

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2779

### Direct award contract to Future of London for the delivery of the Council-Led Housing Network

#### Executive summary:

This decision seeks approval to spend £55,000 on directly awarding a contract to Future of London (FoL) to deliver the next phase of the Council-Led Housing Network (CLHN). The CLHN supports London borough councils with their housing delivery ambitions; and increases their capacity, skills and expertise. This expenditure will enable delivery of the CLHN from November 2025 until May 2028.

The CLHN will support commitments made in the London Housing Strategy; and outcomes set out in the delivery plans for building more homes, making best use of land and improving London's housing stock delivery plans. It will achieve these outcomes by, among other things, helping councils identify how best to enable new development; and promoting greater collaboration between council teams that are key to enabling development (such as housing development teams; and planning, procurement and finance teams).

#### Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Investment and Operations approves expenditure of £55,000 – via direct award of a contract through the Ealing Procurement Framework – to deliver the next phase of the Council-Led Housing Network from December 2025 until May 2028. This is broken down as follows:

- £22,000 in 2025-26
- £22,000 in 2026-27
- £11,000 in 2027-28.

#### AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

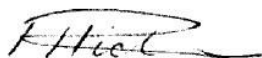
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

**Name:** Rachael Hickman

**Position:** Assistant Director of Investment and Operations

**Signature:**



**Date:**

08/09/2025

## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. The Council-Led Housing Network (CLHN) supports council housing delivery; and the building of capacity, skills and expertise amongst councils. This work supports the Mayor's commitment to deliver 40,000 new council homes by the end of 2030. The CLHN meets three Mayoral housing mandates: building more homes; making best use of land; and improving London's housing stock. Supporting the next phase of the CLHN also meets commitments made in the London Housing Strategy to deliver 'a package of investment, skills and expertise from City Hall to enable councils to build more homes'.
- 1.2. The current phase of the CLHN engages with council housing development teams and is built around four key programme pillars:
  - Expert panel – councils can seek advice (twice a month) on pressing housing delivery challenges from a team of multi-disciplinary experts.
  - Housing development peer groups – councils can access a peer network of other councils; and come together to discuss pressing development issues. Examples include peer groups focused on design and small sites.
  - Resource library – the CLHN offers access to an extensive library of resources to help councils navigate the complexities of council-led housing development. The library includes best-practice case studies on council-led delivery, and summaries from expert panel sessions.
  - Twinning – connects a small number of councils addressing similar project challenges.
- 1.3. In 2022-23, nearly 11,000 new council homes were started; and local authorities in London built twice as many council homes as the rest of the country combined. However, councils are now struggling to increase delivery due to various factors, including higher costs associated with responding to the temporary accommodation crisis. The CLHN helps support delivery and capacity-building amongst councils in the current challenging delivery environment.
- 1.4. The CLHN is currently funded through a combination of GLA expenditure (as set out in Mayoral Decision 2914) and revenue received by Future of London (FoL) from private-sector sponsorship. FoL notes that private-sector sponsorship alone is insufficient to support the delivery of the CLHN; the additional GLA funding is key. The current iteration of the CLHN has been funded with £72,000 of GLA funding; and over £50,000 of private-sector sponsorship, with partners selected by FoL.
- 1.5. FoL is requesting GLA funding of £55,000 to deliver the next phase of the CLHN: a significant reduction from the £72,000 supporting the current iteration. This is due to project infrastructure already being in place; and an increase in private-sector sponsorship for the next phase (from £50,000 to £60,000). FoL has given the GLA assurance that it will secure this £60,000; and has thoroughly engaged with potential sponsors who have expressed a strong interest in supporting the CLHN.

#### *Procurement risk and compliance*

- 1.6. On 30 August 2022, the GLA directly awarded a £72,000 contract to FoL to deliver the current iteration of the CLHN. This contract expires in January 2025. The GLA verbally agreed an extension with FoL on the CLHN launch date. This resulted in FoL continuing to deliver the CLHN until November 2025. Approval is sought, under this decision form, to grant FoL a new contract to continue the delivery of CLHN up to May 2028; and ensure continuity in support for councils.

- 1.7. The Ealing Procurement Framework has been confirmed as accessible to the GLA, permitting a direct award to FoL. Therefore, this procurement route is compliant with Section 9 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code (the Code), and no exemption is required.
- 1.8. FoL has successfully delivered the CLHN to date. Its work includes over 50 sessions; 30 peer group meetings; and 17 expert panel sessions. They offer established relationships with councils; credibility; and a tailored proposal for the next phase, based on council feedback. These factors demonstrate their capacity to continue delivering value.
- 1.9. FoL has shown continued involvement and alignment with the strategic objectives of the GLA's Housing and Land directorate – particularly in successfully setting up and running the CLHN. Given this – as well as FoL's ability to provide value for money, and the need to move at pace to ensure continuity in support for councils – the GLA will proceed with a direct award via the Ealing Framework. This route ensures compliance with procurement requirements, while enabling timely delivery of the next phase of the CLHN.
- 1.10. The total expenditure for the delivery of the CLHN is £55,000, from December 2025 to May 2028. This breaks down as follows:
  - 2025-26 – £22,000
  - 2026-27 - £22,000
  - 2027-28 - £11,000.
- 1.11. The £22,000 spend to deliver the CLHN in 2025-26 has been allocated from the GLA Housing and Land's annual Operational Budget within the Investment and Operations unit. Budget lines from the remaining spend in 2026-27 and 2027-28 will be committed to annually, and drawn from the Housing and Land budget.

## **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1. The key objective is to support the Mayor's commitment to increasing council-led housing delivery. This aim of this work is to meet commitments made in the London Housing Strategy; and support the outcomes set out in the delivery plans for building more homes, making best use of land and improving London's housing stock.
- 2.2. The next phase of the CLHN will be adapted according to FoL's experience of running the CLHN, and feedback from councils. FoL aims to meet the following objectives in the next phase:
  - Helping councils identify how best to enable development – including by identifying optimal organisational policies and working practices across the wider council, beyond development teams.
  - Explore how peer-to-peer learning can be expanded to facilitate inter-disciplinary working between housing development teams, planning, procurement and finance teams within councils. The expansion of peer-to-peer learning will address internal barriers to councils accessing learning and development due to resource constraints.
  - Expanding the resource library to look at how efficiencies can also be driven for councils by creating routes for councils to share key documentation (for example, employers' requirements) in the resource library.
- 2.3. To meet these objectives, FoL will adapt the existing CLHN approach (the four pillars) by:
  - continuing to run the expert panel and themed housing development peer groups

- creating new peer groups for planning, procurement and finance teams to share their development enabling approaches
- focusing the function of the resource library on enabling efficiency, by collecting and sharing standard documentation and producing baseline templates
- drawing on peer group insight to develop the concept of ‘a development enabling council’, which can be shared as best practice towards the end of the programme.

### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Mayor and GLA are subject to the public sector equality duty, and must have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
  - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership status. The duty involves having appropriate regard to these matters as they apply in the circumstances, including having regard to the need to: remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share or are connected to a protected characteristic; take steps to meet the different needs of such people; encourage them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low. This can involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without one.
- 3.3. FoL is committed to ensuring that diversity and inclusion are embedded throughout all of the programmes and initiatives they deliver. For example, FoL runs programmes such as the Emerging Talent Programme, which supports people from ethnically diverse backgrounds to start a career in the built environment. It also delivers the Speaker Diversity Network, which aims to facilitate more diverse speaker representation at industry events. In relation to the CLHN, FoL has sought to ensure expert panels are diverse; and all resources produced in the resource library are accessible. In the next phase of the CLHN, FoL has also committed to tracking diversity data related to participation in the programme.
- 3.4. The greatest housing need in London is for low-cost rented homes (particularly social rented homes), and councils play a significant role in delivering these. Increasing councils’ capacity, and supporting them to tackle pressing delivery challenges, is expected to have a positive impact on their ability to provide new homes. The delivery of low-cost rented homes is also likely to bring positive equalities benefits to Londoners in housing need, who are more likely to be negatively affected by higher housing costs, poverty, unsafe or poor-quality housing. The following groups disproportionately make up those in housing need:
- households that contain children – including households where one member displays the pregnancy and maternity characteristic
  - Deaf and disabled households
  - Black and minority ethnic households.
- 3.5. Therefore, it is expected that the CLHN will have a positive equalities impact for Londoners with protected characteristics, particularly those in housing need.

#### 4. Other considerations

4.1. Risks and mitigating actions are outlined in the table below:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
FoL does not secure £60,000 in private-sector partnership for the delivery of the next phase of CLHN.	Low	FoL has provided assurance to the GLA that it will be able to secure private-sector sponsorship; and that it is in advanced discussions with potential sponsors. In the unlikely event that FoL does not secure private-sector sponsorship, the GLA and FoL will discuss alternative options for delivering the CLHN, including a shorter delivery time for the programme.
The CLHN will not deliver on the intended objectives of supporting council housebuilding, and increasing councils' capacity, skills and expertise.	Medium	FoL has significant experience in delivering the CLHN. Engagement with councils has been carried out to inform the focus of the next phase of the CLHN, ensuring that the CLHN responds to councils' capacity and skills needs. The focus on building expertise around what a 'development-enabling council' looks like will specifically support capacity and knowledge building around housing delivery. GLA officers will continue to monitor CLHN progress closely, and will set up contract and CLHN progress meetings. A mid-point review will also be carried out to assess and implement any necessary improvements for the second half of the CLHN.
There is limited take-up from councils, meaning the CLHN does not achieve key objectives.	Medium	Engagement with councils suggests that they continue to see value in, and have widely engaged with, the CLHN. Regular check-ins between the GLA and FoL will also be set up to understand council engagement; and enable discussions, if necessary, on how council engagement can be improved.

4.2. As noted, the delivery of CLHN links with key commitments made in the London Housing Strategy and Mayoral commitments to support council-led housing delivery. The CLHN also links with three Mayoral housing mandates: building more homes; making best use of land; and improving London's housing stock.

4.3. No conflicts of interest have been identified for any officer involved in drafting and clearing this decision.

#### 5. Financial comments

5.1. This decision seeks approval, from the Director of Investment and Operations, to spend £55,000 via the direct award of a contract, through the Ealing Procurement Framework, to FoL to deliver the next phase of the CLHN. The delivery period will run from December 2025 until May 2028. The spending breakdown is as follows:

- £22,000 in 2025-26
- £22,000 in 2026-27
- £11,000 in 2027-28.

5.2. As the Ealing Procurement Framework is accessible and permits direct award, no exemption from the Code is required.

5.3. The funding for this contract is proposed to be from Housing and Land's annual Operational Budget within the Investment and Operations unit. This budget is included in the planned budget for 2025-26 to 2027-28, approved via the 2025-26 budget-setting process. However, this is subject to final budgets being approved for 2026-27 and 2027-28. Therefore, to mitigate against risk of insufficient

funding, a break clause should be included in the contracts being funded from GLA programme budget, should funding change for future years.

5.4 This contract is to be managed by the Strategy and Policy team within Housing and Land.

## **6. Planned delivery approach and next steps**

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

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Specification sent to FoL	September 2025
Award of contract	October 2025

### **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.

**Part 1 – Deferral**

**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES**

If YES, for what reason: Request for the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred until FoL have signed their contract to deliver the next phase of CLHN with the GLA.

Until what date: 3 November 2025

**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:**

Jo Bhandal 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 8 September 2025.

✓

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:**

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

**Signature:**



**Date:**

08/09/2025