

# GREATERLONDONAUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2725

### Title: Google AI Opportunity Fund

#### Executive Summary:

This decision seeks approval for the receipt and expenditure of 100,000 EUR (approx. £83,329.50)<sup>1</sup> of funding from the Google AI Opportunity Fund to upskill workers who are at risk from AI driven automation. The funding will be used to enhance the GLA funded London Union Learn Project (LULP).

#### Decision:

That the Executive Director - Communities & Skills approves:

1. the receipt of 100,000 EUR (approx. £83,329.50) of grant funding from the Google AI Opportunity Fund, which is administrated by the Centre for Public Impact
2. expenditure of grant funding set out in decision 1, above, in furtherance of the GLA's London Union Learn Project (LULP).

#### AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

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

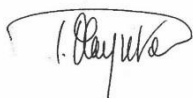
It has my approval.

**Name:** Tunde Olayinka

**Position:** Executive Director –  
Communities and Skills

**Signature:**

**Date:** 13 November 2024



<sup>1</sup> Exchange rate on 22 October 2024

## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. The Artificial Intelligence (AI) Opportunity Fund is an AI skilling initiative designed to equip workers, especially those who need more support to upskill themselves, with the foundational AI knowledge and tools needed for long-term positive professional outcomes and is available for trade unions and trade bodies, municipalities, non-profits, and professional associations from across the EU, UK and Turkey to apply for support.
- 1.2. The GLA made an application for funding to expand support under the London Union Learning Programme (LULP) in April 2024, and has been notified of award of the maximum grant available of 100k EUR.
- 1.3. The LULP began delivery in April 2024. The programme collaborates with affiliated Trade Unions to rebuild a network of Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) across London's priority sectors. These representatives promote access to learning opportunities and demonstrate to employers the benefits of workplace learning programmes.
- 1.4. The programme delivers workplace learning, enabling in-work Londoners to upskill, improve their chances of career progression, and move into better-paid employment. This funding will allow LULP to expand its current training offer of basic IT sessions to include AI upskilling developing learners' AI knowledge. It will also support trainer capacity by upskilling tutors and union reps to improving their AI knowledge and supporting the adaption of pedagogy/course design.
- 1.5. The workers targeted by the Union Learn programme are primarily employed in sectors likely to see widespread adoption of AI tools in the next few years. These include distribution, logistics, retail, and other sectors where routine tasks can be automated. These workers often face disadvantages in the labour market, such as lower levels of formal education or no qualifications at all, and limited access to training opportunities, making them more susceptible to job displacement. For example, some workers have not engaged in learning for 40 years, with many people not having a current CV due to being in the same job since leaving school.
- 1.6. Acquiring foundational AI knowledge and tools is crucial for these workers to adapt to the evolving job market, secure their current roles, and support them in managing their future careers.

#### **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1. The GLA would use this funding to upskill workers who are at risk from AI driven automation. Funding would be used to enhance the GLA funded LULP which is already delivering a unique and innovative model across London working in partnership with Trades Union Congress (TUC). This funding would serve two main purposes:
  - Supporting individuals who are currently employed but face high risk of redundancy or displacement in their current roles due to the development of technology such as artificial intelligence (AI). These workers may lack the necessary skills to adapt to new technological demands and are vulnerable to job displacement. These primary groups are already being engaged through direct face-to-face delivery through the LULP. We would ensure this project reaches workers who face additional barriers in the workplace, such as older workers, workers with disabilities and workers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.
  - Rebuilding a network of Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) across London, providing advice and links to training providers and partner organisations. This funding would enable the

LULP to provide training directly to ULRs across London, disseminating AI knowledge across a wider population accessing new workplaces.

- 2.2. This funding will be used to ensure that beneficiaries can adapt to changes in their workplace, allowing them to develop their careers and specialise within their current roles or transition to new careers entirely. As per submitted application the funding will support 200 to 400 Londoners during January 2025 to December 2026. The GLA has been presented with two options to fund delivery which includes:
- 2.3. Option 1 Working with Existing Provider - The GLA, through Union Learn, would provide the €100,000 grant to an existing LULP training provider, to cover coordination costs and to remove barriers to learning for beneficiaries of the AI course. Based on this delivery model Google trainers would train tutors to deliver the AI course and provide the course materials, however Google's selected training provider could also deliver the AI course directly to our beneficiaries. The GLA would engage with the provider to identify coordination and organisational costs for delivering the AI course to the agreed number of beneficiaries.
- 2.4. Option 1 would be the GLA's preferred approach as outlined in our submitted application. In this scenario, the GLA will engage several existing providers for this programme based on a set of specific criteria which includes: their current experience working with the LULP to deliver IT courses; their current delivery of in-work learning; and their understanding of the practicalities of working within a unionised workplace. Considering the small pot of funding available, and value add of having established expertise in this area, the GLA's intention is to establish a grant agreement with an existing provider to enable the project to mobilise and deliver at a faster pace to support project objectives within the stated timeframe. The GLA would design a process proportional to the funding available to ensure a provider is identified to deliver project outcomes in line with Section 12 of the Contracts and Funding Code, with final approval on the method of delivery will be sought from the Assistant Director – Skills & Employment (Delivery) via the Skills and Employment Unit's Unit internal governance processes.
- 2.5. Option 2 Google Delivering Directly - The GLA would organise beneficiaries into classes or cohorts, with Google's selected training provider delivering the AI course directly to our beneficiaries, with LULP supporting and coordinating between Google's provider, our employers, and beneficiaries. GLA would administer the €100,000 grant and organise and coordinate beneficiaries to receive training from Google's provider, ensuring the €100,000 is used to eliminate barriers to learning.
- 2.6. Due to tight timeframe set by CPI on signing the grant agreement, currently both delivery options are being explored with the required due diligence. The criteria which will govern the selection process will take into account value for money, maximising the number of Londoners who can be supported through this project, and supporting partnership working with LULP with clear compatibility with LULP's current delivery. Once the options have been clearly established, final approval on the method of delivery will be sought from the Assistant Director – Skills & Employment (Delivery) via the Skills and Employment Unit's Unit internal governance processes.
- 2.7. Whichever option is selected, expenditure will be used on several activities including; events and marketing, office space, purchasing related equipment, and removal of specific barriers to learning.
- 2.8. The training provider delivering the programme will assess the needs of learners through an information and guidance process at the onboarding stage ensuring the learners are suitable for the course, taking into consideration any barriers to learning they might have.
- 2.9. Given that the use of large language models (LLMs) and other AI tools may lead to the creation of new roles, we hope the training provided by this programme will position learners to further their skills and foundational knowledge in this area, enhancing their employability and career prospects. This activity would support our broader LULP targets of supporting in-work Londoners being referred to Mayoral funded training and progressing into better paid work.

- 2.10. In the long term, we would seek to use this opportunity to ensure that union representatives and tutors gain knowledge and are able to implement what they have learned about AI tools in future skills provision, supporting increased coverage of the LULP and building legacy and sustainability of learning and knowledge across the ULR network. More widely, this can support the Mayor's ambitions to grow London's economy in an inclusive way. This includes aligning skills programmes with growth sectors such as AI, whilst making sure those most in need of relevant learning can access it.

### 3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 provides that, in the exercise of their functions, public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 3.2. Relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 3.3. The LULP is already supporting individuals who are currently employed but face high risk of redundancy or displacement in their current roles due to the development of technology such as artificial intelligence (AI). These primary groups are already being engaged through direct face-to-face delivery with LULP reaching workers who face additional barriers in the workplace, such as older workers, workers with disabilities and workers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. A large percentage of people already engaged are from a Black, Asian, or minority ethnic background (85 per cent). This funding will enable LULP to further enhance both their activities and coverage to these groups, especially the flexibility to use the funding to support for both childcare and travel expenses will improve access and retention of these groups in further learning. LULP has updated the learner data capture process, which will capture more detailed data on participants.

### 4. Other considerations

#### Key Risks and Issues

Risk	Mitigation
Not running open competition process to allocate grant funding.	Mitigated by the low value of the grant available and short timeframe for delivery.
Delivery targets not met as per the Google AI Opportunity Fund.	<p>A significant number of those in the target group are already engaging with the LULP, as a result less time is required to identify and source remaining learners.</p> <p>The GLA will work with an existing training provider or Google's training provider, who are already setup to deliver skills provision</p>

	through the LULP minimising any onboarding delays to delivery.
Regardless of option selected, project would still require resourcing to manage/assess its proper use.	Resourcing implications would be low given the relatively small amount of money and would be manageable within the existing GLA team.
The AI programme is inaccessible to learners due to being at too high a level or due to lack of basic knowledge required to engage.	We will align funding to programmes with an IT skills element, so that learners have some grounding in digital skills.
Reputational risk around Google's AI research and its implications.	This is a social impact programme designed to offset risks of displacement posed by AI technology.
Due to the funding being in Euros, variations in the exchange rate could impact the amount of funding available for the project (e.g., a strong pound means less funding).	We reserve a small amount of budget to account for exchange rate fluctuations. Fluctuations in the exchange rate could also work to the GLA's benefit.

#### Links to Mayoral Strategies and Priorities

- 4.1. The Mayor will publish a growth plan in early 2025, which will set out his ambitions for London's economic growth. The Mayor has already set out in '[towards a growth plan](#)' that this will include an 'inclusive talent strategy' which will need to prioritise putting Londoners at the heart of economic growth, and ensuring Londoners are equipped with the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing nature of work. The AI Opportunity Fund will support this by providing targeted upskilling for workers at risk of automation in sectors like logistics and distribution, helping them adapt to technological advances. By focusing on those who are most vulnerable to job displacement, such as older workers and those with lower qualifications, the initiative directly addresses the Mayor's ambition to ensure no one is left behind in the face of economic change.
- 4.2. A key enabler of this strategy, and a specific objective for the Skills and Employment Unit, is to attract additional investment into the skills system to complement devolved adult skills funding. This funding represents an opportunity to bring more investment into the LULP and enhance the existing programme.
- 4.3. The Mayor's manifesto also identified the AI sector as a fast-growing sector that the Mayor will focus on. The growth of AI tools in recent years has prompted debate of the ethical and economic implications of widespread adoption of these technologies, including related job losses. Funding this programme will demonstrate that the GLA is taking a responsible approach to AI adoption and considering the impacts and suitable mitigations.

#### Conflicts of Interest

- 4.4. There are no conflicts of interest to note for any of those involved in the drafting or clearance of the decision.

## 5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This decision seeks approval for the acceptance of 100,000 EUR (approx. £83,329.50) of funding from the Google AI Opportunity Fund, administered by the Centre for Public Impact.
- 5.2. The funding would be received from the Centre for Public Impact as a one-off grant.
- 5.3. The indicative spend will be as follows in the following financial years; 10,000 EUR (2024--25), 45,000 EUR (2025-26), 45,000 EUR (2026-27).

## 6. Legal comments

### Power to undertake the requested decisions

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Executive Director – Communities and Skills (the “Director”) concern the exercise of the Authority’s general powers and fall within the Authority’s statutory power to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of economic development and wealth creation in 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. In taking the decisions requested, the Director 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 between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) 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 Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

### Receipt of grant funding

- 6.3. Decision one, above, seeks approval for the receipt by the GLA of 100,000 EUR (approx. £83,329.50) of grant funding from the Google AI Opportunity Fund. Officers are reminded to comply with the conditions, which have been placed upon the use and expenditure of the grant funding.

### Expenditure of grant funding

- 6.4. Decision 2, above, seeks approval for expenditure of the 100,000 EUR (approx. £83,329.50) grant funding in furtherance of the GLA’s London Union Learn Project. Officers are reminded to comply with the requirements of the Contracts and Funding Code, when they procure services or supplies in furtherance of the project or when they award grant funding. Furthermore, officers are reminded to put in place appropriate contracts and grant agreements between the GLA and the relevant service providers and/or recipients.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Grant Agreement signed (GLA/CPI)	w/c 11 November 2024
Grant award announcement / ceremony	21 November 2024
Receipt of funds	December 2024
Decision Form – Expenditure	December 2024
Project Onboarding	January 2025
Commence delivery of AI tools training	February 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? 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:

Adam Norris and Kashif Mirza have drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

#### Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Ayo Akande has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

#### Financial and Legal advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

#### Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 11 November 2024

### CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

**Signature**



**Date**

13 November 2024