

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3193

Title: Fourth Plinth Programme 2024-27

Executive summary:

For 23 years, the Fourth Plinth has been a designated space for a rolling programme of contemporary art. Its use was determined in 2000 through extensive public consultation and an in-depth review by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It has since grown into the most talked-about public art programme in the world, with each new sculpture receiving international press and media reach of more than 300 million people. The Fourth Plinth has become a powerful symbol for London, bringing contemporary art and debate to millions for free and casting a new light on London's most celebrated historic square. The commissions are seen by 40,000 people a day, and the programme is replicated internationally. At a time of global debate on the role of statues and monuments, the Fourth Plinth has been cited by commentators as a leading exemplar to address contested histories in civic spaces.

This Mayoral decision seeks approval of GLA expenditure of £1.03m to deliver:

- two Fourth Plinth Commissions, unveiling in 2026 and 2028, selected by an independent panel of experts drawn from a diverse and international shortlist of artists
- three iterations of the Fourth Plinth Schools Awards in 2025, 2026 and 2027, reaching students aged between five and 15
- a public engagement programme, including the eighth Fourth Plinth Shortlist Exhibition and a wider digital engagement strategy.

Decision:

That the Mayor:

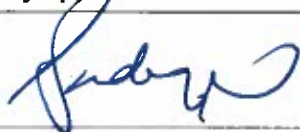
- approves revenue expenditure of up to £780,000 across 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 to deliver the Fourth Plinth Programme, including commissions unveiling in 2026 and 2028; the eighth shortlist in 2024; the annual Schools Awards Competition; and digital content to engage new audiences
- approves the receipt and expenditure of Arts Council England grant income of up to £75,000 to supplement the programme; and up to £250,000 sponsorship from alternative sources to support the programme
- approves capital expenditure of up to £250,000 across 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27
- delegates authority to the Executive Director, Good Growth, to: seek and accept further financial contributions from third parties, including the recoupment of fabrication costs; and approve expenditure to enhance activities as appropriate, without the need for a further decision form.

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:

8/2/24

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Fourth Plinth Programme is a powerful manifestation of London's leading position as a world-class cultural capital and is referred to as the 'UK's biggest sculpture prize'. Over the past 23 years the Fourth Plinth in the northwest corner of Trafalgar Square has been home to some of the world's most innovative artworks; and has become a global exemplar in commissioning public art. Since Mayoral Decision (MD) 2185 was approved in August 2021, one commission has been unveiled. In 2022, the critically acclaimed artwork *Antelope* by Samson Kambalu was unveiled. Due to the official mourning period for HRH Queen Elizabeth II, the unveiling and related events were delayed by two weeks. It still, however, achieved significant, worldwide coverage.
- 1.2 MD2185 approved the initial allocation of funding of £672,000 for the Fourth Plinth Commissioning Programme over financial years 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24. This funding covered the delivery of the entirety of Samson Kambalu's commission; the majority of funds for the next commission by artist Teresa Margolles and the associated launch event; long-listing and shortlisting for the next two commissions for 2026 and 2028; the public exhibition of, and consultation on, the shortlist; and any associated public engagement programmes (including the annual Fourth Plinth Schools Awards competition).
- 1.3 The most recent shortlist exhibition took place at the National Gallery for six weeks in Spring 2021 and was seen by 120,000 people, generating significant press interest. In-person attendance was reduced owing to social-distancing restrictions arising from COVID-19. However, an enhanced digital offer was available on the London.gov.uk website and the Bloomberg Connects app. The shortlist exhibition received 17,500 public votes (along with many comments): a 75 per cent increase on the previous year. The evaluation of public comments concluded that the programme receives an unusually high level and quality of engagement from the public, with overwhelmingly positive responses (93 per cent).
- 1.4 In February 2024, the next Fourth Plinth Shortlist Exhibition will open at the National Gallery, covering the 2026 and 2028 commissions. The public will have the opportunity to comment on the shortlisted proposals, through a London.gov.uk web form, to which QR codes in the gallery will link (the gallery received 226,000 visitors in the same period the previous year). The details and images of the proposals are also available online, for those who are unable to visit the exhibition in person. There will be a press announcement in January 2024 that will preface the exhibition launch and the opportunity for the public to vote, with further press and marketing activity at the time of launch. Then in March 2024, following an analysis of public comments and feasibility studies on the seven presented proposals, the 16th and 17th commissions will be announced. These will be installed in 2026 and 2028 respectively. The longlisting process for the following round begins in Autumn 2025 and concludes with new shortlisted proposals in Winter 2026-27.
- 1.5 GLA funding for 2024-27 will be in the form of a grant to the 16th and 17th commissioned artists of up to £230,000 each. This funding amount comprises a £30,000 artist fee, and £200,000 for production costs. The production costs have increased for the first time in 10 years, in response to increases in material and service costs. This will also enable the artists (and their fabricators) to meet heightened environmental sustainability requirements. Artists are required to provide proof that production costs over and above the grant amount will be met. However, additional external funding may be sought by the GLA to assist in meeting the costs of delivering and enhancing this project.
- 1.6 If, after display on the Fourth Plinth, the sculpture is sold, the GLA is entitled to recoup its production costs. Income received from the sale of the sculpture will go back into the Fourth Plinth Programme.

- 1.7 Each round of the Fourth Plinth Programme covers four years, to allow for the significant fabrication period for each commission, and appropriate lead-in time for installation and unveiling. Grant agreements with artists extend across this period, with appropriate break clauses relating to GLA budget-setting processes.
- 1.8 In January 2019, Westminster City Council took the unprecedented step to award planning permission to the Fourth Plinth Commission for 2022 and 2024, without knowing the artists or the work. This demonstrated significant confidence in the Fourth Plinth Programme's track record. A further, blanket permission will be sought for the next two commissions covered by this decision.
- 1.9 The GLA will be responsible for procuring and entering into contracts for the decommissioning of the current sculpture; and the production and safe installation of the 16th and 17th commissions. The GLA will also begin the process of assembling the next longlist and shortlist for the eighth commissioning round.
- 1.10 Arts Council England (ACE) has previously supported the Fourth Plinth Programme to deliver the commissions and the public engagement activity. A further application to ACE will be made in 2024.
- 1.11 Grants from Arts Council England are through application and are not guaranteed. However, ACE has a continuing relationship with the programme, and an application will be developed in line with officer advice. The engagement aspects of the programme can be scaled if the grant is not received, although alternative funding would still be sought elsewhere, such as from trusts and foundations, to ensure that engagement activity continues and the objectives of the programme are met.
- 1.12 In 2021 Bloomberg Philanthropies became the first headline supporter of The Fourth Plinth 2021-23. They committed to £250,000 of funding to the programme to support the artists' commissions and to increase engagement activity, including enhancing visitors' digital experiences by including the Fourth Plinth in its free Bloomberg Connects app. This offers access to 250 museums and other cultural organisations and interventions. It has been downloaded by two million people worldwide.
- 1.13 The annual Mayor of London Fourth Plinth Schools Awards engages schools across London with the Fourth Plinth programme, by inviting students to respond to the commissions. The programme reaches all boroughs in London; it encourages children to engage with the commissioning process and consider the issues of use of public spaces. Winning entries are exhibited at City Hall. The programme started in 2008 with 250 entries and it has since reached more than 30,000 students in total.
- 1.14 In consultation with the Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group and international nominators, 25 artists worldwide were longlisted for the 2026 and 2028 commissions. Seven were shortlisted and given a grant of £6,000 each to produce a maquette of their work, and these will be displayed in the shortlist exhibition at The National Gallery as part of the wider public engagement programme. A Memorandum of Understanding has been entered into with National Gallery, which has committed to a continuing relationship with the Fourth Plinth Programme and to hosting future shortlist exhibitions. The shortlisting process has been independently assessed and shown to be a model of best practice – demonstrated by the fact that it has since been used by the High Line Art Programme in New York.
- 1.15 The expenditure for this programme is detailed in the table below.

Programme activity	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Total
Fourth Plinth commission delivery costs (not production as capital) covers installation; longlisting process; and project management	£100,000	£85,000	£100,000	£285,000
Fourth Plinth commission fees	£10,000	£25,000	£25,000	£60,000
Marketing and engagement activity	£45,000	£45,000	£45,000	£135,000
Fourth Plinth Schools Awards	£35,000	£35,000	£30,000	£100,000
Fourth Plinth public engagement activity	£70,000	£70,000	£60,000	£200,000

Fourth Plinth production costs (capital)	£100,000	£50,000	£100,000	£250,000
Total expenditure	£360,000	£310,000	£360,000	£1,030,000

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 The objectives of this investment are to:

- promote and support an enhanced public realm in London, and make world-class art available to all for free
- demonstrate how London's public realm is inclusive, safe and accessible; and that these values are reflected in the policies, processes and people that create, inform and adapt the city's public spaces
- engage Londoners with the cultural and community life of their city, physically and through digital resources
- provide a visible signifier of a best-practice approach to representation in the public realm
- maintain the global significance of the Fourth Plinth Programme as an exemplar of best practice for commissioning in historic and high-profile heritage sites
- promote London nationally and internationally encouraging tourism through high-quality cultural activity and helping to maintain London's reputation as a global city for culture.

2.2 The outputs of the Fourth Plinth programme include:

- production and launch of the 16th and 17th Fourth Plinth Commissions
- delivery of annual School Awards and the related Public Engagement Programme
- delivery of wider public engagement activity, including digital and online resources, to build in-depth engagement with the Fourth Plinth Programme and the built environment, particularly Trafalgar Square
- delivery of the eighth commissioning round, including scoping for other routes for further public engagement
- delivery of the next Fourth Plinth shortlist, and the Shortlist Exhibition, in Winter 2026-27 to support the development of the 18th and 19th commissions.

2.3 The outcomes of this investment will be to:

- improve representation in public realm
- engage Londoners with the cultural and community life of their city
- bring high-quality, international art to the centre of the city, and make it free and accessible for all
- champion London's position as a creative capital and supporting creative careers
- promote ownership of London's public realm
- connect young people with the public spaces in which they are growing up.

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 proposed programme outlined in this report will enable the continued creation of opportunities for Londoners, creating positive social and economic impact in the capital. The programme seeks to ensure that all Londoners, regardless of whether or not they have protected characteristics, are empowered to enjoy, experience and benefit from being creative and taking part in London's cultural offering. In 2021, 120,000 people visited the Fourth Plinth Shortlist Exhibition at the National Gallery; and 17,500 voted on their favourite Fourth plinth proposal. The final commissions are seen by 40,000 people every day.
- 3.3 The Fourth Plinth commissioning process has been independently evaluated and recognised as operating a model of best practice for commissioning public art. Additional recommendations have been implemented to attract nominations from every continent through the shortlisting process, ensuring a genuinely diverse collection of artists are considered.
- 3.4 The current Fourth Plinth Commission has been made accessible by the inclusion of a braille panel on the plaque, and an audio description of the work on the GLA's website. Additionally, the Fourth Plinth Guide on the Bloomberg Connects app is translated into 36 languages.
- 3.5 The Shortlist Exhibition will take place at The National Gallery. It is a fully accessible venue. The gallery and its collections are free for everyone, as will be the Shortlist Exhibition. The gallery has comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy, an anti-racist commitment and statement on cultural diversity across its exhibitions and collections. The Gallery's policy is to represent people of achievement in British history and culture and they continually review how to fulfil it and how to respond to the changing nature of society.
- 3.6 The programme also seeks to ensure that more children and young people in London have an opportunity to access free arts and cultural activities. This is achieved in particular through the delivery of the Fourth Plinth the Schools Awards, an art competition for children in primary and secondary schools across all London boroughs.

4. Other considerations

Risks

- 4.1 The key risks to the programme are outlined in the table below:

Risk	Mitigations in place	Risk rating
Financial mismanagement by any organisation in receipt of GLA grant funding.	Responsible GLA officers overseeing grant-funded programmes will closely monitor delivery and meet regularly with delivery partners. This was agreed through an internal audit on the programme in 2017. Robust funding agreements will be put in place. Payments will be made against clearly defined milestones and, where appropriate, in arrears.	Green
The activities set out in this MD do not meet	The programme activities have been developed and refined over a long period. Activities detailed in this MD have evolved from previous work and ongoing research. All previous plans have been revisited and revised in the context of another public health	Green

their specific aims and goals.	emergency (similar to the COVID-19 pandemic) on the sector to ensure they are necessary and robust. Relevant officers hold relationships and work closely with other GLA teams, such as External Relations and Facilities Management.	
External funding is not realised.	A strategic approach to external funding is essential, in a climate of reduced public-sector funding. Smaller funders can be approached for specific activity in order to mitigate this risk. However, if no further funding is received, the programme will be scaled back to reflect the lower levels of funding available. The final commissions will not be impacted by this.	Amber
Impact on the cost of commission, due to increased costs of building and fabrication materials arising from Brexit.	Grant agreements with artists provide a restricted contribution to fabrication cost. The artist must raise any additional funding required. If relevant this will be assessed continually and captured in the project risk register.	Amber
Subject matter of the Fourth Plinth can create negative as well as positive responses.	Drawing on expertise within the GLA to provide guidance related to specific communities and data to support our activity. Professional advice on communications management will also be sought. Staff and third parties will receive relevant training and support.	Green

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.2 The programme outlined in this decision supports the following Mayoral strategies:

- Culture for All Londoners, the Mayor's strategy for culture, which outlines an ambitious vision to ensure all Londoners can engage with and contribute to the capital's rich cultural offering on their doorstep.
- Inclusive London, the Mayor's equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, which sets out that a successful city needs to work well for all residents. Everyone should be able to share in its prosperity, culture and community life – regardless of age, social class, disability, race, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, or whether they are pregnant/on maternity leave.
- The Mayor's Social Integration Strategy, which aims to improve social integration in London. This means enabling people to have more opportunities 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. It involves reducing barriers and inequalities, so that Londoners can relate to each other as equals.

Impact assessments and consultations

- #### 4.3
- The programme aims to facilitate maximum public engagement in the Fourth Plinth Commissioning process. For each shortlist the public is asked to express preferences on the proposed sculptures within the context of participation in art. The culture team worked closely with third-party consultants and evaluators, as well as the GLA's external affairs teams, to maximise engagement in this process. A similar process will take place during the shortlisting of the artists for future commissioning rounds.

- 4.4 Consultation will also take place with the Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group, which consists of professionals from across the arts, broadcasting and engineering sectors. The Group is chaired by Ekow Eshun, independent broadcaster and curator; and attended by the Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries.
- 4.5 This programme will align with work relating to MD2814: Increasing Diversity in the Public Realm. A member of the Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group is also represented on the Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm.
- 4.6 The GLA's Cultural Strategy Group for London (known as the Mayor's Cultural Leadership Board) is a statutory group comprising senior leaders from across the creative and cultural industries. These ambassadors shape the Mayor's Culture Strategy and represent diverse voices across the industry.
- 4.7 The announcement of Lord Robin Janvrin as chair of the newly established Queen Elizabeth Memorial Committee is welcome. The Committee will put forward proposals for a national memorial and a legacy for how best to pay tribute to our longest serving monarch. The Mayor and the GLA stand ready to support the Committee in its work. The Mayor has already committed to support the Committee's recommendation in the event that this is to place the memorial on GLA-owned property.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.8 No GLA officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this Mayoral Decision is aware of any conflict of interest with the proposed programme.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is being sought for:

- revenue expenditure of up to £780,000 from 2024-25 to 2026-27, to deliver the Fourth Plinth Programme, including unveiling of the commissions in 2026 and 2028; the eighth shortlist in 2024; the annual Schools Awards Competition; and digital content to engage new audiences
- the receipt and expenditure of ACE grant income of up to £75,000 to supplement the programme; and up to £250,000 sponsorship from alternative sources to support the programme
- capital expenditure of up to £250,000 from 2024-25 to 2026-27
- delegated authority to the Executive Director, Good Growth, to: seek and accept further financial contributions from third parties; and approve expenditure to enhance activities as appropriate, without the need for a further decision form.

- 5.2 The planned profile of the GLA expenditure is shown below:

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Total
Revenue expenditure	£260,000	£260,000	£260,000	£780,000
Capital expenditure	£100,000	£50,000	£100,000	£250,000

- 5.3 The total GLA funded expenditure is planned to be £1,030,000. The GLA contribution will be supplemented by further expenditure of £75,000 funded by additional ACE grant income and up to £250,000 of sponsorship from alternative sources.

Revenue expenditure

- 5.4 In relation to the revenue expenditure for this programme, £260,000 per year has been included as part of the Mayor's draft budget for the Culture, Creative Industries and 24-Hour City Unit for 2024-25; as well as in the indicative plan for 2025-26 and 2026-27. This budget is subject to formal approval as part of the Mayor's budget-setting process for each year. To mitigate any risk of the

programme not being sufficiently resourced following conclusion of the budget-setting process, all contracts and grant agreements should include break clauses that can be exercised if required.

Capital expenditure

- 5.5 The proposed capital expenditure of £250,000 is currently scheduled to be incurred between 2024-25 and 2026-27. This relates to capital grant provided to the artist for production costs. Budget for this expenditure has been included within the draft Mayor's budget for 2024-25, and in the indicative plan for 2025-26 and 2026-27. The budgeted source of funding for this capital expenditure is from GLA revenue contributions. In order to mitigate any risk of the programme not being sufficiently resourced in future years to cover costs, following the conclusion of the budget-setting process, all contracts and grant agreements will include the usual break clauses that could be exercised if required.

Third-party grant contributions and sponsorship

- 5.6 The Culture and Creative Industries Unit will seek third-party contributions in the form of grant income and sponsorship totalling up to £325,000 (ACE funding of up to £75,000, and other sponsorship of up to £250,000) to enhance programme delivery up to the end of 2026-27. At this stage no third-party contributions have been secured, but the receipt and associated expenditure of any secured income streams will be covered via this approval. Approval for expenditure of any specific items equal to or greater than £325,000 is to be delegated to the Executive Director of Good Growth (for which approval is also being sought).
- 5.7 It should also be noted that commitments against third-party income streams will only be entered into once the contractual agreement has been secured with the grantor and/or sponsor. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The decisions requested of the Mayor fall within the statutory powers of the Authority under the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (the Act). Under section 378 of the Act, the Authority has a duty to promote tourism to Greater London. The activities described in sections 1 to 4 of this report can fairly be described as activities that will promote tourism to London.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.4 In taking the decisions requested, 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; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, sex, gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation, religion) and persons who do not (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section three (above) of this report.
- 6.5 Section one 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. To the extent that any of the proposed expenditure concerns payments for services, those services must be procured in liaison with TfL Procurement and in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code; and that contracts are put in place between and executed by the GLA and contractors before commencement of such services.

- 6.6 The Mayor may delegate the exercise of the GLA's powers to the Executive Director, Good Growth should he wish.
- 6.7 There should be no reliance placed upon, nor commitment made to, expenditure that is subject to the:
- Arts Council England funding until a binding commitment is in place for that funding
 - 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 budget-setting processes, until that process has been completed and the corresponding budgetary provision has been approved.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1 The project will be delivered according to the following timetable:

Activity	Date
Launch Fourth Plinth Schools Awards Competition	January 2024
Open Fourth Plinth Shortlist Exhibition	19 February 2024
Close Fourth Plinth Shortlist Exhibition	March 2024
Winner decision: 16 th and 17 th Fourth Plinth Commissions	March 2024
Fabrication of 15 th Fourth Plinth Commission	Until August 2024
Unveil 15 th Fourth Plinth Commission	September 2024
Launch Fourth Plinth Schools Awards Competition	January 2025
Fabrication of 16 th Fourth Plinth Commission	June 2024 – August 2026
Commence Fourth Plinth Shortlist process for 18 th and 19 th Commissions	November 2025
Launch Fourth Plinth Schools Awards Competition	January 2026
Unveil 16 th Fourth Plinth Commission	September 2026
Fabrication of 17 th Fourth Plinth Commission	September 2026 – August 2028
Launch Fourth Plinth Schools Awards Competition	January 2027
Open Fourth Plinth Shortlist Exhibition	Winter 2026
Winners decision: 18 th and 19 th Fourth Plinth Commissions	Spring 2027

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 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:

Jo Baxendale has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

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

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Justine Simons 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 18 December 2023.

✓

INTERIM CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature:



Date:

07/02/2004

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature:



Date:

06/02/2004