

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2469

### Title: Subscription to Molior London

#### Executive Summary:

Molior provide information and data on residential schemes across London. Molior are known to provide in-depth data on land, planning, Build to Rent and Build for Sale developments with a wide range of search options.

Annual subscription to 30 licences will cost £8000 and the allowance of up to £24,000 (under this ADD) covers subscription to licences for up to 3 years. The licences will be allocated between GLA Planning unit and GLA's Housing & Land Directorate.

A single source route is being used to reflect the absence of competition and the need for continuation of service to enable aforementioned teams to carry out key responsibilities.

There are no adverse equality impacts or risks relating to the procurement exercise and regard has been given to Mayoral Policies and other considerations.

#### Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Planning approves:

1. The expenditure of up to £24,000:
  - purchase 30 licences for at least one year (and up to three years) subscription to services provided by 'Molior London'; and
2. Procurement of licences via a single source route:
  - the exemption from the standard procurement route has been accepted on the basis that there is complete absence of competition and the need for continuation of service to facilitate on-going work of the GLA Viability Team, the GLA Planning Data Team and the GLA Housing & Land Team.

#### AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

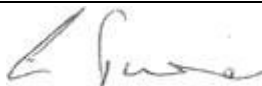
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

**Name:** Lucinda Turner

**Position:** Assistant Director, Planning

**Signature:**



**Date:** 2 November 2020

## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1 Molior provide information and data on residential schemes across London. Molior are known to provide in-depth data on land, planning, Build to Rent and Build for Sale developments with a wide range of search options.
- 1.2 Molior contains up to date residential data in the London market. These include (amongst other information) sales values and rental values across London. Molior brings together data in a single platform and data primarily sourced from Developers, Agents, Land Registry and Local Planning Authorities. This provides users with an understanding of market conditions and thereby provide useful information when sourcing land for development, assessing viability and undertaking research on land and development generally.
- 1.3 Molior London data was provided on a complimentary basis until July 2020, when the GLA was informed that charges will be incurred if the GLA intended to have continued access to the database. This has led to access being restricted and will remain the case until subscriptions are purchased.

#### **2. Objectives and Outcomes**

- 2.1 Molior data will be used by the GLA Viability Team to verify inputs and assumptions pertaining to sales value and rental values provided in Viability Assessments referred to the Mayor. The data will act as evidence and provide a robust position for arguments produced by the GLA Viability Team. These will prove to be relevant in the day to day operation of the team, particularly, when producing evidence as part of planning appeals and call in schemes. Market reports produced by Molior can be useful information and will enable the team to carry out its main function in maximising the provision of Affordable Housing in schemes referred to the Mayor.
- 2.2 The Planning Data Team will use the data to track individual schemes and to sense-check the planning data supplied by London's planning authorities and applicants, whilst the intelligence reports assist policy development by keeping up to date with trends in the development market.
- 2.3 H&L will use Molior to understand market conditions and general housing delivery. This includes construction starts and completions and sales. This will help inform decision making, policy development, guidance and planning applications.

#### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. No adverse equality impacts are identified in relation to this procurement. The procurement of this subscription will ensure that the Viability Team will be able to robustly assess viability assessments submitted alongside planning applications. This will help achieve the Mayor's policies within the Intend to Publish London Plan and Affordable Housing and Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance which seek to maximise the provision of genuinely affordable homes for Londoners.
- 3.2. There are no adverse equality impacts for the Planning Data Team to use Molior London and will ensure monitoring of up to date application information across London. This will help achieve the Mayor's policies in the Intend to Publish London Plan in relation to monitoring the effectiveness of policies, including that of Affordable Housing approvals.

- 3.3. There are no adverse equality impacts of Housing & Land having subscription to Molior London. The use of this service will enable the directorate to produce research that will inform policy and guidance which will favour the delivery of more Affordable Housing.
- 3.4. Consequently, there are no negative equality impacts in carrying out this work and there are positive impacts on groups with protected characteristics in need of affordable housing.

#### **4. Other considerations**

- 4.1. There are no substantial risks related to having a subscription with Molior. Molior London have previously provided the GLA Viability Team and GLA Housing & Land team with access to data and was utilised for scrutiny of planning applications and for research supporting policy development. As such, it is imperative for the GLA to have access to Molior London, without which, continuation of existing work cannot take place, undermining the ability of the GLA Viability Team to scrutinise viability assessments in a way that ensures the maximum reasonable Affordable Housing can be secured, as well as limiting the GLA Housing & Land Team in continuing key research to inform on going policy development. In addition, there is a complete absence of competition to Molior London, and they are the only supplier of the type of data and nature of research that is produced, making the supplier unique in their ability to provide compatibility with the ongoing work being carried out by the aforementioned teams.
- 4.2. A one year subscription of 30 licences will be procured although with further allowance for two more years renewal is also covered under this ADD. In the event it is found to not continue to meet user requirements, renewal of subscription for the entire 3 year allowance will not be explored, upon completion of each year. It is worth noting that in terms of Value for Money, Molior London are providing a £1000 discount per year for 30 licences from £9000 p/year to £8000/p year. It is considered that these licences are being provided at the most competitive rate possible.
- 4.3. The Mayor is committed to increasing the level of affordable housing delivered through the planning process. To achieve this, the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan sets out a strategic target that half of new homes should be affordable (Policy H4). The Mayor has also introduced the Threshold Approach to affordable housing through Policy H5 of the intend to publish London Plan and Affordable Housing and Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). The Molior database will provide up to date market information and enable the GLA Viability Team, Planning Data Team and Housing & Land Team to deliver the aforementioned Mayoral Policies.
- 4.4. There are no conflicts of interest to note for any of the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

#### **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1 Approval is sought for the expenditure of up to £24,000 for annual licences to the Molior database. The approved expenditure of £24,000 will cover up to 3 years depending on the benefits and effectiveness of the system.
- 5.2 The cost will be funded 50/50 by the Development Management Viability budget and the Housing and Land management and consultancy budget. Necessary arrangements will be agreed by the relevant finance contacts and appropriate accounting treatment will be applied at year-end reporting.

#### **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1 Sections 1 - 4 of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the assistant director fall 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 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 assistant 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, sex, 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 assistant director should have particular regard to section 3 of this report.
- 6.3 Section 9 of the Contracts and Funding Code (the ‘Code’) requires the GLA to seek three or more written quotations in respect of the services required or call off the services required from an accessible framework. However, the assistant director may approve an exemption from this requirement under section 10 of the Code upon certain specified grounds. One of those grounds is that the approval of the exemption is justified on the basis that there is complete absence of competition, and another of those grounds is that the supplier is unique in its ability to provide compatibility with an existing service. Officers have indicated at paragraph 4.1 of this report that these two grounds apply. Officers have also indicated at paragraph 4.2 of this report that they are satisfied that the proposed contract affords value for money.
- 6.4 The assistant director may approve the proposed exemption if satisfied that the ground for exemption applies, that the contract affords value for money, and if the assistant director is satisfied with the content of this report generally.
- 6.5 Officers have indicated that the licence is being procured for an initial term of 1 year, and a decision on whether to renew on an annual basis up to a maximum of 3 years will be taken towards the end of the initial 1 year term. Officers must ensure that the licence allows for expiry after the initial 1 year term, and allows the GLA to renew on an annual basis at its discretion with no penalty if the licence is not renewed. Officers should be especially careful that the licence does not contain any automatic renewal clauses.

**7. Planned delivery approach and next steps**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Delivery Start Date	October 2020
Main milestones	Approval of expenditure – October 2020 Subscription to Licences – October 2020
Delivery End Date	October 2023
Project Closure	October 2023

**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:**

Taher Hussain has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

**Corporate Investment Board**

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 2 November 2020.

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES:**

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

**Signature**

*Anna Eastcott*

**Date** 2 November 2020