

Minutes of meeting, 7 December 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) * Anna Kear (Tonic Housing Association) * Sagal Afrah (Anti-Tribalism Movement) * Laura Vicinanza, (Inclusion London) * Niall Mulholland (London Federation of Housing Co-operatives) | * Joseph Jones (London Tenants Federation) * Pat Turnbull (London Tenants Federation) * Richard James (YMCA St Paul’s Group) * Tilly Smith (Generation Rent) * Marcin Brajta (Camden Community Law Centre) |

**In attendance**: Sam Hurst (GLA), Velvet Dibley (GLA), Dan Maton (GLA), Sophie Donaldson (GLA), Leila Baker and Mary Carter (Panel Secretariat), Susie Dye (Trust for London)

**Observers:** Aklima Begum (GLA), Klara Skrivankova, (Trust for London).

* **Apologies**: Tom Copley (Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development), Francesca Lewis (GLA), Sam Ashton (London Councils), Mikey Erhardt (Young private renters group, Toynbee Hall), Samanthi Theminimulle (Young private renters group, Toynbee Hall), Svetlana Kotova (Inclusion London), Sebastian O’Kelly (Leasehold Knowledge Partnership), Conor O’Shea (Generation Rent), Fiona Colley (Homeless Link), Bob Green (Tonic Housing Association), Greg Robbins (London Federation of Housing Co-operatives), Rebecca Goshawk (Solace Women’s Aid), Maria Morgan (Kineara CIC)

Minutes of 10-10.50 Members pre-meeting

* Chair welcomed Niall Mulholland and Joseph Jones to their first Panel meeting.
* Chair reminded members to share their manifestos.
* Tom Copley is unable to attend due to being called to London Assembly Plenary but has arranged a follow up call to discuss any issues emerging from the meeting.
* Members survey: the proposals in the paper were agreed (see actions below)
* Planning for London Community Conversations report – actions on the report are noted:
  + The process needs to be highlighted more.
  + Care not to lose/water down nuance; make sure the headlines are really clear; we want officers to read the findings in full. This is what we’ve heard, now this is what it means.
  + Highlight need to improve data around people with protected characteristics.
  + When will the decision-makers see people in social housing as humans.
  + Note that we’ll be looking for greater nuance and specificity in the future from both the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and London Plan.
  + Factor in accessibility, safety, social support and quality (in homes and neighbourhoods) from the start. It’s often an afterthought. The principle should run through everything.
  + Coops as a way for people to be in control of their homes. Imagine if funding for shared ownership could instead have been used on coops e.g. for key workers. What would it take to enable planning/plan making to enable coops in that way?
  + What evaluation has there been of previous London plan?
  + Safety needs to cover both physical safety and maintaining sense of humanity and equality. New building and corners getting cut. And when new (mixed tenure) housing is built and some tenants not allowed to use some of the amenities.

Points about how to take forward the findings are included under this item in the minutes of the main meeting.

**Actions & decisions**

* Chair reminded members to share their manifestos (via secretariat)
* The proposals in the members survey report were agreed. It was suggested that the Panel go out to communities for evidence/lived experience as well as inviting people in.
* Chair wishes to start a conversation with members about ‘Panel 2028’ – the Panel’s future beyond 2025 and invited members to volunteer to help with some of the initial strategic thinking. Any proposals would come back to all members.
* Panel Learning Workshop will take place in 2024. Provisionally, GLA and Panel will survey their own officers/members pre election (in order to capture learning) and then bring insights to a workshop to be held post election.
* Planning for London report: Process needs to be highlighted more in the report and then bring to discussions about SHMA/London Plan that this community-led process needs to complement the consultant work; it’s not either/or. Care not to water down the findings; we need the officers to read the findings in order to understand the nuances.
* Planning for London relationship: Next step is to complete and submit the report. In January, chair/secretariat will pursue meeting with James Gleeson re SHMA and London Plan team re ongoing dialogue about the community conversation findings.

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 Dan Maton, GLA Head of North West and Sophie Donaldsom, representing GLA London Plan team. Also joining as warmly welcome observers: Aklima Begum, GLA Community Engagement Team; and Klara Skrivankova, Trust for London.

This is Sam Hurst’s last attendance at Panel meetings in his role as first point of contact for the Panel now handing over to Velvet Dibley. Thanks for all his work and support of the Panel. Look forward to continuing work with you on TA and other areas of policy.

**Chair’s business:**

* Housing Delivery Taskforce, in September (planning working group in Sept).
* Panel invitee for the GLA Assembly Housing Committee on TA (with Kineara).
* 6 monthly catch up with Housing & Land Exec Director, Tim Steer.
* Catch up and introduction with Just Space coordinator.

In the pipeline:

* Intro with Ben Laryea, BME Landlords London, postponed to Mon 10th Dec.
* Liaison with Tibbalds planning consultants re planning and accessibility, aiming for meeting in January.
* Meeting Fiona Fletcher-Smith G15 Chair in January.

Outside Panel meetings, Chair is aware members have been joining up with GLA officers on barriers to access to the PRS for under 35s and a new conversation around estate regeneration feeding into research requested by the Deputy Mayor.

1. **Minutes of the last meeting**

Notes from the last meeting held on 14 September 2023 were approved by Panel and GLA.

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

The Chair invited brief feedback from members that have attended any of the recent Planning for London stakeholder events. Sophie Donaldson from the London Plan team was at the meeting and offered to take back points made about event format and structure.

* London Gypsies & Travellers attended the event on small sites. Positive to hear from a range of sectors on this. Looked at good practice and barriers.
* Tonic Housing. Aware for some people the City Hall location is a barrier to participation. Online can be more inclusive.
* Inclusion London attended Inclusive Design session. Not many equalities groups there. It was a consultation where people were asked to come into GLA space. Would prefer to see inclusive design embedded across everything.
* London Tenants Federation asked for the event on affordable housing to be hybrid. Been offered a 1:1 instead although Pat has suggested they offer a well-publicised online workshop in January.
* London Federation of Housing Co-operatives – overall good, can be a bit hurried and sometimes plenary more helpful than short break out groups.

**Actions and decisions:**

* February Panel to discuss Planning for London overall housing findings and next steps in working together. London Plan officer agreed to take back members’ comments on the format (online/hybrid) and way discussions were structured.
* December’s Planning for London stakeholder events are listed [here](https://consult.london.gov.uk/pflp-stakeholder). Use this link to add ideas about the different topics being discussed even if unable to attend.

1. **Housing Delivery Taskforce**

Velvet Dibley and Dan Maton, GLA, updated the meeting and answered questions.

GLA are working with London Councils about using Right To Buy receipts for the Affordable Homes Programme. It was noted that there has not yet been a response from the Secretary of State to the Position Statement. Autumn statement didn’t pick up the points raised, except Local Housing Allowance.

London Tenants Federation voiced concerns that the joint statement emphasises delivery of numbers of homes and on large developments, without enough emphasis on social housing and so would not meet need. ‘Regeneration’ often means knocking down social housing and replacing with market rent homes.

Dan Maton responded to the specific questions:

What does ‘flexible’ mean in supporting regeneration? Previously the GLA could only use the grant on additional homes, not the ones being replaced. It can now use the grant on replacement homes as well. The GLA sees this as positive because it should mean they can rebalance more funding towards social rented homes.

Recycled Capital Grant Fund[[1]](#footnote-1). The question was about whether housing associations could flex how they use this. Dan explained that the GLA still has to approve the use of the RCGF so it fits within priorities to provide more social rented homes.

The Chair to discuss with Tom Copley whether the definition of ‘flexibility’ could be tightened to mean ‘greater flexibility in funding to retain and increase social rented housing’.

**Actions & decisions:**

* Position statement has not yet had a response. GLA will update.

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

Members welcomed the work on media lines and thanked Fiona Colley and members of the voice working group (see action below). Members Richard, Maria and Connor had met to look at scoping rent control and identified that if it’s taken further they want to understand from GLA what is going to be useful. Generation Rent has some modelling that may be helpful.

The main discussion was focused on what we might take from our Planning for London community conversations into our work with GLA on the London Plan and future Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Key points are listed in the actions below. On accessibility, the following additional points were made: definitions and targets don’t always reflect a wide definition of accessibility. ‘Fully accessible’ is reflected in the Plan, not the guidance but the issue is to do with how effectively that’s implemented. The issue is coming up for GLA in student housing but they are getting push-back from providers. The LP team wants to prioritise accessibility.

**Actions & decisions:**

* Media lines – can each working group develop their lines and share back with voice working group by the next Panel meeting.
* Rent control scoping – small group met to develop ideas, will share back with voice working group and discuss with GLA focusing on the question what can we do that’s a useful piece of work?
* The Planning for London community conversations report is a milestone in an ongoing process. The meeting discussed what the findings mean for future work together on the SHMA and London Plan. Members emphasised a number of points that need to be taken into future work:
  + This is as much about the journey as the destination.
  + The diversity of voices has been very important.
  + The way it was facilitated by communities has enabled the conversations to happen in a safe space.
  + Need officers to look at the actual report and not just the summary of it.
  + And if they have questions about the content then come to communities and ask.
  + London Plan needs to reflect affordability and accessibility – they’re linked.
  + Members will be looking for greater nuance and specificity in future from both SHMA and London Plan.
  + Need to factor in accessibility, safety, social support and quality (in homes and neighbourhoods) from the start. It’s often an afterthought. The principle should run through everything.
  + Safety needs to cover both physical safety and maintaining sense of humanity and equality. New building and corners getting cut. And when new (mixed tenure) housing is built and some tenants not allowed to use some of the amenities.
  + Coops as a way for people to be in control of their homes. Imagine if funding for shared ownership could instead have been used on coops e.g. for key workers. What would it take to enable planning/plan making to enable coops in that way?
  + What evaluation has there been of previous London plan?

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 Supply**

The chair of the working group invited the meeting to note progress with the Discussion Note and planned summary. Its next meeting will discuss the GLA work on the cost of poor housing (circulated with the papers for this meeting). The following comments were made about the report:

* Would be keen to see a next stage of the report identify who is particularly affected and the follow on about what needs to happen.
* A lot of the issues in the report are about too many people who are poorly housed in the private rented sector.
* Members shared relevant reports on older people from [National Housing Federation](https://www.housing.org.uk/resources/older-people-in-the-private-rented-sector/) and from [Independent Age](https://www.independentage.org/hidden-renters-report).

**Actions and decisions:**

* Next meeting on 30 January will discuss GLA Housing and Land Housing Research Note 11 *The Cost of Poor Housing in London*, November 2023. All members welcome.

**7.2 Temporary accommodation**

The working group invited the meeting to note the response to the joint open letter on temporary accommodation (see actions below). A request for expressions of interest to deliver the pilot project ‘Encounters & Conversations’ has been issued. The London Assembly Housing Committee will prepare a report on its investigation into TA; Sam Hurst/Velvet Dibley will update the Panel when that comes through.

**Actions & decisions:**

* Co signatories will send a short response to the letter welcoming the progress in the autumn statement but saying it’s not enough.
* Secretariat asked for a volunteer to sit on the recruitment panel for the Encounters & Conversations project.
* GLA to update Panel when it receives a report from the London Assembly Housing Committee.

1. **Affordable Homes Programme: EDI Action Plans**

Velvet Dibley, GLA, was thanked for a very helpful meeting with a small group of members that discussed an earlier version of the paper and gathered members’ insights and advice. At this meeting, Velvet gave a brief overview and answered questions.

Most of the 47 investment partners, i.e. those in receipt of Affordable Homes Programme funding, have met or exceeded EDI Action Plan criteria (content and form; basis of evidence; deliverability/measurability). Action is being taken with the 8 partners who didn’t meet the criteria, including providing good practice guidance. Using new Regulator for Social Housing Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which break down data by protected characteristics and intersectionality, but thinking about how to measure impact; and not replicating work of the Regulator. GLA (Francesca Lewis) will be on the panel set up to regulate the Regulator, potentially providing a direct line for LHP to influence.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

* Context of cuts in housing provider housing officers, e.g. Hackney closing housing offices, make it harder to meet needs of tenants including around accessibility for disabled people.
* Context of small housing associations being merged with larger ones – less connection with neighbourhoods.
* The paper is very useful and positively welcomed, but doesn’t say how we get the best housing for people with protected characteristics.
* EDI is key opportunity to work with Londoners and organisations that support them, but EDI action plans happen after the broad provision has already been agreed. Part of process to agree nuanced delivery using evidence of diversity that is subsequently gained. People are falling through gaps of need categories. Need better understanding of who is and isn’t housed; and of that influencing planning.
* Danger of being tick-box exercise and the measures are marking their own homework. Best practice would be about accountability and transparency, publishing action plans so people can see.
* Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Can help improve but caution about people who will be missed.
  + Questions and wording are universal so it can measure standards across all providers, but danger of excluding people where, e.g. English is not their first language, or there are literacy or IT literacy issues. Will there be a sense of percentage return and who doesn’t fill it in?
  + Security of tenure likely to be a barrier to answering any questions – the least secure are most likely not to answer.
  + Role of Tenant Resident Organisations – where existing may support process, but now fewer of them and very local focus has been damaged by the loss of borough-wide umbrella bodies.
  + No excuse for people coming together; the right of tenants to organise themselves and not under the patronage of housing providers.
  + Data quality and how what’s collected relates to people on the ground.
* Role of Voice Working Group to work with GLA around balanced assessment and best practice, bringing in widely rather than one or two beacons of practice. Partnerships like this so important.

**Actions & decisions:**

* Secretariat to follow up with officers regarding a clear line of communication between the Panel and the GLA’s involvement in the Regulator of Social Housing Advisory Panel.
* Voice working group to continue to work with GLA on how we can work together for these plans to have real tangible outcomes for Londoners.

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

**Actions & Decisions**

* London Rough Sleeping Charter launched. Richard encouraged members to take a look and consider signing up [[here](https://www.endroughsleepinglondon.org.uk/) and details below]
* TA Working Group to discuss new refugees and short notice of eviction from Home Office accommodation.

1. **Next steps**

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

**Date of next London Housing Panel meeting**

10am-1pm Tuesday 27 February 2024 (10-10.50 Members pre-meeting).

**Dates of other future meetings:**

Homes for Londoners Board meeting – 12 December 2023; next 4 March 2024

Meeting held on 7 December 2023

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

* Minutes of Panel meeting held on 14 September 2023 were agreed.
* Members pre-meeting
  + Chair reminded members to share their manifestos (via secretariat)
  + The proposals in the members survey report were agreed. It was suggested that the Panel go out to communities for lived experience as well as inviting people in.
  + Chair wishes to start a conversation with members about ‘Panel 2028’ – the Panel’s future beyond 2025 and invited members to volunteer to help with some of the initial strategic thinking. Any proposals would come back to all members.
  + Panel Learning Workshop will take place in 2024. Provisionally, GLA and Panel will survey their own officers/members pre election (in order to capture learning) and then bring insights to a workshop to be held post election.
  + Planning for London report: Process needs to be highlighted more in the report and then bring to discussions about SHMA/London Plan that this community-led process needs to complement the consultant work; it’s not either/or. Care not to water down the findings; we need the officers to read the findings in order to understand the nuances.
  + Planning for London relationship: Next step is to complete and submit the report. In January, chair/secretariat will pursue meeting with James Gleeson re SHMA and London Plan team re ongoing dialogue about the community conversation findings.
* Planning for London Programme
  + February Panel to discuss Planning for London overall housing findings and next steps in working together. London Plan officer agreed to take back members’ comments on the format (online/hybrid) and way discussions were structured.
  + December’s Planning for London stakeholder events are listed [here](https://consult.london.gov.uk/pflp-stakeholder). Use this link to add ideas about the different topics being discussed even if unable to attend.
* Housing Delivery Taskforce
  + Position statement has not yet had a response. GLA will update.
* Report from voice working group - Special item
  + Media lines – can each working group develop their lines and share back with voice working group by the next Panel meeting.
  + Rent control scoping – small group met to develop ideas, will share back with voice working group and discuss with GLA focusing on the question what can we do that’s a useful piece of work?
  + The Planning for London community conversations report is a milestone in an ongoing process. The meeting discussed what the findings mean for future work together on the SHMA and London Plan. Members emphasised a number of points that need to be taken into future work:
    - This is as much about the journey as the destination
    - The diversity of voices has been very important
    - The way it was facilitated by communities has enabled the conversations to happen in a safe space
    - Need officers to look at the actual report and not just the summary of it
    - And if they have questions about the content then come to communities and ask
    - London Plan needs to reflect affordability and accessibility – they’re linked
* Reports from other Panel working groups
  + Supply working group: Next meeting on 30 January will discuss GLA Housing and Land Housing Research Note 11 *The Cost of Poor Housing in London*, November 2023. All members welcome. Members also shared relevant reports on older people from [National Housing Federation](https://www.housing.org.uk/resources/older-people-in-the-private-rented-sector/) and from [Independent Age](https://www.independentage.org/hidden-renters-report).
  + TA working group: Co signatories will send a short response to the letter welcoming the progress in the autumn statement but saying it’s not enough. Secretariat asked for a volunteer to sit on the recruitment panel for the Encounters & Conversations project.
* Item on Affordable Homes Programme: EDI Action Plans
  + Secretariat to follow up with officers regarding a clear line of communication between the Panel and the GLA’s involvement in the Regulator of Social Housing Advisory Panel.
  + Voice working group to continue to work with GLA on how can we work together for these plans to have real tangible outcomes for Londoners.
* Open Space item:
  + London Rough Sleeping Charter launched. Richard encouraged members to take a look and consider signing up [details below]
  + TA Working Group to discuss new refugees and short notice of eviction from Home Office accommodation. [Update – Generation Rent has arranged for Migrants Organise to update the working group]

**London Rough Sleeping Charter**

“The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan has today launched the capital’s first ever Rough Sleeping Charter, a public commitment for Londoners to work together to end rough sleeping. More than 100 charities, faith groups, businesses and people with lived experience have helped to design and develop the charter, creating a shared purpose and vision for tackling the challenge of rough sleeping in the capital.

“The rough sleeping charter started with a small group of organisations and city government officials – the Connection at St Martin’s, Groundswell, Housing Justice, The Passage, YMCA St. Paul’s, Bloomberg Associates, the Greater London Authority and London Councils — who wanted to engage better with the community and build a bigger movement around the goal to end rough sleeping.

Read about the press release [here](file:///Users/leilabaker/Dropbox/London%20Housing%20Panel%20COMPLETE%20ARCHIVE%20AND%20MAIN%20DB)/Panel%20work%202023%20-%202024/Full%20Panel%20meetings/071223%20Panel%20meeting/here)

See and sign the charter here: <https://www.endroughsleepinglondon.org.uk/>

1. Recycled capital grant is funding that has previously been made available to registered providers by GLA to purchase land or to build affordable housing. If the land or property is subsequently sold, the money acquired from the sale must then be repaid or recycled to provide new affordable housing either by using it to part fund a new housing development or to purchase additional units. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)