

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2869

Title: Robust Safety Net workplan 2021-22 and 2022-23

Executive summary:

This Mayoral Decision (MD) seeks the Mayor's approval for the receipt of £440,000 of income and expenditure of £1,670,000 in order to fund programmes linked to the Robust Safety Net recovery mission. It also seeks the Mayor's delegation of the exercise of the GLA's powers to approve further expenditure and approval of the receipt and expenditure of funding from external stakeholders and other GLA teams to contribute to the work.

It builds on and supplements expenditure that has already been approved under cover of MD2732, MD2831, DD2529, DD2535, ADD2496 and ADD2497.

Decision:

That the Mayor:

1) approves the:

- a) receipt of £440,000 grant funding from Guy's and St Thomas' Charitable Trust (GSCT) for use to meet costs of the Advice in Community Settings project
- b) expenditure of up to £1,670,000 to fund programmes of work led by the Communities and Social Policy Unit linked to the Robust Safety Net recovery mission in 2021-22 and 2022-23 (subject to future budget approvals), including immediate approval for expenditure on:
 - the Advice in Community Settings grant scheme (£260,000 in 2021-22 and £600,000 in 2022-23)
 - the Food Roots Incubator programme (£200,000 in 2021-22 and £200,000 in 2022-23)
 - funding a Local Welfare evaluation pilot (£50,000 in 2021-22)
 - raising awareness of Employment Rights (£50,000 in 2021-22)
 - increasing the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers (£20,000 in 2021-22)

2) delegates the exercise of the GLA's powers to the Assistant Director, Communities and Social Policy to approve through subsequent decisions form expenditure on further activity relating to:

- a) the Advice in Community Settings programme (£125,000 in 2021-22; and £125,000 in 2022-23)
- b) increasing the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers (£40,000 in 2021-22).

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:

14/10/21

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

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 This Mayoral Decision (MD) seeks approval for the receipt of external income and its expenditure – along with expenditure from the core GLA budget – for programmes linked to the Robust Safety Net recovery mission.
- 1.2 The London Recovery Board approved the establishment of this recovery mission in September 2020 with the goal that “by 2025, every Londoner is able to access the support they need to prevent financial hardship”. Subsequently, the Board approved an action plan for that mission consisting of: a set of actions around the coordination of social welfare legal advice provision; the delivery of a project to expand a previously trialled approach to embedding welfare advice in community settings; and efforts to bring greater consistency to the provision of local welfare assistance schemes by London boroughs.
- 1.3 The programmes for which expenditure approval is sought in this decision document are directly linked to that mission’s action plan.
- 1.4 The Mayor authorised expenditure, under cover of MD2732, from the GLA’s Recovery Fund for the first phase of these programmes, including:
 - £700,000 for an Advice in Community Settings programme that built on a pilot the previous year, which tested the efficacy of embedding welfare advice in primary schools
 - £200,000 for the first phase of Food Roots, which supports partnerships between charities and local authorities working to tackle food insecurity
- 1.5 The Mayor also delegated approval for further expenditure of the remaining £100,000 of the funds allocated to this mission from the Recovery Fund. Subsequently, through ADD2496 and ADD2497, the Assistant Director, Communities and Social Policy, authorised expenditure on programmes that responded to the second lockdown in late 2020/early 2021, including:
 - £32,000 grant funding for the Debt-Free London partnership to run its problem-debt hotline on a 24/7 basis throughout February (£41,000 expenditure to extend the provision throughout March was subsequently approved under cover of DD2535)
 - £49,000 grant funding to the Mayor’s Fund for London to repurpose its flagship Kitchen Social programme to support London boroughs preparing to deliver activities under the Holiday Activities and Food scheme.
- 1.6 Expenditure of the remaining £10,000 of the Recovery Fund allocation was approved by the Senior Manager, Equality and Fairness under cover of a delegated authority record to provide grant funding to London Councils in order to enable an existing research project on how local welfare assistance schemes had been repurposed during the pandemic, to be expanded to include a number of London case studies.
- 1.7 This MD seeks authorisation for the use of core GLA budget to build on the expenditure authorised under cover of MD2732. It also builds on the profile of the expenditure illustrated in that decision document.
- 1.8 The Mayor authorised expenditure of £240,000 from the GLA’s social integration budget on the Advice in Community Settings programme under cover of MD2831.

- 1.9 The Executive Director, Communities and Skills, authorised expenditure of £55,000 on translation of GLA resources to reach London's multilingual communities under cover of DD2529. Some £15,000 of that is intended to be spent on translating content from the GLA's employment rights hub. This MD seeks further expenditure on creating fresh content which will also be translated.
- 1.10 Two programmes covered by this decision document – Advice in Community Settings and Food Roots – require us to commission activity over two years. This is to ensure appropriate time is given to facilitate long-term sustainability of these programmes. This MD therefore requests approval for two years of funding. Officers will ensure that appropriate break clauses are included in all contracts to account for any budget changes in future years.
- 1.11 All commissioned services will be procured competitively in accordance with the Contracts and Funding Code.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

Advice in Community Settings

Context and purpose

- 2.1 The Advice in Community Settings grant programme builds on the Mayor's successful 2019-20 pilot project with the Child Poverty Action Group that helped low-income families to increase their incomes by embedding welfare rights advisers in primary schools. The new programme is a flagship policy of the Robust Safety Net recovery mission. It seeks to connect the most excluded Londoners with the advice and support they need to alleviate financial hardship.
- 2.2 Launched in March 2021, the programme funds local and pan-London partnerships involving community settings (such as schools, food banks, children's centres and faith settings), advice-giving organisations, local authorities and other relevant partners to co-design and deliver bespoke interventions that embed income maximisations, and other social welfare legal advice services or referral pathways, in the places where people already go.
- 2.3 The Advice in Community Settings grant programme currently has a total budget envelope of £968,000 from a combination of £28,000 carry-forward from the Equality and Fairness team budget 2020-21; £700,000 from the Recovery Fund (approved by the Mayor under cover of MD2732); and a £240,000 contribution from the GLA Social Integration (SI) team budget 2021-22 (approved by the Mayor under cover of MD2831).
- 2.4 This decision form seeks the Mayor's approval to add £200,000 of additional funding to the programme budget from the Equality and Fairness team's allocation of the 2021-22 Robust Safety Net budget block (as indicated in MD2795); and £470,000 from their indicative allocation of the 2022-23 Robust Safety Net budget block. It also seeks authorisation for income of £440,000 from GSCT to contribute to a mixture of activity that sits directly within and alongside the programme.
- 2.5 The additional funding will allow us to significantly expand the scope and reach of the programme so that we are able to fund a total of 11 partnerships across London, which will ultimately result in a greater number of Londoners experiencing (or at risk of) financial hardship receiving the help they need to escape (or avoid) it. It will also allow us to support grant partnerships into a second year of delivery and provide more complete wrap-around support (such as training and resources for partnerships in relation to issues such as social welfare legal advice or General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements, and opportunities for partnerships to come together and share learning). This will significantly increase the likelihood that the partnerships can achieve sustainability beyond the duration of this project.

Delivery method

2.6 We propose using the additional funding for the following activities:

- **Adding to the existing approved budget for partnership delivery grants in both 2021-22 and 2022-23.** These grants of up to £60,000 a year will be used to deliver the tailored interventions that embed social welfare legal advice services in community settings that were drawn up in the partnership-building phase of the programme.
- **Adding to existing approved budget for wrap-around support (including training and knowledge sharing opportunities) to partnerships in 2022-23.** This will assist them with designing and delivering their interventions more effectively and more efficiently; and with embedding their partnership arrangements more deeply. We are taking a flexible approach to the support provided based on needs as they arise. We already propose to use some of this funding to put on special sessions for the partnerships on GDPR compliance; and to fund a training package for front-line staff and volunteers on the basics of social welfare law and good referrals, which we will also offer to partnerships that submitted unsuccessful bids to the programme. In 2022-23 we will provide increased funding to this area of work to provide greater assistance to partnerships in sharing learning; developing a more streamlined and sustainable delivery model; and connecting them with commissioners and other relevant stakeholders that could provide support beyond the end of the programme.
- **Adding to existing approved budget for partnership building grants in 2021-22.** These grants of between £5,000 and £7,500 allow the partnerships to strengthen and plan their tailored interventions, partnership arrangements and evaluation data-gathering approaches in detail. It will also be used to fund engagement activity with the communities they are serving to co-design more effective interventions.
- **Adding to existing funding for a programme evaluation to allow it to be conducted over a longer period.** A robust evaluation is essential to demonstrate the impact and reach of the programme; influence future commissioner behaviour; or achieve systematic change. Programmes of this nature tend to become more impactful and yield much richer evaluation data once the interventions have been up and running for some time.

2.7 The Mayor is also requested to delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Communities and Social Policy, to approve the expenditure of the remaining £250,000 of the programme budget (derived from the income from GSCT) through subsequent decision documents. We propose using this funding to commission an external organisation to act as a 'learning partner', to extrapolate and use evidence and learning from across the Robust Safety net recovery mission, to influence commissioner and practitioner behaviour or achieve systematic change.

2.8 The delegation of authority will enable more efficient decision making following the carrying out of more thorough engagement with stakeholders and partners on the potential commissioning of a learning partner.

Impacts and deliverables

2.9 The overarching programme goal for the Advice in Community Settings grant programme is to increase awareness amongst Londoners of their financial rights and entitlements, and the support available.

2.10 The specific outcomes we expect to see through the programme at a household level are:

- income from available rights and entitlements is increased and maximised
- regular outgoings (including debt repayments) are reduced

- complex legal issues (e.g., unsettled immigration status) are resolved

2.11 The desired outcomes for this expenditure proposal are to:

- increase the number and scope of community locations involved in the programme
- increase the number of Londoners receiving advice or support through the programme via the Advice in Community Settings grant scheme
- demonstrate the medium-to-long-term benefits of the programme
- identify pathways to sustainable delivery models centred on systematic change and influence advice commissioner/practitioner behaviour.

Table 1

Deliverable	2021-22 approved expenditure	2021-22 expenditure to be agreed under this decision	2022-23 approved expenditure	2022-23 expenditure agreed under this decision subject to future budget approvals	Total to be agreed under this decision
11x partnership building grants (£5,000-£7,500 each)	£28,000 (E&F carry-forward)	£54,500 (E&F core budget)	£0	£0	£54,500 (£82,500)
11x partnership delivery grants (up to £60,000 each)	£454,500 (£312,500 MD2732 + £142,000 MD2831)	£205,500 (£145,500 E&F core budget + £60,000 GSCT funding)	£175,000 (MD2732)	£485,000 (£425,000 E&F core budget + £60,000 GSCT funding)	£690,500 (£1,320,000)
Wrap-around support and training for partnerships	£38,000 (MD2831)	£0	£0	£85,000 (£15,000 E&F core budget + £70,000 GSCT funding)	£85,000 (£123,000)
Programme evaluation	£60,000 (MD2831)	£0	£30,000 (MD2732)	£30,000 (E&F core budget)	£30,000 (£120,000)

Food Roots

Context and purpose

- 2.12 This will mark a second, larger iteration of the Food Roots Incubator programme, following the programme's launch in February 2020 (the expenditure for which was approved under cover of MD2732).
- 2.13 Building on the first year's successful programme delivery, the programme will offer incubator support and 'growth grants' to a cohort of strategic food partnerships across London. The incubator support will be delivered by an external organisation that will help the food partnerships to grow, diversify and become more sustainable, whilst small grants will help each partnership to progress initiatives that increase the resilience of London's food system and address food insecurity.
- 2.14 This iteration will support a larger cohort of approximately 15 food partnerships¹ over a 10-month period and continue to deliver against three key missions in the London Recovery Programme: A Robust Safety Net; Building Strong Communities; and Healthy Food, Healthy Weight. It will achieve this by: ensuring sustainable, collaborative and resilient support structures are in place to effectively respond to food insecurity; increasing the resilience of London's food system and its ability to address the root causes of food insecurity; and improving physical access to healthy, sustainable and culturally appropriate food.
- 2.15 The maximum value of 'growth grants' offered to each partnership will increase from £15,000 to £20,000. This is to reflect the fact the proposals received for the inaugural programme were more ambitious than the size of grants available to each partnership, and underestimated the cost of delivering food insecurity initiatives. Funding of £25,000 will also be used to commission a 12-month incubator 'legacy' programme, offering all partnerships from the first and second years of the programme access to individualised support, advice and relevant expertise upon request. This will ensure there is resource dedicated to supporting partnerships from rounds one and two beyond the incubator programme itself, which will contribute to the sustainability and impact of all partnerships.

Delivery method

- 2.16 The programme will incorporate learning from its first year of delivery, using findings from the two organisations (Sustain and Food Matters) who were commissioned to deliver incubator support jointly to the first cohort of successful food partnerships.
- 2.17 Prior to the inaugural programme launch, officers liaised closely with colleagues coordinating other relevant grant funding and partnership development programmes (including the Civil Society Roots, Community-Led Recovery, Make London and Team London small-grants programmes) to inform the development of the Food Roots prospectus and avoid any duplication. These relationships, as well as those with London Food Board members and external partners, will continue to ensure the programme aligns closely with other relevant activity taking place across London.
- 2.18 Officers will commission an external organisation(s) to design and deliver incubator support to the cohort of successful food partnerships. It is expected the commissioned organisation(s) will:
- carry out pre-incubator engagement with the cohort of successful food partnerships
 - design and deliver a curriculum of activities, including topic workshops and webinars, peer-learning sets, and individual meetings
 - support partnerships to produce long-term, sustainable workplans by the end of the incubator

¹ There are 10 partnerships in the current round one cohort.

- use a unified framework to monitor each partnership's impact, and evaluate progress across the programme as a whole.

2.19 Officers will (in liaison with TfL's procurement team) commission the external organisation(s) in accordance with the GLA'S Contracts and Funding Code; draft the programme prospectus; and coordinate the application and appraisal process for food partnerships, before completing and signing funding agreements with the final cohort. These agreements will detail each partnership's objectives and desired outcomes for the programme, as well as the programme's overall objectives and the requirements for partnerships involved in the incubator.

Impacts and deliverables

2.20 An external organisation will be commissioned to:

- co-produce and deliver a curriculum of incubator activities, including topic webinars, workshops, expert-led sessions, facilitated peer-learning sets and individual development meetings
- develop a unified evaluation framework to assess each partnership's progress and the programme's impact as a whole
- support each food partnership to develop their own workplan and produce a range of resources, such as case studies, to document the programme's impact and successes.

2.21 By supporting 15 food partnerships to grow, diversify and become more sustainable, the following outcomes are expected:

- increased community resilience to respond to shocks and to support recovery
- an increase in sustainable collaborations that can respond to the needs of London's communities
- more joined-up and coordinated support for Londoners from civic, public and business sectors.

2.22 By providing grants to take forward initiatives that increase the resilience of London's food system and address food insecurity, the programme aims to:

- ensure sustainable and resilient support structures are in place to effectively respond to rising food insecurity and future crises
- increase London's ability to tackle the root causes of food insecurity and reduce the need for food aid, particularly through embedding and strengthening the practice of integrated "cash first" approaches
- improve physical access to healthy food and increase take-up of food-related benefits, such as Healthy Start and Free School Meals.²

Table 2

Deliverable	2021-22 approved expenditure	2021-22 expenditure to be agreed under this decision	2022-23 expenditure subject to future budget approvals
Phase 1 of Food Roots	£200,000 (MD2732)	£0	£0

² These aims will be reviewed as part of the development of the second round and in consultation with the first cohort.

Growth grants up to £20,000 to support 15x partnerships	£0	£155,000	£145,000
Commission incubator support	£0	£45,000	£30,000
Commission incubator legacy programme	£0	£0	£25,000

Local welfare

Context and purpose

- 2.23 This document seeks approval to spend £50,000 in 2021-22 to support a pilot project being commissioned by London Councils. The project will work with a small number of boroughs to refine and test an evaluation framework that can produce a robust cost-benefit analysis of local welfare assistance schemes.
- 2.24 London Councils' project directly contributes to the delivery of the Robust Safety Net recovery mission; and builds on a feasibility study that was commissioned – again, by London Councils with a financial contribution from the GLA – at the end of the 2020-21 financial year and carried out by the Financial Inclusion Centre.
- 2.25 The findings of the pilot will be used by London Councils to engage a wider number of boroughs in the work of the Robust Safety Net mission; and inform activity to co-design a minimum standard (or common set of principles) for local welfare. They will also be used to underpin advocacy activity through the London Recovery Board that seeks to secure additional (and on-going) funding for local welfare schemes.

Delivery method

- 2.26 This project is a development of one conceived of and initiated by London Councils, for which the GLA has subsequently provided funding support. London Councils has led the development of the project and remains best placed to commission it, as it will be able to draw on relationships with borough officers via the newly established London Welfare Network which it is supporting. The benefits of the project will fall to London boroughs – London Councils' member organisations – and ultimately to Londoners themselves, in the form of a stronger understanding of the benefits of investment in the local welfare assistance programmes that many of them run, and for which they are funded. Therefore, the GLA will make a grant-funding award (in accordance with the GLA Contracts and Funding Code) to London Councils, who will procure an external organisation to carry out the theory of change and evaluation framework development exercise, with the same organisation running and managing the pilot.
- 2.27 London Councils will also contribute up to £25,000 to the pilot.

Impacts and deliverables

- 2.28 The main deliverable will be the production of a theory of change setting out: the outcomes that investment in local welfare schemes can help realise; a set of specific recommendations that boroughs can adopt in order to standardise the presentation of information on local welfare assistance schemes; and the capturing of information on outcomes.

Table 3

Deliverable	2021-22 expenditure to be agreed under this decision
Provide grant-funding to London Councils to commission a pilot project, involving up to seven borough councils, to	£50,000

co-design and agree a local welfare evaluation framework; and to put in place measures to start collecting relevant outcomes data	
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Employment rights

Context and purpose

- 2.29 This document seeks approval to spend £50,000 on activity to continue and develop the GLA's work on increasing Londoners' awareness of their employment rights. The work will be targeted at Londoners who are in precarious work or vulnerable to labour exploitation. Aligned with the Mayor's ambition to support more Londoners into good work, the aim is to equip more Londoners with a better understanding of their workplace rights and entitlements, and how to seek support if they have a problem at work.
- 2.30 Building on previous work in this area, activity this year will focus on: improving and expanding the Mayor's online Employment Rights Hub; promoting the hub to more Londoners; promoting content about employment rights in offline formats; scoping potential work to increase employers' understanding of employment rights; and influencing the government to strengthen employment rights and improve their enforcement in a way that works for London.

Delivery method

- 2.31 There are several deliverables within this work area. The £50,000 will be spent on a range of activities, including, but not limited to:
- commissioning expert organisations to develop new written content on employment rights for target groups of Londoners, and to host webinars on key issues
 - scheduling paid social media advertisements to promote the hub
 - commissioning training for staff in the frontline voluntary and community sector on identifying that a client has an employment problem, and how to signpost to support
 - working with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, promoting opportunities to offer a new qualification in Workers' Rights and Labour Exploitation to education providers who work with target groups
 - mapping new opportunities to distribute content on employment rights to workers and employers afforded to us through the London Recovery Programmes (for example, through sector skills academies); and, if necessary, commissioning the creation of this content
 - consulting stakeholders to find the main gaps in understanding of employment rights among employers, and the role that this lack of information and misunderstanding plays in employer malpractice.
- 2.32 Expenditure of £15,000 has already been approved under cover of DD2529, for spending on translations of content on employment rights. This will enable us to reach Londoners whose first language is not English – some of whom are likely to be particularly vulnerable to employment rights abuses.
- 2.33 Through our work to improve and promote the Employment Rights Hub, we expect to achieve 90,000 unique page views (UPVs) of the site in 2021–22. This is comparable to the number of UPVs achieved in 2020–21. Research from City Intelligence found that 10 per cent of working Londoners are not well informed about their rights at work and do not know how to find this information if they needed to.³

³ Survey of Londoners, 2019

Lack of awareness of employment rights, and not knowing how to find information, more was more prevalent among Londoners not educated to degree level (14 per cent); among the lowest-income quintile (21 per cent); among Londoners aged 16-24 (19 per cent); and among Londoners in routine and manual occupations (19 per cent). Through targeted social media promotion, we expect these views to be concentrated among Londoners who work in sectors where they are more likely to experience exploitation; young and older Londoners; parents; Londoners from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds; disabled Londoners; and migrant Londoners.

Table 4

Deliverable	2021-22 expenditure to be agreed under this decision
Activity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase workers' awareness of employment rights through the Employment Rights Hub • increase workers' awareness of employment rights in non-digital ways • increase employers' awareness of employment rights • influence to improve the enforcement of employment rights 	£50,000

Healthy Start

Context and purpose

- 2.34 Healthy Start is the welfare food programme in England that offers vouchers⁴ to spend on a range of foods, and on vitamins for women and children. It acts as a nutritional safety net for all young⁵ mothers-to-be (regardless of income); and for low-income families of any age⁶ from pregnancy to their child's fourth birthday.
- 2.35 The uptake of Healthy Start by eligible families has decreased substantially over the past few years. Data shows that in February 2021, only 52 per cent of eligible women and families in London were receiving Healthy Start vouchers. This compares to 67 per cent in February 2016.
- 2.36 There is a key need for strategic support for the scheme in 2021 due to several factors:
- **Healthy Start uptake in London is low.** This represents a significant loss of income for some of the poorest Londoners.
 - The scheme is currently undergoing a period of change. On 1 April 2021, the **voucher value increased from £3.10 to £4.25** per week per pregnant woman, or per family with a child under four years old (two vouchers given for infants). This was one of three key asks of the Marcus Rashford End Child Food Poverty Campaign.⁷

⁴ Healthy Start Vouchers are worth £4.25. Those that qualify receive one voucher per week from the 10th week of pregnancy; two vouchers per week for children under one year old; and one voucher per week for children between one and four years old.

⁵ "Young" being under 18 years of age.

⁶ Eligibility for the Healthy Start scheme is currently determined by the Department for Work and Pensions, based on income and benefit entitlement. However, those with asylum-seeker or refugee status, and families with no recourse to public funds, are currently excluded. See [Healthy Start: Eligibility](#) on the gov.uk website.

⁷ These can be spent on fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables; dried and canned pulses; cows' milk and first cows' milk-based infant formula. Vitamins are currently made available via public health teams, often through children's centres, but in some areas there is a universal or part-universal offer to all families for these vitamins.

- The scheme is being **digitised from October 2021** and all those currently eligible and currently part of the Healthy Start scheme will need to reapply. Although this will be done through a phased approach, awareness-raising to prevent a further decline in uptake is needed.
- The **health professional's signature on the application form was removed** as a requirement in April 2020. This means midwives and health visitors may be less aware or supported to help families with applications.⁸

2.37 Funding would be used initially to establish what interventions might be effective in increasing take-up of Healthy Start Vouchers and to understand what role the GLA, or partner organisations involved in the London Recovery Programme, could play in coordinating those interventions.

Delivery method

2.38 The first phase would involve procuring a consultant, or bringing in dedicated resource, to work with a range of stakeholders and potential delivery partners to help develop a theory of change or logic chain for increasing the take-up of Healthy Start vouchers across London. This would help to: ensure that the proposed activities would be the best for achieving the outcomes and determining how impact could be measured; inform our understanding of which organisation would be best placed to provide the coordination; and help us to understand whether the activities would change depending on whether we're focusing on current non-claimants, or those in receipt of vouchers but at risk of falling off due to the digitisation process.

2.39 Further work would be determined by the outputs of this initial phase.

2.40 As such we are seeking approval for the delegation of authority to the Assistant Director, Communities and Social Policy, to approve the expenditure of an additional £40,000 of the 2021-22 programme budget through subsequent decision documents.

Impacts and deliverables

2.41 The initial deliverable would be policy insight (likely in the form of a theory of change or logic chain in a written report or presentation) into interventions that would be effective in increasing the take-up of Healthy Start vouchers.

2.42 London-wide coordination to increase Healthy Start uptake would support the following outcomes:

- increasing the uptake of Healthy Start, benefitting London families financially and providing a robust safety net for those that need it most
- reducing short and long-term nutrition-related health issues and narrowing inequalities⁹
- achieving economies of scale in dealing with practical issues relating to application, voucher use and vitamin distribution at a national level
- aiding cross-cutting services supporting better food access, and allowing engagement of new families with other relevant services.

2.43 Ultimately, success would be measured through monitoring of London-wide data on Healthy Start uptake.

⁸ For a full history of the Healthy Start scheme from 2006-18, outlining the rationale for the scheme, evaluations that have been done and difficulties noted, see the report 'Healthy Start: What happened? What next?' at www.firststepsnutrition.org/reports.

⁹ The rationale for improving the nutrition of pregnant women and young children through welfare food provision is well established. Increasing the uptake of Healthy Start, and the support for how it can be used, has the potential to address this.

Table 5

Deliverable	2021-22 expenditure to be agreed under this decision
Procuring a consultant to produce a theory of change and logic chain for increasing uptake of Healthy Start vouchers	£20,000

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 The programmes for which approval is sought via this MD are underpinned by a focus on addressing a common goal of preventing and alleviating financial hardship, which is an underlying driver of structural inequality itself. 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 Many of these programmes seek to connect Londoners on low incomes, or at risk of hardship, with forms of relevant support. Therefore it will be important to consider which groups, including those sharing protected characteristics, are most likely to have need of, or be in a position to benefit from, this support; what barriers might prevent them from doing so; and how we can monitor whether or not they are so prevented.
- 3.4 Certain groups experience higher risks of poverty and destitution than others. The poverty rates for Londoners from BAME communities is 38 per cent, compared to 21 per cent for White Londoners. For households with a disabled member, the rate is 31 per cent, compared to 27 per cent for those without. Foreign nationals – especially those with no recourse to public funds – face a particularly high risk of destitution.
- 3.5 Previous GLA research has highlighted how the cumulative impact of changes to the national tax and benefit system has had a disproportionately large and negative impact on the incomes of households with a disabled member; households with children (especially lone parents); and Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi households. This stems from the fact that these groups are likely to rely on welfare benefits for a proportionally larger share of their incomes. The converse is therefore also expected to hold: that initiatives seeking to increase households' income by raising awareness of entitlements to welfare benefits should stand to be particularly beneficial to these groups.
- 3.6 Initiatives that seek to increase households' income by raising awareness of entitlements – such as the Advice in Community Settings grant programme – should stand to be particularly beneficial to these groups. This will be reflected in the design, communication and evaluation of proposals.
- 3.7 Proposals will also need to respond to the evidence of which groups are less well served by specialist advice provision of this nature. Analysis commissioned by the GLA last year identified young people, some BAME groups and disabled Londoners as groups that experience either a lack of specialist provision or barriers to accessing 'mainstream' provision.

- 3.8 As a manifestation of extreme financial hardship, food insecurity follows similar patterns. The Survey of Londoners revealed that 1.5m adults and 400,000 children in London were experiencing food insecurity before Covid-19.¹⁰ Single parents, disabled Londoners and Black Londoners were found to be more likely to experience low or very low food security, and disproportionately experience income inequality and a lack of access to fresh affordable food.
- 3.9 Alongside this, Black and Asian people are at particularly high risk from diet-related illnesses including diabetes and obesity. People identifying as Black or Black British were significantly over-represented among those needing to use Trussell Trust food banks (9 per cent versus 3 per cent of the general UK population).¹¹ Meanwhile, obesity prevalence is twice as high for children living in the most deprived areas in London compared to those living in the least deprived areas.
- 3.10 Initiatives such as the Food Roots programme – which aim to support food partnerships to effectively respond to rising food insecurity and improve physical access to healthy food, whilst increasing London’s ability to tackle the root causes of food insecurity – should directly address the disproportionate impact of food insecurity and health inequalities.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

Risk	Mitigation	Current probability	Current Impact	RAG
Information on the Employment Rights Hub could become outdated.	Event that would pose risk of content becoming outdated would be passing of Employment Bill – timing currently unknown. Officer resource to be focused on that event.	2	4	A
GLA capacity is limited to manage the programmes.	Capacity to be created as a result of, and following, team restructure.	3	4	R
Organisations commissioned and funded to carry out work fail to deliver to expected quality or to time.	Set clear and specific parameters for delivery; build in regular milestones to check progress; establish governance to oversee new programmes.	2	2	G
Projects require long-term intervention limiting the effectiveness of short-term project funding.	Make intentions for extension on grants/contracts clear, subject to securing further funding for this work in 2022-23; use approved budget for learning, evaluation and wrap-around support that will strengthen delivery partners’ ability to secure longer-term funding.	2	3	A

¹⁰ <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/survey-of-londoners-headline-findings>

¹¹ The Trussell Trust (2020) Lockdown, lifelines and the long haul ahead: The impact of Covid-19 on food banks in the Trussell Trust network

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.

Link to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.2 This work directly links to the Robust Safety Net recovery mission approved by the London Recovery Board. The Advice in Community Settings programme and the Employment Rights Hub directly deliver on commitments in the Mayor's manifesto.
- 4.3 As well as contributing the work of the Robust Safety Net mission, the Food Roots programme also links to the Building Stronger Communities and Healthy Food, Healthy Weight missions.
- 4.4 Work to promote Londoners' awareness of their employment rights – including through the employment rights hub – links to the Good Work for All recovery mission.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1 Approval is sought for receipt of £440,000 (£185,000 in 2021-22; and £255,000 in 2022-23) of external income from Guy's and St Thomas' Charity relating to the Advice in Community Settings workstream.
- 5.2 Approval is sought for expenditure of £1,670,000 for the Robust Safety Net programme over two financial years (2021-22 and 2022-23) as detailed in the table below.

Workstreams	Approval for expenditure in 2021-22	Delegated authority for expenditure in 2021-22 (subject to further decisions)	Approval for expenditure in 2022-23 (subject to future budget approvals)	Delegated authority for expenditure in 2022-23 (subject to future budget approvals and further decisions)	Total approvals
Advice in Community Settings	£260,000	£125,000	£600,000	£125,000	£1,110,000
Food Roots	£200,000		£200,000		£400,000
Local Welfare	£50,000				£50,000
Employment rights	£50,000				£50,000
Healthy Start	£20,000	£40,000			£60,000
Total	£580,000	£165,000	£800,000	£125,000	£1,670,000

- 5.3 Of the £1,670,000 expenditure:

- £1,230,000 (£560,000 in 2021-22 and £670,000 in 2022-23) will be funded from the Equality and Fairness Low-income and Food programme budget held within the Communities and Social Policy Unit
- £440,000 (£185,000 in 2021-22 and £255,000 in 2022-23) funded by the external income from Guy's and St Thomas' Charity

- 5.4 The expenditure detailed within this decision all sits within the 'A Robust Safety Net' mission. Funding for future financial years will be subject to the annual budget setting process and is subject to change. Any contracts that commit the GLA in future years will be subject to suitable break clauses.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1 The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further or that are facilitative of, conducive or incidental to the promotion of social and economic development and wealth creation in Greater London; and in formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers have complied with the GLA'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, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment) 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 of this report.

- 6.3 The Mayor may delegate the exercise of the GLA's powers to the Assistant Director, Communities and Social Policy as proposed should he wish.

- 6.4 If the Mayor makes the decisions requested, officers must ensure that:

- no reliance is placed upon, and no commitments are made to, third parties in reliance of the:
 - GCST funding until and unless they are under a legally binding obligation to provide such funding and officers are satisfied that the GLA can comply with the conditions upon which it is to be provided
 - funding for future years which is not yet approved
- to the extent that proposed expenditure concerns:
 - the award of grant funding, such funding is awarded on a fair and transparent basis in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code, and appropriate funding agreements (containing termination for convenience provisions exercisable at sole discretion of the GLA) are entered into and executed by the GLA and counterparties before commencement of the same
 - the purchase of works, services or supplies, those works, services or supplies must be procured by Transport for London Procurement in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code, and appropriate contracts (containing termination for convenience provisions exercisable at sole discretion of the GLA) are entered into and executed by the GLA and counterparties before commencement of the same

- staffing matters, all relevant GLA HR protocols are followed and related separate approvals (where applicable) are obtained.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Prospectus for Advice in Community Settings (AiCS) programme published	May 2021
Successful bidders to AiCS programme announced	August 2021
First payment of AiCS partnership development grants	September 2021
Grant payment to London Councils for local welfare assistance research	September 2021
Commission evaluation of AiCS programme	October 2021
Initial phase of Healthy Start programme delivered	December 2021
Commissioned content and paid-for advertising of Employment Rights Hub procured	December 2021
First payment of AiCS delivery grants	February 2022
Food Roots 2 incubator support commissioned and first payment of growth grants	February 2022
Food Roots 2 incubator legacy programme commissioned	December 2022

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 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:

Nicholas MacAndrews has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Sarah Mulley 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 20 September 2021

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

Date

D. Gove

28/09/21

CHIEF OF STAFF:

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

Signature

Date

D. Bellamy

01/10/21

