

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2809

### Digital Access for All - Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme

#### Executive Summary:

This decision form requests approval of expenditure of £1.362m over two years to fund the London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme, as part of the GLA's Digital Access for All recovery mission.

LOTI will provide research, design, and testing capability to explore digital inclusion challenges, working with the GLA, boroughs, and partners in the voluntary and private sectors. See Appendix 1 for the funding proposal.

By the end of the programme LOTI will have delivered a body of research and results which support:

- residents, by developing a 'minimum access package' based around a standardised approach to triaging digitally excluded Londoners' needs for an essential device, data or digital skills, which can then be matched to a range of reliable and affordable support options;
- public servants and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) practitioners, by giving those who work with digitally excluded Londoners easy access to quality resources and peer support on digital inclusion, including an evidence base on what works and on the range of mature interventions that can be scaled; and
- businesses, by making the evidence base on digital needs in London easily accessible and increasing the business community's understanding of it, including raising awareness of the impact of moving to online-only channels on digitally excluded Londoners.

#### Decision:

The Mayor approves expenditure of up to £1.362m of grant funding between 2021 and 2023 as a contribution to London Councils' costs of delivering its London Office of Technology and Innovation Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme, as part of the Digital Access for All mission.

#### Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

3/6/21

## PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

### Decision required – supporting report

#### 1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The coronavirus crisis showed many Londoners are still unable to access the connectivity they need to access essential services. Those lacking digital skills, connectivity, or access to a suitable device, could not use online services, learn, or work from home during lockdown.
- 1.2. The London Recovery Board, chaired jointly by the Mayor of London and the Chair of London Councils, has identified Digital Access for All as one of its nine recovery missions<sup>1</sup>. This has the objective that every Londoner should have access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and the device or support they need to be online by 2025<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.3. To help achieve this, the GLA proposes to provide funding to London Councils' London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) as a contribution to its costs of delivering a Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme, supporting specific digital inclusion initiatives identified by the GLA and London boroughs. LOTI was created to help London boroughs work together, bringing the best of digital, technology and data to improve public services for Londoners<sup>3</sup>.
- 1.4. London's boroughs, voluntary and community organisations, and businesses have made significant progress in identifying people who need help accessing digital services and getting them the support they need. Much of this has been done to address immediate needs resulting from the lockdowns imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic, which meant people were unable to access services in person and needed to do so online. LOTI has been bringing boroughs together to discuss digital inclusion and learn from each other, including through their Bridging the Digital Divide<sup>4</sup> research.
- 1.5. LOTI has developed a proposal to use GLA funding to provide research, design, and testing capability to explore digital inclusion challenges, working with the GLA, boroughs, and partners in the voluntary and private sectors. The proposal will target a number of important digital inclusion challenges by:
  - defining what outcomes we want for London and ensuring everyone agrees what the mission should achieve;
  - researching what already exists by engaging with boroughs, voluntary and community organisations and others to see what existing work supports those outcomes. This will help identify tools, resources and examples that can be shared across London and highlight gaps where new projects are required;
  - designing and running new projects that deliver key activities to help achieve the outcomes. Activities have been suggested by London boroughs, the GLA and others; and
  - scaling projects that work so that more Londoners can benefit from what works well.
- 1.6. This approach will build on LOTI's extensive work with boroughs to create user research that will help others to solve problems more quickly and cost effectively. Testing new projects in the open and publishing the results will provide evidence for what works and what does not. Successful new projects can then be scaled up.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/talk-london/recovery-covid-19>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/talk-london/digital-access-all#tab-background>

<sup>3</sup> <https://loti.london/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vqq4uaXlIV4>

- 1.7. The Digital Exclusion Taskforce (DET)<sup>5</sup>, launched by the Mayor of London and London Councils, will serve as an advisory body for this mission and the Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme. The Taskforce is chaired by the Chief Digital Officer for London and includes representation from London Councils; the London Boroughs of Ealing, Croydon, Newham, Southwark and Brent; Nominet Trust; Age UK; HEAR; BT; and Vodafone. Mission delivery will be monitored by the GLA through the Digital Access for All mission team and overseen by the London Recovery Taskforce.
- 1.8. The funding will be provided on a milestone basis to cover costs including staff time; commissioning research including reports; consultancy on specific challenges; software development; legal costs and other project expenses. LOTI will provide a progress report to the GLA in advance of each milestone. This will include an update on how the project is continuing to support GLA objectives, an updated risk register and progress on engagement activities.

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

- 2.1. The overall objective for the GLA's Digital Access for All recovery mission is for: "Every Londoner to have access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and the device or support they need to be online by 2025."
- 2.2. The GLA will expect two outputs from the Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme:
  - validated solutions that help to tackle one or more of the overall objectives of the digital access mission; and
  - a body of evidence for what works, and what does not, in improving digital access. This will be published and available to anyone working in this field.
- 2.3. LOTI will make progress in developing effective support measures for:
  - residents, by developing a 'minimum access package' based around a standardised approach to triaging digitally excluded Londoners' needs for an essential device, data or digital skills, which can then be matched to a range of reliable and affordable options;
  - public servants and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) practitioners, by giving those who work with digitally excluded Londoners easy access to quality resources and peer support on digital inclusion, including an evidence base on what works and on the range of mature interventions that can be scaled; and
  - businesses, by making the evidence base on digital needs in London easily accessible and increasing the business community's understanding of it, including raising awareness of the impact of moving to online-only channels on digitally excluded Londoners.
- 2.4. LOTI will be using the process set out in para 1.5 for the programme. When they come to design and run new projects, they will use an outcomes-based methodology, drawing on the Design Council's Double Diamond approach<sup>6</sup>. Using this methodology will mean that all projects start by defining the real-world outcomes for Londoners first, before deciding what the project will do.
- 2.5. Projects will be prioritised that:
  - aim to achieve outcomes that will substantially benefit digitally excluded Londoners;
  - clearly add value to what already exists;

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-and-london-councils-tackle-digital-divide>

<sup>6</sup> <https://medium.com/@EddieACopeland/designing-an-outcomes-based-method-for-collaborative-technology-projects-986dd95d61af>

- build on and create strong evidence through effective design and evaluation; and
- have a credible route to large-scale adoption and financial sustainability.

2.6. Project development and spend will be reviewed and approved by the programme board, consisting of LOTI and GLA officers including the Chief Digital Officer. Projects will also be reviewed by the LOTI all-member network, which includes LOTI Chief Information Officers, and the GLA Chief Digital Officer. Only projects which receive the support of a majority of boroughs will be taken forward, in line with LOTI's broader approach to project governance. In addition, projects will be presented to the Digital Exclusion Taskforce (see paragraph 1.7) for feedback.

2.7. Public progress updates will also be provided:

- a note will share progress made on individual projects;
- regular 'show and tells' will be held where project teams will discuss progress; and
- write ups on progress at important points in the project lifetime will be provided through a blog.

### 3. Equality comments

3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as public authorities, the GLA and the London boroughs must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.2. The delivery of funding for innovation to enhance digital inclusion forms a key pillar of the Digital Access for All recovery mission, which aims to address digital exclusion and improve Londoners' access to affordable connectivity, devices, and basic digital skills.

3.3. Reducing digital exclusion is a foundational step in supporting London's communities, improving access to services, and narrowing social, economic and health inequalities. LOTI have conducted research into personas of digitally excluded people, identifying important causes and barriers to digital accessibility<sup>7</sup>.

3.4. This has identified that the main reason people lack digital access is older age. Disabilities, learning difficulties, ethnic origin, location, culture and language, and low income are also important factors:

- If you are poor, you have less chance of being online. The higher your income, the more likely you are to have access online. Only 51% of households earning between £6,000-£10,000 had home internet access. The figure for households with an income over £40,001 is 99% (ONS, 2019);
- In 2017, 56% of adult internet non-users were disabled. Yet disabled adults only make up 22% of the UK population (Family Resources Survey 2016/17). In 2017, for internet non-users aged 16-24 some 60% were disabled;
- Ofcom estimates that between 1.14 million and 1.78 million UK children (nine per cent) lack access to a laptop, desktop or tablet at home – and more than 880,000 live in a household with only a mobile internet connection<sup>8</sup>; and
- 55% of London's civil society organisations surveyed reported an increase in demand for digital connectivity from those they support under lockdown.

<sup>7</sup> [https://loti.london/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/September-2020\\_LOTI-Digital-Inclusion-Workshop-Notes.pdf](https://loti.london/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/September-2020_LOTI-Digital-Inclusion-Workshop-Notes.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0030/198138/tech-tracker-internet-and-device-access-children-data-tables.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0030/198138/tech-tracker-internet-and-device-access-children-data-tables.pdf)

- 3.5. This research will inform the development of the LOTI programme and be designed to positively impact London through reducing the digital divide faced by Londoners in partnership with London boroughs, the Voluntary and Community Sector, and industry.
- 3.6. Specific projects developed in this programme will undergo individual assessments to ensure the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 is complied with. Any potential negative equalities impacts will be identified and relevant mitigations considered.

#### 4. Other considerations

##### *Conflicts of interest*

- 4.1. There are no conflicts of interest for anyone involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

##### *Key risks and issues*

<b>Risk (with short description)</b>	<b>Red, amber green rating</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Stakeholder engagement: if boroughs and other partners are not involved in the early phases of scoping and design, then the programme will not meet expectations and desired outcomes.	Green	Programme designed in a way that includes regular engagement of key stakeholders, including ones critical to delivery (boroughs, VCS etc.). Workshops will be held at the start and then at regular points (at least quarterly) throughout the two-year period.
Identifying projects: no suitable projects or programmes identified that can be scaled to deliver the programme's overall outcomes.	Green	Several suitable projects have been submitted as part of LOTI's COVID Innovation Fund. An explicit selection criterion for every project created as part of the programme is that they are plausibly replicable and financially sustainable. Involving multiple boroughs and partners in the design and delivery of each project will help identify challenges and barriers to scaling early in the project lifecycle to ensure mitigating actions can be taken.

##### *Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities*

4.2. A number of links to Mayoral strategies and priorities have been identified:

- Digital Access for All – one of the key missions identified as part of London Recovery programme is the Digital Access for All mission: “Every Londoner to have access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and the device or support they need to be online by 2025.”;
- Mayor’s manifesto – the Mayor of London committed to the Digital Access for All mission in his 2021 election manifesto, pledging to “close the digital divide, allocating £1.5m towards school children accessing the equipment they need to learn throughout the pandemic and beyond”. The LOTI programme described in this MD will contribute to this by addressing the needs of school children and their ability to access support through a ‘minimum access package’;
- Adult Education Budget – the Mayor has also secured the delegation of the Adult Education Budget and has pledged to offer ‘Basic Digital Skills for Londoners’ to help equip people with low or no digital skills with the tools they need to cope with increased digitisation; and
- Coordinating with LOTI – working through LOTI promotes pan-London delivery of projects allowing scalable solutions which benefit all Londoners. LOTI helps London boroughs work together, bringing the best of digital, data and innovation to improve public services for Londoners.

## 5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought for the expenditure of up to £1,362,000 as a contribution to London Councils for the cost of delivering its London Office of Technology and Innovation Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme. This expenditure will be funded from the Devices and Data budget within the Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Digital Access for All budget
- 5.2. The budget for 2022-23 expenditure is currently profiled and will be subject to the annual budget setting process.
- 5.3. Payments to London Councils will be made on completion of agreed programme milestones across financial years 2021-22 and 2022-23. Programme costs are illustrated in appendix 1 and total the following:

	2021-22	2022-23	Total
LOTI Programme contribution	£ 675,000	£ 687,000	£ 1,362,000

## 6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The preceding sections of this report indicate that:
- 6.1.1. the decisions requested of the Mayor fall within the GLA’s general 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 and social development in Greater London (section 30, GLA Act 1999); and
- 6.1.2. in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers have complied with the Authority’s related statutory duties to:
- a) 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

b) consult with appropriate bodies.

- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested, as noted in section 3 above, the Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity, 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. To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 of this report.
- 6.3. Should the Mayor be minded to make the decision sought officers must ensure that no commitment to award the funding proposed is made until both the GLA and London Councils have executed a funding agreement on the GLA's terms.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Research on current device upcycling and barriers	April – June 2021
Map current digital inclusion activities in boroughs and wider partner organisations:  1) Conduct workshops with key partners (boroughs, VCS etc)  2) Undertake desktop research and interviews with key partners	April – May 2021
Prioritise desired outcomes to be achieved in the first six months of the programme	May – June 2021
Programme discovery phase part 1 and recruitment	May – July 2021
Begin programme delivery part 1 and discovery phase part 2	August – November 2021
Continued project delivery, milestone reporting and project evaluation.	November 2021 – May 2023

### Appendices and supporting papers:

Appendix 1 - LOTI Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme Proposal



**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: Yes, the publication is to be deferred until the agreement has been executed. This is expected to take place by 30 July 2021.

Until what date: 30 July 2021

**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:**

Sara Kelly has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following: ✓

**Sponsoring Director:**

Philip Graham has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities. ✓

**Mayoral Adviser:**

David Bellamy has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations. ✓

**Advice:**

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal. ✓

**Corporate Investment Board**

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

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:**

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

**Signature**



**Date**

2 June 2021

**CHIEF OF STAFF:**

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor

**Signature**



**Date**

2 June 2021