

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Andrew Boff

GLA Conservatives - Londonwide Assembly Member

andrew.boff@london.gov.uk

Our Ref: MGLA170717-0918

1 August 2017

Dear Mr Boff

Thank you for your requests for information, which the GLA received on 16 July 2017. Your requests have been dealt with under the Environment Information Regulations 2004.

I have grouped requests one to eight, which can be responded to jointly, and will then turn to your remaining requests.

1. *Please supply emails sent to the Mayor regarding his decision not to release the transcripts from the Garden Bridge Review.*
2. *Please supply documents provided to the Mayor regarding his decision not to release the transcripts from the Garden Bridge Review.*
3. *Please supply emails sent to the Mayor regarding his decision not to release the audio recordings from the Garden Bridge Review.*
4. *Please supply documents provided to the Mayor regarding his decision not to release the audio recordings from the Garden Bridge Review.*
5. *Please supply emails sent to the Deputy Mayors, Mayoral Directors or the Chief of Staff regarding the Mayor's decision not to release the transcripts from the Garden Bridge Review.*
6. *Please supply documents provided to the Deputy Mayors, Mayoral Directors or the Chief of Staff regarding the Mayor's decision not to release the transcripts from the Garden Bridge Review.*
7. *Please supply emails sent to the Deputy Mayors, Mayoral Directors or the Chief of Staff regarding the Mayor's decision not to release the audio recordings from the Garden Bridge Review.*
8. *Please supply documents provided to the Deputy Mayors, Mayoral Directors or the Chief of Staff regarding the Mayor's decision not to release the audio recordings from the Garden Bridge Review.*

The GLA does not hold any emails or documents relating to these eight requests.

To help provide some context to our response, we have detailed below a list of recent requests which we consider to either relate to Dame Margaret Hodge MP's independent review of the Garden Bridge, or cover information or matters similar in nature to those covered by this request.

Ref	Request	Received	Response
0379	<i>...copies of all communication between the office of the Mayor or his staff and Margaret Hodge between August 2016 and the present day</i>	26/04/17 *Via WDTK.com	This request was superseded by 0978.
0404	Request received by third party but relates specifically to transcripts: <i>...Could you please say whether, for those individuals named in Appendix 1 of the report, the Review a) recorded audio/video for the interviews; b) produced transcripts or write-ups for these interviews? For the above question, please detail responses for each named person in Appendix 1 individually.</i>	26/04/17	The GLA responded on 24/05/17 and the response is on our disclosure log here: https://www.london.gov.uk/foi-disclosure-log/foi-garden-bridge-review-transcript-information
0978	<i>...copies of all communication between the office of the Mayor or his staff and the office of Margaret Hodge or persons representing her between August 2016 and the present day.</i>	03/05/17 *Via WDTK.com	The GLA refused this request on 01/06/17 as it was 'manifestly unreasonable' under regulation 12(4)(b) of the (EIR).
8509	A follow up request to 0978 with three further questions which addressed the aim of your request: 1. <i>Did the Mayor know that Margaret Hodge was to be paid when originally commissioned?</i> 2. <i>Who asked for the payment to be made?</i> 3. <i>What review was there of the quality for the work produced before the sign off was made?</i> You also requested further advice and assistance in how you could further refine your request.	05/06/17	The GLA responded on 18 July 2017 and the response is on our disclosure log here: https://www.london.gov.uk/foi-disclosure-log/eir-payment-garden-bridge-review
9822	Request received by a third party: <i>Please could you supply the transcripts of the interviews carried out by Dame Margaret Hodge with the following as part of the Garden Bridge review</i>	07/07/2017	The GLA is currently dealing with this request and has not yet issued a response.
0468	A request for an internal review into the response to request 8509: <i>I am writing to request an internal review of Greater London Authority's handling of my FOI request 'Communication between the Mayor of London and Margaret Hodge (2)'. There is a public interest in knowing the background to a Mayoral decision to pay £9,500 of taxpayers' money to a friend. The documents and emails that informed this decision are being concealed. The Mayor has been reluctant to release this information in any other way. The public will want to know why.</i>	13/07/17 *Via WDTK.com	The GLA is currently dealing with this request and has not yet issued a response.
0469	<i>Please supply all advice given to the Mayor in advance of him refusing to provide the transcripts and audio files from the Garden Bridge Review.</i>	13/07/17	The GLA is currently dealing with this request and has not yet issued a response.
0919	11 questions re Transparency	16/03/17	This request is the subject of this response.

* A full history of the correspondence received via WDTK.com is available on the Internet at this address: https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/communication_between_the_mayor_3

The information you have requested in these 8 questions is not held because we have not yet responded to a direct request '*to provide the transcripts and audio files from the Garden Bridge Review*' under the EIR or Freedom of Information Act (FoIA). I would clarify that the Mayor has never been asked to approve or refuse such a request and therefore no advice has been provided to him. GLA officers have taken all decisions regarding the disclosure of information in relation to all information requests under EIR and FoIA in relation to the Garden Bridge and the Garden Bridge Review.

As the case history above shows, the first request (ref: 9822) directly asking for audio or transcripts of the interviews conducted by Dame Margaret Hodge was sent to the GLA by a third party and received on 7 July 2017.

While I can confirm your previous request 0978 would have *indirectly* included the interview transcripts (along with a considerable volume of other related information), that request was refused due to the time it would take to collate and review the large volume of information within the overall scope of the request.

Our response to your request refer 0978 is currently the subject of an Internal Review and we hope to provide this to you shortly. However, I would again confirm that the decision refuse the request under the provisions of regulation 12(4)(b) of the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) were made by officers in my team in the same way we handle other information requests received by the GLA

As our response to that request explained, and our Internal Review will consider again in detail, the request met the threshold for that provision of the EIR because it involved hundreds of separate pieces of information; significantly broader in scope than a request solely for the interview transcripts and/or audio recordings.

Once again, this decision was made by officers and I can confirm we do not hold any of the information covered by these first eight parts of your request.

In relation to the remaining three parts of this request:

9. *Please supply all background documents informing Mayoral Decision 2108.*

The attachment '*Appendix 9*' accompanying this letter includes the information held by the GLA in respect of this part of your request.

The MD itself is published here:

www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/md2108_publishing_mhs_gb_report_signed_pdf.pdf

The earlier MD for the initiation of the review is here:

www.london.gov.uk/decisions/md2041-review-garden-bridge-project

Dame Margaret's report and other information is here:

www.london.gov.uk/independent-review-garden-bridge-project

10. *Please supply all emails regarding payments to Margaret Hodge for the Garden Bridge Review.*

Please find attached document *Appendix 10*.

11. Please supply all documents regarding payments to Margaret Hodge for the Garden Bridge Review.

Please find attached document *Appendix 11*

As you may already be aware, the GLA has responded to several Garden Bridge related EIR / FOI requests and these are published on our disclosure log - <https://www.london.gov.uk/foi-disclosure-log?order=DESC>

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'IL', written over a horizontal line.

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>