

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive
Tuesday 8 September 2015 10:00am**

Mayor Jules Pipe was in the chair

Present

Member	Position
Mayor Jules Pipe	Chair
Cllr Claire Kober OBE	Deputy Chair
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Vice chair
Mr Mark Boleat	Vice chair
Cllr Ruth Dombey	Vice chair
Cllr Lib Peck	
Cllr Julian Bell	
Cllr Philippa Roe	
Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	
Cllr Peter John	
Cllr Ravi Govindia	Substituting for Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE

London Councils officers were in attendance as were the following borough chief executives as members of the Devolution and Public Service Reform sub-group:

Ms Lesley Seary - Islington
Mr Nick Walkley - Haringey

1. Apologies for absence and announcement of deputies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE for whom Cllr Ravi Govindia substituted.

2. Declaration of interest

Cllr Julian Bell declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 6 *Legislation affecting Housing in London: proposed influencing activity* as a tenant of a housing association. He indicated that he would not leave the room when the item was dealt with since there were other matters in the report on which he was not conflicted but he would take no part in the discussion or voting on the item.

3. Minutes of the Executive Meeting held on 23 June 2015

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 23 June 2015 were agreed.

The Chair reported a request by Cllr Ruth Dombey that an item on Refugees be added to the agenda.

The discussion of the next three items; 4 **Devolution and Public Service Reform – oral update**, 5 **Spending Review 2015 Submission** and 6 **Legislation affecting Housing in London: proposed influencing activity** was taken together

The Chief Executive introduced the items saying:

- The London Proposition submission on Devolution and Public Service Reform had been based on the document Leaders' Committee had agreed in July
- It had been modified to take account of officials requests for more detail in respect of Skills, Employment and Business Support and Crime and Criminal Justice
- The elements on Health reflected the outcome of a meeting of the Chair, Cllr O'Neill and Mr Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, along with the Mayor of London, at the end of July which had agreed a joint platform based on a local, sub-regional and pan-London approach
- The approach to Housing reflected the type of issues raised by Leaders previously but, given wider discussion on the likely shape of Housing in the housing legislation, it did not deal with all of those items. They would be subject to separate consideration
- On governance of a devolved settlement, the July document had been updated to clarify respective scrutiny responsibilities, strengthen the protection of minority interests and emphasise the voluntary nature of joint arrangements between boroughs, and between boroughs and the Mayor.

There then ensued a discussion.

Cllr Philippa Roe raised queries in respect of the Housing Bill issues in connection with asset sales and rent levels.

Mr Nick Walkley on behalf of the Devolution and Public Service Reform sub-group and London Councils officers set out details of discussions with GLA and Government officials and their understanding of GLA discussions with Government officials.

The Corporate Director, Policy and Public Affairs said:

- At its meeting in June the Executive had agreed the following principles to guide its approach to the Government's proposed changes to housing policy in London, that any change would involve:
 - An increase in housing delivery
 - A net increase in affordable housing
 - Protection for London's social mix
 - No outflow of funds from London.
- Work had progressed with the GLA in order to seek to reflect these principles

Cllr Peter John said:

- The discussion at the Congress Executive in July had emphasised the importance of a collaborative approach to addressing London's housing crisis.

Mayor Sir Steve Bullock said:

- Fleshing-out proposals needed to happen and it needed to happen urgently.

Mr Mark Boleat:

- Detailed the commitments the City had made to building housing on land under its control
- Argued that one problem was the lack of planning officers who were often attracted into the private sector by higher salaries
- The reason why builders held ten-year land-banks was that it often took that long for development proposals to come to fruition and the process needs to be speeded up.

Cllr Claire Kober OBE argued that:

- Officers had not been given sufficiently clear a mandate by members to be able to go away and negotiate
- A twin-track approach was required involving:
 - a small sub-group fleshing-out details
 - a concerted effort to persuade boroughs not represented on the Executive of a joint approach

Cllr Ravi Govindia argued that an estate regeneration strategy based on shared ownership would be more likely to succeed than one based purely on rental tenure.

Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE said:

- Ministers expected London to deliver a solution
- Representations could be made separately to the Government on the definitions in the homelessness legislation which had not been reviewed for some time.

It was agreed that this could be raised, but it was important to guard against this being used as a distraction from the key arguments about how the Government would implement its commitment.

Cllr Ruth Dombey:

- Said some boroughs would be more ambitious and with speed being of the essence it was important to push forward with those boroughs. Both Cllr Claire Kober and the Chair concurred with her sentiments
- She proposed an amendment to the second bullet point in the recommendations by adding after *London's housing...*

...and to exempt supported and specialist housing from it

In response to a question from Cllr Roe, the Chief Executive reported on the point recorded in the document in relation to Governance of any devolved settlement.

The Chair concluded by saying:

- The member sub-group proposal would have to address the need to influence prospective housing legislation urgently
- On Cllr Roe's point on governance, there was a political task of ensuring that City Hall shared the view of Leaders about importance and urgency
- On the specific issue of the Spending Review 2015 Submission time had not been sufficient for its discussion but any member of the Executive with points to make about it should forward them to the Chief Executive.

The Executive agreed:

- To note the Spending Review 2015 submission
- To support London Councils' proposals for engagement with officials and parliamentarians in relation to the Housing Bill to propose alternative options that would ensure the interests of London were protected in the implementation of the extended Right to Buy and forced high value council stock sales in the capital
- To establish a small member sub-group to oversee work to influence the Housing Bill
- To raise separately issues around definitions in the homelessness legislation
- To utilise political contacts to emphasise the urgency of moving ahead with agreed governance proposals with City Hall
- To support London Councils engaging with parliamentarians through the passage of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill to seek to amend the 1% cuts to social rents to reduce the negative impact on London's housing and to exempt supported and specialist housing from it

- To support London Councils engaging with parliamentarians through the passage of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill to mitigate the impact of the lower benefit cap on homelessness and temporary accommodation in London
- To note the potential cumulative impacts of these policies and others discussed in this report and support London Councils pursuing a range of options for mitigations with government

7. Month 3 Revenue Forecast 2015/16

The Director of Corporate Resources introduced the report saying that the overall Month 3 forecast surplus of £1.671 million was influenced by a number of factors including:

- Uncertainty over the start of the ESF funding
- A saving of £200,000 in respect of journeys undertaken by independent bus operators as part of the Freedom Pass scheme
- Receipts from Lorry Control PCNs which were forecast to exceed the budget of £550,000 by £281,000

The forecast level of uncommitted reserves by the end of the year was estimated to be £8,677,000.

The Executive agreed to note the overall forecast surplus as at 30 June 2015 (Month 3) of £1.671 million and note the position on reserves.

8. Debtors Update Report

The Director of Corporate Resources introduced the report saying that the figure of £3,680,000 given in the report for outstanding debts had now been reduced to £1,300,000 and the specific figures that the Executive were being asked to note had all been similarly reduced

The Executive agreed to note:

- The level of outstanding debt, at the time of the dispatch of the report, of £347.380 in relation to borough, TfL and GLA invoices raised up until 31 December 2014, a reduction on the outstanding figure of £1.481 million reported to the Executive at it's meeting on 3 March 2015
- The level of outstanding debt, at the time of the dispatch of the report, of £3,182,000 in respect of borough, TfL and GLA invoices raised in the period 1 January to 31 July 2015
- The level of outstanding debt, at the time of the dispatch of the report, of £497,977.23 in relation to other debtors invoices raised up until 31 July 2015 and
- The specific action being taken in respect of significant debtors, as detailed in the report.

9. Business Planning Timetable for 2016/17

The Executive agreed to note the process and timetable for delivering London Councils corporate business plan for 2016/17.

10. Nominations to Outside Bodies

The Executive agreed to note the report.

11. Any Other Business

Refugees

The Chair asked Cllr Ruth Dombey to introduce the item and she did as follows:

- The exodus of displaced persons from the Middle East was the largest humanitarian crisis of our lifetime

- Her borough, Sutton, had been inundated with offers of help
- She was not suggesting any joint plan between boroughs but a sharing of intelligence and would be interested to know if there was any desire to co-ordinate

The Chief Executive replied that the Chair and a number of borough leaders would attend a meeting at City Hall on 10 September on the matter.

Cllr Ravi Govindia asked about the legal status of any refugees who arrived in the UK and what sort of financial commitment was required and Cllr Lib Peck suggested London Councils could collate the boroughs' responses on practice so far

The Chair suggested, and the Executive agreed, to two strands of work:

- Collate boroughs' responses
- Establish what different possible scenarios would mean in terms of funding

and base a lobbying position on the conclusions arrived at.

An update note would be sent to the Executive.

The Executive ended at 11:45

Action points

	Item	Action	Progress
4-6	Devolution and Public Service Reform – oral update, Spending Review 2015 Submission and Legislation affecting Housing in London: proposed influencing activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A twin-track approach to be developed involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a small sub-group fleshing-out details ○ a concerted effort to persuade 	PAPA Housing	

boroughs not represented on
the Executive of a joint
approach

- Amendment to the second bullet point in the recommendations by adding after *London's housing...*
...and to exempt supported and specialist housing from it
- Any member of the Executive with points to make about the Spending Review 2015 Submission should forward them to the Chief Executive.
- Engage with officials and parliamentarians in relation to the Housing Bill to propose alternative options that would ensure the interests of London were protected in the implementation of the extended Right to Buy and forced high value council stock sales in the capital
- Establish a small member sub-group to oversee work to influence the Housing Bill
- Raise separately issues around definitions in the homelessness legislation
- Utilise political contacts to emphasise the urgency of moving ahead agreed governance proposals with City Hall
- Engage with parliamentarians through the passage of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill to seek to amend the 1% cuts to social rents to reduce the negative impact on London's housing and to exempt supported and specialist housing from it.
- Engage with parliamentarians through the passage of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill to mitigate the impact of the lower benefit cap on homelessness and temporary accommodation in London.

AOB

Refugees

- Collate boroughs' responses
- Establish what different possible scenarios would mean in terms of funding

**PAPA
Strategic
Policy**

Borough input
being sought via
Comms and
Housing networks.

An update note would be sent to the Executive.