

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA261020-8441

20 November 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for information which the GLA received on 25 October 2020. Your request has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked for:

1. *The number of QCs from whom The Mayor of London has requested planning advice or a legal opinion or some other form of legal advice regarding any planning matters of whatsoever nature (collectively henceforward referred to as a "planning opinion"), each to be laid out for each year from 2015 to 2020 to-date.*
2. *The number of times The Mayor of London has requested a planning opinion from each QC, listed by type of planning opinion requested, each to be laid out for each year from 2015 to 2020 to-date.*
3. *The cost of each planning opinion given by each QC to The Mayor of London, listed by type of planning opinion and whether the planning opinion was given verbally or in writing, each to be laid out for each year from 2015 to 2020 to-date.*

Our response to your request is as follows:

Please find attached the information the GLA holds within scope of your request. As a large organisation responsible for strategic planning within Greater London the GLA is dealing with a significant number of complex legal issues relating to planning matters at any given time.

When considering the information please note the following:

- the figures supplied are presented by reference to the number of legal matters in respect of which advice was sought during a given financial year;
- invoices are submitted in relation to individual legal matters but one invoice may cover several pieces of advice relating to the same legal matter;
- for complex and/or long-running matters several invoices may be processed within a financial year and in some cases a matter will be active for several years; the attached table shows the total cost of advice sought per financial year;
- the GLA may seek advice from an individual QC on several different legal matters over the course of a year.

We are unable to provide you with the information you are seeking in relation to part 3 of your request in full. We do not record by transaction whether the planning opinion was given verbally or in writing. We have estimated that the cost of complying with this element of your request would exceed the "appropriate limit" specified in the Freedom of Information (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Act 2000.

Section 12 of the Act provides that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request if the cost of determining whether we hold the information, locating and retrieving it and extracting it from other information would exceed the appropriate limit. The aforementioned Fees Regulations stipulate that this limit is £450; calculated at £25 per hour for every hour spent on the activities described and equates to 18 hours of work.

There is no mechanism at our disposal to perform an automated search for relevant information. In some instances, there will be a combination of both written and verbal advice. To confirm the precise nature of the advice received would require several Legal officers to review each individual legal matter file and the related invoices within scope of your request.

We have therefore refused part of your request under the cost limit provisions of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act and this letter therefore constitutes a refusal notice under section 17(1) of the Act.

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

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>

1. The number of QCs from whom The Mayor of London has requested planning advice or a legal opinion or some other form of legal advice regarding any planning matters of whatsoever nature (collectively henceforward referred to as a "planning opinion"), each to be laid out for each year from 2015 to 2020 to-date.

Financial Year **2015/16** **2016/17** **2017/18** **2018/19** **2019/20** **2020/--**

No. of QCs 3 5 4 5 8 5

2. The number of times The Mayor of London has requested a planning opinion from each QC, listed by type of planning opinion requested, each to be laid out for each year from 2015 to 2020 to-date. **AND**
3. The cost of each planning opinion given by each QC to The Mayor of London, listed by type of planning opinion and whether the planning opinion was given verbally or in writing, each to be laid out for each year from 2015 to 2020 to-date.

2015/16	Legal Matters on which Opinions sought	Type	Cost (£ NET)
QC-1	3	advice	3,500
		advice	9,650
		advice	1,200
QC-2	1	advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	123,380
QC-3	4	advice	3,000
		advice	2,000
		advice	500
		advice	1,000

2016/17

QC-1	4	advice	2,250
		advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	15,300
		advice	2,000
		advice	2,000
QC-2	1	advice	1,500
QC-3	4	advice	2,990
		advice	2,125
		advice	640
		advice	2,250
QC-4	3	advice	4,000
		advice	5,000
		advice	1,000
QC-5	1	advice	5,550

2017/18

QC-1	1	advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	8,100
QC-2	4	advice	2,550
		advice	1,315
		advice	3,125
		advice	2,025
QC-3	2	advice	500
		advice	11,687
QC-4	2	advice	1,900
		advice	800

2018/19

QC-1	2	advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	140,875
		advice	2,800
QC-2	6	advice	1,125
		advice	4,250
		advice	2,775

		advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	11,735
		advice	1,750
		advice	1,500
QC-3	1	advice	10,625
QC-4	2	advice	2,500
		advice	1,250
QC-5	2	advice	13,250
		advice	6,500

2019/20

QC-1	2	advice	2,000
		advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	34,075
QC-2	1	advice	2,000
QC-3	4	advice	3,250
		advice	2,100
		advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	117,360
		advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	83,575

QC-4	1	advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	111,400
QC-5	4	advice	400
		advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	87,200
		advice	1,200
		advice	3,200
QC-6	2	advice	2,333
		advice	3166.67
QC-7	1	advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	3,000
QC-8	1	advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	55,875
2020/--			
QC-1	1	advice	3,600
QC-2	3	advice	1,275
		advice	1,800
		advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	31,362.50
QC-3	1	advice and representation at appeal/inquiry/legal proceedings	175,101.24
QC-4	1	advice in connection with legal proceedings	0

QC-5

1

advice

500