

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3105

Title: Holiday Hunger Programme

Executive summary:

This decision form seeks the Mayor's approval for expenditure of up to £3.6m of GLA budget in 2023-24 to deliver a Holiday Hunger Programme, which aims to tackle the urgent issue of food insecurity in London through targeted interventions and capacity building.

The proposal set out in this document will complement the allocation of £130m from the GLA budget in 2023-24 to provide free school meals to all primary school children in London. It will do so by increasing the provision of free meals to low-income families during the school holidays, and thus helping them to mitigate the worst effects of the continued rise in the cost of essentials, such as energy and food.

Decision:

That the Mayor approves:

1. expenditure of £3.1m in grant funding, to be provided to the Mayor's Fund for London, to deliver a Holiday Hunger Programme for Londoners in partnership with the Felix Project
2. expenditure of an additional amount, up to £425k, in grant funding to be provided to the Felix Project to expand its operational capacity, with funding being used to cover the staffing and core operational costs associated with running its existing warehouses and distribution operations for an extra day a week
3. expenditure of up to £75k towards the creation of a new function within Communities and Social Policy, to deliver communications capacity in order to ensure the successful delivery of the programme.

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

14/3/23

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. This decision form seeks approval for expenditure of £3.6m of GLA budget for 2023-24 to contribute to a Holiday Hunger Programme. This programme will increase the volume of ready-made and recipe-based cook-at-home meals to London families; build urgent food distribution capacity in London to meet an increase in demand; establish new communications capacity to increase the delivery impact of the programme; and align with broader communications in relation to communities and social justice.
- 1.2. The cost-of-living crisis is pushing more people into poverty and homelessness, with thousands of households in London unable to obtain an adequate and nutritious diet. Research from the Food Foundation highlighted that, in September 2022, 18 per cent of households across the UK experienced food insecurity that month, impacting 9.7m adults and 4m children.¹
- 1.3. In the [Mayor's Final Draft Consolidated Budget for 2023-24](#), he allocated £130m to one-off funding to 'help for families'. It is proposed that this is used to ensure all primary school children in the capital can receive free school meals for 2023-24; this will help around 270,000 children and save families around £440 per child across the year. The plans detailed in this paper complement this initiative, with a focus on interventions to address holiday hunger in order to plug a gap in provision for children and families during the school holidays. It also aligns with several existing Mayoral priorities and London Recovery Missions, the details of which are set out in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.5.
- 1.4. These programmes also scale up pan-London food distribution to better meet an increase in demand with a focus on reducing edible food waste generated by the food industry. They do so through a model that collects surplus food from suppliers and delivers it to charities helping disadvantaged adults and children access high-quality food. Currently, pan-London food redistribution capacity is limited to five days a week; this proposal seeks investment to move the operating model to six days a week, addressing urgent gaps in weekend food deliveries.
- 1.5. This programme has been designed to meet an acute need in the 2023-24 financial year for families. However, the support offered over the next 12 months will also result in longer-term benefits to low-income families beyond the lifetime of the project, which will help deliver against long-term strategic priorities. For example, it is well evidenced² that the provision of affordable healthy meals contributes to better long-term health outcomes for families, by reducing childhood obesity, reducing rates of diabetes, and promoting better mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Meal provision will include resources and nutritional advice to support long-term health outcomes for families. Accompanying resources and support to maximise incomes will also help beneficiaries to improve their financial resilience, and reduce reliance on crisis support in the long term.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

Overarching objective

- 2.1. The overarching objective of this specific programme is to reduce the extent of holiday food insecurity in London by increasing the supply of free meals to low-income families over the school holidays. This objective is consistent with the strategic goals of several London Recovery Missions, the details of which are set out in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.5.

Delivery method

¹ The Food Foundation, [Food Insecurity Tracking](#)

² Child Poverty Action Group/Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, [Poverty and Child Health](#), May 2017

- 2.2. This decision seeks approval to provide grant funding to the Mayor's Fund for London (a separate charitable entity that is not part of the GLA Group structure), acting in partnership with the Felix Project, to collaborate on delivery of a Holiday Hunger Programme, with delivery taking place during the 13 weeks of school holidays across 2023-24, beginning with the two-week holiday in April 2023. The rationale for the provision of grant funding in line with the requirements of the GLA's Funding and Contracts Code has been set out in paragraph 4.7, below.
- 2.3. This programme will provide an increased volume of ready-made and recipe-based cook-at-home meals to London families through the following delivery vehicles:
- **Create and Make** – uses surplus and seasonal food alongside cupboard staples to complete a full recipe box for families
 - **Heat and Eat** – pre-cooked meals that can easily be heated up either at home or in community spaces; this recognises that many organisations, as well as families struggling to use fuel at home, can be limited in their ability to cook from scratch
 - **Take and Make** – combines food, nutritional education and family activities through recipe boxes designed to create a meal for four to six people with high-quality contents that take into account allergies and dietary preferences
 - **Kitchen Social** – works through a network of nine local community hubs to help provide young people with a safe place in which to receive a free healthy meal, take part in cooking lessons and participate in fun wellbeing activities with their peers
 - **Food for families** – London-wide food provision, free at the point of delivery, to a network of community organisations and schools; the organisations receive a weekly order of food tailored to their needs that can be used to create meals on site, offer snacks and refreshments, and be offered to families to take home themselves
 - **Community distribution events** – mass distribution events to meet heightened demand in school holidays, organised through schools, housing associations and other community-based spaces, to offer food via large-scale mass participation events.
- 2.4. The programme has been designed to capitalise on the success of the existing delivery models set out above. However, it will also include newly designed food delivery routes that target the distributive mechanisms reaching Londoners in community settings, prioritising those most in need, such as younger people and families with school-age children. There will be no formal eligibility criteria to allow families to access the food supplied through this programme. However, the provision will be targeted in areas of highest need based on demand from community partners, along with an assessment of local rates of destitution and gaps in existing provision.
- 2.5. The food provision will be delivered alongside interventions that promote cooking skills, nutritional education and community wellbeing interventions. These interventions will also link beneficiaries into 'cash-first' support (such as advice or information about claiming benefits or other financial entitlements, and accessing help to deal with debt) that can assist in alleviating the underlying drivers of food insecurity.
- 2.6. This programme will be administered by the Mayor's Fund for London, a charity that champions opportunities for young Londoners from low-income backgrounds, in partnership with the Felix Project. (The proposed grant of £3.1m would also provide a contribution towards the partnership costs of the project, including an evaluation of the programme and administration/project management fees.) The Mayor's Fund for London provides free meals to low-income families and young people via more than 340 community partners, and more than 80 hubs where families and young people can also benefit from other free enrichment activities or wrap-around support. The Felix Project is a charity that uses surplus food from the food industry that cannot be sold and would otherwise go to waste. They collect or receive food from more than 539 suppliers, including

supermarkets, wholesalers, farms, restaurants and delis. This food is then sorted and delivered to almost 1,000 front-line charities. The Felix Project is the only voluntary and community sector organisation of this kind acting at a pan-London level, and which therefore has the ability to quickly achieve the scale needed to operate effectively across all London boroughs.

- 2.7. In addition to the funding for the Holiday Hunger Programme, this decision seeks approval to provide up to £425k funding to the Felix Project to expand its operational capacity. This funding will be used to cover increases to staffing and management costs, along with increased core operational costs (e.g. energy, fuel, vehicles etc) associated with running the charity's existing surplus food rescue and redistribution operations for an extra day a week. The Felix Project currently operates out of four warehouse locations, providing London-wide coverage, on a five-day-a-week working model. However, there is an urgent need to expand this capacity to six days a week (enabling operations to take place on Saturdays) in order to meet the heightened demand for food aid throughout the year, particularly during the school holidays.
- 2.8. Approval is also sought for the expenditure of up to £75k towards the creation of a new function in Communities and Social Policy, to lead on communications activities that are central to the success of the Holiday Hunger programme, and to carry out aligned work with a focus on communities and social justice. This officer will maximise the impact across communities and social policy programmes; and enable alignment against shared strategic priorities to ensure that families disproportionately impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and holiday hunger can access information, advice and support services.
- 2.9. The creation of this function will be subject to establishment control processes. The £75,000 budget allocation includes all associated on-costs.

Expected outcomes

- 2.10. A flexible approach to delivering the Holiday Hunger Programme will be taken to ensure that the programme can respond to rising or emerging need during different holidays, and in different parts of London. However, the Mayor's Fund for London and the Felix Project estimate that the £3.1m funding will result in the equivalent of around 6.9m additional meals being provided to families across London in 2023-24.
- 2.11. The Felix Project estimates that the £425k funding to increase its operational hours from five to six days a week will allow them to redistribute surplus food to London families via an additional 100 community partners a week. They expect, as a result, to deliver in the region of 20 tonnes of additional food every weekend, which they estimate is equivalent to an extra 2.5m to 3m meals provided over the entire financial year.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as a public authority, the GLA must have 'due regard' of the Public Sector Equality Duty – that is, the need to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity
 - foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. Equality, integration and inclusion are the drivers behind these programmes. They support the delivery of the Recovery Missions to enable a 'robust safety net' by increasing Londoners' access to good and healthy food. These programmes also help address challenges highlighted in other missions, including commitments to support young people and build stronger communities; they will

also address health inequalities through the longer-term outcomes of work on improving access to healthy food.

- 3.3. Experiences of food poverty often interact with other forms of marginalisation, such as disability and racism. Londoners from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority backgrounds are disproportionately impacted by barriers in accessing housing, good work, secure healthcare and other entitlements that can increase vulnerability to food poverty. Immigration policies, such as the 'no recourse to public funds' condition, often disproportionately impact families from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, limiting their access to a welfare safety net. This makes direct interventions ensuring access to good-quality food all the more important.
- 3.4. Steps will be taken on the programme to ensure that food is diverse and celebrates dishes, ingredients and cooking skills that represent London's diverse communities, as well as meeting dietary requirements and preferences. This will include co-designing recipes/recipe boxes with a diverse range of young Londoners and low-income families, to ensure the offer is culturally appropriate.
- 3.5. To ensure the highest standards of equality, diversity and inclusion are upheld, the GLA will work with delivery partners to use outreach and engagement approaches to target activities at particular groups that are less able to engage, or that face greater barriers to engagement. This will enable them to participate, while ensuring that activities are open and accessible to all Londoners.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

Risk	Mitigation	Current probability	Current impact	RA G
Volatility of food prices impacts on the number of meals that can be delivered	Using surplus food within supply chains significantly mitigates against inflationary pressures by achieving good value for money on the programme. Bulk purchasing of food further mitigates against inflationary pressures by achieving better value for money.	3	4	R
Volatility of food supply chains disrupts supply	Maintain excellent connections with food supply chains to mitigate against short-term supply challenges, and to expand access to new food-sector markets to increase access to surplus edible food.	2	4	A
Speed of delivery required from partners puts pressure on services and risks delays	Investment in distribution capacity alongside food provision to ensure that scale is achieved sustainably. Ensure robust partnership arrangements and governance are in place to track delays, and address issues to ensure work can progress at pace.	3	2	A

Conflicts of interest

- 4.1. There are no conflicts of interest to note for any of the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form. The Mayor is the patron of the Mayor's Fund for London. However, he has no involvement in the affairs of the charity and this proposal is being brought forward by officers based on the Mayor's Fund for London's proven track record of delivering holiday food provision on a pan-London basis.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2. This work links to the Mayor's delivery of the Robust Safety Net Recovery Mission, which aims to ensure that, by 2025, all Londoners can access the support they need to avoid or alleviate financial hardship. This includes work to ensure that Londoners who need crisis support and emergency food aid can access it.
- 4.3. It also contributes to the delivery of the Healthy Place, Healthy Weight Recovery Mission (which aims to ensure that by 2025, all London's families will find it easier to eat healthy food and be active where they live, learn, shop, work and play); and the Building Strong Communities Mission (which aims to ensure that by 2025, all Londoners will have access to a community hub ensuring they can volunteer, get support and build strong community networks).
- 4.4. This proposal is primarily an intervention to help reduce the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on low-income families, which is a priority under the Getting London Back on its Feet Mayoral priority.
- 4.5. The use of (primarily) surplus food throughout this project will also help London become a zero-waste city by 2050.

Considerations for the provision of grant funding

- 4.6. This programme has been informed by consultation with local authorities and charities working to support Londoners facing food poverty. This ensures that it meets the most urgent needs of Londoners, and complements other regional and local initiatives to fill gaps in provision for families.
- 4.7. It is considered that the funding proposed in this decision constitutes the award of grant payment funding, rather than a contract for services under the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code. This is because:
 - it would support an existing third-party (rather than GLA) project that aligns with the Mayor's priorities, but is the initiative of the third party in question
 - the GLA would not receive a direct or indirect benefit as a result; the benefits would instead accrue to Londoners.
- 4.8. The strategy of providing grant funding directly to the two organisations in question has been chosen for the following reasons:
 - The Felix Project is the only supplier of surplus food that operates across London and in all London boroughs, and that has established mechanisms for delivery at a London-wide level.
 - The Mayor's Fund for London is the only organisation that provides free, culturally appropriate food to families and young people through several established delivery mechanisms on a pan-London basis.
 - Collectively, these are the only organisations with the existing infrastructure, delivery mechanisms and relationships with community partners that enable the delivery of holiday food provision at the scale and within the timeframe required. The predominant use of free surplus food throughout this programme (which can only be provided at the scale required by the Felix Project) represents better value for money than other approaches that might rely more on purchasing food to provide meals.
 - The cost-of-living crisis (and, in particular, the predicted rise in food insecurity from the start of April, aligned to further increases in household energy bills) requires an urgent response. Funding these organisations directly (rather than carrying out a lengthy competitive grant-application process that would be resource-intensive for both the GLA and bidding organisations) is the quickest and most efficient way to increase holiday food provision.

- 4.9. The Mayor's Fund for London and the Felix Project are the only organisations capable of delivering the programme objectives in a cost-effective way. They have been identified as such via ongoing engagement and consultation with several strategic pan-London stakeholder groups, including the London Food Board, the London Food Board's food-aid sub-group, and the Boroughs Food Group. Research was also conducted to identify any other potential delivery organisations, and exploratory conversations were held with some. However, none had the reach, the established delivery mechanisms or the capacity to deliver a pan-London Holiday Hunger Programme within the desired timeline.

Subsidy control

- 4.10. GLA officers have carried out an analysis of the proposal against the Statutory Guidance for the UK Subsidy Control Regime.³ They have assessed that the Subsidy Control Regime is non-applicable in these circumstances because the proposed financial assistance does not constitute a subsidy.
- 4.11. In particular, the proposed financial assistance fails to satisfy Limb B of the four-limbed test set out in the Subsidy Control Act, as neither of the beneficiaries of the funding are classed as enterprises. Both the Mayor's Fund for London and the Felix Project are charitable organisations, neither of which are engaged in economic activity to offer goods or services on a market. They provide free, charitable support (in the form of food aid and activities) to low-income Londoners, and are entirely dependent on donations or ringfenced grants to fund their operations.
- 4.12. This proposal is consistent with the example set out in the Statutory Guidance in section 2.17, on page 26. This example states that "a ringfenced grant to a charity for its non-economic activities (even if the charity also provides some goods or services on the market)" is unlikely to meet the four-limbed test. As such, no further assessment of the proposal against the Subsidy Control Principals is deemed necessary.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. This decision seeks approval for expenditure of £3.6m of GLA budget in 2023-24 to deliver a Holiday Hunger Programme that aims to tackle the urgent issue of food insecurity in London through targeted interventions and capacity building.
- 5.2. This is broken down as follows:
- expenditure of £3.1m to grant fund the Mayor's Fund for London and the Felix Project to deliver a Holiday Hunger Programme for Londoners
 - expenditure of up to £425k to grant fund the Felix Project to expand its operational capacity
 - expenditure of £75k to build communications capacity to ensure the successful delivery of the programme and aligned communities and social justice priorities.
- 5.3. Funding for future financial years will be subject to the annual budget-setting process and is subject to change. The expenditure of £3.6m for the Holiday Hunger Programme in 2023-24 is assumed to be affordable, and can only be confirmed when the budget allocation is formally approved in March 2023.
- 5.4. Any contracts that commit the GLA in future years are subject to appropriate break clauses.
- 5.5. The award of funding to the delivery partners will be subject to satisfactory financial due diligence.

³ BEIS, [Statutory Guidance for the United Kingdom Subsidy Control Regime](#), November 2022

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor 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 that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of social development within Greater London; and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers have complied with the Authority's related statutory duties to:
- 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 Mayor must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity 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; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 (above) of this report.
- 6.3. Decisions (i) and (ii) seek approval for the provision, by the Authority, of grant funding of up to £3,525,000 to the Felix Project and the Mayor's Fund for London. The proposed grants may be viewed as conditional gifts rather than a contract for services. Section 12 of the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code provides that decisions to award grant funding should generally be based on the outcome of a transparent, competitive application process. In this respect, the Mayor should have regard to section 4, above, which sets out reasons that officers consider the direct provision of grant funding to be appropriate in the specific context of the Holiday Hunger Programme. Finally, officers must ensure that appropriate grant funding agreements are executed between the Authority and the grant recipients prior to any funds being committed.
- 6.4. The Subsidy Control Act 2022 requires that certain grant-funding activity complies with its subsidy control principles. Officers have set out in section 4, above, how the proposed grant funding has been assessed as falling outside the scope of the subsidy control regime, such that further consideration of those principles is not required.
- 6.5. It should be noted that this decision relates only to the approval of budget, although there is reference in decision (iii) to approval also being sought for expenditure for the establishment of a communication function. Any staffing decisions that need to be made following this decision must be approved by the Head of Paid Service in accordance with the Authority's Head of Paid Service Staffing Protocol and Scheme of Delegation.

7. Planned delivery approach and next step

Activity	Timeline
Finalise grant agreement	March 2023
Easter holiday intervention	April 2023
May half-term intervention	May 2023
Summer holiday intervention	July 2023
October half-term intervention	October 2023
Christmas holiday intervention	December 2023
February half-term intervention	February 2024

Wrap-up activities	April 2024
Final evaluation	June 2024

Appendices and supporting papers:

None.

Public access to information

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

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

Part 1 – Deferral**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES**

Please defer until 30 April 2023 to allow for programme launch and comms activity in late March/early April.

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:

Hannah Boylan has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

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

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Debbie Weekes-Bernard has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 13 March 2023.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature:

D. Gove

Date:

14 March 2023

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature:

D. Bellamy

Date:

14 March 2023