

Leaders' Committee

Business Plan 2016/17

Item no: 9

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Date: 22 March 2016
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Summary Following a series of meetings between the Chair and portfolio holders, this report outlines the themes, projects and work programmes which will form the content of London Councils Business Plan for 2016/17.

The draft business plan and work programmes were considered by the Executive Committee on 1 March 2016.

Recommendations Leaders' Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of London Councils Business Plan for 2016/17

Business Plan 2016/17

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 November 2015 and February 2016. Meetings have been held on the following areas of work:
 - Housing and Planning
 - Capital Ambition
 - Crime and Public Protection
 - Health
 - Devolution and Public Services Reform
 - Adult Services
 - Greater London Employment Forum (GLEF) and Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC)
 - Infrastructure and Regeneration
 - Transport and Environment
 - Grants
 - Finance & Resources, Welfare Reform and Culture and Tourism
 - 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 2016/17, the priority work planned and notes the principles which underpin the way we work.
4. The draft business plan was presented to the Executive Committee on 1 March 2016 and following that discussion, changes have been made accordingly.

Proposed Business Plan 2016/17 - 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 four 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 2016/17, London Councils needs to undertake this role against the backdrop of three significant challenges facing our member authorities. They are:
 - Supporting councils in their work to meet the challenges of significant further restrictions in funding over the spending review period to 2020.
 - Seeking to secure even greater devolution to London government and London boroughs in order to help drive a broader agenda of public service reform based

on close integration of local public services, a focus on managing service demand and helping boost sustainable growth across London. In particular, 2016/17 will see significant work in collaboration to boost housing supply and developing a potential London proposition to Government on Business Rate Devolution, working with boroughs and the Mayor of London.

- Ensuring that boroughs, individually and in groupings, are supported to exploit the reform opportunities that have been created, particularly in area such as Skills, Employment Support and Health.

London Councils Challenge

9. During 2016/17 London Councils will also be reflecting upon how best it can serve London local government over the next five years. A Challenge process has been commissioned to support the organisation and its members in this thinking. The outcome of this will, of course, impact upon business plans going forward in future years.

Themes

10. Our over-arching themes for 2016/17 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;
 - Provide support on proposed changes in the basis of financing local government and fiscal devolution following the 2015 Spending Review and the commitment to Business Rates Devolution;
 - Mitigate the impact of financial reductions upon London boroughs;
 - Support councils as they seek to manage significant reductions in their available funding.
 - Securing further devolution and localism. 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 new Mayor of London to develop further the devolution settlement for London;

- Work to develop collaborative approaches to boosting housing supply;
 - Continue to play a strong brokerage role to help develop opportunities that can be applied more broadly across London local government, and, in particular, to support the implementation of the reform that has been agreed in areas such as Skills, Employment Support and Health;
 - Support London local government in its work to turn this into practice on the ground by supporting shared learning and developing London frameworks that allow this devolution to take place at local level.
- 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;
 - Continue to both host and foster the full development of the London CIV on behalf of London local government.
- Organisational Change. In the context of significant organisational changes in the last five years, we will focus on:
 - Preparing for and engaging with the London Councils Challenge process early in the new financial year;
 - Continue to manage our resources to drive on-going improvements in value for our member authorities, in a way which continues to meet the evolving needs of our member authorities over the next five years;
 - 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;
 - Working with members to review key roles and positioning of London Councils going forward, to reflect a changing environment.

Directorate work programmes

11. 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 localism, supporting London delivery and organisational change.
12. These Directorate programmes are set out in detail in Appendices One and Two, attached.

The way we work

13. 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

14. As in the previous seven years, the high level business plan will be available online as hard copies will not be produced.

Recommendations

15. Leaders' Committee is asked to:
 - Note the content of London Councils Business Plan for 2016/17

Financial Implications for London Councils

16. The activities set out in the plan are contained within the 2016/17 budget approved by Leaders' Committee in December 2015.

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 were recently reviewed as part of the Chair/Equalities portfolio holder meeting.
- 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 London Tribunals 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 Priorities;
- **Appendix Two:** Services Priorities.