

Children's Services Department

222 Upper Street  
London N1 1XR

Report of: Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

Meeting of: Executive

Date: 18 July 2024

Ward(s): All

Decision No. I027962

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## Subject: Proposal for spending to address Food Insecurity for Families

### 1. Synopsis

- 1.1. Islington Together 2030 plan sets out a bold vision for working together with our diverse communities to create a more equal future for our borough by 2030. Extensive work has been undertaken to date to tackle inequality including the development of the Community Wealth Building, Economic Well-being offer that provides the safety-net for residents at a time of crisis, whilst exploring the longer-term improvements to their financial situation. This includes income maximisation; support of the wider household finances; employment and skills support to help secure a good job; along with supporting those in employment to secure a better or more secure job and supporting residents with energy help and advice via our SHINE service. We also offer universal free school meals to all primary pupils and have an updated council tax support scheme and distribute various grants to help residents with cost-of-living issues. However, too many Islington residents remain in poverty, including the inability to meet the cost of the basic essentials such as food.
- 1.2. This report recommends focussing some additional funding on practical interventions to address food security. The report considers the use of three funding sources that can be used to address food insecurity for families, namely the 1. Household Support Fund 5; and 2. offset funding of the General Fund and 3. offset funding of the Public Health grant released by Mayor of London's grant for universal free schools' meals at Key Stage 2. This report makes recommendations for the use of this combined funding over the next two years to address food insecurity for families.

- 1.3. This report sets out a collaborative approach to tackling food insecurity. A number of options are set out that makes better use of the collaborative resources across the Council to mitigate the risk of food insecurity to our residents within the report with clear recommendations. In Islington, 56% of children are eligible for Free School Meals and the number of children accessing free school meals has grown as a result of the rising number of families experiencing food insecurity. School meals provide children with nutritious food options that they may not otherwise be able to access. Therefore, this report also identifies school attendance as a protective factor for children experiencing food insecurity, whereby attendance at school ensures children will receive a regular nutritious hot meal.
- 1.4. The report includes some financial costs associated with these options as well as addressing how closely the options align with:
  - a) the mayor's expectations about the use of released funding and
  - b) the requirements of the Public Health Grant which is the source for part of the released funding and
  - c) takes account of the guidance from the Department for Works and Pensions that issues the Household Support Fund 5 criteria. Noting that the Household Support Fund 5 will be used to help support some of the other causes of poverty around energy costs and other essential bills and
  - d) we have also considered the option of using funding to reduce overall Council budget pressures.
- 1.5. The paper also notes an emerging piece of work in collaboration with VCS organisations to look at underlying issues around food insecurity and wider inequality and pilot new approaches to tackling poverty.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.0. To agree the proposals for the allocation of the Household Support Fund in Table 4.
- 2.1. To agree the proposals for the allocation of the offset General Fund and Public Health grant in Table 5.
- 2.2. To delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children and Young People to enter into grant agreements with the GLA for future rounds of the mayor's grant for Universal Free School Meals funding at Key Stage 2.

## 3. Introduction

### 3.1 Food Insecurity in Islington

Islington is the 53rd most deprived local authority in England<sup>1</sup>, with extremes of rich and poor. There is a high level of need in Islington relating to food poverty and food insecurity.

Local data (Feb 2024) shows there are currently about 27,350 low-income households with 13,600 children in the borough. Among these, there are about 7,200 households in relative poverty with 6,381 children affected.

A household can broadly be defined as experiencing food poverty or 'household food insecurity' if they cannot (or are uncertain about whether they can) acquire "an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways". This is measured by whether a household's total minimum expected expenditure (based on the minimum income standard) is higher than their income after priority costs. Based on this, there are **5,100** households that are food insecure comprising of **1,400 children**.

Although food insecurity can affect anyone, it disproportionately impacts certain demographics. Those most affected by food insecurity include households with children (especially single parent households with multiple children); households where the head of the household is aged 16-24 years; households with a disabled adult; Black and Minority Ethnic groups (particularly Black groups); households on any income related benefit, especially universal credit; low-income households; and people living in social housing.

### 3.2 Household Support Fund 5

The Government has announced a Household Support Fund 5, with £421 million of new funding made available to councils in England to support those most in need of support with the cost of essentials.

Islington has been allocated £2,218,159 and the funding covers the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 inclusive. The Fund is expected to support vulnerable households with energy and water bills, food, and wider essentials. The eligibility criteria allow some discretion to help vulnerable households with the cost of essentials. The allocation strategy must include an application process and must spread funding across households with children, pensioners and disabled residents.

The proposed allocation strategy comprises:

- c55% to be used to fund holiday meals by way of supermarket vouchers for children eligible under the national Free School Meal criteria for May half term and the summer holiday period of 2024
- c10% to be used to support 2,000 low-income households with benefit deductions that reduce their available income
- c20% to be used to support 3,717 of our least financially resilient low-income households

- c5% to be used to support care leaver households and to help any exceptional housing cost cases
- c10% to be used to fund an application process for crisis support to disabled households

#### Free meals during school holidays

It is proposed to support those households with children that are eligible for free school meals (FSM) by providing funding for free meals during the forthcoming school holiday periods during the May and Summer holidays. This will cover 7 weeks of school holiday. This will provide households with FSM eligible children and low-income households with children under school age with a £15 voucher per week per child to cover food costs for the 7 weeks of the combined school holiday periods mentioned. This will use approximately £1.4m of our funding, which is circa 55% of the fund used to support families with children.

#### Households with benefit deductions

This will help residents who have benefit deductions that are impacted by welfare reforms or are having a deduction taken from their benefit leaving them with below the minimum level of income per week to live on. An award of £100 will be made to 2,000 households with benefit deductions. This will use approximately £200k of the funding, which is circa 10% of the total HSF5 funding.

#### Least Financially Resilient households

The Council uses a standard definition of financial resilience to classify low-income households based on the relationship between household income, savings and expected household expenditure. The definition is based on four categories of financial resilience set out in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Categories of Financial Resilience**

<b>Financial Resilience Group</b>	<b>Definition</b>
In crisis	Household take-home-income is not enough to meet rent and Council Tax liability and they do not have enough savings to meet 3 months' worth of expected expenditure.
At risk	Household take-home-income is less than their expected expenditure, and they do not have enough savings to meet 3 months' worth of their expected expenditure.
Struggling	Household take-home-income is between zero and £100 greater than their expected expenditure and they do not have enough savings to meet 3 months' worth of expected expenditure.
Coping	Household take-home-income is greater than expected expenditure by over £100. Or household take-home-income is less than £100 above expected expenditure and they do have 3 months' worth of savings.

Based on a data set including all households on either housing benefit or council tax support, the cumulative number of Islington households in each category is summarised in Table 2 below. Note that households on universal credit will be in the data set if they are eligible for council tax support. The dataset includes all households in either food, fuel, or water poverty.

**Table 2: Number of Islington Households in Financial Resilience Groups**

<b>Financial Resilience Groups</b>	<b>Number of households</b>
Crisis, risk, struggling, coping	27,358
Crisis, risk, struggling	4,986
Crisis, risk	3,717
Crisis	1,022

Focusing on the two least financially resilient categories, there is a fairly spread distribution of households across each Council ward. It is proposed to make a £200 award to the 1,022 households in the crisis group. This will use £204k of the fund. It is proposed those households in the at-risk group totalling 2,695 households, receive an award of £100. This will use £270k of the fund.

#### Care Leavers & Housing costs

It is recommended that an amount £100k is made available to help care leavers and those facing exceptional cases of genuine emergency where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need. It is anticipated that approximately £50k will be used for care leavers and £50k for housing costs.

#### Applications to HSF5

The criteria for HSF5 includes that at least part of the scheme must be application based. There are no restrictions on exactly how much of the scheme should be application based. The application scheme does require more administration resource to deliver this part of the scheme. It is proposed that £250k from HSF5 is made available to apply for crisis support funding.

#### Administration costs

The proposed strategy will keep administration costs to a minimum, allowing for the bulk of the funding to be used to support residents. It is estimated that covering costs of printing and postage, along with the application administration will be around £50k.

### Award allocation

To assess how best to allocate sums to these target households, data on average costs for essential purchases is also required. Based on UK average costs per household, the weekly bill for essential purchases split at £100 per week is -

- £56: food at home
- £30: dual fuel
- £8: water
- £6: broadband

We will recommend to residents to distribute the award as set out above to help them with essential costs. This will be a guide rather than a requirement.

### Award method

It is recommended that awards for holiday free meals are issued by electronic vouchers that can be used at all major supermarkets.

Other awards will be made via the Post Office Pay-out service which allows the resident to visit the post office and exchange the award letter for cash, having sufficiently verified their ID. This award method also benefits those that have challenges accessing the digital requirements of the electronic vouchers.

Some awards will be made by the most appropriate method dependant on the award group, either voucher or equivalent that can be exchanged for cash.

In exceptional circumstances we will cancel an award and re-issue in a way that best suits the individual household e.g., a resident who is unable to leave their house.

### Overall spend

Islington has been allocated £2,218,159, and the funding covers the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 inclusive.

- 3.2.1** The potential spend outlined in this allocation strategy fully spends the grant amount allocated. The total spend will be £2,474m, which is £256k higher than the fund. However, it is recommended to allow a minimum 10% overall not cashed allowance for the money distributed. Based on experience of the four previous rounds of HSF the suggested allocation strategy will fully spend the fund. The council will support all residents to access the funding provided.

### **Mayor of London funding for free school meals at Key Stage 2**

Through the Greater London Assembly (GLA) the mayor made available for academic year 2023/24 £130m across all London boroughs to help address families' cost-of-living pressures. This support was to provide funding so that all

primary pupils can access a free school meal in the current academic year. Without this allocation, in most boroughs, free school meals would be limited to pupils in Key Stage (KS) 1 (Reception to Year 2) and to those KS2 (Year 3 to Year 6) pupils living in households on specific benefits.

Subsequently the GLA's 2024/25 budget has been approved, with a further £140m commitment so that the scheme will continue until July 2025.

Islington is one of a number of boroughs who were already funding this KS2 provision. For such boroughs money is allocated by the GLA on the same basis as if we did not already make universal KS2 provision, but with the expectation that the offset funding released in Council budgets would be used to "support families in financial hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crisis".

Funding was allocated at a rate of £2.65 per meal, generating £1.924 million for Islington. The rate will increase to £3.00 per meal in September 2024.

### **3.3 Offset funding – year 1**

The Council has, in the past, used Public Health Grant (PHG) and General Fund to top-up national funding so that free school meals are provided universally for primary-aged pupils in Islington schools. This funding was provided to schools at a rate of £2 per meal.

The mayor's decision to fund universal free school meals at KS2 means that school budgets have been supported with the cost at the £2.65 funding rate from September 2023, enabling the release of elements of the Council's two funding streams to support families in financial hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crisis or to contribute to other priorities, including dealing with the Council's financial pressures.

The cost of universal free school meals at KS2 (UFSMKS2) in Islington schools is £1.994m in financial year 2023/24, with provision being funded by PHG £0.551m (for summer term 2023 and at the £2 rate) and Mayor's Fund £1.443m (for autumn term 2023 and spring term 2024, both at the £2.65 rate). The Mayor's Fund grant enables the release in 2023/24 of £176,000 of PHG and £947,000 of General Fund.

### **3.4 Offset funding – year 2**

The GLA has not yet published financial allocations, but the expectation is that the Council will be allocated in excess of £2 million.

Some of the funding released by the two full academic years of Mayoral funding will be required in FY 2025/26 to ensure that, in the event that the GLA is not able to extend the scheme to a third year, the Council can fund its UFSM scheme at the new, higher rate of £3 per meal.



**Table 3** shows that around £2.4m is available from funding released by the GLA grant. There is more discretion around the use of the General Fund, whereas the PHG is ring-fenced and must be used according to its grant conditions for eligible expenditure.

**Table 3: Funding Released by the Grant**

Funding stream	Released FY 2023/24 £'000	Released FY 2024/25 £'000	Required FY 2025/26 £'000	Available FY 2024/25 after 23/24 carry forward £'000
Public Health Grant	176	672		672
General Fund budget	947	847	55	1,739
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,123</b>	<b>1,343</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>2,411</b>

## 4 Proposals

4.1 A set of proposals have been developed for:

- The allocation of the Household Support Fund 5, which comply with the funding criteria and support households the cost of living. These are described at section 3.2 above and summarised in **Table 4** below.
- Deploying the offset funding released by the Mayor's Fund grant, after taking into account the allocation of the Household Support Fund 5 and its cessation in September 2024. These are summarised and set out in order of recommendation in **Table 5 below**. It is important to note that all the proposals set out in Table 5 are either one off allocation or for a commitment of no longer than 2 years.
- In consideration of the proposals, it should be noted that UCL are undertaking evaluation of the Mayor's UFSM programme and all authorities accepting the grant are required to take part in that evaluation. Boroughs which were already providing UFSM are asked to answer these two questions:
  - *What are you planning to use additional funds (made available through the programme) on? Can you please list the areas you are planning to allocate funding to?*

- *Would any of this spend have an impact on Key Stage 2 children? If the answer to this is 'yes' or 'maybe', please provide a brief explanation of how.*

**Table 4: Summary of Proposals for Household Support Fund 5**

Proposal	How much HSF5 is used	How many households benefit
Fund holiday free school meals from May half term through to Summer 2024	55% or £1.4m	13,000 children
Low-income households with benefit deductions that reduce their available income	10% or £200k	2,000
Least financially resilient low-income households	20% or £474k	3,717
Care leaver households and to help any exceptional housing cost cases	5% or £100k	300
Application process for crisis support to disabled households	10% or £250k	1,250

**Table 5: Summary of Proposals for General Fund and Public Health Grant  
Offset by Mayor's Fund**

	Proposal	How much general fund is used	How much Public Health grant is used	How many residents would benefit
A	Extend supermarket vouchers for school holidays for children eligible for FSM from Early Years to Post 16 (Sept 24 – April 25)	£749K	£451K	13,000
B	Targeted work with households to prepare for cessation of supermarket vouchers	£150K		Engage with the households of the 13,000 children
C	Extend Access to Healthy Start Vouchers	nil	£45K	408
D	Provide supermarket vouchers to care leavers	£40K		200
E	Investment in Attendance Mentors to support attendance at school	£710K		
F	Top up Resident support scheme for families with children	£200K		

#### **4.1 A: Fund Supermarket Vouchers for School Holiday for FSM eligible children**

Replacing the lost HSF with funds released by the GLA grant for the period from September 2024 to March 2025 would align with the mayor's expectations about how the released funds should be deployed. The Council allocated the majority of its 2023/24 HSF funds to fund free meals during school holiday periods. Using Public Health Grant and General fund offset by the Mayor's Grant fund to contribute to keeping this scheme in place in 2024/25 would meet the conditions of grant and provide continuity of funding for meals during the school holidays for children at risk of food insecurity.

#### **4.2 B: Targeted work with households to prepare for cessation of supermarket vouchers**

The households receiving the holiday meals support will have been receiving this support for approximately four years by the time the funding ceases. This element would fund a communications campaign targeted at the households of the 13,000 children receiving this support to communicate with them about this help ending. We will take a pro-active approach to targeting these households to improve their financial situation. This will be via the IMAX team to ensure they are claiming all entitlements, SHINE to ensure they are supported with energy and iWorks to provide employment support. Additional resources will be deployed to support these households to improve their financial resilience. This will build on the new approach to tackling poverty that is currently being piloted and is described in section 5 of this report.

#### **4.3 C: Extending access to Healthy Start vouchers**

Healthy Start is a means-tested scheme in the UK that supports pregnant women and families with children under four years old in purchasing healthy food and vitamins. Eligible families receive £4.25 each week for each child between 1 and 4 years old.

At a child's 4th birthday, the Healthy Start scheme ends. If that child's birthday falls after 31<sup>st</sup> August, they won't start school until the following September, when they would become eligible for free school meals. This creates a gap in food support, potentially leading to increased food insecurity for families until their child starts reception. This gap can be particularly problematic for children with birthdays near the start of the school year, who may go without support for an entire year.

The Council could extend eligibility to cover 4-year-olds, thus covering the gap between Healthy Start and access to free school meals. This would cost £45k for one year and would be able to be funded from PHG.

#### **4.4 D: Care leavers vouchers**

Provide vouchers to Islington carer leavers aged 16-18 in 2025, the year after the last allocation from the Household Support Fund at rate of £200 to provide additional support to those for whom we are the corporate parent. This would cost around £40k.

#### **4.5 E: Investment in Attendance Mentors to support attendance at school**

School attendance is identified as a protective factor for children experiencing food insecurity, whereby attendance at school ensures children will receive a regular nutritious hot meal, which they may not access otherwise. Long term implications of poor attendance include lower academic achievement, reduced employability and an increased risk of social exclusion. Across the country, figures show that severely absent pupils (those attending school less than half the time) rose to 2%, or 142,000 pupils in the 2023 autumn term, an increase from 0.9% before the pandemic. Islington has one of the lowest school attendance rates in the country. Existing efforts at individual school levels have resulted in limited sustainable improvement, and the situation requires urgent corporate action.

A 'Call to Arms' has been issued which includes establishing a Corporate Board, chaired by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families to address poor attendance comprehensively as part of our Borough-wide strategy for making Islington a child-friendly borough and implementing our education strategy – 'Putting Children First'. Noting the significant impact of parental mental health on pupil attendance, Officers have also recommended investment in Attendance Mentors to support families across a geographical area overcome the challenges to their children achieving a high level of school attendance. The Attendance Mentors will play a crucial role in actively engaging students, families and school staff to promote regular attendance and reducing absence. The proposal is that these roles operate in a different way to the current Family Support Workers within Bright Start and Bright Futures and that they operate in a similar way to previous roles like Home School Liaison Officers working directly with parents and carers. The cost of making this provision across the borough would be £355,000 per annum and is proposed to run across the two years.

As part of the 'Call to Arms', the Attendance mentors would:

- Closely monitor students' attendance records, track patterns of absence and persistent absenteeism in an area
- Intervene early i.e., when a student's attendance starts to become irregular to identify potential barriers such as health issues, family circumstances, or disengagement.

- Work one-on-one with students, build relationships, understand their unique situations, and provide personalised support
- Collaborate with parents, discuss attendance challenges, explore solutions, and encourage family involvement in improving attendance.
- advocate for students' well-being, provide support and develop customised individual plans that may include incentives, rewards, or targeted interventions to boost attendance.
- Collaborate with teachers, counsellors, and administrators to share insights, coordinate efforts, and align attendance initiatives.

This investment will be analysed for impact through the tracking of specific indicators and key metrics including: the regular monitoring of school attendance data of the schools where the support is being targeted and through a detailed review with headteachers after its first year of operation.

#### **4.6 F: Topping up Resident Support Scheme (RSS) and other support for vulnerable households**

As well as the impact of HSF reduction, 2024/25 is expected to see a significant increase in Islington residents moving from legacy benefits onto Universal Credit, potentially leading to the need for some form of financial assistance to help with the initial delay in receiving their first Universal Credit payment and associated problems with claiming Universal Credit. This is in addition to existing pressures on the RSS budget caused by inflation and increased demand.

The RSS would be topped up by £200,000 to provide support to households with children and consideration given to targeted intervention for low-income households with children to improve financial resilience.

#### **4.7 Alternative would be to offset pressures within Council financial position**

In principle the Council could decide simply to use the allocation of the Mayor's Fund grant to improve its General Fund financial position. It is, however, the GLA's clearly articulated hope that Councils such as us will use the funds released to support families in financial hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

This option would release £947k of General Fund in 2023/24 and £795k in 2024/25.

The rules relating to Public Health Grant preclude the £176k released in 2023/24 and the £230k released in 2024/25 from being used in this way, with any unspent sums required to be added to a Public Health Reserve for use on public health functions<sup>1</sup>.

## 5. Piloting a new approach to tackling longer-term poverty

As referenced in section 4.2 a new approach to tackling longer term poverty is being piloted. The Council's Cost of Living Board has agreed a piece of work co-designed, developed and delivered by VCS partners, Voluntary Action Islington, Octopus Community Network, Manor Gardens Welfare Trust and Help on Your Doorstep. This will tackle rising poverty levels for under-served households by joining up and building the capacity of key networks in the borough to target support and preventative interventions at the point of most critical need.

### Key elements of the proposal:

- Using food aid projects as a means to reach and target support at those most in need
- Building skills and capacity of food aid projects to help people / signpost to support
- Recruiting 12 bilingual translators to support those with language barriers, including those at risk of debt and arrears (COL data identified some BAME groups as being more at risk of rent arrears)
- Recruiting and training 12 Change Makers to bridge grassroots and statutory health and wellbeing services
- Using council data to target support e.g. around rent arrears
- Including a focus upon wellbeing (in additional to financial resilience), as poor health is both a cause and effect of poverty
- Promoting volunteering as a means to enable residents to build skills, networks and contribute to their communities

### Outcomes:

- Improved wellbeing and financial resilience for residents
- Strengthened engagement with community members for a cohesive support network
- Food Aid providers have the skills needed to support residents accessing food aid

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<sup>1</sup> "The [DHSC's] presumption is that the grant will be spent in-year. If at the end of the financial year there is any underspend, local authorities may carry these over, as part of a public health reserve, into the next financial year. In using those funds the next year, local authorities will still need to comply with the grant conditions. The department may consider reducing future grant amounts to local authorities that report significant and repeated underspends". [Public Health ring-fenced grant 2023 to 2024: local authority circular](#)

## Outputs

- 600 residents supported to access specialist advice to address the underlying issues and the consequences related to their financial hardship
- 150 residents with language barriers provided culturally competent support to deal with debt and arrears
- 12 bilingual translators employed and 12 changemakers recruited from the community. A comprehensive package of training and support provided
- Residents who rely on food aid linked into local activities organised by local wellbeing networks
- 60 Residents who rely on food aid supported to volunteer in their community
- 15 resident led project developed to proactively engage residents relying on food aid

## **6. Implications**

### **6.1 Financial Implications**

6.1.1 This report provides proposals for the use of two funding streams during 2024/25 and 2025/26. The grant funding streams are:

- The Household Support Fund 5, with £421 million funding made available to councils in England to support those most in need with the cost of essentials. Islington has been allocated £2,218,159 and the funding covers the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 inclusive. The Fund is expected to support vulnerable households with energy and water bills, food, and wider essentials.
- Through the Greater London Assembly (GLA) the mayor made available for academic year 2023/24 a total of £130m across all London boroughs. This support was to provide funding so that all primary school pupils can access a free school meal in the current academic year. For 2023/24 Islington Council received £1.924 million. Subsequently, the GLA's 2024/25 budget has been approved, with a further £140m commitment so that the scheme can continue until July 2025, of which Islington is expecting to receive approximately £2m.

6.1.2 Since Islington Council already funded free school meals for all primary school children, the Mayor's Fund has enabled the release of £1.123m core council funding in 2023/24 financial year. A further £1.342m is estimated to be released in 2024/25, with £0.055m of this earmarked to be required in 2025/26.

6.1.3 The proposals for the use of the Household Support Fund 5 are shown in Table 4, above, and the proposals for the use of the funds released through the receipt of the Mayor's Fund are shown in Table 5, above. These proposals seek to use the entirety of this funding during 2024/25 and 2025/26 by supporting Islington families and households who are most in need of additional cost of living support. This would benefit a wide reach of children and vulnerable households in the borough.



6.1.4 Alternatively, as mentioned in the body of this report, some of the GF released through the receipt of the Mayor's Fund could be used to provide a one-off saving to the GF. As Islington Council already provides many services and also funds VCS organisations who provide wide-ranging support for the borough's residents, it could be viewed that other services already being funded by the council also meet the funding criteria/expectations.

## **6.2 Legal Implications**

6.2.1 The Council has a general power under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that an individual may generally do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation and the power is exercised in accordance with the limitations specific in the Act which enables the Council to allocate or spend the various grant funding as set out in this report.

6.2.2 The Council can accept the various grant funding further to s.31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

6.2.3 In respect of the Household Support Fund, the Department of Work and Pensions (**DWP**) have issued a Grant Determination 2024 No 31/7199 which contains the terms and conditions governing the use of the grant. Key clauses of the Grant Determination relate to transparency, accounting, eligible expenditure, clawback, overpayments and cessation of funding. Officers should note in particular the obligation to report progress and submit management information to DWP in relation to the grant usage for which there is a template reporting tool provided.

6.2.4 The proposed allocation of spend as set out in this report appears to be in line with the guidance document issued by DWP which sets out the types of support and eligible spend to include energy and water, food, wider essentials and advice.

6.2.5 The proposed criteria used for establishing eligibility as set out in this report is in line with the guidance document issued by DWP which states that the fund is intended to support a wide range of low-income households and is not limited to those in receipt of benefits. The Council has flexibility to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and can apply their own discretion when identifying eligibility. Nonetheless, in accordance with the general legal duty on local authorities, officers are advised to have a clear rationale or documented policy/framework outlining the Council's approach – the principles of which are already set out in this report.

6.2.6 In respect of the PHG, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have issued grant terms and conditions (Public health ring-fenced grant financial year 2024 to 2025: local authority circular) which sets out eligible expenditure, reporting requirements and financial management which officers should be abreast of. The grant can be used for both capital and revenue purposes and in using the grant, the Council must have regard to the need to reduce inequalities between the people in its area with respect to the benefits that they can obtain from that part of the health service provided in exercise of the Council's public health functions.

### **6.3 Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030**

The proposed allocation of the funding set out in this report is to provide additional funding to support the cost of living to groups of residents and the employment of additional staff to support attendance at school, for both of which there are no particular environmental impacts. The new activity that will be undertaken as a result of these proposals will be based on existing sites and within existing teams within Islington.

### **6.4 Equalities Impact Assessment**

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

An Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Tool has been completed in respect of these proposals and identified there are only positive and neutral impacts on groups with protected characteristics and so a full EQUIA has not been completed.

## **7. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

- 7.1 The report recommends that the Household Support Fund 5 is allocated as proposed in Table 4 to ensure continuity of current provision, and which is line with the grant criteria.
- 7.2 The report recommends that the funding released in 2023/24 and 2024/25 by the receipt of Mayor's Fund should be used to fund the proposals set out in Table 5, as these take account of the implications of the cessation of the Household Support Fund; address food insecurity for families; and build capacity for households in the future when the grant funding is unknown.

**Appendices:** Appendix A - Funding sources for UFSM

**Background papers:** None.

**Final report clearance:**

Authorised by Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

Date: 10 July 2024

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## APPENDIX A – FUNDING SOURCES FOR UFSM

£'000	Summer 23	Autumn 23	Spring 24	FY 23/24	Summer 24	Autumn 24	Spring 25	FY 24/25	Summer 25	Autumn 25	Spring 26	FY 25/26	
<b>Cost, financed by...</b>	558	718	718	<b>1,994</b>	718	699	699	<b>2,116</b>	699	699	699	<b>2,097</b>	
<b>Mayor's Fund</b>	0	962	481	<b>1,443</b>	481	936	468	<b>1,885</b>	468	0	0	<b>468</b>	
<b>PHG</b>	551	0	0	<b>551</b>	231	0	0	<b>231</b>	231	496	0	<b>727</b>	
<b>Gen Fund</b>	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0	203	699	<b>902</b>	
<b>PHG budget</b>				<b>727</b>				<b>727</b>					<b>727</b>
<b>Gen Fund budget</b>				<b>947</b>				<b>847</b>					<b>847</b>
<b>PHG released (budget less cost)</b>				<b>176</b>				<b>496</b>					<b>0</b>
<b>Gen Fund released (budget less cost)</b>				<b>947</b>				<b>847</b>					<b>-55</b>

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<sup>i</sup> 2019 English Indices of Multiple Deprivation' (IMD)