

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2567

Title: IT and Other Equipment for Home Workers

DD2476 gave approval to the Executive Director of Resources to incur expenditure of up to £150,000 on extra IT and office equipment to allow GLA staff and Assembly Members to work more efficiently and effectively from home. This Decision requests the approval of additional expenditure of a further £150,000 to cover the additional costs incurred, and to allow the scheme to continue and be available to new starters.

The boundaries, duration and spend on this scheme will in future be managed under the auspices of the Expenses and Benefits Framework and, as this is now de facto routine expenditure, will not be subject to further decision forms.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Resources approves expenditure of up to an additional £150,000 as set out below on extra IT and office equipment to continue to allow GLA staff and Assembly Members to work more efficiently and effectively from home.

- £50,000 already incurred above the scheme's original approved budget.
- provision of £60,000 to allow the scheme to continue and for new starters to benefit from its provision until the end of 2022-23
- the potential cost of £40,000, subject to the government's decision on whether it will remove the tax exemption on employer's paying for home equipment from 2022-23.

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: David Gallie

Position: Executive Director,
Resources

Signature:



Date:

10/1/22

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Director Decision DD2476 approved expenditure of up to £150,000 to support the purchase of the following IT equipment for staff to use with their Surface Pros to facilitate working from home during the pandemic:
 - larger screens to enable better visibility and review of documents and spreadsheets;
 - larger keyboards to enable easier input;
 - cables to connect the Surface Pro to a larger screen;
 - a mouse, to enable easier movement on the screen; and
 - a headset to reduce feedback when on Surface Pro connected meetings.
- 1.2. In addition to the IT equipment, the approved scheme allowed some staff members to purchase a chair and/or a small desk to operate at home.
- 1.3. The equipment was, in most cases, purchased directly by staff and on an 'as needed' basis for use in their homes. The costs were reimbursed through the expenses policy. The equipment belongs to the staff member and the responsibility of maintaining or insuring all the equipment rests with each member of staff. The GLA committed to meeting the tax liability of employees utilising the scheme, however, this cost was not required as the government exempted such benefits from tax up to the end of this financial year.
- 1.4. An exception to the £250 limit was made for individuals who require 'reasonable adjustments' to their work environment, but these people were contacted individually and any requests approved on an exceptional basis and procured corporately. Such exceptions were made in line with advice from Occupational Health and GLA HR policies designed to support disabled employees in the workplace.
- 1.5. The scheme has proved successful and assisted the Authority in being able to work from home effectively. To date just over £200,000 has been incurred on the scheme which has benefitted 896 staff. DD2476 approved expenditure of £150,000 for the scheme. Retrospective approval is sought here for the additional expenditure of £50,000.
- 1.6. It is proposed that a further £60,000 be approved to allow the scheme to continue and be available to new starters. However, the tax exemption on home equipment is due to end at that end of this financial year. If this is the case, and the government were not to extend this exemption, a further £40,000 would need to be provided for.
- 1.7. This proposal bears on the GLA's approach to expenses and benefits for staff, as set out in the Expenses & Benefits Framework. The Framework will, at its next approval point, be reviewed to ensure it reflects the continuation of provision for staff to reclaim expenditure on IT and office equipment in line with the criteria set out in this form.
- 1.8. Given this expenditure is becoming routine, rather than extraordinary as it was at the start of the pandemic, further decision forms will not be required for the approval of expenditure beyond the

envelope set out in this form. Any changes to, or the cessation of, the scheme will be managed through the Expenses & Benefits Framework and by making amendments to its provisions.

- 1.9. The continuation of the scheme will be subject to ongoing review of the GLA's budget position, with its impact and sustainability considered in particular through the annual budget setting process.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The objective of this Decision is to authorise resources to cover the existing cost of the scheme and to ensure the scheme can continue and new starters have access to the same facilities as existing staff. The expected outcome is that staff are able to work more efficiently and effectively.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as public authorities, the Mayor and the GLA are subject to a Public Sector Equality Duty and must have 'due regard' to the need to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (all except the last being 'relevant' protected characteristics).
- 3.2. Equality, diversity and inclusion considerations were taken into consideration and were central to the distribution of equipment. Supply of the equipment allowed those with work adjustments to operate more efficiently and effectively.
- 3.3. Inclusion is a key point of the distribution of equipment as it will enable people to connect and perform their roles more easily.
- 3.4. The Mayor's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy outlines that the GLA needs to be 'leading by example', specifically, we should be an inclusive employer. The objective which directly links to this decision is: To take the steps needed to ensure that all organisations within the GLA Group have open and inclusive cultures and are great places to work.
- 3.5. Due diligence will be taken through the supply of equipment to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Smart working, enabled by supplying appropriate equipment, can contribute to compliance with the Equality Act 2010 as it ensures different working patterns and needs are more easily adopted and supported.
- 3.6. The continuation of the scheme and making it available for new starters ensures equity between existing and new staff.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. The work supports the Mayor in delivering his vision of a 'fair and equal city'. The working environment and arrangements will inspire staff at the GLA to work effectively together, make the best use of the current circumstances, and deliver world-class services to London and Londoners.

Conflicts of Interest

- 4.2. There are no known conflicts of interest for anyone involved in the drafting or approval of this decisions.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This decision requests approval for expenditure of up to £150,000 to meet:
- (i) additional costs of £50,000 already incurred above the scheme's original approved budget of £150,000;
 - (ii) to make provision of £60,000 to allow the scheme to continue and for new starters to benefit from its provision. On the basis of the existing uptake of the scheme and the current turnover of staff, the additional provision of £60,000 should be sufficient to allow the scheme to continue until the end of 2022-23; and
 - (iii) the potential cost of £40,000, subject to the government's decision on whether it will remove the tax exemption on employer's paying for home equipment from 2022-23.
- 5.2. The expenditure of up to £150,000 will be funded from the contingency provision in 2021-22 and 2022-23.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. Paragraphs 1 to 2 of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Director concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling 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 GLA'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 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 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). To this end, the Director should have particular regard to Section 3 (above) of this report.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

| Activity | Timeline |
|----------|----------|
|----------|----------|

| | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Announcement | January 2022 |
| Delivery | From January 2022 |

Appendices

None

Supporting papers:

DD2476 IT and Other Equipment for Home Workers

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 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:

Alison Cubbins has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Anna Casbolt 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

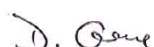
This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 10 January 2022.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature



Date

10/1/22