me and senior representatives of Optare to discuss the subject. I feel that the electric vehicle technology which Optare is working on is of great importance from the environmental point of view and the country would be poorer if it were to be lost.

I am copying this to Sadiq Khan, the present Mayor of London, in view of its relevance to the city's transport plans.

Kind regards

Gopichand P. Hinduja
Co-Chairman
Hinduja Group

Cc Mayor of London

Rt Hon Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

Optare Group Ltd
Hurricane Way South
Sherburn in Elmet
Leeds, LS25 6PT, UK
T: +44 (0) 8434 873 200
F: +44 (0) 8434 873 201
E: info@optare.com
W: www.optare.com

2nd September 2020

Dear Mr Khan

Re: TEC/2020/003170 Additional payload for low and zero emission HGVs, Bus and Coach

You may or may not be aware that the Government is planning to approve the use of up to 20 tonnes GVW for zero emission vehicles on the roads. They are saying they need to do this to allow for additional mass so that OEMs can install zero emission technology for zero emission vehicles. This is to reflect The EU Heavy-Duty CO2 Regulation – (EU) 2019/1242.

We feel this is a retrograde way of approaching zero emissions as it brings with it consequences which are, to be frank, unnecessary if the industry applies existing lightweight technology, as we have done through years of significant investment and being forward thinking to prevent such consequences.

The impacts of these higher weights (as has already been seen with the few vehicles that have been deployed this weight because of legislation in 2016/2017) are:

1. They increase wear and tear on roads, even more so where they must manoeuvre tightly on inner-city routes and applications. Given we struggle to maintain roads now what is the true impact.
2. They require more braking effort to stop, which means more braking material, putting more particulate material in the already contaminated atmosphere.
3. They increase tyre wear, again increasing the number of particles in the atmosphere.
4. They consume more energy (battery or hydrogen) than lighter vehicles which means they will require more energy to operate daily, so comparatively to lighter vehicles more well to wheel carbon.
5. They require more material so consume more precious resources than they need.

In view of the above we ask that you consider raising concerns with the Secretary of State for Transport to ask him to reconsider this, and thus make a major contribution to holistically improving air quality though the introduction of zero emission vehicles and reduce cost of maintaining our roads.

Yours sincerely



Graham Belgum
BSc MSc MBA MIO D MIET CDir CEng FSOE FIRTE
Chief Executive

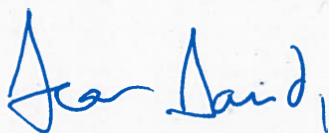
cc Transport Secretary
Chief Executive, SMMT

MAYOR OF LONDON

David Barnett
Product Director
Wrightbus

Date:

20 DEC 2016



I am writing to thank you for all your hard work in making the Zero Emission Bus Conference such a success.

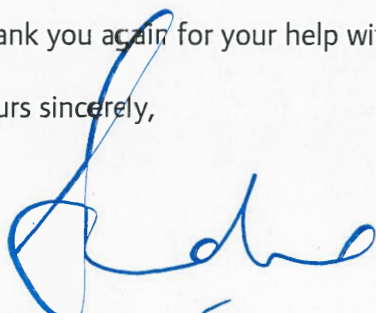
I was thrilled to unveil the double decker hydrogen bus and I appreciate the time you took to give me a tour and explain the technology. This prototype is a great step forward and I hope to see it in the London bus fleet very soon.

As you know I want London to become a world leader in hydrogen and electric bus technology, creating a race to the top that will benefit all cities. More hydrogen buses will be included in the Transport for London fleet in the following years, and I am pleased to hear that you are working closely with them to move this trial forward.

London is a leader in innovation and trialling new technology, and I am determined that we use this strength to tackle poor air quality in our city.

Thank you again for your help with this event.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

MAYOR OF LONDON

Sir William Wright

Wrightbus
Galgorm Industrial Estate
Fenaghy Road
Galgorm, Ballymena
Co. Antrim
N Ireland BT42 1PY

Date: 17 JAN 2018

Sir William,

Many congratulations on being awarded a knighthood in the New Year's Honours list for services to the economy and the bus industry.

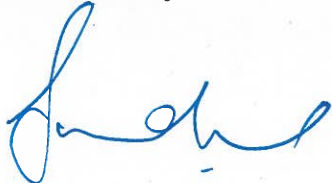
Few things are as synonymous with London as its famous red buses, thousands of which carry millions of passengers a year. Your company has been instrumental in London's bus network for many years.

Wrightbus has been a leader in shaping the future of buses with a particular focus on improving air quality and passenger safety – something which I am also extremely passionate about and committed to delivering for London.

Your dedication to the bus industry has been a key driver of the local and national economy and I wish you many years of continued success.

Thank you for everything you have done and continue to do for London.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan

Mayor of London