

London Strategic Migration Partnership

Minutes of the London Strategic Migration Partnership meeting
 21 June 2011
 10am –12pm
 City Hall
 CR4

Minutes

Present

Chair	Richard Barnes	Deputy Mayor of London
HH	Hugh Harris	London First
SA	Simin Azimi	MRAP
LH	Laurie Heselden,	SERTUC
VL	Val Lowman	BeOnsite
DC	Donna Covey	Refugee Council
BR	Beryl Randall	Third Sector Alliance
DH	Derek Harvey	Group Partnership Manager in the Office of the Director for London and Home Counties.
RBe	Richard Bell	Head of Accounts, Skills Funding Agency
SF	Sharon Flannery	UKBA
MH	Mubin Haq	London Funders
Apologies:		
MP	Cllr Marie Pye	London Councils
ST	Simon Tanner	Regional Public Health Group, NHS London
PP	Paul Plant	NHS London
JA	Jennette Arnold	MPA
ST	Sindi Tepzda	MRAP
JO	Joseph Oladosu	MRAP
GLA:		
WL	Wayne Lawley	Deputy Mayor’s Office
TD	Terry Day	Manager, Diversity & Social Policy
RS	Roudy Shafie	Senior Policy Officer, Immigration and Asylum
DW	Dick Williams	Senior Policy Officer, Immigration and Asylum
AM	Amna Mahmoud	Project & Policy Officer, Diversity and Social Policy
In attendance		
EC	Emma Churchill	Head of Asylum Policy, UKBA
RBau	Rebecca Baumgartner	Deputy Director, Border Agency West London
SG	Shirani Gunawardena	Policy Development Officer

1. Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies.

1.2 The Chair updated members on membership changes and welcomed new members;

Derek Harvey, Group Partnership Manager, Job Centre Plus, Richard Bell, Head of

Accounts, Skills Funding Agency, Sindi Tepzda and Joseph Oladosu, new MRAP representatives

1.3 The Chair congratulated Simin on her re-election following the MRAP annual election of representatives to LSMP.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

2.1 Minutes of the last meeting of 21 June 2011 agreed as an accurate record.

2.2 The Chair updated on matters arising:

Action 1: SFA to update LSMP on findings of BIS ESOL EIA.

RBe informed members that EIS for ESOL would be available in July.

Action 2: The Chair and Jeanette Arnold to explore option of raising the Call for Action at the London congress.

The London Congress had its meeting but it was exclusively about the Olympics. This action is to be followed up to put Call for Action forward as an agenda item for its next meeting in November.

Job Centre Plus update on structure, refugee and migrant customer journey and the Work Programme was an outstanding action from the March meeting. This action will be discussed under agenda item 6.

3. Chair's update

3.1 The Chair reported that the GLA hosted the immigration minister, Damian Green, and other senior UKBA officials on the 26 May at City Hall as part of the National Asylum Stakeholders Forum held by UKBA to consult with the voluntary sector and other partners on asylum policy.

3.2 The Chair reported that he had been invited to be the keynote speaker at the Open Cities Conference in Brussels on 25 May. The British Council's Open Cities project put London at the top of its league for 'openness', which is measured on ability to attract and benefit from international populations. Among the factors considered were the ease of firms to hire foreign labour, the number of overseas students and international schools, policies to help the integration of new arrivals, public attitudes to migration, and "quality of living".

SA commented on the important role of the voluntary and community sector in promoting cohesion in London.

Action 1: The British Council report to be circulated to members.

3.3 The Chair reported on his visit to the Olympic park. He thanked Val Lowman for inviting the LSMP and sharing the successes of their BeOnSite project.

4. London Enriched progress report

4.1 The chair thanked all the agencies that have inputted into the delivery of the Implementation plan for 2009/10.

4.2 The chair reported that GLA officers have reviewed the role and impact of the LSMP Link Body structures. With the exception of Health and Community Development, it was suggested that the function of link bodies (policy input and overseeing delivery of London Enriched actions) could best be met by other existing forums and/or with project groups. He acknowledged the commitment of the Regional Public Health Group at the Department

of Health and the Community Development Link Body to effectively deliver the London Enriched actions.

4.3 Members requested an update on ESOL provision, the impact on delivering London Enriched actions and partners who are losing their funding.

DH informed members that JCP undertook a study to map the impact of ESOL funding cuts and change in policy on London.

GLA officers explained that the landscape has changed and that GLA is assessing the impact on women and those in low-paid jobs. However, Year 2 Implementation Plan took into consideration the financial situation.

It was suggested that a follow up roundtable on ESOL should be held to discuss how the LSMP could make the most of the available resources.

Action 2: The GLA will consider holding a roundtable.

HH enquired about successor to London Skills and Employment Board. Chair responded that this had not yet been determined.

4.4 It was suggested that a considerable work needs to be done around the London Living Wage especially in the hotel and catering industry.

5. UKBA report on outcomes of the Asylum Improvement Project pilots

5.1 **EC** from UKBA presented an update on the outcomes of project pilots. At the December meeting EC had presented the scope of the Asylum Improvement Project and agreed to update members on the outcomes of the pilots they ran and any policies they identified to improve the system. A report on the progress of the pilots is available at:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/reports/asylum-improvement-project/aip.pdf?view=Binary>.

EC reported that the asylum system has improved and that the UNHCR says the system is the best in the world due to the new structured approach to quality. She summarised the outcomes of the Asylum Improvement Project pilots as follows:

- Decisions are made more quickly and are of high quality.
- A new performance framework to look at performance and productivity was developed.
- The cost of asylum support has been reduced.
- Transparency in publishing the performance against the framework included statistics by gender.

The next phase is to monitor the impact of the changes to ensure that the asylum system as efficient as possible.

Members raised the following points and questions:

- How does the UKBA follow up clients after removals.

EC responded that it is possible only in the cases of voluntary removals. UKBA works with the FCO and DfID on this issue; Sri Lanka is an example.

- Members requested an update on the safe countries list policy.

EC responded that there isn't a list. Country of origin information (COI) is compiled independently and case owners can look at additional information. The Independent Commissioner will report on COI soon.

- Concerns were raised about the detention and deportation of those who served their sentences as the detention is costly and the offenders were already served their sentences.

EC responded that UBKA deals with the issue on individual basis.

6. Job Centre Plus update on structure, refugee and migrant customer journey and the Work Programme

6.1 **DH**, updated members on structure, customer journey and the Work Programme. Key points included:

- 40% reduction in the corporate structures.
- Individual indicators for vulnerable groups would be available next year. Refugee status is not one of them though information could be pulled out.
- Clients benefit of up to 30-hour work experience.
- Apprenticeships are extended. Does this mean there are more of them?
- Improved techniques to navigate the labour market.
- Improved working with the voluntary sector.
- JSA is gradually phased out when clients start employment.
- Lone parents can apply voluntarily to the Work Programme.
- DWP ESF tender is to go out.

Action 3: A separate meeting with Derek Harvey and LSMP members was suggested to follow up the refugee marker.

7. London Enriched 'move on' framework

7.1 **DW** referred to the concept paper that had been circulated and requested that the LSMP endorse the concept paper and that relevant members agree to nominate a suitable representative to the project board. DW informed members that London Councils had said it could not join the Project Board or negotiate a single protocol for all London boroughs, but had accepted the GLA proposal that a number of boroughs be invited to join and advise on a model protocol that could be adapted and signed up to be individual boroughs.

7.2 Members responded as follows:

- Refugee Council agreed to support the project, with the proviso that the One Stop Service role in move-on would be very limited.
- UKBA suggested that their National group to inform the work of 'Move On' framework.
- **DH** said JCP could contribute and would look at how they could be involved.

8. MRAP matters for LSMP consideration

8.1 The chair invited MRAP representatives to introduce their question on ESF funding. He

reminded members that at the last meeting on this subject it was explained that the LDA was only allocated a small winding down budget for this financial year. This has meant that the GLA does not have the required match funding required to draw down its 2011-13 ESF funding allocation. Discussions have been taking place with other co-financing organisations in London to explore the possibility of transferring the funding to them as long as they deliver Mayoral priorities. None of these discussions have been finalised yet. He emphasised that the main priority is to deliver sustained employment opportunities for Londoners, in particular supporting the long-term workless Londoners and young people.

9. AOB

9.1 **BR** gave an update on the new working group on refugee integration.

9.2 **DC** reported on the national launch of the new Refugee Council online advice line for asylum seekers, which would help replaced drop-in-services reduced due to funding cuts. The service is free for client from mobile phones. It is delivered in 8 languages and has been tested in Birmingham.