

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3390

Title: Mayoral Renewables funding for Greener Schools projects

Executive Summary:

The Mayor of London is committed to helping London reach net zero. To support this, the Greener Schools Pilot initiative was launched in December 2024, with up to £2.984 million of grant funding made available for projects across London. The pilot has allocated funding to 38 schools across 16 boroughs.

The GLA has now successfully secured £607,838 from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero's Mayoral Renewables Fund for further delivery of decarbonisation projects and renewable energy generation measures in London schools in 2025-26. This government funding will support an additional ten schools to reduce their energy bills and their emissions as part of the Greener Schools Pilot. These schools are the highest-ranking applicants from the 100 applications received during the pilot that fell outside of the initial funding shortlist but have met the MRF eligibility requirements.

By expanding the pilot, we can generate valuable insights from a broader range of interventions, helping more schools lower their energy bills and reduce their carbon footprint.

This Mayoral Decision seeks formal approval to accept this funding and allocate it accordingly to London boroughs in line with the Greener Schools Pilot eligibility criteria.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves:

- receipt of £607,838 from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in the form of grant funding to support an additional ten Greener Schools projects as part of the Greener Schools Pilot
- expenditure of the £607,838 to support ten additional Greener Schools
- delegated authority to the Assistant Director for Environment and Energy to allocate funding to the highest-ranking eligible projects 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: 18/08/2024



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

Decision required – supporting report

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Mayor is committed to supporting schools to implement net zero interventions in order to improve the learning environment for young Londoners, cut fuel bills for schools and contribute towards London becoming a net zero carbon city.
- 1.2 In December 2024, under Mayoral Decision (MD)3297, the Mayor of London launched the Greener Schools pilot – a £2 million capital grant funding scheme aiming to trial different approaches to decarbonising London schools, working in close collaboration with London boroughs, schools, young Londoners and local communities including community energy groups. The aim was for the pilot to fund a variety of measures including solar PV, LED lighting and air source heat pumps, with each school receiving up to £100,000 to roll out these interventions.
- 1.3 In April 2025, under MD3365, a further £984,000 was approved as funding for the programme, with authority delegated to the Assistant Director for Environment and Energy to approve allocations to up to 20 additional Greener Schools projects without the need for a further decision form.
- 1.4 In April 2025, the GLA submitted a bid to the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero's Mayoral Renewables Fund (MRF) for £607,838 of funding to be used to support a further ten schools through the Greener Schools Pilot, with 10 per cent of the funding to be used for administration costs. Projects eligible for the MRF must have spent funding by 31 March 2026, which is in line with the objectives of the Greener Schools Pilot.
- 1.5 The proposal is to allocate the MRF funding to the ten highest-ranked schools from the 100 applications received during the pilot that did not make the shortlist but still meet the MRF eligibility requirements (i.e., incorporated renewable energy generation as part of the project). If approved, this decision will increase the total number of school projects funded by the Greener Schools Pilot to 48.
- 1.6 This would increase the amount of capital grant available under this pilot from £2.984 million to £3.531 million in total, supporting a larger number of schools across London and increasing the scope to identify decarbonisation measures that have potential for replicability and scaling up.
- 1.7 The pilot is also designed to put a strong emphasis on engaging young Londoners through climate literacy and education initiatives, and through providing students with opportunities to engage in the design, promotion and evaluation of net zero school initiatives in their communities.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The primary objectives of the pilot are:
 - to design a scalable, repeatable approach to net zero delivery with schools, students, local authorities, communities and technical partners and to pilot its roll out
 - to demonstrate the savings that could be made to London schools' budgets
 - to reduce emissions for participating schools once interventions have been implemented
 - to identify a pipeline of projects and solutions that could be rolled out with greater funding/financing

- to generate a pipeline of activity and jobs for Londoners and London-based small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- 2.2 The funding secured through the MRF will increase the pilot's ability to meet these objectives by supporting additional projects in schools across London.
- 2.3 In addition to the objectives identified above, the ambition of the pilot is to help secure further external funding to deliver a multi-year programme of work, which would contribute to achieving the following outcomes:
- to reduce London's emissions from the non-domestic sector and accelerate progress towards the Mayor's Net Zero 2030 target
 - to create a blueprint for Greener Schools delivery – including appropriate business models – that can be replicated at scale across London and in the UK, informing the design of future national government schemes
 - to deliver environmental, financial and educational benefits for schools, through improving learning environments, reducing schools' carbon footprints and cutting energy bills
 - to lead by example: schools are catalysts for change and for inspiring future generations to take action to tackle the climate crisis.

3 Equality comments

- 3.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the GLA is subject to the public sector equality duty and must have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
 - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2 Protected characteristics under section 4 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sex orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (all except the last being "relevant" protected characteristics).
- 3.3 The GLA has taken appropriate steps to ensure there are no potential negative impacts on those with protected characteristics in relation to the development, design, targeting, marketing, and delivery of the scheme. This has been done by ensuring compliance with the Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and developing and testing in line with GLA guidance on equalities and diversity. Those with protected characteristics will gain from the positive benefits of this scheme in equal measure should their school be eligible, and there will be equality of access to participate in the delivery and benefit from the scheme, without discrimination.
- 3.4 Through the assessment criteria, efforts have been made to reach schools in more income-deprived areas as a priority for the pilot programme.
- 3.5 The programme has been designed in line with the London Environment Strategy and the proposals were tested to ensure they had due regard to the public sector equality duty.
- 3.6 Projects were assessed by GLA officers against a [set of criteria](#) reflecting the pilot's strategic objectives which included equality, diversity and inclusion. Higher weighting was applied to financial

savings and equality, diversity and inclusion criteria to support projects with the highest potential savings for schools and to prioritise schools with a higher proportion of students facing socio-economic disadvantages.

4 Other considerations

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.1 The Greener Schools Pilot is a key project under the Reducing Non-Residential Emissions mandate and its developing delivery plan. The Pilot will contribute towards a broad range of objectives, policy and proposals in the London Environment Strategy, including proposals 6.1.1b, 6.1.3a and 6.2.1b; and policies 6.1.3 and 6.2.1.
- 4.2 The Pilot also assists the delivery of the Mayor’s Solar Action Plan to “...encourage public sector organisations and providers of social housing to retrofit solar energy technologies on buildings by promoting the use of technical assistance programmes...”.

Relevance to other local and national initiatives

- 4.3 This Pilot and any subsequent programme will be designed to align with the Great British Energy (GB Energy) – Local Power Plan, which is expected to invest significantly in clean energy projects in community buildings and schools across the country.
- 4.4 This Pilot will support the scaling up of individual school initiatives across London. Schools and councils in London have mostly used a combination of loans and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funding to pay for climate measures in schools (although PSDS funding will end after 2025-26). Schools may also use Department for Education capital funding pots to tackle safety and quality problems, and some have run schools projects using Carbon Offset Funds, community energy and share schemes and minor works budgets. The Pilot will aim to work with boroughs that can provide match funding through some or all of these routes, in order to maximise the value achieved through any GLA funding.
- 4.5 This project will align with the objectives of the 2008 Climate Change Act and related strategies, including Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan, Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards, Heat and Buildings Strategy. Decarbonising schooling is explicitly referenced in Powering Up Britain.

Key risks

Risk no.	Risk	Likelihood (1-4)	Impact (1-4)	Rating	Mitigation
1	The recipients of the additional funding provided by this MD will not be able to complete their projects by the 31 March 2026 deadline.	2	4	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participating boroughs have confirmed that projects will viably be delivered in the time frame and are eligible for this funding. • Commercial and Programme Management support will be deployed from the GLA to support the Boroughs and schools appropriately, for

					instance through the Zero Carbon Accelerator.
2	An increase in the number of funding recipients will lead to an increase in the scope of works for the external Strategic Partner supporting the pilot	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The procurement of the Greener Schools Strategic Partner allows for the provision of additional services, which can be agreed via a change control procedure
3	The GLA will not have the required capacity to support the delivery of the additional projects funded by this MD	1	4	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The increase in the number of boroughs supported by this additional funding will be kept to the minimum Up to 10 per cent of the Mayoral Renewables Fund grant can be spent on administration costs which will be in addition to the up to £500k that has been assigned to resourcing under MD3297. There has been an increase in delivery capacity since the pilot launch.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.6 None of the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form have any conflicts of interest to declare.

Subsidy control

- 4.7 The Subsidy Control Act 2022 requires that grant funding comply with its subsidy control principles. Officers have assessed the proposed award of funding and are satisfied that it does not constitute the provision of a subsidy. This is because it does not meet the four-limb test set out in the statutory guidance to determine if a subsidy is present. Specifically, the recipients of the funding will be:
- local authorities engaged in the discharge of their statutory duties and not providing services, works or supplies on markets for the same and so are not considered to be acting as “enterprises”
 - acting as intermediaries, passing on the benefit of the funding to the relevant schools (in procuring works and supplies for the benefit of those schools) and so will not receive any “selective advantage”.

5 Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is being sought for the receipt of £607,838 from DESNZ in the form of grant funding to support the Green Schools Pilot Programme – the first phase of which was approved via MD3297 and extended through MD3365.
- 5.2 This grant is being transferred to the GLA as capital funding, so will be accounted for within the Authority's Capital Programme and all expenditure will have to fit into the definition of capital expenditure for accountancy purposes.
- 5.3 There is, however, 10 per cent of the grant being made eligible for administration costs, which would be deemed as revenue expenditure. GLA officers are currently working with officers from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero to confirm this proportion of the grant can be explicitly classified as revenue expenditure in the GLA accounts. If this is not permitted, the administration costs will be funded from the Environment Team's revenue budget for 2025-26, which was approved as part of the 2025-26 budget setting process).
- 5.4 It is expected that spend of this grant will be completed during the 2025-26 financial-year and managed by the Environment Unit. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

6 Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions sought concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further, or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of the improvement of the environment in Greater London. In formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers must comply with the GLA'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 any decisions sought, 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, age, sexual orientation, religion, gender reassignment) and persons who do not (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3 The Subsidy Control Act 2022 requires that grant funding be assessed in relation to its four-limbed test. Officers have made this assessment at paragraph 4.8 above and have concluded that the proposed funding does not amount to a subsidy.
- 6.4 Any function exercisable by the Mayor on behalf of the GLA may also be exercised by a GLA officer albeit subject to any conditions, which the Mayor sees fit to impose. To this end, the Mayor may make the requested delegation to the Assistant Director, Environment and Energy if he so chooses.
- 6.5 If the Mayor makes the decisions sought, officers must ensure that:

- the award of grant funding is made fairly, transparently, in accordance with the GLA’s equalities requirements and with the requirements of GLA’s Contracts and Funding Code and funding agreements are put in place between and executed by the GLA and recipients before any commitment to fund is made.
- as per MD3297, if there, is a desire to “roll-out” related activity, if the proposed pilot activity is considered successful, that the processes for the award of funding and/or procurement of associated contracts include such options and/or the arrangements for such “roll-out” activity are procured competitively.

7 Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1 Following approval of this Decision, officers will take the funding forward for implementation under the following timetable.

Activity	Timeline
Approval of receipt of funds	July 2025
Memorandum of Understanding signed	July 2025
Allocation of funds to participating boroughs for project commencement	July-October 2025
Delivery of capital works	July 2025-March 2026
Allocation of funds to participating boroughs for project completion	December 2025-March 2026
Project evaluation and reporting	March 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 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:

Ellen Jennings 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:

Meté Coban 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 the 14 July 2025.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature:



Date:

16/07/2025

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature:



Date:

14/07/2025

pp. Richard Watts, Deputy Chief of Staff on behalf of David Bellamy