

London Tenants Federation

Annual Report

October 2015 -16



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OVERVIEW: This has been an incredibly busy year for LTF, particularly since January 2016 when grant funding for the two projects it supports have overlapped. LTF's two part-time workers and its members continue to contribute a huge amount of voluntary time and effort to support the organisation's projects and core work.

Much of LTF's core work this year was focused on the Housing and Planning Bill / Act 2016; an extremely damaging piece of legislation for existing and would-be social housing tenants. With an awareness that government policy has been moving in this direction for many years, LTF feels that if we fail to strengthen a genuine representative social-tenants' voice in London now, there will be little chance of influencing any change in policy direction.

LTF worked in partnership with the National Federation of TMOs (NFTMO) and the London Federation of Housing Co-ops (LFHC) to produce tenant briefings on the Bill and to organise a large London-wide conference. Together, the three organisations have been able to show their collective weight and achieve a degree of success (see more on page 3).

LTF continues to support Grand Union Alliance (GUA), a strong network of around 40 resident and community groups in the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) area. Funding for this has come from Trust for London and, post-January 2016, from a two-year research grant - 'Governing the Future City' via UCL Professor Jenny Robinson. Academics from Shanghai, Johannesburg and London are working together on this piece of research. GUA (which aims to influence the large-scale developments in the OPDC area) provides an effective way for community groups to: share and exchange across borough boundaries, learn from one another, ensure that a diverse range of voices are heard and, at times, respond to the OPDC with a strong consensus voice.

In London's other Mayoral Development Corporation area, the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) LTF has supported Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood Forum in developing its draft Neighbourhood Plan policies and in establishing a good working relationship with LLDC planning officers. LTF has also supported a loose network of resident and community groups from parts of the four boroughs that form the LLDC over the last three years or more. Members of the network have agreed that they wish to continue after our Trust for London funding ends in January 2017 (more on this on page 3).

LTF'S HOUSING AND PLANNING BILL / ACT WORK: LTF produced -:

- a written submission for the House of Commons committee stage of the Housing and Planning Bill;
- a response to government consultation on 'pay to stay' and
- a response to government consultation on amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework;

- analysed the impact of the Bill's 'Pay to Stay' in London which was referred to in the Observer and Independent newspaper articles.

With NFTMO and LFHC, LTF produced an easy to read/understand tenant briefing, material for our member associations and organisations to use in lobbying members of the House of Lords and produced a joint press release. This resulted in front page coverage in the Observer and in one of the LTF member representatives being interviewed for the article.

LTF, NFTMO and LFHC organised a very well attended post-Housing and Planning Act Conference in September 2016, bringing together probably the largest number of representative tenant groups in London achieved for many years.

Yvonne Roberts who wrote the front page Observer article on 'pay to stay' chaired the panel debate. Bob Colenutt, Northampton University, and Richard Lee, Just Space joined the panel and facilitated two of the workshops. John Perry, Chartered Institute for Housing, provided an excellent presentation as our key speaker. Some of the invited contributors to workshops included Blase Lambert from the Confederation of Co-operative Housing, Alice Woudhuysen, Child Poverty Action Group and Maja Luna Jorgensen, GLA. Members and workers of the three organisations supported by being panel members, facilitating workshop debates, chairing the event and organising refreshments.

LTF also responded to the House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs' call for evidence as part of its *Inquiry into the economics of the UK housing market*.

LTF'S LONDON-WIDE WORK

LTF produced a list of key proposals that it asked Mayoral and London Assembly candidates to commit to. It received a fairly positive response from Sadiq Khan's Director of Policy regarding estate regeneration schemes and replacement of housing association right-to-buy homes with new social-rented homes in the same borough:

"In his manifesto, Sadiq has also been very clear about his expectations over estate regeneration. He wants estate regeneration only to take place where there is resident support, based on full and transparent consultation. He has said demolition should only be permitted where it does not result in a loss of social housing, or where all other options have been exhausted, with full rights to return for displaced tenants and a fair deal for leaseholders.

The manifesto also sets out that housing associations in London should be reinvesting money from the right-to-buy in new social housing in the local area – reflecting his amendment to the Housing Bill that he tabled last year. Sadiq's amendment said that if a housing association sells a home for social rent, it must be replaced with another home for social rent in the same borough."

LTF is committed to holding the Mayor to account on this and LTF delegates have already had one meeting with GLA officers responsible for drawing up the Mayor's

guidance around estate regeneration.

LTF delegates also had a discussion with the GLA around community involvement in regional housing policy and has been asked by GLA officers to draw up proposals around this.

LTF supported Just Space in the development of some sections of its 'Community Plan' (a community alternative to the London Mayor's London Plan), particularly around policy on housing. Following its conference on Housing, Health and Wellbeing' in August 2015, LTF organised two workshops with Just Space for LTF members and other tenant, community and voluntary sector groups that have an interest in housing.

LTF has also produced:

- member updates on council-owned companies and Special Purpose Vehicles;
- analysis of delivery of additional homes in London for 2014/15 (from data published in the Spring 2016 annual monitoring report of the London Plan);
- a 10-year analysis of delivery of additional homes 2005-15;
- started work on a new booklet to support social-housing tenants faced with demolition of their homes.

LTF regular member meetings have had focused debate on national and regional strategic policy (including all those mentioned above).

Its directors' meetings have focused on operational issues, including funding, updating operational policies and regular monitoring of LTF project work.

LTF PROJECT WORK

Grand Union Alliance (network in the OPDC area). In December 2015 LTF worked with Just Space (whom we commissioned to provide some technical planning support) and JTP Architects to organise a 'community charrette' that attracted some of the regular members of the GUA and some new groups, most of whom have continued to attend the GUA meetings. A summary and full activity report were produced and a presentation was made by GUA members and Charles Champion from JTP Architects to the OPDC planners.

LTF, with commissioned support from Just Space, provided support for groups in responding to the consultation on the first draft of the OPDC's Local Plan. We drew together a collaborative response to the consultation (from meetings and events at which the draft had been discussed) which groups could submit as it was or used to support in writing their own response to consultation. LTF organised a very well-attended afternoon and evening event on the range of evidence-based documents that the OPDC had produced for consultation at the same time as the draft Local Plan. A large number of GUA members submitted responses to the consultation on the evidence-based documents as well as the draft Local Plan.

LTF also facilitated a meeting of GUA members with the GLA's Fiona Fletcher-Smith, who is carrying out a review of the OPDC on behalf of the London Mayor.

Project work in the London Legacy Development Corporation Area: The groups we have worked with in this area have never formally given their network a name and is a far looser network than that that we established in the OPDC area. However, at a conference that we organised in early September 2016, focused on the 'Olympic Legacy four years on', the network agreed that it wants to establish a more formal group, perhaps with a website, and to remain as a network after our Trust for London funding ends in January 2017.

The conference was relatively well attended and included wide debate on the Olympic Legacy and what the Growth Borough Units refer to as 'convergence'. A presentation from the Growth Boroughs Unit was provided. Attendees were told that Unit will not continue after this year, so there will be no further monitoring of their promise that 'in 20 years the communities who host the 2012 Games will have the same social and economic chances as their neighbours across London' (what they mean by convergence). This led a number of the attendees at the event to suggest that the network might bid for funding to do this, perhaps with an academic institution.

LTF's work with the Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood Forum had also involved a number of the members of the wider network. Struggling with a borough that is unsupportive of retaining social rented homes on the Carpenters Estate is difficult. However, the Forum, which now has a strong membership, has worked hard in developing its Neighbourhood Plan. LTF, working with Just Space, has supported them in arranging monthly meetings, organising two full-day consultation events, helping to distribute and collect questionnaires about the Neighbourhood Plan policies and in engaging with the LLDC (their local planning authority).

There are plans to apply for additional funding from Locality through which LTF and Just Space may continue to provide the Forum with support after our Trust for London funding ends.

LTF PLANS FOR THE FUTURE:

LTF's key aim is for greater empowerment and a stronger voice for social-housing tenants through further work with the NFTMO and LFHC following on from our 'post-Housing and Planning Act Conference, which could offer funding for some of our core work. We plan to do some work around pulling in borough-wide federations and organisations that are not currently involved with LTF. We aim to make more tenants aware of the work that we do and to continue to maintain the links we have with other voluntary and community sector organisations that have a focus on housing.

LTF directors are also looking at potential funding opportunities including through continued support for the Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood Forum, work with a group that is forming a Stonebridge Neighbourhood Forum and work with Professor Loretta Lees in 2017 around tracking of tenants displaced in estate regeneration or demolition.

