

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3020

Title: Rewild London Fund Round 2

Executive summary:

Globally biodiversity is in decline. The UK is in the bottom 10 per cent of countries in terms of the biodiversity it has left, and these national and global declines are projected to worsen. The Mayor is committed to making sure London plays its part in tackling this ecological emergency by taking action to help halt and reverse these declines.

The Green New Deal mission sets an objective to improve London's natural environment and tackle the climate and ecological emergencies. This decision requests approval for £250,000 of funding for a second round of the Mayor's Rewild London Fund to help meet this objective.

Funding is from the "Climate Resilience Through Nature" (£0.5m total) allocations in the GLA Mayoral Budget 2023-24, subject to future budget confirmation for the 2023-24 financial year.

The Rewild London Fund will support owners and managers of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in their response to the climate and ecological emergencies, by creating and restoring priority habitats across London's SINC network. This will result in increased resilience of London's ecological network and an increased extent of priority habitats in London to help deliver London Environment Strategy targets for habitat creation. The programme will also contribute to increasing opportunities for Londoners to benefit from and enjoy nature.

The programme will also be sponsored by Amazon and supported by London Wildlife Trust to make more funding and specialist advice available to SINC managers, resulting in better outcomes for nature in London.

Decision:

The Mayor approves the expenditure of £250,000 to fund Round 2 of Rewild London from the 2023-24 Climate Resilient Through Nature budget, subject to budget approval.

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:

18/8/22

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Mayor has committed to make London a world leader in improving the environment locally and globally, taking the lead in tackling climate change; reducing pollution; developing a low-carbon economy; consuming fewer resources and using them more effectively; and ensuring all Londoners have access to a high-quality biodiverse environment. As world governments prepare to set new targets for recovering nature at CoP15 later this year the Mayor wants London to play its part in nature being visibly and measurably on the path of recovery by 2030, as well as London reaching net-zero by this date.
- 1.2. The Mayor has committed to a Green New Deal for London, combining strong economic recovery with action to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies, creating green jobs and opportunities for all Londoners. It will help ensure London becomes a greener, zero-carbon, zero-pollution city by 2030.
- 1.3. The London Recovery Board, co-chaired by the Mayor of London and the Chair of London Councils, has set out a programme for the capital's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that seeks to build back better and make London a fairer, more equal, greener, and more resilient city. Accelerating the delivery of a cleaner, greener London is one of the Board's five key outcomes for the recovery programme.
- 1.4. As part of the recovery programme, the Green New Deal Mission, jointly developed by the GLA and London Councils, will tackle the climate and ecological emergencies, and improve air quality by doubling the size of London's green economy to accelerate job creation for all. The four objectives of this Mission are to:
 - improve London's natural environment, improve air quality, and tackle the climate and ecological emergencies
 - promote and incentivise activities that sustain and grow London's green economy
 - prioritise interventions reducing health inequalities and social injustices
 - engage Londoners and businesses in the journey to become a zero-pollution and greener city.
- 1.5. The Mayor has also convened a Rewilding Taskforce to explore potential opportunities for rewilding in London to support nature recovery and enhance biodiversity, while bringing benefits to Londoners and addressing the climate and ecological emergency. They will also advise on funding mechanisms for rewilding, including opportunities for green finance and other private investment. The Taskforce will publish its recommendations later this year.
- 1.6. SINCs are the core of London's ecological network and must be central to any action to address the ecological emergency and rewild London. There are over 1,600 SINC sites in London, covering nearly 20 per cent of the city's surface area. Some of these sites are also designated as local nature reserves, or as internationally or nationally important sites for the habitats or species found within them.
- 1.7. Most SINC sites are the responsibility of boroughs or other public bodies and should offer opportunities for Londoners to enjoy nature close-up. It is estimated, however, that 40-60 per cent of SINC sites are not covered by any regular management to conserve or enhance their special biodiversity.¹ Years of cuts to public-sector budgets mean that fewer than half of London's boroughs have access to in-house ecological advice. For those that do, this resource is often spread too thinly to adequately

¹ Mayor of London, [London Environment Strategy Appendix 1](#), p.22-23

oversee SINC management, or to invest in the creation of new habitats to meet the targets set to create new priority habitats for conservation in the London Environment Strategy.

- 1.8. In January 2022 the Mayor awarded £0.6m from the 2021-22 and 2022-23 Climate Resilience Through Nature budget to 19 projects, through the first round of his new Rewild London Fund (agreed in MD2680). This funding was to support SINC owners and managers to improve and restore SINCs; create new habitats; connect sites; and reintroduce species to help rewild the city. The funding of these projects will help to connect 54 SINCs and create or restore over 250 hectares of wildlife habitat by March 2023.
- 1.9. The first round of the Rewild London Fund was oversubscribed, with more than twice as much funding requested as available. Consequently, not all good projects could be funded. It is therefore proposed to open a second round of the fund to enable more SINC owners and managers to take action to recover nature and rewild London.
- 1.10. Following the success of the first round of Rewild London, Amazon approached one of our grant delivery partners, London Wildlife Trust (LWT), to express interest in contributing funding to a second round of Rewild London via their Right Now Climate Fund. Their sponsorship offer has been subject to the GLA's due diligence processes and has been approved. It has been agreed that Amazon will contribute £0.75m towards round 2 of the Rewild London Fund.
- 1.11. This MD seeks the Mayor's approval to spend the following GLA budget towards the second round of the Rewild London Fund: £0.25m from the 2023-24 Climate Resilient Through Nature budget, subject to budget approval. This will create a total funding pot of £1m for round 2 of Rewild London.
- 1.12. Groundwork London will be contracted to provide grant management support through GLA call off contract (ICTI12805-A). They have extensive experience of managing GLA green infrastructure grants, including round 1 of Rewild London and the Mayor's Grow Back Greener community greening grants.
- 1.13. The funds from Amazon will not be received or managed by the GLA. Amazon's contribution will be paid direct to LWT and distributed to funded projects via Groundwork London, along with the GLA's contribution. Details regarding the award of funding (including how projects are selected for funding) and communications will be agreed in a GLA Partnership Agreement signed by the relevant parties before the fund opens, on signing of this Mayoral Decision. The GLA will have final sign off on projects selected for funding and project communications.
- 1.14. We worked in partnership with LWT to deliver round 1 of Rewild London Fund to help address some of the skills and capacity gaps facing SINC owners and managers. LWT is a recognised expert in managing London sites for their nature conservation interest. It owns and manages SINCs and statutory protected wildlife sites across London; and supports boroughs and local communities to manage other SINC sites, including leading strategic landscape-scale nature recovery projects across multiple sites. It is also the only environmental organisation on the GLA-chaired London Wildlife Site Board that provides guidance to boroughs on the identification of SINCs and ensures consistency in site selection between boroughs. During the first round of the grant, LWT has assisted with scoring applications, with a focus on their ecological merits, and provided technical assistance to applicants, and will provide similar assistance in this round. It will also capture and help share knowledge from the awarded projects. LWT will be funded through Amazon's contribution to continue and expand this role for Rewild London 2, so that it has more time available to support funded projects to deliver the fund's objectives.
- 1.15. The Rewild London Fund will operate as a grant scheme with a competitive call for projects, open to local authorities and civil society organisations that manage SINCs. It will make grants available to support projects that help to enhance, restore and connect SINCs and rewild the city. The types of projects that could receive funding include expanding and buffering SINCs through new habitat creation; works to enable better site management, such as fencing or access, trials and monitoring of innovative management techniques that can be rolled out to other sites; projects to improve habitats

between SINCs to ensure they are better connected, and therefore more resilient; and projects that restore lost species such as water voles or large grazing animals to an area.

- 1.16. It is anticipated that there will be circa £0.8m available as grants through two strands of the fund, with the remainder funding Groundwork's and LWT's fees and overheads. One strand will offer grants of between £10,000 and £50,000 as per round one of the Rewild London Fund and will support 10-15 projects. A second strand will offer grants between £50,000 and £150,000 for 2-3 larger projects that are focused on new habitat creation and rewilding at a larger scale, reflecting the view of the Mayor's Rewilding Taskforce that have identified the need for rewilding projects to happen at a range of spatial scales.
- 1.17. The grants will have a project delivery window from December 2022 to March 2024 reflecting the specialist nature of the types of projects we expect to fund. This will allow projects to include monitoring and delivery aspects, where beneficial; and allow any practical works to be delivered at the time of year that is most appropriate, depending on the site's nature conservation interest.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

Objectives

- 2.1. The programme detailed in this Mayoral decision will be expected to contribute to the delivery of the objectives of the Green New Deal Recovery Mission, which are to:
 - improve London's natural environment, improve air quality, and tackle the climate and ecological emergencies
 - promote and incentivise activities that sustain and grow London's green economy
 - prioritise interventions reducing health inequalities and social injustices
 - engage Londoners and businesses in the journey to become a zero-pollution and greener city.
- 2.2. The Mayor is committed to London playing its part in tackling the ecological emergency and has invested £24 million in green infrastructure programmes since 2017, including towards supporting nature's recovery. He has convened a Rewilding Taskforce to establish what further opportunities there are to rewild London to support nature, and how these opportunities can be funded. The Taskforce has established a definition of and principles for rewilding in London. Together these recognise the essential role of the city's existing ecological network of SINCs and other greenspaces, and the need to connect sites and increase access to nature for Londoners as part of a rewilding approach. These priorities are reflected in this new round of the Rewild London Fund's core objectives, which are to:
 - create new habitats to expand, diversify and connect SINCs in line with London Environment Strategy targets and the Taskforce's principles for rewilding in London
 - enhance London's SINCs to restore nature and support biodiversity
 - strengthen local ecological networks to make them more resilient
 - secure better future management of sites
 - build skills to better plan for and manage SINCs
 - support activities that enable unrepresented communities to actively participate in managing important wildlife sites

- support innovative projects that inspire action, and trial and implement new approaches that could be adopted more widely to help rewild the city.

Outcomes

2.3. To promote nature's recovery across London, the Rewild London Fund will support SINC owners and managers to respond to the climate and ecological emergencies by creating and restoring priority habitats across London's SINC network. Outcomes from the programme will include:

- increased resilience of London's ecological network due to SINCs being buffered and expanded, better managed and better connected
- increased extent of priority habitats in London, helping to deliver the London Environment Strategy targets for habitat creation and making more space for nature and for Londoners to enjoy nature
- enhanced biodiversity and creation of new wildlife habitats.

Outputs

2.4. The fund is expected to provide grants to 10-15 small projects, and two to three large projects, to undertake projects to enhance, restore and connect SINCs such as, but not exclusive to:

- expanding and buffering SINCs through new habitat creation on adjacent land, such as the creation of new chalk grassland banks
- works to enable more effective and efficient site management, such as infrastructure and equipment to bring amenity grassland into meadow management
- trials and monitoring of innovative management techniques that can be rolled out to other sites, such as no-fence collars for conservation grazing projects
- improving habitats between SINCs to ensure they are better connected and more resilient, such as creating habitat stepping stones to help secure landscape connectivity for priority species
- enhancing more than one SINC to improve a local nature network, such as installation of reedbeds along a waterway/waterbody to create a local network
- ecological surveys or monitoring of the outcomes of management to inform future site management and local nature recovery plan development, such as hydrological studies to design wetland creation schemes
- creating the conditions for potential reintroductions of species that meet wider conservation objectives
- focused staff-training activities to make sure that those responsible for the day-to-day planning and management of SINCs have the right skills to do so.

2.5. We will expect grant recipients to share the knowledge and best practice they develop through funded projects to help accelerate the changes required across London to create healthy, sustainable places and to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies. Applicants to the fund will need to identify how they will do this within their own organisation and with other organisations across London as part of their application. In addition, LWT will work with funded projects to prepare case studies and to disseminate learning so that best practice can be shared with other land managers.

3. Equality comments

3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the Mayor of London must have 'due regard' of 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 characteristic² and those who do not. This involves having due regard to the need to remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share a relevant protected characteristic; taking steps to meet the different needs of such people; and encouraging them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low.

3.2. The programme outlined in this MD forms part of the policies and proposals in the London Environment Strategy, which has been informed by a full integrated impact assessment, including consideration of equalities.³ The Equalities Assessment Report for the London Environment Strategy noted that exposure to poor environmental conditions is much higher among Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Londoners.

3.3. The Mayor has a number of green infrastructure grants programmes that are complementary and together fund different types and scales of greening across the city to deliver multiple benefits for Londoners and nature. The Mayor's Grow Back Greener Fund Round 3 (approved in MD2827) will be open alongside Rewild London Round 2. This programme specifically aims to tackle the inequalities in access to green space and higher climate risk that disproportionately impacts Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Londoners, and Londoners with lower incomes. Although the focus of the Rewild London Fund means that it is not specifically targeted at community groups, or at increasing access to green space, applicants will be encouraged to identify opportunities for Londoners to benefit from improved access to nature; to access training; or to learn new skills through funded projects.

4. Other considerations

4.1. The key risks and issues are set out in Table 1, below.

Table 1 – Risks and issues

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation	RAG rating
Further COVID-19 lockdown restrictions	Low	Medium	<p>Good communication to ensure frank discussions can take place around organisational capacity and delivery. In the event of a further lockdown, each project will be reviewed, and new parameters put in place where needed.</p> <p>Many of the habitat creation and management aspects we expect to fund will still be deliverable in lockdown scenarios similar to previous lockdowns.</p>	GREEN

² The "protected" characteristics and groups are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership status. Compliance with the Equality Act may involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without the characteristic. The duty must be exercised with an open mind and at the time a decision is taken. Conscientious regard must be had that is appropriate in all of the circumstances.

³ Temple, [London Environment Strategy – Integrated Impact Assessment: Equality Impact Assessment \(EqIA\) Report](#), 10 August 2017

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation	RAG rating
Partner contribution to the fund is not forthcoming	Low	High	<p>Amazon has committed to funding the project via its Right Now Climate Fund, which has budget confirmed.</p> <p>The terms of Amazon's contribution will be finalised in a partnership agreement with the GLA (to be signed once this MD has been approved) and via a contract with LWT that will cover the transfer of funds.</p>	GREEN
The fund is undersubscribed	Low	Medium	<p>Round 1 of Rewild London was oversubscribed and not all good projects could be funded. The fund will be promoted in good time to relevant networks and via the GLA's communication channels, including social media and on our website. LWT will actively promote the fund to their networks.</p>	GREEN
Boroughs and other site managers do not have capacity to access Rewild London fund	Low	Medium	<p>The programme will be structured to allow adequate time for boroughs to bid for funding. There is an established need for the fund and the capacity-building element of the programme, provided by LWT support, will enable organisations without in-house ecological expertise to access the fund and deliver good-quality projects.</p>	GREEN

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.2. The work outlined in this MD will contribute towards:

- London Environment Strategy Policy 5.1.1: protect, enhance and increase green areas in the city, to provide green infrastructure services and benefits that London needs now and, in the future
- London Environment Strategy Proposal 5.1.1.f: back greater community involvement in the improvement and management of London's green spaces and natural environment
- London Environment Strategy Objective 5.1: increase tree canopy cover by 10 per cent, and to ensure that over half of London is green by 2050
- London Environment Strategy Objective 5.2: conserving and enhancing wildlife and natural habitats
- London Environment Strategy Policy 5.2.1: protect a core network of nature conservation sites and ensure a net gain in biodiversity
- London Environment Strategy Policy 5.3.1: address underinvestment, and improve the management of London's green infrastructure, by developing new business models and improving the awareness of the benefits of London's green infrastructure
- London Health Inequalities Strategy Objective 3.3: a greener city where all Londoners have access to good-quality green spaces

- London Recovery Board high-level outcome to accelerate delivery of a cleaner, greener London, and Green New Deal mission to tackle the climate and ecological emergencies and improve air quality by doubling the size of London's green economy by 2030 to accelerate job creation for all.

Consultations and impact assessments

4.3. Conserving London's wildlife and natural habitats is one of the three strategic green infrastructure priorities of the 2018 London Environment Strategy. The evidence base for the strategy showed that SINCs are integral to meeting this aim. However, it also showed that they are at risk from a chronic lack of management that would ultimately lead to declines in nature and in their quality as green spaces for people. The responses received during the public consultation on the London Environment Strategy supported this conclusion, and identified conserving wildlife sites and providing support and guidance for their management as a priority.⁴ The Integrated Impact Assessment for the strategy concluded that no negative effects were identified for the Equality Impact Assessment in relation to strategic green infrastructure policies, and that improving the quality of green spaces, such as SINCs, would have positive impact on addressing inequalities in access to green space and nature.

Conflicts of interest

4.4. If any conflicts of interest arise during the delivery of the programme (i.e., a GLA officer has links with an organisation that applies for a grant) they will declare that interest and not take any part in assessing that grant application or awarding funding to that organisation. There are no conflicts of interest arising from any officer involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

5. Financial comments

5.1 £250,000 is required to fund round two of the Mayor's Rewild London Fund. This fund will be delivered in partnership with the London Wildlife Trust whose will be contributing their expertise and technical support.

5.2 The majority of this fund will be dispensed as grants to the owners and managers of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservations (SINCs) to recover nature in the capital and rewild London. Due to the complexity and anticipated number of applicants, it is proposed Groundwork London will be contracted to provide grant management support.

5.3 If approved the programme will be valued at £1,000,000 in which £250,000 will be funded by the GLA and £750,000 from Amazon which will further enhance the programme and cover the technical support costs of the London Wild Trust contribution. The latter funds will be exchanged between Amazon and the London Wild Trust directly and will not go through the Authority's accounts.

5.4 Expenditure of the £250,000 is expected to commence next financial year. This is in line with the 2022-23 budget setting process which indicates the budget allocation for the 2023-24 Climate Resilience Through Nature Budget held against the Environment and Energy Unit. However, as the 2023-24 budgets are not yet formally approved, this decision would constitute a pre-existing commitment against these budgets when the formal budget setting exercise is undertaken. As such, all grant agreements and contracts will include break clauses to mitigate against this risk should these future funds become unavailable.

6. Legal comments

⁴ Mayor of London, [London Environment Strategy – Consultation Response Report](#)

6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or that are facilitative of, or conductive or incidental to, the promotion of economic development and wealth creation, social development or improvement of the environment, in Greater London.

6.2. In implementing the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers should comply with the GLA'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.

6.3. 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; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

6.4. Section 1 of this report indicates that part of the sought budget will amount to the provision of grant funding, and not payment for services. Officers must ensure that the funding is distributed fairly; transparently; in accordance with the GLA's equality policy and subsidy control rules; and in a manner that affords value for money in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code. Officers must ensure that an appropriate funding agreement is put in place and executed by the GLA and the recipient before any commitment to funding is made.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Grant opens for applications	By mid-September 2022
12-18 projects awarded funding	By December 2022
First grant payment made to projects	By January 2023
Projects deliver agreed outcomes, with LWT expert support	By March 2024
Final grant payment made to projects	By March 2024
Case studies and advice produced and published	By March 2024

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

If YES, for what reason: Publication to be deferred until after Rewild London Fund Launch. Until what date: 30 September 2022

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 and confirms the following: ✓

Sponsoring Director:

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

Mayoral Adviser:

Shirley Rodrigues 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 15 August 2022 ✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

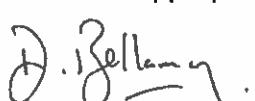


Date: 16/8/22

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature



Date 15/8/22