

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2667

Title: Provision of online job postings data (2023-24)

Executive Summary:

This decision seeks approval for a GLA subscription to Lightcast online job postings data for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. Alongside traditional sources, this near real-time information is used to track and assess job vacancy trends in London, providing granular information on the demand for jobs and skills. Continued access to this data will support the effective planning and delivery of adult skills provision in London. As well as informing GLA policy decisions, it will be used to produce high quality labour market information to support key stakeholders, including skills providers and careers advisers.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director – Skills & Employment (Policy) approves:

- expenditure of £29,000 from Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) reserve funding to renew subscription access to local online job vacancy data from July 2023 to June 2024.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

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: Ann-Marie Soyinka

Position: Assistant Director – Skills & Employment (Policy)

Signature:



Date:

14/09/2023

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 A strategic approach to commissioning and delivery of skills requires access to high quality Labour Market Information (LMI).¹ Better LMI can help to improve the alignment between the skills that employers demand and those people have. This, in turn, can lead to better outcomes for individuals and businesses.
- 1.2 To support this aim, the GLA has, over recent years, purchased subscription access to online job postings data (see, for example, [DD2591](#)). This data provides a direct indication of the demand for jobs and skills in the capital, rather than relying on indicators of demand at the occupation level. It has several key advantages over traditional sources of LMI, including in terms of timeliness and granularity.²
- 1.3 In the last year, GLA officers have used access to online job postings data for:
 - regular labour market information to monitor and inform stakeholders about economic trends in London, including quarterly updates on [online job postings](#) and analyses of [green jobs and skills](#) postings
 - granular information on occupational skills demand to support the development of skills and employment policy and programmes
 - analysis for an updated evidence base to support the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for London, including identification of priority areas for intervention
 - presentations and [infographics](#) on skills needs in priority sectors to share LMI with skills providers and support careers information and guidance.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 It is proposed that £29,000 of reserve Skills and Advisory Panel (SAP) funding is used to fund the renewal of the GLA subscription to Lightcast (formerly Emsi Burning Glass) online job postings data for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. This would come from SAP funding provided by the Department for Education and is in line with the objectives approved in [DD2591](#). It should be noted that 2022-23 was the final year of SAP funding from the Department for Education.
- 2.2 Alongside traditional sources, this near real-time information is used to track and assess online job postings trends in London. As noted, it provides granular information on employer demand for jobs and skills (both specialised and transferable) in the capital. This subscription will therefore allow GLA officers to continue to share data and information to support effective planning and delivery of adult skills provision in London.
- 2.3 It is expected that GLA officers will use this data to:
 - update existing outputs to ensure the GLA has access to timely information on the local labour market and skills needs

¹ Mayor of London (2018), Skills for Londoners

² Real-time web-scraping data have several key advantages over traditional sources of labour market data. The data can be accessed and updated frequently, they include a large volume of data with coverage across the country and have a wide range of information besides occupation (or job title), including desired skills, location, and salary information.

- undertake additional analysis and/or deep dives into areas of particular interest – for example, around skills needs in priority sectors
- produce materials that disseminate the latest data to relevant stakeholders, including skills providers and careers advisers.

2.4 The current GLA subscription with Lightcast expired on 30 June 2023. Under advice from Transport for London (TfL) Procurement, GLA officers recently ran a competitive tender process based on a Request for Quotation Form in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code. As a result of this process, Lightcast was identified as the optimal provider: while another supplier offered a cheaper alternative, it did not suitably address our work requirements, especially at a time when labour market data is becoming more essential to present reliable and timely information on London's economy. Therefore, Lightcast offers greater value for money while meeting our requirements in terms of access to high-quality and granular data.³

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 In carrying out any functions in respect of his skills and employment programmes, the Mayor will comply with the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the GLA must have 'due regard' of the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 3.3 The [Skills for Londoners \(SfL\) Strategy](#) and [Skills Roadmap for London](#) found that key groups with protected characteristics, including women, Black, Asian and minority ethnic Londoners and disabled Londoners are under-represented in London's labour market. Access to better labour market information will help to produce work to develop actions to address this, including the prioritisation of inclusive and good quality education and transition opportunities for all, with targeted actions to improve access for protected and under-represented groups.

4. Other considerations

Risks arising/mitigation

- 4.1 Continued access to online job postings data will ensure that GLA officers maintain an uninterrupted understanding of trends in London's labour market. By maintaining this subscription, officers can leverage new and updated analyses and outputs, maximising the value of the data for informed decision-making and effective information sharing.
- 4.2 As 2022-23 was the final year of SAP funding, the GLA will consider funding options for future access to online job postings data beyond June 2024.
- 4.3 The SAP reserve fund has arisen from staffing costs for SAP activities which were not cross charged in line with internal arrangements against the Adult Education Budget (AEB).

³ Officers evaluated the options based on cost, data quality, functionality, and user experience. The recommendation reflects cost considerations as well as considerations related to the presentation and interpretation of online job postings data through data portals/applications (e.g., efficient access to robust information and diverse data breakdowns).

Links with Mayoral Strategies and priorities

- 4.3 The continued access to online job postings data will ensure that the GLA has access to up-to-date information on labour market and skills needs. It will be used to help inform and support the development of employment and skills policy and programmes in London. The [SfL Strategy](#) sets out the need to improve London's skills system across a number of areas, particularly the AEB which has been delegated to the Mayor. It will also be used to help skills providers to understand and find timely, granular, local labour market information, as highlighted in the [Skills Roadmap for London](#).
- 4.4 There are no conflicts of interest to declare from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is sought for the expenditure of £29,000 towards the Lightcast online job postings data subscription renewal from July 2023 to June 2024.
- 5.2 This will be funded from the reserve SAP programme budget from underspent SAP funding from the Department for Education in financial years 2021-22 and 2022-23. Note, 2022-23 was the final year of SAP funding from the Department for Education. New sources of funding would need to be identified to purchase subscription access to online job postings data in future years.
- 5.3 It is within the funding rules to use this funding as outlined.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Submission to CIB and signature by Assistant Director – Skills & Employment.	August 2023
Renewal of existing contract	August 2023

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? NO

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:

Christopher Rocks has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Corporate Investment Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board 11 September 2023.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature:

Anna Eastcott

Date:

11/09/2023