

## Responses from Directorate of Children and Culture

### Item 6.2 The Council's 2021-22 Budget Report and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021-24

Questions	Response
Question 1. Has the public health grant been considered as a funding option for the Key Stage Two extension of Free School Meals? If so, is it included in the review options going to the 27th January Cabinet meeting?	Yes, the Public Health Grant has been considered and will continue to provide a significant contribution towards ensuring Free School Meals for all our primary school pupils. In addition (at 3.5.30 in the Cabinet Report) it is being recommended that the New Homes Bonus reserve is utilised to fund the Key Stage Two extension of Free School Meals until the end of 2023-24 at an estimated cost of £2m per annum (in addition to the £1m per annum funding from the Public Health grant).
Q10 p91 What does the 50th anniversary of the independence of Bangladeshi have to do with LBTH?	Tower Hamlets has the largest Bangladeshi population in the UK and a reputation for celebrating and supporting Bengali culture. The 50th Anniversary of the Independence of Bangladesh is a significant event for our Bengali residents (32% of our population). This commemorative event provides a platform for the council to engage with local Bengali arts and cultural organisations to celebrate Bengali culture with other residents across the borough and supports Strategic Outcome 8 (People feel they are part of a cohesive and vibrant community). The borough has a history of supporting equalities-based events to tackle hate crime and support cohesion including; Black History Month, Chinese New Year, St George's Day etc as well Language Movement Day (Martyrs Day) and the Boishakhi Mela. Whilst we are unable to deliver events for Martyrs Day this year (and unable to carry out the Mela), the 50th Anniversary provides a focus for the borough to support awareness of Bengali culture and promote cohesion.
Q11 p91 Was an attempt made to seek funding from Hackney Council to continue the fireworks?	Hackney Council has previously stated that they will not provide financial support for any events or contribute to the upkeep of Victoria Park. No additional requests for funding from Hackney council have been sought, given their position on this matter.

<p>SAV/CHI 001/ 21-22 on page 2 it says that there is no impact on resources available to address inequality, but this seems to conflict with the information in the Risk and Mitigation section on p1. What will be the impact on children who are behind in their language acquisition, and how will this not impact inequality?</p>	<p>The support of language acquisition is a key priority in the early years, and this is reflected in the professional development for all staff and in the interventions provided for some children. The cessation of this additional EP support will reduce specialist capacity and may have some impact on language acquisition, however the approach taken to ensure all staff have skills to support language development will mitigate this. This is an effective model that other local authorities deploy. The wording of the Equality Analysis Screening Tool will be reviewed.</p>
<p>SAV / Chi 005 / 21-22 – The risk section makes mention of a possible exponential rise in costs. Are we confident that we have the staffing and infrastructure in place to make the necessary improvements in early help to make these savings possible? Further, the EA screening tool has not been completed properly. What is the impact on front line services?</p>	<p>Throughout the Covid 19 Pandemic, we have managed to ensure that services have been maintained and have managed any changes in demand. The current re-structure aligns much of the current Youth and Early Help services into the same management structure as Children’s Social Care. This should assist in ensuring that any additional pressures can be absorbed across the wider service. The EA screening tool will be reviewed.</p>
<p>SAV / CHI 006 / 21-22 et al – Like several others, this saving relies on dampening demand through more targeted early help. While this makes sense in a BAU context, how can we be assured that this (and other savings which rely on the same rationale) are achievable in the immediate aftermath of the Covid-19 Pandemic given the increased vulnerability of our young population and the increase in poverty which we know increases LAC? Further, how does the reduction in Early Help Capacity referenced in SAV / CHI 007 / 21-22 impact on the achievability of this saving? Surely, we can’t burn the candle at both ends?</p>	<p>The Savings Proposal also recognises that there remains an element of risk in these service reductions, particularly at this point. However, so far through-out the pandemic our “Looked After” Children numbers have remained stable, and although CP number have risen, they remain in line with Statistical neighbours.</p>