

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2784

Title: Workforce Integration Network Design Lab Knowledge Partner

Programme: Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth

Executive Summary:

This Director Decision seeks approval of expenditure of up to £30,000 to appoint a Knowledge Partner for the Design Lab programme and legacy offer. The Knowledge Partner's role is to capture, codify and standardise insights from previous programme iterations to ensure there is consistency, quality, and scalability across Design Lab resources.

In addition, the Knowledge Partner will redefine the Design Lab's innovation and equity methodology and embed learning from past cohorts to strengthen the alignment of future design labs with the programme's aims and improve the impact of the programme. They will also build capability among delivery partners, supporting long-term sustainability. The expenditure will also cover a designer for the Design Lab User Guide and a video editor for the Design Lab impact review project.

This is linked to a previous decision DD2755 for £200,000 of expenditure for 2025-26.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Communities and Skills approves:

1. In 2025-26
 - a. Expenditure of up to £24,990 for a Knowledge Partner for the Workforce Integration Network's Design Lab.
 - b. Expenditure of £2,000 for a designer for the Design Lab User-Guide.
 - c. Expenditure of £2,500 for a video editor to edit the Design Lab Impact Videos.

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

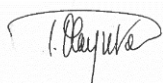
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Tunde Olayinka

Position: Executive Director for Communities and Skills Communities and Skills

Signature:



Date:

2 February 2026

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Mayor is committed to creating 150,000 additional jobs across London and promoting inclusive growth by tackling employment gaps faced by members of London's workforce who face the most barriers, including Black, Asian, and racially minoritised Londoners in the city. Evidence shows that addressing the employment and progression gap for Black and minoritised Londoners has the potential to boost London's economy to £17.4 billion through higher salaries.
- 1.2. The Inclusive Talent Strategy, launched by the Mayor and London Councils in October 2025, aims to tackle persistent inequalities in skills development and employment access. WIN plays a key role in delivering this vision by supporting employers to embed inclusive practices and create pathways for underrepresented groups into good jobs.
- 1.3. It seeks to address barriers that prevent Londoners from entering and progressing in work, while helping employers find the talent they need. The strategy focuses on building a skills and employment system that better develops the capabilities businesses require to grow and ensures Londoners have the opportunities, support, and resources to thrive.
- 1.4. WIN works with employers to address the structural barriers that prevent underrepresented groups from accessing and progressing into good work thereby fostering inclusive growth.
- 1.5. WIN takes an intersectional approach and has identified the following groups as facing the greatest barriers to accessing good work and experiencing significant labour market inequalities, and therefore prioritises them for tailored support:
 - Black men (16-24; and 50 and over)
 - Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black women.

Data also shows socio-economic status and disability as key intersecting factors that impact on individuals' ability to access good work².

Design Lab summary

- 1.6. The WIN Design Lab is an equity innovation and change programme. It supports large employers in London to promote inclusive growth that all Londoners can benefit from. The programme provides a bespoke package of support to businesses to explore the causes of underrepresentation in their workforces in an evidence-driven way, and to design and test approaches to tackling them.
- 1.7. Each cohort is supported over a 10-month period through coaching, workshops, and peer learning to design and implement projects that improve inclusion practices and increase workforce diversity.
- 1.8. The 2025-26 programme will support up to 10 NHS employers in the health sector to improve their workforce inclusion programmes and policies, with the aim of improving access to and career progression within the NHS for Londoners from underrepresented backgrounds.
- 1.9. The WIN team will also deliver a legacy offer for participants who graduated from the 2023-25 programme to ensure continuity of Design Lab projects and good practice, as well as ongoing collaboration amongst participants.
- 1.10. The programme will leverage the partnership established with the NHS London Workforce Race Strategy (LWRS) to support amplify programme impact across the NHS and share best practice at a London-level.

- 1.11. The WIN is proposing to commission a Knowledge Partner to capture, codify and standardise insights from previous programme iterations to ensure there is consistency, quality, and scalability across Design Lab resources. In addition, the Knowledge Partner will redefine the Design Lab's methodological frameworks and embed learning from past cohorts to strengthen alignment and impact of the programme. In addition, they will assess the employer needs of those participating in the legacy offer and shape flexible tools and frameworks that sustain long-term impact and support adoption across sectors.
- 1.12. Alongside this work WIN is producing a Design Lab User Guide. This is a practical resource that explains how organisations can apply equity-centred design principles to tackle workforce inequalities. It sets out the aims of the methodology, which focus on embedding lived experience into organisational change processes to ensure solutions address systemic barriers. The guide provides a clear framework for the Design Lab process, including challenge identification, ideation, prototyping, and implementation, alongside practical tools such as facilitation guides, equity audit templates, and project planning resources. This is a separate workstream to that of the Design Lab Delivery Partner or Knowledge Partner, and is being developed by a consultant, but will be available as a published resource to support and draw from.
- 1.13. The Design Lab Impact Project is an impact review of the first phase of the Design Lab programme which was delivered in 2021-22, showcasing its long-term benefits for employers, programme participants and the young Black men who have secured employment and built careers in the construction, digital and tech industries as a result. The project has produced an impact report and will produce a film series to demonstrate the programme's success and share best practice for tackling labour market inequality. These resources aim to engage employers in the Mayor's growth sectors and inform policymakers on effective approaches to inclusive employment.

Knowledge Partner Proposal

- 1.14. The WIN is seeking to appoint a Knowledge Partner to capture, codify, and standardise insights from previous Design Lab programme iterations to ensure consistency, quality, and scalability across Design Lab resources. They will also produce and update the Design Lab's innovation and equity methodology frameworks and embed learning from past cohorts to strengthen programme alignment and impact. In addition, the Knowledge Partner will assess legacy offer employers' needs and shape scalable frameworks that sustain long-term impact and support adoption across sectors.
- 1.15. The WIN team will commission a Knowledge Partner with expertise in equity-centred design and proven approaches to addressing labour market inequities.
- 1.16. The Knowledge Partner will work alongside the Design Lab Delivery Partner. Roles in the 2025-26 Design Lab Programme and Legacy Offer are set out in the table below:

Function	Knowledge Partner	Delivery Partner
Methodology	Codifies best practice frameworks and methodologies for equity-centred design.	Implements programme activities in line with agreed frameworks.
Standardisation	Ensures consistency of principles, reviewing tools, and resources across the programme.	Applies these standards in practical delivery to employers.
Programme Alignment	Advises on design to embed learnings from previous cohorts and build upon earlier programme successes.	Designs and delivers the employer journey and programme structure.
Legacy & Scale-Up	Assesses individual employer needs and shapes frameworks accordingly for sustainable impact.	Connects employers to legacy offer, delivers workshops and coaching, and supports dissemination of learnings.

- 1.17. By co-ordinating shared practice, and providing guidance that integrates the Design Lab's methodology of inclusion at every stage of delivery, this dual role ensures continuity and consistency of learning, strengthens programme delivery and embeds equity-centred design principles across participating organisations, creating lasting systemic change.
- 1.18. The Knowledge Partner will support the promotion, dissemination and adoption of the user-guide by leveraging existing networks with growth sector employers and supporting the delivery partner to embed the accessible and engaging language into workshops.

Editing and design

- 1.19. The Design Lab user guide graphic designer's role is to ensure the content is visually engaging, accessible, and aligned with the GLA brand guidelines. They will work closely with the programme team to translate complex information into clear, user-friendly layouts that enhance readability and comprehension. This includes designing infographics, diagrams, and visual frameworks to illustrate the equity-centred design process, as well as creating a consistent style for headings, typography, and colour schemes. By combining aesthetics with functionality, the graphic designer will make the guide an effective tool for organisations seeking to implement Design Lab principles.
- 1.20. As part of the impact review project of the first phase of the Design Lab, we require an external video editor to re-edit existing video content for publication on the website and use across social media channels, primarily LinkedIn, to reach employer and policymaker audiences. Re-editing existing footage to ensure it is ready for online publication will allow us to tailor messaging, improve clarity and ensure the final films are engaging and aligned with our communication objectives.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The long-term objectives of the Knowledge Partner's contribution include:
 - embed equity-centred design as a standard approach across programme stages and participating organisations.
 - promote replication of the Design Lab model through widely shared frameworks and resources.
- 2.2. The desired medium-term outcomes of the Knowledge Partner's contribution include:
 - integrate equity-centred principles and lessons learned into programme and legacy offer design.
 - accelerate implementation of legacy projects
- 2.3. The desired short-term outcomes of the knowledge partner's contribution include:
 - develop tools to apply equity-centred design methodology and learnings through the programme.
 - ensure Design Lab legacy frameworks for impact are based on individual employer needs.
 - share Design Lab frameworks and user guide with stakeholders to support adoption.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act), as a public authority the GLA must 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 advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. The relevant protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, 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. WIN focuses on improving pathways for underrepresented groups in the workplace, particularly those who face the highest barriers, such as Black men; and Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Black women. An intersectional analysis showed that these groups experience significant inequality and exclusion because they possess one or more characteristics in addition to ethnicity that compound disadvantage. Further, disability and socio-economic class are also key intersectional factors that can negatively impact on labour market outcomes.
- 3.4. Addressing the inequalities racially minoritised groups face in the labour market could have a significant positive impact on London's economy. Recent GLA research shows that reducing employment inequalities could lead to an additional 290,000 Black and racially minoritised people in work and boost London's economy by £17.4bn through higher salaries.
- 3.5. Equity-centred design methodology underpins the programme. This participatory approach ensures that staff from underrepresented groups are actively involved in co-designing solutions, making interventions more relevant and impactful. By embedding lived experience into the design process, equity-centred design tackles systemic barriers and creates sustainable change. Employers will use this methodology to identify challenges, ideate solutions, and develop projects that address structural inequalities.
- 3.6. The Knowledge Partner plays a critical role in advancing these aims. They will:
 - support participatory processes that amplify voices of underrepresented staff
 - promote resources and frameworks that enable organisations to embed equity in recruitment, progression, and workplace culture.
- 3.7. Through these contributions, the knowledge partner ensures the programme not only meets statutory equality duties but also drives meaningful, long-term improvements in workforce diversity and inclusion.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. The risks, and mitigations, are detailed in the table below:

Risk description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation	RAG rating
Knowledge partner availability or resourcing constraints lead to delivery slippage	Medium	High	Build clear capacity expectations into contract; require a named core team and back-up personnel; phased workplan with milestone checks; monthly delivery assurance meetings.	Amber
Reputational risk if programme outcomes are delayed or do not materialise	Low-Medium	High	Set measurable interim outcomes; communicate credible timelines; publish process learning and early wins; maintain independent evaluation plan.	Amber
Inconsistent facilitation quality across sessions	Medium	Medium	Standardise agendas/scripts; use shadowing and co-facilitation; QA observations with rapid feedback; provide facilitator briefing packs.	Amber

[Links to Mayoral Strategies and priorities](#)

- 4.1. The WIN Design Lab programme aligns with the “Supporting Londoners to benefit from growth” mandate:
 - Embedding good work across the capital
- 4.2. The programme is aligned with the “London level outcome objective”:
 - Londoners have access to good work
- 4.3. The WIN Design Lab is aligned with the recently published London Growth Plan, which sets out opportunities to boost sustainable and inclusive economic growth across all of London’s communities. The programme is aligned the inclusive growth ambitions to ensure that these jobs lead to career progression and a route to higher pay and living standards for all Londoners.
- 4.4. The programme is also aligned with the aims of the Inclusive Talent Strategy, which will build on the capital’s skilled workforce, tackle systemic issues across education and employment to unleash the potential of all Londoners and - in turn - London’s economy. Particularly on aims to reduce the number of Londoners in poverty due to labour market barriers and to increase employment of underrepresented groups in the higher-paying growth sectors.
- 4.5. The WIN Design Lab programme is aligned with the Mayor’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives. It contributes directly to Objective 9 – “to ensure London’s workforce reflects its population at all levels and in all sectors” – by working collaboratively with employers to address underrepresentation in their workplace.
- 4.6. The programme supports and builds on Pillar 4 of the Good Work Standard, which aims to set out a commitment to action for businesses on EDI and their recruitment practices.

Consultations

- 4.7. The 2022-25 WIN Design Lab was designed incorporating learnings from the 2021-22 programme that were captured by the independent evaluators commissioned to assess its outcomes. The evaluation included interviews with participating businesses and stakeholders. The programme has been developed in response to the issues and challenges that partners and stakeholders raised at the time.
- 4.8. The Design Lab was scoped in discussion with industry representatives and is based on specific challenges each sector faces. Ethnographic research, including interviews with workers in the sectors, has been undertaken by the supplier.
- 4.9. The legacy offer has been developed through interviews with participating employers, incorporating their feedback into design.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.10. There are no conflicts of interest to note for any of the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought for the following in 2025-26 financial year:
 - expenditure of up to £24,990 for a Knowledge Partner for the Workforce Integration Network’s Design Lab
 - expenditure of £2,000 for a designer for the Design Lab User-Guide
 - expenditure of £2,500 for a video editor to edit the Design Lab impact videos.

- 5.2. This is linked to a previous decision DD2755 for £200,000 of expenditure for 2025-26.
- 5.3. This expenditure will be funded from the WIN programme budget and there is available budget in the WIN programme budget to meet this expenditure.

6. Legal comments

Legal powers

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Executive Director of Communities and Skills (the “Director”) concern the exercise of the Authority’s general powers and fall within the Authority’s statutory power to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of economic development and wealth creation in Greater London and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority’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 decisions requested, the 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 between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3 The decision seeks approval for expenditure of £30,000 for the procurement of various services. Officers are reminded to comply with the requirements of the Contracts and Funding Code, when they procure the services. Furthermore, officers are reminded to put in place appropriate contracts and grant agreements between the GLA and the relevant service providers.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. The Design Lab will be delivered according to the following timetable:

Activity	Timeline
Legacy offer Initiation meeting Health, Creative and Green Design Lab	October 2025 – March 2026
Recruitment Health cohort	October 2025 – February 2026
Procurement of a Knowledge Partner, service providers through a transparent tender process	December 2025 - January 2026
Programme set up and design Design Lab	February 2026
Graduation Health cohort	October 2026
Legacy offer graduation event	December 2026
Evaluation report	December 2026 - January 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 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

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

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:

Frances Roberts has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Tom Rahilly 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.

✓

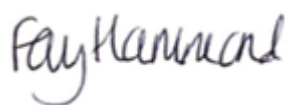
Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 2 February 2026.

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature



Date

2 February 2026