

London City Charter

29th April 2009

**Mayor of London
London Councils**

Foreword

It is now a little over 10 months since we both signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding' committing ourselves - the Mayor, the London Boroughs and the City Corporation - to producing a City Charter for London. We did so to ensure that London's public services would continue to improve and to be delivered as efficiently as possible, and that decisions that affect Londoners would be made as close to the people as is possible.

This is not about adding an additional layer of unnecessary bureaucracy to the way London works, but about changing the culture of how we, the Mayor and Borough Leaders, work together to find solutions to common problems in a direct and open way.

Since then, the pressures on and uncertainties for Londoners have increased. The challenges posed by the current global economic recession make the London City Charter even more vital today than when it was first conceived. It is even more important that the Mayor and Borough Leaders are working closely together to help Londoners through these difficult times and ensure that London continues to be a prosperous, vibrant, safe and sustainable city.

Governing a city as energetic, diverse and dynamic as London will always be complex. But Londoners have a right to expect that the machinery of government works for them and their families. They want to have a genuine say in decisions that affect their lives and they want good quality services delivered at the lowest possible cost.

The City Charter is a declaration of intent by London's elected leaders to help Londoners through current challenges and set a firm foundation for London's economic recovery and continuing global competitiveness - essential for the UK as well as for London.

The City Charter will help to ensure that London government continues to deliver efficient high quality services to London residents.

And we know that the case for London can be most powerfully made when all of London's elected leaders speak as one.

This commitment by London's democratically elected leaders to align their efforts and to work together will support Londoners through difficult times and build the foundations for an even stronger and more assured future for London.

**Councillor Merrick Cockell,
Chairman, London Councils**

**Boris Johnson
Mayor of London**

Introduction

This Charter is a voluntary agreement between London Councils and the Mayor of London, reflecting the aspirations of the Capital's government at regional and local level. Starting from the powers and duties of these institutions – the Greater London Authority, the London Boroughs and the City of London – it has as its key purposes: democratic leadership, the delivery or regulation of public service and the oversight of appointed service-providers. The people of London – residents, workers and visitors - are its intended beneficiaries.

The City Charter is arranged in three sections:

- **section 1** covers the principles underlying the Charter; and the organisational arrangements for the London Congress and London Charter Board;
- **section 2** comprises a set of possible areas for joint action relating to key priorities for London's elected government, agreed by the London Congress; and
- **section 3** looks ahead to how this Charter can form the basis of a new relationship between elected London government and Whitehall.

This initial Charter is not a legal or quasi-statutory document. It is rather a statement that describes the current position, which reflects existing legislation and the established relationships between different spheres of government. It reflects the current level of devolution to local and regional government in London but also looks ahead to the next stages of devolution. In the longer term, the Charter might become the basis for a self-determined framework, to be reflected in legislation for London's government.

The Charter is not intended to be comprehensive nor cover all the various ways in which the Mayor and the boroughs interact. Rather the intention is to identify a number of key issues for Londoners where urgent action is needed by the Mayor and Borough Leaders jointly, and where collaboration via this route is likely to accelerate progress because of the combined political, professional and managerial focus that can be brought to bear on these issues.

The Charter is intended to be a living document that will develop as our unique system of local and regional governance in London evolves further.

Throughout this document, the term 'London Boroughs' should be taken to include the City Corporation also.

Section 1 Principles and Organisational Arrangements

1.1 Principles

The people of London expect those that they elect to govern – the Mayor of London, London’s Borough Councils and the City of London Corporation - to work together to ensure that:

- the needs and aspirations of everyone in London are recognised;
- public services are delivered efficiently and continue to improve; and
- local and regional decisions are made as close to people as is possible.

This City Charter expresses the principle that decisions affecting London should be made, at the most local level possible, wherever appropriate and efficient to do so. This means that the Mayor and Leaders will act together to maximise the degree of regional and local control that is possible within the current system and to make the system work in the best way for Londoners.

London’s elected leaders recognise that Londoners’ expectations require clear principles for governing London and further improvements in the way that we govern. Each party believes that it is in the best interests of Londoners to work together in a relationship of mutual respect, continuing consultation and cooperation on matters of mutual interest. The Charter recognises that the complexity and importance of many of the challenges facing London in the next few years will require co-ordinated and effective action from all levels of government.

The roles of the Mayor and the GLA group on one hand, and the boroughs and the City Corporation on the other will be different for different issues. Broadly speaking, there are four categories, as follows.

- First, issues where the Mayor has a clear **statutory** role, to which borough policies must conform – in particular, housing, transport and planning. The Mayor has a statutory duty to promote economic development, social development and improvement of the environment in Greater London. In addition to their own locally determined work in these areas, boroughs have an important voice in shaping these strategies, and, once they are finalised, in how they are delivered. In planning, strategic policy direction is set through the London Plan, which has development plan status. Within that framework, and in line with GOL Circular 1/2008, the Mayor pledges to use his new powers to take over planning applications only as a last resort. Borough Leaders pledge to accept that their duty to their constituents’ aspirations includes accepting a wider duty to the well-being of London as a whole. In housing, the new Homes and Communities Agency London Board is a welcome development, with strong London accountability through being chaired by the Mayor and strong links to local accountability through three borough elected members serving on the Board.
- Secondly, services where boroughs have a statutory role or exercise local leadership, working within national policy requirements and where the Mayor’s role is to complement and support – for example, education and social care.

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- Thirdly, services for Londoners that are delivered by national agencies and departments not under the direct control either of the Mayor or of the boroughs – for example, health services. Here there should be joint moves towards strengthened influence of both the Mayor and the boroughs over the delivery of these services. These services should also be subject to scrutiny by the London Assembly and the boroughs.
- Fourthly, issues where there are shared or complementary responsibilities, and effective co-ordination is essential to improve outcomes for Londoners – for example reducing crime and improving community safety; promoting economic prosperity; increasing skills levels; and promoting and widening access to culture and sport. In these cases, the Mayor and Borough Leaders pledge further improvements in cross-tier working to deliver better services to Londoners.

It is entirely appropriate – and indeed a strength of London governance – that both the regional view and local views are strongly represented. The balance between these, and the relationship between the Mayor and the boroughs will be different across these four categories.

In the first category, where the Mayor has statutory strategic responsibilities, there is a clear line of sight from Mayoral strategy to delivery. In the second category, the London boroughs are clearly responsible for the bulk of local services. In the third category, there should be moves towards further devolution towards both regional and local government in London. In the fourth category, there are gains to be made in terms both of services to Londoners and value-for-money in developing an even more effective and co-ordinated approach. In this Charter, we set out an agenda for effective working on key issues for Londoners which demand a joint approach.

London elected leaders therefore agree to:

- ensure that decisions are made as close to people as possible;
- work together to promote equal life chances for all Londoners by ensuring service delivery is inclusive, workforces are representative of the communities they serve; and that barriers to Londoners being included in all aspects of living in London are removed;
- recognise that while the governance of London may be complex, the people of London expect clear and simple accountability irrespective of institutional boundaries;
- recognise the Mayor's strategic responsibilities and role as 'voice for London' and together seek the maximum feasible devolution of services and spending to the region and to boroughs and groups of boroughs;
- recognise that each tier of London government has a unique contribution to make to improve the lives of Londoners and respect the jurisdiction and authority of each level of government;
- consult with one another on matters covered in the Charter and work towards the maximum level of information-sharing between the partners;

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- acknowledge each other's interests and where appropriate, facilitate the other party's input into discussions with central government and other partners;
- strive for open and transparent communications and decision-making;
- building on the work of Capital Ambition continue to improve the quality and efficiency of services and outcomes secured for Londoners. The Mayor and the Boroughs will commit to collaborate in seeking new and innovative means of serving London and Londoners more responsively, and to focus consistently and relentlessly on driving greater value for money for London's taxpayers;
- work together to ensure that London receives appropriate funding from future Government Spending Reviews that accurately reflects both London's needs and its role as a key driver of the UK's future economic prosperity;
- uphold and develop the highest standards of transparency and openness in the way that each institution of London government reaches decisions and spends public money; and
- recognise the vital role played by the London Assembly and borough councillors in providing effective scrutiny for all levels of London governance.

1.2 The Congress of Leaders

Membership

There shall be a Congress of Leaders whose membership consists of the Mayor of London, the Leaders of each London Borough and the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee of the City of London Corporation.

Deputy Mayors from the Greater London Authority shall attend as observers and to support the Mayor. The Congress of Leaders shall therefore consist of thirty four members who will represent their own mandate but who shall also consider both the city-wide and local interests of London. The Congress shall be chaired by the Mayor. The Chairman of London Councils shall be the Deputy Chair of the Congress.

The Congress may decide to invite others to join a meeting as observers.

Meetings

The Congress shall meet at least twice a year. Between meetings of the Congress, a sub-group comprising the Group Leaders of London Councils and one or more Deputy Mayors shall have authority to progress business and to decide the agenda and priorities for the next Congress.

Purposes

The purposes of the Congress shall be the good government of London, through facilitating joint actions, including in particular, the co-ordination of Greater London Authority and borough policies and of overall approaches to the delivery of services for the people and businesses of London.

Specifically, the Congress of Leaders shall:

- determine a key set of joint priorities to benefit Londoners for the GLA, the boroughs and the City of London to work on together; and
- set goals and objectives for the longer-term, which might include any of the spheres of public service that fall within the wider public sector, including those not the direct responsibility of the GLA or the boroughs.

Progress against actions agreed by the Congress will be subject to the same scrutiny processes that apply to all decisions made by the Mayor and by Borough Leaders, on the one side by the London Assembly, on the other by borough scrutiny committees.

1.3 The London Charter Board

The activities and purposes of the Congress shall be pursued by the chief officers of their authorities, acting as a Charter Board. There shall be a Charter Board whose members shall consist of the Chief Executive of the GLA, five representatives of the Chief Executives of the London Boroughs, the Town Clerk of the City of London Corporation and the Chief Executive of London Councils. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner, the Transport Commissioner, the Fire Commissioner and the chief executives of the London Development Agency, the Homes and Communities Agency and the Strategic Health Authority for London shall also be members. The Charter Board shall therefore consist of 14 members and will be co-chaired by the Chief Executive of London Councils and the Chief Executive of the Greater London Authority.

The Charter Board may decide to set up sub-groups of the whole board. Such a sub-group will be chosen and will operate according to rules determined by the Charter Board, subject to approval by the Congress of Leaders.

The Charter Board may decide to invite other members to join a meeting as observers. These members may include:

- the chief executive of any public service operating in London, in whole or in part;
- expert advisors who from time to time may be able to assist the Charter Board; and
- an officer or officers of London Councils or the Greater London Authority.

Meetings

The Charter Board shall meet no less than four times a year. Meetings will take place at City Hall or at the offices of London Councils

Purposes

The purposes of the Charter Board are as follows:

- to provide professional support to the Congress of Leaders; and

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- to ensure that the policies and mechanisms are in place to deliver in an integrated manner, the objectives of the Congress of Leaders, as described above. This may be either through joint action or through the separate delivery by individual institutions.

Specifically, the Charter Board shall:

- assist the Congress of Leaders in determining an annual set of priorities for joint GLA/boroughs/City of London work;
- provide the Congress with the information and support necessary to set goals and objectives for the longer-term, which may include any of the spheres of public service that fall within the wider public sector, including those not the direct responsibility of the GLA or the boroughs; and
- produce a short annual report listing the activities and achievements of the Congress of Leaders and the Charter Board, subject to the agreement and assent of the Congress of Leaders.

The Board will bring this about by effective co-ordination of advice, resource and action by various institutions that continue to operate within existing statutory arrangements. The Board will have no separate legal delivery mandate.

Section 2 Areas for joint action by the Mayor, Borough Leaders and their partners

The London Congress of 29th April 2009 agrees the following priority areas of work for discussion by Congress and joint action by the Mayor and Borough Leaders:

- delivering the best possible transport outcomes for London;
- supporting economic recovery in London including including tackling worklessness;
- reducing serious youth violence in London;
- responding to climate change in London;
- improving police accountability and more effective commissioning;
- improving health outcomes in London; and
- jointly campaigning for resources for London.

This section outlines possible areas for action for the Mayor and Borough Leaders to discuss and agree on. The Charter Board will then work to deliver on these agreements.

2.1 Transport

Shared Goals and Objectives

London's councils, GLA and Transport for London will deliver the best possible transport outcomes for London. To do this, we commit to working closely and effectively, relying on a relationship based on trust, respect and partnership. Only by working together can we rise to meet the challenges facing London and deliver the maximum benefits to everyone who lives and works in London.

Together the Mayor, Boroughs and Transport for London will work together to make common objectives a reality, to help make London a better place in which to live, work, and do business.

Possible areas of joint action to be pursued:

- devolution of powers on Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) to the boroughs;
- options around securing greater local influence and management of bus routes;
- future strategy for door-to-door transport;
- engagement with boroughs in the revised Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS2)'
- revised Local Implementation Plans which provide more flexibility for local partners (LIPs 2); and
- promotion of cycling and walking.

2.2 London's economic recovery

Shared Goals and Objectives

A successful London economy is vital for the successful economic performance of the UK as a whole. A rapid and sustainable economic recovery in London, benefiting the whole of the UK, will require concerted and co-ordinated public intervention from national, regional and local government.

National government holds the key levers of monetary and fiscal policy, business regulation and confidence-building, as well as the responsibility for co-ordinating the UK's

policy response with that of other leading economies. The Mayor and Borough Leaders have a crucial role to play in helping London businesses and residents through the downturn and in positioning London for long-term economic recovery in which all Londoners can benefit

This Congress affirms its support for the Mayor's Economic Recovery Action Plan, launched on 17th December 2008 and the London Councils' Action Plan for delivery in the downturn, agreed on 10th March 2009.

Possible areas of joint action to be pursued:

- promotion of positive procurement practices in London that maximise training and employment opportunities from large capital projects and increase the accessibility of public procurement to SMEs, for example through the Competefor system;
- delivery of 5000 apprenticeships over the next 3 years via the GLA Group and local government and work to maximise opportunities across other partners, such as through Crossrail and the ODA;
- promotion of opportunities from the lower value of sterling to increase exports, tourism and inward investment;
- support for local economies and town centres as a key part of achieving economic prosperity throughout London; and
- help for organisations and people to cut their fuel bills through programmes such as building retrofit and fuel efficiency advice campaigns.

2.3 Reducing serious youth violence

Shared Goals and objectives

Achieving a safer city and further reducing the level of crime (especially violence) suffered by Londoners is a key goal. In particular, improving the safety of young people in London is a top priority for London's elected leaders. In order to make real progress in this area the Mayor and Boroughs need to work together.

Possible areas of joint action to be pursued:

- working effectively in partnership to reduce serious youth violence in London, supported by appropriate governance arrangements;
- ensuring delivery of the "Time for Action" programme to promote opportunities and prevent violence through, for example
 - supporting young offenders in custody and on resettlement;
 - keeping young people in education;
 - promoting mechanisms for building character and responsibility ;
 - promoting positive images of young people and involving young people in solving the problems;
 - identifying what really works; and
- through the Serious Youth Violence Board, taking forward pan-London strategic work to reduce serious youth violence, based on recognising the core problems to be addressed, improved coordination, reducing duplication and a common approach to monitoring progress.

2.4 Climate Change

Shared Goals and Objectives.

London's local authorities and the GLA Group already work successfully together on various climate change initiatives.

The possible areas for action outlined below therefore look to build on this strong relationship, to work better towards mitigating London's impact on climate change, and towards adapting its infrastructure, places, and spaces to cope with a changing and less predictable future climate.

Possible areas of joint action to be pursued:

- working jointly, to look at skills gaps and training needs with regard to energy and climate change to ensure London can take advantage of the opportunities presented by a low carbon economy;
- working together to ensure that London can gain maximum advantage from national schemes;
- working with our finance and procurement experts to develop ways of financing energy efficiency and supply, examining the potential for municipal 'energy services company' models;
- sharing best practice and promote common procurement on retrofit activities on local and regional government's own estate;
- considering the development of decentralised (i.e. small scale, locally based) energy supply and heat networks across London; and
- together lobbying government on appropriate regulatory and financial support to develop green industries in London.

2.5 Improving police accountability

Shared Goals and objectives

Our overall objective is to bring together elected local and regional government to ensure current policing and community safety structures in London deliver for the communities we serve. A great deal has already been achieved but there is much more we can do.

Possible areas of joint action to be pursued:

- improving information sharing, consultation and dialogue;
- implementing a transparent process of the allocation of policing resources;
- involving councils in the recruitment and retention of Borough Commanders
- integrating community engagement by Police and councils;
- integrating aspects of neighbourhood policing with borough community safety and enforcement activity;
- including local influence over the deployment of central and specialist teams; and
- meeting regularly (MPS, MPA and London Councils) to resolve emerging challenges at a high level.

2.6 Health care in London

Shared goals and objectives

As Lord Darzi's review showed, health care in London must improve and modernise. Across the board standards of care are too low. In addition there are unacceptable inequalities across the capital. In a single London borough, average life expectancy can vary by as much as ten years between people living in the most and the least deprived neighbourhoods. Travelling eight stops on the Jubilee Line reduces life expectancy by seven years.

The Borough Leaders and the Mayor therefore agree to work together on a joint agenda with the NHS and others to improve health outcomes and value for money and to reduce health inequalities in London. Our shared objective is to raise standards, support the transformation of the NHS in London and strengthen democratic input to services at a local level.

Possible areas of joint action to be pursued:

- looking to increase democratic accountability for health commissioning at local level through local government, with an aspiration for national funding for health commissioning by PCTs to be directed through local government;
- maintaining the advantages of coterminous borough PCT boundaries in any further reform of the NHS in London;
- protecting and advancing further partnership working as a vital part of ensuring that Londoners get the best quality health services;
- actively supporting the NHS in London in its efforts to develop a health service fit for a global city;
- tackling the barriers to opportunity and participation; and
- developing and promoting London as a healthy place for all.

2.7 Winning resources for London

Shared goals and objectives

London is the engine of the country's economy. London needs a fair financial deal where every Londoner is counted. Investment is required to improve public services and enhance value for money including by joining up across professional boundaries. Reform is needed to encourage more sharing of resources whether they are used by public services at national, regional or local level.

Possible areas of joint action to be pursued:

- campaigning jointly for a fairer share of funding and investment in London from central Government;
- developing innovative forms of financing public services in London;
- lobbying government to put appropriate measures in place to ensure that the 2011 Census provides an accurate count of London's population and to make fundamental changes to the funding regime which recognise both London's unique challenges and the importance of London's success to the UK public finances; and
- lobbying government for a new deal on sharing the fiscal benefits of growth between national, regional and local government.

Section 3: Toward greater self-government for London

London has an effective, accountable system of local and regional governance.

London is different from the rest of the country – both in its governance and in the range and scale of issues that London’s regional and local governments confront. London’s regional and local government is a success. The innovation of a directly elected Mayor and London Assembly has brought strategic focus and regional leadership, while London’s boroughs have delivered service improvements and increased efficiencies that have outperformed the national average, and have a track record of working together through London Councils and Capital Ambition.

This Charter expresses the commitment of the Mayor and Borough Leaders to work together as effectively as possible within the current system. But further devolution and strengthened self-government is both possible and necessary. The Central-Local Concordat (December 2007) sets out the reciprocal rights and responsibilities between central and local government. The Concordat makes clear the shared commitment of central and local government to working together “to provide greater clarity and transparency to local people on the levels of public funding going into local areas, and...towards giving councils greater flexibility in their funding, to facilitate the wide degree of autonomy referred to in the European Charter of Local Self-Government.”

The signatories to this Charter therefore call on Government to recognise the maturity, efficiency and accountability of London’s unique system of self-government and to take decisive steps to devolve further powers, responsibilities and fiscal capacity to London’s elected governments.