

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2304

Title: Tackling child poverty in schools – income maximisation in schools

Executive Summary:

Approval is being sought to access the final £50,000 of the total £130,000 budget set aside for work on child poverty in schools that was approved in MD2314. The initial £80,000 of the budget has already been allocated to deliver an extended pilot project to tackle child poverty in schools starting in early 2019. Subject to approval, the final £50,000 will be added to the pilot project budget and will specifically be used to deliver income maximisation/social welfare advice to families in the schools taking part.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Communities and Social Policy approves:

1. That the additional £50,000 set aside for follow-up activity on child poverty in schools in MD2314 be added to the existing £80,000 budget for the wider pilot project on tackling child poverty in schools that was also authorised via MD2314
2. That the additional £50,000 expenditure is specifically used to fund the provision of income maximisation/social welfare advice within the schools taking part in the wider pilot and evaluate the impact of their work

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: Kathleen Kelly

Position: Joint Assistant Director for Communities & Social Policy

Signature:

K. Kelly

Date:

17/12/18

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 There are roughly 700,000 children in London living in poverty – nearly four children in ten – with poverty rates particularly high in inner London, but with higher numbers in outer London¹. The Mayor's manifesto included a commitment to take action to address child poverty in London. As a public service reaching families of all types, schools regularly witness the effects of poverty first-hand and are increasingly playing an informal role in feeding or providing basic forms of support for pupils and parents from low-income families.
- 1.2 To understand the broader role schools could play in tackling child poverty, the GLA commissioned the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) to carry out an initial scoping and action learning project in four primary schools in London, expenditure for which (£40,000) was approved via ADD2198. One of the main outputs was to provide recommendations or a framework for a wider pilot project to be commissioned in early 2019.
- 1.3 Authorisation for expenditure of £80,000 on the 2019 wider pilot project was given under MD2314 (the Equality and Fairness team workplan 2018/19). The same MD also approved the expenditure of an additional £50,000 on follow-up activity on child poverty in schools, making the total expenditure £130,000. Use of the additional £50,000 was to be informed by the findings of the CPAG scoping and action-learning project and would be subject to approval via a separate ADD.
- 1.4 CPAG have provided the GLA with a summary report of their qualitative scoping research along with recommendations for the wider pilot project. One of their key recommendations was that the pilot should include and evidence the impact of initiatives that help families maximise their income. In particular, they suggested embedding a welfare rights adviser within the schools taking part in the project. This approach proved very effective in a recent pilot in Edinburgh run by NHS Lothian. In the first ten months alone, they assisted 61 families with securing £275,000 of additional income at an average of £4,500 per family.² Much of the return was the result of identifying unclaimed welfare benefits and supporting clients to claim them.
- 1.5 Latest government figures on unclaimed benefits show that 41% of couples with children across the UK who were eligible for Housing Benefit in 2016/17 did not claim it.³ On average, this would have increased their income by between £43 and £57 per week. In total, more than £6 billion worth of Tax Credits went unclaimed in 2015/16 - more than 1 in 3 (37%) working families eligible for Child Tax Credits did not claim them. Neither did 21% of low-income working families who were entitled to both Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits.⁴ This suggests that welfare rights advice targeted at low-income families has the scope to significantly boost their household income and help alleviate one of the underlying causes of poverty.
- 1.6 In light of this data, the following high-level framework for the 2019 pilot is proposed:
- Core pilot funding (£80,000) to fund two to four part-time co-ordinators who will work in different Local Authority areas with approximately four local primary schools each
 - The co-ordinators will assist the schools with establishing a school's support network and building relationships with relevant services across the borough. They will also assist each school with co-

¹ <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/publications/londons-poverty-profile-2017/>

² <https://youtu.be/TyKZWwtBX7M>

³ DWP, Income related benefits: estimates of take-up 2016/17, Nov 2018

⁴ HMRC, Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit Take-up rates 2015-16, December 2017

designing and implementing a range of anti-poverty initiatives for which they will receive a small pot of funding

- The process would be guided by a best practice tool-kit which will be produced by CPAG as an additional output of the scoping research
- Additional funding (£50,000 - subject to approval via this ADD) will be used to fund a full-time income maximisation/welfare rights adviser who will work across all schools taking part in the pilot project
- A proportion of both the core and additional funding will be used to carry out an in depth-evaluation of all aspects of the project

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 The objectives are:

- to fund a full-time welfare rights/income maximisation adviser who would:
 - work across all schools taking part in the wider pilot project and split their time between sessions with parents and casework
 - provide advice, information and (where needed) representation to low-income families
 - work with parents referred by schools/teachers to help them claim all welfare benefits they may be entitled to but not claiming
 - work with families on a wider range of social welfare issues, referring to specialist sources of advice where necessary
- to test and evaluate the benefits of embedded welfare rights/income maximisation advice in schools as part of a broader package of school-based anti-poverty initiatives
- to identify opportunities and/or options to secure legacy funding for any or all elements of the project

2.2 The expected outcomes are:

- an increase in the household income of families trapped in poverty as a result of increased take up of benefits and other entitlements (e.g. passported benefits such as free prescriptions)
- improved referral pathways from schools to other types of social welfare advice or support services (e.g. debt advice, immigration advice)
- positive health outcomes for families as a result of resolving social welfare issues that may be having a negative impact on mental or physical health
- positive effects on the well-being and educational attainment of children from low-income families
- increased likelihood of further activity in this area (including legacy funding) as a result of obtaining robust evidence of the financial and non-financial impact of embedding advisers in schools

3. Equality comments

3.1 The Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy contains a specific objective to: "[W]ork with early years and childcare providers, boroughs and businesses to help address the root causes of child poverty. This includes affordability of housing, childcare and transport, low pay and lack of flexible working." The core objective of this project is to address some of the symptoms and causes of child poverty through schools. As such it will directly contribute to achieving this objective.

3.2 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is underpinned by the following evidence relating to child poverty:

- Growing proportion of children living in poverty live in working families
- Majority of children living in poverty in London live in private rented sector
- Higher poverty risk for families with a disabled child;

- Higher poverty risk for Black-Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani families or families with parents born outside the UK (as a result of these families being more likely to have only one wage-earner or No Recourse to Public Funds status)
- Higher poverty risk for single-parent families (due to unemployment or under-employment)
- Women and children – especially those from BAME groups – and disabled people have lost out most from welfare reforms
- Families from BAME groups are less likely to take up their entitlement to tax credits for their children

3.3. The extended pilot project as a whole will develop and test innovative ways for schools to provide services/referrals to services that will directly benefit families living in poverty. This includes improving the provision of – or access to – wrap around childcare, holiday provision, volunteering opportunities and employability skills/training. All of these measures should work to address some of the issues listed above. The specific provision of income maximisation/welfare advice will ensure that families living in poverty are empowered or assisted to claim all the welfare benefits or other benefits they are entitled to and will increase their household incomes. Embedded advisors will be required to signpost/refer clients to other sources of support or advice (such as housing, debt or immigration) that may assist with addressing some of the other inequalities listed above.

3.4 To ensure that the groups who are in most need of support are reached through this project, a significant focus of the scoping research has been to co-design methods of engaging families that authorities are often less successful in reaching. The learning from the scoping will be applied to the wider pilot project and included in the tool kit provided to the schools taking part. It will also be a requirement for schools and/or co-ordinators to research the poverty profile of their school/local authority to identify – and target – the families that face the biggest disadvantages. Specific attention will be given to ensuring that all interventions (including referrals to income maximisation advisers) are accessible to – and inclusive of – all the groups that are disproportionately affected by child poverty.

3.5 To measure how successful the project has been at addressing inequalities, income maximisation/welfare advisers and schools taking part will be required to collate demographic information about the families they have supported. A key aspect of the evaluation of the entire wider pilot will be to measure the outcomes for different demographic groups and identify those who remain excluded.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 The Mayor's manifesto contained a commitment that: "In a city as prosperous as London, there is no excuse for child poverty, or for people to have to rely on food banks in order to feed their children, and I will ensure that monitoring and effective, targeted intervention strategies are in place." He also committed to establishing an Economic Fairness team at City Hall that would work to deliver a range of pledges through an Economic Fairness work programme. One of the key elements of this programme is "Working with central government, local authorities, trade unions, civil society, financial institutions and Londoners to tackle poverty, financial exclusion and other issues that affect low income Londoners in particular."
- 4.2 While a number of initiatives already launched will be directly beneficial to low-income families by either reducing costs or raising and/or stabilising incomes (e.g. the freeze on TfL fares, the introduction of the Hopper ticket, the promotion of the London Living Wage), this one would represent an initiative in which addressing child poverty is the primary objective and is likely to result directly in an increase in income for families living in poverty.
- 4.3 This initiative would also contribute towards delivering the Mayor's strategic objective in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to: "[W]ork with early years and childcare providers, boroughs and

businesses to help address the root causes of child poverty. This includes affordability of housing, childcare and transport, low pay and lack of flexible working.”

- 4.4 As an intervention targeted at addressing child poverty, this initiative would also be highly relevant to key themes within the new Vision for All Young Londoners including a focus on early intervention and prevention, a good start in life and opportunity for all. Close co-ordination between the CSP and Education and Youth teams will be required. This will be ensured by including EY officers on the steering group for the follow up pilot.
- 4.5 There is a reputational risk for the Mayor if stakeholders feel their input has either not been sought or has been ignored. To manage these risks officers have conducted extensive internal and external engagement in the drafting of the wider pilot design. This included co-hosting a learning event at City Hall with CPAG with around 40 delegates including relevant teams within the GLA, London schools, Local Authorities, academics and providers of support services. We will continue to follow a programme of wide stakeholder engagement as the pilot design progresses.
- 4.6 There is a linked procurement risk that some stakeholders who have not had the opportunity to feed into the project design may use this as a basis to challenge the award of any tender. CPAG may also be viewed by others as having a competitive advantage if they chose to bid for the wider pilot. To mitigate these risks, officers will be transparent with research findings and include any pertinent correspondence with CPAG or other stakeholders alongside the invitation to tender to ensure a level playing field.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 The expenditure of £50,000 will be funded from the total sum of £130,000 that was allocated to the 2018-19 Social Mobility Programme Budget in MD2314 for the purpose of tackling child poverty through schools.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 TfL Legal team have advised that legal comments are not required as the decision is not deemed to be unusual and does not include a single source justification for procurement of external goods/services.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

| Activity | Timeline |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Procurement of contract [for externally delivered projects] | January – March 2019 |
| Announcement [if applicable] | January 2019 |
| Delivery Start Date [for project proposals] | Late March 2019 |
| Interim findings | July 2019 |
| Final evaluation start and finish (external): | August – September 2019 |
| Delivery End Date [for project proposals] | End September 2019 |
| Project Closure: [for project proposals] | Start October 2019 |

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

If YES, for what reason: n/a

Until what date: n/a

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:

Nick MacAndrews has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that:

- the Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments

✓

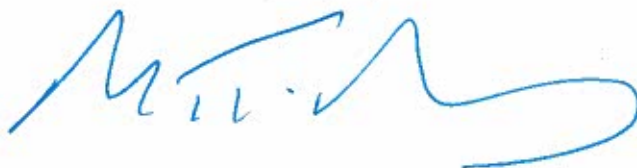
Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on the 17 December 2018.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

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

Signature



Date

17-12-18