

Chief Officer's introduction: GLA Q2 2023-24 Performance and Finance Pack

Members of the Budget & Performance Committee,

I attach our Q2 performance and finance pack which is organised in the usual way: a series of dashboards in line with our budget structure by missions and foundations (appendix 1) and by core activity (appendix 2); and a finance report, organised primarily by directorate, but also summarising the position by missions and foundations (appendix 3).

This quarter, housing delivery has remained challenging due to a mix of factors including substantial increases in construction and financing costs and uncertainty regarding building safety regulation, as well as delays in getting government agreement to commence the Affordable Housing Programme 2021-26. GLA officers, however, have worked continuously with partners to secure progress on projects where possible, having secured additional flexibilities under the programme from government to reflect these challenging market conditions and enable more social rent homes to be delivered. Partners and officers are also putting significant effort into securing housing completions, despite the challenges. Cladding remediation delivery is always difficult to forecast due to the nature of the programme, but as buildings are now being moved out of the funding programme for the costs to be covered under the developer pledge rather than by the public purse, this challenge has increased further.

The Mayor's Universal Free School Meals programme, which aims to provide free school meals to all children attending state primary schools, was launched in September after some hard work at pace by GLA officers and colleagues in all London boroughs in the preceding months. We estimate that 286,874 children in London have been offered a free meal during term time as a result.

It is positive to see tourism numbers in London increasing again, driven mainly by visitors from the US and EU. Tourism numbers from East Asia have still not recovered but travel from there to any global destination is still significantly reduced from pre-pandemic levels.

A new event to celebrate Black culture – Black on the Square – was delivered this quarter. High footfall was achieved for the event, and it received high satisfaction scores. A full evaluation is underway and will be published in Q3. We will learn from this, but we are clear that this was a very good start to what will now be an annual event.

Finally, this quarter has also seen significant progress in our staff diversity. Representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff at the GLA is at a record high – both overall (37 per cent) and within the Senior Leadership Team (20 per cent). We know we still work to do to meet our target of 40 per cent and to increase representation at senior levels. We continue to monitor our female staff representation and I am pleased that our numbers at Grade 10 and above (now 60 per cent), and for our Senior Leadership Team (now 57 per cent) are coming closer to aligning with our overall figure for female staff of 63 per cent.

Turning to finances, the position at Q2 shows a year-to-date underspend of around £14.9m, with a projected year end position of £16.7m underspend. The majority of this relates to slippage on UKSPF funded schemes, caused primarily by government delays in both announcing the three-year UKSPF programme and approving the London UKSPF Investment

Plan, which was submitted in July last year by City Hall and boroughs and only approved in December. The year-to-date position for our capital programme is £8.3m overspent, with Housing & Land overspent by £15.8m offset by Good Growth underspend of £7.6m.

As ever, please let me know if you have any feedback on the pack. You will have already seen the new, thematic structure we are using for the GLA:Mayor draft budget 2024-25. This has implications for how we will report performance from the new financial year, and I will provide more details on those plans in due course.

Mary Harpley
Chief Officer