GREATER**LONDON**AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD1575

Title: New London.gov.uk website

Executive Summary:

The new London.gov.uk website is a significant development for the GLA. Over the past 18 months, a substantial development project has been under way, not just to create a rich new website for Londoners but also to get GLA teams trained and ready to ensure it remains a success.

The new website will be launched in November 2015 as planned. This further funding will enable a range of new and innovative features and functions to be developed in the coming months and will ensure robust technical support is available. In addition, this funding will ensure sufficient digital resources (in development, content management and web design) remain in place to rapidly develop and update the website post-election, so as to respond quickly and efficiently to the new Mayoral and Assembly priorities following the elections.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves:

Expenditure of up to £896,000 for costs related to:
- Completing the development of the website in readiness for its full launch in November 2015 and procuring technical support for it until 31 March 2016;
- Developing a number of new features and functions on the website, to use it to its full potential by 31 March 2016;
- Extending the contracts for key members of staff to enable rapid development and changes to website content to reflect the post-election Mayoral and Assembly priorities;
- Enabling the continuous development of the site throughout the 2016/17 year in response to the new Mayoral and Assembly priorities.

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: 30.11.15

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

Decision required – supporting report

1.   Introduction and background

The project to build a new London.gov.uk website (the LGRedev project) commenced in early 2014. In late July 2015, the first cut (or beta) version of the website, beta.london.gov.uk, was launched to the public. The initial comments from targeted user testing and feedback from public users have justified the vision at the start of the project to create an exemplar website with clean and clear designs, focussed and relevant content, rich in features and a strong and sustainable Mayoral and Assembly brand. The website is on target to be fully launched in late November 2015.

The LGRedev project is an agile, collaborative undertaking managed jointly by the External Relations Team and the Technology Group. The initial tranche of funding (£1,450,000 – with an additional contribution from the Technology Group budget of £100,000) for the project was approved under MD1326 as a multi-year programme of work. Further funding for the project consists of:
  - New funds of £125,000 and transfer of £50,000 from the Technology Group approved under MD1414 and
  - A transfer of £66,000 from External Affairs as approved by MD 1548.

A total of £1,791,000 has been approved for the LGRedev project.

Preparing for the project

The project for a new London.gov.uk began in 2014 with a considerable amount of research into what the new website should look like, who its core users are and what they wanted to see and be able to do on the site. This research resulted in the GLA's Digital Strategy which was approved by MD1193 and published in 2014, triggering the LGRedev project.

In the summer of 2014, a number of services were procured for development, design and testing. Alongside these, a number of highly skilled content managers, an analyst and project delivery manager were recruited on a fixed-term basis to provide specialist expertise to the project. The new recruits and suppliers supplemented a group of existing staff from the Technology Group and External Relations who formed the project board and senior team. Having established the project organisation, the development work commenced in September 2014.

Developing the website

Developing an excellent London.gov.uk website has been an enormous undertaking, by far the biggest digital project the GLA has ever carried out. In the course of the last year, the following milestones have been successfully delivered:

- Gathering the users' requirements accurately and in sufficient detail
- Coming up with a new style and design that reflects the image that the GLA wishes to project
- Developing the website navigation so that users are able to get to the information they want in the shortest time and in the most efficient way
- Producing content that communicates clearly, concisely and using the right "tone of voice"
- Creating a sufficient distinction between the work of the Mayor and the Assembly so as to identify them as two separate entities but linked by the common objective of improving London.
- Ensuring the websites meet rigorous security and accessibility standards.
- Integrated a number of key GLA business systems such as those used for planning, Mayoral and Assembly webcasts, and Committee management into the website.
- Migrated over 10,000 of the statutory records such as approvals, gifts and hospitality items etc. from the current to the new London.gov.uk site

- Established website hosting arrangements that will perform during times of very high visitor numbers e.g. New Year's Eve

In moving past the above and other milestones during the project, the team has focused on prioritising the most essential features and functions necessary for launching the website to the public. This process of prioritising, called setting a "minimum viable product" or MVP, was used successfully ahead of the launch of the Beta.london.gov.uk in late July 2015 and is currently being used in preparation for the full public launch in November 2015.

The new London.gov.uk

The new website for London will be smart, clean, clear and modern. It has been designed, developed and tested with an absolute priority on the needs of users.

However, in order to meet the MVP for the November 2015 launch, the development work in other, new areas of the website has had to be limited on cost and time grounds.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

These are:
1. To complete the current programme of development work and bring this phase of the project to a close, switching off the old website as a final milestone.
2. To procure maintenance and support for the live website from the existing development company until 31 March 2016.
3. To continue the development work to add new features and functions to the website in the period leading up to the pre-election period to use it to its full potential
4. To retain sufficient development, content and creative staff resources in place to rapidly develop and change the content of the website post-election and procure support and maintenance service for the 2016/17 year.

Objective 1. To complete the current programme of development work and bring this phase of the project to a close

The cost of meeting Objective 1 is £117,000. £55,000 of this can be sourced from within the External Relations budget however the remaining £62,000 is currently unfunded. Much of this additional cost arises from two key areas, additional design work and additional testing. This is an expected consequence of being much more "user" focused. This is a cyclical and iterative approach where features are designed, passed to user testing, re-designed if testing identifies changes and finally developed. What is developed is again tested extensively and further changes made in response to testing. Finally, all features that successfully pass testing are deployed to the website for live operation. At this stage in the project a large amount of change is happening at one time along with a large amount of integration work. This requires intensive testing to ensure that each developed element works on its own, works once integrated into the website and finally that the new element has not caused an issue in other parts of the website. The work is going well, and is of a high standard – but the sheer volume of changes means that a large number of bugs are being identified and have to be resolved. Resolving all these bugs while continuing to deploy lots of new code is causing momentum to be lost. As a result, additional testing resources are needed.

Objective 2. To procure maintenance and support for the live website from the development company until 31 March 2016

To provide robust and comprehensive "business as usual" maintenance and support for the new, live London.gov.uk website is estimated at £33,500 for the period from mid-November 2015 – 31 March 2016, as an extension to the current development contract. For the period immediately following the launch, and through the first few months it is prudent for the company involved in the development to carry out these very specific monitoring and maintenance services to quickly resolve any teething problems. A competitive

procurement will be carried out in early 2016, in conjunction with Transport for London Procurement Service and in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code, for technical support and maintenance services for the new website during 2016/17.

<u>Objective 3. To continue the development work to add new features and functions to the website in the period leading up to the pre-election period</u>

A wealth of new features and functions were identified during the project but did not make the MVP. Retaining the development company will enable the GLA to implement the most important of these. The cost of this will be £244,125. The expected outcomes of this investment are:

i   *Rich "In my Area" content and features.* "In my area" is of primary importance to the website and focusses on content and functionality aimed at residents of London to provide information about what events and Mayoral and Assembly activities are taking place in the Borough and locality of interest to them. This has taken time to plan and to get the required level of feedback from GLA Teams as well as external testers. Whilst a basic implementation of the "in my area" functionality will be carried out before the November launch, there is much more functionality that should be produced to complete the full experience.

ii   *Brand new features and major enhancements.* There are a number of very useful features that time just hasn't been available to produce. Whilst these have been de-prioritised for the purposes of the MVP, they are very much in the next set of priorities and are considered to be standard features in any modern website. These features include (but not limited to) the ability to:

a.   Have a richer mobile and tablet versions of the website – vital given the shift towards this technology. 73% of Londoners use a smart phone to access the internet and this rises to 96% for 18-24 year olds.

b.   Create rich web forms on the website

c.   Conduct polls and surveys with users – a vital part of the move towards a two-way conversation with Londoners to understand what they think/want from us as opposed to us just broadcasting at them

d.   Use and manage images much more efficiently – so we produce high quality documents etc, but also to mitigate against any potential copyright breaches.

e.   Make greater use of maps and mapping services on the website – bringing together much more of the exciting work being undertaken by the Intelligence team and to make the most of the wealth of data we have. This functionality has proved to be very popular in users testing.

iii.   *Example additional enhancements to content include:*

a.   Assembly Member landing pages – these are pages which sit beneath each member profile page to enable them to showcase the policy areas which they specialise in. These were a late request from the Assembly who have requested this content is available by the end of the financial year.

b.   FAQs - a landing page, FAQ category/topic page and FAQ form. This will enable us to offer Londoners a series of FAQs that are organised by topic/category, and to present the answer in a usable and accessible layout. The functionality will also include providing a web form that allows users to suggest a question that they'd like to see answered in the FAQs. In future, as we move towards more social media-focused public correspondence, this functionality provides a useful tool to link to i.e. we can tweet a link to an FAQ answer. As users are increasing turning to website and social to answer queries and away from phone/letter/email – this will become more important.

c.   Transcripts - provide functionality for the business to upload a transcript to accompany a video or webcast, so that it is displayed alongside the video. This will allow to meet accessibility guidelines.

d.   Landing page for Assembly Committees - to provide a landing page to list the 15+ Assembly committees so that users have a more attractive way to navigate to content from those committees.

iv.   *Design review.* With the pace of change on the website, a large number of website elements are being created on a daily basis. A design review has been carried out, looking at aesthetics and consistent application of design elements. It made a number of recommendations, which, once implemented, will greatly enhance the look of the site.

v.   *Front end development work.* As said earlier, much of the MVP prioritisation has been focussed on the functionality that must be in place to turn off the current London.gov.uk site. As a result, even some of the planned developments have had to be de-prioritised. These include fairly fundamental, but more involved functions, such as being able to execute a search which doesn't just look for the search item on the website but looks for it in all the applications e.g. MQT system, Modern.gov system etc. that are linked to the website. This functionality is not available in the 'old' website and will be useful functionality for users in the new site once this work is completed.

<u>Objective 4. To retain sufficient development, content and creative staff resources in place to rapidly change the content of the website post-election and procure support and maintenance service for the 2016/17 year</u>

It is almost guaranteed that the new administration will want to do more and different things with the website. Every new project will have communications implications that may require further website development. The trend towards additional consultation with Londoners through crowd sourcing ideas and crowd funding could well figure across a multitude of policy areas. There is also a growing desire to be able to analyse and display the wealth of data available to us through maps and interactive data.

The GLA needs to respond to these challenges in a positive and effective manner or risk returning to an outdated, static website and a proliferation of disparate microsites, costing more money and further diluting the Mayoral and Assembly brand. Avoiding this risk means having the necessary resources either in-house or 'call-off'-ready.

The cost of meeting this objective in 2016/17:

i.   2 x content editors for 6 months including on-costs = £40,000
ii.   1 x photographer for 6 months including on costs = £20,000
iii.   1 x digital designer for 6 months including on costs = £20,000
iv.   Website support and maintenance for a year, including 50 days of development = £90,000
v.   Additional development budget = £250,000. (This is to include the cost associated with supporting additional user testing, implementing a Digital asset management system, the use of development resources to be provide by approved Development Partners and the costs associated with the integration of some of the existing microsites)

3.   Equality comments

The LGRedev project, from its inception has measured its impact on all categories of users, including those with protected characteristics. The website is on target to meet all accessibility standards applicable to reach at least an AA classification.

4.   Other considerations

4a.   Risks and Risk Management

The key risks identified in this project are:

i.   Financial: With a project of this complexity, there is a continuing need to monitor and manage budgets as tightly as possible to avoid cost over-runs.
ii.   Time: A number of milestone dates affect the project e.g. financial year-end, pre-election period and the elections themselves and the work must be managed taking these into account.

iii.   People: It is imperative that the project team consists of the right people. The new website impacts on practically every team in the GLA, and the content and creative staff in particular are essential to continue working with these teams.

The core project team meet on a daily basis with the express purpose of identifying, managing and mitigating operational risks. Any risks identified that are more strategic nature are escalated to the Project Board to resolve. Progress on the project is reported to the GLA Digital Board which is chaired by the Executive Director, Development, Enterprise & Environment and including attendance by the Head of Paid Service and a number of Assistant Directors around business..

4b.   Links to Mayoral Strategies and priorities

The new London.gov.uk website is a direct output of City Hall's marketing communications and digital strategies. Improving London.gov.uk is one of the core activities GLA External Relations is running to achieve our objectives and aims to; increase public awareness, understanding and engagement with the work that the Mayor, the London Assembly and the staff at City Hall do.

5.   Financial comments

5.1   The expenditure of up to £896,000 to further develop the new London.gov.uk website will be part funded from the existing 2015/16 External Relations Budget (£55k), with the remaining resources required funded from the 2015/16 GLA Corporate Contingency Budget (£841k). As spend will span two financial years, a budget carry forward request will be required to fund the 2016/17 element of expenditure, approval of which is subject to the year-end process.

6.   Legal comments

6.1   The report above indicates that:

6.1.1   the decisions requested of the mayor (in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code) fall within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive to the discharge of its general functions;

6.1.2   in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:

- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people (further details on equalities are set out in section 3 above) and to the duty under section 149 of the 2010 Act to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not[1];

- 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; and

- consult with appropriate bodies.

6.2   Any services or supplies required must be procured by Transport for London Procurement who will determine the detail of the procurement strategy to be adopted in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code.

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[1] The protected characteristics and groups are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marriage/ civil partnership status.

Officers must ensure that appropriate contract documentation is put in place and executed by the successful bidder(s) and the GLA before the commencement of any services or supplies.

6.3   Officers should ensure that appropriate documentation is put in place to record any variations to existing contracts between the GLA and suppliers.

6.4   Officers must ensure that they comply fully with all GLA HR/Head of Paid Service protocols in respect of staffing proposals, in particular the need to gain all necessary approvals for the creation of any new posts.

7.   Investment & Performance Board

The IPB considered this proposal at its meeting on 20 November 2015 and gave endorsed the recommendations.

8.   Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract [for externally delivered projects]	November 2015
Announcement [if applicable]	N/A
Delivery Start Date [for project proposals]	January 2016
Final evaluation start and finish (self/external) [delete as applicable]:	N/A
Delivery End Date [for project proposals]	September 2016
Project Closure: [for project proposals]	September 2016

Appendices and supporting papers:

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) 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 approval <u>or</u> 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 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be 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: Duminda Baddevithana has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following have been consulted on the final decision.	✓
Assistant Director/Head of Service: David Munn and Emma Strain have reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.	✓
Sponsoring Director: Martin Clarke has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.	✓
Mayoral Adviser: Will Walden has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.	✓
Advice: The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.	✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:
I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature *M. D. Elle*   Date 24.11.15

CHIEF OF STAFF:
I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor

Signature *Edward W*   Date 25:11:2015