

Subject: A Mayoral Digital Manifesto

Report to: Economy Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 21 January 2016

This report will be considered in public.

1. Summary

- 1.1 This paper sets out for noting the Committee's report on the Digital Economy, resulting from its September 2015 site visit.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes its report *A Mayoral manifesto for the Digital Economy*, as set out at Appendix 1.**

3. Background

- 3.1 In July 2015, the Committee agreed the terms of reference for a site visit to London's Tech City. They were, to explore:
- How the tech sector is rising to the challenge of a shortage of digital talent. In particular, how it is working to ensure that Londoners, especially less-advantaged youth, and the long-term unemployed, are given the skills to benefit from opportunities in the tech sector;
 - The impact of the Mayor, LEP and others' interventions to support technology skills training for Londoners;
 - What actions the Mayor, LEP and others could take to ensure Londoners benefit from the growth of London's tech sector, with a view to production of a Digital Manifesto for the new Mayor.
- 3.2 On 10 September, members of the London Assembly Economy Committee, London Assembly Education Panel, and John Biggs AM, met with various prominent individuals in the tech sector with a role in digital skills growth and connectivity improvement. Through their discussions and observations they uncovered three key issues relating to the terms of reference: poor broadband connectivity, a lack of diversity in the sector, and a significant shortage of skilled workers.

3.3 The final report was published on 03 December 2015.

4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 The terms of reference for this project were approved by the Committee at its meeting on 14 July 2015. Officers confirm that the report and its recommendations fall within these terms of reference.

4.2 In October 2015, the Committee delegated authority to the Chair, in consultation with the party Group Lead Members, to agree the final output from the Committee's visit to Tech City. The Committee published *A Mayoral manifesto for the Digital Economy*, in December 2015.

4.3 The full report is attached for Members and officers as **Appendix 1**, and can also be found on the London Assembly website at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly/london-assembly-publications/mayoral-manifesto-digital-economy>

4.4 The report made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

The Mayor should ensure clear guidance is made available, to help businesses establish their connectivity needs, and set out the full range of options available to help address them.

Recommendation 2:

The Mayor could endorse a redefinition of the 'Superfast' target, to recognise that many SMEs, particularly in the tech sector, require superfast to apply to both their download and upload speeds (i.e. to be symmetrical). Achieving 95% asymmetric superfast speeds is not enough.

Recommendation 3:

The London plan should include a clear commitment to promote strategic investment in connectivity infrastructure. This should reflect the new ambition to achieve symmetrical superfast speeds.

Recommendation 4:

The connectivity vouchers scheme represented a series of missed opportunities for the Mayor and City Hall. Future schemes to enable SMEs in London to improve their connectivity must be more ambitious in scale. And, to ensure their success, they must be easier to understand, better explained, and marketed earlier.

Recommendation 5:

The Mayor should highlight the need for wider availability of high-speed broadband infrastructure, including FTTP, fixed wireless infrastructure and other innovative technologies, which are needed to achieve the ultrafast 100Mbps download and upload speeds worthy of a leading digital economy.

Recommendation 6:

The Mayor, and GLA, should continue to support Central London Forward in designing and delivering the new standardised wayleave, ensuring its existence is widely known and understood, by both landlords, and their business tenants.

Recommendation 7:

The Mayor should lobby government to introduce, as a condition of planning consent for new developments, a requirement to have installed 'super-fast' connectivity infrastructure.

Recommendation 8:

As part of the LEP's London Ambitions Careers framework, more emphasis must be placed upon tech businesses engaging directly with schools in their local areas, to bring local opportunities to life (see recommendation 16).

Recommendation 9:

Additionally, tech apprenticeships and digital skills provision must be designed to enable the most disadvantaged young Londoners to benefit from the best training available. (See apprenticeships under 'Challenge 3 – Skills.')

Recommendation 10:

The Mayor could further champion the role of women, such as his new tech ambassador, Sarah Wood, in the digital economy.

Recommendation 11:

The Mayor could endorse and promote the newly launched, industry-led, [Tech Talent Charter](#) which aims to increase gender diversity in tech. In particular he could support the goal for industry leaders to monitor and publish data on their diversity record.

Recommendation 12:

With increased devolution of skills funding the Mayor, and LEP, should work together with digital skills providers, and further education establishments, to re-design an apprenticeship which is fit for the purposes of the digital sector (See box).

Recommendation 13:

In the meantime, as well as supporting existing apprenticeship schemes, the Mayor and the LEP should carefully target the £5m Digital Talent Programme to enable a range of providers to benefit. Making funds available to providers offering courses other than conventional apprenticeships, would ensure those most in need could access the very best training available in London.

Recommendation 14:

The Mayor, and GLA, should gather and maintain real-time data on the sectoral demand for tech skills, to ensure skills providers are designing training appropriate to the needs of businesses.

Recommendation 15:

The Mayor, LEP and GLA, could ensure that SME interests are represented in high level decisions as part of the Digital Talent Programme. They could support SMEs to collaborate on building a sustainable, shared apprenticeship programme from which they would gain value, without disproportionate resource burden.

Recommendation 16:

The Mayor, London Councils, and the LEP could use the tech sector to pilot The London Ambitions Careers Offer, bringing together digital business leaders, local authorities and schools, to build better, universal, careers provision at a local level (see recommendation 8).

Recommendation 17:

To underpin this, and avoid the array of digital skills offerings becoming confusing for young Londoners, the Mayor should use the [Tech.London](#) website to provide a clear, well explained, source of information and advice on the range of pathways to a digital career, and the financial help available

4.5 Responses to the report are outstanding, pending a deadline of 31 February 2016.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – *A Mayoral manifesto for the Digital Economy*

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers: Member's Delegated Authority Form 607

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