

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2817

Title: Supporting and Inspiring Young London - holiday, sport and university participation

Programme: Supporting and Inspiring Young London

Executive Summary:

In June 2025, Mayoral Decision (MD) 3380 approved the delivery plan for the strategic programme, Supporting and Inspiring Young London (SIYL). It also approved: the Assistant Director, Civil Society and Sport, as the Senior Responsible Owner; and to approve expenditure in line with MD3380.

The core London-level outcomes to which this programme will contribute are: children and young Londoners achieve the health and learning outcomes they need to thrive at every stage of development; and children and young Londoners have the positive opportunities needed to be successful and have the skills they need to improve their lives. The SIYL delivery plan describes how the GLA will work to bridge the gap between opportunity and offer; and enhance young Londoners' ability to access these opportunities.

This Decision seeks approval for expenditure totalling £205,000 for holiday provision and sport projects that bridge this gap between opportunity and offer; and enhance young Londoners' ability to access positive opportunities.

Decision:

That, pursuant to the delegated authority provided by Mayoral Decision MD3380, the Assistant Director of Civil Society and Sport approves expenditure totalling £205,000 for the purposes of the GLA funding the provision of sports and holiday activity opportunities in London for children and young people (including those with special educational needs and disabilities) during school holidays.

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: Alice Wilcock

Position: Assistant Director, Civil Society and Sport

Signature:



Date:

16 February 2026

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. In June 2025 Mayoral Decision (MD) 3380 approved the delivery plan for the strategic programme, Supporting and Inspiring Young London (SIYL). This programme will contribute to the following core London-level outcomes:
 - children and young Londoners achieve the health and learning outcomes they need to thrive at every stage of development
 - children and young Londoners have the positive opportunities needed to be successful
 - Londoners have the skills they need to improve their lives.
- 1.2. The SIYL delivery plan describes how the GLA will work to bridge the gap between opportunity and offer; and enhance young Londoners' ability to access these opportunities. The Mayor will work across London to bring together key partners, all delivering for young Londoners. This includes directly commissioning key programmes to work on meeting the most acute of these opportunity gaps. It includes activity towards meeting the Mayor's commitment to provide 250,000 positive opportunities for young Londoners during this Mayoral term.
- 1.3. MD3380 approved the establishment of the SIYL programme with the Assistant Director, Civil Society and Sport, as the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO). It also approved the delivery plan for the SIYL programme, including the resources allocated to it: namely, £527.8m revenue funding across 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28 (as set out in the delivery plan). MD3380 delegated authority to the Assistant Director, Civil Society and Sport, to approve the receipt of any additional funding from central government, or other sources, to expand or extend existing approved projects contained in the SIYL delivery plan, where the parameters of the project remain the same or similar, and after consulting with legal advisors and the GLA's Chief Finance Officer, and having subsequently secured agreement from the Mayoral Delivery Board. MD3380 also approved (where not already covered by a delegation in an existing MD) the delegation of authority to the Assistant Director, Civil Society and Sport, to approve expenditure funded by the resources allocated to the delivery plan, or income under the terms set out in MD3380, for projects listed in paragraphs 1.18 and 1.19 of that MD.
- 1.4. The projects listed in paragraphs 1.18 and 1.19 of MD3380, for which this Decision seeks approval of expenditure, are:
 - delivery of the Holiday Hope programme approved under Mayoral Decision MD3371
 - partnership work with major US sporting brands and other brands, as appropriate and approved by Mayoral appointees.
- 1.5. It is proposed that the Assistant Director, Civil Society and Sport, approve expenditure totalling £205,000 for the delivery of the projects listed in paragraphs 1.18 and 1.19 of the SIYL delivery plan. This is so the GLA can deliver activity that supports the priorities set out in paragraph 1.2. This work contributes to the objectives and expected outcomes of the SIYL delivery plan.
- 1.6. As part of the process of approving Mayoral Delivery Plans, the governance around spending has also changed for Delivery Plan SROs. In Delivery Plans, there are three categories of projects:
 - where the project is already set out in detail in an approved MD, and the SRO has delegated authority to make expenditure decisions included in that legacy decision form

- where the project budget is defined in the delivery plan; and the delivery plan MD, once approved by the Mayor, provides delegation for the SRO to take expenditure decisions outside of the thresholds stated in the current Mayoral Decision-Making Framework (MDM)
- where the project is less well-defined, and will need a further MD to set the strategic direction of the budget.

This request falls under category No.2, in that the project budget is defined in the delivery plan and the delivery plan MD; and MD3380 approved a delegation for the SRO to take expenditure decisions outside the thresholds stated in the current MDM.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. As set out in MD3380, school holiday periods, when there is a reduction in formal activity, are a time of particular vulnerability for young people which leaves them open to risky behaviour and without the chance to engage in activities, learn and develop their skills. It approved plans and projects that would draw on the Mayor's ability to coordinate and strengthen existing provision through partnership and funding, to improve access to high quality holiday activity through a new and integrated Holiday Hope project. It also noted that sport in particular can play a critical role in engaging young people in positive activity. The projects described below have been designed to create these opportunities.

Inclusive Access Fund - £85,000

- 2.2. This work will deliver outcomes against multiple SIYL priorities, and importantly for a group of young people who are particularly vulnerable, and less likely to engage in physical activity. A budget of up to £85,000 will increase grants awarded as part of the Inclusive Access Fund (approved under cover of ADD2271), with funding awarded to deliver or increase basketball activity. It will create outcomes around the SIYL priority to boost participation in basketball, with the sport improving mental health and wellbeing, and building employability skills through training, opportunities, and skills sessions as well as improving access to high quality holiday activity.
- 2.3. Following an open call for applications, the Inclusive Access Fund awarded grants of up to £30,000 to community youth and sport organisations. Bringing together priorities around mental and physical health, and holiday provision, this funding ensures young people have access to safe spaces and trusted adults during the school holidays. With a particular focus on reaching CYP (children and young people) with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) it improves their access to positive opportunities during school holidays, engaging them at times when they often lose access to positive role models, sporting and physical activities. The projects began providing opportunities to CYP in summer 2025. Reporting to date has shown that community groups are delivering outcomes as anticipated, but that more participants require support than the initial projects were designed to support. Some projects have also been able to provide additional opportunities to young people through weekend activities as well as during school holidays.
- 2.4. CYP with SEND are at increased risk of being inactive and affected by social isolation. Sport England's Active Lives Children and Young People Survey states that over half (50.9 per cent) of disabled CYP in London engage in less than the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day. Disabled children are twice as likely to be lonely compared to their non-disabled peers (72 per cent vs 36 per cent), and are more likely to feel they have no one to talk to; to feel left out; and to feel alone. Social isolation and limited access to support are also key contributing risk factors to becoming involved in or affected by violence. These risks to young people become even more heightened during out-of-term periods as access to a safe structured environments pauses, and the ability to take part in PE and free physical activity stops. School holiday provision is therefore crucial in supporting families and young people.

- 2.5. This funding will create outcomes in line with multiple SIYL priorities, and for a particularly under-served demographic of young people. Alongside boosting participation in basketball for an under-represented group, outcomes include:
- improved access to high-quality, inclusive sports activities for CYP with SEND
 - increased delivery period of inclusive sports activities for CYP with SEND, to include more days per week and/or more weeks of the school holidays
 - continuity for families and CYP with SEND who rely on the structured support of schools to thrive
 - improved accessibility of mainstream sports programmes, in order to increase reach/improve quality of provision for CYP with SEND
 - increased knowledge and skills, within the sport youth workforce, in delivering inclusive activities that are accessible to CYP with SEND. This will include any training in neurodiversity and disability sport via inclusive sports coaching (where organisations require), and will be funded through their grant. This will result in strengthened working relationships between the community sports sector and wider systems partners (such as the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub; local Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services; and SEND teams) to improve the quality and reach of inclusive sports activities

Holiday Hope cold spots - £30,000

- 2.6. Holiday Hope tackles the challenges of safety, access to positive opportunities and food insecurity experienced by young Londoners in school holiday periods. The first phase of Holiday Hope (December 2024 – June 2025), including use of funding approved by the Mayor under MD3322, included both direct delivery for young people and development of a new project and partnership approach to ensure that the Mayor’s Fund for London’s (MFL) Kitchen Social project could be enhanced and scaled over subsequent years. MD3371 approved Holiday Hope Phase Two, including award of up to £900,000 grant, per annum for three years, to MFL as a contribution to MFL’s costs of delivering positive opportunities through their existing Kitchen Social project.
- 2.7. The Kitchen Social project supports thousands of young people. It works with community groups to provide meals and safe spaces alongside activities. A recent review of Holiday Hope shows outcomes achieved by participants include improved: learning; engagement; relationships; social emotional learning; mental health and wellbeing.
- 2.8. There remain some cold spots in London where there is low, or in some cases no Kitchen Social delivery. It is therefore proposed that the that MFL should be awarded a grant in respect of its Kitchen Social project in order to provide and/or increase this provision in cold spots. As noted in MD3371, MFL can be considered unique in their ability and position to deliver this project at pan-London scale during holiday periods. They hold a unique position in London through their significant network of over 600 youth and community organisations and partners, that can be rapidly scaled. There are no known organisations with an equivalent reach in London.

Widening university participation activities for young people - £90,000

- 2.9. The Sutton Trust 2023 25 Years of University Access study illustrated that although there has been a substantial increase in the number of young people attending university, and that gaps in access by under-represented neighbourhoods have narrowed, the gap itself remains significant. It foresaw tackling the access becoming more challenging in the medium term and recommended that universities make greater use of contextual offers including taking into account wider circumstances of applicants when accessing their potential.
- 2.10. Some groups face greater challenges than others in attending university, for example the London Assembly Economy, Culture and Skills Committee May 2025 Careers after care report notes that in London fewer than one in ten 19 to 21-year-old care leavers attend university, and are

disproportionately more likely to withdraw from their studies. As a result, committee recommendations include that the Mayor work with London universities to create a basic support offer for student care leavers for all of London's public universities.

- 2.11. London's higher education institutions (HEIs) collectively offer a varied landscape of widening participation (WP) summer provision for young people. Activities range from short academic tasters and creative summer schools to multiyear progression pathways that include summer components. Provision supports learners facing barriers to higher education, including those from low-income backgrounds, care experienced young people, disabled students, and others underrepresented in HE or specific fields.
- 2.12. Target groups for existing provision include: low-income and first generation learners: students from low HE participation areas; global majority/minority ethnic groups; disabled learners; care experienced and estranged young people; young carers; WP eligible creative arts students. Geographical targeting varies greatly. Some universities target explicit borough footprints, some draw from state schools within a certain radius, some work with specific partner schools and further education colleges, and other operate national eligibility models.
- 2.13. Although some provision exists, the level, structure and reach of summer schemes vary significantly between institutions, with some offering long established flagship programmes while others currently provide limited or no summer-specific WP activity. Scoping work is currently being undertaken in partnership with London Higher (the membership organisation for London's higher education providers) and the Anchor Institutions network (LAIN). This is exploring collaborative approaches to enhance or expand existing offers in alignment with Mayoral priorities in the Inclusive Talent Strategy and SIYL programme. Created in accordance with these findings, up to £90,000 will fund the design and delivery of a pilot project that works with London universities (anticipated via a consortium approach) to test new approaches to university participation activities.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Mayor and GLA must comply with the public sector equality duty and must have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
 - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. As set out in MD3380, activity within the SIYL programme will provide support to disadvantaged children and young Londoners. This includes young people with protected characteristics and those who are more vulnerable. The projects in the programme will particularly support certain disadvantaged groups – for example, young people with SEND; young refugees and asylum seekers; those who are socio-economically disadvantaged; Black, Asian and minority ethnic young Londoners; disabled young Londoners; young people with a social worker; young care leavers; and those who are at risk of exclusion, or who have been excluded, from school or college. Careful consideration will be given to ensuring appropriate accessibility for the widest range of young people; this will include targeted engagement, where this is considered supportive. Young people's voices and co-production will be used in planning, development and delivery, to maximise effectiveness.

- 3.3. In planning the Mayor’s investment into community sport between 2021 and 2025, the Sport team consulted stakeholders and partners with proven expertise in engaging and CYP – particularly those who are disadvantaged; considered to be at risk; and/or face additional barriers to positive participation for personal development and improved life chances. In a review of demographic data of VRU Sport programme participation to date, CYP with SEND was identified as a key underrepresented demographic. In consultations with the sector, a key recurring theme was the lack of funding for tailored provision for children with SEND. Organisations are oversubscribed with waiting lists for children and families looking for support. This work aims to address this gap, and provide improved equity in access to sporting opportunities in the capital.
- 3.4. This work inherently prioritises young Londoners who are under-represented in sport and physical activity. While this programme prioritises reaching young people with SEND, funding will be further prioritised with regards to intersectionality – for example, for those who face the most barriers to active participation, either in relation to a protected characteristic (i.e. age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage or civil partnership status), or in relation to circumstance (for example, a person who is a carer, or a person who is isolated and/or lonely, or a person who comes from a lower socio-economic background). Underrepresentation in sport and physical activity is heavily influenced by intersectionality, and the Inclusive Access Fund will place particular emphasis on young Londoners facing multiple and intersectional barriers and challenges as outlined above.
- 3.5. London is home to more than two million children and young people aged 0-19 and has the highest rate of child poverty in England (after housing costs are taken into account), with rates expected to increase in coming years. Poorer children are more likely to underachieve at school, be unemployed and have lower incomes. Poverty is significantly worse in Black-Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani families, and more than 50 per cent of families with a disabled child live at the margins of poverty. This has all been exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. Providing Holiday Hope provision in cold spot boroughs will allow those most in need to access provision.
- 3.6. Work to widen university participation activities for young people will advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. As set out in section 2 some young people face additional barriers to university participation due to protected characteristics, socio-economic status, and personal circumstances. This work will convene universities and develop strategies to reduce these barriers.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1. The key risks, and mitigations, are listed in the table below:

Risk	Mitigation	RAG rating
Reputational risk of other programmes, such as Free Holiday Meals, ending and impact of reduced budgets on community groups.	Whilst there is some overlap in delivery approaches between the Free Holiday Meals programme, Holiday Hope is a separate and distinguishable programme. Aspects of funding have been incorporated within this first year of Holiday Hope, and through DD2740, to mitigate risk/impact of programme closure on wider community groups. The Mayor has also invested significantly in responding to food inequality through the Universal Free School Meals programme.	Amber

Universities do not engage with work to widen participation and access to university is not improved	City Hall work with universities to date has shown they are keen to improve attendance of under-represented groups. Conversations around the widening activities have additionally acknowledge the need to improve this provision.	Amber
Not enough participants show an interest in this activity resulting in a low take up.	Organisations with active waitlists of CYP with SEND and expert staff that could deliver inclusive holiday provision and mobilise in time for delivery have been identified.	Green
Organisations do not have the specialist skillset to deliver this work, resulting in a failure to meet the fund's key aims.	The grant recipients have been delivering this provision since summer 2025 and have therefore already developed and evidenced their skillsets in this area	Green
The most disadvantaged young people do not access Holiday Hope	Whilst Holiday Hope activities will be open to all young Londoners there will be a focused effort on supporting the most disadvantaged young people. There has been careful consideration of approaches to ensuring accessibility for the widest range of young people including targeted engagement and communications, which built on successful approaches already in place through programmes such as New Deal for Young People (NDYP).	Green

4.2. The programmes outlined in this decision support the following Mayoral strategies:

- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, as revised in the Mayor's Equality Objectives (2022), which aims to remove the barriers preventing children and young Londoners from realising their potential now and in later life.
- The London Health Inequalities Strategy, the Mayor's ten-year strategy to address unfair, systematic and completely avoidable differences in health between groups of people. This includes the key commitments Healthy Children (every London child has a healthy start in life) and Healthy Minds (all Londoners share in a city with the best mental health in the world).
- The Inclusive Talent Strategy is a vital early step in delivering against the ambitions set out in the London Growth Plan. It focuses on the change needed to ensure Londoners can access those opportunities, puts employers in the driving seat for skills in London, integrates the system so that Londoners can get advice and support wherever they are, and creates an environment in which talent can thrive.

Subsidy control

4.3. The funding within this programme has been considered in line with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. GLA officers have considered whether programmes will involve the provision of grant funding to enterprises that are likely to receive funding from other public-sector organisations, such that these activities have been considered further in light of the subsidy control principles. Those activities are as follows:

- the award of up to £30,000 for Mayor's Fund for London (MFL), as a contribution to MFL's costs of delivering existing Kitchen Social project, the aims of which align closely with the GLA's Holiday Hope programme

4.4. Officers do not consider that the proposed awards constitute a subsidy. This is because these awards do not meet all four limbs of the subsidy test set out in the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Specifically, the proposed awards each fail to satisfy Limb 2 (providing an enterprise with an economic advantage) and Limb 4 (capable of having an effect on competition or investment within the UK or between the UK and another country) of that test, because the funding:

- is ringfenced for non-economic purposes – the project is not-for-profit, free to use, and has the benefit of the funding accruing to end-recipients, rather than meeting general costs for core operational function.
- will not have a genuine effect that is more than incidental or hypothetical on competition or investment in the UK, or on international trade or investment.

Conflict of interest

4.5. There are no conflicts of interest arising from those involved in the drafting and clearance of this decision form. As and when individual conflicts of interest arise during the delivery of initiatives contained in the SIYL delivery plan, they will be handled in line with the GLA policy on registering and declaring interests.

5. Financial comments

5.1. Approval is being sought for the following expenditure totalling £205,000 in 2025-26 financial year for the purposes of the GLA funding the provision of sports and holiday activity opportunities in London for children and young people (including those with special educational needs and disabilities) during school holidays. This contributes to the objectives and expected outcomes of the Supporting and Inspiring Young London delivery plan approved by MD3380.

- expenditure of up to £85,000 in 2025-26, for the purposes of the GLA funding the provision of sports and physical activity opportunities in London for CYP (including those with SEND) during school holidays; this work contributes to the objectives and expected outcomes of the SIYL delivery plan.
- expenditure of up to £30,000 in 2025-26, in order that MFL be awarded a grant in respect of its Kitchen Social project in order to provide and/or increase this provision in cold spots.
- expenditure of up to £90,000 in 2025-26 to fund the design and delivery of a pilot project that works with London universities (anticipated via a consortium approach) to test new approaches to university participation activities.

5.2. The projects will be funded by the following programme budgets:

- Inclusive Access Basketball funding: £85,000 funded from the Sport Partnerships budget
- Holiday Hope cold spots: £30,000 funded from the Youth and Schools line
- Widening university participation activities for young people: £90,000 funded from the CS&S SIYL Mandate Activity line

5.3. There is sufficient budget to meet this expenditure in 2025-26 financial year.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Inclusive access grants varied	February 2026
Inclusive access grants community group coaches upskilling	February 2026

University participation activities scoping completed	February 2026
MFL grant varied	February 2026
Inclusive access project participants engaged	March 2026
University participation activities grant award	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 either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Strategic Programmes

Does this decision seek approval for activity falling within the remit of a programme delivery plan? YES

If YES, which programme/s does this fall within: Supporting and Inspiring Young London

Part 1 - Deferral

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

If YES, for what reason: To attain value in grant making exercises

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring) 15 March 2026

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:

Karen Reed 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 16 February 2026.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

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

Signature

Peter Sebastian

Date

16 February 2026