

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2175

Title: Workspace Provider Accreditation Scheme Study

Executive Summary:

Following endorsement by the LEAP Programme Board on 12 October 2017, approval is sought to award £20,000 of grant funding to Capital Enterprise to support a study exploring the development of a Workspace Provider Accreditation scheme.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment approves expenditure of up to £20,000 in grant funding, from the LEAP Strategies Budget, to support Capital Enterprise in creating a study exploring a Workspace Provider Accreditation Scheme.

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: Fiona Fletcher-Smith

Position: Executive Director Development, Enterprise and Environment.

Signature:



Date:

13.12.17

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

At the LEAP Board meeting on 28 June 2017, Members signed off a range of proposals that would support the overarching priority of “mainstreaming entrepreneurship” through three key areas of ‘people’, ‘connectivity’ and ‘space’. Focusing on the latter of these three themes, the following specific actions were agreed by LEAP:

- i) Explore ways to formalise the emerging workspace provider sector, encouraging more consistent monitoring of value, both social and economic.
- ii) Facilitate joint working between local authorities (and other public sector players) to pool information on available, publicly owned space which could be used for co-working, meanwhile or move-on space.
- iii) Research to explore viability of more flexible leases and convening of key stakeholders
- iv) Commission work to help develop a better understanding of what is genuinely affordable workspace for particular sectors or business stages

In order to avoid duplication and maximise the available funding, we have reviewed current planned research in this area and have identified a relevant research pieces being developed by Capital Enterprise, in partnership with the London Workspace Providers Board (an advisory body to the GLA) that will deliver against the first action outlined above. It is therefore proposed that LEAP provides grant funding towards this piece of activity rather than commissioning potentially duplicative activity.

2. Issues for consideration

The proposed research will explore the viability of a Workspace Provider Accreditation Scheme, including the following activities that will allow for consideration of any issues associated with developing the proposals:

Workspace Provider Accreditation

Task A: By drawing on discussion with relevant organisations, scope and soft-test a voluntary workspace accreditation scheme, suggesting the potential criteria for accreditation. A key part of such a scheme should include the demonstration of a standard of social, economic, and cultural value.

Task B: Make assumptions on the number of workspaces which would gain accreditation by demonstrating various levels of impact.

Application to the Business Rate System

Task C: By drawing on research and discussion with relevant experts, provide a brief summary of how the business rates system works, including outlining how small business rate relief, charitable rate relief, and discretionary rate relief, work.

Task D: By drawing on research and discussion with relevant experts, describe any misalignment in the application of business rates and the reality of workspaces and small businesses using these workspaces. Provide brief case studies of the full implications of these issues.

Task E: By drawing on research and discussion with relevant experts, set out options for overcoming these issues in a focused and limited way.

Estimate Cost Benefit

Task F: Use the GLA's database / map of Workspaces and their estimated floor areas, to compare addresses to VOA rateable values. Add rateable values to the database.

Task G: Outline the social and economic benefit of relevant 'accredit-able' workspaces.

Task H: Build on this to create an approximate analysis of cost / benefit of rates relief for relevant / accredited high impact workspaces.

3. Objectives and expected outcomes

The primary objective of this research will be to have a developed accreditation model that will formalise the workspace provider sector and allow for more consistent monitoring of value, both social and economic. This will not only support measurement of the wider workspace sector, but will help inform decisions by the GLA and boroughs in terms of funding to workspace providers, and ultimately encourage the sector to deliver a service to cover entrepreneurs and small businesses from currently underrepresented groups.

4. Equality comments

A key outcome of the proposed accreditation scheme will be to ensure accredited providers meet a range of social outcomes, which we anticipate would include ensuring greater diversity of businesses supported through these spaces. This would include groups identified within the Equality Act such as women and BAME owned business as well those from a wider range of socio-economic groups.

All activity will be developed and delivered in compliance with relevant Codes of Practice and in line with the requirements of the public-sector equality duty to ensure that steps are taken to minimise disadvantages suffered by people who share a protected characteristic. Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation. The following specific issues have been considered

i) Documents and publications: all documents produced will comply with Mayor of London branding guidelines, it being based on guidance from the Royal National Institute of Blind People. Where possible accessible formats will be available.

5. Other considerations

a) Key risks and issues

The main risk is reputational, by not funding research pieces which help support London's Start-up/SME sector then the Mayor is at risk of not following up on the promises set out in his election manifesto.

b) Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

This programme links to the Mayoral priority of the current Mayor being the most pro-business Mayor ever. The proposed accreditation model is currently included within the draft Economic Development Strategy and will support objectives within the “thriving businesses” strand of the Mayor’s draft Diversity & Inclusion Vision, and the draft London Plan’s proposal to “encourage Boroughs to consider bringing in detailed policies requiring dedicated affordable workspace, particularly for specific sectors that have cultural and social value” .

6. Financial comments

The £20,000 cost of this project will be funded from the LEAP Strategies budget, held within the Development, Enterprise & Environment Directorate.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Delivery Start Date	Following funding approval
Delivery End Date	31/03/2018
Project Closure:	31/03/2018

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix 1 - Project specification

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

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

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:**

Richard Cumbers has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance and –if relevant- Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

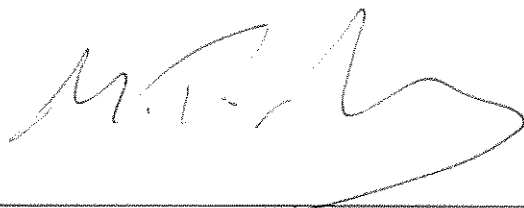
Corporate Investment Board:

The Corporate Investment Board reviewed this proposal on 4 December 2017.

HEAD OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

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

Signature:



Date:

11/12/17

