

APPG for London

Minutes of the Spending Review 2021 meeting held on Wednesday 22 September 2021

Speakers:

Paul Honeyben, Interim Director for Local Government Finance and Improvement, London Councils

- Spending Review will conclude on 27 October alongside Autumn Budget. It will cover 3 years.
- 5 top priorities: Levelling up opportunity particularly for young people, Supporting a green recovery, Unlocking housing through infrastructure, Advancing Global Britain by supporting Global London, Ensuring strong and innovative local public services
- London local government has seen a 25 per cent reduction in resources since 2010 with disproportionate income losses due to the pandemic

Manny Hothi, Chief Executive, Trust for London

- High numbers of poverty in the capital are largely a result of high cost of housing.
- Impact of COVID-19 has been high in London – Increasing number of Universal Credit claimants, Increase in food bank use, but also massive fall in evictions due to covid policy.

Adam Tyndall, Programme Director, Transport, London First

- 3 short term asks of government: 1) Campaign to get people back into central London, 2) Investment in public transport that supports the return to growth, 3) A business-led reskilling programme
- Need for a stable funding deal to get Transport for London to 2023

Questions:

Q from Sir Bob Neill MP – The Chancellor has suggested this will be a tight settlement. What is the argument London MPs should be making to him – and what are the critical priorities?

- Paul – LC's submission is a lot about flexibility and freedom rather than big funding asks. Highlight the impact on other public services e.g. knock on social care.
- Manny – The crunch on people with low incomes is sure to hit. May be room on UC.
- Adam – Short term investments that can pay off.

Q from LCCI – Business rates are going up. What can be done?

- Adam – Even before the pandemic, the business rates system wasn't working. London represents around 16 per cent of rateable properties in the UK but contributes around a third of business rates. The government needs to take a fundamental review – devolve business rates to London.