

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2507

### Title: Greenspace Information for Greater London Partnership Agreement

#### Executive Summary:

This ADD seeks approval to enter into a contract with Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) to secure access to data which the GLA relies on to discharge its statutory and wider functions. Outputs from the contract will also include new data sets and tools to enable the GLA, boroughs and others to deliver the objectives of the Green New Deal recovery mission and London Environment Strategy, which seek to ensure that the inequalities in access to high-quality green infrastructure faced by Londoners living in the most deprived parts of the city are reduced and new greening is provided to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies and to improve air quality.

#### Decision:

That the Interim Assistant Director of Environment and Energy approves:

1. Expenditure of £20,000 on data subscription and support services from Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC to enable delivery of the GLA's statutory functions and Green New Deal objectives; and
2. An exemption from the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code to commission the above services without procuring competitively.

#### 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:** Elliot Treharne

**Position:** Interim Assistant Director for Environment and Energy

**Signature:**



**Date:**

1 March 2021

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

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

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

- 1.1. Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC (GiGL) are London's local environmental record centre (LERC). LERCs are not-for-profit organisations that collect, collate and manage information on the natural environment for a defined geographic area. LERCs make information products and services accessible to a range of audiences including decision-makers, the public, and researchers and collaborate with a network of experts to ensure the information is robust and meets their users' needs.
- 1.2. GiGL collect and curate data for London on a range of natural environment and green infrastructure<sup>1</sup> issues including public open space, Sites of Importance of Nature Conservation (SINCs) and habitats and species. They also create and manage other models and tools that can be used to understand the distribution and quality of green infrastructure such as mapping of Areas of Deficiency in Access to Public Open Space and Nature, as well as tools to identify opportunities for more green infrastructure such as analysis highlighting where new habitats can be created.
- 1.3. These data and tools support decision making by the GLA and others around how to meet the Mayor's London Environment Strategy objectives for a well-planned and managed green infrastructure that provides maximum benefits for all Londoners.
- 1.4. Organisations can access GiGL's data and support services to help them make best use of this data by becoming a 'GiGL Partner' through an SLA contract agreement. In his London Environment Strategy the Mayor sets out an expectation for all boroughs to enter into partner agreements with GiGL, in recognition of the importance of their data services and timely access to high-quality environmental data to delivering the objectives of the strategy. 27 boroughs currently have an SLA agreement with GiGL. The GLA have been a GiGL partner for a number of years (further information in paragraph 1.8). The service is funded by the Environment Team, but the data exchanges are managed by the GLA's Geographic Information Team to quality assure the data we receive and ensure that it is available to the whole organisation. All GLA teams can access GiGL's support services to help them to understand and use the data we receive.
- 1.5. GiGL operate as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC). The cost of running their services is shared between its users and they provide data free of charge to community groups and researchers in accordance with their data licencing terms. Using GiGL's data is more cost effective than collating and managing this data ourselves as all GiGL partners contribute to the cost associated with maintaining a high-quality and up to date source of information. This model also encourages a reciprocal data exchange whereby GiGL partners submit relevant data back into the GiGL database. This means that we are easily able to access natural environment data collected by boroughs or wildlife charities for example, in a format suitable for our use and from one place.
- 1.6. A number of the data sets GiGL curate are spatial expressions of London Plan policies and are managed on our behalf as the definitive London map for these issues. The contract agreement we have with GiGL ensures that this information is made freely available to not-for profit users and to others through GiGL's data-search service. It also requires certain data sets of strategic importance to be made freely available to all on the London Datastore<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.7. In addition to data curation their running costs include agreeing data sharing agreements with national monitoring schemes to secure a London cut for use by GiGL partners, as well as supporting volunteers to generate new biological records including the location of species and habitats identified by the Mayor as a priority for conservation in London.

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<sup>1</sup> Green infrastructure describes the network of parks, nature reserves, trees, rivers and other features such as green roofs and walls that provide health and economic benefits to Londoners, as well as help the city to adapt to climate change.

<sup>2</sup> The London Datastore is a free and open data-sharing portal run by the GLA where anyone can access data relating to the capital.

## *Proposal*

- 1.8. The GLA are coming to the end of a three-year agreement with GiGL which included an annual data subscription and addition funding for specific detailed project support. This cost £60,000 in total and was approved under MD2285 – National Park City Programme.
- 1.9. The GLA rely on access to GiGL’s curated data and their expertise to deliver our statutory and wider functions across a number of teams. Examples of work delivered through the previous contract include evidence to support the Mayor’s [London Greenspaces Commission](#); support in drafting London Plan Guidance; data and modelling for web tools to support better decision making such as the [Green Infrastructure Focus Map](#) and [Planning Data Map](#); evidence for the tender pack for housing delivery on a Mayoral owned site; support to identify [species of conservation concern](#) for London to inform the planning and land management decisions of others and provision of [training and materials for planners](#) to support them to use environmental data to take account of biodiversity in the planning process and meet the Mayor’s London Plan policies.
- 1.10. Over the next year having access to the data and expertise that that GiGL provide will be essential to the delivery of the Green New Deal mission objective to drive a fair and inclusive recovery from the pandemic including providing access to green spaces and tackling the climate and ecological emergencies. Initial analysis of GiGL’s data shows that almost 50% of households in London live in Areas of Deficiency of Access to a Public Open Space<sup>3</sup>. More deprived areas of London are less likely to have good access to green space, and BAME Londoners are more likely to live in these neighbourhoods. Continued access to the relevant data will allow us to target interventions that ‘green the grey’ and address these inequities so that more Londoners can experience the health, wellbeing and economic benefits that a greener local environment provide.
- 1.11. GiGL have [set annual subscription charges](#) for data access based on the geographical coverage of the data required. For coverage of over three quarters of the London region, as is required by the GLA, the annual charge is £10,000. This charge also includes access to 12.5 days of GiGL staff time to support partners to use, interpret and analyse the data.
- 1.12. GiGL partners can also procure additional GiGL support through the SLA contract to deliver more complex organisation specific work such as the development of new data sets, modelling or expert advice to support project development at a cost of £400 per day.
- 1.13. This ADD seeks approval to enter into a one-year contract with GiGL with a total cost of £20,000. This will pay for the annual data provision and 12.5 days of general data-use support, plus 25 days of additional specialist support services at £400 per day to underpin delivery of the Mayor’s Green New Deal objectives and statutory obligations where GiGL are uniquely placed to do the work.
- 1.14. This decision form also requests a related exemption from the requirement of the GLA’s Contracts and Funding Code, to commission the above services without procuring competitively. In their role as London’s LERC GiGL is the only organisation that holds the breadth and, importantly, quality of environmental data that is needed to help inform the GLA’s work. Using GiGL’s data provides a cost saving for the GLA compared to the time and resources which would be needed to collate, manage and store this information in-house. GiGL’s model allows these savings because all of GiGL users share the costs associated with maintaining a high-quality and up to date source of information through their service charges. GiGL’s data management model also encourages a reciprocal data exchange whereby GiGL partners submit relevant data back to them. This means that we are easily able to access natural environment data which would not readily be available to us otherwise – such as that collected by boroughs, wildlife charities or individuals for example – in a format suitable for our use and from one place. Again, no other supplier offers this service.
- 1.15. We have tested other approaches to collating relevant data. For example, the GLA’s Planning team have run a trial working with boroughs to obtain the GIS boundaries relating to Sites of Importance for

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<sup>3</sup> Areas of Deficiency in Access to Public Open Space are areas which are more than 400m from a local or district park as defined in Table 8.1 in the London Plan. An explanation of how these are calculated is [here](#).

Nature Conservation (SINCs) which is a data set that GiGL manage. However, we have not been able to obtain all of the boundaries from boroughs nor were we able to keep the data set updated to the accuracy required because of the number of data holders involved and high turn-over of information. GiGL's model of shared costs and reciprocal data exchange overcome these issues and we have determined that the best way forward is for us to contract GiGL to develop and publish an open-source data set of SINC boundaries on the London Datastore and maintain this on our behalf. This will be an output of the new contract. A Single Source Justification is being progressed in parallel to this ADD.

- 1.16. GiGL's subscription terms set out that agreements run for the financial year period and that they will invoice for their services in advance in March or April. Given their status as a not-for-profit and to aid cash flow during the challenges of the pandemic we wish to pay GiGL in advance in March of the 2020-2021 financial year. The GLA has been a GiGL Partner since the organisation's inception and believe it to be very low risk to make the payment in advance this way.

## **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

- 2.1. The contract schedule will be split into two sections; section 1 will focus on the data products and general support that we will receive through the annual data subscription and section 2 will focus on specific projects and the outputs we require.

*Annual data subscription - £10,000*

- 2.2. GiGL will provide the GLA with quarterly updates of their core data sets and provision on request of tailored data extracts e.g. filtered species or selected open space types.
- 2.3. The annual data subscription also provides up to 12.5 days of GiGL staff time per year to support the GLA in a call off capacity with ad-hoc work including, but not limited to:
- producing maps and infographics based on GiGL's core data for use in GLA publications and other communications;
  - providing information such as data search reports and maps to inform project delivery or decision making;
  - support with data interpretation and analysis e.g. facts and statistics based on simple modelling and analysis of GiGL data, enquiries about database construction, data use, sources and metadata;
  - arranging data use licences for and providing data extracts to GLA contractors where GiGL data is required to deliver the project;
  - expert advice to inform project scoping and proof of concept work; and
  - training for GLA staff.

- 2.4. This service has been well used by staff across the GLA under the current agreement, including officers from the Environment Team, Housing and Land, the London Plan and Development Management teams and the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation and we expect this demand to continue as the organisation focuses on delivering the Recovery Missions, particularly the Green New Deal mission.

*Specific project support - £10,000*

- 2.5. Part two of the contract schedule includes the development and publication of open-data sets and tools that GiGL are uniquely placed to deliver in their capacity as London's LERC. The outputs will be made available to boroughs and others to help them to design, plan and manage London's green infrastructure network and reduce the inequalities in access to it and benefits received from it. This includes:

- publication on the London Data Store of a new Greenness Index spatial data set to identify areas of London where communities are most deprived of access to public open space and green cover so that investment and action can be prioritised to reduce these inequalities;
- development of a new methodology for identifying opportunities to plant trees on social housing land to improve environmental quality, increase access to high-quality green space and contribute to the Mayor's target to increase London's tree canopy by 10% by 2050;
- creation of guidance to enable boroughs to make best use of GiGL's data and analytical services as they prepare Green Infrastructure Strategies to help them plan and manage green infrastructure in an integrated way to meet the requirements of the London Plan;
- supporting boroughs to identify and protect London's most valuable sites for nature (SINCs) by providing guidance on how to map and record these sites, and by managing the definitive London-wide database of SINC sites and citations for London so that the GLA can monitor changes in the network to inform policy development;
- creation of a new open source SINC data set for publication on the London Data Store which will be added to the GLA's Planning Policy Map to ensure these strategically important wildlife sites are protected in planning decisions;
- data and analytical support to deliver the London Urban Forest plan. This is a partnership document jointly co-ordinated by the GLA to drive delivery of the Mayor's objectives to protect, enhance and increase London's tree and woodlands; and
- work with the GLA to support the delivery of other statutory requirements or strategic priorities that arise as over the course of the agreement. This could include, but is not limited to, for example supporting the GLA to meet new statutory requirements to map a Nature Recovery Network for London that will arise from the forthcoming Environment Act, but the full details of which are yet to be announced.

2.6. To ensure the best use of the provision GiGL will provide a quarterly report to the GLA with a detailed breakdown of how time has been used under the core services provision and the additional project provision. Priorities will be reviewed and agreed with the contract lead at the GLA on a quarterly basis.

### **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Mayor and GLA are subject to the public sector equality duty and must have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
  - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. The "protected characteristics" are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage/ civil partnership status. The duty involves having appropriate regard to these matters as they apply in the circumstances, including having regard to the need to: remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share or is connected to a protected; take steps to meet the different needs of such people; encourage them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low. This can involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without one.
- 3.3. One in five households in London have no access to a private or shared garden and in England, Black and Minority Ethnic people are nearly four times as White people<sup>4</sup> to have no access to outdoor space

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/oneineightbritishhouseholdshasnogarden/2020-05-14>

at home. While access to public parks is more evenly spread the pandemic has made clear that not all people feel comfortable or able to use parks. There is a need to bring the benefits of green infrastructure closer to people's homes, schools and daily travel routes. The data that we will access through this contract with GiGL and the tools that we will develop with them will allow us to better target our interventions and policy development to ensure that the inequalities that Londoners face in how they can access and benefit from the city's green infrastructure are addressed so that they can be accessed by all Londoners including the under 25s, BAME communities, people from lower-income families and disabled people.

- 3.4. As a Community Interest Company GiGL are committed to delivering social and environmental outcomes through their work. Their core commitments include making their information available to inform decision making that protects and enhances London's natural environment for the benefit of all Londoners.

#### 4. Other considerations

- 4.1. Access to GiGL's data and the additional project work supports the London Environment Strategy, The London Plan, the Mayor's Strategy for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (A Great Place To Live, strategic objective 12) and the Health Inequalities Strategy (objective 3.3 Healthy Places & Healthy Communities).
- 4.2. The primary recovery mission focus of this project is the Green New Deal and its objective to drive a fair and inclusive recovery from the pandemic including providing access to green spaces, improving air quality and tackling the climate emergency.
- 4.3. The key risks are set out in the table below:

Risk description	Likelihood of the risk occurring	Impact if the risk occurs	Mitigating action
Poor quality data outputs	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GiGL have always produced high-quality outputs to date.</li> <li>• Mapping and database creation will be carried out in accordance with GiGL's published standards and quality assured by the GLA's Geographical Information Team before publication where required.</li> </ul>
Delays due to COVID-19 or other reasons	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GiGL have appropriate technology in place to allow their staff to continue to provide their full services whilst working from home.</li> <li>• GiGL have multiple staff members with the expertise to deliver the work required and will therefore be able to reallocate work within their team if required.</li> <li>• Quarterly meetings with their Partnership Manager will track progress and reconfirm priorities.</li> </ul>

- 4.4. There are no conflicts of interest 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 the expenditure of £20,000 towards data subscription and support service being procured from Greenspace Information for Greater London. The subscription service will span 2021-22. The funding source for this procurement will come from the available resources within the Urban Greening budget held within the Environment Unit.
- 5.2. The procurement route for the data provision will be carried out through a Single Source Justification. This is due to the specific expertise and information provided by Greenspace Information for Greater London who are the designated Local Environment Record centre for London. Payment for the subscription will be funded from the 20-21 Urban Greening budget held within the Environment Unit.

## 6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 6.1. The following table sets out a summary timetable for key outputs from the contract:

Activity:	Timeline
Procurement of contract	March 2021
Data provision to GLA	Quarterly
Project review meetings	Minimum of quarterly
<b>Key Milestones:</b>	
Creation and publication of open source dataset of SINC's on London Datastore	By end of Q1
Refinement of beta version and publication of open source Greenness Index model on the London Datastore	By end of Q1
Publish guidance on data use to support boroughs to undertake GI Strategies	By end of Q2
Publish guidance to support boroughs to map their SINC's	By end of Q2
Develop new modelling method to evaluate tree planting opportunities on social housing land	By end of Q3
First draft of updated open source dataset of Public Open Space Sites submitted for review	By end of Q4
Delivery End Date	March 2022

## 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:**

Samantha Davenport has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures.

✓

**Corporate Investment Board**

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 1 March 2021.

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES:**

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

**Signature**



**Date**

1 March 2021