

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2682

Title: Practice Support Programme

Executive summary:

The Growing Places Fund (revenue support for local regeneration support, piloting and testing) was approved in December 2022. This Decision seeks approval for £100,000 to be drawn from the Growing Places Fund, and awarded in the form of a grant to the London School of Architecture to run a pilot phase of a Practice Support Programme.

MD3057 delegated authority to the Head of Regeneration to approve detailed expenditure of this allocation in accordance with the principles, priorities and high-level activities set out in this decision form. As such, the Practice Support Programme will develop the skills and capacity of practices with diverse leadership within the built environment sector.

Decision:

That the Interim Head of Regeneration approves expenditure of £100,000 through a grant award to the London School of Architecture (£20,000 to be spent in 2023-24, and the remaining £80,000 in 2024-25).

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: Louise Duggan

Position: Interim Head of Regeneration

Signature:



Date:

27/11/2023

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. MD3057 (Growing Places Fund revenue support for local regeneration support, piloting and testing), approved in December 2022, delegated authority to the Head of Regeneration to approve detailed expenditure of the £340,000 allocation in accordance with the principles, priorities and high-level activities set out in that decision form.
- 1.2. As such, a pilot phase of a Practice Support Programme has been outlined as a test model for a longer-term programme that is financially sustainable beyond the grant period. The programme will promote diverse leadership in the creative industries and built environment sectors.
- 1.3. The programme builds on recommendations from the Supporting Diversity Handbook (2019; revised in 2022), by creating structured ways for practitioners to offer support and advice to others looking to progress within the industry.
- 1.4. An extensive scoping exercise has been carried out, over 18 months, to identify the gaps in provision of support and other initiatives addressing diversity in the built environment sector; and to highlight other gaps and areas of need. The expenditure of £100,000 to fund the pilot has been benchmarked against costs of delivering a comparable programme.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. In alignment with the Good Growth by Design Forward Plan (2022), the Practice Support Programme will:
 - grow the capacity and professional networks of practitioners and practices led by people from underrepresented groups, helping them to play a more active role in designing and shaping projects in London
 - establish a cohort of emerging and recognised practices that would undertake shared research, learning and skills-sharing, and foster feedback loops
 - target the barriers associated with ‘setting up’ by supporting practices led by people from underrepresented groups, to broaden their networks, skills, experience and practice portfolio, thus enabling them to successfully bid for public work.
- 2.2. Piloting the programme will aim to improve representation in the built environment sector through the following outputs:
 - learning programme – a series of targeted skills and development workshops to upskill leaders from underrepresented groups
 - practice mentorship – pairing participants with well-established mentor practices to build professional relationships and networks that can exist beyond the programme
 - practice development – a self-directed project to implement key learnings from the programme in a supported environment, to enable participants to implement and test a new initiative in their practice; and gain feedback from mentors and the cohort during the programme.

Expected outcomes

2.3. The expected outcomes are as follows:

- an increased number of commissions received each year by participating practices; this may include engaging in public-sector work
- an increase in fee income generated from commissions by participating practices
- participating practices maintaining or growing their turnover and/or number of employees.

2.4. The future model of the programme will build on the pilot scheme's successes, refining its function, remit and financial requirements to ensure its long-term viability.

3. Equality comments

3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the GLA is subject to a public sector equality duty, and must have 'due regard' to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.2. The "protected characteristics" are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership status. The public sector equality duty involves having appropriate regard to these matters as they apply in the circumstances, including having regard to the need to: remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share or are connected to a protected characteristic; take steps to meet the different needs of such people; and encourage them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low. This can involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without one.

3.3. The Practice Mentoring Programme relates to multiple strategic objectives set out in the Mayor's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. These are as follows:

- To ensure London's workforce reflects its population at all levels and in all sectors
- To increase the number and proportion of diverse-owned businesses within the Mayor's main supply chain. The purposes of this scoping exercise are to develop the evidence base for a Practice Mentoring Programme; and to determine the nature of support that would be most impactful in addressing the barriers to accessing work, in public sector-built environment projects, that exist for businesses led by those from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background; women; disabled individuals; and LGBTQIA+ individuals.

4. Other considerations

4.1 The risks are detailed in the table below:

Risk #	Risk description and impact	Control measures / Actions	Residual risk assessment
1	Poor response from the identified partner	We will conduct a 'warming up' period to discuss barriers to delivery in detail	10

2	Lack of interest amongst potential mentee practices	The programme has been developed with practitioners with relevant lived experience to the programme. We will partner with a credible delivery organisation who will add value to the programme through their reputation and networks.	5
3	Lack of capacity amongst potential mentee practices to participate in the programme	Build in some flexibility in how the programme curriculum is delivered to meet the needs and capacity of the mentees.	10
4	Poor response rate from potential mentors	As part of the A+U framework procurement, suppliers were asked whether they would consider acting as a 'mentor practice'. A total of 64 practices volunteered to act as mentors. We will follow up with these volunteers with more information to register their interest/complete short application	5
5	Lack of visibility within the built environment sector	Promote the programme through existing networks and platforms within the industry Develop a good communications strategy and branding to reach the right audience.	2
6	Project loses momentum due to lack of resource	We will schedule weekly project team catch ups and fortnightly meetings with the project board and delivery partner	3

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2 The Practice Support Programme is part of the Good Growth by Design programme, and it supports key mayoral policies, including Supporting Business, Jobs and Growth. The wider programme addresses the role of the built environment in supporting economic resilience, including: safeguarding space in the city for industry and business; addressing the future of the Central Activities Zone; understanding how work has changed, and how workspace design can respond; championing the design and built environment sector; and showcasing London on an international stage

Consultations and impact assessments

- 4.3 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 requested for expenditure of £100,000 through a grant award to the London School of Architecture (£20,000 to be spent in 2023-24, and the remaining £80,000 in 2024-25.)
- 5.2 This expenditure will be funded from the Growing Places Fund budget within the Regeneration Unit. There is currently £910,000 remaining of this which is currently profiled to the 2023-24 financial year. This is ringfenced external funding and therefore funding for the £80,000 of expenditure in 2024-25 is expected to come from underspend against this budget in the current financial year. This will be reflected within the forecast within the periodic management accounts and will also be adjusted within the next iteration of the Mayor's draft budget for 2024-25.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Grant award process	January 2024
Grant award announcement	February 2024
Delivery start date	February 2024
Final evaluation start and finish	August 2025
Delivery end date	November 2025
Project closure	December 2025

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix 1: List of Mayor's Design Advocates

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 be published either 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 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:

Shamiso Oneka 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 on 27 November 2023.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature:**Date:**

28/11/2023

PP Tricia Clark on behalf of Anna Casbolt