

# MDA No.: 1601

## Title: Letter to the Mayor re the GLA Group Budget Process for 2024-25

### 1. Executive Summary

1.1 At the London Assembly Plenary meeting on 8 February 2024 the Assembly resolved:

That a delegation of authority be given to the Chair of the London Assembly, in consultation with the Deputy Chair and Assembly Group Leaders, to write to the Mayor with representations regarding the budget process for 2024/25.

1.2 Following consultation with Assembly party Group Leaders and the Deputy Chair of the Assembly, the Chair agreed the letter to be sent to the Mayor, as attached at **Appendix 1**.

### 2. Decision

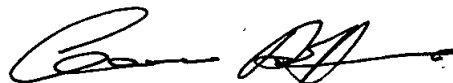
2.1 That the letter attached at Appendix 1 be sent to the Mayor.

#### Assembly Member

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Printed Name: Andrew Boff AM

Date: 20 February 2024

### 3. Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

#### Background and proposed next steps:

- 3.1 Following consultation with Assembly party Group Leaders and the Deputy Chair of the Assembly, the Chair agreed the letter to be sent to the Mayor, as attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The exercise of delegated authority will be formally noted at the next appropriate meeting of the London Assembly.

#### Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision:

Signature (Committee Services): 

Printed Name: Nikoleta Kemp

Date: 21 February 2024

#### Financial Implications: NOT REQUIRED

Note: Finance comments and signature are required only where there are financial implications arising or the potential for financial implications.

#### Legal Implications:

The Chair of the London Assembly has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signature: 

Printed Name: Rory McKenna, Monitoring Officer

Date: 20 February 2024

Email: [rory.mckenna@london.gov.uk](mailto:rory.mckenna@london.gov.uk)

#### Supporting Detail / List of Consultees:

- Len Duvall AM, Neil Garratt AM, Caroline Russell AM, Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM and Dr Onkar Sahota AM.

### 4. Public Access to Information

- 4.1 Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the FoIA, or the EIR and will be made available on the GLA Website, usually within one working day of approval.
- 4.2 If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

4.3 **Note:** this form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

**Part 1 - Deferral:**

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If yes, until what date:


**Part 2 – Sensitive Information:**

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA or EIR should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form? NO

---

**Lead Officer / Author**

Signature: 

Printed Name: Rebecca Arnold

Job Title: Assistant Director, Committee & Member Services

Date: 21 February 2024

**Countersigned by Executive Director:**

Signature: 

Printed Name: Helen Ewen

Date: 20 February 2024



**Andrew Boff AM**  
**Chair of the London Assembly**

Sadiq Khan  
Mayor of London

(Sent by email)

21 February 2024

Dear Mr Mayor,

I am writing, on behalf of the Assembly to express concern regarding the perceived lack of transparency in your responses to direct questions posed by Assembly Members during recent public meetings.

The Mayor's transparency and openness when dealing with the Assembly are fundamental principles that underpin the democratic process, and it is crucial for elected officials to uphold these values.

At a Budget & Performance Committee meeting on 9 January 2024 when asked by Neil Garratt AM about whether £30 million had been used to settle the RMT dispute you said, "I'm not going to say that publicly, but the figure you said that's in the media is not a figure I would say is the figure". It later transpired that this was the figure and that you would have known that at the time of the meeting.

On 17 January 2024, you published the Draft Consolidated Budget documents showing a reduction in passenger income to £5,519.1 million, compared with the earlier figure of £5,647.1 million in the consultation budget. When asked during Mayor's Question Time on 18 January 2024 by Sian Berry AM specifically if this reduction was explained by decisions on fare cuts - with follow-up questions also asked by Susan Hall AM - you refused to answer, saying you had no information to share. During that same day, the press was made aware of a fares announcement

the following day, and the next morning you announced a fares freeze, the impact of which was indeed the reduction in income reflected in the budget documents. A decision was then published, which had been signed on 18 January 2024, and stated it was based on fares advice given to you on 15 January 2024, including the fact that, ahead of this advice, you as Mayor had: "asked TfL to advise him on a proposal to freeze all fares on buses and trams, the Tube, and all other rail services in London where Tube fares apply." I would be grateful if, in your response to this letter, you would outline how, during the exchanges referred to above at Mayor's Question Time, you have met your obligations under Sections 45 (3) and (4) of the GLA Act 1999, noting in particular Section 45(4) which states that the Mayor should: "so far as reasonably practicable, answer any such question orally at the meeting at which it is put."

During MQT, you indicated you would be happy to answer questions on the draft budget proposals at the 25 January 2024 Plenary meeting, which would be devoted to discussion of the budget proposals. When further questions were put to you on 25 January, you implied that it would not have been proper, on 18 January, to confirm a fares freeze as you had not, at that time, taken a formal decision on fares for 2024/25. However, as you had published revised estimates based on fares advice you had requested, the Assembly notes, that you did hold information that would have explained the figures and that your answers during both meetings were not given reasonably.

On 25 January 2024 at the London Assembly question and answer session on your Draft Consolidated Budget proposals, Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM raised questions over the use of the Transport Innovation Fund to pay for your recently announced fares freeze, particularly asking what the remaining £24 million would be spent on. She was met with a non-committal answer that no decision had been made and options were being considered. It was later revealed on 28 January that you would be using this money to fund a trial into 'off-peak Fridays' and that the media had been notified prior to the Assembly being informed.

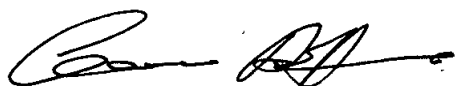
Peter Fortune AM, at the same meeting, asked you if you would be making any decisions on the £24 million - including on fares - within the "next couple of days". To this you replied, "There are many things I will decide on after this meeting. I am not sure if any of them are relevant to the question you asked." Clearly that decision was very much relevant to his line of questioning.

Parliament – through the GLA Act 1999 - has given the Assembly a statutory role to keep under review the functions exercisable by you and has bestowed on it some specific duties to hold Mayor's Question Time meetings and to consider your draft budget proposals. It is not clear why you were unable to set out full proposals regarding the use of the Transport Innovation Fund in good time to enable meaningful and robust public scrutiny on 25 January.

In relation to the RMT dispute figures and TfL fares you have set out your reasons for the timing of your announcements and Assembly Members will no doubt have a range of views on your rationale. However, the Assembly would encourage you to reflect on your approach to the questions posed to you (referred to above) and consider whether your responses might, with hindsight, perhaps appear misleading (in the case of the RMT dispute) or lacking in transparency (in the case of TfL fares). In future, we invite you instead to inform us when there is a reason that an answer cannot be given at the time, and commit to writing to the Assembly Member involved at the first available opportunity when the decision is made (at the same time, at minimum, as you share this information with the media).

The Assembly looks forward to your response to the above points, including how you have acted within the GLA Act, as outlined above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Boff', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Andrew Boff AM**  
**Chair of the London Assembly**