

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3436

Digital planning suite – hosting, support and maintenance for the Planning London Datahub and LAND4LDN systems

Executive summary:

This Mayoral Decision seeks approval to spend £374,000 to fund costs for software development, support, maintenance and hosting, for a suite of digital planning software, under a new two-year contract.

The suite of digital planning software will extend the existing arrangements for the Planning London Datahub (PLD); LAND4LDN; and a new public website for the PLD. This will help support the projects, and deliver the objectives, in the forthcoming Making Best Use of Land Delivery Plan.

The PLD (live since November 2020) has given the GLA important data to understand development across London; and to continue monitoring the London Plan. The LAND4LDN system (live since September 2024) has helped to develop housing-capacity assumptions that will underpin the new London Plan.

The new PLD public website will make the PLD data more transparent and accessible for the general public.

This project will combine all three products into one contract, enabling cost savings. It will also allow time for software development to drive further system improvement. The contract will be procured through direct award via the G-Cloud 14 framework, which permits this approach.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves a total expenditure of £374,000, across 2025-26, and 2026-27, to cover the cost of software development, support and maintenance across the three platforms: the Planning London Datahub; LAND4LDN; and a new public Planning London Datahub website service. This work comprises:

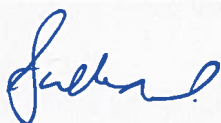
- software development
- hosting infrastructure services
- providing in-hours support and a maintenance service between 08:00 and 18:00.

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:

1/10/25

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Greater London Authority Act 1999 places responsibility for strategic planning in London on the Mayor. It requires him to produce a strategic spatial strategy for London, and to keep it under review.
- 1.2. In 2019 the GLA used funding of £373,000, approved through Mayoral Decision (MD) 2466, to create the Planning London Datahub (PLD). This is a live automated database of all planning applications in London, which replaced the London Development Database. Also in 2019, the GLA received funding of £100,000, from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, to develop the PLD platform.
- 1.3. The GLA Planning team must be able to operate both in its strategic role and as a local planning authority. To support its functions, it therefore requires a range of tools and functionality; and clear, robust business processes.
- 1.4. There are many benefits of an open and automated service for the PLD:
 - automated data is collected daily, via London planning authorities' back-office system connectors
 - data is provided as it is created in London planning authorities' back-office systems – not just when approval has been granted
 - data can be provided by those submitting planning applications through machine-readable formats, rather than the data being held in PDF documents only
 - there is a clearer, more transparent picture of what is happening on the ground for Londoners; small and medium-sized enterprises; the government; and others interested in London's growth.
- 1.5. In 2019 the GLA appointed WS Atkins (renamed AtkinsRéalis in 2023) to create the PLD under contract ICT13175. The total cost of £235,000 included initial costs to host the platform.
- 1.6. Between 2020 and 2023, annual costs of approximately £9,000 covered the hosting and support arrangements with WS Atkins. In 2023 a new contract was signed between WS Atkins and the GLA to cover the hosting, support and engineering hours to develop the system. Funding was approved through Director Decision 2620 at a cost of £69,000 for two years.
- 1.7. MD2711 approved the appointment of AtkinsRéalis to build a new digital Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) system called LAND4LDN. This system enabled a live view of housing capacity across London; and integrates directly with the PLD and the Planning Datamap. This system went live in September 2024 and will be used to produce the next London-wide SHLAA in 2026. As hosting costs for LAND4LDN were not included in MD2711, this decision also seeks approval to enter into a new agreement to cover these hosting requirements.
- 1.8. Since LAND4LDN launched, the project team has identified several opportunities to enhance the system's functionality; improve user experience; and refine methods for estimating future housing capacity in London. The associated development costs for these improvements have been captured in this MD.
- 1.9. AtkinsRéalis has also built a new website for the PLD – currently in a testing phase – to make the data it holds more interactive and accessible for members of the public; developers; planning professionals; and London planning authorities. Funding was approved under Assistant Director Decision 2690, but only covered costs to build the new website. Costs for hosting, support and maintenance are now required, and are being sought under this MD.

- 1.10. This request is to combine the hosting, maintenance, support and further engineering hours for the PLD, LAND4LDN and the new PLD public website under one contract. This should enable efficiencies; and give the GLA more flexibility around how engineering time is spent, ensuring best value for money.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. This work supports the delivery of the Making Best Use of Land programme (whose proposed delivery plan is currently being finalised); it ensures we have the right digital and data tools to improve London planning and support housing delivery.
- 2.2. Specific outputs and objectives for the PLD system, delivered through ongoing support and maintenance services, include continued service for the PLD and LAND4LDN. This includes the back-office system connectors that send a daily live feed of data to the PLD; and the planning portal connector that retrieves data for newly submitted planning applications, entered by the applicant.
- 2.3. This work also aims to allocate engineering time to further develop the LAND4LDN and PLD systems. The expected outputs include:
- enhancements to user experience
 - supporting emerging requirements, and continuing to improve data automation and collection within the PLD – thereby reducing the administrative burden on London planning authority officers
 - creation of a phasing module in LAND4LDN, enabling London planning authority users to set out the expected number of homes to be delivered over rolling five-year periods for each site
 - incorporating additional datasets to produce a comprehensive list of all potential housing sites in London
 - functionality to provide “snapshot in time” housing capacity estimates
 - development of the system to integrate the Sustainable Access Measure (SAM) as an alternative approach to estimating site capacity, alongside the current Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) measure of connectivity (the SAM methodology is currently under development, and the GLA will continue to work with TfL to understand its usefulness in assessing housing-capacity assumptions in comparison to the PTAL methodology)
 - creation of additional LAND4LDN modules, including:
 - a module to assess stalled sites using PLD data
 - a module to analyse potential residential starts and completions by comparing external datasets (e.g., council tax, building control, and energy performance certificates) with planning permissions
 - a module for superseded sites, allowing London planning authorities to view overlapping permissions and avoid double-counting housing numbers.
- 2.4. Continuing the services will also assist the GLA in encouraging London planning authorities to upgrade their back-office systems to enable further automation. The supplier will support this transition; and it is expected some of the technical engineering hours will be allocated towards it.

Other benefits

- 2.5. Hosting the PLD database, the new public PLD website, and LAND4LDN through a single supplier should generate cost savings by consolidating management of the three core systems.

- 2.6. The PLD public website will give Londoners greater transparency around, and access to, the data held in the PLD.
- 2.7. LAND4LDN already provides London planning authorities with a standardised method for recording housing-capacity assumptions, replacing legacy spreadsheets. Ongoing improvements will further establish the system as a key tool for London planning authorities when assessing housing capacity.
- 2.8. Furthermore, it enables London planning authorities to assess housing capacity dynamically, as new data is added and updated in the PLD. Historically, SHLAAs were conducted every five years, leaving little to no visibility of housing-capacity figures in the intervening periods.
- 2.9. The PLD and LAND4LDN systems, as well as the new module proposed, have been written as open-source code. This means that, should the current supplier be unable to continue providing these services in future, a new supplier could use the code to build very similar products.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The GLA is subject to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Act). The Act requires the identification and evaluation of the likely potential impacts, both positive and negative, of GLA decisions on those with protected characteristics. The Mayor is to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may involve, in particular, removing or minimising any disadvantage suffered by those who share a relevant protected characteristic and taking steps to meet the needs of such people. In certain circumstances compliance with the Act may involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without it.
- 3.2. The project is considered unlikely to have a particular impact or difference in impact on any persons with a protected characteristic. However, we have looked at a number of considerations:
 - Day to day, there would be some internal changes to the organisation in the form of business processes; but this is not expected to create any adverse impact on staff with protected characteristics. However, we will monitor this; any matters arising would be managed in line with HR policies and the GLA's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
 - Externally, the implementation of this project should help support more transparency in the planning of London, allowing information to be more accessible and searchable.
 - Provisions for compliance with the PSED were included in the procurement process.
 - The new website will be developed and tested in accordance with GLA accessibility requirements.

4. Other considerations

Project costs

- 4.1. The total costs for this contract are shown in the table below:

Work description	2025-26	2026-27
Project management	£12,100	£9,900
Service desk	£14,400	£14,400
Engineering hours (PLD)	£31,335	£24,065
Engineering hours (LAND4LDN)	£91,100	£77,140

Hosting	£18,720	£18,720
Connector support	£17,000	£17,000
Planning portal data feed support	£14,000	£14,000
Total	£198,655	£175,225

- 4.2. We will be working with TfL's Procurement team to secure the contract for support, maintenance and ad hoc development work through direct award on the G-Cloud 14 framework, which permits this approach. This will be funded through the GLA's Digitalisation budget.
- 4.3. The direct award under G-Cloud 14 is justified on the basis of continuity, cost-effectiveness, and the bespoke nature of the existing systems. Re-procuring would incur significant transition costs and delay delivery of key planning tools.
- 4.4. We have considered whether to seek alternative providers, for elements of this support and hosting, for the current year. However, there would not be capacity in the team to undertake this work alongside focused delivery of the SHLAA project. This means we would not be able to deliver the key objective of improving usability and accessibility to the data. As such, it has been concluded that – for this contract – the approach set out above is the best one. The call-off contract hours arrangement will minimise costs and help best target use of the resource.
- 4.5. Consideration has also been given to best value for money. The Planning Data and Digital team concluded that going out to market to procure a new supplier would be far less cost-effective than continuing with the existing supplier. The PLD and LAND4LDN systems have been written as open-source code – this will enable these systems to be moved to a new supplier in future, if required. However, at present, the cost of doing so would not give good value for money.

Key risks and issues

Risk description	Mitigation/response	Probability	Impact	Overall
Not renewing this contract would result in the loss of service for the PLD and LAND4LDN. This would have an impact on the Mayor's ability to monitor residential housing starts and completions; and provide a future evidence base for the new London Plan.	Renew the hosting and maintenance costs.	Low	High	Green
Dependency on one supplier who has developed tailor-made products for the GLA.	The platforms for the PLD and LAND4LDN have been procured and built with open-source coding in mind. The contract will include provisions for knowledge transfer; access to technical documentation; and source code to facilitate transition to alternative suppliers if required.	Low	Medium	Green
The PLD has been developed to make London planning data as open and accessible as possible, with further improvements to	Renew the hosting and maintenance costs.	Low	Medium	Green

Risk description	Mitigation/response	Probability	Impact	Overall
follow. Not purchasing the annual hosting and support services would mean losing momentum on these benefits.				

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.6. The GLA planning service is key to delivering the Mayor's London Plan. It also supports the forthcoming delivery plan for the proposed Making Best Use of Land programme. The PLD supports the monitoring on all planning applications in London, which are assessed against the range of London Plan policies for new developments.

Conflict of interests

- 4.7. Special regard will need to be given to risks around interests that parties have in the development process. It is recognised that there are occasions where suppliers will act for developers, whilst also acting for planning authorities. The contract will include confidentiality clauses and conflict-of-interest provisions to ensure supplier neutrality and protect GLA data. Further, access to the GLA data environment will be governed by formal access controls, with audit logging and role-based permission.
- 4.8. There are no conflicts of interest to note from anyone involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

Impact assessments and consultation

- 4.9. This decision relates to achieving the objectives set out in London Plan policies. The development of the London Plan included a public consultation process; and an integrated impact assessment incorporating sustainability, community safety, health and equalities assessments. There is no requirement to further consult or undertake an impact assessment specific to this decision. The new London Plan will also be subject to public consultation and an integrated impact assessment. Any significant changes to the scope or functionality of the platforms may require further consultation or impact assessment.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. The budget lines are included in the budget for 2025-26 onwards in the Planning and Regeneration business unit, assigned for the Making Best Use of Land programme.
- 5.2. Future years' budgets will be subject to the annual budget-setting process. Any contracts that cover future years will need to have break clauses. Any changes in the anticipated profile of spend across the years will be reflected as updates during the budget setting process.
- 5.3. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor 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 economic development and wealth creation, social development and the improvement of the environment in Greater London. In formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers have complied 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 contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the UK
- consult with appropriate bodies.

- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor must have due regard to the PSED under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.3. The services described in this report will be procured via a direct award under the terms of the G-Cloud 14 framework, which permits this approach, and in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code. Officers must ensure that appropriate contractual documentation is put in place and executed by the chosen service provider and the GLA before the commencement of the attendant services.
- 6.4. Furthermore, officers must ensure that the contract includes appropriate break clauses and does not create any binding financial commitment beyond the current approved budget. Any future expenditure will remain subject to the GLA's annual budget-setting process and cannot be guaranteed at this stage.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

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

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	September 2025
Appointment of new supplier	October 2025
Contract start date	TBC
Contract end date	TBC

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 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:

Simon Long 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:

Jules Pipe 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 29 September 2025.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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



Signature

Date 30 September 2025

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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



Signature

Date 29 September 2025