

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2513

Title: Online Qualitative Research Platform

Executive Summary:

Approval is sought to extend the GLA's current Online Qualitative Research Platform for a further year. 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, Strategy, Intelligence & Analysis approves:

Expenditure of up to £15,000 to extend the GLA's Online Qualitative Research Platform for a further year, taking total spend up to £25,000.

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, Strategy, Intelligence & Analysis

Signature:

Approval received via email from Jeremy Skinner, Assistant Director, Strategy, Intelligence and Analysis, to Felicity Harris on 26 April 2021.

Date:

26 April 2021

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 we would not have been able to with traditional research methods, e.g. quick polls, diary tasks, photo uploads. 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 & Engagement via a Delegated Authority Record.
- 1.7. This Decision form now seeks approval for expenditure of up to £15,000 from the GLA's Opinion Research and Statistics team budget to extend the GLA's Online Qualitative Research Platform for a further 12-month contract, from May 2021 to May 2022.
- 1.8. The contract with our platform provider expires in May 2021. We plan to extend the contract for a further 12 months.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1. Objectives:

- to conduct online qualitative research with a variety of Londoners, in line with COVID-19 restrictions;
- to engage with Londoners from a broad range of target groups; and
- 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; and
- 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 Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty 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, we see our use of the platform continuing even when face-to-face restrictions are lifted.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1. The key risk is that the technology will not be suitable for our needs, or suitable for use by Londoners (who possess varying levels of familiarity with technology). However, having used the research platform for 10 months, we are confident it meets our needs. The platform is designed for the specific purpose of engaging a range of participants, and thus is very user-friendly. Customer support is on-hand from the platform providers, if needed.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2. 'A City for All Londoners' aims to ensure people from all walks of life are healthy and live well alongside each other. The Mayor is committed to making sure that policy makers in City Hall are fully aware of public needs as early as possible. For this to happen, policy makers need to be able to engage with and gather insight from people from diverse backgrounds, with different perspectives and experiences. Ensuring we are able to conduct research in a format which 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 will be followed to ensure that the successful company complies with the GLA's equal opportunities 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 preparation of this form.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Assistant Director's approval is sought for expenditure of up to £15,000 to extend the GLA's Online Qualitative Research Platform for a further year, taking total spend on this up to £25,000. The cost of up to £15,000 will be funded from the 2021-22 Opinion Research team's Cross-cutting budget held within the City Intelligence Unit. Funding for services that fall into financial year 2022-23 (April and May 2022) will be subject to the 2022-23 budget setting process and approvals.
- 5.2. A Delegated Authority Record approved £10,000 to commission the initial 12-month contract from May 2020 to May 2021 that was also funded from Opinion Research team's Cross-cutting 2020-21 budget.

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	April 2021
Delivery Start Date	May 2021
Delivery End Date	May 2022

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 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

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 26 April 2021.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature**Date**

26 April 2021