

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2390

Title: London Development Database Automation and Live Data Hub project

Executive Summary:

This Mayoral Decision (MD) seeks approval to fund the development of an up-to-date, automated data collection and monitoring system for the London Plan. This project should: enable a robust evidence base on which to prepare new planning policies and make decisions on planning applications; reduce the cost of collecting development data for Londoners and local planning authorities; and provide a clearer, more transparent picture of what is happening on the ground for Londoners, SMEs, Government, and others interested in London's growth.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves:

The allocation and expenditure of up to £150,000 on phase one of the project to deliver an updated, automated London Development Database and related improvements.

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:

16/11/17

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

Decision required – supporting report

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Greater London Authority Act 1999 places responsibility for strategic planning in London on the Mayor and requires him to produce a strategic spatial strategy for London, which he is also required to keep under review.
- 1.2 Since 2004 the effectiveness of that spatial strategy has been monitored through the London Development Database and reported through an annual monitoring report.
- 1.3 The way this works has broadly not changed since 2004 and requires each of the planning authorities in London to review each permission they grant and report permissions for developments which:
 - Create or lose 1 or more dwellings;
 - Result in a change of use of more than 1000m²; or
 - Results in the loss or gain of public open space.
- 1.4 This data is collected and entered into the current London Development Database through a web portal, often manually, and checked by GLA officers.
- 1.5 The data is collected relating to:
 - When permission is granted;
 - When the development commences; and
 - When the development is completed.
- 1.6 Data is also collected on when the planning permission expires unimplemented.
- 1.7 Whilst still the only database of its kind, and ground breaking for its time, technology, the planning process, and the development industry have since moved on not least in the expectations that data will be collected to enable the effectiveness of policies and development on the ground to be assessed much more comprehensively than the limited dataset above.
- 1.8 The Mayor's London Plan is soon to be adopted and the limitations of the current London Development Database (LDD) mean that the effectiveness of this critical policy document on non-referable schemes will not be measurable for over a year, if not 18 months, after the policy document has been agreed and published.
- 1.9 The GLA has other projects that rely on the LDD for their effectiveness, in particular the London Infrastructure Mapping Application, the soon to be launched accessible housing register, and the work of the City Intelligence team on demographics, schools, and other social infrastructure. The LDD's current limitations constrain the effectiveness of these tools.
- 1.10 Specialist services are required therefore, to enable the LDD to be updated to meet the GLA's London Plan needs efficiently.
- 1.11 The update of the London Development Database will address these issues by automating the collection of monitoring data for all planning application types.
- 1.12 This request for a Mayoral decision aligns with the Smarter London Together roadmap and the GLA's wider work stream regarding Digital Planning. The project will be delivered to meet the criteria of the Local Digital Declaration of which the GLA is a signatory.

- 1.13 This request for a Mayoral decision is also informed by a discovery exercise where GLA staff visited 26 Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in early 2018 to identify how they currently complete LDD requirements; their existing back office systems and management practices; the cost of the status quo; the quality of the data they provide; and issues they face completing the requirements. A summary of this research can be found at <https://medium.com/@SmartLondon/improving-london-wide-planning-data-what-we-found-665de6b27d1a>

2 Objectives and Expected Outcomes

2.1 The objectives of the automation of the London Development Database are:

- To have a clear, up to date and robust evidence base on which to prepare new planning policies and make decisions on planning applications;
- Reduce the cost of collecting development data for Londoners and local planning authorities; and
- Provide a clearer, more transparent picture of what is happening on the ground for Londoners, SMEs, Government, and others interested in London's growth.

2.2 The outcomes of this project are:

- A central register of all planning applications submitted within the GLA area with key monitoring data in machine-readable format; and
- A dataset that will inform decisions, with published tools to enable Londoners to analyse the data.

2.3 There are likely to be other outcomes from the delivery of this automation, including:

- E-Alert notifications for Londoners of all developments that might affect them, regardless of borough boundaries, enabling Boroughs to move away from written neighbour notification letters;
- Opportunities for business to innovate based on the live data feed of information, which we hope will stimulate new markets and opportunities for business;
- Enable smoother delivery of housing; and
- Encourage boroughs to use the connected levels of information to undertake more specific monitoring of developments and generate faster payment of CIL and policing of building regulations.

2.4 This MD funds phase one of this project, to be completed by 31 March 2019. The above outcomes would be delivered at the close of phase two in February 2020 (contingent on an additional MD).

3 Equality comments

3.1 The public-sector equality duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the identification and evaluation of the likely potential impacts, both positive and negative, of the decision on those with protected characteristics.¹ The Mayor is to have due regard to the need to

¹ These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and in certain circumstances marriage and civil partnership.

eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may involve, in particular, removing or minimising any disadvantage suffered by those who share a relevant protected characteristic and taking steps to meet the needs of such people. In certain circumstances compliance with the Act may involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without it. The GLA will take appropriate steps to identify any potential negative impacts expected on those with protected characteristics. The project is unlikely to have a direct impact on any persons whether they have any protected characteristics or not. That being said further consideration will need to be given to how the data collected is used and how that may have an impact on any protected group. For example, the data collected to inform individuals with accessible housing need of the available pipeline of accommodation could have a positive impact. However much of the impact is dependent on how this data is published.

4 Other considerations

Mayoral Priorities

4.1 This project contributes to a number of the Mayor's priorities, including:

- Enabling accurate data on delivery, pipeline and decisions for the provision of housing for Londoners and genuinely affordable housing:

'My first priority will be tackling the housing crisis. We need to build more homes, including more genuinely affordable homes for Londoners, and fewer gold bricks for overseas investors.' (Manifesto);

- Enabling joined up decisions for infrastructure planning—helping utilities plan for growth so that lack of infrastructure does not become a blocker to housing delivery—as well as providing opportunities for business to use and commercialise this information to further opportunities for Londoners:

"When it comes to planning London's future economic development, infrastructure, skills and housing will be my foremost priorities" ; "The next Mayor must start planning and delivering the infrastructure and new capacity for the future straight away..." (Manifesto);

- Providing a collaborative, cross-London effort toward open data and transparency:

'Put an open data strategy at the heart of London government, with a new London data office working to bring data from across London's boroughs and public agencies together, and opening it up to enable quicker decision making, better services, more efficient government, and greater transparency.' (Manifesto); and

- Enabling centralised collection of this data will enable the delivery of more joined up services for all, removing the postcode lottery of planning services, enabling Londoners to become more engaged in shaping the environment they live in.

Project Costs

4.2 The protected costs for the delivery of this project in phase one are as follows:

Staff requirements, in addition to existing resources, through 31 March 2019:

1 Senior Project Officer (Grade 8/9): To manage project implementation - £60,000 x 1/3 (4 months) = 20,000

2 Delivery Officers (Grade 6/7): To work with boroughs—e.g. coordinating to update systems, agree validation list changes, etc. - £45,000 x 2 officers x 1/3 (4 months) = £30,000

Total staff costs: £50,000

Systems costs:

Upgrade borough systems to same level: £42,000

£1,000–10,000 per borough

For: back office system changes, true automation with Planning Portal or equivalent

Planning Portal changes: £25,000

For: altering fields in Planning Portal to reflect new local validations lists

Back Office System transformation: £33,000

For: altering fields; improving ease of data extracts

Total systems costs: £100,000

Total phase one project costs: £150,000

4.3 The above services will be procured through TfL Commercial; project officers are in discussion with TfL Commercial to determine the most appropriate procurement strategies.

4.4 The three positions to be created above will be recruited in accordance with all GLA staffing protocols.

Risks and Issues

4.5 There are a number of key risks to the delivery of this project, these include

Risk #	Risk description and impact	Inherent risk assessment (out of 4)			Control measures / Actions
		Prob.	Impact	Overall	
1	That the submission systems may not be able to accommodate proposed changes	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -early conversations to ensure changes are technically feasible -allocating budget for changes -investigating how changes would work across all possible platforms.

3	That there may be a lack of LPA buy-in to project	3	4	<p>12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -communications strategy for boroughs with clear narrative demonstrating business case -GLA commitment to do background work required on behalf of LPAs -potential involvement from Central Government given national scalability
4	That the back office systems may not be able to accommodate proposed changes	3	2	<p>6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -early conversations with providers -provider-customer conversations to be convened -allocating budget for changes -exploration of disruptor providers, to open the market -potential for GLA funds to employ legal and other services to support negotiation -potential involvement from Central Government given national scalability -potential solution where data circumvents back office systems
6	That the changes may not create savings for boroughs	1	3	<p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -potential for CBA -GLA budget allocated to ensure the transition does not cost boroughs -potential to explore additional sources of external funding
7	That the funding allocated by the GLA may be insufficient to achieve objectives	2	2	<p>4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -budget set at level that includes sufficient contingency -investigate opportunities for external funding
9	That the LDD rewrite may not be launched with automation capacity in a timely fashion	1	3	<p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -request to allocate budget internally -elevating project profile internally -back-up plan that allows system to go live before full GLA automation is ready

10	That even with changes, applicants may not input high quality data initially into applications	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ensure changes are mandatory -ensure different level of detail required for different level of development (home owner versus major developer) -ensure boroughs continue monitoring data
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5. Financial comments

- 5.1 The proposed expenditure of up to £150,000 on the London Development Database and Live Data Hub during phase one of the project will be a combination of capital and revenue expenditure in 2018-19. The estimated expenditure budget and proposed funding sources is summarised below.

	2018-19
Capital	£
Upgrade Borough Systems	42,000
Planning Portal changes	25,000
Back Office System Transformation	33,000
Total Capital Expenditure	100,000
Revenue	
Staff Costs	50,000
Total Revenue Costs	50,000
Total Project Costs	150,000
Funding	
Growth & Infrastructure IMA	50,000
Planning Pre-App Reserve	51,000
Planning under-spend	49,000
Total Funding	150,000

- 5.2 The proposed capital expenditure of £100,000 scheduled to be incurred in 2018-19 will be funded by a revenue contribution to capital from existing revenue budgets, specifically via Planning budgets held within the Development, Enterprise & Environment Directorate (DEE) and a drawdown from the pre-application planning reserve as summarised in the table above.
- 5.3 The proposed revenue expenditure of up to £50,000 will be funded from the Growth & Infrastructure budget, specially via the income received for the Infrastructure Mapping Application as approved by MD2162.
- 5.4 It should be noted that phase 2 of the project is still being developed and subject to funding being made available will go through the Authority's decision-making process once fully scoped out.

6 Legal comments

- 6.1 The sections above indicate that the decisions requested fall within the statutory powers under section 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) ("the Act") to do anything to promote

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 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 affect:
 - i. the health of persons in greater London;
 - ii. the health inequalities between persons living in Greater London;
 - iii. the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and
 - iv. climate change, and the consequences of climate change; and
- (c) consult with appropriate bodies.

6.2 Section 34 of the Act also gives the Mayor the authority to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the exercise of any of the statutory functions of the Authority. Section 334 of the Act requires the Mayor to prepare and publish a spatial development strategy (known as the London Plan). Section 339 of the Act requires the Mayor to keep the London Plan under review, especially matters which may be expected to affect the development of Greater London or the planning of its development. In this case, the decision to undertake this project and update the London Development Database may reasonably be regarded as facilitating, being conducive or incidental to the exercise of the powers detailed above.

6.3 In taking the decision requested, 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 and foster good relations 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 (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

6.4 Should the Mayor be minded to make the decision sought officers must ensure:

6.4.1 That the services required are procured by Transport for London Commercial Procurement who will determine the detail of the procurement strategy to be adopted in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code and appropriate contracts are put in place between and executed by the GLA and successful bidders before the commencement of such services; and

6.4.2 To the extent that the expenditure proposed involves GLA staffing matters, all relevant GLA staff protocols (including seeking Head of Paid Service approvals where applicable) are observed.

7 Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1 This project will require a number of changes to the planning process. These include:

- Amending the Mayoral agreement with the leaders of London's Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) regarding the data collected;
- Working with 35 LPAs to amend their Local Validation Requirements Checklist;
- Updating the Planning Portal to collect the information required in machine readable form;

- Working with back office development management system providers to enable the automated collection of information;
- Establishing reporting mechanisms to extract the data from LPAs' back office systems;
- Updating the London Development Database to receive automated data; and
- Developing a new portal that enables live data to be published with tools to help Londoners understand the data.

7.2 A project plan has been produced to reflect this.

7.3 This project includes eight distinct work streams that will be pursued concurrently. The anticipated timetable for delivery is as follows. Please note that the workstreams with dates in bold will commence during phase one of the project covered by this MD:

Activity	Timeline
Delivery Start Date	Oct 2018
Workstream 1: Back Office System Market Disruption [enabling new suppliers that are responsive to LPA and GLA requirements to enter the market]	Oct – Nov 2018
Workstream 2: Back Office System Standardisation [ensuring borough systems are at an appropriate level of sophistication to receive automated data]	Oct 2018 – April 2019
Workstream 3: Submission Portal Changes	Oct 2018 – March 2019
Workstream 4: Update Local Validation Requirements	Oct 2018 – April 2019
Workstream 5: Stakeholder Communications	Oct 2018 – Feb 2020
Workstream 6: LPA Reporting	Jan – Aug 2019
Workstream 7: Update LDD	April 2019 – June 2019
Workstream 8: Build Data Hub	March – Sep 2019
Testing and Preparation	Sep 2019 – Jan 2020
Go Live / Delivery End Date	Feb 2020
Evaluation	Feb 2020
Project Closure	Feb 2020

(Please note that the above workstream timelines include procurement periods since many of the streams will require independent procurement strategies.)

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? YES**

If YES, for what reason: This report contains information which, if published before the completion of the procurement of services required, would prejudice the GLA's commercial interests in stimulating genuine competition for such services and securing best value which is not in public interest.

Until what date: 1 August 2019

Part 2 – Sensitive information**Is there a part 2 form – NO****ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Peter Kemp and Molly Strauss have drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirm the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

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

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Jules Pipe 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 12 November 2018

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

M. D. Allen

Date

12.11.18

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature

D. Bellamy

Date

15/11/2018.