

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2747

### Title: Procurement of an off-the-shelf grants management system for the GLA Group

#### Executive Summary:

The ICT12805 GLA Small Grants Management System framework (containing Rocket Science and Groundwork) expired in September 2022, yet there is no other GLA-specific framework in place, despite forthcoming Mayoral grants programme commitments, including the Green Roots programme due to launch in June 2025.

GLA OPS is not suitable for most small to medium-sized grants programmes, having been designed to accommodate the specific requirements of Affordable Homes and Adult Skills grants programmes. Furthermore, an external review in 2022 recommended its replacement.

This Director's Decision seeks approval to procure and implement a grants management solution that could be scaled across a wide range of grants programmes, by piloting with the Greener Roots programme this will support us in adopting a 'test and learn' approach to developing our Grants Service, and meet the immediate needs of the Green Roots Fund. We will follow due diligence as we seek to expand the service.

#### Decision:

That the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Business Improvement approves expenditure of £250,000 to procure a grants management system as follows:

1. Implementation, support and licence costs of £150,000 in Year 1 (2025-26)
2. Support and licence costs of £50,000 in Year 2 (2026-27)
3. Support and licence costs of £50,000 in Year 3 (2027-28)

#### 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:** Diane Tranmer

**Position:** Executive Director, Corporate Resources and Business Improvement

**Signature:**



**Date:**

01/04/2025

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

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

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

- 1.1. The GLA Group is one of the largest grant-making organisations in London. Grants are used across the group to help deliver third-party projects that align with policy outcomes set out in Mayoral strategies and commitments.
- 1.2. The Grants and Loans Transformation programme seeks to make the GLA Group's grant-making activities more efficient and effective, and to offer better value for money. It ensures that grant-making: is used strategically and effectively; and makes the most of the skills, knowledge and capabilities available across the group. The vision for this service is to ensure that GLA grant-making "significantly and demonstrably improves the lives of Londoners, and makes London a better place, now and in the future".
- 1.3. With this in mind, we intend to launch one pilot programme (the Mayor's Green Roots programme) via a new commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solution. Given the priority to launch this fund in June 2025, it is imperative that we progress at pace with this implementation.
- 1.4. The GLA undertook an early market engagement (EME) with a pool of suppliers to assess the current COTS options in the market. Suppliers were advised it was not a tendering exercise. The EME consisted of the following activity:
  - Desk research of the COTS grants management system market, which enabled us to identify six products that potentially met our requirements
  - Formation of a panel of subject matter experts to agree detailed functional and non-functional requirements (and later, evaluate candidate products): this included representatives from the Green Roots team
  - Invitations to six potential suppliers to submit details of their COTS products functionality and estimated costs for licences and configuring the Green Roots fund on our behalf in the light of timeframes
  - Four supplier COTS products showed potential and demonstrations of these products were requested.
  - Selection of four respondents, based on their proposals, to demo their products to our panel (two were excluded for not meeting some of our 'must-have' requirements)
  - 90 minute demos to our evaluation panel by four suppliers
  - Scoring Assessment of each supplier by the panel against our agreed evaluation essential criteria
  - Further questions to suppliers (post the demos) ruled out two of the four suppliers as potential options
  - Suppliers were also asked as to their framework affiliations eg CCS or other. This was to ascertain possible compliant routes to market (RTM) when undertaking a tendering exercise
  - Gcloud14 was highlighted as the most advantageous RTM for a tendering exercise, as the prices are fixed and the service definition documentation detailed all the requirements of the COTS products
- 1.5. Route to market for tendering of the COTS products:

- Following the EME, and with discussion with TfL commercial, a decision has been made to tender for the COTS product via GCloud14 using key word search.
- GCloud14 is a CCS government framework which has a predefined tendering process using “key word search” to shortlist suppliers
- Shortlisted suppliers are then assessed based on the service definition documentation and their pricing documentation advertised on GCloud14
- Award is then made based on the supplier’s ability to provide the required criteria, and their pricing
- If the chosen supplier is an implementation partner of a licenced software product, then following discussion with TfL commercial, the licences alone will be procured separately through the TfL Reseller framework. This will allow significant discounts on licence costs compared with procuring them through the implementation partner on GCloud14

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

- 2.1. Procuring a COTS grant-management solution will achieve the following immediate outcome: an easily deployable technical solution to meet the requirements for the Mayor’s Green Roots programme, due to launch in the first quarter of 2025.
- 2.2. Further work will be undertaken to agree future programme onboarding. Over the longer term the aims are to improve the efficiency of the grant progress, standardise processes and data, improve the grantee experience, provide audit trail and improve reporting insights on the achievement of grant outcomes.
- 2.3. The implementation of this solution will provide a more cost-effective solution to grant administration. In the past, civil society type grant programmes such as the Green Roots programme would have been outsourced to an external grant management service via the Small Grants Management System Framework. On average, this has been at a cost of 10 per cent of the overall available grant funding. As a rough estimate, of the £48.5m administered via external grant management services between financial years 2018-19 and 2024-25, £4.855m (10 per cent) of this would have been specifically for administrative services, including system administration and support.
- 2.4. In contrast, this proposal represents only 2.5 per cent of the available grant funding (£10m) in the Green Roots Fund, representing higher value for money than the previous approach via the Small Grants Management System Framework.
- 2.5. The implementation plan for the COTS includes integration to financial systems and contract management systems. Whilst this will initially be utilised by the Green Roots Fund, these components will be ready to use as and when we scale the use of this system across more grant programmes. The return on investment in the longer term will therefore be significantly higher. Should we choose to take this approach, due governance will be followed.

## **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. Procurement of this solution will enable the GLA to comply with the requirements of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), the technical standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium to make digital content accessible to people with disabilities: WCAG compliance was a ‘Must have’ non-functional requirement met by all suppliers invited to demo their products.
- 3.2. Procurement of this solution will allow us to deliver the Green Roots programme in accordance with the GDS Service Standard, one of the principles of which is to ensure that everyone can use the service.

## 4. Other considerations

### 4.1. Key risks and issues

Risk description	Mitigation	Probability	Impact	RAG
The Green Roots Fund cannot be delivered on time based on current specification	De-scope features and functionality to ensure minimum viable product is delivered on time	1	4	Amber
Decision is not approved	Deliver the Green Roots Fund using basic MS Office tools (noting severe detriment implied for timescales, user experience, and achievement of Green Roots and Grants Transformation programme outcomes)	1	4	Green

### 4.2. Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

This proposal links to the Green Roots programme which will deliver against the London Environment Strategy, and which sets out an ambitious vision including creating new green spaces where they are needed most, as part of the Mayor's ambition to make London a net-zero carbon city by 2030.

### 4.3. Conflicts of interest

No person involved in the drafting or clearance of this Mayoral Decision has any conflict of interest.

## 5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought for £250,000 over 3 years, profiled as £150,000 in 2025-26, £50,000 in 26-27 and £50,000 in 27-28 due to be funded from the transformation budget within the Open Project System. Funding in future years will be subject to the annual budget setting process. It is worth pointing out that should these projections increase marginally, this request will need to be approved through a Mayoral Decision (MD) process.
- 5.2. According to the Grants team's estimates, the 'do nothing' option is likely to cost 10 per cent of the overall grant funding amounting to £1m over 3 years for the Green Roots programme against the equivalent £250,000 quoted for the COTS grant management solution, representing value for money in the administration of this programme.
- 5.3. The expenditure will support the Mayor's mandate of 'Delivering a greener, more climate-resilient London'.

## 6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Director concern the exercise of the Authority's general powers; falling within the Authority's statutory powers to do such things considered to further, or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of economic development and wealth creation and social development 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. In taking the decisions requested,
- 6.2 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 and foster good relations 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 (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3 If the Director makes the decisions sought, officers must ensure that the supplies and services in question are procured fully in accordance with GCloud14 and TfL’s internal Reseller Framework (working with TfL Procurement in this regard) and the appropriate call-off contracts are put in place between and executed by the GLA and the contractors before commencement of such supplies and services.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contracts	Mid to late March 2025
Delivery Start Date	Early April 2025
The project will adopt an Agile Scrum delivery approach where Discovery, Build & Test will be ongoing from early April through to mid-September, with three phased deployments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User registration, eligibility and application</li> <li>• Assessment to Award</li> <li>• Monitoring &amp; Evaluation/Variation/Payments</li> </ul>	April to early May 2025  Mid June 2025 Early August 2025 Mid September 2025
Delivery End Date	31 March 2028
Project Closure:	31 March 2028

### 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:**

Helen Wilson has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

**Assistant Director/Head of Service:**

Vicky Ridley-Pearson 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 31 March 2025.

✓

**CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:**

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

**Signature:**

*Anna Casbolt*

**Date:**

02/04/2025

pp. Anna Casbolt, Assistant Director, Financial Services, on behalf of the Chief Finance Officer