

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2081

**Title: Mi Wifi**

### Executive Summary:

The *Mi Wifi* pilot is a 'proof of concept' project that will test how effective lending wifi-enabled devices (tablets) through libraries or community centres is at reducing digital exclusion among specific groups of Londoners (older Londoners, disadvantaged Londoners, Londoners with a disability and community groups). It will also see if the provision of basic digital skills training and knowledge of local support, alongside internet access, encourages sustainable and beneficial online activity.

The pilot will run in one or more London boroughs with high digital exclusion rates. It is aimed at those who have no access to the internet and are lacking basic digital skills which can often compound economic disadvantage and social isolation in these groups.

### Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Health and Communities approves up to £50,000 for the delivery of the *Mi Wifi* digital inclusion project including:

- £10,000 in 2016-17
- £40,000 in 2017-18

### 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:** Amanda Coyle

**Position:** Assistant Director of Health and Communities

Signature:



**Date:** 27 Feb 2017 .

## PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

### Decision required – supporting report

#### 1. Introduction and background

1.1. **Digital inclusion** is more than just getting people online, it is about transforming lives, particularly for those groups most excluded. In 2016, 6% of London households did not have access to the internet, 7.2% of Londoners had 'never used the internet' and 16% did not have basic digital skills.<sup>1</sup> There is no single reason for people being digitally excluded but the main reasons tend to include:

- A lack of interest in the internet & digital (59%),
- A belief they lack the skills to go online (21%) and
- The cost of equipment (9%)<sup>2</sup>.

This project aims to address these barriers through the provision of a wifi enabled tablet, borrowed from a local library or community centre. Participants will also be able to access basic digital skills support to learn how to get online and the benefits of being online if they stay online.

This project will target groups with high digital exclusion rates across one or more London boroughs with high rates<sup>3</sup> of digital exclusion including: older Londoners (+55); Londoners from disadvantaged backgrounds (in social housing, in receipt of benefits or entitled to Job Seekers Allowance or Free School Meals) and Londoners with a disability (especially those who are housebound).<sup>4</sup>

But it is not just individuals who are offline and not benefiting from digital access; 23% of small businesses and 58% of charities/community groups lack basic digital skills which will help them thrive.<sup>5</sup> As such, this programme will also aim to support community groups who are currently not online.

In recognition of this emerging digital divide the GLA's *Digital Inclusion Strategy* was launched in January 2015. It outlines why digital exclusion is a growing concern for particular groups in London and how the GLA can work with partners to address the barriers Londoners face to getting online. Sadiq confirmed his commitment to reducing digital exclusion in both his manifesto commitments and by highlighting digital inclusion's relevance in *A City for All Londoners*.

In February 2016, the GLA became a signatory to the government's *Digital Inclusion Charter*<sup>6</sup>. The charter aims to reduce the number of people who are offline by 20% (nationally) every two years, so that by 2020 everyone who wants to be online is online. The GLA is committed to working towards this goal in London ensuring that all Londoners benefit from digital technology.

1.2. **Mobile Wifi** is increasingly considered the best channel through which to reduce digital exclusion. A recent evaluation of a Vodafone Mobile Devices project by the Good Things Foundation found:

- 88% of the people who took part in the project improved their digital skills during the project through their use of mobile technology, and their motivations for and use of the internet also changed dramatically.

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<sup>1</sup> managing information, communicating, transacting, creating and problem solving

<sup>2</sup> Home internet and social media usage, ONS 2016

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/datasets>

<sup>4</sup> 10% or above based on 2016 data; B&D, Bexley, Bromley, Camden, Ealing, Hackney, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hounslow, Islington and Waltham Forest; if the project is multi-borough, at least one of the boroughs needs have a high DI rate.

<sup>5</sup> See annex 1 for breakdown of digital exclusion by characteristic.

<sup>6</sup> Lloyds Business Digital Index 2015,

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-inclusion-strategy/uk-digital-inclusion-charter>

- 78% of people who were loaned a tablet or smartphone said they found the interface more intuitive and easier to remember than that of a laptop or desktop, leading to changes in online behaviour and more regular use.
- 55% of those who were loaned a tablet or smartphone said they learned independently, as well as using their devices out and about at a range of venues including community and day centres, social clubs, and friends' and family members' homes.
- 70% of people felt that mobile wifi had cost advantages for them over fixed broadband.
- For people experiencing severe social exclusion and disadvantage mobile internet was shown to enable people to better self-manage their health, leading to greater independence and wellbeing.<sup>7</sup>

The *Mi Wifi* project is a unique opportunity for the GLA to practically support the reduction of digital exclusion for some of London's most vulnerable groups and develop a pilot, modelled on the successful Leeds Library wifi-enabled device lending project<sup>8</sup>, for delivering wifi to those most in need. A model that can be replicated or scaled up across London's borough libraries/community centres if proved successful.

## 2. Objectives and expected outcomes

### 2.1. The main objective of this programme is to test if:

- Lending wifi enabled devices (tablets) is a successful route to reducing digital exclusion among specific groups of Londoners.
- If community groups can be successfully digital upskilled and empowered to deliver for their communities in a more efficient, cost effective way.
- If providing basic digital skills training and information on local digital support options is elemental to successfully getting people to stay online.

### 2.2. Outputs and Outcomes

The main outputs and outcomes for the *Mi Wifi* pilot are outlined in this section:

#### Outputs

- i. A minimum of **70 tablets are lent**, via borough libraries or other community centres
  - a. 60 tablets are lent to individuals from the following groups:
    - older Londoners (55+),
    - Londoners from disadvantaged backgrounds (in receipt of benefit or income support, JSA in social housing, pupils entitled to on FSM, etc.)
    - Londoners with a disability (especially those who are housebound via library-at-home services or equivalent service);
  - b. 10 tablets are lent to individuals from local community groups that need support to build digital capacity in their organisation.
- ii. A **robust evidence base** is created, based on the evaluation to either prove or disprove the concept of this pilot.

#### Outcomes

- iii. **Internet access** – all participants are competent and confident enough to access the internet from a tablet.

<sup>7</sup> Mobile: Helping to Close the Digital Divide? A Qualitative Evaluation of the Vodafone Mobile Devices Project, March 2015

<sup>8</sup> For more information see <https://datamillnorth.org/smart-city-leeds/>

- iv. **Basic Digital Skills:** All participants gain a basic level of digital skills by completing the basic digital skills course (including how to keep themselves and their data safe whilst online).
- v. **Knowledge of support available:** All participants know where to access local support to stay online (through local digital skills support mapping and signposting).
- vi. **Positive Impact:** All participants report a positive impact on their lives as a result of participating in this pilot, measured through qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis during the life of the programme and the evaluation phase.
- vii. **Empowering Community Groups:** Community groups understand the benefits of being digitally enabled for the work they do to support their communities.

### 3. Equality comments

In London, in 2016 ...

- One in four Londoners who have a disability
- One in ten ethnically Black/African/Caribbean/Black British or Indian Londoners
- One in ten women in London
- One in four economically inactive Londoners
- One in six 60-64 year olds

.... have 'never used the internet';<sup>9</sup> and

- One in four in the C2DE do not have basic digital skills<sup>10</sup>

This pilot is specifically targeted at groups with the highest rates of digital exclusion and reflects the intersectionality of disadvantage .i.e. many of the participants will be suffering from multiple disadvantage: unemployed, with a disability and socio-economically disadvantaged. Being offline can cost an individual up to £744 per year as well as reducing their chances of employment or connecting to others, thus compounding disadvantage and social isolation further.<sup>11</sup>

### 4. Other considerations

*a) links to Mayoral strategies and priorities*

#### Mayoral Commitments

**Digital Inclusion:** Implement a digital inclusion strategy, led by the new Chief Digital Officer, to ensure that everyone in London, including older Londoners, have the skills, and online access they need to access public services, job opportunities and information.

#### A City for All Londoners

**Social Mobility & Social Integration:** "Social integration is an important priority that cuts across all policy areas. If we are to achieve it, we need to tackle inequality. We need to build strong communities, and enable all Londoners to actively participate in the life of the city, and in the decisions that affect them."<sup>12</sup>

**Community Engagement:** "I will work with communities and civil society groups across London to encourage active participation in community and civic life."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> 2016, LFS data

<sup>10</sup> lowest three social and economic groups

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.lloydsbank.com/banking-with-us/whats-happening/consumer-digital-index.asp>

<sup>12</sup> & <sup>7</sup> A City for All Londoners, pgs 71 & 73

<sup>13</sup> A City for All Londoner, p73

b) Key risks and issues:

Mi Wifi project	RISK	MITIGATIONS	likelihood	impact
Delivery	Poor referral paths	Delivery partners will ensure that referral paths are clear, numerous and preferably well established	2	3
	Low uptake of offer	marketing budget included to ensure that communities and individuals know about this project and that they can borrow free Wifi from their local library/community centre	2	3
Reputation	A participant on this programme uses their device for illegal or improper activities.	delivery partners will have to ensure that participants understand fully the implications and penalties of improper use	2	4
	A participant on this programme is harmed (identity theft, grooming, defrauded etc) whilst online	Basic digital skills course will cover personal safety and data security; ensuring that people know how to keep themselves safe whilst online.	3	4

c) impact assessments and consultations.

Consultations on the best type of delivery methodology have taken place with

- Doteveryone (formerly Go On)
- Google
- Facebook
- Leeds Library
- Good Things (formerly Tinder Foundation)
- Libraries Taskforce, Department of Culture
- EPBU Digital Skills team

## 5. Financial comments

Approval is being sought for expenditure of up to £50,000 over two financial years. £10,000 will be spent in 2016-17 and will be funded from the Minor Programme Budget in Communities and Intelligence Directorate. A further £40,000 in 2017-18 to be met from the Health and Communities Unit's 2017-18 budget.

## 6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

### 6.1 Delivery Model – the key elements of the project model are described below.

- ❑ Participants, who meet the eligibility criteria, are enrolled from clear referral paths in participating boroughs.
- ❑ The wifi enabled devices are purchased, set up and loaned through libraries or community centres
- ❑ Marketing of project in pre-delivery period takes place to ensure sufficient interest from referral partners and prospective participants.
- ❑ Mandatory basic digital skills sessions are delivered to every participant for a minimum of six hours covering the identified basic digital skills needed.
- ❑ Robust monitoring is undertaken and embedded within the pilot delivery model to support successful project delivery and a robust evaluation.
- ❑ Digital Skills Support Map and signposting processes established to support participants on their learning journey.
- ❑ Design the evaluation of the pilot to assess i) the project model, ii) the cost-benefit of the pilot and iii) the impact on participants' lives, in collaboration with GLA Intelligence.

**6.2 Deliverables:** The key deliverables for this project are outlined in the following section:

- i. Identify referral pathways to the programme and enrol individuals and community groups
- ii. Lend and maintain mobile wifi enabled devices (tablets)
- iii. Device maintenance, security and data-wiping
- iv. Provide Basic Digital Skills training
- v. Provide Digital Skills Support Map
- vi. Programme administration, management and delivery
- vii. Ensuring Data security
- viii. Monitoring and reporting
- ix. Collecting and management of all additional evaluation data
- x. Self-evaluation
- xi. Sustainability plan

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	w.c. March 21
Announcement [if applicable]	NA
Delivery Start Date [for project proposals]	April 1
Main milestones – referrals to programme	April – June
Main milestones – WiFi lending commences	June 2017
Main Milestones –Wifi lending ends	December 2017
Final evaluation start and finish (self)	June 17 – Mar 18
Delivery End Date [for project proposals]	December 2017
Project Closure: [for project proposals]	March 2018

**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:**

Siobhán McKenna has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance and –if relevant- Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

**Corporate Investment Board:**

The Corporate Investment Board reviewed this proposal on 27 February 2016.

**HEAD OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:**

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

**Signature:**



**Date:**

27.02.17

