

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2051

Title: Establishing the Skills for Londoners taskforce

Executive Summary:

This MD relates to the Mayor's manifesto commitment to lead a new skills agenda for London and establish a 'Skills for Londoners' taskforce to make sure businesses and Londoners get the skills they need to succeed.

Decision:

The Mayor approves the:

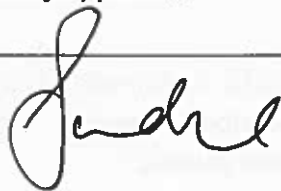
- Establishment of a Skills for Londoners taskforce, comprising a small steering group supported by a large stakeholder advisory group on which the steering group can draw for advice and guidance to assist in realising the Mayor's manifesto commitment to lead a new skills agenda for London and to make sure businesses and Londoners get the skills they need to succeed; and
- Commencement of activity (in January 2017) to identify members for appointment to the steering group and stakeholder advisory group, including an open application process.

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:

6/12/16

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Mayor's manifesto committed to leading a new skills agenda for London and establishing a "Skills for Londoners" taskforce to make sure businesses and Londoners get the skills they need to succeed.
- 1.2 London has a strong, dynamic, global economy, but despite the capital's economic growth and prosperity, the employment rate has lagged behind the national average for three decades and continues to do so. Almost 700,000 Londoners are out of work, with particularly high rates of youth unemployment. London also has a growing problem of in-work poverty, associated with low-skilled low-paid work. Ensuring an effective and responsive skills system is critical to tackling these issues, enabling more Londoners to find and progress in work.
- 1.3 An effective skills system is also critical to meeting the needs of London's businesses. Employers repeatedly report both skills shortage vacancies and skills gaps within their workforce, impacting on growth and productivity. These are partly attributable to the skills system being insufficiently responsive to labour market need. As London faces the uncertainty of Brexit following the EU Referendum result, ensuring a more responsive skills system is key to meeting the needs of London's employers.
- 1.4 Skills for Londoners will bring together experts and key stakeholders to advise the GLA on delivery of the Mayor's manifesto commitments on skills and the role of skills in London's economic development. It will help to shape and oversee a programme of activity to improve the quality and responsiveness of skills provision in the capital.
- 1.5 Programme budget for these activities is being sought from the GLA budget through the formal budget setting process, but there are no direct costs associated with the establishment and functioning of Skills for Londoners, which will be supported by existing GLA officer resource.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

a) Objectives

- 2.1 In line with the Mayoral manifesto, it is proposed that Skills for Londoners has a twin focus on ensuring that London's skills system meets the needs of London's businesses while supporting all Londoners to access the skills they need to find and progress in work.
- 2.2 It is therefore proposed that Skills for Londoners takes a holistic approach to skills, focussing primarily on post-16 further education and training while looking at progression pathways from school and into higher education (HE). In practice this would mean looking at all-age careers information, advice and guidance, 14-19 vocational education, further education provision and links with HE.

b) Structure

- 2.3 It is proposed that Skills for Londoners comprises a small steering group supported by a large stakeholder advisory group on which the steering group could draw for advice and guidance.

2.4 It is proposed that steering group membership would be restricted to ten members as follows:

- Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills (Mayoral appointment)
- London Councils' Executive Member for Children, Skills and Employment (Mayoral appointment)
- Employer advisors x 4 (To be appointed via an open application process)
- Schools advisor (To be appointed via an open application process)
- Further Education (FE) advisors x 2 (To be appointed via an open application process)
- Higher Education (HE) advisor (To be appointed via an open application process)

2.5 It is proposed that membership of the stakeholder advisory group would be very wide, encompassing the following categories:

- Employers and Business Representative Organisations (BROs)
- Skills and education providers and relevant sector bodies
- Central government and London government representatives
- Other stakeholders including learner and employee representatives, including reference to coordination with GLA and MOPAC workstreams on skills for offenders, cultural projects and business apprentices.

2.6 The majority of members of the stakeholder advisory group would be selected via an open application process, but a number of positions would be reserved for representatives from key stakeholder or partner organisations of the GLA and be appointed by the steering group. This would include the Association of Colleges, the London Work Based Learning Alliance, London First and the Federation of Small Businesses, as well as London Councils and each of the sub-regional partnerships of boroughs. The latter would also come together in a dedicated sub-group with the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills to assess borough skills priorities as identified by Sub-regional Skills and Employment Boards.

2.7 Selection for Skills for Londoners will be undertaken in line with the GLA Protocol for Mayoral Appointments and carried out in partnership with the Greater London Authority's HR department. Members will be unremunerated and their participation subject to terms of appointment. Appointments will run until the end of the current Mayoral term.

2.8 In fulfilling its roles Skills for Londoners will report into and work in concert with the London Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to facilitate its efficient functioning and to enable the provision of support to and assist in informing the London LEP's wider economic development plans and strategies (as well as specific areas such as the London LEP's funding to support the FE sector). As is standard practice, related decisions concerning LEP funding will put to the LEP in advance of seeking GLA approvals of the same.

c) Expected outcomes

2.9 Skills for Londoners will oversee a programme of activity which seeks to ensure that skills provision in the capital better serves the needs of employers and learners. This will include:

- setting the strategic direction for London's skills system;
- increasing the responsiveness of skills provision in the capital;
- driving up the quality of London's FE provision;
- tackling information failures in the skills system on the benefits and outcomes of further education; and
- improving FE infrastructure in the capital including working with the LEP to set a strategy for the Skills for Londoners Capital Fund.

- 2.10 The details of the programme will be set by the steering group, drawing on advice and guidance from the stakeholder advisory group as appropriate, and will be informed by the outcome of London's skills devolution negotiations.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 provides that, in the exercise of their functions, public authorities 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; and
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 3.2 The obligation in section 149(1) is placed upon a decision maker, and due regard must be had at the time a particular decision is being considered. The duty is non-delegable and must be exercised with an open mind.
- 3.3 Skills for Londoners must therefore have regard to the public sector equality duty in its work. The public sector equality duty will also be taken into account in the selection process for Skills for Londoners and specific efforts will be made to ensure that the membership reflects London's diversity.
- 3.4 In order to deliver Skills for Londoners' key objective to "support all Londoners to access the skills they need to find and progress in work", specific work will be undertaken to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. This is likely to involve, for example, proposals that would aim to remove barriers to employment or to accessing skills provision faced by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic.

4. Other considerations

a) Key risks and issues

- 4.1 There are several internal and external risks associated with delivery of Skills for Londoners' twin focus on ensuring that London's skills system meets the needs of London's businesses while supporting all Londoners to access the skills they need to find and progress in work. These include risks associated with:
- Lack of levers available to Skills for Londoners to deliver its objectives.
Mitigation: The Mayor continues to lobby Government in order to secure a wide-ranging skills devolution agreement. In the interim, officers are developing alternative work plans based on different devolution models. In terms of funding, Skills for Londoners will work in concert with the London LEP in the development of a strategy for the LEP's skills strategy funding. A programme budget is also being sought from GLA budgets to support Skills for Londoners' work programme, and is being included in the Mayor's draft budget. The delivery of Skills for Londoners' objectives is not dependent on securing the full proposed programme budget, as the activity that relates to it is scalable, and Skills for Londoners' objectives will also be supported and delivered through existing GLA officer resource. No expenditure will be incurred before the budgetary allocation is approved.
 - Failure to implement, successfully the London Area Review recommendations.

It is intended that Skills for Londoners will have a role in overseeing implementation of the recommendations from the London Area Review, part of the government's programme of Area Reviews of post-16 education and training institutions, which concludes in November 2016.

Mitigation: The GLA will continue to work with Government, the LEP, providers and business to ensure the recommendations of the review are successfully implemented and that funding streams are made available to support delivery.

b) Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.2 Establishing a 'Skills for Londoners' taskforce that would work in concert with the LEP and consist of business leaders and other employers alongside London Councils and representatives of HE, FE and schools was a key commitment in the mayoral manifesto. The manifesto stated that Skills for Londoners would:

- Develop a city-wide strategic approach to skills
- Work with schools to improve careers advice
- Ensure that communities across London have access to training
- Creating thousands of new, high quality apprenticeships
- Establish a construction academy scheme with the housebuilding industry

4.3 The Mayor also committed to seeking a devolution deal over further education. Negotiations with central government are ongoing about this. The outcome of the negotiations will have implications for the scope of Skills for Londoners' activities.

c) Impact assessments and consultations

4.4 GLA officers have consulted informally with key partners and stakeholders on the proposed structure and remit of Skills for Londoners, including London Councils and the sub-regional partnerships, and the London Area Review Steering Group which includes skills sector representatives.

5. Financial comments

5.1 This MD is seeking approval for the establishment of a 'Skills for Londoners' taskforce, with January 2017 being the proposed date for the commencement of activities. Other than officers' time, there are no direct costs to the GLA for establishing the taskforce at this stage.

5.2 The programme budget to cover these activities is being sought through the formal budget setting process.

5.3 The Skills Devolution Unit within the EBPU_DEE Directorate will be responsible for managing this project.

6. Legal comments

6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that:

6.1.1 the decisions requested of the Mayor involve the exercise of the GLA's general powers falling within the Authority's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of social and economic development and wealth creation in Greater London; and

- 6.1.2 in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
- (a) pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
 - (b) 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
 - (c) consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2 Should the Mayor be minded to approve the proposals set out in this report officers must ensure that they:
- 6.2.2 comply fully with all GLA and related HR policies and protocols in respect of the appointment of members to taskforce such as those proposed; and
- 6.2.3 establish and implement clear terms of reference for members to enable the efficient working of the proposed advisory and steering groups.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Application process documents signed off	19 December 2016
Positions advertised	9 January 2017
Application deadline	6 February 2017
Short listing	8/9 February 2017
Interviews confirmed	10 February 2017
Interviews held	End February 2017
First meeting of Skills for Londoners	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:

Souraya Ali has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Fiona Fletcher-Smith has 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 the 5 December 2016.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature M. J. Ollie

Date 5.12.16

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature D. Bellamy

Date 5/12/2016

