

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Legal services - recruitment and retention of core legal team including market supplements		
Reference:	GRO / CEO 001 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Budget Pressure
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Office	Growth Service Area:	Central services
Directorate Service:	Legal and Monitoring Officer Services	Strategic Priority:	8. A council that listens and works for everyone
Lead Officer and Post:	Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Monitoring Officer	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

Financial Impact:	Current 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	3,390	100	-	-	100

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	53	-	-	-	-

Proposal Summary:

Legal services - recruitment and retention of core legal team including market supplements.

A review of the hard to recruit posts has highlighted the need to incorporate a market supplement to improve the uptake of applicants recruited to permanent posts. This will reduce the reliance on interim/agency cover and therefore reducing the substantial agency costs that is currently being experienced by the service.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

Increasing permanent staff in posts will enable better service delivery as there will be a reduction in staff turnover which has a negative impact on the delivery of the service. Also, the costs of agency and interims will be reduced and enable the service to maintain spend within budget.

Risks and Implications:

A risk could be that the market supplement/increased salary does not attract suitable candidates to the roles.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	

Summary:	
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.	
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No

Additional Information and Comments:

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Member Development Programme		
Reference:	GRO / CEO 002 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Office	Growth Service Area:	Central services
Directorate Service:	Democratic Services	Strategic Priority:	5. Investing in public services
Lead Officer and Post:	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Mayor Lutfur Rahman, Executive Mayor

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	15	45	-	-	45

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

Achieving the LGA Member Learning and Development Charter Mark and transforming the Council's Member Development Programme.

As Lord Gary Porter, Chair of the LGA says:

"The environment in which we work is ever changing and if we're to continue to meet our residents' expectations we've got to keep pace with it. That means recognising that the role of the councillor is different to what it was five, 10, even 20 years ago. We're wardens of places, leaders who represent the interest of our residents, protectors who mitigate the impact of funding constraints, facilitators who help partners and communities work together and develop new possibilities for their local areas.

Our roles are being redefined and we need to make sure we have the skills and expertise to continue delivering for our communities. The Member Development Charter and Charter Plus has provided councils with a robust framework and has encouraged member development across the sector.The charter ... make[s] sure we're capturing current and future challenges so that councillors are able to shape debate whilst continuing to fulfil their role as the community representatives.

I would strongly encourage local areas to adopt the Member Development Charter and Charter Plus as a guide and a benchmark as part of your improvement journey. Every profession has continuing professional development at the heart of their improvement and so should we. The Member Development Charter and Charter Plus supports this continuing professional development for councillors by being a contract between the council and its councillors that commits to invest in councillors' growth and development."

Commentary:

The Council has always operated a standard Member Learning and Development Programme covering key statutory and other requirements for Members. Development training has also been offered on skills and professional development but usually on an ad-hoc, general, basis. The training programme is seen as having met the goals that were set for it but that these were generic rather than Member specific.

The proposal is to transform the nature of the Programme turning it into a support tool that is geared to the individual needs of all our Members. This recognises that the programme should not just be about core statutory requirements for training but should also encompass all the skills that Members need to best undertake their roles and that development of these skills is very much down to the individual and their needs.

Skills and personal development is an area that is expected to require significant support from external trainers as Council officers are unlikely to have the relevant qualifications to run such training. The training is also likely to be on a 121 or small group basis depending on the issue. In addition, for statutory and similar training, the council will look to make sure of external organisations where this is useful/appropriate to the training to be delivered.

Budget:

The proposal is that at the core of the new Programme each Member should be able to call upon at least £1k each per year for their own personal development (with additional allowance potentially available for role specific training).

A general budget would also be retained to allow the provision of external trainers for statutory and other 'All Member' training and for general training programme expenses.

Historically there was a budget of £10k which officers had agreed to increase by £5k through internal virements within the Member Budget. However, this year the total spend is currently expected to be closer to £25k-£30k and that is without the proposed new individual training budgets (although it does include some training which would be covered by that plan).

The proposal at this stage is therefore to increase the budget to £60k with which to cover the likely take-up of the individual member training budgets and to allow a significant additional sum for group/all member training as required.

In future the new Member Learning and Development Group will monitor use of the Training Budget and related issues and could request that officers seek further budget increases if that proved necessary (or budget reductions).

Member Learning and Development is managed by Democratic Services within the Member Support Team. At this stage there are no proposals to increase the number of staff posts as it is planned that this increased support will be managed within existing resources.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

The aim of the improved programme is to increase the capacity of all Members so that they can fully undertake the wide variety of roles that they have to take on.

Effective Members increase the general effectiveness of the Council but also of its partner bodies and other local organisations where our Members play a formal role.

Risks and Implications:

Where Members are not training/able to undertake their roles effectively there are significant risks both to the Council and also to its partners. For example, Members are expected to take major strategy and policy decisions, sit on boards of outside organisations, scrutinise and audit the Council's work, support and represent local residents and businesses amongst many other roles. This requires a wide range of different skills and training to support these roles.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

Accreditation to the LGA Charter Mark will provide a guarantor that the Council's programme is of a good quality.

The Member Learning and Development Group will be able to monitor training provision and costs to ensure that they are appropriate and of a good value to the Council.

Members will be required to complete personal development plans or similar to demonstrate a need for any particular training.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Bengali Communications and Engagement Team & General Engagement Officer		
Reference:	GRO / CEO 003 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Office	Growth Service Area:	Central services
Directorate Service:	Communications Service	Strategic Priority:	8. A council that listens and works for everyone
Lead Officer and Post:	Andreas Christophorou, Director of Communications and Marketing	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Mayor Lutfur Rahman, Executive Mayor

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	N/A	505	-	-	505

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	4	-	-	4

Proposal Summary:

1. A Bengali focused Communications and Engagement Team – one Communications and Engagement uplift and three Communications and Engagement Officers

The first part (A) is for three (Bengali-focused Communications and engagement Officers). They would work with our existing BME Communications Officer – who would require an uplift to become Manager of the team – to create a Bengali-focused communications and engagement unit in the Communications Service.

2. One Engagement Officer focused on other residents and uplift of existing post in team to become Head of Engagement and Consultation

The second part (B) is to create one more role which will make a borough focused consultation and engagement team adding to part A. This would be managed by an existing member of the Communications Service who would require an uplift in pay to create a Head of Engagement and Consultation.

Altogether the two areas come to a growth bid of £505k

Promotional budget = £165k per year

3 FTEs (Grade L) = £225k total (inc. on-costs)

1 uplift – Bengali Communications and Engagement manager (grade L) = £20k

1 uplift Head of engagement = £20k

1 FTE (Grade L) – non-Bengali engagement officer £75k (inc. on-costs)

Rationale

Tower Hamlets has the UK's largest Bangladeshi population. While this is a tremendous asset, it provides a challenge for the council to reach much of that population. There can be issues of language and cultural issues that prevent residents from engaging with the council and its communications.

We need to do more to solve this issue, so everyone feels included. In turn, by encouraging more people to interact with the council and its services, and those of partner organisations, we will be able to improve more lives in our borough at a faster rate.

There are a few ways we can achieve this through this growth bid:

1. Greater focus on Bengali media:

We understand the power of the Bengali media to reach the Bengali and BME communities and particularly those who do not speak English as a first language. These roles will mean greater work with the Bengali and BME media – both in terms of creating stories and content such as film for them, but also to advertise campaigns and key information in the Bengali and BME media and the Council's own extensive media, communications, and marketing channels.

3 positions/FTEs, all with overarching focus on engagement. However, engagement is broken into 3 specialisms: 1, Digital Media, 2, TV and Video News Story, 3) Content writing, translating and productions

Of the three new Bengali-focused FTEs, 1 will be full-time (Digital Media) and the remaining two will be split into 4 part-time positions.

2 part-time and 1 full-time position will be formally seconded to the Mayor's Office, with oversight in conjunction with the formal line manager.

In addition, all positions are to be line managed by the formal line manager in conjunction with the Mayor's BME media advisor.

2. Engagement on the ground – to complement our Communications

For at least the last 8 years, the council has not had a centralised engagement team that can talk to residents face to face, build trust, work with diverse communities and cocreate communications and projects that will resonate with those communities.

We have suffered as a result with continued drops in sentiment by residents in areas such as feelings of trust, involvement, listening, informed and satisfaction. Factors that are influenced by whether people feel the council involves them, is accessible and working for them. Often people only understand the council if they are able to interact with the council on a personal level. That is what engagement provides.

For example:

Trust in 2017 was 79%, in 2023 it is 65%

Feeling involved in 2017 was 58%, in 2023 it is 42%

Listens to residents in 2017 was 68%, in 2023 it is 48%

Satisfaction in 2017 was 72%, in 2023 it is 63%

Feeling informed in 2017 was 68%, in 2023 it is 57%

Most local authorities of our stature and complexity have a Consultation and Engagement Unit. Communications and engagement are two sides of the same coin. Communications is broadcast by its nature but can be improved through feedback from face to face engagement – for example the best communication messages and approaches can differ depending on demographics such as ethnicity.

Likewise engagement (face to face) is crucial to building trust and reaching seldom heard parts of the community, but those doing engagement need the right communication materials to support them in their engagement.

The Communications Service does consultations working with services and Strategy through our Let's Talk Tower Hamlets Consultation Hub – but it is online only, so on the ground engagement would support more of our residents to have their voice heard and help shape the borough through consultation, as well as being able to use and shape our services better.

Case study: Covid

A good example of this working is during the pandemic when the Government gave funding to the council via Public Health for on the ground engagement team to help with issues such as social distancing and uptake of the vaccine in diverse communities.

Communications and the engagement team worked together effectively to share intelligence, support each other with materials and information that would be well received by different communities. As a result, we moved from certain ethnic groups such as Bangladeshi having low vaccination rates, to being an example to other local authorities of best practice in increasing vaccination rates in different communities.

The engagement team was only temporary and closed when the pandemic stopped and funding ran out from central government.

Responsibilities:

Part A: A Bengali focused Communications and Engagement Team – one Communications and Engagement Manager and two Communications and Engagement Officers

The roles would:

- include greater interaction with the Bengali and BME media
- placing advertising in the Bengali and BME media for council campaigns
- securing advertising from Bengali community for Our East End
- working on the place promotion of areas including Brick Lane
- to establish champions in the community that can advocate and disseminate information for the council.
- engagement – both physically and virtual – of the Bengali community for campaigns, consultations and general engagement in the council.
- help increase levels of trust, informed, feeling involved and feeling of being able to influence decisions in the borough – all of which have consistently dropped since 2017.
- Encourage the Bengali community to interact with the council to cocreate campaigns, be advocates for the services and behaviour change to improve lives, and given seldom heard groups the opportunity to shape our services and our borough through consultation participation.
- Help create a network of institutions and community groups – from faith organisations to residents associations that we can use, alongside our Love Tower Hamlets Champions, as advocates and provide the council with a much needed centralised Stakeholder Database that we have to hand not only for proactive campaigns, but also in times of crisis.

Part B: One engagement Officer focused on non-Bengali residents and uplift of existing post in team to become Head of Engagement and Consultation

The roles would:

- include greater two way interaction with our residents
- Encourage residents to interact with the council to cocreate campaigns, be advocates for the services and behaviour change to improve lives, and given seldom heard groups the opportunity to shape our services and our borough through consultation participation.
- securing advertising from community organisations for Our East End
- promote and encourage residents to feel civic pride and have greater cohesion through the TH_IS Community – place campaign. We have so far struggled to get community buy in as we did not have engagement officers to work with residents associations, community groups and partners to use it.
- to establish champions in the community that can advocate and disseminate information for the council.
- engagement – both physically and virtual –for campaigns, consultations and general engagement in the council.
- help increase levels of trust, informed, feeling involved and feeling of being able to influence decisions in the borough – all of which have consistently dropped since 2017.
- Help create a network of institutions and community groups – from faith institutions to residents associations that we can use as advocates and provide the council with a much needed centralised Stakeholder Database that we have to hand not only for proactive campaigns, but also in times of crisis.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

A council that works and listens to everyone (Communication and Engagement)

Risks and Implications:

The risk of not doing this is to continue to be out of touch with our residents, creating issues such as:

- Failure to deliver priority 8 of the Strategy Plan – a council that works and listens to everyone
- Failure to deliver priority 2 of our Corporate Communications Strategy – expanding from broadcast to two way communication
- Lack of opportunities for residents to shape services and the borough through consultation and cocreation
- Lack of understanding what the council does
- Lack of civic pride which is important to the environment and cohesion in our borough
- Lack of trust
- Lack of feelings of involvement
- Lack of feelings of being able to influence
- Lack of satisfaction in the council
- Resident not being able to access services that will improve their lives
- Isolation of residents such as parts of our Bengali or Somali communities

Value for Money and Efficiency:

The team would be able to save the council money currently spent by some services for third parties to do engagement.

It would also help the council to save money by having more effective communications and engagement that reach target audiences, making our services more effective, and making behaviour change more effective – whether health, clean streets or ASB – which would save the council money in other areas due to better outcomes.

We would merge into our existing Digital Content Team that covers consultation and also bring our current Communications Officer – Bengali into the team.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	Yes	New JDs and amendment to two existing JDs
Summary:		Additional Information and Comments:
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	Yes	

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Love Tower Hamlets		
Reference:	GRO / CEO 004 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Office	Growth Service Area:	Central services
Directorate Service:	Communications Service	Strategic Priority:	8. A council that listens and works for everyone
Lead Officer and Post:	Andreas Christophorou, Director of Communications and Marketing	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Mayor Lutfur Rahman, Executive Mayor

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	N/A	300	-	(66)	234

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

Overall Vision and mission:

Tower Hamlets offers the best of London in one borough.
It is the beating heart of the East End that epitomises the capital's past and its future.
Diversity has always been our strength.
We are one of the most popular places to live, work, study and visit.
Tower Hamlets has a unique mix of old and new, combined with award winning parks, international cultural destinations, world class learning institutions and entrepreneurship with one of the UK's largest economies.
We mix London's youngest population with a borough draped in history.
Whether you are in Wapping, Isle of Dogs, Spitalfields, Mile End, Bethnal Green, Canary Wharf, St Katharine Dock, Stepney, East India, Whitechapel or Poplar, every area is a cornerstone of London's history.

This is a bid is for £834k over three years to work with our residents, businesses, partners and other stakeholders to:

- Promote civic pride among residents with champions in areas including cost of living, housing, jobs, skills, young people and education, older people, clean streets/recycling, culture, history, community safety and opportunity.
- Promote the past, present, and future of Tower Hamlets via direct engagement with residents drawn from diverse backgrounds
- Elevate 'people' alongside 'place' as a visible element in our wider campaigns and communications
- **Bring the Council more directly into Tower Hamlets' diverse communities, promoting community cohesion, inclusivity, tolerance and celebrating our communities and bringing them together
- Promote the borough as a place for tourism, and retain tourists in the borough to visit other Tower Hamlets venues during a day out.
- Promote our people (residents and businesses) to build civic pride, with a focus on residents who have achieved something outstanding and/or are leaders in their communities
- Promote the borough as a great place to work and study
- Help to attract new business opportunities and talent, including increased footfall for our existing small businesses and markets.
- Encourage local businesses to become Council suppliers.

To enhance the borough's image by telling stories about what is special in Tower Hamlets – from a resident to a community group, and from a local business to a multinational.

Elements will include:

1. Creating a comprehensive champions programme to formally recognise individual members of the community in areas such as cost of living, housing, jobs, skills, young people, older people, clean streets/recycling, culture, history, community and opportunity.
2. Branding and merchandise for residents, businesses and partners, including at community events.
3. Branding for themed Love Tower Hamlets champions to complement TH_IS place campaign.
4. Themed events in Tower Hamlets where the community is invited to discuss issues to improve the borough.
5. Annual Community Awards process and event to celebrate people and organisations that contribute to the borough
6. Marketing promotion/advertising of the borough as a place to invest in the trade sector.
7. Utilisation of every available promotional channel and/or medium at the Council's disposal to promote
8. Marketing promotion/advertising to domestic and international tourists through advertising, influencers and media (including local BME media), and working with partners including Airports, Rail Stations and the Underground.
9. Celebrate our history through the roll out of blue plaques marking where famous people lived or worked (currently on 8% of blue plaques in the UK are for people from BAME backgrounds).
10. Promotional films of the borough – the place and the people
11. Bringing together organisations and institutions under themes of history to promote Tower Hamlets, including (Tower of London, Young V&A, Museum of London Docklands), culture (All Points East/AEG, The Troxy, Rich Mix etc), Community (community groups, charities such as Felix Project) and opportunity (businesses, Canary Wharf Group, East London Business Association, Queen Mary University of London, other Universities/Colleges) and faith groups.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

A council that works and listens to everyone
Boost Culture, Business, Jobs and Leisure

Risks and Implications:

The risk of not doing this is:

- Not realising our potential for domestic and international tourism and associated opportunities in Tower Hamlets
- Lack of civic pride which will cost the council money in the long run – for example residents not advocating clean streets, or community safety
- Less community cohesion leading to issues including polarisation of communities and community safety/tension.
- Less people involved in the council and making the borough a better place
- Less inward investment and development in Tower Hamlets which provide new homes, training, jobs, supply chain opportunities as well as local spend.
- Greater involvement of diverse community groups in the borough

Value for Money and Efficiency:

The project will help attract investment into the borough including tourism, inward investment, development, jobs, skills, supply chain opportunities and local economy spend. It will also help to reduce some financial burdens on the council if the public take greater civic pride in looking after their borough.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Street Advertising Income Generation and Venue Marketing – Marketing Officer (Invest to Earn)		
Reference:	GRO / CEO 005 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Office	Growth Service Area:	Central services
Directorate Service:	Communications Service	Strategic Priority:	5. Investing in public services
Lead Officer and Post:	Andreas Christophorou, Director of Communications and Marketing	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Mayor Lutfur Rahman, Executive Mayor

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	N/A	67	-	-	67

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	-	1	-	-	1

Proposal Summary:

This is a proposal for a Marketing Officer to support income generation through street advertising and some marketing for services to help them generate more income.

This role is an invest to save so the Communications Service can reach the target of generating £300,000 a year in advertising revenue over 24/25, 25/26 and 26/27.

The Communications Service currently does not have any staff to work on street advertising. Our two marketing officers work on publications, leaflets and other collateral and are at full capacity delivering around 150 projects a quarter. They do bring in some advertising revenue from Our East End too.

The Communications Service however does have knowledge of the street advertising market having got involved a few years ago because contracts were being mismanaged in the Place directorate and advertisers were contacting Communications because no one from the council was maintaining a relationship with them. As a result, some contracts expired before without any replacement agreements could be finalised or put back out to the commercial market.

The Design and Marketing Team picked up extra work to help find the contracts and build relationships with the advertisers, and then Place decided to pick up the work again.

The Design and Marketing Team did let out a street advertising contract for six sheets in 2019 which generates £90,000 a year which currently goes to Public Realm (the Place Directorate). So the team has delivered above and beyond, but does not have the research to take this work forward as this resource formerly sat in the Place directorate.

Now the Chief Executive and the Mayor have given responsibility for street advertising to Communications Service and this is part of the Overall Income Generation Working Group work being overseen by Raj Mistry. One of the actions from that group is for Communications to set up a Street Advertising Working Group to look at new opportunities.

The Marketing Officer is needed to pick up the work to find and secure new street advertising opportunities, and can also help with the process of setting up infrastructure and relationships such as the Street Advertising Working Group.

As the council continues to move into more commercialisation it is going to need more marketing support on top of this to marketing venues and to market services such as pest control and commercial waste, so this role is a prelude to a bigger team and a restructure in 2024 of the Design and Marketing Team to support the council's aspirations for income generation.

If the Marketing Officer has capacity they can also support with:

- **Better uptake of our venues:** The Communication's Service Design and Marketing Team will need to work with the venues such as St George's Hall to market their venues. This will include traditional marketing such as publications and fares, and also digital marketing such as programmatic advertising which can target people in geographic areas and based on their interest and searches on the intranet and social media.
- **Commercialisation of services:** The Communications Service Design and Marketing Team and its Digital Team will need to support the commercialisation of services. For example, when Commercial Waste or Pest Control is ready to market, they will need a microsite and webforms for advertising, bookings and transactions, and they will need marketing support – particularly digital marketing such as programmatic advertising and advertising to businesses. The same will be needed for other services and venues.

This means we must invest in and restructure the Communications Service. However, in the interim, we need a Marketing Officer to take forward the street advertising work and they can also start to pick up some of the other commercial work being taken forward by Raj Mistry and Andreas Christophorou.

We believe there could be in the region of £300,000 that can be generated in street advertising, and hundreds of thousands more in supporting our venues and services to be commercial and market them. So this is an invest to earn proposal.

This role will:

- Find new street advertising opportunities
- Work with advertisers
- Work with planning, highways, legal and procurement to ensure that planning permission can be granted and the process fast-tracked to bring income into the council's coffers.
- Begin working on wider commercial opportunities that are ready such as our venues (starting with the most lucrative, for example Weddings), and expand to wider work, capacity permitting, when some services are ready to go commercialise such as Commercial Waste.

Note: As commercialisation of services increases, more than one Marketing Officer will be required and this should be reviewed ahead of a Communications Service restructure in 2025.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

A council that works and listens to everyone (Communication and Engagement)
 Boost Culture, Business, Jobs and Leisure / Invest in public services (Marketing/Income Generation/Commercialisation)

Risks and Implications:

We will not achieve our income generation targets

Value for Money and Efficiency:

This role will not only generate income from street advertising but will support services such as our venues to advertise themselves to generate more custom and more income – for example our profitable Registrars Service. If there is capacity, the person can also start supporting some of the commercialisation of services work such as advertising for commercial waste.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Somali Community Hub - Granby Hall		
Reference:	GRO / CEO 006 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Office	Growth Service Area:	Central services
Directorate Service:	Strategy, Policy and Intelligence (H&R) Corporate Strategy and Communities (CEO)	Strategic Priority:	6. Empowering communities and fighting crime
Lead Officer and Post:	Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Mayor Lutfur Rahman, Executive Mayor

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	0	60	-	-	60

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

The proposal is to establish and support the development of a community hub that focusses on the needs of the Somali community in Tower Hamlets, managed, through a service agreement, by a suitably competent and experienced Somali led not-for-profit organisation.

A designated community hub focussed on services and activities for and delivered by the Somali community has been identified as a Mayoral priority and is included in the council's Strategic Plan 2022-26 under priority 6 – Empower communities and fight crime. This includes the following action:

- Support a dedicated resource centre for the Somali community, which is underrepresented in employment and local institutions, run by community members and open to the public.

Granby Hall has been used by Somali community groups for many years and currently the majority of regular users are from that community. Previously designated as a community hub and renovated by the council in 2019, Granby Hall has been identified as the most appropriate premises to become the Somali led Community Hub.

Since our 2011 census analysis [Somali Census report](#) and our work with the Somali community through the Somali Task Force and Somali Working Group we know that the Somali community in Tower Hamlets has significant disadvantages compared with the wider population in health, employment and educational achievement. Overall, one quarter of Somali households are deprived on at least three out of four different dimensions of deprivation - housing, health, education and employment - compared with 10 per cent of households generally. A dedicated community hub focussing on services for the Somali community will not only provide a venue for the community to organise its own activities but will also provide an opportunity for statutory providers to deliver bespoke services.

The project will deliver a physical focus for activities and services organised for and by the Somali community in Tower Hamlets. The Somali Community Hub should be able to demonstrate,

1. Strong community links – Somali residents are able to influence its operation and decision-making processes;
2. An animating presence – new activities and services are encouraged including providing space and support to smaller groups;
3. Meeting local needs – social, economic, and environmental benefits are delivered through the hub;
4. Embracing diversity – working to improve community cohesion and reduce inequalities;
5. Good governance – transparent and accountable processes, with adequate monitoring, evaluation and financial management systems;
6. Good premises management – sustainably, legally, and safely managed premises supporting the delivery of services.

Benefits to residents – providing a designated hub will provide Somali residents with a focus for community based activity and the opportunity to provide a holistic range of services to meet the needs of the community. Initial discussions have indicated that Somali groups currently based at Granby would want to continue to offer the facilities at Granby Hall to other local community groups and residents of the surrounding area. This would provide the opportunity to develop activities to promote community cohesion. There is capacity at Granby Hall to provide facilities for locally based community groups and residents as well as providing additional services specifically targeting the Somali community.

Benefits to residents are embedded in the high level deliverables and will be assessed through the outcomes framework and KPIs incorporated into the service agreement with the proposed management group.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

The proposal directly meets a key action in the council's strategic plan to, 'Support a dedicated resource centre for the Somali community, which is underrepresented in employment and local institutions, run by community members and open to the public'

The service agreement will include an outcomes framework and KPIs to ensure the commissioned management organisation demonstrates,

- Higher levels of use of the premises
- Strong community links
- An animating presence
- Meeting local needs
- Embracing diversity, working to improve community cohesion and reduce inequalities
- Good governance through open and accountable processes
- Good premises management

Value for Money and Efficiency:

Granby Hall is currently managed by the council as a venue for hire. The current costs of running the centre may be utilised as 'seed money' to support the new Hub in the first years of operation. Some additional resource will be needed to provide a management fee if the council commissions a management organisation. After this period, the council may reduce its financial support.

In the longer term, if the premises are leased to a Somali led consortium, there may be potential savings of up to £40k per annum as the hub becomes more self sufficient.

In the project budget below, it is assumed that the new management organisation will take responsibility for business rates, energy and utilities, soft services such as cleaning, security and waste disposal, and staffing. The council will retain responsibility for statutory testing, repairs and maintenance and other hard services.

As far as possible, the budget is based on the average of three years' costs from 2020/21 to 22/23. The council is expecting higher usage under the new arrangements, but it will be for the management organisation to balance additional costs against additional income. There is no budget transfer in relation to hard services as the council will retain responsibility for these services.

The balance required to fund the project, including the management fee, is the growth requirement.

	£s	£s	Comment
Business rates	0		100% NNDR relief assumed
Energy and utilities	12,000		Currently a cost to council - responsibility passed to managing organisation
Soft services	14,000		Currently a cost to council - responsibility passed to managing organisation
Hard services	0		Retained by the council
Sub-total running costs	26,000	26,000	
Management fee	50,000	50,000	Payment to contractor to include staff presence on site
Hire charges (income)	-16,000	-16,000	Estimated retained income
Growth requirement		60,000	

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Women's Resource Centre		
Reference:	GRO / CEO 007 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Chief Executive's Office	Growth Service Area:	Central services
Directorate Service:	Corporate Strategy and Communities Team	Strategic Priority:	6. Empowering communities and fighting crime
Lead Officer and Post:	Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy and Communities	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Suluk Ahmed , Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Inclusion

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	N/A	400	-	-	400

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE)	0	1	-	-	1

Proposal Summary:
<p><i>What is the proposal and its objectives?</i></p> <p>This proposed project sets out to establish a Women's Resource Centre. It is a strategic priority in the current corporate plan. The objectives are to provide a safe space for learning and development for women as part of addressing the challenges around equitable opportunities for marginalised women. This proposal includes on-going costs with the PFI costs associated with identified site.</p>
<p><i>What will the proposal deliver?</i></p> <p>In addition to the learning and development courses that will be delivered from site, the centre will also provide a vital advice base for VAWG issues, as well as having a creche on site to support childcare needs for women wanting to access services at the centre.</p>
<p><i>What is the motivation and reason for the proposal? Any changes in legislation etc.</i></p> <p>The project aims to provide a dedicated resource centre to enable opportunities for the development of all marginalised women, especially Bangladeshi women. Local data suggests Bangladeshi women continue to be marginalised and face economic, health, social and gender inequalities disproportionately. Despite efforts to address the gaps in opportunities for Bangladeshi and other ethnic women, the issue remains prevalent as the disadvantages they experience are not based on a level playing field compared to their counterparts, which is why it has been recognised as a priority in the council's corporate plan.</p>
<p><i>Why is this desirable?</i></p> <p>The centre will provide women the opportunity to seek support in a centre carefully designed to meet their needs. It will be an exclusive centre for women, with their childcare needs addressed. The proposed centre is based in a gated location between Osmani School and Osmani Trust, set within a mile of the former Jagonari Women's Education and Resource Centre.</p>
<p><i>Evidence any numbers and cost drivers.</i></p> <p>We anticipate by establishing this centre, we would facilitate the needs of local women to seek development and employment opportunities, especially economically in-active women who might have language or skills barriers preventing them from seeking employment. This would impact the wider cost-saving implications for the local authority with an improved household income. It would alleviate the challenges of the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72.9% of people aged 16-64 are economically active in Tower Hamlets. The rate is considerably higher for males (80.2%) than females (65%). Source: ONS, 2021 • Percentage of children in relative low-income families, aged 0-15 years (DWP; Children in low income families, local area statistics) Tower Hamlets 25.3% (2021) Comparator 16.6% London (2021)

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

How does this proposal contribute to achieving the strategic priorities of the Council?

This project directly impacts the following strategic priorities:

- Tackling the cost of Living – supporting women to access learning and employment support
- Accelerating Education – supporting women with gaining accredited qualifications
- Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure – the centre will be a tangible outcome for the borough and will deliver a culturally sensitive resource centre
- Investment in Public Services – it will be an investment in a community asset, for the benefit of residents
- Empowering Communities and Fighting Crime – the site will have VAWG advice provisions on site and will impact reporting of crime and support through the process

What are the expected improvements in service delivery & performance? Provide performance information data.

At present, the Idea Stores have a learning programme of Lifelong Learning and Skills for Life courses, we will extend these courses in the women's resource centre so that they can be delivered in a safe space, where women feel comfortable to participate. There are some cultural nuances, including childcare restrictions which prevent some women from seeking development opportunities in some settings, and this project aims to tackle these issues.

Once established performance related information will be gathered and identify for year on year improvements.

Risks and Implications:

Highlight any service and corporate associated risks

The initial key project risks identified are listed below:

- Delays with project launch due to factors outside of project group control
- External and Internal user disengagement and lack of input in co-design/co-production
- Issues around the current PFI contract may lead to the decision that this site is not suitable, which will impact on timeline as a new site will need to be identified
- Renovating the site whilst in PFI contract could significantly hike up the overall costs
- Budget restraints could result in the centre's renovation being minimal, therefore affecting the service plans and what the centre can provide in reality.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

Provide justification for VFM and efficiency

The long-term value for money and efficiency will go beyond cost savings as it will provide an opportunity for marginalised women, who might never have taken up the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence. Supporting women, especially mothers will not only impact them, but also their children's opportunities as well as their household income.

The centre will provide a space for women to learn, seek advice and help, as well as build friendships and confidence. Public Health and NHS partners have documented the challenges with early screening for certain diseases affecting women – this centre could provide that safe space for women to learn and be educated about getting screened. The centre will work with external and internal stakeholders to ensure their services can be sensitively delivered to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Similarly, for VAWG issues, the centre aims to build a positive environment for learning, developing and empowering women to seek help. This public health approach of 'prevention is better than cure' by providing early intervention services will ensure that longer-term cost savings are made.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	Yes	The proposed centre is a dedicated space for women as gender inequalities have been identified for this group which this proposal aims to address. The centre will deliver services to mitigate inequality and is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		Additional Information and Comments:
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	SEN Transport		
Reference:	GRO / CHI 001 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Unavoidable Growth
Directorate:	Childrens's Services	Growth Service Area:	Education services
Directorate Service:	SEN Transport	Strategic Priority:	5. Investing in public services
Lead Officer and Post:	Lisa Fraser, Director of Education	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Maium Talukdar, Statutory Deputy Mayor & Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	6,757	1,121	-	-	1,121

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

The transport provision is delivered through several different routes: -

The most cost-effective delivery as well as the most flexible for parents and carers is through personnel transport budgets and where possible families are offered this as an option for supporting their Child in their Journey to School. However, this does not always work for Parents who have Children at different School or who are not able to access transport.

Internal Transport services are offered through the Place directorate and deliver a multi-route bus service for Children, primarily at Special School or resource bases. The Cost of this service is shared with adult services who have access to the transport during the day for clients to attend day centres, while the routes are utilised for Schools in the morning and late afternoon Historically the split of these costs had been 70/30 with Children picking up the higher element of the cost. With the reduction in the use by Adults post Covid this has now changed to an 80/20 split. The cost base has also increased, with no subsequent increase in the budget for the service over the last three year. The Increase in costs was masked by Covid, where grants were used to support the increased cost.

The current mid-point forecast from the External transport Team is 80% of £5,641K = £4,513k against a current budget of £3,405k, giving an increase of £1,108k

The third route of transport provision is through the use of call off contracts for individual taxi transport, the 2022/23 budget overspend in this area was £1,670k. Much of this overspend relates to build up of inflationary pressures which had not been built into the base budget, which have now been agreed for 2023/24 of £1,257k leaving a volume pressure of £413k.

These two pressures equate to £1,521k. However, the service believe that further mitigations would be possible through the use of personnel budgets, route optimisation, travel training and review of current non statutory provision. This would mitigate the cost by an estimated £400k giving a growth proposal of £1,121.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

The Council must make transport arrangements for all children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs (SEN) or disability. Eligibility, for such children is assessed on an individual basis to identify their particular transport requirements. Usual transport requirements (e.g. the statutory walking distances) cannot be considered when assessing the transport needs of children eligible due to SEN and/or disability.

Risks and Implications:

- Risk to the effectiveness of assessment and review process
- Risk of additional demand led funding pressures
- Risk to ability to demonstrate a fair and robust needs based individual assessments and re-assessments in accordance with the LA's statutory duties.
- Risk of legal challenge at SEN Tribunal

Value for Money and Efficiency:

The Transport demand board has been reconstituted and will regularly review best value delivery of the service as well as alternative arrangements that offer longer term support for young people towards independence.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	SEND Improvement – SEN Service		
Reference:	GRO / CHI 002 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Unavoidable Growth
Directorate:	Childrens's Services	Growth Service Area:	Education services
Directorate Service:	Special Educational Needs and Preparing for Adulthood	Strategic Priority Outcome:	Priority 3: Accelerating education Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone
Lead Officer and Post:	Dr. Tina Sode and Lewis Teasdale Joint Heads of Special Educational Needs	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	7,641	454	150	-	604
Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	48	11	-	-	11

Proposal Summary:

This growth bid is in line with the Council's Strategic Plan 2022-26 priorities 3 and 8.

- **Priority 3:** Accelerating education: Improve support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs.
- **Priority 8:** A council that listens and works for everyone: Work to ensure staffing at every level of the council reflects the diversity of the borough / Implement a rigorous improvement programme for those services subject to external inspection.

This proposal is a request for additional staffing within SEN and PFA, to meet the increase in demand for statutory SEN services and to maintain the pace of improvement within SEN. This bid is for an additional 8 EHC Coordinators, 1 Senior EHCP Coordinator, 1 assistant EHC Coordinator, and a Quality Assurance lead.

The table below outlines a breakdown of the growth requested within this bid.

Job role:	Grade:	Salary with on-costs, second spinal point:	Number of roles:	Salary with on-costs, second spinal point:
EHCP assistant coordinator	F	£41,825	1	£41,825.00
EHCP Coordinator	I	£53,857	8	£430,856.00
Senior EHCP Coordinator	J	£60,831	1	£60,831.00
Quality Assurance lead	L	£70,243	1	£70,243.00
Total				£603,755.00

The SEN Service is a statutory service that assesses, issues and reviews Education, Health and Care plans for children and young people who have Special Educational Needs and who require levels of support beyond what their schools/educational settings receive from central government. These top-ups to settings are funded via the Dedicated Schools Gant but the service is funded via the General Fund. The growth for 2022-23 was recognition of long-term underfunding of the service and a response to the Written Statement of Action received following the June 2021 Local Area SEND Inspection. Additional funding has meant that rapid improvement was seen in the key areas of the quality of EHCPs, and the administration of Annual Reviews of EHCPs.

The SEN Service will be inspected again by OFSTED under the new SEND-AP Inspection Framework within the next 12 months. Building on existing good practice, the Local Authority must ensure that it is in the best position to meet current and future demand and need in SEN, as well as continue to drive and evidence good work within the Local Area when inspected.

However, over the last year there has been a significant increase in the number of requests for assessment (for an EHCP) have been received, and a corresponding increase in the number of EHCPs issued, and therefore an increase in the total number of EHCPs which the Local Authority is responsible for.

There has been significant increase in the number of new requests for EHCNA seen in recent years:

- A 25% increase, 2021 against 2022 (calendar).
- A 35% increase, 2022 against 2021 (calendar).
- A 100% increase (doubling) for the 2022/23 academic year, compared to the 2020/21 academic year.
- The Local Authority currently receives between 90-110 requests for an EHCP each month. As a snapshot, there were 39 requests for assessment in June 2021, 64 in June 2022, and 90 in June 2023.
- At the time of writing (August 2023) it has received 778 requests for the 2022/23 academic year (September 2022 – July 2023); last academic year it received 555 in the same period.

In one year, the number of EHCPs issued by Tower Hamlets has increased from 400 in the 2021/22 academic year, to 700 in the 2022/23 academic year.

The total number of EHCPs for which the LA is responsible for has risen from 3257 (January 2021), to 3464 (January 2022), to 4111 (January 2023), to 4371 (July 2023), a 34% increase in 2 ½ years. It is expected that by the end of the 2023/24 financial year – by Easter 2024 – the Local Authority will be responsible for between 4750-5000 EHCPs.

This increase in demand is reflected nationally: there has been a 14% increase in the total number of Plans between 2020 and 2022 (last available DFE figures), and a 51% increase in the number of requests for assessment at the same time-period.

Historically, there had been challenges with the timeliness of EHC Needs Assessments in Tower Hamlets. However, recent additional interim capacity has been brought into the SEN Service to address the demand and case management of new assessments, as well as clear overdue and outstanding assessments; this latter work is completed though the demand for new assessments remains. Cumulatively for this calendar year to date, 55% of all EHCPs have been delivered in-timescale, which is slightly above the national average. However, month-by-month, our performance is higher, and over the last 3 months (May, June, July 2023) we have issued 66% of EHCPs within the statutory 20 weeks as a result of this additional capacity, putting Tower Hamlets in the top third of LAs.

With the rapid increase in both the number of EHCPs held, as well as the demand for new requests, SEN colleagues have been working with split focus. The SEN Service will be moving to a model of teams split working exclusively on new assessments, and exclusively on ongoing casework for issued EHCPs, Annual Reviews, and Phase Transfer.

This proposal seeks to maintain the performance and continue the improvement of timeliness of EHC Needs Assessments, whilst ensuring that each child or young person receives continued support on their EHCP in their journey through the SEND system into adulthood. It seeks to ensure that there are sufficient Coordinators to undertake and complete the requests for new assessments within the legally required 20-week timescale, as well as deliver on commitments to co-produce our EHCPs with families, children and young people, and involved professionals, whilst at the same time bring writing EHCPs back into the Local Authority. It seeks to ensure that every child's EHCP is amended at each Key Stage and point of transition (from nursery into primary school, primary to secondary school, and secondary into post-16 education). It seeks to ensure that there is sufficient support for our young adults as they move from education into employment and training.

Each casework/Annual Review coordinator (including Preparing for Adulthood) would hold a caseload of 225 pupils; each new assessment coordinator would deliver 125 new EHCPs each year, written internally and properly co-produced.

Within this proposal it seeks to balance management of an increased workforce and workloads as well: not with senior managers, but with assistant team leaders who would work with professionals, schools and settings, to manage demand and advise on alternative services before statutory SEN. These new roles will deliver opportunities for retention and development of good and ambitious colleagues, fulfilling Tower Hamlets' ambition to 'grow our own', and providing a stepping-stone from front-line work into management and then leadership.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

Priority 3: Accelerating education: Improve support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs

New assessments: There will be sufficient capacity to ensure that the SEN Service can meet the demand for statutory assessment, delivering any agreed assessments within the 20-week timescale greater than national averages. At the other end of the scale, there will be renewed and greater scrutiny of new requests, with further advice and support back to targeted and universal support services where requests for assessment are declined. Both will ensure that Tower Hamlets children and young people receive the support and assessment which they need, at the time and in the manner which they need it. It is expected that all new assessments will be written in-house, rather than outsourced, and all EHCPs will be co-produced with families and children and young people.

Annual Reviews: Building on the newly implemented two-step Annual Review process, there will be greater co-production with families and children and young people on their existing Plans as they move through the SEND system. There will be SEN representation at the most important Annual Reviews, especially at Phase Transfer, to ensure that EHCPs remain relevant, reflective of the aspirations, outcomes and need of children and young people. There will be closer scrutiny of the need for continuing EHCPs, with a focus on ceasing where appropriate EHCPs, where a child or young person has completed their outcomes and is ready to 'graduate' onto a lower level of support.

Co-production: With the above in place, all children and young people with an EHCP (new and existing) will have co-production in their EHCP along their entire SEND journey. This will be first with their families and then into secondary school and post-16. Young people will have an ever-greater stake in their educational direction.

Preparing for Adulthood: Building on the successes of the PFA Service, more Tower Hamlets young people will attend colleges and training provision locally; more Tower Hamlets young people will be in meaningful apprenticeships, supported internships, and ultimately employment, locally and in the London area. More young people with SEN will live happy and successful independent / semi-independent lives. There will be fewer young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

Accountability: Parents-carers, families, children and young people, and professionals / stakeholders, will have an increased and measured confidence in the Local Area SEND system as a whole and through the gathering of user feedback on the process and the systematic recording of outcomes, will demystify the whole SEND journey for all, increasing transparency and allowing the service to respond to the needs of our local communities. Regular reporting of service user feedback, statutory timescales and progress against individual outcomes will ensure accountability, as will Director oversight.

Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone: Work to ensure staffing at every level of the council reflects the diversity of the borough / Implement a rigorous improvement programme for those services subject to external inspection.

A diverse and reflective workforce: This growth proposal allows the SEN Service to continue to develop and be a reflective face of our local area. It will allow the SEN Service too, to promote and develop good and ambitious colleagues internally – 'grow our own' – with a focus on front line roles, rather than senior management. The Quality Assurance role will ensure that this is embedded and continuously improved upon, as standard practice.

A rigorous improvement programme for those services subject to external inspection: The SEN Service will be inspected again by OFSTED under the new SEND-AP Inspection Framework within the next 12 months. Building on existing good practice, the Local Authority must ensure that it is in the best position to meet current and future demand and need in SEN, as well as continue to drive and evidence good work within the Local Area when inspected.

Risks and Implications:

Reputational: Reduction in the local community's confidence in the LA and SEND Services, which has taken time to rebuild and develop,
Legal: An increase in tribunal and mediation cases with associated risk of parental preference for out of borough schools and settings, Non-compliance with statutory duties (Children and Families Act 2014, SEN Code of Practice 2015),
LGSCO: Delays in processing new assessments and Annual Reviews may yet increase number of matters going to Ombudsman and potential compensation payments,
Ofsted: Written Statement of Action not delivered – failure to meet the significant weaknesses identified in the Written Statement of Action, leading to further action from Ofsted/CQC and central government,
Adverse inspection judgement at next re-inspection of the Local Area under the new SEND-AP Inspection Framework, particularly on amended and updated Plans.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

This investment will bring the capacity in line with neighbouring LAs and deliver better value for residents.

With a focus on front-line staff and internal staff development, this investment brings greater value for money than before and will reduce the spend on high-cost interim staff, meeting demand from a permanent and stable workforce.

The increase in capacity will also enable data held within the service to be used more effectively in future planning and in meeting the outcomes of children and young people. This will improve the quality of provision for children and young people with SEND.

A smoother assessment process, and further improved Annual Review process, both with co-production at their heart, will support efficient assessment and review of EHCPs ensuring that outcomes are met with maximum cost-return.

It will enable the Local Authority to demonstrate the pace and impact required by the Written Statement of Action following the joint OFSTED/CQC inspection, as well as reassure external monitors of continued improvement and a commitment to SEND.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	

Summary:	
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.	
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No

Additional Information and Comments:

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Accelerating Education – Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) / University Bursary Grant Funding / Education Awards		
Reference:	GRO / CHI 003 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Children's Services	Growth Service Area:	Education services
Directorate Service:	Education	Strategic Priority:	1. Tackling the cost-of-living crisis 3. Accelerating education
Lead Officer and Post:	Lisa Fraser, Director of Education	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Maium Talukdar, Statutory Deputy Mayor & Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	1,100	1,350	-	-	1,350

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	4.0	2.0	-	-	2.0

Proposal Summary:
<p>School Governance, Information and Traded Services will require £200k to deliver the Mayors Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), University Bursary Awards and Education Awards. Below is a breakdown of the funding allocation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o £600 x 1250 = £750k - University Bursary Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o £1,500 x 800 = £1.2m - £50k for appeals - £250k staffing cost. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Education Awards Support Officer - £189,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4.5 FTE at grade F (£41,092 with oncost), Education Awards Support Officers to deliver the mayors EMA/UNI Bursary pledges. These positions are important staffing requirement as per mayoral priorities, which cannot be delivered without this provision. ▪ Previously only 3FTE was required, however with the growth in grant now being awarded by almost double, additional provision will be needed to successfully deliver the grants awards scheme. o Digital Officer need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 FTE at grade J (£58,137 with oncost), Digital Officer to support all four of the Accelerating Education pledges. The Education Awards team found it a real struggle getting continuous digital support, which had an impact on workload. This position will help deliver efficiencies in the long haul. The officer can also support the finance team digitalising processes of primary school data collection, creating more long-term savings. - Education Awards <p>Event celebrating and acknowledging the academic accomplishment of our student community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o £200k cost to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Venue hire - £20k (benchmarked from quote provided by Troxy) ▪ Catering - £30k (benchmarked from quote provided by Troxy and Sapphire London catering group) ▪ Staffing cost (equivalent to 0.5FTE at grade F)/ Administration - £20k ▪ Keynote Speakers- £5k ▪ Publicity/promotions/Communications/activities – £5k ▪ Awards Vouchers - 300x£400 = £120k

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

The growth bid will deliver on two key mayoral pledges directly linked with the following Tower Hamlets strategic priorities:

- Priority 1: Tackling the cost-of-living crisis Our Ambition: No child will go hungry, and no pensioner will go cold for the next four years
- Priority 3: Accelerate Education: Every child achieves their best in education

Risks and Implications:

Should funding not be approved, there is no resource elsewhere within LBTH to deliver on the Mayors Educational Maintenance Allowance, Universality Bursary pledges and student awards.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Universal Primary School Free School Meals Grant		
Reference:	GRO / CHI 004 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Children's Services	Growth Service Area:	Education services
Directorate Service:	Education	Strategic Priority:	3. Accelerating education
Lead Officer and Post:	Lisa Fraser, Director of Education	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Maium Talukdar, Statutory Deputy Mayor & Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	-	(2,200)	2,200	-	-

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

It is a continuing Tower Hamlets Council priority to provide universal free school meals to all primary school age children in the borough. Currently funding is provided directly to Schools from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) through the schools funding formula. This supports providing free school meals to all children eligible through income based assessment and through a specific grant for universal provision for Children in Reception and Key Stage 1. Tower Hamlets currently extends the universal provision to all children at Key Stage 2, through direct Council funding. £2m was funded in 2023-24 from the Free School Meals reserve, on top of £1m per year provided through the Public Health grant. These funds are included in the council's medium term financial strategy.

A permanent growth bid was approved by Council last year for the continuation of the offer from 2024-25 as £2m ongoing base budget (with the continued extra £1m per year funding from the Public Health grant). Since then, the Mayor of London has announced a one-off grant for the Primary School Free School Meals for 2024-25 so this bid is delaying the ongoing base budget request to begin from 2025-26 rather than 2024-25. The amount is based on the 2023-24 allocation.

- Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):**
- Free school meals are associated with improved educational engagement, better attendance at school, improved level concentration, behaviour, health and well-being.
 - There is currently an over 90% per cent take up for the Primary free school meals programme in Tower Hamlets Primary schools.
 - Reduction in childhood obesity; children have access to a nutritious, healthy school meal and are ready to learn.
 - High levels of take up encourage Children to develop important social skills through eating and socialising communally.
 - Continual free meal provision encourages school attendance which is essential to support post Covid catch up for all Children.

Risks and Implications:

If the Mayor's free school meal programme is not funded through this bid, the programme will cease. In addition, the programme is reliant on a public health grant funding of £1m per annum; this would need to continue to maintain the level of spend.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

Having a universal provision ensures that no means testing is required, reducing administration, and making the scheme run at a school level. Schools will not need to process any cash payments for meals reducing issues for schools including the chasing of non-payment.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	Yes	This ensures all children are eligible for the service and a nutritious meal regardless of family income.
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Leisure Service Insourcing		
Reference:	GRO / COM 001 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Communities	Growth Service Area:	Cultural and related services
Directorate Service:	Leisure	Strategic Priority:	4. Boosting culture, business, jobs, and leisure 5. Investing in public services
Lead Officer and Post:	Tom Alexander, Project Director, Leisure Capital Programme and Procurement	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Iqbal Hossain, Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	0	2,105	205	-	2,310

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current FTE 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	0	Circa 250	TBC	plus circa 50 for St Georges	Circa 250

Proposal Summary:

In August 2022 the Mayor & Cabinet agreed that the Leisure Service will be insourced from May 2024. It is currently outsourced to GLL under a contract that will expire on 30 April 2024. This change will provide greater control over the operation of the Leisure Service, as delivered through the Council's 7 leisure centres. It also requires the Council to assume all commercial and operational risks associated with running the service. The insourcing of the leisure service is a key deliverable of the Council's Strategic Plan

The new in-house service will run all 7 leisure centres (noting that St George's is shut but a new facility is due to open on that site in the next 5 years). It will also deliver outreach services using non-Leisure sites (e.g. community centres, parks, etc.), although that is to be determined after engagement with residents and validation through business planning. The service will manage, maintain and operate the leisure centres, initially to a similar specification to the current GLL contract, but evolving to a more holistic wellbeing model to ensure it meets a wider range of need, offer a different combination of programmes and interventions and generates new income.

Officers are undertaking a detailed financial modelling exercise to understand the true costs of running the service given recent inflationary pressures, a reduction in discretionary spend for most residents, additional running costs and new technological developments within the leisure industry.

The decision will provide the Council with greater control over the operation of the service, and full responsibility for its performance. It is our intention that, with sufficient planning and investment, the service could perform above the model's expectations, however learning from other areas suggests a deficit budget.

	24/25	25/26
Direct Income	9,629,650	10,505,073
Direct Expenditure	10,540,484	11,498,710
Net Direct Operating Cost	(910,834)	(993,637)
Central Support Cost	1,194,903	1,317,166
Growth Request	2,105,737	2,310,803

These are provisional costs and our forecast will be more accurate as the modelling is informed by further data and analysis. We are shortly to receive additional key information from GLL on staffing and programming that will refine our estimates, will find more as part of the final hand back and will be able to validate and stress test the model with the new governance arrangements, we are putting in place between now and the end of April 2024.

We have not maintained any central contingency amount in the project, however there is significant risk in the project as we do not know the number of staff we will receive at this point, now do we know their grades and salaries. There would also be significant recruitment costs if key personnel do not transfer. Therefore, an amount of £550k is held within the corporate risk reserve which could be called on if required.

These figures do not include any inflation or costs that may be identified in the condition surveys being undertaken currently. Some of those surveys are likely to identify invest-to-save opportunities on issues like utility consumption.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

The proposal to insource meets strategic priorities 4. Boosting culture, business, jobs, and leisure & 5. Investing in public services

The Mayor and Cabinet anticipate an improvement in service quality from the Council being able to intervene directly in the service.

Risks and Implications:

The Leisure Delivery Board's risk register monitors the implications of this change. It highlights a number of significant risks rated R using the Council's RAG methodology. These include (but not exclusively):

1. The Council will be responsible for the cost of any deficit in the trading performance of the service, currently estimated to be £2.6m per annum.
2. The Council needs to recruit a bespoke management team to oversee the delivery of this service, employing individuals with the requisite skills and experience to manage the service as effectively as possible. Failing to do so, or to retain staff that have been recruited, will significantly undermine the ability of the service to function effectively.
3. All operational risks will sit with the Council – staffing shortfalls, health and safety incidents, equipment failure, planned and reactive maintenance, customer service, etc.
4. A transition team with experience of undertaking a similar insourcing needs to be maintained to give the Council the best chance possible of meeting the tight deadline of 1 May 2024 for having the in-house model in place and to ensure the offer is fully developed whilst the operational team can deliver the day-to-day services.
5. The risk of deteriorating performance from the current provider as the contract nears end.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

The proposal to insource the Leisure Service will provide the Council with greater control over how it operates, and thus the potential opportunity to alter aspects of its delivery to meet Council objectives, particularly public health priorities. The in-house option does not offer a fiscal advantage over other delivery model options. Its value is based on having a more flexible model, in terms of adjusting its delivery quickly and without any recourse to contractual change and the potential to widen the service offer to attract new customer and additional revenue streams.

The service is more likely to be successful in widening its offer and reducing the initial deficit to the Council if sufficient resource is dedicated to allow for:

- as smooth a transition as possible to an insourced operation,
- continuing development past the initial hand-back date,
- ensuring the operational management and staffing of the service has the requisite skills, expertise and experience required to run it.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	Yes	This proposal creates a new front-line service, albeit non-statutory, in the form of the in-house leisure service providing facilities and activities directly to residents.
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	Yes	For existing Council staff who manage the contract with GLL and the strategic direction of the current contract, there will be changes to roles, including preferable T&C and focus on community wellbeing.

Summary:	
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.	
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No

Additional Information and Comments:
This is a substantive change in how the service is managed, although users will hopefully not see any negative impact upon service quality if the transition is smooth and the new service resourced to succeed. There are, however, some implications for staff – existing Council, and employees who will TUPE across.

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Coroner's Consortium		
Reference:	GRO / COM 002 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Unavoidable Growth
Directorate:	Communities	Growth Service Area:	Cultural and related services
Directorate Service:	Environmental Health and Trading Standards	Strategic Priority:	5. Investing in public services
Lead Officer and Post:	David Tolley, Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Emergency

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	342	250	-	-	250

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

The Council is within the statutory Inner London North Coroners Consortium with Camden, Hackney and Islington. This is a statutory arrangement governed by legislation for the provision of the Coroners Service. Camden are the lead Authority. The costs of the Coroners Service are divided equally between the four Boroughs. There has been a considerable increase in costs of running the Service due to a backlog of Coroners Hearings, pathology costs and general uplift of contracts that the Coroner has to have in place. The Coroner also has opened an additional Court within Tower Hamlets (Bromley Public Hall) – to assist with the backlog of Hearings that have built up during covid.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

This is a statutory requirement to provide this Service, costs are managed by Camden.

Risks and Implications:

The provision of this Service is a statutory requirement.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

The Coroner is responsible for running the Service and the Authorities are have a statutory responsibility to fund the Service. The Coroner and her Officers are accountable to the Ministry Of Justice and not the Local Authority.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Freedom Passes 2024-27		
Reference:	GRO / COM 003 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Unavoidable Growth
Directorate:	Communities	Growth Service Area:	Highways and transport
Directorate Service:	Parking, Mobility and Market Services	Strategic Priority:	5. Investing in public services
Lead Officer and Post:	Michael Darby, Head of Parking, Mobility and Market Services	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Emergency

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	8,067	1,527	2,064	1,342	4,933

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

The Freedom Pass scheme provides free travel on public transport for pass holders over 66 and registered as disabled throughout London. The scheme is administered by London Councils and decisions on apportioning the costs of the scheme between boroughs are made by Members of London Councils' Transport & Environment Committee.

London Councils manage the negotiation of the Freedom Pass settlement with TfL and the allocation process between all the London Boroughs of their respective budget contributions to TfL.

Based on London Councils latest model (assumptions) of concessionary fares

- 2024-25 figures are confirmed, and all ongoing years are estimates and could be subject to change.
- We're using HM Treasury inflation estimates for future years – as you know these are imprecise.
- The amounts for future years are much less reliable and will depend on journey numbers and inflation and for that reason we have included several scenarios regarding the extent to which journey demand.

Appendix 2: 2024/25 Apportionment by quarter and borough

Authority	Total per borough (£) Paid to TfL	Total per borough (£) Paid to London Councils	2024-25 Total per borough (£)
Tower Hamlets	9,386,620.00	207,648.00	9,594,268.00

BOROUGH	2025-26			2026-27		
	Lower range	Baseline	Higher range	Lower range	Baseline	Higher range
Tower Hamlets	£11,201,924	£11,658,200	£12,376,599	£12,475,815	£13,000,200	£13,784,942

Funding for this growth will be subjected to annual reviews to ascertain demand.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

The Freedom pass allows for older persons and disabled people to freely travel across London and free bus journeys nationally.

Risks and Implications:

The Council is bound to pay a contribution to the Freedom Pass scheme and may not legally withdraw from the scheme. The apportionment methodology is determined by the Boroughs working through London Councils.

The settlement is usually confirmed annually in November/December which provides the information on what the Authority's annual contribution will be based on for the next year.

Other work currently being undertaken on demographic and social changes within the Borough indicate that the Authority has an increasing population which may mean an increased demand for freedom passes.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

The Authority has no individual control over the amount of money levied upon it to fund the Freedom Pass scheme. Arguably the Freedom Pass scheme represents value for money in offering enhanced mobility to traditionally fewer mobile members of the community and enhances sustainable travel by encouraging the use of public transport.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Waste Operations		
Reference:	GRO / COM 004 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Communities	Growth Service Area:	Central services
Directorate Service:	Waste Services, Public Realm	Strategic Priority:	7. Working towards a clean and green future
Lead Officer and Post:	Simon Baxter, Director of Public Realm (Interim)	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Kabir Hussain, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Emergency

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	20,346	5,000	(5,000)	-	0 (one off investment)

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	335	72	(72)	-	-

Proposal Summary:

The mayor declared a waste emergency at full Council in November 2022. A waste improvement plan was drafted and presented in July 2023 as a response to the requirements of the waste emergency. The plan did not fully highlight the issues within waste services that stemmed from a flawed TUPE process. This plan seeks to address these failures with a response that will review, recover, and deliver an improved waste service for residents of the borough. It is expected that the proposed projects will deliver improvements starting from April 2024. This is a one-off investment in 2024-25, improvements in standards will need to be maintained from the existing baseline budget or subject to a growth bid in the 2025-26 Medium Term Financial Strategy.

This growth bid relates to delivery of improvements, highlighting the need for investment and realignment of waste services to provide a basis for service improvement, with an overarching goal of delivering on the key strategic plan objectives - 'working towards a clean and green future - cleaning up our borough with more bins, litter sweepers and a mission to drive down missed bin collections'.

To ensure changes to service improvement are sustainable over the long term, the delivery model will be programme based with a suite of projects some of which will be mainstreamed as their effectiveness is assessed and performance reviewed. Thirteen main projects have been identified as priorities, with sub-projects that will require realignment of the waste services structure and strengthening of links to internal teams such as Finance, Human Resources, Customer Contact Centre, and Revenues. To deliver these projects and service changes, there will be a need to utilise internal and external project management support. The proposal is to utilise internal staff within the council and external staff in the following ways.

Job Title	Role Requirements	Commencement of Assignment for 12 months
Programme Manager x 1	To coordinate, manage and lead on the programme deliverables	April 2024
Project Managers x 4	To manage and coordinate a suite of projects working with project officers and reporting to the Programme Manager	April 2024
Project Officers x 4	To work with the project manager as directed	April 2024

To meet the demands and needs of effective service delivery, waste services require a reorganization of the staff structure. This will consider the potential for a dedicated in-house call centre for waste services to deal with all waste/street cleansing/ demand from FiFi-related telephone enquiries. It will also consider -

- The potential creation of a Local Environmental Quality Team
- The potential creation of a nighttime enhanced enforcement team
- A review of top and middle management structures
- Investment in more training and development for front line staff

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	MILESTONES	RESOURCE	COST
<p>Introduction of Time-Bands</p>	<p>Revised time-bands will be introduced to ensure all waste from shops and businesses is placed out at the correct time and place to ensure that our streets are clear of waste at all times. This will ensure that time-bands remain relevant to the needs of residents and businesses in the areas where they are set. New time-bands will help keep the street scene clear in busy areas (flats above shops) and prevent waste being stored overnight in business premises.</p> <p>We will review our enforcement approach in relation to the new time-bands. Introduction of time-bands will allow targeted enforcement action being taken on businesses and residents that do not adhere to the stipulated times. A period of education will be in place to allow the time bands to embed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional enforcement officer x 4 resource (including night time enhancement pay) <p>Comms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with residents and businesses will be required • Signage will need to be displayed across the borough and • A communication plan to share the message. 	<p>Project Team/BAU</p>	<p>£250,000</p> <p>£100,000</p>
<p>Commercial Waste Service Review</p>	<p>In order to improve our commercial waste sales we will introduce dedicated vehicles that will ensure improved services for commercial waste customers and a greater visibility of our workforce.</p> <p>Manage “aged debt” of approximately £700,000 and create a debt free service that operates on a trading account model.</p> <p>Currently, commercial waste is collected in the same vehicles that pick up municipal waste for both the recycling and residual service. As part of the optimization of collection rounds commercial waste collections will be a “stand alone” service delinked from municipal rounds. This will allow us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect commercial waste only as paid for by the customer. • Provide a seven day a week commercial service to effectively manage commercial waste in the borough and retain a customer base over and above the circa 2,000 we currently have. • Understand total service costs and create baseline and assess budget. • As part of the changes envisaged, time bands will be re-introduced in key areas of the 	<p>Project Team/BAU</p>	<p>£130,000</p>

	borough to help manage waste on streets. Compliance will be managed through education and enforcement.		
Street Cleansing Service Enhancements	<p>As the Street Cleansing Service undergoes a service review, the following daily additional street cleansing resource enhancements are recommended to enhance visibility and accommodate increased footfall in parts of the borough in the mornings, afternoons, and evenings, particularly in areas of the borough with a thriving night-time economy such as the west of the borough. This will include increasing visibility and use of mechanical footway cleaning in areas where this is appropriate.</p> <p>Mornings (AM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 drivers and 2 loaders <p>Afternoons Enhancement (PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 x drivers and 4 loaders (on existing 4x Caged vehicles to enhance fly tipping collections) 10 x Sweepers – To maintain street cleanliness in high-footfall areas eg markets/transport hubs <p>Nights Enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1x driver and 2 x loader (on existing vehicles) 2 x drivers and 2 x sweepers on existing mechanical broom vehicle to clean more main roads and traffic islands. 1x driver (on existing compact mechanical broom) 1x driver and 3x operatives -a high visibility nightly deep cleaning / jet washing team that will ensure that our markets and nighttime economy areas are spotless <p>Weekend Enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 x sweepers (Saturday AM/PM) 5 x sweepers (Sunday AM/PM) <p>Vehicles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2x compact mechanical brooms 2 x 7.5 tonne Caged Vehicle – to target fly-tipping hotspots in key areas. 2x 3.5 tonne caged vehicles – for FIFI Plus <p>Enhanced Find it fix It PLUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2x drivers and 2 x operatives <p>Additional Find fix it fix it Plus- a new addition to the find it fix it team who will be a multi skilled workforce tackling issues on public and private land such as overgrown vegetation, painting, broken fencing, designing out problem areas, i.e hoardings where flyposting takes place.</p>	Project Team/BAU	<p>£200,000</p> <p>£400,000</p> <p>£400,000</p> <p>£180,000</p> <p>£220,000</p> <p>£60,000</p> <p>£210,000</p> <p>£250,000</p> <p>£250,000</p> <p>£200,000</p> <p>£250,000</p> <p>£120,000</p> <p>£220,000</p> <p>£200,000</p>

	<p>Other Street Cleansing Service Enhancements: Other planned initiatives for improving our street scene are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent grading of streets (Tranche) using Keep Britain Tidy including training of staff 		
Parks enhancements	<p>Weekday Mornings Enhancements (AM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x driver and 3 x operative <p>Weekday Afternoons Enhancement (PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2x litter picker • 2x drivers and 2 x operatives <p>Weekend Mornings Enhancement (AM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x driver and 1 x operative <p>Weekend Afternoons Enhancement (PM):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2x litter picker • 1x driver and 1 x operative 		<p>£210,000</p> <p>£100,000</p> <p>£220,000</p> <p>£140,000</p> <p>£100,000</p> <p>£140,000</p>
Waste operating system digitalisation, benchmarking, and options appraisal	<p>We will review Whitespace, our waste management system, to determine the service requirements it currently meets and those that it needs to meet. The following priority areas of Whitespace functionality have been identified for testing and development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missed Collections • Invoicing / FMS • Contracts / customers • Ad Hoc / scheduled. • Bulky Waste • Clinical Waste • Ad Hoc Streets • Scheduled Activities (All) • Addition of new properties • Container movements • Recycling sack deliveries <p>Re-Implement of Whitespace (Version 11) We will reimplement Whitespace as Version 11 after testing and development of key functions. This will enable us to develop a 'fit for purpose' info management system for all service users, including managers, crews, deliveries internal stakeholders, residents, and businesses. A core aim of this project is to streamline the overall user experience and customer journey. Part of reimplementing will be training of all staff on updated version of Whitespace.</p> <p>Mobile phones for sweepers Every sweeper will be issued with their own phone, with data to use. This will enable frontline staff to report any issues they are facing and record clean streets upon completion of the job.</p>	Project Team/BAU	<p>£200,000</p> <p>£50,000</p>

	<p>FiFi Update the find it fix application to meet the demands of our new services</p>		£50,000
<p>Communication and Consultation Plans</p>	<p>To ensure deliverables are communicated and consulted on as required, there is a need for an overarching communications plan that embeds the relevant comms required for each of the project streams.</p> <p>It will be important to develop a meaningful comms plan that utilises local community channels to share our service improvements plus encouraging a wider community response to improve our environment (street leader scheme) including improving recycling. The comms plan will differentiate targeting three main demographics: the young generation through utilisation of social media platforms including the newly launched local authority TikTok; use the locally based social media influencers. The use of non-mainstream media such as of channel S and equivalent for communities to widen “reach”. Utilise our places of worship and our community leaders to take up the challenge of improving our borough.</p> <p>Advertising the FiFi App to increase awareness and usage.</p> <p>Work with the Young Mayor on engagement and campaigns to engage with younger people on taking responsibility for their environment (Don't be a Waste Man, Own your waste man campaign)</p> <p>Develop a street theatre campaign, including my space my place and the guerrilla (gorilla) cleansing squad. This campaign will make a huge difference to how we connect to not just those that live here but also those passing through.</p> <p>A borough wide bill board campaign telling everyone information such as, that we are the cleanest borough in London, that 99.45% of our bins are collected on time, that we have so many award winning green flag parks!</p>	Project Team	£100,000
<p>Community Engagement</p>	<p>We will create and launch an ambitious new Street Leader (SL) scheme. Street Leaders will consist of community volunteers who take the responsibility for all environmental issues in their area and encourage residents to actively report and engage with cleaning up their neighbourhood and celebrate their achievements.</p> <p>Each Street Leader will be given a unique ID code via find it fix it app. When they engage and report waste issues, they gain points and can win monthly prizes (vouchers, iPad, Play station etc). Each SL will be receive bespoke training.</p>	Project	£50,000

	<p>The Street Leader will be issued with free graffiti removal kits, litter pickers etc so they can actively participate in improving the cleanliness of the borough. There will be bi annual conference celebrating their successes and their achievements in making our borough the cleanest in London.</p>		
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Risks and Implications:
 Poor waste services and increase in operating costs due to poor alignment and structures

Value for Money and Efficiency:
 Long term efficiencies

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Free Swimming for Women and 55+ Male Seniors		
Reference:	GRO / COM 005 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Communities	Growth Service Area:	Cultural and related services
Directorate Service:	Leisure	Strategic Priority:	1. Tackling the cost-of-living crisis 4. Boosting culture, business, jobs, and leisure 5. Investing in public service
Lead Officer and Post:	Simon Jones, Head of Leisure Operations	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Iqbal Hossain, Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	N/A	248	-	-	248

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

Free Swimming for Women

- In May 2022 the Mayor and Cabinet made the decision to bring leisure services in-house.
- The Council will operate the service to benefit those hard-to-reach communities, such as BAME women and SEND children, to promote healthy living and wellbeing.
- There are currently 17.5 hours of dedicated women only swimming provision across the four pools in Tower Hamlets per week.
- Tower Hamlets has the largest growth of any borough throughout the UK.
- The borough is predominantly made up of those from an Asian/Bangladeshi background (44.4%) and those of the Islamic faith (39.9%).
- 1 in 5 females across the Borough have been classified as inactive.
- Female participation remains at the forefront of targeted provision, set out within the Mayor's manifesto.
- Women feel recreational facilities are an area where inequality is particularly evident.
- Many women find it difficult to engage in this activity due to various cultural, religious, and personal reasons.
- Approximately 148,800 (48%) of the total population in Tower Hamlets are female. (2021, Census).
- Currently 38% of leisure centre usage is by females.
- During the Summer the team carried out consultations with the local community, we asked what activities they would most like to participate in, swimming was ranked as their second choice after general fitness, circa 250 people took part in the survey.
- It is crucial that we establish an inclusive and culturally sensitive environment for our community members.
- Women's only swimming sessions play a pivotal role in addressing these inequalities.
- A safe space for women to engage in physical activity, fostering both their physical and mental well-being is desired.
- Regular exercise has been proven to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, while also enhancing self-esteem and body image.

Current Offering

- GLL offered 280 hours of women's only aquatic sessions in 2023.
- This is a combination of Swimming Sessions, Swimming Lessons and Aqua Aerobics
- Women only sessions currently see 3300 attendees across all 4 pools which is a penetration of 2% of the local female population if all are unique visits, we therefore assume the genuine penetration rate is below 1%

NGB and Partner Insight

- 64% of females from all ethnically diverse communities cannot swim compared to 17% of white females – Swim England
- 76% of South Asian females are unable to swim – Swim England
- Only 63% of the ethnically diverse community feel it is easy to take part in swimming, compared to 71% of white females – Swim England
- Only 59% of the ethnically diverse community see swimming as accessible – Swim England
- Swimming is currently helping the NHS save £357 million a year nationally – 4 Global

Planned Offering

- To provide female lifeguards to supervise all qualifying sessions.
- To offer 240 free spaces for women only sessions per week (12480 annual) with an expected up take of 85%, 204 users per week (10,608 annual)
- Aim to see an initial uptake of 85% on these spaces equating to 10,608 visits (7,308 more than current)

. Easy booking system for a smooth customer journey via five customer channels;

- Centralised call centre
- Online booking
- On App Booking
- At site staff booking
- Through a chat bot online (date tbc)

Planned Outcomes

- Raise penetration of local community from 2% to 7% in female based aquatic activities.
- Remove barriers of access to aquatic activities for low-income households within the borough.
- To instil confidence into the local female community that our facilities and activities are safe and suitable.
- See a rise in activity throughout the local community both in swimming and other physical activities.
- Increase positive health markers for local community and reduce costs to the NHS.

To provide free access to women sessions for all eligible residents to increase participation of sports activities within the demographic at no cost to the user.
Each participant will be provided with a membership card linked to the LMS allowing the ability to book and participate in women aquatic related sessions at no additional cost.

The sessions available to Women under this scheme will be;

Women Sessions

Site	Session	Day	Start	Finish
Mile End	Swim	Tuesday	10:00	13:30
Mile End	Aqua	Tuesday	12:00	15:00
Mile End	Swim	Wednesday	17:00	22:00
Poplar	Swim	Monday	09:00	12:00
Poplar	Swim	Tuesday	17:00	22:00
Poplar	Aqua	Wednesday	12:00	15:00
Tiller	Swim	Thursday	18:00	22:00
York Hall	Swim	Tuesday	16:00	22:00

55+ Swimming (men only)

The borough has seen the largest increase in residents over the age of 60 (34%) with 70-74 being the highest with a 37% increase.

- 48% of people over 70 have been classified as inactive.
- A recent study found that men who swam regularly had a 53% lower risk of dying from cardiovascular disease.
- it is crucial that we establish an inclusive environment that caters to the diverse needs of our community members.
- A safe and simple customer journey to engage in physical activity, fostering both their physical and mental well-being is desired.
- Regular exercise has been proven to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, while also enhancing self-esteem and body image.

Current Offering

- 55+ are currently eligible to register for a concessionary membership which provides them with a reduced rate on certain activities.

NGB and Partner Insight

- Swimming is currently helping the NHS save £357 million a year nationally – 4 Global
- Recognised as the best form of exercise for senior citizens – Swim England

Planned Offering

- To offer 30 free spaces for 55+ (men only) at each pool on each day, allowing 43,680 free swimming opportunities annually.
- Aim to see an initial uptake of 85% on these spaces equating to 37,128 visits.
- Easy and sympathetic booking system for a smooth customer journey.

Planned Outcomes

- Remove barriers of access to aquatic activities for low-income households within the borough.
- To instil confidence into the 55+ men section of the local community that our facilities and activities are safe and suitable.
- See a rise in activity throughout the local community both in swimming and other physical activities.
- Increase positive health markers for local community and reduce costs to the NHS.

To provide free access to 55+men for an hour per day to increase participation of sports activities within the demographic at no cost to the user. Each participant will be provided with a membership card linked to the LMS allowing the ability to book and participate in specified sessions at no additional cost.

The Sessions available to 55+ under this scheme would be:

55+ (men only) Free Swimming Sessions - All Pools

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
13:30 - 15:30	13:30 - 15:30	13:30 - 15:30	13:30 - 15:30	18:00 - 20:00	13:30 - 15:30	13:30 - 15:30

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

The proposal will help to remove barriers to exercise for the 2 target groups listed, helping links to local healthier living initiatives and increasing physical activity within the local community

The proposal will allocate 30 spaces per hour for each type of qualifying session this is costed below at the current rate for a swim at the appropriate price level from 1st May 2024.

Women Session - Adult Swim £7.90
55+ – Off Peak Concessionary - £2.60

Women Sessions

Site	Session	Day	Start	Finish	Hours	Spaces	Value
Mile End	Swim	Tuesday	10:00	13:15	3.25	30	£ 770.25
Mile End	Aqua	Tuesday	12:30	13:30	1.00	30	£ 237.00
Mile End	Swim	Wednesday	12:30	13:15	0.75	30	£ 177.75
Poplar	Swim	Monday	09:00	12:00	3.00	30	£ 711.00
Poplar	Swim	Tuesday	12:00	14:00	2.00	30	£ 474.00
Poplar	Aqua	Wednesday	18:30	19:30	1.00	30	£ 237.00
Tiller	Swim	Thursday	19:00	20:00	1.00	30	£ 237.00
York Hall	Swim	Tuesday	19:00	21:30	2.50	30	£ 592.50

Weekly Total	£ 3,436.50
Annual Total	£ 178,698.00

55+ Sessions (men only)

Site	Session	Day	Start	Finish	Hours	Spaces	Value
York Hall	Swim	Monday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
York Hall	Swim	Tuesday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
York Hall	Swim	Wednesday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
York Hall	Swim	Thursday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
York Hall	Swim	Friday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
York Hall	Swim	Saturday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
York Hall	Swim	Sunday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Mile End	Swim	Monday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Mile End	Swim	Tuesday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Mile End	Swim	Wednesday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Mile End	Swim	Thursday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Mile End	Swim	Friday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Mile End	Swim	Saturday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Mile End	Swim	Sunday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00

Weekly Total	£ 2,184.00
Annual Total	£ 113,568.00

Tiller	Swim	Monday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Tiller	Swim	Tuesday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Tiller	Swim	Wednesday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Tiller	Swim	Thursday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Tiller	Swim	Friday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Tiller	Swim	Saturday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Tiller	Swim	Sunday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Poplar	Swim	Monday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Poplar	Swim	Tuesday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Poplar	Swim	Wednesday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Poplar	Swim	Thursday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Poplar	Swim	Friday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Poplar	Swim	Saturday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00
Poplar	Swim	Sunday	13:30	14:30	1.00	30	£ 78.00

This would see the total value of funded places cost - £292,266 based on all spaces for all sessions being utilised.

We anticipate an uptake of 85% which would lead to a total value of £248,426

Risks and Implications:

There is no inherent risk as all potential loss of income would be covered by the project funding.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

As the service will be provided for free the project would see an uptake in usage by the target groups when supported by marketing within the local community.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Temporary Accommodation (cost pressure above Housing Benefit subsidy)		
Reference:	GRO / HAR 001 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Unavoidable Growth
Directorate:	Housing and Regeneration	Growth Service Area:	Housing (General Fund)
Directorate Service:	Housing Options	Strategic Priority:	2. Providing homes for the future
Lead Officer and Post:	Abul Kalam, Service Manager – Housing Management & Procurement	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	5,000	4,500	-	-	4,500

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	-	-	-	-	-

Proposal Summary:

The Housing Options Service currently has over 2,700 households in temporary accommodation, of these 1,500 are private rented accommodation.

Homelessness is increasing nationally due to market conditions and the cost of living.

Following the extension of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) based subsidy scheme to people living in temporary accommodation from April 2010, the Government introduced a cap on the level of benefits paid that were eligible for Housing Benefit (HB) subsidy. This means that although a household may be eligible for full benefit on a property, the amount of the benefit that the Council can recover from the DWP in HB subsidy is capped.

The amount the council can claim back is based on 90% of the January 2011 LHA rate which is substantially below current market rates, and the Council has had to increase the amount it is paying for temporary accommodation in order to maintain supply to meet its statutory duty. The Council has no alternative but to subsidise the rents for homeless households if they exceed temporary accommodation subsidy rates as all properties have to be affordable if they are to be deemed suitable. We, along with other boroughs and London Council's are lobbying Government to review this.

The impact of the shortfall in temporary accommodation subsidy is a net charge to the Council's HB budget. The estimated shortfall in the budget is forecasted to be £4.5m, which cannot be met from within existing budgets. The extent of the unadjusted increase in Subsidy loss since 2016/17 can be seen in the table below with increase of over 184% over the 7 years.

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
£3,903,546	£4,345,368	£5,131,048	£6,012,341	£7,431,645	£6,890,120	7,206,159

This cost has previously been held separately and has been covered off initially by one off funding and then by a permanent growth bid.

A range of actions are being utilised i.e. reduced use of expensive B&B accommodation, capping b&b rents at the one bed LHA and further measures are being considered, including greater use of out of borough accommodation, including outside of London, all of which should reduce the amount of the HB subsidy loss.

Some boroughs are placing as far as Peterborough to meet their homelessness obligations. Whilst we do not want to move households as far as this, it is something that we would need to consider as part of our placement policy review which is currently underway.

Below is a benchmark of Tower Hamlets LHA against 2 other boroughs, Southend and Luton

	1	2	3
Tower Hamlets	295.49	365.92	441.86
HB subsidy	216	270	315
HB subsidy loss	-79.49	-95.92	-126.86

Southend	138.08	182.96	230.14
HB subsidy	103.84	135	170.38
HB subsidy loss	-34.24	-47.96	-59.76

Luton	143.84	178.36	224.38
HB subsidy	103.84	124.61	150.38
HB subsidy loss	-40	-53.75	-74

At present, 51% of our households are in the borough with 85% of the 49% outside of the borough in East London boroughs.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

This pressure was countered in 2021/22 by utilising one off resources in the form of Covid funding and a growth bid for 22/23 (£4m)

Risks and Implications:

If this growth bid is not approved there will be an ongoing pressure on the budget.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

Overall, this will add no value for money or efficiency

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Temporary Accommodation – increasing temporary accommodation rates to increase supply
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Reference:	GRO / HAR 002 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Unavoidable Growth
Directorate:	Housing and Regeneration	Growth Service Area:	Housing (General Fund)
Directorate Service:	Housing Options	Strategic Priority:	2. Providing homes for the future
Lead Officer and Post:	Abul Kalam, Service Manager – Housing Management & Procurement	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding

Financial Impact:					
Budget (£000)	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
	-	3,450	(1,450)	(2,000)	-

Staffing Impact (if applicable):					
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

The council needs to manage the increasing TA/PRS pressures that it faces due to a continuing rise in the number of households approaching the Housing Options Service for housing assistance.

There is an immediate need to increase TA rents because we are competing with other local authorities to procure accommodation in the borough which unfortunately because of the contracting supply of suitable temporary accommodation in the borough leads to the council having no choice but to place households into unsuitable bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation, for longer than is legally permitted. Consequently, this reliance on B&B accommodation means that we are currently not meeting our legal obligations and are at continued risk of judicial reviews.

Whilst growth of 3,450m is being requested, this is reduced over the following financial years as the intention is to reduce the number of households in TA and rehouse more households into private rented and social housing. We would also be working with landlords to convert TA into PRS accommodation. Converting more TA to PRS would reduce the number of households in TA and would also release us from the pressures of increasing our HB subsidy loss as the household would be claiming Universal Credit Housing Cost rather than HB.

The 3,450m is based on the current accommodation requirements for 260 households that are an unsuitable accommodation, to get us into a position where we are legally compliant. This is also based on the current projected TA expenditure forecasted to the end of the FY.

Currently, there are 211 families in B&B of which, 155 have been in B&B for more than 6 weeks.

This growth is required to enable us to pay the landlord a higher rent whilst not passing this onto the resident. Passing on a rent increase to the resident will make the accommodation unaffordable and would then put us foul of the Suitability of Accommodation Order as this would bring in further suitability issues which we could be challenged against, including being JR'd.. We would also not want to add additional pressure on the HB subsidy loss.

An example of the cost of a 1 bed TA in the borough;

Current model

Rent to landlord	365
Resident charge	287.35
HB subsidy	216

HB subsidy loss	-71.35
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Model if all charge passed to resident

Rent to landlord	365
Resident charge	365
HB subsidy	216
HB subsidy loss	-149

The second model would also increase the rent to the resident by £69.08 above the one bed LHA

Figures are fluid, we are trying to reduce B&B but need to continue paying top up rents to landlords above what the resident is charged to keep households in the borough.

We are still housing households outside of the borough but if the rents re not topped up to keep inline with the market trend, we will have to start placing more households outside of the borough and outside of London. The number of families placed into Kent has more than doubled in the last 5 months. During the same period in 2022, we had 20 households in Kent, we now have 48.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

This growth will enable the service to procure more properties in the borough, meaning keeping more households in the borough.

In accordance with the Mayor's wishes to keep everyone in the borough, this will enable us to keep more households in the borough, and when in a position of having no families in unsuitable accommodation, we would focus on moving other households back to the borough, dependent on supply.

Risks and Implications:

If growth is not agreed, this would been placing households outside of the borough and potentially outside of London. We would also be procuring accommodation outside of the borough where rents are similar to our Tower Hamlets rates and would mean more pressure on HB subsidy loss.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

This will not add any value for money but will improve efficiency as it is a statutory requirement to place households in the borough in the first instance and then neighbouring boroughs. It will also reduce the number of statutory and judicial reviews the borough receives.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Future of Building Control – Responding to Grenfell Part 2				
Reference:	GRO / HAR 003 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Unavoidable Growth		
Directorate:	Housing and Regeneration	Growth Service Area:	Planning and development services		
Directorate Service:	Planning and Building Control (P&BC)	Strategic Priority Outcome:	2. Providing homes for the future		
Lead Officer and Post:	David Williams, Director, Planning and Building Control (P&BC)	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Kabir Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding		

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	883	501	(50)	(200)	251

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	20	5	-	-	5

Proposal Summary:

Context

This is the second part of a Growth Bid process started in 22-23 for 23-24 and 24-25.

Background and Part 1

Over the last 12 months the council has been working hard to detail how it proposes to address the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022, the governments regulatory response to the Grenfell Tragedy of 2017, to ensure such a tragedy can never happen again.

This culminated in a part successful growth bid by Planning & Building Control for 23-24 of £401k with an additional reserved basic additional amount for 24-25 of £464k. However, this fell short of the amount identified as required at the time and requirements have since increased as we now better understand the details of the act and our capacity to respond. This growth bid reflects our current assessment of what is needed to enable the council to provide a robust response to the new legislation and its subsequent regulations, implementation and delivery model. We cannot and must not leave the safety from fire for all our residents in any sort of uncertainty, the implications of failure are so disastrous as witnessed at Grenfell they cannot be repeated.

For a Borough like Tower Hamlets with its nationally significant stock of higher risk residential and other buildings (over 18 meters in height), currently numbering over 1000 this is not a nice to have. We are in the spotlight and the government has already visited LBTH, noted our proliferation of higher-risk buildings and indicated they would like to understand our response, seeing us as amongst the leaders in this field.

The government has been busy setting up the infrastructure within which we will need to operate with the establishment of the National Building Safety Regulator (BSR) positioned under the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and the identification, for London, of the “London Hub” (City of London Corporation).

The Building Safety Regulator will be the Building Control body for all higher risk buildings (mainly buildings with residential 18m or over), however the work will actually be carried out at the local level. It will be distributed via the London Hub, with the relevant local authority being the first port of call to take on the work. Given the large number of tall buildings in the pipeline and our focus on delivering the homes our residents need, we need to be able to ensure those buildings are safe and thus need the right resources, skills and expertise in the team.

We need to recruit and retain a body of Registered Building Inspectors (RBI) that can offer the capacity to possibly both:

(i). Assess new development proposals and (ii). Be part of a multi-disciplinary team to assess existing structures, these are then reassessed every 5 years to be certified (this is now looking less likely at this time although we do understand that the whole system may be revisited in the light of the Grenfell Inquiry report once it is published. In any event to do this we must significantly grow the BC team, which requires additional Funding.

Part 1 – Decisions

Year 1: Approved £401k.

The first growth bid secured funding for 6 months of this year the funding at senior grades for x5 RBI. We will be competing nationally for staff who are already amongst the hardest to recruit and who will need to be validated as competent and carry substantial responsibility in the assessment process so the grades are senior.

We are also looking to upskill some of the existing experienced staff to become validated as competent so they can also be RBI as well as part of our existing staff saving money on additional new staff. We estimate that x5 roles will eventually secure this status but it is testing and our staff are mainly inexperienced. We have amended grades to deliver this pathway.

We are also aware that there is a national recruitment crisis in Building Control so we have, for a number of years now, developed a grow your own/workforce to reflect the community approach and successfully embedded a pathway for trainees to join and be supported to be surveyors. With a particular interest in encouraging local talent to take advantage of this pathway. This takes around 6-10 years to be able to assess buildings of the scale we have in LBTH so we are also adding capacity in the structure to secure staff earlier as apprentices (x2) and added roles at trainee (x1), surveyor (x1) and principal (x1) reviewing grades so this help us develop a supply to replace retiring experienced staff, reward and retain staff much cheaper than prevailing market salaries.

It is also worth remembering that the existing BC service is a trading account so the general fund contributes only 40% of the cost of a post, furthermore it is considered likely that the act will also deliver extra, chargeable work through local authority building control as the private sector will not be able to undertake the work, so income should increase. The growth fund bid also included support for training and developing for all additional staff as well as supporting existing staff to secure competence as RBI.

Year 2: Already approved £464k.

This was significantly less than the amount required (and discussed and agreed with the Mayor). The growth bid had requested over £800k in a live changing environment, but the sum was reduced to the £464k figure with no explanation given for the reduction or what was no longer being expected to be delivered as part of the bid.

Because of how crucial this growth bid is to how we can respond to the BSA and concern over this reduced amount, discussions were had with the past CEO and the current interim to ensure understanding of the importance of the growth bid. The suggested approach was to revisit year two in 2023/24 (i.e. now) and year three next year.

We have established that the reduced Year 2 sum embeds the full 12 months cost of x5 RBI at Grade M-O, embeds the full 40% cost of the additional existing staff and the developmental costs for staff. We think it also delivers capacity for an additional x2 RBI.

Year 2: Additional Requested in this Proposal £501k

Appendix 1 attached details more specifically this proposal.

We consider as a minimum we should add:

- the cost of x3 further RBI (this will then give us x10 new overall and in time x5 internally compliant senior staff)
- expertise training/validation/competence support and training costs for staff
- two specialist officers in drainage and in mechanical and electrical surveying
- a 50% contribution to the administration of this new system in Building Control would complete the service offer at this stage.

We are not proposing to expand numbers of administrative staff but rather review job descriptions to ensure they can take on the work. There may well be future administrative support needed but this is not yet known. There may in time need to be more RBI but hopefully at that point we would be in a cost recovery phase so no further growth fund would potentially be required.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

It should be noted that the bid for these Growth Funds are, in the main temporary, and funding will be re-directed back to the general fund once income from the BSR starts to come into the council. All work for the BSR is charged at a per hour rate so once work commences we will be able to start to bill the BSR at stages and receive an income. However, this will take a few years to start receiving an income this way as buildings new to the process will take a few years to get to delivery and then to hit construction milestones, some of these structures take many years through many phases to complete. We do not envisage any significant income until around 26-27. Growth Funding could then begin to be reduced in stages to minimise the ask of the general fund as far as possible. This means to an extent this Growth Bid is almost just to get the new approach embedded, rather than a long-term requirement. But exactly when that cost recovery will be of sufficient amount that we can reduce general fund budget is not yet known, so the assumption that we can reduce general fund by £50k in 25/26 and £200k in 26/27 will need to be reviewed (and the figure may go down or up).

It is hoped that this approach will secure, with fully filled posts, a Building Control service that will present LBTH as self-sufficient and able to manage and absorb all the available Building Control work it is asked to lead on in its own Borough.

The initial assessment by BC in discussion with peers across the profession identified provisionally that LBTH with its volume of new structures (many are higher than 18 metres (6/7 stories) and existing buildings would need up to 20 RBI staff. We have no way of knowing exactly at this stage, workload/capacity of an officer, complexity of requirements of the tasks involved in an as yet undetailed process but we are very anxious to ensure that in LB Tower Hamlets we do all we can to deliver a robust fit for purpose response.

As the system is new it is not possible to assess or even anticipate performance at this stage but this will inevitably emerge with monitoring over-time. We will be able to gather data about average income per proposal, time from work to income being received, case load capacity and assess levels of expertise we will also be able to put some more depth to anticipated benefits from regulation changes such as the likelihood of more building control work and therefore more income being received overall.

Risks and Implications:

Some of the main risks and implications are:

1. Fire Risk is a major national concern. The risk of fire in tall, higher risk, buildings in the borough is one which can endanger residents' lives (and that of fire fighters) and remains until all our buildings, especially those with any of the dangerous cladding on them have been fire safety reviewed and assessed (and reviewed regularly thereafter). This work will involve our building control staff working along with staff reporting to the new Building Safety Regulator. Reputationally it will be important for the council to take an assertive lead in reviewing the boroughs high risk building stock and providing confidence to its many residents.
2. Tower Hamlets likely has more higher risk tall buildings than any other local authority so we will be a high profile, influential, performer and need to respond to the challenge. If we do not this will carry a risk for all our residents and building users but it would also not reflect well reputationally on the local authority.
3. Without this review and rethink there is a risk that overtime the building control service will, as its experienced surveyors retire and other staff continue to be tempted away to the private sector, slowly surrender more competitive business to the private sector. This will mean the reduced capacity service will not be able to offer local residents and businesses, the professional high-quality service backed by a confidence in the council. For example, current major clients range from Canary Wharf PLC to Berkely Homes and Ballymore to local residents and business across the borough and bring in around a £1 million in fees. In addition, the BSA puts an expectation on local authorities to ensure they have a building control service to reflect their profile of buildings, as such we would be expected to have one of the biggest services in the country.
4. We have to have the required number of RBI to be able to take on the high-risk building work from the HSE. If we do not the HSE can put the council into special measures, which has both financial and reputational risks. The amount of new RBI staff we needed given our stock was initially assessed at 20. We are proposing following the partly successful part 1 bid to have 10 new RBI and to upskill and secure 5 internal staff to operate as RBI. This is still five posts short of that initial number. We may return for a further growth bid if we find that these initial staff are overloaded as this is a substantial risk to their effectiveness as illustrated in the findings of the Grenfell inquiry.

5. The recruitment process is not a formality and the Building Control industry, nationally, has intense recruitment difficulties. We have to hop that the recruitment package devised as part of this growth bid is attractive as all authorities with higher risk buildings will be working out how they can secure staff resources to do that same, at the same time. There is a risk at the implementation of the new regulations in April 24 that we have not managed to recruit enough RBI staff. We may have to revisit the package, cost and approach again if we are not securing enough qualified, competent registered staff.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

The cost of supplementing a local authority building control service to provide advice, expertise and assistance to residents and local businesses for years to come ensuring that the borough's building stock, especially it's higher-risk buildings are safe and fit for purpose is likely very small when compared to the impacts of just one high risk incident in the borough as the Grenfell tragedy has illustrated.

The Building Control service is already majority income funded from its trading account but this is not substantial enough to absorb any of the additional costs coming from the Building Safety Act. It is not yet clear whether the fire safety risk assessment works will provide additional income opportunities but the authority has so many high risk, tall buildings that it cannot afford to wait and see what may or may not happen it needs to build capacity and resilience early. Trying to recruit to roles will be extremely competitive as most city authorities with tall buildings will be looking for surveyors as well as the new Building Safety Regulator within the Health and Safety Executive.

Delivering against the proposal will, it is hoped, enable the trading potential and income generating role of building control to rebalance the financial position over-time and in the future the service will be able to secure a majority of its costs once more from a trading account/environment.

Effectively this proposal will be asking that this balance is switched for a temporary period to help redefine a new building control service delivering to it the capacity to fulfil on its fire safety duties and responsibilities and provide a competitive, attractive, high quality and efficient service fit for purpose going forward.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	Yes	Following Growth Bid 1 a restructure of Building Control is currently being implemented. All roles have been reviewed to ensure Fire Safety responsibilities from the Building Safety Act are accurately and consistently embraced.

Summary:

To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.

Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?

No

Additional Information and Comments:

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Care Technology Transformation		
Reference:	GRO / HAS 001 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Invest to Save
Directorate:	Health and Adult Social Care	Growth Service Area:	Adult Social Care
Directorate Service:	Adult Social Care & Integrated Commissioning	Strategic Priority:	5. Investing in public services
Lead Officer and Post:	Darren Ingram, Service Manager – Living Well; and Gillian Beadle-Phelps – Service Manager for Initial Assessment, Safeguarding, and Telecare	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury , Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	1,223	962	(449)	146	659

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	15 FTE	3	-	3	6

Proposal Summary:

This growth proposal needs to be considered alongside the associated capital growth proposal and the savings proposal as it is an invest-to-save.

The figures in the table above show the cumulative growth required each year and assumes that once the growth is added to the base budget it is then available again in the next financial year. As there are different budget requirements each year the amount required goes up and down. The current budget is the total current budget – it is not currently separated into a Capital and Revenue budget.

The proposal is to undertake a Care Technology transformation project, delivered over a five-year period, that will result in a significant increase in the number of residents using care technology from approximately 1,800 currently to approximately 4,400 in five years' time. The range of care technology on offer to residents will be increased, making better use of more innovative solutions and taking a personalised approach that focuses on finding the right solution to meet that individuals need. Care technology will be expanded into new cohorts, widening the offer from the mostly older population that the telecare service currently supports. There will be an increased focus on prevention, such as prevention of falls and preventing long-term conditions that result in people requiring adult social care support.

The result of the increased number of care technology users will be the prevention, reduction or delay of the type of needs that would otherwise require the provision of more costly social care support. The two largest areas of prevention, reduction or delay of need will be on those requiring care at home (homecare) and those requiring residential or nursing care. The significant majority (88%) of the saving will come from the prevention and delay of packages of care that would otherwise have been required; the remaining 12% will come from reductions to existing care packages that are no longer required due to needs being met through technology.

See the savings proposal for further detail of the transformation project.

The revenue requirements will fund the staffing required to grow the number of care technology users, the resources needed to deliver the project including the commissioning of a technology partner.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

Delivering an improved care technology offer is a key part of the Council's Adult Social Care vision and strategy. The strategy sets out the response to a series of challenges that the Council faces around poverty, financial pressures and recovery from Covid-19. Care Technology supports work around developing a strengths-based approach to social care, appreciating the things people can do as well as the things they need help with.

Care technology transformation supports the priorities set out in the Council's Strategic Plan:

Priority 2: Homes for the future - in particular the ambition to adapt homes for disabled residents. Care technology can act as 'digital adaptations' enabling disabled people to better access their homes and remain in them for longer.

Priority 5: Invest in public services – providing high quality financially sustainable services for adults to meet their goals. Care technology can support residents to achieve their goals, live more independently and reduce spend in adult social care. Care technology also enables the Council to achieve its ambition to work in collaboration with the North East London Integrated Care System to deliver integrated health and care services.

Risks and Implications:

Not securing the growth funding to undertake this project is the biggest risk. This project cannot be delivered within existing resources. Any reduced level of growth being approved would require the savings to be recalculated.

There is a risk that the saving would not be achieved, either because of the numbers of residents receiving care technology not being achieved, or because the prevention, reduction or delay of need not materialising. The business case that these figures have been based on has taken a conservative approach to identifying the numbers of residents who could benefit and of the financial benefits and this mitigates this risk.

A full benefits realisation system will be put in place as part of this project. For every individual receiving care technology the financial benefits will be tracked and recorded. Progress will be reported as part of the project governance.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

This savings proposal is an invest to save proposal, for every £1 of investment there will be £2 of net benefits to the Council, from reduced, delayed or prevented needs that would have required care services to be put in place.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	Yes	It is possible that there would be a change in the roles of staff within the telecare service, this would be identified as part of the pathway redesign. Should that be the case a full equalities impact would be undertaken as part of the handling organisational change process.

Summary:	
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.	
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No

Additional Information and Comments:
Not at this stage.

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Adult Social Care Demographic Pressures and Inflation		
Reference:	GRO / HAS 002 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Unavoidable Growth
Directorate:	Health and Adult Social Care	Growth Service Area:	Adult Social Care
Directorate Service:	Adult Social Care	Strategic Priority:	5. Investing in public services
Lead Officer and Post:	Katie O'Driscoll, Director, Adult Social Care	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury , Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	115,909	(2,381)	181	4,958	2,758

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

Demographic pressures in adult social care have been recognised nationally as a growing concern for local authority budgets. The government has allowed local authorities to add a precept increase to council tax but demand for services continues to rise. In Tower Hamlets, the adult social care precept has historically been used to fund demographic pressures in adult social care. The demographic growth calculation assumes that increases in population, combined with other demographic factors detailed below will lead to more clients needing social care support for longer. National and local policy is designed to maintain independence for as long as possible through community-based support, thus reducing the need for more costly residential services. However, more people are living longer with more complex needs. Predicted population growth in Tower Hamlets will inevitably bring an increase in the number of people who need adult social care services. Tower Hamlets has high levels of deprivation, which in turn is associated with poor mental and physical health. Deprivation levels may be further exacerbated by welfare reform. An increase in the number of people living for longer with poor health is also a factor driving an increase in demand for adult social care across all client groups. There is likely to be an increased demand for adult social care from all sections of the population as it continues to expand.

This bid uses estimated growth rates from the Department of Health sponsored systems 'Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information' (PANSI) and 'Projecting Older People Population Information' (POPPI) systems. The two systems combine population projections with benefits data and research on expected prevalence rates to produce projections of the likely future demand on social care and health services. Projections from POPPI and PANSI for previous years have proven to be reasonably accurate and we are satisfied that these are the most robust figures available for calculating projections of future growth in demand for adult social care for older people and adults accessing physical disability and mental health services.

Recalculation of the demographic growth previously agreed has been undertaken, using the POPPI and PANSI data for 2023 to 2040, by client group, age group as well as by need assessment. A reduction has been made for projected deaths in each financial year.

For 2024/25 there is an estimated demographic growth requirement of £2.92m. This has been reduced from the previous growth assumption of £6.8m (a reduction of £3.88m) due to the assumption of the current Adult Social Care Discharge Grant continuing for a further financial year, but with a reduced amount of £1.57m (National Grant estimate of £0.2 billion from the current £0.3 billion). For 2025/26 the estimated demographic growth requirement is £4.64m representing an additional £181k on the previously agreed growth. 2026/27 growth of £4.96m has not been previously agreed. Total demographic growth for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27 is an increase of £1.26m over previously agreed growth.

Higher levels of inflation than projected in 23/24 have also meant an additional £1.5m is needed on an ongoing basis from 24/25.

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	£'000	£'000	£'000
ACS Demographic Pressures Originally in MTFS	6,804	4,463	-
Updated Demographic Pressures	2,923	4,644	4,958
Ongoing Savings / Growth	(3,881)	181	4,958
Inflationary Pressure	1,500		
Ongoing Savings / Growth after Inflation	(2,381)	181	4,958

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

The funding is required to provide statutory Adult Social Care provision.

This growth bid relates directly to the strategic plan outcome – Invest in the provision of care for vulnerable members of our community.

The bid is necessary to ensure the council can fulfil its statutory duties to residents needing care and support, as articulated in the 2014 Care Act. It relates to the outcomes for adult social care expected nationally, as set out in the adult social care outcomes framework.

Accountability in adult social care is set out in our local quality assurance framework. In terms of our accountability of residents, a key mechanism is the annual local account. This publication is produced every year and sets out the quality and performance of services over the preceding 12 months. It enables residents to scrutinise and challenge our performance.

Risks and Implications:

The demographic growth calculations are based on POPPI and PANSI population growth estimations and are used to work out the new growth in client estimations. These are on top of the existing pressures in the ASC budget for existing clients. They assume a standard rate of complexity of care packages and therefore are a base calculation for population and ASC growth. Any increases in complexity during each financial year therefore become part of the ASC overspend position.

There is a risk that the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund in 2024/25 is lower than the current anticipated £1.57m.

There are still implications arising from care impacts of Long Covid that are not understood and therefore not part of these calculations. They are impacting ASC expenditure and are reflected within the current overspend position and not included in any growth assumptions. Impacts of future pandemics are also not built into any growth modelling.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

There are no resource implications arising from this growth bid.

The ASC Demographic growth budget is held on a central Directors ASC cost centre.

Implementation of demographic growth is administered via a quarterly calculation of all new clients to ASC in a quarter, and a budget virement to offset the actual cost of the care package during that quarter, to the appropriate ASC cost centre that is paying for that care. This ensures that only completely new clients and the associated cost of their care package is funded via the demographic growth budget.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-27

Proposal Title:	Culturally Sensitive Extra Care Housing Development (linked to Capital Growth Bid)		
Reference:	GRO / HAS 003 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Health and Adult Social Care	Growth Service Area:	Adult Social Care
Directorate Service:	Adult Social Care	Strategic Priority:	5. Investing in public services
Lead Officer and Post:	Hibo Mohamed, Senior Commissioning Manager, Housing with Care	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	3,417	-	305	(305)	-

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	-	-	-	-	-

Proposal Summary:
<p><i>What is the proposal and its objectives?</i></p> <p>One of the Mayor's capital priorities is an adult's home provision with care and support. The Housing with Care Strategy 2023-33 sets out the ambition to provide an additional 240 living spaces for adults with care and support needs within Extra Care Housing settings and this is the preferred route for meeting this priority. This proforma is based on a 60-bed unit on a single site, to deliver this.</p> <p>A capital bid has been submitted for £20m for this development – once a site has been identified, this estimate will need to be reviewed based on the specific nature of the site and development possible within it.</p> <p>The revenue impact of this additional provision will be to meet any initial costs of a new care and support provider, with a total revenue implication estimated to be £305k. This development is a high priority and therefore this has been programmed for 2025/26 - this will be kept under review. The process through which Adult Social Care plans for increased care and support costs is via demographic growth within the MTFS. Instead of using some of the demography funding for spot purchasing care beds outside of the borough, we will use this growth funding for additional care and support in a new Extra Care Housing scheme, through a contract, to deliver on the Mayor's priority.</p> <p>A care and support provider will be commissioned for on-site support in the new scheme, although, we could step this up gradually as new residents move in, using our existing service provider as a contract variation. Longer term, the new Extra Care Housing scheme will be revenue neutral, or even provide cost avoidance opportunities, as we will be supporting people in these settings instead of residential and nursing care homes.</p> <p>Any accommodation costs associated with the new Extra Care scheme will be met via the client or from Housing Benefit. It is therefore anticipated that the scheme will be provided via the HRA with Disabled Facilities Grant Funding (DFG) application for applicable specialist adaptations required in the properties during the building stage.</p> <p><i>What will the proposal deliver?</i></p> <p>The development of a new 60 bed extra care housing scheme on a single site that will provide a core service of 24-hour care and support through a block element contract with flexibility for additional care to be provided to those who need it. Referrals to the scheme will follow a Care Act assessment by Adult Social Care.</p> <p><i>What is the motivation and reason for the proposal? Any changes in legislation etc.</i></p> <p>The Tower Hamlets Housing with Care Strategy 2023-33 sets out the ambition to provide an additional 240 living spaces for adults within Extra Care Housing settings.</p> <p>The Mayor also has a priority to deliver an adult home with care and support.</p>

The Social Care Reform White Paper 'Putting People at the Heart of Care' recognises that people's homes are crucial to their well-being. This requires a systematic approach to the changing needs of people with care and support needs through effective joint working between housing, health and social care.

There are projected to be further significant population increases in Tower Hamlets over the next ten years, particularly for the 65+ population (@54% by 2033). This will bring with it a significant increase in demand for Adult Social Care. The Council currently have limited in borough provision of extra care housing to meet the existing demand, with significant numbers of people currently being placed out of borough to meet their care and support needs.

Why is this desirable?

There are likely to be significant benefits arising from extra care housing scheme, including:

- More choice and control for individuals receiving care
- Flexibility of care and support to reflect changes in need
- Increased independence
- Support to build and maintain relationships and community connections
- Better value for money

An additional benefit from this development will be a reduction in placements into residential and nursing care and a reduction in inappropriate and unnecessary admissions into hospital settings.

Evidence any numbers and cost drivers.

A review was undertaken to consider the future needs of older people (65+) and those with Learning Disabilities (LD) and Mental Health (MH) needs. These groups represent the vast majority of demand for bed-based care in the borough. The analysis showed the need for an additional 240 Extra Care Beds by 2033 to meet the growing population and changing needs of the residents of Tower Hamlets. The analysis also suggests that there are significant cost saving opportunities by moving away from the over reliance on residential care placements and opting for additional Extra Care Housing schemes.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

How does this proposal contribute to achieving the strategic priorities of the Council?

Providing high quality, financially sustainable services for adults to maintain their housing rights whilst having the care and support they require to promote their independence and wellbeing.

What are the expected improvements in service delivery & performance? Provide performance information data.

- The service provider is expected to promote and maintain a service user's wellbeing and contribute to the prevention or reduction of a person's care and support needs
- Genuine involvement of service users to define how care and support is delivered to meet their agreed desired outcomes – more control for individuals
- Increased choice for service users within Tower Hamlets
- Less admissions to care homes in line with national best practice and our Strategic Plan target

Risks and Implications:

Highlight any service and corporate associated risks

High value social care packages or placements into more costly care settings such as residential and nursing homes, with people placed outside of the borough can result in a higher number of GP visits, ambulance call outs and unplanned hospital admissions. This scheme will help mitigate these risks.

A suitable site needs to be identified and viability of the specific scheme fully assessed at this point. Risk of not identifying a suitable site and risk that costs may be higher than estimate – to be managed through the programme management and budget process.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

Provide justification for VFM and efficiency

It is anticipated that the new capital development of an Extra Care setting will provide Adult Social Care clients with improved choice and a high quality extra care offer and therefore result in lower costs/cost avoidance. The revenue growth will be utilised to fund the initial costs of the care and support provider.

Residents will directly pay for any accommodation costs via their own funding or via Housing Benefit claims (if they are eligible).

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	The eligibility for the service is limited to adults whose needs have been assessed by Council as being eligible to be met as per the Council's duties or powers under the Care Act 2014, the Mental Health Act 1983, or other associated legislation, regulations or guidance.
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Comino hosting, licence, and contract renewal		
Reference:	GRO / RES 001 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Unavoidable Growth
Directorate:	Resources	Growth Service Area:	Central services
Directorate Service:	IT	Strategic Priority:	5. Investing in public services
Lead Officer and Post:	Adrian Gorst, Director of IT	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	78	136	(51)	-	85

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

The Comino (D360) application is a document and workflow management system used by Tower Hamlets Homes (THH), Housing Options, and the Benefits Service. There is a requirement to upgrade the application and the servers that host it due to being out of support.

This proposal involves transitioning to a more sustainable long-term solution by relocating hosting to the supplier, rather than the current on-premises Azure installation. This aligns with the strategic direction of the Council. Not upgrading the servers and the application poses a cyber security threat. Additionally, the supplier will not renew the contract when it expires on 31 March 2024 due to this risk.

Neither the IT Service nor Tower Hamlets Homes (THH), Housing Options, and the Benefits Service have the budget for 2024/25. This is due to increased costs for hosting and additional licensing cost when the contract expires. The estimated one-off project cost is £50,925, followed by an estimated annual recurring cost of £162,577 for hosting, support, and maintenance of the application. Therefore, the additional cost and growth budget required is £84,577 per year.

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

Moving the application to supplier hosting would offer the Council continuity of supply and service. It would also ensure a longer-term sustainable solution, as the current version of the on-premises Azure installation is being discontinued. In two to three years, the Council would need to transition to the supplier hosting arrangement. If the Council chooses to stay on the on-premises Azure installation, it must upgrade to mitigate the risk of a cyber security threat and ensure service continuity. Therefore, commercially it is advantageous now to move to the supplier-hosted arrangement.

Risks and Implications:

The application is currently hosted in the Microsoft Azure environment of the Council. It is understood that the servers hosting the application are outdated and no longer supported by Microsoft, posing a cyber security risk to both the hosting environment and the application. Without the upgrades, the supplier would not renew the contract upon its expiration on 31 March 2023.

The option to “do nothing” is not feasible. It would adversely impact service delivery. If the contract is allowed to expire, the Council would be unable to deliver services to residents. Due to the absence of a contract in place, the Council would not be able to raise a purchase order (PO) for service continuity. Consequently, business continuity plans would need to be invoked.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

The supplier-hosted application solution provides several benefits to the Council. This includes:

- Mitigating the security threat by bringing the system to the latest version on servers and the application.
- A fully managed application that includes version update costs.
- Access to new features, such as enterprise search or drag-and-drop allocation, to provide efficiencies that were not previously available.
- The browser-based application is not affected by latency issues that traditional desktop solutions have.
- A new user interface that makes it easier for all users to navigate, allowing staff to perform tasks more quickly.
- Approach aligns the end dates of the housing (Northgate), revenues and benefits (Civica) contracts to end dates, to make future strategic decisions.
- Removes application downtime/operational risks to the authority.
- Civica's DIS reduces image sizes (existing and new ones) and is likely to provide improvements in document times, with a consequent, significant saving in staff resources.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a summary of how this impacts each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at the full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce the resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve a direct impact on front-line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		

GROWTH PROPOSAL

Proposal Title:	Council Tax Cost of Living Relief Fund		
Reference:	GRO / RES 002 / 24-25	Growth Type:	Mayoral Priority
Directorate:	Resources	Growth Service Area:	Central services
Directorate Service:	Revenues and Benefits	Strategic Priority:	1. Tackling the cost-of-living crisis
Lead Officer and Post:	Chris Boylett, Head of Revenues and Benefits	Lead Member and Portfolio:	Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

Financial Impact:	Current Budget 2023-24	Growth 2024-25	Growth 2025-26	Growth 2026-27	Total Growth
Budget (£000)	N/A	658	753	867	2,278

Staffing Impact (if applicable):	Current 2023-24	FTE Increase 2024-25	FTE Increase 2025-26	FTE Increase 2026-27	Total FTE Increase
Employees (FTE) or state N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Proposal Summary:

The proposal is to create a fund to protect those most impacted by an increase in Council Tax. The funding set aside to provide the scheme is equivalent to 17% of the additional income generated from a 2.99% increase in general Council Tax. A 2.99% general increase in Council Tax is £34.29 for a Band D property.

The existing CTR scheme will ensure that the poorest in the borough are not impacted by the proposed rise. It is therefore envisaged that the impact will be most felt in the 'squeezed middle'.

A fund is therefore proposed, based on annual total household gross income, the means tested threshold for 2024-25 is proposed to be capped at £49,500. The fund can be accessed by any household occupying their sole residence within the borough and not currently protected by the council tax discount scheme,

The fund will remain in place for the duration of the medium-term financial plan and the total household income threshold will be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process.

The existing CTR scheme remains generous and unchanged and will continue to ensure that the poorest in the borough are not impacted by the proposed rise. Tower Hamlets residents' straddle 2 economic extremes; from the poorest (who are already supported as set out above) to the very wealthy, for whom the impact of the increase is modest (as illustrated on table x below). It is therefore envisaged that those most financially disadvantaged by this necessary increase will be households occupying their sole residence within the borough who are not cushioned by the current discount scheme and not receiving enough income to be able to absorb even modest increases in outgoings. This group is often referred to as the "squeezed middle".

It is difficult to find a reference source covering this section of our community. Integral to our proposals is a commitment to secure more data around this group which will enable a more targeted approach in the future. HMRC upper earning threshold for higher rate tax remains £50,270 which reflects the freeze in personal tax allowances at the equivalent 2022-23 rates.

We propose to establish a means tested fund with total gross household income threshold of £49,500 per annum for financial year 2024-25. We commit to maintaining the fund across the full 3-year period of this medium-term financial plan and will review the earnings threshold annually as part of our budget setting process.

We have a council tax base of 140,000 dwellings. c28,000 households currently benefit from our council tax discount scheme. Using the average weekly band d equivalent as an illustration the fund proposed for the coming year will protect an additional c19,000 households.

We have considered the risks associated with higher-than-expected demand on the scheme and have mitigated the risk by making adequate provision within our overall risk contingency for the coming year.

The table below illustrates the weekly impact of the proposed 2.99% general Council Tax rise by council tax band.

Property Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Weekly increase	£0.44	£0.51	£0.59	£0.66	£0.81	£0.95	£1.10	£1.32

Using the total household gross income takes account of all household incomes and seems a fair bases on which to access the fund. The threshold set remains below the higher rate income tax threshold and circa 8% above the ONS average national weekly total earnings (AWE).

Budgeted Outcomes / Accountability (focus on improved performance):

The fund is intended to improve wealth inequality by supporting those most impacted with the additional Council Tax also providing community initiatives and projects.

Risks and Implications:

There is a risk the fund will not be sufficient. However, a considerable amount has been put aside for the fund to mitigate this.

Value for Money and Efficiency:

The fund helps ensures that community initiatives and projects can be funded without detriment to those most impacted.

GROWTH PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

Trigger Questions	Yes / No	If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage.
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents?	No	
Does the change involve direct impact on front line services?	No	
Changes to a Service		
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Changes to Staffing		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	
Summary:		
To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool.		
Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required?	No	
Additional Information and Comments:		