

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2789

London Office of Technology and Innovation – Renewal of grant funding and delivery of Get Online London

Executive summary:

The London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) was established by London Councils in 2019. The award of grant funding to London Councils, to contribute to LOTI's related costs, was approved by the Mayor in [Mayoral Decision \(MD\) 2373](#) and again in [MD3077](#). This decision proposes renewing GLA grant funding to London Councils for 2025-26 – again, as a contribution to LOTI's costs. This will support LOTI's mission to enable boroughs to use technology, data and innovation to improve services and outcomes for Londoners. Funding for 2026-27 to 2027-28 will be confirmed after the Mayor's budget is approved. The GLA budget for 2025-26 included up to £100,000 for LOTI.

LOTI will continue to be hosted within London Councils; and to be funded by a combination of membership fees from London borough councils, and grant funding from the GLA and London Councils. The proposed grant funding will be provided to support the GLA and boroughs to deliver:

- strong digital foundations – supporting the design and adoption of secure, resilient and interoperable tech and data foundations; these will enable large-scale service reform, and provide pan-London insights to London's leaders
- service optimisations – improving existing public services, and achieving savings, by using technology, data and service design methods at scale
- radical transformations – designing and testing entirely new interventions and delivery models for services that are no longer sustainable.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Strategy and Communications approves spending up to £100,000, for 2025-26, in grant funding as a contribution to London Councils' costs in running the London Office of Technology and Innovation.

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 Dissanayeke

Position: Executive Director of Strategy and Communications



Date: 9 March 2026

Signature:

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

1.1. This decision seeks approval, from the Executive Director for Strategy and Communications, to award additional grant funding to London Councils. This is a contribution to the costs of the London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) – the digital-innovation community for London’s local government. Mayoral Decision (MD) 2373 approved the original grant (running from mid-2019 to 31 March 2021); and MD3077 extended funding to 2024-25. This Director Decision outlines the business case and rationale for LOTI; and its proposed scope and funding model.

Contribution to costs

1.2. LOTI will remain funded by a combination of direct funding from the GLA and London Councils; and supported by membership fees. When LOTI launched in 2019, it had 15 borough members; it now has 28. This has enabled LOTI to grow from a very small organisation, with the staff count increasing from three to 13; and to work in more areas.

1.3. LOTI has set out its business plan for 2026-29. Following discussions with its members, including the GLA, LOTI proposes to focus activity in the following areas:

- **Strong digital foundations** – supporting the design and adoption of secure, resilient and interoperable tech and data foundations. These will enable large-scale service reform; and provide pan-London insights to London’s leaders. LOTI’s planned activities include:
 - enabling more collective work on cyber resilience and security: finding cost-effective ways to provide the capacity to prevent and respond to cyber-attacks, and so reduce the risk of catastrophic costs and reputational harm
 - providing project-management capacity to design, deliver and scale digital solutions that warrant being done collectively, including in areas such as AI and smart cities
 - helping boroughs access essential but hard-to-recruit skills in areas such as data science, cyber and technical architecture, by providing training and exploring partnerships with universities
 - exploring better, more cost-effective approaches to tech procurement
 - ensuring London local government has streamlined technical and information governance solutions for sharing data between boroughs and their public-sector partners.
- **Service optimisations** – improving existing public services, and achieving savings, by using technology, data and service design methods at scale. LOTI’s planned activities include:
 - ensuring the Mayor’s Get Online London initiative (Europe’s largest digital inclusion service) continues to thrive after project funding ends
 - continuing to develop the Rough Sleeping Insights Tool, a data platform joining up London’s data jigsaw on homelessness
 - exploring how data can help deliver London’s net-zero and retrofit goals, in collaboration with Warmer Homes London
 - acting as an innovation and delivery partner for London’s Health Mission and public service reform work on the test, learn and grow programme.

- **Radical transformations** – designing and testing entirely new interventions and delivery models for services that are no longer sustainable. LOTI’s planned activities include:
 - creating space to conduct research and development; and de-risk the testing of more radical service interventions, in cases where current service models are no longer viable
 - building more capacity for open innovation approaches, which enable innovators from the public, private and third sectors to support more ambitious and creative thinking around solutions to major public-sector challenges.

- 1.4. LOTI’s budget plan, covering the proposed period of the GLA’s grant, is set out at **Appendix A**.
- 1.5. LOTI’s total core budget is £1 million per year for the next three years. This MD seeks approval for the GLA to spend up to £100k for 2025-26 (around 10 per cent of London Councils’ LOTI running costs per year), via grant funding to London Councils. This is a contribution to the costs of its LOTI project. London Councils will provide match funding (of up to £100k per year); and it is intended that ‘core LOTI’ councils will each provide £33k per year (subject to those councils’ own agreements with London Councils).

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

Objectives

- 2.1. At its inception, LOTI formally set out:
 - its vision: a future where London borough councils are among the most effective digitally enabled public sector organisations, achieving their best for London’s residents
 - its mission: to help borough councils work together to unlock the power of innovation, data and technology, to be high-performing organisations; improve services; and tackle big challenges together.
- 2.2. LOTI underwent a [formal evaluation by GLA Economics](#) in January 2024. The evaluation made the following findings:
 - LOTI has substantially improved digital collaboration across London, receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback from both the survey and interviews with LOTI members.
 - LOTI’s team has an impact far greater than its size. At the time of the evaluation, it had delivered more than 60 [major digital, data and technology projects](#) with boroughs – ranging from homelessness and digital inclusion, to new service models in adult social care and improvements around data-sharing.
 - Members feel supported by LOTI staff; ultimately, LOTI helped them ‘get things done’.
 - LOTI helps boroughs save time and money. Its work on data-sharing agreements alone had delivered £1.4 million in savings, compared to individual agreements between all parties.
- 2.3. LOTI will be conducting a further full evaluation during financial year 2026-27.
- 2.4. Since the original MD in 2019, LOTI’s measurable inputs, outputs and outcomes have included:
 - growing the membership from 15 to 28 boroughs, and the team from three to 13 people
 - producing more than 70 guides, toolkits and templates, created and shared to benefit all boroughs

- hosting 100 events and workshops every year – bringing together colleagues from across London local government and other sectors to share knowledge and tackle specific challenges
- providing £100,000 per year of training opportunities to London boroughs
- running more than 60 projects, including the award-winning Get Online London
- appointing the capital’s first pan-London information governance lead to provide hands-on support for London’s data-sharing needs
- producing more than 300 blogs, weeknotes and articles, as part of its commitment to working in the open and to sharing knowledge
- hosting major design sprints on net zero, digital inclusion, social care, and health; and bringing together digital and data teams with leaders in each field, to design and develop new solutions.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the Mayor of London must have ‘due regard’ of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. There will be continuing opportunities for the GLA to meet its equality duties through its regular interaction with the LOTI and its influence over its business plans. Specific projects developed in this programme will undergo individual assessments to ensure the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 is complied with. Any potential negative equalities impacts will be identified and relevant mitigations considered.
- 3.3. Reducing digital exclusion is a foundational step in supporting London’s communities; improving access to services; and narrowing social, economic and health inequalities. Other important factors are older age; disabilities; learning difficulties; ethnic origin; location; culture and language; and low income.
- 3.4. The Get Online London project is being supported as it is designed to positively impact London by reducing the digital divide faced by Londoners. It is doing so in partnership with London boroughs, the voluntary and community sector, and industry.

4. Other considerations

Key risks in the running of LOTI

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation
Boroughs decide to leave LOTI (or have to leave, due to rising financial pressure on councils); and stop paying their membership fee.	Medium	Medium	LOTI has been a success in terms of the number of boroughs supporting it. At its launch, support came from 15 boroughs, though only eight were expected. Even more have joined since: 28 of the 32 boroughs are now members. LOTI meets at least once a month with all boroughs, in joint meetings and one-to-ones, to ensure they are satisfied LOTI is fulfilling their needs. A focus on helping boroughs save

			money in other parts of their operations is a core strand of LOTI's work.
LOTI pursues aims and objectives beyond its brief.	Medium	Low	The GLA meets regularly with LOTI at various levels – from participating in individual projects to reviewing its overall strategy.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.1. LOTI's activities align with the objectives of Mayoral strategies and priorities. This includes creating a thriving digital and data economy, by fostering innovation; exploiting data assets; supporting partnerships; and attracting global investment. This work is further detailed below.

Mayoral strategies

- 4.2. By driving collaboration across London in technology and data services, LOTI will help to realise the seven Mayoral statutory strategies:
- transport
 - the environment
 - health inequalities
 - housing
 - culture
 - economic development
 - the London Plan.

The Economic Development Strategy specifically supported the establishment of LOTI, co-funded by the Mayor and London Councils.

Data for London

- 4.3. LOTI supported the creation of the Data for London Advisory Board, which will oversee the creation of the first London Data Strategy. Identifying more, and more useful, data collaborations across organisational boundaries will be crucial to the strategy's success. This means spotting where data unique to different organisations may yield insights, service improvements, and the creation of new data services entirely, for the benefit of Londoners. LOTI's focus on data collaborations between boroughs is consistent with this approach.

Adult Skills Fund

- 4.4. The Mayor has also secured the delegation of the Adult Skills Fund. He has pledged to offer basic digital skills for Londoners, aimed people with low or no digital skills. This initiative will equip them with the tools they need to respond to increased digitisation.

Consultations and impact assessments

- 4.5. LOTI's business plan is informed by continuous interactions with all LOTI members. Every month, representatives from each member organisation gather for an 'all-member' session, where projects and LOTI's strategic priorities are discussed. The LOTI team has a weekly meeting with the GLA to ensure its work is aligned with the objectives set out in the grant agreements; and that LOTI is supporting the GLA's needs. The Director of LOTI regularly meets with each member to understand their needs. LOTI works in the open – sharing early ideas for new projects, and encouraging feedback and input from members and partner organisations.

Data protection impact assessments

- 4.6. The decision itself does not have any data protection implications. However, some of LOTI's projects may continue to have important data protection considerations. The LOTI team includes a pan-London information governance lead, who provides data protection advice and support across London local government.
- 4.7. The LOTI staff team, engaged by London Councils, will need to ensure that Data Protection Impact Assessments continue to be undertaken when needed. This in line with the advice from the Information Commissioner's Office, and with the General Data Protection Regulation.
- 4.8. There are no conflicts of interest to declare for anyone involved in either the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. The proposed grant of up to £100,000 to London Councils, as a contribution towards its costs in running LOTI, will be funded from the GLA's LOTI budget in 2025-26. This is held in the Strategy and Communications Directorate.
- 5.2. The proposed funding will be governed by a GLA funding agreement. The grant payment will be made upon:
 - the funding agreement being signed
 - receipt of a summary report detailing annual achievements and objectives for the following year, all scheduled for completion by the end of March 2026.
- 5.3. Any future year's contributions towards this initiative will be subject to the GLA's annual budget setting and decision-making processes. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that:
 - the proposals in respect of which the Executive Director's approval is sought fall within the exercise of the GLA's general powers, as they may be considered facilitative of and conducive to the promotion of economic development and wealth creation 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 health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards achievement of sustainable development in the UK
 - consult with the appropriate bodies.
- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Executive 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, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment) and persons

who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Executive Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

- 6.3. Sections 1 and 2, above, indicate that the proposed contribution of funding amounts to the provision of grant funding and not payment for works, supplies or services. Officers must ensure that:
- funding is distributed fairly, transparently, in accordance with the GLA’s equalities, and in manner that affords value for money, in accordance with the Contracts and Funding Code
 - an appropriate funding agreement/variation of the current funding agreement with LOTI (as applicable) is put in place between, and executed by, the GLA and London Councils before any commitment to fund is made
 - no reliance is placed on, nor commitments made in reliance of, any funds forming part of budgets until they have been approved.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. The GLA and LOTI meet regularly to discuss projects of mutual interest. They also formally review LOTI’s activity twice per year, before agreeing to maintain grant payments (in accordance with decision forms). We propose that this approach continues. LOTI will maintain regular dialogue with its members, as set out at 4.5, above.

Core LOTI funding

- 7.2. LOTI will see through to delivery of its strategy, which runs until 15 July 2029. This covers its work on the areas of digital foundations, service optimisations and radical transformations. There is a thematic focus on areas including net zero, digital inclusion, social care, health and homelessness.

Activity	Timeline
Funding approved	March 2026
Milestone 1 – grant payment for LOTI year seven, on receipt of summary report of annual achievements and objectives for the following year.	March 2026
Evaluation of LOTI	December 2026
Milestone 2 – grant payment for LOTI year eight, on receipt of summary report of annual achievements and objectives for the following year.	March 2027
Evaluation of LOTI	December 2027
Milestone 3 – grant payment for LOTI year nine, on receipt of summary report of annual achievements and objectives for the following year.	March 2028

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix A: LOTI’s income and expenditure 2025-26 to 2027-28

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? No. Core delivery plan.

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:

Azadur Rahman 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 9 March 2026.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Fay Hammond

Date 9 March 2026

Signature