

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD 2966

Title: Civic Strength Index – Receipt and Expenditure of External Funding

Executive Summary:

This MD seeks approval for expenditure relating to the ongoing development and strengthening of the Civic Strength Index as part of the London Recovery Programme, in support of the Building Strong Communities Mission.

Launched in October 2021, the Civic Strength Index sets out a definition and framework for measuring Civic Strength and begins to pull existing data to begin measuring this. The index provides a new lens for communities, policy makers and funders to understand the strengths of communities and how best to build on them.

Further work is needed to improve the robustness and usability of the index across public, private and the third sector.

To deliver on this ambition, we are seeking the approval to: receive £294,000 from Impact on Urban Health as a contribution to the costs of this programme of work; and spend £380,000 (including £86,000 of the GLA's Civil Society budget) to the delivery of a data innovation challenge that will contribute to the ongoing development of the Civic Strength Index.

The Civic Strength Data Innovation challenge will invite and support innovators to identify methods to develop solutions to improve and expand the quality of the datasets that underpin the index as well as improving methods of data collection in the social sector.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves:

- i. receipt by the GLA of £294,000 funding from Impact on Urban Health as contribution to the costs of delivery of a data innovation challenge
- ii. expenditure of £380,000 (£294,000 from Impact on Urban Health as decision 1 above and £86,000 from the GLA's Civil Society budget), to deliver a data innovation challenge that will contribute to the ongoing development of the Civic Strength Index, comprising:
 - a) the award of up to £330,000 in grant funding to data innovation challenge participants
 - b) £50,000 on services required to provide support to the grantees participating in the data innovation challenge.

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:

31/3/22

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

Civic Strength Index

- 1.1. The Civic Strength Index is a key pillar of the Building Strong Communities mission. Its purpose is to create a framework by which the strength of civil society, across a range of indicators, can be measured to give a picture of what contributes to strong communities across the capital. Developing a mechanism to measure civic strength is necessary in order to demonstrate the true value of the contribution made by communities and civil society to the strength of the capital.
- 1.2. In year one, the first iteration of the Civic Strength Index was co-produced with Londoners and gives a shared definition of civic strength; the key domains that underpin it; and a set of indicators that help determine the level of civic strength across the capital.
- 1.3. The first iteration of the Civic Strength Index was published in October 2021. The Index and its underlying framework have been co-designed by Londoners to understand where good conditions for civic activity exist; to make those conditions visible; and to reflect the unique mix of these factors within London. This work responded to calls, from boroughs and civil society, for a London wide measure of the strength of civil society.
- 1.4. The index's framework was co-designed by Londoners, highlighting the factors which are most important to communities when defining Civic Strength. This gives credibility to focusing on these factors when working towards developing a robust measurement for civic strength.
- 1.5. This includes a robust definition of civic strength which is, "Civic strength exists when communities are supported by robust public and social infrastructure to build strong relationships and feel able to meaningfully engage in the issues that matter to them." And three overarching themes: relationships and social capital; democratic engagement; and public and social infrastructure.
- 1.6. However, the first iteration has also highlighted certain limitations and data gaps, meaning several of the agreed indicators within the framework are difficult to measure. These data gaps and limitations are accompanied in the first report with a set of clear recommendations on how to further improve data quality.
- 1.7. In year two of the development of the Civic Strength Index, approval was granted (under cover of MD2854) for the purchase of, and the GLA commissioned services to respond to these recommendations to:
 - further develop the index to improve the robustness of its ability to measure civic strength – this includes getting the index peer-reviewed, and will involve working with key stakeholder groups to fill the data gaps identified in the first iteration; activating and/or collecting relevant data to measure domains; and supporting innovative methods for measuring domains
 - digitise and automate the data feed into the index, so that it is automatically updated annually and when new datasets become available
 - engage with and support key groups, such as funders, civil society and local authorities, to use the index effectively.
- 1.8. To ensure the Civic Strength Index becomes a tool that offers a robust measurement of civic strength that stakeholders such as local authorities, funders and civil society across the capital use, further expenditure is required in addition to the £50,000 approved by the Mayor under the cover of MD2854.

- 1.9. Further expenditure will be used to develop the index by improving and expanding the datasets that underpin the Civic Strength Index.
- 1.10. This will be delivered through the launch of a Civic Strength Data Innovation Challenge, which will invite cross-sector individuals and organisations to develop solutions for measuring indicators within the index that currently cannot be measured.
- 1.11. The Innovation Challenge will develop solutions for measuring areas of civic strength in new, innovative and robust ways. The challenge will support the development of new methods of measuring domains of civic strength, which are then scalable across London boroughs.
- 1.12. Interest in supporting the aims of the Innovation Challenge has brought investment from Impact on Urban Health.
- 1.13. Impact on Urban Health has agreed to contribute £294,000 to the GLA's costs of delivery of the Innovation Challenge. This decision seeks approval for receipt of this funding.
- 1.14. This MD also seeks approval of the expenditure of the £294,000, in addition to £86,000 from the GLA's Civil Society budget. In total, this MD seeks approval to spend £380,000.
- 1.15. The expected outcomes for the challenge include a deeper understanding of civic strength across London; and methods of measuring civic strength, disseminated across the wider system, that support the implementation of the social value act. Additionally, a more robust evidence base underpinning the Civic Strength Index will increase the ability to identify gaps in strength, and to tackle these gaps and build resilience across London.
- 1.16. £330,000 of the funding will contribute towards the funding pot, which will be awarded in grants as a contribution to innovators' costs, in accordance with the Contracts and Funding Code. The funding pot will consist of two types of funding: seed funding of up to £10k to assist with costs of exploring and testing ideas during the co-design phase; and scaling funding for which innovators will be able to apply after the co-design phase, when they have established a proof of concept for their idea and want to scale it. These will be awards of up to £30k.
- 1.17. £50,000 will contribute towards the running costs of the challenge, including the procurement of services to design and deliver elements of the challenge and give support to innovators participating in the challenge. This will include a co-design programme, where innovators have access to support, guidance and workshops to develop and collaborate on their solutions for measuring areas of civic strength.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The Civic Strength Index aims to offer a robust measurement of civic strength so that the contribution and work of civil society and communities can be measured, and resilience can be increased.
- 2.2. It will improve understanding of the factors contributing to civic strength in London; measure the distribution of these factors across the capital; and better enable city-wide resources to be directed appropriately.
- 2.3. The index is a key pillar of the Building Strong Communities mission, as it offers the first iteration of a tool that enables the measurement of the progress being made by the mission.
- 2.4. Work on the Civic Strength Index will aim to improve the evidence base underpinning the index, and work to make the tool more accessible for all stakeholders.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the GLA must have 'due regard' of the Public Sector Equality Duty; that is, the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity
 - foster good relations between people who a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. The Building Strong Communities mission responds to this duty by recognising the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on London's diverse communities and embracing London's diversity. The mission focuses the design of projects on fostering good relations by bringing Londoners from a variety of backgrounds together in support of common causes, amplifying their voices and allowing them to play an active role in recovery from Covid-19.
- 3.3. The Civic Strength Index will aim to improve understanding of domains of civic strength and their distribution across the capital. The domains have been developed through a range of engagement exercises with the steering group, stakeholders and communities; and the next iteration will take the same approach.
- 3.4. The innovation challenge will be designed by a cross-sector group of organisations to ensure it is accessible and open to all kinds of innovators. It will take a collaborative approach to developing solutions. The outcomes of the challenge will aim at beginning to measure indicators within the index that, previously, we have been unable to measure. This will, therefore, give London a deeper understanding of the contributions of civil society and communities to the capital.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

Risk	Mitigating action	Risk rating (green, amber, red)
The delay between the first iteration of the Civic Strength Index being launched, and the delivery of year two of the activity, means a potential lack of engagement and use of the index by stakeholders.	The GLA team has worked up an interim comms and engagement plan for the Civic Strength Index, reaching out to a cross-section of stakeholders to share the index, gain buy-in for future plans, and start to support organisations to use the index in their activity.	Green
Risk that planned work does not identify sufficient data to measure the domains that are currently unmeasurable.	Commissioned partner will work to engage with a diverse range of stakeholders to identify data that exists that needs to be standardised or made open, with the aim of unlocking a minimum of six new datasets to feed into the index in the next 12 months. Engagement with over 30 stakeholder groups has indicated that there is strong appetite to collaborate on this index, and scope to better share existing data. Additionally, the design and delivery of an innovation challenge, which will support innovation to capture new data in new ways measure the domains identified. The innovation challenge will be co-designed	Green

	with various stakeholders and also invite innovations that strengthen civic data capacity, data collection methods and cross-sector data innovations, which will support the strengthening of Civic data beyond generating insights to feed into the Index.	
Due to the limitations of the Civic Strength Index in its current form, the measures of civic strength across London are not wholly accurate. There is a risk that stakeholders use the index without fully understanding that this is a first iteration which needs further work to build out the robustness of the evidence that sits underneath it.	The Community Engagement team is delivering an extensive comms and engagement plan with stakeholders to share the first iteration of the index, setting out its limitations and the planned work in years two and three to develop the evidence base underpinning the index further. This engagement is generating buy-in from stakeholders identifying ways to contribute to the development of the data capture and measurement. The second iteration of the index will also involve further testing and development of the index model, including getting the model peer-reviewed.	Amber

Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.1. The Civic Strength Index sits within the Building Strong Communities mission, one of the nine missions of the London Recovery Programme.
- 4.2. The Civic Strength Index links to two Mayoral strategies – the Mayor’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and his social integration strategy ‘All of Us’ – that set out the Mayor’s expectation for creating equal opportunities for Londoners to participate in shaping the future of the capital, by tackling inequalities in voice and power.

Consultations and impact assessments

- 4.3. Building Strong Communities mission engagement has informed and influenced the design of the programmes. This has included:
 - engagement through the Festival of Ideas which took place in July 2021
 - engagement during the first iteration of the Civic Strength Index, through both online workshops and Talk London.
- 4.4. There are no conflicts of interest to clear from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This decision seeks approval for receipt of £294,000 funding from Impact on Urban Health as contribution to the costs of delivery of a data innovation challenge.
- 5.2. This decision also seeks approval of expenditure of £380,000 (£294,000 from Impact on Urban Health as 5.1 above and £86,000 from GLA’s Civil Society Budget), to deliver a data innovation challenge that will contribute to the ongoing development of the Civic Strength Index, comprising:
 - the award of up to £330,000 in grant funding to data innovation challenge participants

- £50,000 on services required to provide support to the grantees participating in the data innovation challenge.

5.3. The expenditure sits within the Building Stronger Communities mission in the Communities and Social Policy unit.

6. Legal comments

6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that:

- the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to the promotion of social and economic development and wealth creation in Greater London
- in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
 - pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
 - consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons; and contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom
 - consult with appropriate bodies.

6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor 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, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief) and persons who do not (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

6.3. If the Mayor is minded to make the decisions sought, officers must ensure that:

- they are content that the GLA's proposed use of the Impact on Urban Health funding is compliant with terms of its award to the GLA
- no reliance is placed upon the Impact on Urban Health funding until a legally binding obligation is in place to provide the GLA with that funding
- to the extent that expenditure concerns the:
 - award of grant funding: that it is distributed fairly, transparently, in manner which affords value for money, and in accordance with the requirements of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code; and grant funding agreements are put in place between and executed by the GLA and recipients before any commitment to fund is made
 - payment for services: that those services are procured in liaison with TfL Procurement and in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code; and contracts are put in place between and executed by the GLA and contractors before commencement of such services.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Launch Data innovation challenge	10 May 2022

Call for application closes	6 June 2022
Co-design programme starts and seed funding distributed	4 July 2022
Co-design phase ends	January 2023
Scaling funding awarded	February 2023

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

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:

Hannah Coulding has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Joanna Davidson has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Debbie Weekes-Bernard has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 21 March 2022

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

Date

D. Gane

24/3/22

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature

Date

D. Bellamy

24/3/22