

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2493

### Title: Community Improvement Districts: Research Support

#### Executive Summary:

The Mayor approved (under MD2163) £67m worth of expenditure through the Good Growth Fund (GGF) and delegated the detailed funding allocation to the Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment (now Good Growth) in consultation with the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP).

This decision seeks approval for £20,000 revenue funding to support research led by Centre for London exploring the potential for new, more inclusive models of town centre governance and stewardship to revitalise town centres and high streets, including existing and new community assets and social infrastructure. This represents an opportunity to ensure this work considers Covid-19 recovery in line with our emerging mission-orientated approach for London.

#### Decision:

That the Executive Director of Good Growth approves:

Expenditure of £20,000 revenue from the Good Growth Fund, approved with delegated authority from the Mayor (see MD2163 and subsequently DD2225), by way of grant to the Centre for London to support research into new models of town centre governance.

#### 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:** Philip Graham

**Position:** Executive Director, Good Growth

**Signature:**

**Date:** 7 October 2020



## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. MD2163 approved £67m worth of expenditure through the Good Growth Fund (GGF) and delegated the detailed funding allocation to the Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment (now Good Growth) in consultation with the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP).
- 1.2. DD2225, accompanied by a LEAP business case, subsequently secured approval for expenditure of up to £127,500 towards capacity building activities to help groups coming together to propose robust, deliverable projects that respond to local challenges or opportunities, and to implement a package of measures, from workshops and advisory support to project mentoring, provision of specialist skills and development of guidance documentation, to support communities to come together around shared objectives in an organised way, with appropriate governance and accountability.
- 1.3. This decision seeks approval for £20,000 revenue funding to support, through a grant agreement, research led by Centre for London exploring the potential for new, more inclusive models of town centre governance and stewardship to revitalise town centres and high streets, including existing and new community assets and social infrastructure. This represents an opportunity to ensure this work considers Covid-19 recovery in line with our emerging mission-orientated approach for London. Building back better from the Covid-19 pandemic will require all of us to play a part. London's communities have shown that true resilience is created locally, and we can achieve extraordinary things by trusting and empowering local community voices to generate, own and deliver recovery actions that matter to them. For our high streets and town centres to be inclusive and resilient, they must fully represent the people they serve and work harder in their interest.
- 1.4. The London Recovery Board's 'High Streets For All' mission seeks to support growth in London's social economy, including community businesses and social purpose organisations, and to reinforce London's role as a centre for enterprise, collaboration and innovation, by encouraging the development of new models of place-based stewardship on London's high streets, including stewardship of existing and new community assets and social infrastructure.
- 1.5. There is an opportunity for the GLA and Local Economic Action Partnership to show support in this area of local involvement and accountability in the provision of shared resources and curation of local economies for local benefit.
- 1.6. This is relevant and timely not only in responding to rising levels of town centre vacancy likely as a result of COVID-19, but in securing social infrastructure whilst ensuring alignment with more strategic regeneration priorities and underutilised policy levers such as community asset transfer and community right to buy/bid. Only 17% of London Boroughs indicated they had a Community Asset Transfer policy; the most pertinent of the under-utilised localism legislation that could better support inclusive local growth strategies.
- 1.7. New models of place-based stewardship could help partially counter the threats to town centre viability posed by Permitted Development Rights, along with sell-offs of public sector property portfolios arising from budgetary constraints arising from reduced Local Authority revenues.
- 1.8. A 2018 Locality report presented evidence that more than 200 publicly owned buildings and spaces (typically, valued social infrastructure) are sold off in London each year, with the majority lost to private developers for the highest price. The reasons for these sales are broad but are linked to pressures on budgets for Local Authority service provision and their knock-on ability to own and manage assets in the public interest. These spaces are seen by researchers as places that are vital for generating social capital - networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

- 1.9. The research will also inform how the public sector can support businesses and community organisations to develop new ways of working, governance, networks and knowledge transfer to help innovate across local economies. It will complement the Crowdfund London programme, which has established itself as a world-leading example of a city crowdsourcing civic innovation, promoting active citizenship and coordinating resources to support new community-led initiatives as well as mechanisms for evidencing local backing of area-based projects.
- 1.10. The commission will be led and coordinated by Centre for London, an independent charity and a think tank established in 2011, with a mission to develop new solutions to London's critical challenges and advocate for a fair and prosperous global city. It will be informed by co-sponsors of the research, the GLA, TfL and Power to Change, who will act as members of an Advisory Group for the research throughout its collection and synthesis. The methodology features four stages: literature review, live testing and model development, conclusions and recommendations, and launch/dissemination.
- 1.11. The GLA's membership on the project advisory group would ensure the GLA can steer the research appropriately to maximise impact across key stakeholders and target recommendations that support the mission-orientated approach to recovery. Additionally, membership would allow the GLA to steer the selection of interviewees and case studies, building on GLA funded projects and partnerships to test emerging models of community-led town centre stewardship post COVID.
- 1.12. This would represent a one-off funding award of up to £20,000 revenue in total.

## **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

### **2.1 Objectives:**

- create new partnerships between community, local institutions and business to deliver social value and shared prosperity through new approaches to economic fairness, procurement and progressive asset management that seek to lock wealth in place;
- utilise innovative processes for collaboration in developing, financing and managing the delivery of local projects that respond to local needs; and
- secure, consolidate and develop vital social and cultural infrastructure – including informal infrastructure such as local networks – in a way that promotes social integration and community ownership.

### **2.2 Outputs:**

- an external public-facing report providing recommending new models of inclusive town centre governance and stewardship, sharing insights into the potential of these structures to secure or manage strategic assets as part of a place-based regeneration strategy, stimulate a social economy and promote growth in community business/social enterprise; and
- recommendations aligned to the Covid-19 recovery; mission orientated approach and positioned for various pan-London stakeholders

### **2.3 Outcomes:**

- all Londoners to be able to play an active role in their communities; making London a more equal and inclusive city post COVID-19;
- diverse new cultural, economic civic and social uses for empty spaces and buildings across London;
- high streets provide equal access to the social infrastructure that serve diverse and inclusive communities;
- expanded/enhanced high streets, urban greening and cycling infrastructure, new local civic and cultural infrastructure;

- develop an understanding of social value and how it can be secured through public sector property portfolios; and
- growth in London's social economy including community businesses and social purpose organisations.

### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. All projects will be developed and delivered in compliance with relevant Codes of Practice and in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As a public authority, the Mayor of London must have 'due regard' of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. To meet the above, the GLA will ensure that the following issues have been considered;
- documents and publications: all documents produced will comply with Mayor of London branding guidelines;
  - stakeholder and community consultation related to this commission will look to ensure fair representation of London's diverse geographic, ethnic and economic demographics as part of this commission; and
  - events: any related events will be open to all and, where possible, will encourage people who share a protected characteristic to participate in any activity in which their participation is disproportionately low.
- 3.2. The research commission delivers on the Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, namely the Strategic Objective of supporting effective ways to involve communities in the development of their neighbourhoods and the wider city, with particular interest in the role of older people, disabled people, parents, BAME groups, deprived neighbourhoods and faith communities by, for example, promoting usage and ownership of public spaces by underrepresented communities.

### **4. Other considerations**

*Links to Mayoral Strategies:*

- 4.1. This initiative supports the Good Growth Fund's aims to promote innovative and inclusive regeneration activities, enabling:
- Londoners to actively participate in their local community and have a say in how their city is shaped by stimulating routes to local ownership and/or management of assets of community value or local social enterprises;
  - delivery of co-ordinated place-based strategies that welcome growth in a way that works with the physical character of London's many places by supporting communities in areas undergoing change or receiving other public / private investment; and
  - diverse and accessible local economies – from our high streets and town centres to industrial areas – to realise their full potential and making London a place of opportunity for all. This would be enhanced through potential new mechanisms to allow for local enterprise that supports both economic and social resilience by building capacity in local groups.
- 4.2. This proposed programme of activity is consistent with a number of objectives of the emerging London Recovery Board's 'missions' from promoting resilient communities, to securing social and cultural infrastructure on London's high streets and developing skills and employment opportunities.
- 4.3. The initiative will deliver on ambitions in the following emerging Mayoral strategies or priorities:

- London Plan – Contributing to Good Growth and building strong, inclusive communities by involving citizens directly in the future development of the city.
- Economic Development Strategy – Supporting innovation and creating opportunities for all Londoners to develop new skills. Delivering projects that help communities to directly share in the opportunities created by investment and change.
- Social Integration – Promoting active citizenship and community cohesion by enabling citizens to propose, deliver and manage sustainable projects that matter to them. Often this will secure or formalise vital social infrastructure being lost across the city.
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy – By encouraging communities to come together and collaborate around shared objectives.
- Culture – Through projects that support and promote creative arts and cultural industries or cultural exchange.
- Environment – Through projects that create new green spaces or greening of public spaces.

4.4. There are no conflicts of interest to note, for anyone involved in the drafting or clearance of this DD.

## **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1. £20,000 of the Authority's Good Growth Fund is required as a contribution for the commissioning of research into investigating new models of town centre governance and stewardship post COVID-19.
- 5.2. The research will be led by the think tank Centre for London with co-sponsors, including the GLA, acting as informed members of the advisory group.
- 5.3. This will be funded by the 2020-21 Good Growth revenue budget held within the Regeneration and Economic Development Unit.

## **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Director concern the GLA's exercise of its general 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 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:
  - 6.1.1. pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
  - 6.1.2. 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
  - 6.1.3. 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 and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, 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 Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report
- 6.3. Officers have indicated that the expenditure proposed concerns provision of grant funding and not payment for works, goods or services. Accordingly officers must ensure that: the funding is distributed

fairly, transparently, in accordance with the GLA's equality policy, State Aid rules and in manner which affords value for money in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code; and appropriate funding agreements are entered in to and executed by the GLA and the recipient before any commitment to funding is made.

## **7. Planned delivery approach and next steps**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Establish contractual partnership with Centre for London	October 2020
Advisory Group input into research	October 2020
Interim report- Governance - completed by Centre For London	December 2020
Second Advisory Group	January 2021
Interim report – Town Centres - completed by Centre For London	February 2020
Final publication & dissemination - completed by Centre For London	March 2021
Final report issued by Centre For London	March 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:

Olivia Tusinski has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

### Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Patrick Dubeck 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 5 October 2020.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

### Signature



### Date

6 October 2020