GREATER**LONDON**AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2588

Title: GLA OPS discovery

Executive Summary:

We are looking to conduct a discovery process to help us develop the next iteration of the GLA's corporate grant funding system, GLA OPS, to enable it to better meet the needs of its users. We are looking to deliver this discovery using agile methods, including producing a strategic plan and implementation roadmap.

We are seeking an agency specialising in user experience, service design and digital transformation. They will conduct research, run activities and engage with stakeholders to understand how OPS can better support its users, how it can be more sustainable, fit for purpose, be scalable and flexible to respond to new and regularly changing grant funding programmes.

Decision:

That the Head of GLA Technology Group approves:

1. Expenditure of up to £50,000 for a discovery exercise focusing on the following areas as a minimum:

   - Review service design and strategy

   - Review technical architecture/structure to assess efficiency, sustainability and scalability

   - Review the service delivery model including the internal external staffing, the funding model and engagement by the user community.

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: *David Munn*	**Position:** Head of GLA Technology Group
Signature:	**Date:**
	11/7/22

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1.   Introduction and background

1.1.   We are looking to conduct a discovery process to help us develop the next iteration of the GLA's corporate grant funding system, GLA OPS, to enable it to better meet the needs of its users. We are looking to deliver this discovery using agile methods, including producing a strategic plan and implementation roadmap.

1.2.   We are seeking an agency specialising in user experience, service design and digital transformation. They will conduct research, run activities and engage with stakeholders to understand how OPS can better support its users, how it can be more sustainable, fit for purpose, be scalable and flexible to respond to new and regularly changing grant funding programmes.

1.3.   Currently OPS is supported by both internal GLA officers and through a contract with a third-party supplier who primarily provides development and technical services.

1.4.   We will be following this discovery work with a wider strategic review of grant giving processes and the appropriate solutions to support this. Splitting these two areas of work ensures that we are able to address the immediate issues we are facing with current OPS users but also look at wider strategic aims and ambitions across the GLA group. It is anticipated this follow on work will begin shortly after this piece of work, so there will likely be a period where we are working on both concurrently. This additional work will likely cost £30,000-£50,000. This will be subject to a separate approval.

1.5.   The procurement will be in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code.

2.   Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1.   The growing complexity and bespoke enhancements carried out in GLA-OPS have meant that we have limited capability to support new programmes quickly. In some areas, the nature of the work that OPS manages has become very bespoke and specialised, making recruitment to current roles extremely difficult. Once we do recruit, training staff up takes a disproportionate amount of time and building up their knowledge takes several months.

2.2.   It is not uncommon for new funding programmes to be launched with very tight timeframes, largely due to external factors or the need to get funds out quickly to respond to unforeseen needs e.g., the Grenfell fire, Covid pandemic lockdowns etc. This not only means we have to find solutions fast, but often there is little or no room for discussion on how to best meet the needs and therefore we find technical debt (sacrificing creating long term, sustainable solutions meet needs in favour of short term, quick developments) rising and MVP solutions being made live rapidly with no opportunity to iterate and improve.

2.3.   The discovery work should deliver a clear set of recommendations that answer the questions and needs set out below;

• To what extent is OPS meeting the GLA's needs?

- What technological, digital, process and engagement changes do we need to make in order to ensure that OPS, or any other digital solution, can develop and manage all grant funding programmes for H&L and Skills, taking into account the external constraints and requirements placed on them?

- How do we ensure that we can flex the team and scale up to allow us to respond quickly to new funding programmes and provide a digital solution for new grant programmes efficiently?

- A review of resources and make recommendations on the ideal team make-up in relations to roles, skills and inhouse / external sourcing approach

3. Equality comments

3.1. The GLA has an obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty enshrined within the Equality Act 2010, to consider how its policies and decisions affect people who are protected under the Act.

3.2. The GLA will take appropriate steps to ensure there are no potential negative impacts on those with protected characteristics in relation to the work undertaken in this exercise and the recommendations taken forward. This will be done by ensuring compliance with the Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy; and developing and testing in line with GLA guidance on equalities and diversity.

3.3. Individual teams will identify and evaluate the likely impact of new programmes on those with protected characteristics. The GLA OPS Delivery Team will also consider those with protected characteristics when analysing business requirements and system design. The minimum requirement for the GLA OPS system is for the site to meet WCAG 2.0 level AA accessibility. Any future development will comply with this requirement.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

4.1. The key risks associated with this decision are as follows:

Area	Risk Description	Mitigation
New Programme Delivery	We currently struggle to meet the growing needs of the core customers as well as other customers wishing to use OPS. We need to find more efficient and practical ways to scale up and deliver new programmes faster	This discovery looks to consider how we better support the delivery of new programmes.
Resourcing	We currently struggle to recruit and retain good staff. The roles have become very specialist and require significant onboarding and training.	A review of current resources looking to understand how we can support the needs of the teams better and the skills we need to bring in to assist with this

Short term vs Long term planning	There are two issues we face – the immediate concerns re work for current customers vs the work we plan to support in the long term – i.e. having a single source of truth for all grant giving at the GLA. There is a danger that we ignore the immediate challenges because we know we will be having a wider review. However, we need to ensure we are delivering the first effectively as well as looking at the longer-term ambition.	We have split the discovery into two distinct areas; one looking at how we work more efficiently and respond to the requirements of Housing and Land and Skills and Employment. The second looking at the strategic approach to grant giving, and the required digital solutions and services to support this.
Product complexity	The longer we allow the products to grow into bespoke solutions, the larger the problem re scalability and flexibility become	This discovery work considers how we effectively manage bespoke requirements

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.2.   An effective grant management system supports the achievement of GLA priorities in the areas where teams use it. This helps ensure Londoners benefit from the outcomes and outputs delivered via grant awarded to partner organisations.

4.3.   This decision links to Mayoral and corporate strategies across the following areas:

4.4.   Governance -GLA OPS fully supports the GLA's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy & Response Plan, specifically section 5.8, "developing systems in a way that limits and addresses the risk of fraud." GLA OPS has been built with multiple safeguards in place to reduce the risk of fraud. For example, two officers must authorise payments and officers are assigned payment thresholds (controlled by the GLA Finance Department) in accordance with an access and permissions model.

4.5.   Technology Strategy - GLA OPS' implementation is consistent with a number of aims in the "Digital and Technology Strategy and Programme 2019":

• to support Smart ways of working and Agile development to deliver better designed services;

• making greater use of Cloud based services to support flexible working;

• have infrastructure that is scalable, reliable, resilient and with the capacity to cope with greater load;

• prioritising the use of open source systems (to reduce our costs and to produce reusable and sustainable components); and

• to create services that customers and citizens find: useful, well designed, meets user needs, gets the information they seek in the fastest possible time and meets digital service standards.

Impact assessments and consultations

4.6.   The recommendations in this decision have resulted from input and discussions between the GLA OPS Delivery Team, the Digital Team and the Digital Board, the Technology Group, GLA Governance and Finance. Feedback has also been received from individual users of GLA OPS on an ongoing basis and officers in teams who would like to use the system. All consulted agree with this proposed decision.

4.7.   There are no conflicts to declare from any of those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5.   Financial comments

5.1   Approval is being sought for expenditure of up to £50,000 on GLA OPS discovery work during the 2022-23 financial year.

5.2   The costs will be funded via a budget virement from the Authority's Corporate Contingency budget for 2022-23. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.

6.   Planned delivery/ approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract [for externally delivered projects]	July 2022
Announcement [if applicable]	July 2022
Delivery Start Date [for project proposals]	Early August 2022
Main milestones	Report with recommendations by end of October
Delivery End Date [for project proposals]	Mid November
Project Closure: [for project proposals]	Mid November

Appendices and supporting papers:
None

Part 1 - Deferral

Is the publication of P art 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

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: <u>Nahida Miah </u> has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:	✓
Corporate Investment Board A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 11 July 2022	✓

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** **12/7/22**
Anna Custcolt	