

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR DIRECTOR DECISION – DD2677

### Future of London Emerging Talent Programme

#### Executive summary:

In September 2022 Housing and Land agreed to fund one placement through Future of London's Emerging Talent Programme (ETP), a 21-month programme for Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals who want to start their career in housing and regeneration.

The Public Land and Building Safety teams have benefitted from ETP placements for over six months; and have seen the benefit of the programme within the Directorate. This decision form seeks to secure a three-year commitment to the programme, to support placements in the Housing and Land Directorate on a sustained basis. This will demonstrate commitment to the expansion of diversity in the real estate sector; and to entry-level roles that support the development of early-careers candidates. These are elements of the Directorate's equality, diversity and inclusion Action Plan that have been noted as requiring improvement.

#### Decision:

That the Executive Director of Housing and Land approves expenditure of £148,500 for the Emerging Talent Programme comprising £49,500 per year for the financial years 2024-25; 2025-26 and 2026-27.

#### AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

**Name:**

Tim Steer

**Position:**

Executive Director, Housing and Land

**Signature:****Date:**

19/02/2024

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

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

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

- 1.1. Housing and Land is committed to genuine equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the directorate. It has identified that there are currently insufficient opportunities for early-careers entry into the directorate; and that Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues are underrepresented within its staff.
- 1.2. It has sought to address this by participating in the Future of London Emerging Talent Programme (ETP).
- 1.3. Future of London is an independent network for housing, regeneration and economic development practitioners. It helps to build better cities through knowledge, networks and leadership. Future of London has several networks, including the Council-Led Housing Forum and the Speaker Diversity Network. It also runs Future London Leaders and Leaders Plus courses, which many staff from the Directorate have benefitted from. The GLA is a core supporter of Future of London.
- 1.4. In response to the well-recognised lack of ethnic diversity in the built environment profession, with a narrow talent pool entering the sector, the Future of London network has sought to respond by developing the ETP. The Programme reaches out to Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals to offer an inclusive entry point to produce a greater diversity of talent within London's housing and regeneration sectors. It supports candidates starting their career but is also open to anyone who is looking to change their career direction. To be on the programme, candidates need some level of work or volunteering experience, and/or qualifications at a higher or degree level, related to housing, regeneration and development.
- 1.5. The aims of the programme are to:
  - attract greater diversity into the sector
  - fast-track potential leaders
  - increase understanding and awareness of the range of career opportunities in the sector
  - offer a 15-month programme of rotations through partner organisations in both public and private sectors
  - create a unique experience working across housing associations, local authorities, consultancies and private developers
  - support innovation and diversity of thought, leading to better performance of host organisations and the sector overall.
- 1.6. Each candidate completes two placements (nine months and six months), with two host organisations, to give them different experiences across housing and the built environment. This allows candidates on the programme to maximise their career prospects after 15 months, through exposure to these host organisations, their network, and the support provided by Future of London throughout the programme.
- 1.7. Participants benefit from:
  - a personal mentor (note that three Housing and Land colleagues mentor candidates in the first cohort, which they have found incredibly rewarding)
  - attending a series of regular learning and development sessions to build skills, knowledge and understanding of housing and regeneration

- regular support and guidance from a dedicated Programme Manager at Future of London
  - support in securing ongoing employment after completing the programme.
- 1.8. The host organisation provides both placements, supporting two different candidates through the duration of the programme.
- 1.9. The experiences of three candidates in the first cohort of the programme, as they neared completion of their first placement can be heard on a Future of London podcast [here](#).

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

- 2.1. The objectives of the programme are to support early careers recruits to gain experience, but also build up valuable networks within the built environment. The first cohort of ETP recruits has recently completed the programme and the first placements of the second round have been concluded. All the recruits to date have reflected on the benefits to their network of developing contacts and having greater exposure to other roles within the built environment. This exposure has given them insight into roles they might not have known about or considered for themselves.
- 2.2. For Housing and Land the programme addresses an identified need in terms of early careers opportunities, combined with the opportunity to support people from under-represented groups. Housing and Land recognises that ethnicity is not the only protected characteristic (under the Equality Act 2010) that is underrepresented in the directorate; and has committed to exploring other inclusive routes into employment. This will form part of the offer with regards to increasing the diversity of the directorate.

## **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. 'Inclusive London', the Mayor's EDI strategy, sets out a clear vision for tackling persistent inequalities through policy-making and progressive workforce practice. The main objective the ETP would address is "to ensure London's workforce reflects its population at all levels and in all sectors". To address this the ETP will do the following:
- ETP recruits exclusively from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidate pool, and helps to attract a more ethnically diverse mix of candidates into the built environment profession. Through supporting the programme, GLA will be increasing the diversity of the GLA workforce and building a pipeline of more ethnically diverse talent for middle and higher-grade positions.
  - A targeted, sector-wide attraction strategy helps the GLA to access a pool of talented Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates that we may otherwise not have been able to attract.
  - ETP provides priority access to an innovative cross-sector, fast-tracked professional development programme that will provide candidates with a strong support network. This will support future talent in their career progression, and allow them to reach senior-level positions.
  - Participants on the ETP programme will gain unique cross-sector and cross-discipline experience and understanding. This will help them to secure good jobs at the end of the placement, choosing a career pathway that best suits their interests and skills.
  - The ETP programme creates a supportive peer network, allowing hosts and candidates to share experience and best practice. This will help to upskill GLA staff; and will be an important step towards creating a more open and inclusive culture.
- 3.2. In the most recent workforce survey (March 2023) Housing and Land had only 19 per cent of roles paid under £50,000, compared to a GLA average of 41 per cent. This points to a relative lack of entry

level roles in the Directorate. This programme would not address the issue directly; but would help to support the wider sector by giving relevant exposure to candidates, and providing them with strong networking opportunities to build their professional profile.

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Proportion of roles paid less than £50,000</b>
Housing and Land	19%
Assembly Secretariat	75%
Chief Officer Directorate	56%
Communities and Skills	40%
Good Growth	37%
Mayor’s Office	13%
Resources	63%
Strategy and Communications	47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41%</b>

- 3.3. The GLA will be leading sector-wide change, and leading by example – encouraging public and private sector organisations to act and support diversity within their organisations. The GLA, as host organisation, would be directly supporting candidates with protected characteristics through the ETP. There is likely to be intersectionality of protected characteristics, which the programme will address.
- 3.4. The ETP programme seeks to attract young Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates who have recently completed their education. The intersectionality of age and race may have exacerbated inequalities through the COVID-19 pandemic; these candidates may have felt a disproportionate negative impact when compared to the wider population. This programme will provide targeted supported; help to fast-track the professional development of the candidates; and attract them to the housing and built environment profession, where there is a recognised lack of ethnic diversity.

Talent management

- 3.5. The Equal Group Report highlighted that the GLA has an issue with the development and progression of ethnic minority staff, as well as underrepresentation of ethnic minority staff at GLA, particularly at higher-grades. Key recommendations and themes in the report related to recruitment and talent management. The ETP seeks to directly address a key issue within the housing and built environment sector: a lack of ethnic diversity entering the profession, with a reduced pool of talent to recruit from. The programme builds this pipeline, and supports the professional development and career progression of Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals, from which GLA will benefit in future recruitment rounds.

Housing and Land EDI Action Plan

- 3.6. The Housing and Land EDI Action Plan identifies the ETP programme as a way of welcoming a range of applicants to the GLA. It will create a talent pool, enabling access to a wider network of talent, from which the directorate will be able to recruit into permanent roles.

Human resources

- 3.7. The candidates are directly employed by Future of London, not the GLA. They will, however, require IT equipment to be provided by the GLA for the duration of their placement.

Workplan for candidates

- 3.8. A longer-term commitment to the programme will facilitate a more strategic approach to the allocation of the placements within the Directorate. It will also enable different teams to benefit from hosting. To date, candidates have been placed within the Building Safety, and Land and Development teams.

#### 4. Other considerations

- 4.1. The key benefit, to Housing and Land, of supporting the ETP is the service that Future of London provides in the form of the recruitment, selection and ongoing support of the candidates.
- 4.2. Previous early-careers interventions, such as Futures Associates (an internally run programme), required significant internal resource for the design and management of the recruitment process. Future of London manages the recruitment process; it invites host organisations to be panel members, and to complete the selection and contracting with the recruits. The cost of the recruit covers both the candidate's salary (above the London Living Wage) and a fee to Future of London.
- 4.3. By using the ETP, Housing and Land can benefit from Future of London's framework for the programme – which specifically targets underrepresented early-careers candidates, and ensures that they have a well-supported placement in the organisation.
- 4.4. A three-year commitment to the programme gives Future of London certainty of placements, and the ability to plan for recruits to be placed in the organisation. It also gives Housing and Land the opportunity to embed the ETP, with the expectation that teams host the placements and share learning. This ensures it is a valuable experience for recruits and for receiving teams.
- 4.5. A review of similar programmes was undertaken to understand the offer in the market. No comparable programme identified. There were routes to reach underrepresented groups (such as BAME in Property, Building People CIC) and programmes targeted at senior leaders from the same groups (Leadership 2025).
- 4.6. Risks:
  - Reputational risk: the GLA clearly sets out the importance of EDI, therefore we need to externally demonstrate leadership in this area. Key to demonstrating this commitment externally is supporting programmes such as Future of London's ETP; and providing opportunities for Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals wanting to start a career in housing and regeneration.
  - Not enough candidates are found to participate: in this event, Housing and Land will not be charged for participation.
  - Candidates drop out from the programme: in this event, there is no ongoing cost to Housing and Land. If there are insufficient candidates to offer an initial placement, there are no costs. If the GLA cannot offer a placement after the contract is signed, at least one month's notice needs to be given to avoid incurring a charge.
  - Salary benchmarking: as part of the Job Families work, there will be a clearer understanding of the corresponding grades to the ETP recruits, to ensure parity of role and grades. This arises from a concern over whether the recruit's work would be above the level at which they are being paid. This will be carefully monitored by the Directorate to ensure that these entry-level posts are being filled appropriately.

#### 5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Executive Director's approval is sought for GLA expenditure of £148,500 (plus VAT) for a three-year commitment to the ETP. This comprises £49,500 (plus VAT), per year, for 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27. Budget for 2024-25 to 2025-26 has been factored into the Land and Development unit within Housing and Land's 2024-25 budget, via the current budget-setting process. Budget for 2026-27 will need to be considered as part of the 2025-26 budget-setting process. Therefore, it should be noted that future years' budget is subject to future budget-setting processes and approvals so break clauses should be in contracts, should the budget change in future years.

## 6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Executive Director, Housing and Land (the Director), concern the exercise of the Authority's general powers; and fall within the Authority's statutory power to do such things considered to further, or which are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of social development and economic development and wealth creation within Greater London. In formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
  - consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom
  - consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Director must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty – namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any 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 (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Director should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3. Officers are reminded to comply with the requirements of the Contracts and Funding Code when they procure services or supplies, or when they award grant funding, in furtherance of the ETP. Furthermore, officers are reminded to put in place appropriate contracts and grant agreements between the GLA and the relevant service providers and/or grant recipients. Finally, officers should ensure that all such contracts and grants include break clauses, lest any future mayoral administration decides not to proceed further with the programme.
- 6.4. The Director must also have due regard to sections 158 and 159 of the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that any proposed positive action be lawful and in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. The project will be delivered according to the following timetable:

Action	Deadline
Contract with Future of London	End of February 2024
Welcome first ETP recruit	April 2024
Welcome second ETP recruit	January 2025

### Appendices and supporting papers:

None

**Public access to information**

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

**Part 1 – Deferral**

**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO**

**Part 2 – Sensitive information**

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under the FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

**Is there a part 2 form – NO**

**ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

**Drafting officer:**

Philippa Bancroft has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

**Assistant Director/Head of Service:**

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

✓

**Financial and Legal advice:**

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

✓

**Corporate Investment Board**

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 12 February 2024.

✓

**INTERIM CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:**

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

**Signature:**



**Date:**

22/02/2024