

LONDONASSEMBLY

Gareth Bacon AM, Chairman of GLA Oversight Committee

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Leah Kreitzman
Mayoral Director,
External and International Affairs

(Sent via email)

9 October 2018

Dear Leah

Thank you for your letter of 1 October 2018.

I agree with the sentiments expressed in the letter that it is important that Mayoral expenditure and the activity it drives is discussed in public in a transparent way. This is particularly the case for expenditure on marketing and communications which is designed to influence and persuade. As you stated, there is a wide range of marketing work being done that is focused on important issues to Londoners. I welcome that.

On your other points, information used in the meeting was based on: data provided to us by your staff; an FOI request that was on the GLA website; the GLA's published budget details (in relation to marketing spend); and from the relevant Mayoral Decision form. I'm not at all clear that statements based on that information could therefore be said to be inaccurate. Members ask questions, based on the information available, and guests respond, including by providing clarification where it is deemed necessary. That is the nature of scrutiny.

I could choose to suggest, in return, that you used completely inaccurate information when referring to "growth" in the Assembly's staffing establishment, clearly implying that the Assembly's marketing capacity had grown, just as the Mayor's marketing team has grown. For the record, at the time of the meeting, the Assembly had no marketing capacity at all, although one short-term post is now proposed. You were, in fact, referring to 3 media and public affairs posts (only one of which is actually a permanent post), thereby making a flawed comparison. Assembly officers could have corrected that public statement beforehand, if you had shared your briefing with them earlier. We do not, however, seek to make an issue of the fact that you did not. I might also suggest that the argument being advanced that the web site has nothing to do with marketing, in the broad sense, is one that could be interrogated further (different lines in the budget do not mean that the activities are entirely separate in reality). I do not, though, propose to continue this sort of pointless, tit-for-tat argument with you any further.

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Thank you for the extra information you have provided particularly the information on the marketing team and Digital Transformation Team's staffing budgets. Thank you also for the offer of engagement with the London Assembly in relation to marketing activities – that is much appreciated, particularly if it relates to new, substantive areas of work, over and above the effective cooperation that already exists.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gareth Bacon', written in a cursive style.

Gareth Bacon AM
Chairman of the GLA Oversight Committee