

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2811

Creative/design production agency

Executive summary:

This decision seeks approval to procure a design production agency, through which approved requests to create designs, and artwork can be delivered across the organisation.

This service will be used to meet organisational demand for creative and design work, supplementing the Creative team's core work. Having a single on-call provider would reduce the time and resource spent procuring design services. It would also:

- be more cost-effective, as we would be procuring in volume
- be more efficient, as the provider would be familiar with the GLA brand and requirements
- give an overview of the volume of work being commissioned across the GLA
- improve the quality of work being produced, by ensuring brand consistency and centralised review processes for all materials.

It will also ensure the small in-house Creative team can focus on high priority Mayoral campaigns.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Strategy and Communications approves the procurement of a single design production agency, to provide the organisation with a call-off services with an estimated value of up to £150,000 over a maximum of two years 2026/27 and 2027/28 (the second at the option of the GLA).

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, Strategy and Communications

Signature:

Date: 19 June 2026



PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The External Relations Unit (ER) supports the GLA in promoting the Mayor's vision and priorities. It helps GLA teams communicate the benefits of this work in a clear and compelling way – enabling Londoners and key audiences to better understand and engage with it. ER leads the GLA's marketing and communications strategy – delivering campaigns, events, digital content, creative services and internal communications. It provides high-quality advice and support to other GLA teams and partners, helping to develop campaigns and events that support the Mayor's objectives. Overall, the team offers a streamlined service for all marketing and communications needs across the GLA.
- 1.2. The GLA's requirements for communications assets outstrip the Creative team's ability to resource it. A design/production agency is needed, to support the organisation with specialist services that can satisfy GLA's needs for professional communication materials.
- 1.3. Currently, design work is commissioned throughout the organisation by:
 - procuring design/creative agencies, or freelance designers
 - commissioning consultants (in addition to ER providing its own consulting/writing service) to carry out work that includes creating and designing materials required for the relevant project
 - working with external stakeholders, partner organisations and delivery partners who may produce artwork for materials required as part of the contract
 - producing the work within ER, through services such as Canva.
- 1.4. Although these options ensure that the communications work is produced, they carry risks around consistency, quality and managed oversight.
- 1.5. The audience for these communications ranges from small, niche groups (such as businesses, community partners and local boroughs) to a pan-London audience. The communication may include templated work (such as reports, documents, brochures, direct mail, posters, postcards, leaflets, etc), campaign adaptations (resizing of artwork for different channels), diagrams and infographics, animations, pull-up banners, certificates, merchandise and social media content.
- 1.6. Externally funded programmes administered by GLA staff (such as the London Anchor Institutions Network, the London Resilience Partnership and taskforces) also use external design agencies/freelancers to support their programme communications. This is because the communications are not coming directly from the Mayor of London's office.
- 1.7. The overall volume of work is unknown, but it is significant. Every programme and policy area has communications needs and requires a broad range of tailored assets.
- 1.8. We have identified the following risks arising from the current situation:
 - **Unknown quantity of organisational outputs:** Non-ER teams producing or commissioning their own materials have little incentive to report or review these materials through ER.
 - **Wastage:** Design and production agencies are being procured in an ad hoc way. This can be expensive and time-consuming for both the procuring team and the agency.
 - **Lack of quality control:** Materials produced outside the Creative team may not always go through ER's quality-control process. This exists to ensure they are de-risked; accessible; and approved by the appropriate internal stakeholders.

- **Off-brand communications:** ER serves as the brand guardian for the GLA and the Mayor of London. Its work ensures that outputs produced have the correct look, feel and tone of voice. This cannot be guaranteed for materials produced outside the unit.
- 1.9. This decision seeks to ensure that all GLA outputs go through a consistent review, monitoring and quality-control process. This will provide value for money and result in a higher quality of output.
 - 1.10. The cost for commissioning design work externally will come from programme budgets as and when required (as with the framework for the Collaborative Print Management contract). It is expected that the agency would be appointed for one year, with an option to extend for a further year; with spend of £150k potentially over two years. This is based on ER's estimate of current 'overflow' commissions. After a year, ER will have a better knowledge of the precise volume and value; and can review and recommission accordingly.
 - 1.11. This call-off service could also benefit the GLA Group – especially partners who do not have in-house design teams (such as the Royal Docks, London Fire Brigade, the Oxford Street Development Corporation, and the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation).
 - 1.12. Procurement will comply with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code. It will be carried out via a competitive tender process, through TfL Procurement's Crown Commercial Services framework.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The objectives of this piece of work are to:
 - streamline the procurement process for commissioning design work externally
 - have a managed supplier; and a consistent process with defined service quality, accountability and performance metrics
 - ensure oversight of the volume of design work being commissioned externally
 - ensure that the quality of work is consistent and on brand, so that our communications are recognisable and can be trusted
 - ensure that the GLA is getting value for money on work being commissioned externally, by agreeing consistent pricing structures, and using templates for regular/common design request.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. GLA staff have a responsibility to engage Londoners in their work. Doing so means Londoners can access the benefits of this work; and contribute to, and have a say in, the things they care most about in their city. The work commissioned by GLA teams aligns with the Mayor's objective to make London a fairer, and more equal and integrated city for all Londoners.
- 3.2. As part of the procurement process, we would ensure that the supplier has experience of:
 - working within agreed brand guidelines
 - producing accessible and engaging communications
 - including equality, diversity and inclusion qualitative award criteria as part of the tendering process.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. Promoting the Mayor's vision, policy and delivery is essential to ER's work for Londoners. The move to a call-off service will ensure that, when commissioning design and creative assets externally, the process is efficient and effective and delivers value for Londoners; and the materials produced communicate in a clear and compelling way.
- 4.2. The key risks, mitigations and associated ratings are set out below:

Risk / Issue	Mitigation	Risk Rating
Inefficiency of conducting bespoke procurement processes for each design commission	Establish a pre-approved supplier framework or roster with agreed terms and rates to enable quicker call-offs	Amber
Paying different rates across suppliers, potentially leading to higher costs and suboptimal supplier selection	Introduce standardised rate cards and clearer guidance on supplier selection aligned to project needs	Amber
Work not meeting accessibility standards, leading to additional remediation costs	Build accessibility requirements into briefs, contracts and QA processes from the outset	Red
Work not aligned to brand, affecting credibility and diluting the brand	Strengthen brand governance, sign-off processes and mandatory use of approved guidelines and templates	Amber
Inconsistent standard of work being published	Define and enforce quality standards, with central review or assurance for key outputs	Amber

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought for a call-off contract with a single design agency at an estimated cost of £150,000 spanning 2026-27 and 2027-28 financial years to provide a centralised, more efficient approach across the GLA. It is expected that teams that commission services for specific projects will fund the costs from their GLA approved budgets for the two financial years and be charged directly for the services that they procure. The central marketing team will procure and fund high profile Mayoral campaigns from GLA resources as agreed in the budget for External Relations for 2026-27 and budgetary uplift agreed in Mayoral Decision MD3494. Future year budgets are subject to budget setting process.
- 5.2. This procurement will support a number of mayoral programmes, with the central marketing expenditure being part of the Core delivery plan.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions sought concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of social or economic development and wealth creation and/or the improvement of the environment in Greater London and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers must comply 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, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom
- consult with appropriate bodies.

6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the 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 (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

6.3 If the Director makes the decisions sought, officers must ensure that:

- no reliance is placed upon, nor commitments made to expenditure which relies upon future years budgets until they have been approved and secured; and
- the services are procured in liaison with TfL procurement and in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code and all applicable legal requirements, and contracts are put in place between and executed by the GLA and contractors before commencement of the services.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1 This work will be carried out according to the following timetable:

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	2-3 months
Delivery end date	TBC

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? NO

If YES, for what reason:

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 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:

Michelle Jones has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Nicole Valentinuzzi 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 15 June 2026.

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature



Date

19 June 2026

pp. Peter Sebastian, Assistant Director, Financial Services, on behalf of Fay Hammond