

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3410

GLA Marketing Budget 2025-26

Executive summary:

The Greater London Authority (GLA) has a responsibility to keep Londoners informed on, and engaged in, the work of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly.

The GLA's centralised marketing, planning and budgeting process – introduced in 2017 to bring us in line with government best practice – allows the GLA to plan resource requirements and communicate the work and priorities of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly, in an integrated, cost-effective and impactful way. It supports the GLA's strategic ambition to engage in a truly responsive dialogue with Londoners, reaching under-served communities with critical information on support and services. It also helps the GLA to plan its communications efforts strategically, with a long-term view.

This Mayoral Decision seeks to approve expenditure of up to £1m in 2025-26 to deliver integrated, cost-effective public information campaigns. This represents a lower level of funding, in real terms, than when the £1m budget was introduced in 2017.

Decision:

That the Mayor of London approves:

- spending up to £1m in 2025-26 on services and tools required to deliver effective marketing communications, digital communications and engagement campaigns for the GLA
- the delegation of decisions on the allocation of said funding to the Assistant Director, External Relations, in consultation with the Mayoral Director, Communications, without the need for further individual decision forms
- seeking, receiving and spending additional sponsorship by the GLA from suitable corporate partners, for the GLA Marketing, Creative and Digital Communications teams' activities; this will be in accordance with the Contracts and Funding Code and sponsorship policy, and will bring direct and indirect financial contributions, and in-kind support, to support the teams' activities.

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: 26.08.25



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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Greater London Authority (GLA) has a responsibility to keep Londoners informed on, and engaged in, the work of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. This includes making Londoners aware of the Mayor's statutory responsibilities, so that they may respond to statutory consultations or attend statutory events (such as People's Question Time with the Mayor and the London Assembly). It also includes making Londoners aware of wider opportunities that stem from the Mayor's work, including events, programmes and services across the capital.
- 1.2. The centralised marketing budget is also used to inform Londoners about the policies, programmes, events and activities of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. In this way, it enables Londoners to better understand and engage with the GLA's work. The budget will also support new and ongoing campaign activity, driven by a need to align communications activity to support policy priorities. This covers a broad spectrum of marketing and communications-related activity, including strategy; research; creative services; advertising; digital; print and production; content production; and tools and services required to deliver the work of the Marketing Campaigns and Digital Communications teams.
- 1.3. This work includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - media planning and buying, including print and digital advertising, social media and paid search
 - printing, distribution and production costs associated with using TfL advertising space
 - developing a media-buying strategy, and auditing fees
 - user research and testing (qualitative and quantitative research)
 - content production, including a range of creative and digital assets, such as social media content
 - video and photography, including production tools, filming and editing services, and livestreaming
 - email marketing, including strategy, tools and assets
 - creative agency and freelance requirements
 - strategic work to maximise the impact of marketing campaigns and digital communications.
- 1.4. The GLA's Marketing Campaigns, Digital Communications, Creative and Press teams are collectively responsible for communicating and engaging with Londoners about the work and priorities of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. The teams work alongside GLA departments that require marketing and public communications support. The central teams collaboratively provide a strategic consultation service and campaign management, as required. The teams also work closely with TfL and other functional bodies on significant campaigns to maximise impact and ensure value for money.
- 1.5. If approved, this Mayoral Decision (MD) delegates decisions on the allocation of funding between the various campaigns, and communications and engagement activities, to the Assistant Director, External Relations, in consultation with the Mayoral Director, Communications, without the need for further individual decision forms.
- 1.6. This decision also approves seeking, receiving and spending additional sponsorship by the GLA, from suitable corporate partners, for the GLA Marketing, Creative and Digital teams' activities. This will be in accordance with the Contracts and Funding Code and sponsorship policy; and will bring direct and

indirect financial contributions and in-kind support to support the teams' activities. This will be determined based on campaign or project objectives.

- 1.7. Since its introduction in 2017, the centralised marketing, planning and budgeting process has enabled the Marketing Campaigns and Digital Communications teams to work more strategically; avoid duplication across the GLA; communicate with greater impact; and deliver better-integrated campaigns that promote and engage Londoners in the work of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. Objectives and benefits of the centralised marketing budget include:

- strategic annual planning, and a coordinated and holistic view of how the GLA communicates to Londoners
- full accountability and transparency over spend on marketing communications, digital communications and engagement campaigns
- better value for money for Londoners – for example, visibility of annual budgets has helped to achieve cost savings
- more efficient and effective use of the GLA's gifted 'on-system' inventory from TfL
- more concise budget control, enabling the GLA's Marketing and Digital Communications teams to work with an agile approach, and to respond quickly to external factors and changing priorities
- greater efficiency within the finance and procurement processes.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 provides that the GLA and the Mayor must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when exercising their functions, including when taking decisions.
- 3.2. The PSED requires the GLA and the Mayor, in the exercise of all their functions, to 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.
- 3.3. Consideration of the PSED is not a one-off task. The duty must be fulfilled before taking a decision, at the time of taking a decision, and after the decision has been taken, to ensure that equalities impacts are kept under ongoing review.
- 3.4. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirements to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), race (ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, and sexual orientation.

- 3.5. The development of all GLA marketing campaigns includes consideration of their target audiences. In every case, materials are assessed to ensure they are fully accessible and in line with the PSED. The GLA will ensure that marketing materials reflect the diversity of London's population. Staff are trained to recognise and compensate for their own unconscious bias, and communications are governed by brand guidelines that require us to show a truly representative London – reflecting the city's diversity. The guidelines also ensure that messages are simple and easy to understand with no jargon, ensuring that our campaigns are accessible. The GLA's owned channels are also fully compliant with best practice on accessibility.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1. The proven success of our approach, outlined below, will be at risk if the centralised marketing budget is not approved, and if seeking other alternatives would reduce efficiency. A smaller budget, or a budget devolved to other departments across the GLA, would mean less impactful campaigns for Londoners, and would have a detrimental effect on the ways of working to deliver these campaigns and activities.
- 4.2. The GLA's centralised marketing, planning and budgeting process, introduced in 2017-18, has led to significant improvements in the GLA's marketing and digital communications function. This includes working more strategically and efficiently, and with agility – which enables the Marketing Campaigns and Digital Communications teams to respond quickly to external events and changing priorities.
- 4.3. This process has the following key benefits:
- streamlined messaging, ensuring we are not communicating to the same audience in an uncoordinated way; rather than communicating with the same (highly engaged) audience, this approach enables us to reach a greater breadth of Londoners, ensuring different audiences can engage with the messages that are most relevant to them
 - improved digital communications to ensure we are reaching Londoners online effectively, and with appropriate content
 - maximising the effectiveness of the marketing and digital resources to ensure we respond quickly to external factors and changing priorities
 - delivering better value for money for Londoners – for example, annual licences for tools as well as paid search strategies for London.gov.uk.
- 4.4. The GLA's marketing campaigns and digital communications function plans and delivers large-scale campaigns linked directly to the Mayor's delivery programmes. These include, for example, providing opportunities for young people; preventing violence against women and girls; and combatting homelessness. It also plays an important role in providing information and support to Londoners in response to external events and developments – for example, helping Londoners through the cost-of-living crisis with information about benefits, grants and discounts; linking Londoners with food-poverty support; improving access to affordable homes and ensuring tenants are fully informed of their legal rights; and connecting young people to mentorships and other opportunities.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.5. This work is linked directly to the GLA's core business objectives to:
- increase awareness of the work that the GLA (including the Mayor and the London Assembly) is doing on behalf of Londoners

- increase Londoners' understanding, engagement and participation in key projects, events and campaigns
- increase Londoners' opportunities to access and influence the work of the GLA.

Impact assessments and consultations

- 4.6. The GLA will ensure services are procured competitively, and sponsorship activities are managed in a fair and open manner, in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code and Sponsorship Policy. Officers consistently aim to secure value for money, and make efficient use of funds.
- 4.7. The centralised marketing budget will be closely managed and monitored to ensure effective and appropriate use of GLA resources. It is not considered necessary or appropriate to consult any other bodies on this proposed decision before it is submitted for approval.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.8. There are no conflicts of interest to note for anyone involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This decision requests approval of expenditure, over 2025-26, of £1m to effectively deliver marketing and engagement campaigns for the GLA. The expenditure will be funded from the 2025-26 budget allocation that was approved as part of the 2025-26 budget-setting process. This budget is held within the External Relations Unit (part of the Strategy and Communications Directorate), which will be responsible for the delivery of the GLA marketing campaigns and the associated expenditure during 2025-26.
- 5.2. It should be noted that, while it is intended that any sponsorship income secured for specific campaigns will be used in supplementing GLA resources, officers will look to make efficiencies to reduce the GLA contribution to campaign costs (wherever possible).

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. Section 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (GLA Act) provides that the GLA has the power to do anything that it considers will further any one or more of its principal purposes, which are: promoting economic development and wealth creation in Greater London; promoting social development in Greater London; and promoting the improvement of the environment in Greater London. Section 34 of the GLA Act provides that the GLA – acting by the Mayor, the London Assembly or both jointly – may do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of any functions of the GLA. The approval of the centralised marketing budget would therefore be considered to fall into section 34, as it would be incidental to the exercise of the GLA's functions by the Mayor, the London Assembly or both jointly.
- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor must comply with the PSED (set out in section 3, above).
- 6.3. Under section 38 of the GLA Act, any function exercisable by the Mayor on behalf of the GLA may also be exercised by a member of the GLA's staff – albeit subject to any conditions that the Mayor sees fit to impose. To this end, the Mayor may make the requested delegation to the Assistant Director, External Relations, in consultation with the Mayoral Director, Communications. The obligations set out in The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 which describe when written records of decisions and their content need to be published must be complied with to the extent applicable to any decisions made by the Assistant Director in the exercise of delegated authority.

- 6.4. Depending on the nature and detail of any sponsorship arrangements, the GLA may be able to rely on its general and incidental powers to seek sponsorship and under its power to charge third parties for discretionary services, under section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003, provided that the charges levied do not exceed the costs of provision. If the delegation proposed in this MD is approved, the seeking, receipt and use of sponsorship may be approved by the Assistant Director, External Relations. Sponsorship arrangements entered into by the GLA must be in accordance with its Sponsorship Policy.
- 6.5. Should the Mayor be minded to make the decisions sought, officers must ensure that:
- any services and supplies required for the effective marketing communications, digital communications and engagement campaigns for the GLA are procured in consultation with TfL's Procurement and Commercial Team, and in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code
 - the GLA and service providers/suppliers enter into and execute contracts for the provision of the same before such services and supplies begin
 - no reliance is placed upon sponsorship income before a legally binding commitment is secured from the sponsor
 - they follow the GLA's guidance on the use of GLA resources at all times when undertaking marketing communications, digital communications and engagement campaigns.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

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

Activity	Timeline
Delivery start date	April 2025
Project closure	April 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? YES

If YES, for what reason: The GLA will be seeking external sponsorship, used to either enhance campaigns or reduce GLA net expenditure. The existence of this budget may make it harder for the GLA to secure that sponsorship. The budget will also support several procurement exercises; giving notice of GLA budgets, before launching the main procurement exercises, may compromise the GLA's ability to secure value for money.

Until what date: 22 August 2025

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:

Jared Shurin has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

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

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Bob Roberts has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

This decision was agreed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 21 July 2025.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature:



Date:

30 July 2025

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature:



Date:

28 July 2025