

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3460

Title: Compressor House Disposal to White Goods Venues Ltd

Programme: Building More Homes

Executive Summary:

This Mayoral Decision requests approval for the disposal of a long-leasehold interest in Compressor House, situated on the northern bank of Royal Albert Dock (RAD) in the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone which is held freehold by the GLA Land and Property Limited (GLAP) to White Goods Venues Ltd. The disposal delivers on the ambitions of MD3019, superseded by MD3317, which approved the acceptance of Levelling Up funding via the London Borough of Newham, and Royal Docks Good Growth Fund funding, for investment into Compressor House.

The project is a unique opportunity to link the surrounding communities, especially Beckton and Custom House, with the benefits of the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone programme – in this case through the lens of digital inclusion and creativity.

Decision:

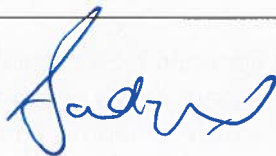
That the Mayor approves the leasehold disposal of Compressor House, for 10 years, from GLAP to White Goods Venues Ltd to deliver good growth, levelling up and Royal Docks placemaking.

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

26/3/26

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Compressor House is on the northern bank of Royal Albert Dock (RAD) in the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone. Built in 1914 with a floorplate of just under 600 square metres, it was designed as a cold storage facility serving the Royal Docks. It retains many original features - including hoists, rails and winching machinery. The building had been vacant for some time and required significant investment to bring it back into a usable condition.
- 1.2. The London Borough of Newham (LBN) successfully applied to the government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and secured £1.725m capital funding to invest in Compressor House's refurbishment (as set out in Mayoral Decision MD3019). A LUF grant agreement between LBN and the GLA (the LUF LBN-GLA agreement), dated 11 May 2023, set out the conditions attached to, and outcomes to be achieved through, this funding.
- 1.3. The Royal Docks Team (RDT) conducted an open-market process to find a new operator for the building. The Really Local Group Ltd (RLG) was ultimately selected and unlocked a further £563,000 of Royal Docks Good Growth Fund (RDGGF) grant (approved in Director Decision DD2634). These funds were for RLG to deliver the capital refurbishment scheme under a licence for alternations in advance of lease execution. Following this, the funds would allow RLG to operate the facility under a planned 10-year lease.
- 1.4. In late 2024, for reasons beyond the GLA's control (and detailed in MD3317), it was decided to end the GLA's grant agreement with RLG. The subsequent approval was for the RDT to take direct ownership and lead on the capital works, and simultaneously run an open process to secure a new operator for the building post-works.
- 1.5. MD3317 approved the authority for the GLA to directly appoint the Design & Build Contractor team (MGL Ltd) already engaged on the project via RLG. This happened and the substantive capital works (save a small amount of reserved operator-specific investment) were completed in June 2025.
- 1.6. Simultaneously, the RDT ran a second RDGGF process to secure a new partner in early 2025. This led to the selection of All is Joy (AIJ) as the preferred candidate to receive a 10-year leasehold interest in Compressor House to run it as an exhibition and events space and provide the required levelling up requirements. AIJ have established a new company to take forward the lease White Good Venues Limited (WGV).
- 1.7. AIJ already runs a venue based in Dean Street in Soho. It operates 1,200 sqm of studios, cinema, event space, offices, café and bar in the former Warner Brothers' De Lane Lea Building, where some of the biggest movies in history were produced. The founders have varied backgrounds in the arts, performance, production and managing engaging flexible spaces for creatives.
- 1.8. AIJ will retain its Soho operation, with an intention to bring the two venues together in purpose (but not in commercial entity). The ambition is to extend the vibrancy and networks of Soho into the Royal Docks, and for the Docks to offer the larger flexible spaces not readily available nor affordable in zone 1. Equally, the ambition is for the Royal Docks (and its communities) to become linked to the Soho networks, offering new opportunities to build partnerships and pathways for local creatives.
- 1.9. This overall approach has safeguarded the external LUF investment in a GLAP asset (now realised); offers some positive financial return (previously it was a burden); and has significant placemaking potential for the Royal Docks.
- 1.10. At the point of termination in late 2024, the RDT had agreed almost-final commercial leasehold terms with RLG. These were based on previously agreed heads of terms, which themselves formed a reserved appendix to MD3178 – the decision that approved the appointment of RLG. These terms were

communicated to AIJ through the RDGGF process and have formed the basis of the proposed terms of lease with them.

- 1.11. The agreed Heads of Terms between GLAP and WGV are a reserved appendix to Part 2 of this decision and its key features are summarised in the Part 2 report. A valuation report (reserved Appendix 2) sets out the terms of the commercial rent agreed between GLAP and WGV, and confirms the terms are market facing and therefore meet the best consideration requirement on GLAP.
- 1.12. A relatively small amount of the project budget has been reserved for WGV to use to cover the digital fit out of the large event space, and this allocation will be unlocked through a Grant Agreement between the GLA and WGV, mirroring that which was in place between GLA and RLC, prior to its termination. This GGF allocation was approved as per DD2634, which was superseded by MD3317 which approved the funds being redirected accordingly.
- 1.13. The project has included the creation of an extended mezzanine level which intends to become a 'front of house' for the Royal Docks programme, inclusive of both desk and meeting spaces, and be home to the Royal Docks physical model. A key element of the overarching business plan for the project includes the GLA (via RDT) paying a commercial rent to WGV. Details on this commercial arrangement and are provided in the Part 2 report. The authority for this comes as a corporate cost approved through MD3230.
- 1.14. There are ambitions for further enhanced investment in Compressor House and the surrounding area, the details of which will secure the necessary approvals at the appropriate time.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The aim of investing in Compressor House is to deliver a project in line with the financial, social and place-making aspirations of the RDT and its partners, notably LB Newham via its LUF proposals.
- 2.2. The ambitions of WGV include the asset becoming a destination venue in the heart of East London, but also bringing significant social value and cultural wealth-building to the local and wider community. WGV's headline aspiration is to turn Compressor House into 'East London's premier community-driven digital culture venue'.
- 2.3. With the project being part-funded by the LUF, outcomes and outputs associated therewith are linked to this funding programme – specifically, in this case, digital inclusion linked to both the council's Levelling Up project, and the Newham Data programme. Other thematic areas of stated relevant focus are Digital and Urban Technology; Young People; Arts, Creativity and Culture; and Heritage.
- 2.4. Specific LUF output requirements, which form part of the grant agreement and lease terms, are provided in the accompanying Part 2 report. Broadly they cover engaging local young people, employment opportunities and footfall via events.
- 2.5. The details of the agreed commercial terms are covered in the accompanying Part 2 report.
- 2.6. The Royal Docks Cultural Placemaking Strategy (2021) outlines the vision to mould the Royal Docks into the cultural engine of London. Within this, Compressor House provides the opportunity to become a destination space, a cultural hub and an event space that converges multiple communities within the Docks.
- 2.7. The RDT is mid-way through a major procurement exercise to secure a master developer partner to bring forward comprehensive redevelopment of Royal Albert Dock (RAD). This includes Compressor House, which will form part of the future developers' long-term plans, subject to the terms of the 10-year lease proposed in this decision. This project will also support these long-term aspirations, through offering insight into what could be realised in the wider area, as well as practical spaces to host meetings and inspire ideas.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 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 2010
 - 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. Relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 3.3. The LUF is, by definition, aimed at equalising investment between and within communities UK-wide. LBN was awarded this funding to, in part, reflect the systemic disadvantages that some of the borough's communities face. The investment at Compressor House responds directly to this agenda. Such structural inequalities are also reflected in the headline LBN policy of community wealth-building; and the growth agendas of the Mayor of London and LBN. These are all core themes running through all Enterprise Zone programme activities. Specifically, the project aims to address digital exclusion by providing (as part of the broader offer at Compressor House) exposure to digital creative skills training and digital cultural activity.
- 3.4. LBN is an integral partner in realising this opportunity. Key to this vision is the borough's commitment to addressing inequality; and creating economic, social and environmental value for all. LBN's community wealth-building agenda will be a key focus for the site: addressing economic and social disparities in local communities; and putting local communities at the centre of shaping a local economy where growth and investment benefit all residents. Compressor House has the potential for significant benefits, including promoting equality of opportunity for local residents and protected groups. This includes local employment, skills development, educational initiatives and broad economic growth.
- 3.5. Whilst commercial in nature, the opportunity seeks to significantly increase the site's added social and placemaking value. It has the potential to be a link (physical and otherwise) between Royal Docks opportunities and the surrounding local communities. Newham is one of the youngest, most diverse places in London – so responding to the opportunity set out here, if delivered well, is likely to be a valuable means of addressing inequality in the area. It is also a valuable vehicle through which several other RDT priorities could be delivered or housed – especially from the RDT Cultural Activation Team's programme.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. This project will help deliver against the following Mayoral policies and strategies:
- the Royal Docks Delivery Plan (2024-2029)
 - the London Inclusive Talent Strategy
 - the Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Inclusive London
 - the Mayor's London Health Inequalities Strategy
 - the London Growth Plan
 - the London Plan

- Culture for All Londoners

4.2. The Royal Docks Enterprise Zone Delivery Programme forms part of the Building More Homes Strategic Programme. There is capacity in the Royal Docks to deliver 35,500 new homes in mixed use developments on GLAP and privately owned sites. The programme includes a range of cultural placemaking objectives. Compressor House contributes towards these as it is activating a GLAP asset and facilitating new cultural activity. This indirectly supports the delivery of housing through the creation of a sustainable neighbourhood that increases demand for new housing.

Key risks

4.3. The key project risks and mitigation measures are set out in the table below.

Risk	Likelihood (HML)	Impact (HML)	Mitigation
Preferred Partner does not deliver on the collective ambitions	L	H	Close partnership working with GLA as anchor tenant on site, alongside a commercial relationship. Lease terms protect interests of GLAP as freeholder/landlord.
Insufficient demand for the proposed type of use in this location, especially given cost of living, low current footfall etc	M	H	Market perspective provided by WGV willing involvement, and nature of their commercial risk. Turnover rent model allows for shared risk (and benefits) albeit with a baseline rent to GLAP.
The wider vision for the provision of a community hub/work/studio space is not possible, resulting in inconsistent footfall.	M	M	Mitigated by having a flexible business model, especially regarding the F&B operation. The commercial terms have been designed to offer this flexibility in an uncertain climate, and in an untested location. RDT as a commercial anchor tenant de-risks the business plan.
Programme delays result in LUF financial contributions not being completed by the required deadlines, thus threatening funding.	L	M	LUF expenditure completed – programme now in delivery. Regular communication with LBN team, who are supportive of the approach. Project is part of a wider LBN-led programme, being managed as a portfolio, so will be de-risked through this process.

Consultations and impact assessments

4.4. The RDT since 2023, and now the Preferred Partner (since Autumn 2025) have engaged with local communities to raise awareness and grow a relationship between the renovated building and local community use. The most prominent example of this was the community takeovers held during the September Royal Docks Original (RDO) festival which saw a number of community groups both in partnership with the RDT and independently, use the building for community uses. This was an opportunity to grow awareness, test the buildings use and function, and start to build up relationships for the coming period.

- 4.5. Capturing the impact of Compressor House (across a range of dimensions) falls within the ongoing work of the Royal Docks success framework. There are also ongoing monitoring and reporting requirements for both LUF and RDGGF which will help understand the impact that the project is having locally.
- 4.6. All issues of data protection (GDPR) are duly addressed via the lease and/or Grant Agreement between the relevant parties.
- 4.7. There are no conflicts of interest to declare from any of the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this Mayoral Decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. The proposed 10-year lease secures an occupier for Compressor House through which financial and social benefits would be realised by GLAP and the Royal Docks area. The income received from WGV will be included within GLAP's budget.
- 5.2. Additional comments are provided in the Part 2 form.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. Section 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) (GLA Act) gives the Mayor a general power to do anything that he considers will further one or more of the principal purposes of the GLA as set out in section 30(2), which are:
 - promoting economic development and wealth creation in Greater London
 - promoting social development in Greater London
 - promoting the improvement of the environment in Greater London.
- 6.2. Additionally, in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers confirm they 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 in Greater London; promote the reduction of health inequalities between persons living in Greater London; contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the UK; and contribute towards the mitigation of or adaptation to climate change in the UK
 - consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.3. Under section 34 of the GLA Act, which allows the Mayor to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of any of his functions (including his functions under section 30) and the Mayor's powers (under Section 38 of the GLA Act) to delegate to any GLA member of staff functions of the GLA that are exercisable by him, the foregoing sections of this report indicate that the Mayor has the power to agree to the decisions set out in this decision.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Lease executed	End of March 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 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: Building more homes

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 – YES

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Matt Davies has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Tim Steer has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Tom Copley has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

This decision was agreed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on the 23 March 2026.

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Date 25 March 2026

Signature



pp on behalf of Fay Hammond

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor

Date 23 March 2026

Signature

