

MDA No.: 1661

Title: London's New Year's Eve Firework Event

1. Executive Summary

1.1 At the GLA Oversight Committee meeting on 23 October 2024 the Committee resolved that:

"That authority be delegated to the Chair of the GLA Oversight Committee, following consultation with the Deputy Chair and Party Group Leads, to agree any output from the meeting".

1.2 Following consultation with the Deputy Chair and party Group Lead Members, the Chairman agreed the Committee's letter to the Mayor on London's New Year's Eve fireworks event, as attached at Appendix 1.

2. Decision

2.1 **That the Chairman, in consultation with the Deputy Chair and party Group Lead Members agrees the Committee's letter to the Mayor on London's New Year's Eve fireworks event, as attached at Appendix 1.**

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:

Emma Best, Chairman of the GLA Oversight Committee

Date:

27 November 2024

3. Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

Background and proposed next steps:

- 3.1 The terms of reference for this investigation were agreed by the Chairman, in consultation with relevant party Group Lead Members and the Deputy Chair, under the standing authority granted to Chairs of Committees and Sub-Committees. Officers confirm that the letter and its recommendations fall within these terms of reference.
- 3.2 The exercise of delegated authority approving the letter will be formally noted at the GLA Oversight Committee's next appropriate meeting.

Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision:

Signature (Committee Services): Nikoleta Kemp

Printed Name: Nikoleta Kemp

Date: 27 November 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.

Signature (Finance): Not required

Legal Implications:

The GLA Oversight Committee has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signature (Legal): 

Printed Name: Rory McKenna, Monitoring Officer

Date: 27.11.24

Email: rory.mckenna@london.gov.uk

Supporting Detail / List of Consultees:

All Group Leaders have been consulted.

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

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: Helen Ewen

Job Title: Executive Director of Assembly Secretariat

Date: 27 November 2024



Emma Best AM
Chair of the GLA Oversight Committee

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
(Sent by email)

28 November 2024

Dear Sadiq,

Re: London's New Year's Eve fireworks

Last month, the Oversight Committee held a meeting on the upcoming New Year's Eve firework event in London. We spoke to fireworks expert Phil Grucci, as well as GLA officials leading work on the event, David Holley (Head of Events for London) and Nicole Valentinuzzi (Assistant Director, External Relations). We are grateful for their time.

At the meeting, we heard how London's New Year's Eve celebration is highly respected within the global industry, benefitting from the city's iconic skyline and architecture. It is also an enduringly popular event, with consistently high in-person attendance and very high broadcast figures. With this positive record in mind, we are writing to highlight two specific issues, which we consider important to address to ensure its ongoing success and sustainability.

Fake tickets

GLA officials noted that there had been an uplift in fake ticket selling last year. The associated websites claiming to be the official ticket provider for London's New Year's Eve fireworks are very convincing, and pose a real risk of harm to visitors for the event.

We heard how this led to crowding at barriers and delays for legitimate ticket holders, when people discovered that their tickets were not genuine and wouldn't allow them access. We consider that fake ticket selling will also have caused great distress to people who paid substantial amounts of money for tickets and planned their New Year's Eve around the event. The New Year's Eve fireworks

is an important tourist event, and fake ticket selling has the potential to damage London's reputation with national and international tourists.

GLA officials told us that fake websites are reported to Action Fraud, and that they are working closely with the police to tackle other forms of fake ticket selling. They also described how this year "a more robust ticketing system" will be used and the tickets will look different.

These actions are welcome and necessary, but in the context of an increasing number of incidents, it is important that the public is adequately warned and information about buying legitimate tickets (and avoiding fake tickets) is widely shared both locally, nationally and internationally.

Recommendation 1

The GLA should implement a short, proactive media and social media campaign in December 2024 to warn the public (including international tourists) about the risk of fake ticket selling websites and touts for the London New Year's Eve fireworks.

Recommendation 2

London & Partners should work with London event publications such as Time Out and Secret London to provide the only correct link to buy tickets and warn of potential fraudulent websites.

Recommendation 3

There should be signage/warnings/checks for tickets at earlier hoardings on the approach to entry points to warn people that those with no or fake tickets will not be able to enter. Signage should encourage attendees to check if their tickets were purchased through the london.gov.uk website.

Recommendation 4

The GLA should conduct an evaluation of the event, including of security levels after the event has taken place, to see if the changes made were successful or if more are required. The evaluation should be provided to this Committee and include details of how many fake ticketing sites were discovered and reported to Action Fraud.

Carbon footprint

Fireworks events are often criticised for the environmental impact in both air and noise pollution, but the GLA has previously said that it considers these are both short-lived.

Our guests were unanimous that moving to a drone display instead of fireworks would not significantly change the environmental impact of the New Year's event. Phil Grucci, who leads an American fireworks company, said:

"fireworks certainly have an environmental impact, like many other mediums do, just the vehicles that come to an event like this has an environmental impact. The drones are not free of environmental impact. They do have charging that has to take place; there are generators that are running; there is power; there is electricity that is being used and then there is the battery that has a certain shelf life or useful life that has to be disposed of properly, so they are not necessarily free of an environmental impact".

The GLA's David Holley added that: "the biggest creator of carbon emissions is actually the audience and the vehicles that are transporting equipment to the event. The fireworks themselves make up a

very small proportion of the carbon emissions for the event”, adding “creatively you can reduce the footprint of the fireworks from a carbon perspective, but I do want to highlight the carbon footprint of a firework display is not as impactful as the general public perceives it to be, as compared to the other reductions that could be made in the event itself as it relates to a carbon footprint.”

The GLA officials also explained that the event production company has a full sustainability policy plan in place for the delivery of New Year’s Eve, which ensures that the GLA is reducing the carbon emissions where possible. This includes by sourcing local suppliers. They added that carbon offsetting does take place, but as the carbon emissions from the fireworks display are quite low, impact is limited.

Recommendation 5

The Committee heard how the carbon footprint of the event stems more from the logistical set up, transportation and delivery than the fireworks themselves. We heard evidence that drone displays instead of fireworks are not the answer to making the event more sustainable. As part of its evaluation of the event, the GLA should review and measure the sustainability of the event, to continually ensure the most sustainable means of sourcing and transport are used. The Committee would welcome further information on how TfL supports travel to the event by walking, cycling and public transport, as well as details on accessibility adjustments for those for who may require additional support travelling to the event. It should provide a summary of its findings to this Committee.

The Committee would welcome a response to this letter by Friday 20 December 2024. Please send your response by email to the Committee’s Clerk, Nikoleta Kemp (Nikoleta.kemp@london.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,



Emma Best AM
Chair of the GLA Oversight Committee