

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2450

Funding for the London Housing Panel from August 2020 until July 2021

Executive Summary:

The London Housing Panel was established jointly by the Mayor and Trust for London in April 2019. It exists to provide London voluntary and community sector organisations with a structured forum to consider housing issues and engage with the Mayor, GLA and other decision-makers. From April 2019 to July 2020 the GLA provided £40,000 of funding to Trust for London (ADD2339 and ADD2412) to set up and facilitate the functioning of the London Housing Panel. This was matched-funded by £30,000 from Trust for London.

This decision seeks approval of a grant of an additional £30,000 to enable Trust for London to continue running the London Housing Panel until the end of July 2021. This will be matched-funded by £30,000 from Trust for London. The purpose of the additional funding is to enable the Panel to continue working with the GLA until the Mayor of London and London Assembly Elections in May 2021. This will include work to support the GLA's response to Covid19, building on the Panel's current involvement in the Expert Panel for the Housing Delivery Taskforce. A decision will be made on funding for the Panel in the longer-term following the election in May 2021.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Housing approves:

A grant of £30,000 to Trust for London to run the London Housing Panel from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

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: Rickardo Hyatt

Position: Assistant Director, Housing

Signature:



Date:

8 June 2020

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The London Housing Panel ('the Panel') was established by the Mayor and Trust for London in April 2019. It was set up to build on the Mayor's existing community engagement work and to provide a structured forum for the voluntary and community sector to consider housing issues and inform the Mayor's housing policies.
- 1.2. The Panel membership consists of 15 members and a Chair, all of whom are working in the voluntary and community sector. Trust for London co-ordinates secretariat and project management support for the Panel. In order to ensure that there is a direct link between the Panel and the Mayor's work on housing, the Chair is also a member of the Mayor's Homes for Londoners Board.
- 1.3. Since its launch in April 2019, the London Housing Panel has held six formal meetings, and has set out its policy priorities in a report to the Mayor. The priorities in this report cover three themes: delivering more social housing, improving community engagement, and taking action on temporary accommodation. A formal response to this report, which will include the identification of potential areas where the GLA can work together with the Panel over the coming year, is currently being developed and will be shared with the London Housing Panel shortly.
- 1.4. In addition to working to develop and agree the priorities above, members of the Panel have also engaged with the GLA on wider policy development work in relation to rent control, empty homes, and the response to Covid19. The Chair also represented the Panel at events including the GLA's Homes for Londoners conference in October 2019, and the Panel are represented on the Expert Group of the Mayor's Housing Delivery Taskforce which has been established to inform the GLA's response to the impact of Covid19 on London's housing sector.

Funding to date

- 1.5. The Panel was initially funded for one year (from April 2019 to March 2020) with the GLA providing £30,000 (approved in ADD2339) and Trust for London providing £20,000 to meet the total project cost of £50,000. This funding enabled Trust for London to set up and facilitate the functioning of the Panel, as well as providing a stipend and expenses for members to ensure that smaller and unwaged community organisations were not prevented from taking part.
- 1.6. In December 2019, a further £10,000 of funding was approved by the GLA (ADD2412) which was matched funded by £10,000 from Trust for London. This funding covered the period from April 2020 to July 2020. The objective of this extension was to enable Trust for London to undertake a review of the Panel's first year in order to inform a decision on its future and longer-term funding following the election which was scheduled for May 2020.
- 1.7. The review led by Trust for London noted that the London Housing Panel had established the policy areas it wanted to focus on in its engagement with the GLA and set out recommendations for how the GLA and the Panel could work together over the next year. The recommendations focused on the need to ensure the Panel is able to influence GLA policy making across its priority areas, as well as ensuring that the Panel provides a meaningful route for community engagement for GLA officers when developing housing policy.
- 1.8. Following this review, this decision seeks approval to fund the London Housing Panel for the year from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021. This will enable the GLA to continue working with the Panel to ensure that the voices of diverse communities are heard within the policy development process. Extending funding until July 2021 will allow a longer-term decision to be taken on funding for the London Housing Panel following the rescheduled Mayor of London and London Assembly Elections in May 2021.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The objective of providing funding for the London Housing Panel to continue its work until July 2021 is to provide time and resource for the Panel to contribute to key pieces of policy development over the coming year including (but not limited to) the response to Covid19 and contributing to development of some aspects of the next affordable homes programme. More broadly, extending funding for the London Housing Panel will ensure that there is a structured forum through which the voices of diverse communities are represented in the development of the Mayor's housing policy.
- 2.2. The overall budget for 12 months has increased from £50,000 to £60,000 however the GLA's contribution remains fixed at £30,000, with Trust for London contributing an additional £10,000. This is to provide resource to support both to Trust for London as the Secretariat and the Chair. This support was not included in the initial scope of the Panel, but was identified as a requirement during the first year of its operation.
- 2.3. In addition, the current Chair of the Panel has recently moved to a new organisation and is no longer able to continue in the role as Chair. The funding provided for the next year would also cover the costs of a recruitment exercise to appoint a new Chair. The exact process for this is still to be agreed, however the aim is to have the new Chair in place by September 2020. This process will be managed by Trust for London with input from the GLA and Panel members.
- 2.4. The Panel will meet four times between September 2020 and July 2021.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the GLA must have 'due regard' of the need to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and
 - advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. The London Housing Panel represents a range of communities across London, including those with protected characteristics who are disproportionately affected by the housing crisis. A key consideration during the recruitment of the Panel was to need to ensure that its membership represented London's diverse communities. This includes Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, who are more likely to experience poverty and are disproportionately affected by overcrowding; women (including victims of domestic abuse) who experience homelessness at a disproportionately high rate, and older people whose needs are often unmet due to a lack of sheltered and/or supported housing. The London Housing Panel provides an opportunity for these communities to engage with the GLA and influence the Mayor's housing policies. The same principle will be applied in recruitment of the new Chair.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1. The London Housing Panel was initially established for one year and so there is a risk that some members may be unable or unwilling to commit to extending their participation for another year, particularly in light of pressures on the sector due to Covid19. This could result in the Panel being less representative of London's diverse communities. While the GLA is not aware of any Panel members having expressed a desire to leave the Panel so far, this will be mitigated against by continuing to provide a stipend for Members.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2. The Mayor is committed to giving Londoners a voice in housing policy-making. The London Housing Panel builds on the existing work undertaken by the Mayor to involve Londoners in developing his housing policies. This included extensive consultation on the London Housing Strategy and draft London Plan, as well as attendance from City Hall officials at numerous bilateral meetings, workshops and large conferences on housing.
- 4.3. The three areas identified by the London Housing Panel as priorities (delivering more social housing, improving community engagement, and taking action on temporary accommodation) align with the Mayor's housing policies and priorities on delivering genuinely affordable homes, creating inclusive neighbourhoods and tackling homelessness.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.4. There are no conflicts of interest to note for any of those involved in the drafting or clearance of the decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This decision seeks approval for expenditure of £30,000 in 2020/2021 to award a grant to Trust for London to deliver the London Housing Panel. Trust for London will be responsible for running the Panel and will provide match funding of £30,000 to meet the total project cost of £60,000.
- 5.2. The expenditure will be funded from the H&L Management & Consultancy budget and will be spent in 2020/2021 financial year.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 6.1. Trust for London will be responsible for running the forum, including the recruitment of the Chair, clerking of meetings (including publication of meeting papers and minutes) and management of communications and publicity.
- 6.2. The GLA will award £30,000 to Trust for London via a funding agreement. Trust for London will contribute £30,000 to meet the total project costs of £60,000.
- 6.3. A formal recruitment process for the new Chair will be launched shortly after this decision is made. This will be led by Trust for London, with input from the GLA and Panel members.
- 6.4. Participation in the Panel may place a strain on resources for very small voluntary and community sector groups or unwaged individuals. To ensure forum participation is accessible to all, there will be a stipend available for members and the Chair. This is intended to cover both meeting attendance and preparation.
- 6.5. The Panel will meet four times between September 2020 and July 2021, with meetings held in advance of the Homes for Londoners Board when possible.
- 6.6. The Panel will be governed by a Terms of Reference which are currently being refreshed following a review of its first year.
- 6.7. The Panel will be represented at the quarterly meetings of the Homes for Londoners Board, which is chaired by the Mayor. The Chair of the Panel will be a standing member of the board and may be accompanied by other Panel members as appropriate and with the agreement of the GLA.

Activity	Timeline
Funding agreement in place	June 2020
Homes for Londoners Board	June 2020
Recruitment of new Chair	June – August 2020
London Housing Panel meetings	September 2020 – July 2021
Decision on future funding	July 2021

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? YES

If YES, for what reason:

This decision is being deferred until the funding extension has been formally communicated to members of the London Housing Panel.

Until what date: 11 June 2020

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:

Rebecca Reid has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 8 June 2020.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

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

Signature



Date

8 June 2020