



London Housing Panel

## Panel meeting

22 September 2021, 2-4.30 (2-3pm Members only) *via Zoom*

### KEY NOTES AND ACTIONS

**Present:** Loretta Lees (Chair)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will McMahon (Action on Empty Homes)</li><li>• Derek Bernardi (Camden Community Law Centre)</li><li>• Fiona Colley (Homeless Link)</li><li>• Sebastian O’Kelly (Leasehold Knowledge Partnership)</li><li>• Samantha Themini-mulle (Toynbee Hall’s Toynbee Hall’s young private renters peer researchers)</li><li>• Mikey Erhardt (Toynbee Hall’s young private renters peer researchers)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greg Robbins (London Federation of Housing Co-operatives)</li><li>• Pat Turnbull (London Tenants Federation)</li><li>• Erin Mansell (Solace Women’s Aid)</li><li>• Anna Kear (Tonic Housing Association)</li><li>• Nigel Long (in a personal capacity)</li><li>• Philomena Mongan (London Gypsies and Travellers)</li><li>• Ilinca Diaconescu (London Gypsies and Travellers)</li></ul>
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**Apologies:** Natalie Williams (Children’s Rights Alliance for England / Just for Kids Law) Maria Morgan /Melanie Sirinathsingh (Kineara)

**In attendance:** Leila Baker and Mary Carter (Panel Secretariat), Susie Dye (Trust for London), Jonathan Schifferes (GLA), Rohan Ranaweera (GLA), Deborah Halling (GLA), Daniella Davila Aquije (GLA), Joseph Small (London Councils), Tom Copley (Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development).

**GLA observers:** Merhawit Ghebre, Andrew Williams, Joanna Jedrasiak.

### Members only meeting 2-2.55pm

1. Chair welcomed members to the meeting, including new organisational members Toynbee Hall’s young private renters peer researchers; and new representatives from Solace and London Gypsies and Travellers. The chair acknowledged that there had been some disruption to the panel and confirmed that funding is in place to 31 March 2022.
2. The chair updated the Panel that a motion about the panel’s funding raised by Sian Berry had been passed by the London Assembly. The next step is for the Mayor to respond.

3. The final shared agenda of work for 2021/22 between the Panel and the GLA had been circulated. Members discussed the following points:
  - a. Caitlin gave an update on the Renters Reform Coalition and reminded members to get in touch if their organisation wants to become a partner of the coalition; and/or to sign up for the newsletter or if they want to know more. ACTION: Caitlin to share the invitation to the Renters and Rental Reform APPG with members.
  - b. On voice: members discussed how they can communicate the practice of co-production rather than the rhetoric, and what it takes to make it happen. That includes the fundamental message that you need people in communities to engage in order to have co-production and there's a lack of support for that. Positive examples of co-production mentioned: Hammersmith and Fulham Disabled People's Housing Strategy; Tonic Housing Association; LTF appointing 2 workers to rebuild tenant organisations. LHP was created as a mechanism to enable the GLA and Mayor to work with community groups and voluntary organisations.
  - c. On TA: the chair noted that a key focus of work is proposed to be around embedding best practice in local authorities and working with London Councils on this. London Gypsies and Travellers offered to feed in how they support the people they work with to navigate the system and prepare case study example to feed into the December meeting. Solace reported that some housing teams are planning not to go back to in person services and is campaigning to have them reinstate at least some face to face. Issues are that Solace has trained and co-located advocacy work and with services closed there is nowhere for them to be co-located; and the issue that some women have no digital access. In some areas we have co-located advocacy and they are campaigning to reinstate some of this provision. Another Panel member commented that it is important to balance this with it being covid safe for officers to do so. ACTION" The chair asked members that had shared examples to put something in writing and send to the secretariat.
  - d. On EDI: There is real potential to use performance on equalities and diversity (ie meeting all the requirements of the EDI action plan) to help decide on funding allocations.
  - e. The context of the James Gleeson paper being that there is an overall lack of enough social rented homes. The AHP is designed at mainstream providers and this paper is talking about how those mainstream providers relate to their EDI. The paper doesn't pick up on the gaps and what grassroots providers that are closer to housing need are doing. So we need to embed EDI in the mainstream *and* support the grassroots groups.
  - f. Re EqIA: The report on CORE highlighted that only some data on EDI is collected. The starting point should be better data. Otherwise how can you know what the situation is and what you are going to do about it.
4. Members noted that the Affordable Homes Programme is so much better than what the government is pursuing nationally with Homes England. Worth recognising that what the Mayor *is* doing in a tricky national environment.
5. Ilinca said can we ask for EDI plans that are coming from council and HA bids to be opened up and made public. The chair noted that there is a trend towards this.

## Main meeting

### 1. Chair's welcome

The Chair formally welcomed new Panel member, Toynbee Hall's young private renters peer researchers represented jointly by Samantha Themimulle and Mikey Erhardt. They take the place of New Horizon Youth Centre who have stepped down from the Panel. The Chair also welcomed GLA officers, Deborah Halling and Daniella Davila Aquije and thanked them for preparing the strategic workshop on Equalities Impact Assessments.

### 2. Business: Minutes and action log

The minutes of February and June 2021 meetings were approved by Panel and the GLA.

The action log has been [updated here](#) and will be brought back to the December meeting.

Jonathan Schifferes, GLA, introduced the advanced copy of the *Housing Research Note: Who moves into social housing*, that had been circulated to Panel members. The GLA wanted to gather responses to the note. He pulled out the following points of interest: age distribution of who the people who are who move into housing and because families are priorities the most common age is one year old and that's a powerful framing that children are the largest beneficiary of social housing. Felt important to continue to talk about the early years impact of that. And the homes that become available are not reflective of the stock i.e. we have a big stock of social homes but entry to those doesn't necessarily give access to the homes that are needed.

Panel members welcomed the paper, which was useful and informative; pleased to hear that the GLA is talking to central government about CORE data, getting more breakdown and detail and happy to help with this. It's not a comment on this paper but members said it was important to flag that there is a companion piece needed on who's not getting housed; and it doesn't reflect the lived experience of trying to access social rented accommodation. Further responses included (and some GLA reactions italicised):

- Issues of what CORE/the report doesn't cover: it includes new lettings but not transfers. Surprised there wasn't more emphasis on the availability of larger units for larger families.
- There seemed to be very few being housed because they can't afford a market rent so if that doesn't lead to people being housed then are they sofa surfing? Being classed as intentionally homeless? There is a gap in the story here. *Unable to afford market rent is one of a number of reasons that housing takes into account but not the only one.*
- Section 8.3 is there more of a story there about a lack of mobility and what does that indicate? *Overcrowding is likely.*
- 8.10 is the woman only showed as head of household in lone parent families? *Response: No, the head of household shown is the applicant.*
- Request to split out gypsies and travellers and will Roma be included as a separate category going forward. *GLA agreed to raise this.*

- Responding to 6.3 and older people not benefiting from social housing: the learning from the Tonic HA offer that people are downsizing because Tonic's offer is attractive.
- Positive that social class has been referenced but because the government doesn't monitor this, it doesn't appear in the figures.
- From the chat: <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2021/sep/13/stats-summary-mhclg%E2%80%99s-latest-homelessness-statistics-for-2020-2021>

**ACTION:** Panel members with relevant experience agreed to share (via secretariat) examples from their organisations of ways that people are supported to navigate the housing system. GLA committed to take points raised back to colleagues.

### **3. Workshop: Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and housing delivery**

The Chair introduced the session saying that Housing Delivery reports to the Homes for Londoners Board are required to reflect EqIA and the Panel are working with GLA to inform these and make them more meaningful to create an EqIA framework as a way to better inform housing supply including making best use of existing stock.

Panel were asked to consider where we want to get to in terms of EDI and the Panel's input around housing. The focus of discussion is how it relates specifically to the Affordable Homes Programme; how the Housing Delivery report reflects inequalities and takes them into account at every stage of decision-making. Need to think about housing delivery as a process, looking at EDI of housing providers and hopefully making them public, but also to consider what we mean by housing delivery and stretching the EDI lens back as well as forwards. Where does EDI fit within different stages of housing delivery?

Enshrining equalities within the Housing Delivery Report as a public document also allows the Panel and other organisations a way to hold GLA to account and whether they're doing enough around equalities, including the processes and mechanics of authorship and when/how they're written.

Daniella Davila Aquije (GLA) thanked the Chair for the chance to meet with members on this matter and said that this was about getting from members' experience how that can help with achieving a better application of equalities in GLA decision-making and capturing that in reports to the Homes for Londoners Board. GLA wants to do better and achieve a better understanding of equalities within their statutory framework and how they could have/can do things differently.

The meeting was invited to address three discussion points:

- What steps should Housing and Land consider taking in future decision-making, in particular the AHP?
- What is an illustration of a decision we would make differently if we had a more complete understanding of the impacts?
- How could Panel members and others help Housing and Land take these steps?

ACTION: Panel members agreed to share (via secretariat) examples of how intersectionality has been embedded in the way housing needs are assessed whether at the level of individual need or at area level or at the level of a particular group or community. This will help inform the way intersectionality can be embedded in the implementation of the AHP at every stage.

**Notes from the discussion including key themes are in Appendix A.**

GLA will update the Panel on progress at the December 2021 Panel meeting.

#### **4. Closing remarks and date of next meeting**

The Chair thanked everyone and noted that the next Panel meeting is on Tuesday 7 December 2021 10-12.30 (10-11 members only).

### **Appendix A**

#### **Summary of key points from the London Housing Panel's 22 September 2021 workshop session: Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and housing delivery**

**Note:** This discussion builds on earlier discussions with the Panel and Panel submissions some of which is summarised in the feedback [paper](#) that the Panel sent to the GLA after October 2020 Panel.

Panel members welcomed the paper that the GLA had provided and noted that this represented huge progress and was far more advanced than what's coming out of Homes England, including in balance between tenure and the higher level of grant per unit. The discussion was building on that welcome progress and we can see this work as a journey of continuous improvement.

Summary of key points:

- London's Affordable Homes Programme is so much better than Homes England in how it is addressing housing need and equalities.
- Framing around intersectionality was a strong theme in discussions as a means to avoid tick box responses; better understand the full impact of decisions; achieve a better demand/supply fit; and with the potential to save money.
- Better qualitative and quantitative data is important (including around proxies for class); as are approaches to consultation that move beyond traditional routes to consider who is missing from discussions and how best to reach them.
- Communicating the practice of co-production and what it takes to make that happen. Co-production draws out from communities new and alternative options that can save money. In order for co-production to happen, there needs to be support for grassroots community groups.

The following points were raised and discussed:

- Need to consider how any displacement affects individuals and all communities in change that is designed to benefit the area.
- Recognises that where GLA decisions bring about displacement they need to try harder to improve impact on individuals and community networks. Data currently poor. Would welcome pointers to studies, methodologies, peer approaches, etc. (qualitative and quantitative).
- Even with the welcome increase in social rented housing, it won't be possible to provide enough housing. It's not clear what the work on equalities impact for the poorest will achieve while the emphasis remains on ownership, including shared ownership. Need to keep up pressure on central Government to shift emphasis.
- There is a point about the scale at which we talk about EDI – talking massive scale here and the impact of decisions made by central government as well as to the mechanics of delivery.
- The Deputy Mayor noted his agreements with remarks so far made but noted that there is an identified need for shared ownership.
- An illustration of decisions being made differently: If you ask private renters what types of housing they need then yes they will agree it's social housing. But they may also like things like alternatives coops, social letting agency etc. But these will only come about through participatory processes, actions and methods – not limiting options.
- Really pleased with the mention of intersectionalities and that's an important way to keep this human. Don't rely on consulting with residents groups assuming all residents are represented – e.g. LGBT not necessarily confident to raise their issues. Human lens and looking to other organisations that understand the grassroots.
- Re Slide 15 'considerations and challenges' strongly disagree that it costs more to provide disabled and older people's housing – a different financial analysis takes into account say downsizing i.e. how many other people have also been housed 'down the chain' as homes are released and investment made.
- Can see there is a need for accounting for that qualitative data in equalities assessment. How to capture data better?
- Example – Housing with Pride – created a nationwide network that people can connect with. Works with LGBT residents' groups within larger housing organisations and looking to set up a national network to support the emergence of small groups.
- Can we look at how some of the qualitative work being carried out by Panel members can be fed through. There may be questions about its 'purchase' and generalisability.
- All on journeys – arguably continuous – to achieve diversity - this Panel could do some reflection on its own diversity.
- Re the inclusion of social class – lived experience of homelessness/housing need as a proxy for covering social class. Or ask about income. Or census uses occupation.
- Can try applying poverty to protected characteristics.
- How do EqIA keep up with recent/wider changes? And how does it take account of identity being reflected in the lived experience of housing need?
- Rough sleeping on slides – how did you take into account demographic changes, e.g. provision disproportionately benefits men because there are more male rough sleepers, but now more women who are less visible in the data. How does data keep

up with change? What do characteristics mean in those circumstances – e.g. in relation to male violence and what it means for women-specific provision if it's in the same place as for men?

- Do people think we can develop or (use an existing) framing around intersectionality?
- There's lots of work in LGBT re intersectionality and linking in with other organisations so it's not starting from scratch, although not necessarily about housing. It's qualitative. The quantitative data misses the intersectionality.
- The EqIA doesn't understand different disability needs and the levels of support needed and doesn't properly distinguish mental health, learning disability, other disabilities.
- GLA Housing and Land is funded for construction, i.e. capital rather than revenue funding, and its hands are tied in influencing long-term funding for support – want to do it, but hard to join up with other parts of government - local authorities, Treasury, DHSC.
- Should we be part of the lobby for free social care as in Wales and Scotland and LB Hammersmith and Fulham (see Zoom chat).
- See this as an opportunity to reframe how gypsies and travellers are seen and an opportunity to bring forward type of suitable housing that better meets health and social care, education, employment, life chances etc to start dialogue/partnerships to create culturally suitable homes meeting complex and diverse housing needs within neighbourhoods.
- I'm encouraged that the discussion about disability and equalities has moved on from previous assumptions about support. That the conversation is becoming a little more integrated.

Additional notes from the Zoom chat:

- I think the new duties we have under the Domestic Abuse Act are an exciting opportunity for that joining up of capital and revenue, albeit only related to one form of supported accommodation.
- LB Hammersmith and Fulham have interesting data on switching to 'free' social care. For example, they have made a huge saving in undertaking fewer assessments and bureaucratic investment in rationing care. That (revenue) budget can instead go to actual care.
- There is some evidence that H&F have saved money on moving from charging to free care. Yes hopefully there will be multi-year allocations for the DA Act announced in the budget next month which will allow for some of that join up. You may know them already, but worth a chat with Expert Link <https://expertlink.org.uk/>