



Mr Hetan Shah
12 Errol Street
London
EC1Y 8LX

22nd May 2017

Dear Mr Shah,

Thank you very much for your letter. As I am sure you are aware, I made a number of pledges in my Renewal Plan on Open Data. These commitments were as follows:

- **A Clear Commitment to Transparency:** During my campaign so far, I have tried to be as open as possible, holding open “Ask Andy” meetings where anyone can come and ask me anything they want to know. If elected, I want to continue this approach.
- **The Performance-Based Mayor:** We need the right indicators and the right data to measure the progress the West Midlands is making. I have committed that my salary as Mayor should be performance-related, based on how well my Renewal Plan for the West Midlands is going. I want to have real ‘skin in the game’. The people of the region should be able to see this progress, and we need to create the dashboards or measurement mechanisms which are most appropriate to achieve this.
- **Appoint the Right People:** As I learnt during my time at John Lewis, the most important leadership skill is selecting the right people to get things done. Any activities which I am proposing as Mayor will have an individual who has a clear responsibility for delivering. I will be personally keeping a track of the progress we make in Open Data, just as I will with each of my other policy priorities.
- **Secure the Data:** One of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century is keeping our personal data secure. Government, businesses and individuals face this challenge together. As Mayor, any data which is open or shared will go through rigorous checks to make sure that nothing which is personally or commercially sensitive is shared inappropriately.
- **Listening to What Data People Want:** As Mayor, I will involve both the holders of public sector data, and the users of that data, whether they are researchers, entrepreneurs or journalists. We need to be user-centric in our approach, and work collaboratively to make sure we deliver the most useful data first.



- **Improve the Data:** The public sector needs to work together to improve its own data, opening up new sources, including real-time data. We need to explore using data from other sources too, working with the private sector. For example, why shouldn't housebuilding companies or mortgage lenders give us a more accurate real-time data on progress towards our housing goals?
- **Making the Data Available and Accessible:** Of course public data needs to be shared online, but we need to work harder to make it accessible. Where can we find opportunities to make data searchable, machine readable or accessible through APIs? We need common standards to make sure that data is comparable with other parts of the country and across the local authorities in the West Midlands region. These are the challenges which the next Mayor must tackle.
- **Make Sure We Use the Data:** I want to unleash a new innovation revolution in the West Midlands. We need to attract the best technology talent to tackle our most pressing public sector problems. We also need to foster start-up businesses which are looking to use public sector data to create value for their customers. Our young people need the digital and statistical skills to understand data and use it effectively to be successful in the twenty-first century.

I look forward to fulfilling my manifesto pledges over the next three years.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Street
Mayor of the West Midlands