

MAYOR OF LONDON

John Biggs AM
Rapporteur for the
GLA Oversight Committee
City Hall

Our ref:

Date: 3rd March 2016

Dear John

Transparency of the GLA Group and Family

Thank you for your letter of 26 February to the Mayor regarding the transparency of the GLA Group and Family. The Mayor has asked me to respond on his behalf.

I am pleased to hear that you feel that some progress has been made on this important issue. The Mayoralty has certainly attached a high priority to the prompt publication of key financial and performance data for the GLA and all bodies closely associated with the GLA.

You are right to say that further progress is required and in that spirit I am providing responses to each of your recommendations in the appendix to this letter. I very much hope the next Mayoral administration will carry this work forward in a positive and cooperative manner with the Assembly.

I am grateful to you for the work you have done on transparency. It has been to the benefit of London government.

Yours sincerely



Sir Edward Lister
Chief of Staff and Deputy Mayor, Policy & Planning

Mayoral response to Assembly transparency recommendations

1. *The next Mayor should ensure that all organisations in the GLA Group start to publish all their contracts in full, and set up search facilities on their websites to make them easy to find.*

I agree that the next Mayor should reinforce this message. The contracts should be published in full except in those cases where some redactions for reasons of commercial confidentiality are unavoidable or for very low value contracts where the cost of publication means it does not represent value for money for the taxpayer to do so.

2. *Transport for London must ensure that it provides a consistent level of transparency across all parts of its organisation. In particular, it should start publishing the contracts and Board and committee papers of Crossrail, and make a commitment that Crossrail 2 will be transparent and open to scrutiny.*

Transport for London will no doubt respond on the detailed arrangement for Crossrail. I agree that a consistent approach on transparency should, wherever appropriate, be our common aspiration.

3. *The next Deputy Mayor for Police and Crime should review the decision-making information MOPAC publishes and propose improvements to the Committee by 1 August 2016.*

I agree.

4. *The GLA Corporate Governance Framework should be updated to include requirements that:*
 - *Relevant papers should be provided at least 5 working days before committee meetings.*
 - *Information requests from committees and Assembly Members should be fulfilled within 20 working days.*
 - *Answers to Mayoral Questions should always be made public, not sent to Assembly Members confidentially.*

The Framework is being update for the next Mayoral administration and for the next Assembly to consider. I agree that, wherever possible, the standards you have outlined in terms of timeliness and openness should be adhered to.

5. *The next Mayor should introduce a more consistent approach to transparency across the GLA Family, bringing it in line with that of the GLA Group. Each organisation should publish a transparency policy that reflects the objectives of the Local Government Transparency Code. In particular, these organisations should publish Board and committee papers, and details of contracts over £5,000 (and full contracts on request). These requirements will remain subject to commercial sensitivity tests, but the presumption should be to publish.*

I agree that the presumption should be to publish. Detailed work would need to be undertaken with each of the bodies concerned to assess what sort of transparency arrangements are appropriate for the different contexts within which they operate and their varying legal status.

6. *Organisations in the GLA Group should publish all responses to FOI requests as a matter of course. They should set up online FOI search facilities to help users track down information more quickly. Those organisations in the GLA family that are subject to the FOI Act should set up disclosure logs on their websites, and keep them up to date. These should contain clearly titled links to relevant documents.*

I agree.

7. *The Metropolitan Police Service should meet the performance threshold set by the Information Commissioner's Office for responding to FOI requests without delay. To allow the Assembly to monitor progress, the Met's FOI performance should be included in the GLA's Annual FOI Act Performance Report.*

I agree, noting this would require the Metropolitan Police Service's cooperation.