

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2720

### Title: Talk London Website Development

#### Executive Summary:

Talk London is City Hall's online community, empowering Londoners to shape a better capital via meaningful debate and consultations. As part of a necessary technology upgrade we have recently redesigned and redeveloped the Talk London website, which is due to launch at the end of this year.

Talk London is supporting the London Recovery Board to enable citizens to influence, shape and participate fully in London's recovery through a far-reaching and inclusive process. Collaborating with and involving London's diverse communities is one of the six cross-cutting principles that shapes the recovery work.

In order to facilitate that engagement and benefit all other engagement activities at City Hall, approval is sought for funding to support further technical development including enhanced features and design that will make it easier for Londoners to take part and will appeal to diverse audiences.

#### Decision:

That the Mayor:

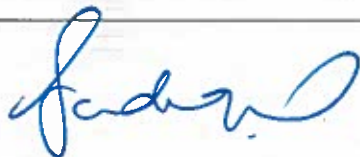
- 1) approves expenditure of up to £190,000 across financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 to complete the delivery of the Talk London design and development; and
- 2) delegates authority to the Executive Director, Strategy and Communications and the Assistant Director, Strategy, Intelligence and Analysis, acting jointly or separately, to approve expenditure of the budget that is the subject of decision 1 above in relation to the Talk London project including without limitation via the execution of all required legal documents.

#### 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:

18/1/21

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

### Decision required – supporting report

#### 1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Talk London is City Hall's online community, placing Londoners' needs at the centre of its strategies and programmes by involving citizens in meaningful research, debate and consultation about how to improve the capital.
- 1.2. Talk London has almost 60,000 members and has delivered almost all of City Hall's statutory consultations; involved thousands of members in GLA policy development and the design of products and services; secured public input to London Assembly committee investigations, and has been delivering the online public engagement for the London Recovery Programme, at no additional cost to policy teams across the GLA.
- 1.3. In June 2018, MD2300 approved expenditure up to £240,000 on the delivery of projects that would grow our user base to ensure it better reflects London's population. This included support from digital agencies and development. Since this time, we have demonstrated that our actions – including innovative campaigns like Your Commute, testing a more compelling homepage, and lowering the sign-up age to 16 – have grown and diversified our audience.
- 1.4. In November 2019, MD2535 approved expenditure up to £240,000 on the delivery of a discovery, redesign and redevelopment project to facilitate a necessary technology upgrade. This considered user experience and interaction design; the need to visually appeal to a more diverse audience; the requirement to meet website accessibility standards; and the delivery of ongoing, targeted advertising and outreach to progress our goal of making the audience as reflective of London as possible. The first phase of the refreshed site is due to launch in December 2020.
- 1.5. Talk London is currently supporting the London Recovery Board to enable citizens to influence, shape and participate fully in London's recovery through a far-reaching and inclusive process. It has involved citizens in a sustained debate about London's response and recovery since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.6. Collaborating with and involving London's diverse communities is one of the six cross-cutting principles that shapes the recovery work. In order to facilitate that engagement, funding is sought to support further technical development including enhanced features and design that will make it easier for Londoners to take part and will appeal to diverse audiences, for example enhanced email automation, personalisation and enabling more self-serve opportunities for policy teams working with Talk London.
- 1.7. Funding is now sought to support the further redevelopment of Talk London as set out below. The costs below have been based on the development work for phase one, which is underway and is expected to total £143,000 for development, accessibility testing and security testing. Based on the number of features still to be introduced, we are estimating that phases two and three will be approximately equal to phase one. The digital agencies budget included is set aside for requirements coming from the Recovery Programme and the estimated cost is based on the redesign and discovery project costing £81k. The project team working on the redesign and redevelopment has included colleagues from the GLA's Technology Group (TG), the Digital team and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).

Type	2020/2021 spend	2021/2022 spend	Description
Digital agencies		£40,000	Additional Talk London website design requirements due to the recovery programme, including visual design, user experience,

			accessibility and interaction design for new features.
Development agencies	£60,000	£90,000	To complete implementation the new designs and new functionality in phases 2 and 3, particularly personalisation, further automation and efficiencies from enabling self-serve opportunities for policy teams. Delivered via existing TG supplier contracts.
TOTAL	£60,000	£130,000	
TOTAL	£190,000		

1.8. It is anticipated that this funding would enable the development work for launch of phase two of the new Talk London in March 2021 and launch of phase three in June 2021. Continuous testing and iteration would be undertaken, working in an agile way to ensure that the new designs and functionality resonate with our audiences.

## 2. Objectives and expected outcomes

### 2.1. Objectives:

- new designs required as a result of the Recovery Programme, considering user experience and interaction design, and the need to appeal visually to a more diverse audience; and
- launch of the additional features and design to support the Recovery Programme, including enhanced personalisation, analytics and automation.

### 2.2. Outcomes:

- increasing participation, awareness and knowledge of the Recovery Programme, building trust between Londoners and the agencies involved in delivery; and
- development of a cohort of Londoners who have shaped our Recovery Programme and who are willing to become active in delivery of activities.

## 3. Equality comments

3.1. The Greater London Authority has an obligation under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to consider how its policies and decisions affect people who are protected under the act. The website redevelopment will continue to ensure the Talk London site is more appealing to a diverse audience and that it is easier to take part. Demographic information collected on registration will ensure we are aware who joins and participates in Talk London and will inform our acquisition strategy, and automation aspects will make it more efficient for the Talk London site to be run internally.

## 4. Other considerations

### *Risks and issues*

4.1. Talk London was established to gather Londoners' views to help steer important policy decisions. It is, therefore, important that we reach and engage Londoners from all walks of life in our work. Any new designs and all redevelopment will specifically monitor participation rates from different audiences and a test, learn and iterate approach will ensure we create a website that appeals to a diverse

audience. Our acquisition and outreach will continue to target underrepresented audiences to bolster numbers of those who are traditionally harder to reach.

- 4.2. London.gov is currently running a discovery project and learnings from the Talk London design refresh and testing will feed into this process, helping to inform the discovery and future integration.

*Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities*

- 4.3. The Mayor has a published commitment to lead the way in openness and transparency. The Talk London community ensures we allow Londoners to participate in the design, development and delivery of strategies, policies, interventions and services. In addition, the London Recovery Programme contains a cross-cutting principle to collaborate and involve London's diverse communities with work to restore confidence in the city, minimise the impact on London's communities and build back better the city's economy and society.
- 4.4. GLA officers involved in the preparation of this form do not have any conflicts of interest to declare.

## **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1. Approval is being sought for expenditure of up to £190,000 (profiled £60,000 in 2020/21 and £130,000 in 2021/22) to support the further redevelopment of Talk London website. Some development agency commitments and spend profiled to 2020/21 may fall within 2021/22. This will be funded via budget reprofile/carry forward from 2020/21, subject to approval.
- 5.2. The expenditure will be funded from the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Talk London Budgets held within the City Intelligence Unit after allowing for the anticipated reductions to Talk London's budget in 2021-22.

## **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor fall within the statutory powers of the Authority to promote and/or to do anything which is facilitative of or conducive or incidental to social development within Greater London and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
  - (a) pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people;
  - (b) 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
  - (c) consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested of him, the Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other 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 characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3. Officers must ensure that any external services required for the project be procured in accordance with the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code and with the assistance of Transport for London's procurement team. Furthermore, officers must ensure that appropriate contractual documentation be

executed by both the Authority and the relevant contractor prior to the commencement of the required services.

- 6.4. Any function exercisable by the Mayor on behalf of the Authority may also be exercised by a member of the Authority's staff albeit subject to any conditions, which the Mayor sees fit to impose. To this end, the Mayor may make the requested delegation to the Executive Director Strategy and Communications and the Assistant Director Strategy, Intelligence and Analysis, if he so chooses.

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

- 7.1. Project sponsorship is provided by Dr Nick Bowes. The Talk London Digital Engagement & Product Manager will manage the project, working closely with colleagues from Digital, Marketing and TG.
- 7.2. Talk London development and digital agency work will be delivered via existing TG supplier contracts.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Talk London redevelopment phase two	January-March 2021
Talk London redevelopment phase three	April-June 2021
Programme evaluation and recommendations	July/August 2021

**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**

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

**Part 2 – Sensitive information**

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

Selina Holliday has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

**Sponsoring Director:**

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

✓

**Mayoral Adviser:**

Nick Bowes 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 7 December 2020.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:**

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

**Signature**

**Date**

*D. Gove*

15 January 2021

**CHIEF OF STAFF:**

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

**Signature**

**Date**

*D. Bellamy*

7 December 2020