

London Councils

Minutes of the London Councils Leaders' Committee held on 9 July 2019
Cllr Peter John OBE chaired the meeting

Present:

BARKING AND DAGENHAM
BEXLEY
BRENT
CAMDEN
CROYDON
EALING
ENFIELD
HACKNEY
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM
HARINGEY
HARROW
HILLINGDON
ISLINGTON
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA
KINGSTON UPON THAMES
LAMBETH
LEWISHAM
MERTON
REDBRIDGE
RICHMOND UPON THAMES
SOUTHWARK
SUTTON
TOWER HAMLETS
WALTHAM FOREST
WANDSWORTH
WESTMINSTER
CITY OF LONDON

Cllr Darren Rodwell
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE
Cllr Muhammed Butt
Cllr Georgia Gould
Cllr Tony Newman
Cllr Julian Bell
Cllr Nesil Caliskan
Mayor Philip Glanville
Cllr Sue Fennimore (Deputy)
Cllr Joseph Ejiofor
Cllr Graham Henson
Cllr David Simmonds (Deputy)
Cllr Richard Watts
Cllr Elizabeth Campbell
Cllr Liz Green
Cllr Jack Hopkins
Cllr Kevin Bonavia (Deputy)
Cllr Stephen Alambritis
Cllr Jas Athwal
Cllr Gareth Roberts
Cllr Peter John OBE
Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE
Mayor John Biggs
Cllr Clyde Loakes (Deputy)
Cllr Ravi Govindia CBE
Cllr Nickie Aiken
Ms Catherine McGuinness

Apologies:

BARNET
BROMLEY
GREENWICH
HAVERING
HILLINGDON
HOUNSLOW
LEWISHAM
NEWHAM
WALTHAM FOREST

Cllr Daniel Thomas
Cllr Colin Smith
Cllr Danny Thorpe
Cllr Damian White
Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE
Cllr Steve Curran
Mayor Damien Egan
Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz
Cllr Clare Coghill

Officers of London Councils, the London Borough of Camden and the City of London were in attendance.

1. Apologies for absence and announcement of deputies

The apologies and deputies listed above were noted.

2. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of the Leaders' Committee AGM and Main Business meeting 4 June 2019

The minutes of the Leaders' Committee Annual General Meeting of 4 June 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

The minutes of the main business meeting of 4 June 2019 were agreed as an accurate record subject to the insertion of the words 'as per the original business case' after the line 'There was concern that the Crossrail 1 route should be finished as a priority.'

4. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Leaders' Committee received a report which was introduced by Cllr Aiken that summarised the background to the system for receiving and caring for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in London and the developments in national arrangements. It set out the significant pressures – in both service and financial terms – that London is now facing. The report sought guidance on the possible steps to take to ensure the London arrangements can be sustainable in the short term, summarised steps being taken to develop medium term operational solutions to the current challenges and plans for lobbying to recognise the need for adequate funding and a functioning national transfer scheme for UASC.

Cllr Aiken added that:

- It was important for these issues to be considered as a response by boroughs as a whole, rather than the most affected ones only, because of the potential impact across the capital and the continued pressure on services;
- The suggestion of an increase of the 0.07% threshold to 0.08% was not really central as most boroughs were already operating over the threshold of accommodating cases that represented 0.07% of total child population

The Chair thanked Cllr Aiken and introduced Martin Pratt, DCS at the London Borough of Camden and Chair of ALCDS, who added that:

- Boroughs had performed well in meeting UASC needs and had developed good levels of understanding of the needs of those children, which was the central consideration;
- Much of the demand on services from this group occurred after resettlement, particularly among UASC who had reached 18 and subsequently became former UASC care leavers;
- The Children Act 1989 was enacted on assumptions that were now out of step with the pressures implied by the current volume of UASC;
- It was important that boroughs should be fully funded for this level of demand.

The Chair thanked Mr Pratt for his comments and noted the specific point in the report that regard should be had to overall caseloads among boroughs, including the number of ex-UASC care leavers in councils. In response to a request from the Chair, members made the following responses to the report:

- Care should be taken in framing any narrative to avoid a perception that London was unwilling to participate in assisting UASC, and that there was recognition that all boroughs were contributing to this issue when representing London to the Government;
- In terms of collective lobbying, that utilising community and faith based organisations could be advantageous, but that any publicity should not compromise individual children;
- Boroughs fulfilling the demand of UASC needed to be relieved by full funding;
- That those lobbying on behalf of UASC should also be expressing their support for local authorities.

The Chair thanked Members for their contributions

Leaders' Committee:

- Agreed that London Councils take steps to seek urgent additional financial support for London boroughs to ensure that the London rota remains functional during the forthcoming summer pressures;

- Supported lobbying by London Councils to seek cross-departmental focus, involving MHCLG, the Home Office and Department for Education;
- Agreed that sustained lobbying be undertaken by London Councils in respect of UASC and former UASC Care leavers;
- Supported exploration of intensifying this issue politically, legally and in media terms

5. Strengthening Local and Collective resilience: Progress Report

The Chair welcomed John Barradell, Chair of the Local Authority Panel (LAP) and Town Clerk & Chief Executive of the City of London Corporation, to introduce the report.

Mr Barradell informed Members that the report presented an update on the implementation of a package of recommendations flowing from the independent peer challenge of London local government's contribution to overall resilience. This had been reported to Leaders Committee in February 2018 and an overall implementation plan had been considered by Leaders in July 2018. The update report also set out details of the work that London Councils had led to develop guidelines and training for elected members. A handbook, agreed with leading members, had been produced and training sessions were due to begin in the Autumn.

The Chair thanked Mr Barradell for the work of LAP and endorsed the Civil Resilience Handbook for Members, agreeing that the support it provided to Members was invaluable. The following comments were made:

- the communications aspect of the Handbook was extremely important, in particular in acknowledging that there were limitations in the extent to which social media messages could be controlled;
- some centralised training would help to ensure a standardised approach to delivery;
- it was important for boroughs who had experienced critical incidents to be able to share their experiences with others on a 'lessons learned' basis, and for case studies to be developed;
- peer support was welcomed when incidents occurred. Councillor Campbell, in particular, commented positively on the support her own borough had received from other boroughs;
- specific training should be considered when responding to specific types of incident

Mr Barradell confirmed that de-briefing and lessons learned formed part of the resilience process, and also that the pan London communications protocol would continue to evolve and reflect the other comments that had been made.

Members received and noted:

- the Local Authorities' Panel progress report: '*Strengthening Local and Collective Resilience: EP2020 Enhancement Programme*';
- the *Civil Resilience Handbook for Councillors* and the pilot training programme;
- the '*Resilience Standards for London*';
- the expectation that Leaders' Committee would receive a further report on progress in 2020.

6. Pledges to Londoners – Update on Progress in Supporting Business and Inclusive Growth

In the absence of Cllr Coghill, Cllr Gould provided an update on this element of the Pledges to Londoners, commenting that:

- A number of sub regional pilots are being developed in areas like *in work progression* and *SEND support*;
- The lobbying strategy included the publication of a 'Better Ways to work' document, which included a number of recommendations, for example co-location of Job Centres;
- Lobbying was also continuing regarding Skills for London devolution opportunities, including funding for 16-18 year olds and the Apprenticeship Levy;
- Consultation on a Charter for Business was continuing, aligned with the Mayor's Good Work standards;
- Campaigning was taking place, in the event of any devolved money allocated to replace EU funding post Brexit, for funds to go directly to boroughs, and to minimize current regulatory complexity.

In addition, Cllr Butt mentioned that work was continuing to develop a welfare best practice offer for boroughs to help them support people transitioning into Universal Credit, and that this was intended to be published in October.

Cllr O'Neill commented that cross party representation was important in any negotiations around this aspect of the Pledges involving boroughs.

Leaders' Committee noted the report.

7. Feedback from Joint Boards

London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP)

The Chair fed back the key issues raised at the most recent Board meeting in June.

Members were updated on:

- London's Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) which is important, as it was likely to determine the strategic priorities for the future LEP funding and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund that would replace some EU funding in London;
- LEAP's Growth Hub;
- The future of the London co-investment fund; and,
- the LEAP delivery programme which was broadly on track.

8. Urgency Report

Leaders noted the Urgency report in relation to the approval of the London Ventures commercial deal with Blue Prism.

9. Minutes and Summaries

Leader's Committee agreed to note the minutes and summaries of:

- GLPC – 21 March 2019
- CAB – 15 May 2019
- Executive – 21 May 2019
- Executive – 18 June 2019

The meeting agreed to exclude the press and public.

The meeting ended at 12.35.