

# MAYOR OF LONDON

## London Strategic Migration Partnership

Thursday 11 February 2016

### Minutes

#### Present

GL	Gerard Lyons	Mayor of London
MM	Munira Mirza	Mayor of London
MW	Mike Wells	UK Visas and Immigration
MH	Mulat Haregot	Mayor's Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel
PC	Philip Clifford	London Councils
MJ	Matthew Jaffa	Federation of Small Businesses

#### In attendance

DS	Dominic Scott	UK Council for International Student Affairs
JO	Jo Attwool	Universities UK
MH	Mark Hilton	London First
EF	Emily Follis	London Chamber of Commerce and Industry
PS	Dr Paresh Shah	London Higher
DF	Don Flynn	Migrant Rights Network
AK	Almir Kolkzic	Counterpoint Arts
AO	Aine O'Brien,	Counterpoint Arts
CS	Catherine Shrimpton	London First
LW	Louise Wilkes	London & Partners
KM	Kevin McCarthy	London & Partners
JL	James Lee	Greater London Authority
AD	Amanda Decker	Greater London Authority
LE	Lee Edwards	UK Visas and Immigration
SM	Sarah Mulley	Greater London Authority
SG	Shanthi Gunsekera	Greater London Authority
AM	Amna Mahmoud	Greater London Authority

#### Apologies

MB	Cllr Muhammad Butt	London Councils
VL	Val Lowman	Be On Site
RC	Rita Chadha	MRAP

### 1. Chair's welcome and previous minutes

- 1.1 Welcome: Dr Gerard Lyons, Chief Economic Adviser, Mayor of London
- 1.2 Previous minutes and update on Syrian refugee resettlement: Munira Mirza, Deputy Mayor, Education and Culture.
- 1.3 MM provided an update on London's response to the PM's commitment to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees in the UK over the course of the Parliament. Some refugees have already been resettled in London, as part of the first phase of the Government's commitment. There are significant ongoing challenges to resettling Syrian refugees in the

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Capital long-term, in particular in sourcing appropriate and affordable private rented accommodation. The Mayor and London Councils are leading work to develop a regional multi-agency approach to enable London to play its part, whilst continuing discussions with the Minister Richard Harrington MP to agree a model which will work in London.

1.4 Previous LSMP meeting minutes were circulated and LSMP members were invited to provide comments by email to the GLA.

## 2. Culture and creative: recruiting and retaining talent

2.1 Amanda Decker, Cultural Strategy Coordinator outlined the value of London culture and creative sectors and the importance of recruiting and retaining international talent. Recognised considerable improvement in the sector's understanding of the visa system following a London Cultural Strategy Group/UKVI event and subsequent follow up last year.

2.2 Issues remain around the visa system providing opportunities for recruiting international artists at the early stages of their development ('raw talent'), rather than those with established careers; salary thresholds for creative graduates where starting levels are below the current (and MAC's recommended level) thresholds - the Migration Advisory Committee's recent review of Tier 2 recommended the government take particular note of creative jobs and salary levels; creative start-up/SMEs ability to sponsor through Tier 2.

**Action 1:** UKVI will look at hosting an annual/bi-annual forum for the creative and cultural industries to review processes and address concerns. They are looking at how this will work on a national level.

**Action 2:** UKVI to look at ways to better support start up creative SME's in navigating the processes of becoming sponsors.

## 3. Tourism and London

3.1 Catherine Shrimpton, Programme Director, Promoting London, London First and Louise Wilks, Tourism Insight Manager, London & Partners outlined the value of tourism to London, linking with the previous presentation on culture. The issue of promoting longer term visitor visas to the Chinese market, including lowering the cost of this visa and providing a single application route for the UK and Schengen.

3.2 Lee Edwards, UK Visa and Immigration confirmed that all European countries now required biometric data; Belgium and the UK were piloting a joint application process in China - apply for a UK visa at Belgium visa application centres in China.

3.3 Discussion looked at the question of whether to prioritise attracting volume or high value tourism. Although not directly connected to visas, the issue of employment standards and pay in the hospitality sector was raised and difference between New York (higher pay) and London. CS pointed out that the hospitality sector offers value in providing good progression opportunities/pathways for entry and other level jobs.

3.4 London First will continue discussion with UKVI, in particular on strengthening the UK's visitor offer in China. London First is also a member of the government's Tourism Industry Council. London & Partners' work on a new Tourism Strategy will address the issue of volume of tourists and the spend per tourist in London.

## 4. International students in London

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- 4.1 Kevin McCarthy, Head of Education and Culture, London & Partners outlined the importance of international students to London and the numbers coming to the capital over the past five years. London has a strong HE offer, although is facing strong competition from other countries. Although there has been growth in numbers of international students year on year, this is below expectations, given London's global position, strong HE performance and demand from growth markets. India was identified as a particular market where London and the UK have seen significant reductions – over 50% since 2009/10. This year saw London, for the first time, increase the numbers of Indian students (2.2%) while the UK saw a decline of 7.4%. India is a growth market for higher education and other countries have seen an increase in Indian students.
- 4.2 James Lee, Senior Policy, Growth and Enterprise outlined the importance of international students to London's position as a leading global city and to the capital's higher education institutions (HEIs) as core assets for innovation and economic growth. The Mayor has recommended that London (and the UK's) HEIs are supported to compete internationally by having a stronger international student visa offer, one which has a clearer route to working after graduating. This is not a return to a general Tier 1 PSW visa but one which targets particular markets – especially India – and degree areas which are important to London's innovation ecosystem.
- 4.3 UKVI responded by stating that work opportunities are in place for international students graduating from UK universities and that a key issue is making people aware of these.

## 5. Migration Advisory Committee: Tier 2 Review - summary

- 5.1 Mark Hilton, Executive Director, Policy, London First stated that the government is considering its response to the MAC's report.
- 5.2 MH outlined a number of relevant areas, including the Immigration Skills Charge (ISC), salary thresholds and the creative sector. A concern was raised that the ISC would have a significant impact on universities – 12% of academic and research staff of non-EU, and this is higher in areas such as STEM.

## 6. AOB and Concluding comments

Sarah Mulley, Senior Manager, Diversity and Social Policy reviewed the last three meetings of the LSMP. The GLA will be consulting with the core LSMP membership on a draft business plan in the coming weeks, and will table a discussion on this at the next LSMP meeting. There will be a change of administration at City Hall in the interim with a new Mayor in May. This will be reflected in the priorities of a new mayor in planning for next year in due course.