

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2604

Title: Food Connect expansion with Hubbub to measure environmental impact and social value of redistributing surplus food

Executive summary:

This decision form seeks approval of expenditure of up to £30,000 by the GLA's Waste and Circular Economy team to match-fund the expansion of Food Connect with Hubbub and Starbucks.

This will support the expansion of an existing pilot project – Food Connect – redistributing edible surplus food to those suffering from food insecurity, preventing waste and supporting vulnerable people through the cost-of-living crisis. The funding will enable the project to expand its reach into two new boroughs, providing five new community fridges and increasing the number of vulnerable people who can receive support.

Food Connect will streamline operations at these sites; pilot new business engagement tools; and explore self-sustainability and scalability. The project is expected to more than triple the volume of donations; the number of people supported; and the amount of emissions saved. The project will monitor and evaluate environmental and social impacts and make recommendations for further improvements; expand operations; and move to a financially sustainable model.

Food Connect will link existing work with the Food Flagship Initiative (FFI) – a strategic partnership between the GLA, ReLondon and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation – and support the output from the GLA's Financial Hardship team's food root incubator programme. (This supports people suffering from food insecurity into more sustainable lifestyles).

This work will be over 12 months; the expenditure will be a grant to deliver the project. It is planned to continue for another year (24-25), aiming to be funded by businesses.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Environment and Energy approves expenditure of up to £30,000 by the Waste and Circular Economy team on grant funding the expansion of Food Connect, supporting five new community fridges across London.

AUTHORISING DIRECTOR

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: Catherine Barber

Position: Assistant Director of Environment and Energy

Signature:



Date:

12/10/22

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. An estimated 32 per cent of all food produced in the world is lost or wasted from farm to fork.¹ This huge level of inefficiency has economic, social and environmental impacts. Globally, it means that more than 1bn tons of food never get consumed each year, while one in nine people are undernourished. In addition, food loss and waste are responsible for an estimated 8 per cent of annual greenhouse gas emissions; if it were a country, food loss and waste would be the third largest emitter after China and the United States.
- 1.2. Approximately 6,347,000 tonnes of food are produced to supply London's food system each year.² This comes from two key sources: imports from outside the city; and production and cultivation within the boundaries of London. Currently 99 per cent of London's food is imported, with local production and farming accounting for less than 1 per cent of the capital's food supply.³
- 1.3. In total, 1,456,000 tonnes of food is lost or wasted in London each year, with 64 per cent (931,000 tonnes) coming from households. The majority of London's food loss and waste is incinerated (57 per cent), while approximately 24 per cent is more productively managed through anaerobic digestion and composting. Approximately 8 per cent of food waste is still landfilled, which contributes to the greenhouse gas emissions associated with food loss and waste.⁴
- 1.4. Around 300,000⁵ tonnes of food waste is generated from the hospitality sector. The Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP), a climate action NGO working globally to tackle the causes of the climate crisis, estimates that the equivalent of one in six meals served is thrown away, 75 per cent of which is avoidable and could have been eaten.⁶
- 1.5. The food we throw away costs the average family £470 per year.⁷ This is at the same time as high levels of food insecurity in the UK, when 13m people are considered to be at risk of poverty. According to Sustain's report, 'Beyond the Food Bank 2019', almost 2m Londoners (of whom an estimated 400,000 are under 16) struggle to afford or access a sufficient diet. The largest provider of food banks, the Trussell Trust, gave out food parcels for more than 165,000 people in London in 2018-19, up from 30,000 in 2017-18.⁸ There are many other providers of emergency food, so the total extent of Londoners' need is far greater than that.
- 1.6. The cost to London boroughs of reprocessing/disposing of food waste is estimated at around £50m per annum. It costs consumers £1.4bn per year to purchase the food and drink thrown away

¹ ReLondon, [London's food footprint: An analysis of material flows, consumption-based emissions, and levers for climate action](#), November 2021

² ReLondon, [London's food footprint: An analysis of material flows, consumption-based emissions, and levers for climate action](#), November 2021

³ ReLondon, [London's food footprint: An analysis of material flows, consumption-based emissions, and levers for climate action](#), November 2021

⁴ ReLondon, [London's food footprint: An analysis of material flows, consumption-based emissions, and levers for climate action](#), November 2021

⁵ Bloomberg food waste data analysis (GLA internal document)

⁶ WRAP, [Overview of waste in the hospitality and food service sector](#), November 2013

⁷ WRAP, [Food surplus and waste in the UK – key facts](#), updated October 2021

⁸ Sustain, [Beyond the Food Bank: London Food Poverty Profile 2019](#), October 2019

in London. Food waste is costly to the environment. The food waste London threw away in 2020 generated the equivalent of 2m tonnes of CO₂e, much of which could have been avoided.⁹

- 1.7. WRAP estimates that waste disposal costs the hospitality and food-service sector £10,000 per outlet.¹⁰ Using GLA data, we estimate the total cost to the food service sector in London to be £278m (£276m for small and medium-sized enterprises).
- 1.8. London's consumption-based emissions embedded within the food and drink products consumed in the city is 3.5 times bigger than the territorial emissions occurring within the city boundaries. This equates to over 15ktCO₂e per annum.¹¹
- 1.9. ReLondon – a strategic partnership between the Mayor and London Councils – published a material flow analysis of food in London in 2021, London's Food Footprint: An analysis of material flows, consumption-based emissions, and levers for climate action. The findings showed a series of hotspots and areas of opportunity across the food-supply chain to reduce food loss and waste, and consumption-based emissions (an action plan is soon to be developed for this report). The report shows that 6,347,000 tonnes of food are produced to supply London's food system each year; and that 99 per cent of this is produced outside of London. Even before it reaches the city, 836,000 tonnes of imported food are lost, representing the second-largest volume of food that is either lost or wasted across the supply chain. Additionally, the majority of the consumption-based emissions (78 per cent) from London's food is produced outside the city, demonstrating the role London plays in helping to tackle the climate-change impact of our food system.
- 1.10. During the 2020-21 COVID lockdowns, food hubs played an important role for communities. The London Food Alliance worked with redistribution charities and the GLA to set up 54 food hubs to help communities access food they needed.
- 1.11. The GLA developed nine recovery missions; each focuses on key outcomes, cross-cutting principles and engagement. This pilot project will meet objectives set out in the Green New Deal.
- 1.12. The GLA recognises that surplus food distribution is not a solution to food insecurity. However, there is a need to ensure surplus food that would otherwise be thrown away is put to better use, while measuring its environmental and social impacts.
- 1.13. Hubbub – a charity focused on delivering innovative, practical projects that have a positive impact on the environment – ran a pilot in Milton Keynes to improve the redistribution of surplus food. The project was a great success. It created six new green jobs; achieved zero emissions from using green electric cargo bikes to distribute food, and run collections; and shared the equivalent of 260,000 meals. The success of the Milton Keynes project led to a pilot being developed for roll-out in the London Borough of Southwark, with joint funding from the GLA and Southwark Council. This project has experienced similar success: in the first three months of the service, 41 tonnes of food were redistributed; 97,000 meals were prepared for vulnerable people; 3,324 families were supported; and 103 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions were saved.
- 1.14. The Mayor has set a target for a 50 per cent reduction of food loss and waste by 2030. This is in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 – "By 2030, halve per capita global food

⁹ GLA, [London Environment Strategy](#), May 2018

¹⁰ WRAP, [Overview of waste in the hospitality and food service sector](#), November 2013

¹¹ ReLondon, [London's food footprint: An analysis of material flows, consumption-based emissions, and levers for climate action](#), November 2021

waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses” – of which the Mayor is a Champion. The Food Connect service focusses on redistributing edible food waste which would otherwise be wasted, supporting this target.

- 1.15. New regulations under the Environment Act 2021, coming into force in 2022 will contain a polluter-pays principle. This project will test how businesses can meet this new obligation through surplus food donation, instead of sending food to create energy or disposal.
- 1.16. A survey of potential locations, carried out by Hubbub through the Community Fridge Network, identified the Southwark-based Albrighton Centre as the optimal candidate to participate in this pilot. Given the similarities with previous hub sites in the Milton Keynes pilot, the demographics of the local population, level of use, and how embedded within the local community the centre is.
- 1.17. The expansion of Food Connect will be jointly funded by the GLA and Starbucks. Starbucks has a long-term relationship with Hubbub, having previously provided funding for multiple waste-reduction and circular-economy-focused projects. Starbucks’ funding will be provided from the five-pence tax it places on disposable coffee cups. The GLA has previously partnered with Starbucks in the delivery of projects, the most recent being the “Give it a Grow” campaign. Support has also been provided to collaborative projects between Hubbub and Starbucks, such as the Cup Fund.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1. The expansion of Hubbub’s Food Connect model will enable efficient, effective and agile surplus food collection and redistribution at five new community fridges across two London boroughs, Hackney and Islington. Both Hackney and Islington have listed commitments to redistributing edible food waste within their Reduction and Recycling Plans; and both support London Councils’ One World Living Climate Action Plan, which advocates for councils to introduce food redistribution services to reduce avoidable food waste and as part of their support package to those suffering from food insecurity. The project will measure the environmental and social benefits; and work with businesses on an engagement, communications and training campaign to improve awareness, and the quality and quantity, of surplus edible-food redistribution.

Furthermore, the pilot and evaluation will explore ways to make sure this model is financially sustainable and can be further scaled across London. This work will help in achieving the London Environment Strategy aims; recovery missions; and the Mayor’s targets and objectives to reduce waste, and transition to a low-carbon circular economy in London. The service will also support the Mayor’s manifesto commitments to work with London’s food sector to reduce waste; promote healthy, sustainable diets that are good for the planet; and grow London’s green economy, creating new green jobs.

- 2.2. The following outcomes are expected as a result of funding this expansion of the Food Connect Service:*

- 16,000 families supported within 12 months
- 205 tonnes of food shared, creating more than 845,000 meals in the first year

- 50 per cent of food shared to be made up of fruit, vegetables, wholegrains, pulses, nuts and seeds
- work with at least two different food retailers to pilot an employee engagement campaign on surplus food
- five new green jobs created
- five additional community hubs/fridges/kitchens supported
- streamlined processes, leading to measurable efficiency savings that free up volunteers' time, so that they can concentrate on other, more socially focused activities
- transport emission savings of 515 tonnes within the first year
- development of a model that outlines new ways for redistribution hubs to address food surplus across the capital.

* This is dependent on the surplus food flows from the food sector; therefore, the expected outcomes are conservative estimates. However, taking into account the business engagement support package of work, and work with the FFI, we expect to exceed the outcomes listed above.

Budget

- 2.3. This ADD is requesting £30,000 to support this pilot by providing grant-funding to Hubbub to deliver the project. The grant will be awarded in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code, and in line with the arrangements for the pilot project in Southwark.

The cost breakdown is as follows:

2022-23	£
Food hub start-up costs	
Capital expenditure – purchase of cargo bikes	15,000
Training, marketing and engagement	4,000
Business engagement package	
Training, marketing and engagement	3,000
Hubbub management, monitoring & evaluation, reporting and guidance	
£1,000 per calendar month for up to six months	6,000
Wrap-up, evaluation and reporting	2,000
Total	30,000

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in considering whether to grant this approval, “due regard” must be had to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual

orientation (and marriage or civil partnership status for the purpose of the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination only).

- 3.2. This duty has been taken into account. The Mayor wishes to support the development of community food hubs, in order for them to contribute to the waste and circular economy objectives of his London Environment Strategy (and London recovery missions), which have been the subject of public consultation. In addition, the project will work with community fridges to identify and support the most vulnerable individuals within their local communities, as these are often disproportionately over-represented among minority ethnic groups. No other equalities issues have been identified regarding the nature of the proposals.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

- 4.1. There are no potential or perceived conflicts of interest with any person involved in the drafting or clearance of this form.
- 4.2. Key risks, and mitigating measures, are outlined in the table below.

Risk	Measures to reduce risk
Insufficient match-funding is secured to deliver the project.	Hubbub has a longstanding relationship with Starbucks, which has pledged to provide the remaining funding needed to deliver the project. Starbucks has partnered with Hubbub on many occasions to provide corporate sponsorship for projects focused on addressing the impact of waste on the environment. Hubbub has received written confirmation of Starbucks' intent to fund; and has requested a sponsorship agreement signed by both parties.
Project milestones for 2022-23 are not delivered before the end of the financial year.	Given that the project will begin in quarter three of the financial year, Hubbub has mobilised resources to secure corporate sponsorship, and build relationships with pan-London food redistribution charities, to ensure delivery is completed on time. Hubbub is prepared to incur initial expenditure, and will look to recover costs from the GLA and the corporate sponsors, Starbucks, based upon evidential receipts.
The project is not financially viable without continued support from the GLA.	Hubbub has a great deal of experience in successfully delivering pilot projects of this nature. Particular focus will be given to streamlining processes to make them more efficient, and thus more cost-effective; reducing expenditure; and making the operation more financially viable. Hubbub has significant experience in identifying and applying for third-party funding. Hubbub's project management staff will provide support for the organisation beyond the lifetime of the pilot.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.3. The London Environment Strategy contains strategies aimed at promoting waste reduction, in particular food; reducing the climate-change impact of the food system and waste management; and supporting the transition to a low-carbon circular economy.
- 4.4. This project supports the objectives of the Mayor's Green New Deal: creating new green jobs; and tackling emissions and food waste through the redistribution of surplus food to those suffering from food poverty. The cross-cutting benefits extend to supporting those impacted by societal inequalities within Hackney and Islington boroughs.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. £30,000 is required to further support the Food Connect Pilot aimed at redistributing surplus food from local businesses and communities within the capital.
- 5.2. The pilot commenced in 2021-22 in which the GLA committed £30,000 as match funding. If approved, the total value of the Authority's contribution will amount to £60,000.
- 5.3. Hubbub will deliver the project and will be the recipient of the funds which will be issued as a grant. Alongside the GLA, Hubbub have also sought funding from Starbucks who will contribute £171,156. Therefore, the total value of the expansion alone will be £171,156.
- 5.4. The requested £30,000 will be funded from the 2022-23 Waste Programmes budget which currently resides within the Authority's Environment and Energy Unit.

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:

Tom Harris has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Corporate Investment Board

This decision was agreed by the Corporate Investment Board on 10 October 2022

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

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

Signature

Anna Eastcott

Date

12/10/22