

# Leaders Committee

## London Councils' Shared Ambitions Progress report

Item no: 11

**Report by:** Alison Griffin **Job title:** Chief Executive

**Date:** 13 December 2022

**Contact Officer:** Jillian Kay, Strategic Director, Recovery  
(jillian.kay@londoncouncils.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 020 7934 9575 **Email:** alison.griffin@londoncouncils.gov.uk

**Summary:** This report outlines a progress report and update on London Councils' Shared Ambitions Milestones since they were agreed by Leaders in July. We have substantial progress to report across the board, in a context for London and Londoners which is particularly challenging. Members are invited to agree a new roadmap for the six months ahead (Annex A).

**Recommendations** Members are asked to:

- Note the progress report and approve the suggested priorities for the first half of next year.

# London Councils' Shared Ambitions Progress report

## 1. Introduction

1.1. This report outlines a progress report on London Council's Shared Ambitions milestones, five months on from their agreement by Leaders in July 2022. The 'Shared Ambitions' framework is illustrated below.



1.2. The period since July 2022 has been marked by political and economic instability, a growing concern across London about the cost-of-living crisis, the impact on Londoners and damage to London's recovery. The shared ambitions framework has enabled us to remain focussed in this context and we have made substantial progress against the roadmap, while responding to the changing context in our support to the Boroughs and in our lobbying. A detailed progress report against the framework is set out in section 2.

1.3. Also, since July, we have moved to a new phase of London's ambitious recovery programme. The Recovery Board, which is co-chaired by our Chair and the Mayor of London, will evolve next year into a 'partnership board'<sup>1</sup> for London, which will take its focus beyond recovery and will bring partners together to tackle a range of issues affecting Londoners. The recovery missions will continue but with many of them managed as business as usual, including through our shared ambitions programme as detailed below. This evolution has already begun, with important

<sup>1</sup> London Partnership Board is a working title

discussions on the cost-of-living crisis at the Board last month. This way of working is a positive legacy for London from our response to the pandemic.

1.4. Looking ahead, our recommendation is that the shared ambition framework remains appropriate, and we will continue to be flexible and responsive to events and opportunities. A revised roadmap is attached at Annex A. Proposed priorities for the next 6 months are:

- Cost of living working group and dashboard (Launch group & dashboard Dec 2022, Dashboard 2.0 March 2023) *London's future*
- Agreement of the pan-London infrastructure framework (March 2023), ahead of UKREIFF (May) *London's future*
- Support for asylum seekers - with an opportunity to mark the anniversary of the Ukraine invasion in Feb 2023 *London's future*
- Delivery Plans for climate change programmes (March 2023)– London 'Partnership Board' item on retrofit (Feb 2023) *Climate and net zero*
- Driving up representation of London boroughs in the five new ICSs established across London – ongoing *Wellbeing and prevention*
- Development of policy positions on fiscal devolution through devolution task and finish group – launch in Jan 2023 – advice to Leaders summer 2023 *London's voice*
- Operating model review (April 2023) and continued work to embed race equality (ongoing) *Organisational development*

## **2. Progress against Shared Ambitions Milestones**

### **2.1. London's Future: a relentless focus on levelling up**

- Levelling up and tackling deprivation
- Jobs, skills and support for young people
- Supporting Londoners through the cost-of-living crisis
- Building collaboration between London partners
- Shaping our city for the future
- Developing London's role as a global city

**Cost of living:** We brought boroughs together in September on the cost-of-living crisis, to share plans and ideas for supporting Londoners through another challenging period. That discussion has been followed up by a number of activities, including the establishment of a member-officer working group chaired by Cllr Claire Holland, a new campaign that will be launched early in the new year in collaboration with the GLA to drive up pension credit take-up and the creation of a data dashboard to enable us to measure the impact of the crisis at pan-London and borough-level, as well as inform our policy development and campaigning. This first iteration of the dashboard should launch in December, and an updated version in March.

**Building collaboration:** We worked collaboratively with the GLA on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, with Leaders agreement on funding allocations to the boroughs and influencing the main bidding pot priorities. Boroughs are on track to start spending on UKSPF in 2022-23, subject to Government agreement to the investment plan which is now overdue. London Councils and borough representatives will be part of a new UKSPF board, reporting to the London 'Partnership' Board, providing oversight of the fund as a whole.

Following the work that we undertook on UKSPF, the GLA is proposing to take a different approach to a new £12.5m Mayoral place-based regeneration fund. It does not propose to allocate via competitive bidding, but rather through a process of engagement and co-commissioning with London boroughs. London Councils has facilitated a discussion between GLA and London borough officers to discuss what data and other processes should be used to identify where the funding might be targeted.

**Local Welfare Assistance** We commissioned the design and trial of an evaluation framework for Local Welfare Assistance (LWA), working with 7 London boroughs over 6 months. The evaluation has now been completed and the report is due to be published in December. It found that LWA is effective at preventing escalation of crisis and protecting residents from harmful consequences, as well as providing an opportunity for councils to sign-post residents to relevant support that can help prevent future crisis. The findings will inform the ongoing work of the Robust Safety Net mission, including working with interested boroughs to support them to implement the evaluation framework included in the report, as

well as future discussions with government departments to make the case for dedicated LWA funding.

**Pan-London plan on SEND:** Since the publication of the Green Paper ‘Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability (SEND), we have held a member event with lead members for children to help us shape our response to the proposals set out in the paper, written to Ministers and published an article by Cllr Edwards setting out the key messages from our response. We are working with the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) SEND working group to continue to mitigate some of the challenges facing boroughs and children with SEND and their families.

**Leadership on refugee resettlement and reform of asylum dispersal:** Since March 2022 we have convened a weekly/fortnightly Ukraine borough leads network. This enables boroughs to share good, innovative and emerging practice, identify and escalate issues of concern. We have also supported borough leads to respond to the humanitarian emergency and escalate issues through officer and political routes following the rapid decanting of the Manston processing.

Working with London boroughs, we have agreed a model for Afghan resettlement to avoid the over-concentration of any homelessness responsibilities in those borough hosting bridging hotels.

A London dispersal plan for Asylum Seekers was developed in close collaboration with boroughs and agreed by Leaders in October 2022. The London asylum dispersal multi-factor model was submitted to Home Office alongside a set of principles and conditions for improving the wider system for receiving, accommodating, supporting and integrating asylum seekers. The London dispersal model has been received and agreed by Home Office.

**London’s infrastructure:** The delivery of a pan-London infrastructure framework began in August and is on track to be completed by the end of March 2023 ahead of MPIM. The framework will set out a prioritised list of schemes with strategic value for London and that could be particularly attractive to private investors. A workshop with leaders is planned for

mid-January to review the emerging framework, with early soundings of investors also planned for that month.

### **Working with GLA, boroughs, SRPs and businesses to deliver the Economic**

**Recovery Framework:** In October, we held the first meeting of the refreshed London Councils Economy Board, chaired by Cllr Elizabeth Campbell with portfolio holders around economy, employment, skills, transportation, and environment. The board discussed a refresh of the economic recovery framework, which will be published shortly.

### **2.2. Climate Adaptation and Net Zero: delivering the seven climate programmes to address the climate issues facing boroughs.**

- Delivering the seven climate change programmes
- Financing climate change action
- Supporting people into new green jobs
- Delivering a New Green Deal for London
- London Councils' journey to net zero

**3Ci:** We are a founding partner of the Cities Commission for Climate Investment (3Ci), which reached an important milestone in October with the launch of an outline business case for place-based packages of investment that blend public and private finance for new infrastructure. Over the next 12 months, 3Ci will be seeking to establish a range of demonstrator projects to test the principles and assumptions of the business case on the ground. Working with boroughs, we have identified over 600 projects that could support London to achieve its net zero ambitions and are ensuring that priority schemes are incorporated into the pan-London infrastructure framework.

**Delivery Plan of Climate Programme actions:** Over the summer, we brought together officers from the 7 climate change programmes to reflect on the progress made over the last 2 years, look at the connections and common challenges and start to scope out the next phase of programme development. There was broad consensus that by working together councils can have greater impact on the climate emergency, but there is also a recognition that a plan is needed for sustainably resourcing this work in the next phase. The programmes are naturally at different stages, but all are starting to deliver key actions from their plans. One of the most notable achievements to date has been Retrofit London winning the MJ Award for 'leadership in responding to the climate emergency' in June 2022.

**Green New Deal for London:** We continue to jointly deliver the Green New Deal mission with GLA colleagues. The focus is on retrofitting all buildings, improving green finance for net zero projects and creating the right conditions for accelerating programmes for green skills development. In February, we brought all of the different stakeholders together in a Warmer and Greener Buildings Summit, which resulted in a number of actions being taken forward. London Councils leads through its Retrofit London programme and business organisations have committed action on their stock. London Councils and GLA have developed a joint statement on green finance and how the place-based approach of blended finance can work with the green bond that the Mayor is progressing. On green skills, we are currently taking stock of all the different activities taking place, including strategic sub-regions, the Green Economy climate programme, individual boroughs and the GLA with a view of creating an overall, collaborative strategy for delivery in this space.

**Transport and Mobility contracts:** We continue to work towards the inclusion of climate change and sustainability in Transport and Mobility contracts (the milestone of Q2 2002 for LLCS and HEB has been rolled forward to 2023). A new Assistant Director, Commercial, Contracts and Service Delivery, was appointed and started at London Councils last month. This will enable further progress in this area, including the development of a procurement pipeline for transport and mobility during Q1 of 2023.

### **2.3. Wellbeing and the London borough role in Prevention: establishing and developing Integrated Care Systems across London.**

- Supporting boroughs in improving health & wellbeing
- Addressing health inequalities
- Improving housing conditions
- Improving mobility and transport
- Addressing violence against women and girls
- Developing Integrated Care Systems

**Drive up representation of London boroughs in ICSs:** We have formed a Chief Executives' ICS leads group to enable the exchange of intelligence and information about the development of new partnership arrangements, including ICB membership and governance and place partnerships. Working with the Chief Executive group and London

Health and Wellbeing Board Chairs' Network, we have drafted a stocktake of ICSs in London and boroughs' views on the priorities for new partnership arrangements. We have worked with NHS partners and voluntary and community groups to collate innovative models of partnership working and produce a framework for borough-based partnerships to undertake a self-assessment of local arrangements. Finally, we held a Leader and Member session on 14 November, shining a light on the role of councils in ICS partnerships and borough partnerships and facilitating a space for members to exchange experiences about collaboration with health partners.

We have published a report and self-assessment tool to promote early years integration. The purpose is to improve wellbeing for both parents and young children, which has led to greater collaboration in ICSs. We are working with partners in the NHS to promote the report findings across regional and ICS networks in the NHS.

**Improvement in housing standards and conditions:** We have set up the Setting the Standard system (London's centralised temporary accommodation inspection service) and 33 per cent of the bed and breakfast and studio properties used for Temporary Accommodation in London have been inspected. We have a target to have inspected 60 per cent by 2023. We have also launched a sector led housing standards improvement programme, which includes a series of learning action groups. This programme will also include a peer-to-peer programme taking place in early 2023.

We are leading the Life Off the Streets programme, a partnership initiative for tackling rough sleeping in London. The programme is ambitious and cross cutting and includes tackling non-UK rough sleeping, responding to the specific needs of women and young people, ensuring greater support for rough sleepers around their health and support needs and enough off the streets accommodation that can manage those needs.

**Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG):** We held our first member lunchtime event on tackling VAWG, chaired by our Community Safety and VAWG Lead, Cllr Jas Athwal. With around 30 attendees, topics covered included the key challenges for survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence, services funded through the London Council Grants programme and a case study presented by Shaminder Ubhi (Director of the Ashiana Network, one of London Councils' grants partners) about a survivor of abuse with no recourse to public funds who accessed support via their service.



We have successfully engaged at an early stage with new Police Commissioner, establishing a platform for improving the police and local authority partnership including local policing and community engagement.

**Review of Climate Programme actions with public health outcomes:** A workshop was held between the seven climate programmes, GLA, ADPH and others which identified several significant synergies, including tackling inequality and promoting public health. These will be tackled through the implementation plan scheduled for later in the year. The low carbon transport programme is undertaking a deeper assessment of the overlaps between transport and health policy as part of its work. Again, this will be included in the implementation plan. LEDNet has been through a process to define its strategic priorities and reinvigorate the network. Five key themes are taken forward, including transport and health & environment. All themes are currently being scoped out with action plans being developed.

#### **2.4. London's Voice: developing a shared London narrative to maximise the city's opportunities for all Londoners.**

- Lobbying for London
- A shared London narrative
- A fair share of funding for Londoners
- A vision for greater financial autonomy
- Greater devolution and levelling up
- London Councils is a trusted partner

**Levelling Up and London:** London Councils was recently invited to submit evidence for the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee's inquiry into funding for levelling up. Our response welcomed the overall strategic aim of levelling up as a lever for addressing deprivation and regional differences in opportunity. However, we also raised concerns regarding the lack of an overarching funding strategy, the short-term nature of levelling up funding and an overly centralised system with government controlling too many of the funding levers. We reiterated our call for greater fiscal devolution to local areas over the medium to long term.

**Making the case for London:** London Councils have led the development of Opportunity London where we work with key London partners to present a powerful narrative about London's future as an open and green world city to global investors to attract sustainable investment into all of London's boroughs and communities. Through Opportunity London we are working with other cities as part of 'Team UK' at a range of investor events in the UK and which will include a joint stand with Manchester at the UK Reiff investment event in Leeds in Spring 2023.

We have developed a new narrative for London Councils as the collective of London local government where shared ambitions are developed, agreed and championed by members working together; where boroughs speak as one and collaborate with Government, the Mayor of London, the London public sector, the third sector and key UK and other international cities. A programme of work is underway to ensure that the new narrative is embedded in all of the briefings and communications of London Councils to ensure consistent and coherent messaging across the organisation.

**Fair funding campaigning:** While the government has not consulted on local government finance reforms, as had been planned in July, London Councils has undertaken a range of activity to lobby for fair share of funding for Londoners. This has included: raising awareness of the overarching pressures on boroughs budgets caused by inflation (June); highlighting the potential undercounting of London's population in the 2021 Census (June); illustrating the financial pressures on high needs budgets (in responding to the SEND Green Paper consultation, July); raising concerns about planned reforms to the Homelessness Prevention Grant (consulted on in August) and the distribution of ASC charging reform funding (consulted on in September).

**Budget submission:** Our submission ahead of the Mini-Budget in September set out the challenges facing London boroughs, emphasising the lower funding of outer London boroughs. It sought financial support for London's boroughs, called for increases to social care funding and postponement of the ASC funding reforms, support for residents and businesses with the rising cost of living and inflation, funding for net zero, and devolution. The rapid changes to the wider national political context, meant London Councils did not make a submission. Our lobbying and media campaigning ahead of the recent Autumn

Statement gained coverage in the Guardian, Times and BBC and other outlets to raise awareness of the £700m funding gap London boroughs were facing for 2023-24.

While we were successful in our lobbying call for a delay to the proposed ASC funding reforms, the recent Autumn Statement announcements on the 7% cap on social rents and the freeze in Local Housing Allowance rates remain a significant concern.

**Fiscal devolution:** Analysis was undertaken in August to support the decision not to reconstitute the pan-London business rates pool next year (seen previously as an important steppingstone to greater fiscal devolution). In November, the Executive agreed to establish a task and finish group to help update and renew London Councils policy positions on fiscal devolution. This work will begin in January 2023 and make recommendations to Leaders Committee by the summer.

## **2.5. Value Proposition for Boroughs: ensuring our services and everything we do adds value to the work of boroughs.**

- Led by the boroughs
- Our services, advocacy, and lobbying
- Supporting professional networks
- Promoting innovation and leading practice
- Supporting boroughs to be more resilient

**Led by the boroughs:** We have launched a new series of online briefings for councillors – London in Brief. These are led by London Councils Executive Members and Strategic Policy Leads and all London’s councillors direct access to the expertise at London Councils and its partners. Councillors can attend live or access recordings of the events when it is convenient to them. The subject matter is focussed on London Councils shared ambitions and started with workshops on VAWG and Climate Change.

As the provider of the secretariat for the London APPG we organised a number of briefings on key priorities from the shared ambitions including asylum seekers and cost of living to ensure that London’s parliamentarians are aware of how these issues impact on boroughs and how boroughs are working to tackle them.

**Freedom Pass:** We have completed the Freedom Pass settlement for 2023/24 with transport operators and the apportionment to boroughs. The cost of the settlement is £236.87 million, compared to £207.52 million in 2022/23. The increase in cost is largely down to assumed levels of fares rises (13.3%), recovery in rail usage and the completion of new stages of the Elizabeth Line. The final cost could come down in the coming months once DfT and the Mayor announce fares rises for next year. It should be noted that without the agreement negotiated by London Councils, TfL could invoke the 'reserve scheme', which would be significantly more expensive for boroughs.

We successfully completed a mid-term review of Freedom Passes expiring in 2025. The exercise checks continued eligibility of pass holders at the mid-point of their passes' five-year life. The exercise, which is forecast to cost £177,000, is estimated to avoid £6 million of cost to boroughs, thereby generating a benefit / cost ratio of 34 to one.

**Senior workforce development:** In workforce development, we have delivered an induction offer for new Chief Executives that have started during the past year that has been well received.

With significant churn at chief executive level in London there has been recognition this year of the need for a workforce strategy that will ensure a pipeline of chief executives and senior managers that can effectively support Leaders in their roles. The first elements of this work comprise continuation of the London Leadership Programme (LLP) and the development of an 'aspiring chief executives' programme. The recommissioning of a further four cohorts of the LLP will begin in December ready for launch in summer 2023, while the commissioning of the aspiring chief executive programme will begin in the new year. The aim of this programme will be to help participants understand the challenges of being a chief executive, how they can work effectively with members and how to tackle issues at a pan-London level. We have also developed and commissioned London Skills Academy to build housing development capabilities in boroughs.

**Performance benchmarking:** The announcement of the Office for Local Government and their intentions around the collection and publishing of performance data meant a decision was taken to pause the building and commissioning of a new bespoke benchmarking solution. In the interim to help support boroughs be more resilient, we have worked with the

Local Government Association to develop a series of data reports using their LG Inform benchmarking tool. These reports will provide information to the Self Improvement Board (SIB) that will measure the performance of London against a set of key metrics, highlight lines of enquiry for the Board related to borough or service performance and highlight notable practice from boroughs that can be shared more widely. This new model of reporting was trailed at the October Board meeting with information presented that is now enabling deep dives on a series of identified topics/themes. We will support boroughs to use the LG Inform reports and amend their own versions as required, alongside continuing to seek further information on the establishment of the Office of Local Government and government intentions around benchmarking.

On behalf of the SIB, we have continued to successfully deliver peer-to-peer support programmes for chief executives and treasurers. Both programmes have had high levels of engagement from across almost all boroughs and help contribute to building personal and organisational resilience.

**Support for networks:** We are ensuring that all professional networks supported by London Councils are aware of the shared ambitions and support their delivery. This has included the Directors of Communications rapid sharing of best practice about communicating with the public on the cost-of-living crisis; as well as a joint workshop with the National Centre for Cyber Security and the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure on how to communicate with the public and other stakeholders in the event of a cyber-attack.

## **2.6. Organisational Development: enabling the organisation and its people to do their best work on behalf of London and Londoners.**

- Powers
- People and diversity
- Premises
- Practices
- Budget strategy

**Budget and premises strategy:** Our budget and medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) were completed on schedule and presented to the Executive. Work on delivering the

strategy will continue in the new year with a planned review of our operating model. The review of our future premises requirements carried out by Moveworks, a firm of workplace consultants, was completed in October 2022. It revealed that we need significantly less office space than we currently occupy, and we can secure significant savings on premises costs over the medium-term by moving to a smaller property. This presents an opportunity to free up resources to reduce reliance on the use of reserves when setting annual budgets and will make our financial arrangements more sustainable. Members have considered the outcome of the review and are supportive of our proposed strategy to move to a smaller office space to reduce premises costs.

**Powers and governance:** We provided initial advice to Elected Officers about priorities on London Councils powers and governance and have begun discussions with DLUHC about the potential for London Councils to have the same powers to receive and distribute funds pan-London as the GLA.

**Leadership and values:** We created an internal leadership group to engage a wider group of staff in the leadership of the organisation. Our work to embed race equality across the organisation is continuing as planned with staff participating in the Race Equality Learning & Development Sessions commissioned for this year. We also recently celebrated two years of the Leadership in Colour programme.

**Outcome based pilots:** We successfully delivered three pilots between May and July using an outcomes-based methodology that enabled collaborative working across multi-disciplinary teams. The pilots focussed on data collaboration in order to shape policy positions, reviewing the on-boarding process for new starts and how we can be better at identifying and sharing leading practice. The results and learning from the pilots were presented to CMT and will be used to shape using the outcomes focussed way of working to deliver other shared ambitions projects in 2023.

### **3. Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the progress report and update and provide any steers to officers for priorities for next year. Members are also asked to note the below economic, policy and resource implications.

## **Economic landscape**

The political and financial turmoil in late 2022 reshaped the economic and financial landscape for London and the UK. Rising energy, food, and other goods prices have pushed up interest rates to levels not seen since the 2008 financial crisis. Inflation is set to peak at a 40-year high in this quarter (11% CPI), and unemployment is projected to peak at 4.9% in Q3 2024 from the current 3.5%. In summary, the medium-term fiscal outlook has materially worsened since the beginning of the year due to a weaker economy, higher interest rates, and higher inflation.

The squeeze on real incomes, rise in interest rates, and fall in house prices all weigh on consumption and investment. It is expected this will tip the economy into a recession lasting just over a year from the third quarter of 2022.

## **Policy implications**

The Milestones should also be viewed within the wider policy context and key political events that will occur in the year ahead. These include, but are not limited to:

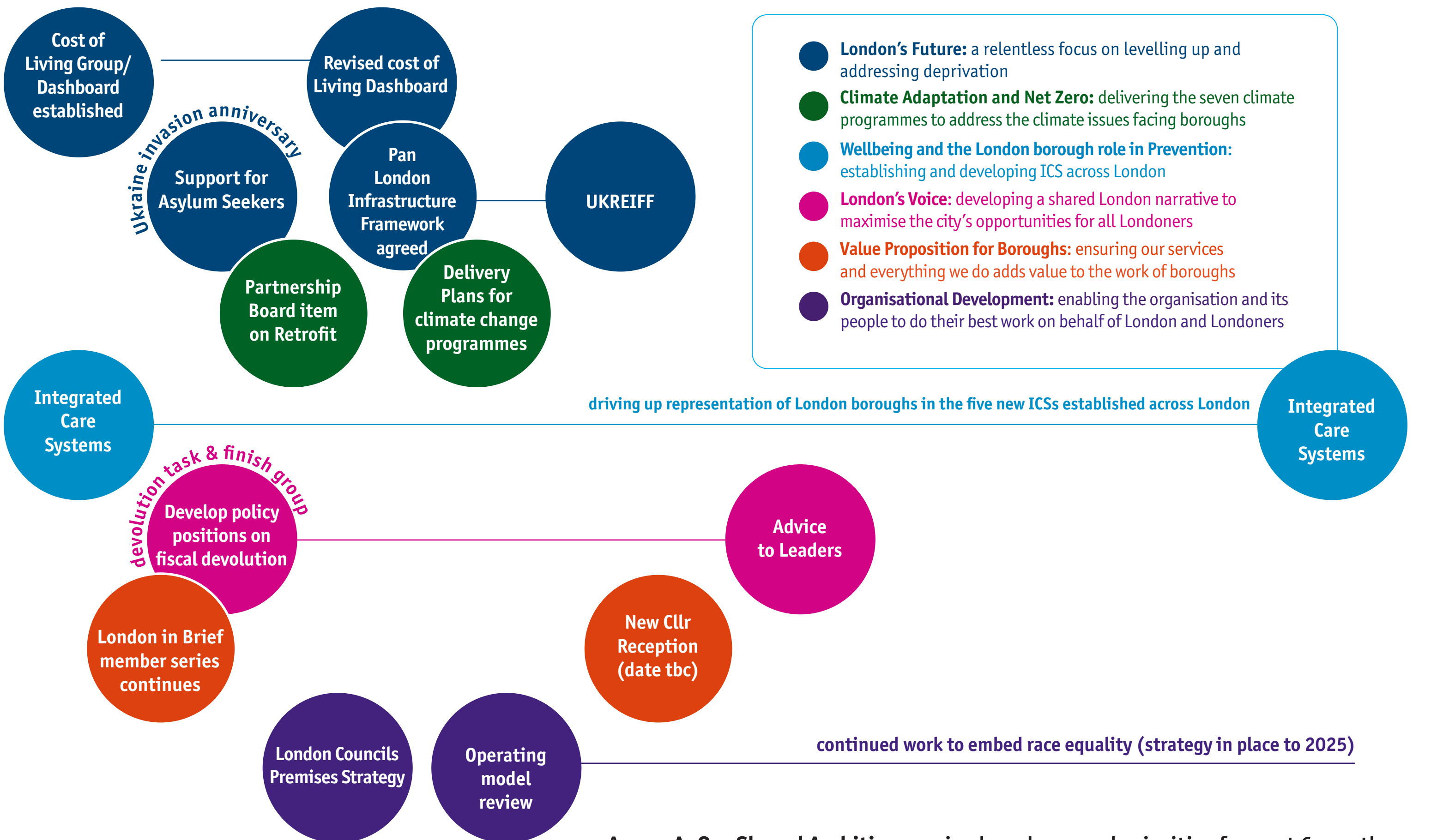
- Mar 2023 – Spring Statement
- May 2023 – Local Elections (England outside London)
- May 2023 – Kings Speech
- 6 May 2023 – Coronation
- Sep – Oct 2023 – Party Conferences
- Oct 2023 – Autumn Budget
- Nov 2023 – UNFCCC COP28

## **Resource implications**

London Councils is already working to deliver the Shared Ambitions as set out in the report. At its meeting in November, the Executive recommended that the Leaders' Committee approve the proposed budget for 2023/24 and MTFS, which is included as a separate item on the agenda. The budget and financial strategy aims to ensure that we make the best use of our resources to deliver our leaders' ambitions. The Executive has established a Shared Ambition Impact Fund to support this work. The fund is being used to augment expertise and capacity in the health and wellbeing team to ensure the development of the Integrated Care Systems deliver the right outcomes for London's communities. It may also be

necessary to draw on the Fund to support our work on the cost-of-living data dashboard (see separate paper to Leaders).





- London's Future:** a relentless focus on levelling up and addressing deprivation
- Climate Adaptation and Net Zero:** delivering the seven climate programmes to address the climate issues facing boroughs
- Wellbeing and the London borough role in Prevention:** establishing and developing ICS across London
- London's Voice:** developing a shared London narrative to maximise the city's opportunities for all Londoners
- Value Proposition for Boroughs:** ensuring our services and everything we do adds value to the work of boroughs
- Organisational Development:** enabling the organisation and its people to do their best work on behalf of London and Londoners

Annex A: Our Shared Ambitions revised roadmap and priorities for next 6 months