

GREATERLONDONAUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA240719-8480

19 August 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email about the new [Talk London](#) avatars, which the GLA received on 24 July 2019. Your request for information (in bold) has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You wrote:

"I refer to the email below from City Hall dated 24 July 2019.

I find this matter to be of considerable concern.

Do staff at City Hall, for whom you as Mayor of London are fully responsible, really have nothing better to do than unnecessarily spend time and public funds on this puerile nonsense?

It is totally unjustifiable and unacceptable that public funds are misused and wasted in paying the salaries of City Hall staff to work on ridiculous and unnecessary projects such as this, including the designing, creating and rolling out of avatars.

Kindly provide a full explanation for this.

Kindly also provide a full detailed breakdown of the total cost of the "project" set out in the email below together with details of any associated cost benefit analysis that was carried out."

Talk London is City Hall's online community and it's an important way that Londoners can input into policy development and have their say on key issues. Talk London members are consulted on our strategies and have helped shape City Hall's plans and policies including, [the Ultra Low Emissions Zone](#), a ban on unhealthy food ads on the TfL network, and the [Smarter London Together](#) roadmap.

We want to make sure younger Londoners also have the chance to input on key issues that affect them both now and in the future, and so we are in the process of lowering the registration age for community members from 18 to 16.

In order to do this, we have reviewed the Talk London website both from a child safeguarding and data protection point of view, and are now implementing the recommendations. One of the safeguarding recommendations is that avatars should be introduced to replace personal profile images.

The GLA does not hold a detailed cost breakdown or any cost-benefit analysis.

- **The design and production of the avatars was carried out by City Hall's in-house design team and took one designer approximately three days.**
- **We are unable to calculate the time/costs relating to the meetings with young people – the avatars were not the only topic discussed at these meetings**
- **No other costs were incurred in the delivery of the avatars.**

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference MGLA240719-8480.

Yours sincerely


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>