

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2573

Title: Thames Estuary Production Corridor

Executive summary:

The Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) is uniting east London, the north Kent coast and south Essex to create a world-class centre for creative and cultural production: leading global innovation, creating new jobs, developing local talent, supporting the rapid growth of the creative economy and local recovery. The TEPC is a unique collaboration between the public and private sectors to create a cultural production ecosystem built on the principles of sustainability, innovation, inclusivity and environmentally sound practices.

In July 2020, the GLA secured £350,000 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to develop the evidence base and rationale for future investment in the TEPC. Following a successful funding bid to the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP) of £150,000, this decision form seeks approval to deliver a detailed feasibility study programme, an investment prospectus and continued project management resource; to provide support for skills development and, with boroughs, the culture sector and investors, developing large-scale flagship propositions.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Good Growth approves the GLA's expenditure of £150,000 to develop a feasibility study for a major cultural production project in east London; an investment prospectus; support for skills initiatives; and project management resource, as awarded by LEAP and endorsed by the LEAP Board on 9 December 2021.

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, Good Growth

Signature:



Date:

05/12/2022

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) is a significant programme uniting east London, the north Kent coast and south Essex to create a world-class centre for creative and cultural production. The programme aims to lead global innovation; create new jobs; develop local talent; and support the rapid growth of the creative economy.
- 1.2 The TEPC partnership includes the GLA (including the Royal Docks team); the South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN) and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (South East LEP); the seven east London boroughs comprising the Thames Estuary region (Tower Hamlets; Newham; Barking and Dagenham; Lewisham; Greenwich; Bexley; and Havering) and 11 local authority areas across north Kent and south Essex. These partners are working together through the TEPC Partners Board.
- 1.3 Phase one of the project began with the launch of the Mayor of London's industrial vision for the Estuary in 2017 in partnership with the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP), the South East LEP and SECEN.
- 1.4 Phase two began in March 2018, under cover of MD2129 and DD2189. TEPC partners commissioned a case for investment report to provide a more detailed vision and evidence base for the TEPC. The research showed that investment in the Thames Estuary's creative industries could deliver over 50,000 new jobs and generate £3.7bn additional GVA per year.
- 1.5 In July 2020, under cover of MD2632, £350,000 was secured from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to develop the evidence base and rationale for future investment in the TEPC. A research commission was created to identify sites and pipeline opportunities across the Thames Estuary, to create guidance for local authority partners to support cultural production and to develop flagship projects across the Estuary to help fuel growth and local recovery.
- 1.6 The LEAP award of £150,000, as endorsed by the LEAP Board on 9 December 2021, will support the development of screen and fashion infrastructure across east London as part of phase three of the project. This award will fund the following activity:
 - support delivery of an investment-ready flagship project in an east London location, through a feasibility study to test viability
 - demonstrate the value of the TEPC as an investment opportunity by creating an investment prospectus
 - identify and present best-practice examples of skills and talent-development initiatives already operating successfully within the production corridor
 - ensure continued GLA oversight and project management of the TEPC through funding the extension of an existing full-time, fixed-term Policy Officer post to March 2024.

2. Objectives, outputs and expected outcomes

Place-based feasibility study

- 2.1 The objective for this strand of work is to support a strategic approach to job creation and growth in east London boroughs, helping to fuel local recovery by supporting and developing cultural infrastructure (the buildings, structures and places where culture is produced), significantly increasing potential for employment and training opportunities for local people.

- 2.2 The output for this strand of work will be a feasibility study to test the viability of establishing a TEPC major cultural production project, in a key location, in order to meet a local need for growth and economic recovery. The project will be selected based on findings from the TEPC Research Commission, which identified notable flagship projects and sites through an evidence-led selection process aligned with the goals of attracting investment and creating jobs and growth through cultural production.
- 2.3 The sum of £25,000, from the LEAP award, will be ringfenced for this strand of work, and a competitive procurement process will recruit an external agency to undertake it.
- 2.4 The ideal outcome is a feasibility study showing the viability and investment potential of a flagship cultural project, with subsequent investment in cultural infrastructure creating long-term local growth and employment, aligned with the employment and educational needs of Londoners. Success can be measured through the viability of the selected project and whether it successfully attracts the onward investment needed to reach its potential.

Investment prospectus

- 2.5 The objective of the investment prospectus is to clearly demonstrate to potential investors why the TEPC is a valuable, sustainable investment for east London; and how it will create significant returns for investors.
- 2.6 The sum of £25,000, from the LEAP award, will fund the output to develop and produce a TEPC investment prospectus document. This will communicate to potential investors how supporting sustainable economic growth and innovative cultural infrastructure development can also deliver an appropriate return on investment. The TEPC Policy Officer will oversee audience engagement with potential investors as part of the preparation of the prospectus, working with key TEPC partners and in alignment with wider estuary investment strategies.
- 2.7 The outcome for this strand of work is a successfully delivered prospectus that raises awareness and builds confidence through live cultural production opportunities, creating a broader investor base to help establish stronger public and private-sector partnerships. Success can be measured through investment queries and financial commitments pertaining to live opportunities that contribute to growth.
- 2.8 A competitive procurement process will recruit an external agency to undertake this work.

Skills best practice

- 2.9 The objective of the skills strand of work is to present exemplary sector skills projects as case studies to demonstrate how TEPC partners can create effective, local skills models. These should be aligned with TEPC goals to create a strategic, networked and sustainable talent pipeline across the estuary.
- 2.10 TEPC commissioned research outlines the sector skills shortage across the sector and makes clear the need to address this strategically across the estuary. Presenting strong examples of where skills programmes are being put into practice is an effective way of supporting TEPC partners in developing their own skills strategies.
- 2.11 The sum of £14,000, from this award, will deliver an output to identify and present strategic examples of skills and talent development practice already operating successfully within the production corridor. Producing strong skills case studies will help develop best practice skills models in other TEPC boroughs. This will be achieved in two ways:
- evaluating existing examples of successful integrated, employer-led local skills programmes aligned with TEPC goals to demonstrate their impact on communities
 - producing two strong skills-based case studies to help TEPC partner organisations adopt talent-development models based on best practice.

- 2.12 Case studies will be made available to TEPC partners to support strategic skills development locally and across the estuary. The TEPC Policy Officer will oversee development of, and engagement with the case studies as a TEPC skills resource.
- 2.13 A successful outcome for this work will be the creation of content that feeds into wider strategic aims to develop a sustainable talent pipeline for the TEPC, led for the GLA by the TEPC Policy Officer. Success can be measured by how much integration of the case studies takes place across other TEPC skills initiatives.
- 2.14 A competitive procurement process will recruit an external agency to undertake both of these strands of work.
- 2.15 An evaluation has been budgeted for in order to assess successful achievement of outcomes described above.

Project management resource

- 2.16 The sum of £86,000, from this award, will fund the extension of the existing full-time, fixed-term TEPC Policy Officer post, operating within the Culture and Creative Industries Unit at the GLA. Approval for this proposal was granted in CO403 by the GLA's Chief Officer, in line with the GLA's Establishment Control process and the London Assembly Oversight Committee was consulted. The post will continue to provide full-time policy support and project management for the TEPC until March 2024, including project managing LEAP-funded activities.
- 2.17 The post will continue to contribute to coordinated and strategic development across the partners, including job and skills priorities and opportunities for joint strategic ventures to develop networked cultural infrastructure across the Thames Estuary.
- 2.18 All commissioned services set out above will be procured in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the Mayor of London must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2 The proposed activities outlined in this decision will enable the continued creation of employment opportunities in both east London and the wider South East region. Last year, London's unemployment rate was the highest across the UK (6.4 per cent nationally). In July 2021, over 1 million Londoners claimed Universal Credit and 297,000 were still on furlough. Eight out of the UK's ten local authorities with the greatest proportion of jobs on furlough were London-based, the highest being Newham, a borough where TEPC investment will support jobs, skills and opportunity. In addition, some of the most diverse boroughs in London are situated with the TEPC geography, including Newham, Tower Hamlets and Barking & Dagenham.
- 3.3 As the city and the region recover from COVID-19, this investment will support vital economic development planning. The TEPC programme will contribute to longer-term regeneration, giving rise to new jobs and revitalised prospects in disadvantaged east London locations. It will need to work closely with borough partners to reach disadvantaged communities and meet the specific needs and challenges faced by those communities. Creating opportunities for skills development, training and job creation in cultural production should address local recovery in a meaningful way. This means responding to social and economic deprivation through the lens of race, disability and gender along with other protected characteristics, where possible converging with locally focussed programmes with shared goals, such as Creative Enterprise zones.

- 3.4 The objectives of this work are aligned with GLA Culture and Creative Industries Unit diversity initiatives – such as the Creative Workforce Diversity Programme, which seeks to ensure that Londoners from every background can pursue a career in the creative industries, and to remove the barriers that stand in their way. Central to achieving this will be prioritising support for underrepresented communities and organisations as key beneficiaries from this work. Applying the Culture and Creative Industries EDI Action Plan framework to the selection of a flagship project and selection of skills-based case studies will help steer this.
- 3.5 The Estuary’s manufacturing legacy provides a unique opportunity for new industry. A skilled local workforce, from fabricators to metalworkers, already exists. The Estuary is at the forefront of the skills agenda, through training and education programmes such as National College Creative Industries at High House Production Park in Purfleet. This employer-led programme open to UK and international learners comprises a range of inclusive courses and apprenticeships designed to address the sector skills gap and provide the industry with a diverse and highly skilled professional workforce. Core to this vision will be the creation of pathways into long-term employment through schools; further and higher education; skills training; apprenticeships; and careers advice, improving the quality and diversity of the local talent pipeline. The activities within this funded programme will focus on equality, diversity and inclusion in both development and application which set a course for emergent community engagement in cultural production through skills development and employment opportunities.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 The key risks associated with the LEAP funded activities have been carefully considered, with impact and mitigation measures taken into account. These are outlined in the table below:

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation
Scale of demand outstrips funding	High	Medium	It is necessary to be clear with partners that the modest funding available means submissions need to demonstrate innovation, and leverage existing partnerships and establish new ones, in order to maximise the impact of funding. Continue to lobby central government to ensure the scale of need in London is recognised in national funding allocations, as well as other funders.
Timing	Low	Medium	Programme and resource planning is under way to ensure the process is clearly defined, and resourcing is in place to enable timely decision-making. Progress and risk-reporting processes are in place to enable project and programme-level risk-management.
Alignment across GLA	Low	Medium	Regular cross-GLA meetings and coordination across the Good Growth directorate to ensure alignment across policy areas and cross-cutting recovery themes.

Alignment across London Councils and boroughs	Medium	High	Regular engagement with (and GLA co-leadership of) the TEPC Partners' Board, and the London Recovery Economic Workstrand sub-group.
GLA capacity to manage programme delivery	Low	High	LEAP funding for extension of the TEPC full-time, fixed-term Policy Officer post until March 2024 will ensure the programme is effectively project-managed and delivered.

- 4.2 Investment in the development of innovative new infrastructure will help to meet the Mayoral strategies and priorities to contribute to thriving, inclusive and resilient high streets, town centres and creative clusters. In the longer term, this will provide good jobs and economic growth, and training and skills opportunities for increasing numbers of Londoners.
- 4.3 The programme of work within the LEAP award intersects with a number of Mayoral strategies and priorities including the Skills for Londoners Strategy, the Culture Strategy for London, the London Plan and the Economic Recovery Framework for London – as well as the Good Growth and Creative Londoners priorities. More specifically, the TEPC programme supports the Culture Strategy priority, 'Culture and Good Growth: Supporting, saving and sustaining cultural places and spaces', recognising the importance of safeguarding existing workspaces and providing new spaces to enable the creative workforce to thrive and innovate. It also helps deliver the Mayor's Cultural Infrastructure Plan by supporting cultural and creative production infrastructure.

Consultation and impact assessment

- 4.4 The TEPC forms part of the Mayor's Culture Strategy and was included within the Culture Strategy's Integrated Impact Assessment. The Culture Strategy was subject to a 12-week consultation with stakeholders and the public. Key positive findings from the strategy consultation include that arts and culture have a positive influence on health and wellbeing; and that this link should be promoted and better facilitated. The consultation also found that participation in culture supports social cohesion, inclusion and a sense of identity; and creates vibrant places and communities.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.5 There are no conflicts of interest to note for any of the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 The sum of £150,000 is required to support the development of phase three of the TEPC programme.
- 5.2 The requested funds will be spent on:
- progressing one detailed feasibility study of large-scale cultural production propositions within a TEPC London boroughs
 - developing an investment prospectus to demonstrate investment potential of the TEPC
 - producing one feasibility study of an effective TEPC skills initiative, and two separate case studies that demonstrate best practice in skills and talent development
 - funding the extension of a fixed-term GLA Policy Officer post to ensure continuity and ongoing project management of the TEPC.

- 5.3 This expenditure will be funded by LEAP growth deal funds that were built into the Culture and Creative Industries Unit budget, as part of the 2022-23 GLA budget process. However, as per the profile set out in section 7, below, part of this will need to be reprofiled across future years. Approval for this will be sought via the formal 2023-24 budget process, in which no contracts will be entered into until such approval has been obtained. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made following the outcome of this decision.
- 5.4 Lastly, it is important to note although most of the activity relating to this programme ends in 2023, the requested staffing resource will be required beyond this to build on the outcomes and findings of the work stands.
- 5.5 Programme budget profile

Investment prospectus	Period	Amount
Investment prospectus project delivery and spend	Q1-Q3 2023	£25,000
TEPC skills best practice project delivery and spend	Q1-Q2 2023	£14,000
Feasibility study project delivery and spend	Q2-Q3 2023	£25,000
Project management resource salaried GLA post, G8 level providing project management support to the TEPC	Contract end March 2024	£86,000

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the executive director fall within the statutory powers of the Authority to promote and/or to do anything that is facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, social development, and economic development and wealth creation, within Greater London. 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 of him, the Executive 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; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it; and to 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 executive director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

Grant funding

- 6.3 To the extent that any of the requested budget be used for grant funding, the officers are reminded to ensure that they comply with section 12 of the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code (the Code). Furthermore, the officers must ensure that an appropriate funding agreement be put in place between the Authority and any recipient before any part of the funding be paid.

Procurement

- 6.4 Similarly, where the requested budget is to be used to procure services, supplies or works, the officers are reminded to comply with the Code; and to ensure that a written contract be put in place between the Authority and the service provider/supplier prior to the commencement of any activity under the contract.

Creation of a post

- 6.5 It should be noted that this decision relates only to the approval of budget. Paragraphs 1.6, 2.13 and 2.14, above propose the extension of an existing fixed-term post. The officers should note that the proposal to extend this fixed-term post has already been approved by the Head of Paid Service, in accordance with the GLA Head of Paid Service Staffing Protocol and Scheme of Delegation.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1 Timetable:

Activity	Timeline
Programme of work agreed with project programme board	November 2022
Delivery start date	November 2022
Progress update to LEAP Board	December 2022
Feasibility study programme commences	January 2023
Delivery end date	March 2024

Appendices and supporting papers:

None

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:

Activity that will be developed under DD2573 is not in the public domain and would be compromised through publication at this stage. Details of the budget allocated for services under various budget lines are also commercially sensitive; this publication may unduly influence the GLA's ability to achieve value for money through its tenders. Therefore, the publication will need to be deferred until all procurements are over.

Until what date: 31 March 2023

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under the 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:

Alexander Mann has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Shonagh Manson 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

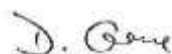
This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on the 5 December 2022.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature



Date

07/12/2022