

EVALUATION OF THE LONDON RECOVERY PROGRAMME

FINAL REPORT
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The London Recovery Programme and Recovery Board (now evolved and reformed as the ‘London Partnership Board’) were set up as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic to address the socio-economic challenges faced by London. PRD have been commissioned to qualitatively assess and evaluate the aims and activities of the board through engagement with key stakeholders, identifying the challenges and understanding lessons learned to help improve its role and function going forward.

Through the process of evaluation, PRD looked at the depth and value of the work undertaken by the board and its members, with a focus on understanding ways to improve its effectiveness. We have also proposed recommendations, reflecting on both what has worked well, and what could be improved. In developing these reflections, we recognise the immense challenge of developing a Recovery Programme of this scale and nature; especially within the context of the global pandemic, which must be recognised as an unprecedented, crisis that bore a period of sustained uncertainty and upheaval.

We hope this evaluation will support the London Partnership Board, and the agencies supporting it, to streamline and develop its future role and purpose as an important fulcrum and exemplar for cross-sectoral collaboration and partnership working.

Having agreed on a relevant list of stakeholders for discussion with the GLA client team, PRD carried out 11 in-depth one-to-one interviews, as well as 3 focus group sessions with the agreed sample of representatives involving 25 participants in total. The interviewees included board members, chairs of the taskforce and anchor institutions network. The focus group sessions were with Youth Recovery Board members, GLA officers and other stakeholders involved in the board and programme (see full participant list in the [appendix](#)).

These discussions focused on, and were evaluated against, four themes:

- **Governance:** Considering how the governance structure of the board influenced its clarity of the purpose, ways of working, representation, inclusivity, progress monitoring, and overall effectiveness in board meetings and decision making
- **Operational:** Understanding the role of sub-groups and working-group arrangements, as well as support, and co-ordination arrangements.
- **Away from meetings:** Ability of board members to influence change within their organisations, and the extent to which they could use the London Recovery Board (“LRB”) approach to meet their own organisational needs.
- **Future:** Views on the future functioning of the board, its aim and purpose going forward beyond recovery

The evaluation also recognises that many of the lessons learned and recommendations have been taken on board by the GLA and the move to the Partnership Board is an effective step in addressing some of the challenges. A summary of the main findings is detailed overleaf.



Main insights from the evaluation:

- The Recovery Board and its ways of working were considered overwhelmingly positive, adding real value to the work being done across London's key stakeholders. The board represents a **useful precedent for partnership working** in London and the UK, fostering pan-London partnerships and cross-sectoral ways of working. It helped different organisations to work across silos and be more proactive about new partnerships.
- The **convening power of GLA and London Councils** has been powerful in nurturing an active dialogue between key stakeholders and resulted in the new collaborative form of governance necessary to respond to the challenges created by the pandemic. It is important to maintain its position as a platform for two-way exchange, learning from the practices on the ground around London, and engaging with communities more broadly.
- The board provided a **useful platform and forum for the exchange of ideas, diversity of voices and opinions**. Continuing this forum for discussion and partnership working were positively regarded by many towards addressing future challenges, such as cost-of-living, climate emergency and structural inequalities. However, it requires exploring the intersectionality of interests to find alignments in thinking and having a shared purpose.
- The **collective presence of strong leadership** and the mix of powerful and diverse voices added to the strength and gravitas of the Recovery Board. The symbolic nature of the joint venture between the GLA and London Councils provided legitimacy and affirmed the importance of the board to London. However, it is important to also consider how communicating more widely about the work being done can ensure this partnered approach captures a wider, larger audience.
- The **programme of work** was well thought out and expansive, with the sub-groups providing an opportunity to allow for more in-depth conversations. However, the mission-based approach could be re-visited to improve and streamline the focus. There should also be a clearer focus on outcomes, delivery, and tangibility of actions. The evaluation of the **missions to streamline** and bring out the key objectives around them (being done as a separate programme by the GLA) will prove useful for this purpose. Fewer, more focussed missions were considered better if missions continue to be pursued.
- **Representation and inclusivity** of the board were largely deemed positive, with the valuable additions of the voluntary and community sector, and the youth representatives alongside key organisations with fiscal power noted as very important. However, more inclusivity and accessibility are essential to have diversity in opinions and outlooks. A right balance in size and diversity is crucial to have meaningful discussions. The future board should also consider having a more diverse platform by incorporating less-heard voices and marginalised communities at the forefront.
- The **Youth Recovery Board** was described as a successful and important addition both by the members of the board, as well as the members of the youth board themselves. The Youth Board brought in the voices of young people from London and provided them with an opportunity to interact with major decision-makers and stakeholders. It also resulted in bringing fresh and positively disruptive perspectives to the board that allowed for a broader understanding of the priorities of future generations. This model has the potential to become more pervasive alongside traditional governance structures.



- The **Anchor Institutions Network** was regarded as an important and successful development; fostering and strengthening useful partnerships with key institutions, supporting them to act collaboratively to address some of the biggest challenges faced by Londoners. The Anchor Institutions network was established through the board as an inherent part of the programme and grew into a separate impactful network of leading organisations across the public sector, businesses, trade unions and community groups.
- The board had clear structures in place which allowed for **efficient, effective working**. However, the interactions could be more fluid and informal to allow for more open and honest conversations. Given the public nature of the meetings, it was inevitable for the discussions to have reflected partisan lines at times, and this underlined the importance of having sub-groups where more open dialogue was possible.
- The board came together as a response to the pandemic and had a **real sense of shared purpose**. It is important to maintain this shared purpose going forward and align the thinking to continue with the legacy of the board. The work programme should articulate more clearly how partners will contribute to delivery. The future board presents the potential to carry forward the legacy and evolve it, by taking on some of the long-term structural challenges faced by Londoners.
- **Clarity and transparency around decision-making**, representation and involvement would allow a better understanding of processes and participation. The board was purposefully designed to be an advisory board and not a decision-making one, and this needs to be communicated to the members to allow for a deeper understanding of the purpose and role of the board and to manage expectations.
- The board was successful to some extent in allocating resources and capacity to address challenges such as digital exclusion (by arranging for laptops for home schooling where necessary) and community vaccination drives (through community and faith spaces) during the pandemic. However, further measures should be introduced **to build capacity amongst participants** representing organisations and groups that are traditionally less heard in top-down decision making. In particular, working more effectively with London's Voluntary & Community Sectors needs further consideration.



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

About the London Recovery Board and London Recovery Programme

In response to the outbreak of COVID-19, London established both the London Recovery Board (“LRB”) and the London Recovery Programme which aimed to restore confidence in the city, minimise the impact of the pandemic on London’s communities, and ‘build back better’ the city’s economy and society.

The London Recovery Board and Recovery Programme

Convened by the Mayor of London and co-chaired with the Chair of London Councils, the London Recovery Board brought together leaders from across the capital as part of a wide-ranging programme to support London’s long-term recovery from the pandemic. Meeting 14 times between June 2020 and March 2023, the aim of the board was “*not just to return to business as usual after the pandemic, but to tackle the deep-seated social, economic and health inequalities which COVID-19 exposed and exacerbated, to deliver a greener, safer, fairer and more prosperous London, and to ensure that Londoners are at the heart of the city’s recovery*”.

Delivering against this remit, the board established a ‘Grand Challenge’ and established the London Recovery Programme, underpinned by nine missions illustrated in Figure 1 and detailed in greater depth later in the report (see [appendix](#)).

‘Grand Challenge’: to restore confidence in the city, minimise the impact on London’s communities and build back better the city’s economy and society

9 Recovery Missions



Figure 1: Nine missions of the London Recovery Board (Source: GLA)

The missions-based approach was developed based on work carried out by the [Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose](#) at University College London, designed to be ambitious and deliverable, fostering widespread collaboration across different sectors. These 9 missions are shaped by 3 key dimensions (Figure 2) offering a framework to support London's sectors to meet the grand challenge set out by the board. Greater detail that sits behind these dimensions is set out in the [appendix](#).

The board was supported by the London Recovery Taskforce. Consisting of 21 members, this was established to oversee and co-ordinate practical initiatives to drive forward London's recovery priorities and actions against the nine missions.

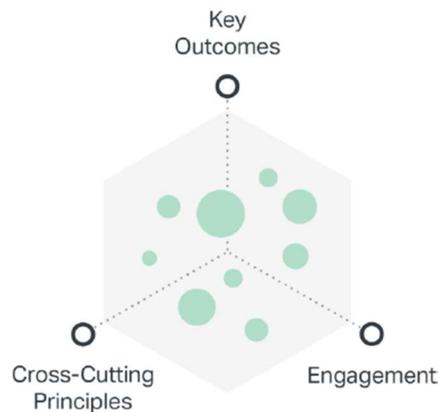


Figure 2: Three key dimensions shaping the London Recovery Programme

The LRB initiated several projects to support its work towards the nine missions, including networks and sub-groups aiming to maximise capacity and ensure the board could capture a diversity of views representative of London's communities. Most notably this included:

- **Anchor Institutions Network:** Bringing together many of London's most influential organisations, collaborating to tackle inequalities, boost local economies and move towards net zero. In March 2021, 14 organisations signed the London Anchor Institutions Charter, and the network has subsequently grown to represent a cross-section of the public sector, higher education, cultural, faith-based and private industry bodies. The network currently focuses on helping Londoners into good work, supporting young people, buying more from small, diverse businesses, and decarbonising their estates to move towards net zero.
- **Addressing Structural Inequalities Sub-Group:** Established to specifically tackle socio-economic inequalities affecting Londoners, including income inequality, structural racism, employment risk, health, and housing. The Sub-Group has published the ['Building a Fairer City' Action Plan](#), setting out 14 actions falling under four priority areas: 1) Labour market inequality; 2) Financial hardship and living standards; 3) Equity in public services; and 4) Civil society strength. This plan aimed to address the inequalities that drove the disproportionate impact of the pandemic, or were created by it.
- **The Youth Recovery Board ("YRB"):** Established in October 2021, the YRB consists of a diverse group of young Londoners aged 16 and above supporting the work of the LRB. In addition to having a voice at the table, their remit is to raise awareness of the recovery missions amongst other young people, and to support the LRB in its 'Grand Challenge'.



The London Partnership Board

The London Recovery Board was dissolved in March 2023, with the London Partnership Board established in its place. This continues to work towards addressing the same workstreams, and *“aims to enable the city to respond to current and future complex and cross-cutting challenges by convening London’s leaders. It helps co-ordinate London’s response to these challenges, fostering collaboration between the city’s partners at local, sub-regional and city level to achieve shared goals”*.

It aims to bring the voice of Londoners and the city’s diverse communities and experiences to the forefront, empowering partners to take action together and within their organisations.

The board is co-chaired by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and the Chair of the London Council, Councillor Georgia Gould.

The board structure has been designed to convene a selection of key decision-makers and stakeholders from a range of platforms and sectors across London. This includes London’s government, the business community and civil society, as well as senior representatives from the police, transport, healthcare, central government, education and other sectors (A full list of members can be found [here](#)).



About the Evaluation

Scope of work

The evaluation of the board involved qualitatively assessing the aims and activities of the board through engagement with key stakeholders, while capturing the challenges and lessons learned to help improve the board going forward. The project followed the following stages of the work programme:

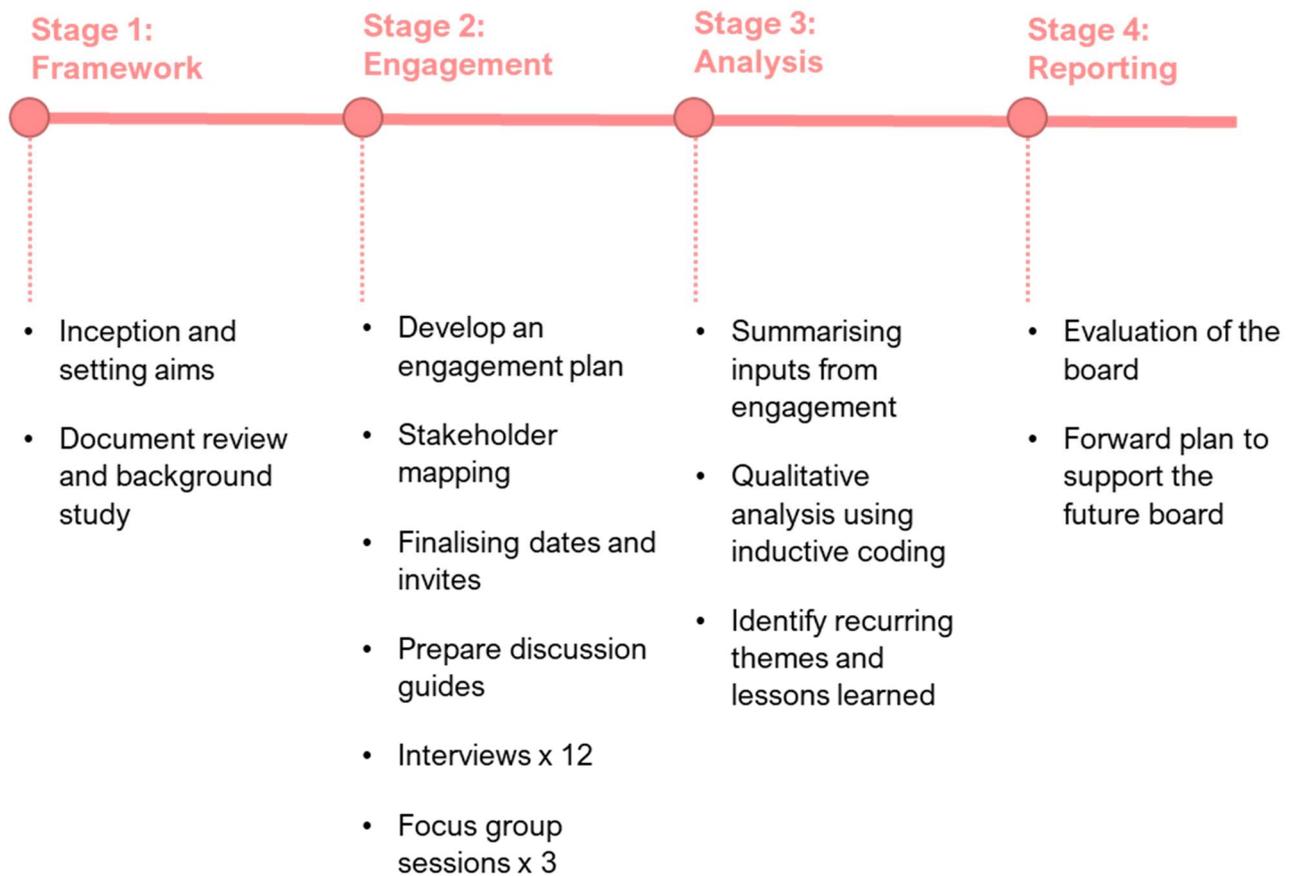


Figure 3: Scope and program of work

Through the process of evaluation, PRD looked at the depth and value of the work done by the board and its members and understood ways to improve its effectiveness. We also propose recommendations going forward, reflecting on both what has worked well and what could be improved. We hope this will enable the Partnership Board to streamline its future role and purpose and continue to support cross-sectoral collaboration through partnership working.

Through the conversations, we explored:

- The impact of the board, what worked well and what didn't.
- Inclusivity and representation of the board.
- The takeaways of influence from the board away from the meetings.
- The key lessons learned.
- The future role and purpose of the board going forward.



Document review

This initial process was developed to provide a platform to design a well-informed approach to engagement. It involved reviewing a suite of documents provided and recommended by the GLA client team, capturing information about the programme as a whole, as well as relevant insight about various sub-groups, initiatives, networks and plans set up by the board. This exercise also included a review of meeting minutes and terms of reference.

This approach allowed the review to be as holistic as possible, considering not only the operational aspects of the board, but also the effectiveness of its governance structures, and fundamentally considering what worked well and what could be improved. A summary of the document review is provided in the [appendix](#).

Overview of engagement

We developed an approach to engage the board and its members. Agreeing on priority stakeholders for discussion with the GLA, we carried out in-depth *one-to-one interviews* with key representatives of the board and focus group sessions with members of the board, taskforce, and members of the Youth Recovery Board (full list provided in [appendix](#)).

These discussions were focused on key thematic areas to aid evaluation, including:

- **Governance:** Considering how the governance structure of the board influences clarity of the purpose of the board, ways of working, representation, inclusivity, progress monitoring and overall effectiveness of board meetings and decision making.
- **Operational:** Understanding the role of sub-groups and working-group arrangements, support and co-ordination.
- **Away from Meetings:** Ability of board members to integrate their organisation into activities of the board, influence change within their organisations and the extent to which they could use the LRB approach to meet their own organisational needs.
- **Future:** Views on the future functioning of the board, its aim and purpose going forward beyond recovery.

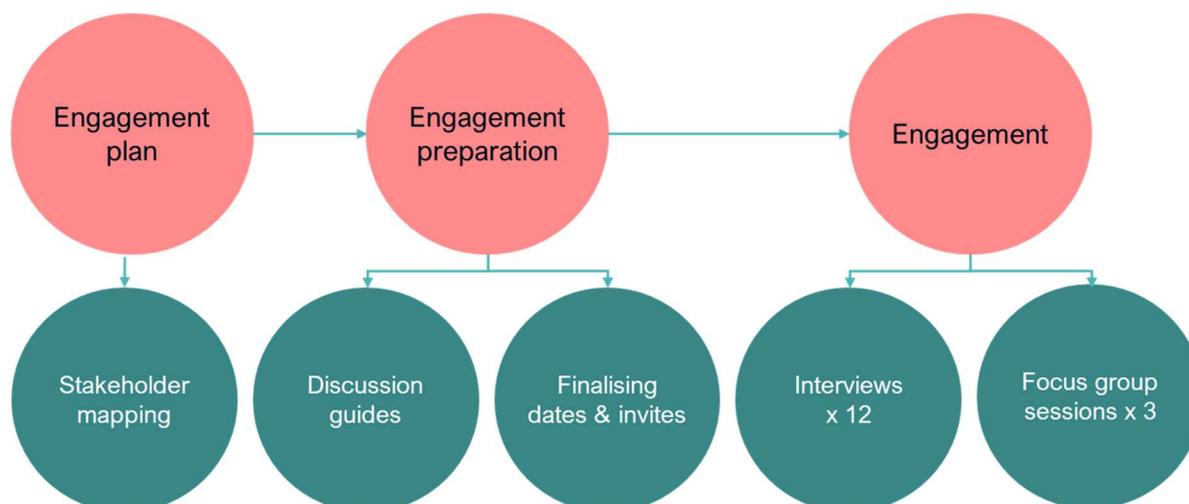


Figure 4: Engagement approach

These themes were also used as a framework to guide our *document review* provided by the GLA which helped to inform our engagement work (a full list of these documents is set out in the appendix).



Interviews

We conducted 11 in-depth interviews with a selection of representative samples of the recovery programme and board based on the stakeholder mapping exercise done with the client team. The board members consisted of leaders from across London's government, business, and civil society, as well as the health and education sectors, trade unions and the police, to oversee the long-term recovery effort, with 31 members (as of July 2023). The interviews included the members of the board and the officers that supported the taskforce in charge of overseeing the board. While finalising the priorities of interviewees, we aimed for a diversity of participation in terms of representation with a focus on informing a well-rounded understanding of the board and its various components.

Interviews were undertaken by members of the PRD project team, using the relevant discussion guides. Conversations were recorded, with the permission of the participants, with comprehensive notes taken.

Focus group sessions

In addition, we also conducted three *focus group sessions* intending to engage with a representative sample of each organisation to discuss the lessons learned and key takeaways. These focused on the future of the board, delving deeper into the recurring themes which emerged from interviews. In total, 3 online focus groups were delivered:

- **Internal stakeholders:** This focus group consisted of GLA officers responsible for overseeing the functioning of the board.
- **External stakeholders:** This focus group consisted of former Recovery Board members and representatives from other organisations, such as London Councils.
- **Youth Recovery Board:** PRD attended a session of the Youth Recovery Board to engage with the members of the board and hear from the perspectives of the young people.

The evaluation process for this report experienced some challenges in securing engagement/participation from participants both for interviews and focus group sessions. The initial proposal included around 20 interviews and 4 focus group sessions (2 online and 2 in-person). However, this was reduced in numbers to two online sessions, to facilitate meaningful discussions, due to the difficulty in getting enough participation. The engagement log (see appendix) details the steps carried out by the project team and the GLA to encourage active involvement in the sessions. Opportunities to build a more formal feedback requirement into the functioning of the board would prove useful in the future to have effective monitoring and review.



SUMMARY AND FINDINGS FROM THE ENGAGEMENT

The following section outlines the summary and findings from the conversations through the engagement process carried out by PRD. The following structure was followed to thematically categorise the inputs.

- What worked well?
- What could be improved upon?
- Inclusivity and representation
- Reflections on the Youth Recovery Board
- Influence away from meetings
- Lessons learnt: Understanding challenges and opportunities

What worked well?

Overall, it should be noted that the general sentiment expressed throughout the engagement was of positivity about the board, the importance of bringing partners together to talk about coordinated actions to tackle London's challenges and fulfilling its potential, with clear enthusiasm for an ongoing Partnership Board to build on what had worked well.

- **The symbolic nature and high-profile status of the board:** The collective presence and mix of powerful, diverse voices and strong leadership were noted as giving strength and gravitas to the board and its symbolic existence was seen as important and benefitting for a city of London's global stature. The significance of the Mayor of London and the chair of London Councils leading the board affirmed the importance of the board to London.

"The partnership of Sadiq Khan and Georgia Gould as co-chairs is symbolic. The nuance is small but it makes all the difference."

- **Enabling government to coordinate better:** The board presented an important platform for different parts of regional and local government to come together around a common interest in delivering London's recovery and finding opportunities to learn from each other and coordinate.
- **Establishing broader partnership working as an effective approach:** The board helped to legitimise and support partnership working at the heart of the approach to recovery and brought diverse stakeholders from across various sectors together around the same table for this purpose. The cross-sector approach also allowed for greater traction and consideration of issues that were otherwise likely to be taking longer time to respond to.

"This government is more inclined to listen to someone with a business standpoint than a regional local government standpoint. That was another advantage of having business groups."

- **Developing relationships:** The board helped to support already established relationships to develop further, but also provided useful opportunities for organisations to engage with others and forge new



relationships, which in turn enabled all board members to embrace more diverse viewpoints, experiences, and expertise.

“Meetings being leveraged for ‘getting stuff done’ outside of meetings, and encouraging conversations.”

In addition, what cemented partnerships were:

- **Supporting structures:** Working alongside and in concert with the Recovery Board, the Anchor Institutions Network and the Youth Recovery Board was successful in bringing a diversity of voices and opinions and fostering meaningful partnerships.

“I was very pleased to see the work on the Youth Recovery Board and its [the board] willingness to do new things in terms of listening to people.”

- **Effective use of subgroups:** Subgroups presented opportunities for more open and in-depth conversations which were unencumbered by the political standpoints that can shape the discourse at high-profile public meetings. As such, the subgroups brought much-needed agility and energy to partner working alongside the public-facing workings of the board.

“I was able to say that there is a Recovery Board meeting coming up with a focus...there were occasions where it was helpful to have a named agenda.”

- **Effective and efficient administration:** Whilst the administration of a partnered board of this scale and nature was extremely challenging (especially during a period of unprecedented uncertainty), the board was very well administered, and the taskforce was effective with a well-rounded programme of work. Pre and post-meeting research was well put together, board papers were of high quality, and the number of meetings was noted as sufficient and timely. The engagement element was positive, and allowed for policies to be framed through the insights from the communities. However, this could have been integrated more into the functioning of the board.

“Pre-meets between the Voluntary and Community Sector, funders, and the board gathered people in the right space and were taken through papers...It broke down barriers for those with less capacity, and made things more accessible.”

- **A platform to build upon:** Considered further later in this report, the evolution of the London Recovery Board into the London Partnership Board is a testament to the value and importance of a partnered working platform for London.

What could be improved upon?

- **Limitations to the adoption of mission-based approach:** The missions were acknowledged as well-intentioned, however there were limitations in effectively implementing the mission-based approach to be aligned with the focus of the board. Fewer and more focused missions were regarded by many as an opportunity for improvement and the mission-led structure could be revisited.
- **Challenging and rigorous process:** Given the novelty of the board and the uniqueness of partnership working in unprecedented, pandemic conditions, the initial process of working together was seen as



challenging by some. Some of the board members also reiterated the need for ensuring accessibility and support to groups that are not used to a formal structuralised process such as the board to ensure inclusivity.

“It was like building a plane while flying it.”

- **Diversity of voices:** A deliberate effort to include and allow different voices during the meeting was mentioned as important and something to be improved upon. Providing equal opportunities and space for the board members to express opinions and having more informal interactions is important to ensure open communication. Not all members were used to participating in public forums of this calibre and needs conscious consideration to allow for the opportunity to participate equally in the discussions. The informality of the setting, providing additional preparatory support and ensuring accessibility could be ways to improve equality in participation.

“Help should be provided to those who are not familiar with this type of environment.”

- **Size and structure of the board:** The board was considered to be too large by some to support open dialogue and interactions. A large cohort meant longer discussions that were time-consuming and at times overlong.

“You want to include the right people, but you also want it to be manageable.”

- **Constrained by partisan lines:** Given the public nature of the forum and the role of the members to represent wider interests, the meetings were inevitably constrained by partisan lines. This restricted open and honest conversations at times, which underlined the need for sub-groups where more open dialogue was possible.

“People need the confidence to speak up.”

- **Governance around participation:** There was a lack of clarity regarding whether individuals or organisations were appointed to the board, which created some uncertainties around how to proceed when individuals parted ways with organisations. This could be addressed through amendments to the terms of reference to avoid future uncertainty.
- **More VCS support:** The Voluntary and Community Sector (“VCS”) and faith sectors needed more support to bring in greater diversity of voices to the table, and to manage the dialogue with the sector to ensure community feedback came through.

“Much to recover from and it’s not just covid.”

- **Limitations of subgroups:** Whilst many saw these as positive and effective, some participants thought that subgroups did not (but should) focus on implementation strategies or monitoring delivery. Subgroups were noted to have provided useful information exchange and debate.



- **Limitations of influence and capacity:** Some of the issues are beyond the scope of local governments to solve and require intervention by the central government. There were also limitations with capacity and some officers being under pressure to perform and deliver. The GLA also had a strong desire to be collaborative and needs active participation from partners and other stakeholders involved.
- **Waning interest:** Membership dropped slightly towards the end of the work programme and at times some felt the meetings were repetitive. However, it is worth reflecting that over the three years of the board, the membership decline was not excessive in comparison to other boards of similar sizes.
- **Alignment to focus and having a strong sense of purpose:** Some parties felt that the board could be more systemic and focused on addressing inequalities more broadly. The board could strengthen its approach by having a stronger focus and a clear sense of purpose.

However, the evaluation also considers that the move towards becoming the Partnership Board as a successful first step towards addressing many of these issues. Rather than being a re-branding exercise, the Partnership Board presents an important opportunity to both build on what has worked well and to re-orientate to address new challenges and opportunities that London faces.

Inclusivity and representation

Board members were asked to reflect on how inclusive and representative they felt the Recovery Board had been. Key views included:

- **Diverse and representative overall:** The board incorporated a good mix of people and organisations overall, including a wide range of key institutions from across London. This diversity of voices, experience and viewpoints was cited as a strength by many board members, presenting opportunities to engage with parties that they would not usually have the opportunity to, tackling many issues of mutual interest. This balance enabled the fiscal, socio-economic, and demographic dynamics of the recovery response to be considered in a more rounded way.
- **Opportunities to improve diversity:** Opportunities to improve the diversity of voices were identified, which included more diversity of voices from less heard communities such as (but not limited to) the LGBTQ+ and disabled communities and more broad representation of faith communities beyond Church of England.
- **Achieving the 'right' size and mix:** The challenge of establishing a 'viably sized' working board whilst also seeking to be fully representative was appreciated as a difficult, but important balance to get right. A right balance is important to maintain the ambitions of the board to be as diverse as possible while at the same time limiting the risk of being ungovernable.

"The board felt unique and right."

- **Challenges for individuals as representatives:** There were noted limitations to the abilities of individuals to be representative of complex or large organisations or groups (for example the NHS as a significant, large body of myriad organisations, or the VCS across London, which is a hugely diverse cohort in every measure).

"No one can represent everyone."



- **Useful precedent:** The board was successful in setting a precedent to offering capacity to allocate resources to vulnerable groups e.g., those who were digitally excluded during the pandemic. However, further opportunities to support and develop the capacity for and within the VCS sector to engage with the process represented a potential area for improvement should be considered, which in practical terms included dealing with a high volume of interest directed at sector's represented on the board.

Reflections of the Youth Recovery Board

The following points below draw on engagement with both the Recovery Board members and the Youth Recovery Board.

- **The Youth Recovery Board:** Drawing in the voices of young people provided an extra dimension the board did not previously have. The Youth Recovery Board brought much-needed disruption that challenged the board to think critically.
- **Meaningful not tokenistic engagement:** The Youth Board described their experience as exceeding expectations, their involvement genuinely appreciated, and their inputs listened to. The opportunity to attend and facilitate sessions by the youth members was useful for them to be fully involved. Being able to provide their perspectives in meetings was described as a highlight of the experience.

"It was quite a big thing to share our views with a room full of decision makers."

- **Rotation of representatives:** The youth board members took turns in attending board meetings. This allowed different members the opportunity to take part in discussions. This was described as a positive.
- **Relationship with the London Recovery Board:** The youth board members were unsure about the connectedness between the two boards. They felt that follow-up conversations were not sufficient and would have liked the board to attend youth meetings more often. This would be useful to have better integration between the two.
- **Thoughts on the future:** The following comments were mentioned as useful suggestions to consider in the future.
 - The group suggested they would like more in-person meetings and to work closely with the GLA on long-term recovery.
 - Key issues that they mentioned the board could focus on were policing; housing; gentrification; and cost of living. Community spaces; long-term support; and education were recommended as important areas for young people.

"I live in Enfield and there is a lack of community spaces for young people."

- It was also suggested that measures need to be taken to address the impacts of COVID on London youths, such as social isolation, integration, and anxiety.
- Collectively, the group mentioned that they would recommend the Youth Board to others but would like to see work around personal development for young people who have not had prior experience in youth work, and measures to make the board more accessible.



Influence away from the meetings

Board members were asked to reflect on their abilities to effectively take learnings from the Recovery Board into their organisations or sectors. Key views included:

- **Nurturing existing and new partnerships:** The board enabled relationships and partnerships to be developed outside of its structure, bringing wider benefits to participating organisations and groups.

“The LRB work helped to strengthen LC relationship with the GLA... This supported involvement and influence with SPF decisions.”

- **Influence on the GLA and London Councils:** The board also influenced internal decision-making within the GLA and London Councils, especially around budgeting and resource allocation.

“GLA was influenced by the board very much and took away a lot from the meetings. GLA re-wrote its entire budget structure to fit the missions.”

- **Broadened perspectives:** Whilst several members did not report a direct influence on decision-making and activities within their respective organisations because of their participation on the board – possibly because of the nature of their organisation – all noted the positive indirect benefits of hearing diverse perspectives and learning about what others were planning or doing. However, not all members were aware of it being a part of the role of the board and were unsure of ensuring any influence beyond partnership working. The board could provide more capacity to its members to take it back to their own organisations as well as create accountability in delivering some of the decisions of the board more broadly.

“There were significant takeaways from the board to be reflected into one’s organisation.”

- **Structures:** Members involved in the sub-groups, namely the economic recovery framework, met informally and formally outside of the meetings, and this was considered effective.

“Based on the considerations, NHS implemented a policy on the London Living Wage. Furthermore, 10% of procurement criteria is also set aside for social value.”

- **The Anchor Institutions Network:** The network was said to be hugely beneficial to securing buy-in and momentum amongst key influencers. The network made the institutions involved responsible for making them accountable for crystallising their actions. Although the Anchor Institutions Network was a product of the Recovery Board, it quickly grew into a network of its own with the steering committee co-chaired by Professor Wendy Thomson CBE (Vice Chancellor of the University of London) and Martin Machray, (Executive Director of Performance - London, NHS), both Recovery Board members.

“The board also provided an opportunity to engage and collaborate with others around the table beyond just board businesses.”



Lessons learnt: Understanding challenges and opportunities

Members engaged were asked to reflect on the overall lessons learned from the London Recovery Board (positive and negative):

- **An important precedent:** The board formed a useful precedent for partners working collectively with a pan-London focus. The board was said to have helped people to work across organisational silos and be more proactive about new partnerships. Many regarded the work of the Anchor Institutions Network and the Youth Board as successes of the Recovery Board and Programme.

“The relationships built; it would be a shame not to capitalise.”

- **Convening power of GLA and London Councils:** This convening power and commitment to nurture ongoing dialogue was for many the biggest lesson and takeaway from the board. The board was a necessary tool in response to the challenges exacerbated by the pandemic and it allowed for a new catalytic form of governance that played a huge role in shaping actions through organisations coming together with a shared purpose. This could become a more wide-spread approach for the GLA as it moves to redefine its role towards being a more active convener.
- **The adoption of a mission-based approach had limitations:** It needs to be refreshed and rethought as the way of working for the Partnership Board. It would be useful to evaluate the missions to streamline and bring out the key objectives around them. Fewer and more focussed missions were considered better if missions are to be pursued.

“The risk is talking about something which is not relevant.”

- **Finding the right challenges:** Being a public forum, it is inevitable that some board discussions were shaped by the public nature of the discussion. Careful consideration should be given to foster genuine interactions both in terms of the focus of activity at the board and activities that support it outside of the meeting. A focus on issues where common ground can be found and which cannot be solved without better city-wide collaboration should inform a strategy going forward.

“Ensure that the Partnership Board does not become over-inflated and can keep its purpose of what it’s trying to achieve rather than general themes of work.”

- **Finding and capitalising on alignments in thinking:** Was seen as necessary to tackle some of the current challenges (e.g., cost-of-living, decarbonisation). The board should be encouraged to continue to explore the intersectionality of interests. Important to maintain a real tangible sense of purpose for the board going forward. The work programme should consider clear plans of delivery.

“There needs to be quick wins to keep the commitment and confidence of stakeholders. They need to feel like they have a role in whatever will be delivered.”

- **Collaborative funding and resourcing:** The board was recommended to explore collaborative funding and resourcing opportunities, which made the best use of partnered working. Providing greater resources and capacity to the VCS sector to engage with the wider community is an opportunity for improvement. Working together to create and design an engagement plan and process.



“It is important, in addition to the symbolic partnership of the board, to not lose the actual partnership, and in some ways strengthen them.”

- **Two-way exchange:** The board needs to be diverse and representative enough to be able to bring in the voices of communities. Important to have diversity both in opinion and outlook. The board is a platform for two-way exchange, learning from the practices on the ground around London, rather than being a decision-making body to which London responds.
- **Ways of working:** It was suggested that there is real value in keeping the meeting more fluid and informal. Important to preserve the human element of things. More in-person meetings were also suggested. Greater clarity around the decision-making process and outcomes of the discussions at the board would positively reinforce its value and purpose and help manage expectations. A greater focus should be put in place to communicate the important work being done, to ensure a wider reach and engage a larger audience.

“It is the soft relational stuff which can so easily be lost, but it supports the whole.”



RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE EMBEDDED WITHIN A FUTURE BOARD STRUCTURE

Participants engaged were invited to make recommendations for how the lessons learned from the London Recovery Board should help inform the London Partnership Board. Key views included:

- **The board should aim to foster relationships and partnerships across London:** The Partnership Board should foster informal and formal partnerships across diverse organisations and groups with a vested and shared interest in the wellbeing of the capital. The real value of the board is in its cross-sectoral way of working and approach.
- **Importance of having a forum for London:** London continues to face both unprecedented and well-entrenched challenges in the post-pandemic era. London is a pre-eminent world city and deserves a forum that brings together diverse voices and key stakeholders from across London and champions airing diverse opinions and positions in the pursuit of common aspirations for the city. The Mayor of London and the chair of London Councils should continue to lead this board.
- **A broader canopy for collaborative working:** The board should continue to work collaboratively and should seek to broaden its reach. It was noted that the future board and programme could aim to be truly cross-sectional with a possible resourcing of budget and capacity, to reflect the collaborative nature of the board. Others exemplified the need to broaden the cohort through referencing universities, which could make a meaningful contribution to strategic discussion and decisions about the future of the city, which is yet to be harnessed.
- **Resetting a clear sense of purpose and focus:** Was a key discussion area, with many parties engaged in expressing the need to focus on fewer things. Some parties felt these should be things that present opportunities to find solutions across political divisions, whilst others were less focused on this. All agreed that the focus must be on issues that cannot be effectively addressed by London's local authorities in isolation. The future board needs to carry forward the legacy and endorse this approach to address some of the long-term structural challenges faced by Londoners.

Some of the key issues that were suggested by the participants were:

- Cost-of-living
 - Net-zero and decarbonisation
 - Addressing structural inequalities and economic inclusion
 - Integrated care systems
 - Greener cities: green skills, retrofit and high streets vitality
 - Fairer cities: policing, housing, and gentrification
- Further measures should be introduced to **build capacity amongst participants representing organisations and groups** who have traditionally been less heard voices in top-down decisions about how things get done. In particular, working with London's VCS effectively needs further consideration.
 - There needs to be **clarity and transparency** around the board being a public forum and how this is upheld through representation. More detail is required in the terms of reference to deal with whether



individuals are being appointed in their own right or as representatives of specific organisations or groups. The board strategically decided not to have any decision-making powers and remain an advisory body to maintain its objectivity during the discussions. This needs to be communicated to the members in a more explicit way to allow for a deeper understanding of the purpose and role of the board and to effectively manage expectations.

- The **importance of sub-groups and structure for collaboration and dialogue** away from the public platform of the board underlines the need to support and administer sub-groups and other supporting arrangements.
- Views on how the board should conduct itself in the future varied. Some felt the future board should foster informality of the processes allowing **more room for interaction** if possible. Others thought the board should seek to be less strategic and more operational in its outcomes.
- As a further recommendation, the formation and integration of the Youth Recovery Board was a key strength of the approach and further opportunities should be pursued **to introduce representative mechanisms for young Londoners in governance structures** by the GLA, London Councils and wider stakeholders, learning lessons from the YRB approach as good practice.
- There are **portable lessons learned that can add value for other London boards** (such as the Skills for Londoners Board) and so opportunities to share learnings as part of capacity-building for other boards should be pursued.



APPENDIX

Document Review and Research

The below sets out documents received, and elements of the board reviewed as part of our document review exercise:

- London Recovery Board: Overview Paper and Summary
- London Partnership Board: Terms of Reference
- An Economic Framework for London (part of London's Economy Recovery Implementation Plan)
- London Recovery Board: Building a Fairer City
- Understanding Sub-Groups of the LRB:
 - London Anchor Institutions' Network
 - Youth Recovery Board
- Minutes and Meetings, Board Papers and Meeting Recordings:
 - London Recovery Board
 - London Recovery Taskforce

9 Recovery Programme Missions

Recognising the missions could adapt and change in response to evolving priorities, these initially included:

1. **A Green New Deal:** Tackle the climate and ecological emergencies and improve air quality by doubling the size of London's green economy by 2030 to accelerate job creation for all.
2. **A Robust Safety Net:** By 2025, every Londoner can access the support they need to prevent financial hardship.
3. **High Streets for All:** Deliver enhanced public spaces and exciting new uses for underused high street buildings in every Borough by 2025, working with London's diverse communities.
4. **A New Deal for Young People:** By 2024 all young people in need are entitled to a personal mentor and all young Londoners have access to quality local youth activities.
5. **Helping Londoners into Good Work:** Support Londoners into good jobs with a focus on sectors key to London's recovery.
6. **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** By 2025 London will have a quarter of a million wellbeing ambassadors, supporting Londoners where they live, work and play.
7. **Digital Access for All:** Every Londoner to have access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and the device or support they need to be online by 2025.
8. **Healthy Food, Healthy Weight:** By 2025 every Londoner lives in a healthy food neighbourhood.
9. **Building Strong Communities:** By 2025, all Londoners will have access to a community hub ensuring they can volunteer, get support and build strong community networks.



Recovery Programme Strategic Framework

Key Outcomes

- Reverse the pattern of rising unemployment and loss of economic growth caused by the economic scarring of Covid-19
- Support our communities, including those most impacted by the virus.
- Narrow social, economic and health inequalities
- Accelerate delivery of a cleaner, greener London
- Help young people to flourish with access to support and opportunities

Cross-Cutting Principles

- Recognising and addressing structural inequalities, promoting a fairer, more inclusive London, and focusing on supporting the most vulnerable
- Prioritising sustainability, mitigating climate change, and improving the resilience of our city
- Collaborating and involving London's diverse communities
- Improving the health and wellbeing of Londoners
- Innovating and using digital technology and data to meet emerging needs.
- Ensuring affordability of measures and providing value for money

Engagement

- 68,937 total site visits to Talk London (52,272 unique); 21,444 members read emails and 1,095 comments from 609 members (aged 16-87). 700 business stakeholders surveyed.
- 26 community grant applications were awarded, with a focus on BAME Young People, BAME women, Disabled, Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seekers, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Somali, Armenian, Black African / Caribbean and Portuguese-speaking communities
- 70 community conversations were submitted from 60 different organisations involving over 1,000 Londoners.
- +650 business stakeholders and 32,500 LinkedIn followers



prd

Daniel.partridge@prdemail.com

Malavika.krishnan@prdemail.co.uk

Sam.franks@prdemail.co.uk

prdweb.co.uk

Partnering Regeneration Development Ltd

Unit 1, 47A Great Guildford Street, London, SE1 0ES

[linkedin.com/company/prduk](https://www.linkedin.com/company/prduk)

[@PRD_tweets](https://twitter.com/PRD_tweets)