

## **Why the new London Plan is an essential battleground for those in need of social housing**

For the next ten weeks, London Tenants Federation members will be giving up their time to speak at fifteen sessions of the London Plan public hearing at City Hall.

With a few exceptions, we are not experts in city planning. We are not planning consultants, academics or chartered surveyors and, unlike the many developers who seek to influence the Plan, we have no financial interest in its contents.

And before you ask, going through three hundred pages of technical information with a fine-tooth comb is hardly our idea of fun!

We're taking part because, short of a major change in housing policy at the national level, the London Plan will play a large part in determining where and how lower income households in London will be able to live for the next 22 years.

Will families continue to live with six people to a two-bedroom flat?

Will spending months and years in hostels and B&Bs, moving from one temporary home to another, continue to be the norm for so many people?

Will private tenants continue to struggle to pay the rent, knowing they could be thrown out at a moment's notice?

Will the numbers of people sleeping on friends' sofas, or worse, in parks, beneath railway arches and on benches still be rising?

Will entire communities of social housing tenants continue to worry that their homes might be sold from beneath their feet to make way for a more profitable use?

Will we still have access to green spaces, play areas and community halls?

By 2041, will many of us still be living in London at all?

These are the questions that will be on our minds while we are waiting our turns to make our comments at these hearings.

The bold vision set out in Shelter's Housing Commission Report last week, for 3million more social homes in the next 20 years, brought some hope for growing recognition that building new homes for social rent is the only answer to the housing crisis. Next to Shelter's Report, some of the most crucial policies in the draft new London Plan appear out of touch and cowardly.

But we cannot sit tight and hope for change to take place at the national level. It's in the fine print, at the regional level, in the next ten weeks, that we have an opportunity to influence whether there will remain room enough for people of all incomes to live happy and healthy lives in London over the next 22 years.

For the next ten weeks we'll be sharing stats and ideas, and regularly blogging and sharing our thoughts on what needs to change in the new London Plan before it is finally adopted. You can follow what we're doing:

On Twitter @londontenants #LondonPlan

On Facebook at facebook.com/londontenants #LondonPlan

And by checking out our Calendar for the London Plan Examination in Public on our website [www.londontenants.org](http://www.londontenants.org)