

Minutes

LHC JOINT COMMITTEE

3 December 2021

Meeting held at LHC Offices, 4th Floor, Royal House, 2-4 Vine Street, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1QE



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Councillors:

Representative:

Representative:	Borough	Attendance
Councillor John Bevan	Haringey	Attended in person
Councillor John Chilver	Bucks CC	Attended in person
Councillor Philip Corthorne	Hillingdon	Attended in person
Councillor Susan Fajana-Thomas	Hackney	Attended in person
Councillor Adrian Garden	Lambeth	Attended in person
Councillor Eleanor Southwood	Brent	Attended in person
Councillor Shama Tatler	Brent	Attended in person
Councillor Mick O'Sullivan	Islington	Attended in person
Councillor Nick Naylor	Bucks	Via Teams
Councillor Gideon Bull	Haringey	Via Teams

Apologies received:

Councillor Eddie Lavery	Hillingdon	Apologies
Councillor Heather Johnson	Camden	Apologies
Councillor Gina Needs	Enfield	Apologies
Councillor Peter Mason	Ealing	Apologies
Councillor Hass Yusuf	Enfield	Apologies
Councillor Danny Hassell	Tower Hamlets	Apologies

Officers and Advisers:

Elaine Elkington – Interim Managing Director	LHC
John Skivington – LHC Group Director	LHC
Clive Feeney – Director	SPA
Neil Barker – Director	WPA
Mary Bennell – Director	SWPA
Gary Cawley – Director	CPC
Ethan James – Acting Regional Manager	LSE
Mij Rahman – Operations Director	LHC
Pam Chander – HR Manager	LHC
Asha Patel – Strategy, Innovation & Growth Director	LHC
Neil Fraser – Honorary Clerk (Deputy)	LB Hillingdon
Jack Roberts - Apprentice	LB Hillingdon

10. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** (*Agenda Item 1*)

1.1 Apologies for absence were received as set out above.

11. **TO SIGN AND RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** (*Agenda Item 2*)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the LHC Joint Committee meeting held on 25 June 2021 be agreed as a true record.

12. **REPORT OF THE INTERIM MANAGING DIRECTOR** (*Agenda Item 3*)

- 3.1 Consideration was given to a report by the LHC Interim Managing Director, which provided Members with an overview of the organisation's performance. Highlighted points included:
- 3.2 Progress was being made against all objectives set for the Interim Managing Director between August 2021 and April 2022. The mid-year assessment of the impact of COVID on LHC business turnover was better than expected, with turnover for 2021-2022 forecasted to increase by 1.8% to £465,619,818. However, income was lower by 4%, with further details to follow as part of agenda item 8.
- 3.3 It was confirmed that LHC was not immune to the national issues of material and labour shortages and the resulting rise in costs. The business was attempting to weather the impact of such issues through regular contact with clients, as well as accurate forecasting and logistical planning.
- 3.4 The Joint Committee was provided with updates from the various regional offices, which detailed how each region had attempted to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic. Most regions had shown an increase in identified projects and unique clients, with some regions showing significant increases to income. All regional offices were supporting clients through regular meetings using remote meeting tools and face to face meetings, where possible. Early engagement with clients and flexibility was seen as key to promoting successful projects. Marketing campaigns had been undertaken through social media and with external marketing agencies, to drive enquiries and visitors to the websites. Where required, vacant posts had been filled and staff headcount increased, with training and support for staff wellbeing provided.
- 3.5 Best practice was being shared between regional offices to help all regions contribute to the overall LHC business plan. This included newly created projects/intelligence gathering tools, with a further database of centralised knowledge expected to be ready for all regions to use as of January 2022.
- 3.6 Regarding tenement projects in Scotland, these were confirmed to be on hold until such time as the Scottish Government advised otherwise.
- 3.7 It was requested that a detailed breakdown of costs per project in Scotland be circulated to Members following the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the information contained in the report be noted.

13. **REPORT BY THE HR MANAGER** (*Agenda Item 4*)

- 4.1 Consideration was given to a report by the HR Manager, which contained details of LHC staff ethnicity, gender, pay rates, training and recruitment.
- 4.2 Regarding diversity training, all staff were confirmed to have completed an e-learning course, with further sessions with an external consultant scheduled for January and February 2022. Additional diversity data would also be available following the launch of a new ATS system, which captured new candidate data at the application stage. This new system could also include LGBTQ and disability data (though providing such data was optional to candidates).
- 4.3 The Joint Committee was advised that LHC was broadly in line with the UK average for ethnicity and gender of staff within SMEs. On the matter of the gender pay gap, this was improving, though it was recognised that the gap

would be smaller if female contractors were included in the available data, and the Group Directors were not included. Further work to promote diversity and equality would continue.

4.4 On the matter of recruitment and offering of competitive salaries within the marketplace, it was confirmed that the LHC offer, including salary, benefits, holidays and career progression, was felt to be competitive, though it was recognised that flexibility on such matters was sometimes required as part of the recruitment process. Roles and their respective salaries, pensions etc were benchmarked in line with LB Hillingdon's policies.

4.5 Policies to address harassment, domestic abuse etc. were to be discussed as part of the new internal Wellbeing Committee. The business was proactive in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of staff, including lone workers and female staff, and LHC had recently become an affiliate member of Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse.

4.6 It was confirmed that there were no concerns regarding staff sickness/absence. Manager training and support, occupational health referrals, confidential counselling, and adjustments for staff, were all being offered where appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the information contained in the report be noted.

14. **REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY & REGISTER OF INTERESTS** (*Agenda Item 5*)

5.1 Consideration was given to the register of gifts and hospitality, and the register of interests.

RESOLVED: That the register of gifts and hospitality, and the register of interests, be noted.

15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** (*Agenda Item 6*)

6.1 None.

16. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING** (*Agenda Item 7*)

7.1 Following consideration of agenda item 9, it was confirmed that the next meeting of the Joint Committee of the LHC would take place at 10am on Friday 25th March, subject to the clerk confirming that this was allowable under purdah.

17. **FINANCIAL UPDATE BY THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES** (*Agenda Item 8*)

8.1 Consideration was given to the report from the Director of Operations, with information highlighted as per the contents of the meeting papers.

RESOLVED: That the information contained in the Director of Operations report be noted.

This item is included in Part II as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it (exempt information under paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government [Access to Information] Act 1985 as amended

18. **PROPOSALS FOR NEW GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR LHC** (*Agenda Item 9*)

8.1 Consideration was given to the report detailing proposals for new governance arrangements for LHC, with information highlighted as per the contents of the meeting papers.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Committee:

- 1. Note the conclusions given in the body of the report;**
- 2. Agree to proceed immediately with implementation of the 'Preferred Option' and the formal process leading to the disbandment of the LHC Joint Committee on 31st December 2022 at the earliest as set out in sections 2 and 6 of the report, and in addition, instruct LHC officers to hold discussions and carry out all due diligence with any authorities expressing an interest regarding a third option, (to assume the role currently held by London Borough of Hillingdon); with this third option to include the requirement of the holding structure as set out in 3 below;**
- 3. Agree to proceed with setting up the new proposed holding structure, to be effective from 1st April 2022, as set out in section 3 of this report;**
- 4. Agree to change the future meetings of the LHC Joint Committee to March, September and December as set out in section 4 of the report;**
- 5. To consider the options for each of the current LHC Constituent Authorities for future participation in a new LHC corporate entity planned to be effective at the earliest from 1st January 2023, as set out in this report, and to be agreed at the meeting in March 2022.**

*Councillor Corthorne left the meeting prior to the consideration of the recommendations, but had previously confirmed his support for the recommendations as set out in the report.

The meeting, which commenced at 10.00 am, closed at 12.51 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Neil Fraser on 01895 250692 . Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

The meeting which began at 10:00am, closed at 12:51pm.