GREATER**LONDON**AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2871

Title: Lower Lea Valley Connectivity Partnership

Programme: Making Best Use of Land

Executive Summary:

The Lower Lea Valley is one of London's most strategically important growth locations, identified through successive London Plan frameworks as a focus for housing, employment and infrastructure delivery.

This decision seeks approval for revenue spend of £60,000 and associated resources, profiled as £50,000 direct commissions in financial year 2026-27 and £10,000 grant funding in 2027-28, to continue supporting the Lower Lea Valley connectivity partnership. The proposed spend will be used to deliver connective infrastructure and so address the many significant barriers between local communities.

Continued Mayoral support helps ensure project delivery in line with Good Growth principles, creating inclusive, well-connected and environmentally resilient places. The work is part of the Making Best Use of Land Delivery Plan (and relates to 1.2 'Area planning and place-based frameworks' and 1.5 'Targeted transport investment though external funding to support housing and regeneration'). It is part of a match funded partnership with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, the London Borough of Newham and Transport for London. The Lower Lea Valley Executive Sponsors Group, established in 2024 provides governance oversight.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration, as Senior Responsible Owner for the Making Best Use of Land programme, approves revenue expenditure of up to £60,000, broken down as follows: £50,000 in financial year 2026-27 and £10,000 in 2027-28. This is to support delivery of workstreams identified by the Lower Lea Valley connectivity partnership.

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: Lucinda Turner

Position: Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration

Signature:



Date:

26 October 2026

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

1.1. The Lower Lea Valley is still seeing significant growth and regeneration. Substantial pipelines of housing and employment development are coming forward across Newham and Tower Hamlets. However, major physical barriers remain in these areas, including the River Lea, large road infrastructure and surface rail corridors. These constrain movement and connectivity between communities, development sites and transport hubs. Investment in new connections and infrastructure improvements is necessary to supporting sustainable growth, improving access to opportunity and enabling the delivery of Good Growth objectives.

1.2. The GLA has worked with partners over several years to improve connectivity and unlock growth opportunities across the Lower Lea Valley. This builds on previous partnership work and funding, (approved under Mayoral Decision (MD) 3140) which supported "delivery of connective infrastructure to address the many and significant physical barriers between communities in the area". Director Decision (DD) 2707 approved spend for delivery activity during 2024-25 and 2025-26.

1.3. This decision seeks approval to spend up to £60,000 of revenue funding to continue the Lower Lea Valley Connectivity work and support the delivery of Making Best Use of Land Delivery Plan. This breaks down as £50,000 for commissioned scoping, vision and technical work during 2026-27 and £10,000 grant funding to London Borough of Newham towards a focus area connectivity study during 2027-28.

1.4. GLA investment will be matched by contributions from LB Newham, LB Tower Hamlets, and Transport for London (TfL). As such, the combined programme budget is £180,000. This funding will support a programme of evidence gathering, option development and strategic planning. This includes area-wide vision, route benefit analysis and prioritisation work. This work will also identify future funding opportunities and delivery pathways for infrastructure projects that maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits of growth, including safe 24-hour routes and access to waterways.

1.5. The Lower Lea Valley Executive Sponsors Group was established in 2024. The group brings together senior representatives from the GLA, TfL, LB Newham and LB Tower Hamlets to provide strategic leadership for the regeneration and infrastructure agenda across the area. A key priority for the partnership is improving walking, cycling and public transport connectivity across the Lower Lea Valley to overcome longstanding severance caused by waterways and transport infrastructure and the protection and enhancement of the area's environmental, ecological and heritage assets.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1. The proposed work builds on previous GLA and partner investment to improve connectivity across the Lower Lea Valley, including work undertaken through the Priority Bridges Programme, to agree on funding and the delivery strategy for Mayer Parry Bridge. This has shown the value of cross-borough collaboration in overcoming physical barriers; and coordinating approaches to infrastructure planning and delivery.

2.2. The GLA will work in partnership with TfL LB Tower Hamlets and LB Newham, to commission a high-level cross-borough vision for the Lower Lea Valley and a refresh of the Lea River Park Design Manual and Primer. This guidance was commissioned by the London Legacy Development Corporation and adopted by the boroughs in 2017. Almost 10 years on, with increased housing density planned, changes to flood mitigation requirements and cycle standards, establishment of the nearby Royal Docks Team and the opening of the Silvertown Tunnel, a new strategic context needs to be reflected to support future investment and implementation.

2.3. The shared vision extends along the River Lea from Poplar Riverside and Canning Town down to the River Thames. The commission will assess the implications of planned housing and employment growth, identify priorities for improving connectivity between communities and destinations, and explore opportunities to maximise the area's contribution to London's future growth. Outputs will comprise a series of technical reports, strategic recommendations and delivery plans to support future investment and implementation.

2.4. Key deliverables and outcomes between 2026 and 2028 are expected to include:

- a joint long-term vision for the Lower Lea Valley, building on existing Opportunity Area Planning Framework objectives, relevant planning policy and emerging delivery pipeline
- updated Lea River Park and Leaway design strategy and implementation plan that considers future growth needs, including flood mitigation impacts
- prioritised connectivity interventions supported by robust options appraisal and evidence-based benefits analysis
- increased clarity and confidence among partners, funders and stakeholders regarding future infrastructure investment priorities
- stronger partnership approach - the GLA will play a strategic coordinating and advocacy role to support the delivery of Good Growth outcomes across this area of the Lower Lea Valley.

2.5. This work is aligned with Good Growth principles and the *Making Best Use of Land* Delivery Plan (approved by Mayoral Decision MD3434), specifically projects, 1.2; 'Area planning and place-based frameworks' and 1.5 'Targeted transport investment though external funding to support housing and regeneration', It supports the infrastructure planning, partnership working and evidence base required to unlock the full potential of development sites across the Lower Lea Valley (both now and in the future). Through informing future infrastructure investment, the work will ensure that growth comes with well-connected, sustainable and high-quality neighbourhoods that maximise social, economic and environmental benefits. More widely, this work also supports the *Helping Local Economies to Thrive* delivery plan, by improving access to employment locations, town centres and other economic hubs. In this way, it gives communities and businesses greater benefit from local regeneration and investment.

3. Equality comments

3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Mayor and the GLA are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty. As such they must have due regard of the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- advance equality of opportunity and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act comprise age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status.

3.2. The Lower Lea Valley is home to diverse communities, including residents with a range of protected characteristics. The proposed work will help to develop evidence, strategic planning and partnership activity to inform the future regeneration of the area. This is expected to have positive impacts by helping to ensure that proposals are informed by inclusive growth principles, improve access to

opportunities and services, and contribute to the creation of neighbourhoods that are accessible, safe and welcoming for all Londoners.

3.3. This decision is not expected to have any negative impact on persons with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act. Equality considerations will be embedded throughout the commission and any subsequent programme of work.

3.4. Stakeholder engagement activities undertaken through the project will seek to engage a broad range of local communities and partners. This will ensure that diverse needs and perspectives are understood and reflected in recommendations.

3.5. Any future projects, interventions or investment decisions arising from this work will be subject to their own equalities assessments, as appropriate.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

4.1. The table below identifies the principal risks associated with the proposed workstreams and the mitigations that will be used to manage them.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation	Residual RAG rating
Changes in policy, funding availability, development viability or wider market conditions may affect the timing, scope or delivery of regeneration and infrastructure opportunities in the Lower Lea Valley. As a result, the programme may be less able to identify and progress priority connectivity interventions.	High	High	The workstreams will stay engaged with boroughs, TfL, landowners, developers and other stakeholders to monitor emerging opportunities and constraints. The scope of work will remain flexible and responsive to changing circumstances; this will ensure outputs remain relevant and evidence led.	Red
Partner contributions or future funding opportunities may not be secured. This could reduce the overall scope of work; or limit the progress of identified infrastructure priorities in future delivery phases.	Medium	Medium	Governance routes and funding arrangements are being agreed with partners before spend is committed. The programme will be phased to ensure available resources deliver the highest-priority outputs. The work will also strengthen the evidence base required to support future funding bids and investment opportunities.	Amber
There may be differing priorities and aspirations among partner organisations and stakeholders. This could make it harder to agree a	Low	Medium	The Lower Lea Valley Executive Sponsors Group provides strategic oversight and a framework for collaborative decision-making. The commissioned work will:	Green

shared programme of investment and future project priorities across the Lower Lea Valley.			• establish a robust evidence base to support consensus-building • identify areas of common interest • inform how future interventions are prioritised.	
Procuring the technical commission may take longer than anticipated. This could delay project mobilisation and programme delivery.	Low	Medium	The procurement approach has been scoped and agreed, to mitigate procurement delays at an early stage. It has been developed with support from Architecture + Urbanism's Procurement and Legal teams. Appropriate time contingencies will be built into the programme, to minimise the impact of any delays.	Green

Links to Mayoral Strategies and Priorities

4.2. The work supports the following London-level outcomes within the Mayor's strategic programme portfolio:

- "stable, long-term economic growth benefits all of London's communities"
- "Londoners live in neighbourhoods that are well planned and designed"
- "Londoners have access to good work"
- "high streets and town centres are thriving across London"
- "Londoners can enjoy green and wild spaces across the capital"
- "London is resilient to extreme weather and the impacts of climate change".

4.3. The workstreams will contribute to these outcomes by improving connectivity between communities, employment locations, transport hubs and growth areas and support access to environmental, cultural and community assets across the Lower Lea Valley. The work helps to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth, increasing housing delivery, promoting economic opportunity and supporting good growth.

Consultations and impact assessments, including data protection

4.4. The commission will involve engagement with relevant public-sector partners, local authorities, landowners and other stakeholders as appropriate. The findings will help inform future discussions on regeneration priorities and delivery opportunities in the area.

4.5. The activities authorised by this decision do not involve the processing of significant amounts of personal data. Should personal data be collected as part of engagement activities, it will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GLA's data protection policies and procedures.

4.6. No specific health, safeguarding or environmental impact issues arise directly from this decision. However, these matters will be considered through the development of future projects and proposals informed by this work, where relevant.

Conflicts of interest

4.7. No GLA officer involved in the drafting or clearance of this DD is aware of any conflicts of interest with the proposed programme.

4.8. If any conflicts of interest arise during grant-funding processes, officers will be required to declare that interest as part of a requirement of the Contracts and Funding Code; and will be excluded from the grant-funding (or any other related) process or activity for that project. This process will also be in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards for Staff and accompanying guidance on registering and declaring interests.

5. Financial comments

5.1. This decision seeks approval to spend up to £60,000, though direct commission and grant funding to LB Newham. The spend will take place across 2026-27 and 2027-28. All spend will be incurred by quarter three of 2027-28.

5.2. The proposed spending is financed by a new request for reserve use that was not included in the GLA Mayor budget for 2026-27. A total of £334,000 is currently held in the Revenue Grants Unapplied reserve for use by the Regeneration team. The expenditure will sit in the London Plan project.

5.3. Procurement will be via the Architecture and Urbanism Framework panel for direct commissions. The funding will be governed via a funding agreement between the GLA and LB Newham to support focus area work.

5.4. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

6.1. The outline timetable for delivery is set out below:

Activity	**Timeline**
Procurement	October 2026
Delivery start date	November 2026
Milestone 1a: Lower Lea Valley Vision	January 2027
Milestone 1b: Lea River Park Primer/Manual Review	February 2027
Milestone 2: Lower Lea crossing transport assessment (TfL)	March 2027
Milestone 3: Begin Focus Area 1	April 2027
Delivery end Date	February 2028

Appendices and supporting papers:
None.

Public access to information

Information in this form 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 will either be published 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: **Making Best Use of Land**

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 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: Hannah Lambert has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:	✓
Mayoral Delivery Board A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 26 October 2026.	

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature



Date

26 October 2026