



London Tenants Federation

Annual Report

September 2013-14



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OVERVIEW: This year saw consultation on, and adoption of, a new London Housing Strategy. There was also consultation, and a following public hearing, on 'further' alterations to the London Plan. Since these are the two most important policy documents relating to housing in the capital, a large part of LTF's work this year was focused on the proposed changes to both.

LTF has worked hard on its two grant-funded projects from Trust for London and Antipode (International Geography Journal). It has applied for, and is hopeful of gaining, a further two years funding from Trust for London. Loretta Lees, Professor of Geography, formerly of Kings College London has also suggested further partnership work with LTF as a follow up to the Antipode project.

LTF has continued to work widely with other voluntary and community sector groups in its regional strategic housing and planning policy-related work; particularly around the draft London Housing Strategy, the Examination in Public of the London Plan alterations and London Assembly committee meetings and investigations.

The issue of refurbishment versus demolition has become increasingly prominent in LTF's project and core work over the last year. LTF worked with staff from the engineering department of University College London to develop a technical report on this issue and has carried out analysis of loss of social-rented homes in demolition schemes in London. Anne Power from the London School of Economics, who has for many years promoted refurbishment of homes over demolition - for economic, social and environmental reasons, gave a presentation on this issue at LTF's AGM in 2013. LTF members attended and provided evidence at a London Assembly Housing Committee meeting focused on this subject in July 2014.

LTF prepared a '*tenants' alternative*' report on rents in the social housing sector as a follow up to the publication of the Chartered Institute of Housing and London and Quadrant's 'We need to talk about rents'.

It continues to maintain a website, produce newsletters, e-bulletins and briefings on policy issues that are widely distributed to its members, friends and contacts amongst the tenant and other community and voluntary sectors.

Its share-and-exchange sessions continue to provide opportunities for mutual support, rigorous debate on regional housing and planning policy and exploration of the differences and similarities across London. The sessions also provide good information and evidence to use in LTF's engagement in regional strategic housing and planning policy.

LTF has been registered as a company limited by guarantee (with charitable objectives) for two years. It continues to work by consensus in terms of its regional strategic policy work. LTF directors have worked hard to ensure that

company-related operational work and monitoring of LTF grant-funded projects is effective.

Sadly, LTF lost Graham Nicholls, LTF director and deputy delegate to the Mayor's Housing Forum this year.

LTF'S REGIONAL POLICY WORK:

- **London Housing Strategy:** The London Mayor published a new draft London Housing Strategy in November 2013. LTF produced a briefing on the strategy and analysis on issues of concern for tenants of social housing providers in London. The briefing was widely distributed to tenant, voluntary and community sector groups.

In December 2013 LTF organised an event on the draft in partnership with Just Space and London Voluntary Services Council for representatives of tenants' organisations and other voluntary and community sector groups. Alan Benson, Head of Housing at the GLA, gave a presentation at the event. Workshops were held on different aspects of the proposed changes that provided the focus and content for a collaborative community and voluntary sector response to the consultation. Thirty mostly London-wide organisations contributed to and / or supported the response.

- **Further Alterations to the London Plan:** LTF supported the organisation of a Just Space conference on the further alterations to the London Plan. This included provision of analysis of the changes proposed to the housing section, facilitation of a conference workshop on the housing changes, and organisation of a follow-up event to support tenant and other groups in making responses to the consultation. LTF submitted a response to the consultation and as a result has been invited to attend the Examination in Public of the alterations.
- **Demolition versus Refurbishment - London Assembly Housing Committee:** LTF was invited to take part in the London Assembly's investigation into refurbishment versus demolition of council homes in July 2014. It submitted a list of eight regional policy changes it felt are required on this issue and provided direct evidence (relating to both social and environmental issues) to support them.
- **Opportunity and Intensification Areas:** LTF organised a conference on Opportunity and Intensification Areas in London in November 2013 as part of its Trust for London work. The conference brought members of the community networks that LTF is supporting in six different parts of London together with other tenant, community and voluntary sector groups that have an interest in large-scale developments in London. The conference focused in part on lessons learnt from the Kings Cross Opportunity Area.
- **London Assembly Planning Committee:** LTF supported a community

representative from Ealing attending a London Assembly Planning Committee discussion on the development of a new Mayoral Development Corporation in Old Oak Common and Park Royal Opportunity Areas in NW London.

- **Mayor's Housing Forum:** LTF delegates attended the Mayor's Housing Forum meetings, the latest of which was in December 2013. The meeting was focused on the draft London Housing Strategy.

LTF FUNDED PROJECTS:

- **Antipode Foundation Scholar-Activist Project:** This is a joint project involving: Professor Loretta Lees, Professor of Geography, Southwark Notes Archive Group, LTF and Just Space. It is focused on collating hard evidence on gentrification-induced displacement in London (especially 'social cleansing' of inner city council estates) and the need for 'alternative visions' for regeneration programmes that result in displacement.

This year, much of LTF's Antipode project work focused, with Just Space, on completing work with Carpenters Estate residents, local businesses and other stakeholders to develop a Carpenters Community Plan as an alternative to top-down plans imposed by Newham. The Community Plan and a detailed consultation and preparation report was published in September 2013. <http://cicdl.info/opportunity/20-lower-lea-valley-including-stratford/>

LTF, working with Just Space, continues to support residents and local businesses from the Carpenters Estate in moving towards the development of Neighbourhood Plan and a response to the London Legacy Development Corporation's consultation on its draft Local Plan.

LTF also worked with others in the partnership to put together an anti-gentrification handbook for residents of council estates in London called 'Staying Put'. A formal launch of the Staying Put document was held at Queen Mary's University in June 2014.

- **Trust for London Project:** This two-year project aims to bring together tenants' and other community groups to influence and challenge policy in six different parts of London where large-scale developments are taking place. LTF commissioned Just Space to provide specialist planning support for the project. Students and academics from University College London also provided some support. The project work has included:
 - ◇ supporting groups in Greenwich to respond to consultation on and attend the Examination in Public of the borough's Core Strategy in December 2013. This achieved a number of policy changes that are of benefit to excluded communities in Greenwich;
 - ◇ supporting groups in Hackney to respond to the borough's draft Development Management and Site Allocations Local Plans;

- ◇ supporting groups to respond to the White City Opportunity Area Planning Framework, with a resultant change in the affordable housing target;
- ◇ supporting groups to respond to the vision for Old Oak Common;
- ◇ bringing together groups from Newham, Hackney and Tower Hamlets to engage in the LLDC's Local Plan consultation;
- ◇ preparatory work in the development of a network of tenants', residents' and other voluntary and community groups in Old Oak Common and Park Royal and neighbouring opportunity areas. This included development of a community engagement charter, organisation of events and discussions on a proposed Mayoral Development Corporation for the area, and production of a newsletter;
- ◇ development of a new website relating to the project;
- ◇ engagement of some of the groups in London-wide policy consultations - specifically the London Housing Strategy and the Further Alterations to the London Plan.

BUILDING LINKS: LTF continues to build links with other tenants', community and voluntary sector groups; both London-wide and, through its Trust for London project, at local level. This provides important opportunities for cross-fertilisation of ideas on housing and wider community- and neighbourhood-issues. It also provides mutual support on a range of regional policy issues. LTF continues to be a member of London Voluntary Services Council and an active member of Just Space.

LTF has increased links with the academic sector through its Antipode and Trust for London grant funding. This has included some support from UCL planning students on policy analysis and in developing a directory of small businesses in Hackney. LTF members and co-ordinator were invited to speak and engage in discussion at a UCL event on demolition of social housing. An interview with Just Space and LTF co-ordinators on engagement of communities in city-wide planning policy was used in a UCL publication.

TRIBUTE TO GRAHAM NICHOLLS: LTF members were very sad to lose Graham Nicholls this year. Graham was a committed and loyal representative of the tenant movement both in his own borough of Lambeth and London wide. He was a London Tenants director and deputy delegate to the Mayor's Housing Forum and often spoke on behalf of LTF at events in and outside London. His delivery of evidence at one of the Examinations in Public of the London Plan resulted in him being described as the LTF's Lawrence Olivier. His focused lobbying around older people's housing, which was taken up at the regional level by both LTF and Just Space, contributed to the changes made in the 2011 London Plan.

