

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2579

### Title: Online Qualitative Research Platform

#### Executive summary:

Approval is sought for a two-year contract with the GLA's current Online Qualitative Research Platform, from May 2022 to May 2024. The contract will be procured via the reseller procurement framework. This contract follows two years of use of the same Platform (one year with the initial contract; the second year with an extension of this contract).

The platform will be used to conduct remote qualitative research delivered by GLA researchers, such as focus groups and diary studies, for policy teams throughout the GLA.

#### Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Strategy, Intelligence and Analysis approves expenditure of up to £30,000 to procure the GLA's Online Qualitative Research Platform for a two-year contract from May 2022 to May 2024. This takes total spend over a four-year period up to £50,000.

#### 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:** Jeremy Skinner

**Position:** Assistant Director of  
Strategy, Intelligence and Analysis

**Signature:** Jeremy Skinner

**Date:** 06 June 2022

## **PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. The Opinion Research team regularly conducts qualitative opinion and market research with Londoners to provide insight and evidence to the Mayor and policy teams throughout the GLA.
- 1.2. In May 2020, the GLA commissioned an online qualitative research platform to enable the Opinion Research team to conduct such research remotely whilst restrictions on face-to-face research were in place due to COVID-19.
- 1.3. The platform has enabled us to reach a much wider group of Londoners than would have otherwise been possible, thereby facilitating our commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.
- 1.4. We have also made full use of the platform's capabilities to engage with participants in ways that would not have been possible with traditional research methods, e.g. quick polls, diary tasks, photo uploads, etc. We have since conducted five studies on the platform. Due to the flexibility offered by this approach, we see our use of the platform continuing even when face-to-face restrictions are lifted.
- 1.5. In addition, the platform saves on the cost of renting space for focus groups.
- 1.6. Expenditure for the initial 12-month contract budget of £10,000 was approved by the Senior Manager, Research and Engagement, via a Delegated Authority Record. Further expenditure of up to £15,000 from the GLA's Opinion Research and Statistics team budget was approved in April 2021; this was to extend the GLA's Online Qualitative Research Platform for a further 12-month contract, up to May 2022. This contract has now ended. (Although £25,000 was approved over a two-year period, actual expenditure was circa £19,850.)
- 1.7. This Decision form now seeks approval for expenditure of up to £30,000 from the GLA's Opinion Research and Statistics team budget to contract the GLA's Online Qualitative Research Platform for two years, from May 2022 to May 2024.
- 1.8. This contract has been procured via the reseller framework. This ensures a compliant route to market for licensed software.

#### **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

##### **2.1. Objectives:**

- to conduct online qualitative research with a variety of Londoners
- to engage with Londoners from a broad range of target groups
- to provide insight and evidence for policy teams and the Mayor.

##### **2.2. Outcomes:**

- the Opinion Research team can safely carry out varied qualitative research with a variety of Londoners

- the views and experiences of Londoners, particularly those who are hard to reach, inform policy and decision-making at City Hall.

### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. The Greater London Authority has an obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty enshrined within the Equality Act 2010, to consider how its policies and decisions affect people who are protected under the Act.
- 3.2. Using a specialist platform is both the easiest and the most data-secure way of conducting research online, for both participants and moderators. We are therefore able to conduct research with a wide range of Londoners – including those who have protected characteristics – unconstrained by individuals' caring responsibilities, mobility, or location.
- 3.3. Due to its inclusiveness and the flexibility offered by this approach, our use of the platform has continued, even as COVID-19 face-to-face restrictions have been lifted.

### **4. Other considerations**

#### *Key risks and issues*

- 4.1. The key risk is that the technology will be unsuitable for our needs or for use by Londoners (who possess varying levels of familiarity with technology). However, having used the research platform for 24 months, we are confident it meets our needs. The platform is designed for the specific purpose of engaging a range of participants, and is thus very user-friendly. Customer support is on hand from the platform providers, if needed.

#### *Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities*

- 4.2. The 2021 Mayor's Manifesto cites, 'Promoting Fairness and Equality' as top Mayoral commitment. The Mayor is committed to making sure that policymakers in City Hall are fully aware of public needs as early as possible. For this to happen, policymakers need to be able to engage with, and gather insight from, people from diverse backgrounds, with different perspectives and experiences. Ensuring we can conduct research in a format that is engaging and accessible to a wide range of people (i.e. online) will allow the Opinion Research team to engage with a variety of groups when conducting qualitative research.

#### *Consultations and impact assessments*

- 4.3. The appropriate procurement process has been followed to ensure that the successful company complies with the GLA's equalities requirements. Being able to conduct qualitative research with a variety of Londoners will ensure that the GLA involves a broad constituency of people in our work. Consultation helps the GLA to make better informed decisions and make us more accountable to the public.
- 4.4. There are no conflicts of interest to declare for anyone involved in the drafting or clearance of this form.

## 5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Assistant Director's approval is sought for expenditure of up to £30,000 to procure the GLA's Online Qualitative Research Platform for a two-year contract from 2022-23 to 2023-24. The cost of up to £30,000 will be funded from the 2022-23 and 2023-24 Opinion Research team's Cross-cutting budget, held within the City Intelligence Unit. Funding for services that fall into financial year 2024-25 (April and May 2024) will be subject to the 2024-25 budget setting process and approvals.
- 5.2. A Delegated Authority Record approved £10,000 to commission the initial 12-month contract from in 2020-21. ADD2513 approved £15,000 for the extension of this contract for a further year from 2021-22, though only circa £10,000 was spent.
- 5.3. Total spend over a four-year period will be up to £50,000.

## 6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 6.1. The Online Qualitative Research Platform contract will be managed by the Opinion Research team.
- 6.2. Procurement will commence as soon as is practical following this decision.

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	May 2022
Delivery start date	May 2022
Delivery end date	May 2024

## 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 either be published within one working day after it has been approved or 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:

### 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:

Helen Moore has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

#### Corporate Investment Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 6 June 2022.

### ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

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

Signature



Date 07 June 2022