

## Executive

### Business Plan 2015/16

Item no: 6

**Report by:** Christiane Jenkins      **Job title:** Director, Corporate Governance  
**Date:** 3 March 2015  
**Contact Officer:** Christiane Jenkins  
**Telephone:** 020 7934 9540      **Email:** Christiane.Jenkins@londoncouncils.gov.uk

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**Summary**      This report informs the Executive on the development of London Councils' business plan for 2015/16, and includes the proposed purpose, themes, work programmes and services. This has been developed following a series of meetings between portfolio holders and the Chair.

**Recommendations**      The Executive is asked to:

- Comment on the proposed purpose and themes for the organisation;
- Comment on the proposed Directorate work in Appendices One and Two;
- Note that the Business Plan will be submitted for noting at Leaders' Committee on 24 March 2015 incorporating any comments/changes from this meeting.

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# Business Plan 2015/16

## Background

1. As in previous years, London Councils will develop two levels of business plan; a high level plan available for external organisations and stakeholders and detailed internal work plans developed for management purposes.
  
2. This report outlines the proposed content for the high level business plan. It has been developed following discussions between portfolio holders and the Chair which took place between December 2014 and February 2015. Meetings have been held on the following areas of work:
  - Housing
  - Capital Ambition
  - Crime and Public Protection
  - Health
  - Devolution and Public Services Reform
  - Adult Care Services
  - Greater London Employment Forum (GLEF) and Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC)
  - Infrastructure and Regeneration
  - Transport and Environment
  - Grants
  - Finance & Resources, Welfare Reform and Arts & Culture
  - Equalities
  - Children, Employment and Skills.
  
3. The business plan outlines the purpose of London Councils and the context in which we work. It identifies our overarching themes for 2015/16, the priority work planned and notes the principles which underpin the way we work.
  
4. The Executive is asked to comment on the text below. Amendments to the plan will be made following this Executive meeting and a final version will be submitted for noting by Leaders' Committee on 24 March 2015.

## **Proposed Business Plan 2015/16 - Introduction and purpose**

5. London Councils' core purpose is to help London local government successfully shape London both as a world class capital city and its localities. Specifically, London Councils aspires to be:
  - a highly respected and influential lobbyist and advocate for boroughs, promoting their leadership of a broad range of local public services and communities, as well as fighting for them to get the resources, powers and freedoms necessary to play that role;
  - a catalyst for effective sharing between boroughs – people, practice, knowledge, information and services. London Councils seeks to be instrumental in both challenging and supporting London local government to improve performance and efficiency;
  - a provider of a clearly defined range of quality and responsive services to Londoners and London organisations on boroughs' behalf.
6. This plan sets out the five broad, over-arching themes for the year that set all of our work into context. It describes the ways in which London Councils goes about its work – with members, member authorities and others.
7. Appendices one and two set out the individual projects and main work programme for the Policy and Public Affairs and Services Directorates, which underpin the overall work of the organisation, help deliver its core purpose and reflect its over-arching themes.

## **Context**

8. In the context of 2015/16, London Councils needs to undertake this role against the backdrop of two significant challenges facing our member authorities. They are:
  - Supporting councils in their work to meet the challenges of significant further reductions in funding over the next spending review period;
  - Seeking to secure greater devolution to London government and London boroughs in order to help drive a broader agenda of public service reform based

on closer integration of local public services. This devolution and integration will be critical to helping councils manage future service demand and drive local economic growth.

## Themes

9. Our over-arching themes for 2015/16 are as follows:

- Resourcing London. In a period of acute financial retrenchment, we will continue to work alongside our member boroughs and partners to:
  - Ensure the best possible public financing climate for London including arguing for greater fiscal devolution;
  - Support councils as they seek to manage significant reductions in their funding base;
  - In the period running up to the 2015 Spending Review, we will continue to communicate the financial pressures faced by London local government and develop a strong case that will advocate the need for both a fair financial outcome for our member boroughs and Londoners, as well as continuing to make the case for why wider devolution and reform can secure greater value for public money.
  
- Securing devolution and reform. We will:
  - Continue to highlight the strong London argument for boroughs, groups of boroughs and the Mayor to be at the heart of commissioning a broader range of integrated local public services;
  - Work closely with the Mayor of London to negotiate with Government on a further devolution settlement to London;
  - Support London local government in its work to turn this into action on the ground by providing shared learning and approaches and developing London frameworks that help facilitate devolution to take place at local level among boroughs and groups of boroughs.
  
- Supporting London Delivery. We will:
  - Provide a defined range of direct services to Londoners and London organisations directly on the collective behalf of boroughs;

- Support London local government's collective efforts to enhance the effectiveness of public services across the capital;
  - Act as a focal point for brokerage and co-ordination between different London public services, the GLA group and boroughs on key delivery issues;
  - Work with key political, professional and managerial groupings across London local government to help strengthen the capacity of our membership to deliver high quality and cost effective services.
- Preparing for a new Mayoral Administration. In the run up to the 2016 Mayoral election we will:
    - Focus on ensuring that candidates for the office of Mayor understand the potential of a mature and balanced collaboration with London boroughs.
  - Organisational Change. In the context of significant organisational changes in the last five years, we will focus on:
    - Managing our resources to drive on-going improvements in value for our member authorities;
    - Equipping ourselves with the skills, knowledge and competences required to support London local government in this critical period;
    - Creating an environment in which we continue to attract talented people and challenge them to deliver outstanding performance.

### **Directorate work programmes**

10. Our Directorate programmes detail the range of work that will support our overall objectives, all of which relate in some way to our over-arching themes of Resourcing London, Securing Devolution and Reform, Supporting London Delivery, Preparing for a new Mayoral Administration and Organisational Change.
11. These Directorate programmes are set out in detail in Appendices One and Two, attached.

### **The way we work**

12. Underpinning the way we work is the following set of principles:
  - We are a cross party, politically led organisation motivated by our common commitment to the interests of London and London local government;

- We seek to harness the power that comes from the practice and the people of our member authorities;
- We work closely with a range of public, private and third sector partners across London and more broadly to secure our aims;
- We work in partnership with the national Local Government Association and seek mutually to reinforce our respective work on local government's overall behalf;
- We strive continuously to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our organisation on behalf of our member authorities and seek to make London Councils an attractive and challenging place for people to develop their careers.

### **Next steps**

13. The draft business plan will be revised following comments received from this meeting of the Executive and a final version will be submitted for noting by Leaders' Committee on 24 March 2015.
14. As in the previous six years, the high level business plan will be available online as hard copies will not be produced.

### **Recommendations**

15. The Executive is asked to;
  - Comment on the proposed purpose and themes for the organisation;
  - Comment on the proposed Directorate work in Appendices One and Two;
  - Note that the plan will be amended following this Executive meeting and then submitted for noting at Leaders' Committee on 24 March 2015.

### **Financial Implications for London Councils**

16. The activities set out in the plan are contained within the 2015/16 budget approved by Leaders' Committee in December 2014.

### **Legal Implications for London Councils**

17. There are no legal implications for London Councils arising from this report.

## **Equalities Implications for London Councils**

18. There are no equalities implications for London Councils arising from this report. However, much of our core work is based on ensuring that equality and diversity issues are positively addressed. London Councils continues to ensure that equalities issues are taken fully into account in all service delivery programmes.
- In addition, the objectives which were identified in line with our obligations under the Equalities Act 2010, have recently been reviewed and revised, as appropriate. .
- The areas concerned include some of our policy work, communications and accessibility, both to our building and services. Our portfolio leads, our lead Member for Equalities, our Corporate Equalities Group and Trade Union side were engaged and/or consulted in the development/identification of these objectives.

### **Objectives:**

- One: Policy - Tackling community disadvantage effectively;
- Two: Improving accessibility to London Councils website;
- Three: Improving accessibility to Freedom Pass and Taxicard;
- Four: Improving Freedom Pass take up;
- Five: Ensuring that the London Health Board supports improvement of the health of all Londoners, aiming for greater improvements in more disadvantaged communities;
- Six: Improving accessibility to PATAS website;
- Seven: Improving the accessibility to Southwark Street.

Full details can be found on our website at:

<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/aboutus/equalities/equalities.htm>

### **Appendices:**

- **Appendix One:** Policy and Public Affairs projects
- **Appendix Two:** Services main work programme.