



A voice for outer London

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South London could be in recession for years if the Mayor's new Outer London Commission (OLC) proves to be little more than a "talking shop", business leaders have warned.

The OLC, which met for the first time last week, is tasked with ensuring the views of outer London are fully taken into account when the Mayor is developing policy and making planning decisions, including the regenerating of suburban areas.

Currently, there are more than 160,000 businesses in outer London employing more than 1.6m people, OLC chairman William McKee said at its inaugural meeting.

Mr McKee also announced at the meeting his new board, which includes leaders from

the world's of business, architecture and politics – including Councillor Serge Lourie,

leader of Richmond Council.

He said: "The Mayor has rightly placed realising the economic potential of outer London at the heart of the commission's work.

"In support of this, we will be examining, also, other key planning considerations including transport infrastructure and factors affecting the quality of life in outer London."

However Peter Pledger, chief executive of South London Business – which represents businesses south of the Thames – said while south London welcomed the new OLC, it was vital it delivered on its remit.

Following a meeting with the heads of south London's Chamber of Commerces, he

said: "We need the OLC to be more than a talking shop. It has a great chance to listen to south London businesses and help them through the toughest trading conditions many have ever seen. If it doesn't deliver we could be in recession for many years longer."

The OLC will hold four meetings in outer London areas before submitting a preliminary report to the Mayor in June.

Mayor Boris Johnson said he wanted to expand the number of businesses in outer London through extended business programmes and the £600m skills training budget.



