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London & Partners' transparency consultation response

London & Partners undertook a public consultation in February 2019 on our transparency arrangements. This consultation set out our proposals to adopt increased levels of transparency to demonstrate how we spend public funds, make decisions and show the outcomes and beneficiaries of our work.

As a not-for-profit private limited company, half of our funding comes from the Greater London Authority. The remaining half is provided through other public sector funds and commercial ventures.

This unique arrangement has raised important questions about how we balance our role as a transparent custodian of public money, while also acting as a trusted commercial organisation.

We suggested possible measures to respond to these questions in our transparency consultation.

Our approach to the proposed measures was to ensure that these:

- Respect the confidentiality of commercial information relating to our clients and partners.
- Do not cause an undue cost burden.
- Do not conflict with our corporate governance as a company limited by guarantee.

The consultation was published on our website and sent to our stakeholders and partners to respond to. We received eight responses, which broadly supported the additional arrangements as an important further step in improving our transparency.

After discussion with the board, we have agreed to undertake the following new arrangements in addition to the information we already publish.

From the beginning of April 2019, we will publish:

- Terms of reference for the board.
- Terms of reference for board sub-committees.
- Our Delegation of Authority framework, including board sub-committees and subsidiary boards.
- Approved board meeting minutes (starting with the November 2018 Board). Minutes for subsequent board meetings will be published once approved by the board at the subsequent meeting.
- Our procurement policy following Public Contracts Regulations 2015, including the requirement to advertise notification of tenders and contract awards of more than £25,000.
- An organisation chart for senior members of staff, including salary brackets.

By the end of July 2019, we expect to have completed updates to our corporate governance pages on londonandpartners.com, making information easier to find and including the following documents:

- Information on transactions of more than £250.
- Information on FDI and business tourism projects supported.
- Our annual review with a more detailed breakdown of spend.
- Our correspondence policy.

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Appendix: Responses to London & Partners' transparency consultation

REDFERN LEGAL

Hello

We are replying to the transparency consultation questionnaire. Replies are in green. Your statements are in black below.

We currently publish extensive information on our strategy, business plan, and performance against our key objectives. Whilst we have also adopted increased levels of transparency in recent years, we recognise that we can do more in relation to how we spend public funds and in being clearer about our decision-making and the beneficiaries of our work. This document sets out significant additional steps that we intend to take to publish more data and information in four key areas as well as making it more easily accessible.

The idea is laudable but not if it is just a tick box exercise. There may be a perception that some of the things proposed are tick box exercises. Heaven forbid.

Consultation Questions:

Q1: Do you agree with our proposal to conduct an independent audit of our annual results?

How much will this cost and where will the money come from?

Q2: Do you agree with our proposal to publish details of companies that we have helped through our business support programmes except where companies have requested that their details be kept confidential? No comment

Q3: Is there any additional information in relation to our strategy, planning and delivery of our corporate objectives that you consider we should publish? It would not be right to publish information about the fees you seek from the commercial partners. However, you should advise the commercial partners 3 months in advance of the proposed membership fee for the next year of membership. It is unacceptable to provide 1 week's notice of a 3x increase in such fees, as has occurred once. Plus you should publish how the export drive is funded. This may help to be clear it does not involve funding from the commercial partners (though it does indirectly as it uses resources overseas who are paid for with the contribution from the partners).

Consultation Questions:

Q4: Do you agree with our proposal to publish details of all expenditure exceeding £250 on a quarterly basis? Currently we publish our budget within our annual business plan, details of contracts of over £150,000 and our audited annual accounts. It is a massive leap to go from £150,000 to £250. Who decided on £250? How much will that cost? What about a higher figure like £2,000?

Q5: Is there any other information in relation to our proposed revised approach to procurement that you consider we should publish?

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Q8: Do you agree with our proposal to publish full minutes of board meetings? **Great idea**

Q9: Do you agree with our proposal to publish the terms of reference of London & Partners board and sub-committees and delegation of authority? **Great idea**

Q10: Do you agree with our proposal to publish a comprehensive annual report and accounts? **What will be the benefit? You already publish audited annual accounts. Have you ever had feedback on those?**

Q11: Is there any other information that you consider we should publish or measures we should adopt in relation to our corporate governance? **No comment**

Q12: Are there any other measures that you consider we should take to make it easier to find or access information about London & Partners on our corporate website? **You have an active marketing dept**

Q13: Do you agree with the proposal to publish a policy and process for handling correspondence from the public, press and elected politicians? **No comment**

Q14: Do you agree that we should open our Annual General Meeting to our main public and private stakeholders? **Great idea**

Q15: Are there any other measures that you consider we should take to make London & Partners more accountable for how it spends public funds? **You should explain when the EU funding runs out, what the funding is used for and what will happen when it disappears eg will it be replaced, if so, from where.**

Regards

Tom Redfern
Senior Partner

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Q1: Do you agree with our proposal to conduct an independent audit of our annual results?
YES

Q2: Do you agree that we should publish details of companies that we have helped through our business support programmes except where companies have requested that their details be kept confidential? **YES**

Q3: Is there any additional information in relation to our strategy, planning and delivery of our corporate objectives that you consider we should publish?

Q4: Do you agree with our proposal to publish details of all expenditure exceeding £250 on a quarterly basis? **YES**

Q5: Is there any other information in relation to our proposed revised approach to procurement that you consider we should publish?

Q6: Do you agree with our proposal to publish an organisation chart for senior staff? **YES** this would be extremely helpful so we know who does what and who can help if we get a

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string of OOO from staff we are trying to contact. This is the norm with many other companies similar to L+P.

Q7: Is there any other information in relation to our people that you consider we should publish? Leisure FAM trips. I used to get lots of emails requests from staff at Visit London. Do these no longer happen? Does anyone look after trade, domestic or otherwise? I know that the Travel Trade LinkedIn page has closed but surely there is some focus on trade outside of corporate?

Q8: Do you agree with our proposal to publish full minutes of board meetings? YES

Q9: Do you agree with our proposal to publish the terms of reference of London & Partners board and sub-committees and delegation of authority?

Q10: Do you agree with our proposal to publish a comprehensive annual report and accounts? YES

Q11: Is there any other information that you consider we should publish or measures we should adopt in relation to our corporate governance?

Q12: Are there any other measures that you consider we should take to make it easier to find or access information about London & Partners on our corporate website?

Q13: Do you agree with the proposal to publish a policy and process for handling correspondence from the public, press and elected politicians?

Q14: Do you agree that we should open our Annual General Meeting to our main public and private stakeholders? YES

Q15: Are there any other measures that you consider we should take to make London & Partners more accountable for how it spends public funds

Lucy Hillyard

CONFERENCE INTERPRETERS UK

Dear London and Partners,

Just to confirm that Conference Interpreters UK agrees with all the proposals contained in the Transparency Consultation.

It would be interesting to know what is to become of the European Development Funding after Brexit?

Best wishes

Rosamund Durnford-Slater

CAROLINE PIDGEON - LONDON ASSEMBLY MEMBER

To whom it may concern,

London & Partners transparency consultation

I welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the transparency of London & Partners and future plans for improving this.

As a public-private entity, I recognise the need to balance your responsibilities as both a trusted commercial partner and a transparent custodian of public money. As a member of the London Assembly, I will of course be responding with close attention to the latter.

The Mayor has allocated £13.1million in funding for London & Partners for 2019-20, a level which will be sustained for the following three years. It is therefore only right that we should closely scrutinise the organisation and call on it to be more open with us, and the Londoners which ultimately help pay for it.

First and foremost, it is welcome that London & Partners is taking active steps to increase their transparency as an organisation. As you will know, the London Assembly – particularly the Economy Committee – has long been critical of the perceived opaqueness of London & Partners and its failure to provide specific information when requested.

In the last year I've become increasingly concerned over the lack of openness and transparency of London & Partners' operations and its claims over how much value it adds to London's economy. It is unacceptable that the Economy Committee had to resort to summoning documents in order to get a clearer picture.

Having read the consultation document, and while broadly agreeing with your approach, I wish to make some specific comments.

The foreword to the consultation states "It is only through this public-private partnership that we can generate returns of £15 to the London economy for each £1 that we spend". This is the kind of statement which the London Assembly has repeatedly questioned,

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and sought the evidence on which London & Partners can back this up. When making grand statements such as these, I believe you should be more transparent with readers as to how these claims were arrived at.

While I welcome plans to publish full minutes of board meetings, I would hope this proposal also extends to all committees and sub-committees. Additionally, it is important that meeting agendas and papers are also made public.

Furthermore, while I recognise that London & Partners is exempt from Freedom of Information laws, in the interest of transparency I believe that voluntary compliance should be considered.

In terms of procurement processes, I welcome that notifications of tenders issued by London & Partners over the threshold will be published in an OJEU Notice on the Official Journal of the European Union and on the Contracts Finder website.

As you may be aware, in the event of a no-deal Brexit, the Government has proposed replacing the OJEU public procurement portal with a UK-specific notification service. I assume that you would comply with this in such a scenario but having this in writing in the final transparency policy document would be desirable.

I welcome proposals to publish - "in the future" - the policy and process for handling correspondence from the public, press and elected politicians. Clear communication channels are important if transparency and accountability are to be upheld and thus, I would like clarification as to whether this can be expected in the long-term, or more immediate future.

Improving access to information on transparency is also important, but I believe this information should be more readily available than just through the landing page you have detailed. A quarterly e-newsletter could signpost subscribers to relevant information such as the corporate strategy, business plans, and most importantly – quarterly reports tracking progress against KPIs. Links to this information should also be shared on your social media channels when available.

I also note that you will ensure information relating to transparency is updated on the corporate website every six months. I don't believe this is regular enough and information should be updated after every Board, committee, and sub-committee meeting so that minutes can be reviewed in real time.

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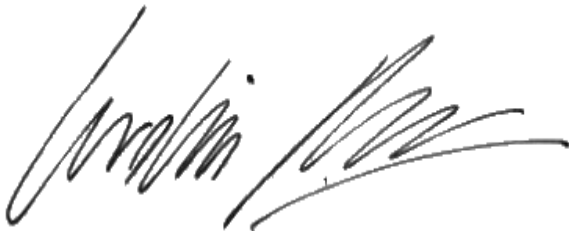
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Finally, I welcome that you will now publish a quarterly list of expenditure over £250, but question why this will be published on a quarterly, rather than monthly basis.

I thank you for inviting me to respond to this consultation and hope that this feedback will be taken on board ahead of the final transparency policy being formulated in March.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely



Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

Thanks for sight of this. A few comments in response to questions below - for those I've not responded to please consider agreement or abstinence because they are not applicable to the tourism context in which I work with you:

- Q3: the contributions (at level of resource deployed) and/or inputs of other agencies/members/partners to the delivery of strategies and plans would be interesting to see (but are not essential), noting that this will help demonstrate the value of collaborative working and recognise those responsible for success (eg the financial and in-kind contributions to projects like the Humankind research undertaken last year or the domestic tourism campaigning currently proposed); clearly agreement of partners to publish details would need to be sought.
- Q4: that figure seems very low and I wonder if this places undue burden on L&P, using time and staffing resource that may be better deployed/focussed on delivering success for London?
- Q7: it would be interesting to see the equalities evaluation you undertake (ie the diversity of your applicant pool for jobs) as well as an understanding of where you are advertising to attract a representative workforce, identifying barriers to entry and demonstrating a level playing field for London's communities

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- Q15: the funds L&P receives from the City Corporation (under the Platinum Member scheme at least) are from its public funds, there may be other members (like Greenwich) that fall into this category. Given recent criticisms of L&P's response to requests from members/partners in pursuit of realising benefits and/or buying services, transparency around response times (completion of requests rather than holding notices) would - I believe - be of significant interest to your network partners

With thanks for the opportunity to respond

Nick Bodger

ANDREW DISMORE – LONDON ASSEMBLY MEMBER

Date: 11 February 2019

Dear Laura and Rajesh,

Response to consultation on London & Partners Transparency policy

Thank you for providing the opportunity to respond to your consultation on transparency policy and arrangements. I am responding on behalf of the Labour Group as the spokesperson on economy.

The transparency of London & Partners is an area in which we have been dissatisfied since its formation by the previous Mayor Boris Johnson in 2011. Without suitable transparency, for which Assembly Members have consistently asked, it is difficult to scrutinise your work, to see what action is being taken to address issues that are affecting London's economy and to see how well London & Partners may be performing. This issue will increase in importance given the continued uncertainty surrounding Brexit and the impact this will have on London's economy.

Q1: Do you agree with our proposal to conduct an independent audit of our annual results? The proposal for an independent audit of annual results would be a welcome move to ensure full transparency and accountability of London & Partners performance. Currently, it is difficult to measure the performance of London & Partners and to feel confident in your performance. The methodology used to evaluate Gross Value Added (GVA) is complex and has obvious limitations. An independent annual assessment of performance should go some way to alleviate these concerns. However, it would be useful to see interim performance results to ensure that London & Partners are on track to achieving their targets.

Q2: Do you agree with our proposal to publish details of companies that we have helped through our business support programmes except where companies have requested that their details be kept confidential?

In the Economy Committee meeting in October 2018, we heard that many companies had given permission to share their details yet London & Partners were not doing so. It is understandable

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that some companies may want to keep some details confidential and we respect that. However, for those that have agreed to share their information, it is difficult to understand why you are reluctant to do so. Presumably, sharing these success stories would act as a good marketing tool for London & Partners to promote their services. London & Partners business model requires a level of trust to be maintained with businesses, therefore the publication of details should be subject to rigorous controls. London & Partners should demonstrate these measures to ensure that requests are respected, and any lapses of trust are avoided. We would therefore support the move to publish details of companies that London & Partners business support programmes have helped.

Q3: Is there any additional information in relation to our strategy, planning and delivery of our corporate objectives that you consider we should publish?

I expect that whether there is a Brexit deal or a no-deal outcome after 29 March 2019, this will have an impact on your strategy which runs from 2018–2021. Whilst this is mentioned throughout the strategy, it would be useful to publish, particularly in a no-deal scenario, whether there have been any changes to the strategy to accommodate the current situation.

Q4: Do you agree with our proposal to publish details of all expenditure exceeding £250 on a quarterly basis?

It would be of use to the London Assembly if London & Partners publishes details of all expenditure over £250. Not only will this allow Assembly Members to fulfil their scrutiny role of the Mayor's budget, it will allow London & Partners to show the importance of financial support in assisting businesses and tourism in London. It might also demonstrate to other businesses the type of support that you provide and act as a marketing tool for future investment.

Q5: Is there any other information in relation to our proposed revised approach to procurement that you consider we should publish?

Before this consultation was published, it was difficult to find London & Partners procurement policy. This must be rectified, as conducting a search of the website, the only place that procurement was listed was on the consultation webpage. Aligning your procurement policy with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 would be a good first step for London & Partners. However, given that half of your funding is derived from the Greater London Authority (GLA), London & Partners should work towards upholding the GLA Group Responsible Procurement Policy. This will ensure that London & Partners is committed to the fairness that the Mayor expects when GLA funding is spent.

Q6: Do you agree with our proposal to publish an organisation chart for senior staff? A staff organisation chart would be very helpful to show how London & Partners works. It will be useful to see which officers deliver which programmes, with their job descriptions, particularly when Assembly Members may want to point businesses in the direction of London & Partners for assistance. Your consultation document states that you are able to see the number of employees in each pay band. However, this information could not be found. I suggest that the information is published on your website and adequately signposted.

Q7: Is there any other information in relation to our people that you consider we should publish? London & Partners should produce a publication for the London Assembly, which would also be a

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public document, showing separate expenditure for each strand of work, for example income and expenditure for tourism, business support as a separate strand, and so on. Information should also be published on the income and expenditure of each of London & Partners' offices abroad. Details of London & Partners' income should be provided, including where it is from and how much, including details of value in kind contributions.

A single point of contact for Assembly Members with queries about London & Partners' work, or to request information or refer organisations to you, would be very useful to Assembly Members who represent eight million Londoners.

Q8: Do you agree with our proposal to publish full minutes of board meetings?

Board minutes provide important information about the work being carried out by London & Partners. I would strongly urge you to publish full minutes of board meetings. Whilst commercial sensitivity is relied upon to explain why this is not currently the case, I do not feel that it is an adequate reason. Assembly Members have a duty to scrutinise the Mayor's work and hold him to account. Withholding information in this way prevents the London Assembly from carrying out its core function. There may well be many things in the board minutes which illustrate the hard work being carried out to promote London. However, we never see this and therefore are unable to have full understanding of your work, leading to, possibly in your view, unnecessary suspicion. The current summaries of board minutes have so little detail that they are of very little value to our work.

Q9: Do you agree with our proposal to publish the terms of reference of London & Partners board and sub-committees and delegation of authority?

Yes, publishing the terms of reference of London & Partners' board, along with sub-committees and delegation of authority will allow for greater understanding of the role that London & Partners carries out. Without providing this information, it cannot be assumed that stakeholder will know the value in or workings of your organisation.

Q10: Do you agree with our proposal to publish a comprehensive annual report and accounts?

Publishing a comprehensive annual report and accounts will be an effective way for London & Partners to demonstrate their value and achievements. It will also allow the London Assembly to scrutinise your performance without the usual frustrations of asking for information to be provided after committee meetings. I would expect that this work is being undertaken by London & Partners already in order to evaluate your own performance.

Q11: Is there any other information that you consider we should publish or measures we should adopt in relation to our corporate governance?

To gain a better relationship with Assembly Members, in addition to providing a point of contact between London & Partners and the Assembly, it could be useful to establish communications. For example, this could include regular updates on quarterly performance, new initiatives or programmes and new decisions taken.

Q12: Are there any other measures that you consider we should take to make it easier to find or access information about London & Partners on our corporate website?

The website is desperately in need of better signposting. It is difficult to navigate and does not provide much detail as to what London & Partners does. Given the technological advances, the

website should be a key aspect in communicating your message to London and the rest of the world and so it is important that improvements are made.

It would be useful for Assembly Members and other stakeholders to know the timelines that you are proposing for finalising your decision and carrying out the actions. I look forward to seeing positive changes come from this consultation on the future transparency of London & Partners.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Dismore AM

London Assembly Labour spokesperson on the Economy

BETTER BANKSIDE

Response from Better Bankside to London & Partner's Transparency Policy

Consultation Questions

Q1: Do you agree with our proposal to conduct an independent audit of our annual results?

Yes

Q2: Do you agree that we should publish details of companies that we have helped through our business support programmes except where companies have requested that their details be kept confidential? **Yes, but as part of the case studies it would be good to see how those company benefits have reached further afield, i.e. for an area or an industry, rather than solely limited to individual businesses.**

Q3: Is there any additional information in relation to our strategy, planning and delivery of our corporate objectives that you consider we should publish? **We're aware that the current mandate for London & Partners covers international tourism only, but in future strategy and planning we would like to see how changes in the tourism industry (i.e. decline in domestic tourism) might be addressed.**

The current domestic tourism consortium isn't mentioned in the policy. Although not within the current remit, it is core funded by the GLA so should this be more transparent and alluded to?

Q4: Do you agree with our proposal to publish details of all expenditure exceeding £250 on a quarterly basis? **Yes**

Q5: Is there any other information in relation to our proposed revised approach to procurement that you consider we should publish? **We recognise contracts below 50k but over 25k are advertised on Contracts Finder but would welcome a process where spend between 25k – 50k is scrutinised.**

We would also welcome procurement processes and guidelines which do not exclude or deter small businesses from applying or being considered for winning contracts.

Q6: Do you agree with our proposal to publish an organisation chart for senior staff?

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Yes

Q7: Is there any other information in relation to our people that you consider we should publish?
Consideration of a diversity report, clearly representing diversity on the Board where possible.

Q8: Do you agree with our proposal to publish full minutes of board meetings? **Yes**

Q9: Do you agree with our proposal to publish the terms of reference of London & Partners board and sub-committees and delegation of authority? **Yes**

Q10: Do you agree with our proposal to publish a comprehensive annual report and accounts?

Yes

Q11: Is there any other information that you consider we should publish or measures we should adopt in relation to our corporate governance? **Again, we would welcome consideration of a diversity report in relation to governance.**

Q12: Are there any other measures that you consider we should take to make it easier to find or access information about London & Partners on our corporate website? **Ensure clear contact details for relevant individuals.**

Q13: Do you agree with the proposal to publish a policy and process for handling correspondence from the public, press and elected politicians? **Yes**

Q14: Do you agree that we should open our Annual General Meeting to our main public and private stakeholders? **We would welcome clarification on the definition of 'main'. Would this make the AGM open to all members, or partners of a certain level?**

Q15: Are there any other measures that you consider we should take to make London & Partners more accountable for how it spends public funds? **Referring to Q5, consideration of how spend between 25 – 50k is scrutinised (currently it looks like anywhere from 5k up to 50k only demands three quotes).**

SUSAN HALL – LONDON ASSEMBLY MEMBER

Dear Laura,

We welcome London & Partners' (L&P) consultation on its Transparency Policy. This is a step in the right direction.

The London Assembly has for many years been concerned about the lack of transparency at L&P. We are therefore pleased to see that you are consulting on some of our specific requests including:

- Publishing details of all expenditure exceeding £250 on a quarterly basis (question 4)
- Publishing an organisation chart for senior staff (question 6)

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- Publishing full minutes of board meetings (question 8)

We are in favour of the immediate and regular publishing of this information.

Please find below further comments in response to the consultation:

Q1: Do you agree with our proposal to conduct an independent audit of our annual results?

Yes, we would welcome an independent audit of its annual results. The Economy Committee has raised specific concerns over L&P's approach to measuring its impact, such as the methodology used to assess its impact and a lack of transparency on the data used in the evaluation model. An independent audit would give us, and others, more confidence in L&P's impact claims and performance assessment.

Q2: Do you agree with our proposal to publish details of companies that we have helped through our business support programmes except where companies have requested that their details be kept confidential?

Yes. More transparency of L&P's taxpayer funded activities is essential to ensure value for money.

However, L&P should provide details about companies or projects it has helped across all business lines and not be limited to companies that went through its business support programmes.

While we are aware that L&P provides a certain amount of case studies in its annual reports and on its website, it is not always very clear what L&P's role was for each individual project. For instance, L&P has taken part in London Tech Week. It states that there were 200 live events across London and 55,000 attendees. It is not clear if these figures are the result of L&P's seven events organised during the week, or the impact of Tech Week on London as a whole.

The same observation is valid for L&P's trade and investment work. Case studies of companies are available on the website but very few details are available (e.g. year of investment, project length, service used by the investor).

Therefore, we encourage L&P to provide more specific details about the projects it has directly supported, outlining the benefits that L&P's involvement specifically has brought.

Q9: Do you agree with our proposal to publish the terms of reference of London & Partners board and sub-committees and delegation of authority?

Yes. Publishing the terms of reference of the L&P board and sub-committees and delegation of authority is important. This would help the London Assembly and others better understand the remit and purpose of each of L&P's committees.

Q10: Do you agree with our proposal to publish a comprehensive annual report and accounts?

Yes. We do not think that L&P's current annual reviews are comprehensive enough. In particular, they lack detail about L&P's role in the projects presented and on its performance. A comprehensive annual report should indeed contain audited accounts, L&P's performance against key performance indicators, and evaluation of board performance. The report could also helpfully include a list of projects, information on the number of companies approached and converted per business line and include details about the activities and performance of overseas offices.

Q11: Is there any other information that you consider we should publish or measures we should adopt in relation to our corporate governance?

We would like L&P to publish a register of all contracts (not limited to those over £150k) and the contracts themselves as requested previously by the London Assembly Budget and Performance Committee.

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In addition, we would like L&P to appoint an Assembly Member to its board as an unpaid observer. This would allow the London Assembly to scrutinise better L&P on behalf of Londoners and help the London Assembly regain confidence in L&P's work and performance.

Finally, we encourage L&P to publish its decision-making framework alongside its terms of reference for L&P boards, sub-committees and the delegation of authority. Publishing the L&P's decisionmaking framework will ensure transparency for arrangements of L&P decisions which the London Assembly scrutinise.

Q14: Do you agree that we should open our Annual General Meeting to our main public and private stakeholders?

Yes. As a significant part of L&P's money comes from public funds, we would encourage L&P to open its Annual General Meeting to everyone who is interested in attending the meeting.

Q15: Are there any other measures that you consider we should take to make London & Partners more accountable for how it spends public funds?

We would like more clarity on trade visits and delegations as well as greater transparency about the outcomes of those trade visits. For example, L&P should provide information about: the cost of the trade visits; participants; details about meetings held; what deals were made; and what the total monetary benefit to London was. This information could be included in the annual reviews.

Finally, we would like L&P to commit to regularly update the London Assembly/Economy Committee on its work and results.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation and we hope you will take our proposals on board.

Economy Committee

We look forward to receiving the final version of L&P's Transparency Policy.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Hall

Chairman, Economy Committee, London Assembly