

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD 2847

London & Partners grant funding to support Grow London Local

Programme: Helping Local Economies to Thrive (HLETT)

Executive summary:

In December 2025, Mayoral Decision (MD) 3426 approved the delivery plan for the Helping Local Economies to Thrive (HLETT) strategic programme. Subsequent to this, MD3486 (Integrated Settlement) and MD3496 (GLA Portfolio Changes 2026-27) aligned government and Mayoral funding, respectively, to the HLETT delivery plan to support small and medium-sized enterprises across London, via Grow London Local.

This Assistant Director Decision (made under the delegation provided by MDs 3426 and 3496) seeks approval to award grant funding of up to £8,473,000 to London & Partners (L&P) across 2026-27 and (subject to future Mayoral budget decisions) 2027-28 and 2028-29 (these last two years as indicative funding). This is to contribute to L&P's costs of its 2026-27 Business Plan (approved under Director Decision 2816) and Grow London Local.

This decision also seeks approval to introduce a 0.5 per cent top slice on L&P's total grant funding in 2026-27, to contribute to the GLA's ongoing grant-management and oversight costs.

Decision:

That the Head of Regeneration and Growth Strategies approves total expenditure of £8,473,000, as a grant award to London and Partners. This comprises:

- £550,000 across each of 2026-27 and (subject to Mayoral budget setting) 2027-28 and 2028-29, to support delivery of London's Growth Hub
- £2,500,000 in 2026-27, to boost productivity in small and medium-sized enterprises in London
- £4,323,000 in 2026-27 towards supporting Grow London Local
- £36,865 retained by the GLA for grant-management costs making a final grant of £7,336,135 in 2026-27.

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: Louise Duggan

Position: Head of Regeneration and Growth Strategies

Signature:



Date: 27 July 2026

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. In December 2025, Mayoral Decision (MD) 3426 approved the delivery plan for the Helping Local Economies to Thrive (HLETT) strategic programme. This programme contributes to the core London-level outcome that high streets and town centres are thriving across London.
- 1.2. The HLETT delivery plan describes how the GLA will work with partners to publish the London Growth Plan (February 2025); and support London's high streets, town centres and other local economic hubs to generate employment and growth across the capital. London's high streets also form a key part of our local communities. A core aim of the growth plan is to set out how the success of London's high streets can be secured – including through support for the productive and resilient small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) on which many depend. This work is pivotal to our support of the government's mission to kickstart economic growth. This MD seeks approval to bring together the necessary funding for investment in London's SMEs, via London & Partners (L&P).
- 1.3. L&P is the growth agency for London.¹ L&P's mission is to create economic growth that is resilient, sustainable and inclusive. It is a company limited by guarantee, operating as a social enterprise that receives both public and commercial income.
- 1.4. L&P has produced a business plan for 2026-27, which includes activities that align with Mayoral programmes such as HLETT and Boosting London's Growth Sectors (BLGS), both of which support London's businesses.
- 1.5. L&P's Business Plan activities align with the HLETT delivery plan as follows: Project 1.1 Helping small businesses access the support they need by helping businesses navigate London's business support ecosystem.
- 1.6. Activities to continue to support London's *growth* businesses is set out in Director Decision (DD) 2816.
- 1.7. This ADD, made under the delegation provided by MD3496, seeks approval to award grant funding of up to £8,473,000 to L&P for 2026-27 and, subject to future Mayoral budget decisions, indicative funding for 2027-28 and 2028-29. This funding will contribute to L&P's costs of delivering the outcomes and activities set out in its 2026-27 Business Plan (approved in DD2816), which aligns with the success measures and delivery milestones of the HLETT programme, as updated through this decision.
- 1.8. ADD approval is also sought to deduct 0.5 per cent from the total L&P grant for 2026-27 to contribute to the GLA's ongoing grant management and oversight costs of administering this grant to L&P.

Background

- 1.9. MD3426 makes clear how the shape of the London economy is changing, with thriving high streets, town centres and other local hubs of economic activity contributing to London's overall growth potential, already accommodating 41 per cent of all of London's businesses, often small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). These places can create and sustain jobs and embed economic opportunity

¹ L&P promotes the capital across the world; attracts overseas organisations, events and visitors to the city; and helps retain and grow London companies.

at the heart of our diverse communities and play an important role in building cohesion at local level by providing accessible and safe environments.

- 1.10. At the same time, there are challenges of varying scale and nature that limit SMEs' potential. Faced with rising costs and increasing competition (including via online platforms), SMEs often need support to take risks to innovate and invest. Without this, significant growth in employment and productivity is difficult. Small businesses, which underpin London's high streets and local economies, can struggle to access the support and advice that they need to grow. Some business owners – including women, people with disabilities, and those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds – face even greater barriers; Grow London Local will seek to address these.

Proposal

- 1.11. To address these challenges, L&P's business plan for 2026-27 sets out how it will implement London's new Business Support Strategy.² This includes delivering small business support (as set out below) and helping small business owners find the support they need to thrive, via the Grow London Local business support navigation tools and service.³ This ADD seeks to improve access to free support and advice for SMEs; and ensure that it reaches the widest range of diverse-led businesses.
- 1.12. Awarding a grant to L&P, of up to £8,473,000, will support the delivery of L&P's business plan (including business support and navigation programmes). It will:
- help small business owners find the support they need via Grow London Local, funded by the Integrated Settlement and Mayoral funding
 - boost productivity through innovation funded via the governments Made Smarter programme, funded by the Integrated Settlement.
- 1.13. See Appendix 1 for more detail on Grow London Local and Made Smarter programmes are described below.

Top slicing of funding for GLA oversight

- 1.14. This decision seeks approval to award L&P funding. GLA officers will, however, have an ongoing management, monitoring and reporting responsibility for the funding. This includes ensuring L&P adheres to the terms of both the GLA and government's funding requirements, and the additional reporting requirements for Made Smarter (set out in paragraph 2.7 below). This will also ensure that the GLA reports performance data, risks and issues to central government on a timely basis.
- 1.15. This will require dedicated officer input across multiple funding streams and mechanisms, including Integrated Settlement reporting (as set out in 1.6 and 2.7). For 2026-27, 0.5 per cent has been agreed; this equates to £36,865.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. Approved under MD 3426, the HLETT Mayoral programme project 1.1 seeks to provide support and advice to SMEs to level the playing field for small businesses in the local economy – including for cooperatives and mutuals. This activity will be funded through the existing Grow London Local

² As part of delivering the London Growth Plan, L&P has worked with the Mayor of London and organisations across London to develop the Business Support Strategy. This strategy sets out a clear framework to help SMEs start, scale and grow in the capital – from early stage and foundational SMEs to high-growth scaleups. The strategy's ambition is that, by 2035, London will have a world-leading business support system that is inclusive, sustainable and easy to navigate – ensuring every SME in the capital can thrive.

³ Grow London Local is the Growth Hub for London.

programme. This work, led by L&P, will include an online library for events, support programmes and expert-led content.

- 2.2. The HLETT success measures for project 1.1 include enabling London's vibrant and diverse SME sector to access the support it needs to grow, with high levels of business creation.
- 2.3. The associated activity set out in this decision relates to L&P's 2026-27 business plan, which aligns with the following HLETT delivery milestones for 2026-27:
 - completion of HLETT grant funding agreement by Q2 2026-27
 - delivery of business support to 10,642 businesses by Q4 2026-27.
- 2.4. Delivery milestones relating to jobs created will be removed from this delivery plan via a project change request; and will be recorded on the GLA's programme management platform, Asana. This is because the UK Shared Prosperity Funding for this activity has ceased.
- 2.5. As the Growth Hub and Made Smarter funding is being provided to the GLA under the Integrated Settlement, both programmes are required to report and deliver against targets set out in the Integrated Settlement Outcomes Framework (ISOF). As such, two additional delivery milestones will be added to the HLETT delivery plan to accommodate this (targets in brackets):
 - number of businesses with improved productivity (23) by March 2028
 - number of businesses with improved practice (71) by March 2028.
- 2.6. The grant-funding agreement will include additional metrics to be captured, as set out in L&P's business plan for Grow London Local delivery. Further details on these associated targets will be set out in the funding agreement.

Made Smarter additional Department for Business and Trade (DBT) reporting

- 2.7. The GLA has agreed to DBT's request that it reports indicators that sit outside the ISOF. The GLA will include the following additional performance indicators in L&P's grant funding agreement:

Deliverable	Targets 2026-27
Engagements with businesses, where the minimum levels of data are collected	284
Digital road-mapping sessions delivered	142
Intensive support delivered to businesses (10 hours or more)	45
Funded projects delivered	45
Leadership and management training places filled	42
Digital internships placed	25
Organisation and workforce development training places filled	48

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 provides that, in the exercise of their functions, public authorities including the GLA must 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 persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons 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. 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.
- 3.3. Consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty 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.
- 3.4. L&P’s Grow London Local service plays an important role in supporting diverse entrepreneurs and business owners. As part of its business plan, L&P has set targets for the percentage of businesses/entrepreneurs that are supported, in person, to find relevant business support.
- 3.5. As part of Grow London Local, interventions have been put in place to strengthen engagement with hard-to-reach communities. This includes using translators; producing marketing material in various languages; and outreach via local community groups.
- 3.6. This activity supports the Mayor’s commitment to tackling structural inequalities in access to business support and economic opportunity. Particular emphasis will continue to be placed on supporting entrepreneurs from diverse groups, including women; disabled Londoners; and Black, Asian and minority ethnic Londoners.
- 3.7. As Grow London Local is accessed by SMEs via a non-public-sector website, L&P is not legally required to meet level 2 (AA) of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. However, it endeavours to work with its website delivery partners to implement accessibility standards of a similar level. Accessibility requirements are also considered when selecting any physical spaces used for hosting events.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. The risks associated with this decision are detailed in the table below:

Risk description	Mitigation	Residual RAG
L&P does not recruit or support enough SMEs, through the Made Smarter programme, to meet DBT’s grant-funding agreement targets.	L&P now has a growing database of SMEs. It will continue to increase marketing effort where necessary and use its Grow London Local platform to recruit businesses. It will also work with other institutions focusing on manufacturing, who will direct SMEs towards the platform. L&P will also receive leads from the national Made Smarter website.	Green
The Made Smarter funding is not spent within the appropriate financial year, leading to claw-back. Any delays to spend can cause a risk.	The GLA grant manager will continue to closely monitor spend and milestone payments made to L&P for delivery, to ensure any slippage is addressed. L&P has a full operations team to oversee processes,	Green

	timelines, and financial planning and monitoring.	
There is a risk of underspend, as L&P will only be able to claim and retain funding in line with actual expenditure, and the achievement of agreed milestones and outputs for the Made Smarter programme (set out in the funding agreement). This risk is particularly pronounced for grants awarded to SMEs, which are paid in arrears following evidence of expenditure; any delays or shortfalls in SME delivery may therefore reduce overall funding drawdown.	L&P has deployed, and will continue to deploy, resource to raise awareness of the programme via Grow London Local, and through its communication channels, to ensure outputs are met. It has also built a network during the pilot phase; and will continue to work with other institutions focused on manufacturing; these will direct SMEs towards the platform. L&P will also receive leads from the national Made Smarter website.	Green

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.2. L&P's business plan and business support programmes align with:

- HLETT, which focuses on the importance of a thriving London economy that is open to business; and the promotion of London as a world leader in innovation, technology and creativity
- the London Growth Plan
- the Mayor's Economic Development Strategy.

Conflicts of interest

4.3. There are no conflicts of interest to declare for any of the officers involved in drafting or clearance of this decision form.

Subsidy control

4.4. The Subsidy Control Act 2022 requires that the GLA's provision of any grant funding complies with the subsidy control principles.

4.5. Subsidy control advice will be sought prior to a grant funding agreement is issued.

5. Financial comments

5.1. Approval is requested to grant L&P £8,473,000, as a contribution to its costs of delivering the associated programmes set out above. A 0.5 per cent top slice of this funding (£36,865 in 2026-27) will be retained by the GLA for ongoing grant-management and oversight costs. The final grant award to L&P will be £7,336,135 in 2026-27.

5.2. £3,050,000 of the proposed spending is financed by the Growth Hub and Made Smarter grants. These grants are part of the GLA's Integrated Settlement, as agreed in the budget for this financial year.

5.3. £4,323,000 of the proposed spend is financed by GLA resources, as agreed in the budget for this financial year.

5.4. Expenditure and indicators will be monitored on a quarterly basis. This requirement as well as the standard break clauses will be incorporated into the funding agreement to ensure that performance and risk is managed effectively during the duration of the grant agreement.

5.5. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The preceding sections of this report, and those set out in MD3426, indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor fall within the GLA's general statutory powers – specifically section 30(1) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999. This provides for the GLA to be able to do anything that is incidental to the exercise of its functions, including its general powers – specifically promoting economic development and wealth creation in Greater London. If the Head of Regeneration and Growth Strategies, under the delegation of MDs 3274 and 3496, makes the decisions sought to continue to support L&P's Grow London Local programme, it will achieve this ambition.
- 6.2. Officers have ensured that no reliance is placed on, nor commitments made in reliance of:
- third-party funding, until legally binding commitments are secured for it, and officers are satisfied that their proposed use of the same aligns with any conditions of award
 - future budgets remaining subject to the outcome of the budget-setting process for future financial years, until those budget-setting exercises are completed
 - “returned funding”, without confirming that it can be used as proposed; and, where applicable, after liaising with third party funders and varying current GLA funding agreements to reflect the reallocation of funding.
- 6.3. Sections 1 to 4, above, concern the award of grant funding by the GLA. Officers will act in accordance with requirements of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code, and the DBT's requirements; and ensure that such grant funding is distributed fairly, transparently, and in a manner that affords value for money.
- 6.4. As set out in 4.5, above, subsidy control advice will be sought before a grant funding agreement is issued.
- 6.5. If the Head of Regeneration and Growth Strategies makes the decisions sought, officers must ensure that:
- as the proposed grant exceeds £100,000, the grant is registered on the DBT's Transparency Database
 - a grant-funding agreement is put in place between and executed by the GLA and L&P before any commitment to fund is made.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. The work will be carried out according to the following timetable:

Activity	Timeline
Grant-funding agreement signed	August 2026
GFA start date	April 2026
Final 2026-27 claim submitted to GLA	April 2027

Appendices and supporting papers:

Grow London Local

London & Partners 2026-27 Business Plan

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/s does this fall within: Helping Local Economies to Thrive

Part 1 – Deferral

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

If YES, for what reason: L&P's 2026-27 business plan will be published in July 2026

Until what date: August 2026

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:

Sarah Purvis has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

This decision was agreed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 27 July 2026.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Date: 27 July 2026

Signature

