

Executive

15 January 2019: 9.30 am

London Councils offices are wheelchair accessible

Location: Room 5

Contact Officer: Derek Gadd

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*** Declarations of Interests**

If you are present at a meeting of London Councils' or any of its associated joint committees or their sub-committees and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest* relating to any business that is or will be considered at the meeting you must not:

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your disclosable pecuniary interest during the meeting, participate further in any discussion of the business, or
- participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public. It is a matter for each member to decide whether they should leave the room while an item that they have an interest in is being discussed. In arriving at a decision as to whether to leave the room they may wish to have regard to their home authority's code of conduct and/or the Seven (Nolan) Principles of Public Life.

*as defined by the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive

Tuesday 13 November 2018 10:30 am

Cllr Peter John OBE was in the chair

Present

Member	Position
Cllr Peter John OBE	Chair
Cllr Lib Peck	Deputy Chair
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Vice chair
Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE	Vice chair
Ms Catherine McGuinness	Vice chair
Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE	
Cllr Julian Bell	
Cllr Nickie Aiken	
Cllr Georgia Gould	
Cllr Darren Rodwell	
Cllr Muhammed Butt	
Mayor Phillip Glanville	Substituting for Cllr Clare Coghill

London Councils officers were in attendance.

1. Apologies for absence and announcement of deputies

Apologies were received from Cllr Clare Coghill for whom Mayor Phillip Glanville was deputising.

2. Declaration of interest

During the meeting Ms Catherine McGuinness declared a non-pecuniary interest in the exempt item 7 *Proposed Revenue Budget and Borough Subscriptions and Charges 2019/20* as a member of the City of London Common Council in relation to its position as freeholder of the Southwark St offices.

3. Minutes of the Executive Meeting held on 19 June 2018

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 19 June 2018 were agreed.

4. London Office of Technology and Innovation

The Director, Local Government Performance and Finance introduced the report saying:

- The report outlined proposals for a London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). The LOTI would build London's capacity to collaborate on digital and smart technology innovation and to scale up the application of successful innovation across London's public services
- The development of the proposal had been led by the GLA, with support from London Councils and a number of active London local authorities. It envisaged a three-year commitment from London Councils and the GLA to a work programme led and facilitated by a team of three, which would be both based at and part of London Councils. The estimated cost of around £440,000 p.a. to be funded by the GLA, London Councils and participating London local authorities
- LOTI would provide services to all London local authorities and the GLA to build digital capability, some additional services to a core group of London local authorities and related services to the GLA
- The proposals were based on the assumption of joint funding, with the GLA and London Councils each contributing £100,000 p.a. and participating London local authorities each contributing £30,000 p.a.. A further assumption inherent in the calculations behind the proposal was that of eight boroughs participating with six being a minimum.

Cllr Ray Puddifoot asked that the three-year commitment for participating boroughs set out in the report be made clearer and Cllr Ruth Dombey pointed out that her borough, Sutton, had already made a considerable investment in data along with other south-west London boroughs and without greater clarity on what the projected three staff would do, she could not support the proposal.

Mayor Philip Glanville suggested that it was something of a chicken-and-egg situation and that boroughs may step forward if they see London Councils and the GLA taking a

lead. The need to be involved in developing work on data was widely recognized but boroughs were arguably too small to carry it forward and the GLA too big.

Cllrs Muhammed Butt, Darren Rodwell and Georgia Gould expressed their support for the proposals and the Executive agreed to note that formal support for London Councils managing and part-funding the LOTI for three years from 2019/20, subject to it achieving the active commitment and financial support of at least six London Local Authorities, would be sought via Urgency arrangements.

5. Audited Accounts 2017/18

Director of Corporate Resources informed the Executive that he would be introducing the next three reports:

- The external auditors issued unqualified opinions on all three accounts – for the Joint Committee, Grants Committee and TEC. The report summarised the differences identified between the pre-audited and audited figures and provided members with a brief explanation of the changes. London Councils' Audit Committee approved the audited accounts at its meeting on 18 September 2018.

The Executive agreed to:

- Note the changes between the pre-audited and audited financial outturn for 2017/18 for each of London Councils' three committees and
- Formally adopt each of the three statutory accounts attached as appendices.

6. Month 6 Revenue Forecast 2018/19

The report analysed actual income and expenditure after the six month of the current financial year and highlighted any significant variances emerging against the approved budget.

The Executive agreed to note the overall forecast surplus as at 30 September 2018 (Month 6) of £1.612 million and note the position on reserves as detailed in the report.

7. Proposed Revenue Budget and Borough Subscriptions and Charges 2019/20

The report proposed the level of boroughs subscriptions and charges to be levied in 2019/20, together with the consolidated revenue income and expenditure budget for 2019/20.

- A range of new pressures that had emerged during the course of the current year meant that, for the first time since 2011/12, there was a projected deficit for the Joint Committee for 2019/20, amounting to £347,000. The Joint Committee had, typically, delivered surpluses at the end of the year in comparison to its initial budget, but clearly a deficit budget could not be set at the beginning of the year.
- The organisation was currently reviewing its priorities with members and was undertaking a range of internal work as part of the London Councils Challenge process. Both of these exercises would better enable the organisation to identify a clear strategy in the Autumn of 2019 that would include further potential reductions in expenditure, or increases in income, or a combination of the two. That would be the opportune moment to deal with any deficit by putting the future budget on to a sustainable basis for the medium term
- Significant ongoing savings had been delivered over the period since 2011/12
- Officers, after a discussion with the Chair, recommended that the Executive ask Leaders' Committee to agree that the projected deficit in 2019/20 of £347,000 be covered by a one-off draw-down from uncommitted Joint Committee reserves. These reserves would still remain as £3.264 million after such a draw-down, which equated to 34.6% of estimated Joint Committee operating expenditure of £9.436 million for 2019/20. This was considered sufficient for London Councils to remain financially resilient to cover any future unforeseen eventualities.

Cllr Puddifoot commended the budget report and strategy.

Cllr Nicki Aiken argued against the use of reserves and, on a division called by the Chair Cllr Aiken voted against but the other members of the Executive agreed to recommend that the Leaders' Committee approved the use of reserves in the way set out in the report at their meeting on 4 December 2018.

The Executive agreed to recommend that the Leaders' Committee at their meeting on 4 December 2018 agree the following borough subscription and charges:

- The proposed Joint Committee subscription for boroughs of £161,958 per borough for 2019/20, no change on the charge of £161,958 for 2018/19
- The proposed Joint Committee subscription for the MOPAC and the LFC of £15,410 for 2019/20, no change on the charge of £15,410 for 2018/19
- An overall level of expenditure of £6.909 million for the Grants Scheme in 2019/20 (inclusive of £241,000 gross ESF programme), a reduction of £1.759 million on the total budget of £8.668 million for 2018/19 and
- That taking into account the application of £58,000 ESF grant and £183,000 from earmarked Grants Committee reserves, net borough contributions for 2019/20 should be £6.668 million, the same level as for 2018/19.

The Executive also agreed to recommend that the Leaders' Committee endorsed the following subscription and charges for 2019/20 for TEC, which would be considered by the TEC Executive Sub-Committee on 15 November, before being presented to the main meeting of TEC on 6 December for final approval:

- The Parking Core Administration Charge of £1,500 per borough and for TfL (2018/19 - £1,500)
- No charge to boroughs in respect of the Freedom Pass Administration Charge, which was covered by replacement Freedom Pass income (2018/19 – no charge)
- The net Taxicard Administration Charge to boroughs of £338,182 in total (2018/19 - £338,182)
- No charge to boroughs and TfL in respect of the Lorry Control Administration Charge, which was fully covered by estimated PCN income (2018/19 – no charge)
- The Parking Enforcement Service Charge of £0.3760 per PCN, which would be distributed to boroughs and TfL in accordance with the number of PCNs issued in 2017/18 (2018/19 - £0.4226 per PCN)

- The Parking and Traffic Appeals Charge of £28.75 per appeal or £25.08 per appeal where electronic evidence was provided by the enforcing authority (2018/19 - £30.63/£27.02 per appeal). For hearing Statutory Declarations, a charge of £23.23 for hard copy submissions and £22.50 for electronic submissions (2018/19 - £25.21/£23.53 per SD)
- Congestion Charging Appeals – to be recovered on a full cost recovery basis, as for 2018/19, under the new contract arrangement with the GLA
- The TRACE (Electronic) Charge of £7.53 per transaction (2018/19 - £7.53)
- The TRACE (Fax/Email) Charge of £7.70 per transaction, which was levied in addition to the electronic charge of £7.53 per transaction, making a total of £15.23 (2018/19 - £15.23) and
- The TEC Charge of £0.175 per transaction (2018/19 - £0.175).

On the basis of the above proposed level of subscriptions and charges, the Executive agreed to recommend to the Leaders' Committee:

- The provisional consolidated revenue expenditure budget for 2019/20 for London Councils of £385.173 million
- The provisional consolidated revenue income budget for 2019/20 for London Councils of £383.449 million
- Within the total income requirement, the use of London Councils reserves of £1.724 million in 2019/20.

The Executive also agreed to recommend that the Leaders' Committee note:

- The position in respect of forecast uncommitted London Councils reserves as at 31 March 2019 and
- The positive statement on the adequacy of the residual London Councils reserves issued by the Director of Corporate Resources.

8. Nominations to Outside Bodies

The Chief Executive introduced the report saying that it was a report that was brought to the Executive each year, normally in May -but later in an election year - detailing the appointments that London Councils made to outside bodies with a calculation of the proportionality of those appointments relative to the three political party groups respective strengths on Leaders' Committee. That calculation showed that current appointments are broadly in line with proportionality.

The report also notified members of recent appointments.

The Executive agreed to note the report.

The meeting ended at 11:10am.

Action points

	Item	Action	Progress
4.	London Office of Technology and Innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Formal support for London Councils managing and part-funding the LOTI for three years from 2019/20, subject to it achieving the active commitment and financial support of at least six London Local Authorities, would be sought via Urgency arrangements.	Local Government Performance and Finance/CG	Done

Executive Committee

London & Partners

Item no: 4

Report by: Jenny Gulliford **Job title:** Principal Policy & Project Officer

Date: 15 January 2019

Contact Officer: Dianna Neal

Telephone: 020 7934 9819 **Email:** dianna.neal@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Summary

Following a discussion between Catherine McGuinness and other Executive members in the Autumn of 2018, it was agreed to extend an invitation to London and Partners to provide a briefing on its work to the Executive.

The attached briefing from London & Partners provides the Executive with an update on:

- The role of London & Partners in promoting London internationally.
- The focus of the London & Partners Strategy 2018-2021.

This briefing also sets out the current borough offer, including support encouraging foreign direct investment, SME trade support and tourism promotion.

The short presentation that London & Partners has been invited to make at the meeting of the Executive will provide an opportunity for a discussion of how the boroughs, London Councils and London & Partners can work together in future. This will include a focus on how to encourage SMEs and local attractions to apply to their support programmes and partnership opportunities.

Recommendations That the Executive note the report and accompanying briefing.

The Executive is advised to consider how boroughs and London Councils can strengthen joint working with London & Partners in future.

Executive

Exiting the EU - Update on Local Engagement

Item no: 5

Report by: Doug Flight **Job title:** Head of Strategic Policy
Date: 15 January 2019
Contact Officer: Doug Flight
Telephone: 020 7934 9805 **Email:** doug.flight@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Summary: This paper provides an update on preparatory activity at a local and pan-London level in relation to identifying opportunities and mitigating risks for London local government as a result of the UK's planned exit from the EU.

Recommendations: The Executive is asked to note this report

Exiting the EU- Update on Local Engagement

1. This paper provides an update on preparatory activity at a local and pan-London level in relation to identifying opportunities and mitigating risks for London local government as a result of the UK's planned exit from the EU.
2. London Councils has been actively engaging with Government, the Mayor of London, and the LGA to ensure that London's particular needs in relation to exiting the EU are heard. We have also continued to engage with boroughs, chief executives and relevant professional networks to support local preparatory activity and promote the exchange of local insights and practice.
3. Contingency planning is being taken forward under the auspices of the statutory London Resilience Forum, at the request of Government.
4. Leaders' Committee considered a report on preparations for leaving the EU at its meeting in December 2018. In discussion, Members raised the issue of communication with residents and the question of what costs were being incurred by councils as a result of preparatory activity. An update on progress is set out below (paragraph 12), including the development of Key Communication Lines and a survey of costs.

Contingency Planning

5. Local authority input to contingency planning at a pan-London level is being co-ordinated through the Local Authorities' Panel (LAP), which is chaired by John Barradell, Chief Executive of the City of London. This initiative is operating under the auspices of the statutory London Resilience Forum and working through the Forum's Brexit Contingency Planning Group.
6. The London Resilience Forum is using a risk based approach, and the Forum's Brexit Contingency Planning Group has set out a work plan which covers key areas of risk, including:
 - Business Continuity – supplies / workforce / technical/regulatory/specific
 - Staff welfare
 - Border disruption
 - Critical sectors – health / food / fuel / transport / energy / water
7. All sectors that are represented on the Forum, including London local government have been asked to contribute to the overall London assessment. An initial local government survey was undertaken late last year on behalf of LAP and this contributed to the Forum's initial Brexit Contingency Planning report.

8. It is envisaged that the resilience capabilities and tools that have been established for broader purposes could be utilised to tackle identified risks, such as processes for providing humanitarian support or co-ordinating mutual aid.
9. The Forum's Brexit Contingency Planning Group and its constituent sectoral leads agreed to step up preparatory activity at the end of 2018. In consequence, borough chief executives have been recently been asked to identify a point of contact for communications and reporting in relation to Brexit preparedness in each borough.
10. It is envisaged that the nominated officer will be asked to provide information and intelligence at regular intervals to contribute to the London-wide assessments of any developing impacts. The first call for information under these arrangements went out in early January 2019, with a view to developing an initial picture of impacts on London local government and broader preparedness in February 2019. It is hoped that the emerging findings will be available to inform a briefing to Leaders in February 2019.
11. The nature of the Forum's co-ordination and assessment activity may need to rapidly evolve as further clarity emerges about the UK's future relationship with the EU. This may require the establishment of a formal Strategic Co-ordination Group and a more regular rhythm of reporting from boroughs and other partners.

Pan London Co-ordination

12. London Councils has been actively engaging with Government, the Mayor of London, and the LGA to ensure that London's needs in relation to exiting the EU are heard. We have also continued to engage with boroughs, chief executives and relevant professional networks to support local preparatory activity and promote the exchange of information.
 - The Chair of London Councils (Cllr Peter John – Leader LB Southwark) and the London Councils Executive Member for Business, Europe and Good Growth (Cllr Clare Coghill) sit on the MHCLG Ministerial Brexit & Local Government Delivery Board. The Delivery Board also includes senior political representatives from the LGA, County Councils Network, District Councils Network, and the Core and Key Cities Groups. The Board provides a forum for consideration of the impact of exiting the EU with, or without a deal, on local government, including workforce, supply chains, and council services. The Board last met on 28 November 2018, as reported to Leaders' Committee in December 2018.
 - London Councils initiated a survey of chief executives in late 2018 which revealed that boroughs are putting cross-departmental Brexit planning arrangements into

place. These have a focus on assessing risk, ensuring business continuity arrangements are in place and providing support for communities, including:

- i. Monitoring reliance on EU nationals of council and other public sector workforces
 - ii. Assessing the impact of possible increased border checks and controls between the UK and EU on existing contracts and supply chains.
 - iii. Preparing for potential impact on community cohesion.
- London Councils continues to support borough Heads of Communications in relation to communicating with the public on settled status and has facilitated engagement between the network and the Home Office. This is being supported by further information, key lines and signposting to good practice.
 - Borough Treasurers have been asked to identify the costs to boroughs of preparing for Brexit. We have asked them to identify:
 1. Direct, quantifiable costs to each council incurred or anticipated, if any (e.g. contingency planning, policy officer time etc); and/or
 2. Types of cost pressure they think may arise but are not able to quantify.

Early responses suggest that it may be harder than envisaged to separately account for direct quantifiable costs that have been incurred to date. It is hoped however, that a more comprehensive set of findings will be available to report to Leaders' Committee in February 2019.

13. London Councils is now working to support the development of additional preparatory arrangements within London local government, where these may be required. It is envisaged that this may include a range of service-based initiatives, focussed on areas where there are understood to be issues of common concern across London boroughs. This work would need to be taken forward by convening appropriate professional networks and could include a focus on:

- Adult Social Care
- Children's Social Care
- Waste & the Environment

14. Preparatory activity across service areas may require an assessment of:

- Common workforce planning issues
- Mapping of dependencies on common contractors

- Developing potential guidance / mitigation for boroughs

15. The Government's White Paper on the UK's future approach to immigration announced a consultation on a minimum salary requirement of £30,000 for all skilled migrants seeking five-year visas. The £30,000 minimum earnings rule already applies to non-EU workers in most Tier 2 visa cases but could also apply to migrants from the EU. Concern about the impact on London's economy has been expressed by business Leaders and the Mayor of London in a recent joint letter to the Secretary of State. The salary requirement could also affect health and local government's ability to recruit skilled staff and there may be opportunities for London Councils and regional partners to collaborate over influencing activity in relation to the proposed salary requirement.
16. In the run up to Christmas, officials from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government began discussions with the Chief Executive of London Councils in relation to potential approaches to communications with London local government. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

Conclusion

17. It will be important that boroughs continue to plan and prepare for any anticipated place-based impacts and opportunities as a result of the UK exiting the EU.
18. In addition to pan-London contingency planning which is being led by the London Resilience Forum, London Councils will continue to support pan-London preparations by convening engagement with professional networks, the LGA and the Government, in the run-up to March 2019.
19. The Executive is asked to note this report.
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Financial implications for London Councils

No immediate implications.

Legal implications for London Councils

None

Equalities implications for London Councils

None

London Councils' Executive

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Item 6

Report by: Clive Grimshaw **Job title:** Strategic Lead for Health and Social Care
Date: 15 January 2019
Contact Officer: Clive Grimshaw
Telephone: 020 7934 9830 **Email:** Clive.grimshaw@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Summary

This report summarises the current arrangements for refugees and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) being received by the UK, the challenges in the UASC system and the *Our Turn* campaign, which councils across the UK are being asked to support and make pledges towards.

The Executive is asked to consider whether, taking into consideration that a number of boroughs have already made pledges, a collective approach to the terms which boroughs engage with the *Our Turn* campaign is possible, as well as on the receipt of UASC under current arrangements. In doing so, the Executive may wish to revisit previous calls from London local government, including the following factors –

- Future financial support must fully fund the costs of caring for all UASC.
- That there must be a single, consistent national response which is equitable, proportionate and ensures no council remains above its 0.07% threshold.
- That there should not be pressure for a disproportionate number of placements on London and the South East as a result of the *Our Turn* campaign.
- That the Home Office should engage with London boroughs to reform the current processing arrangements in the Capital in order to ensure the more efficient assessment and transfer of UASC.

Recommendations

The Executive is asked to:

- Offer guidance on the points set out above;
- agree that a report be submitted to Leaders' Committee setting out a proposed position for agreement as a single set of terms which would form the basis for individual offers to the *Our Turn* campaign; and
- provide a view on whether Lord Dubs' offer to meet with Leaders' Committee be taken up.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Introduction

Adult and child refugees and unaccompanied asylum seeking children arrive in the UK by a number of routes, including arriving sporadically by their own means, through organised people-trafficking networks and through official, nationally coordinated arrangements.

There are currently a number of internationally coordinated refugee resettlement programmes, operated in collaboration with the UN refugee agency (UNHCR). Under these schemes, refugees are given a status when they arrive in the UK and do not have to apply for asylum. These are:

- Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) which will resettle 20,000 refugees fleeing the Syrian conflict by 2020. London has resettled over 500 refugees under this scheme.
- Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) which hopes to resettle up to 3,000 children and their families from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The scheme includes unaccompanied refugee children, but relatively few have been identified as suitable for the programme.

With regard to UASC, the Dubs scheme (Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016) is distinctly different from adult and child refugee resettlement programmes. It arose in the context of the closure of the Calais 'jungle' camp in 2016. Lord Dubs' amendment established a requirement in law for the Government to take UASCs who did not have family ties in the UK from refugee camps in Europe.

In addition to this, asylum seeking children residing within the EU who have family ties in the UK are entitled to be brought to the UK in order to claim asylum.

Finally, where UASC arrive in the UK outside these official routes, local authorities have responsibilities to provide care and accommodation as children looked after and as care leavers.

This report to Executive has been drafted in response to the approach by Lord Dubs.

The London Context

London has a long track-record of welcoming refugees and asylum seekers from across the world. Currently, boroughs make a substantial collective contribution:

- London boroughs spent £53.7 million in support of an estimated 2,881 households with NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds) in 2016/17. It is estimated that they supported around 3000 children from NRPF households.
- 5,152 asylum seekers are currently in London, around quarter of the total in the UK. 3,626 are in dispersal accommodation (also known as NASS accommodation).
- Over 500 refugees have been resettled in London under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), the scheme for refugees fleeing the Syrian conflict.
- There are currently roughly 1500 UASCs (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) in London, a quarter of the overall population in England.
 - Research by ADCS (The Association of Directors of Children's Services), London Councils, and others have consistently shown that government funding for UASCs only covers in the region of half of the costs of caring for them a shortfall of around £25,000-£35,000 per year per UASC child.
 - London Councils' research found that, in 2016/17, 19 London boroughs reported a cumulative funding pressure of £19 million as a result of having to deliver unfunded responsibilities for UASCs.

As of December 2018, 24 boroughs report that they are caring for more UASCs than 0.07% of their total child population - the threshold above which central government considers the pressure upon local authorities to be unreasonable.

The '*Our Turn*' Campaign

Supported by the refugee charity Safe Passage, and led by Lord Alf Dubs, the *Our Turn* campaign is calling for the establishment of a new 'Children at Risk' resettlement scheme to bring 10,000 child refugees to the UK over the 10 years. As envisaged:

- The scheme would build on and extend the current Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) beyond 2020, with central government providing funding to local authorities that at least equals that allocated under VCRS.
- The new scheme (unlike the current VCRS) would be open to vulnerable children in Europe as well as other regions around the world.

- Like the VCRS, the scheme would be both for unaccompanied children and accompanied children who are particularly at risk under UNHCR criteria. The *Our Turn* campaign has not specified what the division between the two would be, although it hopes that far more unaccompanied children can be found places than currently under VCRS.

It is not wholly clear, but it is assumed that this scheme would supersede the current array of nationally coordinated arrangements.

To secure a government commitment, the *Our Turn* campaign is asking local authorities to pledge places now for children for this future scheme. The emphasis in the campaign is upon unaccompanied children, although this is not explicit. If the government commits to funding the 'Children at Risk' scheme, local authorities would be expected to honour these pledges.

At the request of Lord Dubs, the Chair of London Councils met with Lord Dubs and representatives of Safe Passage in December. During this meeting it was evident that through bilateral engagement, a number of councils inside of and outside of London have already made individual pledges to the *Our Turn* campaign to accommodate children after the current VCRS and VPRS schemes end in 2020. Those pledges include those from around 9 London boroughs and appeared to offer between 3 and 10 placements per year across a 10 year period. It is understood that pledges are made on the condition of all costs being funded.

The UNHCR's analysis of projected future need does not identify Europe (with the exception of Turkey) as a region with significant resettlement needs. However, Safe Passage officials have highlighted that UASCs within the EU are also living in undesirable conditions, especially in camps in Greece.

UASC – The Current System

Any humanitarian case for the *Our Turn* campaign cannot be seen in isolation from finance, capacity and mechanisms in place for receiving and accommodating UASC.

For a number of years, boroughs have been running the Pan London Rota. This has helped manage some of the pressure on the London Borough of Croydon –

which hosts the Home Office Screening Unit for asylum registration – although the number of UASC in the borough is still several hundred . Boroughs voluntarily fund the London Asylum Seekers Consortium (LASC), which provides accommodation services, information, training and partnership working. Most boroughs play a role in the rota – the exceptions are those where there boroughs are already acting as a port of entry and therefore accommodate significant numbers of UASC (e.g. Croydon and Hillingdon).

In more recent years, the Home Office has introduced a National Transfer Scheme (NTS). The NTS is currently voluntary, though the enacting legislation does allow for the Secretary of State to make it mandatory. The introduction of the NTS was intended to ensure that the responsibility for accommodating UASC was shared nationally as part of new system. This was a positive step forward and, since being established, has helped to disperse several hundred across UASC the country. However, as the pressure in the capital indicates, there are currently significant problems with the NTS. Transfers are happening slowly and often fall through due to the insufficiency of spaces provided by receiving local authorities outside of London.

Furthermore, some councils outside of London have had to stop receiving UASC pending the outcomes of the Home Office review of funding. There are also around 140 children currently awaiting transfers from entry local authorities.

The Association of London Directors of Children's Services has recently written to Home Office officials to raise concerns about UASC arrangements, including:

- Insufficient funding to cover local authority costs, and ongoing delays in announcing the result of the Government's UASC funding review. This not only increases the cost of looking after UASCs in London, it undermines the participation of receiving local authorities. Most acutely, we understand that local authorities in a region outside of London have collectively frozen their participation in the NTS until a higher level of funding is announced.
- Substantial delays in the provision of screening interviews, which are required before local authorities can refer young people onto the NTS. It is not uncommon now for it to take three weeks before an appointment is provided by the Home Office. This means that children become settled in

London before they are even initially referred onto the NTS, substantially reducing the chances of a successful transfer.

- The inclusion of Dubs and VCRS cases in the NTS, as well as the prioritisation of these cases by the Home Office over UASC from local authorities over the 0.07% threshold. The Home Office clearly does need, systematically, to identify new homes for Dubs and VCRS unaccompanied young people, but this is a different kind of need that should be dealt with separately.

Matters for Consideration

While the request to support the *Our Turn* campaign is put forward as conditional on all costs to councils being fully met – and as a longer term scheme to go beyond 2020, when two of the internationally coordinated arrangements are due to end – the emphasis on children, specifically UASC, means it is impossible to consider the ask in isolation from the difficulties in the current UASC system.

The number of UASC arriving in London has increased steadily over the past few years. London's share of UASC remains stubbornly fixed at around 1 in 3. The financial shortfall for caring for UASC is substantial, in the region of £19 million per year, and the Home Office has not yet announced the outcome of its funding review. The lack of clarity around future funding is placing the NTS under strain, some councils outside of London withdrawing. These withdrawals are only likely to increase the reliance on London and the South East and to further slow up the process of dispersing children through the NTS. Finally, in the context of an overspend of £107 million on children's services in London, of which placement costs is the biggest area of overspend, there are serious concerns to be taken into consideration about the impact of additional UASC on the placement market in terms of sufficiency of supply, cost and quality.

It is, however, characteristic of how arrangements were handled during the closure of the Calais camps in 2016 that the process for seeking pledges to the *Our Turn* campaign is being handled through a series of bilateral discussions rather than as a coordinated and collective effort. This approach, albeit inadvertently, leads to a lack of consistency and transparency in the system. This is in contrast to London's efforts to coordinate its work and for a collective, transparent and consistent approach to be at the root of its work. This was evidenced at the time of the closure

of the Calais camps in 2016 when the former Chair of London Councils proactively worked to promote a consistent response across the city, which served to reinforce a coordinated approach by London.

The Executive is asked to consider whether, taking into consideration that a number of boroughs have already made pledges, a collective approach to the terms which boroughs engage with the *Our Turn* campaign is possible, as well as on the receipt of UASC under current arrangements. In doing so, the Executive may wish to revisit previous calls from London local government, including the following factors –

- Future financial support must fully fund the costs of caring for all UASC.
- That there must be a single, consistent national response which is equitable, proportionate and ensures no council remains above its 0.07% threshold.
- That there should not be pressure for a disproportionate number of placements on London and the South East as a result of the *Our Turn* campaign.
- That the Home Office should engage with London boroughs to reform the current processing arrangements in the Capital in order to ensure the more efficient assessment and transfer of UASC.

Next steps

Subject to the view of the Executive, Leaders' Committee could be asked to take a view on a London position in respect of the current difficulties facing the UASC system and a response to the *Our Turn* campaign specifically. Lord Dubs has offered to attend and present to Leaders' Committee if members felt this would be helpful.

Financial Implications for London Councils

There are no financial implications for London Councils resulting from this report.

Legal Implications for London Councils

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

Equalities implications for London Councils

There are no equalities implications for London Councils.