

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD2991

### Title: Cost of living: support for advice sector 2022-23

#### Executive summary:

This Mayoral Decision (MD) seeks approval for expenditure of £2,910,000 on activities to help Londoners mitigate rising living costs by connecting them with the information and advice they need to realise all their financial (and other relevant) rights and entitlements. It also seeks a delegation to the Executive Director of Good Growth to approve the expenditure of a further £790,000 on work to support Londoners in fuel poverty. Both amounts are drawn from the £3,700,000 budget that was allocated to work on this issue by MD2969. These proposals build on the Robust Safety Net mission work programme approved by MD2869, and interim funding for pan-London debt advice services approved by MD2944.

#### Decision:

That the Mayor:

- 1) approves the expenditure of £2,910,000 on a programme of work in 2022-23 to support Londoners with the rising cost of living comprising:
  - £500,000 to improve the usability, accessibility and awareness of the Cost of Living Hub, including a grant-funding programme in relation to associated third-party digital tools designed to support Londoners to understand their rights and entitlements
  - £1,200,000 in grant funding awarded to the Royal Courts of Justice and Islington Citizens Advice Bureaux to: boost adviser capacity across the network of 28 London Citizens Advice offices; improve their community outreach; and upskill community-based staff and volunteers
  - £1,100,000 in grant funding awarded to the London Legal Support Trust to: boost adviser capacity across their network of 38 Advice Centres of Excellence; improve their community outreach; and upskill community-based staff and volunteers
  - £110,000 to fund two fixed-term one-year posts to support the delivery of the programme
- 2) delegates authority to the Executive Director, Good Growth, to approve, through a subsequent Director Decision form, expenditure of £790,000 on work to support Londoners experiencing, or at risk of, fuel poverty.

#### 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:

16/5/22

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

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

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

- 1.1. This MD seeks approval for expenditure from the GLA: Mayor budget for 2022-23 for activity to support Londoners affected by the rising cost of living. The MD describes the use of the £3.7m that was allocated under cover of MD2969 to secure capacity in organisations that provide advice on problem debt, welfare benefits and other issues, so they can in turn support Londoners at risk of being pushed into financial hardship.
- 1.2. The activity described in this MD builds on the programme of work authorised by MD2869 to deliver a range of activity linked to the Robust Safety Net recovery mission. It also builds on the expenditure authorised by MD2944 to provide grant funding to the Debt Free London partnership, to allow for the extension of its pan-London debt advice telephone service to a 24/7 basis between February and May 2022.
- 1.3. The rising cost of living has already presented most Londoners with a sudden shock to their living standards. Increasing inflation, energy bills, and national insurance rates/council tax bills have all meant that nearly 80 per cent of Londoners have seen an increase in their living costs over the last six months – and prices for essentials are predicted to increase further over the next year.
- 1.4. This sustained hit to living standards is unavoidable without significant action from national government. However, there is some support on offer to Londoners that could at least partially mitigate the worst effects. This includes advice on dealing with problem debt, claiming welfare benefits, and accessing other rights or entitlements. Some of these forms of support are not widely understood and, in some cases, significantly underclaimed. However, this support could make a tangible difference to their living standards of Londoners on low incomes.

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

- 2.1. The overarching aim for the programme of work is to help Londoners mitigate the worst effects of the cost of living crisis by providing them with the support they need to understand and access all the financial (and other relevant) rights and entitlements they are eligible for.
- 2.2. The programme aims to achieve this through the following objectives:
  - increased awareness amongst Londoners of the full range of rights and entitlements that can help offset rising living costs (e.g. welfare benefits, breathing space, social tariffs, energy bill reductions, hardship grants)
  - improved understanding amongst Londoners of which rights are relevant to them and their circumstances, and how to go about claiming them
  - increased capacity in the advice sector to help Londoners with the most complex needs claim their entitlements
  - improved access to advice services for Londoners who usually face challenges accessing them
  - increased uptake of new or underclaimed rights and entitlements
  - increased understanding of the policy drivers of the cost of living crisis, and the support needs of different groups of Londoners.
- 2.3. These objectives will be achieved through the delivery of three core elements of work, as set out below.

## **Element 1: Developing and promoting digital content, products and tools**

### Context and purpose

- 2.4. In April 2022, the GLA launched the Cost of Living Hub on London.gov.uk,<sup>1</sup> which signposts Londoners to trusted information and advice about a wide range of rights, entitlements and other sources of support – including several third-party digital tools that help users understand which rights are relevant to them and their circumstances. The hub requires additional development to further improve its usability and accessibility – particularly to Londoners with complex needs.
- 2.5. The hub will be promoted to Londoners as a central strand of the Mayor's 'Making London Fairer' campaign, which is being funded through the central marketing budget. Whilst this will be effective at raising awareness amongst Londoners who are engaged with mainstream Mayoral communications channels, we are seeking approval, through this MD, to use budget to supplement the campaign with additional targeted communications and awareness-raising activity amongst the groups of Londoners who are less likely to engage with these channels.
- 2.6. We also recognise the need to support charities and/or social enterprises to make improvements to some of the existing third-party-owned digital tools to which the Cost of Living Hub signposts. This is to make them both more accessible and more inclusive of a wider range of entitlements. Similarly, there is a need to support these same organisations to develop new targeted digital tools where they have identified that the needs of Londoners with more complex requirements are not being met by existing products. Any new tools developed by third parties would also be signposted within the Cost of Living Hub.
- 2.7. Supporting the development of digital content and tools will have the additional benefit of yielding analytics or other anonymised user data that could be used to improve the GLA's, and partners', understanding of the cost of living crisis and the needs of specific groups of Londoners. This could be used, for example, for informing targeted campaign and awareness-raising activity.

### Approvals and delivery method

- 2.8. We are seeking approval for expenditure of up to £500,000 to:
- commission a range of appropriate specialist providers to deliver goods and/or services to make iterative improvements to the Cost of Living Hub on London.gov.uk
  - commission (or provide grant funding to, where appropriate) a range of specialist providers, charities or community organisations to deliver goods and services and/or carry out activities to support targeted campaigns, and awareness-raising of the Cost of Living Hub
  - provide grant funding to charities or social enterprises to improve existing (or develop new) third-party-owned digital tools (which are/will be signposted within the Cost of Living Hub) that help Londoners with complex needs to understand their rights and entitlements.
- 2.9. The goods and services required to make improvements to the Cost of Living Hub (and hence the providers that will be commissioned) will be informed by user and stakeholder feedback. However, these could include user testing, video content, translation services and new content/feature development. Similarly, the goods and services procured, or activities funded, to support targeted awareness-raising of the Cost of Living Hub (and hence the organisations commissioned/grant funded) will be determined by further engagement with the External Relations team to ensure that it supplements and complements activity taking place as part of the 'Making London Fairer' campaign.
- 2.10. Grant funding to support charities or social enterprises to develop third-party digital tools will be provided in the form of a competitive grant programme. Organisations will be invited to submit bids

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<sup>1</sup> London.gov.uk, [Help with the cost of living](#)

that will be independently evaluated against a set of objectives/criteria laid out in a grant prospectus. We hope to encourage innovation, and will be open to a range of proposals for different types of digital tools, project budgets and timelines for delivery. However, all bidders will be required to demonstrate how their proposals either improve the accessibility/scope of existing tools; or respond to gaps in provision for Londoners with complex needs/requirements through the development of new tools.

- 2.11. All procurement of goods and services, or grant funding, will be carried out/provided in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code.

#### Outcomes and deliverables

- 2.12. The extent to which Londoners are aware of and access the Cost of Living Hub will largely be dictated by the success of the wider 'Making London Fairer' campaign. However, by investing in the range of activities set out above, we hope to increase the use of the Hub and the tools to which it signposts amongst groups of Londoners with complex needs – particularly Deaf and Disabled Londoners and carers; older Londoners and those supporting them; Londoners with English as a second; or other language Londoners in low-paid work with fluctuating incomes.
- 2.13. Whilst it is not possible to track the usage of the Hub by the groups above using standard analytics, the number of page views of content, features, or tools relevant to the needs of those groups can be tracked as a proxy.

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>2022-23 expenditure to be agreed under this decision</b>
<p>1. Goods and services to improve the usability and accessibility of the Cost of Living Hub as required by user testing/feedback (exact number and nature to be determined by user feedback).</p> <p>2. Goods, services, and/or activities to support targeted awareness-raising of the Hub (exact number and nature to be determined by engagement with the 'Making London Fairer' campaign team).</p> <p>3. The development of between two and four new or existing third-party-owned digital tools (exact number to be determined by number and nature of bids received).</p>	£500,000

### **Element 2: Investing in community-based advice and support services**

#### Context and purpose

- 2.14. Given the complexity of some entitlements, and the challenges navigating the range of support available, there will be many Londoners who require additional or specialist support. For this group, support from organisations that provide advice, casework and, if necessary, representation is likely to be required.
- 2.15. Whilst there is a large number of advice services in London that provide this type of support to Londoners, in many places demand for advice on financial hardship issues already significantly outstrips supply. There are clear risks in signposting Londoners struggling with the cost of living to services that simply do not have the capacity or the specialism to respond. As such there is a need to both boost the capacity of London's advice sector (including upskilling staff or volunteers to fill gaps in specialist provision) and maintain capacity at current levels where there is a risk of it being depleted.

- 2.16. Some groups of Londoners, for varying reasons, also face barriers to accessing mainstream advice services. Previous (and current) GLA-funded programmes have demonstrated that embedding advice and referral pathways in community settings is an effective way to overcome many of these barriers. Therefore, to reach the most excluded Londoners, advice services need to be supported to work in partnership with grassroots or community organisations wherever possible.

#### Approvals and delivery method

- 2.17. We are seeking approval to fund two pan-London advice infrastructure bodies to increase and maintain expert advice capacity across their networks. This will allow them to act as 'community anchors', so that they can offer advice and support in dealing with the cost of living to as many Londoners as possible. Funding will also be used to provide a coherent offer of support to surrounding community and grassroots organisations; this will help them triage service users and refer them to crisis support and expert advice.
- 2.18. The two organisations we are seeking approval to fund represent the only London-based networks of advice agencies that can, collectively, provide the range, specialism and quality of advice needed to effectively help people mitigate rising living costs in any part of London (see section 4.2 for justification for providing direct grant funding). Whilst these two networks will work together closely, and refer clients between their respective services, individual funding arrangements are required in recognition of the slightly different role each organisation will play (e.g. the London Citizens Advice network will play a more prominent role in providing training to community organisations and generalist advice; and the network of Centres of Excellence will play a more prominent role in the provision and training of specialist advisers).

#### *Funding arrangement with London Citizens Advice*

- 2.19. We are seeking approval for expenditure of £1,200,000 to provide grant funding directly to the Royal Courts of Justice and Islington Citizens Advice Bureaux (collectively, RCJ Advice)<sup>2</sup> to: increase adviser capacity across the network of 28 London Citizens Advice offices; and deliver a new advice model that responds to the needs of Londoners struggling with the cost of living. As lead partner RCJ Advice will be responsible for receiving the funding; distributing it across the network, as required; and providing project coordination and oversight.
- 2.20. The funding will be used to rapidly recruit (and train where required) 16 generalist frontline advisers to provide immediate crisis support in parts of London with high demand and/or limited adviser capacity. This will be supplemented by the recruitment of five new specialist advisers who will take referrals from crisis advisers and resolve complex/specialist legal problems.<sup>3</sup> Local Citizens Advice offices will also act as 'community anchors' and some funding will be used to develop new partnerships with local grassroots/community organisations and deliver 'Advice First Aid' training to community staff/volunteers to upskill them in identifying advice needs and making onward referrals.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.21. RJC Advice and the London Citizens Advice network will contribute a range of resources to the project – including drawing on existing adviser, volunteer, supervisor, trainer and campaign staff resource to supplement new roles funded by the GLA; and providing training and communications materials, case management and other IT systems, and physical space to carry out face-to-face advice sessions.

#### *Funding arrangement with London Legal Support Trust*

- 2.22. We are also seeking approval for expenditure of up to £1,100,000 to provide grant funding directly to the London Legal Support Trust (LLST) to deliver a complimentary pan-London advice model

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<sup>2</sup> This is a single legal entity rather than two separate organisations

<sup>3</sup> The other organisation we are proposing to fund (the London Legal Support Trust – see sections 2.22 to 2.25) will provide additional specialist advice capacity where required.

they have co-designed with RCJ Advice. As lead partner, the LLST will be responsible for receiving and distributing funding across the network of 38 London Advice Centres of Excellence they represent, as required; and providing project coordination and oversight.

- 2.23. The funding will be used to recruit and train 16 specialist advisers, to be based in Centres of Excellence in areas of high demand/limited capacity. Seven crisis support advisers will also be recruited from (and be based in) surrounding community organisations, and will refer clients to specialist advice as required. The specialist advisers will also take referrals from Local Citizens Advice offices; who will, in turn, take crisis support advice referrals where required. Some funding will also be used to support the development of new triage and referral partnerships with around 24 grassroots/community organisations that will be supported by 'Advice First Aid' training for staff and volunteers, to be delivered by Citizens Advice. As well as responding to the immediate needs of Londoners in crisis, the upskilling and recruitment of advisers from community organisations, through this proposal, will improve the resilience of the advice sector by filling strategic gaps in specialist advice provision and creating new talent pipelines.
- 2.24. As with the Citizens Advice funding above, the first phase of delivery would be a three-month 'mobilisation period' to allow for the recruitment and training of advisers and community partners. This would be followed by a 12-month delivery phase.
- 2.25. The LLST and the Centres of Excellence will contribute a range of resources to the project, including drawing on existing specialist adviser and supervisor resource to supplement the new roles funded by the GLA; and providing training and communications materials, case management and other IT systems, and physical space to carry out face-to-face advice sessions.

#### Outcomes and deliverables

- 2.26. We will gather evidence from both funded delivery partners to track progress towards the following combined outcomes:<sup>5</sup>
- approximately 30,000 Londoners supported to claim/access entitlements and/or crisis support to help increase their incomes, reduce their costs or avoid destitution
  - approximately 5,000 Londoners supported to address complex legal problems that are limiting their incomes or blocking access to other forms of support with the cost of living
  - approximately 4,400 community staff/volunteers trained in triage and signposting to increase the number, and improve the quality, of referrals to advice/crisis support services

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>2022-23 expenditure to be agreed under this decision</b>
<p>Activity for London Citizens Advice to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recruit and train 16 crisis support advisers to support approximately 21,000 Londoners</li> <li>• recruit five specialist advisers to resolve approximately 1,750 complex legal cases</li> <li>• deliver up to 180 Advice First Aid and other tailored training sessions to approximately 4,400 participants.</li> </ul>	£1,200,000

<sup>5</sup> These outcomes are rough estimates of reach that were provided by RCJ Advice and the LLST. These were calculated based on the average number of clients seen per adviser across each network, and the maximum number of participants per training session.

Activity for LLST to:	£1,100,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recruit and train six part-time and 10 full-time specialist advisers to resolve approximately 3,250 complex cases</li> <li>• recruit and train seven crisis support advisers based in surrounding community organisations to support approximately 9,000 Londoners</li> <li>• recruit 24 community organisations to triage and refer clients to generalist/specialist advice.</li> </ul>	

### **Element 3: Developing a pan-London energy-advice service**

#### Context and purpose

- 2.27. The recent 54 per cent increase in the energy price cap, coupled with the further predicted increase of 32 per cent in October, is likely to plunge hundreds of thousands of London households into fuel poverty.
- 2.28. The Mayor has funded boroughs to deliver his Warmer Homes Advice Service since February 2018, and in that time has helped over 14,500 households across every borough in London. However, the limitations of this approach are that the boroughs have no additional capacity to expand; and they do not provide a single point of access to energy advice for Londoners. We therefore propose establishing a new London energy advice service, similar to that provided by the Energy Saving Trust up until a decade ago.

#### Approvals and delivery method

- 2.29. The energy advice service would provide a single telephone line and advice website, available to all Londoners concerned about their energy bills, regardless of their income brackets. Key areas of advice would be:
- how to save on energy costs and stay warm at home
  - financial support available for energy-efficiency measures, specifically the Mayor's £43m Warmer Homes programme, Solar Together London, and the government's £450m Boiler Upgrade Scheme
  - energy and water bill discounts such as the Warm Home Discount and WaterSure schemes
  - energy-efficiency measures such as renewables, insulation and heating improvements; and their likely costs for Able to Pay households
  - the routes available to private tenants to improve the energy-efficiency of their homes
  - sources of more in-depth help such as the Warmer Homes Advice Service.
- 2.30. The Warmer Homes Advice Service would remain and be the subject of a further MD. It supplements the proposed energy advice service by focusing on the most vulnerable residents to provide community outreach; a referral route for over 300 partners; home energy advice visits; and in-depth fuel and water debt support. The Warmer Homes Advice Service would receive referrals from the new energy advice service.
- 2.31. The impact of the new energy advice service would be to reduce energy bills; improve access to advice and information on saving energy in the home; and improve uptake of funding amongst fuel-poor households. It would commence by Autumn 2022, and run for a period of 12 months.

- 2.32. Further work will be required to negotiate this with potential delivery partners. Therefore, we are seeking approval to delegate the exercise of the GLA's powers to the Executive Director, Good Growth, to approve through a subsequent decision form expenditure of £790,000.

### Staffing

- 2.33. We are seeking approval for expenditure of £120,000 to fund two fixed-term one-year posts within the Equality and Fairness team at the GLA. Once approved through the GLA's establishment control procedures, and signed off by the Chief Officer, these posts will support the delivery of various aspects of the Cost of Living work programme – including campaigning and awareness-raising activity, community engagement, grant management, and procurement.

## **3. Equality comments**

- 3.1. Many groups of Londoners with protected characteristics are disproportionately likely to experience financial hardship which makes them particularly vulnerable to rising living costs. For example:
- the poverty rate amongst households with a disabled person living in it is 35 per cent, compared to 25 per cent of non-disabled households
  - children in families with a disabled member are more than twice as likely to experience low income and material deprivation (20 per cent) than children in families where no one is disabled (8 per cent)
  - 38 per cent of Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic Londoners are in poverty compared, to 21 per cent of White Londoners
  - 19.1 per cent of households with an ethnic minority as the household reference person (HRP) are in fuel poverty, compared to 12.6 per cent of households with a White HRP
  - older Londoners and households with a disabled person living in it are also disproportionately likely to experience fuel poverty, due to having higher energy requirements
  - London-based single parents, disabled Londoners and Black Londoners are more likely to experience low or very low food security
  - migrant Londoners – especially those with no recourse to public funds – face a particularly high risk of destitution.
- 3.2. Whilst the programme of work set out above will be of benefit to all Londoners, it has been specifically designed to ensure that it provides support to Londoners with protected characteristics. For example:
- One of the primary goals of the work to improve and design new digital resources and tools is to make them more accessible to Londoners with complex needs. This is likely to benefit some Deaf and disabled Londoners; Londoners with long-term health conditions; older Londoners; or Londoners with English as a second or other language.
  - The investment in community-based advice services will provide an effective support option for less digitally capable Londoners, or those with more complex needs that cannot be served via digital signposting to self-help resources.
  - Supporting the development of partnerships between community organisations and advice services will provide support to Londoners who face barriers in accessing advice. This is particularly relevant to Deaf and disabled Londoners; Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Londoners; younger Londoners; and migrant Londoners.

- By funding pan-London networks of advice services, beneficiaries will be able to access a wider range of specialist legal advice. This will benefit Londoners with no recourse to public funds who require immigration advice.
- The development of a pan-London energy-advice service will particularly benefit the equality groups that are disproportionately likely to experience fuel poverty.

#### 4. Other considerations

##### Key risks and issues

##### 4.1. The key risks and issues are as follows:

Risk/issues	Mitigation
The scale of the cost-of-living pressures Londoners are facing may limit the impact of this programme of work.	<p>Awareness-raising activity and the delivery of advice interventions will be flexible and targeted at the communities with the most acute needs, to maximise their impact.</p> <p>Analytics data from digital products, and monitoring data from funded advice interventions, will yield intelligence on the scale of the problem and its policy drivers. This intelligence could be used to lobby government for additional support at a national level, or leverage additional funding from London-based partners.</p>
Despite funding increased capacity in the advice sector, advice services may continue to be overwhelmed.	<p>The Advice First Aid training aspect of the funding proposals will increase the number of Londoners who can be helped with simple queries by non-experts, and improve the quality of referrals to expert advice services.</p> <p>The development of new and improved digital tools/resources will increase the number of Londoners who can self-serve and deal with simple queries themselves.</p>
Information on the Cost of Living Hub could become outdated.	Officers will monitor key changes to funding pots and schemes, and periodically update the hub when appropriate.
Information provided digitally is inaccessible to Londoners who do not have the necessary digital skills to navigate them.	The provision of face-to-face advice, as set out in Element 2, serves to pick up cases where Londoners cannot self-serve via digital resources and tools. This also contains provisions for those with language barriers, and for whom complex cases mean that generalised advice is not suitable to their needs.
Element 2 requires the recruitment and training of advisers. This may take time and cause delays to project delivery.	An initial three-month 'mobilisation phase' will be built into the delivery timeline to allow for the recruitment and training of staff, with delivery continuing into the start of 2023-24.

GLA staff capacity is insufficient to launch and manage the full programme of work within the desired timeframe.	Approval is being sought to fund two additional fixed-term posts to support the delivery of this work.
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### Considerations for the provision of grant funding and subsidy control

- 4.2. Under Element 2 of the proposals (see sections 2.14 to 2.18, above) we intend to make direct grant awards to RJC Advice and the LLST, who will act as responsible bodies for the funding. They will then grant this funding to a wide range of community organisations. The strategy of granting funds to two recipients, who will act as responsible bodies for the funding, has been chosen for the following reasons:
- They represent the only two London-based advice networks capable of (in partnership) delivering the range, depth and quality of advice needed to effectively support Londoners with varying advice needs in every borough.
  - In combination, the two networks consist of more than 60 independent organisations – most, if not all, of whom would be likely bidders for an open grant process. Therefore, cascading funding through the two strategic partners represents the most efficient way of distributing funding to a large number of organisations.
  - The cost of living crisis requires an urgent response, and funding these networks directly (rather than carrying out a lengthy competitive grant application process that would be resource intensive for both the GLA and bidding organisations) is the quickest and most efficient way to increase advice capacity across the capital.
  - The coordination role of the infrastructure organisations will allow us to effectively target communities in London that currently have the poorest access to advice.
  - Proposals also include a training offer for a large number of community organisations beyond the advice providers in the two partner networks. This increases the number of beneficiaries from the funding, and helps create sustainable relationships within the London advice sector.
- 4.3. There is some overlap between these two networks – four of the London Citizens Advice offices are currently also among the 38 Centres of Excellence – so it will be stipulated in the grant agreement with the LLST that their funding is for non-Citizens Advice Centres of Excellence only, to avoid duplication.
- 4.4. Neither RJC Advice or the LLST are economic operators selling goods or services for a profit in a competitive market, and nor are any of the organisations within their respective networks that will receive onward funding. All partners involved in delivery are charitable organisations that do and (as a consequence of GLA funding) will provide free services to Londoners. They will also be contributing their own resources to supplement the posts and activity funded by the GLA, including existing staff, adviser, volunteer and trainer resource; project management resource; training and communications resource/content; IT equipment and case management systems; and use of physical space to carry out face-to-face advice sessions.
- 4.5. Individual onward grants provided by RJC Advice and the LLST to organisations within their networks will be capped at £250,000. This limit will be stipulated in the grant agreements between the GLA and both responsible bodies.

### Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

- 4.6. This funding will be invested in programmes that will immediately start raising awareness of advice and support for Londoners in financial hardship. This will contribute to the long-term goal of the

Robust Safety Net mission which is to ensure that “by 2025 every Londoner can access the support they need avoid or alleviate financial hardship”.

- 4.7. Investing in London-based advice networks, and funding them to develop new partnerships with community organisations under Element 2 of the proposals, will also directly contribute to two of the three workstreams under the Robust Safety Net recovery mission: embedding advice in community settings; and improving the strategic coordination of advice in London.
- 4.8. These proposals also link to the Building Strong Communities recovery mission, by providing funding to advice services to act as community anchors and develop their networks with surrounding community organisations.

#### Conflicts of interest

- 4.9. There are no conflicts of interest to note from officers involved in the drafting and approving of this decision form.

### **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1. Approval is being sought for expenditure of £3.7m for the Cost of Living programme over two financial years (2022-23 and 2023-24), as detailed in the table below.

<b>Workstream elements</b>	<b>Approval for expenditure in 2022-23: £m</b>	<b>Approval for expenditure in 2023-24: £m</b>	<b>Delegated approval (subject to further decision): £m</b>	<b>Total approvals : £m</b>
Developing and promoting digital content, products, and tools	£0.500			<b>£0.500</b>
Investing in community-based advice and support services	£1.500	£0.800		<b>£2.300</b>
Staffing	£0.110			<b>£0.110</b>
Work to support Londoners experiencing fuel poverty			£0.790	<b>£0.790</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£2.110</b>	<b>£0.800</b>	<b>£0.790</b>	<b>£3.700</b>

- 5.2. The £3.7m expenditure will be funded from the Cost of Living programme budget held within the Communities and Social Policy Unit. Following the approval of this decision, all appropriate budget adjustments will be actioned accordingly.
- 5.3. The expenditure detailed within this decision all sits within the ‘Robust Safety Net’ mission.

## **6. Legal comments**

6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Mayor concern the exercise of the Authority's general powers; and fall within the Authority's statutory power to do such things considered to further or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of social development in Greater London. In formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers have complied with the Authority'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; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic 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 (above) of this report.

### Procurement of services

6.3. The officers have requested approval of £500,000, some of which will be used for the procurement of services to improve the usability, accessibility and visibility of the Cost of Living Hub on the Authority's website. The officers are reminded to ensure that the procurement of the services comply with the requirements of the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code (the Code).

### Funding

6.4. Some of the £500,000 expenditure, which is discussed in paragraph 6.3, above, will be used for a grant-funding programme to help Londoners with complex needs to understand their rights and access their entitlements. As set out in section 12 of the Code, funding should generally be made on the basis of a transparent, competitive application process. As set out in paragraph 2.10, above, the officers have indicated that they will be running a competitive process to select projects that meet the goals of the funding programme.

6.5. The officers propose to provide £1,200,000 funding to RCJ Advice; and £1,100,000 to the LLST. As set out at paragraphs 4.2 to 4.4 above, each grant recipient will act as a responsible body for the funding, which it will then distribute by way of smaller grants to organisations within its network. Moreover, the organisations within those networks are charities, which are not providing services which compete within a market. Finally, the officers have noted that the amount of the sub-grants will be capped at a maximum of £250,000, which is below the de minimis threshold for the purposes of the government's subsidy control regime.

### Creation of two posts

6.6. It should be noted that this decision is to provide funding only. Any posts created as a result of this decision must be created by the Head of Paid Service in accordance with the GLA Staffing Protocol.

### Delegation

6.7. Any function exercisable by the Mayor on behalf of the Authority may also be exercised by a member of the Authority's staff – albeit subject to any conditions that the Mayor sees fit to impose.

To this end, the Mayor may make the requested delegation to the Executive Director, Good Growth, if he so chooses.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Contract-grant award phase	Development/set-up phase	Delivery phase
<b>Element 1</b> Refinement of 'Cost of Living Hub' Support for linked digital tools Campaigns and community engagement	N/A May-Jun 2022 May 2022	N/A Jul-Oct 2022 Jun 2022	May 2022-Apr 2023 Aug 2022-Apr 2023 Jul 2022-Apr 2023
<b>Element 2</b> Funding London Citizens Advice Funding LLST	May 2022 May 2022	Jun-Aug 2022 Jun-Aug 2022	Sep 2022-Aug 2023 Sep 2022-Aug 2023
<b>Element 3</b> Pan-London Energy-advice service	TBD	May-Jul 2022	Aug 2022-Sep 2023
Staffing			Throughout

**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? YES**

If, Yes, for what reason: To allow for necessary arrangements around announcement and recruitment.

Until what date: 31 October 2022

**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:**

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

✓

**Sponsoring Director:**

Tunde Olayinka has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

**Mayoral Adviser:**

Dr 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 9 May 2022

✓

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:**

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

**Signature****Date**

*D. Gene*

10/5/22

**CHIEF OF STAFF:**

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

**Signature****Date**

*D. Bellamy*

9/5/22