

FOI request to the Greater London Authority submitted on 16 & 18 May 2016

Reference numbers: #1807 and #2280

The Greater London Authority's initial response sent by email 14 June 2016 with additional information sent on 14 July (See attachments)

Thank you for your requests for information which the GLA received on 19 May 2016. Your requests are being dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as below

1

"The academy received £544,000 in June 2015 in match funding from the London LEP, administered by the GLA. A review of the academy's internal controls found that there "were some control weaknesses for part of the 2013-14 year but none were in relation to the government funding bodies grants". In the following year's accounts, the academy said the weaknesses had been remedied. Was the GLA aware of these control weaknesses and if so what assurances, if any, did the GLA require from the academy when awarding the funding?"

The GLA undertakes a range of checks from a suite of information that it requires grant applicants to submit for its FE Capital and other grant funding programmes. The Authority was fully satisfied in respect of any financial risk that it was appropriate to enter into a grant agreement with the college. It should also be noted that the grant agreement requires recipients to notify the Authority immediately if any financial irregularity in the use of the GLA funding or any other irregularity is suspected. This would include the steps being taken in response and the GLA is able to reduce, withhold or suspend funding at its discretion and require all or part repayment. There are also robust monitoring arrangements in place governing the drawdown of funds which include an assessment of costs incurred by an independent quantity surveyor.

The project has been successfully completed and a final grant claim has now been processed.

2

"The Fashion Retail Academy applied for match funding to the London LEP (GLA administered) in February 2015 and was awarded £544,000 in June 2015 towards the complete refurbishment and upgrade of the Academy premises and IT. Please disclose the application submitted by the academy and the subsequent contract awarded to the academy when it secured funding. Please also disclose all correspondence between the GLA and the academy in 2015 regarding the funding."

Some of the information you request falls under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act covering commercial information and section 40 covering personal data. Section 43 is a qualified exemption i.e. one subject to a public interest test so we must consider whether - despite the exemption - it is still more in the public interest to release the information anyway. As permitted under section 10(3) of the Act we need to extend the 20 working day limit by a little more time to determine the balance of this public interest 'test'. We estimate a final decision is likely to be made and provided to you by 12th July 2016, and if possible before, when we will either disclose the information or issue an explanation as to why the public

interest falls in favour of maintaining the exemption.

In the meantime, if you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference at the top of this email. If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA's FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/greater-london-authority-gla/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>