

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2779

### Royal Docks Summer Splash 2026

### Programme: Building More Homes/Royal Docks Team Culture & Activation

#### Executive summary:

In 2024, the Mayor approved up to £64.31 million expenditure (in Mayoral Decision (MD) 3230) for the 2024-29 Royal Docks Delivery Plan. This was to deliver projects supporting three strategic outcomes:

- economic prosperity, growth and investment
- environment, wellbeing and community
- culture, identity and perception

MD3230 also delegated approval of project-level spend to the Executive Director of Housing and Land.

This Director's Decision seeks approval of up to £200,000 revenue to fund the Royal Docks Summer Splash 2026. This is part of the strategic programme to enhance the Royal Docks as a place to live, work and visit.

Approval is required in February 2026 to meet procurement and planning timescales. The proposal was endorsed by the Officer Level Board on 5 November 2025; and noted by the Enterprise Zone Programme Board on 3 December 2025.

Further proposals relating to the third outcome will be considered on 24 March 2026.

#### Decision:

That the Executive Director of Housing and Land approves up to £200,000 revenue spend, to deliver the Royal Docks Summer Splash in 2026. This is part of a two-year programme of cultural placemaking and place promotion activity against the third outcome (culture, identity and perception) of the new Royal Docks Delivery Plan for 2024-28.

#### 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:** Tim Steer

**Position:** Executive Director Housing & Land

**Signature:**



**Date:** 9 February 2026

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

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

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

- 1.1. The Royal Docks is one of London’s largest regeneration and investment opportunities; it is at the centre of an expanding east London region. Once the UK’s gateway to world trade, today the Royal Docks is re-emerging as a major new business and visitor destination, with approximately £5 billion worth of investment planned over the next 20 years. This will deliver up to 38,600 new homes; 55,000 new jobs; and up to 4 million square feet of commercial space.
- 1.2. The Mayors of London and Newham have jointly been delivering the regeneration of the area through its Enterprise Zone (EZ) status. This work is funded through the ringfencing of business-rate income collected within the EZ since its inception. The area’s designation as an EZ has helped unlock significant public-sector investment; and has led to a dedicated Royal Docks delivery team that is helping to coordinate the area’s comprehensive redevelopment.
- 1.3. In February 2024, the Mayor (under cover of Mayoral Decision (MD) 3230) approved spending up to £64.31 million for the next five-year Royal Docks Delivery Plan period (2024-25 to 2028-29). This will deliver programmes and projects designed to achieve three strategic outcomes:
  - economic prosperity, growth and investment
  - environment, wellbeing, and community
  - culture, identity and perception.
- 1.4. MD3230 also delegated authority to the Executive Director of Housing and Land to approve (through Director’s Decision (DD) forms) the income and detailed spending proposals for each project being funded within this £64.31 million expenditure budget envelope.
- 1.5. The period 2024-28 marks an exciting chapter in the Royal Docks’ extensive redevelopment. Thousands of new affordable homes and workspaces are being built; a major uplift to the area’s connectivity and public realm is taking place; ExCeL London’s significant expansion is completing; and unprecedented levels of regeneration and investment signal a step change in the area’s transformation. The Royal Docks Team (RDT) is working with stakeholders and residents to maximise these opportunities. This work will harness the area’s unique qualities, and planned investment, to transform it into an inclusive, sustainable and attractive place to live, work and visit.
- 1.6. This DD sets out the case for the Royal Docks Summer Splash as a strategic placemaking project, within a comprehensive approach to cultural placemaking, marketing, communications and engagement. The work will attract and sustain significant footfall into the area; improve perceptions of it; and, in doing so, amplify and accelerate planned investment and development across the area. This investment directly supports the Mayoral mandate of supporting community, cultural and sporting events in London. It indirectly supports the following programmes:
  - making the most of land
  - building more homes
  - delivering a greener more climate-resilient London
  - boosting London’s growth sectors
  - helping local economies thrive.
- 1.7. Working closely with key stakeholders and communities, the RDT will:

- showcase the Royal Docks’ unique qualities and identity
  - support its exciting transformation
  - unlock the area’s future as a distinctive and desirable waterside destination and authentic cultural hub – one that is at the forefront of creating a fairer and more sustainable city for everyone.
- 1.8. Summer Splash is a centrepiece of At the Docks. This is a summer destination programme that provides a free swimming facility, and associated activities, for local families during the school holidays. It also brings together dockside activities at Royal Victoria Dock, to create a growing leisure and culture destination. Summer Splash is the forerunner for a permanent lido, proposed as part of long-term water activation plans.
- 1.9. This DD seeks approval to spend up to £200,000 revenue expenditure, to deliver Summer Splash in 2026. This is part of a series of initiatives in cultural placemaking, marketing, communications and community engagement. These initiatives will help transform the Royal Docks into a distinctive and attractive place to live, work and visit.

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

- 2.1. This investment aims to build on the considerable momentum already achieved through Summer Splash; and on its role as an anchor project within At the Docks. In 2025, Summer Splash was promoted as the centrepiece of the Royal Docks’ burgeoning ‘dockside offer’, which incorporates local partner events and water-based activities. The event expanded, opening over more days and for weekly ‘late’ evening events. This resulted in higher attendance and greater footfall into the area. Summer Splash attracted broadcast media, including BBC London television news and radio; this raised the area’s profile as a new destination for Londoners. Developments included a daily family activity programme; a weekly disco night; offers at neighbouring dockside bars; and leisure activities. It also led to the viability of a longer-term lido option being explored. The proposed activities have been informed by the ongoing involvement and input of stakeholders and local communities.
- 2.2. Following this approval, the RDT will start full due diligence for the proposed project. This will ensure that services are properly procured, and contracts are distributed fairly and transparently, in accordance with the GLA’s equality policy and subsidy control principles; and in a manner that affords value for money, in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code. This will be done in conjunction with TfL Procurement and TfL Legal.
- 2.3. The Royal Docks Cultural Placemaking Strategy focuses on building a sustainable legacy, within the Delivery Plan timeframe, to achieve its vision of becoming a major cultural quarter with long-term community and economic benefits. Subject to the approval of the Executive, Director Housing and Land, the RDT is seeking sponsorship, funding, benefit in kind, and other relevant and appropriate income and concessions to support Summer Splash in 2026, up to the value of £250,000.

### Expected outcomes

- 2.4. Recent increases in footfall will be maintained and expanded. Dates and activities at Summer Splash, including weekly evening events, will be consolidated. Summer Splash is a main event of At the Docks, a summer programme of enhanced local water-based activities; the Ensemble Festival; and food and beverage offers. The programme is growing the area’s appeal to tourists and locals; supporting the development of Royal Victoria Dock as a unique London destination for culture, leisure and sport; and helping to drive the experience economy.

### Expected outputs

- 2.5. The expected outputs are listed in the table below:

Objectives	Indicators	
Raise profile	Drive content across Royal Docks comms channels: newsletter, website, social media	3 newsletters; 1.5 months of social media; and a web page
	Secured strong press coverage across broadcast, lifestyle, London and listings publications and platforms	30+ pieces of coverage, including national titles and broadcast features
Attract and engage audiences	Summer Splash no of days	24
	Summer Splash attendance	15,000
	Summer Splash evening events	4
	Summer Splash family activities	20
	Creative Network programming subgroup – dockside activity membership/programme	4 subgroup members involved in development of dockside activities
Empower culture and creativity	Resident engagement in family activities	1,000
	Local artist commissions	6
	Creative Connectors programming group	6

### 3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act) provides that, in the exercise of their functions, public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
  - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 3.2. Protected characteristics under the 2010 Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage or civil partnership status (the duty in respect of this last characteristic is to eliminate unlawful discrimination only).
- 3.3. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was prepared in 2023 to support the development of this new Royal Docks Delivery Plan. The 2024-29 Delivery Plan was developed to continue the Royal Docks programme; as such, the EqIA sets out how the proposed programme of activity might impact different groups, including those who share protected characteristics.
- 3.4. The EqIA makes recommendations for how any potential adverse equality effects may be mitigated, and any potentially positive equality effects enhanced. These recommendations were used to inform the 2024-29 Delivery Plan, with further detail about how they may be actioned and monitored. Since the project is part of this plan, it is not felt necessary to prepare another EqIA report.
- 3.5. Strategic projects relating to the third outcome (culture, identity and perception) will directly contribute to the Mayor of London’s key strategies and policies as set out at paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3 below. These policies and strategies are underpinned by a very clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion; and are central to the RDT’s ambitions for the Royal Docks to become a sustainable, liveable and cohesive place that prioritises the wellbeing and prosperity of all its communities.

- 3.6. Inclusive marketing, communications and engagement activities for Summer Splash will champion and celebrate the rich diversity and culture of the area. They will also ensure RDT is prioritising and reaching all local communities, especially those that may feel excluded.
- 3.7. Summer Splash is planned to be inclusive and aimed at all Londoners, culturally and socially. This will be achieved through the programme content; the broad and targeted approach to marketing channels; and access facilities at events and activities. Event planning will engage directly with community stakeholder groups; and the event will bring different communities together to share cultures. In this way, it will supporting social integration.
- 3.8. Equality impact considerations and mitigations are built into all RDT projects as they move forward for implementation. They are a core part of the evaluation process.
- 3.9. Equalities considerations will also be considered by the GLA in connection with all work procured. The GLA Equalities team will be consulted to ensure approaches are inclusive and accessible. All recruitment will fully comply with the Equality Act; and fulfil the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in the section 149(1) of the Equality Act.
- 3.10. This decision is therefore expected to have positive impacts on persons with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act.

#### **4. Other considerations**

##### Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.1. Summer Splash 2026 directly supports the Mayoral mandate of supporting community, cultural and sporting events in London. It indirectly supports the following mandates:
  - making the most of land
  - building more homes
  - delivering a greener more climate resilient London
  - boosting London's growth sectors
  - helping local economies thrive.
- 4.2. It also delivers against a range of Mayor of London policies including:
  - the London Plan
  - the Economic Development Strategy
  - the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
  - Culture for all Londoners
  - Vision for a 24-Hour City
  - the Strategy for Social Integration
  - the Healthy Streets Approach.
- 4.3. It is aligned with the Mayor's Equalities Framework to consider the requirements of relevant equalities groups.
- 4.4. There are no conflicts of interest to declare from anyone involved in the drafting or clearance of this Decision form.

## Key risks and issues

4.5. The key risks and issues are outlined in the table below:

<b>Risk description</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Probability (low, medium, high)</b>	<b>Impact (low, medium, high)</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Poor attendance and footfall at Summer Splash.	RDT	Low	Medium	Summer Splash has become an eagerly anticipated event, popular with local people. Marketing campaigns promote the event to a wider audience, drawing tourism into the area. The event also regularly attracts high-quality media, including BBC London TV and radio.
Project cancelled due to force majeure (e.g. extreme weather, industrial action, illness).	RDT	Medium	Medium	The event can be closed if the temperature exceeds that allowed within the production company's safe working guidelines. In 2025, heat also caused dockside algae bloom, resulting in closure. Hot weather mitigation for staff includes appropriate clothing; coverage of the working area; and cooling aids. This mitigates for anything except excessive heat. The Royal Docks Management Association (RoDMA) has purchased water-testing kits. This will avoid any closure of the dock water, except in the case of dangerous algae or other water conditions. Family programming activities can continue indoors if the water has to be closed for safety reasons.

## 5. Financial comments

5.1. Executive Director of Housing and Land approval is sought for expenditure up to £200,000 revenue in 2026-27 to deliver the Royal Docks Summer Splash in 2026 part of the new Royal Docks Delivery Plan for 2024-28. This is to be funded from Royal Dock's planned 2026-27 revenue budget.

## 6. Legal comments

6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Director concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers; falling within the GLA's statutory powers 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 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 decisions requested, the Director 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. All procurements of works, services and supplies required for the project must be procured in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code (the "Code") and, where the value exceeds £150,000, in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 (the "Act"). Furthermore, the officers must liaise with Transport for London's procurement and supply chain team, which will determine the detail of the procurement strategy to be adopted in accordance with the Code and the Act. Officers must ensure that appropriate contractual documentation be put in place and executed by chosen service provider/supplier and the GLA before the commencement of the attendant works, services or supplies.
- 6.4. The Director must comply with the obligations set out in Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 when taking decisions in accordance with the delegations set out in this decision form or any other delegations in existing Mayoral Decisions. In particular regulation 7 provides that where a decision has been delegated to an officer either (a) under a specific express authorisation or (b) under a general authorisation and the effect of the decision is to award a contract or incur expenditure which, in either case, materially affects the GLA's financial position, the officer to whom the delegation has been made must produce a written record of the decision (regulation 7(1) and (2)). Regulation 7(3) provides that the written record must be produced as soon as reasonably practicable after the decision has been taken and must contain the date the decision was taken, a record of the decision taken with reasons, details of options considered and rejected, if any, and where a decision is delegated under a specific express authorisation, any conflicts of interest. Regulation 8 requires the written record, together with any background papers, must as soon as reasonably practicable after the record is made, be made available for inspection by members of the public including on the GLA's website.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1. Below is an indicative timeline for Summer Splash.

February 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procure a production company</li> <li>• Book lido infrastructure</li> <li>• Draw up plans for event management, and health and safety</li> <li>• Creative Network programme meeting</li> <li>• Plan marketing campaign</li> </ul>
March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative Network programme meeting</li> <li>• Call-out for At the Docks cultural activities</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage local water and safety stakeholders – such as the London Ambulance Service, Atlantic Pacific, Swim England, RoDMA and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution</li> <li>• Develop information packs and safety guidelines</li> </ul>
April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing campaign starts</li> <li>• Creative Network programme meeting</li> <li>• At the Docks cultural activities confirmed</li> <li>• Wider dockside offer agreed as part of At the Docks</li> <li>• Safety Advisory Group agreement to Summer Splash plans/licences signed</li> </ul>
May 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative Network programme meeting</li> <li>• At the Docks programme launch</li> <li>• Programme Summer Splash family activities and water-safety sessions</li> </ul>
July/August 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer Splash delivery</li> <li>• Data and feedback collection</li> </ul>
September 2026	Evaluation

**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: Building More Homes/Royal Docks Programme

### 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:

Kate Anderson has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

#### Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Simon Powell 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.

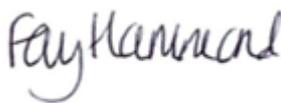
✓

#### Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 9 February 2026

### CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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



**Date:** 9 February 2026

**Signature:**