

## London Councils

### Notes of the Informal meeting of the London Councils Leaders' Committee held virtually on 8 February 2022 at 11.30am

#### Present:

BARKING AND DAGENHAM	Cllr Darren Rodwell
BARNET	Cllr Daniel Thomas
BEXLEY	Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE
BRENT	Cllr Muhammed Butt
BROMLEY	Cllr Colin Smith
CAMDEN	Cllr Georgia Gould
CROYDON	Cllr Hamida Ali
EALING	Cllr Peter Mason
ENFIELD	Cllr Nesil Caliskan
GREENWICH	Cllr Danny Thorpe
HACKNEY	Mayor Philip Glanville
HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM	Cllr Stephen Cowan
HAVERING	Cllr Damian White
HARROW	Cllr Graham Henson
HILLINGDON	Cllr Ian Edwards
HOUNSLOW	Cllr Steve Curran
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA	Cllr Elizabeth Campbell
KINGSTON	Cllr Andreas Kirsch
LAMBETH	Cllr Claire Holland
LEWISHAM	Mayor Damien Egan
MERTON	Cllr Mark Allison
NEWHAM	Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz OBE
REDBRIDGE	Cllr Kam Rai (Deputy)
RICHMOND UPON THAMES	Cllr Gareth Roberts
SOUTHWARK	Cllr Kieron Williams
SUTTON	Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE
TOWER HAMLETS	Mayor John Biggs
WALTHAM FOREST	Cllr Grace Williams
WANDSWORTH	Cllr Ravi Govindia CBE
CITY OF LONDON	Ms Catherine McGuinness

#### Apologies:

HARINGEY	Cllr Peray Ahmet
ISLINGTON	Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz
REDBRIDGE	Cllr Jas Athwal
WESTMINSTER	Cllr Rachael Robathan

Officers of London Councils and the London Borough of Harrow were in attendance.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed Cllr Andreas Kirsch to his first Leaders' Committee.

### **1. Apologies for Absence and notification of Deputies**

Apologies and notifications were as listed above.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Minutes of the Leaders' Committee held on 7 December 2021 – for noting**

The minutes of 7 December 2021 were noted.

### **4. London HIV Prevention Programme**

Cllr Thorpe introduced the item, informing members that:

- boroughs were asked to provide their support to promote HIV testing week (commencing 7 February)
- members noted London's progress to reach zero HIV infections by 2030; the London HIV Prevention Programme had made a contribution to the tangible decreases in the numbers of new infections in the capital
- the report made reference to the ongoing issues of disproportionality among Black African men and men who have sex with men who are most at risk of catching HIV in the context of the HIV challenge
- members' concerns about ensuring that the programme continued to offer value for money were noted: although the report recognised the need for a 'one city' approach, and as such members' commitment to support the programme for the duration of the financial year and to work towards developing the sustainability of the programme beyond April 2023 was agreed.

Members made the following comments:

- although local messaging remained important, the value of maintaining the work on a pan London basis was noted, particularly in terms of the changing health landscape, for example the creation of the ICS structures, and the fact that sexual health issues did not contain themselves within boroughs
- the positive impact of the partnership work between London Councils, the GLA and the NHS was noted, in that London was one of the best performing cities in relation to reducing late diagnosis infection
- the work with Thrive London linking mental health and wellbeing had been successful in obtaining funding and getting access to PrEP
- a full briefing on the support for people with uncertain immigration status would be provided outside of this Committee.

Members noted the report, endorsed the proposal to continue funding the programme for a one-year transitional period from April 2022 to March 2023, and confirmed the commitment for London Councils to continue to work with LB Lambeth and stakeholders to develop a set of proposals to secure the long-term sustainability of the programme to April 2023.

## **5. Climate Afghan Evacuation, Asylum Support and UASC Pressures**

Sean Harriss, Chief Executive of Harrow, presented the item. He informed members that:

- progress was being made in these areas and there had been successes, for example the acknowledgement regarding British nationals' eligibility for the ACRS/ARAP offer
- over 70 families had now been relocated within London
- more pressure was being placed on Government to speed up the matching process so that property offers were not lost
- there was positive feedback about London's 'Fair Shares' offer although because of the numbers of ACRS/ARAP cases the capital's numbers could be higher
- because of evidence to the Home Select committee and lobbying via the GLA, it was expected that an announcement would shortly be made regarding resources levels for boroughs taking on refugees
- work had been done around UASC and the National Transfer Scheme to ensure that Home Office figures remained accurate. Lobbying had taken

place regarding a small number of boroughs where UASC pressures were higher.

In addition, Cllr Butt mentioned that he was shortly to meet with Government regarding the NTS and 'Fair Shares', the impact on London and the requirement for funding to align with housing and employment requirements.

Members supported the work being done and made the following points:

- continued lobbying needed to take place with Government regarding the issues of refugees being unable to work
- the benefit cap remained an issue with regard to housing
- there was concern about the general lack of appropriateness of accommodation for people's needs and the length of time spent in such accommodation.

Members noted the report and endorsed the next steps.

## **6. Enhanced Sub-Regional Working re: Rough Sleepers**

Cllr Rodwell introduced the report, informing members that:

- the opportunity to work with government to fund five sub regional co-ordinators and five sub regional immigration co-ordinators was a positive move
- while recognising that boroughs were already supporting rough sleepers at a sub-regional level, the potential funding complemented the pan London work including the co-chairing of the 'Life off the Streets' task force with the Mayor's office.

In response to a question from members about the value for money implications of the proposals, Cllr Rodwell confirmed that the new resources would assist with better pan London co-ordination but would also demonstrate the positive borough level advantages of sub regional working.

Members noted the report and approved the suggested way forward.

## **7. Levelling Up White Paper**

The Chair agreed that while a longer discussion was needed on this paper, because of constraints of time regarding this meeting the paper could only be noted at this point. The Strategic Director: recovery informed members that:

- regarding the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the government was to promise indicative allocations in the spring and required investment plans by summer
- the first two years of the fund would be focused on 'pride in place' with the emphasis on investment in communities and business. Members' views were sought on the most effective way of responding to this.

Members were keen that the allocation needed to be at a sub-regional level, recognising that the north east of London was one of five areas recognised for its deprivation; a pan London allocation might result in the money not being correctly allocated.

Members of Leaders' Committee noted the work so far on the Levelling Up White Paper.

## **8. Annual Audit Report 2020/21**

Members noted the contents of the Annual Audit Report for 2020/21

## **9. Feedback from Joint Boards**

Members noted the feedback from the following Joint Boards:

- London Economic Action Partnership Board (LEAP)
- Skills for Londoners Board (SfL)
- London Crime Reduction Board (LCRB)

## **10. Minutes of meetings for noting**

Members noted the minutes of the following meetings:

- GLPC – 18 October 2021
- TEC Executive - 17 November 2021
- Grants Committee – 24 November 2021

## **11. Urgency report**

Members noted the London Councils' urgency procedure regarding decisions taken following the Meeting of Members of London Councils Leaders' Committee on 7 December 2021.

The meeting finished at 12.00 pm.