

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2609

Title: London Borough of Culture Proposal

Executive summary:

The Mayor launched the London Borough of Culture programme in 2017. It is a key commitment in his Culture Strategy, 'Culture for all Londoners', to bring Londoners together. Round one was approved under cover of MD2107, with title awards given to Waltham Forest (2019) and Brent (2020). Round two was approved under MD2450, with title awards given to Lewisham (2022) and Croydon (2023). Smaller strategic grants were also given as Cultural Impact Awards to nine boroughs.

The decision on the potential third round of London Borough of Culture will be taken once the GLA Mayor budget is finalised following confirmation of the GLA's receipts from business rates and council tax for 2023-24. However, in order to facilitate the delivery of a high-quality programme from 2025 and meet the timeline conditions, should a decision be taken to extend the programme, this decision seeks approval to spend £100,000 for preparatory planning and pre-application work.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Good Growth approves expenditure of £100,000, for the planning and pre-application phase to prepare for a potential third round of the London Borough of Culture programme. This funding is to be spent as follows:

- £10,000 to procure a grants-management system to establish a fully accessible online application system
- £10,000 to support boroughs (through workshops, speaker fees, venue costs, tech, catering etc) to develop cultural strategies and approaches
- £10,000 to develop assets (prospectus, application guidance design etc) to be deployed only after the programme launch
- £10,000 to commission an artistic consultant to advise and support the bidding process for the boroughs subject to budget sign off for round three
- £60,000 provision of a small grants programme to support boroughs to apply during the bidding phase. This will not be spent if a round three does not go ahead.

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:

20/02/2023

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Mayor launched the London Borough of Culture (LBoC) programme in 2017. It is a key commitment in his Culture Strategy, 'Culture for all Londoners', to bring Londoners together. The Mayor wants to help build stronger, more resilient and more creative communities, ensuring Londoners have pride in their local areas, enhancing their health, wellbeing and prospects, and supporting the capital's economic and social recovery from the pandemic. Round one was approved under cover of MD2107 and round two under MD2450.
- 1.2. LBoC delivers ambitious cultural programmes that are underpinned by the active engagement of residents. It places culture at the heart of communities, inspiring new and diverse talent, and drawing visitors from across the city and beyond. Programmes focus on young people, community and civic engagement, health and wellbeing, and jobs and skills. The programme works strategically with councils to embed culture for the long term across borough strategy and policy.
- 1.3. Since its inception, LBoC has become a successful flagship cultural programme and cornerstone of the capital's culture calendar. Waltham Forest held the title in 2019 and Brent in 2020 – both title awards were made in 'round one' of the programme. Lewisham is delivering its programme in 2022 and Croydon will hold the title in 2023 – both title awards were made in 'round two'. Smaller but targeted and strategic projects have also been supported through Cultural Impact Awards in Camden, Barking and Dagenham, Kingston, Lambeth, Lewisham, and Merton in round one, and Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, and Sutton in round two.
- 1.4. In round one alone, the programme:
 - supported over 2,000 artistic partners
 - leveraged more than £16m from over 20 programme funders
 - created 1,570 volunteers
 - worked with 208 schools
 - delivered over 600 employment and leadership opportunities for young people
 - awarded over £1m in small grants to more than 427 diverse local events, people and organisations across Waltham Forest and Brent.
- 1.5. This decision is sought in advance of the completion of the formal 2023-24 budget process, in which proposals for a new round three of the programme will be considered. If the GLA:Mayor budget can support round three, a full proposal for round three will be put to the Mayor, but this would not be confirmed until February 2023, after the GLA's confirmed receipt from business rates and council tax is confirmed in January 2023.
- 1.6. The proposed scope of round three, pending Mayoral approval, would be for a further two title awards (in 2025 and 2027) plus up to three Cultural Impact Awards. It is desirable for the title awards to be delivered in odd-numbered years (the earliest possible being 2025 and 2027), in order to avoid coinciding with local elections. Running the programme during a local election year would divert resource and attention away from the programme; and could run the risk of political leadership and commitment changing. Running a single competition for two title awards helps ensure value for money by making the planning and lead-in time more efficient.
- 1.7. In order for a potential round three of LBoC to launch in 2023 (for title years taking place in 2025 and 2027), some limited preparatory work and limited investment is required prior to any budget decision being confirmed. This has been discussed and agreed with the Mayor's office.
- 1.8. Boroughs require a minimum of eight months to sufficiently plan, resource and consult on their bid. This lead time ensures a higher volume and quality of applications and the securing of maximum financial commitment. Following announcement, the winning boroughs then need a minimum of 12

months to raise match funding, recruit a team, build partnerships, programme events and engage their communities.

- 1.9. Working backwards from 2025, the competition would need to launch as soon as possible after the budget decision in February 2023, with applications submitted by November and announcement of winners in early 2024. For that reason, some limited preparatory work is required in advance. Nonetheless, plans have been formulated carefully to reduce, as far as possible, any financial outlay made ahead of a full decision on round three, to minimise potential losses should the full programme not go ahead (see 4.6, below, for an outline of the risks).
- 1.10. Due to the programme schedule and launch requirement in Spring 2023, £40,000 is proposed to be spent on the preparation of application materials, development of a borough engagement plan and procurement of a grants management system. This decision form also seeks approval for expenditure of £60,000 to provide small grants to applying boroughs to help them develop their bids.
- 1.11. A Director's Decision is time-sensitive for the following reasons:
 - it must launch in Spring 2023 to ensure we are on track to deliver title awards in 2025 and 2027.
 - in order to launch in Spring 2023 we must undertake limited preparatory (non-public) planning/launch-readiness activity in February with potential confirmation of funding in Feb/March 2023 as part of the GLA: Mayor Budget process.
- 1.12. The proposed approach to LBoC round three, if a decision is taken to proceed, would include two title awards for LBoC in 2025 and 2027 (£1.35m each) and three Cultural Impact Awards (£200,000 each). This may be revised through the budget process in light of financial constraints.
- 1.13. LBoC demonstrates the Mayor's commitment to tackling low cultural engagement rates and working in areas of significant deprivation and with a need for 'levelling up' within London. The culture sector has been hit hard by the pandemic. The cost of living crisis and levels of poverty in London mean it has become harder than ever for boroughs to support culture. Council expenditure on cultural services has fallen by 50 per cent across England since 2010, from £118 per person in 2010 to just £59 in 2022. London's Arts Council England funding between 2023 and 2026 is significantly lower than in previous rounds. London cannot bid for UK City of Culture and, following Brexit, cannot bid for European Capital of Culture either. All of this means it will be significantly harder to make sure all Londoners have access to culture on their doorstep.
- 1.14. If taken forward, LBoC round three would continue to deliver on the Mayor's commitment to supporting Londoners outlined in the Culture Strategy. LBoC, with its track record and reach into communities, is needed more than ever. Led by local people, it is empowering communities and reaching diverse Londoners. In round one, in Waltham Forest, 67 per cent of its audience were local residents; and one in 10 had a life-limiting illness or disability. Brent, where 149 languages are spoken, designated itself the London Borough of Cultures (plural) and involved more than 15,000 local people in designing and shaping its programme. LBoC provides a low-cost cultural offer for Londoners on their doorstep. It tackles low cultural engagement and programmes work in areas of significant deprivation. Its focus is on young people, community and civic engagement, health and wellbeing, and jobs and skills. It also incorporates Liberty, the Mayor's flagship festival for Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse artists, which attracts Arts Council match funding as part of London Borough of Culture.
- 1.15. The table below sets out the proposed expenditure.

	Amount
Grants-management system procurement	£10,000
Borough development programme – a closed-door standalone programme of borough culture support that will support borough development of culture strategies and approaches whether round three happens or not, and will help prepare boroughs for application if it does (workshops, speaker fees, venue costs, tech, catering etc)	£10,000

Development of assets (prospectus, application guidance design etc) to be deployed only after formal launch	£10,000
Commission of artistic consultant to support the bidding process	£10,000
To cover a small grants programme for boroughs to apply to during the bidding phase (this will only be spent if round three goes ahead)	£60,000

1.16. All commissioned services set out below will be in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1. The requested funding will support the delivery of the following outputs and activities:

- *February to March 2023 – planning stage:* Prepare draft application materials, devise and plan engagement (borough, business, arts sector, etc). General culture strategy workshops with boroughs.
- *March 2023 – pre-application stage:* Procure grants-management system, confirm partnership/funding potential, engage policy teams across GLA to build offer to boroughs.
- *Spring (April/May) 2023 – Launch competition:* Press moment and/or event, subject to final budget approval.

2.2. The expected outcomes of the planning phase are as follows:

- early development investment in boroughs' cultural planning to account for budget cycles, including the commissioning of an artistic consultant to support the bidding process, to ensure boroughs have the capacity and resources to develop high-quality applications
- procurement of a user-friendly and value-for-money grants-management system to ensure a robust and streamlined application and assessment process
- development of marketing assets to reach as wide a range of applicants and partners as possible, build momentum for the programme and excite and engage Londoners
- readiness to launch round three if required, securing substantial future social and economic benefits for Londoners in deprived and under-invested areas of London.

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' as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and those who do not.
- 3.2. The programme has local communities and London residents at its heart. It aims to increase Londoners' engagement with culture and shine a light on the rich and varied stories of London's diverse communities. Led by local people, the programme has been effective in reaching the communities the Mayor is elected to serve. In Waltham Forest, 2019, the programme reached over 500,000 people at more than 1000 events. In Brent, 2020, 15,340 local people were involved in shaping the programme, which reached audiences of 843,481 (live and digital).
- 3.3. In round one, boroughs delivered over 600 employment and leadership opportunities for young people. Lambeth's Cultural Impact Award 'Elevate' supported diverse talent in the creative workplace and engaged 26 cultural partners to inspire the next generation of creative leaders and enable young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to build careers in the arts. Barking and Dagenham's pioneering programme, New Town Culture, brought the power of art and culture into social care services for children and adults. To date it has involved 400 looked-after young people and care leavers; and 814 adult social care users. Lewisham's Age Against the Machine, a festival of

creative ageing, included 275 events, attended by over 16,500 people. And in round two, Lewisham's 2022 programme has already reached 1,800 young people so far. Funding for round three will specifically support activity to ensure that attendance at events is diverse and reflects the population of the borough; and that diverse young people are engaged with positive activities to help them fulfil their potential and steer them away from trouble and towards education and employment.

- 3.4. Round three of the competition will be open to all London boroughs to apply for and receive grant funding if their application proves successful. The evaluation of all applications will be fair and transparent, and scored and evaluated to the same criteria, giving all applicants an equal opportunity to access the grant funding outlined in the main body of this report. Assessment of need, in line with the borough's level of deprivation, will form part of the funding criteria and applicants will have to outline how their programme and approach to engaging communities will achieve this.
- 3.5. All London boroughs will be made aware of the development fund, alongside access to an arts consultant and an engagement programme to support them during the bidding process. This funding will be distributed fairly and openly to all those who wish to apply for this fund.

4. Other considerations

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.1. The Mayor's Cultural Leadership Board advises the Mayor on issues and opportunities in culture, the creative industries and 24-hour London that impact across the GLA's programmes and initiatives. These in turn support the following recovery missions and foundations, to help London recover from the impact of COVID-19:
 - High Streets for All mission
 - Health and Wellbeing mission
 - Building Strong Communities mission
 - Engaging Londoners foundation
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) foundation
 - Supporting Businesses, Jobs and Growth foundation
- 4.2. The Mayor's Cultural Leadership Board led the development in draft of the Mayor of London's Culture Strategy, Culture for all Londoners. This outlines a vision to ensure all Londoners can engage with and contribute to the capital's rich cultural offering on their doorsteps. LBoC is the flagship programme within the Love London chapter of this strategy. Other Mayoral strategies with a strong emphasis on culture and the creative industries are as follows:
 - Inclusive London, the Mayor's EDI Strategy, ensuring there are opportunities for all Londoners to engage in the programme, regardless of age, social class, disability, race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or marital status
 - the Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy and Health in All Policies approach, creating opportunities for Londoners to feel comfortable talking about mental health, reducing stigma as well as empowering people to improve their own and their community's health and wellbeing.
 - the Mayor's Social Integration Strategy, enabling people to have more opportunities, through culture, to connect with each other positively and meaningfully; and supporting Londoners to play an active part in their communities and the decisions that affect them.
 - the Mayor's Vision for London as 24-Hour City, diversifying London's night-time cultural offer; and making it more safe, welcoming and accessible for a wider range of people.

Impact assessments and consultations

- 4.3. The LBoC programme was developed in consultation with the Strategic Partners' Board and continues to be reviewed in close contact with this group. The board is made up of representatives from strategic and funding partners, including Arts Council England, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Linbury Trust, City Bridge Trust, Historic England, London Councils and Libraries Connected.
- 4.4. Improvements to the proposed competition process for round three have been informed through feedback from the applicant boroughs from rounds one and two, and the Strategic Partners' Board. Extensive engagement and consultation with communities take place during the application development phase to ensure the programme reflects the needs of residents and robust evaluation is undertaken by title award boroughs, with findings feeding into the commissioning of future rounds.
- 4.5. LBoC forms part of the Mayor's Culture Strategy, which was subject to a 12-week consultation with stakeholders and the public.

Risks

- 4.6. The key risks and mitigating actions are outlined below.

Risk	Mitigating action	RAG rating
GLA: Mayor budget decision in February 2023 means that boroughs do not have sufficient time to develop strong applications	A launch date of early Spring, with preparatory work under taken in February/March 2023, at the latest, will be required to meet the 2025 and 2027 timeframes. A detailed and robust borough engagement plan is being developed and there will be a dedicated officer to provide intensive support to the boroughs in developing their bids. Upfront culture strategy work will be undertaken with boroughs in order to advance capabilities and borough planning.	Amber
Loss/waste of public funds if round three is not approved as part of the budget process	Engagement activity will be designed to benefit boroughs and their ambitions for culture, more broadly than just regarding LBoC readiness, so that there will be lasting outcomes regardless of whether the programme goes ahead or not. The procurement required in preparation of the programme launch will not be a loss of public funds as all related documentation will clearly state that this is subject to budget approval.	Green
Financial mis-management	Officers adhere to internal financial management and procurement processes as set out in the Contracts and Funding Code and the Financial Regulations. Payment is only made on achievement of milestones.	Green

Conflicts of interest

- 4.7. 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. Approval is being sought for expenditure of up to £100,000 for the planning and pre-application phase to prepare for a potential third round of the LBoC Programme. This will include the following:
- £40,000 on the procurement of a grants-management system to establish an online application system; preparatory engagement activity for prospective borough applicants; and design costs (prospectus, application guidance)
 - £60,000 on development of grants for bidding boroughs.

- 5.2. The proposed expenditure will be funded from the LBoC round 3 budget held within the Culture & Creative Industries unit subject to formal approval of the Authority's budget setting process for 2023-24 currently underway.
- 5.3. Expenditure will only be incurred should the LBoC round 3 programme be approved within the mayor's budget.
- 5.4. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Executive Director of Good Growth concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development or improvement of the environment, in Greater London.
- 6.2. In implementing the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers should comply with the GLA'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.
- 6.3. In taking the decisions requested, as noted in section 3 above, the Executive Director of Good Growth must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, 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, gender, 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. To this end, the Executive Director of Good Growth should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.4. Section 1 of this report indicates that part of the sought budget will amount to the provision of funding. Officers must ensure that the funding is distributed fairly; transparently; in accordance with the GLA's equality policy and subsidy control rules; and in a manner that affords value for money in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code. Officers must ensure that an appropriate funding agreement is put in place and executed by the GLA and the recipient before any commitment to funding is made.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contracts	From February/March
Announcement	Spring 2023
Application and assessment phase	April/May2023 to January 2024
Programme development phase	February 2024 to March 2025

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: The programme will not be announced publicly until Spring 2023.

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring) 31 May 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:

Coral Flood 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

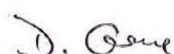
A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 20 February 2023.

✓

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