

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

By email

Our Ref: MGLA240220-3456

29 June 2020

Dear

Thank you for your request for information which the Greater London Authority (GLA) received on 22 February 2020. Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I am sorry for the delay in responding. Please accept my apologies for the inconvenience.

Your requests:

Under a freedom of information request I wish to request the following information.

- 1. How much money from the mayor's budget has been spent on sponsored advertising on Facebook since Mr Khan was elected as mayor?*
- 2. Please can you provide details of every advertisement since his election on Facebook and how much it actually cost?*

Our response to your requests:

The GLA has a responsibility to keep Londoners informed and engaged in the work of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly, and Facebook advertising supports that. For example, to inform Londoners about People's Question Time events and encourage them to register to attend, or to encourage Londoners to take part in statutory public consultations.

We use Facebook advertising to engage Londoners in a cost-effective way. Spend across the different types of advertising such as print, outdoor, radio and digital has stayed at broadly the same level, however as Facebook represents better value for money than other digital channels, it is allocated a larger proportion of that budget. The GLA's communications spend on Facebook is below that of other public bodies. For example, in the financial year 2018-19 the Department for Work & Pensions expenditure on Facebook was over £1.029m across only six campaigns¹.

The data we hold on Facebook advertising spend is organised by financial year, and to interrogate that data for the exact dates you specify would take more than the staff time limit for Freedom of Information Act requests. Below are the records closest to the date range you specified, broken down by financial year. We hope that they are helpful.

¹https://www.london.gov.uk/questions/2019/20317#_ftnref1

The total amount of money spent by the GLA on Facebook advertising for the financial years 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 is £922,382.36. These figures are taken from Facebook Business Manager across the @LDN_gov and @MayorofLondon accounts. Here is that total broken down by financial year.

Financial year	Facebook
2016/17	£ 99,839.72
2017/18	£ 129,858.83
2018/19	£ 345,866.33
2019/20	£ 346,817.48
Total	£ 922,382.36

To answer your second request, to see details of every advertisement together with its cost would exceed the 'appropriate limit' of £450 set by the Freedom of Information (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. Under section 12 of the FOI Act, we are 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. This is calculated at £25 per hour for every hour spent on the activities described and equates to 18 hours of work. In this case, we have estimated that it would cost over 40 hours to provide a full response to your request.

We have based this on the time it would take to locate and extract the itemised costs of all Facebook adverts related to the aforementioned accounts from 9 May 2016 to 30 April 2020 with advert title, cost of advertising on social media, and cost of media production (e.g. videography). Locating, extracting and collating the spend information from the Facebook platform in more detail would involve manually separating the information for each of the channels (@LDN_gov and @MayorofLondon) and providing the itemisation you requested would require analysis of all records in the specified date range.

To bring the cost of responding to your request to within the limit, you may wish to consider narrowing the scope of your request - such as the relevant date/s or date range, or the level of detail required so that we can more easily provide the information you are seeking.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference MGLA240220-3456.

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>