

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive

Tuesday 26 February 2019 9:30 am

Cllr Peter John OBE was in the chair

Present

Member	Position
Cllr Peter John OBE	Chair
Cllr Georgia Gould	Deputy Chair
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Vice chair
Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE	Vice chair
Ms Catherine McGuinness	Vice chair
Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE	
Cllr Julian Bell	
Cllr Clare Coghill	
Cllr Georgia Gould	
Cllr Darren Rodwell	
Cllr Muhammed Butt	
Cllr Ravi Govindia	Substituting for Cllr Nickie Aiken
Cllr Jas Athwal	

London Councils officers and Ms Laura Citron, Chief Executive Officer of London and Partners were in attendance.

1. Apologies for absence and announcement of deputies

Apologies were received from Cllr Nickie Aiken for whom Cllr Ravi Govindia was deputising.

2. Declaration of interest

Ms Catherine McGuinness declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item 4 *London and Partners* as a member of its board.

3. Minutes of the Executive Meeting held on 13 November 2018

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 15 January 2019 were agreed.

4. Childrens Services Finance Pressures

This item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

5. Governance in London

The Chief Executive introduced the report saying that work fell into three main categories:

- **Resilience Contingency Planning** Local authority input into contingency planning was being co-ordinated through the Local Authorities' Panel (LAP), chaired by John Barradell, Chief Executive of the City of London. This initiative was operating under the auspices of the statutory London Resilience Forum and working through the Forum's Brexit Contingency Planning Group.
- **London Councils work:**
 - Lobbying on particular policy issues, e.g. the proposition for a £30,000 salary threshold for EEA skilled workers proposition
 - Capturing borough issues of concern, e.g. settled status application payments
 - Working with professional networks to identify areas of risk in the short and medium term, assessing potential financial impacts and establishing some common communications lines.
- **Liaison with MHCLG** on sharing messages and updates. The Member for Business, Europe and Good Growth (Cllr Clare Coghill) and the Chair sit on the MHCLG Ministerial Brexit & Local Government Delivery Board.

In the discussion the following points were brought out:

- In the case of a no-deal Brexit there would be an issue of Food Trading Standards officers being required to check food imports from Europe whose arrival point was in London
- Cllr Lib Peck and Cllr Ruth Dombey had been part of an LGA delegation that had met with the local government minister to call for money to be set aside to cover the cost of Brexit to local authorities
- Council officers had made clear that putting precise figures on the cost of Brexit preparations in boroughs so far was difficult but at the same time the Secretary of State, James Brokenshire had made equally clear that he was looking for evidence
- Cllr Nicki Aiken could make a useful contribution in conversations with ministers on this topic

The Executive agreed to note the report.

6. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

The Chair introduced the item saying Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) had been an issue for some years now. He had met with the prominent campaigner, Lord Alf Dubs, and wanted to gauge whether a London Councils' position in respect of the campaign, *Our Turn*, supported by the refugee charity, *Safe Passage*, was desirable and/or feasible. The *Our Turn* campaign was calling for the establishment of a new 'Children at Risk' resettlement scheme to bring 10,000 child refugees to the UK over the 10 years. It would build on the current Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme.

Cllr Muhammed Butt introduced the report saying that the principles behind London Councils approach included:

- Future financial support must fully fund the costs of caring for all UASC
- That there must be a single, consistent national response which was equitable, proportionate and ensured no council remained above its 0.07% threshold
- That there should not be pressure for a disproportionate number of placements on London and the South East as a result of the *Our Turn* campaign

- That the Home Office should engage with London boroughs to reform the current processing arrangements in the Capital in order to ensure the more efficient assessment and transfer of UASC
- Lord Dubs could be asked to initiate a debate in the House of Lords requiring a minister to respond.

Cllr Ray Puddifoot said that as Heathrow Airport was in his borough, this had been a particular pressure locally.

Cllr Clare Coghill pointed out that the vast majority of UASC were boys, there was a huge gender imbalance and Cllr Georgia Gould that there was now a further cost for 18-25 year-old care leavers.

Cllr Darren Rodwell argued that the cost of asylum-seeking placements in his borough had become unsustainable.

Cllr Govindia spoke of the scale of the challenge being taken on. If the campaign wanted a ten-year commitment to be made to what, were often, very disturbed children, that needed a ten-year funding commitment. The case of the Kindertransport in the 1930s was often put forward, but it should be remembered that that was not a government initiative but came from faith groups and the community and the involvement of those was needed again now.

Cllr Teresa O'Neill argued that more should be done on the 'cliff-edge' cost pressures to local authorities and establishing clearly the fact that London did more than its fair share.

The Chair concluded by saying that more time was needed to prepare a report to Leaders' Committee – which the Executive agreed - and that Leaders' Committee will receive a report later in the year.

The Executive agreed to note the report.

7. Local Government Finance – verbal update

The Director of Finance, Performance and Procurement provided the verbal update:

- The Business Rates Pilot extension had been agreed, albeit at 75%
- The promised additional resources as part of the settlement was welcomed but were not enough and if they had been distributed according to established needs formulae £130m more would have gone to urban areas.
- The additional £250m for SEND was again welcomed but regrettably it was not going to be distributed according to the established High Needs formula
- The consultation on Fair Funding had not yet closed
- The distribution proposed that there be no separate deprivation factor in the Foundation formula
- The Spending Review lobbying campaign had been launched at the Summit
- Core Cities, Key Cities and the All Party Parliamentary Group were being liaised with
- The approach to the consultation response on Fair Funding to be tabled at Leaders' Committee on 5th February.

The Executive agreed to note the briefing

The meeting ended at 11:00am.

Action points

	Item	Action	Progress
6.	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report to come to a future Leaders' Committee, but not that on 5th February 	PAPA Children's Services	Will be reported to March Leaders