

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2761

Major Sports Events National Hockey League Fan Zone Support

Executive summary:

The GLA has been working closely with the National Hockey League (NHL) to bring the NHL Global Series to London. As part of this work, the NHL has indicated its desire to build brand awareness and bring fans to London through an activation this summer, with an event at the Canada Day celebrations in Trafalgar Square.

The Major Sports Events (MSE) team is seeking approval for £25,000 of funding from the MSE budget (2025-26) to support this activity.

The NHL has provided a supportive statement affirming that a contribution will support the continuation of our partnership towards delivering Global Series games in London.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of External Relations approves expenditure of up to £25,000 from the Major Sports Events annual budget (2025-26) to support the delivery of a National Hockey League Fan Zone in Trafalgar Square.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

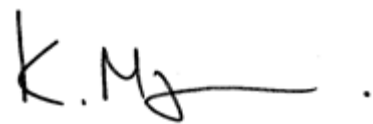
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Katie Morrison

Position: Assistant Director, External Relations

Signature:



Date:

11/06/2025

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. As part of building London's growth sector – making it an attractive and high-quality destination for visitors, and demonstrating London as a world-leading global city – London must continue to secure and deliver a further strong portfolio of major sports events (MSE). Major events stimulate London's economy by serving as a catalyst for economic regeneration; and creating publicity to increase London's attractiveness to new visitors and investors – as well as to Londoners. They provide a platform to showcase London on an international stage and attract visitors to our vibrant city.
- 1.2. As set out in the MSE Strategic Framework 2023-30, a key strategic priority for the Mayor is to secure additional global franchise sporting events for London. London already plays host to the National Football League and Major League Baseball. Since 2023, the MSE team has been working with event partners at the National Hockey League (NHL) and the National Basketball Association to build partnerships to secure future games in London.
- 1.3. The MSE team and the Mayor's Office see the NHL Global Series as a priority global sporting event to bring to the city.
- 1.4. The NHL Global Series has been developed by the NHL to expand its presence and fan base worldwide, by hosting regular-season games outside of North America. The series typically involves teams from the NHL playing exhibition or regular-season games in various international locations, including Europe and Asia. The NHL Global Series aims to:
 - promote hockey globally
 - increase its popularity in non-traditional hockey markets
 - provide opportunities for the local community to engage in and play hockey
 - provide fans around the world with the opportunity to experience live NHL action.
- 1.5. Over the years, the NHL Global Series has visited various cities across Europe, including Stockholm, Helsinki, Prague, Berlin and Zurich. The series has also ventured into Asia, with games being played in countries such as China and Japan. London has yet to host the series.
- 1.6. The MSE team have been working over the past year to secure the NHL Global Series in London, as part of the Mayor's ambition to secure global franchise sports. In October 2024 the MSE team visited the Prague Global Series to see the fan experience, and observe how other cities activate with NHL.
- 1.7. The NHL saw increased participation through the activation in 2024. To help build on the market in London, they would like to activate again. This is to keep momentum around building a market in London, and creating a foundation for future Global Series events.
- 1.8. The MSE team are providing grant funding to NHL, to support with their activation at Canada Day on Trafalgar Square. The team want to support this activation to help the NHL in engaging its current fans in London, but also in attracting new fans. This activation, along with event promotion, will help achieve this. Supporting this activation is expected to build a stronger relationship with the GLA and the NHL, and encourage a Global Series coming to the city.
- 1.9. Financial support from the MSE budget will support the existing partnership with the NHL, directly influencing London's prospects of hosting the NHL Global Series in the future. The NHL has provided a supportive statement, affirming that a contribution will support the continuation of our partnership towards delivering global games in London.

- 1.10. The MSE team would like to allocate £25,000, from the 2025-26 MSE budget, to support with operational costs and marketing. Costs to deliver the NHL Fan Zone are approximately £50,000. The remaining £25,000 (for operational costs), and any additional costs (including marketing costs) above the £25,000 GLA funds, will be covered by the NHL.
- 1.11. There is a risk that, without confirmed funding before the end of May 2025, the NHL will decide, due to cost, not to activate in London. London does not want to miss out on this opportunity to drive engagement in the sport and build a stronger partnership with the NHL – this could negatively impact future opportunities to host the NHL Global Series.
- 1.12. London has a longstanding relationship with the Canadian Embassy, situated adjacent to Trafalgar Square. This is an important neighbour, with the power to impact licensing decisions for Trafalgar Square. This, in turn, could directly impact the GLA's ability to host events on Trafalgar Square. For this reason, it is integral to maintain a good working relationship with this stakeholder. The Events for London team supports the Canadian Embassy annually to deliver Canada Day on Trafalgar Square.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The following objectives are to be met through supporting this activity:
 - to strengthen London's partnership with the NHL
 - to demonstrate London's commitment to the franchise, supporting further negotiations for future games in London
 - to enable the NHL to grow its London fanbase in preparation for future games in London
 - to provide Londoners and visitors with the opportunity to engage and participate in hockey at a free-to-access event in London
 - to benefit from NHL promotion of London and the event.
- 2.2. There is scope, through this partnership, for the NHL and the Canadian Embassy to work on a business reception event, opening up further opportunities for the NHL here in London.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The NHL Fan Zone activity will be inclusive and aimed at all Londoners. This will be achieved through:
 - the programme content
 - the broad and targeted approach to marketing channels
 - access facilities at the event, which specifically aim to reduce barriers to attendance for people with disabilities or mobility issues.
- 3.2. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the Mayor of London must have 'due regard' of 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 and those who do not.
- 3.3. The MSE team will ensure that as many Londoners as possible, including those with protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), are considered in the planning of the activation. The MSE team will coordinate with GLA comms team to promote the event on social channels, as well as working with civil society and sports team to engage with communities that are harder to reach.

- 3.4. Appropriate assistance will be available for all visitors at the NHL Fan Zone. Event staff who speak more than one language will be in place. This ensures that the sites can aid both those with whom we may have previously been unable to communicate; and will foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not.
- 3.5. Planning is being shaped by 'London 2030 Tourism Vision' (formerly 'A Tourism Vision for London') to ensure that visitors are given information in accessible formats, to help them do and see more in London. This information has been improved to help them find rewarding experiences. Visitors and Londoners alike are encouraged to explore areas beyond central London; this means persons who share a relevant protected characteristic will be able to participate in public life, or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 3.6. The GLA will continue to work with the organisers to ensure that it is an accessible venue.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. Funding will be provided to the NHL following approval via a funding agreement. This will set out, in principle, the objectives and outcomes of the funding. An officer from the MSE team will be responsible for managing this agreement and providing updates to the senior management team.
- 4.2. The MSE team will engage with the GLA Facilities Management team (who manage Trafalgar Square) to ensure that the NHL follows the terms and conditions when operating on the square. This will be achieved by linking the NHL with the Facilities Management team, who will review NHL plans to ensure they comply with the terms and conditions of operating on the square.
- 4.3. There are no known conflicts of interests or interests to declare associated with this decision, including from officers drafting or clearing this decision.
- 4.4. Potential risks are detailed in the table below:

Risk	Likelihood/impact	Response and mitigation
The Mayor's missions and aims are not incorporated into the event.	Low/medium	The MSE team will work closely with the NHL and the Canadian Embassy to ensure the NHL Fan Zone delivers real benefit to Londoners, in line with the Mayor's missions.
Due to an international crisis (e.g., pandemic, war) the event faces potential significant changes/cancellation.	Low/High	The MSE team will work closely with the NHL and the Canadian Embassy to monitor risks, and report back to the MSE senior management team.
The NHL sponsors do not align with the GLA's sponsorship policy.	Low/medium	The MSE team will maintain a risk register to monitor external risks such as sponsorship. This will be reviewed at regular meeting with both the NHL and the Canadian Embassy.

- 4.4. This decision links to the Mayor's mandate of 'boosting London's growth sectors', as it aligns with the strategic objective to show London as an attractive, high-quality destination for visitors through its programme of successful, large-scale sporting events. The NHL is a global brand; with the GLA's partnership, this activation will give Londoners and visitors the chance to engage with a new sport through activities and interactive education.
- 4.5. GLA support for the event will:
 - support delivery of the GLA's MSE framework
 - increase economic investment into London

- supports London's relationships with the Canadian Embassy, a key international stakeholder
- boost investment in London's economy
- supports London as an attractive and high-quality destination for visitors by increase international exposure for London in key North American markets
- supports London as a world-leading global city by increase of international exposure

Subsidy control

- 4.5. For grant funding to be considered a subsidy, it must meet each limb of the four-limbed test set out in the Subsidy Control Act 2022. The proposed grant meets neither Limb C nor D of the test. To that end, the grant is aimed at promoting the NHL to bring the NHL Series to London. This is an official body with no direct competitors. The purposes of this grant are to build the interest of Londoners and NHL fans in a London-based series; and to promote London as a key destination for major sporting events.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought for £25,000 for delivery of an NHL Fan Zone in Trafalgar Square. This will be funded from the 2025-26 Major Sport Events budget, to support the Mayor's priorities as part of the 'boosting London's growth sectors' delivery plan.
- 5.2. Costs over and above £25,000 will be met by the NHL as part of the agreement to deliver the event.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 6.1. The next steps are summarised below:

Activity	Timeline
Confirm funding with NHL	March 2025
Draft and sign off funding agreement	31 May 2025
Receive invoice	June 2025
Incorporate GLA community sport team involvement	March-June 2025
Deliver event	28 June 2025

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: Commercially sensitive for partner.

Until what date: 1 August 2025 (after the event).

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:

Tom Potter drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

This decision was agreed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 27 May 2025.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES

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

Signature:



Date:

29/05/2025