

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA131217-7434

12 January 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

FOI request for information

Thank you for your email of 12 December 2017 in which you asked for the following under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the FOI Act'):

Please provide electronic copies of all opinion polling (excluding surveys of Talk London participants) commissioned by the Greater London Authority since May 2016, please include all polls relating to public knowledge and understanding of the work of the Mayor of London.

1.

The Opinion Research and Statistics (ORS) Team in the Communities and Intelligence Directorate are responsible for commissioning most public opinion polling for the GLA. Past opinion polls undertaken by the GLA are listed on the London Datastore at:

<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/gla-poll-results>

All polls are published on the London Datastore within three months, with the following exceptions:

- Polls commissioned to support work with a publication date outside of the three-month window, for example polling which supported the development of the Mayor's strategies, which will be published as part of a Consultation Report alongside the final strategy document.
- Polls commissioned to track a trend will be published after the last survey in a series has been conducted. The results of these surveys are to be published as a group to identify trends and to prevent surveys in the series that have still to be conducted being skewed by premature publication of current results.

The results of surveys not yet published on the website are not being provided, as in our view this information falls within the exemption at s.22 of the FOI Act (Information intended for future publication). The use of this exemption reflects the fact that these polls will be made available on our website in the future, either as part of a Consultation Report alongside the launch of a Mayoral Strategy, or after the last survey in a series has been conducted. Please see Appendix A for details of how this exemption has been applied.

2

In addition to the polls listed above:

- TNS Research were commissioned to provide polling data to inform the Mayor's Clean Air Consultation in July 2016. These polls are published on London Datastore website at: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/clean-air-consultation-july-2016>
- TNS Research were commissioned to provide public opinion polling data to inform the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan in October 2016. <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/police-and-crime-plan-consultation---october-to-november-2016>

3

The London Assembly's Transport Committee commissioned a survey about views on traffic congestion in 2016/17. The data is all published on this page;

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly/london-assembly-publications/london-stalling-reducing-traffic-congestion>.

The direct link is: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/survey_results_-_congestion_and_road_charging.pdf

The London Assembly's Health Committee has commissioned a survey and holds information that is within the scope of your request. However, the results will be published in conjunction with an event planned for February and fall within the exemption at s.22 of the FOI Act. The results will be published on the investigation page on the London.gov website at that point.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference MGLA131217-7434.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Phillips
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>

Annex A

Section 22 – Information intended for future publication

(1) Information is exempt information if –

- (a) the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not),
- (b) the information was already held with a view to such publication at the time when the request for the information was made, and

it is reasonable in all circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph (a)...

s.22

Under section 22, information can be withheld if the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication at some point in the future (whether determined or not); if the information was already held with a view to such publication at the time when the request was made; and it is reasonable in all circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the information will be published.

The information being withheld compromises information intended for future publication. This will be published as soon as it has been accurately collated and analysed. It was already intended that the details would be so published, at the time the request was made.

S.22

Arguments for releasing information

- Releasing the information would potentially increase awareness of the content and results of the surveys aiding public awareness.

Arguments for not releasing information

- *The results of the periodic surveys are designed to be published as a group, after the last in the current series has been conducted, to analyse/identify any trends over the period they were conducted.*
- *The information is intended and was intended at the point it was requested, for public dissemination in the future.*
- *Releasing results of periodic surveys prematurely can affect the effectiveness of future surveying by influencing those who may take part in surveys.*

Section 22 acknowledges that public authorities must have freedom to be able to determine their own publication timetables. This allows them to deal with the necessary preparation, administration and context of publication. It is however necessary to consider whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and withholding the information until the publication date), is greater than the public interest in releasing the information before this date.

The decision to proactively publish polling results demonstrates the GLA's commitment to openness and transparency

The public interest – i.e. the best interests of the public – is met by the GLA being open and transparent, but also by managing its resources effectively, and this includes setting reasonable publication schedules to meet this public interest.

We do not believe the public interest favours the disruption that would be caused to GLA staff by expediting this publication when its early publication would not meet any immediate or exceptional public concerns at the present time.

We therefore find the balance of public interest falls in maintaining the exemption and the GLA publishing this information in accordance with our existing publication timetable.