

GLA International and Domestic Trips Letter

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The Greater London Authority (GLA) should publish the partnership agreement reached with United Airlines ahead of the Mayor’s trip to the United States in May 2022, according to the **GLA Oversight Committee**.

An investigation by the Committee looked at the scale and nature of GLA international and domestic trips, and the GLA’s approach to selecting and scrutinising such trips.

In May 2022, American airline company United Airlines paid for the cost of flights for the Mayoral delegation on a trip to the USA, as part of a ‘partnership agreement’ with United Airlines.

This appeared to be in return for the Mayor promoting United Airlines’ business. This includes photos on the Mayor’s personal and official Twitter accounts with United Airlines staff advertising ‘22 in 2022’ – the number of daily flights the airline runs from Heathrow Airport to the USA.

At a meeting on the topic, the Mayor’s Chief of Staff told the Committee that he “would not describe” the trip to the USA as United Airlines sponsored, and agreed to check whether there was a formal partnership agreement in place and, if so, publish the agreement.

In addition, questions were asked of the Mayor at Mayor’s Question Time about Pride in London’s decision to appoint United Airlines for a second year running as the main sponsor for its annual event, which took place on 1 July.

The Committee notes that there are obvious positive benefits to identifying opportunities to reduce the overall expenditure on business trips, and that international and domestic trips can add genuine value to the work of the Mayor and the GLA.

However, the Committee is concerned that there is insufficient guidance to support the GLA in determining how such partnerships should influence business trip proposals.

The Committee has written to the GLA Chief Officer with **seven recommendations** on how to strengthen the processes in place to undertake international and domestic trips, including:

- The GLA should publish the partnership agreement reached with United Airlines ahead of the trip to the United States in May 2022.
- The Mayor and all ten senior staff who attended the trip to the United States in May 2022 should consider declaring the flights in the Gifts and Hospitality register, in line with GLA policy.
- The GLA should provide explicit guidance on the interaction of external sponsors and business trips. This should include specific arrangements for the timely publication of details relating to such sponsorship and what sponsors receive in return.
- The GLA should ensure that effective carbon offsetting is in place when travel costs are covered by external sponsors.

[Read the Letter](#)

1. The letter is attached.
2. [Emma Best AM](#), Chairman of the GLA Oversight Committee, is available for interviews.
3. Find out more about the GLA Oversight Committee.
4. As well as investigating issues that matter to Londoners, the London Assembly acts as a check and a balance on the Mayor.

For media enquiries, please contact Emma Bowden on 07849 303 897. For out of hours media enquiries, call 020 7983 4000 and ask for the London Assembly duty press officer.

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