

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2776

Cloud Computing for City Intelligence Unit, 2025-26

Programme: Core Enabling Services

Executive summary:

The GLA's City Intelligence Unit (CIU) has a requirement for flexible, cloud-based storage of data; hosting of web servers; and computing for data processing. Specifically, the CIU's work with large, complex datasets can be carried out most efficiently on cloud-based infrastructure. The delivery of data services, and interactive data visualisations, are also hosted in the cloud, for its scalability and high availability.

Cloud services have previously been procured on an ad hoc basis. However, as the CIU's use of cloud services grows to support GLA programmes, an ongoing contractual arrangement is required.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Strategy and Communications approves:

- expenditure of up to £130,000, over 12 months, for cloud-computing services, to be provided by Amazon Web Services (25 per cent in 2025-26; and 75 per cent in 2026-27)
- an exemption under section 10 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code from standard procurement processes on the basis that 'the supplier is unique in its ability to provide compatibility with an existing service'.

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: Chandru Dissanayake

Position: Executive Director,
Strategy and Communications

Signature:

Date: 15 January 2026



PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The City Intelligence Unit (CIU) delivers a wide range of analysis, data outputs and data services each year. These support the work of organisations, and the delivery of our programmes. Examples include:
 - the High Streets Data Service (a collective partnership for purchasing and sharing data)
 - the London Building Stock Model 2 (LBSM2) (a building-level model of information, to inform retrofit and other housing-improvement programmes)
 - Population Projections (used to help inform planning, transport and policy work within the GLA and across London).
- 1.2. This work requires the team to:
 - manage large volumes of data
 - create automated data pipelines, to keep data up to date
 - run algorithms
 - provide secure routes to share data with our partners
 - host interactive data visualisations for our end users.
- 1.3. The CIU has made regular use of Amazon Web Services (AWS) for the past 10 years. Over that time, the CIU has built up a complex network of integrated data systems and security profiles. Some of our systems make use of AWS-specific tools and services (meaning that the supplier is unique in its ability to provide compatibility with an existing service); these could not be easily migrated to other cloud providers. Other GLA systems use more generic tools; these could, in theory, be migrated to other cloud providers. However, this would incur significant cost and disruption, which would not be offset by any potential benefits. In addition, AWS costs remain competitive.
- 1.4. In earlier years, costs for the GLA's use of AWS were paid for through ad hoc credit card payments. However, as our capacity in data science and data engineering has increased – along with the amount of work delivered each year – payment can be more efficiently made by regular bank transfer.
- 1.5. The monthly cost varies. This is because the services are billed by the hour, and we only run systems when they are needed. However, the regular costs are estimated to be £130,000 per year, to be met from the existing CIU budget.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The objectives are:
 - to ensure that adequate storage and computing power is available to deliver our services
 - to provide a high level of availability, security and resilience
 - to provide a flexible infrastructure that supports innovation and continuous improvement.
- 2.2. The expected outcomes are as follows:

- Timely, accurate, and relevant insights are made available to those who need them at the GLA, and our partners, to inform decisions about programmes and investments.
- Staff can work in an efficient and cost-effective way.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The GLA is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty. Overall, no adverse impacts have been identified as a result of purchasing AWS Cloud Services.
- 3.2. The Mayor wants London to be the best place in the world to live and work. The impact of the pandemic was uneven across the city. London is now at risk of losing the critical mix of independent businesses, community/cultural organisations, and local services that characterise local high street economies, and their ability to promote social integration. This has the potential to undermine resilience now and in the future.
- 3.3. The data supported by our cloud-based data services aids the understanding of how policies and programmes (such as High Streets for All) have an impact on groups with a protected characteristic, under the 2010 Equality Act.
- 3.4. The Mayor's Warmer Homes programme (supported by LBSM2) provides grants to help low-income Londoners make their homes more energy-efficient.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. The CIU's activities are key to delivering the Mayor's delivery plans, strategies and priorities – including the Mayor's Economic Strategy, and his Environment Strategy.
- 4.2. Risk assessments are in place for the data services that are supported by AWS. The use of cloud storage seeks to mitigate risks, including lack of availability (down time) and scalability (to deal with peak request loads, and periods of intense modelling activity). The team managing our AWS estate are members of the GLA's Cyber Security Group
- 4.3. The usage of AWS cloud computing will comply with the GLA's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation, including the use of UK-based data centres.
- 4.4. There are no conflicts of interest to declare for any of the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. The CIU is seeking spend approval for £130,000 for AWS to be funded from its existing City data and GIS team budget. The services will span two financial years; approximately £30,000 is expected to be spent in the 2025-26.
- 5.2. The expenditure is part of the Core function. It will contribute towards delivery of the Mayoral delivery plans.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA'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, social development, or the promotion of the improvement of the environment in Greater London. 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 UK
- consult with appropriate bodies.

6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor 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 (race, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, and gender reassignment) and persons who do not (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

6.3. The procurement of the cloud-computing services from AWS is valued at £130,000. Section 9 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code requires that the GLA undertakes a formal tender process, or makes a call-off from an accessible framework, for procurements with a value between £10,000 and £150,000. However, section 10 of the Contracts and Funding Code also provides that an exemption from this requirement may be justified on the basis that 'the supplier is unique in its ability to provide compatibility with an existing service'. The officers have set out, at paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 (above) the reasons that procurement of AWS falls within the said exemption. Accordingly, the Executive Director of Strategy & Communications may approve the exemption, if he is so minded.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1. This work will be carried out according to the following timetable:

Activity	Timeline
Procurement via G-Cloud 14 Framework Agreement – Lot 1: Cloud hosting	November 2025
Delivery start date	December 2025
Delivery end date	December 2027

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? YES

If YES, which programme/s does this fall within: Core Enabling Services

Part 1 – Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? **NO**

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Is there a part 2 form? **NO**

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Paul Hodgson has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Jeremy Skinner 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.

✓

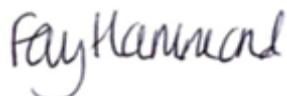
Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 12 January 2026.

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature



Date

15 January 2026