
London mayor program

Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth

constructive analysis by Harrow Monitoring Group

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Executive Summary

The Greater London Authority's current initiatives, reinforced by the Mayor's *Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth* programme, set out a clear and timely vision for inclusive economic development. Together, they recognise that London's long-term prosperity depends not simply on economic expansion, but on whether growth translates into improved skills, access to good-quality work, and reduced inequality across the city. The emphasis on system integration, partnership working, and employer engagement reflects contemporary best practice in metropolitan governance and responds directly to long-standing fragmentation in London's skills and employment landscape.

The principal challenge facing both the wider GLA initiatives and this programme, however, is execution. While strategic intent is strong, delivery mechanisms are often insufficiently specified, accountability is dispersed across multiple actors, and public-facing measures of success remain underdeveloped. Heavy reliance on coordination rather than formal authority risks slowing implementation and obscuring responsibility for outcomes. At the same time, although equity is a stated priority, there is a risk that benefits accrue disproportionately to areas and groups with greater existing capacity unless redistribution and targeting are more explicitly embedded.

In its current form, *Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth* strengthens the coherence of the GLA's policy framework while also exposing its structural weaknesses. Addressing these weaknesses, particularly around delivery clarity, accountability, and equitable impact, will be essential if the GLA is to move from ambitious strategy to tangible improvements in Londoners' lives. Doing so within this flagship growth and skills programme would set an important precedent for the wider GLA policy portfolio.

Constructive Analysis

The Mayor's *Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth* programme is one of the most substantial delivery vehicles within the wider GLA policy landscape, translating the principle of inclusive growth into a concrete labour market and skills agenda. Its central ambition, to ensure that Londoners are better equipped to access good work as the economy evolves, is closely consistent with the GLA's broader commitment to reducing inequality while sustaining economic competitiveness. In doing so, the programme grounds abstract growth objectives in the everyday realities of work, skills, and progression.

Strategically, the focus on building a more integrated, employer-led talent system addresses a long-recognised structural weakness in London's labour market: fragmentation between education, training, careers advice, and employment support. By seeking to match skills provision more closely with labour demand, the programme responds both to employer needs and to gaps in individual opportunity. This systemic framing reflects the GLA's wider shift away from isolated interventions towards city-wide coordination and partnership-based governance.

At the same time, the programme exemplifies challenges that cut across the GLA initiatives as a whole. Most notably, it relies heavily on coordination across multiple actors - boroughs, employers, providers, and national agencies - without fully resolving how authority, accountability, and performance management will operate in practice. While the GLA positions itself as a system architect rather than a direct deliverer, this role depends on strong incentives, clear governance structures, and enforceable expectations. Without these, responsibility for outcomes risks becoming diffuse, making it difficult to define success or intervene effectively when performance falls short.

This risk is not unprecedented and carries important lessons for the current programme. Previous attempts to deliver skills reform through multi-agency coordination without clear lines of authority offer a cautionary precedent, most notably the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) of the late 1980s. Despite ambitious rhetoric around a “skills revolution,” the TECs failed to deliver meaningful systemic change. Their shortcomings were attributed to a combination of inadequate and insecure funding, short-termism, and a limited ability to stimulate sustained employer investment in training. More fundamentally, these weaknesses reflected flawed underlying assumptions: market failures in the training system were unlikely to be resolved by institutions designed to mimic market mechanisms. In this sense, the failure of the TECs was not merely operational but systemic, a reminder that coordination alone, without robust governance and public accountability, is insufficient to drive structural change.

Measurement and transparency are particularly salient issues. Although the programme articulates clear outcome ambitions, the public articulation of how progress will be tracked remains limited. For Londoners, the distinction between strategic intent and measurable improvement is critical. Without transparent milestones and regular, accessible reporting, it is difficult to judge whether investment in skills and employment pathways is genuinely improving access to good work or simply reconfiguring existing provision. This reflects a broader pattern across GLA initiatives, where evaluation and accountability often lag behind policy ambition.

Equity presents a further risk. While the programme is explicitly framed around enabling more Londoners to benefit from growth, an employer-led system does not automatically overcome entrenched barriers faced by disadvantaged groups or under-resourced communities. Without deliberate targeting, there is a danger that those with greater social capital, stronger institutions, or proximity to high-growth sectors will benefit most. As with other GLA strategies, achieving equitable outcomes will require more than inclusive language; it will demand prioritisation, capacity-building, and sustained attention to those least well served by existing systems.

These equity and delivery challenges are particularly relevant for outer London boroughs such as Harrow. For Harrow, *Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth* corresponds closely with the Council’s priorities on inclusive growth, skills progression, support for young people, and strengthening the local economy. As an outer London borough with a diverse population, a strong SME base, and high levels of outward commuting, Harrow stands to benefit from a more integrated approach to careers, skills, and employment that improves access to good-

quality work closer to home. The programme's focus on employer engagement and better work practices is particularly relevant to Harrow's town centres and local businesses, while strengthened skills pipelines into sectors such as health and care, construction, digital, and green jobs could support both workforce needs and resident wellbeing. However, these benefits will only be realised if delivery is genuinely place-based, with targeted support and capacity-building for outer London boroughs, clear borough-level accountability, and transparent tracking of outcomes to ensure that Harrow residents are meaningfully benefiting from London's growth rather than remaining on its margins.

Finally, the scale of investment attached to the programme signals seriousness of intent but heightens the importance of long-term sustainability. The movement of projects between programmes and reliance on multi-year funding settlements introduce potential instability, particularly in a volatile national policy environment. Embedding successful elements into core systems, rather than treating them as time-limited initiatives, will be essential if the programme is to deliver durable change.

Overall, *Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth* strengthens the GLA's strategic narrative by placing people and work at the centre of the growth agenda. At the same time, it reinforces the central critique of the wider GLA initiatives: strong vision and strategic coherence are not yet consistently matched by delivery clarity, accountability, and equitable implementation. Addressing these issues within this flagship programme would not only improve its own impact, but also establish a benchmark for how the GLA can convert ambitious strategy into outcomes that Londoners can see and experience.

Recommendations

1. Clarify delivery authority and accountability by explicitly defining organisational responsibilities at each stage of implementation and establishing clear mechanisms for addressing underperformance.
2. Introduce clear, publicly accessible performance metrics that link investment to measurable improvements in skills, job quality, and access to employment, supported by regular reporting in plain language.
3. Embed equity through targeted mechanisms, including prioritised funding, capacity-building support, and place-based interventions for underrepresented groups and under-resourced boroughs.
4. Strengthen partnership governance by aligning incentives, simplifying coordination arrangements, and reducing duplication across programmes and delivery bodies.
5. Plan for long-term sustainability by mainstreaming successful initiatives into core systems and services, rather than relying on short-term or pilot-based funding cycles.
6. Improve transparency around funding flows and programme alignment, particularly where projects move between initiatives, to maintain coherence and public trust.
7. Use *Supporting Londoners to Benefit from Growth* as a delivery benchmark for the wider GLA strategy, applying lessons learned to improve execution, evaluation, and accountability across all major initiatives.