

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3494

GLA Central Marketing Budget 2025-26 (supplementary), 2026-27, 2027-28

Executive Summary:

The Greater London Authority (GLA) has a responsibility to keep Londoners informed on, and engaged in, the work of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. The GLA's centralised marketing process allows for planning long-term resource strategically and communicating the Mayor's work and priorities in an integrated, cost-effective and impactful way.

A fully resourced central marketing budget is vital to ensuring the GLA can provide information and support to Londoners, for example:

- helping Londoners through the cost-of-living crisis with information about benefits and discounts
- linking Londoners with food-poverty support
- connecting young people to mentorships and other opportunities.

This Mayoral Decision (MD) therefore seeks to approve spend of up to £1.35 million in each of 2026-27 and 2027-28, to deliver integrated, cost-effective campaigns and communications that serve Mayoral priorities. This adjusts the initial £1 million budget introduced in 2017, in accordance with inflation since then. This MD also seeks to approve an additional £100,000 for the 2025-26 central marketing budget (agreed in MD3410), reflecting inflationary pressures faced during the year.

Decision:

That the Mayor of London:

- approves expenditure of up to £1.35 million in each of 2026-27 and 2027-28, as a central marketing budget, on services and tools required to deliver effective marketing communications, digital communications and engagement campaigns for the Greater London Authority (GLA)
- approves the allocation of an additional £100,000 to the 2025-26 Central Marketing Budget to offset inflationary increases within that year
- delegates authority to the Assistant Director, External Relations, in consultation with the Mayoral Director, Communications to approve the allocation of the central marketing budget approved by this decision.

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:

15/04/26

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Greater London Authority (GLA) has a responsibility to keep Londoners informed on, and engaged in, the work of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. This includes making Londoners aware of the Mayor's statutory responsibilities, so that they can respond to statutory consultations or attend statutory events (such as People's Question Time with the Mayor and the London Assembly). It also includes making Londoners aware of wider opportunities that stem from the Mayor's work, such as events, programmes and services across the capital.
- 1.2. The central marketing budget is also used to inform Londoners about the Mayor's policies, programmes, events and activities. In this way, it enables Londoners to better understand and engage with the GLA's work. The budget will also support new and ongoing campaign activity, driven by a need to align communications activity to support policy priorities. This covers a broad spectrum of marketing and communications-related activity, including:
 - strategy
 - research
 - creative services
 - advertising
 - digital
 - print and production
 - content production
 - tools and services required to deliver the work of the Marketing Campaigns and Digital Communications teams.
- 1.3. This work includes, but is not limited to:
 - media planning and buying, including print and digital advertising, social media and paid search
 - printing, distribution and production costs associated with using TfL advertising space
 - developing a media-buying strategy, and auditing fees
 - user research and testing (qualitative and quantitative research)
 - content production, including a range of creative and digital assets, such as social media content
 - video and photography, including production tools, filming and editing services, and livestreaming
 - email marketing, including strategy, tools and assets
 - creative agency and freelance requirements
 - communications and media reporting and analysis, including tools and subscription services
 - strategic work to maximise the impact of marketing campaigns and digital communications.

- 1.4. The GLA's Marketing Campaigns, Digital Communications, Creative and Press teams are collectively responsible for communicating and engaging with Londoners about the Mayor's work and priorities. The teams work alongside GLA departments that require marketing and public communications support. The central teams collaboratively provide a strategic consultation service and campaign management, as required. The teams also work closely with TfL, and other functional bodies, on significant campaigns to maximise impact and ensure value for money.
- 1.5. Since its introduction in 2017, the GLA's central marketing budget has remained constant at £1 million. (There were exceptions in 2021-22 and 2022-23, when – due to the COVID-19 pandemic – the budget was reduced to £700,000.) However, over the past eight years, rising inflation means we have been unable to deliver the same scale and efficiency of marketing campaigns across GLA priorities as envisaged in its inception.
- 1.6. The central marketing budget also provides for the services and subscriptions that support the GLA's communications. These include agencies, creative software and digital subscriptions essential to our press, digital and social media communications. These costs have all increased since 2017, due to market changes and the increased complexity of our requirements. Nonetheless, these services remain essential for our work.
- 1.7. Accordingly, this decision seeks approval from the Mayor to:
 - increase the central marketing budget, in line with inflation, to £1,350,000
 - retroactively add £100,000 to the 2025-26 budget.
- 1.8. This decision invites the Mayor to delegate decisions on allocating funding between the various campaigns, and communications and engagement activities to the Assistant Director, External Relations, in consultation with the Mayoral Director, Communications.
- 1.9. This decision also invites the Mayor to approve seeking, receiving and spending additional sponsorship by the GLA, from suitable corporate partners, for the GLA Marketing, Creative and Digital teams' activities. This will be in accordance with the Contracts and Funding Code and Sponsorship Policy. The sponsorship will bring direct and indirect financial contributions and in-kind support to support the teams' activities. This will be determined based on campaign or project objectives.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. Objectives and benefits of the central marketing budget include:
 - strategic annual planning, and a coordinated and holistic view of how the GLA communicates with Londoners
 - full accountability and transparency over spend on marketing communications, digital communications and engagement campaigns
 - better value for money for Londoners – for example, visibility of annual budgets has helped to achieve cost savings
 - more concise budget control, enabling the GLA's Marketing and Digital Communications teams to work in an agile way; and to respond quickly to external factors and changing priorities
 - greater efficiency within the finance and procurement processes.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Mayor and the GLA must comply with the public sector equality duty (PSED), and 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 people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those 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. Consideration of the PSED is not a one-off task. The duty must be fulfilled before taking a decision, at the time of taking a decision, and after the decision has been taken, to ensure that equalities impacts are kept under ongoing review.
- 3.3. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirements to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), race (ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, and sexual orientation.
- 3.4. The development of all GLA marketing campaigns includes consideration of their target audiences. In every case, materials are assessed to ensure they are fully accessible. The GLA will ensure that marketing materials reflect the diversity of London's population. The GLA's owned channels are also fully compliant with best practice on accessibility.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1. The proven success of our approach, outlined below, will be at risk if the central marketing budget is not approved; and if seeking other alternatives would reduce efficiency. A smaller budget, or a budget devolved to other departments across the GLA, would mean less impactful campaigns for Londoners; and would have a detrimental effect on the ways of working to deliver these campaigns and activities.
- 4.2. The GLA's centralised marketing, planning and budgeting process, introduced in 2017-18, has led to significant improvements in the GLA's marketing and digital communications function. This includes working more strategically and efficiently, and with agility. This enables the Marketing Campaigns and Digital Communications teams to respond quickly to external events and changing priorities.
- 4.3. This process has the following key benefits:
 - streamlined messaging, to ensure we are not communicating in an uncoordinated way; this approach enables us to reach a greater breadth of Londoners, ensuring different audiences can engage with the messages that are most relevant to them
 - improved digital communications – this ensures we are reaching Londoners online effectively, and with appropriate content
 - maximising the effectiveness of the marketing and digital resources – this ensures we respond quickly to external factors and changing priorities
 - delivering better value for money for Londoners – for example, annual licences for tools and paid-search strategies for London.gov.uk.

4.4. The GLA's marketing campaigns and digital communications function plans and delivers communications and campaigns linked directly to the Mayor's programmes. These include, for example:

- providing opportunities for young people
- preventing violence against women and girls
- combating homelessness.

It also plays an important role in providing information and support to Londoners proactively, and in response to external events and developments – for example:

- helping Londoners through the cost-of-living crisis with information about benefits, grants and discounts
- linking Londoners with food-poverty support
- improving access to affordable homes, and ensuring tenants are fully informed of their legal rights
- connecting young people to mentorships and other opportunities.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.5. This work is linked directly to the GLA's core business objectives to:

- increase awareness of the work that the GLA (including the Mayor and the London Assembly) is doing on behalf of Londoners
- increase Londoners' understanding, engagement and participation in key projects, events and campaigns
- increase Londoners' opportunities to access and influence the work of the GLA.

Impact assessments and consultations

4.6. The GLA will ensure services are procured competitively, and sponsorship activities are managed in a fair and open manner, in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code, and Sponsorship Policy. Officers consistently aim to secure value for money, and make efficient use of funds.

4.7. The central marketing budget will be closely managed and monitored to ensure effective and appropriate use of GLA resources. It is not considered necessary or appropriate to consult any other bodies on this proposed decision before it is submitted for approval.

Conflicts of interest

4.8. There are no conflicts of interest to note for anyone involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

5.1. This decision requests approval to spend £1.35 million, in both 2026-27 and 2027-28, to effectively deliver marketing and engagement campaigns for the GLA. The spend will be funded in each year from the budget allocation of £1 million for the External Relations Unit, and an additional top up of £0.35 million from within the budget allocation, approved in the GLA: Mayor budget for 2026-27, of £8.3 million for increasing visitors to and investment in London (allocated to the Boosting London's growth sectors programme). This budget is held within the External Relations Unit (part of the

Strategy and Communications Directorate), which will be responsible for the delivery of the GLA’s external campaigns and the associated spend. The relevant budget transfers will be made. Expenditure in 2027-28 is subject to this funding being allocated in the GLA: Mayor budget for that year.

- 5.2. This decision also requests an additional £100,000 to be applied retroactively to the 2025-26 central marketing budget (as previously agreed in MD3410). It should be noted that this £100,000 has already been committed and will come out of 2025-26 budgets. Future allocations, for the 2026-27 financial year, will come from the funding allocated in the budget for that year.
- 5.3. It should be noted that, while it is intended that any sponsorship income secured for specific campaigns will be used in supplementing GLA resources, officers will look to make efficiencies to reduce the GLA contribution to campaign costs wherever possible.
- 5.4. Although the central marketing budget has remained the same since 2017, inflation has risen over the past eight years. According to the Bank of England’s [inflation calculator](#), an inflation-adjusted budget of £1,000,000 would now be equivalent to £1,348,000 (based on 2017 to August 2025).
- 5.5. The table below sets out a range of possible inflationary calculations, showing that a £1,000,000 budget in 2017 would be equivalent to:

Measure	2025 equivalent	Description
Inflation	£1,348,000	Based on inflationary increase
Simple purchasing power	£1,419,000	Based on retail price index
Economic cost of project	£1,369,000	Based on share of GDP
Labour cost of project	£1,374,000	Based on wage index

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. Under section 30(1) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (the GLA Act), the Mayor – acting on behalf of the GLA – has the power to do anything that he considers will further any one or more of the GLA’s principal purposes, 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. In deciding whether or how to exercise the general power in section 30(1), section 30 (4) of the GLA Act requires the GLA to have regard to the effect which the proposed exercise of the power would have on:
 - the health of persons in Greater London
 - health inequalities between persons living in Greater London
 - the achievement of sustainable development in the UK
 - climate change, and the consequences of climate change.

- 6.3. Where the GLA exercises the power under section 30(1), pursuant to section 30(5) it must do so in the way which it considers best calculated to:
- promote improvements in the 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
 - contribute towards the mitigation of, or adaptation to, climate change, in the UK.
- 6.4. The GLA must also make arrangements with a view to securing that in the exercise of the power in section 30(1) there is due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people in accordance with section 33 of the GLA Act and consult with such bodies or persons as the GLA may consider appropriate in this particular case in accordance with section 32 of the GLA Act.
- 6.5. Under section 34 of the GLA Act, the GLA, acting by the Mayor, the Assembly, or both jointly, may do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of any functions of the GLA exercisable by the Mayor; or, as the case may be, by the Assembly, or by both acting jointly. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the GLA's powers under sections 30 and 34 of the GLA Act.
- 6.6. Under section 38 of the GLA Act, any function exercisable by the Mayor on behalf of the GLA may also be exercised by a member of the GLA's staff – albeit subject to any conditions that the Mayor sees fit to impose. To this end, the Mayor may make the requested delegation to the Assistant Director, External Relations, subject to the conditions and requirements set out in this decision.
- 6.7. Section 31 of the GLA Act places limits on the general power and prohibits the GLA from incurring expenditure on anything that may be done by Transport for London, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, or the London Fire Commissioner.
- 6.8. In taking the decisions requested of him, the Mayor must have due regard to the PSED contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.9. Depending on the nature and detail of any sponsorship arrangements, the GLA may be able to rely on its general and incidental powers to seek sponsorship and under its power to charge third parties for discretionary services, under section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003, provided that the charges levied do not exceed the costs of provision. If the delegation proposed in this decision is approved, the seeking, receipt and use of sponsorship may be approved by the Assistant Director, External Relations. Sponsorship arrangements entered into by the GLA must be in accordance with its Sponsorship Policy.
- 6.10. Should the Mayor make the decisions sought, officers must ensure that:
- any services and supplies required for the effective marketing communications, digital communications and engagement campaigns for the GLA are procured in consultation with TfL's Procurement and Commercial team, and in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code
 - the GLA and service providers/suppliers enter into and execute contracts for the provision of the same before such services and supplies begin
 - no reliance is placed upon sponsorship income before a legally binding commitment is secured from the sponsor
 - they follow the GLA's guidance on the use of GLA resources at all times when undertaking marketing communications, digital communications and engagement campaigns.

6.11. If the Mayor makes the decisions sought, the Assistant Director, External Relations, must comply with the obligations set out in the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 when taking decisions in accordance with the delegation set out in this decision form. In particular, regulation 7 provides that:

- where a decision has been delegated to an officer either:
 - under a specific express authorisation
 - under a general authorisation
- 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; and details of options considered and rejected, if any
- 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, be made available for inspection by members of the public (including on the GLA's website) as soon as reasonably practicable after the record is made.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1. The project will be delivered according to the following timetable:

Activity	Timeline
Delivery start date	March 2026
Delivery end date	March 2028

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? NO

If YES, which programme/s does this fall within:

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 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:

Jared Shurin has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following: ✓

Sponsoring Director:

Chandru Dissanayeke has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities. ✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Sarah Brown has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations. ✓

Advice:

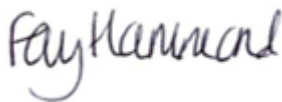
The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal. ✓

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.



Signature

Date 2 April 2026

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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



Signature

Date 2 April 2024

pp on behalf of David Bellamy