

# Executive

## Covid 19 Pandemic: Recovery and Renewal

Item no: 4

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**Summary:** This report provides an overview of the emerging pan-London Coronavirus (Covid 19) transition, recovery and renewal structures before beginning to explore the role London local government can play.

**Recommendations:** The Executive is asked to:

1. Note the transition from the London resilience arrangements, including the establishment of the Transition Board and the Recovery Board.
  2. Comment on:
    - a. The opportunities and challenges for London local government during the recovery phase?
    - b. How London Councils might best support co-ordination of London local government's own renewal aspirations – drawing on political, managerial and professional expertise in the boroughs?
    - c. How to optimise alignment of borough-led renewal work with the work of the Transition Board and the Recovery Board?
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# London Local Government Resilience Response to the Covid 19 Pandemic – Recovery and Renewal

## Introduction

1. London local government's Covid 19 related work is now emerging from the immediate response and mitigation phase - and transitioning towards recovery and renewal. The initial response was grounded in established ways of working that have been developed through our long-standing shared commitment to building London's resilience and protecting Londoners. The local government response was escalated in step with the stand-up of the formal inter-agency London Covid 19 Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) - with London local government representation represented through London Local Authority Gold.
2. The strategic and tactical responses at local and pan-London level were subsequently strengthened through enhanced sub-regional co-ordination - to marshal the resources of boroughs as effectively as possible. The next phase of activity will move on from mitigating the immediate implications of the pandemic on our communities, businesses and transition through the necessary steps which will allow us to build London's recovery and renewal, using newly developed structures and arrangements.
3. This report provides an overview of the new pan-London transition and recovery arrangements, including the structures that will facilitate leadership of London's recovery and renewal. It will outline the role of London local government within these structure and arrangements and the potential role London Councils can play in capturing the political and professional learning of member councils, commissioning specific interventions that will add value to the work of councils and groups of councils, develop options and arguments for London local government to deploy. This will involve co-ordinating policy input, sharing information and practice and playing an active influencing role.

## **Background – pan-London Covid-19 resilience arrangements: immediate response and mitigation**

4. A formal SCG was initiated on 3 March 2020 with the mandated responsibility to lead the pan-London emergency pandemic response. John Barradell, chief executive at the City of London and Eleanor Kelly, chief executive at Southwark became independent Co-Chairs following confirmation from Government.
5. A dedicated Local Authority Gold chief executive was introduced for the Covid 19 response to represent the local government sector on the SCG, provide continuity and release the regular on-call Gold chief executive to respond to any other incidents which might occur. Martin Esom (Chief Executive, Waltham Forest) took the London Local Authority Co-ordinating 'Gold' chief executive role with the support of 'Deputy Gold' chief executives who cover sub-regional resilience footprints; a range of Task and Finish groups, led by chief executives, covered key local government issues; supported by a wider group of chief executives, directors, professional networks, other staff and colleagues from London Councils.
6. The initial pan-London response phase has been characterised by close working between a range of partners, with local government often at the forefront. Through the initial arrangements, in collaboration with partners, London local government achieved a number of successes including the establishment of a pan-London Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) procurement system, accommodating over 1000 homeless people during the pandemic and establishing robust Shielding Hubs that have provide essential support to vulnerable residents and beyond. London Councils played has played a multifaceted role in support of the broader London local government contribution, as set in the report to the Executive of 19 May 2020.

## **Pan-London recovery arrangements: the transition to recovery and renewal**

7. The initial emergency response phase of the Covid 19 pandemic is being reshaped, reflecting the consistent fall in Covid-related deaths (particularly when compared to the designated 'peak' in May); the increasing relaxation of lockdown measures and the gradual re-opening of public sector institutions and businesses. The marks a national transition towards recovery from the immediate

impact of the pandemic. However, nationally, and particularly in London, this increasingly being recognised as an opportunity not only to recover, but also to renew and aim to build a better London for everyone, not simply seek to a return to pre-Covid normality.

8. London's recovery effort will be led, in parallel, by two distinct boards addressing the need for both a short-term transition and longer-term recovery:

- **The London Transition Board** – co-chaired by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London – will lead the Capital's transition out of lockdown, coordinating the response to emerging trends, issues and risks, as the economy begins to reopen - whilst controlling the virus.
  - The Transition Board will convene a range of key stakeholders to address broader short-term challenges such as transport, social care, infection control, re-opening the economy, community cohesion and the potential of a 2<sup>nd</sup> wave. The Board will also oversee the existing programmes that underpin the ongoing and future response to C19 – including the Mortality Management Group, the PMART process alongside other risk identification, mitigation and co-ordination planning.
  - The inaugural meeting was due to take place on 9 June 2020, after despatch of this report, and was due to be attended by the London Councils' Chair, Deputy Chair and Vice-Chairs, representing the perspectives of London boroughs.
  - The work of the SCG will morph into the Transition Management Group. This multi-agency group, Chaired by John Barradell, will be responsible for the oversight of the joint work undertaken across London viewing this at both pan-London and sub-regional levels and will provide assurance and deliver the objectives of the Transition Board.
- **The London Recovery Board (LRB)**, will run in tandem with the Transition Board and is Co-Chaired by Cllr Peter John, Chair of London Councils and the Mayor and. The LRB will plan and oversee the capital's wider long-term economic and social recovery. The Government is represented on the Board

by Paul Scully MP, Minister for London and for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets.

- London Councils has been asked to nominate leads for two key strands dealing respectively with social and economic recovery: Cllr Georgia Gould will lead on the Economic Recovery Strand and we are talking to Conservative group in relation to Social Recovery strand
  - **The Economic Recovery** working group will focus on the stabilising and kickstarting the Capital's economy, encompassing broad themes such as unemployment, economic growth and a cleaner, greener London.
  - **The Social Recovery** working group will address the broad spectrum of social issues that have been impacted by the pandemic, including themes of poverty and destitution, keeping young people safe, health inequality, social isolation and the Shielding cohort.
- Two additional working groups will cover the following strands:
  - *Covid 19 Housing Delivery Taskforce* – Chaired by Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor for Housing. This group was established in April 2020 to develop a housing recovery plan focused on continued housing supply and developments that can deliver more social and other genuinely affordable homes. London Councils is represented by Darren Rodwell, Executive Member for Housing and Planning.
  - Commemoration. Details of this group of still under discussion and will be confirmed in due course.
- The LRB is designed to bring together cross-sectoral representatives including local and central government, police, health, business, trade unions and the voluntary, community and faith sector - to lead, develop and establish long-term London recovery and renewal. The overarching objective of this programme is to restore confidence in the city, minimise the impacts on London's most vulnerable communities, and rebuild the city's economy and society. The inaugural meeting took place 4 June

where overarching principles and ways of working for the structures were agreed.

- The LRB will oversee and be supported by the multi-agency London Recovery Taskforce which will be chaired by Nick Bowes, Mayoral Director of Policy at the Greater London Authority. The wider membership of the Taskforce is still under discussion and the inaugural meeting is set to take place on the 19 June. The Taskforce will implement the Board's vision and it will work closely and collaboratively with the SCG and Transition Management Group.

### **London Councils Recovery and Renewal Engagement**

9. London Councils Office Holders and staff are engaged directly with the recovery and renewal work, with a view to adding value to the work of boroughs and groups of boroughs.
  - Lead members have continued to play a key role, including convening member-level 'virtual meetings' in relation to business and the economy; transport and the environment; housing; community safety; and children's services - including liaison with MPS leads and MOPAC.
  - Leading Members made a number of points during the initial meeting of the Recovery Board on 4 June 2020, including the following:
    - The importance of aiming to 'build back better'.
    - The critical potential of Green investment ( e.g.. green energy and retrofitting) to generate jobs.
    - The need to focus economic and social interventions on young people who are understood to be hardest hit, economically.
    - The importance of rebuilding business confidence.
    - The need to consider the impact on social cohesion and inequalities (including the digital divide).
    - The need to consider the mental health impacts.
    - The balance of emphasis needed between inner and out London.
    - Public transport issues, including work to support a modal shift as well as the need to improve orbital vs radial capacity.

10. In addition, **London Councils** has:

- Initiated work to gather evidence of the impact to inform the development of policy solutions.
- Continued to actively engage with Treasurers, SLT and MHCLG officials to support boroughs prepare and assure their assessment of the financial implications of managing the pandemic, and to analyse and understand the overall impact for London. This will help develop the case to Government around challenges for councils, particularly around loss of income (including Council Tax and business rates), as well as direct costs and undelivered savings. Clearly these issues remain vital going forward and Members may wish to reflect on finance and resource matters when they come to discuss this paper at the Executive.
- Continued to monitor key economic concerns across boroughs, making the case for support to local businesses and the self-employed and convening economic Development Leads.
- Worked with professional networks, to initiate the development of the key learning points for the future of collaborative working with the NHS in London.
- Continued to help harness London local government's wider managerial and professional capacity, Helping interpret the data which is being collected to provide a stock-take for LLAG and the SCG.
- Worked with Housing Directors to help support boroughs in taking the next steps for rough sleepers that are currently placed in temporary accommodation.
- Worked with Government and TfL to articulate borough concerns around the impact of changes to the concessionary travel arrangements and to support boroughs in developing next steps.
  - Working with other funders and the voluntary and community sector to continuously assess the stability of the sector (staffing, funding, increased demand on services), support contingency plans in response to the needs of Londoners and provide links across local, sub-regional, pan-London and national support structures.

11. In addition, as discussed by the Executive at its meeting in May, London Councils will work with portfolio holders, Lead Chief Executives and other key professional groupings to:

- Capture the political and professional learning from member councils over the past few months and use that to help inform boroughs' consideration of their own recovery strategies.
- Commission interventions that add value to the work of individual councils and groups of councils in their own recovery and renewal work.
- Make the case to Government, the Mayor and others for investing in propositions built on London local government leadership of key recovery and renewal themes, e.g. A locally-led Green Recovery proposal.
- Deploy this additional work as part of the consideration of the London recovery Board as well as directly.

## **Conclusion**

12. London local government, including London Councils, has the opportunity to play a potentially quite important role in shaping and implementing the new recovery structures and strategy.

13. London Councils' Office Holders and officers have been working closely with partners, particularly City Hall, Health and Resilience partners, as well as Government, business, and wider public sector agencies, in developing the emerging arrangements.

14. This engagement provides a platform which Office Holders and the broader Executive can use to seize the opportunity to help inform a potential vision not only for recovery, but potentially for building back better – supported by London Councils and the deeper political, managerial and professional resources of all of London local government.



## **Recommendations**

The Executive is asked to:

1. Note the transition from the London resilience arrangements, including the establishment of the Transition Board and the Recovery Board.
  2. Comment on:
    - d. The opportunities and challenges for London local government during the recovery phase?
    - e. How London Councils might best support co-ordination of London local government's own renewal aspirations – drawing on political, managerial and professional expertise in the boroughs?
    - f. How to optimise alignment of borough-led renewal work with the work of the Transition Board and the Recovery Board?
- Note the transition of London resilience arrangements towards recovery, the new pan-London recovery arrangements and the role of local government.
  - Comment on the opportunities and role of London local government in being at the forefront of London's recovery.
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## **Financial Implications for London Councils**

Additional expenditure and potential reductions in income from London Councils' response to the pandemic are being identified and monitored. Each Directorate has an appointed officer responsible for recording these incidences in their respective areas of operation and an overall model is being maintained by the Finance team. This is being reviewed on a very regular basis. Most of the additional burden will have been incurred from the start of the 2020/21 financial year, so there will be significant opportunity to review income and expenditure to consider the need for any adjustments and the potential use of any uncommitted reserves.

## **Legal Implications for London Councils**

None specifically flowing from this paper.

## **Equalities Implications for London Councils**

None specifically flowing from this paper.