

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2795

Misinformation and disinformation in London

Programme: London Resilience Unit/Trailblazers

Executive summary:

This decision approves the commissioning of an external provider to conduct research into how misinformation and disinformation affects London. This work will look at how to:

- detect its spread when it happens
- understand its enablers
- identify its channels of propagation
- analyse its messaging components.

This supports work to develop successful, locally relevant pathways to counteract disinformation; and reduce the threats it poses to London.

The GLA's financial resources for this commission come from the UK government's Trailblazers grant funding (see Mayoral Decision 3421).

This work will chiefly involve analysing publicly available qualitative information and data sets; and directly engaging with London organisations and actors that are countering misinformation and disinformation through their work with London communities and wider society.

The aim is to increase the resilience of London to this rising and evolving chronic risk.

Decision:

That the Director of Resilience approves spending up to £25,000 to procure an external provider to deliver research on misinformation and disinformation in London, and to support our resilience to it.

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: Katherine Richardson

Position: Director of Resilience

Signature:

Date: 18/11/2025



PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Disinformation poses a growing threat to London’s resilience – affecting public health, community safety, climate action, economic stability, and trust in public services and government. From vaccine misinformation to climate denial, to attempts to poison AI models and undermine institutional legitimacy, the spread of false or manipulated information weakens London’s ability to govern effectively; respond to crises; and deliver for its citizens.
- 1.2. The 2025 London Resilience Strategy sets out a commitment to support longer-term resilience to chronic risks, by integrating with strategic London policy and programmes. The Strategy also prioritises supporting the resilience of London’s communities – including through robust risk and resilience communications; and amplifying and promoting appropriate messaging through trusted partners. These actions are key to counteracting the risk of misinformation and disinformation. Evidence from this commission will help to achieve those strategic objectives.
- 1.3. The 2025 UK Government Chronic Risks Analysis identifies misinformation and disinformation as one of three key societal risks to the country. It encourages ownership of the necessary mitigation measures across partners, and at different levels of government.
- 1.4. In 2025, London was one of five Local Resilience Forum (LRF) areas awarded funding for three years under the government’s Trailblazers programme (led by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)). Receipt of this funding was approved under Mayoral Decision (MD) 3421. This funding enables LRFs to deliver resilience priorities, as set out in the UK Government Resilience Framework (2022), and the UK Government Resilience Action Plan (2025).
- 1.5. A key theme of the Trailblazers programme is integration. This means incorporating resilience into key strategic policies and programmes, to address chronic risks such as misinformation and disinformation.
- 1.6. The risks identified in the UK Chronic Risks Analysis have local implications; the LRU is conducting a mapping exercise, to see how these are being managed across GLA policy areas. This commission sits under that strand of work. It will be included in the evidence being compiled to prioritise the chronic risks that are most relevant to London.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The objective of this project will be to build a comprehensive picture of drivers, enablers and mechanisms of misinformation and disinformation; and identify pathways to reduce this risk in London.
- 2.2. The overall outcomes of this project are to:
 - build a better understanding of misinformation and disinformation phenomena in London
 - strengthen the ability of London’s systems to foresee, detect, react to and counteract misinformation and disinformation effectively, and in a joined-up manner
 - enhance the overall capacity of London partners to address drivers, enablers and mechanisms of misinformation and disinformation through their work.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. This project will uphold the GLA's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. It will have due regard to the GLA's Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 3.2. The LRU recognises that Londoners are unequally affected by the risks facing the city, with poorer and marginalised Londoners experiencing disproportionate effects of emergencies. The London Resilience Strategy commits the LRU to a people-centred approach to resilience, where the experience of underrepresented Londoners adequately informs resilience practice.
- 3.3. Research findings are expected to enable an evidence-based integration of equity and diversity considerations into actions to reduce misinformation and disinformation, delivered by London partners. This work will enable an inclusive response to the relevant risks.

4. Other considerations

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.1. This project directly commits to a recommendation of the London Resilience Partnership Strategy 2024-27. It also addresses important elements related to community resilience in the London City Resilience Strategy 2020.

Risks and considerations

- 4.2. The risks identified within this work are as follows:
 - Delays in the procurement of the project: this risk is being mitigated through committed staff resource and time to move this project ahead. A list of providers is being drawn up ahead of the final decision.
 - Challenges in sourcing data and getting participants involved: this risk is being mitigated by commissioning an experienced provider with established links into the sectors being engaged.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.3. There are no conflicts of interest to declare from any officer involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. The £25,000 cost of this commission is covered by the Trailblazers funding to the LRU, within the Strategy and Communications Directorate. The funding is part of the first instalment of £335,864 already received from MHCLG. There is sufficient budget in the programme to fund this spend.
- 5.2. London Resilience is part of the Core delivery plan, and contributes to fulfilling statutory obligations.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

6.1. Below is the timeline of project delivery:

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	November 2025
Delivery start date	November 2025
Delivery end date and final report	February 2026
Project closure	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 be published either within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Strategic programmes

Does this decision seek approval for activity falling within the remit of a programme delivery plan? NO

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:

Michele Vianello has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 17 November 2025.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature:



Date: 12 November 2025