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Title: **Response of the London Assembly - Consultation on the proposed relocation of City Hall to The Crystal**

Executive Summary

To agree the submission of the London Assembly to the Mayor in response to the consultation exercise on the proposed relocation of City Hall to The Crystal.

Decision

To agree the submission attached at **Appendix 1**, on behalf of the London Assembly to the Mayor, in response to the consultation exercise on the proposed relocation of City Hall to The Crystal.

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

Date: 19/08/2020 (Via Email)



Printed Name Len Duvall AM

Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

Notes:

1. The Lead Officer should prepare this form for signature by relevant Members of the Assembly to record any instance where the Member proposes to take action under a specific delegated authority. The purpose of the form is to record the advice received from officers, and the decision made.
2. **The 'background' section (below) should be used to include an indication as to whether the information contained in / referred to in this Form should be considered as exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). If so, the specimen Annexe (attached below) should be used. If this form does deal with exempt information, you must submit both parts of this form for approval together.**

Background and proposed next steps:

At its Annual Meeting on 15 May 2020, the Assembly resolved:

“That, in relation to urgent matters only, a general delegation of authority in respect of the Assembly’s powers and functions (apart from those that cannot under the Greater London Authority Act 1999 be delegated) be given to the Chair of the GLA Oversight Committee, in consultation with the Deputy Chairman of that Committee, party Group Leaders, Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM and any relevant committee Chair(s), from the close of the meeting until 31 August 2020.”

Further to consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman of the Assembly, the Deputy Chairman of the GLA Oversight Committee, party Group Leaders and Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, approval is sought to agree the letter attached at **Appendix 1** to the Mayor detailing the London Assembly’s submission to the consultation exercise on the proposed relocation of City Hall to The Crystal.

Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision

Signed by Committee Services		Date	18/08/2020
F.Bywaters			
Print Name: Fiona Bywaters		Tel:	07825 028 318

Financial implications NOT REQUIRED

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

Signed by Finance	N/A	Date
Print Name	N/A	Tel:

Legal implications

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

Signed by Legal



Date

18/08/2020

Via Email

Print Name

Emma Strain, Monitoring Officer

Tel:

X 4399

Supporting detail/List of Consultees:

Chair and Deputy Chairman of the London Assembly, Deputy Chairman of the GLA Oversight Committee, party Group Leaders and Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM.

Public Access to Information

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.

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. **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**

Until what date: N/A

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

Signed

E. Williams

Date
18/08/2020

Print Name

Ed Williams

Tel: x4399

Job Title

Countersigned by
Executive Director

As above

Date
18/08/2020

Print Name

Ed Williams

Tel: x4399

Chair of the London Assembly



Navin Shah AM
Member for Brent and Harrow

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA
Telephone: 020 7983 4000
Web: www.london.gov.uk

19 August 2020

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Sent by email

Dear Sadiq,

Consultation on the proposed relocation of City Hall to The Crystal

This letter comprises the London Assembly's response to your consultation exercise on the proposed relocation of City Hall to The Crystal.

The London Assembly fully understands the scale of the financial challenges facing London and London government. We will play a full part in finding solutions to these problems.

However, the Assembly wishes to register its formal objection to the specific proposal regarding the relocation to The Crystal.

The first appendix to this letter sets out the detailed response of the London Assembly.

The Assembly urges you to take the following actions:

- 1) Immediately start negotiations with the current City Hall landlord, the St Martin's Property Group, to (a) allow for a six-month extension to the December 2020 break clause and (b) allow for full, open consideration of any new proposals that the landlord has put forward to the GLA for future lease arrangements at City Hall.
- 2) Present a proper, more comprehensive options analysis in September 2020 which includes a balanced and well-informed presentation of these options:
 - a. Remaining in the current City Hall, based on any new proposals that have been submitted by the landlord;
 - b. Making other use of The Crystal building – for example by selling it, renting it commercially and/or moving the Housing & Land and/or Good Growth directorates to The Crystal, to better align the GLA's housing and regeneration functions with one of the GLA's most significant housing and regeneration projects. There cannot, as a matter of fact, be only one option for the future use of The Crystal; the alternatives need to be presented and given consideration; and

- c. Taking additional space at Union Street, and locating (i) the London Assembly and its staff there, noting that you have already agreed to undertake an assessment of this option and/or (ii) the London Assembly and its Secretariat *and* the Mayor's Office at Union Street.

Subject to your response on options (2) (a) and (c) above, the London Assembly may submit further alternative accommodation proposals for consideration. Our request above for you to agree an extension to the break-clause deadline with City Hall's landlord is therefore of vital importance.

You should not create fundamental, potentially irrevocable, division within the Greater London Authority, in terms of the relationship between the Mayor of London and London Assembly. As Mayor, you should only proceed with accommodation proposals for the Greater London Authority that are supported by the Greater London Authority (as a whole), after a proper process. The presentation of one option, and one option only, is simply not meaningful consultation.

To proceed on that basis, and in the face of reasoned objection from one of the two constituent bodies comprising the Authority, which has its own democratic mandate and a legitimate interest in this matter, would be wrong.

We are cognisant of the issues but there is more than one way to deliver savings. A negotiation on lease terms with the current landlord would have been an obvious, basic first step. There has also been no robust financial case presented as part of the consultation. The financial case should have included a comprehensive options appraisal; this is standard practice across governmental bodies.

Furthermore, it appears as though a significant, viable alternative option – taking space at the LFC's Union Street headquarters – was excluded from the consultation process. The motivation behind the decision not to present this even as an option remains unclear, as the current lease runs for longer than the 5 year planning horizon you have used in the proposals for The Crystal.

The Assembly formally requests that options for future lease arrangements at City Hall are given full consideration, including in discussion with Assembly Members, and that a fully worked-up proposal for taking more space at Union Street is now developed.

Your proposals for The Crystal do not have a sound financial basis and, when one considers value as well as cost, are detrimental to the standing of the Greater London Authority.

This view is echoed by Professor Tony Travers, who said, in a BBC article on 18 August, that "It does risk, however accidentally, reinforcing the idea that the Mayor is less central to the life of the city than he ought to be. I can't think of another City Hall that isn't in the middle of a city." It is something Dave Hill agreed with in the same article: "I do think moving would have a diminishing effect. You've been in a bespoke building, next to Tower Bridge, one of the most famous London landmarks. Whatever the benefits of The Crystal, the Mayoralty will look shrunken in authority."

We urge you to re-think your proposals, by working more effectively with the Assembly and engaging positively with the alternative options that are hereby presented.

LONDONASSEMBLY

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Navin Shah', enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Navin Shah

Chair of the London Assembly

Enc. Appendix

A. A lack of consideration of the alternatives

1. It did not seem reasonable that the GLA's Chief Officer should appear at the Assembly's GLA Oversight Committee on 21 July 2020 and, noting that County Hall had already been suggested by Assembly Members, ask that Members make other suggestions of viable alternative locations and that they do this during the remaining two weeks of the consultation period.
2. Surely setting out, and assessing, options is the role properly to be undertaken by the GLA's professional officers and by them alone. A proper assessment of the market should be a prerequisite to launching a consultation document. A failure to present options, or even actively seek out options during the consultation period, gives the strong impression that the matter had, in fact, already been determined prior to the consultation being started.
3. It is now clear that there is at least one viable alternative option within the GLA Group – namely, taking additional space that is available at the LFC HQ at Union Street. The Assembly is at a loss to understand why this option was not presented for consideration as an option, along with The Crystal. It is a matter of serious concern to us that, at no stage in the process to date, was this option presented. In fact, the Assembly was told that that there were no alternatives. That is, clearly, untrue.
4. As another viable option has arisen, and others also exist, the current consultation exercise is clearly an inadequate basis on which to take decisions. Members and staff have not had a chance to comment on these other options (remaining in City Hall under new terms or using Union Street for Assembly and Mayoral operations). All viable options need to properly considered and presented in a balanced and well-informed manner to interested parties.
5. Furthermore, it seems surprising to us, to say the least, that conversations about the proposed move started as recently as May 2020, as the Chief Officer informed us at the 21 July meeting of the GLA Oversight Committee. This is because:
 - As the Mayor's Chief of Staff informed the 7 July meeting of the Assembly's Budget and Performance Committee, there has been an active programme of work on collaboration and shared services in recent years, which has included for the last two years an estates workstream. If this proposal made sense on its own terms, then it seems surprising that it did not arise through this collaboration and shared services route rather than being forced on us by a financial imperative.
 - It seems astonishing that, as part of the work on collaboration and shared services, that the option of purchasing the freehold of Union Street was not explored more deeply in early 2019. That would seem to have been part of a properly Group-wide approach to estates. It is not clear what the estates workstream has achieved, nor why it took the Mayoral team 2 years to establish this workstream. The existence of the break clause in December 2020 and the end of the lease in December 2026 have been widely known for a very long time. Indeed, alternative accommodation options have been actively explored as far back as the beginning of Mayor Johnson's first term, over ten years ago.

- Indeed when, in correspondence we exchanged with the Chief Officer, we asked for details of the GLA Group estate, we were provided with a list of properties solely within the GLA estate. It is therefore questionable the extent to which a Group-wide approach has been adopted, particularly as the GLA's Union Street sharing arrangements with the Fire Brigade are of some years' standing.
- Given this context, given the corporate memory on these matters and the efforts over a long period of time on collaboration and shared services, it is unacceptable that a proposal as far-reaching as this should emerge as little as two months' ago and be made subject to a 6 week timescale, with only one option put forward.

B. A failure to negotiate with the current City Hall landlord

6. The Chief Officer informed the 21 July meeting of the GLA Oversight Committee that no negotiations had been conducted with the current City Hall landlord, the St Martin's Property Group, prior to the consultation paper being issued.
7. This appears to us to be a completely unsatisfactory state of affairs, particularly as the announcement of the consultation included inflated claims of financial savings (see 'C' below) which did not factor in any discount that the current landlord might offer. Current market conditions would indicate that such a discount is entirely achievable.
8. Given the time constraints involved, particularly those related to the planning process (see 'D' below), we recommend the following options to the Mayorality:
 - 1) Remaining in the current City Hall, based on any new proposals that have been submitted by the landlord;
 - 2) Making other use of The Crystal building – for example by selling it, renting it commercially and/or moving the Housing & Land and/or Good Growth directorates to The Crystal, to better align the GLA's housing and regeneration functions with one of the GLA's most significant housing and regeneration projects. There cannot, as a matter of fact, be only one option for the future use of The Crystal; the alternatives need to be presented and given consideration; and
 - 3) Taking additional space at Union Street, and locating (i) the London Assembly and its staff there, noting that you have already agreed to undertake an assessment of this option and/or (ii) the London Assembly and its Secretariat and the Mayor's Office at Union Street.
9. There would be an incentive for the current landlord to agree a six-month extension to the break clause as the landlord could see that the 'Remain in the current City Hall' option would be given a fair hearing.

C. A significant overstatement of the financial savings arising

10. The Mayor issued a press release on 24 June 2020, entitled 'Mayor to consult on relocating City Hall to protect services.' The press release goes on to say, at the beginning of its second paragraph and without any equivocation or qualification, that 'The move would save the GLA Group £55m over five years.' This is clearly not the case. It also adds to the impression that this matter has already been determined.

11. We make the following points in this regard:

- The GLA's Executive Director of Resources informed the GLA Oversight Committee that the savings level is in fact £31.5m over five years, once the recurring costs of the GLA occupying The Crystal had been factored in. It would be unthinkable to take any other approach to the costings for the GLA occupying The Crystal.
- Indeed, as the GLA's Assistant Director of Housing acknowledged at the 21 July meeting of the GLA Oversight Committee, there had been active negotiations in 2019 and early 2020 with other prospective tenants of The Crystal. Those tenants would have provided an income stream to the GLA.
- In setting out the level of savings expected, the Mayor has made no allowance for any discount the current City Hall landlord would offer for staying. A failure to negotiate with the current landlord is highly regrettable, as stated in 'B' above, and serves substantively to undermine this entire exercise. The Chair of the Assembly's GLA Oversight Committee has recently written to your Chief of Staff, to request full details of any proposals for future lease arrangements that have been made by the landlord of the City Hall site. It may be that any such proposals serve further to undercut the claim of £55m savings – a situation that would have been avoided if those discussions had taken place in advance of issuing the proposal to relocate to The Crystal.
- The Chief Officer wrote to the Chair of the Assembly on 17 July to say that: "Since the commencement of the lease a reserve has been built up year after year in the GLA accounts to cover the cost of dilapidations." When the Chair of the GLA Oversight Committee emailed the Chief Officer to clarify this point, the Chief Officer responded on 14 August to say that: "The closing balance at 31.03.2020 of the Estates reserve was £7.69m. The closing balance of the City Hall Lease reserve was £3.14m. This total value of £10.83m will be ring-fenced to fund dilapidation works." Leaving aside for the moment the point that none of this information can be gleaned from MD2645 (which is meant to set out in detail the GLA outturn for 2019-20, including supposedly a full set of movements in reserves for the Mayor to approve), and also leaving aside for the moment the point that these two statements contradict one another, the only authoritative source of information we can turn to is the audited GLA Statement of Accounts for 2018-19, which sets out that:
 - "The Estates Reserve has been created to fund exceptional repairs and maintenance works across the GLA Estate, works undertaken at Parliament and Trafalgar Squares and the development of land and property schemes." (page 83)
 - "The City Hall Lease Smoothing Reserve is used to ensure that the fixed percentage increases in the City Hall operating lease are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account on a straight-line basis over the lease term and to smooth the budgetary impact on the revenue account of the increase in lease payments." (pages 82 and 83).
- So, neither of these reserves was created to deal with dilapidations. MD2645, signed by the Mayor on 12 August, does not refer to the amalgamation or alternative use of these reserves. The reason this matters is that, if the argument is being put forward that "since the commencement of the lease a reserve has been built up year after year in the GLA accounts to cover the cost of dilapidations", then that would mean that, in any business case or options appraisal put forward, the cost of dilapidations would already have been met by funding set aside for that purpose. We now know that this is

not the case. Funding had not been set aside for this purpose. Two reserves are being used which were set aside for a different purpose. This fundamentally affects the costings involved. The Estates Reserve was mainly, but not solely, set up for the Housing & Land directorate to access. Has that directorate been consulted on the alternative use proposed? If that directorate no longer needs the reserve, surely it could be put to a different use? Similarly, were the City Hall Lease Smoothing Reserve, to give it its proper title (a title which explains its purpose), not to be needed, surely that too could be put to a different use?

The point being made here is that the dilapidation costs of up to £10.83m represent an additional cost for the GLA and further reduce the savings being claimed for the move by the Mayorality. We also understand that there are significant additional costs (more than £2m) arising from the need to relocate the broadcast facilities to The Crystal. These costs – which do not include the costs for any broadcast facilities in Palestra or Union Street – must be likely to represent yet another decrease in the savings that can be achieved from your proposal.

- The savings figure makes no allowance of the element of downsizing that is assumed as part of the relocation. The Chief Officer has informed the Assembly that the relocation includes a generous assumption for staff working from home of around 2-3 days each week. This translates into significantly fewer desks after the relocation than are currently available. Applying this new working from home assumption to the existing arrangement could allow the Housing & Land directorate to be relocated to City Hall and the vacated space at Union Street to be sub-let externally. The capacity of the Chamber offered at the Crystal with 150 audience seats is also significantly smaller than at the current City Hall which seats an audience of 250.
- No allowance is made in the savings figure for the income the GLA currently gets from commercial filming in City Hall and from the commercial use of London's Living Room which would be unlikely to be at the same level in The Crystal.
- While a five-year financial planning horizon is logical in one sense, in that it represents the gap between handing City Hall back 'early' in December 2021 and the end date of the current lease in December 2026, it is by no means the only approach which can be taken:
 - The annual recurring net saving is £6.3m (i.e. the annual equivalent of the £31.5m over five years), which is a significant amount and would certainly be very welcome. However, it is not as eye-catching as the £55m erroneously quoted in the Mayoral press release, generated in part by choosing a five-year period. It also needs to be set in the context of the size of the GLA budget and the flexibilities available within that budget. Looking at the 2019-20 outturn position for the GLA budget:
 - Income from interest receipts was as much as £22.8m over budget.
 - The use of reserves was £6.3m under budget.
 - This additional budget capacity of £29.1m enabled as much as £24.7m worth of capital items to be funded directly from revenue, leaving a surplus of £4.4m on corporate items.
 - The forecast underspend across the organisation is higher still at £9.9m.

- The current budget guidance has a financial planning horizon of less than two years. This is clearly at odds with the five-year approach being taken to savings arising from the proposed move.
 - Looking specifically at the 2021-22 financial year, which is the primary focus of current budget setting activities, the proposed move would only generate one quarter of its annual savings as the GLA would still be responsible for City Hall until December 2021. Indeed, once the £8m move costs have been factored in, and also the dilapidation costs, the proposal does in fact represent significant additional cost for the 2021-22 financial year; and
 - There is no requirement for the GLA to leave the current City Hall in December 2026. The GLA could of course negotiate with its landlord to stay beyond that date. So, it is not inevitable that a five-year financial planning horizon from December 2021 has to be adopted.
12. We are now being told by the Chief Officer that a failure to move and make the savings arising would equate to the loss of 100 GLA posts. None of us want to see any redundancies in any part of the GLA. It is worth noting, though, from the Chief Officer's own figures, that as many as 124 non-externally funded GLA posts (i.e. staffing growth met by the GLA budget) have been created outside the Assembly Secretariat (whose staffing numbers have been flat) in the last four years.
13. It does not seem reasonable, or necessary, to place different types of savings in opposition to one another in this way. Indeed, a wider set of financial factors needs to be borne in mind:
- The value to London of the current City Hall location in more general terms needs to be considered carefully (see 'E' below).
 - The nature of the financial savings for 2021-22 arising from the GLA:Mayor component will also need to be considered in due course. If those savings can be made relatively painlessly from existing GLA programmes, then the principal rationale (i.e. financial savings) behind the proposed move would immediately be called into question. Indeed, and although we have yet to have the opportunity to scrutinise MD2666 on the repurposed GLA budget for 2020-21 in detail, it would appear that the flexibilities in the GLA:Mayor budget are such that a substantial level of savings have been relatively easily to find, including as much as £14m in in-year programme savings.
 - It is of course entirely appropriate that the GLA should review its estates strategy and make financial savings where it can. However, the GLA does not operate in a vacuum and the signals it sends to others are important. That is part of the Mayor's leadership role. If other blue chip organisations were to follow the GLA's lead and look to abandon their Zone 1 headquarters location, then there would potentially be dire consequences for the Group budget as the result of a drastic reduction in business rate income.
14. There has been no robust financial case presented as part of the consultation. The financial case should have included an options appraisal; this is basic, standard practice across governmental bodies. The financial case should have presented full, worked-up information on the following matters (as a minimum) at the start of the process. The fact

that this did not happen has led confidence in your proposals to be completely undermined during the consultation process:

- The impact on potential savings arising from revised proposals from current landlord
- Clear, transparent information on the GLA's dilapidations reserve and its project use
- Full fit-out costs (for all 3 locations)
- Broadcast costs (for all 3 locations)
- Estimate of savings (cash & efficiency) that would have been achieved through mass homeworking without leaving City Hall
- Updated commercial estimates on sale & rental options for The Crystal
- Annual rent and running costs (for all 3 locations).

D. A lack of information relating to the planning process, to staff and to other issues

15. The Chief Officer acknowledged at the 21 July meeting of the GLA Oversight Committee that key questions remain unanswered. The Chief Officer also informed the Committee that there was a balance to be struck between working through the detail of the proposed move and focusing on other priority tasks. This is deeply unsatisfactory approach for a proposal of this magnitude.
16. We perceive the main information gaps to be:
 - Commercial use of The Crystal. It has not been made clear what other uses The Crystal could be put to and what income could accrue to the GLA from that.
 - The planning process. An application for a change of use of The Crystal will need to be made to the London Borough of Newham. It did not seem clear from the GLA's Assistant Director of Housing's responses at the 21 July meeting of the GLA Oversight Committee that all the issues had been fully worked through, specifically: the 13 week statutory timetable, the 21 day public consultation exercise, whether or not the application would be referable to the Mayor and what grounds the Secretary of State might have for intervening.
 - Benefits for the Royal Docks. It is not yet clear, in concrete terms, what benefits would arise to the Royal Docks from City Hall being located there.
 - It is surprising and unhelpful that the results of the staff post code exercise and consultation process are still not available at the time of making this submission.
 - Consideration of other options in the GLA Group estate. In correspondence we exchanged with the Chief Officer, we asked for details of the GLA Group estate and were presented with details of the GLA estate only.
 - Multiple sites. The GLA would be operating from multiple sites (The Crystal, Union Street and Palestra) which are greater in number (three rather than two) than at present and more distant from one another (The Crystal would not be within walking distance of the other sites; currently staff can walk between City Hall and Union Street). It is not clear what impact this would have on the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness in terms of time and effort spent moving between sites.
 - Broadcasting at The Crystal. The costs and operational arrangements required to set up suitable broadcasting equipment in The Crystal.

- Management of public meetings and functions in The Crystal. The capacity of the public gallery will be reduced from 250 in the current City Hall to 150 in The Crystal. It is not clear what impact this would have.
- Cycling and walking plans for the Royal Docks and cycling facilities at The Crystal. It is not clear how easy it would be for GLA staff to either cycle or walk to and from The Crystal. Initial impressions are that both of these modes, which are fundamental to the operation of this option, are fraught with difficulties arising from the location of the building surrounded by hostile main roads.
- There is no information currently available from TfL in relation to the potential impact on transport in the area of The Crystal arising from the proposed construction of the Silvertown Tunnel northern portal.
- General GLA use of The Crystal. It appears from the Chief Officer's answers at the 21 July meeting of the GLA Oversight Committee that basic questions as to which GLA teams would use The Crystal, and how they will do that, will remain unanswered for quite some time.

E. An underestimation of the value of an accessible Zone 1 location

17. There is a danger that the savings driven approach being taken to the proposed move will underestimate the value of an accessible Zone 1 location for City Hall and thereby diminish London government.
18. It is of concern to us that the Chief Officer described the proposed move at the 21 July meeting of the GLA Oversight Committee in terms of the accessibility of The Crystal site to localised groups of Londoners. That is, The Crystal is local to Newham and the current City Hall is local to Southwark. Similarly, any site chosen would be local to a particular area of London. We feel that misses the point, though.
19. The home of London government needs to be accessible to as many Londoners as possible and be symbolic of City Hall's desire to work on behalf of the entire city. That is why Zone 1 locations have been chosen previously.
20. This view is echoed by Professor Tony Travers, who said, in a BBC article on 18 August, that "It does risk, however accidentally, reinforcing the idea that the Mayor is less central to the life of the city than he ought to be. I can't think of another City Hall that isn't in the middle of a city." It is something Dave Hill agreed with in the same article: "I do think moving would have a diminishing effect. You've been in a bespoke building, next to Tower Bridge, one of the most famous London landmarks. Whatever the benefits of The Crystal, the Mayoralty will look shrunken in authority."
21. For The Crystal, it still remains unclear exactly when the Elizabeth Line – and its Custom House station – will open. It may or may not be in time for a potential GLA move to the Royal Docks in the summer of 2021.
22. Similarly, the future of the Cable Car from the Jubilee Line station at North Greenwich to the Royal Docks is unclear. These uncertainties over transport could present Members and staff with problems accessing The Crystal.

23. For The Crystal is to function effectively as London's City Hall, then not just Members and staff but also community groups would need to be able to access it easily. That has not shown to be the case, given the lack of external engagement on the proposal.
24. Furthermore, were the Mayor to use Palestra as an office as well as – or even instead of – The Crystal, that would further cast doubt on The Crystal's status as London's City Hall. Given that the Mayor could of course visit any location within the GLA Group as he wishes, at any time, the fact that it is felt necessary to confirm that the Mayor will also have a base at Palestra only serves to enhance the growing sense that officers are not being 'straight' with the Assembly or the public, and that The Crystal will quickly become the home to the London Assembly (and Royal Docks team) only, and there will, in reality, no longer be a 'City Hall' for Greater London.
25. There is a danger that our city government would be diminished by a move of the sort proposed. It seems remiss to us that this has not figured in the thinking to date and that no work has been done to gauge Londoners' and London stakeholders' views. The London Assembly believes that the proposals will negatively impact on the ability for constituents, other members of the public, members of the press & media, guests and other visitors properly to attend, engage with and participate in the work of the London Assembly, and wider Authority.
26. The Chief Officer told us at the 21 July meeting of the GLA Oversight Committee that staff post code data could act as a proxy for Londoners accessing a relocated City Hall. This approach seems to miss the point and do down London government.
27. Attempts to draw comparisons between the 2002 move and the proposed move to The Crystal also show a lack of understanding of the history of the Greater London Authority, which is rather worrying as those views come from senior officers of the Greater London Authority.
28. At this our twentieth anniversary, we should be proud of what this institution has achieved and what it can achieve in the future. Investing in the right location for City Hall is part of that and it must be done properly; it needs to be done in conjunction with others and take people with it as part of a vision for London.
29. We understand and support the Mayorality's ambitions for the Royal Docks but have strong reservations that the manner in which the proposed relocation of City Hall is being handled will have the benefits claimed for either the Royal Docks or the GLA.