

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD386

GLA membership in the Housing Forum

Executive Summary:

The Housing Forum is an independent cross-sector membership network for businesses, local authorities and non-profit organisations in the housing sector. With over 125 members, including developers and stock holding organisations, professional services, manufacturers, local authorities and local enterprise partnerships, the Forum works to promote collaboration and to encourage improvements across all levels of the housing sector to build and maintain better homes for the future. The GLA has been offered membership in the Forum for a fee of £10,500 plus VAT which will run from immediate effect until 31 March 2017. This decision sets out the benefits of the network and seeks approval of expenditure of £10,500 for the GLA to become a member of the Forum.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director approves expenditure of £10,500 for GLA membership in the Housing Forum until 31 March 2017.

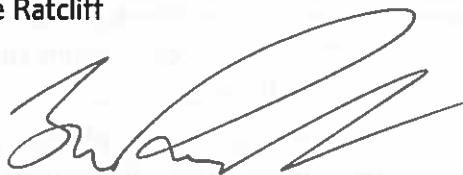
AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT:

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: Jamie Ratcliff

Signature:



Position: Assistant Director – Programme, Policy & Services

Date:

4/2/2016

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Housing Forum is an independent cross-sector membership network for businesses, local authorities and non-profit organisations in the housing sector. The aim of the Forum is to promote collaboration and to encourage improvements across all levels of the housing sector to build and maintain better homes for the future. This is done through informative and influencing networking activities which include working groups on various topics and CEO and local authority forums where delegates share experience taking new approaches to housing delivery.
- 1.2 The Housing Forum itself is non-political and does not lobby on behalf of any sectorial interest. The views and outputs delivered by the network on behalf of its members are the views of the Housing Forum and not attributed (unless expressly agreed) to any individual organisation. The network currently has 126 members including house building and stock holding organisations, professional services, manufacturers, local authorities and local enterprise partnerships. It is the only network with membership representing all levels of the housing delivery chain, including both private and public sector organisations, and currently includes a number of organisations that are delivering housing under one or more GLA programme.
- 1.3 The Forum is continuing to grow and over the last 18 months a number of local authorities have joined as paid members, including Birmingham City Council, Hull City Council, 14 local authorities in or around Kent and 10 local authorities in the Greater Manchester Area.
- 1.4 In early January 2016, the GLA was contacted by the Forum with a membership offer for a fee of £10,500 which will run from immediate effect until 31 March 2017. Under the terms of the proposal the GLA is able to share all of the membership benefits with any of the 33 local authorities in London who wish to participate. The package will give GLA and participating local authority officers full access to the working groups and forums.

Declarations

- 1.5 The Executive Director for Housing & Land is a Housing Forum Board observer but is not a member of the board nor does he take part in Board decision. As such, there is no conflict of interest in his role as observer. Furthermore, membership in the Forum is a decision that will be taken by the Assistant Director for Programme, Policy & Services and not the Executive Director.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 Membership in the network is expected to have the following benefits for the GLA:

Working Group Representation	The Housing Forum's Working Groups produce influential reports for its members, which are recognised at the highest levels of Government and throughout the industry. The Forum currently has three working groups (1) Building Homes for the Future, (2) Investing in our Housing Assets and (3) Smarter Supply: Smarter Resources. Membership in the Forum will give GLA and LA officers full access to these working groups to share and learn from good practice and innovative thinking.
CEO Forums	The Housing Forum builds influence in the sector by bringing leaders together for a monthly examination of major topics that connect directly to the working groups. GLA membership will give senior leaders at the

	GLA and LA access to these events.
Local Council Forums	Local Council forums enable Local Authority members to share experiences of new approaches to developing their assets and help to better disseminate knowledge across the public sector. They are also used to demonstrate a range of new approaches to development including direct commissioning, joint ventures and new development partnerships. GLA membership will give GLA and LA officers access to these forums.
Full London Representation	The membership packaged offered to the GLA means all 33 Local Authorities will also be able to participate the network if they choose to for no additional charge. The GLA will also act as lead for London and will be responsible for defining the Housing Forum's relationship with local authorities in London.
Networking with providers	There are a number of GLA stakeholders who are already members of the network. GLA membership will provide increased opportunities for networking and collaborating with these organisations.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The public sector equality duty requires the identification and evaluation of the likely potential impacts, both positive and negative, of the decision on those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation) and set out how you are addressing the duties). This decision is not likely to have any impact on individuals with protected characteristics; however, the work of the Housing Forum in general could lead to a better sharing of best practice and approach to housing delivery which in turn could improve both access and quality to those with protected characteristics.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 There is no legal commitment associated with GLA membership; however, there is an expectation that the work of the Forum will be supported through involvement and contributions from appropriate senior level officers within the Housing & Land directorate. GLA involvement, however, will have a positive impact in creating additional forums in which GLA initiatives and priorities can be discussed and where the sharing of best approaches can be disseminated.
- 4.2 The work of the Housing Forum also directly supports the Mayor's aims, as set out in the London Housing Strategy, to increase the number of well-designed new homes delivered across London each year.
- 4.3 Consideration was given to whether a portion of the fee should be passed on to the 33 local authorities who will have access to the Forum through GLA membership. However, the administrative costs of advertising, invoicing and collecting the fees together with the lost benefit of the GLA being able lead on and define the relationship for London outweighed this benefit.
- 4.4 No impact assessments or consultations are required for this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is being sought for an expenditure of £10,500 for GLA to become a member of the Housing Forum, an independent cross-sector membership network for businesses, local authorities and non-profit organisations in the housing sector.

5.2 The proposed expenditure will be funded from the existing 2015/16 Housing Programme Cost Centre.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Membership Start Date	Immediately on receipt of payment
Membership End Date	31 March 2017

Appendices and supporting papers: None

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) 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 approval 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 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be 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:

Heath Pritchard has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

HEAD OF GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE:

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

Signature:



Date:

03.02.16

