

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2824

EIT grant funding – Urban Data Exchange

Programme: Core Enabling Services

Executive summary:

The Urban Data Exchange (UDX) was an innovation and research project funded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology's digital arm, EIT Digital (now 28DIGITAL). It was delivered in 2021 through a consortium led by Digital Catapult. As a consortium partner of UDX, the GLA's City Intelligence Unit provided pilot use cases; and helped shape the product requirements and features.

The claims process for UDX partners was paused due to Brexit, and the UK's departure from Horizon programmes (the ultimate funder for EIT Digital programmes). UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) picked up the case in 2023; and the GLA has accepted the principles agreed by the UK government with the original funders, EIT Digital, including that participants individually pay membership fees to EIT at the rate for that type and size of organisation.

For UKRI to release the grant of £72,852.06, the GLA is required to pay £19,230.77. This is the membership fee set by EIT in 2021, for 'large' external partners.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Strategy & Intelligence approves:

- accepting a grant of £72,852.06 from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), for work carried out on Urban Data Exchange
- a one-off payment of £19,230.77 to 28DIGITAL (formerly EIT Digital), in return for the provision of a support letter template (one of the UKRI requirements).

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: Jeremy Skinner

Position: Assistant Director - City Intelligence

Signature: Approval received via email from Jeremy Skinner, Assistant Director, Strategy, Intelligence and Analysis to Paul Hodgson on 2 April 2026.

Date: 13 April 2026

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The GLA has a role to play in ensuring an ethical, user-centred approach to adopting new ‘smart city’ technologies in London. These include sensors and other Internet of Things devices. It also needs to join up disparate data sources, to address some of the most pressing urban challenges facing today’s cities. These challenges include developing low-carbon transport and buildings; and efficient management of infrastructure. In 2020, Digital Catapult – the UK’s innovation agency for advanced digital technology – led a project to develop a cloud-based product focused on managing and sharing real-time urban data. This was called the Urban Data Exchange (UDX).
- 1.2. The UDX programme was funded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) – an EU body dedicated to boosting innovation in digital transformation across Europe. In particular, EIT provides funding for scaling up technologies, and supporting services to its members.
- 1.3. As a consortium partner of UDX, the GLA’s City Intelligence Unit (CIU) provided pilot use cases and helped shape the product requirements and features. The GLA also carried out several tests of open-source solutions for some of the modules required by a smart-city platform. Work was delivered through a combination of a one-year fixed-term developer post, and part-time allocation of an existing staff member.
- 1.4. In the 2021-22 financial year, the work packages assigned to the GLA were completed; an activity report was submitted to the lead partner; and a claim was submitted to EIT Digital (now 28DIGITAL) and approved. Unfortunately, the claim process for members was paused due to Brexit, and the UK’s departure from EU Horizon programmes (the ultimate funder for EIT Digital programmes).
- 1.5. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) picked up the case in 2023, when the UK government made provision to pay grants to completed but unpaid EU-funded projects. The GLA has accepted the principles agreed by the UK government with the original funders, EIT Digital including that participants individually pay membership fees to EIT at the rate for that type and size of organisation. For UKRI to release the original grant of £72,852.06 to the GLA, the GLA will pay £19,230.77 to EIT (the membership fee for 2021). Although the GLA is a relatively small part of the UDX project, 28DIGITAL counts it as a ‘large’ organisation based on its headcount and turnover.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. This Assistant Director Decision seeks approval to:
 - pay the membership fee to EIT
 - accept funding from UKRI for the delivered work.
- 2.2. The objective of the programme itself, from the GLA’s perspective, was to solve the wider technical problems that a city authority faces, but that were out of scope for the UDX platform. This included passing data up to the UDX platform; and ingesting, storing and managing access to data from UDX. We built on previous ‘urban sharing platform’ work carried out by both Milan and London in the Sharing Cities project (MD1574). We also built on work carried out by the Olympic Park authority in London, who had solved some of technical problems but had not created a complete solution.
- 2.3. The outcome for UDX was that they could test their design against ‘real-world’ problems and data. The outcome for the GLA was that we could evaluate, in detail, the performance at scale of individual potential components; and how well they worked together.

- 2.4. Learning from this programme has subsequently informed the design of the Mayor's Data for London programme.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. The GLA is subject to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 requires the identification and evaluation of the likely potential impacts, both positive and negative, of GLA decisions on those with protected characteristics. The Mayor must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may involve, in particular, removing or minimising any disadvantage suffered by those who share a relevant protected characteristic, and taking steps to meet the needs of such people. In certain circumstances, compliance with the Equality Act 2010 may involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without it.
- 3.2. The project is considered unlikely to have a particular impact, or difference in impact, on any persons with a protected characteristic. However, we have made several considerations:
 - Day to day, there would be some internal changes to the organisation in the form of business processes. However, this is not expected to create any adverse impact on staff with protected characteristics. We will monitor this; any matters that arise will be managed in line with HR policies, and the GLA's commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion.
 - Externally, this project should help support more transparency in the use of sensor and other smart-city technologies in London. It will allow information to be more accessible and searchable.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1. A potential risk is that the GLA makes a payment for 28DIGITAL membership; but does not receive the support letter required by UKRI. However, EIT has confirmed that it will provide the letter upon receipt of membership fees.
- 4.2. A further risk is that either the GLA, or the work carried out, fails to meet UKRI's requirements; and so the GLA does not receive the grant payment. However, UKRI has confirmed that the GLA has supplied adequate paperwork to support the payment.
- 4.3. The work undertaken directly supports intervention strand 4: driving data innovation, within the Upgrading London's infrastructure delivery plan.
- 4.4. No officer involved in the drafting or clearance of this document has any conflicts of interest to declare.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought to make a one-off payment of £19,230.77 (from CIU budget code G0220) to 28DIGITAL, to cover the outstanding one-year membership fee for 2021.
- 5.2. UKRI will provide grant funding of £72,852.06. This it will be allocated the same CIU budget code (G0220) to offset the spend at 5.1. The grant will be paid in arrears.
- 5.3. The balance of £53,621.29 will be available to further develop our approach to data analysis and data sharing in 2026-27.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

6.1. This work will be delivered according to the following timetable:

Activity	Timeline
Registration with EIT	Complete
Payment of membership fees to 28DIGITAL	April 2026
Receipt of funding from UKRI	June 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? NO

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:

Paul Hodgson 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 13 April 2026.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature



Date 13 April 2026