

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD352

Title: Essential skills for working in a political environment

Executive Summary: This ADD requests permission to procure The Civil Service College to deliver training to London Assembly Group support staff in relation to skills for working in a political environment.

Decision:

That the Head of Committee and Member Services approves expenditure of £15,000, £11,000 during the 2015/16 financial year and £4,000 during the 2016/17 financial year - for The Civil Service College to deliver training to London Assembly Group support staff in relation to essential skills for working in a political environment.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT:

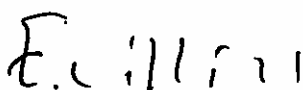
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Ed Williams

Position: Head of Committee & Member Services

Signature:



Date: 15.10.15

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The GLA provides a range of professional development training which is available to all staff, including training around communications skills, writing skills and other 'soft skills' training.
- 1.2 To complement the existing offer, officers are looking to design and deliver some training sessions focused on essential skills for working in a political environment, aimed specifically at staff providing support to London Assembly Members.
- 1.3 The staff work in four Groups – the Labour Group (21 Members of staff) GLA Conservatives (16 members of staff) the Green Party Group (5 members of staff) and the Liberal Democrat Group (5 members of staff). Staff attending the sessions will be either:
 - Senior Researchers;
 - Research and Support Officers; or
 - Press Officers.
- 1.4 The two larger Groups have Heads of Office who manage the teams and their budgets, and the two smaller Groups have Team Coordinators who are not formal line managers but who do coordinate the work of the team, oversee the day-to-day work of the team and act as first point of contact for Members of the Group as regards the team. In addition, one Group also has a Business Support Officer.
- 1.5 All of the above staff support and work closely with politicians, some of whom have several roles within the GLA Group (for example, some are both Assembly Members and Mayoral Advisors or chairs of other bodies within the GLA Group). All the staff therefore operate within a highly political environment, which creates a very specific and challenging context for the service they are expected to provide.
- 1.6 The support roles include a wide range of tasks and duties (exact job descriptions depending on role and location within organisation), including:
 - Research on behalf of politicians;
 - Advising politicians on the approach to be taken to various policy debates and scrutiny reviews;
 - Drafting a variety of documents/communications including briefing notes, formal letters, reports, emails, speeches and press releases;
 - Providing a proactive and efficient interface with the public;
 - Managing diaries, organising meetings and other events;
 - Providing project support or managing discrete projects; and
 - Managing records and filing systems
- 1.7 The performance expectations (the expected behaviours) for all roles, including the support roles, are defined within the GLA competency framework. The competencies typically associated with the above roles include:
 - Communicating and Influencing (all roles except Business Support Officer)
 - Building and Managing Relationships (all roles)
 - Responding to Pressure and Change (Senior Press Officers only)
 - Organisational Awareness (all roles)
 - Planning and Organising (all roles)

- Research and Analysis (all roles except Senior Press Officers)
- Problem Solving (Team Coordinators, Senior Researchers and Research and Support Officers only)
- Stakeholder Focus (Business Support Officer only)

- 1.8 The competencies relevant to Team Coordinators, Senior Researchers, Research and Support Officers, Senior Press Officers are at level 2 of the competency framework. The competencies relevant to the Business Support Officer are at level 1 of the competency framework.
- 1.9 The training sessions would be part of wider rolling programme consisting of a mixture of internal briefings/seminar on a range of knowledge areas (eg corporate governance, the GLA budget process and financial issues facing the GLA Group), technical training (eg statistics workshops, IT skills) and skills training delivered by external providers.
- 1.10 In seeking to procure the training, officers invited four training organisations to submit quotes. Three organisations responded. The three organisations were invited to attend a selection panel meeting in order to provide further information regarding their quotes, detail their experience of providing similar training and answer queries from the panel. The panel consisted of the Committee and Member Services Manager and the Heads of Office of the Labour Group and the GLA Conservatives Group.
- 1.11 Of the bids received, the quotes from The Civil Service College was the lowest quote which also met all the requirements of the training specification and could demonstrate the most relevant experience of providing similar training to a similar audience.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 It is proposed to procure The Civil Service College to design and provide some training to Assembly Group Support staff on essential skills for working in a political environment. The Civil Service College was founded in 2012 to provide high quality and bespoke training programmes for the public sector and has an excellent track record and reputation for providing similar training.
- 2.2 The training would be provided in two tranches, with the first tranche taking place in the current financial year and the second tranche being provided in the 2016/17 financial year.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1 The proposed training will include consideration of equalities issues.

4. Other considerations

a) Key risks and issues

The Head of Committee and Member Services is the lead officer for the GLA in terms of ensuring efficient and effective provision of services to Members of the London Assembly and managing any associated risks.

b) Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

N/A

c) Impact assessments and consultations.

No impact assessment or consultation is deemed necessary.

5. Financial comments

Training expenditure of £11,000 will be charged to the following budget areas: Labour £4,000, Conservative £4,000 and Secretariat £3,000. Sufficient budget has been allocated from the existing member support budget for 2015-16.

The remaining expenditure of £4,000 will be incurred during 2016/17 and will be allocated against the Secretariats' training budget, subject to the Authority's budget approval process.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of training	ASAP
Announcement	N/A
Delivery Start Date	ASAP – availability allowing it is proposed that tranche 1 of the training be delivered before the end of the calendar year
Final evaluation start and finish	N/A
Delivery End Date	Summer 2016
Project Closure	N/A

Appendices and supporting papers: N/A

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) 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 approval or on the defer date.

Part 1 Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be 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:

Rebecca Arnold has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

HEAD OF GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE:

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

Signature:



Date:

15 OCT 2015

