

REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2443

Title: High Streets Adaptive Strategies

Executive Summary:

This Decision requests expenditure of £225,000 from the LEAP Good Growth Fund (GGF) Research / Development Funds (under the delegation in MD2163) to support Borough/Business Improvement District (BID) led partnerships to prepare strategies for high street and town centre renewal.

These strategies will follow and will be in line with the 'High Streets – Adaptive Strategies' guidance which is to be launched on 21 January 2020. Expenditure will support the formation of local partnerships and innovative governance and delivery arrangements, with the aim of enabling Strategy generation and the outcome of high street and town centre renewal.

London Economic & Action Partnership (LEAP) Programme Board endorsement for use of these funds was granted on 9 January 2020.

Decision:

That the Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment approves:

Expenditure of £225,000 to support a competitive call to Boroughs/Business Improvement District (BID) led partnerships to prepare strategies for high street and town centre renewal in line with published High Streets – Adaptive Strategies guidance. It is proposed that £185,000 will be grant awarded to several London Borough/BID led partnerships. A further £40,000 will be used to provide externally procured programme support and advisory work with London Boroughs, and externally procured evaluation to support the dissemination of findings.

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

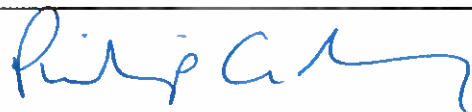
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Philip Graham

Position: Executive Director of Good Growth

Signature:



Date:

22/1/20

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The traditional high street and its inherent civic, social and economic mix, so critical to the success of London, has been changing and in many instances breaking down. Challenges and national issues like austerity and the well-publicised issues faced by the retail sector are playing out alongside a rapidly evolving economy and the need to restructure town centres to meet housing need. Set alongside congestion, pollution and the climate emergency, it is clear the value high streets offer to Londoners is under threat.
- 1.2 Given the right support package London's high streets are well disposed to reinvent themselves in the face of multiple challenges. This requires assistance from City Hall to help form tailored strategies to support local partnerships and associations to adapt and exploit the new and emerging realities.
- 1.3 With the support of LEAP the Regeneration Team have refreshed the strategic rationale for investment in high streets with a dual focus on economic uplift and social value – under the banner of 'High Streets for All'.
- 1.4 The London Plan calls for the adaptation and diversification of town centres and strongly advocates a strategic approach.
- 1.5 In response to High Streets for All, the London Plan and to broaden the support provided by City Hall, £60k LEAP funds (revenue support for the Good Growth Fund – approved by the Mayor under cover of MD2163) were made available to commission guidance to London Boroughs/BID led partnerships to develop adaptive strategies for high streets. In accordance with approvals the research has subsequently delivered the following:
 - a restatement and development of the investment case for high streets;
 - the identification of related current/emerging trends, challenges and opportunities;
 - the identification of the most effective interventions and wider strategies for boosting resilience of the high street. To be tested in real life London locations;
 - the development of a related evaluation approach;
 - a setting out of the lessons learned from the High-Street Fund; and
 - an enhanced evaluation approach for High Street based investment.
- 1.6 The guidance has been developed with ten London Boroughs/BIDs and a range of contributors. It supports high street custodians, practitioners and related communities to prepare strategies to adapt to the challenges high streets face.
- 1.7 The guidance highlights a series of ambitious and innovative approaches for diversification and renewal already taking place in London; all with reach across multiple policy areas and delivery routes. It draws on these case studies and an international precedent framework to extrapolate a series of 'What if' speculative approaches. In turn it proposes a range of principles and practices to underpin the development of bespoke adaptive strategies for renewal.
- 1.8 The Adaptive Strategies guidance demonstrates that London has within its local authorities, communities and businesses, extraordinary capacity and capability to innovate, experiment and prototype the necessary responses. It makes clear that the future lies in reinforcing the positive aspects of London's town centres and high streets whilst embracing new opportunities. Success on

this front will rely on quality, investment in infrastructure that balances the needs of different groups, and intelligent management of change – which will be different on each high street.

- 1.9 This Decision requests approval of expenditure of £225k from the LEAP Good Growth Fund (GGF) Research / Development Funds (under the delegation in MD2163) to support Borough/Business Improvement District (BID) led partnerships to prepare strategies for high street and town centre renewal.
- 1.10 The Mayor delegated authority (under cover of MD2163) to the GLA's Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment to approve detailed allocations of funding in consultation with LEAP with regard to up to £6.088m revenue expenditure for costs to support applicants in the development of their project proposals and to provide for associated operational expenditure and programme support costs to enable the delivery of the programme.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The guidance would be launched alongside an invitation to London Boroughs to develop adaptive strategies as advocated in the guidance i.e. experimental approaches to the challenges faced by high streets. This would be an opportunity to test and demonstrate the guidance.
- 2.2 Expenditure of £225k in Financial Year 2020/21 would enable wider dissemination of the guidance and a scaleable number of London Borough/BID led partnerships to pilot and develop detailed adaptive strategies. It will also cover the involvement of strategic partners such as Nesta to support the programme and the appointment of consultants to evaluate the effectiveness of spend and draw out lessons for wider dissemination. It is proposed, following an open and competitive process, to make available up to £50k per strategy following a very simple proforma application. We would want proponents to provide 50% match.
- 2.3 This will embed the practice of strategy making more widely – currently only a small percentage of town centres have strategies in London – a situation the London Plan seeks to address. It would also enable London Borough/BID led partnerships to be more investment ready and attractive to external funding sources such as Central Government's £1bn Future High Streets fund (FHSF) – London high streets have to date received a disproportionately low number of invitations to develop business plans as part of FHSF.
- 2.4 It is proposed that £185k will be grant awarded to several London Borough/BID led partnerships. A further £40k will be used to provide externally procured programme support and advisory work with London Boroughs, and externally procured evaluation to support the dissemination of findings.
- 2.5 The funding will support specific place based strategies. Each will provide inspiration, principles, references and precedents and include tactics for adapting high streets to the challenges faced and opportunities available. The indicative components for each adaptive strategy can include:
 - research to support a specific place base Investment Case, contextual analysis, which will draw on and/or commission necessary baseline data;
 - the establishment of a 'mission' i.e. a clear and well researched statement on what each partnership is trying to achieve. This would be straightforward and measurable, cross-departmental objectives, broad in reach and delivery. All to be determined and adopted through local participation;
 - the setting out of governance arrangements including where appropriate innovation in terms of Community leadership;
 - the establishment of 'Principles' - the underlying values and behaviours to guide delivery;

- the establishment of 'Practices' i.e. innovative approaches to property and leasing, ground floors, digital transformation, meanwhile use, public realm, enterprise, social prescribing;
- the identification of specific proposals, adaptations and interventions to be coordinated and aspirational and spatially-defined;
- the identification of discrete projects, their owners and actions, in order of priority and where possible costed;
- the development of implementation plans, the resources needed and identified, possible funding streams, time scales for delivery and phasing; and
- the setting out of an evaluation approach to measuring success. To be continuous throughout duration, with insight and reflection. To be iterative and to encourage redesign where possible.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act), as a public authority, the GLA must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under the Equality Act comprise are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage or civil partnership status. (the duty in respect of this last characteristic is to eliminate unlawful discrimination only).
- 3.2. Regeneration staff have looked at how previous rounds of GGF funding have ensured due regard to the Equality Act considerations and examined programme evaluations in this respect. As a result it is proposed that anyone requesting use of the proposed funds will be asked to outline the impact their proposals will have on the proposed beneficiaries, and how, if applicable, they propose to minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- 3.3. Applicants will also be asked to demonstrate how they would encourage people from protected groups to participate in the development of adaptive strategies and how project activities would be designed to accommodate and reflect the needs of the existing community and those that will live, work and visit an area. This includes the design for those with physical disabilities and mental health problems and older persons.
- 3.4. As a condition of funding agreements, projects awarded funding will be required to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and demonstrate this through regular reporting of progress.

4. Other considerations

Key Risks and Issues

- 4.1. Programme – There is a risk of pressure with regards to timescales to get funds committed and to get strategy delivery underway in a timely manner resulting in spend not being achievable. Careful moderation – with programming and resourcing – will be put in place to mitigate this risk.
- 4.2. Achieving outcomes – the aim of this funding is to build capacity and strategic activity in the London Boroughs to secure co-ordinated activity and to access external funding. There is a risk that capacity does not emerge within the London Boroughs and lead partners. To mitigate this, funds will be carefully calibrated, and applications carefully assessed to ensure adequate capacity is in place and/or developed. Applicants' engagement with GLA staff prior to submission, will be managed to minimise discrepancies between outputs listed in applications, grant agreements, and eventually delivered outcomes. We will ensure adequate capacity is in place as a prerequisite of funding.

Link to Mayoral Strategies and Priorities

- 4.3. The draft new London Plan proposes measures of support through the planning system. It takes a strong first approach, focusing on commercial development in town centres. It supports the diversification of uses in town centres and requires London Boroughs to put in place town centre strategies.
- 4.4. The Mayor's Economic Development Strategy (3.6), (4.1) notes the social and economic infrastructure provided by high streets and town centres means they are well placed to help meet London's growth challenges. However, for a range of different reasons including the growth of online retail and large retail centres, many high streets are under threat. The EDS identifies that investment is needed to develop high streets as destinations and investment in skills is needed to help the sector capitalise on the opportunities new technology presents. The EDS promotes the targeting of Mayoral and LEAP funds to stimulate local economic activity which creates attractive and welcoming high streets that draw in visitors and considers alternative uses for empty shops, disused buildings, vacant land and underused spaces. It supports the role of high streets within local economies as places of employment, cultural activity, enterprise and innovation, and for business; along with the management of the introduction, or further intensification, of housing and jobs in town centres to maintain vibrant and healthy high streets.
- 4.5. There are no apparent conflicts of interest for anyone involved in the drafting or clearance of this report. If any conflicts worth declaring emerge appropriate action will be taken to mitigate the conflict.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This decision requests approval for the expenditure of £225,000 to support Borough/Business Improvement District led partnerships.
- 5.2. The proposed LEAP investment will be sourced from the 'Research & Development Funding' element of the Good Growth Fund up to a maximum of £50,000 per strategy. Under this programme applicants are required to provide 50% match funding to support these strategies.
- 5.3. Each proposal will be subject to the submission of a satisfactory application to be assessed against an agreed criterion.
- 5.4. All expenditure will take place within 2020-21 financial year.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections 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 Authority'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 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 and foster good relations 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 (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Director should have regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3 Should the Director be minded to approve the expenditure proposed officers must ensure to the extent that the expenditure concerns the:
- award of grant funding, that such funding is distributed fairly, transparently, in accordance with the GLA's equalities and in manner which affords value for money in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code and funding agreements (on the GLA's standard funding terms) are put in place between and executed by the GLA and recipients before any commitment to fund is made; and/or
 - procurement of services, that such services are procured by TfL Commercial in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code and (on the GLA's standard terms) are put in place between and executed by the GLA and successful bidders before the commencement of such services.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. An open call exercise will be initiated following a Mayoral announcement; the process will be proportionate to the activities proposed bearing in mind that each strategy will require the formation of high street town centre partnerships to take forward the development of 'adaptive strategies'. In turn partnerships are likely to need to procure expert consultant advice and support. Staff from GLA Regeneration and Economic development will facilitate the partnerships to scope out their strategies, appoint consultants and develop and deliver their own strategies. Partners will be supported by NESTA and other organisations viewed to have thought leadership and key expertise in this area and able to foster town centre renewal within a process of innovation. Staff from across the GLA and from within the London Boroughs will be invited to support the development and implementation of respective strategies.

Activity	Timeline
Announcement	Jan 2020
Procurement of contract	Feb – Mar 2020
Start strategy development	April 2020
Finalise Adaptive strategies	Dec 2020
Commence evaluation	Jan 2021
Delivery end date	March 2021
Project closure	Apr 2021

Supporting papers available upon request:

LEAP Programme Board report – December 2018
LEAP Programme Board report – January 2020

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:

Jamie Dean has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Assistant Director/Head of Service:

Patrick Dubeck 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 20 January 2020.

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 21.1.20

