

GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2392

Title: Tech.London 2.0

Executive Summary:

Tech.London is London's online platform aimed at connecting, supporting and growing London's tech business ecosystem. To date its function has been principally to aggregate and promote the many resources and events aimed at the tech sector, including Mayoral policy interventions and the work of the London Economic Action Partnership and Growth Hub. Tech.London was approved under cover of MD 1509 and the site was originally built by US company Gust with sponsorship from IBM. The original contract has concluded, and the platform has been acquired by a London-based company, Tech City Connect Ltd.

There is significant value in the platform that Tech.London provides to the London tech ecosystem, including supporting the promotion and delivery of various GLA innovation policy programmes such as the Mayor's Civic Innovation Challenge and the Mayor's TechInvest Programme. However, the site is now dated and requires a significant overhaul and relaunch to reach its full potential. Tech City Connect will lead and fund this work – with the aim of relaunching the site this autumn – with the GLA giving permission for the use of the Mayor of London logo.

There is no monetary cost to the GLA associated with the development, relaunch and maintenance of the Tech.London platform. In line with the original MD 1509, the GLA will provide in kind support for the delivery of a relaunched Tech.London – a dedicated online platform to connect, support and grow London's tech business community.

Decision:

That the Executive Director for Development, Enterprise & Environment approves:

The continued endorsement of the Tech.London platform, including giving permission to Tech City Connect, the new owners of the platform, to use the Mayor of London logo.

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: Debbie Jackson

Position: Executive Director-Development,
Enterprise & Environment

Signature:



Date:

18/09/19.

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 Tech.London was originally built by Gust, a US company introduced to the GLA by London and Partners. Gust had previously built similar digital hubs across major US cities such as www.digital.nyc. Funding for the development was provided by IBM who acted as the headline sponsor for the platform. The GLA contract with Gust was signed in 2015 and expired in 2018. The platform was wholly owned by Gust, with the GLA having editorial control over the content.
- 1.2 From end of 2018 to early 2019, GLA officers were in discussion with Gust regarding a refresh and a revamp of the website to reflect the changed needs and rapid maturity of the tech sector in London, as well as the Mayor's increasingly visible role in supporting the ecosystem. The platform was, however, acquired from Gust by London-based Tech City Connect Ltd. in February 2019. Tech City Connect has presented a proposal to the GLA to revamp and relaunch the site, introduce a roadmap of new features, and reflect the changed needs and increased maturity of the tech sector in London.
- 1.3 Tech.London currently has a 39% newsletter open rate, significantly higher than industry open rate standards of approximately 22%. Half of the platform's visitors are from outside of the UK, and 81% of visitors reach Tech.London from online search – indicating a significant demand for hosted content of this kind.
- 1.4 Tech City Connect have proposed several areas for improvement in the immediate term:
 - improve the look and feel of the site – including optimisation for mobile and reflecting accessibility needs;
 - update and improve the data feeds which provide the content for aggregation – ensuring the right opportunities and events are being listed;
 - introducing user profiles and microsites – enabling promotion and engagement of GLA tech policies.
- 1.5 The platform will continue to sit as an independent site, utilising the Mayor of London logo. Tech City Connect will design, maintain and launch new content and features throughout the three-year lifetime of the new agreement at no cost to the GLA. The GLA will manage a secondee from Tech City Connect one day per week, to provide editorial oversight to the content on the platform.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The objectives of revamping Tech.London are:
 - to reflect the continued need for sectoral coordination while addressing the changes that have occurred in the tech sector in terms of maturity, style and the kinds of information required;
 - to raise awareness on Mayoral and London Economic Action Partnership programmes – such as the Mayor's Civic Innovation Challenge, and GovTech.London – amongst London's technology sector; and
 - to build engagement with the businesses in the tech ecosystem in London to better inform GLA policy-making and ensure the GLA can provide ever better support.

- 2.2 This will be ensured through the following packages of work:
- development, maintenance, improvement and operation of the free-to-use, public-facing platform;
 - management of the day to day function of the website, including providing an agreed amount of developer hours per month;
 - working with the tech community to deliver quality content and communicate Mayoral priorities in this area; and
 - work with the GLA through a 'Content Sourcing Ambassador', who will source local and regional content for the website, as well as representing Tech.London at events.
- 2.3 These packages of work will lead to the following measurable benefits which will be tracked quarterly:
- web traffic;
 - number of GLA programmes featured on the platform;
 - impact on number of applications to key Mayoral and LEAP programmes;
 - number of business signed up to the Tech.London newsletter, and number of those creating profiles on the site; and
 - number of businesses providing content and featuring on the platform.
- 2.4 The Project will be managed from within Regeneration and Economic Development by the Senior Policy Officer for Technology.
- Use of Funding*
- 2.5 The services are being provided in kind to the Authority and there is no funding allocated for this project.

3 Equality comments

- 3.1 Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the Mayor of London must have 'due regard' of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2 Strategic equality, diversity and inclusion objectives are enshrined within the GLA's programmes and activities according to the Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.
- 3.3 The programme will be promoted through a wide variety of channels to reach out to underrepresented groups, and we will ensure that as vendors are brought onto the database and platforms associated with the project, we monitor for diversity and inclusion.
- 3.4 Officers have discussed with the Digital Team, and as part of the update to the platform, will ensure that the site meets the current statutory accessibility guidelines.
- 3.5 The platform itself is a means of communication with London's technology sector and provides an opportunity to communicate Mayoral priorities such as the Good Work Standard, which will

disseminate information on best employment practices in a sector which is dominated by small businesses often without developed HR functions. Moreover, in order to foster good relations between those with protected character traits and those who do not, the platform will ensure that it gives prominence to entrepreneurs with protected characteristics, as well as to clearly signpost to organisations and events aimed at improving diversity and inclusion in the tech sector.

4 Other considerations

Key Risks and Issues

4.1 The below risk register outlines the major risks to the Project:

Risk Description	Risk Owner	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Insufficient uptake amongst the sector	Regeneration and Economic Development	Low	Med	The revamp project itself is a mitigation against this. The platform already has a relatively strong user base, however the user interface and data feeds are dated and unappealing. By prioritising the user experience, Tech.London will likely see a growth in traffic and usage.
Delays to redevelopment and relaunch	Regeneration and Economic Development	Low	Low	Tech.London will be strictly project managed over the August/September period to ensure that it can be relaunched in September. Officers will liaise closely with the press office, Chief Digital Officer and others to ensure expectations on timeframes are met.

Links to Mayoral Strategies and Priorities

- 4.2 Tech.London provides both a direct means of engagement with London's tech sector on cross-cutting Mayoral priorities such as the Good Work Standard and London's Local Industrial Strategy – providing an effective means of disseminating and receiving feedback on policy design and delivery.
- 4.3 The platform will also help deliver specific projects. For instance, the application phase of the Mayor's Civic Innovation Challenge for 2019 can be launched through the Tech.London platform. The Smarter London Together 'report card' can be promoted and a version hosted on the page, communicating the Smarter London agenda clearly to the tech sector.
- 4.4 Finally, aside from what can be delivered by GLA officers through the site, Tech.London itself is a key means of providing information and industrial coordination to the tech and digital sector – a priority for the Mayor's Economic Development Strategy.

Declaration of interest

- 4.5 No officer involved in the preparation or clearance of this document has any declarable interest relevant to the project.

5 Financial comments

- 5.1 This proposal has no direct financial implications to the GLA.

6 Legal Comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that:
- 6.1.1 the decisions requested of the Director fall within the statutory powers of the GLA to do such things as may be considered to further, and or be facilitative of or conducive or incidental to the furthering of, the promotion of 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 GLA'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 Officers should ensure that appropriate agreements are entered into and executed by the GLA and Tech City Connect Limited to govern the GLA's proposed provision of support and the secondment noted in section 1 of this report before the commencement of the provision of the proposed support and/or the secondment. Officers should also liaise with the GLA's commercial partnerships and HR teams accordingly before such commencement. Any agreement for the provision of GLA support should also contain express provisions concerning the licensing of the Mayor of London logo.
- 6.3 In taking the decisions requested, as noted in section 3 above, the Director 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, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) 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 Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps:

Activity	Timeline
DD sign off	September 2019
Delivery Start Date	September 2019
Mayoral Announcement	Late September 2019
Profiles feature launched	October 2019

Delivery End Date	August 2022
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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

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:

Nick Swanson has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Nabeel Khan 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:

The Corporate Investment Board reviewed this proposal on 16 September 2019.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

M. D. Allen

Date

17.9.19

