

London Councils

Minutes of the London Councils Leaders' Committee held on 3 December 2019.

Cllr Georgia Gould chaired the meeting.

Present:

BARKING AND DAGENHAM
BEXLEY
BRENT
CAMDEN
CROYDON
EALING
ENFIELD
GREENWICH
HACKNEY
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM
HARINGEY
HARROW
HOUNSLOW
ISLINGTON
LAMBETH
LEWISHAM
MERTON
SUTTON
TOWER HAMLETS
WALTHAM FOREST
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 Ian Barnes (Deputy)
Cllr Danny Thorpe
Mayor Philip Glanville
Cllr Sue Fennimore
Cllr Joseph Ejiofor
Cllr Graham Henson
Cllr Steve Curran
Cllr Richard Watts
Cllr Claire Holland (Deputy)
Mayor Damien Egan
Cllr Stephen Alambritis
Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE
Mayor John Biggs
Cllr Clare Coghill
Cllr Tim Mitchell (Deputy)
Catherine McGuinness

Apologies:

BARNET
BROMLEY
HAVERING
HILLINGDON
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA
KINGSTON UPON THAMES
LAMBETH
NEWHAM
RICHMOND
WANDSWORTH
WESTMINSTER

Cllr Daniel Thomas
Cllr Colin Smith
Cllr Damien White
Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE
Cllr Elizabeth Campbell
Cllr Liz Green
Cllr Jack Hopkins
Mayor Rokshana Fiaz OBE
Cllr Gareth Roberts
Cllr Ravi Govindia
Cllr Nickie Aiken

Officers of London Councils were in attendance.

The Chair informed members that she was deputising for Cllr John at this meeting. Members congratulated Cllr Rodwell on his award as Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) Leader of the Year.

The Chair also paid tribute to the two people who lost their lives in the terror incident at London Bridge on 29 November. Members recognised the important work that the City of London had done in dealing with the incident, and Catherine McGuinness in turn thanked boroughs and London Councils for their offers of support. Leaders' Committee was asked to observe a minute's silence to honour the lives of the victims of the attack.

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 8 October 2019

The minutes of the Leaders' Committee meeting of 8 October 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Pledges to Business

Cllr Coghill introduced the item, informing members that:

- Boroughs and businesses had been consulted and supported the development of the pledges which flowed from Leaders' Committee's wider Pledges to Londoners
- The pledges were important to ensure that there were mechanisms to engage with businesses and to encourage active relationships with the business sector

Cllr Alambritis supported the work as a timely tool for ensuring that business effectively engaged with local government.

Leaders' Committee noted the report and endorsed the Pledges to Business.

5. Resource Transfer Supporting Climate Change Policy

Cllr Bell, introducing the report, informed members that:

- Discussions on the issue of climate change had previously taken place at TEC and Executive meetings
- Climate change issues were currently outside TEC's authority

- Agreement was now being sought for a transfer of resources from TEC to the Joint Committee to enable action on climate change to be taken in partnership with boroughs
- The report included the programme of work and resources needed, including the need to establish among boroughs work on common baselines for emissions, as well as shared approaches to a framework for performance
- Cllr Mitchell indicated that, as Vice Chair of TEC, he also endorsed the proposal

Responding to a question regarding the timing of this work, and accepting the urgency required in that boroughs had already drawn up their climate emergency Borough Action Plans, Cllr Bell confirmed that while work was already being carried out at Chief Executive and member level, the additional resources would be effective from early in 2020.

Cllr Ejiofor suggested that Leaders' Committee consider arrangements for political oversight of Climate Change related issues the next time it came to consider the makeup of the London Councils Executive.

Leaders' Committee agreed to the proposals for the work to be undertaken and for the resources to be transferred from TEC to the Joint Committee for this purpose.

6. Feedback from London Crime Reduction Board

The Chief Executive fed back on the key points from the October meeting of the LCRB, which covered:

- the additional £15 million funding provided by the Mayor for the purpose of tackling violence against women and girls
- The London Rape review
- A discussion on the recent range of protests in London, and the resource implications on policing and the boroughs
- Devolution of Criminal Justice Services as part of the Memorandum of Understanding which was being negotiated between the Mayor, Ministry of Justice and London Councils.
- The London Blueprint for Women in Contact with the Criminal Justice System

7. Grants Committee Matters

Mayor Glanville introduced the three reports comprising this item:

London Councils Grants Scheme – Budget Proposals 2020/21 (7a) – Priorities 1 and 2, respectively relating to combatting homelessness and tackling sexual and domestic violence, would continue into the final year of the Grants Programme. However Priority 3 work, which addressed combatting poverty and unemployment, carried out via funding from ESF, had now come to an end. In addition, options for the use of the current Priority 1 and 2 reserves of £511,000 would be discussed at Grants Committee early in 2020.

Addressing issues related to No recourse to Public Funds to support Grants

Programme work to Combat Homelessness and tackle Domestic Violence (7b) –

Grants Committee and Grants Executive had considered ways in which the underspend in the Priority 3 Programme could be re-invested to address emerging needs within Priorities 1 and 2. Evidence provided by Grant funders and other organisations had strongly pointed to the issue of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) as having a significant impact on service users: NRPF pressures had also presented challenges to boroughs in terms of their funding. The report therefore asked members to support the proposal for further work in this area to address needs in Priorities 1 and 2.

Grants Programme 2021/25 (7c) – given that the current Grants Programme was due to end in 2021, Grants Committee had considered whether the three existing Priorities were still fit for purpose in terms of a new Programme. It had concluded, on the basis of evidence, that while Priority 1 and 2 remained important, Priority 3 should be reviewed in the context of the work being carried out at borough level on employment and skills. The review process had also considered the possibility of establishing a response fund that allowed for some flexibility in reflecting changes in need over the course of the Programme, without increasing the overall Programme budget.

Cllr O'Neill emphasised the importance of deploying any underspend in the existing Priority 3 budget in the service of very practical outcomes for service users. Mayor Glanville acknowledged the importance of this point and said the Committee would reflect that in its consideration of this matter.

Leaders' Committee:

- Agreed the recommendations in report 7a relating to the Grants Scheme in 2020/21

- Agreed the recommendation in report 7b that the £1,019,000 Priority 3 underspend was used to increase Priority 1 and 2 grants for the sole purpose of increasing immigration advice for service users with No Recourse to Public Funds.
- Agreed in terms of report 7c that a 2021-2025 Grants programme be established based largely on the current Programme Priorities and at the current level of funding - £26.7million over four years, subject to annual agreement of the Grants Budget.

8. Proposed Revenue Budget and Borough Subscriptions and Charges 2020/21

The Director of Corporate Resources introduced the proposed budget for 2020/21, noting that the budget had already been endorsed by the Executive who had proposed no changes at its meeting. He reported that Grants Committee had agreed the relevant recommendation to Leaders' Committee and which the Committee had endorsed in considering the previous item. The Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) would be reviewing its element of the budget at its meeting on 5 December. It was noted that the budget:

- Proposed no increases, and included a proposed reduction in some charges for appeals and also that the proposed overall take from reserves had reduced by £745,000
- Included proposed additional income arising from a smarter use of the Southwark Street building via adaptations, building improvements and the rollout of agile working
- Considered the future capacity and resourcing of the organisation that would need to be further explored and reflected in the budgetary planning process from 2021/22 onwards.

Leaders' Committee approved the recommendations in the report relating to Joint Committee budget and subscriptions for 2020/21 as well as the overall level of expenditure for the Grants Programme and TEC, the latter subject to final approval at the TEC meeting of 5 December 2019.

9. Minutes and Summaries

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

- Audit Committee – 18 September 2019

- Grants Executive – 12 September 2019
- TEC Executive – 12 September 2019
- TEC – 10 October 2019
- YPES – 17 October 2019
- CAB – 17 October 2019
- Executive – 12 November 2019

The Chair agreed the removal of the press and public in that the following items were exempt from the Access to Information Regulations.