

London Tenants Federation

AGM Report

November 2017



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OVERVIEW: Much of London Tenants Federation's (LTF) core work this year focused on the London Mayor, Sadiq Khan's developing strategic housing and planning policy.

Much effort has also gone into fundraising - focusing principally on proposals for work that came out of the LTF, National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations (NFTMO) and London Federation of Housing Co-ops (LFHC) post Housing and Planning Act conference of September 2016.

So far, we have been successful in obtaining funding from Trust for London, which will be spread over a three year period. We plan to commence use of this funding in early 2018. This is a significant gain for LTF. It will be the first time in more than five years that we have gained funding to support, almost exclusively, our core work. We will need to gain some match funding and we will be working on over the next few months.

The Grenfell tower disaster shocked all social housing tenants and generated wide debate amongst LTF member organisations at the local and London-wide level. This focused not only on fire risk, but also on wider health and safety issues and on how tenants should be fully engaged in decision-making about our homes. To be effective we feel this must be through participatory, democratic and accountable processes.

We have continued to work in partnership with NFTMO and LFHC. After the success of our joint conference last year, we organised a second joint conference in October this year - focused on linking local to regional issues.

Most of our project funding this year came from UCL Professor Jenny Robinson's 'Governing the Future City' research grant which she is working on with academics from Shanghai and Johannesburg. The project and this funding ends in April 2018. The funding allocated for LTF has facilitated our continued work, which we carry out with Just Space, in supporting the Grand Union Alliance (GUA). GUA is a strong network of around 40 resident and community groups that aim to influence plans in the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) area. GUA has, for more than four years, provided an effective way for community groups to: come together across borough boundaries (parts of Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham), to share and learn from one another, respond to developing plans for 25,000 homes and 65,000 jobs and ensure that a diverse range of voices are also heard.

We have also continued (with Just Space) to support the Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood Forum in producing their Neighbourhood Plan. Some funding to support this came via our previous Trust for London grant (until January 2017) and later from government grant funding that supports Neighbourhood Planning.

Some discussions have also taken place about the continuation of the community network that we established in the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) area and the possibility of this being through a project that monitors 'convergence' / Olympic Legacy, potentially with support from UCL.

LTF'S LONDON-WIDE WORK

Responding to Mayoral Consultations: Whenever a new Mayor of London is elected, new policies and strategies are developed and public consultations on them carried out. Those most relevant to LTF are the London Housing Strategy and the London Plan and any new or revised London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance. Over the last year LTF responded to the Sadiq Khan's consultations on:

- 'A city for all Londoners' (setting out his direction for London during his time in office). LTF members were generally unimpressed with this document, fearing that despite suggestions of 'good growth' that it contains little to demonstrate anything other than a continuation of the status quo - particularly overdevelopment of expensive homes and high-end jobs, that fail to meet the evidenced need of households with below median income levels. We also submitted a separate document, setting out proposals for involvement of voluntary and community sector groups in developing and monitoring the Mayor's Housing Strategy, although no response was provided to this proposal. [Link](#) to LTF response and our [proposal on engaging voluntary and community sector groups](#).
- Draft Good Practice Guide on Estate Regeneration. LTF members were pleased that the Mayor had produced this document, after much lobbying on our part that policy be put in place to end the unnecessary loss of social-rented homes in estate regeneration schemes. However, the draft guidance fell short in terms of the detail, including a failure to support a ballot of households where regeneration / demolition is proposed. We also produced a model response that individual LTF members and TRA contacts could use, amend and add to, expressing their own local concerns. [Link](#) to LTF response.
- Draft Affordable Housing and Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance. We expressed huge concern in our response to this document about the failure in the Mayor's 50% / 35% affordable housing target proposals to address the evidenced need for social-rented homes in London. The target effectively reduces the previous Mayor's net target for social / affordable rent homes and facilitates increases in the target and types of intermediate housing products that exclusively meet the needs of middle income households. [Link](#) to LTF response.
- The Draft London Housing Strategy. We were highly critical of this strategic document. Our concerns included: the failure to consider the evidenced housing need of the bottom half of households in London (by income) and of the need for family sized dwellings to address overcrowding; proposals for increased sell-off of public land for private housing development and the creation of more opportunity areas when there has been no monitoring of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these in meeting need. We again submitted proposals for voluntary and community sector involvement in developing and monitoring the London Housing Strategy (as the Mayor's office had failed to respond to this when submitted previously). We also produced a model response, taking some of the key points from our own response, but also enabling members and contacts to add or amend

to express their own local views and concerns. [Link](#) to LTF response.

LTF briefings were produced for LTF members, friends and contacts including:

- [‘Genuinely Affordable Housing or just more of the Affordable Housing Con’](#) - a briefing on existing and new types of ‘affordable’ and ‘genuinely affordable’ as well as information on housing need and housing delivery in London’.
- [Holding on to what we have now and why’](#) - an information booklet for and by social housing tenants on dealing with estate regeneration / demolition proposals.
- [Analysis of net targets and delivery of housing in London for 2015/16](#) (using data published in the 2017 Annual Monitoring Report of the London Plan).

Engaging with the London Assembly Housing Committee: One of the LTF elected regional delegates was invited to speak at the London Assembly’s November 2017 meetings on the London Housing Strategy. One of the LTF directors and member representatives (from the London Federation of Housing Co-operatives) spoke at a London Assembly Housing Committee meeting in October 2017 (also on the London Housing Strategy) about the Mayor’s ‘community hub’ and community-led housing.

LTF’s (two) elected regional delegates: attended (by invitation) meetings organised by the Mayor’s planning team on the development of the Greater London Strategic Housing Market Assessment (evidence based document on housing need) and on the Greater London Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (evidence based document on land available for housing development). Our delegates have also regularly met with representatives from the NFTMO, LFHC around ideas for funding applications. One LTF delegate was also invited to speak at a conference in Salford, focusing in part on the LTF’s project work with the GUA.

Partnership working with NFTMO and the LFHC: In addition to work highlighted above, together we organised a joint conference in October 2017 focused on the link between the Local to London-wide. The event had speakers from the LTF, the LFHC, the National Tower Block Network and the Mayor’s office. Workshop discussions included: issues for housing association tenants; success stories in community-led developments; ‘tower block issues post Grenfell; estate regeneration; communications; the draft London Housing Strategy, sustaining TMOs; keeping homes warm and damp free; a tenants’ think tank and short-life housing.

LTF regular member meetings have had included debate mostly on regional strategic policy (as detailed above) and on issue relating to the Grenfell tragedy.

LTF directors’ meetings have focused on operational issues, including staffing, funding and fund-raising, updating of relevant operational policies and regular monitoring of LTF project work.

LTF PROJECT WORK

Grand Union Alliance (network in the OPDC area). Over the year our support for the network (working with Just Space) has focused on:

- the review of the OPDC, carried out by the GLA's Fiona Fletcher Smith, Executive Director of Development, Enterprise and Environment;
- making efficient responses to planning applications;
- development of planning policy, particularly of the OPDC's Local Plan (via organisation of six meetings and a full day conference);
- early discussions on the GUA after our current funding ending.

Project work in the LLDC Area: While LTF's work with a network of resident and community groups in this area formally ended in January 2017, LTF and Just Space have maintained contact with a number of the network's members in our core work in addition to looking at proposals around continuation of the network. We have also continued to support (with Just Space) the Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood Forum with central government funding from Locality in getting their Neighbourhood Plan to its pre-submission consultation stage and supporting them in discussions with the LLDC planning officers. We also supported them in submitting a response to the Mayor's draft Good Practice Guide on estate regeneration. We wish them success in getting through to having the Neighbourhood Plan adopted.

LTF'S FUTURE: Our new Trust for London Funding will help us to

- **provide a more effective voice for mainstream not-for profit social housing tenants as the only chance of achieving safe secure housing that lower income level households / those with less than median income levels can afford – through:** (i) facilitating a closer relationship between a diverse range of council, housing association, tenant management and co-operative housing organisations; (ii) creating online facilities to provide grass roots groups with information and inspiration (including the creation of a bank of stories about effective tenants 'activism'); (iii) engaging larger numbers of tenants' groups in trying to influence London housing (and planning) currently being developed;
- **change negative attitudes towards social housing tenants through delivering an effective communication strategy by:** (i) establishing a media group comprising tenant representatives trained to effectively engage with journalists and radio/tv presenters; (ii) creating a new website, with clear messages and different layers of data; (iii) making effective use of social media.
- **influence policy to enable social housing tenants to better engage in decision-making: through developing London Tenants 'think pieces' including on** (i) 'promoting participatory democracy in social housing' and 'achieving a positive future for social-housing in London' (ii) producing information resources, on housing subsidy, estate regeneration and links between local and regional policy.

We have been successful in getting through a first stage application from Tudor Trust and will now continue to work on the next stage.

We will also be working with Professor Loretta Lees on work relating to displacement of social housing tenants in estate regeneration schemes during 2018.

