

London Councils

Minutes of the London Councils Leaders' Committee held on 10 February 2015
Mayor Jules Pipe chaired the meeting

Present:

BARKING AND DAGENHAM
BARNET
BEXLEY
BRENT
BROMLEY
CAMDEN
CROYDON
EALING
ENFIELD
GREENWICH
HACKNEY
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM
HARINGEY
HARROW
HAVERING
HILLINGDON
HOUNSLOW
ISLINGTON
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA
KINGSTON
LAMBETH
LEWISHAM
MERTON
NEWHAM
REDBRIDGE
RICHMOND UPON THAMES
SOUTHWARK
SUTTON
TOWER HAMLETS
WALTHAM FOREST
WANDSWORTH
WESTMINSTER
CITY OF LONDON
LFEP

Cllr Darren Rodwell
Cllr Richard Cornelius
Cllr Linda Bailey
Cllr M. A. Butt
Cllr Stephen Carr
Cllr Sarah Hayward
Cllr Tony Newman
Cllr Julian Bell
Cllr Doug Taylor
Cllr John Fahy
Mayor Jules Pipe
Cllr Stephen Cowan
Cllr Claire Kober
Cllr David Perry
Cllr Roger Ramsey
Cllr David Simmonds
Cllr Stephen Curran
Cllr Richard Watts
Cllr Nicholas Paget-Brown
Cllr Kevin Davis
Cllr Lib Peck
Mayor Sir Steve Bullock
Cllr Stephen Alambritis
Cllr Ken Clark
Cllr Jas Athwal
Cllr Lord True
Cllr Peter John
Cllr Ruth Dombey
-
Cllr Clyde Loakes
Cllr Ravi Govindia
Cllr Philippa Roe
Mrs Catherine McGuinness
-

Apologies:

BEXLEY
GREENWICH
HILLINGDON
NEWHAM
TOWER HAMLETS
WALTHAM FOREST
CITY OF LONDON
GRANTS
EQUALITIES

Cllr Teresa O'Neill
Cllr Denise Hyland
Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE
Mayor Sir Robin Wales
Mayor Lutfur Rahman
Cllr Chris Robbins
Mr Mark Boleat
Cllr Paul McGlone
Cllr Marie Pye

Ex officio (under the provisions of Standing Order 2.6)

CAPITAL AMBITION

Mr Edward Lord JP OBE CC

London Councils officers were in attendance.

1. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared.

2. Minutes of Leaders' Committee meeting held on the 9 December 2014

Leaders' Committee agreed the minutes of Leaders' Committee held on the 9 December 2014.

3. Reforming Health & Care

The Chair reported the apologies of Cllr Teresa O'Neill, London Councils' Health portfolio-holder and, in her absence, introduced the report himself:

- In October Leaders' Committee had recognised that London boroughs had a strong interest in the future of health and care in the capital – and an important role to play in leading and shaping transformation to secure sustainable and effective services
- This report showed that since then, the publication of the London Health Commission report and the NHS Five Year Forward View, had clarified the health sector's focus on how to approach transformation.
- The outcome of the General Election and the Comprehensive Spending Review would be important. However, all political parties had welcomed the broad strategic direction in the Forward View and the work over the next six to nine months would certainly inform the outcomes of the Spending Review.
- Boroughs therefore faced questions about the role they wanted to play over the next year, to influence medium term opportunities. This would need to be considered locally, but this paper also sought a steer for London Councils officers' further work.
- The Chair concluded by saying thanks were due to Councillor O'Neill for her work on the health portfolio and, in particular, for arguing for a reformed London Health

Board to help drive this agenda forward in a way that properly reflected the role and contribution of London local government.

Cllr David Simmonds (Conservative, Hillingdon):

- Pointed to the upcoming general election bringing a period of uncertainty but argued that there was an opportunity for greater ambition, in particular on improving business processes where local authorities help the NHS unlock long-standing problems they were not able to resolve themselves. A particular example was estates, where there were real opportunities for new joint ventures or integrated approaches that would unlock better use of estates, to support improvements for example in GP surgeries.
- He also suggested that the Capital Ambition (CAB) programme may provide a source of funding to unlock local partnerships rather than having to rely on bids to central government.

Mr Edward Lord JP OBE CC responded in his role as CAB chair and agreed that he saw Cllr Simmonds' suggestion as an excellent potential use of CAB balances and that the CAB would be happy to receive a paper on any firm proposals at a future meeting.

Cllr Peter John (Labour, Southwark, Children and Young People) condemned the under-use of NHS land and cited the potential for increasing the supply of new housing using un or under-used NHS land.

Cllr Julian Bell (Labour, TEC, Ealing) was particularly concerned about the unwillingness of the NHS to engage local government meaningfully in the approaches being developed for co-commissioning primary care. It was not acceptable that local authorities were only being allowed to be observers in new sub-regional arrangements and that Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) seemed to feel that bringing commissioning intentions to Health & Wellbeing Boards constituted sufficient engagement of these bodies. There was not appropriate recognition of democratic accountability and local residents were being poorly served in places.

Cllr Ruth Dombey (Liberal Democrat, Sutton) felt that the estates agenda was important and should be one area of focus. However, she agreed that making progress on co-commissioning of primary care was also very important. She was concerned that the NHS focus seemed to be too much on vertical integration focused on hospitals, rather than local integration. She was concerned that many of the primary care co-commissioning proposals

were being created to work at the sub-regional Strategic Planning Group (SPG) level. These SPGs would be taking decisions that were really important to boroughs and would have a direct effect on them, while boroughs were not given meaningful influence in them. She would like to see a much more ambitious approach to creating meaningful roles for local authorities in co- and joint commissioning.

Cllr Dombey also thought that the London Health Board (LHB) could have a crucial role in support. She agreed it didn't currently serve its purpose and welcomed a radical rethink, including of membership.

Cllr Richard Watts (Labour Islington):

- Saw the integration of Health and Care as an issue which he thought could only be progressed effectively at a borough level. He felt there should be some challenge of the amount of focus being put on the sub-regional level within the NHS.
- He also felt there was an important role for local authorities in building consensus with citizens for changes in health and care.

Cllr Stephen Carr (Conservative, Bromley) argued for full, democratically-led integration of health and social care at a local level.

Cllr Stephen Curran (Labour, Hounslow) was concerned that in effect a 'super-CCG' was being created in North West London, with no real local authority involvement. Sub-regional arrangements were not acceptable if boroughs were true partners at the table. He also felt NHS England was not working with boroughs as they should be. On estates, he felt issues were made harder because estate that had formerly belonged to Primary Care Trusts had transferred to a national organisation, NHS PropCo.

Cllr Ravi Govindia (Conservative, Wandsworth) argued that resources unlocked through making more efficient use of the NHS estate should first used to improve the Health Service, with other uses such as the provision of homes as secondary goals.

Cllr Sarah Hayward (Labour, Camden) described local frustration at the inability of different NHS bodies to work together to bring together some significant pieces of land in Camden and Islington to release them for development. She called for boroughs to have increased roles to be able to unlock such issues.

Cllr Steve Cowan (Labour, Hammersmith and Fulham) agreed with Cllrs Carr and Curran and that, amidst the plethora of health bodies, democratic accountability should be a fundamental plank of London Councils' case.

Cllr Richard Cornelius (Conservative, Barnet) agreed with them, but added that increasing democratic accountability would require ensuring boroughs had a real role in shaping solutions, not just having to take accountability for what was decided within the NHS.

The Chair summed up by saying that a broad degree of consensus had been achieved, including on the point about the importance of democratically accountable leadership and Leaders' Committee asked London Councils officers to develop policies in light of the steers provided from this discussion, to bring back for further discussion after the General Election.

4. Review of Scale of Election Fees 2015/16

The Chair invited Mr Barry Quirk of the Chief Executives London Committee (CELC) and who plays a pan-London role in elections to introduce the report. Mr Quirk said:

- A similar report came to Leaders' Committee each year which put forward a scale of fees to be paid to election staff and, if Leaders' Committee was content with it, it was circulated to boroughs for guidance that they could adopt or not so, at their discretion
- This report had been prepared by the London Elections Management Board (LEMB) a new body set up in response to encouragement to set up regional election management boards from the Cabinet Office, the arm of central government responsible for managing elections
- The established practice has been to revise all fees and expenses (where not stated as "actual and necessary cost") in accordance with the previous year's local government pay increases
- A local government pay award of 2.2% covering the 15 months up to 31 March 2016 had been agreed. Also additional consolidated payments were to be made to staff at SCP 5-49. Therefore, it was proposed that for the coming year:
 - Part A fees – zero increase. These were the fees for Returning Officers (ROs) and Deputy Returning Officers, and that

- Part B fees - were increased by 2% for the twelve months commencing 1 April 2015. The roles undertaken in part B were generally recognised as being within the SCP 5-49 range and, therefore, should reflect the 2.2% over 15 months and consolidated payments as part of this year's Local Government pay settlement.

Cllr Richard Cornelius (Barnet, Conservative) offered his apologies to Leaders' Committee in that he had raised the question of Returning Officers being remunerated last year but had not been in a position to pursue his concerns. He reiterated them viz. that Returning Officers were normally senior council members of staff and were, in effect, being paid an additional fee for work that they were carrying out within time for which they were being paid by their council. He offered to collaborate with officer colleagues who would be preparing the report that would come to the equivalent meeting next year to ensure his concerns were addressed.

Mr Quirk offered to write to Cllr Cornelius explaining how the fees were structured.

In response to a question from Cllr Nick Paget-Brown (Conservative, R.B. Kensington and Chelsea) concerning the sharp increase in recent years in the number of postal votes and its effect on the number of staff needed at polling stations where there would be a corresponding fall in the number of electors voting in person, Mr Quirk explained:

- The number of staff assigned to polling stations was a matter for ROs
- In many authorities the number of postal voters now exceeded 20%
- There were now three different functions being carried out by local authority election staff: registration, postal votes and managing polling stations and many authorities were putting in place a more explicit separation of the three
- Arrangements needed to be reviewed by ROs but his advice to them would be to put in place a special team to deal with registration in the last week before the poll.

In response to questions from Cllr Carr, Mr Quirk:

- Confirmed that payments to ROs were pensionable, but the employer's liability was the Government's not the local authority's
- The Electoral Commission (EC) was a regulator, not a body charged with delivering functions

- The only *board* that directly managed elections was the one in Northern Ireland.

Cllr Lord True expressed his low opinion of the EC, describing it as a 'grossly over-costly and unnecessary quango' and asked whether it was commissioned by London to undertake work, or commissioned London ROs to do work on its behalf? Mr Quirk confirmed that neither was the case and undertook to provide the councillor with fuller details of the EC's role.

Cllr Ken Clark (Labour, Newham):

- Made mention of the problems experienced at the general election in 2010 of queues at polling stations
- He also expressed his concern that with the new form of registration – Individual Electoral Registration (IER) could delay confirmation of applications to be registered because of late data matching by relevant authorities and result in thousands being disenfranchised.

Mr Quirk responded:

- On queues, he advocated the issue of wrist-bands to electors who joined a polling station queue before the closing-time of 10:00pm to help identify electors able to vote before the poll closed
- On registration he pointed to two problematic groups:
 - The 18-30 year olds, especially students who often lived in some form of hostel accommodation. In the past the wardens of such hostels had been able to make registration arrangements *en bloc*, a practice that was not likely to now be possible
 - The second group were elderly residents of care homes, the managers of which had also registered residents *en bloc* in the past. Discussions were continuing with the Cabinet Office to ascertain whether this would remain possible.

Cllr Darren Rodwell (Labour, Barking and Dagenham) expressed his concern at the risk of intimidation at polling stations and called for a sufficient police presence at them to ensure that it did not take place.

The Chair concluded by thanking Mr Quirk and Leaders' Committee agreed:

- That Mr Quirk would write to Cllr Cornelius concerning the issue of costs and fees
- That Mr Quirk would write to Cllr Lord True concerning the EC
- That those members may choose to circulate his responses to the other members of Leaders' Committee
- The Scale of Returning Officers' Fees and Expenses, attached as an appendix to the report, as guidance for the London boroughs.

5. Devolution and Public Service Reform Update

The Chair introduced the report saying that Leaders' Committee on 9 December 2014 had formally agreed proposals as a potential basis for negotiations with Government including a joint approach with the Mayor of London, seeking joint negotiations with Government, on a proposition for devolution and reform of public services in London. The original outline package included proposals for devolution and reform in relation to:

- Skills
- Employment
- Housing
- Health
- Complex Dependency including Reoffending.

Work to develop more detailed propositions was co-ordinated by the Devolution and Public Service Reform Chief Executives' Group, facilitated by London Councils which also included the GLA's Head of Paid Service.

A joint letter from the Mayor of London and the Chair of London Councils was sent to the Chancellor on 12 December 2014, proposing talks on the scope of a London devolution and public sector reform agreement. The Chancellor's reply indicated that the Government was happy to discuss further devolution to cities and encouraged London to pursue this through discussions with the Minister for Cities and his officials.

The Chair and Cllr Roe, the Executive Group Lead for Devolution and Reform, met the Cities Minister, Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, on 7 January 2015. The Minister broadly welcomed

London's joint approach on devolution and public service reform and agreed – subject to confirmation from the Chancellor - to support discussions on a London Deal that was outside the Growth Deal process. He went on to encourage a focus on public service reform through tangible and practical steps that would offer clear outcomes for government. The Minister had been minded to sanction senior level meetings of officials for detailed conversations.

Cllr Phillipa Roe (Conservative, Devolution and Public Services Reform, City of Westminster) clarified that work in relation to the GLA was work with the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson and his senior colleagues rather than the London Assembly.

Cllr Govindia pointed to the widely-held belief outside London that it had already achieved devolution in the creation of the Mayor of London and GLA but argued that control over spending on skills and employment was within its grasp.

Cllr Watts argued that, given the level of competition around the country for devolution, consideration should be given to winning a level of public support for London's goals through some public campaigning.

The Chair concluded by saying that, in relation to Cllr Watts point, London Councils had a long-standing public stance on Fair Funding to which the devolution work related but it may be time to refresh this.

Leaders' Committee agreed to note the report.

6. Freedom Pass 2015 Reissue Update

Cllr Bell introduced the report saying that London Councils was in the process of the very major operation of reissuing circa 950,000 Freedom Passes. The latest figures showed that 77% of passes had been renewed and 72% of those had been renewed online which was well above the target of 50%, so the project should come in under budget. Thirty-one per cent of passes had already been sent out. Pass-holders who failed to renew had been given a month and a half's grace after their pass ran out on 31 March when their pass would remain useable.

Cllr Roe mentioned that her borough, City of Westminster, had used the opportunity of renewal to cleanse their list of pass-holders.

Cllr Ruth Dombey (Liberal Democrat, Sutton) pointed out that her borough had renewed 100% on-line by using terminals in public libraries where staff had been trained to help pass-holders. They had been using libraries to do this for some time and found it far cheaper and more efficient.

Leaders' Committee agreed to note the progress on the Freedom Pass 2015 reissue since the last report to the Executive on 20 January 2015.

7. Minutes and Summaries

With a correction in the minutes of the Grants Committee – 26 November 2014 previously indicated by Cllr Govindia, Leaders' Committee agreed to note the minutes and summaries:

- Grants Committee – 26 November 2014
- Capital Ambition Board – 3 December 2014
- Transport & Environment Committee – 11 December 2014
- Pensions CIV Sectoral Joint Committee – 17 December 2014

Cllr Lord True asked for the end time of meetings to be recorded.

Leaders' Committee resolved to exclude the press and public.

The meeting ended at 12.30p.m.

Action Points

Item		Action	Progress
3.	Reforming Health & Care Mr Edward Lord JP OBE CC to instruct officers to prepare a report for the CAB meeting after next to look at options around use of CAB balances to facilitate health partnerships.	CAB	A report will be taken to CAB in June
4.	Review of Scale of Election Fees 2015/16 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Barry Quirk to write to Cllr Cornelius	CG/Barry Quirk	In hand

	<p>explaining how election fees were structured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Quirk to provide Cllr Lord True with fuller details of the EC's role. • The Scale of Returning Officers' Fees and Expenses, attached as an appendix to the report, was agreed as guidance for the London boroughs 		Noted
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