



London Tenants Federation

Annual Report September 2014 -15



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OVERVIEW: LTF's Trust for London project funding, which was due to end in January 2015, has been extended for a further two years. This will continue to fund work supporting tenants, resident and community groups in influencing and at times challenging large-scale development plans. The work is focused on the two Mayoral Development Corporation areas of the London Legacy Development Corporation and the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation. LTF commissions Just Space to provide expert planning policy support within the project. The grant funding also supports some of LTF's core work.

A recent successful grant application made to the Economic and Social Research Council by Jenny Robinson, professor of Geography at UCL and fellow academics from Shanghai and Johannesburg will provide continued work with resident and community groups in the Old Oak and Park Royal area, facilitated by LTF and Just Space until January 2018.

LTF continues to hold regular meeting for its member organisations to discuss key national and regional housing and planning policy issues that have a London-wide impact. Debate on strategic policy issues, along with its share-and-exchange sessions, have provided good opportunities for mutual support, rigorous debate on regional housing and planning policy and exploration of the differences and similarities across London. The meetings have also provide good information and evidence for LTF to use in its engagement in regional strategic housing and planning policy.

During the year, LTF delegates were invited to attend meetings of both the London Assembly Housing and Planning committees as panel representatives. LTF also made written submissions on the issues being investigated by these committees; extension of the right to buy to housing associations and estate renewal.

In addition to its member meetings, LTF organised two conferences this year - one in Old Oak Common, relating to its project work in this area and one on Housing, Health and Well-being as part of a week of events organised by Just Space and its members on community based alternatives for a new London Plan. These conferences have involved a wide range of resident and community sector groups.

LTF has regularly published briefings on a range of issues including: annual delivery of social-rented homes in London; dealing with contractors and sub-contractors, council owned companies and special purpose vehicles and setting the record straight on 'subsidy'. These are distributed widely to both LTF member organisations and LTF friends and contacts.

LTF directors have worked hard on the London Tenants company-related

operational work, including monitoring LTF's current grant-funded project and looking for possible alternative sources of funding. They have updated existing, and drawn up new staff employment policies. LTF now (since February of this year) employs two part-time staff; its co-ordinator and a project worker.

LTF'S REGIONAL POLICY WORK:

- **London Assembly Housing Committee:** Some of the London Assembly Housing Committee's recommendations in its '*Knock it down or do it up*', published in February 2015, are proposals put forward by the LTF in its response to the committee's investigation into demolition versus refurbishment in July 2014. Since the investigation, LTF has continued to work with Just Space and UCL on a number of publications including a toolkit on this issue. Further LTF work is planned with the chair and vice chair of the housing committee next year.

Two LTF delegates were invited to attend the London Assembly Housing Committee meeting (as panel members) on the extension of the right to buy to housing associations. The meeting was divided into two parts, one relating to housing associations and one to councils. LTF provided both a housing association and a council tenant for the two parts of the panel debate. LTF also submitted a written response to the investigation covering a range of issues highlighted by LTF member organisations.

- **London Assembly Planning Committee:** An LTF delegate was invited to attend the London Assembly's Planning Committee debate on estate renewal in mid-September 2015. LTF also made a written submission which highlighted London Plan policy that LTF members felt should be changed in order to ensure a more bottom up approach to estate regeneration / renewal and to prevent demolition of perfectly sound social housing estates.
- **Alternatives for a new London Plan:** Just Space members (including LTF) have begun work on drawing up alternative policies for a new London Plan. LTF members took part in a week of events (organised by individually and collectively by Just Space members) as a start to this. LTF's contribution was full-day Housing, Health and Wellbeing conference. It is hoped that many community members might support community-based alternative policies. It is also proposed that Just Space members might lobby mayoral candidates, standing in the 2016 Mayoral elections, to support their alternatives. A new London Plan is likely to be published in 2018.

LTF FUNDED PROJECT: While LTF has just one funded project this year, funded by Trust for London, the funding allocated is more than that allocated for the two previous years. The work, some supported by Just Space, has

included:

- * supporting tenant and resident, community groups and small businesses in responding to consultation on the London Legacy Development Corporation's Local Plan and in attending the Examination in Public of the Local Plan. This included organising meetings and events and one to one sessions with some of the groups; helping groups to understand the impact of proposed policy on their neighbourhoods and how best to influence policy, including through proposing alternatives;
- * continued support for the Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood Forum - including production of a newsletter, support in holding an event about Neighbourhood Planning and facilitation of discussion on 'next steps', following its designation by the London Legacy Development Corporation;
- * support in developing a new network of social-housing tenants and residents group in Newham - including organising of a first meeting and preparation for a future meeting;
- * supporting tenant and community groups to engage in responding to the LB Hackney's development management and site allocations Local Plans' consultations and to attend Examinations in Public;
- * organisation of a conference on the Old Oak Common and Park Royal Opportunity Areas, with speakers and workshops on key theme areas;
- * organisation of 6-weekly meetings of the Grand Union Alliance (a network of resident and community groups in the area established through this project). This has included: assisting GUA members in setting out their priorities; setting up a Grand Union Alliance website; supporting resident and community groups in responding to the Old Oak and Park Royal Opportunity Area Planning Framework consultation and preparing to respond to the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation's Statement of Community Involvement. It has also facilitating GUA members working with UCL masters students around Lifetime Neighbourhoods;
- * organising an event in Greenwich relating to the community rights elements of the Localism Act.

OTHER CORE WORK: LTF members have discussed a wide range of issues at its meetings this year including the extension of the right to buy to housing association tenants and estate renewal, which helped to inform LTF delegates who attended the London Assembly committee debates on these issues. They also held full discussion on dealing with contractors and sub-contractors; council owned companies and Special Purpose Vehicles; new national space standards; assessment of the delivery of new and additional social-rented homes (from data recorded in the Annual Monitoring Report of

the London Plan); stereotyping of social housing tenants and setting the record straight on 'subsidy'. LTF has produced briefings and information booklets on these issues.

LTF's housing, health and wellbeing full-day conference held in August 2015 involved LTF members friends and contacts in discussion on: empowering groups at the grass roots level on issues relating to housing health and wellbeing; overcrowding and short-term tenancies; fuel poverty, retrofitting and refurbishment; housing density, lifetime neighbourhoods and the Lord Adonis issue (i.e. his proposals that council estates be demolished and replaced with mixed tenure homes at higher densities) and equalities issues relating to housing, health and wellbeing.

Speakers from the Building Research Establishment and the National Centre for Social Research gave presentations at the conference on health, mental health and housing conditions in England and on the cost of poor housing in London.

POTENTIAL FUTURE FUNDING AND PROJECT WORK: Professor Loretta Lees, who LTF has worked with previously through funding from Antipode (a geography journal), has made an application for funding to the Economic Social Research Council. If the application is successful, LTF will be funded to work with her; specifically in carrying out contact work with tenant and resident associations who have gone through estate regeneration. The application was made in June 2015, but, as yet no formal response has been made.

John McCormack from Hertfordshire University is looking to run a project with LTF members relating to tenant training and addressing the issue of stereotyping of social-housing tenants. This is still in development stages.

