

# Leaders' Committee

## Covid-19 Response – Rapid Identification of Lessons Learned Item no: 4

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**Summary** This report reminds members that Leaders' Committee agreed in July 2020 that work be commissioned to identify lessons learned from London local government's collective response to the Covid-19 pandemic between March and July of this year.

**Recommendations** Leaders' Committee is asked to:

- Note and comment on the identification of lessons learned that Mike Cooke will verbally present at Leaders' Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

# Covid-19 Response – Rapid Identification of Lessons Learned

## Introduction

1. At its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020, London Councils Leaders' Committee agreed that a short, rapid exercise should be conducted to identify early lessons learned so far from London local government's joint working on COVID 19 during the period between March and July 2020 and, in particular, the ways in which the political and professional strands of the collective response worked together. The project brief is attached as Appendix A.
2. Mike Cooke, formerly Chief Executive of the London Borough of Camden, was subsequently commissioned to undertake the work. He went on to interview a number of those most closely connected with some of the joint working during the period. In addition, he issued an open invitation, through London Councils, for any Leader/Directly Elected Mayor or Chief Executive to submit written observations in relation to the areas covered in the brief.
3. In essence, the key lines of enquiry were centred on how councils in London worked together during the height of the pandemic and the views of Leaders/Directly Elected Mayors and Chief Executive were sought on:
  - What went well?
  - What went less well?
  - What are the key lessons that might help future planning?
4. Mike Cooke will present his verbal summary of lessons learned at the Leaders' Committee meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

## Recommendations

Note and comment on the identification of lessons learned that Mike Cooke will present at Leaders' Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

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## **Financial Implications for London Councils**

Consideration will need to be given to the resource implications of this report and we will revert to Leaders if and when any resource implications for London Councils are quantified.

## **Legal Implications for London Councils**

None specifically flowing from this paper.

## **Equalities Implications for London Councils**

### **Appendices:**

#### **Appendix A: Project Brief**

*(London Local Government Covid – 19 Response Rapid Identification of Lessons Learned)*

## Appendix A: Project Brief

### LONDON LOCAL GOVERNMENT COVID – 19 RESPONSE RAPID IDENTIFICATION OF LESSONS LEARNED

#### Synopsis

A rapid, early identification of lessons learned from London local government's joint working on COVID 19 during the period between March and July 2020 and, in particular, the ways in which the political and professional strands of the collective response worked together. This is not intended to be a full review, but is intended to throw up examples of practice and process that worked well and should be built on in responding to any further waves of COVID 19, as well as issues that need to be addressed in order to strengthen London local government's response to any future waves of the virus.

#### Background

Following the onset of the COVID 19 Lockdown in March 2020, London local government responded in a variety of ways. A very substantial element of that response was the work of individual boroughs. **That activity is not the subject of this exercise.** This review activity is focused on the collective work of London local government at political and professional levels and the relationship of the two.

London local government's collective response included:

- The establishment of Chief Executive co-ordinating arrangements at sub regional level working through a 'Convening' Chief Executive. This was the mechanism that helped act as the transmission mechanism between boroughs and the pan London, multi-agency Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG).
- Local political leadership feeding into local responses that were taken into sub-regional co-ordination arrangements.
- Variety of officers being involved in thematic Task and Finish Groups commissioned by either the SCG or the local authority co-ordination arrangements via the 'Convening' Chief Executive. Chief Executives led a large number of specific theme groups across a wide range of topics relevant to responding to the pandemic.
- Joint communications work amongst boroughs co-ordinated by London Councils and feeding into the SCG Gold Communications Group.
- A range of policy and professional support activity provided by established mechanisms involving London Councils and relevant professional groupings. This work included liaison with key national and London partners.
- Weekly meetings of Leaders with the 'Convening' Chief Executive to review progress on issues that London boroughs were grappling with.
- Twice weekly meetings involving the London Councils Elected Officers with the Mayor's Office and the Co-chairs of the SCG.

## **Identification of Lessons Learned**

This rapid review activity is asked to identify:

- Areas that worked well in terms of co-ordinating and harnessing London local government's collective response work, in particular the ways in which within existing accountabilities the political and professional strands worked together, and which should be built upon in preparing for responding to any further waves of the virus.
- Any suggestions for strengthening co-ordination and alignment between the various London local government inputs, in particular the ways that within existing accountabilities the political and professional strands can work together in order to enhance our capacity to respond effectively to any further waves of the virus.
- Any recommendations on how co-ordination arrangements between chief executives for responding to future waves of the virus can be improved.

## **Inputs**

The review activity is likely to include:

- Interviews/grouped discussions with the elected officers of London Councils and a small selection of other Council Leaders.
- Interviews/grouped discussions with the 'Convening' Chief Executive, their Chief of Staff and sub-regional co-ordinating chief executives.
- Interviews with the Chair of the Chief Executives London Committee (CELC) and the Chief Executive of London Councils.
- Interviews with the Co-chairs of the SCG.
- Review of any relevant documentation to help provide broader context for the collective response work that was undertaken.

## **Output**

The required output is a short commentary focused on:

- Things that went well collectively and need to be built upon in responding to any fresh waves of the virus.
- Suggestions for strengthening our future collective responses to fresh waves of the virus, including the arrangements by which chief executives co-ordinate effective response activity and offer assurance to London's wider resilience arrangements.