

Operational Sub-Group

Future Role of RPG

Item No: 2

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Summary This paper outlines the proposed changes to the role and remit of the RPG arising from the RPG Review conducted during autumn 2010

Recommendations OSG members are recommended to

- Comment on the refocused role of the RPG
- Comment on the proposed amendments made in the constitution

Background

- 1 The London 14-19 Regional Planning Group (RPG) was originally established in 2008 to support local authorities in their new duties for commissioning of 16-19 education and training inherited from the Learning and Skills Council. The group was formalised by London Councils Leaders' Committee in December 2009.
- 2 The RPG was set up under the previous government's arrangements for 16-19 education and training. The Coalition Government has since removed the requirement to have formal partnership arrangements between boroughs, though there remains a statutory requirement for local authorities to cooperate in securing 16-19 education provision.

Review

- 3 In response to these changes an independent review of the RPG was conducted during October and November 2010. The review was led by John Freeman, independent consultant and former head of the transition support programme for the Local Government Association. The review was based on evidence from interviews, questionnaires and written submissions from local authority officers and members, statutory agencies and provider organisations.
- 4 The large majority of those who gave evidence believe that there is a significant ongoing benefit from developing and maintaining a pan-London strategic view of 14-19 education and training provision, and how this fits with the employment market. This strategic view will help inform effective planning and decision-making by individuals, local authorities, schools, academies, colleges and independent providers.

Future Functions of the RPG

- 5 The following functions have been assimilated from the recommendations of the review and consideration by the RPG Board in November 2010, taking account of the newly published statutory guidance from the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) regarding the local authority role in strategic commissioning of 16-19 education and training going forward.
 - develop the strategic vision of the market for 14-19 provision in London, influencing and shaping sufficient diversity and specialism to promote full participation;
 - lobby for the best resources for London's young learners;
 - in partnership with the LSEB, provide a clear picture of the future jobs landscape and skills needs in London to influence the development of provision;
 - enable consistent scrutiny of 16-18 provision, challenge poor quality and champion excellence across the capital;
 - ensure all London's young people have access to high-quality impartial information, advice and guidance;
 - direct London providers towards regionally unmet need and gaps in the market;
 - support local authorities and providers to operate in the collective interest of London, particularly in addressing the needs of vulnerable learners; and
 - co-ordinate the development of specialist education and training across London.
- 6 In pursuing these ambitions it is recognised that there may be the need to undertake specific commissioning activities at a regional level on behalf of local authorities, based on clear business cases. The RPG workplan will be revised to reflect the refocused objectives.

Name Change

- 7 The review also suggested that the RPG's name is changed to better reflect its function and value to London. This will be discussed at the next RPG meeting.

Constitution

- 8 The review concluded that the RPG should continue under a revised constitution to reflect the changes recommended by the review. A prospective draft of such a constitution is included in Appendix A.

Recommendations

- 9 OSG members are recommended to:
 - Comment on the refocused role of the RPG
 - Comment on the proposed amendments made in the constitution

APPENDIX A – RPG CONSTITUTION

LONDON 14-19 REGIONAL PLANNING GROUP

CONSTITUTION

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The role of the LRPG is to provide pan-London strategic leadership for 14-19 education and training provision in relation to the current and future needs of learners and employers.
- 1.2 The key tasks of the group are to:
 - 1.2.1 develop the strategic vision of the market for 14-19 provision in London, influencing and shaping sufficient diversity and specialism to promote full participation;
 - 1.2.2 lobby for the best resources for London's young learners;
 - 1.2.3 in partnership with the LSEB, provide a clear picture of the future jobs landscape and skills needs in London to influence the development of provision;
 - 1.2.4 enable consistent scrutiny of 16-18 provision, challenge poor quality and champion excellence across the capital;
 - 1.2.5 ensure all London's young people have access to high-quality impartial information, advice and guidance;
 - 1.2.6 direct London providers towards regionally unmet need and gaps in the market;
 - 1.2.7 support local authorities and providers to operate in the collective interest of London, particularly in addressing the needs of vulnerable learners;
 - 1.2.8 co-ordinate the development of specialist education and training across London; and
 - 1.2.9 undertake any other tasks as directed by London Councils Leaders' Committee.

2. Definitions

- "ALDCS" is the Association of London Directors of Children's Services.
- "Association of Colleges" is the body which represents and promotes the interests of colleges of further and higher education at national and regional level.
- "CELC" is the Chief Executives' London Committee.

“Forum of London Councils”	is a working party established by Leaders’ Committee to act in an advisory capacity in relation to such issues as shall be determined by Leaders’ Committee.
“Leaders’ Committee”	is the committee comprising the Leaders of each of the London Local Authorities which discharges the functions delegated to London Councils by the London Local Authorities.
“London Councils”	is the joint committee of all the London Local Authorities constituted under an Agreement dated 13th December, 2001 as varied by an Agreement dated 1st February, 2004.
“LSEB”	is the London Skills and Employment Board, which is established to provide leadership in improving skills and employment for adults in London.
“LWBLA”	is the London Work-based Learning Alliance.
“NATSPEC”	is the body which represents and promotes the interests of independent specialist colleges for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
“LDA”	is the London Development Agency
“YPLA”	is the Young People’s Learning Agency.
“SFA”	is the Skills Funding Agency.
“NAS”	is the National Apprenticeship Service.
“DfE”	is the Department for Education.
“ASCL”	is the Association of School and College Leaders

3. Relationship with London Councils

- 3.1 The LRPG is established by a decision of Leaders’ Committee of 25 September, 2009 as a Forum of London Councils to carry out the tasks set out in Clause 1, above.

4. Voting Members

- 4.1 The members of LRPG entitled to vote on matters arising are:

- 4.1.1 **London Local Authority Members** comprising one councillor nominated by each of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat party groups.
- 4.1.2 **London Local Authority Officers** comprising two Directors of Children's Services to be nominated by ALDCS and one Chief Executive to be nominated by CELC.
- 4.1.3 **London Strategic Partners** comprising one nomination from each of the Greater London Authority and the LSEB and a representative of London employers.
- 4.1.4 **Providers Of Education Services** comprising three representatives to be nominated by the Association of Colleges after consultation with Sixth Form College Forum and NATSPEC (one shall be a Sixth Form College, and one shall represent learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in both mainstream and specialist colleges); together with one representative from LWBLA; and one representative from a school sixth form via ASCL. Each of these representatives shall be a direct provider in their own right.

All of the above nominations to be subject to the approval of Leaders' Committee. Members will be expected to declare any conflicts of interest and withdraw from voting where necessary.

5. Non-Voting Members

5.1 The members of LRPg not entitled to vote are:

- 5.1.1 **Additional London Strategic Partners** comprising one nomination from each of the DfE; the LDA; the NAS; the SFA; and the YPLA.

6. Additional members

6.1 Additional members may be admitted on such terms as may be approved by Leaders' Committee.

7. Chair

7.1 The Chair of LRPg shall be the current London Councils Executive Member for Children and Young People.

8. Resignations and termination of membership

8.1 A member of LRPg may resign by giving notice in writing to the Chair. Upon acceptance of a resignation the nominating organisation will be asked to put forward a new representative.

- 8.2 Membership – either individual or organisational - may be terminated by a majority decision of Leaders' Committee on a recommendation of LRPG if, in the reasonable opinion of that Committee, the member is failing properly to discharge the duties of the office, by reason of non-attendance, conduct or otherwise. The termination of an individual's membership will not automatically terminate the membership of their organisation, which will be asked to provide a replacement representative. Before deciding to terminate any individual's membership, Leaders' Committee will take into account any views of the RPG.
- 8.3 A casual vacancy arising as a result of a resignation or termination may be filled in accordance with the nomination procedure set out in Clause 4, above. The term of office of a member appointed to fill a casual vacancy shall terminate at the annual meeting following his/her appointment.
- 8.4 Each member will be entitled to nominate a substitute from the nominating organisation to represent them in their place if they are unable to attend LRPG. Only one member will be entitled to vote at LRPG.

9. Chair of LRPG

- 9.1 The Chair of LRPG shall be the current London Councils Executive Member for Children and Young People. Two Vice Chairs will be appointed, including a Vice Chair who is a Director of Children's Services

10. Meetings

- 10.1 LRPG shall hold a minimum of three meetings each year.
- 10.2 Meetings of LRPG shall be conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders which are annexed to this constitution.

11 Delegation

- 11.1 LRPG may delegate to committees and sub-groups, and/or officers such tasks and activities as it considers appropriate.

12 Observers and members of the public

- 12.1 Observers may be admitted to meetings of LRPG at the discretion of the Chair.

13. Business Plan and Budget

- 13.1 LRPG shall prepare annually a Business Plan and Budget for consideration by Leaders' Committee. If, in the course of any year, any material change to the Business Plan and/or Budget is required as a result of a change in government

policy or for any other reason, such change shall be subject to the approval of Leaders' Committee.

14. Employees and Contracts

14.1 The LRPG staffing complement shall be agreed by Leaders' Committee in the context of the annual Business Plan. LRPG employees shall be employed by London Councils on London Councils' terms and conditions of employment.

14.2 In the event LRPG wishes to enter into a contract, for the appointment of consultants or otherwise, any such contract shall be let on LRPG's behalf by London Councils in accordance with London Councils' Financial Regulations.

15. Variations

15.1 Variations to this constitution may be agreed by a two-thirds majority vote of members present at the meeting at which the variation is proposed, subject to the approval of Leaders' Committee.

16. Termination and Dissolution

16.1 LRPG may be dissolved by Leaders' Committee if, as a result of a change in government policy, an inadequacy of available funding, or any other reason, the continued operation of LRPG becomes unviable.

LONDON 14-19 REGIONAL PLANNING GROUP (LRPG)

STANDING ORDERS

Meetings

1. LRPG shall hold a minimum of three meetings each year.
2. Any member of LRPG may give written notice of an item to be placed on the agenda for any meeting. All notices of agenda items and reports for circulation with agendas must be received by the Director of LRPG not less than ten working days prior to the meeting to which the agenda relates.
3. Meetings shall normally be held at the offices of London Councils but may be called at such time and such place as may be determined by LRPG.
4. If so determined by LRPG, a meeting may take place by means of telecommunications providing that each member participating in the meeting can communicate with the others.
5. The Director shall, not less than seven clear days before an intended meeting of LRPG, circulate a notice to each member. The notice shall set out the time and place of the meeting and the business to be transacted and shall be accompanied by such reports as are available. No business other than that set out in the summons shall be considered at the meeting unless by reason of special circumstances, which shall be specified in the minutes, the Chair of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency.
6. The notice and reports shall be sent by electronic means unless a member requests otherwise.
7. The failure of any notice to be delivered shall not affect the validity of the meeting.
8. The business for ordinary meetings shall be:
 - the election of a person to preside if the Chair and Vice-chairs are not present
 - the approval as a correct record and signature of the minutes of the previous meeting;
 - the receipt of any declarations of interests from members;
 - the consideration of reports/presentations;
 - the consideration of motions;
 - the consideration of any other business specified in the summons to the meeting;
 - the reporting of any decisions taken since the last meeting under urgency procedures.

Quorum

9. The quorum shall be one quarter or the number nearest to one quarter of the members of LRPG. If, within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting to commence, a quorum is not present, the meeting shall dissolve.

Procedure

10. The procedure to be followed at meetings, unless specified in these Standing Orders, shall be decided by the person presiding at the meeting and his/her decision shall be final.

Voting

11. Decisions at meeting of LRPG shall be taken by simple majority vote. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.
12. When making recommendations to Leaders' Committee, LRPG will provide a record of voting on the subject of the recommendation.

Urgency

13. If, at any time, the Director of LRPG considers that any matter is urgent and should be decided on prior to the next meeting of LRPG, then he/she shall consult the Chair and Vice Chairs of LRPG, and, if they agree the matter is urgent and agree the Director's recommendation, then the decision shall be taken by the Director and reported to the next meeting of LRPG. If neither the Chair nor the Vice Chairs are available, the Director shall consult such members of LRPG as he/she considers appropriate.

Declarations of interests

14. Any member of LRPG having a financial interest, direct or indirect, otherwise solely as a trustee, in any matter under consideration at a meeting, shall:
 - forthwith declare his/her interest;
 - not speak or vote thereon;
 - at the request of the Chair withdraw from the room whilst the matter is under consideration.
15. For the purposes of Standing Order 15, a member shall be treated as having an indirect financial interest in any matter if:
 - she/he or any nominee of his/hers is a shareholder member of a profit-making company or other body (apart from any public body) which has a direct financial interest in the matter;
 - he/she is a partner, or in the employment of, a person with a direct financial interest in the matter and a member shall be treated as having a direct or indirect interest if the member's spouse or partner has such an interest.

Code of Conduct

16. Members shall comply with the National Code of Conduct for Members of Local Government in force from time to time.

***Ex Officio* members**

17. The Chair and Deputy Chair of London Councils shall be *ex officio* members of LRPG. They shall be entitled to speak but not to vote in meetings in that capacity.

Variation and Revocation

18. Any addition to, or revocation of, these Standing Orders shall be by majority vote of those present and entitled to vote provided that any such addition or revocation shall require confirmation at the next meeting of LRPG; shall comply with any legislation in force from time to time and shall not conflict with the Standing Orders of London Councils.