



Panel meeting

23 April 2020, 9:45am-12pm *via Zoom*

KEY NOTES AND ACTIONS **draft 06.08.20**

Present: Raji Hunjan (Chair)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will McMahon (Action on Empty Homes) • Derek Bernardi (Camden Community Law Centre) • Caitlin Wilkinson (Generation Rent), • Helen Mathie (Homeless Link) • Giana Rosa (Children’s Rights Alliance for England / Just for Kids Law) • Maria Morgan (Kineara) • Sebastian O’Kelly (Leasehold Knowledge Partnership) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greg Robbins (London Federation of Housing Co-operatives (LFHC)) • Ilinca Diaconescu and Tracie Giles (London Gypsies and Travellers) • Sharon Hayward (London Tenants Federation) • Phil Kerry (New Horizon Youth Centre) • Pam Orchard (The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields (CSTM)), • Fiona Dwyer (Solace Women’s Aid) • Anna Kear (Tonic Living)
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Apologies: Lauren Johnson-King (Disability Advice Service Lambeth),

In attendance: Leila Baker and Mary Carter (Panel Secretariat), Susie Dye (Trust for London)

The following joined the meeting at the break: Tom Copley AM (Deputy Mayor designate), Shadi Brazell, Francesca Lewis, and Rebecca Reid. (GLA)

1. Updates

Panel members said that we’re seeing a demonstration of why mutual support and community organisations are needed. They’re needed now but they will also be needed in the aftermath/for after care. The Chair commented that these reflections set the context for the meeting.

- Street homelessness/hostel providers are collaborating more than usual because they have to and lots of providers have had to change the way they deliver their services. Two big issues now are what happens to people who are in hotels now and also what happens to those that aren’t.
- There’s concern that some people e.g. in co-ops, shared ownership etc will fall through the cracks because their income will be affected but they won’t be eligible for help.

- There's concern that some people are unable to self-isolate e.g. gypsies and travellers, people in some forms of TA. Guidance for local authorities is delayed/unclear/not getting through e.g. what to do re families that are already roadside.

Chair's update

- Enabling communities to be heard. Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor of London for Social Integration, is supportive and has discussed with the Chair the potential for action research with people in TA.
- Next Homes for Londoners board meeting is in June. Social housing is on the agenda and there are other Board members who are supportive.
- COVID. There is a real worry about sliding back to 'business as usual'.

The Chair concluded by saying that although she will be handing on to a new chair she will remain an active listener to what the London Housing Panel has to say.

2. Panel review findings and what happens next

There was a presentation of the findings of a review of the first year of the Panel, which was carried out by Leila Baker at the request of Trust for London.

The review report stressed that arriving at a shared agenda and priorities was a significant achievement:

- *Participation*: The Panel exists as an independent, cohesive voice on London housing issues, containing within it a diverse range of experiences and perspectives, and a focus on smaller organisations.
- *Relationships*: Members have formed productive working relationships with each other. The Panel's existence has been a spur to coalition building within and across often-disconnected groups.
- *Voice*: The Panel has demonstrated that the sector can have a united voice on housing, and that it can move swiftly where needed. It agreed a set of three core principles to drive its work, published its priorities for the Mayor, and quickly published an emergency statement about the COVID-19 emergency. It has also ensured voluntary sector presence at events such as the Mayor's Homes for Londoners Conference in October 2019.
- *A seat at the strategy table*: The Panel has been privileged to attend the Homes for Londoners Board with the Mayor, as well as to welcome the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development to Panel meetings.
- *Efficient operations*: The process of recruiting the Panel and the quality of secretariat management and organisation were each praised by the Review.

Panel members raised the following points during the discussion that followed.

- Everything has changed in terms of how and whether things can happen. What does the change in context mean for the Panel? What is the role of the Panel post pandemic? Does it still have the right people round the table?

- A Panel Member recommended plotting the Panel's priorities in relation to those of the Mayor and looking for where the alignment is. The Panel agreed.
- There is a tension between the short and the long term. We're navigating/ reacting to the short term and trying to set a footprint/be proactive for the longer term.

There was also a short discussion about future governance of the Panel. The Chair does not just chair meetings but also represents the group externally. Given the critical time/context the selection of another chair needs to be quite strategic and needs to look for qualities/characteristics as well as knowledge/experience.

3. GLA Housing Delivery Taskforce

Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor of London for Housing joined the meeting to talk about the newly created Housing Delivery Taskforce which has been set up to look at recovery from the economic impacts of Covid19. The London Housing Panel will be invited to sit on the Expert Panel that will advise the Taskforce.

The Taskforce will look at the construction sector and housing delivery and how to deliver genuinely social and affordable housing at scale. They want to see more building but not business as usual. At its first formal meeting there is an emphasis on delivering social housing. They will be working on a clear set of 'asks' of central government, including pressing for central government support to deliver social housing. The context is that the cross-subsidy model will be difficult at a time of recession and there is a need not to lose the construction labour force. The Taskforce Terms of Reference include looking at design and quality – outside space as well as internal space standards. The Deputy Mayor is keen to get London Housing Panel input and sees a key role for them.

The Chair welcomed the Taskforce and commented on wanting to ensure that we have the right housing in the longer term, and that the voluntary sector is consistently part of that conversation (design, allocation etc).

Panel members commented/ asked:

- Discussions on social rented housing will need to build in equalities dimension and the role of communities in getting that right.
- How does the work of the Taskforce fit with the new London Plan? (A: Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning is on the Taskforce)
- What comes next especially re hidden homelessness becoming visible once lockdown is lifted? (A: Currently developing proposals re rough sleepers in hotels. The Mayor is signed up to 'In for Good' principles but also needs Government support e.g. there will be a flood of private evictions)
- What does 'flipping private into social housing' mean? (A: This means converting homes intended for private sale into affordable housing, including social rented homes. Cost is an issue; need support from Government)
- Risks from continuing to build shared ownership and cost of cladding
- Can we get cross party consensus on security of tenure and affordability?

- Delivery is different to 2008 recession. Boroughs are now delivering more than they were and now have the capacity to take resources to generate their own housing.
- A Panel member raised a reality check about whether the government would actually 'cough up' enough money; and that there might be a capacity issue within boroughs, as some do more than others.

The Deputy Mayor summarised where he sees the London Housing Panel feeding into work on recovery overall:

- 1/ Recovery and the role of community sector/mutual support; and
- 2/ Equalities dimension to housing development.

He also noted that the GLA plan for handling coming out of the crisis will include looking at welfare, insecurity in PRS.

The Chair thanked Tom Copley and asked for the Taskforce terms of reference to be circulated. Tom Copley left the meeting.

3. Panel reactions to the Taskforce and recovery measures

The Chair invited reactions to the idea of the Taskforce and recovery measures. What are the GLA/Mayor looking at and what does the Panel want to say and do?

The following points were made in the short discussion that followed:

- Where the GLA already has a stake in housing developments e.g. Community Plan for Holloway, they could be pushing for more social housing in those.
- The Chair said the Panel needs to think about where to push so the Panel can have an impact.
- Could the Panel be looking at trying to prevent demolitions?

4. Any Other Business

Some members of the Panel stayed on the call to discuss a recent Channel 4 production and its portrayal of Gypsy and Traveller (G&T) communities. The programme was said to have set us back in terms of G&T site development because the premise was that sites are linked to criminality.

5. Log of agreed actions

WHAT is the action?	HOW is it being carried out	WHEN is the deadline?	WHO is involved?
Await Mayor's response to Panel priorities	GLA officers have been asked to assemble a response for the Mayor	TBC	Secretariat to share with members
Outline of GLA Housing and Land areas of work	GLA officer preparing this	By 22.05.20	Rebecca

Identify points of alignment between Panel priorities & London Housing Strategy/new London Plan	Secretariat agreed to do this. NB <i>Advised to wait until we have Mayor's response</i>		Secretariat with members
'What we're doing' booklet	Greg Robbins (LFHC) is collating and contributions and will send round for further comment and ideas for the way it is framed.	TBC	Greg leading with member contributions