

London Councils

Minutes of the London Councils Leaders' Committee held on 11 February 2020
Cllr Peter John OBE chaired the meeting

Present:

BARKING AND DAGENHAM
BARNET
BEXLEY
BRENT
BROMLEY
CAMDEN
CITY OF LONDON
EALING
ENFIELD
GREENWICH
HACKNEY
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM
HARINGEY
HOUNSLOW
ISLINGTON
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA
KINGSTON UPON THAMES
LAMBETH
LEWISHAM
MERTON
NEWHAM
REDBRIDGE
RICHMOND
SOUTHWARK
SUTTON
TOWER HAMLETS
WALTHAM FOREST
WANDSWORTH
WESTMINSTER

Cllr Darren Rodwell
Cllr Daniel Thomas
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE
Cllr Muhammed Butt
Cllr Colin Smith
Cllr Georgia Gould
Catherine McGuinness
Cllr Julian Bell
Cllr Nesil Caliskan
Cllr Danny Thorpe
Mayor Philip Glanville
Cllr Stephen Cowan
Cllr Joseph Ejiofor
Cllr Steve Curran
Cllr Richard Watts
Cllr Elizabeth Campbell
Cllr Liz Green
Cllr Jack Hopkins
Cllr Kevin Bonavia (Deputy)
Cllr Stephen Alambritis
Mayor Rokshana Fiaz OBE
Cllr Kam Rai (Deputy)
Cllr Gareth Roberts
Cllr Peter John OBE
Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE
Mayor John Biggs
Cllr Clare Coghill
Cllr Ravi Govindia
Cllr Rachael Robathan

Apologies:

HARROW
HAVERING
HILLINGDON
LEWISHAM
REDBRIDGE

Cllr Graham Henson
Cllr Damian White
Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE
Mayor Damien Egan
Cllr Jas Athwal

Officers of London Councils and representatives of the London Pensions CIV were in attendance.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Rachael Robathan, the new Leader of Westminster City Council and the Committee offered its congratulations to Cllrs Nickie Aiken and David Simmonds on their recent election as Members of Parliament.

1. Apologies for Absence and Announcement of Deputies

The apologies and deputies listed above were noted.

2. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of the Leaders' Committee 3 December 2019

The minutes of the Leaders' Committee meeting of 3 December 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Update on the London Pensions CIV

The Chair introduced Lord Kerslake and Mike O'Donnell, Chair and CEO of the London Pensions CIV respectively, who provided their annual update to Leaders' Committee.

Lord Kerslake informed members that:

- The London Pensions CIV was the vehicle by which London boroughs pooled their pension investments: it had been operational for around five years and now employed 29 staff
- Over half of the pension assets under management (AUM) were now held by the London Pensions CIV and over £29m of cumulative net savings had been created for boroughs
- The London Pensions CIV had now implemented the recommendations of the Governance review, including making changes to the Board
- In terms of the year ahead, the medium term financial strategy and budget had been agreed on 30 January 2020: costs had been contained within the limits of the agreed plan for the previous year's MTFS, but the slower than hoped for pace of pooling had resulted in boroughs being asked to increase their basic fee by £20,000
- To reduce the costs of AUM, the London Pensions CIV planned to introduce more fund products and also change its business purpose to speed up the way in which new offers were delivered.

Mr O'Donnell added that:

- In terms of growth, focus had been given to working more closely with Pension Chairs, Fund Managers and Finance Directors, and there were opportunities to work with boroughs to understand the potential for investment within their strategic asset allocations.

In response to a question from Cllr. Georgia Gould regarding the pace of the environmental, social and governance (ESG) work and the opportunity for the London Pensions CIV to influence green investment, Lord Kerslake confirmed that more capacity was being built into the organisation in terms of an additional expert resource, and also that they were working with boroughs to offer alternative green options for investment. Mr O'Donnell also mentioned that the different approaches of boroughs to green issues, for example the adoption by some boroughs of fossil fuel exclusion mandates, was a factor.

Cllr Smith said that he had profound concerns about the London Pension CIV, including around issues of governance and staffing. He encouraged other members to assess their responsibilities to pension funds in their boroughs. Lord Kerslake informed members that a range of methods were available to scrutinise the work of London Pensions CIV, including general and shareholder meetings, as well as ongoing dialogue with boroughs about the service.

Responding to a question from Mayor John Biggs about how London Pensions CIV compared to its peers, Lord Kerslake informed members that although the methodology of benchmarking could be impacted by the different ways in which pension pools were established, staffing comparisons had shown that the London Pensions CIV were lower than average in terms of staffing ratios.

Leaders' Committee noted the report, and thanked Lord Kerslake and Mr O' Donnell for attending the meeting. Both representatives of the London Pensions CIV then left the meeting,

5. Appointments to London Councils' Executive and Lead Members

Leaders' Committee agreed that Cllr Elizabeth Campbell (Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea) be appointed to London Councils' Executive as the new Portfolio holder for Schools and Children's Services.

The new Portfolio Holder for Crime and Community Safety was Cllr Thorpe (Royal Borough of Greenwich) with Cllr Rachael Robathan (Westminster City Council) appointed as Conservative Party Lead.

6. London Office of Technology and Innovation

Mayor Glanville introduced the report, informing members that:

- The London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) was developed by London Councils in partnership with the GLA
- the initial assumption was that eight London boroughs would join, but sixteen councils were now members of LOTI
- The year one workstreams for LOTI were:
 - Digital skills
 - Tech procurement
 - Data collaboration
- Additional workstreams in year two would concentrate on the shape of public services of the future, as well as developing practical approaches to digital leadership
- Details of LOTI's work were posted via weekly blogs to chart the development of these workstreams and aid transparency in LOTI's work.

In response to a question about how cross London impact could be achieved given that not all boroughs had joined LOTI, Mayor Glanville explained that the intention had always been not to wait for all boroughs to sign up before commencing the work and sharing the results across the capital. While he acknowledged that additional advantages would be achieved through direct membership, the intention was to lead by example and share lessons learned, using London Councils' role to help share the information across all boroughs.

Leaders' Committee noted the report.

7. Pledges to Londoners – Update on Progress of Housing and Planning

Cllr Rodwell introduced the report, thanking all those who had been involved on a cross party basis in the work on this aspect of the Pledges. He was also pleased to report the numbers of boroughs who had so far signed up for the PLACE and Capital Letters programmes.

Cllr Rodwell further reported that the boroughs of Sutton and Barking and Dagenham were supporting the commissioning of a report to look at the issue of fire safety in low rise buildings.

In response to a question from Cllr Teresa O'Neill about the progress of the Capital Letters programme, Cllr Rodwell undertook to ask for an update report and feed it back to members.

Cllr Roberts felt that the Housing and Planning Pledges should place more emphasis on climate change, ensuring that future homes were fit for purpose and bringing pressure to bear on Housing Associations to reduce their carbon footprint. Cllr Rodwell agreed that this would be more clearly set out when this aspect of the Pledges was next considered.

Cllr Elizabeth Campbell asked about the position regarding co-operation between boroughs to accept the allocation of homeless households. Cllr Rodwell reported that there was a proposed Memorandum of Understanding being developed between authorities via the LGA which would cover support when making homeless households' referrals outside of London. The Chair also reminded members that a protocol was already in place regarding the requirement to notify boroughs when placing homeless households out of their boroughs. Cllr Rodwell agreed to reissue the protocol to Leaders.

8. Feedback from Joint Boards

London Crime Reduction Board (LCRB)

The Chair fed back on the most recent meeting of the LCRB, which had received:

- A Report on the VRU's work
- An update from the Deputy Commissioner on:
 - Crime statistics
 - Officer numbers
 - County Lines
- A report on disproportionality and race equality in the Criminal Justice System
- An update on the next Police and Crime Plan.

The Chair agreed to disseminate again the results of the London Councils' County Lines research to Leaders' Committee.

London Health Board (LHB)

In Cllr Puddifoot's absence, Cllr Watts reported that the most recent meeting had considered:

- Childhood obesity and setting out ambitions within the health sector
- Violence reduction including the public health approach and wider social care issues
- Health and care estate work
- Mental Health and Dementia Friendly London campaigns

- The London Health and Care vision and the resultant NHS re-shaping

London Economic Action Partnership Board (LEAP)

Cllr Georgia Gould reported that four new business board members had joined LEAP. The latest meeting had also included:

- A presentation on the post Brexit position for businesses
- The Local Industrial Strategy
- The LEAP Communication Strategy

Homes for Londoners Board (HfL)

Cllr Rodwell reported that the most recent meeting had looked at:

- Building Safety in London
- The Mayoral London Housing Panel
- The Housing Delivery report, noting that numbers of new build affordable housing overall were steadily increasing

In response to a question from Cllr Caliskan regarding debate about climate change within the HfL Board, Cllr Rodwell said that climate change impacts on both new and older accommodation would be considered as part of the Board's work

9. Minutes and Summaries

Leader's Committee agreed to note the minutes and summaries of:

- GLPC – 24 October 2019
- Grants Committee – 13 November 2019
- TEC Executive – 14 November 2019
- TEC – 5 December 2019
- Executive – 21 January 2020
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The Chair agreed to remove the press and public in that the following items were exempt from the Access to Information Regulations, and via Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (Section 3) in that the items related to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information) .