

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2157

### Title: Support for Skills London 2017

#### Executive Summary:

The Skills Festival Company Limited (SFC) runs Skills London, a free annual jobs and careers event aimed at 15-24 year olds. The GLA has supported this event for the past five years, enabling young people, teachers and parents/carers across London to access thousands of job opportunities including apprenticeships as well as important careers advice. This paper seeks approval for the GLA to support Skills London 2017.

#### Decision:

That the Executive Director - Development, Enterprise & Environment approves grant funding of up to £50,000 to the Skills Festival Company Limited for additional content and features at the Skills London 2017 event.

#### AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

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:** Fiona Fletcher- Smith

**Position:** Executive Director-Development,  
Enterprise & Environment

**Signature:**



**Date:**

12.9.2017

## PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

### Decision required – supporting report

#### 1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Skills London, the capital's biggest jobs and careers event is focussed on supporting young Londoners aged 15-24 (including NEETs) into jobs, apprenticeships or further study through the provision of information, advice and guidance. Skills London also provides young people with access to real job and training opportunities with the employers, education institutions and training providers exhibiting at the event.
- 1.2 Established in 2005, the annual event is run by the Skills Festival Company Limited (SFC), (a fully owned subsidiary of London First), in partnership with Prospects as a 'not for profit' venture with all revenue generated by the event, recycled for the purpose of developing future events.
- 1.3 The GLA has supported the event since 2012, providing grant funding as a contribution to overall cost of running the event. The cumulative value of GLA grant funding awarded to date is £530,000, approved under cover of three separate approvals; refer to table 1.

**Table 1**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>£</b>
2012	DD919	£30,000
2013	DD1084	£150,000
2014	DD1084	£150,000
2015	DD1084	£150,000
2016	DD2061	£50,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£530,000</b>

- 1.4 The Skills Festival Company have offered the GLA an opportunity to support Skills London 2017, which will take place on 24th-25th November at ExCel London. Unlike previous contributions, GLA grant funding would be used specifically to fund discrete additional event content conducive to several of the Mayor's manifesto pledges on Skills and Employment (Refer to section 4.2).
- 1.5 It is recommended that the GLA award grant funding of £50,000 for the additional activity, more fully described at section 2.2, and provide the event with marketing support in the form of space on the TfL tube poster advertising network.
- 1.6 It should also be noted that this year London First will be hosting a business engagement and consultation event for the London Skills Strategy on day 1 of Skills London.

#### 2. Objectives and expected outcomes

##### 2.1 Objectives and expected outcomes of Skills London 2017

- 2.1.1 The expected outcomes of Skills London 2017 are as follows:

- Young Londoners are supported into work, an apprenticeship or further study;
- Young people and their parents are able to make informed career decisions, including apprenticeships; and

- The capacity of London's teachers attending the event is enhanced, enabling them to provide young people with quality careers advice and guidance, including routes to apprenticeships.

2.1.2 The expected outputs of Skills London 2017 are as follows:

- 200 exhibitors with 50% being employers;
- over 32,500 visitors; young people, teachers and parents.
- over 175 educational establishments attending with every London borough represented;
- 20 *Get Skilled* stands (where visitors can try first-hand the skills associated with a specific job role (e.g. brick laying); and
- over 75% of exhibitors offering Apprenticeships.

## 2.2 **Additionality Afforded by GLA Support for Skills London 2017**

2.2.1 GLA grant funding of £50,000 would enable the organisers to provide additional content and features at the Skills London 2017 event, specifically:

2.2.2 GLA grant funding would finance the creation of a "Find out about apprenticeships zone"; 80m2 of additional exhibition space allocated to apprenticeship training providers.

The zone would also include a theatre area which employers will use to showcase apprenticeship opportunities within their organisations throughout the event.

The zone would also include a 'live' apprenticeship opportunities board.

The GLA would have the opportunity to provide apprenticeship editorial in the monthly schools and colleges e-newsletters, which have a circulation to contacts within every secondary school and FE college in London together with editorial space in the event guide for the 32,500 visitors.

2.2.3 GLA grant funding would also finance the expansion of both the Tech and Hospitality zones (an additional 175m2). The additional space would be used to provide free and subsidised exhibition space to small companies with apprenticeship vacancies within these key sectors, thereby presenting City Hall and the Mayor in a positive light by increasing young people's accessibility to training providers.

2.2.4 The GLA would be provided with stand space (6m x 3m) within the wider construction zone to engage with employers, providers and visitors to the event to learn more about the Mayor's Construction Academy Scheme, due to go live in spring 2018.

2.2.5 In addition, the Mayor's Construction Academy Scheme will be featured on the Skills London website and with relevant content including industry specific careers information and links to the online scheme Prospectus inviting providers and employers to join local hubs.

### 3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The event organisers ensure that the event is accessible to all young Londoners, including those with protected characteristics, ensuring the event marketing materials are designed to appeal to all sexes, and reflect the wide diversity of London.
- 3.2 The event is marketed on a pan London basis, however SFC have prioritised the inner London boroughs to ensure that schools from the most deprived areas of London are aware of the event. Schools are given a bursary from the revenue raised by the exhibitor sales to ensure the widest possible attendance.
- 3.3 Data on the protected characteristics of visitors will be collected as part of the event. Past event evaluation has shown a good mix of visitors to the event

### 4. Other considerations

#### 4.1 Risks

- 4.1.1 The cumulative value of the grant awarded to date exceeds de-minimis aid thresholds<sup>1</sup> and as such there is a risk that the GLA might be challenged on state-aid.

This risk is considered minimal given that there is no directly comparable event of a similar scale, offering pan London coverage. Furthermore, the de-minimis aid threshold was exceeded in 2014 and there has been no challenge to date.

The implications of a challenge to the GLA can be mitigated via provision within the grant funding agreement to enable the GLA to claw back the grant funding in full and pass on any EU sanctioned financial penalties to the beneficiary (i.e. SFC).

The risk of challenge can be further mitigated by ensuring that as far as possible, all goods / services procured using GLA grant funding are procured via an open and competitive process.

- 4.1.2 A decision for the GLA not to support the capital's biggest school-age jobs and careers event carries a significant reputational risk and may be perceived as a lack of Mayoral interest in the skills agenda, in advance of devolved powers on skills (due in 2019) and not least given that partner organisations including the National Careers Service, London Councils, Education & Skills Funding Agency and the Association of Colleges are all contributing to the event.

#### 4.2 Benefits of Support for Skills London 2017

- 4.2.1 In addition to the outcomes and outputs listed above, Mayoral / GLA support for Skills London 2017 would have the following benefits.

- 4.2.2 Contribution to Mayoral manifesto pledges:** Supporting Skills London 2017 would contribute to many of the Mayor's manifesto ambitions around Skills for Londoners; specifically, Skills London will:

- promote the take-up of high quality apprenticeship programmes;
- provide practical support to address skills gaps and help to create a pipeline of skilled London workers to make the most of the opportunities in London's growth sectors;

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<sup>1</sup> €200,000 over a three-year rolling period.

- work with schools to improve careers advice and to promote opportunities for children to get an early start in career skills;
- ensure that young Londoners are encouraged to explore the skills they need to get on in the future economy; and
- support the development of a London STEM strategy by linking young people with careers and skills in science, tech, engineering and manufacturing.

4.2.3 Note, given the volume of young people and key decision makers that regularly attend Skills London, supporting Skills London 2017 was identified by the Skills for Londoners Apprenticeship Task and Finish Group as part of the solution to the challenges of creating parity of esteem between apprenticeships and academic progress routes and increasing awareness of the range and quality of apprenticeships.

4.2.4 Despite the uncertainty around the appetite of the GLA to support Skills London 2017, SFC have continued to include GLA Skills and Employment Officers in the event planning meetings. GLA involvement has ensured that the composition of the exhibitors is reflective of sectors important to London's economy, including construction, STEM creative and hospitality employers. There is also focus on the promotion of higher level apprenticeships.

Furthermore, SMEs and start-ups from sectors important to London's economy have been offered subsidised rates, shared stands and other solutions to enable them to exhibit.

4.2.5 Skills London is referenced within the London Ambitions Careers Offer, which was developed jointly in June 2015 by the London LEP and London Councils'. Specifically, the document references Skills London as one of its key recommendations:

*'Every young Londoner should have completed at least 100 hours experience of the world of work, in some form, by the time they reach the age of 16. This may include career insights from industry experts, work tasters, coaching, mentoring, enterprise activities, part-time work, participation in **Skills London** and The Big Bang Event, work shadowing, work experience/supported work experience and other relevant activities'.*

Furthermore, all employer exhibitors at this year's event will be asked to pledge work related experience to Skills London visitors in support of the London Ambitions recommendations, as well as the work-placement element of the new T-levels qualifications.

## 5. Financial comments

5.1 The proposed grant of up to £50,000 to the Skills Festival Company Limited to support the Skills London 2017 event will be funded from the 2017-18 Apprenticeships budget held within the Economic Business Policy Unit.

## 6. Legal comments

6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that:

6.1.1 the decisions requested of the Director fall within the statutory powers of the GLA (and sought pursuant to the GLA's scheme of delegation) to promote economic development and wealth

creation and/or to do anything which is facilitative of or conducive or incidental to the promotion of economic development and wealth creation in Greater London; and

- 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:
- (a) pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
  - (b) 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
  - (c) consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the Director must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010).
- 6.3 Officers have indicated that the contribution of funding to the proposed recipient will amount to the provision of funding and not a payment for services rendered and must ensure therefore, that:
- 6.3.1 the proposed funding is disbursed fairly, transparently, and in a manner considered to afford value for money; and
  - 6.3.2 a funding agreement is put in place and executed by the GLA and proposed recipient before any commitment is made to the grant of funding.
- 6.4 Given that value of the proposed funding, when taken together with GLA funding provided in support of the event in previous years, officers must ensure that:
- 6.4.1 GLA funding is not used for any activities or overheads incurred in respect of activities for which the proposed recipient charges and a clear operational limit is placed on their use of funds for the administration of the project in this regard;
  - 6.4.2 the proposed recipient is required to have a separate account for the receipt and use of Authority funding, or if this is not possible, that they show the funding and related expenditure as a restricted fund in their accounts under a clear identifier, e.g. "GLA Funding";
  - 6.4.3 any award by recipients of funding to sub-recipients (if permitted) under the funded projects are made in accordance with EU "de minimis" principles; and
  - 6.4.4 the proposed recipient procures any services, supplies or works required for the delivery of the event and for which payment is to be made using GLA funding competitively.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Entry into grant agreement	30 September 2017
Delivery Start Date	24 November 2017
Final self-evaluation start and finish	25 November 2017 -28 February 2018
Delivery End Date	25 November 2017
Project Closure	15 March 2018

**Appendices and supporting papers: None**

**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 or on the defer date.

**Part 1 Deferral:**

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

**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:**

James Spacey has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that:

✓

**Assistant Director/Head of Service:**

Mark Kleinman has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

**Financial and Legal advice:**

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

**Corporate Investment Board:**

The Corporate Investment Board reviewed this proposal on 11 September 2017

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:**

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

Signature

*M. J. Ollivier*

Date

11.9.17