

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2082

**Title: Access Europe Funding 2016/17**

### Executive Summary:

This Director Decision seeks approval for the allocation of £30,000 of grant funding to Access Europe Network in order to:

- Gather information on the impact of EU funding in Greater London on various sectors and priorities, thereby supporting the Mayor's work on the issue;
- Provide free services to London organisations to ensure these organisations are well equipped to bid, win and to manage EU funding, thereby supporting their long-term growth and wider economic growth in London; and
- Publicise and support bids for separate 'transnational' EU programmes that could support multiple Mayoral priority areas (see section 1).

### Decision:

That the Executive Director of Development, Enterprise & Environment approves £30,000 of grant funding to Access Europe Network (AEN) to help Greater London organisations to explore and win European grant funding opportunities, taking the lifetime GLA funding to £130,000.

### AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

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:** Fiona Fletcher-Smith

**Position:** Executive Director Development, Enterprise & Environment

**Signature:**



**Date:**

17.1.2017

## **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

Access Europe Network (AEN) helps London boroughs, businesses and third sector organisations to bid, win and manage EU funding opportunities. This includes the European Structural & Investment Funds as well as 'transnational' EU programmes such as Interreg, Erasmus and Creative Europe. AEN Support is delivered through online information, seminars and application workshops and through finding EU partners for London organisations and businesses.

In the context of Brexit, AEN's role in encouraging London organisations to bid for EU funds is greater than ever, particularly since recent Government assurances that it will guarantee EU funding for structural and investment fund projects agreed before, but which continue after, the UK has left the EU.

Recent AEN successes have helped Westminster Council win a €1.4 million project to support vulnerable families tackle housing, skills and mental health issues and move into work: this programme will call for more bids this autumn: more London organisations could win this funding for similar innovative projects.

AEN is funded by the City of London Corporation (£50k), London Councils (£66k) and GLE (£30k): each has agreed this level of funding for three years ending 2016/17. The GLA agreed £50,000 grant for 2014/15 and 2015/16 using budget allocated to the London Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), following endorsement from the London Local Enterprise Partnership which acts as an advisory panel to the Mayor. This funding request is for an additional £30,000 (down from an initial ask of £50,000) as AEN have secured some consultancy income from project evaluations, project management support and intensive one-to-one support with funding bids. This consultancy income has increased year on year, although it is still a fairly small proportion of their income.

AEN have considered charging for attendance at seminars and workshops, or for access to the detailed information on their website. However, the project's objective is to encourage engagement in EU funding, and other funders are of the view that charging for support would mitigate against that objective. In addition, AEN receive many enquiries about the impact of Brexit and have established a new section on their website to hold information and articles on the subject. This has increased time spent on the website, without additional income. AEN are also gathering information on the impact of EU funding in London on various sectors and priorities, to support the Mayor's lobbying on the issue, but again without income to cover the time spent on this.

The increase in consultancy income, together with some minor staffing changes, means that AEN are requesting a smaller LEP grant of £30,000 for 2016/17. Without this funding from the LEP AEN will be unable to provide the current range of services and outcomes set out in this proposal.

#### **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

European Structural & Investment Funds are allocated in line with the strategy set by the London Local Enterprise Partnership, with these and other EU funding opportunities supporting multiple Mayoral priorities areas which seek to create jobs and encourage economic growth.

#### **3. Equality comments**

AEN helps London organisations access a wide range of European funding, much of which is designed to tackle discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, the trafficking of human being, and violence against

women and children; those escaping from violence; refugees and migrants. Efforts are made to reach as wide a range of organisations as possible and AEN's database has 1,700 London organisations.

Funding programmes include, for example:

- The Asylum and Integration Fund, which funds projects designed to achieve efficient management of migration flows and to the implementation, strengthening and development of the common policy on asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection and the common immigration policy, while fully respecting the rights and principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- The Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme is a financing instrument to promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions.
- Erasmus+ aims to modernise education, training and youth work across Europe. It is open to education, training, youth and sport organisations across all sectors of lifelong learning, including school education, vocational and higher education, adult education, the youth sector and sport. It funds youth exchanges, volunteers and strategic partnerships for young people, especially those who are NEET or at risk of being NEET
- The Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme has a budget of €439 million to promote and protect specific individual rights and freedoms that derive from EU law. The programme promotes gender equality, rights deriving from the citizenship of the Union, children's rights and Roma inclusion; and it funds projects aimed at combating all forms of discrimination and racism and fighting violence against women, young people and children.

#### **4. Financial comments**

Director's approval is being sought to for expenditure of up to £30,000 to contribute to the Access Europe Network to facilitate London organisations to explore and attain European grant funding. The expenditure will be funded from the London Enterprise Panel Strategic Plans and EU Funds Investment Strategies' budget for 2016-17.

All spend will take place in 2016-17; officers should ensure that they enter into a funding agreement with the Access Europe Network confirming the GLA's contribution to the project.

#### **5. Legal comments**

Section 1 of this report indicates that:

the decision requested of the Director (in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code) concern the exercise of 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, social development or the promotion of the improvement of the environment in Greater London; and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied 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; and
- Consult with appropriate bodies

In taking the decisions requested, the Director must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment) and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above of this report).

Section 1 above indicates that the contribution of £30,000 to Access Europe Network amounts to the provision of grant funding and not payment for services. Officers must ensure that the funding is distributed fairly, transparently, and in accordance with the GLA' equalities and in a manner which affords value for money in accordance with the Contracts and Funding Code.

Officers must ensure that an appropriate funding agreement is put in place between and executed by the GLA and AEN before any commitment to fund is made.

## **7. Planned delivery approach and next steps**

Delivery is already taking place using third party funding and therefore the GLA funding contribution will be used to fund activity in quarter 4 of 2016/17.

### **Appendices and supporting papers:**

None.

**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:**

Jamie Izzard has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that:

✓

**Assistant Director/Head of Service:**

Alex Conway has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to the Sponsoring Director for approval.

✓

**Financial and Legal advice:**

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal, and this decision reflects their comments.

✓

**Corporate Investment Board:**

The Corporate Investment Board reviewed this proposal on 16 January 2017.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:**

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

Signature

*M. J. Ellis*

Date

*17.1.17*

