

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2646

Title: Lesson learning – winter provision

Executive Summary:

Approval is being sought for expenditure of up to £25,000 to commission research into the effectiveness of the delivery of support to Londoners over the 2022-23 winter period.

Approval is also sought to receive up to £12,500 from London Councils as a contribution to the costs of commissioning this research.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Communities & Social Policy approves:

1. Expenditure of up to £25,000 on research into the effectiveness of support to Londoners over the winter
2. The receipt of up to £12,500 from London Councils as a contribution to the same

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

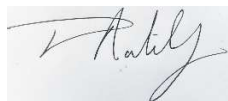
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Tom Rahilly

Position: Assistant Director,
Communities and Social Policy

Signature:



Date:

23/05/2023

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The cost-of-living crisis has presented a significant challenge for Londoners across the income distribution, but particularly those on low-incomes. Over the past 12-18 months, London's public, private and voluntary sector have worked together – including through the London Recovery Board and its successor body – to co-ordinate support for low-income households during this difficult time.
- 1.2. The winter months have always posed a particular challenge for low-income households, and these have been significantly exacerbated by the role that energy costs have played in fuelling the cost-of-living crisis. As a result, there was specific focus given to helping Londoners to stay warm, healthy and safe over the 2022-23 winter period.
- 1.3. Whilst wholesale energy costs are now falling and there is no specific reason to think they will pose the same challenge during the coming winter as they did previously, inflation is still anticipated to be significantly higher than previous long-term trends with the cost of many essential items, including food, expected to be high. The previous winter was also a relatively warm one and that may not be repeated this year.
- 1.4. Therefore, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and partners want to understand what lessons can be learned from the 2022-23 winter period in order to better prepare for the coming winter.
- 1.5. There are no linked decisions or areas of expenditure.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 The overarching objective for this expenditure would be to help the GLA and partners to understand the effectiveness of delivery, co-ordination and support mechanisms for different interventions during the period in question, and to inform actions that might be taken – both collectively and by individual organisations – in the coming winter.
- 2.2 Interventions potentially within scope:
 - Warm and welcoming spaces – The opening of council, state and community spaces to the public over the winter
 - Emergency food aid – The provision of meals or food packages to Londoners experiencing food insecurity by voluntary and community organisations
 - Hardship support, including for energy costs – Accessing the support offered by boroughs through schemes funded through the Household Support Fund and central Government support, including the Energy Bills Support Scheme (particularly by those on pre-payment meters); the Warm Homes Discount Scheme; Winter Fuel Payments and other forms of support such as Cost of Living Payments
 - Energy efficiency measures – Accessing support for reducing energy usage such as the Warmer Homes scheme (or equivalent Sustainable Warmth schemes) and the GLA's Energy Advice Service
 - Holiday provision – Schemes running during the Christmas and spring half-term holiday offering activities and possibly food to young people

- Welfare advice – Initiatives that support Londoners to access social welfare legal advice on issues such as debt, welfare benefits, housing, employment etc to help them realise their rights and entitlements
- 2.3 The main deliverable would be a short, written report outlining the findings from the research. This would be shared internally and with partners to help co-ordinate actions over the coming winter.

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. Most, if not all, of the interventions that are likely to fall within the scope of this research are targeted at Londoners on low incomes or at risk of hardship, which is an underlying driver of structural inequality. Additionally, there are certain groups and communities sharing protected characteristics that are disproportionately likely to experience financial hardship or some of its specific manifestations.
- 3.3. For example, warm and welcoming spaces may be more likely to be used by older Londoners who are known to be particularly vulnerable to the effects of fuel poverty as well as being at disproportionate risk of loneliness and isolation. Different forms of hardship support are likely to be used by specific groups, while some payments are explicitly targeted at specific groups (e.g. older and disabled Londoners).
- 3.4. Therefore, in commissioning this research the tender will stipulate that learning is captured around how interventions and support were able to reach and be accessible to the specific groups or communities that were likely to disproportionately rely on or benefit from them.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1. The main risk to the successful delivery of this work will be an inability to reach interviewees from the relevant sectors or delivery partners whose insight is essential to inform the learning. We will mitigate this risk by weighting scoring criteria towards experience, including having existing relationships in the relevant sectors. In addition, officers from the GLA and London Councils will provide all and any relevant contacts they have with the successful bidder.
- 4.2. It is anticipated that this work will form a core part of the Mayor's approach to supporting Londoners with sustained cost of living pressures over the winter and this project will be reported into the GLA's cost of living steering group.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 This Assistant Directors Decision seeks approval for the expenditure of up to £25,000 of the Financial Hardship team's core budget in the 2023-24 financial year. It will be funded from the Cost of Living programme budget with costs supplemented by external contributions of up to £12,500 from London Councils.
- 5.2 There is sufficient budget within the 2023-24 approved budget to meet the expenditure above from the Cost of Living programme budget within the Financial Hardship team's core budget.

6. Legal comments

None

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract [for externally delivered projects]	Late May/Early Jun
Delivery Start Date [for project proposals]	Early Jun
Interviews conducted	Jun/Early July
First draft of report	Mid July
Final report / Project closure	End of July

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 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:

Dan Drillsma-Milgrom has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Corporate Investment Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Corporate Investment Board on 22 May 2023.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature:

Ana Custodt

Date:

22/05/2023