

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3277

Title: Procurement for the Adult Learning Awards 2025-2027

Executive Summary:

This decision seeks approval for funding to deliver the Mayor of London Adult Learning Awards for three financial years (FY) up to 2027-28. This includes the following elements:

- a total of up to £99,500 from the Adult Skills Fund for the remainder of the Mayoral term (until FY 2027-28). This includes £93,000 for a three-year procurement of a delivery partner and £6,500 for communications activity
- the seeking, receipt, and expenditure of sponsorship to support the delivery of the awards through a new award sponsorship framework, of a forecast £64,500 by FY 2027-28 (40 per cent of the total cost of delivery over three years).

The Adult Learning Awards has become a landmark event in the skills calendar for London, showcasing the Mayor's role as a leader in championing adult learning in the capital.

This co-financing model identifies sponsorship as an opportunity for closer working with key sector stakeholders and will allow the GLA to grow the scale and impact of the awards, while reducing reliance on the ASF.

Decision:

The Mayor is asked to approve:

1. Total expenditure of up to £99,500, from the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) management and administration budget, of which £42,000 will be required in FY 2025-26, to deliver the Mayor of London Adult Learning Awards for three financial years (2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28), including a three-year procurement of a delivery partner. This funding request is subject to budget availability and annual approval by the Mayor via the annual ASF Financial Management Mayoral Decision.
2. The proposed co-financing model through sponsorship to deliver the Mayor of London Adult Learning Awards.
3. A delegation to the Assistant Directors – Skills & Employment to make all further non-ASF decisions relating to the receipt and expenditure of sponsorship funding for the Adult Learning Awards within the scope of this decision and 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:

14/4/25

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Mayor of London Adult Learning Awards has been running since 2022, championing London's skills sector and increasing awareness of adult learning in the capital, celebrating the inspirational stories of Londoners, training organisations, community organisations and employers. It has now become a landmark event in the skills calendar for London, showcasing the Mayor's role as a leader in championing adult learning in the capital. The 2024 awards saw a record number of nominations. Each of the three ceremonies to date have received positive evaluations and praise from key stakeholders.
- 1.2. A co-financing model recognises that the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) has not grown with inflation, and in the face of further ASF reductions, identifies sponsorship as an opportunity to maximise the GLA's delegated funding and secure the future of the awards in London. The GLA is engaging employers and skills and employment stakeholders to understand how our approach to co-financing meets industry standards to ensure success.
- 1.3. Through this model a total of up to £99,500 will be required from the ASF to hold three award ceremonies over the remainder of the Mayoral term. This will cover £93,000 for a three-year procurement of a delivery partner for the awards and £6,500 costs for communications activity. Approximate costings are included at Table One below. Private sponsorship is forecast to be to the value of £64,000 by FY 2027-28 (40 per cent of the total cost of delivery over three years) and will reduce reliance on ASF funding.
- 1.4. Any procurement activity outlined in the activities above will be conducted in line with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code.
- 1.5. Annual funding is subject to annual approval of budget availability and relevant break clauses would be included in any contract for services to reduce risk around budget and poor performance. A three-year procurement is proposed as this would provide better value for money, expand the delivery timeline, and remove short-term planning cycles to enable officers to approach the awards more strategically with a focus on maximising the impact, reach and profile of the awards.
- 1.6. Annual updates will be provided to the ASF Mayoral Board and approval to continue to fund and administer the Adult Learning Awards into the next FY will be sought from the Mayor via the annual ASF Financial Management decision, following confirmation of the ASF budget from the Department for Education (DfE) in January of each year.
- 1.7. Securing the future funding for the awards will enable London to continue to promote its skills excellence nationally and internationally.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. This report requests funding for delivery of the Adult Learning Awards for the FYs 2025-26 to 2027-28, to increase the accessibility and awareness of adult learning in the capital and celebrate the inspirational stories of Londoners, training organisations, community organisations and employers.
- 2.2. The London Growth Plan sets out ambitions to raise productivity, raise the income of the lowest-earning Londoners, and accelerate progress towards net zero. The forthcoming Inclusive Talent Strategy will achieve this through setting the vision to create a unified, employer-led inclusive talent system that brings together skills, employment support and careers provision to create diverse talent pipelines for all employers, and particularly sectors key to its economic growth.

- 2.3. The awards will help to meet these ambitions and support delivery of these strategies by amplifying and celebrating the fantastic adult learning opportunities available in the capital. It will engage more deeply with employers and other sector stakeholders to create an employer-led skills system. It will signpost Londoners to learning opportunities and highlight key growth sectors, helping to create diverse talent pipelines and ensuring Londoners get the skills they need to benefit from the city's growth and for business to thrive.
- 2.4. The total amount of funding being requested is up to £99,500:
- the proposed budget includes £93,000 to procure an external events supplier for a three-year period to support the coordination and delivery of the awards
 - £6,500 will be reserved for costs associated with additional communications activity, such as videography, live streaming, accessibility, and event logistics (see Table One for a breakdown of costs across three years).
- 2.5. £42,000 of the total £99,500 will be required in FY 2025-26 to fund the 2025 Adult Learning Awards.
- 2.6. This longer-term procurement will provide more value for money. It would allow more time to focus on strategic communications and partnerships, which would increase the impact of the awards, and allow the supplier to more effectively plan and allocate resource to the awards, as well as reducing delays caused by yearly procurement activity. The contract will be procured competitively via Transport for London (TfL) Procurement in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code and all applicable procurement law.
- 2.7. Focusing on a longer-term strategic plan for the awards would aim to achieve the following outcomes:
- more Londoners are aware of adult learning opportunities and are supported to access them
 - more Londoners have the skills they need to improve their lives and access good work
 - the awards support the delivery of outcomes outlined in the London Growth Plan and Inclusive Talent Strategy
 - secure a greater breadth of nominations from Londoners, including from diverse communities
 - better engagement with key stakeholders, including employers, who going on to engage, participate and invest in the skills system
 - the awards are cemented as the flagship skills award ceremony for London, raising the profile of adult learning in London
 - London's national and international profile for skills excellence is boosted.

Sponsorship objective and performance indicators

- 2.8. Without the co-financing model, the awards are expected to cost approximately £164,000 over the remainder of the Mayoral term (three awards ceremonies and nomination processes), based on the cost of the 2024 awards plus inflation at two per cent. Costings are set out at Table One.
- 2.9. The project is currently majority funded by ASF, and co-financing the awards through a new proposed framework would reduce use of the ASF and cover 40 per cent of cost through external sponsorship over three years.
- 2.10. Through this model only a total of £99,500 will be required from the ASF to hold three award ceremonies over the remainder of the Mayoral term. This will cover £93,000 for a three-year procurement of a delivery partner for the awards and £6,500 costs for communications activity.

- 2.11. The sponsorship framework and engagement strategy will aim to raise £64,500 of funding by FY 2027-28 (40 per cent of the total cost of delivery over three years).
- 2.12. The framework will support City Hall's work by providing an effective stakeholder management channel, which will build new partnerships, bolster existing relationships, and strengthen the sustainability of the Adult Learning Awards, while reducing the cost for the ASF.
- 2.13. The GLA's warm relationship with our existing sponsor and the new sponsorship and engagement framework will support officers to secure funding for the remainder of the costs of the awards.
- 2.14. If the full amount of sponsorship funding is not secured during any given financial year, we will seek to reduce costs where possible. Where we feel this will be unduly detrimental to the impact of the awards, we will propose seeking additional ASF funding to make up the shortfall. Where possible, approval for additional funding will be sought from the annual ASF Financial Management MD, or, if the additional funding is required in-year, approval up to the total value of the awards for that year will be sought from the Mayor via the ASF Mayoral Board without an additional decision form.
- 2.15.

Table One – estimate cost of Adult Learning Awards, accounting for two per cent inflation.

Awards (FY)	Total Costs	Delivery Partner Costs	Other Costs	Sponsorship Funding (Est.)	ASF Funding (Est.)
2024-25	£52,500 (actual)	£29,595 (actual)	£22,905 (actual)	£5,500 (actual)	£47,000 (actual)
2025-26	£53,550 (est)	£30,187 (est)	£23,363 (est)	£12,000 (est)	£41,550
2026-27	£54,621 (est)	£30,790 (est)	£23,831 (est)	£20,000 (est)	£34,621
2027-28	£55,713 (est)	£31,406 (est)	£24,307 (est)	£32,500 (est)	£23,213
Total 2025-26 to 2027-28	£163,884 (est)	£92,383 (est)	£71,501 (est)	£64,500 (est)	£99,384 (est)

- 2.16. Performance indicators to measure the impact of the awards will include:
- views and click through rates of creative assets such as digital communications outputs and videography
 - participation in events and feedback collected from attendees, including the evaluation of the Adult Learning Awards
 - increased engagement with and number of nominations from Londoners, employers and communities who are under-represented in adult learning and work in the capital
 - sponsorship funding secured for each award ceremony.
- 2.17. The 2024 awards saw a total of 329 nominations across ten award categories. Nominations have increased each year since the inception of the awards, and we aim to double this by the end of the Mayoral term, with a particular focus on increasing employer nominations. It is proposed to delegate authority to the Assistant Directors – Skills & Employment to make all further non-ASF spending decisions relating to the receipt and expenditure of sponsorship funding without the need for a further decision form. This delegation will support efficient decision making in line with local management procedures.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 provides that, in the exercise of their functions, public authorities, of whom the Mayor is one, 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 Adult Learning Awards will help the GLA meet the public sector equality duty by increasing accessibility and awareness of London's skills offer, especially to disadvantaged and protected groups.
- 3.4. Equalities are assessed as part of the awards' shortlisting and judging process to ensure winners and highly commended nominees are reflective of London's diversity. Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) undertaken across Skills programmes identify lack of information/awareness as a key barrier for participation in adult learning. The Adult Learner Awards will help to address these barriers through promotion of adult learning in London, including celebrating the achievements of learners who face additional barriers.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1. The key risks and issues relating to this decision are laid out below:

Risk	Mitigation
Budget for the Adult Learning Awards is not approved, meaning the awards do not take place and impacting sector stakeholder relationships.	Officers would manage stakeholders and sponsors' expectations through effective relationship engagement and utilise other activity, e.g. engagement opportunities around the Inclusive Talent Strategy, to build and maintain stakeholder relationships. Officers would explore other options to help champion and raise awareness of adult learning.
Sponsorship funding could not be forthcoming for the delivery of the awards.	The Adult Learning Awards have so far always secured sponsorship, and we are testing our proposed approach through desk research and consultation with internal and external stakeholders, to ensure it is robust for cultivating and approaching prospective sponsors. If the full amount of sponsorship funding is not secured during any given financial year, we will seek to reduce costs where possible. Where we feel this will be unduly detrimental to the impact of the awards, officers would seek additional ASF funding to make up the shortfall.

Procurement for the awards 2025-26 is delayed and a three-year procurement of a delivery partner is not approved.	Officers will work with TfL to prioritise procurement for the upcoming awards and explore additional officer resource to be allocated to the awards to ensure successful and impactful delivery and reduce risk to the successful delivery of the project.
The ASF has been reduced in London for the next academic year, therefore some people may argue that the awards channel funding away from direct delivery.	The Awards represents a very small proportion of the ASF, with the majority going to direct delivery. The awards raise awareness of the profile of adult learning opportunities in London, thereby increasing the number of Londoners aware of and benefiting from ASF learning opportunities. It also facilitates stakeholder engagement within the sector and with employers, which will help implement and promote the forthcoming Inclusive Talent Strategy, supporting the London Growth Plan. In addition, the co-financing model will reduce the proportion of ASF funding.
Budget for the Adult Learning Awards is not approved in future financial years	<p>A break clause will be included in the delivery suppliers' contract to mitigate if the budget is not approved in future years and all milestones, workstreams and deliverable dates will be structured so as to reduce the amount of abortive costs incurred upon terminating for convenience.</p> <p>We will work closely with sponsors to manage expectations and keep them informed of developments.</p>

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2. The Mayor has committed to increasing the accessibility and awareness of adult learning, central to the Mayor's vision to build a fairer, safer, and greener London for everyone. The Mayor of London Adult Learning Awards aims to fulfil this commitment by engaging Londoners, providers, employers, and community organisations and showcasing positive and inspirational stories of adult learning in the capital.
- 4.3. The London Growth Plan and Inclusive Talent Strategy will grow London's workforce and create diverse talent pipelines for businesses in key growth sectors. The awards support this work by raising awareness of learning opportunities in London and providing opportunities to better engage sector stakeholders in the skills system, including employers, and celebrate partnership working. This is key to creating a unified, employer-led inclusive talent system that brings together skills, employment support and careers provision to create diverse talent pipelines for all employers, and particularly sectors key to its economic growth. The event further promotes the outreach work of community organisations and celebrates the achievements and initiatives of inclusive learning providers and the employers offering excellent apprenticeship opportunities and good work.
- 4.4. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out how the Mayor will work to create a fairer, more equal, integrated city where all people feel welcome and able to fulfil their potential. The awards support this strategy by increasing accessibility and awareness of London's skills offer and promoting success stories of learning from Londoners from disadvantaged groups.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.5. There are no conflicts of interest to declare from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This Mayoral Decision is requested to approve total expenditure up to £164,000 of which £99,500, is to be funded from the ASF management and administration budget, to deliver the Mayor of London Adult Learning Awards for three financial years from 2025-26 to 2027-28. This funding request is subject to budget availability and annual approval by the Mayor via the annual ASF Financial Management Mayoral Decision (MD). The remaining £64,500 is proposed to be sponsorship. This decision therefore also seeks mayoral approval for the proposed sponsorship model to co-fund delivery of the Mayor of London Adult Learning Awards.
- 5.2. The table in paragraph 2.14 details the spend and funding across 2025-26 to 2027-28. As the funding of delivery if the awards are subject to annual budget setting approval process and amount of sponsorship, a break clause should be included in the delivery supplier's contract to mitigate risk of budget and sponsorship changes in future years.
- 5.3. This decision also requests the Mayor for approval for a delegation to the Assistant Directors – Skills & Employment to make all further non-ASF decisions relating to the receipt and expenditure of sponsorship funding for the Adult Learning Awards within the scope of this decision and without the need for a further decision form.
- 5.4. Delivery of the Mayor of London Adult Learning Awards will be managed by the Skills & Employment unit within the Communities and Skills directorate.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions that it is proposed be sought from 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 which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development or the promotion of the improvement of the environment in Greater London and in formulating the proposals in respect of which decisions are 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
 - ministerial functions delegated, by the Secretary of State for Education, to the Mayor pursuant to section 39A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999.
- 6.2. When taking any decisions requested, 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 or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010).

- 6.3. The GLA may seek sponsorship when exercising its section 30 general power via 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. Officers are reminded to seek sponsorship in accordance with the GLA's sponsorship policy and to put in place appropriate sponsorship agreements between the GLA and sponsor(s) before any reliance is placed on the sponsorship income and/or in-kind benefits.
- 6.4. If the Mayor makes the decisions sought officers must ensure that they:
- do not commit to any expenditure which relies upon future years' budgets or sponsorship until such: budgets have been confirmed definitively; and sponsorship has been secured and sponsorship agreements have been put in place and executed by the GLA and sponsors
 - in addition to ensuring that all relevant agreements contain a termination for convenience right in favour of the GLA all milestones, workstreams and deliverable dates are structured so as to reduce the amount of abortive costs incurred upon terminating for convenience
 - ensure that raising and use of sponsorship to match ASF expenditure does not impact adversely on the GLA's ability to comply with its ASF obligations to the DfE/ESFA and the retention of ASF in the future
 - to the extent that the expenditure proposed concerns the purchase of services: they are procured in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code (the "Code") and where applicable the Procurement Act 2023 (the "Act"); liaise with Transport for London's procurement and supply chain team, which will determine the detail of the procurement strategy to be adopted in accordance with the Code and the Act; and put in place appropriate contractual documentation and ensure it is executed by the chosen service provide and GLA before the commencement of those services
 - to the extent that the expenditure proposed concerns the award of grant funding, distribute the funding fairly and transparently, in accordance with the GLA's equalities duties and within the requirements of section 12 of the Code and an appropriate funding agreement between the GLA and the recipient before any commitment to award the funding is made.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1. Next steps are set out below:

Activity	Timeline
Procurement begins for supplier for the Adult Learning Awards 2025-26 to 2027-28	April 2025
Supplier confirmed for 2025-27 awards	April 2025
Secure sponsorship for 2025 awards	By April 2025
Delivery of Adult Learning Awards 2025	April-December 2025
Secure sponsorship for and delivery of Adult Learning Awards 2026	January-December 2026
Secure sponsorship for and delivery of Adult Learning Awards 2027	January-December 2027
Evaluation of 2025-2027 Awards	January 2028

Appendices & supporting documents:

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? YES**

If YES, for what reason: It is in the GLA's financial interest to defer publication of the maximum yearly expenditure until the procurement process is complete to ensure the most competitive bids.

Until what date: 1 July 2025

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:

Hester Waterfield has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

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

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Howard Dawber 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 31 March 2025.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature:

Fay Hannan

Date:

08/04/2025

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature:

D. Jellany

Date:

03/04/2025

