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Evening Standard  
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**Our ref:** MGLA230115-7463

**Date:** 24 February 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

**Freedom of Information request**

Thank you for your email of 27 January. You asked:

*Please give me the following relating to the Mayor's trip to Erbil, Kurdistan.*

1. *A list of all City Hall/Greater London Authority (GLA) and any other staff who accompanied him.*

The Mayor was accompanied by: Sir Edward Lister (Chief of Staff and Deputy Mayor, Policy and Planning) and Will Walden (Director of Communications and External Affairs).

2. *A list of all official meetings he had in Kurdistan/Iraq with public officials, businesspeople and others*

The Mayor met the Kurdish Peshmerga forces and the British trainers; met with the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, and other Cabinet Ministers; spoke to a Kurdish and UK business forum called "From London to Erbil: the UK's partnership with the Kurdistan Region"; and undertook a tour of Erbil International Airport. The Mayor had a lunch meeting with the Governors of Erbil, Duhok and Sulemani, and the Mayor of Erbil about developing cities and regions; he met with members of the newly formed British business group in Kurdistan; visited the Baharka internally-displaced-people's camp (where the UK Department for International Development) is funding health facilities; and took a tour of the citadel hosted by the Governor of Erbil.

3. *A summary of all costs relating to the whole trip, for the Mayor and for any accompanying staff, including: air fares; ground transportation costs; accommodation and subsistence costs; costs of any security provided by Metropolitan Police or any other British personnel; insurance costs.*

The Mayor of London visited Erbil in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq from 21-23 January. The visit came in response to a formal invitation from the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government and was an excellent opportunity to further strengthen the commercial and business links between the UK and the KRG and promote London as an investment destination in what is a rapidly growing regional economy.

The GLA incurred a cost of £1,500 for security training, but all travel expenses (flights and on the ground transport) were paid for by the Kurdistan Regional Government. The Mayor, Sir Edward Lister and Will Walden travelled under the FCO's duty of care whilst in the country. This included staying in Consulate General accommodation and being looked after by the Consulate General's security team. Both accommodation and security costs for HMG's staff in Erbil are fixed. As the Mayor's visit contributed to the Consulate General's commercial objectives, the FCO covered these costs.

The GLA recommended an increase to its contingency insurance cover which is in place to cover those circumstances (i.e. death or serious injury to the Mayor) that would necessitate the running of a Mayoral by-election at an approximate cost to the London taxpayer of £10 to £12 million. The extended insurance cover was taken up, at a one off cost of £10,000, and covers all travel up until the point where the legal necessity for a by-election expires, in November 2015.

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

Yours sincerely

**Meena Shah**

Information Governance Officer

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