

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD319

Title: **Accessibility for Visitors Evaluation Study**

Executive Summary:

This study will evaluate the progress made in improving the accessibility of London as a visitor destination. It will replicate the study commissioned after London 2012 to see progress made in ensuring an accessible destination for disabled visitors and will make recommendations for any further improvements. This study will track progress against the Mayor’s aspiration that the London 2012 would be the most accessible ever and as part of the public sector equality duty to advance equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination for disabled people.

The study will evaluate progress by replicating and using the baseline measurements from the Live Tourism Report called ‘Games Changer? An Evaluation of London as an Accessible Visitor Destination’.

This study will:

- evaluate the projects and programmes undertaken by the GLA and others
- undertake key stakeholder research to assess how the public sector has responded to the need to create an accessible welcome for disabled visitors
- undertake consumer research with a sample of disabled respondents
- quantify lessons learnt and identify work still needed to further improve the accessibility of the visitor experience
- make recommendations on how to continue improving the visitor experience as part of a wider legacy programme for London
- identify who is best placed to continue this important work.

Decision:

The Assistant Director approves expenditure of up to £25,000 to procure, appoint and commission consultants to undertake an evaluation study of the accessibility of London as a visitor destination and its readiness to welcome disabled visitors.

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 Amanda Coyle

Position Assistant Director of Health and Communities

Signature

Date

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 In 2009 the London Development Agency (LDA), in partnership with the GLA, commissioned Live Tourism to undertake a study into the accessibility of London as a visitor destination and its readiness to welcome disabled visitors. The study was replicated after the Games. The resultant report called 'Games Changer? An Evaluation of London as an Accessible Visitor Destination' was published in March 2013. It identified the major initiatives underway at that time to improve accessibility in London and it made a number of recommendations on public sector interventions and influences and established a baseline against which progress can be measured. It recommended that the study be replicated at an appropriate interval to evaluate progress.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

Objectives of this study

- 2.1 This study will replicate the Live Tourism study in order to evaluate progress made and make recommendations on making London an accessible visitor destination.
- 2.2 Using the baseline measurements and the recommendations in 'Games Changer? An Evaluation of London as an Accessible Visitor Destination' the study will:
- evaluate the projects and programmes put in place by the GLA, and others where appropriate, in response to these recommendations
 - look at the wider picture of how the public sector has responded to the need to create an accessible welcome for disabled visitors by undertaking key stakeholder research
 - undertake consumer research with a representative sample of disabled respondents which replicates that undertaken in 2012 and evaluate progress.
 - quantify lessons learnt and identify work still needed to further improve the accessibility of the visitor experience.
 - consider how the economic impact to London / added value of the accessibility improvements could be measured
 - make recommendations on how to continue improving the visitor experience as part of a wider legacy programme for London.
 - Identify who is best placed to continue this important work.

Scope

- 2.3 The sectors to be included in the study are set out below. To be consistent with the previous study the physical infrastructure issues and the less tangible issues of visitor information and customer service for disabled visitors will be assessed.
- 2.4 The sectors include:
- Public Transport – underground, bus, rail, river transport and stations
 - Air transport at Heathrow airport and transfers to ground transport
 - Taxis and Blue Badge Parking for visitors
 - Hotels and other serviced accommodation

- Tourist Attractions/Museums/Heritage Venues
- Theatres/Arts/Cultural Venues
- Restaurants/Pubs
- Accessible Public Toilets
- Sports Venues
- Tours and Guides
- Major London Parks
- Town Centres/Destinations/Public Realm including key walking routes including the South Bank
- General City Information and Guidebooks
- Major retail hubs such as Stratford Westfield

2.5 The geographic scope of the study will be Pan London to cover the Mayor's remit.

3. Equality Comments

3.1 The main purpose of this project is to eliminate unlawful discrimination in instances where the built environment is inaccessible for people with mobility impairments or address a disabled visitor's experience of accessing tourist sites, hotels and other such places. For instance, it will look at the attitudes they face from customer service staff. In addition, this evaluation will also advance equality of opportunity by seeing what barriers disabled people face as visitors and what more needs to be done to remove these barriers.

4. Other considerations

a) *Links to strategies and Mayoral and corporate priorities*

This project supports one of the objectives in the GLA's Strategic Plan – namely the Paralympic legacy. It will help to assess how well London is performing in terms of being an accessible destination for disabled visitors. It will also assist in the objective of leaving a legacy for future Londoners by recommending how to continue these improvements as appropriate.

b) *Key risks and issues*

If this project is not undertaken the GLA will not be able to confidently state whether sufficient steps have been undertaken to ensure an inclusive welcome for disabled visitors. This is also part of the Paralympic legacy commitments to mainstream disability equality. This could result in negative publicity and the inability to counter any criticism of London's accessibility given that, despite the improvements made in the last few years, London can still be a challenging place for many disabled people.

b) *links to Mayoral strategies and priorities*

This project supports delivering the GLA's *Equal Life Chances for All* Framework as well as helping to meet the public sector equality duties set out in the Equality Act 2010. In addition there are links with corporate objectives on a Paralympic legacy.

c) *Impact assessments and consultations.*

The GLA recognises that ensuring the Mayor's strategies and programmes are designed to take proper account of disabled and older people's needs, is both a challenge and an opportunity.

The Assessment of the GLA's impact on disability equality 2013 highlighted evidence of key inequalities experienced by disabled people in the built environment, including: a lack of affordable and accessible housing (built to Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Accessible Homes Standards); difficulties accessing the built environment and public realm and experiencing adverse effects of poorly designed, built and managed environments.

The close involvement of disabled people and their organisations is integral to the development of the project

5. Financial Comments

- 5.1 The estimated cost of this project is £25,000 and will be funded from the 'Disabled Visitor Experience Survey' budget for 2015-16, held within the Health & Communities budget. Any changes to this proposal will be subject to further approval via the Authority's decision-making process. All appropriate budget adjustments will be made.
- 5.2 The Diversity & Social Policy Unit within the Communities & Intelligence Directorate will be responsible for managing this project and for ensuring that all activities and associated expenditure complies with the Authority's Financial Regulations, Contracts & Funding Code and Expenses & Benefits Framework.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 6.1 A brief will go out to tender in line with the procurement process set out by TfL with the shortlisting based on objectives met and value for money. Appropriate milestones and meetings will be set between the project manager and the company commissioned. The resultant report will be reviewed by the GLA, London and Partners and will be published online. It will be an opportunity to track progress and review what further actions are required.

7. Background/supporting papers

Games Changer? An Evaluation of London as an Accessible Visitor Destination, 2013
<https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/equalities/london-2012-legacy/an-evaluation-of-london-s-accessibility-for-disabled-visitors>

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:

Huma Munshi has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance team has 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: