

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2623

Title: London Business Hub website contract 2023-24

Executive Summary:

To commit up to £140,000 for server hosting, maintenance, content management and call off development contract for the London Business Hub website for six months with the potential to extend to 12 months.

The current website contract is due to end on 31 March 2023. A short-term solution is required to ensure that the website remains active to London's small business community whilst ongoing discussions take place regarding the future of the London Business Hub initiative following outcomes of the recent review of business support services. This contract will cover the transition period from 1 April onwards until next steps are formally agreed.

The London Business Hub website is a key platform through which the GLA and Mayor can support small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs to start, sustain and grow. It also hosts information, advice and support for businesses struggling with the current economic climate.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Good Growth:

- approves expenditure of up to £140,000 for the London Business Hub website contract for up to 12 months

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Philip Graham

Position: Executive Director of Good Growth

Signature:



Date:

20/02/2023

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The London Business Hub (LBH) website (www.businesshub.london) has been supporting London's micro businesses and small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) since its inception in March 2015.
- 1.2. The website helps businesses access support programmes, advisers, and networking opportunities. It provides the entry point to two of the Mayor's business support programmes, Business Advisers (known internally as Hub & Spoke) and the Wayfinder.
- 1.3. The website's content and infrastructure has been maintained by Browser London Ltd, in consortium with Cobweb Information Limited, for the past four years under contract ICT13085 (Lot 1 & 2). This contract covers server hosting, website maintenance and support, content curation and maintenance as well as optional 'call off' website development. It allows the website to function efficiently and within the constraints of internal resource and capacity. It also allows the team to respond actively to changing user needs and to ensure continuous improvement of the website. The contract is due to end on 31 March 2023.
- 1.4. Following the GLA's recent review of business support services, the London Business Hub website and related services are being rescoped, but this exercise will not complete before the current contract ends and GLA officers have therefore sought advice from TfL procurement on a compliant process to source the services required from Browser and Cobweb during the interim period.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 Following discussions with TfL Procurement, the GLA will source the services required for the new website contract from TfL's Reseller Framework. The Reseller Framework was procured via a competitive, advertised procurement process. Following this procurement process five suppliers were appointed to the framework. The Reseller Framework allows the GLA to run a mini-competition procurement process, following which a call-off contract will be awarded to the winning reseller. That reseller will then enter into a subcontract with Browser.
- 2.2. The Reseller Framework process allows us to continue working with Browser and Cobweb via the successful reseller, to provide stability, consistency, and continuation of services during the transition period; and maintain the same SLAs and services as currently supplied by Browser. The new contract will cover six months but we will build in an optional additional six months extension, allowing in total for up to 12 months of service delivery.
- 2.3 During the initial six-month contract term GLA officers will assess progress with the rescope activities to determine whether an additional 6 months will be required. If required, this extension will be processed via a Change Control Note (CCN) with support from TfL.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The LBH website ensures that all relevant London based business support schemes are included on the website. This includes specific information and events for women, BAME, and other underrepresented groups with to satisfy the GLA's Public Sector Equality Duty, namely through addressing underrepresentation of women, disabled people and businesses run by ethnic entrepreneurs.
- 3.2. The LBH website also ensures that the highest standards of website accessibility are met and/ or incorporated, which meet the latest industry standards (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA)

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. This project is aligned to the Mayor's commitment to support new and growing businesses and develop London's offer to SMEs and the self-employed by creating a single front door so business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs can easily access the right advice and support to help them start, sustain and grow. The London Business Hub is the platform by which the Mayor can promote his wider work to support the capital's SME community.
- 4.2. This project hosts content for the Mayor's Cost of Doing Business activity, alongside supporting digital resources and information for businesses impacted by the cost of living crisis.
- 4.3. The key risks associated with this project are as follows:

Risk description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Browser London Ltd and Cobweb Information Limited are not interested in extending the current contract	Low	High	GLA officers will have initial conversations with the delivery partners to ensure they are committed to entering into a new contract via the Reseller Framework.
Cost of contract extension will be much higher than current costs due to Reseller Framework route	Medium	Low	In order for the Reseller process to be competitive each supplier will add a markup to the baseline contract costs. TfL blocks resellers from adding anything more than three per cent markup. The GLA will go with the lowest markup. Funds have been earmarked for this extension taking the maximum markup into consideration.

- 4.1. There are no conflicts to note from any of those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is being sought for expenditure up to the value of £140,000 for a maximum 12-month contract for London Business Hub website as detailed within this report. All expenditure will be incurred by 31st March 2024.
- 5.2 The funding of this new contract will be financed by London's allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funding sources in 2023-24 (approved under Mayoral Decision MD3058).
- 5.3 Based on current contract costs the anticipated the breakdown of the initial six-month and potential additional six-month extension is as follows:

Timeframe/ Expenditure type	April – October 2023 (initial six-month)	September 2023 – March 2024 (optional additional six-month extension)
Server hosting, maintenance, support, and content maintenance	£31,656 + max. three per cent markup	£31,656 max. three per cent markup
Call off development funds	£35,000 max. three per cent markup	£35,000 max. three per cent markup

6. Legal comments

Power to undertake the requested decision

6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decision requested of the director concerns the exercise of the Authority’s general powers and fall within the Authority’s statutory power to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development and improvement of the environment in Greater London and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority’s related statutory duties to:

- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
- consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom
- consult with appropriate bodies.

6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the director must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

Procurement

6.3 The officers must ensure that they comply with the rules of TfL’s Reseller Framework, when they undertake the proposed mini-competition to procure a reseller. Furthermore, the officers must ensure that a call-off contract be put in place between the Authority and the successful reseller, before the services commence.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Reseller Framework Request for Proposal (RfP) document finalised and sent to TfL to commence process	Early February 2023
Response to RfP received and scored	Mid-February 2023
Supplier confirmed	Late February 2023
Current contract ends	31 March 2023
New contract commences	1 April 2023

Assess progress of LBH transition to determine whether additional 6-month extension required or whether contract can end in October.	May – September 2023
Contract ends or is extended through CCN	31 October 2023
TBC extended contract ends	31 March 2024

Appendices and supporting papers:

TfL Reseller Framework

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website 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? YES

If YES, for what reason:

We need to complete the procurement process.

Until what date: 31 March 2023

Part 2 – Sensitive information

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

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Lucienne Blakely-Droz has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Alex Conway has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

Financial and Legal advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

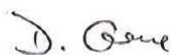
A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 20 February 2023.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:



Date:

21/02/2023