

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2838

Title: Mainstage London Learner Survey 2021-22

Executive summary:

This Mayoral Decision form (MD) seeks the Mayor's approval for expenditure of up to £300,000 to deliver year one of the Mainstage London Learner Survey (LLS) with the full range of Adult Education Budget (AEB)-funded learners in the 2021-22 academic year. This funding will allow the GLA to accommodate the different cost options identified by the appointed evaluators (IFF Research), including cost options for circumstances where there is a relatively low response rate to the follow-up survey by learners in the LLS pilot. It will also allow the GLA to accommodate any unexpected costs, such as additional support for new "Good Work for All" AEB providers who were unable to participate in the LLS pilot.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves:

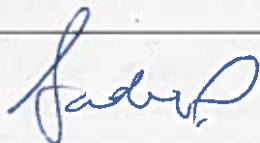
Expenditure of up to £300,000 to deliver year one of the Mainstage London Learner Survey with the full range of AEB-funded learners in the 2021-22 academic year, and according to the table of cost options set out in Appendix A.

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

22/7/21

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The mainstage London Learner Survey (LLS) was developed to measure the impact of Adult Education Budget (AEB) provision across a set of seven priority impact areas, which were endorsed by the Mayor in November 2019.
- 1.2 Under cover of MD2652 (London Learner Survey 2020-2022), the Mayor approved expenditure for developing and delivering an LLS pilot with providers in the 2020-21 academic year, with an option to deliver the Mainstage LLS in the 2021-22 academic year.
- 1.3 Following a competitive procurement process, IFF Research was awarded and entered into a contract with the GLA, valued at £137,919, to carry out the LLS pilot. The contract has an initial end date of 11 August 2021 and includes a provision to extend through a contract variation. The provision was included to allow the GLA to roll out the Mainstage LLS subject to Mayoral approval. The contract includes three funding options for the Mainstage LLS, which are presented in Appendix A.
- 1.4 The pilot survey is being used to test the operational model for the survey ahead of this request to scale it up to a full mainstage survey. Lessons learnt from the pilot survey will be used as the basis of any improvements to the mainstage survey, and will ensure that a representative sample of the AEB learner population can complete the mainstage survey in the 2021-22 academic year.
- 1.5 The survey model will have the following components:
 - a baseline questionnaire completed by all learners at enrolment
 - a follow-up online questionnaire sent to all learners five months after the end of their course
 - targeted phone and SMS/postal follow-up with key learner groups, following a review of the data obtained, to: maximise the number of providers for which detailed analysis is possible; and ensure data is collected from under-represented and hard-to-reach groups.
- 1.6 To ensure the survey accounts for the accessibility needs of all learners, the pilot survey is being conducted on targeted groups of key learners who may experience barriers to accessing and completing the survey. The targeted groups of key learners include: learners enrolled on courses of English for speakers of other languages, or basic skills, which accounts for 47 per cent of the AEB learner base; learners with learning difficulties or disabilities, which accounts for 14 per cent of the AEB learner base; and learners on adult-skills courses eligible for the disadvantage funding uplift, which accounts for 51 per cent of the AEB learner base.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The plan was for the LLS pilot to commence in January 2021, but a consultation with AEB providers demonstrated that 80 per cent preferred to delay it until after the Easter break in 2021, so they could adapt their provision to meet the demands of the second Covid-19 lockdown. The consultation also found that the announcement of the second Covid-19 lockdown had substantially reduced learner-enrolment numbers, which would have compromised the significance of LLS pilot findings. Therefore, the LLS pilot was postponed to April 2021.
- 2.2 IFF Research presented the GLA with three funding options for the Mainstage LLS, based on the learners' response rate (see Appendix A). The costliest funding scenario assumes a low response rate on the follow-up survey (on average 11 per cent), and reflects the additional activities that will need to be conducted by the researchers to increase the learners' response rate so that a robust representative sample is achieved.

- 2.3 The LLS pilot is currently underway and is scheduled to end in July 2021. The interim LLS pilot report reveals that, at present, 85 per cent of the existing AEB providers have participated in the pilot and have successfully administered the baseline survey, which is reassuring with respect to fully rolling out the LLS in the 2021-22 academic year. Some providers have identified areas for improvement regarding the operational aspects of the baseline survey and its accessibility to ensure satisfactory levels of learner response rates.
- 2.4 The current LLS pilot learner response rate for the baseline questionnaire is 49 per cent: a good starting position, and likely to increase once the LLS is well established and providers keep building awareness of the LLS among all AEB learners. The current LLS pilot follow-up response rate is 9 per cent; this is on the lower side, but not surprising since those learners did not participate in the baseline survey, and were often contacted more than five months after they completed their AEB course. GLA officers expect this response rate to further increase in the first year of Mainstage LLS so that a representative sample of learners is achieved.
- 2.5 It should be noted that the interim LLS pilot findings set out at paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 above are subject to change once the pilot has completed and the final report is received.
- 2.6 To account for the risk that the initial learner response rate on the follow-up LLS is low, this MD requests approval of an expenditure of up to £300,000 for the 2021-22 academic year, in line with the low response rate funding option presented by the evaluators. The requested expenditure is £75,000 less than the estimated £375,000 set out under the cover of MD2652.
- 2.7 This budget will allow the GLA to accommodate the costliest funding scenario (Appendix A – option C), which will be used in case the initial learner response rate is low. The GLA will include a contractual mid-year review point, where officers will consider switching to a cheaper funding option if the learner response rate is higher than expected.
- 2.8 GLA officers expect the annual cost of the survey to fall in future years, as AEB learners and providers become more familiar with the survey.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 provides that, in the exercise of their functions, public authorities, of whom the Mayor is one, must have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 3.2 Relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 3.3 In the Skills for Londoners Strategy and subsequent analyses, the GLA has highlighted that there are several groups that are disproportionately under-represented in London's labour market, including some groups with protected characteristics. This includes special educational needs and disabilities learners; young people; disabled adults; Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups; and women.
- 3.4 The GLA will use any data collected through the LLS to measure and analyse trends in the participation of different groups of Londoners and the outcomes achieved by different groups of Londoners. This will give the GLA insight into how effectively providers are serving those groups,

and will be used to inform future policy interventions to reduce gaps in participation and achievement among disadvantaged groups.

- 3.5 Several measures were integrated into the survey's development and delivery process to ensure the survey is completed by a representative group of AEB learners. These measures include stress-testing the survey with sector representatives; piloting the survey on learner groups that may experience barriers accessing the survey; and adopting several accessibility measures, for example, ensuring the survey is accessible in any language and providing alternative methods for learners to complete the survey.

4. Other considerations

Risks arising/mitigation

- 4.1 The risk of postponing the roll out of the Mainstage LLS is substantial since there will be a delay in collecting the necessary learners' destinations data and thus estimating the impact of AEB on the priority outcome areas agreed by the Mayor in November 2019.
- 4.2 There remains a residual risk that the response rate to the survey will be too low to generate meaningful representative results; for example, as a result of poor-quality or limited learner contact details, or reluctance from learners to take part in the survey. This will be mitigated through the recommended survey design and adequate contingency budget.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.3 The LLS was developed to measure the impact of AEB provision across a set of seven impact priority areas which include both economic and social outcomes, which were endorsed by the Mayor in November 2019. The LLS will enable the GLA to better demonstrate the impact that the AEB has on London learners, employers and communities; and the impact that delegation of funding is having on the outcomes achieved by learners in both adult community learning and adult skills provision.
- 4.4 There are no conflicts of interest to declare from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 The MD is seeking approval of an expenditure of up to £300,000 for the academic year 2021-22, in line with the funding option presented by the evaluators as stated in section 2.6. The estimated budget is set under MD2652 and this will be funded from the AEB.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 Section 39A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 permits the delegation of ministerial functions to the Mayor, subject to certain limitations and conditions. This forms the basis of the delegation to the Mayor of AEB functions from the Secretary of State for Education. A particular limitation of the delegation is that the usual power of delegation by the Mayor is not available in respect of s39A delegated functions.
- 6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor 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, sex, 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 Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

- 6.3 Section 1 of this report indicates that the GLA intends to vary an existing contract for services. Officers should seek support from Transport for London (TfL) Procurement as required when varying any contracts and ensure that variations are properly executed before using such services.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Signing of mainstage contract variation	July 2021
Final report on LLS pilot	August 2021
Year one mainstage survey start date	August 2021
Year one mainstage survey end date	January 2023

Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix A – London Learner Survey Cost Options for the 2021-22 academic year.

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? YES**

Reserved until 30 September 2021, once the contract variation is completed and the final LLS pilot results are received.

Part 2 – Sensitive information**Is there a part 2 form – NO****ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Lubomira Chirmiciu has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Sarah Mulley have reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Jules Pipe has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 12 July 2021.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

D. Gove

Date

14 July 2021

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor

Signature

D. Bellamy

Date

14 July 2021