

LONDON ASSEMBLY

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Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Economy Committee

Cllr Georgia Gould
Chair of London Councils
(Sent by email)

19 February 2021

Dear Cllr Gould,

The London Assembly Economy Committee is exploring the potential role for Universal Basic Income (UBI) in London's economic recovery from COVID-19. This follows a motion being brought to the full Assembly in November and referred to the Economy Committee for in-depth consideration. The motion asks the Assembly to call on the Mayor to write to the Government calling for a fully evaluated basic income in the city, and for him to work with local authorities to help test UBI in London. The Committee has not yet voted on this motion, and is gathering further information before making that decision.

Our Committee is interested to examine the viability of calling for a pilot in London and the support that would need to be extended by relevant bodies for a pilot to be carried out. To that end, I would be very grateful if you were able to outline London Councils' willingness or unwillingness to support a pilot in London. We are aware, through correspondence with London Councils in January this year, that you do not have an organisational position on UBI and whether it offers an alternative to current welfare arrangements. However, in the exceptional circumstance of a post-pandemic recovery, we would like to know London Councils' views on UBI pilots, and whether you would be interested in supporting a pilot in order to gain a deeper understanding of the impact and feasibility of UBI. We would also be interested to hear any concerns you would have with supporting a pilot. Specifically, the Committee would be interested in knowing the answer to the following questions:

- Is London Councils supportive of UBI pilots to gather further information about the viability and effect of UBI?

- To what extent would you, as an organisation, be willing to be involved in providing support for the running and monitoring of a pilot in a London borough, if one was to take place?
- What concerns would you, as an organisation, have about supporting a UBI pilot in London?
- We know that a UBI pilot would require support from Government – primarily the Treasury for financial support and the Department for Work and Pensions to make temporary amendments to welfare arrangements. Would you anticipate any further support being required from additional sources to assist with the effective running of a pilot?
- Is carrying out a pilot feasible at the current time, given the effect of the pandemic on a wide range of organisations and services, including local authorities?

I would be grateful to receive a response to our findings and recommendations by 26 February 2021. Please send your response by email to the Committee's clerk Lauren Harvey (Lauren.Harvey@london.gov.uk).

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leonie Cooper', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Leonie Cooper AM
Chair of the Economy Committee