

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2498

Title: Developing the business case for street greening

Executive Summary:

This ADD seeks approval for a research project that will examine whether the projected costs and benefits of street greening are accurate when translated into real sites, by conducting a cost benefit analysis using three scenario sites across three boroughs. The outputs of the research will develop the case for investment in street greening at both the GLA and borough level, and will also directly inform the design of future programmes delivered through the Green New Deal mission including the Future Neighbourhoods 2030 programme, and green infrastructure capital investment programmes.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Environment approves:

1. Expenditure of £20,000 to appoint Vivid Economics as consultant (with sub-consultant Barton Willmore) to develop a business case for street greening aimed at decision makers; and
2. An exemption from the Contracts and Funding Code for a single source tender.

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: Elliot Treharne

Position: Interim Assistant Director
Environment and Energy

Signature:



Date:

16 February 2021

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Research published in July 2020 by Vivid Economics and Barton Wilmore, commissioned by the National Trust and partners, made a powerful economic case for a significant investment across the UK in greening the country's most left behind and greyest urban communities over the next five years. A green infrastructure investment of £5.5 billion was projected to bring £200 billion in physical health benefits to alleviate some of the strain on local health service providers and to improve people's quality of life. Over 20 million people were projected to benefit from this investment and an estimated 40,000 jobs created in the initial construction phase, over 6,000 of which would be needed permanently for ongoing maintenance. The research assessed the costs and benefits of three major interventions to level up access to quality green spaces: greening urban streets and neighbourhoods, upgrading poor quality parks and green spaces and creating large regional parks and forests in the urban fringe.
- 1.2 A London cut of this data was commissioned by the GLA in September 2020 to help inform the Green New Deal recovery mission by predicting the number of roles that investment in green infrastructure would provide. It projected that an investment of £2 million annually for the next 10 years in street greening would result in 128 temporary jobs and 18 permanent jobs. An investment in green infrastructure of £26 million a year would result in 5,600 temporary jobs and 858 permanent roles and provide around £1.5 billion in health benefits.
- 1.3 This research builds on the findings of the 2017 Natural Capital Account for London which projected that Londoners avoid £950 million per year in health costs due to public parks and that for every £1 spent on public parks Londoners enjoy at least £27 in value. These high-level figures are useful for making the broad political case for greening across London but do not provide the tangible on the ground business case needed to make the argument for investment at borough level.
- 1.4 The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the value of London's parks but also demonstrated the inequality of access to green space across the capital. Almost 50% of households in London live in Areas of Deficiency of Access to a Local Open Space¹. More deprived areas of London are less likely to have good access to green space, and BAME Londoners are more likely to live in these neighbourhoods.
- 1.5 While the London Plan and borough Local Plans, include strong requirements for new developments to include green infrastructure, we cannot rely on development sites alone to deliver the scale and pace of change required. In addition, in high density areas of London it will not always be possible to create significant new parks and open spaces. Therefore, there is a need to look creatively at ways to bring the benefits of green space to people who need it most.
- 1.6 We already know that "greening the grey" by repurposing the public realm, including streets, to incorporate substantially more green infrastructure – such as sustainable drainage, street trees, green roofs and walls – will support Londoners' wellbeing, improve air quality and build climate resilience but the pace of change has been slow. This research will provide the tangible cost benefit analysis that has been missing to date and will help inform both local and London wide investment.
- 1.7 London's recovery and specifically the Green New Deal provide an opportunity to reimagine what a 2030 city would look like. This research will lay the foundations for medium and long term phases by providing insight into how benefits can be maximised through increased greening and climate resilience in the public realm.
- 1.8 In addition, we know that investment in street greening is projected to bring additional jobs in the green economy but it will also lead to the development of new skills not only in the green space sector but in teams like highways and transport.

¹ Areas of Deficiency in Access to Public Open Space are areas which are more than 400m from a local or district park as defined in Table 8.1 in the London Plan. An explanation of how these are calculated is [here](#).

- 1.9 Lastly this research has been developed alongside TfL using their Strategic Neighbourhood Analysis to help identify scenario sites. By using the sites highlighted as suitable for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) the research looks to support decision makers in presenting a strong business case for the long-term greening of LTNs and a Healthy Streets Approach.
- 1.10 Vivid Economics are proposed to be appointed to undertake this work, with Barton Willmore appointed as sub-consultant. This is a single source procurement. Exemption is sought from normal procurement processes under section 10 of the Contracts and Funding Code and a Single Source Justification is attached to this Decision form. The research is underpinned by the proprietary Greenkeeper software developed and owned by Vivid Economics and Barton Willmore and these companies are unique in being able to provide access to this tool. The Greenkeeper tool brings together extensive data sets that are not publicly available. No other organisation holds this complete data set.
- 1.11 The proposed fee of £20,000 has been broken down to staff time split between Vivid Economics and Barton Willmore and the daily rate is comparable to other consultant contracts procured through competitive tender. In addition, the scale of work has been adjusted from six to three scenarios and the number of director level days reduced to bring down the overall cost and provide better value for money for the outcomes delivered. We are satisfied that the cost is competitive based on experience with other consultants in the sector.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 Phase one – Inception

Objective: To create a shared understanding with the GLA and up to three participating boroughs on the objectives and outputs of the project.

Outputs: An inception meeting via video conference with all parties and a two-page inception report outlining the outcomes of the meeting

- 2.2 The GLA GIS team are currently using existing data layers to identify priority areas where TfL's Strategic Neighbourhood Analysis, Areas of Deficiency for public open space, the top 10% IMD, top 10% of flat density and climate vulnerability overlap. The GLA will use this mapping of overlapping priority areas and discussions with the borough to select three target sites for this project located in boroughs who are interested in building a case for street greening.

- 2.3 Vivid Economics and Barton Wilmore will host an inception meeting via video conference with all participating parties in February 2021. The objective of the video conference is to ensure all parties are aligned on the objectives and outputs of the project, and to provide boroughs with an understanding of our capabilities along with examples of different scenarios that each borough could consider.

2.4 Phase Two – Designing a scenario for each site

Objective: To design one bespoke scenario for each of the three target sites that that will support the case for street greening.

Outputs: One to one discussions with each participating borough and a brief workplan for each site detailing the features of the bespoke scenario agreed

- 2.5 In the context of declining budgets, understanding the benefits of an investment is crucial to ensure spending is cost-effective. Given the multiple ways to improve urban streets, scenario analysis will help boroughs to better understand and visualise the potential benefits and costs of a particular intervention. This can be used to inform the long-term investment plan and green infrastructure (GI) strategy. It can also be used to identify funding streams and potential investors, by showing how investments align with other community priorities such as improved health and community-building. This in turn can help create a more sustainable funding model.

2.6 The inception meeting will be immediately followed by one-to-one discussions with each target borough to better understand their priorities and objectives for street greening. Once the three target sites have been identified, we will work with each respective borough to design one bespoke scenario per site with costings, illustrations and cost benefit analysis. The results will help to strengthen the case for permanent greening interventions. Each of the three bespoke scenarios are to be agreed by late February.

2.7 **Phase Three – Scenario analysis**

Objective: To examine each scenario using cost benefit analysis and visual aids to help boroughs to better understand and visualise the potential benefits and costs of a particular intervention.

Outputs: A slide deck presenting the results of each scenario with costings, illustrations and a cost benefit analysis. An overview document collating key results from scenarios across each target site

2.8 Vivid will use their Greenkeeper tool to conduct analysis on the greening of streets within each target site as agreed in phase two. Results from each scenario will be supplemented with:

- concept diagrams to show context, connection to existing areas of green, areas for greening and how movement is maintained. These diagrams will seek to illustrate the wider strategic potential of each proposal whilst ensuring that key access and delivery routes are maintained;
- an overall illustrative colour plan showing the greening proposals across each study area in the context of adjacent residential communities. Each plan will show the location of key features such as tree planting, street SuDS features and other areas of planting as well as retained and enhanced hard surfacing;
- a study area or 'tile' for each study area showing a greater level of detail than the overall proposals plan;
- an eye level view of the enhancements;
- precedent images illustrating similar spaces and interventions as those proposed for each study area; and
- text description of the proposals.

2.9 The aim is to produce materials that will provide elected members with a strong business case for street greening and support a wider strategic approach to green infrastructure as well bids for future funding.

2.10 Results and illustrations for each scenario will be published in a high-quality slide deck that can be used internally for the GLA, TfL and participating boroughs and extracts of which can be used externally in a public-facing format (where site locations are anonymised and with borough approval). The individual reports will be supplemented with a brief summary document highlighting key results and figures from across all three scenarios assessed within the project. Initially, a draft of each report and the summary document will be shared with relevant parties for comments. Final reports and a final summary document integrating feedback will be shared by the beginning of April 2021.

Project team

2.11 Vivid Economics' Greenkeeper team's specialist expertise lies in the fields of property development and planning, economics and natural resources management, local economic development and infrastructure, and landscape architecture. They combine and utilise this mix of skills to support cities to make informed green infrastructure planning and investment decisions. Vivid Economics will lead the project with support from Barton Willmore as a sub-consultant.

2.12 Barton Willmore is the UK's largest independent, integrated planning and design consultancy. From largescale inner-city regeneration to the creation of new towns, it provides comprehensive support. It

is accomplished in providing distinctive and sustainable development proposals based on a firm understanding of integration into existing movement networks, the landscape and the surrounding urban fabric.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The target sites have been specifically chosen in areas where greening is needed most. The target areas are in within the top 10% of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, where access to public open space is low, climate vulnerability is high and where there is high density housing.
- 3.2 One in five households in London have no access to a private or shared garden and in England, Black people are nearly four times as White people to have no access to outdoor space at home. While access to public parks is more evenly spread the pandemic has made clear that not all people feel comfortable or able to use parks. There is a need to bring the benefits of green infrastructure closer to people's home and daily travel routes.
- 3.3 This project will address these areas of inequality by exploring the business case for street greening, localising the benefits based on real sites and scenarios. The scenarios will demonstrate how the benefits of green infrastructure can be incorporated at street level and link to existing green spaces. The outcomes will also aim to provide boroughs and the GLA with the case for greater investment in urban greening where the need is highest.

4 Other considerations

- 4.1 This project supports the London Environment Strategy, The Mayor's Strategy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (A Great Place To Live, strategic objective 12) and the Health Inequalities Strategy (objective 3.3 Healthy Places & Healthy Communities). The primary recovery mission focus of this project is the Green New Deal and its objective to drive a fair and inclusive recovery from the pandemic including providing access to green spaces, improving air quality and tackling the climate emergency.
- 4.2 The target areas have been discussed with TfL, the GLA transport and regeneration teams to determine the three scenario sites and ensure that the research results will contribute to other work streams. In particular how the research can help demonstrate the benefits that long-term greening of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods put in place under emergency traffic orders and a Healthy Streets approach could bring.

Risk description	Likelihood of the risk occurring	Impact if the risk occurs	Mitigating action
Boroughs unable to take part due to capacity	Medium	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number of scenarios has been reduced from six to three allowing careful targeting of boroughs and support for their officers four sites being explored to allow for one borough to drop out early in the scoping time implications for boroughs kept to a minimum and made clear up front

Research doesn't deliver high quality outputs	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vivid Economics and Barton Willmore are well known in the sector and have always produced high quality outputs to date • two rounds of amendments are built into the project plan to allow for revision
Research shows poor business case for street greening	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research produced would still be useful in informing future policy and funding work • national work and natural capital accounting already undertaken suggests this is unlikely
Delay to timescale	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some flexibility to Vivid's timelines allows for short delay • regular review of progress built in to flag potential delay early to allow mitigation

4.3 There are no conflicts of interest to declare from any of those involved in the drafting or clearance of this Decision Form.

5 Financial comments

5.1 Approval is being sought to award an external consultancy project, up to the value of £20,000, for a research project developing the business case for street greening. The funding source for this project will come from the available resources within the 20-21 Urban Greening budget, held in the Environment unit. This project is being awarded to Vivid Economics and Barton Willmore, via a single source justification procurement route due to specific expertise offered by the consultants. Payment will be made in arrears based on the milestones agreed and achieved in the contract to mitigate against financial risk.

6 Legal comments

6.1 Sections 1 - 2 of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the assistant director fall within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development or the promotion of the improvement of the environment in Greater London; and 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 to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and
- consult with appropriate bodies.

- 6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the assistant 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 and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the assistant director should have particular regard to section 3 of this report.
- 6.3 Section 9 of the Contracts and Funding Code (the 'Code') requires the GLA to seek three or more written quotations in respect of the services required or call off the services required from an accessible framework. However, the assistant director may approve an exemption from this requirement under section 10 of the Code upon certain specified grounds. One of those grounds is that the approval of the exemption is justified on the basis that the supplier has technical, artistic, exclusive or intellectual property rights. Officers have indicated at paragraph 1.10 of this report that this ground applies. Officers have also indicated at paragraph 1.11 of this report that they are satisfied that the proposed contract affords value for money.
- 6.4 The assistant director may approve the proposed exemption if satisfied that the ground for exemption applies, that the contract affords value for money, and if the assistant director is satisfied with the content of this report generally.
- 6.5 Officers must ensure that appropriate contract documentation is put in place and executed by the supplier and the GLA before the commencement of the services, and that the terms of the agreement do not have the effect of fettering the discretion of any successor administration, considering in particular the London elections taking place in May 2021.

7 Planned timetable

Deliverables	Target date (week of)
Phase 1 inception	
Inception meeting via video conference	22 Feb 2021
Two page inception report outlining workplan	22 Feb 2021
Phase 2 scenario design	
Brief workplan for each site	29 Feb 2021
Phase 3 scenario analysis	
First draft of slide deck	12 March 2021
Comments on first draft	19 March 2021
Second draft of slide deck and first draft of overview document	26 March 2021
Final comments	4 April 2021
Final reports provided	11 April 2021

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: (a date is required if deferring)

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:

Ruth Knight has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 15 February 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

16 February 2021