

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2816

London Regional Defence and Security Cluster (LRDSC) Grant

Programme: Building London Growth Sectors

Executive summary:

The London Regional Defence and Security Cluster (LRDSC) is a collaboration led by industry, academia and the public sector, with the support of the Ministry of Defence's (MoD's) Defence and Security Accelerator. It seeks to raise the profile of regional defence and security; and so encourage growth and productivity. London South Bank University (LSBU) leads the cluster and its steering group. The regional defence clusters form part of the previous government's Industrial Strategy.

The GLA has been awarded a grant from the MoD. It has agreed for LSBU to act as the main delivery partner, to allow the LRDSC to undertake its activities.

The Assistant Director Decision seeks approval for the GLA to administer the MoD grant of £154,875 to LSBU, to support the ongoing operational activities.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director Economic Development and Programmes approves the GLA:

- acting as the accountable body for the London Regional Defence and Security Cluster (LRDSC)
- receiving £154,875 in grant funding from the Ministry of Defence

This funding will be used to:

- support the continued establishment, and ongoing operational activities, of the LRDSC
- enter into a grant agreement with London South Bank University (the delivery organisation)

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

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: Alex Conway

Position: Assistant Director, Economic Development and Programmes

Signature:



Date: 24 February 2026

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The London [Regional Defence and Security Cluster](#) (LRDSC) was formed in 2024. It is a collaboration led by industry, academia and the public sector, with the support of the Ministry of Defence (MoD). It seeks to raise the profile of London's defence and security sector; and so encourage greater knowledge sharing, growth and productivity across the capital.
- 1.2. The MoD has agreed to support regional clusters across the UK. It is awarding a grant of £154,875 to the GLA, which will be the accountable body supporting the LRDSC. The activities undertaken by the LRDSC will raise awareness the role that defence and security industries play in the growth of dual-use technologies such as quantum sensors, AI and cybersecurity. The facilitation of networking and collaboration events between academia and businesses in these sectors fit with the National Industrial Strategy, London Growth Plan and with the BLGS Delivery Plan objective, section 2.2: supporting wider growth clusters to explore innovation in new technologies, new processes and supply chain opportunities. All of these activities can support employment growth and sustainability.
- 1.3. The LRDSC is chaired by London South Bank University (LSBU); the steering group meets once a quarter. This is the first time the LRDSC is receiving a grant from the MoD. The MoD's objectives for the grant are to:
 - ensure the LRDSC membership is attractive to traditional and non-traditional defence suppliers
 - fund associated secretariat functions, such as:
 - handling membership enquiries
 - marketing and communications
 - website management
 - event planning and costs, and partnership building.
- 1.4. The MoD's request is that the GLA acts as the accountable body to administer and monitor the grant, which will be paid in two instalments:
 - first instalment: up to £72,155, paid on signing the funding agreement (approximately February 2026)
 - second instalment: up to £82,720, paid on achieving agreed deliverables set out in the funding agreement (approximately October 2026).

The funding covers two financial years: 2025-26 and 2026-27. The MoD has not made any decisions on future funding.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The GLA will sign a funding agreement with the MoD. This will state that, as the grant recipient, the GLA will monitor grant spend; and achievement of the objectives set out in the funding agreement. It will then process the grant funding to, and enter into an agreement with, LSBU as a named delivery organisation. There is a GLA representative on the steering group. The Economic Development and Programmes Unit will contract manage the MoD grant, as the grant recipient; and report to the MoD on progress against the objectives.

- 2.2. LSBU will submit reports to the GLA every quarter. These reports will track progress against the budget and objectives set out in the grant-funding agreement with the GLA. This agreement is also mirrored in the MoD funding agreement with the GLA.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 requires the GLA, as a public authority, to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by under the Equality Act 2010
 - advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not.

Relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

- 3.2. The LRDSC will contribute to promoting economic development and wealth creation in Greater London. It will do so by encouraging and supporting networking between academia, and private and public sector organisations, through information-sharing (on its website); event; and knowledge transfer.
- 3.3. The steering group’s quarterly reports will detail how they are ensuring the MoD grant is appropriately and equitably used.
- 3.4. The funded activities (such as maintaining the cluster website, hosting events and managing membership of the steering group) will consider equality implications, to ensure they are accessible. The budget also considers costs for any reasonable adjustments if required.

4. Other considerations

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

Description	Mitigation	Residual RAG rating
Grant administration fraud: eligibility fraud, grant diversion, double funding, misuse of funds	<p>GLA has internal procedures in place to manage grant administration. These cover limits on spending approval; budget-monitoring processes; and grant reconciliations for each of these requirements.</p> <p>This procedure is supported by the GLA’s public-facing anti-fraud and corruption policy and due diligence process.</p> <p>The GLA grant manager will review the grant every quarter; and communicate regularly with LSBU.</p>	Green
Conflicts of interest: undeclared personal/financial interests, related party transactions	<p>The GLA has an established conflicts of interest policy; and guidance set out in the GLA’s Contracts and Funding Code.</p> <p>The GLA requires notification of interests to be disclosed; and maintains conflicts of interest registers for individual grant-funding programmes, rather than a central corporate list. All GLA staff participating in this project must comply</p>	Green

	with the GLA policies and procedures; and must complete training.	
MoD grant objectives not achieved	<p>The GLA will sign a grant-funding agreement with the MoD; it will include objectives and milestone dates that will be monitored by the named GLA grant manager.</p> <p>The LRDSC will submit quarterly monitoring reports, for review against objectives' progress.</p> <p>The grant-funding agreement will be shared with the chair of the LRDSC steering group; and monitoring meetings will be established.</p>	Amber
Ineligible spend	<p>The GLA will sign a grant-funding agreement with the MoD; it will be monitored by the named GLA Grant Manager.</p> <p>The LRDSC will sign quarterly monitoring reports for review against spend progress. A budget will be agreed between the LRDSC and the GLA; and monitoring meetings will be established.</p>	Amber
Delivery organisation LSBU not delivering the objectives set out in the funding agreement.	The GLA will have a grant agreement with LSBU setting out objectives. LSBU will be requested to submit an outline budget with an action plan with milestones which will be monitored on a quarterly basis with meetings and submission of a quarterly progress report.	Amber

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.2. The LRDSC supports:

- the Building London Growth Sectors (BLGS) Delivery Plan, section 2.2: supporting wider growth clusters and corridors in London
- the London Growth Plan.

4.3. Our support for the LRDSC recognises the role that defence and security industries play in the growth of dual-use technologies such as quantum sensors, AI and cybersecurity. In addition, the MoD's support for regional defence clusters forms part of the government's Defence Sector Plan for the National Industrial Strategy. These all fit clearly with the BLGS Delivery Plan objective.

4.4. The LRDSC also contributes to a range of other Mayoral priorities set out in other programmes within the Mayoral portfolio, including Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth.

4.5. The cluster activities align with the London Growth Plan, helping academia and enterprises to:

- collaborate and adopt new technologies
- transfer knowledge
- explore joint working
- carry out research and development contributing to business growth
- safeguard jobs

- create employment opportunities.

Consultations and impact assessments

4.6. The project has been developed in consultation with the MoD, and members of the LRDSC.

Conflicts of interest

4.7. No GLA officer involved in the drafting or clearance of this ADD is aware of any conflicts of interest with the proposals set out in this form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This decision form seeks approval to administer the MoD grant, managed by the Economic Development and Programmes Unit. The MoD will provide the total grant (£154,875) to the GLA, which will act as the accountable body for LRDSC (which is not a legal entity).
- 5.2. The GLA will administer the grant to LSBU, as it chairs the LRDSC. In this role, LSBU is responsible for the ongoing establishment of, and operational activities carried out by, the LRDSC – as set out in the MoD funding agreement.
- 5.3. The grant funding will be received by the GLA, as below. Spend will take place in 2025-26 and 2026-27:

	2025-26	2026-27	Total
MoD grant funding	-£72,155	-£82,720	-£154,875
Grant to LSBU	£72,155	£82,720	£154,875
Total	£0	£0	£0

5.4. Future years' budgets will still be subject to the annual budget-setting process. Any contracts that cover future years will need to have break clauses. Any changes in the anticipated spend profile, across the years, will be reflected as updates during the budget-setting process. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. Under section 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (GLAA) the GLA may do anything which it considers will further one or more of its principal purposes that are promoting: economic development and wealth creation in Greater London.
- 6.2. In determining whether or not to exercise its power to further one or more of its principal purposes, the GLA is required to consider the effect this may have on the remaining purpose or purposes – in so far as that is practicable – and, over a period of time, to secure a reasonable balance between furthering each of its principal purposes.
- 6.3. Section 33 of the GLAA requires the GLA to make appropriate arrangements with a view to securing that, in the exercise of its general power, there is due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people. The GLA is also subject to the public sector equality duty imposed by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the exercise of its functions (see section 3 above).
- 6.4. Section 34 of the GLAA provides for the GLA to be able to do anything which is incidental to the exercise of its functions, including its general powers under section 30.
- 6.5. Sections 1 to 4, above, concern the award of grant funding by the GLA. Officers must ensure that such grant funding is distributed:

- fairly
- transparently
- in a manner that affords value for money
- in accordance with the requirements of the GLA’s Contracts and Funding Code, UK government requirements (including those contained in the funding agreement entered into between the GLA and the MoD) and subsidy control principles. Officers must also ensure that grant funding agreements are put in place between – or existing agreements varied – and executed by the GLA and the MoD and by the GLA and LSBU respectively before any commitment to fund is made.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1. The GLA will enter into a funding agreement with the MoD as the grant recipient. The GLA will establish a grant funding agreement with LSBU as the delivery organisation to progress the objectives associated with the cluster. The LRDSC steering group meetings are held on a quarterly basis which is currently chaired by LSBU. The cluster will develop a budget and action plan with key milestones which the GLA will use to monitor progress as set out in the MoD funding agreement. The Chair of the LRDSC and nominated representatives from LSBU will have regular communication with the GLA as part of the monitoring requirements. A GLA representative is a member of the steering group and the Economic Development and Programmes Unit will contract manage the MoD grant and liaise with the MoD providing them with a quarterly progress report.

7.2. The key activities and timelines are shown in the table below:

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	n/a
Announcement	n/a
Delivery start date	1 February 2026
GLA/MoD Funding Agreement issued	February 2026
GLA/LSBU Funding Agreement issued	February 2026
LRDSC website operational and updated	1 April 2026
Events held LRDSC	October 2026
Final evaluation start and finish	31 March 2026
Delivery end date	31 March 2026
Project closure	30 April 2026

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 London Growth Sectors

Part 1 – Deferral

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

If YES, for what reason:

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 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:

Pat Muotto has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 23 February 2026.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature



Date

24 February 2026

pp Abdelreza Nauyeck on behalf of Peter Sebastian