

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2733

### Title: Oxford Street Transformation Programme – Public Realm Procurement

#### Executive Summary:

The Oxford Street Transformation Programme aims to realise the full potential of London’s globally-renowned retail and leisure destination with the aim of generating significant increases in economic activity.

Proposals are being developed for the stretch of Oxford Street between North Audley Street/Orchard Street and Regent Street, known as Oxford Street West, to be pedestrianised as the first stage of a large transformation project. These proposals should demonstrate world-class design and an innovative approach to rejuvenating this world-famous street. A consultation will be undertaken shortly on the proposed designation of a Mayoral Development Area for Oxford Street and the principle of pedestrianisation. A decision about whether or not to progress the development of these pedestrianisation proposals will be subject to the outcome of that consultation. Any proposals to permanently pedestrianise Oxford Street will be subject to further public engagement and consultation as appropriate.

It is proposed that external consultants are procured to produce a shared requirements report to enable design and engineering work for Oxford Street West to move forward promptly, should a decision be made to progress proposals for a scheme design following consideration of the responses to the consultation. This decision relates only to the shared requirements exercise and not any future design phase.

#### Decision:

That the Executive Director of Good Growth approves expenditure of up to £74,700 towards the costs of procuring the services of Publica Associates Limited via a direct award of a call-off contract from the GLA’s Architecture + Urbanism Framework to deliver the Phase 1 Technical Requirements for the Oxford Street Transformation Programme.

#### 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:**

24/02/2025

## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. Welcoming approximately 120 million visitors a year, Oxford Street is a major element of the West End, London, and national economies, contributing an estimated £25 billion to London's GVA in 2022. 85 per cent of visitors arrive by public transport as a result of extremely high service provision.
- 1.2. However, factors including the growth of online shopping, the coronavirus pandemic, and limited city level engagement have led to a decline in the perception of Oxford Street as a place to visit or invest in, as demonstrated by high-profile closures and the proliferation of candy stores.
- 1.3. The Mayor's aim is to realise the full potential of London's most globally-renowned retail and leisure destination, and the full benefit of the recent arrival of the Elizabeth Line, through a programme of transformation of the street and its immediate surrounding area. Oxford Street's renaissance would deliver a premier shopping and leisure destination that reflects its place at the centre of a global city, attracting tourists and locals alike, and generating significant economic activity.
- 1.4. The mission of the Oxford Street Transformation Programme is to maximise Oxford Street's economic and social potential as a globally renowned retail and leisure destination and to deliver the greatest possible benefits for businesses in the area, for London and for the wider UK economy.
- 1.5. There is another Mayoral Decision (MD) related to this matter: MD3327, which sets out the approval for public consultation and associated consultation costs to seek views on the proposal for the designation of a new Mayoral Development Area for Oxford Street; the proposed establishment of a new Mayoral Development Corporation for Oxford Street; and the principle of pedestrianisation of Oxford Street.
- 1.6. In order to realise the benefits of the Oxford Street transformation programme as quickly as possible, it is proposed that initial preparatory steps are taken now to prepare for a design phase, should proposals for a scheme design be progressed following the consultation. This will allow the GLA to take into account consultation feedback whilst still moving quickly to arrive at a proposed design, should a decision be made to progress proposals for a scheme design following consideration of the responses to the consultation. This is potentially a two-phase process and this decision only seeks approval for Phase 1.

#### *Phase 1 – Technical Requirements*

- 1.7. The aim of Phase 1 is to establish a clear scope and set of initial requirements for work on the public realm, highways, and commercial activation, including evaluation of transport planning work undertaken previously, to inform any proposed design. This is a technical exercise to assemble existing knowledge across the GLA, TfL, our supplier, and other key stakeholders as deemed appropriate—not a design exercise. We require expert consultancy services to help us achieve clarity about requirements before procuring a design and engineering team to develop and deliver a proposed scheme, should a decision be made to do so following the consultation and consideration of responses.
- 1.8. The scope of this phase would be to: a) establish the scope of the potential public realm transformation, including requirements to enable commercial activation and advertising, and accessibility and inclusion considerations; b) carry out a full evaluation of work done to date on highway designs and modelling by Westminster City Council (WCC) and their consultants; and c) establish requirements for all transport elements of any scheme.
- 1.9. The total cost for the public realm design Phase 1 Technical Requirements would be up to £74,700.

- 1.10. The GLA's Architecture + Urbanism Framework (the "Framework") was procured via a publicly advertised procurement process in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("PCR"). By agreement dated 01 March 2023, Publica Associates Limited ("Publica") became a member of Lot 04 of the Framework. Schedule 3 of the Framework sets out the direct award mechanism by which the GLA may directly award a call-off contract of up to £74,999. Schedule 3 provides that a call-off of services up to the said value may be made via direct award where the GLA is able to determine which service provider will provide the most economically advantageous offer for Phase 1 with reference to the service provider's original pricing and quality submissions for inclusion in the Framework.
- 1.11. The purpose of this initial commission is to marshal all relevant previous work undertaken by the GLA, TfL, and WCC to quickly define requirements. To that end, Publica is the only supplier on the above framework with the expertise and background required; in addition to designing the 2017 GLA/TfL plan for Oxford Street, Publica is currently progressing plans at Marble Arch working with the Portman Estate. We will request that Publica bring in relevant transport expertise as well as other specialisms such as accessibility and commercial activation. The transport sub-consultants identified (NRP) were previously appointed by WCC to undertake the transport elements of its proposed Oxford Street scheme. Both Publica and NRP have a proven track record with WCC and are collectively undertaking work across the area currently.

### *Phase 2 – Design Scheme*

- 1.12. Should a decision be made to proceed and progress pedestrianisation proposals following the consultation and consideration of responses, the Phase 2 process will involve using the clear scope and requirements established in Phase 1 to procure a design and engineering team to develop a proposed transport, public realm, and activation design for Oxford Street. This will be undertaken through competitive procurement.
- 1.13. Phase 2 is not the subject of this decision.

## **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1. The Mayor's vision for Oxford Street is to maximise its economic and social potential as a globally renowned retail and leisure destination and to deliver the greatest possible benefits for businesses in the area, for London and for the wider UK economy.
- 2.2. Achieving this vision would depend upon the successful regeneration of the area, including:
- the development of an attractive and inclusive neighbourhood that welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds
  - the provision of a high-quality, sustainable, and climate-resilient public realm
  - and the curation of the retail and leisure offer, including activation of the street as a visitor destination.
- 2.3. Should an Mayoral Development Corporation be established it would deliver the following objectives:
- to develop strategies and provide visible leadership to address Oxford Street's ongoing under-performance as a visitor destination and economic driver
  - to maintain and improve the attraction of Oxford Street to visitors, investors and employers
  - to build confidence and attract investment by promoting Oxford Street as a globally significant retail and leisure destination

- to facilitate the delivery of detailed proposals for any agreed public realm interventions, and coordinate the management and operation of the street to provide a safe and welcoming environment for visitors, workers and residents
  - to support the development of Oxford Street’s retail and leisure offer, including curating an ongoing programme of activations to provide a world-leading visitor experience
  - to establish a dedicated and locally based team with the right skills and experience to achieve the regeneration of Oxford Street
  - to harness exemplar design, including a strong focus on inclusion and accessibility, to deliver a world-class, attractive, sustainable and climate-resilient public realm
  - to achieve London Plan targets for comparison shopping and office space
  - to improve coordination and build consensus through effective engagement with key stakeholders, service providers, businesses and the local community
  - to develop and implement sustainable commercial and financial strategies to support the long-term curation, activation and operation of the area
  - to respect the role and importance of the two local authorities within whose boundaries the MDA would be sited.
- 2.4. Note that the work captured in this decision would be an initial step toward achieving these objectives.

### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act), as a public authority the GLA and the Mayor must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty which provides that the GLA and the Mayor have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This involves having due regard 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.
- 3.2. The relevant protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, 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. The Mayor’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out how the Mayor works to create a fairer, more equal, integrated city where all people feel welcome and able to fulfil their potential. Equality, diversity, and inclusion are subsequently enshrined within the GLA’s strategies, programmes, and activities.
- 3.4. As part of its ongoing legal responsibility to comply with the public sector equality duty, including its decision-making, the GLA will seek to ensure the removal of barriers that may prevent those with protected characteristics benefiting from the projects.
- 3.5. The Oxford Street Transformation Programme specifically highlights in its core objectives: creating an inclusive neighbourhood that welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds, removing barriers to participation and accessibility. A key focus of the exercise covered by this decision will be to capture

requirements that seek to ensure any proposals for Oxford Street that are progressed are designed inclusively. The planned consultation on the principle of pedestrianisation will include an equality impact assessment that will be kept under ongoing review as the project progresses.

#### 4. Other considerations

4.1. The key risks and issues are set out in the table below:

<i><b>Risk</b></i>	<i><b>Likelihood</b></i>	<i><b>Impact</b></i>	<i><b>Mitigation</b></i>	<i><b>RAG rating</b></i>
Procurement of consultants, contracting, payments take longer than programmed	Low	High	Direct award procurement strategy was selected to allow for rapid onboarding; the team will also ensure finance and legal support are primed ahead of time to assist in contracting and payment.	Amber
Consultants do not deliver required outputs in timely manner or to standard expected	Low	Medium	Team will ensure consultants are appointed who have track record of high quality delivery; brief is carefully crafted to ensure quality results; team will ensure strong project management principles guide delivery.	Amber
Consultants fees are higher than budgeted	Low	Low	Officer assumptions on budgets have included contingency.	Green

#### *Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities*

4.2. The proposed expenditure is expected to deliver against multiple objectives included in the London Plan to promote and enhance the vitality and viability of London’s varied town centres; the Mayor’s Economic Development Strategy; the Culture Strategy for London; the 24-hour London vision; and the Healthy Streets agenda.

#### *Conflicts of interest*

- 4.3. No GLA officer involved in the drafting or clearance of this MD is aware of any conflicts of interest with the proposed programme.
- 4.4. If any conflicts of interest arise during the procurement process, officers will be required to declare that interest as part of a requirement of the Contracts and Funding Code; and will be excluded from the procurement or any other related process or activity. This process will also be in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards for Staff, and accompanying guidance on registering and declaring interests.

#### 5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is requested for expenditure of up to £74,700 towards the costs of procuring a consultant for the public realm design Phase 1 Technical Requirements, to establish a clear scope and set of requirements for the public realm, highways, and commercial activation.
- 5.2. The expected expenditure profile is up to £20,000 in 2024-25 and up to £54,700 in 2025-26.

- 5.3. The draft budget for 2025-26 is sufficient to cover this expenditure within the allocated Oxford Street Transformation Programme budget – subject to formal approval within the Mayor’s budget-setting process. Any expenditure incurred within the 2024-25 financial year will require a drawdown from GLA reserves with a notional budget of up to £500,000 allocated for this financial year to the overall programme.
- 5.4. It is important to note that the 2025/26 budget is still to be fully approved, so is still subject to change.
- 5.5. Any changes to this proposal will be subject to further approval via the GLA’s decision-making process.
- 5.6. The Oxford Street Transformation Programme team, within Good Growth, will be responsible for managing this project.

## **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decision requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the GLA’s general powers under section 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (GLA Act) to do such things which it considers will further: a) the promotion of economic development and wealth creation in Greater London; b) the promotion of social development in Greater London; and c) the improvement of the environment in Greater London. In addition, the decision requested concern the exercise of the GLA’s subsidiary powers under section 34 of the GLA Act to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of the section 30 power. It is proposed that these functions are exercised on behalf of the GLA by the Executive Director, Good Growth. Pursuant to section 38 of the GLA Act, any function exercisable by the Mayor on behalf of the GLA may also be exercised by any member of staff of the GLA, including the Executive Director of Good Growth. Delegations are set out in the Mayoral Decision-Making in the Greater London Authority document. In formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied 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.
- 6.2. In taking the decision requested, the Mayor must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty as described above in section 3. The Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 of this report.
- 6.3. Section 9 of the GLA’s Contracts and Funding Code (the Code) provides that procurement of services valued at more than £25,000 and up to £150,000 may be made via a call-off from a suitable framework. The decision seeks approval for expenditure of up to £74,700 by way of a direct award of a call-off contact from the Framework. As officers have set out at paragraph 1.10, above, the Framework allows for direct award of a call off of a value of up to £74,999 on the basis of the most economically advantageous offer having regard to the service provider’s original pricing and quality submissions for inclusion in the Framework. Officers have set out at paragraph 1.11 how they applied those criteria in the selection of Publica for the direct award of the call-off contract.
- 6.4. Officers have set out at paragraph 1.10, above, that the Framework was procured in compliance with the PCR and that it includes a mechanism for the direct awards of call-off contracts of this value. To that end, the direct award is permitted by the Framework and, as such, there is no need for a corresponding exemption from the Code.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

<b>Step</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
Finalise specification for client support expertise	Agree scope of services	Jan 2025	Finalise specification
Appoint consultant		Feb 2025	Contract signed

- 7.1. Programme delivery will be managed by established officers in the Oxford Street Transformation team. Oxford Street Transformation Programme officers will coordinate with relevant leads in other units to draw on their skills and expertise as required.
- 7.2. Programme-level reporting and monitoring will be undertaken.

**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: To ensure alignment to Mayoral announcement.

Until what date: 15 June 2025, to coincide with Mayoral announcement following consultation.

**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:**

Matt Ruddy has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

**Assistant Director/Head of Service:**

Molly Strauss 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 3 February 2025.

✓

**CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:**

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

**Signature:**

*Fay Hannond*

**Date:**

19/02/2025