

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2730

Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 community engagement

Executive summary:

The Mayor of London's Civil Society and Sport unit exists to strengthen the community sport, civil society and volunteering landscape in London. The Sport team aims to make participation in sport more equal, leading to positive social outcomes. It does so by convening strategic partners; championing community sports organisations; facilitating collaboration; and using insights to shape policy and practice.

The 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup (RWC25) will represent a generational moment for global rugby. It will set new standards; welcome new fans and families to the sport; and inspire a new generation of female players and fans in what is still seen as a predominantly male sport. Eight cities, including London, are hosting RWC25. The Rugby Football Union (also known as England Rugby) will give each of these £45,000 to deliver a rugby challenge.

The community engagement work outlined in this decision aims to engage women in rugby who may not otherwise participate. Following receipt of its £45,000, the GLA will award the funding to an organisation that will collaborate with community groups, and activity providers, to: introduce women to rugby; and create sustainable opportunities, and provide support and resources, to enable women to keep playing.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director, Civil Society and Sport, approves:

- the receipt of £45,000 from the Rugby Football Union
- the expenditure of up to £45,000 in grant funding to an organisation(s) that can engage women in rugby who may not otherwise participate.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

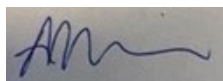
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Alice Wilcock

Position: Assistant Director, Civil Society and Sport

Signature:



Date:

27/08/2024

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Mayor of London's Civil Society and Sport unit exists to strengthen the community sport, civil society and volunteering landscape in London. The Sport team aims to make in participation in sport more equal, leading to positive social outcomes. It does so by convening strategic partners; championing community sports organisations; facilitating collaboration; and using insights to shape policy and practice.
- 1.2. Sport Unites is the Mayor's flagship community sport programme. It supports his long-term vision to make London the most active and socially integrated city in the world – as set out in Sport for All of Us, the Mayor's strategy for sport and physical activity in London. The programme has five priority areas:
 - helping people who are inactive become active
 - improving mental health and wellbeing
 - reducing isolation and loneliness
 - strengthening connections in local areas and across communities
 - working to reduce serious youth violence.
- 1.3. In 2025, the tenth edition of the Women's Rugby World Cup (RWC25) will take place. This is the world championship for national rugby union teams, organised by World Rugby. There are eight host cities for the event in England: Brighton and Hove; Bristol; Exeter; London; Manchester; Northampton; Sunderland; and York. The final is scheduled to take place at the Allianz Stadium (formerly known as Twickenham Stadium) in London. The countrywide format makes it the most accessible women's rugby world cup ever, offering more opportunities for fans to see and engage with the game, and support its stars, in towns and cities across England. Between 22 August and 27 September 2025, 16 teams will compete to be crowned world champions.
- 1.4. RWC25 will represent a generational moment for global rugby. It will set new standards; welcome new fans and families to the sport; and inspire a new generation of female players and fans in what is still seen as a predominantly male sport. There is an opportunity to provide national growth in the female game, which will align with the Rugby Football Union's (RFU's) vision to grow the female game by 100,000 players by 2027.
- 1.5. As well as hosting the RWC25, the RFU will deliver additional engagement in all host cities. It aims to make rugby more accessible for women and girls through a multi-generational impact programme. Each host city has been tasked with developing its own Host City Impact Plan. The RWC25 impact programme has five strands: facilities; coaching and officiating; playing and volunteering; community and fan engagement; and international performance development. The London Host City Impact Plan will be delivered by a combination of local authority sport/leisure teams; community organisations; rugby foundations; London Youth Games schools; and the successful T1 Rugby Challenge grantee(s).
- 1.6. The community and fan engagement strand aims to engage women who have never been involved with the sport, or have not played with a local rugby club. To introduce new female players to the game, as part of the community engagement work, the RFU has developed the Women's T1 Rugby Challenge. World Rugby describes T1 rugby (the first non-contact sport that fully reflects the characteristics of rugby, including scrums, lineouts and breakdown) as "a game for everyone, played by anyone" and "a fun, welcoming, time efficient and safe environment for people of all ages, abilities

and backgrounds, reflecting the international federation's mission of a global sport for all". The T1 model has been selected to maximise the accessibility of the challenge.

- 1.7. The RFU will give each host city £45,000 for their Women's T1 Rugby Challenge. This Decision requests permission for the receipt and expenditure of up to £45,000 from the RFU in order to deliver a London Women's T1 Rugby Challenge.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The Women's T1 Rugby Challenge will run from September 2024 until December 2025, and will form part of the host city plan. Each host city will receive up to £45,000 to lead, coordinate and project-manage the challenge. The GLA will manage its delivery; and will have overall responsibility for project management; overseeing the creation and implementation of a delivery plan; meeting the target KPIs, monitoring and evaluation; and reporting to, and sharing learnings with, the RFU.
- 2.2. Following a competitive exercise, in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code, the GLA will award an organisation (or multiple organisations, should a combined approach be more suitable) up to £45,000 to deliver the London T1 Rugby Challenge. The successful grantee(s) will collaborate with community groups and activity providers to create sustainable opportunities and provide support and resources to enable women to keep playing.
- 2.3. The objectives of the T1 Rugby Challenge are:
 - to ensure that at least 2,500 women and girls play T1
 - to work with at least 15 community clubs/organisations across London
 - to have at least three rugby clubs across London offering T1 rugby 'casual' opportunities, to enable participants to transition to a club environment
 - to have at least 10 per cent of the T1 rugby participants (which would be 250 women and girls) playing T1 rugby at a local rugby club
 - to produce at least two case studies highlighting the impact of the T1 Challenge on community organisations, the participants and local rugby clubs.
- 2.4. The outcomes of the T1 Rugby Challenge will be:
 - improved perception, among participants, of the benefits of physical activity
 - increased levels of physical activity
 - improved perception of rugby
 - increased awareness of rugby opportunities in the host city
 - improved confidence
 - improved wellbeing
 - increased positive perceptions of the host city.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the 2010 Act), as a public authority, the GLA must have 'due regard' to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any

conduct that is prohibited by or under the 2010 Act; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (the duty in respect of this last characteristic is to eliminate unlawful discrimination only).

- 3.2. Consideration of equality and good relations is enshrined within all the projects and programmes delivered against the Mayor's strategy for sport and physical activity, Sport for All of Us, noting the equalities impact assessment (EqIA) completed during the drafting of the strategy. The Mayor's investment into community sport aims to ensure that all Londoners can:
- access sport and physical activity opportunities that overcome barriers to active participation
 - enrich their experiences of living and working in the city
 - encourage and enable better connection within and across their local communities
 - improve physical health and mental wellbeing.
- 3.3. The sports strategy set out three goals: a socially integrated London; a healthy active London; and London as the world capital for sport. The sports strategy EqIA categorised the programmes considered at that time under one of the three goals. It then analysed the impact on those with protected characteristics. The programmes for which this Decision seeks approval will work towards all three goals; and will support young women who are the most under-served. This includes, but is not limited to, Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups; those with physical disabilities; and refugees and asylum seekers. Through this work, opportunities to take part in sport will be provided to those who may not otherwise participate. There will be both physical and mental wellbeing benefits that the work will bring to the sport sector, and therefore to London as a whole. It demonstrates the Mayor's commitment to making London a world capital for sport, by using sport as a tool to support Londoners.
- 3.4. This project will prioritise young female Londoners who are under-represented in sport and physical activity. This includes those who face additional barriers to active participation, either in relation to circumstance (for example, a carer, females who are isolated and/or lonely, or women from a lower socio-economic background).
- 3.5. The boroughs targeted for delivery will be those with a higher percentage of ethnic diversity. This is to best advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

4. Other considerations

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

Risk	Mitigating Actions	RAG
The programme does not reach community organisations with experience in delivering new/multi-sport activities	The GLA Sport team will work with cross-sector organisations (such as London Sport) and their networks to reach out to any suitable community sport organisations. The Sport team will also collaborate with other umbrella sports organisations, and their memberships, to find suitable sports organisations.	G
Not enough young women are committed to the medium/long-term transition from 'casual' play to joining a rugby club	Other elements of the impact programme, particularly around diversifying the workforce (increasing number of female coaches, officials and volunteers), will provide additional support and enable more female participants.	A

Difficulty in finding community organisations to deliver T1 rugby to a diverse audience of women	The GLA is working with community sport organisations previously funded by Sport Unites and/or Go! London (the biggest community sport fund in London, funded by Mayor of London, London Marathon Foundation and Sport England) who may be interested in this new sport offer. Community groups and other organisations might also include community associations, multi-sports clubs (non-rugby), faith groups, refugee/asylum seeker groups, women in sport, women's forums, sport/leisure facility operators etc.	G
The impact of these programmes will not be measured effectively enough to evaluate success and learnings	The Sport Unites evaluation partner NDTi will deliver learning reports based on the findings of the work. The Sport team will work with NDTi to ensure that learnings can be implemented for future major event legacy programmes in the capital.	G

- 4.2. The RWC25 is directly in line with the Mayor's vision for London to host the biggest international sporting events from around the globe. In this way, it will cement London's reputation as the sporting capital of the world, working together for a better London for everyone.
- 4.3. Sport England (the main funders of the RFU) is a long-time supporter of women's and girls' rugby, supporting the growth of both the elite and grassroots games. With the RWC25 taking place in England, the success of the national team will provide a vital surge of interest that demonstrably translates to the growth of the community game.
- 4.4. The Rugby World Cup reports that over the past five years, the number of adult women playing rugby has grown from 25,000 to 40,000 in England. The RFU has ambitious targets as part of its Every Rose Strategy to grow the numbers to 100,000 by 2027.
- 4.5. [Sport England gender research](#) revealed that, in the last 10 years or so, more than £70m has been invested in the sport's infrastructure to make sure there are clubs, pitches, coaches and changing facilities of good quality for everyone playing the sport. The women's and girls' game has already seen an impressive growth trajectory. As an activity, it provides an outlet for participants of all shapes and sizes, and represents an important investment.
- 4.6. According to UK Sport's latest figures, there is still a gender disparity in sport. Sport England survey data shows that 45 per cent of take part in physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day, compared to 50 per cent of boys.
- 4.7. The T1 Rugby format can help overcome barriers that may prevent women from trying rugby, by providing introductory opportunities in familiar environments (e.g., parks, leisure centres, etc). A key outcome will also be encouraging rugby clubs to be more open and accessible; and to provide regular opportunities to play multiple formats of the game, helping more women to become active.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought for the receipt of £45,000 in external income from the RFU, and the expenditure of up to the same value in grant funding in order to deliver a London Women's T1 Rugby Challenge as part of the Women's Rugby World Cup 2025.
- 5.2. This would be managed through the Sport Unites Programme budget across 2024-25 and 2025-26 financial years.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

6.1. The programme will be delivered according to the following timetable:

Activity	Timeline
Agreement with RFU completed	September 2024
Delivery plan submitted to RFU (to release first payment)	September 2024
Sport team open fund for applications	October 2024
Grant awarded	November 2024
Project Implementation	January 2025
First quarterly monitoring and evaluation report submitted	March 2025
Project closure	November 2025
Final monitoring and evaluation report submitted	January 2026

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:

Bevis Allen has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 27 August 2024.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature:

Anna Gustaf

Date:

27/08/2024