

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2476

Title: IT and Other Equipment for Home Workers

Executive Summary:

The current Covid-19 pandemic means all but very few GLA staff are required to work from home and the situation is likely to persist for some time. While the recent rollout of our new standard IT kit has left all staff able to work remotely, we have not envisaged that staff would be using our Microsoft Surface Pro tablets exclusively for long periods. We want to be able to offer staff the option to purchase additional IT equipment – such as a standalone screen, mouse, keyboard, cables, headset – and other equipment – such as an adjustable chair or small desk – to support efficient, effective and safe working and in recognition of the huge variation in the equipment and space staff have available in their homes. In doing this we will also pay particular attention to the needs of staff with existing workplace adjustments, as well as those who require new adjustments in light of the new circumstances.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Resources approves:

Expenditure of up to £150,000 on extra IT and office equipment to allow GLA staff and Assembly Members to work more efficiently and effectively from home.

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: David Gallie

Position: Executive Director,
Resources

Signature:



Date:

6 April 2020

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Director Decision DD2375 approved expenditure of up to £2m to transform ways of working and introduced, amongst other things, standard equipment of a Microsoft Surface Pro tablet computer and an iPhone for members of staff of the GLA and Assembly Members. The Surface Pro has a relatively small screen, making it difficult to work on it continuously, particularly when working on large spreadsheets and/or across multiple documents.
- 1.2. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused the Government to require working from home wherever possible and as a result, the GLA has requested that staff work from home – and this is being facilitated by the use of the aforementioned standard issue kit.
- 1.3. The Surface Pro has limitations, particularly when working on complex documents, spreadsheets and across multiple documents, because of the size of the screen. The small keyboard and built-in mouse are also sub-optimal for long periods of computer-based work. Purchases of appropriate IT equipment have already been made corporately for ‘critical’ staff (for example, those working on payroll).
- 1.4. This decision form is therefore seeking approval for expenditure to support the purchase of the following IT equipment for staff to use with their Surface Pros:
 - larger screens to enable better visibility and review of documents and spreadsheets;
 - larger keyboards to enable easier input;
 - cables to connect the Surface Pro to a larger screen;
 - a mouse, to enable easier movement on the screen; and
 - a headset to reduce feedback when on Surface Pro connected meetings.
- 1.5. In addition to the IT equipment, some staff members may need a chair and/or a small desk to operate at home. These have been identified as available for approximately £100 for a health and safety compliant chair and £50 for a small desk.
- 1.6. The equipment will, in most cases, be purchase directly by staff and on an ‘as needed’ basis for use in their homes. The equipment will belong to the staff member and the responsibility of maintaining or insuring all the equipment will lie with each member of staff.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The objective is to provide staff with the tools to work more efficiently from home during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The expected outcome is that staff are able to work more efficiently and effectively.
- 2.2. The final amount of expenditure incurred will depend on take-up – both in terms of staff numbers and equipment. The £150,000 for which approval is being sought is based on 600 staff members claiming an average of £150 each, together with corporate purchases made for IT equipment for ‘critical staff’ and for those requiring ‘reasonable adjustments’. There is a maximum claim amount of £250 for all equipment. In addition, there is an income tax cost accruing to the staff member from the GLA paying for the equipment, which the GLA will pay. The tax liability is difficult to assess as it will be dependent on individual marginal tax rates.

- 2.3. An exception to the £250 limit will be made for individuals who require 'reasonable adjustments' to their work environment, but these people are being contacted individually and any requests approved on an exceptional basis and procured corporately.
- 2.4. The equipment will primarily be ordered by members of GLA staff and delivered directly to their homes. The costs will be reimbursed through the expenses policy.
- 2.5. Take up and expenditure will be closely monitored. If expenditure appears likely to exceed the £150,000 approval, any additional approval needed will be incorporated into a further DD.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as public authorities, the Mayor and the GLA are subject to a Public Sector Equality Duty and must have 'due regard' to the need to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (all except the last being 'relevant' protected characteristics).
- 3.2. Equality, diversity and inclusion considerations are being taken into consideration and will be central to the distribution of equipment. Supply of the equipment will allow those with work adjustments to operate more efficiently and effectively.
- 3.3. Inclusion is a key point of the distribution of equipment as it will enable people to connect and perform their roles more easily.
- 3.4. The Mayor's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy outlines that the GLA needs to be 'leading by example', specifically, we should be an inclusive employer. The objective which directly links to this decision is: To take the steps needed to ensure that all organisations within the GLA Group have open and inclusive cultures and are great places to work.
- 3.5. Due diligence will be taken through the supply of equipment to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Smart working, enabled by supplying appropriate equipment, can contribute to compliance with the Equality Act 2010 as it ensures different working patterns and needs are more easily adopted and supported.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. The key risks are:
 - a) the equipment cannot be delivered to staff in a timely manner due to the current restrictions throughout the Country. This can be mitigated by staff ordering equipment to be delivered directly to their homes which is currently an option; and
 - b) the equipment is not available due to heavy demand as more and more people are required to work from home. It is therefore necessary to implement this decision as soon as possible to allow staff to order the equipment quickly to get the most benefit from it.
- 4.2. The work supports the Mayor in delivering his vision of a 'fair and equal city'. The working environment and arrangements will inspire staff at the GLA to work effectively together, make the best use of the current circumstances, and deliver world-class services to London and Londoners.

Conflicts of Interest

- 4.3. The drafting officers have no known conflicts of interest.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This decision requests approval for expenditure of up to £150,000 on extra IT and office equipment for staff members working at home, including the cost of settling any tax benefit accruing to employees from the GLA paying for the equipment. The equipment will enable better working conditions for staff who may be required to work from home for an extended period. The cost is assessed on an average claim to date of c£150 which is taken up by an estimated 600 staff, together with corporate purchases for 'critical staff' and those requiring 'reasonable adjustments'.
- 5.2. The tax liability is difficult to assess as it is dependent on amount claimed and the taxpayers marginal rate of tax. An estimate of 30% tax liability has been made, plus 13.8% for National Insurance.
- 5.3. The expenditure will be funded from the development reserve. It will occur in the first quarter of the 2020-21 financial year.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. Paragraphs 1 to 2 of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Director concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or which are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development or the promotion of the improvement of the environment in Greater London; and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the GLA's related statutory duties to:
- Pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
 - 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
 - Consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Director 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 between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). 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
Announcement	27 March
Delivery	April

Appendices and supporting papers:

None.

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? NO

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included 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:

Paul Middlemas has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Elliott Ball 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

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on the 6 April 2020.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature



Date

6 April 2020