

Minutes of meeting, 14 September 2023

## Hybrid meeting at 4 Chiswell St, London EC1Y 4UP and online

**Present**: Dinah Roake (Chair)

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| * Chris Bailey (Action on Empty Homes) * Ilinca Diaconescu (London Gypsies and Travellers) * Mikey Erhardt (Young private renters group, Toynbee Hall) * Bob Green (Tonic Housing Association) * Sagal Afrah * Yasmin Moalin (Anti-Tribalism Movement) * Fiona Colley (Homeless Link) * Laura Vicinanza, (Inclusion London) | * Greg Robbins (London Federation of Housing Co-operatives) * Pat Turnbull (London Tenants Federation) * Rebecca Goshawk (Solace Women’s Aid) * Richard James (YMCA St Paul’s Group) * Conor O’Shea (Generation Rent) * Marcin Brajta (Camden Community Law Centre) * Maria Morgan (Kineara CIC) |

**Wilhelmina Perry (Praxis). Praxis attend as a guest of the Panel**

**In attendance**: Tom Copley (Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development), Sam Hurst (GLA), Francesca Lewis (GLA), Velvet Dibley (GLA), Aleena Khushal (GLA), Mariana Schiller (GLA), Leila Baker and Mary Carter (Panel Secretariat), Susie Dye (Trust for London)

**Observers:** Deirdre McGrath (GLA)

* **Apologies**: Sam Ashton (London Councils), Anna Kear (Tonic Housing Association) Samanthi Theminimulle (Young private renters group, Toynbee Hall), Svetlana Kotova (Inclusion London), Sebastian O’Kelly (Leasehold Knowledge Partnership), Tilly Smith (Generation Rent)

Minutes of 10-10.50 Members pre-meeting

* Chair welcomed Minnie Perry from Praxis who is attending the Panel bring a migrants’ perspective on housing issues to the meeting.
* Members put forward the points they would like to raise as part of the workshop on Specialist and Supported Housing. These are included with the points discussed in the main meeting.
* Kineara brought to the meeting a question about rent control and whether the Panel wanted to have a position on this as it seems to be missing from the conversation. Maria referred to work carried out by [Renters’ Rights London](https://www.rentersrightslondon.org/evidence/) in 2014 that appeared to have Mayor’s support and what’s happened since. Members welcomed the suggestion and made the following points: panel should be helping figure out how to do this equitably in a city like London; if government says it won’t work then what evidence is there to challenge that; note that some rent control does exist in the private rented sector and we could point to those anomalies. See minutes of main meeting. Group of members to meet once in order to scope out and then bring to voice working group.

**Actions & decisions**

* [Revised terms of reference](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ry55b059ddjwtu3lme36i/Voice-working-group-ToR-FINAL-SEPTEMBER-2023.docx?rlkey=tagdlewxw9w5dtrwm92nee221&dl=0) for the voice working were agreed. A new cycle of meetings will work on different areas identified in the terms of reference. Co- chairs for the new group are needed. Meetings will commence in October.
* London Tenants Federation (LTF) updated the meeting about their response to the GLA's draft LPGs (London Plan Guidance) on Affordable Housing and Development Viability published in May 2023. It is available in the Members Dropbox [here](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/4ginteaj9dvla3so81yez/London-Tenants-Federation-responded-to-the-GLA.docx?rlkey=pikw9hy63mf78uo9jc27rt0qc&dl=0).
* Members agreed that a subgroup will meet and scope out work on rent control and bring that to a voice working group meeting. Secretariat to set up with Kineara, Generation Rent, YMCA St Paul’s and Toynbee’s Young Private Renters
* The chair proposed that Panel takes a simple approach to upcoming elections and work on key messages. Members to bring thoughts to next members pre-meeting and share any London manifestos with the secretariat in the meantime. Try to mention the Panel and include link to revamped web page [here](https://www.googleadservices.com/pagead/aclk?sa=L&ai=DChcSEwicydrC7KyBAxW9Q0ECHWu4AFIYABAAGgJ3cw&ae=2&gclid=EAIaIQobChMInMnawuysgQMVvUNBAh1ruABSEAAYASAAEgLTRPD_BwE&ohost=www.google.co.uk&cid=CAASJuRo0lKHGGpJeyxpbo6CrFEnHE32qaOoIbWgj0-TuMoNrXCtypIO&sig=AOD64_2S1viZ345-CR67x0s8SiEl43NkkQ&q&adurl&ved=2ahUKEwiK19PC7KyBAxVFZcAKHTQhBRIQ0Qx6BAgIEAE&nis=8&dct=1).
* Survey of members on an inclusive and cohesive Panel will go out Monday 18 September. Survey closes Monday 9 October.

Minutes of 11-1 Full Panel meeting

1. **Chair’s welcome, introductions and updates**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

A specific welcome to Velvet Dibley who is taking over from Sam Hurst as the Panel’s primary contact. The Chair thanked Sam for all the work he has done with the Panel and wish him well in his new role albeit still maintaining some contact with the Panel.

1. **Minutes of the last meeting**

Notes from the last meeting held on 6 June 2023 were approved by Panel and GLA.

1. **Standing item: Planning for London**

The Chair reported that there had been a great response to the community conversations the Panel is working on. She gave special thanks to Leila for the work she’s put it in to make them happen; and to the Panel members who have brought people together.

10 conversations are being held across 3 categories: People in the middle of a crisis e.g. seeking asylum, domestic violence/abuse; Young people who are precariously housed; Households inadequately housed / neglected in their housing services.

All conversations are addressing two core questions and then choosing from a number of others. The core questions are: What makes places (or neighbourhoods) good to live in? How can we meet people’s housing needs as they change over the course of their lives?

GLA acknowledged they can’t access those insights and connect with people. Looking forward to seeing what has come out of them. Chair noted the importance of feeding back to participants about how their work is used.

Member asked when will the GLA start the discussion of the next London Plan. Up until December the GLA is still in its information gathering stage.

Members shared issues from the conversations they have hosted.

* Tonic: lack of safe accommodation where people can be their authentic selves and live safely; where control and who decides around planning decisions; that sense of belonging and safety.
* Praxis: overcrowding, standards and speed of reporting repairs issues, deep effects on health of TA.
* Inclusion London: would like to be more involved in design stage, include dementia, mental health; when planning and designing homes really think about location of medical and support services and of specialised services that minority groups might need; the process of finding a home is very difficult – allocations policies, improve the process of adaptation; huge problem about harassment and councils are not doing enough.
* YMCA St Paul’s noted that their conversation will be with young people with experience of supported housing.
* Wider points made about diversity within protected characteristics i.e. one size fits all is not okay.

**Actions and decisions:**

* GLA will continue gathering evidence until December. Deep dive topics and thematic events will be advertised on the community engagement portal. Click [here](https://consult.london.gov.uk/hub-page/planning-for-london-programme) to view all events, write ups and material for the Planning for London Programme, and [here](https://consult.london.gov.uk/co-design-london-housing-panel) to view the London Housing Panel events and materials.  Members will need to register with the portal, by following the link at the top right-hand side of the page, and should contact Nina Miles if they have a problem signing up.

1. **Housing Delivery Taskforce**

Tim Steer and Tom Copley, GLA, updated the meeting and answered questions.

The Taskforce first came together in Covid and has reconvened following the mini-budget of Autumn 2022, where it was successful in gaining additional flexibilities from the government. It reconvened again in August 2023 due to the worsening situation around cost-hikes, the particular issue of the lack of detail around the thresholds that apply to require second staircases and the stalling of at least 30k homes (that the GLA knows about) which have caused a state of limbo. The Taskforce (of around 30 representatives covering registered providers, local authorities, unions and Dinah as Chair of the Panel) has developed a consensus around issues and areas of response around funding needs, planning capacity and policies, which it is prioritising at the next meeting (18 September) to then discuss with DLUHC.

LTF questioned whether the flexibilities being discussed would dilute numbers of social housing – if expensive housing is built it doesn’t help those who can’t afford it. Tom Copley responded that the proportion of homes for social rent has risen to 60-70% and that they have a clear steer from government for more social rents, less shared ownership and not London rents. Rising build costs mean an overall reduction in numbers but include a greater proportion of social rents. The flexibility discussed is about acquisitions as the funding agreed to 2029 can’t be delivered without it.

**Actions & decisions:**

* Discussion note bringing together priority areas will be circulated to members of the Taskforce. Chair will update members.

1. **Report from supply working group – Special item**

The Panel’s supply working group has been concentrating on how we can advocate for a net increase in social rented homes. The working group’s investigation and conclusions have been brought together in a special *Discussion Note on housing supply for social rented homes in London, prepared by London Housing Panel Housing Supply Working Group.*

The Chair introduced the item and explained the note provided is there for discussion. It started from a thought that were we looking at the problem of capital funding in the right way. Was there another side of the discussion to do with the benefits that could be generated by reducing the costs on housing benefit by people moving into social rented housing that were currently inappropriately housed in other forms of housing that we are still (quite rightly) having to pay housing benefit for.

We had fantastic input from the GLA especially with interrogating the data in their report GLA’s [*London’s Affordable Housing Funding Requirement Research*](https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/housing-and-land/increasing-housing-supply/londons-affordable-housing-funding-requirement)(Savills*,* 2022); and looking at the figures in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2017) which the Panel is aware is outdated and being updated. But it provides a starting point.

So the total figure we have taken from the SHMA is (rounded) 31,000 homes a year. The Panel took that figure and said let’s assume that all of that needs to be funded by whatever is the gap in the grant and then compare that as a straight like for like in terms of the savings that would come from people moving out of TA and no longer needing their rent to be paid at that higher rent for TA or in the private sector. Recognising that more work needs doing the figure is £8.4bn a year but if the majority of that is delivered through acquisition rather than construction, a government could fund that from their savings to housing benefit.

We will be following up with the GLA’s Public Health team about ways to describe the savings to health even though attribution is difficult.

Deputy Mayor said that the work is timely. Invest to save is an argument that he will be using in discussions with various shadow teams.

During the discussion, the following points were made

* *Government is receptive on some things but the actual pot of money. The moral case is clear. The more we can make the economic case the better.* How do we make sure this piece of work has credibility? Do we need to commission an economic consultancy to look at this.
* Capita Economics did work for Shout on housing benefit savings, benefits to bricks argument. Also National Housing Federation, Joseph Rowntree Trust work on this.
* We are all in agreement on this. This is the point when worth having this conversation and coming to a long-term view.
* Lot of work already done on benefits. Almost a case of where do you stop.
* Document is good at explaining the benefits of investing in social housing. There is plenty of evidence that investing in social rented housing has benefits for everyone including marginalised communities such as deaf and disabled people. Like that the paper isn’t just focused on new build but also repurposing private rented. We believe we need to reduce the private stock and acquire more housing. Have analysed the paper from the point of view of deaf and disabled people. What’s missing is around the quality and accessibility of social rented homes. We need social rented but also need to be accessible so that deaf and disabled people can afford accessible homes as they are more likely to be in poverty. Missing is a bit of analysis of the potential barriers that are hindering investment in affordable housing (given it is in London Plan, it’s agreed that there are benefits). There are issues in the planning system that are blocking e.g. viability, it’s not always just about funding. And looking at accessible housing – wheelchair and adaptable – what are the issues there. As. DDPO we would have liked to see some analysis of accessibility in the paper. That’s concerning. There is shortage of affordable and accessible homes. In London it is better in that there are targets but not all boroughs addressing them. so would be interesting to look at why are some boroughs investing in them and some not. Inclusion London is conducting research on this.
* Tim Steer noted other places where thinking about this is being done. London Councils work on TA and work on costs of TA. London Partnership Board having a special session on housing and economic case. Colleagues within GLA doing similar economic work. It would be helpful to join that up. There’s a broad story emerging so bringing that all together in one place would be good and come to some consensus around the numbers.
* GLA noted re GLA/Savills research, when they calculated the cost of the capital grant it did take into account the number of accessible homes be delivered at the London Plan level.
* Chair confirmed that the housing benefit figures have been run by London Councils and are based on London Councils figures. There is a further small adjustment to be made. And we need that economics input in terms of working out what it costs government to borrow money.
* GLA addressed the question about whether to use the £8.4bn/year for 31,000 social rented homes figure or £4.9bn figure as is in the Savills research. A couple of points in terms of how the analysis might be used. By not taking into account what can be achieved through the planning system in terms of cross subsidy might be perceived as us letting developers off the hook and affect how the work is perceived/its credibility. Also if we use the 4.9bn figure – which has recognition, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor use frequently – there is a benefit here in that it improves the cost benefit calculations.
* LSE and Habinteg have a new paper on the cost benefits of building wheelchair accessible homes as compared with accessible and adaptable homes. Comes out as a cost saving of £94,000 over the course of a disabled person’s life.
* Noted reference to Beyond new build paper (nef). If we’re using acquisitions to increased supply then also use it to increase quality that can be mutually beneficial.
* Agreed important to reflect the use of acquisition to generate *quality* social rented homes. Chair noted that if that’s not clear in the paper it needs to be elevated in the conclusions.
* Chair noted that will take all the points made back to the next supply working group. Paper deliberately basic figures. Will be inviting GLA Public Health to attend to see what we can do in expanding the paper.
* The point about incentives for shifting stock and the decent homes standard – this might provide a framing to talk about the relationship between the 8.4bn and the 4.9bn figure the GLA is using from a planning perspective and to explain why there’s a difference in the numbers (because of that acquisitions element and the use of the grant needed to fill the gap working in the new build and the acquisitions.
* Chair noted that the paper also talks about rebalancing the totality of housing in London to have 30/35% of the totality of housing being social rented in London.
* All agreed working to a March deadline so that we are very clear about the temporary accommodation crisis and how social rented could help. GLA noted that there are ways of hybridising the analysis to feed into different discussions. Chair noted Panel will want to continue the broader conversation about housing supply.

**Actions & decisions:**

* How do we ensure this piece of work has credibility in terms of making the economic case? Follow up with on the economic case and about the special session of the London Partnership Board meeting on housing and the economic case.
* How can the paper address accessibility (and make visible where it draws on figures that take account of accessibility)? Follow up with Inclusion London when their survey work is complete.
* Further discussion about the 4.9bn figure and ways of framing it to make clear the assumptions. There may be ways of hybridising the note for different future contexts
* Other points will be noted in the minutes for the working group to consider at their next meeting to which we will invite GLA Group Public Health Unit
* The working group aims to have the analysis ready for March

1. **Report from other Panel working groups**

A summary document of the activities of the working groups was circulated with the meeting papers and taken as read. The Working Group Chairs reported back to the meeting.

**7.1 Temporary accommodation**

Chair noted that the Panel is sorry to lose Mel Sirinathsingh as chair of the working group and thanked Marcin Brajta for offering to report back to this meeting.

The joint letter has been sent to Michael Gove and Lisa Nandy (then Angela Rayner) with an offer to meet. Now more than 100 signatures. Deputy Mayor congratulated the Panel on the letter. It’s raised the profile of the issues and coincided with London Councils figures that 1 in 23 children in TA. The Trust is seeking to engage London MPs and coordinating with Justlife about approaching them. Members asked to ensure that the working group links with the Trust’s Better TA Initiative.

The working group will continue looking at what’s happening on the ground and reporting that. As a lawyer working on housing in hostile environment, note increase pressure on finding settled accommodation and seeing increase in the use of 7day notices. Very difficult. 28 days notice was a headache. Working group will take forward pilot project between people with lived experience and housing options team.

**Actions and decisions:**

* London Assembly Housing Committee has issued a [Call for Evidence on TA](https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-work/london-assembly-call-evidence/temporary-accommodation). Deadline 16 October. Secretariat will circulate details with a template summary of points already made by the Panel.

**7.2 Voice**

Sam Hurst invited members to say if they wanted to feed into the Social Housing Regulator [Consumer Standards Consultation](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-consumer-standards/consumer-standards-consultation-reshaping-consumer-regulation-accessible-version). Chair asked how does the Panel want to influence the GLA sitting on that Panel and do we want to raise the issues of tenant voice?

London Tenants Federation is holding a meeting on 19 September to discuss a draft submission. LTF will be saying there is no point having all the high level demands on landlords if they’re increasingly strapped for cash. Need support for landlords.

**Actions & decisions:**

* GLA to bring an analysis of AHP EDI Action Plans to the next Panel meeting.

1. **Specialist and Supported Housing**

Panel members had been provided with a summary of the current context for SSH delivery and an overview of upcoming GLA policy work on SSH, including suggestions for how the panel can contribute to GLA policy development. Mariana Schiller and Aleena Khushal from GLA gave a brief overview and answered questions.

The Chair noted points that had been raised in the members pre-meeting towards helping GLA to scope a sensible funding model that looks at how SSH is used or being provided across specific housing types, sites and for move-on; and monitored in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

* London Gypsies and Travellers pointed out that the AHP is the key route to get delivery of culturally suitable homes for gypsies and travellers, but there is little by way of delivery. The policy revision is a great opportunity to have conversations not had before about diversifying the delivery model using evidence from the LGT needs assessment and drawing on alternative models from around the country.
* Homeless Link raised the importance of joining up what is going on and who to talk to. Homeless Link’s annual review shows that accommodation is up but people are still being turned away; and that there’s an increase in the complexity of problems people face, especially around drugs & alcohol and mental health. Funding for support relies on exempt accommodation but rogue elements are drawn to the exemption from housing benefit caps without necessarily providing support. Supported accommodation is also full because people can’t find move-on housing. The Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) is working with DLUHC around priority hostels for long term rough sleepers who can’t move-on (pan-London or sub regional and a pan-London post-detox hostel).
* London Federation of Housing Co-operatives pointed out that community-led housing is one of the ways to provide support but if it’s lumped in with other specialist housing it’s hard to see how it would overcome the hurdles of the bidding system.
* Tonic raised that LBGT people can be in unsafe housing due to harassment. There are questions about monitoring and measuring impact of SSH – which communities are benefitting and which are losing out. What is the pathway/strategic approach with local authorities for supported and move-on accommodation? GLA acknowledged there is work to be done on need, accessibility and impact.
* Toynbee Young Renters expressed disappointment that the papers uses a medical rather than social model of disability. The needs of young disabled people can often be met with adaptations and not SSH, which assumes high needs. Lots have complex needs but it’s a diverse group with different needs.
* Solace raised the limited availability of move on accommodation and noted that they have been working with GLA on alternative routes out.
* Kineara were concerned about the sustainability of SSH models, especially the revenue side but also in the context of short and long terms and devolving budgets.

**Actions & decisions:**

* The GLA intends to publish a vision document setting out the case for SSH in meeting London’s diverse housing need. Views are sought on the areas of focus that would be most beneficial. GLA plans to host a roundtable on SSH. One of its key purposes will be to agree lobbying asks of government to support SSH delivery in London.
* Member responses to this item will be minuted and shared back with GLA Housing & Land
* Members raised that the paper does not use the social model of disability. GLA officer acknowledged the point and that this would be listened to.
* Members interested in participating in a roundtable should email [Mariana.Schiller@london.gov.uk](mailto:Mariana.Schiller@london.gov.uk)
* Francesca Lewis to advise on GLA officer and London Councils contact for a three-way conversation on councils and housing accessibility monitoring.

1. **Open Space to raise emerging or pressing topics**

It was suggested to be in touch with Vicky Pearlman’s PRS team and to refer to the London Model of Renting that was published under the previous Deputy Mayor. The Mayor’s position is to seek devolved power. A commission would come up with a workable approach. Members summarised that they would be pleased to work with the Mayor and GLA on this; both in terms of what the model could look like and groups we can engage to help ensure it works equitably and for all in London; and also on the way we can support devolution.

**Actions & Decisions**

* Rent control: Secretariat to coordinate date for members to scope out Panel position, way to work with Mayor on both what a model could look like and groups we can engage to help ensure it works equitably and for all in London and also work with Mayor on way we can support devolution; and engage with Vicky Pearlman, GLA, PRS team.
* London Assembly Plenary on Refugees (recording [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAnby8R-QLM)): Deputy Mayor, Tom Copley reported the worrying consequences of the Illegal Migration Act could mean 50k people in London being inadmissible, unable to be removed, and left in limbo and may disappear.

1. **Next steps**

The Chair thanked the GLA for attending and contributing to the meeting.

**Date of next London Housing Panel meeting**

10am-1pm Thursday 7 December 2023 (10-10.50 Members pre-meeting).

**Dates of other future meetings:**

Homes for Londoners Board meeting – 20 September 2023.

Meeting held on 14 September 2023

**Actions & Decisions. Drafted pending full minutes**

* Minutes of Panel meeting held on 6 June 2023 were agreed.
* Members pre-meeting
  + [Revised terms of reference](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ry55b059ddjwtu3lme36i/Voice-working-group-ToR-FINAL-SEPTEMBER-2023.docx?rlkey=tagdlewxw9w5dtrwm92nee221&dl=0) for the voice working were agreed. A new cycle of meetings will work on different areas identified in the terms of reference. Co- chairs for the new group are needed. Meetings will commence in October.
  + London Tenants Federation (LTF) updated the meeting about their response to the GLA's draft LPGs (London Plan Guidance) on Affordable Housing and Development Viability published in May 2023.
  + Members agreed that a small group of members will meet and scope out work on rent control and bring that to a voice working group meeting. Secretariat to set up with Kineara, Generation Rent, YMCA St Paul’s and Toynbee’s Young Private Renters
  + The chair proposed that Panel takes a simple approach to upcoming elections and work on key messages. Members to bring thoughts to next members pre-meeting and share any London manifestos with the secretariat in the meantime. Try to mention the Panel and include link to revamped web page [here](https://www.googleadservices.com/pagead/aclk?sa=L&ai=DChcSEwicydrC7KyBAxW9Q0ECHWu4AFIYABAAGgJ3cw&ae=2&gclid=EAIaIQobChMInMnawuysgQMVvUNBAh1ruABSEAAYASAAEgLTRPD_BwE&ohost=www.google.co.uk&cid=CAASJuRo0lKHGGpJeyxpbo6CrFEnHE32qaOoIbWgj0-TuMoNrXCtypIO&sig=AOD64_2S1viZ345-CR67x0s8SiEl43NkkQ&q&adurl&ved=2ahUKEwiK19PC7KyBAxVFZcAKHTQhBRIQ0Qx6BAgIEAE&nis=8&dct=1).
  + Survey of members on an inclusive and cohesive Panel will go out Monday 18 September. Survey closes Monday 9 October.
* Planning for London Programme
  + GLA will continue gathering evidence til December. Deep dive topics and thematic events will be advertised on the community engagement portal. Click [here](https://consult.london.gov.uk/hub-page/planning-for-london-programme) to view all events, write ups and material for the Planning for London Programme, and [here](https://consult.london.gov.uk/co-design-london-housing-panel) to view the London Housing Panel events and materials.  Members will need to register with the portal, by following the link at the top right-hand side of the page, and should contact Nina Miles if they have a problem signing up.
* Housing Delivery Taskforce
  + Discussion note bringing together priority areas will be circulated to members of the Taskforce. Chair will update members.
* Report from supply working group - Special item
  + How do we ensure this piece of work has credibility in terms of making the economic case? Follow up with on the economic case and about the special session of the London Partnership Board meeting on housing and the economic case.
  + How can the paper address accessibility (and make visible where it draws on figures that take account of accessibility)? Follow up with Inclusion London when their survey work is complete.
  + Further discussion about the 4.9bn figures and ways of framing it to make clear the assumptions
  + Other points will be noted in the minutes for the working group to consider at their next meeting to which we will invite GLA Group Public Health Unit
  + The working group aims to have the analysis ready for March
* Reports from other Panel working groups
  + Voice working group: GLA to bring an analysis of AHP EDI Action Plans to the next Panel meeting.
  + TA working group: London Assembly Housing Committee has issued a [Call for Evidence on TA](https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-work/london-assembly-call-evidence/temporary-accommodation). Deadline 16 October. Secretariat will circulate details with a template summary of points already made by the Panel.
* Open Space item:
  + Rent control: Secretariat to coordinate date for members to scope out Panel position, way to work with Mayor on both what a model could look like and groups we can engage to help ensure it works equitably and for all in London and also work with Mayor on way we can support devolution; and engage with Vicky Pearlman, GLA, PRS team.
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