

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3403

Adult Skills Fund Assurance and Governance 2025-26

Programme: Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth

Executive Summary:

This decision seeks approval of the revised Adult Skills Fund (ASF) Assurance Framework ('the Framework') for the 2025-26 academic year.

The Framework provides assurance to key stakeholders, including HM Government, that the Greater London Authority (GLA) has the necessary systems and processes to manage delegated functions and funding relating to the ASF effectively. Changes to this version of the Framework relate to:

- updates in national government, including the closure of the Education & Skills Funding Agency
- updated governance arrangements
- amendments in line with current processes and in line with policy changes.

Amendments have also been made to incorporate changes to the governance structure to support the delivery of the Inclusive Talent Strategy and in support of the move to a more agile, employer-led careers, employment and skills eco-system, agreed via [Mayoral Decision \(MD\)3401](#) – Building an Employer-Led Inclusive Talent System. If any further significant amendments are required to incorporate final governance arrangements, the Mayor will be invited to agree these at ASF Mayoral Board (subject to future governance arrangements following the introduction of the Integrated Settlement).

Decision:

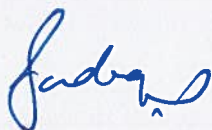
That the Mayor approves the updated ASF Assurance Framework (at Appendix A) for the remainder of the 2025-26 academic year.

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:

18/12/22

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 In preparation for delegation of the (formerly) Adult Education Budget (AEB) functions, the GLA was required to meet six readiness conditions to demonstrate to the Secretary of State for Education that the GLA was prepared to carry out these functions effectively. As a part of a submission to the Department for Education (DfE) setting out how the readiness conditions would be met, a commitment was made to publish an AEB Assurance Framework that sets out the processes and procedures the GLA has put in place to manage the AEB effectively. From the start of the 2024-25 academic year, the government implemented a new adult education funding model. From August 2024 the AEB was replaced with the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) and the AEB Assurance Framework is now known as the ASF Assurance Framework (“the Framework”).
- 1.2 The Framework provides assurance to key stakeholders, including HM Government, that the GLA has in place the necessary systems and processes to manage delegated functions and funding relating to the ASF effectively. The GLA has committed to reviewing the Framework annually to ensure it remains consistent with current policy and is up to date in terms of processes and procedures. The Mayor reviews the Framework, and revises it where appropriate, on an annual basis and publishes it via the GLA website. As the Framework is the primary governance document, it is taken through the GLA’s formal decision-making process.
- 1.3 The updated Framework incorporates updates to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and an additional delegation letter (“the Additional Letter”) from the Secretary of State to the Mayor delegating additional specific ASF functions in London as approved under [Mayoral Decision \(MD\)3349](#). The Additional Letter delegates statutory functions, whereas the MoU underpins the relationship between each party involved and the basis for the transfer of funding.

Stakeholder advisory governance structure

- 1.4 The Skills for Londoners Board and Jobs and Skills Business Partnership were established under [MD2328 – Governance arrangements for statutory functions relating to the AEB](#). The Boards provided advice and strategic direction to the Mayor on the ASF and other adult skills programmes, and form part of the wider ASF governance arrangements.
- 1.5 Officers reviewed the skills governance arrangements to ensure alignment to the Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth programme, the London Growth Plan (LGP) and the Inclusive Talent Strategy (ITS), the Get London Working (GLW) Plan and London’s Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).
- 1.6 In light of this the Mayor approved in [MD3401](#) the establishment of a new skills, employment and careers related advisory forum which will report into the London Growth Mission Board to replace the Skills for Londoners Board and Jobs & Skills Business Partnership. It will comprise of GLA personnel, stakeholder and business members which will be responsible for oversight of programme outcomes.
- 1.7 Once this new model is in place, further updates may be required to the Framework in-year to confirm any changes to governance arrangements as a result.
- 1.8 ASF governance arrangements more broadly may change-in year, subject to the conditions of the Integrated Settlement arrangements and pursuant to the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, subject to the Bill completing its passage through Parliament. Any significant changes to the Framework as a result of this will be made in line with new governance and decision-making requirements.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

ASF Assurance Framework

- 2.1 The latest version of the Framework is attached at Appendix A for approval. Several updates made to this version of the Framework are administrative such as referring to the relevant academic year or updated hyperlinks to the latest versions of documents and webpages.
- 2.2 Amendments have also been made throughout to align the Framework with the additional delegation of functions set out in the Additional Letter and the updated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the delegation of the ASF in London approved under MD3349. This includes the delegation of additional funding powers, specifically for new technical qualifications, to the GLA, in line with section 100(1B) of [the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](#) and took effect from August 2025. These powers relate to the provision of financial resources in connection with approved technical education qualifications or approved steps towards occupational competence.
- 2.3 Substantive changes have been made to the Framework to account for the incorporation of the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) into the Department for Education (DfE). References in the Framework to the ESFA have been removed and replaced with DfE as appropriate. These changes occur throughout the document.
- 2.4 Changes have also been made throughout Chapter One “Governance & Decision Making” to reflect the internal governance approach for the Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth (SLBG) programme.
- 2.5 References to the stakeholder advisory boards have been updated throughout Chapter One and may further change in-year. Please see paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10 for more information.
- 2.6 Appendix B, Chapter Seven of the Framework, detailing “Interventions and active support table” has been updated to reflect changes in approach and the closure of ESFA.
- 2.7 In line with changes put in place by DfE, Free Courses for Jobs (FCfJ) funding will no longer be ringfenced and will be available to support a broader range of expenditure.
- 2.8 Other amendments have been made throughout to ensure the Framework remains up to date with current processes and in line with policy changes. This includes audit, subcontracting, whistleblowing and data management processes.

Wider stakeholder advisory governance structure

- 2.9 Both the Skills for Londoners Board and the Jobs & Skills Business Partnership came to an end on 31 August 2025. As such, references to both bodies have been removed from the Framework following a revision of the stakeholder advisory governance arrangements to respond to the LGP and ITS, the GLW Plan and London’s LSIP.
- 2.10 As established by MD3401, a new skills, employment and careers advisory forum will be established, reporting into the Growth Mission Board, to deliver London’s workforce development which includes implementing the ITS, Get London Working Plan and London’s LSIP. Key responsibilities for the group were agreed by the Mayor under cover of MD3401 (paragraph 2.1). It will also replace the Skills for Londoners Board as the key stakeholder forum for advising the Mayor on the ASF including with regard to strategic priorities, outcomes and funding requirements, subject to the conditions of the Integrated Settlement arrangements.
- 2.11 Once the new forum is in place, any further amendments to the Framework resulting from the arrangements referred to in paragraph 2.10 above will be incorporated into the ASF Assurance Framework in-year and shared with the ASF Mayoral Board for decision before publication. This is in

line with paragraph 20.4 of the GLA's Mayoral Decision-Making Framework (MDMF) which states that:

an ASF MD may provide for subsequent and consequential decisions to be taken by the Mayor at the AEB Mayoral Board without the need for a further MD form, including where an overarching MD is approved. The MD should set the parameters within which these decisions can be taken (i.e. in what circumstances a further MD would be required).

- 2.12 In line with the above paragraph of the MDMF, an additional Mayoral Decision may be required where any proposed system governance changes fall outside of the arrangements referred to at paragraph 2.10 above.
- 2.13 As set out in MD3401, the GLA will continue to work with stakeholders previously represented on the Skills for Londoners Board and Jobs & Skills Business Partnership to ensure valuable stakeholder insights are considered as part of a transition period while the new advisory forum is established. This may include a transition board that will meet informally until the new forum is in place. Where appropriate, and to enable continuation of expertise, certain sector representatives may also be co-opted to the new advisory forum from the current membership.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the Mayor must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when exercising his functions. The PSED is a duty to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
 - advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and those who do not.
- 3.2 The protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status (for the purposes of the first limb of the duty in relation to employment), race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Compliance with the duty may involve ensuring people with a protected characteristic are provided with all the opportunities that those without the characteristic would have.
- 3.3 This involves having due regard in particular to the need to remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share a relevant protected characteristic that is connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the different needs of such people; and encouraging them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low.
- 3.4 The Framework includes a Diversity and Inclusion section that references the Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and states how implementation of the ASF promotes equal opportunities. This Decision makes no changes to those arrangements and has no impact on those with protected characteristics.
- 3.5 Any equalities impacts are considered on a case-by-case basis for each ASF decision prior to it being submitted to the Mayor for approval. All ASF Mayoral Board reports, stakeholder advisory board reports and MD forms contain a section on equality comments setting out how the equalities impacts of decisions have been assessed, taken into account and mitigated where appropriate.
- 3.6 The constitutions of the ASF Mayoral Board and the new stakeholder advisory forum will include provision setting out the role of members in ensuring that the diversity of London's communities is acknowledged and embedded in all aspects of their work.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 Delivering the ASF supports Londoners to develop the skills needed to move into employment in some of the sectors considered critical to London's economic growth. The ASF directly supports the Mayor's priorities laid out in the LGP and the SLBG mandate which brings together employment, skills and careers advice providers and employers, in close collaboration with London's local authorities, central government and wider stakeholders to bring together provision, transforming it into a single city-wide Inclusive Talent System.
- 4.2 The Mayor's 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 ASF supports the strategy by ensuring Londoners from disadvantaged groups continue to have access to employability and skills support to help them move into and progress in London's labour market.

Risks arising/mitigation

- 4.3 The Framework sets out robust governance arrangements for managing the ASF to minimise any programme risks. By having and keeping under review an over-arching framework setting out the GLA's approach to decision-making, transparency, audit, value for money and engagement, stakeholders can be confident that any decisions are robust, evidence-based and capable of being independently scrutinised.
- 4.4 Work will be undertaken to ensure any new processes are fully understood by those administering the ASF, that they are embedded properly, and that there is engagement with relevant colleagues and stakeholders at the right point.

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 decision asks the Mayor to approve the updated Framework (at Appendix A) for the 2025-26 academic year.
- 5.2 There are no direct financial implications to the GLA arising from changes to the Framework.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 Section 39A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (the GLA Act 1999) permits the delegation of eligible ministerial functions to the Mayor, subject to certain limitations and conditions. The Secretary of State for Education (SSE) has exercised the powers under section 39A of the GLA Act 1999 to delegate certain functions of the SSE under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (the 2009 Act) to the Mayor by way of letter dated 6 December 2018. The functions delegated under the 2009 Act are:
- sections 86 to 88 which are to be exercised by the Mayor instead of by the SSE, except any functions relating to apprenticeship training or persons subject to adult detention
 - sections 90 and 100(1) which are to be exercised concurrently with the SSE except any functions relating to apprenticeship training or persons subject to adult detention.

- 6.2 In addition, the Secretary of State has delegated Section 100(1B) of [the 2009 Act](#) to the Mayor, and the terms of and conditions attached to the delegated function have been approved by the Mayor in MD3349.
- 6.3 Section 39A (6) of the GLA Act 1999 provides that the Mayor is unable to delegate functions delegated to him under section 39A and therefore must take all such delegated decisions personally and this is specified in the GLA's decision making framework, Mayoral Decision-Making in the Greater London Authority, as well as in the ASF Mayoral Board Constitution. In exercising the delegated functions, the Mayor must have regard to guidance issued by the SSE, as amended from time to time. The Mayor has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the SSE entitled "Delegation of Certain Adult Education Functions to the Greater London Authority" which sets out the agreed understanding of how the delegation will operate, which the Mayor signed on 22 January 2019. The decisions sought above are consistent with the exercise of the delegated functions.
- 6.4 In taking the decisions to be requested, the Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Mayor is referred to section three above.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1 The next steps are set out below:

Activity	Timeline
Publish the revised Framework and ASF Mayoral Board constitution	December 2025

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix A - Revised ASF Assurance Framework 2025-26.

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.

Strategic Programmes

Does this decision seek approval for activity falling within the remit of a programme delivery plan? YES

If YES, which programme/s does this fall within: Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth

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 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:

Richard Kember-Lawrence 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 the 8 December 2025.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Fay Hammond

Date: 8 December 2025

Signature:

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

D. Bellamy

Date: 8 December 2025

Signature:

