

## REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2749

### School Superzones Legacy Work

#### Executive summary:

This decision is seeking approval of expenditure of up to £15,000 in 2025-26, to deliver a legacy for the School Superzones programme.

School Superzones aim to improve children's health and enable healthy behaviours. They use local authority powers, and place-shaping potential, to implement environmentally based actions in a defined area around a school.

The Mayor invested £1.9m from 2021-22 to 2023-24 to expand the programme across London. During this period, 51 grants were made to 28 boroughs for 87 Superzone schools.

The evaluation shows that School Superzones have delivered a wide range of benefits. The next phase of work is focused on supporting its legacy through the development of resources for boroughs that wish to continue or develop local Superzones.

The work to be funded in 2025-26, as proposed in this decision form, comprises: development of a web-based toolkit; and delivery of a community of practice network.

#### Decision:

That the Assistant Director of the Health, Children and Young Londoners Team approves expenditure of up to £15,000 in 2025-26, to deliver a web-based toolkit and a community of practice network.

#### 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:** Jazz Bhogal

**Position:** Assistant Director, Health, Children & Young Londoners

**Signature:**



**Date:**

17/03/2025

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

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

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

- 1.1. Many of London's schools, particularly those in the most disadvantaged areas, are in environments dominated by traffic, too many unhealthy food outlets, polluted air and limited access to high-quality green spaces. These challenges make it more difficult for children and young people living in these areas to stay healthy.
- 1.2. School Superzones have played a central role in the delivery of the Healthy Place, Healthy Weight (HPHW) recovery mission, one of nine missions established in 2021 to support London's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. HPHW focused on making local environments healthier with a commitment 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".
- 1.3. School Superzones aim to improve children's health and enable healthy behaviours. They use local authority powers and place-shaping potential to implement environmentally based actions in a defined area around a school.
- 1.4. The concept was first tested in a pilot programme that ran from 2018 to 2019 in 13 London boroughs. The impact of this intervention was sufficiently positive that the Mayor committed in his 2021 manifesto to deliver "an expanded role for School Superzones".
- 1.5. The Mayor approved expenditure of up to £1.9m for the expansion of the School Superzones programme under cover of [MD2915: School Superzones work programme 2021-22 to 2023-24](#). This covered:
  - 51 grants, of up to £30,000 each, to 28 boroughs – totalling £1.5m
  - £150,000 for an independent evaluation of the programme
  - £124,000 for a grant management organisation
  - £114,000 for programme coordination, undertaken by Southwark Council.
- 1.6. The expansion, or second phase, of the School Superzones programme started in March 2022. The final programmes will finish in March 2025. 51 grants have been awarded to 28 boroughs for 87 Superzone schools.
- 1.7. The impact of the programme has been evaluated by Hawkins\Brown with input from Imperial College London and Queen Mary University of London. The evaluation has shown that the programme met its objectives and has delivered a wide range of benefits. Overall, it has been viewed by participating boroughs as a highly successful programme whose legacy includes:
  - new partnerships and stakeholder relationships
  - an improved understanding of place-based approaches to addressing public health needs
  - raised awareness of local barriers to healthier lifestyles
  - the adoption of cross-council, multifaceted public health project delivery models.

There is interest from local authorities, both within and outside London, in developing the School Superzones concept or maintaining existing Superzones. A toolkit and community of practice will provide the practical support needed for this.

- 1.8. Approval is being sought through this ADD for the following legacy work which will be delivered in 2025-26:
- Delivery of a visually engaging web-based toolkit that sets out how boroughs and other interested organisations can implement a successful School Superzone.
  - A community of practice network to support boroughs using the toolkit or sustaining their Superzone schools to share good practice.
- 1.9. The costs of up to £15,000 for this work will be funded from the core health budget within Children and Young Londoners in 2025-26.

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

### School Superzones Toolkit

#### *Purpose of funding*

- 2.1. This will be commissioned by Southwark Council, a key delivery partner who coordinated the expansion of the School Superzones programme from 2022 to 2024, and enabled boroughs to share knowledge and good practice. Southwark Council will be funding new Superzones in the borough and is ideally placed to develop the toolkit in partnership with the GLA. The funding will be paid to the London Borough of Southwark (LB Southwark) by way of a funding agreement.
- 2.2. The toolkit will support boroughs to address health inequalities by helping them develop new Superzones, and maintain existing ones. It will also be of interest to other place-based organisations such as housing associations or GP practices.
- 2.3. The toolkit will comprise practical learning from the evaluation and programme delivery; and will be co-produced with School Superzone boroughs. It will provide local authority staff with clear, actionable information on Superzones that can be applied at the local level to implement a successful School Superzone. This will support boroughs to address health inequalities in their most disadvantaged areas. It is expected to cover:
- gaining support of schools and other stakeholders
  - establishing partnership arrangements
  - action planning
  - examples of interventions to address health determinants – such as air quality, community safety and active travel
  - capturing and measuring impact.

#### Expected deliverables/outcomes

- 2.4. The expected outcome is a web-based resource for boroughs and other organisations interested in developing a Superzones programme or improving the environment around a school or other local area. It will include resources such as:
- case studies
  - an action plan template
  - a template to support the collection of baseline information, and help measure the impact of work

- lessons learnt from other HPHW projects aligned to the School Superzones programme – such as the evaluation of the Convenience Stores project.

#### Community of practice network

- 2.5. From 2022 to 2024, Southwark Council hosted a School Superzones Coordinator who was the main point of contact for all participating boroughs. The Coordinator also facilitated quarterly network meetings, which provided a forum for all Superzone boroughs to get together to share learning and good practice.
- 2.6. This ADD is seeking approval to build on the School Superzones' quarterly network meetings by establishing a community of practice network. This will provide a forum for sharing ideas and expertise; creating new knowledge; providing support and guidance; solving problems; and driving change at a local level.

#### Purpose of funding

- 2.7. This ADD is seeking approval to fund Southwark Council to deliver a community of practice network for boroughs that wish to maintain elements of the Superzone work or develop new ones. All boroughs, including those that have not had a Superzone, will be welcome to attend.

#### Expected deliverables

- 2.8. A minimum of four network meetings, open to boroughs and other organisations interested in using the toolkit to improve the environment around schools. The network meetings may be supplemented by action learning sets on topics identified by participants. These could include working with schools, engaging local communities or delivering work on different health determinants.
- 2.9. The table below shows the breakdown of deliverables for the above work programmes, and the decisions sought for proposed 2025-26 expenditure. Southwark Council will also contribute funding from their own resources of up to £10,000 towards the toolkit.

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Decision sought for 2025-26 spend</b>
A web-based toolkit	Approval to spend up to £10,000
At least four community of practice network meetings, and four action learning sets	Approval to spend up to £5,000
Total	Funding of up to £15,000 to be paid to LB Southwark by way of a funding agreement

### **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 need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. The Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy sets out how the Mayor will help address the inequalities, barriers and discrimination experienced by groups protected by the Equality Act 2010. In this strategy the Mayor of London has gone beyond these legal duties; and contributed to addressing wider issues such as poverty and socio-economic inequality, as well as the challenges and disadvantage facing different groups in London including young people.
- 3.3. The prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity remains a major public health challenge. The national child measurement programme for 2023-24 shows that the London trend for overweight

prevalence (including obesity) in Year 6 children had decreased in 2023-24, for both boys and girls; but had increased in Reception-age boys and girls.

- 3.4. In 2023-24, 20.9 per cent of London children in Reception class were overweight (this includes obese children). This compares with 21.6 per cent in 2019-20. In 2023-24, 37.8 per cent of Year 6 children were overweight, compared with 38.2 per cent in 2019-20.
- 3.5. For children living in the most deprived areas, obesity prevalence was over twice as high compared with those living in the least deprived areas.
- 3.6. Among Reception-age and Year 6 children in London, those of Black ethnicity had the highest obesity prevalence (including severe obesity) in the grouped period 2019-20 to 2023-24.
- 3.7. A major increase in the prevalence of overweight children in London, at both Reception and Year 6 ages, has been observed in published figures for 2020-21. This has been shown to be an artefact of the data-collection process that was necessary to collate data during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Data published after this points to overweight prevalence being nearer levels seen before the pandemic.
- 3.8. The updated GLA air quality exposure and inequalities study<sup>1</sup> has again found that populations living in the most deprived areas were, on average, more exposed to poor air quality than those in less deprived areas.
- 3.9. White and Asian populations are less likely to live in the most polluted areas, compared to the general population. Black, Mixed Multiple and “Other” populations are more likely to live in the most polluted areas.<sup>2</sup>
- 3.10. School Superzones address health and environmental inequalities around schools in areas of deprivation. They have been prioritised in areas that fall in the bottom 30 per cent of the national Index of Multiple Deprivation; or where communities have poorer health-related outcomes across issues such as child obesity, air pollution and asthma.

## 4. Other considerations

### Key risks and issues

- 4.1. The table below identifies the key risks and issues.

Risk/issue	RAG rating	Mitigation
Lack of interest in sustaining or establishing School Superzones.	Amber	Some boroughs plan to develop new Superzones or sustain elements of their Superzone. Further consultation with boroughs will take place in March 2025.
The toolkit is not useful and does not encourage or help boroughs establish new Superzones.	Green	The toolkit will be co-produced with boroughs, and tested by boroughs.

\*Red = highly likelihood and/or high impact; amber = medium likelihood and/or impact; green = low likelihood and/or impact

### Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2. The proposed activities will contribute directly to Inclusive London (the Mayor’s equality, diversity and inclusion strategy).

<sup>1</sup> GLA, [Air quality exposure and inequalities study: part one – London analysis](#), June 2023

<sup>2</sup> GLA, [Air quality exposure and inequalities study: part one – London analysis](#), June 2023

- 4.3. School Superzones support and complement several objectives in the Health Inequalities Strategy:
- for children to achieve and maintain a healthy weight
  - for London's air quality to improve, and fewer Londoners to be exposed to harmful pollution, especially in priority areas such as schools
  - for the planning system to be used to create healthier neighbourhoods, including adoption of the Healthy Streets approach
  - for London to be a greener city where all Londoners have access to good-quality green and other public spaces.
- 4.4. Superzones have significant potential to drive progress on several aims of the Mayor's Environment and Transport Strategies. They can also play an integral role in the GLA's health-in-all-policies approach, by: supporting the GLA's leadership role in place-shaping; empowering communities; and tackling health inequalities. They are closely aligned with other place-making initiatives such as School Streets and Play Streets.
- 4.5. In this new term, the Mayor has made supporting young people's mental health through early intervention an urgent priority. This includes a manifesto commitment to pilot a new mental health initiative in London's schools. However, the Mayor remains committed to putting children and young people at the heart of his health agenda. This work will create a legacy for the School Superzones programme by providing boroughs with the tools and information to develop new Superzones, and sustain ones that have been established. Healthier and safer local environments, with good-quality green spaces and opportunities for children to be more active and eat healthier food, support good mental health.

#### Consultations and impact assessments

- 4.6. The Superzones concept was explored, tested and developed in an 18-month pilot project in 13 London boroughs from 2018-19. Activities were coordinated with support from Public Health England London (now the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities), the GLA, the London Association of Directors of Public Health, the Healthy London Partnership, London Councils, the Town & Country Planning Association, and the London Healthy Places Network.
- 4.7. One of the principles of the programme is for local authorities to co-produce action plans with partners which includes schools, pupils and parents, community groups, businesses and local councillors to understand local needs and assets. This enables the Superzone to meet public health and local priorities.
- 4.8. The legacy work will include a toolkit co-produced with boroughs; and a community of practice network that will respond to issues raised by boroughs.

#### Subsidy control

- 4.9. This ADD seeks approval for funding of up to £15,000 that will be paid to LB Southwark. Of this, £5,000 is for the delivery a community of practice network in 2025-26; and up to £10,000 will support the creation of a web-based toolkit. LB Southwark intends to engage an external consultant to produce the digital assets of the toolkit.

Year	Payments to LB Southwark	Funding
2021-22	School Superzone grant	£30,000
2022-23	School Superzone grant	£30,000
2022-23 to 2024-25	Coordination of School Superzones programme	£114,313
2025-26 (proposed)	Production of a toolkit and delivery of a community of practice network	Up to £15,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£189,313</b>

- 4.10. LB Southwark has been a key partner in the development and delivery of the School Superzones programme. From 2022 to 2024 it coordinated the programme, building strong relationships with other Superzone boroughs and sharing the learning from the programme. Southwark is therefore ideally placed to develop the toolkit and deliver a community of practice network. The proposed grant is small; and we have not identified any negative effects on domestic competition, investment or international trade related to this grant.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.11. There are no conflicts of interest to note for the officers involved in the drafting or clearance of this decision form.

## **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1. Approval is sought for the expenditure of up to £15,000 in 2025-26 to deliver a web-based toolkit and a community of practice network.
- 5.2. This will be funded from the Health Core programme budget in the Health, Children and Young Londoners team in 2025-26.
- 5.3. This expenditure of £15,000 from the Health Core programme budget is agreed in principle and is subject to the outcome of the normal budget-setting process for future financial years.
- 5.4. Any contract that commits the GLA in future years will be subject to appropriate break clauses.

## **6. Planned delivery approach and next steps**

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

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Grant agreement signed with LB Southwark	March 2025
Consultant/external provider commissioned	March 2025
Production of toolkit	June 2025
Delivery of community of practice network	April 2025 to March 2026

### **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 be published either 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:

Alison Pearce has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

#### Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 17 March 2025.

✓

### ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

**Signature:**

*Anno Lustbalt*

**Date:**

17/03/2025