

To: Mayor of London  
Deputy Mayor for Housing  
London Assembly Housing Committee

01.07.21

**Re: Mayor of London's intention to cut the funding for the London Housing Panel from March 2022**

London Tenants Federation is extremely disappointed that Sadiq Khan is to end funding for the London Housing Panel in March 2022, less than three years after being established. We urge you to actively support its retention.

**The London Housing Panel was established in May 2019. It comprises a diverse range of tenant and voluntary and community sector voices that are involved in housing issues impacting on the most vulnerable communities in the capital.**

It is currently funded by the Mayor of London in partnership with Trust for London. If the Mayor of London no longer provides funding to support the Panel, Trust for London will no longer be able to contribute match funding.

London Tenants Federation (LTF) has membership of the Panel, along with Action on Empty Homes, Camden Community Law Centre, The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Generation Rent, Homeless Link, Just for Kids Law / Children's Rights Alliance for England, Kineara, Leasehold Knowledge Partnership, London Federation of Housing Cooperatives, London Gypsies and Travellers, New Horizon Youth Centre, Solace Women's Aid and Tonic Housing Association.

LTF itself brings together borough-, landlord- and neighbourhood-wide organisations of social housing tenants in London, including the London Federation of Housing Co-ops and the National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations.

**We have a particular interest in retention of the Panel because of our involvement in its establishment.**

We first set out proposals to the Mayor of London in 2017 suggesting that he establish a panel or forum involving tenants and other Community and

Voluntary Sector (CVS) groups that would have a remit to engage with him around the development and monitoring of regional housing policy.

Previously, from 2005-12 LTF had had membership of the Mayor's Housing Forum and through that, had also instigated the development of a community engagement subgroup of the Forum. This aimed to support the involvement of tenants (both social and private) and other 'hard to reach groups' in regional housing policy. The subgroup operated from 2005-08.

The Mayor's Housing Forum, which involved GLA, London Councils, Housing Associations and voluntary and community sector representatives in developing and monitoring regional housing policy, was gradually phased out. From 2012, it was replaced with boards comprising representatives of those delivering homes in London, but excluding voices from tenant and other CVS groups.

We mentioned our proposal (to the Mayor of London) at a special meeting of social housing tenants with the London Assembly Housing Committee in 2018. The meeting was part of the Committee's investigation into tenant involvement in decision-making post Grenfell.

At its following July 2018 meeting, the Committee raised our proposal with James Murray, the then Deputy Mayor for Housing.

Soon after this, LTF representatives were invited to meet with James Murray, to further discuss our proposals. He advised that the Mayor of London was also keen to establish such a panel or forum and this eventually led to the establishment of the London Housing Panel.

In the short period of its existence, the Panel has drawn together its members' diverse grass roots knowledge and experience to set out its principals, objectives and priorities to the Mayor of London, which can be found on [Trust for London's website](#). Minutes from the London Housing Panel meetings are also available on this website.

**Examples of the London Housing Panel's work include:** publication of a statement on the Covid-19, provision of advice to the Deputy Mayor's Housing Delivery Taskforce and writing to the Government about evictions during the pandemic. Some of its members met with the Mayor of London's officers about the Mayor's response to 'Planning for the Future' and to hear panel members' concerns. The Panel held a special workshop session on temporary housing. Its members fed in ideas and comments about the Mayor's Affordable Housing

Programme, particularly about the need to take equality issues into account, at a meeting with the current Deputy Mayor, Tom Copley.

Case studies of several of the Panel members' experiences have been collated - recognising some of the ways in which local CVS groups are helping to meet the needs of Londoners and take forwards practical workable solutions to local housing problems. These can also be found on the Trust for London's website.

The chair of the Panel, currently Professor Loretta Lees, attends meetings of the Homes for Londoners Board enabling the collective voices of the Panel members to be brought to the Board's attention.

Tom Copley, the current Deputy Mayor for Housing often attends the Panel meetings.

The Panel calls for commitment from the Mayor of London on the following priorities:

1. Massively increase social housing supply
2. Support all Londoners to be heard and thrive
3. Take action on temporary accommodation

In response to a report on the Panel's work, sent to the Mayor of London in June 2020, [the Mayor said](#) **'The report rightly emphasises the value of including community voices in policy making, as I believe the Panel is doing, and is in itself an important contribution to housing policy in London.'** He welcomed the three themes set out in the report, which he said **'aligned with his housing priorities'**.

Given these comments, we were necessarily shocked when we were first advised in February 2021 that the Panel's funding would cease in July 2021, especially since this was almost immediately after a new chair of the Panel had been appointed. While the funding has since been extended, we have been told it will cease in March 2022.

In addition, the Mayor of London's contribution to supporting the panel in 2020-21 was just £30k and would be an incredibly small percentage of the GLA: Mayor revenue expenditure for 2021-22.

We feel that the Panel provides a very important and unique role as part of the Mayor of London's remit to engage Londoners in his housing policies.

Indeed, we had hoped its role might be further developed to involve other voluntary and community sector groups in regional housing policy, for example through the Mayor of London and the Panel organising an annual tenant / CVS conference with speakers and workshops facilitated by Panel members in their specialist areas.

At this time of greater housing need and insecurity for so many low-income Londoners, which have increased or been more prominently highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic, the work of the Panel is needed more than ever.

We sincerely hope that you will do your utmost to ensure its work can continue.

Yours sincerely

London Tenants Federation