

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Mayor's Office

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000
Minicom: 020 7983 4458
Web: www.london.gov.uk
Our ref: MGLA240910-0301

Len Duvall AM

len.duvall@london.gov.uk

Date: 14 OCT 2010

Dear Len

Thank you for your letter of 20 September.

It is widely acknowledged that London has one of the lowest employment rates in the country – one in three working age Londoners are out of work – and 600,000 Londoners have no qualifications. Therefore, improving employment and skills is a top priority for me, as I know it is for you too, both to extend opportunity and to support future economic growth.

The London Skills and Employment Board, which I Chair, continues to do sterling work in this regard, building a clear strategy for joining up services in London and delivering real and tangible improvements. The London Development Agency has also done pioneering work in this field, being the first agency to focus not just on getting people into work, but also helping them stay there for at least 12 months and progress their careers. This groundbreaking work is now being picked up by national Government – London truly has led the way.

As you will be aware, to contribute to the Government's efforts to cut the budget deficit, the LDA has faced a £40m in-year reduction to its grant in 2010-11. This meant that tough decisions had to be made regarding reducing administrative costs too, to ensure that the maximum amount of money goes into frontline delivery and the important work of the LDA is delivered in the best and most efficient way.

It was in this context that the decision was taken to integrate work to support the LSEB into the Learning and Skills Group Directorate. The overall proposed organisational restructure, which included this change, was agreed by the LDA Board at its 21 July meeting.

In reality, much of the strategic work of the LSEB was already being led by the Learning and Skills Group Directorate. For example, two of the three Programme Boards that lead the implementation of the LSEB Strategy were already supported by the Learning and Skills Directorate. The London Skills Priority Statement, which sets out the LSEB's priorities for the year ahead, was also led by the Learning and Skills Directorate. So it made sense to unify these functions fully.

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I want to reassure you that the tough decisions that the LDA has had to take across the board are taken in order to ensure the delivery of my priorities for London. In this case, I believe that the new approach in fact strengthens my ability to deliver real change through the employment and skills system.

Ultimately, these systems and structures exist in order to ensure that London's people and employers get a better employment and skills service and I know that that is a commitment that we both share.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Boris Johnson', written in a cursive style.

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London