

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2933

Title: European Social Fund (ESF) Academies Programme – Additional Funding

Executive Summary:

This Mayoral Decision (MD) form seeks the Mayor's approval to utilise any further underspend arising from the GLA Co-Financing Organisation's European Social Fund (ESF) allocation that is identified prior to the conclusion of the ESF Academies Programme grant selection process, to top up the fund for the new ESF Academies Programme.

Under cover of [MD2878](#) the Mayor previously approved the use of £6.7m identified as unallocated ESF to deliver an ESF Academies Programme to complement the Mayor's Academies Programme, focusing specifically on supporting underrepresented groups and those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic on the journey to employment. Given that this will be the last commissioning process of the four-year ESF programme ending in 2023, this report seeks approval to commit up to a maximum of £4.3m of unallocated budget which may be identified as available to support the ESF Academies Programme subject to receiving bids of sufficient quality.

The commissioning process will follow the GLA Contracts and Funding Code.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves the use of:

- Any underspend which may be identified from the GLA Co-Financing Organisation's European Social Fund (ESF) programme allocation up to a maximum of £4.3m, (the original expenditure of which was previously approved under [MD2375](#), [MD2011](#), and [MD1642](#)) to fund additional ESF Academies Programme projects. This will be in addition to the already approved £6.7m.

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:

16/2/22

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The European Programmes Management Unit (EPMU), which acts as the ESF Managing Authority for London on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), allocated £83.6m ESF to the GLA's Skills & Employment Unit for its ESF Co-Financing Programme. Outline programmes of activities were approved under cover of MD2375, MD2011 and MD1642. Most of these activities have now been commissioned or funded (as applicable).
- 1.2 Under MD2878, the Mayor approved £6.7m of unallocated ESF (the total unallocated amount known at the time) to be used to fund the ESF Academies Programme designed to complement the aims of the Mayor's Academies Programme (MAP). £5m of AEB procured funding was used as match funding to draw down the £6.7m ESF. The ESF Academies Programme launched on 14 February 2022.
- 1.3 The GLA's Skills & Employment unit recently completed a reprofiling exercise across its ESF projects under the 2014-20 & 2019-23 programmes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic some projects have been underperforming. Currently, around £2.5m of underspend has been identified, and it is anticipated that there could be more, up to a maximum of £4.3m.
- 1.4 Considering the next ESF commissioning round will be the last commissioning process for the four-year ESF programme ending in 2023, and to enable the greatest and most effective delivery of benefits for Londoners, it is proposed that the above mentioned £2.5m, together with any further underspend identified and secured prior to the conclusion of the ESF Academies Programme grant selection process should be used to fund additional projects under the ESF Academies Programme.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 A competitive grant award process will take place in early 2022 for the ESF Academies Programme to ensure compliance with ESF regulations. Potential providers will be encouraged to engage with MAP hubs. The details of hub providers (where possible) will be included in the grant award process documents and Hub Leads will not be prevented from bidding to deliver these complementary activities.
- 2.2 £6.7m was approved to fund up to 12 projects (around an average of £0.5m for each project) under MD2878.
- 2.3 As stated in MD2878, up to the end of August 2023, the total funding made available could support:
 - over 3,000 Londoners from priority groups starting on the programme
 - 600 Londoners from priority groups progressing into further education
 - 450 Londoners from priority groups progressing into employment, a paid apprenticeship or work placement.
- 2.4 If the recommendation in this Mayoral Decision form to use additional ESF underspends for the ESF Academies Programme is approved, the GLA will fund additional projects, enabling proportionately more outputs to be delivered. The GLA will use the AEB Procured programme as match funding for any additional ESF Academies Programme funding.
- 2.5 The GLA will only utilise the ESF underspends to fund additional projects if there is enough ESF underspend available to fund such projects and there are enough bids of sufficient quality to award this funding.

- 2.6 The GLA will state clearly on the grant process documents that there is £6.7m GLA funding available for the grant programme to fund up to 12 projects but the GLA does reserve the right to fund additional projects subject to the quality of bids and available underspend.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 provides that, in the exercise of their functions, public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. Relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 3.2 The interventions to be commissioned as a result of the funding are in part aimed at supporting those most at risk from the impact of the economic crisis brought on by Covid-19. This includes young people, women and Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people who tend to work in the occupations and sectors adversely affected by the pandemic, as highlighted by the Skills for Londoners Recovery Task & Finish Group which is tasked with overseeing the delivery of the Good Work mission. The GLA has consulted on the equalities impact of these changes with key sector representatives, and will closely monitor, review and evaluate their impact. The priority groups will include men in sectors where there is documented underrepresentation, such as social care.
- 3.3 Applications for ESF funding will include an assessment of how the groups outlined above will be supported and providers will be monitored to ensure they meet their grant obligations.

4. Other considerations

Links to Mayoral strategies

- 4.1 The ESF Academies Programme outlined in this MD aligns with commitments made in the Mayor's Skills for Londoners Strategy. It will support the London Recovery Programme and the Helping Londoners into Good Work mission.

Risks arising/mitigation

- 4.2 The main risks for establishing the ESF Academies project and for commissioning remain as listed under MD2878. Increasing the funding upwards from £6.7m does not generate new risks. There is a possibility that there will not be enough strong bids to award all of the funding which will mean the underspends will have to be declared to the ESF Contracting authority after the process.
- 4.3 There are no conflicts of interest to declare from those involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 This MD seeks the Mayor's approval to utilise any further underspend from the GLA Co-Financing Organisation's ESF allocation that is identified prior to the conclusion of the ESF Academies Programme grant selection process, to top up the fund for the new ESF Academies Programme.
- 5.2 The Mayor approved £6.7m of ESF for the ESF Academies Programme under MD2878 – the £6.7m

being the total unallocated ESF at the time. However, considering this is the last commissioning process for the four-year ESF programme ending in 2023, this report seeks approval to commit up to the total amount of unallocated budget available to support the Academies programme subject to receiving good bids. The total unallocated amount is currently anticipated to be over £2.5m more than the £6.7m approved under MD2878.

6. Legal comments

6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of:

6.1.1 the GLA's general powers, falling 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 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
- consult with appropriate bodies.

6.2 In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor 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, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion) and persons who do not (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

6.3 If the Mayor is minded making the decisions sought, officers must ensure that:

6.3.1 no reliance is placed upon any “underspend” until and unless it has been identified and all steps are taken to secure the use of the same, including, for example the variation of agreements which have not and are unlikely to fully utilise funding awarded to reflect the reduced sum(s) available

6.3.2 the funding is distributed fairly, transparently, in manner which affords value for money and in accordance with the requirements of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code and grant funding agreements are put in place between and executed by the GLA and recipients before any commitment to fund is made.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Launch of ESF Academies grant tender opportunity	January 2022
ESF Academies scoring process	March 2022
Notification of successful bidders	May 2022
Delivery start date	June 2022
Delivery end date	August 2023
Project closure	September-December 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? YES

Until what date: 1 August 2022 (deferred until the start of the new academic year) for the commissioning process to be completed.

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Aisha Khan & Peter Wade have drafted the report in accordance to GLA procedures and confirm the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Joanna Davidson has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Jules Pipe 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 14 February 2022.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

Date

D. Gove

15/2/22

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature

Date

D. Bellamy

14/2/22

