

## London Councils

### Notes of the Informal meeting of the London Councils Leaders' Committee held virtually on 22 March 2022 at 11.30am

#### Present:

BARNET	Cllr Daniel Thomas
BEXLEY	Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE
BRENT	Cllr Muhammed Butt
BROMLEY	Cllr Colin Smith
CAMDEN	Cllr Georgia Gould
CROYDON	Cllr Stuart King (Deputy)
EALING	Cllr Peter Mason
GREENWICH	Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald (Deputy)
HACKNEY	Mayor Philip Glanville
HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM	Cllr Stephen Cowan
HILLINGDON	Cllr Ian Edwards
HOUNSLOW	Cllr Steve Curran
ISLINGTON	Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz
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 Jas Athwal
RICHMOND UPON THAMES	Cllr Gareth Roberts
SOUTHWARK	Cllr Kieron Williams
SUTTON	Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE
TOWER HAMLETS	Mayor John Biggs
WANDSWORTH	Cllr Ravi Govindia CBE
WESTMINSTER	Cllr Tim Mitchell (Deputy)
CITY OF LONDON	Ms Catherine McGuinness

#### Apologies:

BARKING AND DAGENHAM	Cllr Darren Rodwell
CROYDON	Cllr Hamida Ali
ENFIELD	Cllr Nesil Caliskan
GREENWICH	Cllr Danny Thorpe
HARINGEY	Cllr Peray Ahmet
HARROW	Cllr Graham Henson
HAVERING	Cllr Damian White
WALTHAM FOREST	Cllr Grace Williams
WESTMINSTER	Cllr Rachael Robathan

Officers of London Councils and the Pensions CIV were in attendance.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and confirmed that that some members would be standing down in May. The Chair thanked Cllr Roger Ramsay, Chair of Audit Committee for 8 years and a Councillor in Havering for 40 years, Cllr Steve Curran, who had been a Councillor at Hounslow since 2010, Leader of Hounslow since 2014, and chaired the Capital Ambition Board for London Councils, and Cllr Hamida Ali from the London Borough of Croydon, for their service to London Councils and their own boroughs.

The Chair also thanked Catherine McGuinness, who was coming to the end of her term as Chair of the City of London's Policy and Resources Committee. Ms McGuinness was praised as a generous and humble leader who has been a champion for London's businesses and communities during the Pandemic.

Members of Leaders Committee thanked the members for their work and recognised their leadership.

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

Apologies and notifications were as listed above.

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

Cllr Ravi Govindia reported that he was a board member of the London Pensions CIV.

### **3. Minutes of the Leaders' Committee held on 8 February 2022 – for noting**

The minutes of 8 February 2022 were noted.

### **4. Update on the London Pensions CIV**

The Chair welcomed Mike Creston and Mike O'Donnell, respectively Chair and Chief Executive of the London Pensions CIV.

Mr Creston, who had taken the role of Chair in September 2021 and had a background in asset management, informed members that recent changes had been

made to the Board and that the calibre of the new non-executive members was high. He acknowledged that the present environment had presented a number of challenges, but that significant changes had been made to the work of the CIV in the last six months.

Mr O'Donnell further informed members that:

- progress had made on pooling with 70% of assets to be pooled by 2025. Government guidance on pooling was still awaited to cover future pooling, climate reporting and levelling up
- savings were continuing to be made and these had been reported to shareholders and DLUHC
- despite the Pandemic recruitment had continued and there had been some high quality appointments; a retention risk was acknowledged
- ESG progress continued through the launching of new funds focusing on climate and responsible investment, and the reporting offer in terms of TCFD, plus the setting of Net Zero targets to be achieved by 2040 (and by 2030 internally)
- Managers had been asked not to make new investments in Russia and a managed exit from existing investments when possible was being organised
- one borough was currently involved with the London Fund but the CIV were keen to involve others
- the Board agreed a Diversity and Inclusion policy in 2021, and progress had been made on improving gender diversity
- in terms of the regulatory capital issue, which arose as a result of the FCA's review of the CIV's capital structure, this was a definition issue, which required changes to the Articles and Shareholder Agreement to make capital redemption clearer; 30 shareholders had signed to date. The FCA had been constructive in their advice and both they and the DLUHC would continue to be updated.

The Chair thanked the Chair and Chief Executive of the London Pensions CIV for their report. Members noted the report.

## **5. UKSPF Progress Report**

London Councils Strategic Lead: Enterprise, Economy and Skills introduced a presentation on the item, informing members that:

- the Fund replaced the European Structural and Investment Fund and focused on three priorities; Communities and Place, People and Skills and Supporting Local Businesses. £2.6b had been committed across the UK for the first three years and Government had committed that the totals would match the ESIF totals for England, the devolved nations and Cornwall. London had, under ESIF, received around £620m funding, over a seven year period, which with match funding totalled approximately £1bn
- there had been no detail yet on the allocation formula and the allocations for local areas, expected to be released as part of the Spring Statement
- the three year funding would be allocated to specific areas; in London this would be the GLA. The GLA would then develop an investment plan and manage the delivery of the Fund
- the timetable would likely be tight; local areas would need to submit investment plans by June/July
- Government had launched guidance which noted that the UKSPF should not be focused on people and skills for the first two years, which was challenging for London because a significant proportion of ESIF funding had been used for employment and skills
- the UKSPF arrangements were expected to acknowledge the scale and diversity of London
- Government was expected to announce the next round of the Levelling Up Fund before the pre-election period, with bids to be submitted by June 2020, which again would be problematic for London because of the election period
- an approach to lobbying regarding UKSPF had been agreed at Executive. London Councils would lobby for a central role for boroughs based around the principles that the economic recovery framework was used as the basis for London's UKSPF investment plan, that priorities should be co-designed between the GLA and boroughs, and that much of UKSPF should be allocated instead of a bidding process and should reflect local priorities; the latter would require boroughs and the GLA to agree UKSPF allocations across London

- ongoing discussions had been taking place with the GLA around the co-design and governance of the programme and making the case for borough allocations. The GLA was considering the LEAP as its stakeholder advisory group for UKSPF: three London Leaders were currently nominated to LEAP
- Government was also being lobbied regarding the lack of funding for employment and skills in the first two years of the programme.

Members made the following points:

- there needed to be flexibility for spending the allocation on borough priorities. Also some funds were coming to an end before the new money was allocated, and it was necessary to map this
- healthy competition for ideas was good but any competition that resulted in inequities wasn't
- although there was political representation on the LEAP it was a 'top down' process, and there needed to be alignment with the recovery missions and issues of inner and outer London, for example
- a lot of work would be required while members were involved in pre-election activities and it would be left to London Councils and officers to co-ordinate responses
- whatever was devised should enable every borough to feel that they have a fair allocation, although recognising that this was a long-term programme
- in that the employment market for young people was fragile, there was a very real risk if skills and employment projects weren't funded that young people could miss out on employment opportunities.

Following the Spring Statement London Councils would be meeting with the GLA to look at the priorities for London, how UKSPF could recognise borough-based inequalities, and also to understand gaps in provision with regard to existing skills and employment projects.

Members noted the work done regarding UKSPF.

## **6. The London Vaccine Equity Programme**

This report had been withdrawn in that the decision needed from members was now no longer required, but this did not impact on the administration of the programme.

## **7. Feedback from Joint Boards**

Feedback was provided on meeting of the following Joint Boards:

- Homes for Londoners – Cllr Holland reported that the Board had discussed the Building Safety Bill and support for leaseholders, external walls systems guidance, Leadership 25 which promoted diversity in the housing association sector and a general update on housing delivery
- LEAP Board – Cllr Campbell confirmed that the last meeting had concentrated on the UKSPF, the details of which had already been reported in a previous item
- London Health Board – the Chair reported that the meeting had discussed health inequalities in terms of the Pandemic, the development of Integrated Care Systems, and action being taken on air quality

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

Members noted the minutes of the following meetings:

- TEC – 14 October 2021
- TEC – 9 December
- Executive – 18 January 2022
- TEC Executive – 10 February 2022
- YPES – 17 February 2022
- Executive – 1 March 2022

## **11. Urgency report**

Members noted the London Councils urgency procedure regarding decisions taken following the meeting of Members of London Councils Executive on 18 January 2022 and Leaders Committee on 8 February 2022

The meeting finished at 12.25 pm.