

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2818

Workforce Integration Network Programme Delivery Plan and Budget 2026-27

Programme: Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth

Executive summary:

This Director Decision seeks approval of expenditure of £480,000, to deliver the Workforce Integration Network's programme of work in 2026-27.

[Mayoral Decision 3395](#) delegated authority for further decision-making to the Executive Director, Communities and Skills, as the Senior Responsible Officer for the Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth (SLBG) programme. The Partnership for Good Works project falls under category two of the delegation within that decision for expenditure decisions linked to named projects.

Decision:

That the Executive Director for Communities and Skills (as Senior Responsible Owner for the Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth programme) approves the expenditure of £480,000 from the 2026-27 Workforce Integration Network (WIN) programme budget. This spend is broken down as follows:

- £350,000 to deliver an additional year of the Inclusive Talent Brokerage programme – supporting employment outcomes for underrepresented groups through employer and community partnerships. The funding comprises:
 - up to £300,000 in grant funding for community-based organisations delivering employment-support activities
 - £50,000 for brokerage services to coordinate employer engagement, capacity building and job brokerage
- £55,000 for research on employment barriers and opportunities for young people
- £40,000 for research on employment barriers and opportunities for disabled Londoners
- £30,000 to commission an evaluation of the WIN programme
- £5,000 to support programme-related events and associated costs.

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: Tunde Olayinka

Position: Executive Director,
Communities and Skills

Signature: 

Date: 10 August 2026

**pp Tim Steer Executive Director Housing and Land on
behalf of Tunde Olayinka**

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1 Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Workforce Integration Network (WIN) programme is key to delivering the Mayor's Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth (SLBG) programme's Partnering for Good Work project (approved under [Mayoral Decision \(MD\) 3395](#)). WIN's focus is on working directly with employers across London to tackle the under-employment, and unemployment, of underrepresented groups. The aim is to help meet the London-level outcome of ensuring all Londoners have access to good work. WIN capitalises on the GLA's role as a strategic authority, by working with large, pan-London employers and system leaders to enact change in hiring and organisational culture.
- 1.2 London's labour market continues to face persistent inequalities. Unemployment among people from Black and minoritised ethnic communities is almost double that of their White counterparts (8.9 per cent vs 3.3 per cent).¹ These groups also have higher levels of insecure and low-paid work in London than in other regions.²
- 1.3 The SLBG delivery plan (approved in MD3395) sets out the Mayor's ambition to tackle these disparities in labour-market outcomes, by ensuring all Londoners can access opportunities created by economic growth. Evidence demonstrates that labour-market interventions based on training alone are insufficient to address structural labour-market inequalities. A more holistic approach is required – one that addresses employer recruitment practices, job quality, labour-market demand and access to opportunity – to improve employment outcomes.³
- 1.4 The GLA's role as a regional authority enables it to convene employers; remove perceived risks for inclusive hiring;⁴ and set expectations across the system in a way that is harder for organisations or providers to do alone. WIN extends the GLA's programme delivery to incorporate a focus on the wider systemic factors that drive labour market inequalities. It engages with sector-leading employers to embed good practice at scale; and encourage wider employers in those sectors to adopt this practice.
- 1.5 The WIN programme is made up of three constituent work strands:
 - the Inclusive Talent Brokerage (ITB) programme, which supports Londoners furthest from opportunity into sustainable jobs
 - the Design Lab programme, which engages employers at scale; and creates resources that can be used by a wider set of employers to strengthen workplace equality, diversity and inclusion practices, supporting greater labour market diversity
 - research to generate robust insight into labour-market barriers – and so inform targeted, evidence-led interventions.

¹ London Datastore/Office for National Statistics, [Economic Activity Rate, Employment Rate and Unemployment Rate by Ethnic Group & Nationality, Borough](#)

² Trust for London, [Proportion of London residents' jobs paid below London Living Wage by ethnic group \(2021\)](#)

³ National Foundation for Educational Research, [An exploratory study of employers' recruitment practices](#), 1 October 2024; Edge Foundation, [Inequalities in Access to Professional Occupations](#), March 2025

⁴ Such risks include, but are not limited to, potential legal and compliance issues relating to the Equality Act 2010; financial costs of hiring inclusively compared to standard recruitment pathways; and reputational concerns related to the current political and media discourse regarding inclusivity practices.

- 1.6 Through this programme, WIN is expected to directly influence approximately seven to 10 per cent⁵ of employees in London. These employers are sector leaders and key influencers of equalities practice, resulting in wider influence across key sectors.
- 1.7 The WIN programme supports delivery of the third pillar of the Mayor's Inclusive Talent Strategy (ITS), by tackling barriers to attracting and retaining talent. It is the only element of the ITS that works in depth with employers to address equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); and underrepresentation in the workplace. WIN translates the ITS ambitions into targeted, employer-led interventions that promote workplace inclusion. Through direct engagement with employers, sectors and partners, the programme supports the embedding of good practice by redesigning recruitment processes; testing innovative approaches; and addressing structural barriers to employment.
- 1.8 WIN's work is aligned with the interim findings of the Milburn Review and the London AI and Jobs Taskforce. Through the ITB and Design Lab programme, WIN is delivering activity that responds to four of the key employer challenges identified in the review:
- increasing barriers to recruitment for young people
 - employers' concerns about workplace readiness and retention
 - the need to improve employer practices alongside skills and employability support
 - the need for greater employer support to recruit and retain young people.
- 1.9 The research proposed in paragraph 2.10 further addresses these findings, demonstrating the continued relevance of the programme's work on addressing employer-side challenges and reinforcing the rationale for WIN interventions.
- 1.10 WIN's strategic ambitions include transforming workplace equality, diversity and inclusion practice across London; and establishing the city as a global leader in inclusive workforce practice. Recent evidence shows closing ethnic disparities in London's labour market would unlock £17.4 billion in economic benefits for the UK. This shows the scale of opportunity lost when underrepresented groups are excluded from good work.⁶

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The WIN programme is key to the delivery of the Mayor's SLBG plan's Partnering for Good Work programme (approved in [MD3395](#)). It is recommended that the Executive Director for Communities and Skills (the Director) approves the proposed allocation of £480,000 for the WIN programme in 2026-27. This allocation is detailed below.

Inclusive Talent Brokerage

- 2.2. WIN's ITB programme connects diverse, unemployed, job-ready Londoners with employers seeking to address skills shortages and diversify their talent. It does this by grant-funding community-based organisations (CBOs), and so enabling them to expand their job-readiness support and supply talent to businesses. Alongside this is the provision of a commercial broker to deliver employer engagement and job matching. The 2025-26 programme runs from September 2025 to September 2026.
- 2.3. The ITB programme was awarded £500,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2025-26, under cover of [MD3364](#). This was used to provide grant-funding to CBOs, and so increase their capacity to help 700 talented Londoners from underrepresented communities to overcome barriers and access

⁵ Estimate is based on the proportion of London's workforce employed by large organisations engaged through WIN – including NHS workforce coverage, and large employer participation across priority sectors.

⁶ GLA, [Bridging the Gap: The Economic Case for Workforce Diversity in London](#), 23 October 2025

good work. An additional £130,000 of expenditure was approved under cover of [DD2757](#) for brokerage and evaluation services. This funding is due to come to an end in September 2026.

2.4. Approval is sought to extend delivery of the ITB programme in 2026-27. Extending the programme will support an additional 330 employment outcomes for unemployed Londoners from underrepresented groups, and create further capacity for CBOs, while enabling a robust assessment of the effectiveness of the brokerage model. The learning generated will inform future approaches to employer engagement and brokerage activity across the GLA. It will also help identify opportunities for delivery at greater scale.

2.5. The programme is expected to:

- improve employment outcomes for Londoners from underrepresented communities
- strengthen employer access to diverse talent pools
- support the development of more inclusive recruitment practices.

It will also contribute to reducing skills mismatches in priority sectors; and strengthening collaboration between employers, communities and public services to improve labour market inclusion.

2.6. This DD proposes allocating £350,000 of the WIN budget to the ITB programme in 2026-27. This will help mitigate the funding gap arising from the closure of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund; and support continued delivery of the Mayor's ITS.

2.7. Of this £350,000 proposed allocation, up to £300,000 will be allocated through a competitive funding round to CBOs delivering employment-support activities for underrepresented groups. The remaining £50,000 will fund brokerage services to support programme delivery – including employer engagement; job brokerage; and capacity-building activity for funded organisations. This will help to:

- strengthen partnerships between employers and community organisations
- improve delivery capability
- connect participants with sustainable employment opportunities.

2.8. The brokerage provider supporting the ITB programme was competitively procured in September 2025, with an option to extend the contract. It is proposed that this extension option be exercised to:

- ensure continuity of delivery
- build on the momentum achieved to date
- retain the employer relationships and partnerships developed through the programme.

Extending the existing contract will support ongoing engagement with businesses; and help maximise employment outcomes for participants.

Research

2.9. The WIN programme will commission two research projects in 2026-27. These will aim to strengthen the evidence base on labour market inequalities; and inform future employer engagement and programme delivery. These research projects are as follows:⁷

⁷ Research topics are informed by engagement with employer networks, including feedback gathered through event surveys, stakeholder engagement and wider sector insights.

- Young People and Employers – exploring workplace experiences, barriers to employment and progression for young Londoners; and identifying employer practices that support inclusive recruitment, retention and progression
- Black Disability and Work – examining the labour market experiences of Black disabled Londoners, and the barriers they face in accessing and sustaining employment.

2.10. The Young People and Employers research responds to employer concerns regarding the recruitment and retention of young people, including workplace expectations; mental health; and communication. More than 19 per cent of 16-to-24-year-olds in London are currently out of work, highlighting the need for targeted action to improve employment outcomes. The research will focus on priority groups identified by WIN; and on young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). This includes:

- young people from ethnic minority backgrounds
- care-experienced young people
- those at risk of homelessness
- disabled young people
- those with experience of the criminal justice system, for whom there is currently limited London-specific evidence.

2.11. The research aims to improve employer practice and shape future interventions aimed at improving employment outcomes for disadvantaged young Londoners, ensuring that interventions are responsive to both young people's needs and employer requirements.^{8,9}

2.12. It will support wider work under the GLA's AI and Jobs Taskforce's recommendations, particularly the second recommendation, *Shape Change*, which seeks to partner with employers and workers to redesign workplaces that enhance productivity while expanding opportunity. Specifically, the research will contribute to the emerging London AI at Work Partnership, helping employers create more, better-quality, and inclusive opportunities for Londoners as AI transforms the world of work.

2.13. The research also responds to the findings of the independent review of Young People and Work, led by Alan Milburn, which found that over one million young people aged 16–24 in the UK are NEET (not in education, employment, or training); driven by key factors: a collapse in entry-level jobs, soaring mental health barriers, and a fragmented education system. The research will examine the employer-side barriers that affect young Londoners' access to, and progression within, employment, including recruitment practices, workplace support, job design and retention challenges. Its findings will inform the development of targeted recruitment, induction, retention and progression support.

2.14. The ITB and subsequent brokerage model will provide a mechanism for translating this evidence into practice by working with employers to apply learning, improve employment pathways and support the creation of sustainable job opportunities for young Londoners. This approach will ensure that the research informs delivery and leads to practical improvements, such as recruitment reform. A key opportunity to use this insight will be the permanent Sector Talent Boards which are giving businesses a stronger voice in shaping the capital's skills and employment system.

2.15. Research on Black disabled Londoners forms part of WIN's commitment under the Disability Action Plan. Around 45 per cent of working-age Black disabled Londoners are in employment, compared with

⁸ Young Londoners Hit Hardest by Economic Slowdown 2025, <https://data.london.gov.uk/blog/unemployment-in-key-charts-young-londoners-hit-hardest-by-labour-market-slowdown/>

⁹ While there is no robust published estimate of the ethnic composition of London's NEET population, evidence consistently shows that young people's risk of being NEET varies by ethnicity and intersects with wider inequalities, including deprivation, disability, educational attainment and labour market discrimination. In London, where over half of young people are from ethnic minority backgrounds, addressing NEET requires targeted support that recognises these intersecting factors.

62 per cent of White disabled Londoners. This represents one of the largest employment gaps across ethnicity-disability groups in London.¹⁰ The research will address a recognised evidence gap relating to the intersectional barriers experienced by Black disabled Londoners. It will support the development of more inclusive employer practices and future policy interventions.

2.16. Collectively, these research projects will:

- strengthen the evidence base on labour market inequalities in London
- inform future programme design, employer engagement activity and policy development
- be embedded within the GLA's and delivery partners' approach to employer brokerage, employer engagement and employer practice. This will ensure that the evidence informs the design and delivery of interventions, supporting employers to adopt practices that improve recruitment, retention and progression for young people, and translating the research into more sustainable employment opportunities.

2.17. The WIN programme will be independently evaluated to:

- assess delivery, outcomes and value for money
- generate evidence to inform future programme design, commissioning and the potential scaling of successful approaches across the GLA.

2.18. Planned spend for the year is detailed below:

Programme line	2026-27 budget allocation (£)
ITB – Grant funding	£300,000
ITB – Broker services	£50,000
Research (young people)	£55,000
Research (disability)	£40,000
WIN programme evaluation	£30,000
Miscellaneous (events, etc.)	£5,000
Total programme	£480,000

2.19. Approval for this funding commitment is sought through a Director's Decision, under the delegated authority granted by the Mayor to the Executive Director, Communities & Skills (as the Senior Responsible Officer for the SLBG programme) in MD3395. This spend falls under category two of the delegation for expenditure decisions linked to named projects in paragraph 1.19.

3. Equality comments

3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the GLA (including the Mayor of London) must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when exercising its functions. The PSED is a duty to have due regard to:

- the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010

¹⁰ Bridging the Gap, GLA, <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/workforce-integration-network-win/bridging-gap?>

- advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a ‘protected characteristic’ as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and those who do not.

3.2. The protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Compliance with the duty may involve ensuring people with a protected characteristic are provided with all the opportunities that those without the characteristic would have.

3.3. This involves:

- having due regard to the need to remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share a relevant protected characteristic that is connected to that characteristic
- taking steps to meet the different needs of such people
- encouraging them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low.

3.4. WIN focuses on groups that face the highest levels of unemployment in London:

- Black men aged 16-24
- Black women aged 50 and over
- Pakistani and Bangladeshi women of all ages.

Consequently, this project addresses the needs of these target beneficiary groups by working with CBOs that predominantly serve underrepresented communities.

4. Other considerations

4.1. The following risks and mitigations have been identified:

Risk	Mitigation	RAG
Increasing anti-EDI sentiment: A shifting public and political climate may lead to increased scrutiny or resistance to EDI initiatives. This would affect employer engagement, stakeholder support, and programme positioning.	Reframe messaging to consistently lead with economic value and productivity gains, underpinned by robust evidence (e.g. £17.4 billion impact). Prioritise employer-led case studies and outcomes to demonstrate business relevance; and align all communications with growth, skills, and sector priorities to maintain broad-based support.	A
Delay to Design Lab cohort: loss of momentum with employers, and reduced programme visibility over the five months.	Maintain engagement through recruitment activity; and clearly position the delay as a strategic shift to strengthen quality, impact and the evidence base ahead of relaunch.	A
New research on young people and employer culture: research may not translate into actionable change or may stretch capacity.	Co-design with employers and partners to ensure relevance; focus on clear evidence gaps; and align scope with available resources.	G
Embedding and dissemination of learning: Insights fail to	Deliver a targeted dissemination strategy with accessible outputs (toolkits, case studies), and actively	G

influence policy or practice at scale.	track uptake across policymakers, employers, and cities.	
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Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2. The proposed activity supports the mayor's ambitions to deliver inclusive growth, increase access to good work and ensure that London's labour market provides opportunities for all Londoners to thrive.
- 4.3. The London Growth Plan and Inclusive Talent Strategy (ITS) set out a commitment to delivering a more inclusive economy by putting employers in the driving seat to address barriers to employment and support Londoners, particularly those who are underrepresented in the labour market, to access quality opportunities. The WIN programme directly supports these priorities by working with employers to address structural barriers to employment, strengthen workplace inclusion and promote more inclusive recruitment, retention and progression practices.
- 4.4. The WIN programme also responds to evidence from the Milburn Review, which highlights the impact of labour market changes and the importance of tackling the demand side barriers to better enable employers hire and support young workers. Through employer-led interventions, such as the Sector Talent Boards, brokerage and applied research, WIN supports employers to develop more inclusive approaches and create sustainable employment opportunities for young Londoners.
- 4.5. The proposed activity further aligns with the London AI and Jobs Taskforce's agenda, particularly the recommendation to *Shape Change*, by generating evidence on how employers can adapt jobs, recruitment practices and workplace pathways to ensure AI adoption supports both productivity and access to good employment opportunities.
- 4.6. Collectively, the proposed expenditure will strengthen the evidence base, inform employer practice and support the delivery of more inclusive labour market outcomes in line with the mayor's priorities.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.7. No officers involved in the drafting or clearing of this MD have any interests to declare.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought for to spend £480,000 in 2026-27, funded from the 2026-27 WIN programme budget. The expenditure is broken down as follows:
 - £350,000 to deliver an additional year of the ITB programme, supporting employment outcomes for underrepresented groups through employer and community partnerships. The funding comprises:
 - up to £300,000 in grant funding for community-based organisations delivering employment support activities
 - £50,000 for brokerage services to coordinate employer engagement, capacity building and job brokerage
 - £55,000 for research on employment barriers and opportunities for young people
 - £40,000 for research on employment barriers and opportunities for disabled Londoners
 - £30,000 to commission an evaluation of the WIN programme
 - £5,000 to support programme-related events and associated costs.
- 5.2. This spending will be financed by GLA resources, as agreed for 2026-27.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that certain of the decisions requested of the Director concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further, or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development or the promotion of the improvement of the environment in Greater London. In formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers 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, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the UK
 - 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 Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3. If the Director makes the decisions sought, officers must ensure that:
- the proposed award of grant funding is made fairly; transparently; and in accordance with the GLA's equalities requirements, and the requirements of GLA's Contracts and Funding Code
 - funding agreements are put in place between and/or varied (as applicable) and executed by the GLA and recipients before any commitment to fund is made
 - the GLA's current brokerage contract is extended; and that is documented in accordance with the provisions of that contract
 - all services, supplies or works required are procured in liaison with TfL Procurement and in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code
 - contracts are put in place between and executed by the GLA and contractors before commencement of such services.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. Delivery timelines are as follows:

Activity	Timeline
Procure brokerage contract	August 2026
Announce grant opening for ITB	August 2026
Commission Black Disability and Work research (subject to procurement timelines)	September 2026
Commission Young People and Employers research	September 2026

Launch ITB year two	September 2026
Delivery start date (ITB)	October 2026
Evaluation commission (external)	October 2026
Delivery end date (Design Lab)	December 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? YES

If YES, which programme does this fall within: Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth

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 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:

Phyllis Abebreseh has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Tom Rahilly 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.

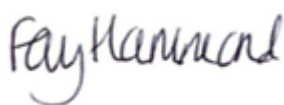
✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 10 August 2026.

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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



Signature

Date 11 August 2026