

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2711

Research and engagement to support London's nightlife

Executive summary:

London's nightlife is under significant pressure for a number of reasons, including the cost-of-living crisis and rising business costs; rent increases; challenges in the recruitment and retention of skilled staff; noise complaints; and navigating complex regulations, such as licensing and planning.

The Mayor has pledged to create a new London Nightlife Fund and Nightlife Taskforce to examine and address the issues facing the city's nightlife. There is a need for robust evidence and insight to assess the current make-up and state of London's nightlife; the challenges that venues, businesses and promoters are facing; and the barriers to consumers accessing the nightlife they want to see in London.

This decision seeks approval to: set up and recruit participants to a new London Nightlife Taskforce; and appoint consultants to conduct a programme of research on the current state of London's nightlife, by engaging with a broad range of stakeholders across the capital. This research will help identify interventions that will increase the resilience, and support the growth, of the capital's nightlife; and ensure the taskforce has the data to make timely recommendations to mitigate the significant pressures facing London's nightlife.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Good Growth approves:

- expenditure of up to £148,000 in 2024-25 to set up and support a new London Nightlife Taskforce; and deliver a programme of research and wide-ranging engagement on the current state of London's nightlife
- the seeking and acceptance of grant funding or sponsorship from external funders
- expenditure of any secured sponsorship and third-party funding for the programme activities set out in this decision, without the need for a further decision form.

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: Philip Graham

Position: Executive Director, Good Growth

Signature:



Date:

19/08/2024

PP Niran Mothada on behalf of Philip Graham

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

Introduction and background

- 1.1. London's nightlife is made up of a diverse mix of activity, serving a wide range of communities of all backgrounds and ages. Nightlife activity is distributed across London, from the West End to town and district centres such as Wembley, Ealing, Ilford and Croydon. There are clusters of emerging and exciting venues and events across the capital, with notable scenes in Lambeth, Southwark, Camden, Haringey, Newham and Hackney.
- 1.2. However, in recent years, nightlife has come under pressure from various issues. These include the cost-of-living crisis, and subsequent reduction in disposable incomes; the cost-of-doing business crisis, which includes higher operational costs and energy bills; the relentless rise in rent; challenges around the recruitment and retention of skilled staff; noise complaints; and navigating complex licensing and planning systems.
- 1.3. Different data sources on the loss of nightlife spaces, such as nightclubs and grassroots venues, are sometimes contradictory and unclear. Anecdotal evidence suggests that nightlife is facing multiple crises. However, there is a lack of consistent data on how many spaces have been lost; how many have opened; and what the most significant challenges and opportunities are. This evidence gap is hampering work to address the challenges facing London's nightlife.
- 1.4. Changing consumer preferences and habits are contributing to a shift away from alcohol-led night-time activities; and seeing a rise in new types of night-time experiences. This presents an opportunity to redefine the scope of what counts as nightlife, and what people want to see as part of a night-time offer.
- 1.5. The GLA's Evidence Base for a 24 Hour City, updated in March 2024, revealed that over a third of young workers are night workers. Anecdotal evidence highlights a severe shortage of events-management and marketing skills within the nightlife sector.
- 1.6. For these reasons, the Mayor has committed to set up a Nightlife Taskforce and a Nightlife Fund, which will both aim to help solve the issues affecting nightlife and help late-night businesses thrive.
- 1.7. This decision will enable the appointment of one or more consultants, over six to 12 months, to deliver research and engagement into the current state of London's nightlife, to better understand where the challenges and opportunities are.
- 1.8. The research is expected to provide a comprehensive study of London's nightlife sector. It will incorporate the views of a wide variety of stakeholders, both consumers and producers. It will combine a range of both quantitative and qualitative methods, including desktop research and analysis, stakeholder mapping, outreach and engagement sessions, and interviews. It will also contain a thorough analysis of the economic, historical, social and urban value of London's nightlife, which will be made available on the London Datastore.
- 1.9. Expenditure will be available to support purchasing of new data and insight, through the High Streets Data Service, that can be used as part of the research. Sources of additional funding and partnerships will also be investigated to add to the GLA's investment and increase the value/buying power of any new data sources.
- 1.10. Scoping and setting up the new Nightlife Taskforce will form part of this programme, running in parallel to the work of the research consultants. Emerging data and insight will be shared with the taskforce as soon as they become available. The members of the Nightlife Taskforce will play an important role in supporting the research – engaging widely with London's diverse nightlife

communities and nightlife scenes across the capital, and with wider stakeholders (including Londoners, Transport for London (TfL), boroughs, promotional agencies and the police), as they gather evidence and form their report and recommendations.

- 1.11. This Decision will also provide funding for an additional fixed term role in the 24 hour London team to help set up the Nightlife Taskforce, establish governance processes that are in line with GLA policy, support onboarding of participants and act as secretariat for the Taskforce. Approval has been given and will follow establishment control procedures.
- 1.12. This Decision will apply an allowance framework similar to that established for the Mayor's Cultural Leadership Board through Mayoral Decision (MD)2946 to pay members of the Taskforce who are freelance or unwaged as appropriate. This will ensure that the Taskforce is representative and allow equality of opportunity for all members to participate.
- 1.13. This programme of work will also help inform the development of a new Nightlife Fund and the support it could provide to ensure London's nightlife thrives. It will enable the identification of possible partners and help to define a potential governance and delivery model for the fund.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The GLA's investment of up to £148,000 will deliver the following key objectives:
 - scoping and setting up a Nightlife Taskforce
 - defining what nightlife in the capital currently looks like; and identifying the key stakeholders, scenes and communities that constitute it.
 - mapping nightlife activity across London, including the number of venues, events and businesses, and their opening hours. The mapping will identify clusters of activity and the key locations where different types of nightlife take place, e.g., high streets and town centres, industrial land and other locations. It also has the potential to support existing GLA mapping work, including the Cultural Infrastructure Map and High Street Data Service. This will inform the next London Plan
 - providing analysis of the value of nightlife to London. This will include metrics such as Gross Value Added (GVA) and employment; and looking at the social value trends over time. This will inform the new London Growth Plan
 - enabling a better understanding of what Londoners and visitors want and expect from London's nightlife offering
 - identifying future trends that London must consider, including (for example) current paths for skills development and gaps.
- 2.2. The GLA investment of up to £148,000 will deliver the following outputs:
 - a Nightlife Taskforce and a programme of meetings, evidence sessions and engagement activities
 - a research and engagement programme with a broad representation of Londoners and nightlife stakeholders across the capital
 - mapping of London nightlife, which can be added to the Cultural Infrastructure Map and High Street Data Service
 - mapping of the key stakeholders, scenes and communities involved in London's nightlife

- a final report containing an assessment of the current state of nightlife in London; the economic, social and cultural value of London's nightlife; the challenges faced by the sector; and the opportunities for London's nightlife.

2.3. This will achieve the following outcomes:

- better-informed, evidence-based policymaking to inform the work of the London Nightlife Taskforce, GLA Family organisations, boroughs, businesses and London's nightlife community
- greater partnership working and collaboration between London's nightlife community, businesses, GLA Family organisations, boroughs and researchers that will support a strong and resilient nightlife offer
- Londoners and nightlife communities having a strong and coordinated voice in shaping policy that affects London's nightlife.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the Mayor of London must 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 have a 'protected characteristic' as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and those who do not.
- 3.2. The 24 Hour London programme helps to tackle inequalities associated with working or running a business at night and being part of an active night time community. A requirement for interested consultants will be their ability to show a strong commitment and effective delivery of equality, diversity and inclusion values.
- 3.3. This work will be specifically concerned with ensuring that all night-time communities, particularly those that tend to be underrepresented, are given a voice in the development of London's nightlife offer. This includes those from ethnically diverse backgrounds; younger and older people; members of the LGBTQ+ and sex-positive communities; disabled people; and those from less privileged social and economic backgrounds. Insight from these communities will help inform plans and policies to address inequalities faced by these groups in accessing London's nightlife.
- 3.4. Paying freelancers will ensure that the Taskforce is representative of social, experiential and ethnic diversity which is known to carry city wide benefit. It shows that the Mayor is leading by example in fairly compensating the freelance workforce which is known to be underpaid.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. The research outlined in this decision also link to the following Mayoral strategies:
 - 24 Hour City Vision
 - Development of the London Growth Plan
 - London Plan
 - Culture Strategy
- 4.2. The Culture, Creative Industries and 24 Hour London Unit will complete procurement and full due diligence for the proposed project. This will ensure that: services are properly procured; and funding is distributed fairly and transparently, in accordance with the GLA's equality policy and legislative

requirements and subsidy control rules, and in a manner that ensures value for money, in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code. Services will be procured in liaison with TfL Procurement, and legal advice will be sought as required.

Risks

4.3. The risks, and their mitigations, are outlined in the table below:

Risk	Mitigations in place	RAG rating
Delay in procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with TfL Procurement to ensure timelines are realistic and achievable. • Programme timelines will be monitored throughout, and adjusted accordingly to mitigate against any delay. 	Green
Lack of bids from suitable consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tender documents will be shared widely across GLA and stakeholder networks, to ensure a broad range of consultants with the necessary expertise is reached. 	Green
Low engagement in research from nightlife sector and Londoners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of existing strong networks across City Hall departments to share opportunities to engage with the research. • Work with external partners to identify further routes for engagement. • Consultants will have demonstrated their capacity to reach underrepresented communities as part of their bid. 	Green
Lack of access to nightlife data or low-quality data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with City Intelligence Unit to advise on the quality of data being accessed; and to identify potential sources of new data. • Ensure the appointed consultants have the capacity to bridge the current gaps in data. 	Green
Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scope of the programme will be clearly defined from the outset, and costs minimised wherever possible. • Programme will ensure existing City Hall data is used as part of the research. • Potential funding partners will be investigated. 	Green

Conflicts of interest

4.4. There are no conflicts of interest to note for any of the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

5.1. Approval is requested for:

- expenditure of up to £148,000 to set up a new Nightlife Taskforce and deliver a programme of research and wide-ranging engagement on the current state of London's nightlife.
- the seeking and acceptance of grant funding or sponsorship from external funders
- expenditure of any secured sponsorship and third-party funding for the programme activities set out in this decision, without the need for a further decision form.

- 5.2. The £148,000 of expenditure will be funded from within the Culture, Creative Industries and 24 Hour London approved budget for 2024-25, to be taken specifically from the 24 Hour London budget.
- 5.3. All expenditure will be incurred by 31 March 2025.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Executive Director of Good Growth 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. 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.
- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Executive Director of Good Growth 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 (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Executive Director of Good Growth should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3. All procurements of services required for the project must be procured in accordance with the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code (the Code). Furthermore, the officers must liaise with TfL's procurement and supply chain team, which will determine the detail of the procurement strategy to be adopted in accordance with the Code. Officers must ensure that appropriate contractual documentation be put in place and executed by chosen service provider and the Authority before the commencement of the attendant services.
- 6.4. Officers must ensure that any sponsorship that is sought is in accordance with the sponsorship policy and appropriate sponsorship agreements be put in between and executed by the GLA and sponsor(s) before any reliance is placed on the sponsorship income and/benefits in kind. Furthermore, officers must ensure that an appropriate funding agreement be put in place between and executed by the GLA and the provider of grant funding before: any commitment to fund is made; and any funding is paid to the GLA.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. The project will be delivered according to the timeline below:

Activity	Timeline
Decision approved	August 2024
Procurement of consultants begins	August 2024

Consultants appointed	w/c 2 September 2024
Launch of public survey	November 2024
Final report published	March 2025

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: So as not to pre-empt a potential Mayoral announcement regarding the programme.

Until what date: 1 November 2024.

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:

Tim Spires has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Shonagh Manson 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 19 August 2024.

✓

INTERIM CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature:**Date:**

19/08/2024