

## London Councils

Minutes of the London Councils Leaders' Committee held on 8 October 2019  
Cllr Peter John OBE chaired the meeting

### Present:

BARKING AND DAGENHAM	Cllr Saima Ashraf (Deputy)
BARNET	Cllr Dan Thomas
BEXLEY	Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE
BRENT	Cllr Muhammed Butt
BROMLEY	Cllr Colin Smith
CAMDEN	Cllr Richard Olszewski (Deputy)
CROYDON	Cllr Tony Newman
EALING	Cllr Julian Bell
ENFIELD	Cllr Ian Barnes (Deputy)
GREENWICH	Cllr David Gardner (Deputy)
HACKNEY	Mayor Philip Glanville
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM	Cllr Stephen Cowan
HARROW	Cllr Graham Henson
HILLINGDON	Cllr Ray Puddifoot
HOUNSLOW	Cllr Steve Curran
ISLINGTON	Cllr Richard Watts
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA	Cllr Elizabeth Campbell
KINGSTON UPON THAMES	Cllr Liz Green
LAMBETH	Cllr Jack Hopkins
LEWISHAM	Mayor Damien Egan
NEWHAM	Cllr John Gray (Deputy)
REDBRIDGE	Cllr Jas Athwal
RICHMOND UPON THAMES	Cllr Gareth Roberts
SOUTHWARK	Cllr Peter John OBE
SUTTON	Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE
TOWER HAMLETS	Mayor John Biggs
WALTHAM FOREST	Cllr Clare Coghill
WANDSWORTH	Cllr Ravi Govindia CBE
WESTMINSTER	Cllr Nickie Aiken
CITY OF LONDON	Simon Duckworth (Deputy)

### Apologies:

BARKING & DAGENHAM	Cllr Darren Rodwell
CAMDEN	Cllr Georgia Gould
ENFIELD	Cllr Nesil Caliskan
GREENWICH	Cllr Danny Thorpe
HARINGEY	Cllr Joseph Ejiofor
HAVERING	Cllr Damien White
MERTON	Cllr Stephen Alambritis
NEWHAM	Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz
CITY OF LONDON	Catherine McGuinness

Officers of London Councils and the City of London were in attendance.

The Chair commenced the meeting by paying tribute to the former Leader of the London Borough of Islington and previous Vice Chair of London Councils, Steve Hitchins, who had recently died. Cllr Dombey had valued him as a mentor and spoke of the significant contribution that he had made to local government and public services in London, as well as his influential work in encouraging diversity. The Chair asked members to observe a minute's silence in memory of Steve Hitchins.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Daniel Thomas to his first Leaders' Committee meeting, and also warmly welcomed Cllr Athwal. As well as confirming the support that been given from colleagues, he reported that until current issues were resolved, Cllr Athwal would step back from his position as Executive Member for Crime and Public Protection. The Chair proposed that he would take on those responsibilities for an interim period. Cllr Athwal was thanked for his work to date as Portfolio holder.

It was agreed that Councillor John would temporarily take over the responsibilities of the Crime and Public Protection portfolio work and a further report would be made to Leaders' Committee in December.

### **1. Apologies for absence and announcement of deputies**

The apologies and deputies listed above were noted. The Chair noted that a number of the absences were due to a clash with the GLA's Homes for Londoners conference.

### **2. Declarations of interest**

No interests were declared.

### **3. Minutes of the Leaders' Committee 9 July 2019**

The minutes of Leaders' Committee meeting of 9 July 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **4. NHS Collaboration**

Cllr Puddifoot introduced the report, noting that progress had been made in London level discussions since the appointment of Sir David Sloman as the new Regional Director for NHS England. Cllr Puddifoot drew attention to the aspirations in paragraph 7 of the report, and the opportunities presented by the NHS Long Term Plan, specifically around borough led integrated delivery of out of hospital care services, a focus on the modernisation of health and care estates, and the use of digital and information technology to enhance services across

health and care. He informed members that the NHS had also been asked to provide a clear plan as to how it intended to deliver new GP services.

Cllr Puddifoot noted that while discussions had been constructive, it was for Leaders to continue to influence the NHS concerning the importance of borough leadership in the local health agenda.

Members made the following points:

- It was important to concentrate on how successful prevention and early intervention should be delivered, the opportunities for collaboration on estates, in particular to deliver GP services, as well as enhancing digital and IT services to enable health and care providers to share information, could be progressed
- The amalgamation of CCGs may lead to a less localised, more pan London approach to health, but the establishment of Primary Care Networks could potentially provide a focused local service and presented a good opportunity for boroughs to engage in more local collaboration on preventative care
- While the NHS had recognised the future role of boroughs, the relationship with CCGs and other governance models was less clear, and therefore the suggestion of an exercise to provide a delivery map, referenced in the report, was supported
- It was important to include political involvement in the new CCG boards
- As well as supporting the benefits of engagement in the governance of CCGs, the need to enhance the role of the Health Well Being Boards was also crucial
- In terms of CCG overspends, it was important for boroughs to be able to input into decisions as to how deficits were to be reduced.

The Chair thanked members for their comments and feedback, and members noted the paper.

## **5. Children's Services – Finance Pressures and Tackling County Lines**

Cllr Aiken introduced the report, and fed back from the recent London Councils summit on 11 September, which had discussed the issue of county lines, noting that:

- All boroughs attending the summit had experienced the impact of county lines, and recognised that the problem also had national implications

- Good relationships had been formed with local authorities, particularly Directors of Children's Services, to address the issue. This made it easier to share good practice from a range of sources, including teachers and parents, and to produce toolkits to share information
- More work was needed to explain the impact of people purchasing drugs for recreational use
- Information sharing regarding transport hubs, and with Transport Police, needed to be developed.

Regarding Children's Services financial issues, Cllr Aiken reported that, following the recent member level event held on 12 September:

- There was recognition among the DCS's of the need to pool resources to improve outcomes for SEN groups and young people
- The ISOS survey results had confirmed members' concerns regarding financial pressures on children's services.

Cllr Aiken reported that three specific ideas had been developed at the event: sharing placements information; developing an NHS protocol for children's services for CCGs; and the development of a Social Work recruitment academy. Boroughs would need to consider whether additional resources might be needed to carry out this work.

In answer to a question from Cllr Govindia regarding county lines activity that impacted beyond London, Cllr Aiken informed members that while a lot of work had been done regarding county lines issues outside the capital, particularly in major cities and coastal towns, London still had over 2000 county lines into other areas.

Members made the following points:

- The high percentage of young people identified in at least one borough that were involved with county lines in some way was noted
- In terms of policing drugs, it was noted that there was a joint approach, with major crimes being policed by Scotland Yard under Organised Crime arrangements
- There were good examples in one borough where a number of people involved in a significant amount of drug crime had been arrested, in part due to the collaborative work between the authority's housing team and local housing associations in sharing

information with the police, and the good relationships between the police and the local VRU

- There should be more emphasis on prevention work for people entering adulthood, citing responses to a recent survey of young people which highlighted a large unmet need in terms of mental health awareness and concerns around suicide or people considering suicide.

Members noted the report and the three proposed areas for priority action.

## **6. Exiting the EU – Update on Local Engagement**

The Chief Executive introduced the report, citing the two strands of work supporting activity: the resilience and contingency work carried out under the auspices of the London Resilience Forum; and the regional information hub that London Councils was providing in London for MHCLG, collating information on behalf of the boroughs and feeding issues of concern for local authorities back into government.

Members were informed that weekly reporting across the network had now resumed and there were regular weekly calls with Borough Liaison Officers. Information from the reporting fed directly into the work on resilience and contingency planning.

John Barradell, Chief Executive of the City of London Corporation, Chair of the Local Authorities' Panel and the Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG), informed members about the cross cutting pan London resilience work being undertaken, including the thematic approach being adopted by the SCG. The SCG would be formally operating from 14 October and function bi-weekly thereafter.

Members made the following points:

- In terms of Settled Status applications, some delays had been experienced for those EU nationals without an NI number or without regular employment history
- It was important for members to be kept informed of EU Exit preparatory activity, for example members recently became aware of an MoU between hospitals in London regarding medical supplies
- The lack of Settled Status application data at borough level was still a concern

- The issue of food poverty in relation to food banks should be considered, and the impact of any potential rise in food prices and availability of supplies
- A proportion of rough sleepers were likely to have No Recourse to Public Funds. This group should be included when considering issues of vulnerability and Settled Status
- While major food suppliers and larger catering industries would be prepared for the implications of exiting the EU, there was concern that smaller businesses would be much less prepared.

The Chief Executive fed back on the following points:

- There had been one release of Settled Status borough level information in July and the proposal from government was to provide the information on a quarterly basis, although a request had been made for more frequent reporting
- Regarding hardship and food banks, there had been conversations with the Borough Liaison Officers to get further data.

Mr Barradell commented that:

- The opportunity to understand how systems across London inter-related with each other was valuable work, which could have longer-term benefits
- The SCG focused on issues of under two weeks duration which were of a cross cutting nature
- Regarding the SME sector, work was being done with the Federation of Small Businesses and local community and business groups to encourage them to note the information made available by government in this area.

Members noted the report.

## **7. Annual Audit report 2018-19**

The Director of Corporate Resources introduced the Audit report for the 2018/19 financial year issued by KPMG, London Councils' external auditor.

In response to a question raised in advance of the meeting by Cllr Puddifoot, where the reference on page 43 of the papers regarding the audit not yet being completed was noted, Members were informed that the comment was written earlier in September 2019 when the audit letter was at draft stage. KPMG had since signed off each of the three London Councils accounts on 25 September following the 18 September Audit Committee, where the Letter of

Representation was signed. After consulting with KPMG, it was confirmed that the signed audit opinion on each set of accounts provided adequate evidence of the completion of the audit and that no further confirmation would be issued.

Leaders' Committee noted the contents of the Annual Audit report for 2018/19.

## **8. Extending the London HR Metrics Service to other regions**

The Director of Corporate Governance introduced the report, informing members that the HR Metrics service, which provided benchmarking for the benefit of all 33 London local authorities, was highly regarded by boroughs. The South East Employers Organisation had approached London Councils to extend the service for local authorities in the South East region of England, a decision which needed Member approval.

Leaders' Committee agreed to the expansion of the HR Metrics and data sharing service outside of London, and the setting up of a Service Level Agreement and subscription arrangements by London Councils with other regions and local authorities.

## **9. Pledges to Londoners – Update on Progress with Funding London**

The Chair updated members on progress with regard to the Pledges in respect of funding, noting:

- The 6% increase in Core Spending Power next year, which met the Pledge that no borough would lose from the Spending Review, although there remained a £200m funding gap
- The postponement of the Fair Funding Review and the direction of travel towards rebalancing funding away from London to other parts of the country
- There was good recognition by government of the growing crisis in SEND funding via the recent review and the additional £700m to be made available next year
- The limited progress on fiscal devolution, although the Chancellor had announced in the previous week an impending Devolution White Paper.

Cllr Roberts felt that the additional £700m for SEND, although recognising that it had not yet been allocated, should be targeted at those boroughs with the biggest deficits.

## **10. Feedback from Joint Boards**

The Chair fed back on the July 2019 meeting of the **Crime Reduction Board**, which had discussed:

- Drug related crime – some useful information had been provided about police operations in London boroughs although the level of information varied between boroughs
- Violent crime – the Home Office award of £7m to the VRU had been discussed
- Probation transition arrangements – the importance of the involvement of London boroughs in the work of the National Probation Service was emphasised.

Cllr Puddifoot reported the key issues from the **London Health Board**, namely:

- GP shortages
- The London Health and Care Vision
- The London Estates Strategy
- Thrive London
- Health Inequalities Strategy
- London Health Board Conference.

The Chair reported the key points from the 26 September meeting of the **LEAP Board**, which were:

- EU Exit
- Industrial Strategy for London – work was being done to increase the role of boroughs within the Strategy
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund – work was being done in advance of the Fund's introduction towards developing a London delivery model involving both the GLA and boroughs
- Collaboration and co-design, specifically with reference to career advice.

The Chair also reported back on the 3 October meeting of the **Skills for Londoners Board**, which had considered the following:

- A presentation from the Institute of Adult Learning
- Changes to the Adult Education budget

- Measuring the impact of AEB outcomes
- The launch of the Skills for Londoners Call for Action.

Cllr Coghill fed back on the 4 September **Homes for Londoners Board**. The Board had received reports on:

- TFL Residential Development Programme
- Intermediate Housing Policy review
- Homes for Londoners Conference
- GLA Rough Sleeper Winter Programme – there was a discussion about future work, reviewing gaps in services experienced the previous winter and a discussion around drugs and alcohol
- Housing Delivery report.

### **10. Minutes and Summaries**

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

- YPES – 6 June 2019
- TEC – 13 June 2019, subject to the change of 'Pater' Craske to 'Peter' (page 77)
- Grants Committee AGM – 10 July 2019
- Executive – 10 September 2019

The meeting agreed to exclude the press and public.

The meeting ended at 13.10.