GREATER**LONDON**AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3540

Adult Skills Fund Assurance and Governance 2026-27

Programme: Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth

Executive summary:

This decision seeks approval of the revised Adult Skills Fund (ASF) Assurance Framework (the Framework) for the 2026-27 academic year.

The Framework gives assurance to key stakeholders (including HM Government) that the Greater London Authority has the systems and processes needed to successfully manage devolved functions, and funding, related to the ASF. This version of the Framework contains:

- updates following the government's introduction of the Integrated Settlement fund; and the English Devolution & Community Empowerment Act 2026
- updated governance arrangements, including changes to decision-making and stakeholder advisory arrangements
- amendments in line with current processes and policy changes.

A delegation of authority is proposed to the Executive Director, Communities & Skills in his capacity as the Senior Responsible Owner for the Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth programme, to approve future amendments to the Framework and significant changes and variations to the value of a contract for services/Grant Agreement.

Decision:

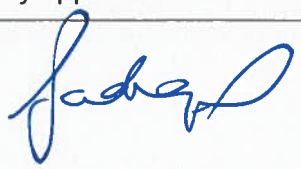
That the Mayor:

- approves the revised Adult Skills Fund Assurance Framework (at Appendix A) for the 2026-27 academic year
- delegates authority to the Executive Director – Communities & Skills in their capacity as the Senior Responsible Owner for the Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth programme to:
  - approve future amendments to the Assurance Framework
  - approve significant growth requests, reduction statements and variations to the value of a contract for services/Grant Agreement.

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: 19/10/26

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

1.1. In 2019, the GLA – preparing for delegation of the then Adult Education Budget (AEB) functions – was required to meet six readiness conditions, to show the Secretary of State for Education that it could carry out these functions effectively. As a part of a submission to the Department for Education (DfE), the GLA committed to publish an AEB Assurance Framework. This outlines the GLA's processes and procedures for managing the AEB effectively. A new adult education funding model was introduced in August 2024 – following this, the AEB was replaced by the Adult Skills Fund (ASF); and the AEB Assurance Framework was renamed the ASF Assurance Framework (the Framework).

1.2. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 (the 2026 Act) received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026. Schedule 13 of the 2026 Act amends the Apprenticeships, Skills and Children Learning Act 2009 (the 2009 Act) – conferring a range of legal duties and provisions, relating to the education and training of adults, to strategic authorities. This requires the Mayor and the GLA to exercise specified functions relating to adult education in London. Before the 2026 Act, many of these functions were delegated by the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to section 39A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (the GLA Act).

1.3. As of April 2026, the ASF is incorporated into the Integrated Settlement fund (IS) under the "adult skills and employment support" pillar. The GLA now receives consolidated funding for skills and employment support, for the Spending Review period to April 2029, as part of the IS. As the legal duties and provisions for the Mayor in relation to the ASF are now provided to him in the 2009 Act, further to the amendments in the 2026 Act, the specific legislative framework which previously provided that the Mayor must personally take all ASF decisions no longer applies.

1.4. In light of these legislative changes, the Framework must now be updated to reflect revised governance and decision-making arrangements. It is proposed that the Framework is retained as a core governance document for the ASF – providing assurance to key stakeholders (including HM Government) that the GLA has the systems and processes needed to successfully manage the devolved functions, and funding, relating to the ASF. Stakeholders have previously noted they have valued the Framework as a place to understand governance and management arrangements for London's ASF.

1.5. The Framework is reviewed and revised each year, and published on the GLA website. This is to ensure it remains consistent with current policy; and reflects any changes to processes and procedures. As the Framework is a primary ASF governance document, it is taken through the GLA's formal decision-making process.

1.6. The decision recommends a delegation of authority to the Executive Director – Communities & Skills, in their capacity as the SRO for the Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth (SLBG) programme, to approve future amendments to the ASF Assurance Framework and significant changes to provider allocations. This delegation will support a more streamlined governance and management approach in line with the devolution arrangements outlined at paragraph 1.3 above.

1.7. This decision will support the delivery of multiple projects under the SLBG programme (as approved in MD3395) and the Supporting & Inspiring Young Londoners programme (approved in MD3380). Updating the management approach set out in the Framework will ensure that elements of the projects funded via the ASF are subject to effective and proportionate management arrangements. A full list of projects under these programmes, that are in receipt of ASF funding, is included at paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2, below.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

ASF Assurance Framework amendments

2.1. The updated version of the Framework is at Appendix A. Several updates made to this version of the Framework are administrative – such as references to the relevant academic year, and hyperlinks to the latest versions of documents and webpages.

2.2. Amendments have also been made throughout to align the Framework with the devolution of functions, in line with the 2026 Act and subsequent amendments to the 2009 Act (outlined at paragraph 1.3 above).

2.3. Changes have also been made throughout chapter one of the Framework (Governance & Decision Making) to reflect the updated internal governance approach, now that the ASF sits within the wider IS package. In this updated approach the ASF Mayoral Board will continue to set the strategic direction and funding priorities in relation to the ASF and ensure they are implemented and delivered effectively. However it will no longer be required to review every formal ASF decision.

2.4. References to the two-tier ASF decision making process, by which ASF decisions could be made by the Mayor, have been removed. This process was approved in MD2736; and subsequently updated via MD3145. ASF decision-making can now be aligned to the wider IS package and the GLA's established Mayoral Decision-Making Framework (MDMF), and decisions are no longer required to be made by the Mayor at ASF Mayoral Board meetings. This change is possible as the legislative framework for the devolution of the ASF now allows the Mayor to delegate authority on ASF decision-making – thus removing the need for the two-tier decision-making process.

2.5. References to the Inclusive Talent Delivery Group have been added throughout the Framework. This is the stakeholder advisory body, responsible for advice and strategic direction to the Mayor and key partners on the ASF and other adult skills programmes.

2.6. References to the Free Courses for Jobs programme have been taken out. This follows the removal of the funding ringfence, and the introduction of the London Talent Pathways, as approved in MD3510.

2.7. Tables one (schedule of matters reserved to the Mayor) and two (schedule of officer responsibilities) at section 1.6 have been removed, as the ASF is now a devolved function and the delegations are as set out in the MDMF. The proposed changes will ensure alignment with SLBG and GLA governance arrangements.

2.8. The "table of value changes considered to be non-significant" has been retained. This is to help in efficiently managing non-significant growth requests; reduction statements; and variations to the value of a contract of services/grant agreement. This is consistent with established ASF management arrangements. The thresholds at which variations are considered 'significant', and must be approved by the Executive Director – Communities & Skills, are based on a percentage of the overall contract/grant value will approved in with SLBG governance processes. The thresholds are below:

Commitment value	Max change in value (per cent)	Maximum change
<£300k	30	N/A
£300k to £1m	20	£100,000
£1m to £3m	15	£300,000
>£3m	10	£500,000

2.9. Other amendments have been made throughout to ensure the Framework remains up to date with current processes, and in line with policy changes. This includes audit, subcontracting, whistleblowing and data-management processes.

Proposed delegation

2.10. To support the efficient delivery of projects funded through the ASF, a delegation of authority is sought to the Executive Director – Communities & Skills in their capacity as the SRO for the SLBG programme to:

- approve future amendments to the ASF Assurance Framework
- approve significant growth requests, reduction statements and variations to the value of a contract of services/Grant Agreement.

2.11. The proposed delegation will support the delivery of the ASF, by providing a clear process for approving arrangements for efficient governance, provision management and financial assurance against one of the GLA's most significant budget profiles. This will give key stakeholders assurance that the GLA can maintain the systems and processes needed to successfully manage the functions relating to a significant volume of public funding, while enabling greater flexibility in decision-making. The Framework also sets out and supports the GLA's best practice approach for the management of the ASF funding packages to providers and partners responsible for delivering grant-funded and commissioned provision. It also provides valuable information and insights to stakeholders on the GLA's management approach for the ASF.

2.12. Where making decisions in exercise of the delegation proposed in this decision form, the Executive Director, Communities & Skills, will ensure compliance with the obligations set out in the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. These explain when written records of decisions and their content need to be published. Director Decisions will be required, where appropriate, to meet these transparency requirements – including in instances where GLA funds are paid to external organisations.

3. Equality comments

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

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and 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 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 under section 149 of the Equality Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status (for the purposes of the first limb of the duty in relation to employment), 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 in particular 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; and encouraging them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low.

3.4. The Framework includes a Diversity and Inclusion section that references the Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and states how implementation of the ASF promotes equal opportunities. This MD makes no changes to those arrangements and has no impact on those with protected characteristics.

3.5. Any equalities impacts are considered on a case-by-case basis for each ASF decision prior to it being submitted for approval. All ASF Mayoral Board reports, stakeholder advisory board reports and decision forms contain a section on equality comments setting out how the equalities impacts of decisions have been assessed, taken into account and mitigated where appropriate.

4. Other considerations

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.1. Delivering the ASF supports Londoners to develop the skills needed to move into employment in some of the sectors considered critical to London's economic growth. The ASF directly supports the Mayor's priorities laid out in the London Growth Plan, Inclusive Talent Strategy, and the SLBG mandate. These strategies bring together employment, skills and careers advice providers and employers, in close collaboration with London's local authorities, central government and wider stakeholders to work towards a single city-wide Inclusive Talent System. The ASF supports several projects under the SLBG programme:

- Project 1.1 - Creating an employer-led Inclusive Talent System and building talent pipelines
- Project 1.2 – Talent pipelines for London's key sectors
- Project 1.3 – Upskilling for Resilience
- Project 2.1 – No Wrong Door
- Project 2.2 – Essential skills and progression pathways
- Project 2.3 – Supported navigation for Londoners
- Project 4.1 – Promoting London's skills excellence
- Project 4.3 – Boosting teaching capacity and capability for London's further education sector.

4.2. The ASF also supports delivery under the SIYL programme and the Mayor's commitment to create 250,000 positive opportunities for young people in the 2024-28 Mayoral Term. This includes equipping more young people to take advantage of opportunities to gain good employment and career progression. The following projects are partially funded by the ASF:

- Project 4.2 – employment and training opportunities for young people who are, or are at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training)
- Project 4.3 – London Youth Guarantee Trailblazer.

4.3. The Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out how the Mayor will work to create a fairer, more equal, integrated city where all people feel welcome and able to fulfil their potential. The ASF supports the strategy by ensuring Londoners from disadvantaged groups continue to have access to employability and skills support to help them move into and progress in London's labour market.

Risks arising/mitigation

4.4. The Framework sets out robust governance arrangements for managing the ASF to minimise any programme risks. By having and keeping under review an over-arching framework setting out the GLA's approach to decision-making, transparency, audit, value for money and engagement, stakeholders can be confident that any decisions are robust, evidence-based and capable of being independently scrutinised.

4.5. Work will be undertaken to ensure that:

- any new processes are fully understood by those administering the ASF
- they are embedded properly
- there is engagement with relevant colleagues and stakeholders at the right point.

Conflicts of interest

4.6. There are no conflicts of interest to declare from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

5.1. This decision asks the Mayor to approve:

- the updated Framework (at Appendix A) for the 2026-27 academic year
- a delegation of authority to the Executive Director – Communities & Skills in their capacity as the Senior Responsible Owner for the Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth programme to:
  - approve future amendments to the Assurance Framework
  - approve significant growth requests, reduction statements and variations to the value of a contract for services/Grant Agreement.

5.2. There are no direct financial implications to the GLA arising from changes to the Framework.

6. Legal comments

6.1. The 2026 Act amends the 2009 Act to confer a range of duties and provisions relating to the education and training of adults on strategic authorities. This includes conferring powers on the Mayor, who exercises these functions on behalf of the GLA.

6.2. The specific legislative framework and governance requirements set out in paragraphs 1.2 to 1.4 of this MD that led to the creation of the ASF Mayoral Board are no longer required, as the relevant functions are set out in the amended 2009 Act.

6.3. It is also proposed that the Mayor delegates authority to the Executive Director, Communities & Skills, in his capacity as the SRO for the SLBG programme. Paragraph 2.11 above covers the areas to be delegated. The Mayor has the power, under section 38 of the GLA Act, to authorise any member of GLA staff to exercise functions that are exercisable on behalf of the GLA by the Mayor, to the extent that the Mayor so authorises, whether generally or specially, and subject to any conditions he may impose. The Mayor may therefore make the delegation requested in this decision form.

6.4. In taking the decisions to be requested, the Mayor must have due regard to the PSED. See section 3, above, for details.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1. The next steps are set out below:

Activity	Timeline
Publish the revised Framework	October 2026

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix A – Revised ASF Assurance Framework 2026-27.

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: Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth

Part 1 – Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

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: Richard Kember-Lawrence has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:	✓
Sponsoring Director: Tunde Olayinka has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.	✓
Mayoral Adviser: Howard Dawber has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.	✓
Advice: The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.	✓
Mayoral Delivery Board This decision was agreed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 5 October 2026.	

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature Fay Hammond **Date** 8 October 2026

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor.

Signature D. Bellamy **Date** 5 October 2026