

# MINUTES

## **Meeting: Outcomes for Londoners Advisory Group**

**Date:** Thursday, 26 November 2020

**Time:** 2.00 pm

**Place:** Remote meeting

Copies of the minutes may be found at: <http://www.london.gov.uk/Skills-for-Londoners>

### **Members present:**

Angus Knowles-Cutler, Skills for Londoners (SfL) Board Member (Chair)

Arinola Edeh, SfL Board Member

Nigel Ball, University of Oxford

Dipa Ganguli, Sutton College

Helen Hammond, Institutes for Adult Learning

Dianna Neal, London Councils

David Pack, West London Alliance

### **Officers in attendance:**

Michelle Cuomo Boorer, Assistant Director – Skills & Employment

Lubomira Chirmiciu, Senior Manager – Funding Policy & Systems, Skills & Employment

Rachel Greenwood, Board Secretary, Skills & Employment (Clerk)

Joel Mullan, Principal Policy Officer, Skills & Employment

Forogh Rahmani, Senior Manager – Strategy, Policy & Relationships, Skills & Employment

Claire Johnson, IFF Research

Jessica Huntley Hewitt, IFF Research

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**1. Welcome and apologies (Item 1)**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Pat Carvalho, Gerry McDonald and Kirsty McHugh.
- 1.3 The Chair also welcomed David Pack to his first meeting. Members noted that David was replacing Diarmid Swainson who had stood down from the Group. It was also noted that Gill Worgan and John Hitchin had chosen not to renew their appointments to the Group.

**2. Declarations of Interest (Item 2)**

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes from the previous meeting (Item 3)**

**3.1 RESOLVED:**

**The minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2020 were agreed as a correct record.**

**4. Actions arising from previous meetings (Item 4)**

- 4.1 Members received an update on the actions arising from the previous meeting of the Group, all of which had been completed.

**4.2 RESOLVED:**

**The actions arising from the previous meeting were noted.**

**5. Outcomes for Londoners programme update and discussion on the London Recovery programme (Item 5)**

- 5.1 The Group received a presentation on the role of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) in the London Recovery programme, including progress to date and the next steps for the programme. Members noted the steps taken by the GLA to support providers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and were provided with an overview of the recovery missions with a particular focus on the *Good Work for All* and *Digital Access for All* missions and how these would be achieved.
- 5.2 Members heard that the long term ambition was to create a more integrated skills & employment system, and how success was measured (over the short- medium- and long-term) would be a key area this group would support.

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- 5.3 Members noted that a Skills for Londoners (SfL) Recovery Task and Finish Group was being set up as a subordinate body to the SfL Board, with support from the Business Partnership, to provide an expert voice on developing the two missions mentioned above. In response to a query, officers agreed to share the terms of reference and membership with the Group once they had been finalised.
- 5.4 The Chair commented that he had attended the first meeting of the 'London Covid Business Forum' last week, noting that the AEB had featured as a part of the discussion. While business representatives would sit on the abovementioned SfL Recovery Task and Finish Group, the Chair suggested that officers sought input from representative groups such as London First, London Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) to ensure a London view of business needs was built into the skills element of the recovery work. The Senior Manager – Strategy, Policy & Relationships agreed to follow this up following the meeting. Officers also noted that in the short term it would be useful to understand from businesses whether they were confident with the offer available from the Government with regards to skills retraining schemes, and what other support might be required.
- 5.5 During the discussion it was also suggested that London Councils could potentially provide insights on business needs and emerging pressures and issues. Many local authorities had got closer to businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic and in turn colleges had been able to shape their own approach to help meet those needs through their offer to learners.
- 5.6 **RESOLVED:**  
**The Outcomes for Londoners Advisory Group:**  
a) **Noted the report and subsequent discussion;**  
b) **Agreed that officers would share the terms of reference and membership of the Skills for Londoners Recovery Task and Finish Group once they had been finalised; and**  
c) **Agreed that officers would seek input from business representative organisations as a part of the recovery work.**

**6. Piloting the London Learner Survey (Item 6)**

- 6.1 Representatives from IFF Research, the organisation appointed by the GLA to implement the London Learner Survey pilot, presented an overview of their work to date on the pilot programme, ahead of its launch in early 2021.
- 6.2 The proposed approach to testing the London Learner Survey was set out. The Group noted that understanding what the AEB was paying for in London was even more important in light of COVID-19 and the survey would be an important tool to

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demonstrate both the economic and social benefits, as well as how the AEB would support London's recovery missions.

- 6.3 Members noted that feedback had been sought from providers, including some members of this group, on the draft questionnaire and to stress-test the proposed approach. Officers thanked the group and all who had been involved in the development of the survey to date. The next phase of piloting would be important to test the process and resolve issues before rolling the survey out more widely.
- 6.4 During the discussion on the draft survey and proposed pilot programme, the following points were raised:
- Overall, members were pleased with the improvements that had been made to the draft survey since the testing some had been involved with, noting that feedback had been listened to and some key challenges had been addressed.
  - There was discussion around the languages the survey would be translated to. While these were yet to be confirmed, members commented that this element would be important for some learners, particularly English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners and those with literacy needs, and queried whether a greater number of languages could be included. It was critical that the survey was as accessible as possible, and this would be a key element of that. Officers noted that the pilot survey would track the most used or requested languages and there would be scope to amend or add languages for the full roll out.
  - It was suggested that the phrasing of some questions, such as those on social integration, may need refining or rephrasing to ensure they were easy to understand and did not cause concern or worry for learners completing the survey. Officers noted it would be important that providers were able to explain to learners why the information was being collected and what it was being used for. Reviewing these elements would be an important part of the pilot programme and changes would be made as needed in response to feedback to ensure that learners felt comfortable providing the information requested.
  - In response to a query, officers confirmed that a round of cognitive testing with learners with ESOL and literacy needs had taken place to help shape the current survey questions. In addition, the survey questions had also been mapped across to the London recovery missions to ensure the data produced would provide insights for the recovery work.
  - During discussion on the administration of the baseline survey, Members commented that the survey would be easier to manage than previously anticipated, and welcomed that materials would be provided to support the process. There was some concern however about the administrative burden that would be placed on providers and it was suggested that the GLA looked at whether additional support could be provided, potentially through additional financial support, to make sure providers were able to resource it.

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- Members highlighted the importance of ensuring the survey was completed by a wide range of learners to ensure the data it produced was representative. There was acknowledgement that the main method of delivering the survey (via an email link) would not work for all learners and providers would need to offer support, either at enrolment, through additional sessions, or one-to-one with learners, particularly for the hard to reach. Some uncertainty also remained around the time taken to complete the survey, noting that it would take significantly longer for some learners.
- Members discussed the potential uses of the data that would be collected through the survey, commenting that this would provide a rich data source. A query was raised as to whether the GLA would make the data publicly available for others, including data analysts, researchers and evaluators. It was also noted that London Councils would welcome access to the data so local authorities and sub-regional partnerships could understand the impact of the AEB on local places, residents and learners. Officers noted that data would be used to inform future AEB policy development in London, and it would also be shared with participating providers to enable them to see their own performance. Officers also confirmed that the ambition would be to make this data available through the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Secure Research Service (SRS) and this was currently being explored.
- Members recognised the challenge in developing an approach for the survey that would work for all learners/institutions. Those representing providers commented that they were keen for the survey to be successful to demonstrate how powerful the work they do with AEB funding is, however additional support to deliver the survey would enable them to ensure it reached as many learners as possible.

6.5 Following the discussion, the Chair thanked the team for their work to develop the Survey noting that, while there was still some work to do, good progress had been made since the last meeting.

6.6 It was agreed that an update on the London Learner Survey would be taken to the next meeting of the Skills for Londoners Board on 26 January 2020.

**6.7 RESOLVED:**

**The Outcomes for Londoners Advisory Group:**

- a) **Noted the presentation and the feedback provided in the subsequent discussion; and**
- b) **Agreed that an update on the London Learner Survey pilot would be taken to the next meeting of the Skills for Londoners Board.**

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**7. Date of next meeting (Item 7)**

- 7.1 The next meeting of the Outcomes for Londoners Advisory Group was confirmed as 10.00am on Thursday, 18 March 2021.

**8. Any other business the Chair considers urgent (Item 8)**

- 8.1 There was no urgent business.

**9. Close of meeting**

- 9.1 The meeting ended at 3.30pm.