

London's Recovery from COVID-19 – Summary

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is the most significant public health crisis in living memory and will have far reaching effects. The economic, health and social challenges arising from both the virus itself, and from the lockdown are far-reaching. The economic and social shock caused by coronavirus is unlike anything the capital has seen since World War II. Just as in the post-war period, a national recovery plan will be required to rebuild the country. Recovery will take many months, if not years.

As London, we have a critical role to play to get our capital city thriving once again. As London's government (City Hall and local authorities) and London's many business and civic organisations we understand our city better than anyone. Collectively, we are best placed both to inform Government's own plans and respond at pace and scale. Across London organisations are already refocusing resources and capacity toward the recovery effort.

Challenges and Opportunities

As we begin to emerge from lockdown and as we continue to track the rates of infection, we are faced with several challenges, including;

- The impact of **ongoing social distancing rules on public transport and getting around London**, with particular focus on increasing cycling and walking. Related to this is the significant damage and long-term threat to London's central activity zone
- **The impact on London's businesses and workers**, particularly how to mitigate the risk of mass insolvencies, and how we protect our High Streets
- The **intense pressure on London's civil society** as organisations contend with increased demand and reduced incomes, particularly given their essential role in supporting the most vulnerable Londoners
- **How we prevent long-term scarring of the labour market** during the recovery, overcome the impact of increased unemployment and ensure ongoing investment in lifetime education to boost long-term productivity growth
- The disproportionate and unequal **social and economic impacts of COVID-19 on different communities and groups of Londoners, including those who now face acute challenges including isolation, poor health and destitution**
- The wider impact on **London's business, hospitality, culture, night-time economy, aviation and tourism sectors**
- Preventative work to lessen the risk of a **surge in violence with a firm focus on young people and the period after lockdown.**
- The impact of **budgetary pressures on local authorities, the GLA and TfL and other government agencies working in the capital.**

and opportunities;

- How we **ensure the recovery has at its heart the health and wellbeing (both mental and physical) of Londoners....**
- **...and a greener, fairer, cleaner city with a renewed drive to tackle the climate emergency, reduce toxic air pollution and improve access to green spaces**

Organising the recovery effort

The Greater London Authority and London Councils have agreed to work jointly to coordinate action to meet these challenges, working in partnership with local authorities, health and care bodies, business groups, the voluntary sector, academia, national Government and other bodies.

We propose to do this through a **London Recovery Taskforce (the 'Taskforce')**. **The Taskforce will be overseen by a London Recovery Board.**

The Taskforce will be underpinned by **working groups**, which will be established to support London in its recovery. It will provide visible and strong leadership, coordinating activity through its membership of cross-London representation and diverse expertise.

The Taskforce will work closely with London's existing **Strategic Coordination Group (SCG)** and the **Transition Management Group**, overseen by **the Transition Board** as it develops to the next stage of co-ordination of the pandemic to both control the virus while taking steps towards reopening society.

We have scoped two broad **Working Groups, Economic Recovery and Social Recovery, focussed on Rescue, Recover and Renew**. The main objectives of both these groups will be to establish key work strands, develop deliverable action plans to meet their respective challenges of the crisis, taking into account the vision and cross-cutting objectives set by the Taskforce, and working collaboratively across London and in a mutually reinforcing way.

The annex provides more details on the Working Groups.

Working Groups

The very broad scope of work means that there is a clear need for more focused working groups. Two working groups have already formed – commemoration and housing. Two further and necessarily overlapping working groups are proposed:

1. Economic Recovery
2. Social Recovery

The main objectives of both these groups are to bring forward deliverable action plans to meet their respective challenges of the crisis, taking into account the vision and cross-cutting objectives set by the Taskforce, and working collaboratively and in a mutually reinforcing way.

They will with the Taskforce bring in appropriate expertise, identify the major short, medium and long-term strategic challenges facing the city, and draft action plans to meet them.

Both working groups will have access to the best available data, evidence, and analysis from the City Intelligence Unit based at City Hall and from London Councils. The City Intelligence Unit also convenes wider groups of academics, think tanks and other organisations that conduct relevant research.

The draft actions will cover both direct action that can be taken by agencies represented on the Taskforce and beyond, and advocacy, requiring intervention by central government and others.

Outcomes for London will be monitored using a holistic set of socio-economic data, which may evolve over time.

New working groups may be set up as circumstances change and evolve.

Within the working groups there should be representation from supporting functions including:

- Finance & funding (this will also be a separate group)
- Communications, engagement & stakeholders (this too will be a separate group)
- Equalities, diversity & inclusion
- Digital and Data
- Environment
- Health (“health in all policies”)

There will be some cross-membership, in particular between the economic and social recovery working groups, to ensure communication. In addition, the programme management functions will aim to ensure as much cross-group coordination, communication and consistency as possible.