

# City of London Corporation Committee Report

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# City of London Corporation Committee: Central London Forward grant receipts and programme delivery

## Summary Report

<b>Committee(s):</b> Finance Committee – For decision  Court of Common Council – For decision	<b>Dated:</b> 16/09/2025  09/10/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Central London Forward – grant receipts and programme delivery [A]: Central London Integration Hub [B]: Get Britain Working Trailblazer – Full Potential – Ovation to the City of London Corporation [C]: Growth within the Connect to Work Programme [D]: Central London Forward - other programmes	<b>Public report:</b>  For Decision
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> <li>• <b>provides business enabling functions</b></li> </ul>	Diverse and engaged communities; Dynamic economic growth; Providing excellent services
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	n/a
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	Various – the Department for Work and Pensions, the Greater London Authority. No City of London Corporation funding is being sought.
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	Yes
<b>Report of:</b>	Damian Nussbaum, Executive Director, Innovation and Growth
<b>Report author:</b>	Shadi Brazell, Director, Central London Forward  Laura Davison, Research and Intelligence Director, Innovation and Growth

## Summary

Central London Forward (CLF) is the partnership of the 11 central London local authorities and the City of London Corporation. The City of London Corporation was a founder member of Central London Forward when it was founded in 2007, and has acted as the legal entity and contracting body for CLF since that time.

CLF runs high-performing employment support programmes, all entirely funded by Government either directly or via the Greater London Authority. It also acts as the collective voice for its members, promoting inclusive and sustainable growth in central London. More information about the work of CLF's work can be found in its [Annual Report for 2024/25](#) and in its adopted [Strategy](#).

CLF is governed and its delivery scrutinised by a Board comprising the Leaders of its member authorities (or a senior delegate) and is also subject to audit by the Government entities that fund it. CLF is currently running four core programmes which range in size from under £200,000 through to c.£14m per annum. CLF also has a policy function which supports member boroughs on issues ranging from the impact of Short-Term Lets on the central London housing market to developing proposals on improving employment rights services. These programmes are summarised in table 1 at paragraph 4.

**While the programme decisions are taken by the CLF Board, and the funding is external, the City of London's role as contracting body means that approval for grant receipts and disbursement come through City of London Corporation Committees. CLF does not have a distinct legal identity from the Corporation.**

CLF often receives offers of funding to grow or extend programmes at short notice, sometimes a matter of weeks before delivery needs to begin. That can make managing governance processes challenging and result in multiple, relatively low-value papers being taken through the Committee process every year, often with a bottleneck around financial year end.

In order to streamline this process, while still seeking the necessary scrutiny and approval, CLF is bringing one, multi-part, forward-looking paper for planned and predicted activities and decisions within the next eighteen months. The CLF recommendation is that an update paper is then brought to Finance Committee in February 2026, and subject to discussions regarding this paper, that future papers are brought annually to align with Corporation Budget setting (i.e. to Finance Committee in February and Court of Common Council in March), in consultation with and with the agreement of the relevant teams within the Corporation.

CLF is a high-performing organisation meeting its delivery targets, as detailed in the main body of this report, accountable for delivery to its funders and Board. This summary and sub-papers collate in one place the CLF team's best estimate for the decisions required over the next six months, bringing together information that would usually come to Committees as separate papers in the interests of efficiency. The requested delegations would enable faster decisions to be made around the acceptance of grant funding, to enable programme expansions or extensions, and the signing of agreements to enable this.

The requested delegations will all be managed in line with existing Corporation policies and procedures.

## **Recommendation(s)**

- Members are asked to review the subsequent papers and issue approvals or endorsements of the recommendations for onward approval by the Court of Common Council as relevant. These approvals are summarised in Table 1 and outlined in the subsequent papers. They relate to:
  - Acceptance of funding for a new workstream in the current financial year (25/26); and acceptance of funding for Phase 2 in next financial year for the Central London Integration Hub. All funding from the GLA.
  - Ovation of the Full Potential (Get Britain Working Trailblazer) programme and associated agreements from the London Borough of Camden to the City of London Corporation, as well as authorisation to accept growth within the programme. All funding from DWP.
  - Acceptance of growth funding within the DWP-funded Connect to Work programme.
  - Acceptance or endorsement of: project funding within the Digital Connectivity Programme; funding for and management of the Local Skills Improvement Plan; extension of arrangement with GLA Economics for data analysis capability.
- Members are also asked to approve the recommended approach to governance, by which CLF would bring a single paper or grouped papers once annually where possible to improve efficiency.

## **Main Report**

### **Background & Current Position**

1. Central London Forward (CLF) is the sub-regional partnership of the 11 central London local authorities and the City of London Corporation. These local authorities are: Camden, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster.
2. CLF runs employment support programmes in partnership and on behalf of those boroughs, and promotes inclusive and sustainable growth in central London.
3. The City of London Corporation is the Contracting Body for CLF, and CLF does not have a distinct legal identity from the Corporation. As such, the City of London enters into contracts on behalf of the member authorities.
4. CLF is governed and its delivery scrutinised by a Board comprising the Leaders of its member authorities (or a senior delegate) and is currently running programmes of various sizes. These programmes are:

*Table 1 - Summary of core CLF programmes*

<b>Programme name</b>	<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Current scale</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Decision sought</b>
Connect to Work	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)	£70m over five years	To support over 17,000 Londoners with disabilities, long-term health conditions and complex barriers to employment into work.	Authorisation to accept growth within the programme
Full Potential Get Britain Working Trailblazer	Greater London Authority (GLA) (though funding originates with the DWP)	£5m for one year, to March 2026	To support over 1,000 care-experienced young people in central London to access employment, training and education opportunities.	Ovation of this programme and associated agreements from the London Borough of Camden to the City of London Corporation, as well as authorisation to accept growth within the programme
Central London Works	DWP	£13.4m from 2017-2025	To support over 6,300 Londoners who have been unemployed for a long time (over 2 years), as well as people with health conditions, into work.	n/a
Digital Connectivity	GLA	£875,000 from 2021 – 31 March 2028	Funds an officer to support CLF boroughs to improve connectivity and deliver related projects.	Delegation to accept additional project funding from the GLA
No Wrong Door (Integration Hub)	GLA	£625,000 from 2021 to 31 March 2026	Supports service integration and cooperation across skills and employment sector in central London.	Acceptance of funding for a new workstream in the current financial year

				(25/26); and acceptance of funding for Phase 2 from next financial year.
London Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)	Department for Education, via BusinessLDN	Phase 1 was 2022-25. Phase 2 expected to be up to £350,000 for 2025-28.	LSIPs are a national Department for Education programme designed to play a key role in tackling skills shortages by bringing employers, educators and other key stakeholders together to create a blueprint for transforming the skills system to meet local needs. They are collaborations between local government and Employer Representative Bodies, of which BusinessLDN is one.	Acceptance of funding and approval of its use for a Phase 1 extension and for Phase 2 of the London Skills Improvement Plan
CLF policy function	Member authority subscription fees (core funding)	Share of core funding - £480,000 per annum	To support to member authorities and act as a collective voice for them on issues where central London has a particular experience of an issue.	Extension of arrangement with GLA Economics for data analysis capability

5. Except the policy function, all other CLF activity and programmes are externally funded by Government departments, regional government or other public sector bodies, as outlined in the table above. CLF's programme management costs, including recharges of officer time within Chamberlain's and Comptroller's teams, are covered by this external funding.
6. This funding is stringently governed via grant funding agreements and other legal agreements. These agreements – particularly when they are offered by central Government departments, are largely non-negotiable. CLF is also subject to audit by its funders.
7. As is common with public funding programmes, CLF often receives offers of funding to grow or extend programmes, or to undertake additional policy project work at short notice, frequently just a matter of weeks before delivery would need to begin.
8. CLF is a high-performing organisation, accountable for delivery to its funders and Board It consistently meets or exceeds contract KPIs across its programmes.

9. CLF also performs well functionally, meeting the audit and governance requirements of funders, attracting and retaining experienced talent for senior roles and being viewed positively by borough and commercial delivery partners.
10. Since 2018, CLF programmes have supported over 50,000 central London residents, with an average of 35% of those securing employment. Where national rankings are available and produced by DWP, CLF has ranked second in the country for performance.
11. CLF frequently out-performs targets. The three programmes which have either recently closed or are winding down all performed at above 100% of target.
12. Through delivery of these programmes, CLF has also consistently sought to increase capacity and capability within our member authorities, to ensure that central London residents have access to the best possible support.

## **Options**

13. Options relating to specific programmes and decisions are outlined in each of the following papers. Approving these collectively will allow smooth continued delivery without multiple reversions to Committee this financial year. The consequences of not approving or requiring amendments are set out individually below.
14. To approve CLF bringing a single paper or grouped papers once annually where possible, to improve efficiency. The CLF recommendation is that an update paper is brought to Finance Committee in February 2026 and then that future papers are brought annually to align with Corporation Budget setting (i.e. to Finance Committee in February and Court of Common Council in March).
15. To approve this approach with amendments.
16. To not approve these recommendations would maintain the status quo. While workable, the current situation does not make the most efficient use of Member or Officer time. While no grants have had to be pulled as yet, the CLF team has had to resort to urgency procedures in order to confirm funding in time.

## **Proposals**

17. This approach brings together an overview of CLF programmes and performance, and seeks approvals in the round and for a slightly longer timeframe in one set of papers. This is in order to ensure that Members have the right level of scrutiny and oversight of CLF activity in the most efficient way.
18. Subject to Members views, CLF recommends that it brings one regular annual paper of this kind, recognising sometimes papers will have to be brought outside of that schedule. To align with Corporation budget setting, from 2027 this will come to Finance Committee in February and then on to Court of Common Council in March.

## **Key Data**

19. The population of the CLF member boroughs is just over 2.8million - the same as the whole of Greater Manchester. This comparison gives a sense of the scale and complexity of the areas that London's subregional partnerships operate in.
20. In 2022/23, more than half of Londoners in poverty were in work.
21. There are 392,000 working age (16-64) central London residents who have a disability. Employment rates among this group tend to be far lower; just over half (52.5%) of disabled Londoners are in work, compared to nearly four in five (78.5%) Londoners without a disability ([ONS 2021](#)). Disabled people who are in work tend to earn less. Across the UK, disabled workers earn £2.10 (19.6%) less per hour than non-disabled workers ([TUC, 2020](#)).
22. Since 2018, CLF programmes have supported over 50,000 central London residents, with an average of 35% of those securing employment. Where national rankings are available and produced by DWP, CLF has ranked second in the country for performance.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

### Strategic implications

23. The funding will support the following outcomes of the City of London's Corporate Plan; Diverse and engaged communities; Dynamic economic growth; Providing excellent services.

### Financial implications

24. There are no financial implications for the City Corporation. Programme and project costs are externally funded, and the delegations requested in the subsequent papers will only be used where programme and project costs are fully funded.

### Resource implications

25. The resource implications for the City Corporation are very limited. CLF is supported by colleagues within Innovation and Growth, Comptroller's and Chamberlain's. Services from Comptroller's and Chamberlain's are recharged internally, so the cost is met from CLF budgets.
26. The delegated authorities sought by the subsequent papers are being proposed in order to maximise efficiency and prevent duplication of work.

### Legal implications

27. See subsequent papers for specifics. CLF works and will continue to work closely with Comptroller's to ensure compliance and consistency.

### Risk implications

28. See subsequent papers for specifics (particularly relating to payment risk, which is where there is the most variance across CLF programmes), but overall there are limited risk implications for the City Corporation from any of these proposals. CLF has a strong track record of delivery in this area – see paragraphs 8-12, above, and these recommendations will enable CLF to work more efficiently, and to smooth delivery to maximise opportunities to retain existing experienced staff and programme infrastructure.



29. CLF is also subject to the reporting and audit requirements of its funders – predominantly the DWP and the GLA. The risk implications of this are open to interpretation, as any failure to comply may constitute a risk to the Corporation as CLF does not have a separate legal identity. However, CLF’s already solid internal governance is supported by Corporation governance and processes, and so this risk is effectively mitigated.
30. CLF’s work is managed and scrutinised both by its own Board, which mitigates risk to the City of London Corporation by providing another layer of senior-level oversight.

### Equalities implications

31. CLF specifically works to tackle labour market inequalities and support residents with protected characteristics into good jobs.

### Climate implications

32. There are no specific climate implications.
33. However, it is worth noting that CLF’s policy programme includes work on Net Zero and climate adaptation. CLF supports member authorities to deliver their climate programmes through facilitating network sessions, enabling officers to share best practise and overcome technical barriers. This is a relatively new area of work which will develop over the coming year.

### Security implications

34. There are no security implications.

## **Conclusion**

35. CLF supports central London residents into good work and enables member authorities to work together to support inclusive and sustainable growth. This approach to governance and the recommendations in the subsequent papers will facilitate that work.
36. The recommendations in this paper will enable CLF to run more efficiently as both a part of the Corporation and a separate organisation, and to make better use of Committee time.
37. CLF remains a high-performing organisation both in terms of outcomes for residents and financial management.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – [CLF Strategy](#)

Appendix 2 – [CLF Annual Report 2025](#)

Hard copies can be distributed on request – please contact Shadi Brazell via the details below.

## **Background Papers**

[CLF joint venture agreement](#)

Hard copies can be distributed on request – please contact Shadi Brazell.

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## Report [A]: Central London Integration Hub

<b>Committee(s):</b> Finance Committee – For decision	<b>Dated:</b> 16/09/2025
<b>Subject:</b>  Central London Integration Hub	<b>Public report:</b>  For Decision
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> <li>• <b>provides business enabling functions</b></li> </ul>	Diverse and engaged communities; Dynamic economic growth; Providing excellent services
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	n/a
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	The Greater London Authority.  No City of London Corporation funding is being sought.
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	Yes
<b>Report of:</b>	Damian Nussbaum, Executive Director, Innovation and Growth
<b>Report author:</b>	Shadi Brazell, Director, Central London Forward  Laura Davison, Research and Intelligence Director, Innovation and Growth

## Summary

The Central London Integration Hub programme has been delivered by CLF since 2022. It is funded through the Greater London Authority's No Wrong Door Initiative, alongside Integration Hubs in the three other subregional partnership areas of London (West London Alliance, Local London (East) and South London Partnership). These Hubs are the delivery aspect of the No Wrong Door initiative, which itself was originally conceived as part of the Mayor of London's Covid Recovery Programme.

The 3-year programme has been operating effectively – in Year 3 of the programme (2024-2025), the programme delivered **681%** of the residents engaged target and **323%** of the partners engaged target.

Phase 1 of the programme was due to wind down in March 2025, but was then extended to September 2025. Due to the success of the programme, as highlighted above and determined by an independently-commissioned evaluation, the GLA is now offering a further extension of Phase 1 until March 2026. This additional funding is intended as a transition measure to enable CLF to continue to support services across skills and employment sector, and to prepare for a possible Phase 2 of the No Wrong Door Programme which is expected to run for three years from April 2026.

In addition, as part of their future planning for the Integration Hubs, the GLA has asked London's subregional partnerships to establish and maintain youth integration networks. These will be funded via the pan-London Get Britain Working Youth Guarantee Trailblazer and will provide an additional £116,000 to the Central London Integration Hub for FY25-26. As referenced and discussed in detail in Paper B in this pack, it has been announced that the Youth Guarantee Trailblazers will be extended, so it is likely that there will be additional funding offered to CLF to extend the Youth Integration Network.

### **Recommendation(s)**

On behalf of the CLF, Finance Committee Members are asked to approve:

- Acceptance of up to £200,000 from the Greater London Authority (GLA) for the extension of Phase 1 of the Central London Integration Hub to 31 March 2026, and the launch of the Central London Youth Integration Hub, also to 31 March 2026.
- Acceptance of future funding from the GLA for the Integration Hub programme up to a total value of £1.25m for a three-year programme (for delivery between April 2026 and March 2029). This includes a projected extension of the Youth Integration Network, and Phase Two of the No Wrong Door programme.
- To delegate authority to the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Innovation and Growth to finalise and enter into the relevant contractual information with support from the Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. The Central London Integration Hub is a programme funded through the Greater London Authority's No Wrong Door Initiative, managed and delivered by CLF. The programme supports service integration and cooperation across skills and employment sector in central London. The work of the programme focuses on two cohorts with significant barriers to work: refugees and disabled central Londoners. The programme was launched in 2022.

2. CLF has received £516,493 to date to deliver the programme, which is wholly funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA). The funding covers the cost of an Integration Hub Manager post, Integration Hub Officer post and residual funding to cover programme activity.

### **Current Position**

3. The Central London Integration Hub is performing very well. It is part of a broader Integration programme (called No Wrong Door) funded by the GLA and delivered by the sub-regional partnerships in London. The programme overall seeks to improve collaboration and join-up within the employment and skills support system.
4. One of the networks is focused on bringing together organisations that support disabled Londoners into good work, and the other on organisations that support refugees.
5. Since its launch in July 2022, the Central London Integration Hub has launched two networks, delivered 53 meetings and events, engaged 5,374 residents (specifically targeting those furthest from the labour market) and 862 partners from central London and published two research reports.
6. In Year 3 (2024-2025), the programme delivered 323% of its target for number of partners engaged in central London.
7. The GLA recently commissioned a thorough evaluation of the programme in preparation for a Phase 2. That evaluation recommended continuation of the programme into Phase 2.
8. The GLA has also asked sub-regional partnerships to launch Youth Integration Networks this year to focus on supporting young people at risk of becoming Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) or already experiencing being NEET. They are providing £116,000 of funding to March 2026 to support this activity. The funding comes from a Trailblazer programme, which was extended by three years in the Government's 2025 Spending Review. We expect, therefore, that this funding will be extended to at least to March 2029.
9. CLF has delivered a successful programme despite short-term funding decisions by the GLA. Programme extensions and new projects to be run from within the Integration Hubs are frequently confirmed at very short notice. Given the relatively modest sums involved, that is why the Central London Integration Hub is included in this paper, to ensure that CLF is in a position to seamlessly continue delivery and offer as much certainty as possible to staff on fixed term contracts as programme funding changes.

## Options

10. Approving the recommendations in full, enabling an extension of Phase 1 of the Central London Integration Hub and foundation of a Youth Integration Network. And approving the Executive Director of Innovation and Growth to accept funding for Phase 2 should it be confirmed. The delegation will enable smooth, continuous and efficient delivery of the programme, benefitting disadvantaged residents across central London.
11. Approving only the extension to Phase 1 of Central London Integration Hub and the acceptance of the funding for the Youth Integration Network to March 2026, and the signing of the deed of variation 2025/26, but not approving any further changes, or a delegation to facilitate Phase 2. This would enable the programme to continue to March 2026 but no further without recourse to governance processes.
12. Not approving the extension or the delegation to approve Phase 2. This would mean a gap in provision at the very least until the GLA has designed and approved Phase 2 of the programme, which would then be brought back through governance processes. It would also result in CLF having to decline the funding offered for the Youth Integration Network. During that time, no integration activity would take place to support services in central London, thus the work would lose momentum. A Central London Forward member of staff would likely need to be made redundant resulting in additional unnecessary redundancy costs, as their salary is paid directly from this funding. Due to differing governance arrangements, the Phase 1 extension and Youth Integration Network funding has already been agreed in two of the three other subregional partnerships, and therefore central London risks becoming an outlier.

## Proposals

For the existing programme:

13. The refugee integration network is the more active network, and will be continued through to March 2026 and hopefully beyond into Phase 2 of the No Wrong Door programme.
14. As a result of the extension from September 2025 to March 2026 being funded at a reduced level, the disability network is likely to be wrapped up in September 2025. The CLF team are exploring options for the network to continue within the newer Connect to Work programme, which is specifically targeted at residents with long-term health conditions and disabilities. This would ensure that the network's expertise and collaboration is not lost.

For the new Youth Integration Network:

15. In the first six months of the Youth Integration Network, CLF will convene three meetings of the network, with a goal of creating a service map and referral guide for organisations seeking to support young people into education, employment or training. This currently doesn't exist. The wider aim of the Youth Integration Network activity is to ensure that young people receive the support they need to access training and/or enter world of work. Therefore the wider aim is to reduce the number of young people not in Education, Employment or Training,
16. The programme will be heavily influenced by youth participation, and CLF proposals include hosting a paid supported work placement for a young person with experience of care, and paid youth facilitators for the events and the network itself.
17. This work will improve access to employment support services for those young people who are either already NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), or at risk of becoming so.

## **Key Data**

18. Nearly a million young people aged 16-24 are classed as NEET - almost 16 % of that age group. This rose 1.3% in the year to February 2025 (ONS). The reasons for this increase are varied: economic challenges, mental health needs, lack of access to good quality training and employment and a fragmented support sector.

## **Corporate and Strategic Implications**

### Strategic implications

19. The funding will support the following outcomes of the City of London's Corporate Plan; Diverse and engaged communities; Dynamic economic growth; Providing excellent services.

### Financial implications

20. There are no financial implications for the City Corporation. The Greater London Authority will be providing grant funding to cover both the cost of the programme, and CLF's costs in managing the programmes.

### Resource implications

21. The resource implications for the City Corporation are very limited. Completing the contractual documents with the Greater London Authority would require some support from City Solicitors.
22. While the CLF team manages the finances of the programme, there would be some support required from Comptrollers. In both cases, the work required is minimal, and CLF would be able to cover the cost from the GLA funding.

23. A delegated authorisation to accept and proceed with Phase 2 is included in this paper in order to maximise efficiency and prevent duplication of work. Timelines to accept funding for this programme are often short, and mis-aligned with governance processes. As the financial and legal implications of this programme for the City Corporation are so limited, it was thought appropriate to seek this delegation at this stage.

#### Legal implications

24. There are no legal implications. Extending the contract is permissible under Reg 72(1)(b) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

#### Risk implications

25. There are very limited risk implications for the City Corporation from either the extension of Phase 1 or the acceptance of Phase 2. CLF has a strong track record of delivery in this area – see information provided at paragraph 5, above – and prompt extension of Phase 1 and acceptance of Phase 2 enable CLF to retain an existing member of programme staff and programme infrastructure.
26. Should the extension of Phase 1 and/or acceptance of Phase 2 not go ahead, the City Corporation may be open to reputational risk as this would lead to a gap in integration provision across central London.
27. This is a grant agreement, and the money will be drawn down from the GLA quarterly in line with the milestone payment schedule included in the deed of variation.

#### Equalities implications

28. The extension of this programme would have a positive impact on Londoners with protected characteristics as it specifically works to tackle the labour market inequalities they face.

#### Climate implications

29. There are no specific climate implications.

#### Security implications

30. There are no security implications.

#### **Conclusion**

31. The Central London Integration Hub programme currently supports refugees and disabled residents in central London into good work. The programme is performing effectively, as evidenced by the evaluation report commissioned by the funders (the GLA).
32. The GLA has the Central London Integration Hub to deliver a Youth Integration Network alongside the extant networks and is actively seeking to extend the programme for a Phase 2 from April 2026.



33. This paper seeks approvals and delegated authorisations to enable CLF to continue to meet the needs of Londoners and to deliver integration hub services uninterrupted in the context of short-notice decisions by funders.

### **Appendices**

None.

### **Background Papers**

Grant Agreement between the Greater London Authority and The Mayor and Commonalty and Citizens of the City of London (on behalf of Central London Forward) 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022: [gla\\_FA\\_NWD\\_CLF\\_V110322\\_final\\_signed.docx](#)

## Report [B]: Get Britain Working Trailblazer – Full Potential – Ovation to the City of London Corporation

<b>Committee(s):</b> Finance Committee – For decision  Court of Common Council – For decision	<b>Dated:</b> 16/09/2025  09/10/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Get Britain Working Trailblazer – Full Potential – Ovation to the City of London Corporation	<b>Public report:</b> For Decision
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> <li>• <b>provides business enabling functions</b></li> </ul>	Diverse and engaged communities; Dynamic economic growth; Providing excellent services
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	n/a
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	Various – the Department for Work and Pensions, the Greater London Authority. No City of London Corporation funding is being sought.
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	Yes
<b>Report of:</b>	Damian Nussbaum, Executive Director, Innovation and Growth
<b>Report author:</b>	Shadi Brazell, Director, Central London Forward  Laura Davison, Research and Intelligence Director, Innovation and Growth

### Summary

‘Full Potential’ is one of five Get Britain Working Trailblazer programmes funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), via the Greater London Authority (GLA). The Trailblazers were originally designed to be one-year, test-and-learn programmes aiming to bring together services and test new approaches.

Full Potential is focused on young people with experience of the care system.

Whereas ordinarily, the City of London Corporation acts as the contracting authority on behalf of CLF, on this occasion the London Borough of Camden took on a coordinating role. This is because the funding was offered and the programme designed in just three months, with the approvals being required during the time when the City of London Corporation was having its elections.

It has recently been announced that funding for the Trailblazer programmes will be extended for three years. While the GLA has not had much further detail, we understand that their intention is to fund Full Potential at the same level until 2029.

CLF's preference is therefore to bring the programme back in line with its usual governance arrangements for the duration. This means agreeing an ovation of the agreements between the GLA and Camden. These agreements follow a prescribed and standard form, as the funding flows ultimately from the DWP.

This paper also seeks approval for the acceptance of £15m of additional funding and the activities associated with running the programme, as the current programme is £5m for one year and has been extended for three.

### **Recommendation(s)**

On behalf of CLF, Finance Committee Members are asked to endorse the following recommendations for onward approval by the Court of Common Council:

- Ovation of the agreement between the GLA and the London Borough of Camden, and the agreements between the London Borough of Camden and the other CLF member authorities in relation to this programme.
- Pursuant to that, acceptance of funding from the GLA or the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for an extension of and growth within the 'Full Potential' Get Britain Working Trailblazer programme, up to a total value of £15m and for delivery between April 2026 and March 2029, and the endorsement of the subsequently required contractual amendments or variations.
- Ovation of the agreement between the London Borough of Camden and the Learning and Work Institute for the evaluation of this programme, and the extension of that agreement to cover the extended programme period, to March 2029.
- To delegate authority to the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Innovation and Growth, with support from the Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department to finalise and enter into the relevant contractual information.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Published in late November 2024, the Government's Get Britain Working White Paper set out their proposals to reform employment, health and skills support to tackle economic inactivity and support people into good work. The white paper announced ambitions to reduce NHS waiting lists, reforms to Jobcentre Plus to increase the focus on careers and work rather than on administering benefits, the creation of a new national jobs and careers service, a greater focus on digital services in the employment and skills support system and a goal to create an inclusive labour market where everyone can participate and progress in work, aiming for an 80% employment rate within a decade.
2. The White Paper also set out plans for Trailblazer areas to bring together services and test new approaches, supported by £240million of investment.
3. Five Trailblazers will be delivered in London with the Greater London Authority acting as accountable body. Three focus broadly on economic inactivity, and two on delivering the Youth Guarantee:
  - a. One pan-London Trailblazer providing systems leadership and change in the youth employment, education and training (EET) and wraparound support space. This Trailblazer will also deliver discrete transitions, mental health, and youth participation focused pilots with the geographic specifics of delivery identified through mapping and data analysis conducted through set-up grant funding. Finally, resource within this Trailblazer will deliver a pan-London convening and coordination function for all four sub-regional Trailblazers across both youth and economic inactivity. London government partners want to ensure that all Trailblazer activity is coordinated to maximise the capital's allocation.
  - b. One Trailblazer focusing on care leavers aged 17-25 years old, delivered by CLF. It is this Trailblazer – now called Full Potential - that is the subject of this report.
4. Full Potential will support over 1,000 care-experienced young people

### **Current Position**

5. Working with Camden and our other member authorities, CLF has already begun delivering the Full Potential programme. The programme aims to:
  - Support care leavers in central London to progress toward and move into employment, education and training;
  - Build capacity through helping boroughs and other stakeholders to innovate, to work together, and to learn from each-other;
  - Build the evidence base about what works in supporting care leavers into employment, education and training.

6. The exact interventions vary across boroughs but essentially provides intensive support from a personal advisor with a low caseload and work closely with employers to identify employment opportunities and provide pastoral support on the transition into work. There will be an intermediate labour market element, providing subsidised temporary roles, paid at least the London Living Wage, to give care leavers real-world experience. It is likely that at least one of those intermediate roles will be hosted by CLF itself, to demonstrate leadership in this area and to contribute in a new way.
7. Full Potential focuses on the following outcomes:
  - Number of care leavers engaged;
  - Care leavers supported into sustainable work;
  - Care leavers supported into education and training;
  - Increased confidence and employability of care leavers
8. CLF has procured, through a competitive process, the Learning and Work Institute to act as the evaluation partner for this programme, as per the GLA's requirements. The Learning and Work Institute is now in contract with Camden (on behalf of CLF).
9. There were some delays in programme delivery beginning as the GLA and DWP negotiated the legal agreements, and these were cascaded down to delivery partners. This means that year one delivery is challenging, but this is being managed and CLF is confident that it will deliver the relevant outcomes.
10. A three-year funding extension has been announced, but the full detail is not confirmed at this stage. Previous experience of this programme demonstrates that decisions will be made with very short lead-in or preparation time, and therefore approval for a funding envelope is sought at this stage to maximise efficiency and delivery time.

## Options

11. Do not approve: the most likely outcome of this is that the programme will continue to run with Camden acting as the contracting body on behalf of CLF. While programme delivery will remain possible, and Camden's Cabinet is likely to approve accepting the additional funding, this undermines a functional status quo that CLF has worked to build up and maintain over a number of years. It also adds operational complexity to an already complex programme and delivery structure.
12. Approve: this would bring governance of this important programme to the City of London Corporation, and back in line with other CLF programmes. It would ensure that the structures that the Corporation and CLF Board are used to remain in place and remain consistent across programmes.

## Proposals

13. The arrangement for Camden to be the contracting body for this programme was made for the purposes of expediency, and to ensure that CLF didn't miss out on this funding due to the City of London Corporation elections. However, that decision was made when the programme was only going to run for one year, which DWP and the GLA were previous immovable on.
14. These proposals are therefore to bring Full Potential back in line with CLF's usual governance processes in time for plans to be made for delivery of the extended programme.

## Key Data

15. There are 19,000 Care Experienced young people in London aged 17-25.
16. Care leavers face significant social and economic disadvantage, and experience substantially worse outcomes than other young people:
  - a. Care leavers aged 19-21 are over three times more likely to be NEET.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. Care leavers are around four times more likely to have a mental health disorder.<sup>2</sup>
  - c. Care leavers are more likely to lack of formal qualifications, and to have unstable housing, which acts as a barrier to education and employment.<sup>3</sup>

## Corporate and Strategic Implications

### Strategic implications

17. The funding will support the following outcomes of the City of London's Corporate Plan; Diverse and engaged communities; Dynamic economic growth; Providing excellent services.

### Financial implications

18. There are no financial implications for the City Corporation. All programme costs, including management costs, are met by the funding from the DWP (via the GLA).

### Resource implications

19. The resource implications for the City Corporation are very limited. CLF is supported by colleagues within Innovation and Growth, Comptroller's and Chamberlain's. Services from Comptroller's and Chamberlain's are recharged internally, so the cost is met from CLF budgets.

### Legal implications

20. There are legal implications in that this paper seeks approval for the ovation of legal agreements to the City of London Corporation, but there are no implications beyond what is usual for CLF contractual arrangements.

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<sup>1</sup> [The Independent Review of Children's Social Care, Final Report](#), May 2022

<sup>2</sup> National Children's Bureau, Achieving emotional wellbeing for looked-after children, July 2015

<sup>3</sup> Education Development Trust, Entry and retention in the labour market: narratives and solutions for NEET and care leave employment support, 2023

21. The suggested approach is compliant with Section 1 of the Localism Act and There are no legal implications. Extending the contract is permissible under Reg 72(1)(b) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

#### Risk implications

22. There are risks inherent in programme delivery but CLF's work is managed and scrutinised regularly by its own Board, which mitigates risk to the City of London Corporation by providing another layer of senior-level oversight.
23. Payment risk is limited on this programme as payment is made in arrears and on the basis of evidenced allowable spend.

#### Equalities implications

24. CLF specifically works to tackle labour market inequalities and support residents with protected characteristics into good jobs. The Full Potential programme specifically works to address the challenges of care-experienced young people. Experience of care is designated by some authorities as a protected characteristic in itself.

#### Climate implications

25. There are no specific climate implications.

#### Security implications

26. There are no security implications.

#### **Conclusion**

27. The extension of the Trailblazer programme by DWP offers an opportunity to increase the reach and effectiveness of this test-and-learn programme. In order to take full advantage of that opportunity, CLF seeks approval via this paper to bring the programme in line with existing governance arrangements.

#### **Appendices**

34. Camden Cabinet paper: [Decision - Youth Guarantee Trailblazer Funding 2025-2026 \(SC/2025/18\) - Camden Council](#) (this paper can be distributed in hard copy as required – please contact Shadi Brazell via [shadi.brazell@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:shadi.brazell@cityoflondon.gov.uk) to request).

#### **Background Papers**

None.

## Report [C]: Growth within the Connect to Work Programme

<b>Committee(s):</b> Finance Committee – For decision  Court of Common Council – For decision	<b>Dated:</b> 16/09/2025  09/10/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Central London Forward - Growth within the Connect to Work Programme	<b>Public report:</b> For Decision
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> <li>• <b>provides business enabling functions</b></li> </ul>	Diverse and engaged communities; Dynamic economic growth; Providing excellent services
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	n/a
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	Various – the Department for Work and Pensions, the Greater London Authority. No City of London Corporation funding is being sought.
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	Yes
<b>Report of:</b>	Damian Nussbaum, Executive Director, Innovation and Growth
<b>Report author:</b>	Shadi Brazell, Director, Central London Forward  Laura Davison, Research and Intelligence Director, Innovation and Growth

### Summary

The Connect to Work programme (formerly known as Universal Support), is a DWP-funded programme seeking to support economically inactive and disabled Londoners into work.

As per a Finance Committee and Court of Common Council approval from June 2024, CLF has developed and agreed a Delivery Plan with DWP, entered into a grant agreement with them and with member authorities, commissioned a commercial provider and begun delivery of the programme.



CLF has developed a hybrid delivery model, with some member authorities delivering the programme directly, and a CLF-commissioned provider delivering the programme in the other areas.

Under that June 2024 approval, the Court of Common Council delegated to the Finance Committee the authority to vary the grant agreement with DWP, vary grant agreements with those authorities delivering the programme, and vary the contract with the commissioned provider.

CLF are currently in discussion with DWP regarding additional funding of up to £1m for this financial year (2025/26), and those discussions have referenced likely

additional funding in future years. This year, the additional funding represents an additional 200 Londoners who will benefit from participation in the programme. This paper therefore seeks approval for CLF to accept this additional funding and the associated growth within the programme.

### **Recommendation(s)**

On behalf of CLF, Finance Committee Members are asked to approve, under the authority delegated from Court of Common Council in June 2024:

- Growth within the Connect to Work programme of up to £1m in the financial year 2025/26.
- Growth within the Connect to Work programme of up to £2m in the financial year 26/27.
- To delegate authority to the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Innovation and Growth, with support from the Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department to finalise and enter into the relevant contractual information.

### **Main Report**

#### **Background**

1. Connect to Work is a flagship DWP-funded programme, which went live over this summer (2025). In central London, CLF is the accountable body for the programme.
2. Connect to Work represents over £70m of investment in employment support for residents with long-term health conditions or disabilities. It will support around 18,000 residents over five years.
3. It employs a 'place and train' model, prioritising the needs of individual participants. This is an approach which has been increasing in use by DWP and other public sector organisations in the UK for some time and has been successful with comparable cohorts in other countries.
4. The CLF Partnership Board has approved a mixed delivery model, whereby some member authorities will deliver this service directly, in other areas a commissioned provider will deliver, and in some cases delivery will be hybrid, with the authority and commissioned provider working closely together. This model seeks to optimise outcomes for residents while building capacity and capability within member authorities.
5. The programme will ramp up over time, with over 4,500 residents starting on the programme at peak in 2026/27.

## **Current Position**

6. CLF was among the first of the accountable bodies in England to 'go live', in July 2025. CLF's programme is also among the largest in the country.
7. CLF has entered into a grant agreement with DWP, commissioned a commercial provider, developed implementation guidance for member authorities and procured a provider for a sophisticated data management system. Delivery has begun and is on track to meet contract KPIs.
8. CLF has a track record of effectively managing similar employment support programmes and meeting or exceeding KPIs. For example, job outcomes performance on CLF's Pioneer Support programme (which uses the same 'place and train' methodology as Connect to Work), is 197% of target. It's the second highest performing of 11 national contracts.
9. DWP approached CLF and other Accountable Bodies for Connect to Work in June 2025 with the offer of additional funding for this financial year, and outlined the likelihood of this process repeating in future years.
10. CLF has worked with member authorities to develop a proposal for an additional £1m to come into the programme, to enable another 200 central London residents to access support. DWP are considering this proposal but CLF has conducted a robust deliverability assessment and early indications from DWP are positive.
11. If DWP approve the proposal, funding will be available from September 2025 and must be spent by March 2026, so the timelines are narrow.
12. This paper seeks approval for the increase in this financial year and a reasonable increase in the next financial year, as funding is likely to be offered at short notice. Ability to respond at speed supports delivery and maximises the opportunity to broaden access to the programme to as many Londoners as possible.

## **Options**

13. Approve programme growth in 2025/26 and 2026/27. This would enable the programme to adapt quickly to offers of additional funding and maximise access to the programme for Londoners in need of support.
14. Approve programme growth for 2025/26 but not 2026/27. This would enable CLF to offer an additional 200 places on the programme this year. CLF would need to bring another paper to Finance Committee once DWP makes a firm offer of additional funding for 2026/27, which is unlikely to align with the approach outlined in the summary paper (above) of bringing one paper per year where possible.
15. Not approving programme growth. This would be contrary to the approach agreed by CLF Partnership Board and limit access to support for central London residents.

## **Proposals**

16. Members are recommended to approve CLF accepting and managing growth within the programme for the next two financial years. This would implement the preferences of the CLF Partnership Board and maximise access to the programme for disabled central Londoners.

17. This is pursuant to paragraph 10 of the Report to Court of Common Council in June 2024, which also considered this eventuality.

## **Key Data**

18. There are 1.3m economically inactive Londoners. Of these, over 300,000 are inactive as a result of a health or mental health condition. One in 6 economically inactive Londoners would like to work.
19. Over the last two years, CLF's employment and skills programmes supported 10,580 central London residents into work. This represents 116% of the cumulative job start targets for our programmes.
20. Every one of the 12 CLF member authorities has a local employment service. In 2023/24, the boroughs collectively supported over 10,000 residents. While we do not have aggregated subregional data, these services are successfully targeted at those residents most in need of support.
21. We estimate Universal Support will support 18,000 residents by March 2029, with at least 6,000 entering work.

## **Corporate and Strategic Implications**

### Strategic implications

22. The Connect to Work programme supports delivery of the following Corporate Plan outcomes: diverse, engaged communities, providing excellent services, and dynamic economic growth.
23. The programme will enable the delivery of priority 1 of the CLF Strategy.

### Financial implications

24. Delivering the programme will require no funding from the City of London Corporation. Both the programme itself, and the costs of CLF in managing the programme, will be covered by DWP.
25. As the contracting body, the City Corporation would make payments to the delivery partners, and receive funding from DWP.
26. Chamberlain's Department are aware of the financial implications of the programme.

### Resource implications

27. The City of London Corporation are delivering the Connect to Work programme directly, and will be able to benefit from programme growth.
28. There are some modest resource implications for City of London Corporation in setting up and managing the programme. These include:
- Support from Comptrollers and City Solicitors to agree the grant agreement with DWP and with delivery partners, and the contract with the commissioned provider;
  - Support from Commercial Services to support ongoing contract management of the procured commercial provider, Seetec;
  - Support from Chamberlain's to comply with DWP audits.

29. The resource implications will be relatively limited for the City of London Corporation. CLF will be able to cover the cost of any City of London resourcing required to support the programme, funded by the DWP grant.

#### Legal implications

30. The City of London Corporation has signed grant funding agreements with DWP, and with CLF member authorities who have opted to deliver the programme. And a contract with the commissioned provider – Seetec – as per the Stage 2 Procurement Report which came before Finance Committee under urgency in June 2025.
31. Comptrollers and City Solicitors are aware of the legal implications.

#### Risk implications

32. There are risks inherent in programme delivery, but CLF's work is managed and scrutinised regularly by its own Board, which mitigates risk to the City of London Corporation by providing another layer of senior-level oversight.
33. There are minimal financial risks relating to the programme, as Connect to Work is delivered on a 'cost' basis. This is not a payment by results programme, rather delivery partners are reimbursed for eligible costs incurred in delivering the programme. This means financial risks for the City of London Corporation are very limited.
34. There would be reputational risk for the City of London Corporation if performance of the programme was poor. However, the likelihood of this risk is minimal. CLF has a record of successfully delivering similar programmes as set out above. CLF has an experienced programmes team already in place to manage the programme.
35. There would also be potential reputational risk if the City of London Corporation did not approve growth within the programme as this would put it at odds both with the ambitions of the DWP and the approach agreed by the CLF Partnership Board. A gap in service provision for Londoners with long-term health conditions and disabilities who want to seek work but are – for the most part – currently reliant on the benefits system would increase pressure on local authority-funded services in an already challenging financial environment for councils.

#### Equalities implications

36. CLF specifically works to tackle labour market inequalities and support residents with protected characteristics into good jobs. The Connect to Work programme specifically supports disabled Londoners to find suitable good work.

#### Climate implications

37. There are no specific climate implications. CLF has ensured that all delivery partners put in place measures to minimise emissions as a result of the programme.

### Security implications

38. There are no security implications.

### **Conclusion**

39. This additional funding would enable CLF, member authorities and delivery partners to support approximately 400 more residents by March 2027.

40. Members are asked, further to the Court of Common Council decision from June 2024, to approve growth within the CLF Connect to Work programme for 2025/26 and 2026/27.

41. Members are asked to note that subsequent papers are likely in future years relating to additional growth and/or other changes to the programme.

### **Appendices**

None

### **Background Papers**

[Agenda item - Universal Support – Grant funding for new CLF employment programme](#)

[Stage 2 Report – Connect to Work Delivery Partner](#)

Hard copies can be provided on request – please contact  
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## Report [D]: Central London Forward - other programmes

<b>Committee(s):</b> Finance Committee – For decision	<b>Dated:</b> 16/09/2025
<b>Subject:</b> Central London Forward – other programmes	<b>Public report:</b>  For Decision
<b>This proposal:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes</b></li> <li>• <b>provides business enabling functions</b></li> </ul>	Diverse and engaged communities; Dynamic economic growth; Providing excellent services
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	n/a
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	Various – the Department for Work and Pensions, the Greater London Authority. No City of London Corporation funding is being sought.
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	Yes
<b>Report of:</b>	Damian Nussbaum, Executive Director, Innovation and Growth
<b>Report author:</b>	Shadi Brazell, Director, Central London Forward  Laura Davison, Research and Intelligence Director, Innovation and Growth

### Summary

As outlined in the initial summary paper, CLF runs a range of programmes of various sizes.

This paper brings together a number of relatively small CLF programmes, and seeks approvals for them all. This is in order to ensure that Members have the right level of scrutiny and oversight of CLF activity in the most efficient way.

CLF often receives offers of funding to grow or extend programmes at short notice, sometimes a matter of weeks before delivery needs to begin. That can make managing governance processes challenging and result in multiple, relatively low-value papers being taken through the Committee process every year, often with a bottleneck around financial year end.

This paper therefore outlines decisions likely to be required in the next eight months to one year, relating to three programmes in particular.

First, the London Local Skills Improvement Plan (the LSIP). This is part of a national programme funded by the Department for Education and run through Employer Representative Bodies. In London, the Employer Representative Body is BusinessLDN, and so the funding flows through them. Phase One of the LSIP has been extended to March 2026, partly to fund a strategic LSIP refresh which is required in Autumn 2025. BusinessLDN remain committed to delivering this programme with subregional partnerships and therefore we anticipate funding at an equivalent level for Phase Two.

Second, the CLF Digital Connectivity Programme, which is directly funded by the GLA via their Connected London programme. This programme has recently been extended to March 2029, and that extension was approved under urgency provisions in March 2025. The turnaround time for acceptance of that funding was incredibly short, and we believe there may be opportunities to identify and secure additional funding in the next couple of years. New funding secured via competitive processes, and additional funding offered by the GLA for specific projects are likely to be offered on tight turnaround timescales. That is why both growth within the current programme and acceptance of funding from other sources are included in this paper.

Finally, all four of London's subregional partnerships have identified a lack of capacity in data analysis as an impediment to our work to support Londoners to secure good jobs and to encourage and facilitate inclusive economic growth. This has previously resulted in high consultancy costs and lack of control over the quality of analysis. Following discussions with partners across London, the four Directors are recommending a partnership with GLA Economics to support us all to make better use of socioeconomic data. This approach is currently being trialled, and this paper seeks approval to enter more formally into that partnership for an initial period of 3 years. The cost of this will be met partially from the LSIP budget (as the consultancy budget will be repurposed) and partially from CLF reserves, which are healthy. There is therefore no cost to the City of London Corporation. The CLF Partnership Board are supportive of this approach.

### **Recommendation(s)**

On behalf of CLF, Finance Committee Members are asked to approve:

- An extension of the existing trial arrangement between CLF and GLA Economics for the provision of data services, up to a total of £150,000 and until March 2029.
- Acceptance and management of up to £310k of funding for the central London Local Skills Improvement Plan Phase One, to be used in line with priorities agreed with the Department for Education and BusinessLDN by the end of March 2026.
- Delegation to the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Innovation and Growth, with support from the Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department to finalise and approve and enter into the relevant contractual information for the above.

On behalf of CLF, Finance Committee Members are asked to grant a standing delegation to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to approve the following extensions to or growth within existing CLF programmes (to be exercised no later than September 2026):

- Acceptance and management of funding for Phase 2 of the London Skills Improvement Plan from Business LDN, up to a value of £500,000 and for delivery between March 2026 and March 2031, subject to the details of this being confirmed by BusinessLDN.
- Acceptance of funding from the GLA of up to £300,000 and from the UKRI Local Innovation Partnership Fund or similar programmes for growth and expansion of the Digital Connectivity programme, within its current programme timeline (to March 2029), subject to confirmation of available funding envelopes.
- Delegation to the Chamberlain and Executive Director, Innovation and Growth, with support from the Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department to finalise and approve and enter into the relevant contractual information for the above.

## **Main Report**

### **Background & Current Position**

#### *The London Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)*

1. Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) are an employer-led initiative funded by the Department for Education. They are designed to play a key role in tackling skills shortages by bringing employers, educators and other key stakeholders together to create a blueprint for transforming the skills system to meet local needs.
2. In London, the LSIP is managed by BusinessLDN with the support of the Mayor of London and London Councils, and delivered through the four sub-regional partnerships. Priorities and projects are agreed by BusinessLDN in consultation with the Central London Forward (CLF) Board and the Department for Education.
3. For example in central London, the LSIP programme has supported and launched the Bridge Partnership, a collaboration between 14 colleges and further education providers working with industry leaders to tackle the skills gaps in Central London's green and digital sectors.
4. This is a programme where funding and timelines are confirmed at very short notice.
  - a. Central London Forward was initially allocated £140k for development of the original LSIP (delivered between April 2022 and August 2023).
  - b. An additional £87k for LSIP Phase One was offered in 2023 and ran to March 2025.
  - c. In December 2024, an additional £35k was offered to keep the programme running between March 2025 and September 2025.
  - d. Most recently, in August 2025, c.£41k was offered for October 2025 to March 2026 to bring Phase One to a close and conduct a strategic refresh of the LSIP in preparation for a Phase Two.



- e. This amounts to a total of £303k for Phase One. The amount for the six months from October 2025 to March 2026 remains unconfirmed, which is why the approval stipulates up to £310k.
5. Given the low values and a mistake by the previous leadership of CLF, Committee approval was never sought for LSIP Phase One. This paper seeks to rectify that as well as seeking approval for Phase Two, which we expect will be offered at short notice between December 2025 and March 2026, and be required to begin delivery from April 2026.
  6. Phase One funding has been used as follows:
    - a. To cover CLF staff costs
    - b. On external consultancy and data analysis support for the development of the original LSIP report, published in 2023.
    - c. Over £100k to directly fund projects which make progress on the priorities identified in the LSIP, such as the Bridge Partnership. There are two payments due before March 2026, and these will be released only upon approval of this paper.
  7. Phase Two is expected to be of similar value and structure.

*The Central London Forward Digital Connectivity Programme*

8. The Digital Connectivity programme at CLF was recently extended by the GLA for another four years.
9. The programme does not have numeric KPIs, but provides expertise and support to both boroughs, the GLA, and private sector actors in the telecoms market to foster constructive dialogue aimed at enabling improvements in connectivity infrastructure.
10. The CLF Board recently approved a new workplan for the programme, which aims to supplement that reactive support with proactive projects addressing some of the key challenges in this space. For example, CLF is running a project to definitively identify fibre not spots in central London, which will enable more informed decisions about future infrastructure.
11. This more proactive approach has already garnered some interest, and there may be opportunities to identify and secure additional funding in the next couple of years. That is why both growth within the current programme and acceptance of funding from other sources are included in this paper.
12. Sources of this additional funding are likely to include: the GLA itself, as the Connected London programme is reviewed and its strategy updated; the UK Research and Innovation Local Innovation Partnership Fund which includes an allocation to Greater London to support innovation clusters; potentially Project Gigabit.

*Provision of data services by GLA Economics*

13. London's subregional partnerships (SRPs) play a key role in promoting London's sub-regions to decision-makers and investors within and outside London, mitigating some of the governance and coordination challenges arising from London's scale, population and formal administrative arrangements.
14. Timely and reliable economic data is an important input for SRPs which can help them to fulfil both of these roles. However, there are a number of barriers:
  - a. It is often difficult to obtain timely economic data at the right geography.
  - b. Approaches and tools vary significantly between and within boroughs, and relevant data is spread across a number of organisations and geographical tiers.
  - c. There is limited capacity and capability for data analysis within SRPs, constraining collective understanding of sub-regional economies within London and how boroughs, SRPs and pan-London institutions can work together for a more productive and inclusive London economy.
15. In the round, this has also led to an overreliance on external consultants, which is not a flexible or financially viable solution to this need.
16. SRPs need to be able to maintain and monitor a set of key metrics (across the economy, skills, housing, health, infrastructure, environment and other topics of relevance to London government) on an ongoing basis as new data becomes available; and to undertake more granular and bespoke analysis to help identify trends and in response to specific challenges and opportunities.
17. In the longer term, there is clear scope for closer joint working across London government to ensure that data is accessible and that it is being used effectively and efficiently to inform decisions, identify priorities (sectors, places, themes) on which to focus limited resources, and make a compelling case for investment, devolution and policy flexibilities.
18. SRP Directors have discussed this proposal with a number of prospective partners. London Councils do not have the relevant expertise or capacity at this time, and may in fact choose to become part of the arrangement in future, and it was felt that a formalised partnership with London's Strategic Authority would be beneficial in this case.
19. It is not feasible for SRPs to host individual roles at this stage because:
  - a. There is not management capacity that would provide the right kind of support.
  - b. SRPs do not in themselves subscribe to many of the relevant datastores or tools, which would incur additional cost.
  - c. Each SRP is unlikely to require a full-time member of staff and identifying qualified and high-quality candidates for part time roles of this kind is difficult.

20. GLA Economics have priced the per annum cost at approximately £125,000, which will be divided evenly between the four SRPs and therefore CLF's contribution will be around £32,000 per annum.

### **Options**

21. To approve the recommendations relating to the LSIP, the Digital Connectivity Programme and the data work by GLA Economics.
22. To not approve the recommendations, either in full or in part. To do so would undermine the approach outlined in the summary paper of aggregating CLF's required approvals.
- a. This would prevent CLF from improving the quality and specificity of the data currently used for decision-making.
  - b. It may also mean that CLF is not able to fulfil its strategic objectives as endorsed by the CLF Board, and/or incurs additional consultancy fees and damages relationships with other stakeholders and funders.

### **Proposals**

23. If these approvals are granted, there are cumulative benefits. For example, the partnership with GLA Economics will support CLF's work to update the LSIP (due to begin in the autumn). The partnership with GLA Economics will also support our work on digital connectivity and in other areas as it will provide additional mapping and analysis capabilities currently lacking.

### **Corporate and Strategic Implications**

#### Strategic implications

24. The programmes outlined in this paper support delivery of the following Corporate Plan outcomes: diverse, engaged communities, providing excellent services, and dynamic economic growth.
25. The programme will enable the delivery of the CLF Strategy.

#### Financial implications

26. Delivering these programmes and their associated outcomes will require no funding from the City of London Corporation. Both the programmes themselves itself, and CLF's management costs will be covered by programme funding.
27. Chamberlain's Department are aware of the financial implications of the programme.

#### Resource implications

28. There are some modest resource implications for City of London Corporation in supporting CLF. These include: support from Comptrollers and City Solicitors;

support from Chamberlain's to comply with DWP audits; support from Innovation and Growth on strategy and governance.

29. The resource implications will be relatively limited for the City of London Corporation.

#### Legal implications

30. Comptrollers and City Solicitors are aware of the legal implications, which are limited. The contract amendments to extend the LSIP and accept additional GLA funding for the digital connectivity programme are likely to be standard and in line with those we already have in place. The agreement with GLA Economics is new but is with an organisation we work with regularly already.

#### Risk implications

31. There are very limited risk implications for the City Corporation. There is an annual break clause in the contract, should the GLA or CLF decide to cease the programme.
32. There would be potential reputational risk if the City of London Corporation did not approve these recommendations as this would put CLF at odds both with the other London subregional partnerships, and the approach agreed by the CLF Partnership Board.

#### Equalities implications

33. CLF specifically works to tackle labour market inequalities and support residents with protected characteristics into good jobs. The Digital Connectivity Programme supports boroughs to improve connectivity infrastructure and counter digital exclusion

#### Climate implications

34. There are no specific climate implications. CLF has ensured that all delivery partners put in place measures to minimise emissions as a result of the programme.

#### Security implications

35. There are no security implications.

### **Conclusion**

36. These approvals would allow CLF to continue to deliver a high-quality service to its member authorities and achieve its strategic objectives (as established by the CLF Partnership Board).

### **Appendices**

None

### **Background Papers**

[March 2025 Digital Connectivity Extension - APPROVED PAPER.docx](#)