

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2592

Funding for the London Housing Panel from April 2022 until March 2025

Executive summary:

The London Housing Panel (the Panel) was established jointly by the Mayor and Trust for London in April 2019. It exists to provide London voluntary and community-sector organisations with a structured forum to consider housing issues and engage with the Mayor, the GLA and other decision-makers.

This decision seeks approval of a grant of £75,000 to enable Trust for London to continue running the Panel from 1 April 2022 until the end of March 2025. Trust For London will provide funding of £69,362 for this period.

This decision will allow the Panel to deliver its objectives of supporting, challenging and adding weight to the Mayor's work on housing.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Housing and Land approves a grant of £75,000 to Trust for London to run the Panel from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025. This breaks down as follows:

- £25,000 in 2022-23
- £25,000 in 2023-24
- £25,000 in 2024-25.

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: Tim Steer

Position: Executive Director, Housing and Land

Signature:



Date:

15/8/22

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The London Housing Panel (the Panel) was established by the Mayor and Trust for London in April 2019. It was set up to build on the Mayor's existing community engagement work, and to provide a structured forum for the voluntary and community sector to consider housing issues and inform the Mayor's housing policies.
- 1.2. The Panel membership consists of a Chair and up to 15 members working in the voluntary and community sector.¹ Meetings are attended by the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, or the Director of Housing and Land if they are unable to attend, alongside two GLA officers. Trust for London coordinates secretariat and project management support for the Panel. To ensure a link between the Panel and the Mayor's work on housing, the Chair sits on the Mayor's Homes for Londoners Board (HfL Board).
- 1.3. The Mayor's Budget for 2022-23 confirmed an allocation of "£600k per annum within the Housing & Land budget to enable the implementation of Lord Kerslake's recommendations and also continue the work of the London Housing Panel."
- 1.4. Since its launch in April 2019, the Panel has held quarterly formal meetings, and has set out its policy priorities in a report to the Mayor. These priorities cover three themes: delivering more social housing; improving community engagement; and taking action on temporary accommodation. The Panel is currently considering this programme of work with a view to confirming a shared agenda with GLA officers shortly. Five smaller working groups are being established, complemented by Panel members and GLA officers, to ensure that the Panel identifies and completes deliverable units work, and delivers against the objectives agreed in its terms of reference.
- 1.5. Since launching, the Panel has continuously performed the four ongoing objectives it agreed with the GLA (see 2.2, below). The Panel is member-led, and its members provided a summary of their achievements in the March 2022 Panel meeting. These were:
 - adding weight to the Mayor's work to secure a majority of the 2021-26 Homes for Londoners programme be allocated to social rent
 - giving voluntary and community sector organisations access to GLA officers
 - working on the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) framework for the AHP 2021-26
 - initiating work on temporary accommodation
 - providing in-depth consultation responses²
 - adding weight to Equality Impact Assessment statements for reports made to the HfL Board.

Funding to date

¹ There are currently 13 members.

² Responses were made to: the Small Sites, Small Builders Programme; the Planning for the Future White Paper; the eight London Covid Recovery Missions; the Affordable Homes Programme; and the Call for Evidence for the London Plan.

- 1.6. Funding of the Panel to date is described in the table below, with the funding proposal decided in this DD included in the final row.

Table 1

Decision	Period	GLA funding	Trust for London funding
ADD2399	April 2019 – March 2020	£30,000	£20,000
ADD2412	April 2020 – July 2020	£10,000	£10,000
ADD2450	August 2020 – July 2021	£30,000	£30,000
ADD2525	August 2021 – March 2022	£23,000	£24,000
DD2592	April 2022 – March 2025	£75,000	£69,362

- 1.7. The Panel was initially funded for one year, with the GLA providing £30,000 and Trust for London providing £20,000 to meet the total project cost of £50,000. This funding enabled Trust for London to set up and facilitate the functioning of the Panel, as well as providing a stipend and expenses for members to ensure that smaller and unwaged community organisations were not prevented from taking part. The Panel has since been funded by three further Assistant Director Decisions at the same annual rate. This decision provides additional funding to support the Panel at a lower per annum rate than previous years, due to a review of Panel costs and renegotiation of funding arrangements with Trust for London.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. This decision seeks approval for £75,000 to fund the Panel from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025, with £25,000 being spent in each of 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25. The Panel's total funding over this period is £160,082 – the remainder of which will be funded by Trust for London at £69,362, and transfers worth £15,720 in underspend from 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- 2.2. The objective of providing this funding is to provide time and resource for the Panel to achieve its goals as described in the Panel Terms of Reference. They are:
- to ensure that the Mayor's policies on housing reflect the needs of all Londoners, paying attention to equality and those who have been disadvantaged by housing policy
 - to add weight to the Mayor's work when it fits with the values and purpose of our work and the needs of our communities
 - to support and challenge the Mayor in thinking differently about the housing solutions and options that will most benefit those who are living in poverty
 - where relevant, to make connections between housing and other related issues such as welfare reform, health and wellbeing, and the environment.
- 2.3. To meet these ongoing objectives, the Panel will perform the following essential operations:
- continue to be member-led wherever possible
 - agree future meeting structures and a workplan for the Panel; recruit and induct a new Chair and members in line with its recommendations, including new members with expertise in racial justice and disability within housing to ensure the Panel represents London's diverse communities

- revisit Secretariat arrangements to ensure value for money while continuing to ensure the highest-quality support; revise its Terms of Reference if needed
- engage in early-stage policy shaping; draw the GLA and Mayor's attention to wider housing policy issues
- consult and ensure a flow of information in both directions with the members, communities and networks that they support
- provide rapid turnaround briefings where needed.

2.4. The Panel will work with officers to deliver a programme of work comprising the following activities in order to meet its ongoing objectives:

- four full formal panel meetings per annum (to include time for workshopping key issues)
- participation of the Chair on the HfL Board, including one presentation on an issue per annum, to be agreed jointly between the Chair, members and the GLA
- four in-depth specialist responses in writing, or convening up to five special sub-groups per annum
- four rapid responses managed by the Secretariat per annum
- one "Panel plus" event per year on an issue to be agreed jointly between the members, Chair and the GLA, e.g. an event with associated papers that can be published.

This programme of work is a continuation of the Panel's existing work programme.

2.5. This decision to fund the Panel for three years enables certainty over the Panel's resources and programme of work for the longest period in its history. This will allow the Panel to achieve its objective as described above (at section 2.2); to identify long-term workstreams comprising discrete and achievable tasks; and to establish five stable working groups that can sustain attention on these workstreams over long enough periods to see them to completion.

2.6. In the extension period, fees paid to members for their participation (member fees) will transition from being paid automatically to being voluntarily collected. This is intended to reduce the amount paid in fees to larger organisations that rely less on the fees to attend, due to their standing employment of policy and research staff; and to bring the Panel's policy on fees closer to those of other panels and public bodies affiliated with the GLA, which do not pay automatic fees to members. A discussion of the risk of this approach is below (section 4.2).

3. Equality comments

3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, functions of the GLA exercisable by the Mayor are subject to a public-sector equality duty and must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.2. Protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status.

- 3.3. The Panel was created to bring together London civil society organisations to consider housing issues and engage with the Mayor, the GLA and other decision-makers on this topic. The Panel is intended to have a positive equalities impact by providing additional channels to better enable Londoners with protected characteristics to feed into the Mayor's housing policies via Panel members. A key consideration during the recruitment of Panel members is ensuring that membership represents London's diverse communities (see section 3.5, below).
- 3.4. Member organisations representing Londoners with protected characteristics include Solace Women's Aid, Tonic Housing Association, London Gypsies and Travellers, Camden Community Law Centre, and Toynbee Hall Young Renters. These proposals strengthen this role by seeking to add members with expertise on racial justice and disability within housing.
- 3.5. Recruitment of new members will be conducted according to the best-practice recommendations of the Equal Group's report, 'Independent Review of Ethnic Minority experiences at GLA', and the GLA's most up-to-date recruitment guidance at the time of recruitment. For new members, this will mean an interview panel that is diverse in its ethnicity and gender. For Deaf and disabled people, and communities experiencing racial injustice, organisations will require a majority of their governing body, and at least half of their staff members, to be Deaf and/or disabled, or to have experienced racial injustice. The recruitment of a new Chair in May 2022 met the GLA's Equal Group commitments to a 100 per cent diverse panel, and a sufficiently diverse shortlist.
- 3.6. The work of the Panel so far has included consulting on the EDI framework of the AHP 2021-26; and scrutinising the quality of Equalities Impact Assessment statements in housing delivery reports to the HfL Board. Completing further such work on equalities is a priority for the Panel, and to this end a race equality working group has been formed.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1. The Panel must retain members to function. The risk of the Panel being destabilised by members resigning has been mitigated by asking organisations to recommit to the Panel in March 2022. All did so. Budget for recruiting new members to replace any outgoing members over the next period has been included to mitigate this risk.
- 4.2. Participation in the Panel may place a strain on resources for very small voluntary and community-sector groups, and unwaged or freelance individuals. To ensure participation is accessible to all, fees offered to members will be paid on a voluntary collection basis. The fee is intended to cover meeting attendance, preparation and other work between Panel meetings. There is a risk that more members than expected will claim the voluntary fees. To mitigate this, officers and the Panel Secretariat engaged with members in May 2022 and undertook a review of fee claims in previous years. This work showed that reducing the allocation for member fees by 20 per cent would be very unlikely to result in more fees being claimed than had been allocated.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.3. The Mayor is committed to giving Londoners a voice in housing policymaking. The Panel builds on work undertaken by the Mayor to involve Londoners in developing his housing policies. This included extensive consultation on the London Housing Strategy and draft London Plan, as well as attendance from City Hall officials at numerous bilateral meetings, workshops and large

conferences on housing. In June 2022, the Panel began to feed into the GLA's Planning for London team and plans to be involved in the Planning for London exercise.

- 4.4. The three areas identified by the Panel as priorities (delivering more social housing, improving community engagement, and taking action on temporary accommodation) align with the Mayor's housing policies and priorities on delivering genuinely affordable homes, creating inclusive neighbourhoods and tackling homelessness. The five working groups being set up in summer of 2022 are on: holding developers to account for social rented housing; getting a platform for the different voices of different housing experience; temporary accommodation; housing and race equality; and improving the Panel's reach and influence.³

Conflicts of interest

- 4.5. There are no conflicts of interest to note for any of those involved in the drafting or clearance of the decision.

Data protection, health and safeguarding

- 4.6. There are no considerations pertaining to data protection, health or safeguarding.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This decision seeks approval for expenditure of £75,000 to award a grant to Trust for London to deliver the Panel. Trust for London will be responsible for running the Panel and will provide match-funding to meet the total project cost.
- 5.2. The expenditure will be funded from the Kerslake Review annual budget of £600,000 (set over three years from 2022-23 to 2024-25) and will be spent equally (£25,000) across three financial years (2022-23; 2023-24; and 2024-25).

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Executive Director of Housing and Land 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 economic development and wealth creation, social development, or improvement of the environment, in Greater London.
- 6.2. In implementing the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers should comply 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
 - consult with appropriate bodies.

³ Terms of reference of each working group are to be finalised in August 2022.

- 6.3. In taking the decisions requested, as noted in section 3 above, the Executive Director of Housing and Land must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender reassignment, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and pregnancy and maternity) and persons who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. To this end, the Executive Director of Housing and Land should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.4. Section 1 of this report indicates that part of the sought budget will amount to the provision of grant funding, and not payment for services. Officers must ensure that the funding is distributed fairly; transparently; in accordance with the GLA's equality policy and subsidy control rules; and in a manner that affords value for money in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code. Officers must ensure that an appropriate funding agreement is put in place and executed by the GLA and the recipient before any commitment to funding is made.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. The GLA will award £75,000 to Trust for London via a funding agreement. Trust for London will meet the remaining project costs of £85,082, which includes £16,000 of underspend from previous years. In this way, the total project costs of £160,082 will be met.
- 7.2. The funding will allow the Panel to meet formally four times per annum from April 2022 to March 2025; and to deliver the essential operations and programme of work described in section 2, above.
- 7.3. The Panel is formally a project of Trust for London in partnership with the Mayor of London. The Chair and members are agents of Trust for London. Trust for London staff and its agents are responsible for running the Panel, including providing the Secretariat for meetings (including publication of meeting papers and minutes), management of communications and publicity, and development of the Panel work programme (led by the Panel members). The Trust for London seeks input from the GLA/the Mayor, the Chair and members in proposing actions for the Panel.
- 7.4. The Panel will be represented at the quarterly meetings of the HfL Board, which is chaired by the Mayor. The Chair of the Panel will be a standing member of the board, and may be accompanied by other Panel members as appropriate and with the agreement of the GLA.

Activity	Timeline
Funding agreement in place	August 2022
HfL Board	March, June, September and December annually until March 2025
Panel meeting	March, June, September and December annually until March 2025

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:

Sam Hurst has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Natalie Daniels 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

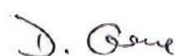
This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 8 August 2022.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature



Date

16/8/22