

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – MD3091

Title: Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's)

Executive summary:

England has been awarded the Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's). The tournament is expected to take place across England in August and September 2025.

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) submitted a bid supported by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and UK Sport to World Rugby in October 2021; it was awarded the tournament in May 2022. In September 2022, World Rugby and the RFU asked potential host cities to resubmit bids to host the tournament. The 2025 tournament will mark 15 years since England previously hosted the Rugby World Cup (Women's), which in 2010 was staged in London and Surrey. It will also mark 10 years since London successfully hosted the Rugby World Cup 2015 (Men's).

London has submitted a bid as one of the host cities for the tournament, with venue bids also coming from Twickenham Stadium, Twickenham Stoop and StoneX Stadium. Twickenham Stadium has been awarded the final and potentially the bronze final, subject to the signing of Heads of Terms.

This MD seeks approval to commit £150,000 from the Major Sports Events budget to this event.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves:

1. expenditure of £150,000 from the Major Sports Events Programme budget towards the staging of the Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's)
2. a grant of up to £270,100 to Rugby World Cup (England 2025) Limited comprising up to £150,000 of financial support and up to £120,100 of in-kind support.

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

16/3/23

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

Major sports events in London

- 1.1. London has created a lasting legacy from the 2012 Olympics by delivering a huge portfolio of major sports events in the decade since the Games. Events have included the Rugby World Cup 2015 (Men's); the 2015 European Hockey Championships; the 2016 European Swimming Championships; the 2017 IAAF World Athletics Championships and IPC World Athletics Championships; selected 2020 UEFA European Championship matches (staged in 2021); the 2022 Women's UEFA European Championship; and the Rugby League World Cup 2021 (staged in 2022).
- 1.2. In order to maintain its position as the 'Sporting Capital of the World', London must secure and deliver a strong portfolio of major sports events in the next 10 years, following on from the success of the Olympic Games.
- 1.3. London has already secured events including the Major League Baseball London Series 2023, 2024 and 2026, and the 2024 UEFA Champions League Final. Looking ahead, there is a need to secure further international major sports events – particularly major women's sporting events, as London looks to continue to lead the way in celebrating equality and diversity in sport.
- 1.4. Following the success of the Women's UEFA European Championship in 2022, the Mayor of London stressed that, as part of the tournament's legacy, women and girls should be able to engage in and access sport. Hosting other major women's tournaments enables London to support this ambition.
- 1.5. The Rugby Football Union (RFU) has a successful history of engaging people in rugby union across the UK and London. In 2015 it delivered a community engagement programme in connection with that year's Rugby World Cup (Men's). This included the All Schools programme, which – with an investment of £10m – looked to ensure that more schools were offering rugby union, giving over 1m young people opportunities to play. It is expected that £14.5m will be invested in the legacy programme for the Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's), with London having an opportunity to secure some of this investment to deliver meaningful engagement in the city.
- 1.6. Rugby union is a popular sport in London, with 13 of the city's male teams playing in national leagues, and many regional amateur leagues regulated by the London and South-East Division RFU. London also plays home to 42 women's rugby clubs across the capital, including three of the ten Premier 15s teams. This highlights the popularity of the sport, and the existing rugby union network in London.
- 1.7. England's national women's rugby union team, the Red Roses, is ranked number one in the world. At the Women's Rugby World Cup (Women's) 2021 (held in 2022), the Red Roses reached the final and narrowly missed out on winning. They are expected to perform well on home soil in 2025, which will likely generate high media coverage throughout the event.

The Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's)

- 1.8. World Rugby confirmed England as the host nation for the Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's) in 2021. In September 2022, World Rugby – with the RFU – recommenced the host city and venue selection process which is due to be completed in February/March 2023.
- 1.9. World Rugby and the RFU are working collaboratively (comprising the RWC'25 team) and establishing a joint-venture company, Rugby World Cup (England 2025), to deliver the tournament with the support of Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), UK Sport and other English partners. This event will be the first joint-venture World Cup; World Rugby have confirmed this model will remain for at least the next four editions.

- 1.10. London submitted a host city bid that includes three London stadiums: Twickenham Stadium, Twickenham Stoop and StoneX Stadium. Twickenham Stadium has been awarded the final and potentially the bronze final. Twickenham Stoop and StoneX Stadium were not successful in their bid to host pool matches in London. The RWC'25 team informed London that this was due to geographical location, with the steering committee preferring to host most matches in the north of England to satisfy the government's levelling-up agenda. It is the GLA's understanding that, according to government funding stipulations, 75 per cent of the tournament must be held outside London and the south-east.
- 1.11. The Rugby World Cup Women's tournament is held internationally every four years. The schedule is as follows:
- 2010 – England
 - 2014 – France
 - 2017 – Ireland
 - 2021 (staged in 2022) – New Zealand
 - 2025 – England
 - 2029 – Australia
 - 2033 – United States.
- 1.12. In line with World Rugby's aspiration to grow the sport internationally, the 2025 tournament will expand from 12 to 16 teams.
- 1.13. England will automatically qualify into the World Cup as the tournament host, along with the teams that reached the semi-final stage of the 2021 World Cup (Canada, France, and New Zealand). It is likely that further home nations will qualify resulting in additional national support for the tournament.
- 1.14. Rugby union is very popular in the Pacific Islands, Australia, New Zealand, Europe and South Africa. This popularity, and the increased number of international participating teams, have the potential to drive significant international and domestic tourism to London. Rugby World Cup analysis suggests that hosting the women's tournament can generate between £21m and £29m in total economic impact for a host country.
- 1.15. The Rugby World Cup 2017 (Women's) was broadcast to over 110 countries. The total coverage, at 1,536 hours, marked a 130 per cent increase on the previous edition (in 2014), and was more than nine times that of Rugby World Cup (Women's) 2006 in Canada. Total attendance at the Rugby World Cup 2021 (Women's) final was 42,000, and for the overall tournament more than 150,000 – over 400 per cent higher than the Rugby World Cup 2017 (Women's). With rising engagement at each tournament it is clear that the women's game is growing in popularity, providing the perfect setting for England to host a record-breaking tournament in 2025.
- 1.16. The RWC'25 team is in the early stages of building its community engagement and legacy strategy. The legacy programme will accelerate the delivery of the RFU's 'Every Rose' women and girls strategy, which specifically supports the aim of reaching 100,000 female players by 2027 by enhancing capacity. It has the following strategic objectives:
- women and girls will be able to easily access rugby and play in a way that is enjoyable and an important feature of their lives
 - our female role models and leaders will be reachable, visible and in a position to inspire the future generation.

- 1.17. HM Treasury has committed £14.5m over four years to the delivery of the legacy programme, with a maximum 25 per cent of this funding allocated to London and the south-east.
- 1.18. The legacy programme will be national in scale; however, the RFU wishes to focus a significant amount of programme resource and investment in targeted locations, including the Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's) host cities.
- 1.19. The Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's) legacy vision and objectives include the following:
- facilities – enhancing the female club experience by improving toilets, upgrading changing rooms and developing social spaces
 - coaching and officiating – increasing the number, quality and visibility of female coaches and match officials in the age grade and adult game
 - playing and volunteering – increasing the adult female playing and volunteering base in universities, transitioning more players and leaders into clubs, and increasing the playing base of teenage girls
 - community and fan engagement – driving more women, who have never been involved in rugby union, into rugby union clubs
 - international performance development – collaborating with home unions to develop the domestic level of rugby union, with a view to delivering high-quality players to the national teams ahead of qualification for the Rugby World Cup 2029 (Women's).
- 1.20. The Major Sports Events team has engaged with the Civil Society Sports team, who fed into London's bid. The Civil Society and Sport team noted synergy with Phase 2 of the Sport Unites programme where they are moving further to engage women and girls in sport and physical activity. The Major Sports Events team and the Civil Society Sports team will continue to work collaboratively, and with the organisers, to deliver meaningful community engagement for London's communities.
- 1.21. The tournament will run from Friday 22 August until Saturday 27 September 2025, when the final will take place. Supporting activity in London is expected to take place between Saturday 20 until Saturday 27 September 2025.

Previous rugby union events in London

- 1.22. In 2010 London successfully hosted the Rugby World Cup (Women's) tournament at Twickenham Stoop and Surrey Sports Ground. This was the first time England had hosted the Women's tournament. The event was broadcast to 127 countries, and broke the record for highest number of spectators for a Women's Rugby World Cup match.
- 1.23. In 2015 London hosted the Rugby World Cup (Men's) tournament at three London stadiums: Wembley Stadium, Twickenham Stadium and London Stadium. The tournament generated £136m for the local economy and supported 2,500 jobs.

Funding proposal

- 1.24. The RWC'25 team asked, as part of the bidding process, for an indication of London's funding contribution. London has specified that the amount of funding would be confirmed following award.
- 1.25. The GLA will be one of several funders:
- UK Sport/DCMS – £14m
 - the RFU – 20 per cent of operating budget (funding tbc)
 - World Rugby – 80 per cent of operating budget (funding tbc)

- HM Treasury – £14.5m.

- 1.26. The current budget process – which includes a growth bid for major sports events, combined with the base level of programme funding for major sports events – can accommodate the provision of up to £150,000 of grant funding and £120,100 of in-kind support to Rugby World Cup (England 2025) Limited (as set out at paragraph 1.29, below). The intention is to fund this project from the Major Sports Events programme budget.
- 1.27. This proposal splits the funding across two financial years: the first tranche, of £50,000, in Q1 of 2024-25; and the second tranche, of £100,000, in Q1 of 2025-26.
- 1.28. Whilst section 12 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code provides that decisions to award grant funding should generally be based on the outcome of a transparent, competitive application process, in this case – as with the majority of major sports events – the funding decision has been based on assessment against the GLA's major sports events framework objectives to deliver economic impact; provide broadcast and exposure opportunities; and offer meaningful community engagement to London's communities. The rationale for funding Rugby World Cup (England 2025) Limited to deliver the event is that it is the official body set up to deliver the Rugby World Cup in England.

In-kind support

- 1.29. As part of London's bid submission, the city has offered the following in-kind support to Rugby World Cup (England 2025) Limited:
 - Fan Zone – free use of Trafalgar Square for a Fan Zone (all associated production costs to sit with the organising body) (value in kind estimated at £109,000)
 - transport and accommodation planning – advice and introductions to relevant organisations, including TfL
 - ceremonies and civic events – use of City Hall for a civic function (value in kind estimated at £11,100); the City of London Corporation has also offered the use of Guildhall for a civic reception
 - city volunteering programmes – introduction to Team London and the London Ambassador scheme
 - marketing communications support – amplification of messaging through the GLA and Mayor of London channels
 - civic society and sport programmes – opportunity to work with the GLA's Civic Society and Sport teams to realise tournament legacy aims and objectives through the GLA's established projects and community connections.

Project governance

- 1.30. If the bid is successful, a steering group will be established and led by the RWC'25 team. All funding and strategic stakeholders will attend this group, including the GLA. The group will monitor and measure project progress, risks, and finances.
- 1.31. The lead officer from the Major Sports Events team will share an update on project progress with their senior manager on a regular basis.
- 1.32. The GLA will also attend any sub-groups relating to marketing and legacy development. The lead officer from the Major Sports Events team will ensure that relevant GLA teams, and London & Partners, are included in these meetings to offer project advice and support, and to ensure the project aligns with mayoral strategic priorities.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1. GLA support for the event will:

- support delivery of the GLA's major sports events strategy, 'London: Home of World Class Sport'
- increase economic investment into London
- increase international exposure for London as a major destination for world-class sport and tourism
- promote social development in London
- support the Mayor's priorities around volunteering
- support London as a host of women's sports events
- contribute to achieving the Mayor's 'Tourism Vision for London'
- deliver across a range of the Mayor's priorities including community participation and youth engagement.

2.2. As the event is over two years away, it is unlikely that London's recovery missions will still be active in their current form by then. However, in the table below we have reviewed how the event aligns to the current missions.

Building Strong Communities	The Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's) would run a large volunteer programme, managed by the event organiser. It is likely that an event of this scale would have 700+ volunteers.
High Streets for All	Eventgoers tend to make sporting events a full day out and spend directly in the local area. For reference, at the Rugby World Cup 2015 (Men's), London sold 1,241,000 tickets; 40 per cent of ticketholders were from outside London, driving revenue into the capital.
A New Deal For Young People	Community Engagement programmes generally focus on young people at a grassroots level. Previous programmes linked to GLA Major Sports Events have supported young people by providing them with specific sport-media work experience. The Major Sports Events team will work with the organisers to ensure a community engagement programme is delivered in London in line with Mayoral objectives.
Helping Londoners into Good Work	An event on the scale of the Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's) would create significant employment opportunities. The Major Sports Events team will facilitate liaison between the GLA's Skills and Employment team, and the event organisers, to understand where we can capitalise on the event to deliver GLA objectives.
Mental Health & Wellbeing	London would work with the RWC'25 team to develop a Community Engagement programme that has a specific mental health strand.

3. Equality comments

3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Mayor and the GLA are subject to the 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
- 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 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. In relation to the Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women’s), the Major Sports Events team has consulted, and will continue to consult, a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that as many Londoners as possible, including those with protected characteristics, are considered in the planning of the event and have the opportunity to be involved in some way.
- 3.4. We will work to ensure that the volunteering programme eliminates discrimination and is open to all, regardless of race, disability, gender, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment.
- 3.5. We will ensure that appropriate assistance is given to all Londoners and visitors at the event and activations in London. We will work to ensure that Londoners and visitors with whom we may have had difficulties communicating, and those with accessibility issues, are given the necessary tools for maximum engagement in the tournament.
- 3.6. In formulating our plans for the Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women’s), the GLA will consider our duty to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those persons who do not share it. Our plans for delivering the project will specifically aim to celebrate the diversity of London and attract interest in the tournament from across London’s diverse population. Our volunteering offer will promote integration between those with protected characteristics and those who do not share the same characteristic, whilst our promotional and marketing communications will seek to target and maximise engagement in the tournament from across London’s broad population.
- 3.7. The RFU won the bid for England on the basis of delivering a legacy programme alongside the spotlight that the tournament will bring to the women’s game. Driving equality through improving women’s access and engagement in sport is at the heart of the tournament.

4. Other considerations

Risk

Risk	Mitigation	Likelihood/impact
Events outside the GLA’s control could have an impact on the delivery and scheduling of the tournament.	The Major Sports Events team will work closely with the event delivery team to ensure any unavoidable changes are known early, and managed and communicated appropriately.	Low/medium
Lack of public engagement in the tournament, and matches being poorly attended, could undermine London’s	The RWC’25 team will be very proactive in promotion, and have extensive rugby union networks to sell tickets to, as well as London eventgoers. Stadia are of an appropriate size	Low/low

reputation as the home of world-class sport.	to ensure they sell out and the event is successful.	
England exiting the competition early could have an impact on attendance at venues, and result in a lack of engagement with the tournament.	England are number one in the world so likely to perform well. The GLA's promotion of London's match-hosting will be based on the tournament as a whole, and on community engagement across the city.	Medium/medium
Reputational damage to London as a host of major sports events if the event is considered a failure.	The RWC'25 team, UK Sport and central government are putting considerable resource towards this event to ensure it is a huge success. It is in all partners' interests to make this happen. London will continue to work with partners to identify any reputational risks, and look to mitigate these internally and externally if they arise. The GLA will monitor event progress and risks through attendance of the steering group. The GLA lead officer will be responsible for providing regular progress updates to senior managers and other internal senior stakeholders as appropriate.	Medium/medium
Further calls on GLA budget and/or a reduced programme of delivery in the lead-up to the tournament.	London's contribution to the event budget will be final. If the budget comes under pressure, the Major Sports Events team will work with the RWC'25 team and UK Sport to look at ways to rectify this without calling on further GLA budget.	Low/medium
Financial feasibility of hosting the event at the host stadiums, and other external financial pressures such as inflation.	As part of the host-bidding stage, the RWC'25 team considers which stadiums allow them to deliver the tournament within budget. The Major Sports Events team will continue to monitor the budget; and to meet with the organisers to determine feasibility going forward, and secure assurances from funding partners and organisers. The Major Sports Events team is monitoring and reviewing the effects of inflation on event delivery costs across the industry. These effects will be monitored and will factor into decision-making.	Low/low
Lack of meaningful legacy and community engagement.	London will engage the Civic Society and Sport team to engage in and advise on the community engagement and legacy programmes, to ensure they align with mayoral priorities. Relevant GLA teams will be invited to attend steering group sub-group meetings to advise and support planning.	Low/medium

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.1. GLA support for the event will:

- support delivery of the GLA's major sports events framework, 'London: Home of World Class Sport'

- increase economic investment into London
- support delivery of the Mayor's sports strategy, 'Sport Unites'
- increase international exposure for London as a major destination for world-class sport and tourism, particularly in Europe.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.2. There are no conflicts of interest to declare for those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Mayoral approval is being sought to earmark £150,000 as a funding contribution towards the staging costs of the Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's) tournament. The funding is expected to be paid in two instalments: first payment of £50,000 in 2023-24, and final instalment of £100,000 in 2024-25. There will also be a value-in-kind contribution of approximately £120,100.
- 5.2. This funding is proposed to be earmarked from the Major Sport Events programme budget for 2023-24 and 2024-25 subject to the annual budget setting process for those years. The Major Sport Events team that is part of Strategy and Communications directorate will be managing this funding agreement.

6. Legal comments

Power to undertake the requested decisions

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor fall within the statutory powers of the Authority to promote and/or to do anything which is facilitative of or conducive or incidental to economic development and wealth creation within 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. Furthermore, the subject of this decision form also falls within the statutory powers of the Authority under section 378 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (the Act). Under that section, the Authority has the power to do anything for the purposes of encouraging people to visit Greater London, and to encourage people from outside the UK to visit the country via Greater London. As set out at paragraph 1.14, above, the hosting of the Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's) serves to promote domestic and international tourism to London.
- 6.3. In taking the decisions requested of him, the Mayor 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; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment) 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 Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

Funding

- 6.4. The proposed grant of up to £270,100 to Rugby World Cup (England 2025) Limited may be viewed as a conditional gift rather than a contract for services, as it is a contribution to Rugby World Cup (England 2025) Limited's project – the preparation for the tournament itself – and the benefit of the grant will inure not to the Authority, but rather to the recipient of the grant and to third parties. Section 12 of the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code provides that decisions to award grant funding should generally be based on the outcome of a transparent, competitive application process. To this end, officers have set out in paragraph 1.28, above, that they took this requirement into account when formulating the proposal to provide conditional funding to Rugby World Cup (England 2025) Limited. Furthermore, officers must ensure that an appropriate funding agreement be put in place between the Authority and Rugby World Cup (England 2025) Limited before any part of the funding is paid; and that such agreement take account of the fact that the funding is contingent upon the success of London's bid to be a host city for the Rugby World Cup 2025 (Women's).

Subsidy control

- 6.5. The minimal financial assistance threshold (MFA) for the purposes of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 is currently £315,000. The proposed grant to Rugby World Cup (England 2025) Limited is valued at £270,100. In light of this, the officers must issue an MFA notification to Rugby World Cup (England 2025) Limited. Furthermore, if it turns out that the Authority's grant would take the level of public funding, which either Rugby World Cup (England 2025) Limited or the other bodies in its group have received, to a level in excess of £315,000, officers should liaise with the Legal team to get assistance in completing a subsidy control assessment. Finally, given that the value of the proposed grant exceeds £100,000, officers must publish the grant on the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Transparency Database.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Candidate city list confirmed	Friday 2 December 2022
Candidate phase with host cities and venues	December 2022 to March 2023
Host cities and venues formally confirmed	31 March 2023
Announcement of host cities and venues	April 2023 (exact date TBC)
Delivery planning	April 2023 – July 2025
Event	August/September 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: pending procurement of key contracts which must be put in place to meet the GLA's host city obligations.

Until what date: 31 August 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:

Holly Colvin has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Niran Mothada has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Nadeem Javaid has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 13 March 2023.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

Date

14 March 2023

D. Gene

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor.

Signature

Date

14 March 2023

D. Bellamy

