

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3069

Title: London Voter Registration Week 2023 and Voter ID awareness campaign – phase two

Executive summary:

This decision seeks approval for expenditure of £200,000 to deliver London Voter Registration Week (LVRW) 2023, and phase two of the GLA Voter ID public awareness campaign. Between January and March 2023, we will: assign a delivery partner following a competitive procurement process; commence the first phase of work; and start developing assets for LVRW 2023. From April 2023 onwards, subject to final budget approval for 2023-24, we will work with the delivery partner and the London Voter Registration Strategic Partnership (LVRSP) to finalise assets; build a broad coalition of support; deliver LVRW 2023; support public awareness-raising; and evaluate activity.

Decision:

The Mayor approves expenditure of £200,000, comprising:

- £40,000 in the financial year 2022-23 to secure a delivery partner for London Voter Registration Week (LVRW) 2023; commence the first phase of work; and start developing assets for LVRW 2023
- £160,000 in the financial year 2023-24 to work with the delivery partner and the London Voter Registration Strategic Partnership to finalise assets; build a broad coalition of support; deliver LVRW 2023; evaluate activity; and support impartial public awareness-raising activity, building on the LVRW model and coalition.

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:

27/1/23

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Civic and democratic participation is a key pillar of social integration. The GLA has statutory powers to do anything that it considers will further the promotion of social development in Greater London. Supporting active citizenship and democratic participation furthers social cohesion and fits within this remit. The GLA's Civic and Democratic Participation work programme was established via:
 - MD2447, which approved initial expenditure for a voter registration pilot project in 2019
 - decisions that approved London Voter Registration Week (LVRW) activity between 2020 and 2022, namely ADD2399, MD2680, ADD2483, MD2798 and DD2557
 - MD2970, DD2597 and DD2610, which approved expenditure for phase one of the GLA Voter ID public awareness campaign and grants programme.
- 1.2. Research from the Electoral Commission ("Accuracy and Completeness of the 2018 Electoral Registers in Great Britain", September 2019) and the Cabinet Office ("Atlas of Democratic Variation", January 2019) into the state of electoral registers shows that London has one of the lowest voter-registration rates across the UK's regions. Not registering to vote has significant consequences for representation and inclusion in London, including exclusion from selection for jury service and increased difficulties in gaining a credit rating.
- 1.3. Following the success of LVRW 2019, the GLA built on the lessons learned, and the coalition of support; and delivered LVRW 2020, LVRW 2021 and LVRW 2022, which engaged typically under-registered and under-represented Londoners. These included young people; Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and migrant Londoners (including Commonwealth and EU Londoners, in line with voting rights); and private and social renters.
- 1.4. LVRW has been delivered by the commissioned delivery partner and has had the support of all London boroughs; the London Assembly; the Electoral Commission; members of the LVRSP; and a pan-London, broad coalition of civil society organisations including, among others, education and youth institutions, (inter)faith groups, community and migrant groups, and renters' associations.
- 1.5. The Elections Act 2022 ("the Act") has introduced a requirement for voters to show an approved form of photographic identification in order to vote in UK Parliamentary, local and other elections, including elections for the Mayor of London and London Assembly, from May 2023. Any voter who does not have an approved form of identification will be able to apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate from their local authority. The Act also removes voting rights from some EU Londoners.
- 1.6. Action to improve voter registration and raise public awareness is particularly important in this context. In drafting the proposals contained in this Mayoral Decision (MD) form, as with DD2597, DD2610 and MD2970, GLA officers have consulted extensively with the Electoral Commission, the Association of Electoral Administrators (London branch) and civil society organisations led by communities most likely to be disproportionately impacted by the Act. Officers have also considered evidence from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (February 2022), which found that 1.7m low-income voters could be disenfranchised; and from "London Voices: The Journey to Full Participation" (Trust for London and the 3million, December 2021). The GLA also ran polling with YouGov between July and August 2022.
- 1.7. Proposals are consistent with the work of the LVRSP, which is made up of representatives from professional and statutory bodies (the Association of Electoral Administrators (London branch) and the Electoral Commission); and civil society organisations. The GLA established the LVRSP in 2019,

and continues to collaborate and coordinate closely with it, as part of the wider Civic and Democratic Participation programme, on key non-party political, impartial activity and advocacy.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

Objectives

- 2.1. This MD seeks approval to design, deliver and evaluate LVRW 2023 and public awareness-raising activity. Funding and preparation will run over two financial years.
- 2.2. In February 2023, the GLA will run a competitive tender process to commission a delivery partner to take forward recommendations from LVRW 2022 and initial public awareness-raising activity; and to start planning LVRW 2023 and further awareness-raising activity. The objectives for this first phase of work are:
 - to build on the lessons learned from previous LVRWs (to ensure that: accessible, inclusive, representative resources are co-produced and co-designed with under-registered and under-represented communities; resources are impartial, non-election-specific, available in various formats (digital, video and print, and in community languages) and distributed through various channels and a broad coalition; content is issue- and community-focused; and the GLA remains anti-racist in the design and delivery of all civic and democratic participation programme activity)
 - to start designing new assets and planning for LVRW 2023 and public awareness activity – phase two (April 2023 – February 2024).
- 2.3. Funding for the actual delivery of LVRW 2023 and the second-phase public awareness-raising activity, from April 2023, is subject to final budget approval for the financial year 2023-24. The objectives for this second phase of work are:
 - to collaborate and coordinate with the LVRSP and build a broad coalition of support to deliver LVRW 2023 activity and public awareness-raising activity, at scale, across London
 - to finalise a diverse set of assets and engage Londoners via social media and education packs
 - to engage Londoners via offline voter registration drives and in community settings, if the public health context permits
 - to engage Londoners via an online campaign
 - to evaluate activity, review lessons learned and inform activity for LVRW 2024 and future iterations of any public awareness activity.
- 2.4. If budget for 2023-24 is not approved, there will be a clear break clause in the contract that will require the provider to hand over assets and other planning materials developed to date, and cease any further preparations for further work.

Expected outcomes

- 2.5. The overall expected outcome for LVRW 2023 and public awareness activity is to build on the established reputation and success of the annual LVRW activity. It will do so via the following:
 - raised awareness about civic and democratic participation across London
 - a contribution to the increase in voter registration rates among under-registered and under-represented communities, particularly young Londoners; Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and migrant Londoners (including Commonwealth and EU Londoners, in line with voting rights); and social and private renters

- raised awareness among London's under-registered and under-represented communities about electoral changes, especially among young Londoners; Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and migrant Londoners (including Commonwealth and EU Londoners, in line with voting rights); Deaf and disabled Londoners; social and private renters; LGBTQ+ Londoners; and older and low-income Londoners
- raised awareness among all eligible Londoners about the changes resulting from the Act
- increased support for the capacity and activity of London borough councils and civil society organisations, using assets created as part of the GLA-coordinated campaign, as they engage under-registered and under-represented communities at risk of being disenfranchised.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under the Public Sector Equality Duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the Mayor and the GLA must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the 2010 Act; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status (the duty in respect of this last characteristic is to eliminate unlawful discrimination only).
- 3.2. Compliance with the duty may involve, in particular, removing or minimising any disadvantage suffered by those who share a relevant protected characteristic, taking steps to meet the needs of such people; and encouraging them to participate in public life, or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding. In limited circumstances this may require treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without one.
- 3.3. This programme of work sits under the GLA equality, diversity and Inclusion (EDI) cross-cutting principles, as it has a focus on tackling inequalities and barriers to civic and democratic participation among: Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and migrant Londoners, including EU and Commonwealth Londoners; young Londoners; Deaf and disabled Londoners; LGBTQ+ Londoners; social and private renting Londoners; older Londoners; and those from a low socio-economic background. These are the Londoners currently less likely to be registered or represented in the democratic system, or to possess a photo ID. Many of these Londoners share protected characteristics, and have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. To address these inequities the GLA will be working with Londoners that have protected characteristics to design and deliver impartial public-awareness information and activity that is accessible, inclusive and impactful. It is considered that the proposals contained in this MD, and in previous related decisions documents, will help many of these Londoners to better understand the voting system changes, and their civic and democratic rights – thus removing or minimising disadvantage that could otherwise arise, and encouraging participation in public life.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

Risk	Mitigation	Current probability (1-4)	Current impact (1-4)	RAG
Legal – risk of activities transgressing the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply legal advice already provided in the run-up to, and throughout, LVRW 2019-22; and continue to take legal advice, 	1	3	G

legal parameters in which the GLA must operate	<p>where appropriate, throughout the design and delivery phases of LVRW 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply legal advice already provided in the run-up to, and throughout, any public awareness-raising activity; and continue to take legal advice, where appropriate, throughout the design and delivery phases of the work. • Coordinate GLA's activity in this area with the planned activities of local authority electoral services. • Ensure clear separation of this work from the role of the Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) and the Mayor of London. • Continue working with the LVRSP to provide guidance and advice; and ensure any activities facilitate, coordinate or cooperate with the activities of local authorities. 			
Reputational – risk that activities are perceived as being for any party's electoral gain, rather than for the social development of the city and its communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission a delivery partner who is an expert in the field; has a successful track record of increasing voter registration and community engagement; has brought together a wide coalition of partners in the past; and employs solid evaluation tools. • Build on the non-party political, impartial and non-election-specific character of all LVRW (2019-22) assets and activities. • Build on the cross-party support for all activity. • Ensure any activity is based on lessons learned and on clear evidence. Ensure any activity is based on best practice and clear evidence. • Maintain impartiality via use of the GLA logo on information material; use of @LDN_gov/London City Hall social media platforms; and non-partisan messaging, cross-party engagement and pan-London delivery. 	1	3	G
Delivery – the risks associated with the external context and activity not getting delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LVRW 2023 will take place in September, to coincide with the start of the academic year, and to build capacity for the annual voter registration canvass run by borough electoral councils. • Activity will be regularly monitored and reviewed to enable a swift response to the external public health and political contexts. • Ensure no public voter registration activity takes place during pre-election period. 	1	4	G

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If activity is not delivered, there will be an increase in democratic inequality among under-represented and under-registered Londoners; and an increase in apathy, in the context of reduced trust in public institutions and the democratic process. 			
Impact and reach – LVRW 2023 and the Voter ID public awareness campaign do not have a wide enough reach or impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply lessons learned from past LVRWs and initial public awareness-raising activity. Regular review of planned activity and public awareness polls. Build on the LVRSP and coalition of civil society partners. 	1	3	G

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.1. This project is key to delivering on the high-level objective cited in the Mayor's Social Integration strategy, All of Us, to "equip more Londoners to participate in democratic processes". It builds on the commitments set out in the Mayor's EDI strategy, focusing on addressing the inequalities and barriers that are particularly detrimental to civic and democratic participation across London, but especially among under-registered and under-represented Londoners.

Consultation and impact assessments

- 4.2. Since 2017, the GLA has been running extensive engagement on its Civic and Democratic Participation programme of work and advocacy, with a diverse range of statutory and civil society stakeholders.
- 4.3. From 2021, and prior to seeking approval of this MD (and obtaining approval for MD2970, DD2597 and DD2610), the GLA consulted with all bodies and persons that it considered appropriate. These included statutory bodies and civil society organisations.
- 4.4. All the activities and materials co-designed and co-delivered with under-registered and under-represented London communities will be amplified via appropriate GLA channels.
- 4.5. In early 2024, the delivery partner and the GLA, in consultation with appropriate statutory bodies and civil society partners, will: review reach and impact; produce an evaluation brief; and use this brief to inform activity in the financial year 2024-25 that will build on, but not be limited to, the public awareness activity and other relevant activity delivered in the financial year 2023-24.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.6. No conflict of interest was identified in the drafting or clearance of this decision document.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is being sought for expenditure of £200,000 towards LVRW 2023 and public awareness activity spanning two financial years, as detailed above and summarised in the table below. This funding would come from the GLA's usual baseline spend for this activity.

Programme	2022-23	2023-24	Total
LVRW 2023	£40,000	£60,000	£100,000
Voter ID public awareness campaign – phase 2	N/A	£100,000	£100,000

- 5.2. The expenditure will be funded from the Voter Registration programme budget held within the Communities and Social Policy Unit for the respective financial years. The programme sits within the EDI foundation.
- 5.3. There is sufficient budget to fund the 2022-23 expenditure of £40,000 within the Voter Registration programme budget.
- 5.4. Funding for future financial years will be subject to the annual budget-setting process and is subject to change. The expenditure of £160,000 in the financial year 2023-24 is assumed to be affordable within the provisional Voter Registration programme budget and can only be confirmed when the budget allocation is formally approved in March 2023.
- 5.5. Any contracts that commit the GLA in future years are subject to appropriate break clauses.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. Under section 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) (GLA Act), the GLA has a general power to do anything that it considers will further the promotion of social development in Greater London. As noted above, and in all previous related decision documents, it is considered that increasing awareness of, and participation by the electorate in, elections generally – including through increased voter registration rates, particularly among under-registered and under-represented communities, and raising awareness of the voting system changes, particularly among under-registered and under-represented communities – will promote and support democratic participation and further social cohesion. On this basis, the activity proposed in this MD falls within the GLA's general power. Pursuant to section 32(1) of the GLA Act, the general power is exercisable only after consultation with such bodies or persons as the GLA may consider appropriate in the particular case. Consultation and engagement which has taken place is referred to at paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 above.
- 6.2. As highlighted in MD2970, and reaffirmed in this MD, the GLA has the legal remit to carry out this activity in collaboration and coordination with statutory and public bodies. Sections 2 and 3 highlight how the proposed activities: will facilitate and support the activities of those bodies in promoting awareness of the voting system changes, including amongst under-registered and under-represented communities; and are in line with GLA's responsibility to tackle inequality.
- 6.3. The GLA's activities in this area must at all times be apolitical, and must not be perceived to be associated with the promotion of any political party or individual politician or potential candidate. They must also be kept distinct from the functions of the GLRO, whose actual and perceived impartiality is vital, and who has no role in respect of voter registration.
- 6.4. Legal advice should be taken, as appropriate, throughout the design and delivery phases to ensure all proposed activities constitute cooperation and coordination with the activities of relevant public bodies. Similarly, it will be prudent for the GLA to continue working with the LVRSP to provide guidance and advice; and to ensure that any activities facilitate, or coordinate or cooperate with, the activities of the Electoral Commission and borough electoral services.
- 6.5. Importantly, and in any event, the GLA's activities and published materials (including those published by grantees or other service providers) in this area must at all times be apolitical, objective, factual and neutral. They must not seek, or be capable of being perceived to seek, to affect public support for, or opposition to, the voting system changes, provisions of the Elections Act or any other such related matters. They must not be capable of being perceived as designed to affect public support (positively or negatively) for a political party or a candidate in an election; and they must comply with the GLA's Use of Resources Guidance and the Code of Practice on Local Government Publicity. Any materials produced should be reviewed to ensure compliance with the above.
- 6.6. Officers should ensure, in the purchase of works, services or supplies, those works, services or supplies are procured by Transport for London Procurement in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code, and appropriate contracts (containing termination for convenience provisions

exercisable at sole discretion of the GLA) are entered into and executed by the GLA and counterparties before their commencement.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	January 2023
Appoint delivery partner for LVRW 2023 and phase 2 of Voter ID public awareness campaign	By end of February 2023
LVRW potential launch and delivery start date	September 2023
LVRW delivery end date	September 2023
LVRW final evaluation (self-evaluation)	Start: September 2023 End: November 2023
Voter ID public awareness campaign phase 2: potential launch and delivery start date	April 2023
Voter ID public awareness campaign phase 2: delivery end date	February 2024
Voter ID campaign final evaluation (self-evaluation)	Start: February 2024 End: April 2024
Project closure	May 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? NO

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under the 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:

Dr Elisabeth Pop has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

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

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Debbie Weekes-Bernard 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 16 January 2023.

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature:

D. Gene

Date:

16/01/2023

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature:

D. Bellamy

Date:

16/01/2023

