

## **Minutes of an Informal Meeting of the Executive**

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 09:30 am**

**Mayor Phil Glanville was in the chair**

### **Present**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Position</b>
Cllr Muhammed Butt	
Cllr Ruth Dombey OBE	Vice Chair
Cllr Danny Thorpe	
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Vice Chair
Cllr Damian White	
Mayor Phillip Glanville	Chair
Cllr Clyde Loakes	Deputy
Cllr Elizabeth Campbell	
Catherine McGuinness	Vice Chair
Mayor Damian Egan	Substitute

London Councils officers were in attendance.

There was a discussion regarding the arrangements to Chair the meeting in the absence of the elected Chair. It was agreed that sufficient notice would be given in future we should have checked this off we'll clear the lines in future.

#### **1. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **2. Apologies for absence and announcement of deputies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Georgia Gould, Cllr Darren Rodwell and Cllr Jas Athwal.

#### **3. Minutes of the informal Executive Meeting held on held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – to note**

The minutes of the informal Executive meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 were noted.

#### **4. LOTI Update - Presentation**

In his capacity as Digital lead, the Chair presented on the work of LOTI and welcomed Eddie Copeland, LOTI Director, to the meeting. Members were informed that:

- LOTI was an organisation, subscription funded by 21 member authorities. LOTI's aims were to help boroughs work together in an open way (there were opportunities for boroughs to be involved even if they were not members) with the overall aim of improving outcomes for Londoners via digital innovation through partnership working
- LOTI launched in its first year with 15 boroughs and a staff team of 3. The first projects concentrated on establishing 100 digital apprenticeships, improving the way data was shared, tech procurement, and digital ethics
- by year 2 LOTI had 19 subscriber boroughs and a team of 4; projects included mapping digital exclusion, assistive technology and innovation in procurement, but also mobilising boroughs to assist in responding to the Pandemic
- in year 3, with a membership of 21 boroughs and a team of 6, under the themes of 'Smarter London, 'Service Innovation' and 'Developing Capabilities' LOTI developed a range of projects including being partners in digital inclusion via the Mayor of London, contributing to the green digital skills aspect of Net Zero, social care innovation, looking at the opportunities for digital districts, developing citizen focused services, and work on digital offices and future workplace provision
- other LOTI successes had included:
  - securing £1.3m from the GLA to tackle digital exclusion, as well as other central government grants
  - exceeding the target of 100 digital apprenticeships and increasing the diversity in skills and setting up a Careers Day, promoting

vacancies and skills gaps across London, building on the digital apprenticeship work

- establishing a LOTI website demonstrating examples of open working
- in terms of next steps, LOTI's plans included:
  - a partnership with LEDNet would concentrate on the use of technology and data to enable London to achieve its Net Zero goals, aims which fed into the Recovery Missions
  - considering, as part of the overall work in this area, how data could help councils to intervene and support people before they became rough sleepers
  - advising on the use of assistive technology within social care (a significant and changing area of expenditure) and using funds to support innovation
  - supporting borough and voluntary sector initiatives to promote digital access for all, looking at different models of devices, mapping digital exclusion and affordability issues
  - an investment of £120K (88 places) from the LOTI community to support the career development of women working in tech, digital and data roles.

The Chair mentioned the value to Hackney of digital apprentices, many of whom had worked to assist the borough's recovery after their cyber-attack; their ability to use skills for public good and diversify their workforce.

In response to a question regarding concerns about the potential for an increase in cyber-attacks, the LOTI Director confirmed their strong relationship with the National Cyber Security Centre in this area. London Councils hosted the Information Security Group for London, and DLUHC had allocated £16m nationally for cyber security interventions which was being monitored. LOTI was also looking at a project linking borough information to predict the possibility of cyber-attacks in local authorities, with a view to creating alerts.

It was reported that one borough had recently simulated a cyber-attack; learning points from this included an awareness of the impact of staff changes when running protocols and the need for regular reviews. It was also noted, in terms of the Hackney cyber-attack, that the borough had managed to rebuild many of their systems more robustly. It was also important to recognise that responsibility for cyber-attack recovery was much wider than a borough's IT department.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that a checklist for cyber-preparedness had been prepared by the National Cyber Security Centre; Government guidance in this area wasn't detailed because every local authority had its own arrangements.

In terms of building networks, it was suggested that assistance could be provided both by the City of London police and the Financial Services Centre because of their experience in this field.

In response to a question regarding corporate data sets, it was confirmed that this work was being led by the GLA but that work was also taking place at LOTI on the sharing of corporate information across boroughs.

Members noted the work of LOTI and future plans.

## **5. Levelling Up White Paper and UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

The Strategic Lead: Enterprise, Economy and Skills introduced the report, which set out proposals as to how the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which replaced the European Structural and Investment Fund, was to be operated. Members were informed that:

- the three themes of the fund were 'communities and place', 'people and skills' and 'supporting local business'
- the funding had been allocated to the GLA in London who were required to develop an investment plan and manage the delivery
- the precise methodology for allocation across local areas was not yet known; £2.6b was to be available nationally across three years

- the timescale could be tight, with indicative allocations in spring and investment plans required to be submitted in the summer, which would cover the pre-election period
- London Councils would lobby that the UKSPF arrangements should reflect London's unique governance arrangements and its scale and diversity
- it was hoped not to replace bidding to Government with bidding to the GLA, so negotiations would take place to agree the distribution of UKSPF in London, based on three principles as set out in paragraph 9 of the report, as well as aiming for a fair allocation for London generally.

Members made the following points:

There was a strong feeling that in the co-design of the allocation, the mechanism of the allocation was crucial, and as much money should be provided to the boroughs as possible, taking into account that boroughs knew best their own priorities, and the relative poverty in some areas of the capital

There was also a concern that 'shovel ready' projects should not necessarily and that there should be enough time to make bids which were equitable.

there was a suggestion that governance structures should be reviewed and that the white paper also provided the opportunity to look at governance areas such as Lea Valley Park

it was important in the bidding to recognise the pressures on outer London boroughs as much as the CAZ, but also to make the case for the whole of London

it was recognised that there were two strands of engagement: the first with the allocation framework and the second in terms of the continued work with the GLA

there were also concerns about bidding for funds such as the recent Good Growth budget; that such bidding involved a lot of work, often for quite small amounts of money; the issue was also raised that while the GLA wanted to encourage joint bids their own bidding structures did not allow for this.

Although it was unlikely that any additional information would be provided from Government before the next meeting of Leaders' Committee, it was hoped that Chairs and Vice Chairs would have separate conversations with Government

departments. Also, negotiations with the GLA would continue. It was recognised that because of the likely short timescale boroughs needed to be prepared

Members noted the report, including the proposed principles to underpin the approach to UKSPF and the next steps

## **6. Month 9 Revenue Forecast 2021/22**

London Councils' Director of Corporate Resources introduced the report, which presented the forecast outturn results for the current financial year based on the position at the end of the third quarter.

A surplus of £1.6m across the three funding streams was reported, the bulk of which was within TEC, mainly due to underspends and surpluses on Freedom Pass and Lorry Control schemes.

There was an underspend of £2.5m on the Taxicard scheme offset by a matching reduction to borough and TfL contributions.

The levels of reserves continued to remain healthy. This was the final forecast for the financial year and the next report would be the provisional outturn figures to be presented in June 2022.

Members noted the overall forecast surplus as at 31 December 2021 (Month 9) of £1.612 million and the position on reserves.

## **7. Debtors Update Report**

The Director of Corporate Resources introduced the report, informing members about the level of debts owed to London Councils at 31 December 2021.

While the report showed a total of £730k this amount had been reduced to £180k.

Finance officers continued to liaise with debtors to ensure that debts were paid promptly. Borough finance officers were thanked for continuing to repay debts on a timely basis.

Members noted the report.

The meeting ended at 10:30