

AGENDA

Meeting **Housing Committee**
Date **Thursday 16 October 2014**
Time **2.00 pm**
Place **Chamber, City Hall, The Queen's
Walk, London, SE1 2AA**

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www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/housing

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Members of the Committee

Darren Johnson AM (Chair)
Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair)
Andrew Boff AM
Nicky Gavron AM

Stephen Knight AM
Steve O'Connell AM
Murad Qureshi AM

A meeting of the Committee has been called by the Chair of the Committee to deal with the business listed below.

Mark Roberts, Executive Director of Secretariat
Wednesday 8 October 2014

Further Information

If you have questions, would like further information about the meeting or require special facilities please contact:

David Pealing, Committee Officer; Telephone: 020 7983 5525; Email: david.pealing@london.gov.uk.

For media enquiries please contact London Assembly External Relations on 020 7983 4283. If you have any questions about individual items please contact the author whose details are at the end of the report.

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Certificate Number: FS 80233

**Agenda
Housing Committee
Thursday 16 October 2014**

1 Apologies for Absence and Chair's Announcements

2 Declarations of Interest (Pages 1 - 4)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat

Contact: David Pealing, david.pealing@london.gov.uk, 020 7983 5525

The Committee is recommended to:

- (a) Note the list of offices held by Assembly Members, set out in the tables at Agenda Item 2, as disclosable pecuniary interests;**
- (b) Note the declaration by any Member(s) of any disclosable pecuniary interests in specific items listed on the agenda and the necessary action taken by the Member(s) regarding withdrawal following such declaration(s); and**
- (c) Note the declaration by any Member(s) of any other interests deemed to be relevant (including any interests arising from gifts and hospitality received which are not at the time of the meeting reflected on the Authority's register of gifts and hospitality, and noting also the advice from the GLA's Monitoring Officer set out at Agenda Item 2) and any necessary action taken by the Member(s) following such declaration(s).**

3 Changes to the Committee's Membership

The Committee is recommended to note the changes to its membership as agreed by the London Assembly at its Plenary meeting on the 16 July 2014 as follows:

That Murad Qureshi AM replaces Fiona Twycross AM as a Member of the Committee; and

That Fiona Twycross AM replaces Murad Qureshi AM as a substitute Member of the Committee.

4 Minutes (Pages 5 - 42)

The Committee is recommended to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2014 to be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The appendix to the minutes set out on pages 9 to 42 is attached for Members and officers only but is available from the following area of the GLA's website:

www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/housing

5 Summary List of Actions (Pages 43 - 46)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat

Contact: David Pealing, david.pealing@london.gov.uk, 020 7983 5525

The Committee is recommended to note the completed and outstanding actions arising from a previous meeting of the Committee.

6 Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision in London (Pages 47 - 52)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat

Contact: Teja Zbikowska, teja.zbikowska@london.gov.uk, 020 7983 4510

The Committee is recommended to note the report and the summary of its site visit to Gypsy and Traveller sites at Appendix 1, as background to discussing with invited guests key issues which arise from identifying and allocating Gypsy and Traveller sites.

7 Clapham Park Estate Site Visit (Pages 53 - 56)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat

Contact: Lorraine Ford; scrutiny@london.gov.uk; 020 7983 4000

The Committee is recommended to note the record of the site visit to the Clapham Park estate on 2 July 2014.

8 Encouraging Diversity in London's House Building Industry (Pages 57 - 70)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat

Contact: Dan Maton, dan.maton@london.gov.uk, 020 7983 4681

The Committee is recommended to note both the letter sent by the Chair to the Mayor about encouraging diversity in London's house building industry and the Mayor's response.

9 Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness (Pages 71 - 112)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat
Contact: Lorraine Ford; scrutiny@london.gov.uk; 020 7983 4000

The Committee is recommended to:

(a) Note its report, *No Going Back: Breaking the Cycle of Rough Sleeping and Homelessness*, as agreed by the Chair under delegated authority; and

(b) Note the responses from the Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform, and Kris Hopkins MP, Minister for Homelessness, to the relevant recommendations in *No Going Back*.

The appendix to the report set out on pages 75 to 105 is attached for Members and officers only but is available from the following area of the GLA's website:
www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/housing

10 Response to Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform Report (Pages 113 - 120)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat
Contact: David Pealing; david.pealing@london.gov.uk; 020 7983 5525

The Committee is recommended to note the response from the Mayor to the report, *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*.

11 Housing Committee Work Programme (Pages 121 - 124)

Report of the Executive Director of Secretariat
Contact: Lorraine Ford; scrutiny@london.gov.uk; 020 7983 4000

The Committee is recommended to agree a proposed adjustment to its work programme as identified in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3 of the report.

12 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Housing Committee is scheduled for 11 November 2014 at 10.00 am in Committee Room 5, City Hall.

13 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent

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Subject: Declarations of Interests

Report to: Housing Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 16 October 2014

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out details of offices held by Assembly Members for noting as disclosable pecuniary interests and requires additional relevant declarations relating to disclosable pecuniary interests, and gifts and hospitality to be made.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the list of offices held by Assembly Members, as set out in the table below, be noted as disclosable pecuniary interests¹;**
- 2.2 **That the declaration by any Member(s) of any disclosable pecuniary interests in specific items listed on the agenda and the necessary action taken by the Member(s) regarding withdrawal following such declaration(s) be noted; and**
- 2.3 **That the declaration by any Member(s) of any other interests deemed to be relevant (including any interests arising from gifts and hospitality received which are not at the time of the meeting reflected on the Authority's register of gifts and hospitality, and noting also the advice from the GLA's Monitoring Officer set out at below) and any necessary action taken by the Member(s) following such declaration(s) be noted.**

3. Issues for Consideration

- 3.1 Relevant offices held by Assembly Members are listed in the table overleaf:

¹ The Monitoring Officer advises that: Paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct will only preclude a Member from participating in any matter to be considered or being considered at, for example, a meeting of the Assembly, where the Member has a direct Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in that particular matter. The effect of this is that the 'matter to be considered, or being considered' must be about the Member's interest. So, by way of example, if an Assembly Member is also a councillor of London Borough X, that Assembly Member will be precluded from participating in an Assembly meeting where the Assembly is to consider a matter about the Member's role / employment as a councillor of London Borough X; the Member will not be precluded from participating in a meeting where the Assembly is to consider a matter about an activity or decision of London Borough X.

Member	Interest
Tony Arbour AM	Member, LFEPA; Member, LB Richmond
Jennette Arnold OBE AM	Committee of the Regions
Gareth Bacon AM	Member, LFEPA; Member, LB Bexley
John Biggs AM	
Andrew Boff AM	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Council of Europe)
Victoria Borwick AM	Member, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea; Deputy Mayor
James Cleverly AM	Chairman of LFEPA; Chairman of the London Local Resilience Forum; substitute member, Local Government Association Fire Services Management Committee
Tom Copley AM	
Andrew Dismore AM	Member, LFEPA
Len Duvall AM	
Roger Evans AM	Committee of the Regions; Trust for London (Trustee)
Nicky Gavron AM	
Darren Johnson AM	Member, LFEPA
Jenny Jones AM	Member, House of Lords
Stephen Knight AM	Member, LFEPA; Member, LB Richmond
Kit Malthouse AM	Deputy Mayor for Business and Enterprise; Deputy Chair, London Enterprise Panel; Chair, Hydrogen London; Chairman, London & Partners; Board Member, TheCityUK
Joanne McCartney AM	
Steve O'Connell AM	Member, LB Croydon; MOPAC Non-Executive Adviser for Neighbourhoods
Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM	
Murad Qureshi AM	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Council of Europe)
Dr Onkar Sahota AM	
Navin Shah AM	
Valerie Shawcross CBE AM	Member, LFEPA
Richard Tracey AM	Chairman of the London Waste and Recycling Board; Mayor's Ambassador for River Transport
Fiona Twycross AM	Member, LFEPA

[Note: LB - London Borough; LFEPA - London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority; MOPAC – Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime]

3.2 Paragraph 10 of the GLA's Code of Conduct, which reflects the relevant provisions of the Localism Act 2011, provides that:

- where an Assembly Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered or being considered or at
 - (i) a meeting of the Assembly and any of its committees or sub-committees; or
 - (ii) any formal meeting held by the Mayor in connection with the exercise of the Authority's functions
- they must disclose that interest to the meeting (or, if it is a sensitive interest, disclose the fact that they have a sensitive interest to the meeting); and

- must not (i) participate, or participate any further, in any discussion of the matter at the meeting; or (ii) participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting

UNLESS

- they have obtained a dispensation from the GLA's Monitoring Officer (in accordance with section 2 of the Procedure for registration and declarations of interests, gifts and hospitality – Appendix 5 to the Code).

- 3.3 Failure to comply with the above requirements, without reasonable excuse, is a criminal offence; as is knowingly or recklessly providing information about your interests that is false or misleading.
- 3.4 In addition, the Monitoring Officer has advised Assembly Members to continue to apply the test that was previously applied to help determine whether a pecuniary / prejudicial interest was arising - namely, that Members rely on a reasonable estimation of whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, could, with justification, regard the matter as so significant that it would be likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.
- 3.5 Members should then exercise their judgement as to whether or not, in view of their interests and the interests of others close to them, they should participate in any given discussions and/or decisions business of within and by the GLA. It remains the responsibility of individual Members to make further declarations about their actual or apparent interests at formal meetings noting also that a Member's failure to disclose relevant interest(s) has become a potential criminal offence.
- 3.6 Members are also required, where considering a matter which relates to or is likely to affect a person from whom they have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 within the previous three years or from the date of election to the London Assembly, whichever is the later, to disclose the existence and nature of that interest at any meeting of the Authority which they attend at which that business is considered.
- 3.7 The obligation to declare any gift or hospitality at a meeting is discharged, subject to the proviso set out below, by registering gifts and hospitality received on the Authority's on-line database. The on-line database may be viewed here:
<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/gifts-and-hospitality>.
- 3.8 If any gift or hospitality received by a Member is not set out on the on-line database at the time of the meeting, and under consideration is a matter which relates to or is likely to affect a person from whom a Member has received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25, Members are asked to disclose these at the meeting, either at the declarations of interest agenda item or when the interest becomes apparent.
- 3.9 It is for Members to decide, in light of the particular circumstances, whether their receipt of a gift or hospitality, could, on a reasonable estimation of a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, with justification, be regarded as so significant that it would be likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest. Where receipt of a gift or hospitality could be so regarded, the Member must exercise their judgement as to whether or not, they should participate in any given discussions and/or decisions business of within and by the GLA.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The legal implications are as set out in the body of this report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
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List of Background Papers: None

Contact Officer: David Pealing, Committee Officer

Telephone: 020 7983 5525

E-mail: david.pealing@london.gov.uk

MINUTES

Meeting: Housing Committee

Date: Thursday 10 July 2014

Time: 2.00 pm

Place: Committee Room 4, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1 2AA

Copies of the minutes may be found at:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/housing>

Present:

Darren Johnson AM (Chair)
Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair)
Andrew Boff AM
Nicky Gavron AM
Murad Qureshi AM

1 Apologies for Absence and Chair's Announcements (Item 1)

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Stephen Knight AM, Steve O'Connell AM and Fiona Twycross AM, for whom Murad Qureshi AM attended as a Substitute Member.

2 Declarations of Interest (Item 2)

2.1 The Committee received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat.

2.2 Resolved:

That the list of offices held by Assembly Members, as set out in the table at Item 2, be noted as disclosable pecuniary interests.

3 Minutes (Item 3)

3.1 Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2014 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

4 Proposal for a review of Gypsy and Traveller Site provision in London (Item 4)

4.1 The Committee received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat.

4.2 Resolved:

(a) That the terms of reference for a review into Gypsy and Traveller site provision in London, and the background paper, be agreed; and

(b) That authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with the Deputy Chair and party Group Lead Members, to agree the site visit relating to this investigation.

5 Resident Perspectives on the Regeneration of London's Social Housing Estates (Item 5)

5.1 The Committee received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat, as background to putting questions to the following invited guests:

- Sharon Hayward, London Tenants' Federation;
- Lucy Musgrave, Director, Publica; and
- Chris Jofeh, Director, Arup.

5.2 A transcript of the discussion is attached at **Appendix 1**.

5.3 During the course of the discussion Eileen Short from Haringey Defend Council Housing agreed to provide the Committee with their list of housing estates in London which are currently fighting plans to demolish homes.

5.4 Lucy Musgrave also agreed to provide the Committee with the following additional information:

- Examples of best practice of where public and resident intervention has resulted in improvements on estates in terms of public safety, and any other examples of best practice involving community participation in housing refurbishment;

- Examples of best practice of intensifying housing estates without demolishing housing units; and
- Further information on the London Borough of Camden's EC1 New Deal.

5.5 **Resolved:**

That the report and discussion be noted.

6 Housing Committee Work Programme (Item 6)

6.1 The Committee received the report of the Executive Director of Secretariat.

6.2 **Resolved:**

(a) That the work programme be noted; and

(b) That the November and December 2014 meeting slots be used for an investigation into improving the affordability of home ownership.

7 Date of Next Meeting (Item 7)

7.1 The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 9 September 2014 at 10.00am in Committee Room 5, City Hall.

8 Any Other Business the Chair Considers Urgent (Item 8)

8.1 There was no urgent business.

9 Close of Meeting

9.1 The meeting ended at 4.25pm.

Chair

Date

Contact Officer: Laura Pelling, Committee Officer
Telephone: 020 7983 5526; email: laura.pelling@london.gov.uk.

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Housing Committee**10 July 2014****Item 5: Resident Perspectives on the
Regeneration of London's Social Housing Estates**

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Today the first part of the meeting is going to be an open session, enabling residents to give their views and experiences of regeneration programmes and the issues around demolition and estate refurbishment, so we will hear from people in the room on that. Then the second part of the meeting is a panel discussion to allow the Committee to consider the methods which allow these non-financial matters to be more systematically factored into the decision-making process and the impact this might have on the resulting regeneration programme.

To kick things off, I am going to ask Sharon Hayward, the London Tenants Federation (LTF) representative on our panel today, to give her perspective first and then introduce a number of other speakers before we throw it wide open.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): I am the Co-ordinator for the London Tenants Federation, so I do not consider myself a representative. I had assumed that part of my role here would be to co-ordinate some of the voices from the LTF to express their concerns. We had focused on the issue of demolition versus refurbishment and we had not considered a wider regeneration agenda, although perhaps the two often are very much overlapping at the moment. Obviously, you can have regeneration that does not involve housing at all, and there have been many circumstances of that, and there are some that deal with the full range.

The LTF brings together borough-wide social housing tenant federations. Most of them are local authority organisations, but increasingly we are involving housing association tenants as well. Also under our umbrella are the London Federation of Housing Co-operatives and the National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs).

The issue of demolition versus refurbishment has become more prominent in the LTF's discussions for a while now and increasingly as people come back and say that some of their own members are experiencing large-scale demolitions where there has been poor provision of information to tenants and residents from the start, retraction of promises that were made in early discussions and inadequate evidence to justify the demolition at all.

The LTF was involved in the organisation of a conference in June 2013 with a number of other groups, including Just Space, and we held a workshop at that conference specifically on the issue of demolition versus refurbishment. That workshop concluded that there was a serious need for authorities to produce in any proposal for demolition a good balance sheet covering wide economic, social and environment issues. Often people are given part of the information, but not all of the information. As a follow-up to that conference, Just Space and LTF have recently commissioned a piece of work from University College London's (UCL) engineering department to consider some of the technical issues related to this and their report is going to be submitted as part of the written submissions to this investigation.

As a tenants' organisation, necessarily, the LTF's greatest concern is the social impact of unnecessary demolition of perfectly good social-rented homes and particularly the impact of demolition on the availability of genuinely affordable homes in the capital. As I am sure you already know, if the Mayor's assessment of the backlog of housing need together with newly arising need were to be met within a five-year period, which used to be the requirement, 99% of the 42,000 housing target would need to be affordable homes and 66% would need to be social-rented. There are a fair number of us who would challenge the analysis that the Mayor's Office has done and feel that perhaps the analysis on the need for social-rented housing is underestimated, but the figure is anyway very high.

Delivery of additional social-rented homes in London is consistently poor. From 2007 to 2013, as our analysis of monitoring reports of the London Plan shows, only 50% of the London Plan's target for social-rented homes was met and this compares with 92% of the target for market homes being met and 73% of the target for intermediate homes. Having a bit of a further dig through the annual monitoring reports of the London Plan, we found that the impact of demolition on social-rented homes on this very poor level of delivery is actually quite significant. It seems that a third of the new social-rented homes delivered in London over that six-year period were just replacements for others that had been demolished. Had it not occurred, the target would have been met by 75% - better anyway - and there would be 15,272 additional social-rented homes in London than we have now. It is not insignificant in policy terms.

Given that the affordable housing grant is no longer available for the delivery of social-rented homes, it is essential that this Committee seriously considers the extent to which demolition, rather than refurbishment, of social-rented homes is contributing to the ongoing crisis in housing affordability in London and the failure to properly address the gap between need and supply.

There is also a significant lack of transparency in the data, not only around the delivery of additional social-rented homes in London, but also on how much demolition of perfectly good social-rented homes is occurring and why. Our figures are derived by comparing figures for new homes delivered with figures for additional homes and obviously there is quite a significant difference there. Demolition of estates such as the Heygate will not appear anywhere in the figures until some years hence when replacement homes are built, so we have a significant underestimate of numbers of social-rented homes that are being demolished and being left empty in London. We would like some transparency on this. We would like to see as a very first step that the London Assembly requires or tries to push for those figures to be transparent and that the Greater London Authority (GLA) openly publishes figures around demolitions each year of each type of home. Thank you.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you very much, Sharon, for setting the scene so eloquently this afternoon. There are a number of speakers that Sharon has suggested I call with perspectives from different estates around London, which I will. Then we will throw it completely open and, hopefully, we will try to get everyone in or at least as near to everyone as possible. Do keep your contributions fairly short. Sharon has set the scene wonderfully, but we do need to keep the rest of the contributions really short so we can bring as many people in as possible.

I am keen that we kick off the discussion now. Can I call Derrick Chung from the West Hendon Estate?

Derrick Chung (Chairman, West Hendon Residents' Association): My name is Derrick Chung and I am Chair of the West Hendon Residents' Association in Barnet. I have been looking at your flyers where it says, "Welcome to today's meeting", and about best practice and seeking views in the decision-making process. The decision-making process for the regeneration of West Hendon was a consultation that was an ultimatum: you either take it or there is a bus going that way. We were not allowed to take part in the decision-making process.

In the beginning, there were 680 home units. At the present time, there are about 548 affordable homes that are supposed to be built to replace when everything is knocked down. The term 'affordable' applies only to landlords and not tenants because they will not be able to afford the new homes. The figures may not be very accurate, but as close as I can get to it, there will be 132 low-cost home ownerships, which may relate to leaseholders and freeholders who will lose their leases and have to renegotiate new terms of contract and arrangements in order to get a home. The compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) have already been delivered.

We have a document here that is a pledge for like-for-like. It means what you have, when the new homes are built, is exactly what you are going to get over there, unless you can find £50,000 more on the price. Home ownership and shared equity are a con because it means that the developers, Barratt Homes and Metropolitan Housing Trust, will eventually own your home. No one in their right mind who has discharged their mortgage would want to enter into any form of renegotiation where they are going to pay rent because, if you are not able to pay your rent, there is repossession order and an eviction order you will be served with.

We also found out 15 years ago that what it is and what it should be are different. There are 256 non-secured tenants who have been drafted into the area. The reason is because there is no agreement with Barnet Council, who is making the decision, to rehouse transient households anywhere on the estate or even within the borough, so they could all be shifted to some reservation somewhere. There are 1,491 homes for sale. That is expected to increase from 680 to 2,149. Those homes will be luxury apartments, so, if you have £1 million, you are OK.

We are near York Memorial Park, which has some significance because, as far as I can understand it, a lot of folks were killed during World War II when a bomb exploded there and their remains are down there. The Welsh Harp is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) area. Birds, bats, bees, trees, their habitats are in danger and so for the folks who live on the estate, all for the means of making a lot of profit.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you, Derrick.

Pat Turnbull (Hackney Residents Liaison Panel representative, London Tenants Federation): I am reading out a statement from Eddie Richardson. Eddie Richardson is a long-time tenant on the Woodberry Down Estate in Hackney. He is not able to be here today, unfortunately, because he is pretty old and he is not fit enough to get out, so I am reading this on his behalf:

"Woodberry Down Estate was started in 1948. I moved into Rowley Gardens on the estate in 1961 into a new flat in a high-rise block where I still live today. Rowley Gardens was the last major development on the original estate. As well as high-rise blocks, it has rows of maisonettes and plenty of green space in between. When you see it even now, it is not surprising that it won an award.

There were over 2,000 council-rented homes originally on Woodberry Down. In 1999, Hackney Council took the decision to knock down and rebuild the estate. There was no ballot of residents. A public relations (PR) firm held meetings in different parts of the estate to sell the plan to the tenants and leaseholders. The picture we were given was of a rebuilt estate we would all be able to live in, with new homes the equivalent of the council homes we lived in. There was no talk of private development.

The latest rescheduled plan for Woodberry Down has increased the number of phases from five to eight. We are only on phase two. The development will go on until 2032. People were originally told they would only have to move once, but already some have moved three or four times. The number of projected homes has gone up from 4,000 to 5,557. Sixty per cent of these will be for sale by developer

Berkeley Group. So far, their glossy tower blocks at the edge of the reservoir, the prettiest part of the estate, have been selling at up to £1 million, mainly to overseas buyers who rent them out at £1,000-plus a month. There will not be any council homes on the redeveloped estate at all. The original 2,000 council-rented homes will be replaced by 1,088 social-rented homes owned by Genesis Housing Association. This means higher rents, higher service charges and less security of tenure. There will be another 1,177 so-called 'affordable' homes, part-rent/part-buy and so on, but these are not actually affordable to most people in London.

This is if the plan goes ahead as it is now and it has already been rescheduled. New fire doors have been put in my high-rise block, so nobody is planning to pull it down anytime soon. It is in the last phase. But why does it have to be pulled down at all? It is well designed, structurally sound and a nice place to live in with great views. I still have my secure council tenancy and reasonable rent and service charges.

As far as I can see, the redevelopment of Woodberry Down Estate is good for the shareholders but poor for those really in need of a roof over their heads. The so-called comprehensive redevelopment will, like as not, make the plight of the working poor even worse."

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you so much for reading that statement.

Manoranjitham Saravanamuthu (Resident, Carpenters Estate): I come from Carpenters Estate, Stratford, and I have lived there since 1992. When they started to build the Olympic Stadium, the council planned to demolish our building and they started to sell the properties to private owners. In 2005, they started to decant the residents and they said that they were going to demolish the properties. Still they have not done anything for ten years.

We have some details here and originally they said they would demolish one of the estate's three tower blocks. We have three tower blocks. Each block has 132 flats. It is a very big space. One of the estate's tower blocks would pay for the refurbishment of the other two. This increased to two blocks for demolition and then three. There are now about 350 empty homes on the estate. I guess many have been empty for ten years.

The provision of information to tenants and leaseholders has always been incredibly poor. In consultation on a Carpenters Community Plan that was produced last year, the vast majority of residents said they wanted the council to consider all alternatives to the demolition of homes on the estate. As a leaseholder, I have just received a letter from the council saying that it would cost more than £100,000 to do up our homes, while I know that the tower blocks costs to leaseholders has been much lower. For example, on the Edward Woods Estate, only £6,666, so where minded to do so, councils can find ways to reduce these costs.

I have never seen a true stock condition survey. The amount of money the council has spent on decanting and rental income is enormous, as is the additional cost of housing families in expensive private-rented homes rather than in empty homes on our estate. A very quick analysis would suggest that the cost to the council of decanting tenants and of buying homes from leaseholders is about £30.5 million. The loss in rental and council tax income is £2.25 million per year and, additionally, the security of our tower blocks is £100,000 per year. The additional cost to the public purse in paying out a benefit for 300 families to be in the private-rented sector rather than in social homes on our estate is about £28.6 million a year. Thank you.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you very much. It is useful to get a leaseholder's perspective there as well.

Roy Tindle (Chair, London Thames Gateway Forum): I want to speak about aspects for which I can give no figures because they have not been counted. In my background, I chaired the London 21 Sustainability Network for several years, I still chair the London Thames Gateway Forum and I am individual member of the Aldersgate Group, a business-led environmental lobby organisation.

Some 30 years ago, I became involved in the very early days of the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees. I started resettling the Vietnamese into Thamesmead and I asked to move into the community to live with them and subsequently married into the community, which is what brings me here today because I have family members living on an estate in Greenwich which is due to be demolished.

I go back a little from that in that ten years or so ago I worked on the Ferrier Estate in Greenwich, employed by Greenwich to regenerate. This was when it was said, "No, no, we are never going to pull it down". The minute my job ended, the work started to pull it down. Residents there were told that they would all be able to come back. What Greenwich did not mention was that they would have to win the lottery in order to do so. Now under attack is the largest group of estates in Woolwich, housing over 1,000 families. I mentioned the Ferrier Estate because decanting from the Ferrier Estate basically removed Greenwich's stock of surplus social housing. They do not have anywhere to move people. Therefore, decanting is a very, very slow process.

The whole point of this is that my brother-in-law and sister-in-law - two separate families - who were young back in the days when I was young are no longer around. I have also gone around talking to other residents and I see the same problems: fear; older people being stripped of their families and friends and moved somewhere else where they will have no support network. I put it to you that that is going to be an enormous cost to the National Health Service and an unnecessary cost.

As well as that, at the other end of the spectrum, you have families with young children and they are worried about their education because they do not know where they are going to go or even when they are going to go. To compound this, as Greenwich is emptying the flats, they are moving people in on short-term leases to stop them being squatted. One of these days, they are going to have 1,000 families with no homes. No one is thinking this through. No one is looking at the ultimate cost, particularly to health and wellbeing.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you very much for talking about some of the human impact.

Jerry Flynn (Spokesperson, 35 Percent and Elephant Amenity Network): My name is Jerry Flynn. I am a former resident of the Heygate Estate, which is part of the Elephant and Castle regeneration. I am also a member of the 35 Percent campaign and the Elephant Amenity Network. I have submitted written evidence to the Committee in response to the Chair's letter of 20 June 2014. I hope the Committee will give it due regard and I will just speak very briefly on two of the points that I have put in that evidence.

The Heygate Estate was an estate of 1,200 council homes. It has now been almost entirely demolished. The new development that will sit on its site will have 2,500 homes. It will have 79 social-rented units. Therefore, we have a net loss of nearly 1,000 social-rented units out of this development.

There will be other kinds of affordable housing which probably everybody in this room is familiar with so I will not dwell on. We will have affordable rent and we will have intermediate, but that, as everybody in the room probably realises, is way beyond the means of anybody who lived in those council houses.

There will be other developments within the Elephant and Castle regeneration area which will to some extent mitigate the loss of 1,000 homes on the Heygate Estate, but nonetheless they will give us only 600 social-

rented units. This is within the whole of the opportunity area. We are still looking, at the end of the regeneration, at a net loss of 600 social-rented units.

Southwark Council, which is the council behind this regeneration, is fully aware of the need for social housing in the borough. Its Housing Requirements Survey of 2008, which supports its Core Strategy, showed that 79% of those who required affordable housing could only afford social-rented housing. This conclusion is reinforced by its own evidence to the Mayor on the Further Alterations to the London Plan, which notes that the median income of council tenants in the borough is £174 per week - which is a figure that always brings me up short - and that of housing association tenants is still only £274 per week.

This really drives home the point that when we are talking about affordable housing, for most people in London who need housing, we really must only be talking about social-rented housing and nothing else.

Just returning to the residents of the Heygate Estate and what has happened to them, we were all promised, like many people in this room on their own regenerations, that we would get new homes. So far, only 45 out of 1,000 or so residents of the estate have been housed in new homes. Only about 200 others still have their precious right-to-return but, as our friend pointed out earlier, they would probably need to win the lottery to make any use of that.

For us, the regeneration has not been good news. It is in the Elephant and Castle opportunity area. This regeneration should really be making the best of a part of London which provides opportunities for people to be rehoused. It has provided little opportunity for us to be rehoused. We certainly support all of the LTF's proposals that are in its paper that has been submitted to the Committee. Thank you very much.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you very much. You make useful points about the impact on social housing numbers there.

Sally Taylor (Chair, West Kensington Tenants & Residents Association): I am Sally Taylor and I am here representing the West Kensington and Gibbs Green Estates, which are part of the Earls Court development.

Firstly, I would like to say how sad it has made me feel that everything that has been said here has been our experience and more. This is big bucks for bricks. They just want us out of the way and that is exactly how we have felt on our estate. Every step of the way, we have had to fight developers, we have had to fight our own then-council. What we have done on our estate is we balloted our whole estate. We had four-to-one in favour of staying put. We are proud of our community. We are a proud community with nice housing, which is not what you read, the way that we have been described. It really irritates me when people use awful language about us and they have not even been to our estates and could not point to them on a map. We are just little pawns in a great big boys' game of chess.

We are not having it in our communities. We have fought a battle that we are tired of fighting, but we will continue. We are going for resident control. All the way through, we have had to fight and fight and fight, so when this 'Big Society' idea came along, we thought, "We will have some of that. We will do it". Every step of the way, we have done what we have had to do, through endless paperwork and ballots. Our then-council either pooh-poohed our results or they refused us a ballot. We asked the council, "Ballot the residents". No, they would not do that. Therefore, we are continuing down the community ownership route, which has been done, as many of you will know, on the Harrow Road very successfully.

What we would like to know is what support is there for this third way. All we have heard today is demolition and promises that are not promises at all. They are absolute lies sometimes. If I hear 'like-for-like' again I will scream because a house to me is a house, not a duplex. There is a new language that we have to learn and you will probably all know this, but 'regeneration' means 'demolition and you lot can - ahem - off'.

We want to take control of our own estates in line with 'Big Society'. We are absolutely convinced that this is the only way forward. It was not our first choice, but we did not ask to be offered up by our then-council. We are fighting for our lives. We are fighting for a community that we are proud of. Where is it that every Londoner should go and live? We should stay put, stay proud and get on and run it ourselves. Thank you.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you so much, Sally. I did actually visit the estates and I think 'nice' is a good word.

Nicky Gavron AM: We all have.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): We now have two environmental perspectives.

Dr Kate Crawford (Research Associate, Department of Civil, Environmental & Geomatic Engineering, UCL): I am Kate Crawford from the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department at UCL. We have been doing some work on the numbers that are missing, from some of these balance sheets, so in service to the bigger conversation about trying to understand the pros and cons, and the benefits and consequences of demolition and refurbishment. We have looked in particular at waste. At the moment, 35% of waste to landfill is from the construction sector.

The discussion on waste in the London Plan focuses mainly on managing waste well when you are building new stuff. We probably need a slightly more nuanced and better understanding of the waste that is coming from demolition and ways that it could potentially be reused locally or avoided altogether in the first instance by focusing first on reducing waste and the refurbishment option. There is great established work on the waste hierarchy that is slightly missing from this discussion, which is to reduce waste first.

The other thing that is slightly overlooked or narrow, perhaps, in the technical evidence about these questions is the question of water. We talk a lot about retrofitting. Retrofitting focuses a lot on energy and we could expand that to think about, yes, water efficiency and lots of low-cost ways to improve that in existing housing - and there is lots of evidence and examples of that - but also to look at run-off from sites. It does not have to be new developments that manage rainwater and floodwater carefully. There are some good examples in London - Bethnal Green, Enfield and Camden - where there have been retrofit projects on cramped sites or pocket parks for sustainable urban drainage, which is ways to use, manage and slow down rainwater on sites that already exist beyond just new developments.

The last little piece of that retrofit argument about water is also - and this applies to energy too - just to think about the water and the energy we are using in the construction process. At the moment, a lot of the focus is on measuring the energy of new buildings, which are obviously nice and new. They use less energy day-to-day, but there is a lot of energy that goes into making them and we need to account for that properly. It is the same with water. A lot of water goes into mixing up all that concrete and we do not have a way to account for that.

Just to finish, in service to the better debate, we would like to see a slightly more transparent and consistent way of monitoring some of these environmental questions. When we say "transparent", that is not just the

numbers but also the assumptions behind those numbers that sometimes we do not see going into the public domain for scrutiny. Thanks.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you very much.

Richard Lee (Co-ordinator, Just Space): I am Richard Lee, Co-ordinator of a network called Just Space, which is a London-wide community-led network. We regularly seek to influence London policies. Just Space has a number of active tenants' and residents' groups amongst our membership. We have a number of environmental groups amongst our membership, including Friends of the Earth.

Time and again, the groups within Just Space have presented evidence in this arena to try to change policies which we regard as simply social cleansing. They are not based on robust evidence. They are not based on any kind of fair balance sheet or fair cost-benefit analysis. There seems to be some kind of ideological, policy-driven agenda to remove council tenants from large parts of London. We regularly come to this arena at City Hall and we seek constructively to try to change policy.

What I have been asked to say a few words on now is the issue of embodied carbon. We find from experience that when a decision is taken to demolish a council estate, it is backed up with a number of technical reports by consultants, obviously and unfortunately employed by the same body that is proposing the demolition. These technical reports very often look at the energy performance of the building. They paint a very bleak picture of the existing council housing in terms of energy performance and they paint a very rosy picture of the potential energy performance of the new build.

What we found from our research - and we document this in the literature review that UCL has produced for the London Tenants Federation and Just Space - is that these technical studies around energy performance very rarely look at the question of embodied carbon. They just do not look at the huge impact on the environment and the impact of carbon dioxide emissions of demolition, the removal of the waste materials from that demolition and all the carbon dioxide emissions resulting from the construction of the new build. This is a very substantial impact in terms of trying to assess the carbon dioxide implications of a decision on demolition or refurbishment. Yet the technical studies that are carried out, in nearly all cases, will only look at issues such as the type of fuel, the type of heating appliance or the thermal comfort. They just dismiss completely the question of embodied carbon.

What we would like to see this Committee support would be that in London, through the Mayor of London, before any decision considering whether to refurbish or whether to demolish, there should be a requirement to carry out an embodied carbon report. There is no such policy in place in London at the moment. It should be a requirement. There should be a requirement to actually ensure that there is a report on the embodied carbon issue and a strategy to reduce embodied carbon as part of the approach to that estate, whether one is looking at refurbishment or demolition. We think it is an absolutely key issue and we would very much like this Committee to get behind this in terms of policy and strategy.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Good. Thank you very much, Richard, for that very useful suggestion. I am now going to throw it completely open now. I do want to try to get as many people in as possible, but if you keep your contributions brief I will be able to get more in.

Paul Burnham (Member, Haringey Defend Council Housing): Thank you very much. My name is Paul Burnham from Haringey Defend Council Housing. The threat of demolition of council housing in London is absolutely serious. It is quite clearly an attack on working class people. It is an attack on the secure tenancies which we have enjoyed over a period of time. It is an attack on really affordable rents. It is an attack

on the ability of working people both to live, to be able to raise our families and expect our children to live in the areas where we currently live. That being the case, it is not too surprising that the consultation has been shocking and has been poor.

In Haringey in particular, we are suddenly facing the proposed demolition of thousands and thousands of council houses. If you read the council's documents, you will read, apparently, that council housing is somehow linked to crime - that is a lie - and is somehow linked to poor health and is somehow linked even to early death. Those are the things which they actually say. There is a democratic deficit when they come to talk to people about the proposals for their estates because they do not tell the whole story. The real story is there in the council documents. Their demolition programme is what they call 'strategic'. It is 'strategic' because they go to areas where they can seek 'tenure change'; in other words, where they can get rid of council housing. It is that cynical.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you for more on the issue of poor consultation and loss of social housing numbers.

Eileen Short (Chair, Haringey Defend Council Housing): My name is Eileen Short and I am also from Haringey Defend Council Housing. We were asked by tenants from Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster estates to convene a meeting. Just off the top of our heads, we came up with a list of at least 20 estates in London that are currently fighting plans that involve demolition of homes. At that meeting, many tenants came and were absolutely clear that this is a fight that we will continue to fight estate-by-estate, but it also has a London-wide character. That is where we are looking to you to do something about a moratorium on the demolition of structurally sound council housing and housing association housing.

The one other thing I want to say is that in this process we have come upon a research proposal by Savills into the implications of the regeneration of council estates in London. The foreword of this report was written by the Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles MP [Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government], and in that foreword he described council estates as 'brownfield sites'. That tells you what we are up against and that this needs champions. Our elected representatives at every level need to get with the tenants in resisting a juggernaut of gentrification.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you. We will certainly have a look at that report. Are you able to send us the list of estates that you have compiled so that we can use it in our investigation?

Eileen Short (Chair, Haringey Defend Council Housing): I will check with the tenants but yes.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you. That is very useful.

Female Speaker: I actually have not prepared anything and I came here in support of the West Hendon Estate. I live on a housing association estate, but that is not what I want to ask you. I am a member of the executive of the Barnet Seniors' Assembly and also the Barnet Alliance for Public Services.

We are very upset about what is happening in the Borough of Barnet, but people are not noticing that they are cementing over Barnet. What do I mean by that? All the way up Whetstone High Street, which is one of the elements of Barnet, are private developments. I cannot go against that because I know there is no council housing whatsoever anymore in Barnet. They are regenerating all their housing estates. However, I did a little tour of all of what I call the cementing of Barnet and did not find any notice of affordable housing or social housing. Having said that, I am an older person and have difficulty in trying to find where to move. I do not want to move, for lots of reasons, out of the borough of Barnet.

I have been an activist for more than 30 years and a very angry one and I am getting absolutely hysterical now with what is happening. I heard the head of the council saying he does not like socialists, he does not like the disabled and he does not want impoverished people living in the borough of Barnet. I was standing beside him when he actually said this. In the last 20 years, they have built three council houses. I was at that demonstration and I will not tell you what I told Boris [Johnson, Mayor of London].

What is the difference between affordable housing and social housing? You can have partially private-rental, how does anybody manage if they are on a Housing Benefit and if it has been capped and with the economic situation? How is an older person on their peanuts pension that they get, that they have worked all their lives for, supposed to manage?

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): That very point is one that we continue to raise. Thank you.

Terry McGrenera (Resident, London Borough of Tower Hamlets): My name is Terry McGrenera. Apologies for being late but with the rain this morning I discovered that my roof has a leak. Basically, I have been bucketing out and it took some of my time. The reason I mention that is because it fits in. When I went online to phone the council, I received an email from my local councillor saying that the council in the form of Tower Hamlets Homes had no plans to make my home as a council tenant decent, yet at the same time they had no plans to demolish it. Therefore, like a lot of council tenants, I am living in limbo and, basically, that is my situation. That is my own personal situation.

As regards the situation for council tenants and people in London in general, I came across a book written by Sarah Glynn the title of which was *Where the Other Half Lives [Lower Income Housing in a Neoliberal World, Pluto Press, 2009]*. What she was saying was that the story that we are all experiencing and that we all know has not been told because we are living beneath the radar of what the media puts out to people.

There is another book written by Anna Minton, which people will know, *Ground Control [Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First Century City, Penguin, 2009]*. It is very appropriate because, basically, she was saying that you need public space. Even where we are now is not owned by the public, although this is a public institution. It is owned by More London. Basically, the whole idea of the public realm and public accountability has been ground down. Like ourselves, we have been moved beyond the pale, beyond Canvey Island, beyond Land's End, beyond John o' Groats, beyond Portland Bill. In other words, take a running jump, just not where we will be seen. I will end there and thank you, Darren, for your time.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you very much.

Joanne Parkes (Resident, Cressingham Gardens Estate): I am Joanne Parkes from Cressingham Gardens Estate, which is another very nice estate by Brockwell Park in Brixton.

We started out our consultation with Lambeth Council back in summer 2012 and we are currently trying to fend them off, but they obviously have their eye on this very nice spot by the park. They call themselves a 'co-operative council', but there has been very little co-operation over the last couple of years. We have had to submit over 60 freedom of information requests just to get basic information out of the council and Lambeth Living to bust the myths that both councillors - our representatives - and council employees like to propagate. There has been the commencement of an official Housing Ombudsman investigation into why repairs are seen to be no longer happening as they should and the commencement of official investigations by the Information Commissioner.

There are still some important questions outstanding. For example, where is the rigorous justification and analysis for choosing Cressingham? Their analysis was based on unsubstantiated numbers and criteria. They basically said they could not afford the repairs and that was why we had to have our estate demolished. Now they are using the affordable housing argument, but it makes even less sense since there is limited development potential due to the estate's location and transport links.

Where are the missing millions? Cressingham Gardens generates over £1.2 million in rents and service charges each year, but the council budgets only £200,000 each year for repairs and maintenance. Why has the council never claimed on insurances for tree root subsidence and storm damage, despite clear written recommendations in surveyor reports? Why does the council have no records of windows guarantees? What is the budget for the consultation and the consequent oversight? They have already spent an amount going on to something equalling the annual budget for repairs and maintenance just on the little bit of consultation they have done.

Essentially, how can a council use its powers to simply plug a gap in its funds under the guise of regeneration? Through the unaffordable market-value gap that results for leaseholders, it is also essentially a massive property tax on a small proportion of society that can least afford it. From our investigations and first-hand experience, regeneration is a con and a disgrace.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): We will try to take a few more contributions.

Jacob Secker (Member, Haringey Defend Council Housing): My name is Jacob Secker. I live in Tangmere House, which is on the Broadwater Farm Estate in Haringey. I am part of Haringey Defend Council Housing.

As Paul [Burnham] was saying, there are possible demolitions being planned all over Haringey. The consultation has been disgraceful. Every time this issue comes up, we know from the council minutes and we know from what we have been told by council officers that they are proposing demolitions, but what they are telling the other tenants is, "There are no demolitions. We are not going to do anything. You are all being scaremongered".

I talked to Tim Chaudhry. I received a letter in December 2013 which clearly indicated that there was a proposal to demolish my block. I phoned up the guy whose name was on the letter, Tim Choudhury of Housing Regeneration, and I said, "Come on. What you are proposing is to demolish the block. That is your proposal. That is what is going out to consultation". He agreed. Chantelle Barker, who is Resident Liaison Officer [Homes for Haringey], agreed the same thing. Then I went to the consultation meeting about Tangmere House and I was told, "Why do you keep scaremongering the tenants by saying the block might get demolished?" This is what they do. They are telling all the tenants, "No, your block will not be demolished. There is going to be no demolition. You are being scaremongered by Defend Council Housing".

I am saying before this forum, if they are not going to ever demolish Tangmere House, let them say that. They have said that is a serious proposal but, if we are liars, why have they told me that they are planning to demolish Tangmere House and why are they then telling all the other tenants I am lying to them when I am relaying that information? The letter indicates clearly anyway, when you read between the lines, that that is what they are proposing. They are doing this in estate after estate. We know from the council minutes that they are considering demolitions. We know that. Most council tenants, as you might imagine, do not spend hours like I do reading every single set of council minutes. It takes too long, so they do not know that and they can be lied to. That is what is happening. This is not democracy. This is not consultation.

You might ask, "Why is this happening?" Why is this happening? We are here in the GLA. Who is the head of Greater London? It is Mayor Boris Johnson. After the riots in Haringey, Mayor Boris Johnson sent his boy Sir Stuart Lipton [Partner, Lipton Rogers LLP] down to Haringey. Sir Stuart Lipton is a big property developer. He came back with a report saying the reason for the riots in Tottenham was social housing. His report clearly tried to imply that immigrants are somehow to blame for crime in Tottenham. It was a racist, social-cleansing report which was explicitly designed for the collective punishment of our community because of the riots. That is what Mayor Boris Johnson, this great fun-loving guy, is doing to Tottenham. It is social cleansing and it is collective punishment for riots that were caused by the police, not by us.

We are not going to be moved. We are not going to be moved. You cannot carry out this social cleansing. If Boris Johnson and Sir Stuart Lipton and all these other rich people think they can get away with this, they have another thing coming. They did all this in Brazil. There is rioting in Brazil. There is unrest in Brazil over social cleansing. If you think that cannot happen here, you have another thing coming. We are not taking it.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you. I do want to bring in some others. You have made your point extremely well. I do want to bring some more people in, though

Robin: My name is Robin. I am from the Unite community. I do not have the relative privilege of living on a council estate. I am one of the 25% of my cohort who still has to live at home. We are here. People have made the effort to come and talk to you. I want to know what you intend to do about this.

Tom [Copley], a lot of these people live in Labour authorities that are doing this, so sitting there and nodding and looking serious is one thing, but we need to know why we are here and what is going to happen as a result of it. We have our little campaign pack for Labour activists about what we are promising for the General Election, but this is all going on now. We do not need broken circles and promises. We need to know what you are going to be doing about these ongoing situations on these 20 estates that Eileen [Short] was talking about. We do not need to wait for a General Election. We want to know what powers the GLA has and what you are going to do about it now.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thanks. If I can just quickly recap what this investigation is about, our legal role as the Assembly is to hold the Mayor to account and investigate issues of concern to Londoners. Therefore, clearly, we do want to hold the Mayor of London to account for his housing responsibilities in this area and this is all feeding into that. Obviously this is an issue and the packed room here today shows that this is an issue of concern to Londoners.

All this evidence is being gathered and is being fed into our report with our previous meeting as well. There are plenty of opportunities for written evidence as well, so if you do not get the chance to speak this afternoon, do make sure either through grabbing a feedback form - we have some feedback forms at the back and you can jot something down there - or emailing us at City Hall about the investigation. We do genuinely want to hear from you. This is not a sham consultation or anything like that. We actually do want to hear what your concerns are and what you have to say.

I will take a couple more contributions and then we are going to have to move on.

Kate Worley (Resident, London Borough of Haringey): Thank you. My name is Kate Worley. I am from a small residents association in North Tottenham.

You will see the publicity of the Tottenham regeneration and Haringey Council came out with a proposal on High Road West last year. When they drew up that plan, they issued it without any street names. What they

failed to say was that some of the area earmarked for the regeneration of the site, which would be their first decent site, was actually on the other side of the railway line on our small estate. We are implicated in the regeneration but with no vote on it and are having to lobby from afar.

We are also backed onto a cemetery, so our only route to main roads and facilities is through that estate. When the 15-year programme starts, we are stuck there having to get through the works and are affected by it. We would have no input into the design of the new properties adjacent to ours unless we actually make a representation on the planning applications, so there is that concern.

The estate that they are planning to demolish had Decent Homes works in recent years. We asked about the grant and were told it is not repayable, so that grant money has been used and would be lost on the demolition of those blocks. We are also in the middle of a Decent Homes contract. We certainly do not have them in what is happening in this contract. I will not name the builder for fear of legal comebacks from them publicly --

Male Speaker: Go on.

Kate Welling (Resident, London Borough of Haringey): OK. It is Mears.

(Applause)

Kate Welling (Resident, London Borough of Haringey): Thank you. It is their first contract in Haringey and hopefully their only. It is an absolute disgrace. We have been managing the contract and complaining daily about health and safety breaches, poor practice and poor standards. It is only near the end when we are in over-run and with no finish in sight that we are actually getting Haringey to admit the errors. They have had to make an example of it and pull in liaison officers, but they made the mistake of making us a pilot project for tenant engagement. We are now publicly campaigning and going out to the other estates in Haringey to help them prepare for Decent Homes. The whole thing just seems to be a mismanagement and lack of consideration. Being on the edge of regeneration, we have the major impact and absolutely no benefits whatsoever.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): I see lots of nodding around the room on that issue around the performance, health and safety and so on, so that seems to be a common thread.

Female Speaker: Just a very short point. I live in Chettle Court in Haringey. There is a lot of mention of old people and I have not done any statistics on this, but there are lots of children who have grown up there over the years. I have been there since 1975. It is a very happy estate. Many of the children on that estate have actually gone to university and that, of course, may be reflecting the fact that it is a secure and safe place. They have gone to university, but many of those children are living with their parents. They cannot afford to leave home. I know of at least seven who are graduates living in their homes in Chettle Court. I just wanted to make that point. We are not just looking at the elderly people, the disabled and the middle range. We are looking at young people and I just wanted to make that one point.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): A very good point. All right, we will take one final contribution.

Revd Paul Nicolson (Retired Vicar, Church of England): Hi. My name is Reverend Paul Nicolson. I am supporting the 500 tenants of Love Lane Estate and indeed Northumberland Park in Tottenham. I live in Tottenham. I am a resident of Tottenham.

I just want to make two points. Could the Committee take into account that while it is considering the residents' perspective, there is a wider perspective than those listed in this report? It is just about the worst possible time for the last 30 years for tenants of social housing and indeed private housing on low incomes. On top of your list, there is council tax, there is council tax arrears, there is rent arrears, there is a market in short supply.

The second point is what happens when 500 tenants suddenly flood a market in short supply around Haringey? Where are they put? Temporarily into possibly private accommodation? My experience of helping people who have been shifted out of secure tenants into private accommodation - temporarily, maybe, because they are going to come back when they get a new house - is that there is no test done of the condition of those properties. I am currently working with a single mother with three children who was put into a damp property and was told by the doctor she had to go. She was then moved out of Haringey into Enfield, into another damp property, because the local authorities do not check the quality of the housing they put people into because they are so desperately pushed. Where on earth are they going to put people whom they have a duty to house? It is far worse than you have stated in your report. The circumstances of all social housing tenants and low-income tenants are much worse. Where are you going to put people? You will get some 500 people from Love Lane Estate and 1,000 from Northumberland Estate and there is going to be a crush and an awful lot of tears.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): A very useful perspective on the wider housing crisis that we are certainly well aware of on this Committee.

I am going to move on now, so thank you everyone for your contributions. We really, really appreciate you coming along this afternoon. We are now going to turn to the panel discussion aspect of the Committee meeting. If I start off with the questioning, the first one is to Sharon.

From our first meeting on this topic last month, it was becoming evident that data on demolition was not very clear. It is something that has come out of the discussion as well today. Would it be helpful to have clearer data indicating the proportion of council or social homes in London which are being demolished compared with those that undergo major refurbishment so that we can actually have a much clearer analysis of the situation?

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): There certainly needs to be clear data about what is being demolished, yes, absolutely, and the proportions of it. We had to do a lot of trawling through the figures to find anything that was sensible. We know that year after year because we do track and monitor what is delivered in terms of additional homes in London and it is always incredibly poor for social-rented homes. However, it is only recently that we have matched it up. What is happening here is that a big chunk of the failure to deliver is about the demolition of existing homes because the money coming in from the new homes is just building homes to replace the old.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you. Chris Jofeh and Lucy Musgrave, welcome both to you as well. Have you anything to add on this point about the need for clearer data?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): Yes, it is absolutely essential we have good data. Picking up on the points that Kate Crawford and Richard Lee made, demolition and new build emits an awful lot of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Even if you build a superefficient home, which we are not very good at, it could take 30 years before you redress the balance. Simply demolishing and rebuilding does nothing to tackle the carbon emissions problem we have and in fact the sums I have been doing recently suggest that it makes it slightly worse. If we do take those carbon targets seriously-- refurbishment is an option which is much more likely to achieve those targets than demolition, which actually will lead the other way.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): That is very useful, thank you. Lucy, do you have anything to add, either in terms of the question about data or any immediate responses to some of the issues that you have heard raised?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): The Ipsos MORI polls over the last years has proved that nationally, in terms of the acknowledgement from the whole of the UK, there is a housing crisis and it is very humbling hearing today people's lived experience in terms of the absolutely phenomenal impact.

One of the things I wanted to say in terms of the issue about environmental data and the assessment, as Richard Lee has said, of embedded carbon is that actually we need to be learning about best practice. These are intractable problems that are being dealt with all across the world. We have open source software and we have the digital revolution in terms of sharing best practice for refurbishment. There is an architectural practice in France called Lacaton + Vassal that has proved that between a third and a half can be saved by refurbishment through smart interventions to social infrastructure. Actually, people do not even have to be decanted with some of the light-touch things that can be done to existing social housing estates. They have huge amounts of research to share and in this country we are pretty insular in terms of learning about best practice and other ways of thinking about some of these intractable problems. I would urge the Committee to look at Lacaton + Vassal's case studies.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): We do not do enough, certainly, as a city, sharing best practice and learning from others.

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): We do not and in particular these case studies have proved that between a third and a half of the financial cost of demolition and rebuilding to the public purse can be saved, but also in terms of the environmental cost.

Of course, my next point was going to be about the social cost. Nearly 100 years ago, this city led the way in understanding and being able to survey through onsite surveys the importance of social networks in high-density housing neighbourhoods, having really set that practice in train 90 years ago by some extraordinary women. Irene Barclay and Evelyn Perry [20th century British chartered surveyors], people like that, who actually went in and understood. Instead of the surveying happening from the (former) London County Council (LCC) in a desk-based survey, they were going and finding out what was happening in housing conditions, and understanding that it is essential when you are considering renewal of housing and regeneration that you can retain, sustain and nurture the social networks that exist. Otherwise, in terms of our definition of sustainability, we lose economically, we lose environmentally, we lose in terms of employment and so forth.

My point on data is that there are things that we are missing at the moment. I concur with my other panellists that we need more transparency and we need more information, but we also need to think about this balance between the social networks and also the best practice internationally in terms of what else is happening.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Excellent, thank you.

Nicky Gavron AM: Just a clarification on data. By the way, listening to all of that made me just want to weep, but, anyway, let us hope we can act and do something. On the Just Space point about embodied carbon, the Planning Committee has argued that there should be a policy in the London Plan, especially as the Mayor has now brought out updated Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Sustainable Design and Construction. I was at a local inquiry recently where they lost the argument on embodied carbon - it was actually in Haringey - because the SPG on Sustainable Design and Construction was seen as an orphan because

there was no policy in the London Plan to support it. Therefore, we argued for it to be in and the Mayor had his Further Alterations to the London Plan and the Mayor's staff had not put it in. We then said to the inspector at the examination-in-public, who has also not put it in as a matter of fact. We have now submitted it as a matter and tomorrow, actually, I am meeting with the inspector and I will bring it up again. I am just telling you what a struggle it is to get this in.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you for that and that work of the Planning Committee is something we can tie up with this report as well.

Murad Qureshi AM: It is clear to me from what we have just heard that many of the regenerations happening on estates across London are not being put forward by the tenants and residents. What is the rationale behind a lot of the proposals, Sharon?

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): There is a variety. Probably a very good person to ask, actually, because I cannot speak on behalf of everybody, is Jerry [Flynn] on some of the rationale that was given on your estates. We had a number of them, if you do not mind.

Jerry Flynn (Spokesperson, 35 Percent and Elephant Amenity Network): We have given the Heygate Estate as an example. It started back in 1999, so it was quite a long time ago, but it did start with an options appraisal survey, first of all, to see what the physical condition of the estate was. The options appraisal survey came to the conclusion that the best option was refurbishment. The physical condition was not bad enough to justify demolition and refurbishment would be the most cost-effective solution.

However, the council, because of the situation of the Heygate Estate at Elephant and Castle and its geographic advantages and transport links, decided that the land value should be the deciding factor. If you open it up, it seems to be quite clear about this. It has given this as the deciding factor on the demolition of the Heygate Estate as part of the wider regeneration of Elephant and Castle, with CPO inquiries and other public inquiries. I do not know whether this could be true of other estates.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): We did hear at our last meeting about the perverse financial incentives for demolition around value-added tax (VAT) on refurbishment but no VAT on new builds and those sorts of issues as well.

Female Speaker: Also, the investment bids. You have listed on your website, in actual fact, the amounts from what year they are. When I delved into it a bit further, any private developer, after ten units or something, can apply for a grant to the GLA and it has to be over 0.4 hectares or something. If you have ever seen any new builds, they are too small. There is no storage. You are only allowed a balcony because you do not want to use up the green space. They are using up all the green space in Barnet. There is nowhere for a kid to kick a football around. It is literally only profit, but in Barnet there are no funded houses. There is no social housing. There is no nothing anymore.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Those comments are well noted.

Murad Qureshi AM: Certainly the picture that I am getting is that it is very rare for residents to be pushing for regeneration. The only example Sally [Taylor] gave was of Elgin and Walerton Estates down the Harrow Road near to me. That was actually a historical battle there. Also, very rarely do residents and tenants get the opportunity to decide the fate of their estate at the ballot box. That is the lesson from West Kensington and Gibbs Green Estates. It is done between elections and that is important and it can be different political persuasions at the local authority level.

Can I just get a bit further in? One of the dominant players I have seen in the London context has been housing associations. What is really the motive behind housing association involvement, apart from the finances? Are we any nearer to knowing what their primary motive is, apart from what they say they are trying to do, Sharon?

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): Housing association involvement in demolition?

Murad Qureshi AM: In regeneration and demolitions and how they go about it?

Pat Turnbull (Hackney Residents Liaison Panel representative, London Tenants Federation): Can I make a suggestion about that? Housing associations used to get Government money. You will remember it was all part of trying to move away from council housing and delegate it to the associations. Gradually the grants have been withdrawn and withdrawn and withdrawn and now housing associations see building homes for sale as cross-subsidising the social housing that they took on when it was removed from council hands.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): We looked at housing associations some months ago and certainly the financial pressures and the reduction in funding and so on has been a big driver on this.

Murad Qureshi AM: Let me come to our professionals. To what extent can residents determine when it is decided that there should be regeneration whether it should be refurbishment or demolition on their estates? Are there examples in the London context where we can genuinely say the tenants and residents on those estates have been given that option and it has not been decided before they actually put their names to it? Lucy, presumably you have been involved in developments?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): Yes. Maybe I should explain who I am. I am an urban planner and public realm consultant. I used to run a thing called the Architecture Foundation where we set demonstration projects in terms of participative urban design around neighbourhoods. That is what I am interested in about the complexity of London's urban neighbourhoods and everything that goes into that, all of the ingredients that make successful urban living. We wrote policy and guidance around participative urban design and we did demonstration projects and we seconded people to the Social Exclusion Unit and so forth in terms of thinking actually about how you could deal with participation and engagement.

I have to say I am pretty opposed to how we deal with public consultation in this country and it is pretty spurious, you have heard a lot of evidence from the floor. At best, it is information giving. I worked for a lot of different people - Londoners, developers, planning authorities, tenants' associations and amenities societies - so I see it from many different angles. I see it through my consultancy and also my community interest company. I have to say I cannot really point to any good example where the public consultation processes actually allow residents and participants to influence what is going to be happening because the financial model and the development model has already been decided upon. Therefore, it is information giving at best.

I am interested, and my professional life has been interested, in what other tools and methods you can use whereby people can meaningfully influence what is happening in their neighbourhood. Obviously there are lots of extremely committed and articulate people here who are doing exactly that and across London there are many, many different players who do that on a variety of levels.

I have been involved in one local housing estate recently, the Peabody Estate, where the tenants' association was unimpressed with their landlord's approach to public consultation in the 21st Century and asked the landlord whether they could appoint their own consultants to do a portrait of the estate and to think about the

long-term regeneration of the estate from the tenants' perspective, and then they could have a meaningful conversation actually in terms of the local area action plan and what was going to happen on the estate.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): That is great. Nicky [Gavron] is going to come in later on to ask questions about how tenants should be involved and engaged, so we will move on to that in more detail later.

Andrew Boff AM: Initially to Ms Musgrave, poor design is often cited as a reason for redevelopment and in many cases the poor quality of public spaces. In your experience, where providers claim that design fosters crime and antisocial behaviour, can estates actually be refurbished or is it usually better to demolish and start again if that physical encouragement of an unsafe environment is there?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): I go back to my earlier point that there are lots of case studies where you can refurbish. In terms of the Paris social housing department, there were lots of assumptions made about crime and antisocial behaviour and that these were very difficult and hostile environments. Actually, they have been proved through refurbishment to be able to be addressed. It is an easy kneejerk reaction to say that the way we used to build post-war housing in terms of deck access and planning primarily for the private car rather than for pedestrians, is not relevant to the way we now plan for urban environments and urban neighbourhoods in the 21st Century. In terms of retrofitting that, I think everybody can imagine a housing estate with what we call 'SLOAP' - space left over after planning - where there is a sea of green space that does not have any amenity value, does not have any clear management and does not have custodianship where there is an absolute dearth of play space for young people, care for elderly members of the community and so forth.

Actually, it is not beyond the wit of man to be able to design properly for what we now know in the 21st Century is functioning, residential, high-density neighbourhoods, but it has to be done through public realm, through the connections, correct planning and good management as well as good physical design. It has to be done primarily with the people who feel they have a stake in terms of taking ownership of some spaces to be able to take forward that amenity.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): Is it not a gauge of good community consultation to have the residents of an estate determine what their problems are and how they want them to be solved?

Andrew Boff AM: That is a good contribution. For 20 years, I was living in Hackney right near Holly Street. There is nothing that would make me want to bring back the old Holly Street, nothing. Occasionally, is demolition not the right course of action? The problem here is that we have not engaged with the communities and taken them on board to show them what the wider vision is. Similarly, I cannot imagine that in 20 years' time I will be joining a campaign to save the new Woodberry Down from being demolished, as is inevitably going to be the case.

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): Your point is about design standards generally and urban planning generally. Therefore, in terms of understanding what we now know about the pressures on society with climate change, long-term decision-making, and social and environmental need, it is about good design, and long-term thinking and of course it is about good governance and ensuring absolutely, as Sharon [Hayward] says, that people who are experts on a local neighbourhood are able to contribute to the brief of actually what works and what does not work.

Andrew Boff AM: Would it be possible, either here or later, to provide us with some examples of where those kinds of interventions have turned an estate around in terms of public safety?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): Yes. There are not that many examples in this country.

Andrew Boff AM: There are some, though?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): Sure, yes.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you very much.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you. Let us now move on to maintenance costs and Tom is going to lead off on this.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): This is to Chris first of all. Obviously one of the factors when considering whether or not to demolish or to refurbish is the cost of maintaining the buildings. Which, if any, sorts of buildings cannot be refurbished?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): Gosh, that is a difficult one. For me, the starting default position is every building can be refurbished. It is a question of whether it makes social, economic and environmental sense to do so. It is very rare that a building is in such a condition that it absolutely has to be taken down.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): We had Lewisham at our last session and they were talking about some properties they have that were thrown up literally as temporary accommodation post-war and they are still there and are still lived in. They were saying that, for them, they are not particularly nice properties and it does not make much sense financially for the council to do anything other than demolish them. What would you say about that, particularly if they are very energy-inefficient?

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): These are prefabs.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): These are prefabs, yes.

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): I would say the fact that they are still up indicates that things can last a lot longer than we might think.

There is another aspect to this as well: the numbers can prove whatever you want the numbers to prove, depending on whether you are buying or selling, but they generally do not go broad enough. There are things which are quite easy to quantify and things which are traditionally harder to quantify and therefore get eliminated. A lot of the discussion we have had today has been focusing on those social issues, educational issues, health issues and the local economic impacts of doing different aspects of work.

There are now techniques which have been evolved, which are formally accepted, and are being used under the heading 'social return on investment'. It is possible now to look at any proposed scheme and compare, let us say, a refurbishment option with a demolition option and calculate those social impacts. It is often the case that a refurbishment scheme will generate significantly more positive quantifiable benefits and significantly fewer disbenefits than a new build/demolition scheme. If we can get it accepted that the social return needs to be better assessed and brought into the balance, it is going to be a lot easier to demonstrate that refurbishment is usually the preferred option.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): In terms of the ease of retrofitting different types of buildings, are modern buildings more difficult to retrofit than, say, Victorian or Edwardian properties?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): No, I do not think so. There will be different techniques used and different materials perhaps and different approaches, but fundamentally they are buildings and you want to keep the water out and keep the heat in, so I do not think one is particularly harder than another. Possibly high-rise is a little more challenging simply because you have to work up the outside of a tall building, but techniques are available to do that.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): In terms of the financials, obviously in inner London you have land which is very high-value. A council or housing association may look at it and say, "If we were to demolish this and rebuild it, we could deliver even more social housing and we can cross-subsidise it through private housing". To play devil's advocate, is that not a perfectly reasonable thing to do if it is going to result in a greater quantity of social housing and not a loss of social housing, as we have heard can happen in some developments?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): It sounds like a reasonable thing to do, but the evidence appears to be pretty consistent that it may be what is described but not what is delivered.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): OK, so, at Arup, you would emphasise in particular the importance of quantifying the social aspects more than perhaps councils and housing associations do at the moment, but how do you make that case? If we play devil's advocate here for a minute, which is what we should be doing, how do you make that case to councils?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): There is this technique which the Cabinet Office published on how you go about assessing the social return. It is established, it is tested, it is tried and it is being used in different parts of the country.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Is it widely used?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): Not yet, but it is growing.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): It will be one of your recommendations that that be integrated into the decision-making process as a matter of course?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): Absolutely, yes. Yes, it would because it can demonstrate particularly the local benefits of refurbishment schemes.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): My last question to you before I want to bring in our other guest: how confident can we be in the robustness of cost-benefit analyses?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): Gosh. It depends on the integrity with which it is done, I suppose, and the testing of the assumptions that go with it.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): It depends, basically, yes?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): Yes. In many of these things, it depends if you are buying or selling. It is easy to present the same set of numbers in two completely different ways, depending on how you frame the argument. You have somehow to find some impartial people who can work through it in an objective and trustworthy way, and see what they come up with.

Andrew Boff AM: One of the biggest benefits that will be cited by developers and local councils is the need to increase supply and how refurbishment copes with that pressing need of increasing supply. It trumps every other argument at the moment. We can go on about the environmental concerns and everything else, but as soon as you say, "We are going to provide another 100 properties on this estate", it trumps everything else because of the pressure we have in London.

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): It is a hard argument to resist, but you have to ask a little more closely what kind of properties are being provided and for whom. The answer you get there may influence how you respond to it because it appears that it is being sold often as an increased number of social housing and what is developed is market housing, so you have more but for some people there is less.

Andrew Boff AM: Are we talking just about tenure or the style of housing? How often do we ask residents on an estate what kind of housing they prefer, whether they want tower blocks, whether they want deck access, whether they want homes with gardens? Do we ever use those?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): I do not know. I would imagine this group would be able to answer that much better than I can.

Sally Taylor (Chair, West Kensington Tenants & Residents Association): No tower blocks. The developers call them mansion blocks now.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): I was interested if Lucy and Sharon had anything to say on the points and the things that Chris has said in response to my questions.

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): I completely agree.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): Yes. If you look at the list that we have put together of the kinds of things we would want to see everybody having access to in terms of decision making about whether a home should be demolished or whether it should be refurbished, it would be a good start.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): We shall certainly be taking that in as evidence.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): You should be taking that as a starting point. I am very pleased to see that there is this document that Chris was talking about. I find that very interesting. I do not know of any estates where they are demolishing and then providing more social-rented homes.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): In Camden they are.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): Where?

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): On the Gospel Oak redevelopment, they are providing extra and it is council [housing] as well. It is all council on the Gospel Oak redevelopment and I believe on the Maiden Lane development as well.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Another model is densification of existing social housing estates to provide additional council housing on those estates. Have you had any experience of those? I know in the borough where I used to be a councillor - Lewisham - that is exactly what they are looking at now. It addresses Lucy's issue about SLOAP - the space left over after planning - and sometimes on these 1960s estates where you have laundry rooms that are no longer used or big areas of tarmac that are not necessarily used that could be

brought into productive use as well as improving the quality of the open space. Have you any comment on that?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): There has been a big debate about density in London since the Urban Task Force report was published nearly 15 years ago. We know that now, environmentally and socially, it makes sense for neighbourhoods to be dense-intensified in terms of places where people can walk and cycle, get to school easily, look after their neighbours, get to places of employment and so forth. In terms of intensification, actually in a lot of London high-rise was seen as high-density, but that is not the case at all. That case really had political consensus and an agreement that we need to think about our urban neighbourhoods differently. We do need to get the right ingredients for quality of life issues for everybody, the different social classes, the young, the old, etc. We need to understand what those ingredients are.

I do not think enough work has been done necessarily in policy terms. Obviously, we do have things like Lifetime Neighbourhoods from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and you do have at the moment the portfolio of shaping neighbourhoods' ideas about character, context and what people value that might not be immediately obvious, as well as issues about amenity, recreation, open space, play and so forth. That is being consulted on at the moment in the Further Alterations to the London Plan, but from my perspective I am very interested in the health of neighbourhoods rather than just housing units and a numbers game. Ultimately, in terms of everybody's physical environment, wherever you live, we can make it better for the 21st Century in London rather than what we have at the moment.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Would you say, given that context, that we can intensify without necessarily demolition but just through looking at using land around developments or increasing storeys on developments or whatever?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): In terms of the opportunity for assessing, there have been lots of case studies done in the past. People like Richard Burton of Ahrends, Burton and Koralek (ABK), a very respected architect in this country, have been looking at how you can put in more social programme onto housing estates as well as more housing units. That is not necessarily a terrible starting point. It has to be assessed. It would be a mistake to assume that there is a formulaic approach to density. In terms of the character and the context of a particular neighbourhood, it has to be assessed and you have to have an intelligence base and the right amount of data to be able to make that decision for the public good.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Do you have some examples, again, or case studies? I know you have feet on the ground in this country. Do you have some examples of best practice there?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): Yes, we can try to pull a list together.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): That could be very useful.

Andrew Boff AM: Could I specifically take you up on what you said? I do not want to put words into your mouth but you said that high-density does not equal high-rise. An awful lot of people do not believe that and we have planning applications and justifications for high-rise on the basis that it is high-density. Where would you point someone if they gave you the argument that we have to have high-rise in order to have high-density? How would you explain to them that it is not the case?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): It has been proved by the Urban Task Force that the highest-density housing in the UK is terraced housing in Kensington and Chelsea. It is an academic and political fact. It is not contentious. You get higher densities in particular typologies of housing than you do in terms of point blocks.

There are many different ways and the Urban Task Force provided a lot of evidence that for the same number of units you can stack up a neighbourhood in many different massing configurations.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Paris is denser than Beijing, I think we were told at the Planning Committee, were we not, Nicky?

Nicky Gavron AM: Yes, central Paris.

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): On the high-rise argument, I brought up my four children in a high-rise flat. If people are living in flats, it is even greater that the scarce issues of civic space, public space, and amenity for all citizens in London has to be really cared for by politicians and people who take a strategic view of how this city is going to function. Particularly if we are getting the number of new towers that the New London Architecture (NLA) tells us we are, over 230 of them as identified in London's Growing Up! Exhibition & Publication. Because of the housing need and because of the need for higher-density housing - I would argue we need to think much more carefully about how to make this city function.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): It is the right sort of building for the right sort of tenure.

Nicky Gavron AM: I just wanted to ask the gentleman from the audience who spoke about living in a tower block very happily on Woodberry Down. How high is that? Has he gone?

Male Speaker: It was a statement by somebody that was read out by Pat [Turnbull] and Pat has had to go.

Nicky Gavron AM: I would like to have known that.

Andrew Boff AM: It was Rowley Gardens, which I know very well and it is a lovely estate with people and with a very strong community on it. It is quite high. It is an example of where elderly people are quite happy living in tower blocks. They are quite happy as long as there are concierge services and security. The same can be said for Holly Street. What it does not work for is loud families and kids are loud. Rowley Gardens is lovely and I do not know why they are demolishing it.

Nicky Gavron AM: Yes. The 'skyline commission' and this announcement of 230 high-rise buildings that not many of us - in fact, none of us, practically, not even some of the Mayor's staff - knew were coming does talk about over 20 storeys, so I am quite interested in how high you can go in terms of high-rise for older people, say.

Female Speaker: Under 20, up to about 10 and not much more than 10.

Nicky Gavron AM: Anyway, it was just interesting to know that. I do not know what Lucy would say on that, but perhaps we will get to that in a minute. What I want to ask about is at what stage in the decision making you think tenants and residents should be brought in.

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): Obviously, at the earliest possible stage, but we have to be honest about how decision making and governance happens around regeneration and urban planning. We do not, in this age, in this city, have a vehicle whereby long-term decisions led by residents are allowed to flourish for a variety of reasons. We could all talk about what has happened over the generations and why it has come to be as it is. However, if you are asking for true participation and for people to be able to influence a development brief and emerging local policy in terms of regeneration, I am sure - it is like voting for motherhood - that everybody would say at the earliest possible opportunity so that they can influence. However, we also know

that those decisions are often made on a financial and development model which does not have any opportunity for people to influence.

Nicky Gavron AM: OK. What would other guests say to that question?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): I am in complete agreement.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): I said previously that people, certainly on local authority estates and social housing estates where it is the land that their homes are on that is up for grabs, it is a different issue to whether you want something that is regenerated. To regenerate means to renew, rather than to be pulled down and to have half of it given away for homes that you are not going to be able to afford.

Nicky Gavron AM: Regeneration is different from redevelopment, I agree.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): Yes, and to regenerate is about what it is that your community needs. It is as simple as that. When would you bring people in? You would bring people in at the beginning to determine what they felt were their problems and what they felt were the answers to those problems. They need to sit down with people to look at how that might come together. However, I do not think of any of us as council tenants has ever received anything like that.

Nicky Gavron AM: Is there a good example that you can point to of that?

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): If you speak to some of the guys in Haringey, there are examples of park redevelopment or the renewing of parks, some kind of small-scale stuff, maybe, but it is not generally.

Nicky Gavron AM: They are not big estate regenerations?

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): It is not generally. Generally, with regeneration there is a big pot of money. For example, with the mayoral development corporations (MDCs), there was a big pot of money that came in from central Government. Central Government said, "This is the programme that we are taking, so we are looking principally at developing mixed and balanced communities", under their definition.

If you look at Derrick's [Chung] estate, for example, in West Hendon, which was looked at to resolve this issue of having a mixed and balanced community, effectively they are moving out social housing tenants to replace with very expensive homes, some intermediate homes and some affordable rent homes. At the moment, they have a very wide and mixed community of different races, ages and religions and it is probably much more mixed in that kind of context than it would be with the new luxury homes on the estates.

If you are going to talk widely about regeneration, we have to talk about the focus that has been led from central Government for a very long time, which is about a mixed and balanced community, and target social housing estates in the London Plan.

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): In terms of play, actually, there was a high point of thinking through the New Deal for Communities and the EC1 New Deal, for example, and the London Borough of Camden's Play Pathfinder programme, which created 29 new playgrounds on underused or derelict bits of public land that could serve a social need and created also a new adventure playground in Kilburn. In terms of some strands around the amenity and particularly around play, until the cuts came in - and Camden no longer has Play Pathfinder and no longer has a Head of Play, those posts have been cut - there were certain things that were

done around housing estates that were really impressive. The EC1 New Deal is a very good case study and I can share some of the work they achieved with some 1960s and 1970s housing blocks.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you.

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): Just a final point on carbon, if I may. Another argument against high-rise is much more embodied carbon in high-rise than there is in low or medium-rise, probably three times as much. Over the entire lifetime of the building, even if it is superefficient to run, it may not repay that debt. It is a net increase in carbon.

Nicky Gavron AM: When the Planning Committee looked at tall buildings a couple of months ago, it found that the evidence said that when you go above about 20 storeys it is almost impossible for buildings to be green. What was cited as a good example of regeneration was King's Cross, which is very dense. I do not know how many towers it has. A couple?

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): It goes up to 15 storeys.

Nicky Gavron AM: It is 15 storeys or something like that. It does not go very high.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Between 15 and 20, maybe.

Nicky Gavron AM: It is a 21st Century version, maybe, of Kensington and Chelsea. It is very dense and it has lots of public realm throughout it. I was very involved in the consultation for that. Partly because of community feeling, the original Foster [Sir Norman Foster, Founder and Chairman, Foster + Partners] plan, which had everything around a central park, not unlike Vauxhall Battersea Nine Elms, was thrown out and you then had what was called an 'urban design action team'. People were camped for several days, day in, day out, having workshops on how King's Cross should really work. This was in the late 1990s and then it fed into the scheme which is there now. People decided they wanted their public realm, their play space and so on woven throughout and they wanted the old buildings kept, but that is going back.

The Mayor has 37 opportunity areas coming up all over London and these are so-called brownfield. That is where the densest development is going to go. I cannot remember now, but about 12 have planning frameworks. There are a lot of planning frameworks to come forward. What my sense is, and what we heard from the Design Review Panel that works for the Mayor is, that opportunity area visions and frameworks do not get the level of consultation that you get for a local development plan or for individual planning permission. I do not know what the views of the panel are on that, but it would be an opportunity, surely, for communities, residents and tenants to be brought in.

Just look at Earls Court. It was deemed an opportunity area between the proposals document of the London Plan in 2011 and the draft. I do not know what consultation there was with tenants around that.

Murad Qureshi AM: There was not any.

Nicky Gavron AM: I just wondered. I have been to see Earl's Court, but it is an example of where they were not consulted and were just told.

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): It has been said already. Where consultations take place, perhaps they are not always followed through, taking the views of the residents into account.

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): It seems absolutely clear that all opportunity area planning frameworks (OAPFs) should be transparent and it should be best practice. We ought to be dealing socially and environmentally with a new approach to urban planning. You are absolutely right about King's Cross. We were involved in the wider area survey to understand what the strengths and the assets were of those five local authority housing estates around so that they could be fed into the regeneration objectives of King's Cross Central by the Argent team and what that might mean in terms of welcoming people in rather than doing what they feared, which was that because of all the severance it would seem like a gated community. You are absolutely right: we have moved on a lot and we know a lot about practice now in terms of participative and long-term decision making.

In fact, I would just point to the case study of Christchurch in New Zealand where there was a devastating natural disaster and they have to rebuild the city. They are not rebuilding it on the urban planning models which over the last decades have been exported from a North American model with a particular approach to building cities. They have actually done it through a bottom-up consultation where 100,000 people said to the city government - and Jan Gehl's [Danish architect and urban design consultant] film on this, *The Human Scale*, describes the process very well - that they wanted an eight-to-ten-storey, high-density city where people could walk, cycle, have play spaces and green spaces, work close to their homes and so forth.

Nicky Gavron AM: Are they getting it?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): That is the big political conundrum. Are they going to get it in Christchurch? We look at the politicians to ask, if that has been such a broad consensus, why it is not being delivered. I understand that it is.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): To echo concerns in the room, I am not convinced an earthquake would deliver the sort of housing model that we want, necessarily.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): With the opportunity area planning frameworks, there are probably a lot more in place already, Nicky, than just 12. However, the thing with the opportunity area planning frameworks --

Nicky Gavron AM: They are designated but they do not have their planning frameworks yet. Many of them do not.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): From the analysis that we have done, there are a lot more in place than 12.

Nicky Gavron AM: OK, I may be wrong on this, but the main thing is there is an awful lot to come.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): I think so. The thing is that if you want communities to engage from the grassroots, then they need support to engage in planning policy stuff. We have done some work. LTF and Just Space have a project that we are working on, funded by Trust for London, where we are working in different areas to try to support communities, including around Old Oak Common and Park Royal, but it needs a bit more money and it needs a bit more support.

Andrew Boff AM: Just on that point because we have talked a lot about planning. Do you have any examples of where communities have established their own neighbourhood plan and what roles neighbourhood plans might have in shaping local communities to the benefit of residents on housing estates?

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): There are examples of neighbourhood plans across London. I would say those are based in areas where there is more social housing and more low-income households and there are fewer in those where they are in more wealthy areas. Nonetheless, there are some. We worked with the guys on the Carpenters Estate - like Manu [Saravanamuthu] - to work on a community plan first. They are now looking at going forward to develop a neighbourhood plan. We would support those certainly as alternatives as well.

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): There was just one thing, actually. DCLG has not been great in terms of evaluating the vanguards for neighbourhood plans and we were disappointed that some of the best practice and learning across communities has not really been invested in. If you are going to make the policy through the Localism Act, you have to think practically about delivery and how people will move this forward. We are about to start helping the first urban parish council in London at Queen's Park with their neighbourhood plan in terms of thinking about a different governance structure. Ultimately, though, I have to say we are fairly sceptical about the implementation of the local plan because it will be trumped by the Core Strategy and also the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in terms of bigger decision-making further up the line. The clarity between the hierarchies of policy is required for people who are investing a lot of time and energy getting a neighbourhood plan, unpaid, and trying to get these things off the ground. We need best practice and we need to understand how they are going to be robust enough to be able to have legs in the long term.

Andrew Boff AM: Summarised, it is a useful tool but we need to evaluate the first tranche of neighbourhood plans to see. Is that what you are saying?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): Absolutely. We also need to share our learning and our case studies better. In Holland, they have 49 local architecture centres that are independent of government and the private sector and are there to facilitate a conversation about long-term decisions on urban planning. I am a member of the Farrell Review panel. It is one of our recommendations that we need some resourcing. It is not that people do not have the will to put the hours in or to help make better decisions. It is actually that there are no resources and it has not been recognised in policy.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): That is an excellent point.

Nicky Gavron AM: The Planning Committee has also found from evidence on neighbourhood plans that the resources are not there. Some communities that have managed to do a neighbourhood plan - or are managing to - have more expertise amongst them than others, so you do need the expertise there.

I just want to ask Lucy. You talked about Christchurch. Is there an example here? We keep asking for case studies. Let us have one example. I gave King's Cross. Can we have example of where it has really worked? King's Cross is a bit different from what we are talking about here because most of it was really empty brownfield, whereas what we are talking about here is the so-called regeneration of many people's estates. Can you give an example? Would Holly Street be one?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): An example of successful participation or an example of successful decision-making?

Nicky Gavron AM: Participation; people being listened to and brought in and, even if they are not brought in at the earliest stage, the assumptions and the constraints on a council are being explained. Can any of you?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): Can I talk about a small example that I have been very actively involved in, the Whitecross Street Estate, which is a Peabody housing estate in Islington? Without any consultation,

Peabody had identified some development sites within the estate. The chair of the tenants' association found out about this and asked Peabody to explain. The sites were actually identified in the Area Action Plan and were out for consultation. He went with his tenants' association to Peabody and asked if the tenants' association could do their own portrait of the estate to understand from a resident's perspective how the estate was functioning, what was missing, what could happen and how it could change over the next 20 or 30 years.

We were appointed to help the tenants' association do this exercise. The way we did it was we assessed every single block and every single space within the estate. We asked a full demographic sample from the young to the old to show us their estate and to walk us around every single block and to tell us what was working and what was not working. We looked at the history of why it had come to be what it was in terms of estate management. Some young people made films. Everybody contributed. There were 100 people from the estate who helped us gather this portrait information. We put it all up. I have brought a copy of it. We made it into a little booklet so that everybody could share. At the end of the process, we asked the tenants' association to set down the principles of what they thought estate regeneration meant for them as their vision, which they did in this four-point plan. They then presented it to the Peabody Board in the local primary school, where we put this report up on the walls. The Board of Peabody that came said to me and many of the people there, "This is the first time we have been to a public meeting where we are not being shouted at". They were not being shouted at because people felt they actually had some practical tools whereby what mattered to them in terms of decision making on this estate and estate management was potentially going to go somewhere. Peabody then decided that it was going to take this vision as a baseline for the brief for the estate. It then appointed landscape architects and is in the process of appointing engagement consultants to ensure that this vision has legs and will be carried forward.

It is not a local authority example, but it is a small example from a registered social landlord (RSL) where it is not rocket science at all and it is a win-win situation with joined-up and better decision making where you can make the right decisions spatially, socially and culturally.

Nicky Gavron AM: That is interesting. How can you ensure that it is not a small and very vocal group of residents/tenants and that all the different voices are engaged? I have been a councillor and that is a criticism often used by fellow councillors. I came into it as a community activist, but fellow councillors often said, "It will just be the usual suspects". It is an argument used for not consulting, often, or consulting in very shallow terms.

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): The interesting thing about all urban neighbourhoods is they are about conflict. We are not sitting around a parish green where everyone agrees with other and looks the same. That is the point about cities. There are differences of opinion and there are different perspectives.

At the first public meeting that we had on this particular estate, people were trying to physically hit each other because there was so much anxiety about people losing their homes. They did not really want to talk about regeneration. They did not want to talk about the playground over there. They wanted to talk about whether they were going to be able to stay in their homes and that was palpable in terms of actually impeding any reasonable conversation amongst neighbours about what was going to happen. The second and third meetings and the walks and the reason we put together this representative group of the full demographic of the estate was to make sure that young people, old people, people with mobility issues and people who were in employment and who were moving out of the estate and did not have any problem with some of the issues about the public realm were all heard and represented.

It is really important in terms of practice and methodology that it is not just about this statutory public consultation as we know it now because it is not working. When you do have public meetings, often it is the people who feel most confident to stand up, rather than the people who have very different lived experiences.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): There is a hell of a lot of stereotyping of people who are active on local authority estates. People who are battling to keep a tenants' association going, which is very difficult with very transient communities, for a whole pile of reasons, find it incredibly difficult. The fact that the local authorities do not provide a great deal of support at that level makes everything worse.

Nicky Gavron AM: I agree. There are different views coming forward when you are consulting from leaseholders and from tenants. How do you make that whole process more equitable? It can be very different, what people want to get out of what is coming forward. Have you been involved in those situations and how do you square that circle? Lucy, that would not have been the case - or would it - in your Peabody example?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): Because we are looking at this through the prism of the neighbourhood, we are not talking about individual units, so I am probably not the best person to answer that in terms of the mix of tenure and also those different perspectives. We were looking at the neighbourhood and how it was funded. The 100 people who became involved in this particular exercise felt that they were participants and citizens of that neighbourhood.

I have to say, not on this particular estate but where we have been working on other estates, we also find the housing manager and the local authority might think there are X number of people living on the estate but there may well be at least twice as many people living on the estate because of the housing crisis. Those people are not able to put their heads above the parapet and contribute to some of the debates that are happening here today for a variety of different reasons. Yes, you do have leaseholders and you do have tenants, but you also have people who are really, really below the radar and who are living in social housing.

Nicky Gavron AM: Does anyone have anything to add on that?

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): I just wondered what sort of tensions you have experience at that level or differences between views of --

Nicky Gavron AM: Service charges is one.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Especially major works charges.

Nicky Gavron AM: Play space is another. I have found it very difficult to negotiate play space sometimes with leaseholders because they do not see themselves as necessarily being the beneficiaries of it. Does anyone else have anything to add?

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): I am sure there are some creative ways of looking at that.

Nicky Gavron AM: I am sure there are. I know there are. I am asking you.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): There are ways of reducing bills for leaseholders in some circumstances: bringing in money from other sources, for example. There are a number of ways of resolving that. Focusing on where both have a similar concern is a very good way to start.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Does that go back to Lucy's point that rather than just seeing this as two distinct groups of people in a city, you are always going to have lots of people with strong opinions that do not necessarily coalesce, and a sophisticated consultation and engagement process is about pulling all of that dynamic together?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): I would also argue it is about leadership and who is championing the civic in the city. I see children as a civilising force and luckily the Mayor has a Play Strategy. How it is being implemented by the boroughs at the moment I do not know, but there was a very bold move with the Mayor's Play Strategy to be able to ensure that children and young people are looked after in this city. In terms of the framework of policymakers and politicians and leaders, we need to hear more. Obviously, there are always going to be differences of opinion, particularly that conflict between generations.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): I want to drag people back, really, because the reason we came here was to look at the issues of demolition versus refurbishment because we thought you had a strategic overview of what the Mayor does and how issues may be raised where that is not working properly for communities. I am not sure how debates on the leaseholders/tenants is going to get us much further and where that will take you in terms of the strategic overview of what the Mayor is doing.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Yes, I do not want to spend too much time on this because we have a lot of questions to get in and limited time.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): The first meeting was advertised as being about demolition and refurbishment. This one has gone a lot further into regeneration and probably, had we known about that prior to coming here, not just me but all of the people sitting here, we would have been much better prepared.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): You were far more disciplined with your presentation than many of our Committee Members today, so I want us to stay absolutely focused on our terms of reference. Full marks to the Tenants' Federation and fewer marks to my fellow Committee Members.

Tom Copley AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you.

Nicky Gavron AM: I just want in defence to say that trying to get consultation at the right time, which is what we need, and to bring people in at the right time, it is actually very difficult to convince a lot of our political colleagues and to convince the Mayor's people, too. It is important for us to understand your rebuttals to some of the stereotypes. That is what I was trying to explore.

Murad Qureshi AM: An important consideration is engagement. One of the most difficult processes, whatever the regeneration, new build or refurbishment, is the decanting programme and how you move people around to make the space to do the works. I am just wondering if there are any lessons to be learned from that. I say that because there is an estate I go down to, just on the edge down at Paddington Rec, the South Kilburn Estate. It has taken them almost 18 years to decant most of that and to get the stuff done that was meant to have been done in 1997. If people had known it was going to take that long, maybe there would have been better options for the people there. I just want to be clear about to what extent we can be realistic about that at the outset of regeneration proposals. We did hear one or two people touch on it.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): There were one or two people who touched on it. Can they speak?

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Yes, all right. Our resident decant expert from Heygate.

Jerry Flynn (Spokesperson, 35 Percent and Elephant Amenity Network): Do not do it the way it was done at the Heygate. As I said, they started this off in 1997 and so far, in 2014, 45 people from the estate have new homes. Decant proper started in 2007 and it was quite quick on the Heygate. It was about a year. One of the problems with it is we were all decanted into the current council housing stock, displacing opportunities for other people on the council housing waiting list from moving in. That is something that should be looked at. About a third of people moving into council housing stock in Newham, Southwark and perhaps in Barnet are people who are moving through decants rather than through other sorts of voluntary schemes.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): Decanting pushes people to the top, so you get places like Carpenters Estate and --

Murad Qureshi AM: Yes, that is what has happened.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): -- other estates in Newham where people have just been moved off and other people are left with inadequate services around because there are insufficient people there to keep the local shops, the local pubs or the local whatever going. All the social impacts are equally bad on the people who are left as they are for those who have had to be decanted off.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Those on the housing waiting lists as well.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): Those on the housing waiting lists. On the Carpenters and other places, the homes are just empty. It is worse, even, than bringing people in on a temporary basis.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): That was very useful.

Nicky Gavron AM: We should get examples of where it has been done successfully because there were many in the past across London.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): Maybe in the past, but not so much now. You do one block and then you move people.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): If we get the successful or the disastrous or somewhere in between, we are very keen to hear examples from people.

Andrew Boff AM: A lot of what I want to ask has been alluded to by Ms Musgrave. I was going to ask about the key things to ensuring that residents are happy when regeneration plans are presented to them. You gave an example quite successfully there about the engagement with residents and I am assuming that would be your response to that question. What are the key themes in terms of public engagement that are required?

Lucy Musgrave (Director, Publica): There has to be an openness that the conversation is going to go in a different direction than perhaps some of the decision makers thought and that should be seen as a positive. There is this great moment in terms of the way that we participate now in society. It is not a paternalistic, top-down society anymore. We all do participate in some way and through the digital revolution we share things and we speak to each other in different communities and in different ways. If there is an openness to setting a development, planning and regeneration brief, it is not necessarily going to be what we have seen before. There has to be an openness to different voices being heard and different decisions being made. However, I cannot see any evidence of or enthusiasm about that process in terms of officers or members who have very,

very limited resources and who are trying to play the numbers game that we were playing in the 1960s and 1970s at the moment.

Andrew Boff AM: To answer your question and ask a question as well to Ms Hayward about what you were saying about what you thought the remit of this meeting was, it is difficult for these subjects not to wander. The investigation is about demolition or refurbishment.

I have been involved quite a lot with the Colville Estate in Hackney over their problems with regeneration. It seems to be that because the residents there do not feel engaged with the process and feel as though they are going to lose their properties and not get adequate compensation, it actually colours their view of the plans that the local authority has and the local authority justifies them on the basis of improving the number of homes for people who live in Hackney, where there is a shortage.

My question is first of all what kind of arrangements should there be in place within a regeneration/demolition programme as a minimum for tenants for decanting purposes? What minimum standards can one expect? Secondly, if demolition is being carried forward, what compensation package should residents reasonably expect with regard to perhaps leaseholders?

Sally, you rather pooh-poohed like-for-like in your contribution earlier.

Sally Taylor (Chair, West Kensington Tenants & Residents Association): We did not at the start. We believed them.

Andrew Boff AM: Yes. I wanted to ask you a question about why like-for-like is not a good thing because it is something we have been fighting for on the Colville Estate, some kind of like-for-like compensation.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): It just does not materialise.

Sally Taylor (Chair, West Kensington Tenants & Residents Association): The developers tell us like-for-like in the beginning and they lied to us.

Andrew Boff AM: What should be the minimum package that should be available to leaseholders?

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): If they are not leaseholders, it is like-for-like, absolutely.

Andrew Boff AM: They are tenants as well.

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): Absolutely. On an estate, like-for-like is exactly the same sized property, the same rent and the same tenure. For tenants, yes. For leaseholders, Jerry?

Jerry Flynn (Spokesperson, 35 Percent and Elephant Amenity Network): For leaseholders, it is statutorily determined and that is what they are told.

Female Speaker: It is capped as well.

Jerry Flynn (Spokesperson, 35 Percent and Elephant Amenity Network): On the idea that there is some package, yes, offers were made but there was no package put in place. The idea of a package beyond what is statutorily determined when the local authorities are having to meet a compensation bill is a bit fanciful, frankly.

Andrew Boff AM: Absolutely. One of the residents in the Colville Estate was in a four-bedroom maisonette. This is Hoxton. Nobody wants to live in Hoxton, do they? They offered him £210,000 for a four-bedroom flat in Hoxton. That guy who has spent most of his life as part of the community cannot ever again afford to live where he has been brought up because there is no like-for-like.

That is what I want to know from the developers. What financial impact would there be if the Mayor of London said, "Generally speaking, we should have like-for-like compensation in London"? What would be the financial impact on those redevelopment schemes? Would it be horrendous or just a blip?

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Any thoughts from the panel on that or is this something we need to take to the Mayor's Office?

Sharon Hayward (Co-ordinator, LTF): Policy 3.14 of the London Plan, which is about existing housing to ensure that there is no loss of social-rented homes. At the moment, it says there should be no loss of housing, so you can have the various estates around where there is no loss of housing. There can be anything else of any other tenure, but no loss of social housing.

Andrew Boff AM: I get that broad policy aim. I am now talking about the individuals who are being affected. If somebody is on an estate and they have had a CPO on their leasehold or as a tenant they have been told they have to move, what is the minimum standard we should expect?

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): In the second row, you did not contribute in the earlier part, so we are going to bring you in.

Female Speaker: Just a really important point when we are talking about consultation is that the people who are supposedly being consulted on these estates are not the ones who end up living on them. That is a point that has just not been raised. If you look at the Heygate Estate, a very small minority of the existing residents remained. How can you have like-for-like if you are not even going to remain on the estate? I have anecdotal evidence from the West Hendon Estate. I met with a gentleman in a four-bedroom house overlooking the Welsh Harp, with a lovely garden, with freehold, may I add. How is he ever going to receive anything that is like-for-like through that development? It is not feasible and consultation cannot happen with people who are not going to remain on that estate, so the baseline has to be that the existing social housing has to exist after that redevelopment and the people who live on that estate have to exist after that redevelopment. Otherwise, it is not consultation.

Nicky Gavron AM: Well done.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you.

Andrew Boff AM: What would be the financial impact to most developers in these development packages of saying, "You must provide like-for-like"?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): They would probably take their money somewhere else and look to get the returns they want, somewhere where it is easier to make money.

Sally Taylor (Chair, West Kensington Tenants & Residents Association): Yay. What a good idea.

Andrew Boff AM: Hold on. If I can just push you on that one, the financing of housing is a big issue. It is very easy to say, "We do not want any new money and we do not want to have owner-occupiers on an estate", but you are not going to get it financed. You are not going to get the regeneration financed. You have to have that. That has been the case for years now. You have to have that financing. Are you saying nobody will come in in their place and we would end up not building any houses anymore?

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): It would slow it. Like-for-like is going to be more expensive for the developer than non-like-for-like, is it not?

Andrew Boff AM: It is, it is.

Chris Jofeh (Director, Arup): It is going to alter the development appraisal adversely from their point of view. They are sensitive about that, so it would act as a deterrent.

Nicky Gavron AM: This is all because we do not see housing as an investment and give grant.

Female Speaker: There is one point that has been overlooked.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Very, very quickly because I am keen to draw this to a close.

Female Speaker: I was on one of the regeneration committees at Grahame Park when they started to do the regeneration in Colindale in Barnet. People were bought out. I do not remember the percentage of what houses were being sold for at the time and what those who had bought their homes were offered. However, a lot of people - and the majority at the beginning - were sent up north.

I know one success story only because it is a longwinded story of somebody I personally know. He sold his house on Grahame Park, moved up to Newcastle because he had a disabled wife, bought her a flat and did whatever he did. Then he came back and around the corner it turned out that there was a house slightly bigger and for another £5,000 he bought it. He was the success story for the Conservatives on how it worked. However, basically, the complaint has been - and nobody has bought this up in actual fact - that a lot of people were sent up north because there was a lot of council housing stock and the properties were bigger.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): It clearly shows the problems when you have this issue with leaseholders who own the properties and who are then moved out and cannot afford to move back in. Again, there are very clear examples of that.

Can I thank everyone who has contributed today and can I thank the panel as well? We have had some really good, strong contributions, so thank you to everyone who has made the effort to come to City Hall this afternoon. If you did not get a chance or if you think of something else, you can email us at housingcommittee@london.gov.uk. If you have anything further to contribute, do email us.

Subject: Summary List of Actions

Report to: Housing Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 16 October 2014

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

1.1 This report sets out details of actions arising from a previous meeting of the Housing Committee.

2. Recommendation

2.1 **That the Committee notes the completed actions arising from a previous meeting of the Committee.**

Actions Arising from the Meeting of 10 July 2014

Minute Number	Topic	Status	For action by
5.	<p>Resident Perspectives on the Regeneration of London's Social Housing Estates</p> <p>During the course of the discussion Eileen Short from Haringey Defend Council Housing (HDCH) agreed to provide the Committee with a list of housing estates in London which are currently fighting plans to demolish homes.</p>	Complete. The list is attached as Appendix 1.	Eileen Short, HDCH
	<p>Lucy Musgrave also agreed to provide the Committee with the following additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of best practice of where public and resident intervention has resulted in improvements on estates in terms of public safety, and any other examples of best practice involving community participation in housing refurbishment; • Examples of best practice of intensifying housing estates without demolishing housing units; and • Further information on the London Borough of Camden's EC1 New Deal. 	In progress.	Lucy Musgrave, Publica

3. Legal Implications

3.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – List of estates currently fighting demolition, provided by HDCH.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
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List of Background Papers: None

Contact Officer:	David Pealing, Committee Officer
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Dear Darren Johnson

Below is our current list of estates facing threat of demolition. We believe your committee needs to urgently join the call for a moratorium on any demolition of structurally sound or viable council or housing association homes. We are also calling for Eric Pickles to retract and apologise for calling London estates 'brownfield' estates. We would welcome your support.

thanks

Eileen Short

DCH

London estates we know of, facing demolition threat as part of 'redevelopment' or 'regeneration' proposals

Barnet Grahame Park

West Hendon

Stonegrove and Spur Road

Dollis Valley

Enfield lots of similar regeneration schemes. including Alma Road (4 x 21-storey tower blocks)

Greenwich Morris Walk

Hackney Woodbury Down

(Haringey Out of Borough estate - Hackney):

Imperial Wharf, Craven Park Road N16 (2-440 evens) /Maple Close (1-50): options appraisal , promoting stock transfer ballot but "all options may include demolition". Total 270 homes

Hammersmith & Fulham Queen Caroline

West Ken & Gibbs Green

Haringey 11 estates up for full or partial demolition (including 2 of prefabs) as part of Estate review programme 2014

Alexandra Ward: Tunnel Gardens 32 houses -. demolition

Bounds Green Ward: Park Grove (22 houses) demolition

Noel Park Ward : Barbara Hucklesbury Close N22 (8 prefabs). Demolition

Northumberland Park Ward: Love Lane estate [297 council dwellings - High Road West] - Consultation already progressed in 2013 demolition

Northumberland Park [1,072 dwellings] demolition

St Ann's Ward : Helston Court (45 flats) demolition

Tottenham Green Ward: Turner Avenue (83 flats) demolition

Watts Close N15 (11 prefabs, Safford Road) demolition

West Green Ward: Tangmere, Willan Road N17 (127 flats): demolition

White Hart Lane Ward: Larkspur Close (37 homes), demolition, sale of the site.

Possibles

Seven Sisters Ward: Leabank View (45 Flats and houses) / Lemsford Close (46) Grovelands Road (7) Options may include possible demolition

Bounds green ward: Durnsford road

Kensington & Chelsea Affinity Sutton Chelsea estate

Cremorne

Lambeth Clapham Park

Cressingham Gardens

Myatt's Field North

Central Hill Estate (near Gypsy Hill)

Fenwick Estate (near Clapham)

Lewisham Excalibur (prefabs)

Newham Carpenters estate

Custom House

Southwark Heygate

Aylesbury

Tower Hamlets Robin Hood Gardens

Island Gardens; Glamis, Cable St (East End Homes)

Waltham Forest Fred Wigg Tower

Wandsworth Alton Estate

Doddington Estate

Winstanley

Westminster Churchill Gardens estate

Ebury Bridge (tenants voted on this)

Subject: Gypsy and Traveller Site Provision in London

Report to: Housing Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 16 October 2014

This report will be considered in public

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the background for the Committee's discussion of site provision for Gypsies and Travellers in London with invited guests. The meeting will also include an opportunity for the public to contribute.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the report and the summary of its site visit to Gypsy and Traveller sites at Appendix 1, as background to discussing with invited guests key issues which arise from identifying and allocating Gypsy and Traveller sites.**

3 Background

- 3.1 In February 2014, the Committee agreed to investigate the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites in London as part of its work programme for 2014/15. The Committee conducted a site visit to two Gypsy and Traveller sites on 9 September 2014; to an authorised site (Southwark) and unauthorised site (Greenwich). A summary of those visits is attached at **Appendix 1**.

4 Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 This meeting provides an opportunity for the Committee to hear from a range of invited guests about the challenges they face when allocating sites as well as innovative schemes that have been implemented to offset site demand. It will also offer a chance to hear first-hand from Gypsies and Travellers about their experiences; a half-hour segment of the meeting will be given over to a discussion open to the floor.
- 4.2 Key issues that Members might want to cover in the discussion include:
- The 2008 Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment and review if this still provides an accurate projection of need;

- The impact of any shortfall in site provision on the Gypsy and Traveller community and wider public services;
 - Highlighting local authority good practice and innovation in identifying and providing sites; and
 - The extent to which existing frameworks and policies support boroughs and communities in developing solutions locally.
- 4.3 Since the repeal of the statutory duty in 1994 that compelled boroughs to provide pitches, few new sites have been built and many were closed, resulting in reduced site provision in London. To compound this issue, borough targets were removed from the London Plan in 2010 after a change in government guidance, leaving the boroughs to understand need and determine how best to make provision for Gypsy and Traveller communities locally.
- 4.4 Despite the abolition of housing targets, local planning authorities have a statutory duty to assess accommodation needs of travellers for the preparation of Local Plans. According to the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit (LGTU) over the last ten years there has been a 15 per cent reduction in London of Gypsy and Traveller pitches in spite of evident need and population growth.¹ The LGTU estimates a need for 800 additional pitches over the next ten years.²
- 4.5 A lack of suitable sites and stopping areas may threaten the Gypsy and Traveller community's traditional travelling way of life, forcing them to stop on unauthorised plots. This can result in confrontation with local communities and carries a constant threat of eviction as well as imposing potentially significant enforcement action and clean-up costs on the relevant local authority. A lack of a permanent address is said to perpetuate the overt discrimination and poor outcomes in health and education from which Gypsies and Travellers suffer.
- 4.6 In April 2012, the Mayor inherited the Traveller Pitch Fund in London from the Homes and Communities Agency. Of the total budget of £1.55 million, £523k remains available. Under the London settlement this is an unring-fenced amount and could be utilised for any purpose. Funding for sites has been distributed to the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Hounslow and Lambeth. Funding was also allocated to Camden and Kensington and Chelsea but was later withdrawn as the boroughs found the projects were no longer deliverable.
- 4.7 A shortfall of sites also impacts wider public service provision. For example, many Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar are occupying social housing that is already in short supply. Policing, health and education services may also be affected.
- 4.8 For practical reasons caravan sites and permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites require a greater degree of land usage per household than for smaller houses. Guidance suggests that an average family pitch must be capable of accommodating an amenity building, a larger trailer and a touring caravan, parking space for two vehicles and a small garden area. For London boroughs, finding and allocating land for Gypsy and Travellers is challenging. The land take for a moderately sized site can be the equivalent of 150 houses due to recommended pitch size and their single-story makeup. Locating and designating land, discerning ownership rights and invoking public consultations from the

¹ LGTU report *Abolition of Regional Spatial strategies*. Found at: <http://www.lgtu.org.uk/Abolition%20of%20RSSs%20%20LGTU%20submission%20with%20cover.pdf>

² Ibid

surrounding community can be arduous, time consuming and costly. Moreover, boroughs have to balance the need for sites against other demands on local land such as social and affordable housing.

5 Invited Guests

5.1 A panel of guests has been invited to discuss these issues with the Committee:

- **Rob McCartney, Head of Housing Support, Leeds City Council.** Leeds piloted a ‘negotiated stopping scheme’ to end the cycle of unauthorised encampments, which is considered to be a successful scheme.
- **Bill Forrester, Head of Service, Kent County Council.** Kent works closely with its local gypsy and traveller community to manage site demand. Previously, Bill Forrester was a Gypsy Liaison Officer for Essex County Council.
- **Ilinca Diaconescu, Planning Policy, LGTU.** The London Gypsy and Traveller Unit is a representative group that supports Travellers and Gypsies living in London. Its priorities are to improve their quality of life and the opportunities available to them.
- **Gill Slater, Policy Planner, LB Bromley.** The London Borough of Bromley has the highest concentration of Gypsies and Travellers in London.
- **Jamie Ratcliff, Assistant Director – Programme, Policy and Services, Greater London Authority.** To discuss site provision in London.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no direct GLA financial implications arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Summary of the Committee’s Site Visit to Gypsy and Traveller sites on 9 September 2014.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers: Background paper for investigation into Gypsy and Traveller site provision in London, [Agenda report](#), Housing Committee meeting, 10 July 2014.

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Housing Committee Site Visit to Gypsy and Traveller Sites 9 September 2014

1. Summary

- 1.1 This appendix sets out details of the Committee's site visit to Gypsy and Traveller sites in Southwark and Greenwich. On 9 September 2014, the Committee visited two sites; an authorised site in Southwark (Brideale Close) and an unauthorised, tolerated site in Greenwich.

2. Record of site visit

- 2.1 The site visit took place to inform the Committee meeting in October. The purpose of the visit was to enable the Committee to see at first hand both an authorised and an unauthorised, tolerated site and to assess the adequacy of current provision for themselves. The Committee also had the opportunity to meet the residents at both sites.

Authorised site

- 2.2 At the Southwark authorised site the Committee held discussions with Paul Jeffery, Southwark Travellers Officer; Ilinca Diaconescu, Planning Policy, London Gypsy and Travellers Unit (LGTU); and Abigail Mawer, Southwark Travellers' Action Group (STAG).
- 2.3 The site is a permanent, authorised site and there is no transit or through flow of Gypsies and Travellers. The resident community use the site as their permanent home.
- 2.4 The Committee met a resident, who has lived at the site for the past 21 years, who reported that relations between the local community and council are now very positive. She considered this to be due to good channels of communication aided by the Gypsy and Traveller support worker and through STAG who are very proactive in supporting residential needs. Consequently, the residents at the site feel they are supported by the Council and that they are able to solve issues locally.
- 2.5 The resident noted that relations with the surrounding community had considerably improved. Initially, as a community they had experienced overt discrimination; shops and pubs would display signs that forbade entrance to Gypsies and Travellers and local schools were reluctant to allocate places to Gypsy and Traveller children. She reported this is now not the case.
- 2.6 The ground rent for a pitch at the Southwark site is £111 a week for a double pitch, and £83 per week for a single pitch. All tenants at the site currently rent their pitches, however they do have the option, under Right to Buy, to purchase the land. To date none of the residents have applied to purchase a pitch.
- 2.7 Paul Jeffery, Southwark Travellers Officer, said that there is an on-going consultation on managing the allocation policy for residency on Southwark borough sites. The council is considering operating a separate formal waiting list for Gypsy and Traveller pitches, which would only be open to the Gypsy and Traveller community. The list would be held separately from the waiting list for social housing and would include consultation with current site residents. Gypsies and Travellers

traditionally live in close-knit communities and so would like to be consulted about prospective residents.

- 2.8 New families who approach the site or children of those who reside at the site tend to move on. Some resort to living in bricks and mortar, given the lack of pitches.

Unauthorised site

- 2.9 The Committee also visited an unauthorised site based in Greenwich. The Committee held discussions with Matthew Brindley (Policy Manager, Traveller Movement) and some of the residents.
- 2.10 The site is a tolerated, unauthorised site, as the council refrains from invoking enforcement action. It has been in existence for approximately 15 years and is considered to be severely overcrowded. The site is situated amongst heavy industry including a recycling dump and aggregate and cement plant. Haulage trucks run continuously on to the entrance road where the site is located.
- 2.11 The committee met a current Irish Traveller family who reported that the site community consisted of 12 adults and 24 children (plus two on the way). The family spokesperson said that they had little contact with the council since the previous liaison officer had retired. She had considered approaching other sites in Greenwich but these are generally filled with English Gypsy and Traveller families where there are long waiting lists and family members are usually given preference.
- 2.12 The family said that the site had become more dangerous recently: the adjoining pavement was demolished and so provides less of a barrier from the haulage trucks that regularly pass. The family spokesperson suggested that it would be useful to have notice of nearby developments, as they live very close to the work being undertaken. Other key problems include dust and noise from the constant industrial activity, rats, poor sanitary facilities (residents have access to a portable toilet but no shower) and severe overcrowding.
- 2.13 The family said they choose to stay at the site as they have no option other than living in bricks and mortar. For them, community is the most important thing, so splitting up the family would be less easy to bear than the inconveniences of the encampment.
- 2.14 The family spokesperson felt that the council does not pursue enforcement action against them as they do not cause any disturbance.
- 2.15 Ownership of the land on which the site is situated is unclear. The family spokesperson said she thought that the council owned a small portion of the land and the remainder was privately owned. All caravans on the site are personally owned by the residents. Ideally the family would wish to own their own piece of land to guarantee community integrity and stability.

Subject: Clapham Park Estate Site Visit	
Report to: Housing Committee	
Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat	Date: 16 October 2014
This report will be considered in public	

1. Summary

1.1 This paper sets out details of the Committee's site visit to the Clapham Park estate in Lambeth.

2. Recommendation

2.1 **That the Committee notes the record of the site visit to the Clapham Park estate on 2 July 2014.**

3. Background

3.1 As part of its investigation into the demolition and refurbishment of London's social housing estates, the Committee visited the Clapham Park estate on 2 July 2014.

3.2 Clapham Park is one of the biggest former council estates in Europe. It extends to some 150 acres in Lambeth, straddling Brixton, Streatham, Clapham and Balham and comprising around 50 multi-storey blocks. Many of these were built during the 1920s by the then London County Council, though other parts of the housing stock were built post-war and it is mainly these newer buildings which are being demolished. Over time much of the public housing fell into disrepair following decades of neglect. A major regeneration programme is currently ongoing with a view to refurbishing and/or demolishing the existing social housing and replacing it with new mixed tenure homes.

3.3 Overall some 7,000 people currently live in the area, and there are around 2,000 homes on the former council estates.

3.4 Clapham Park is currently owned and managed by Metropolitan Clapham Park, part of Metropolitan Housing Association.

4. Record of site visit

- 4.1 The site visit took place as part of an investigation which also included two public meetings in June and July 2014.
- 4.2 The purpose of the visit was to enable the Committee to see at first hand an example of the kind of refurbishment and rebuild work which is involved in a major regeneration programme. Members had the opportunity to discuss with senior representatives of the housing association and the borough their vision for the estate and how this has been shaped by funding opportunities and Government/Mayoral policy. They also saw for themselves how work is progressing and met a number of estate residents to discuss the programme from the tenant and leaseholder perspective.
- 4.3 The Committee held discussions with members of Metropolitan's staff, including Brian Johnson, Chief Executive; Carl Quilliam, Public Affairs Executive; Bernadette Marjoram, Regeneration Director; and Jon Maxwell, Regional Director for Housing; as well as Su Gomer, Lead Commissioner, London Borough of Lambeth.
- 4.4 The Committee heard that the estate comprises a wide range of building types, dating to different periods and in differing conditions. These require a range of different regeneration responses: the 1920s neo-Georgian former London County Council stock, for example, is well-built and is being refurbished. By contrast we were told that the 1950s and 1960s blocks are generally not in good condition and are being demolished. The option of building an additional storey had been explored for one building, but planning permission was refused and so the building has been emptied and is now awaiting demolition. The logistics of the decant process are complicated. For this reason work is undertaken in phases, with some new build being developed first in order to house existing residents who are decanted from buildings which are to be demolished. Metropolitan tries to limit the number of very disruptive double decants required (whereby residents need to move out and then later back in) by using Assured Shorthold Tenancies and then creating voids in buildings which are to be demolished.
- 4.5 Brian Johnson of Metropolitan explained that rebuild tends to provide greater opportunity to densify than refurbishment and is therefore advantageous in terms of realising land values and making efficient use of land. However opportunities are available to support densification alongside refurbishment, for example by using former garages and adding additional storeys to existing buildings, and refurbishment tends to be less disruptive for residents.
- 4.6 Su Gomer of Lambeth explained that the funding criteria applied to new build often do not allow for local housing need to be met in full locally, as new build grant is based around the Affordable Rent model, which sets rent typically at 65 per cent of market rate in London. Lambeth adopts a diverse approach to regeneration across the borough, seeking to meet the variety of housing need on a scheme by scheme basis by identifying a vehicle which can deliver for that scheme.
- 4.7 The Committee also heard that risk management plays a highly significant role in regeneration work, particularly with financial risks. The risks broadly fall into two categories:
- those relating to individual buildings, for example the chance of finding asbestos or further structural problems when refurbishing; and

- the wider risks of demolishing and building anew associated with estate regeneration, for example housing market cycles and volatility in land and property prices, which have more of an impact on the viability of different options in the new lower grant environment. Keeping promises made to residents is inevitably made much harder by this heavy reliance on the market.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report: There are none.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers:

[Demolition and Refurbishment of London's Social Housing Estates](#), Report to Housing Committee, 17 June 2014

[Resident Perspectives on the Regeneration of London's Social Housing Estates](#), Report to Housing Committee, 10 July 2014

[Housing Committee Work Programme 2013/14](#), Report to Housing Committee, 17 June 2014

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Subject: Encouraging Diversity in London's House Building Industry

Report to: Housing Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 16 October 2014

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 Following its 25 March 2014 meeting, the Committee sent a letter to the Mayor regarding the use of public land to encourage diversity in London's house building industry. The Mayor responded to the Committee's findings in September 2014.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes both the letter sent by the Chair to the Mayor about encouraging diversity in London's house building industry and the Mayor's response.**

3. Background

- 3.1 In March 2014, the Committee examined the barriers to entry into London's house building industry. It spoke to representatives of small builders, community groups, and academics as well as the Executive Director for Housing and Land from the Greater London Authority (GLA). In July 2014, it sent a letter to the Mayor setting out some of the findings from its meeting, as attached at **Appendix 1**. The Committee urged the Mayor to reconsider his approach to using public sector land to support house building in London. In particular, it said that – where possible – this land should be used to help new and/or small developers enter the market, an aspiration in the London Housing Strategy.¹
- 3.2 In his response to the letter (attached at **Appendix 2**) the Mayor welcomed the Committee's support for encouraging a more diverse house building industry and in particular the need to do more to support the small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector. However, in terms of the practical solutions proposed by the Committee, the Mayor stated that the ability to adopt a different approach to using GLA land, such as dividing large GLA sites into smaller parcels reserved for SME developers, is limited by the small number of development sites still in GLA ownership that are not either in development or 'active procurement'. (The Mayor did not address what approach he would

¹ [Homes for London: the London Housing Strategy](#), GLA, page 60.

take to other public land in London over which the GLA might take strategic control – something alluded to in the London Housing Strategy.²⁾

- 3.3 The Mayor also questioned whether SME developers would find opportunities to build on larger sites either appealing or appropriate. He added that he has seen no evidence that SMEs have an appetite for a London-wide alternative to the London Development Panel (LDP) specifically targeted at them. Yet, the Federation of Master Builders issued the following statement in response to the Committee's letter which supports a similar development:

"The London Assembly Housing Committee's call to the Mayor of London to use his power to enable greater competition and diversity in the London house building market is a welcome initiative, because we desperately need more smaller house builders to deliver a wider variety of homes.

"The Mayor has been right to set ambitious targets for the number of new homes London needs to build. If this is to be achieved, it will require utilising the full capacity of the small and medium-sized house building sector. As the Housing Committee has rightly recognised, breaking larger sites down into smaller parcels is one way in which public authorities can support a healthier, more diverse house building industry.

"We are also very pleased to see the Housing Committee making clear that the Mayor must avoid acting in a way which reduces competition in the market. The London Development Panel is worryingly exclusive, involving only 25 large contractors and house builders. It is extremely important that the Greater London Authority (GLA) finds more flexible and dynamic framework arrangements, with streamlined processes, which will allow smaller firms fair access to public sector land."³

- 3.4 In other areas the Mayor is willing to accept the Committee's findings. Importantly, he agreed to publish a register of key information on LDP disposals by the end of October, which the Committee hopes will improve transparency (However, the Mayor also said that the capital receipt for disposals will be commercially confidential and therefore not disclosed). Depending on borough responses to the Housing Zones prospectus, the Mayor will also keep under review the Committee's suggestion to commission research into the risks and benefits of 'end-to-end project management', whereby the Mayor could take on a more proactive role in land assembly. And while not supportive of a London-wide alternative to the LDP, the Mayor said that the GLA would, where appropriate, support contractor panels operating at a borough level.
- 3.5 Lastly the Mayor pointed to some current examples of SME activity in the London house building industry. He said he continues to encourage LDP members to support and partner with the SME sector through contracts won through the LDP, citing the recent example of the Floating Village in the Royal Docks, which is using a small Dutch developer. He also highlighted that the GLA has established a £21.7 million revolving fund with Pocket Living to deliver homes across London over a ten year period.

² [Homes for London: the London Housing Strategy](#), GLA, page 54.

³ Brian Berry, Chief Executive, Federation of Master Builders, [Diversity Needed in London's House Building Industry, says FMB](#), press release, 8 August 2014.

4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 The letter that the Committee sent to the Mayor, dated 21 July 2014, is attached at Appendix 1. The response from the Mayor, dated 16 September 2014 is attached at Appendix 2.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Letter to the Mayor about encouraging diversity in London’s house building industry.

Appendix 2 – Response from the Mayor about encouraging diversity in London’s house building industry.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: None
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Boris Johnson
Mayor of London
(Sent via email)

Web: www.london.gov.uk

Ref: 2014/15-02

21 July 2014

Dear Boris

Encouraging diversity in London's house building industry

In March, the London Assembly's Housing Committee examined the barriers to entry into London's house building industry. We spoke to representatives of small builders, community groups, and academics as well as the Executive Director for Housing and Land from the GLA. In this letter, we set out some of our findings from the session. We urge you to reconsider your approach to using public sector land to support house building in London. In particular, we think that where possible this land should be used to help new and/or small developers enter the market, an aspiration in your housing strategy.¹

The land problem

The Committee shares your concern that London's house building industry is more concentrated than ever.² At present, it is dominated by a small number of large developers that alone do not have the capacity to build the number of homes that London requires. It is vital therefore that the public sector does all it can to encourage new entrants to the market, especially small and medium enterprise (SME) developers. Research has shown that since the economic downturn, the number of SME house builders has contracted at a much faster rate than larger builders.³

Homes cannot be built without land. But competition for expensive land makes it harder for small builders to enter the market or to grow. A recent survey of London companies in the property and construction sector found that land availability was the top barrier to house building.⁴ In addition, the land market is complex. Options agreements are commonly in place between landowners and developers so it is difficult to identify available sites. And many developers focus on securing

¹ [Home for London: the draft London Housing Strategy](#), GLA, page 48.

² [Home for London: the draft London Housing Strategy](#), GLA, page 49.

³ [Solutions for the housing shortage](#), Shelter, July 2013, page 15.

⁴ [Getting our house in order: the impact of housing undersupply on London's businesses](#), London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, May 2014, page 13.

strategic land banks to manage their pipeline of new housing supply in future years. The 2007 Callcutt review of house building delivery found that: ‘identifying, acquiring, preparing, developing and selling land (with houses on it) is the key activity of all house building companies’.⁵ As a result, privately owned land released for development by the planning system is likely to be retained by existing house builders while new, small players struggle to get a foothold in the market. (A separate but related issue is that, since the recession, small developers still struggle to access finance to purchase land.)

Given these problems, it is vital that the public sector uses its surplus land to help stabilise the land market, as KPMG and Shelter have argued recently.⁶ You committed to an exit strategy on the 670 hectares of surplus public land the GLA inherited in 2012.⁷ Other public sector bodies in London, such as NHS trusts, may also be sitting on surplus land over which the GLA could take strategic control.⁸ London’s house building industry is not building the number of homes London needs; London government must use the resources available to it, such as surplus land, to help ease this problem.

The London Development Panel

Early signs indicate that the London Development Panel (LDP) might be successful at speeding up the disposal process for public land, such as at the Peel Centre in Hendon. But quick sales of large sites to big developers do not guarantee that homes will be built faster. As your housing strategy highlighted, one of the greatest market failures in London’s house building industry is the issue of absorption, where developers manage the release of homes for sale at a rate that optimises viability and returns for them.⁹ This is particularly the case for large sites and in areas where there is a concentration of development activity. The London Housing Bank is an interesting proposal to try and ease this problem; the Committee looks forward to reviewing its prospectus this summer. Further measures are, however, needed to tackle the absorption issue and there is a risk that the LDP might make the problem worse.

To prevent successful LDP bidders from land banking public sites, they must sign detailed development agreements that specify performance expectations.¹⁰ These might stipulate fast build-out rates following disposal and/or require a mixture of tenure on the site (which can provide an incentive to build quicker).¹¹ But these agreements will not guarantee that overall output in London’s house building industry increases. Many large developers are not looking to increase their output – in fact house builders’ business strategies are now explicitly avoiding increasing the number of homes built.¹² There is therefore a risk that LDP developers prioritise their house building on LDP sites in the short term – i.e. those with development agreements in place – at the expense of their other sites, which they can then build out in future years. Put

⁵ [The Callcutt review of housebuilding delivery](#), November 2007, page 136.

⁶ [Building the homes we need: a programme for the 2015 government](#), KPMG and Shelter, May 2014, page 11.

⁷ [Mayor calls for power to unlock London’s housing potential as he breaks ground in Catford](#), Mayoral Press Release, 15 July 2014. Of this, 87 per cent is either developed or has been moved into development.

⁸ [Home for London: the draft London Housing Strategy](#), GLA, page 45.

⁹ [Home for London: the draft London Housing Strategy](#), GLA, page 49.

¹⁰ David Lunts, Executive Director Housing and Land, GLA, Housing Committee, 25 March 2014.

¹¹ The London Housing Bank intends to do exactly this: provide finance for developers to build homes that are rented for a number of years before they are sold thereby reducing the problem of absorption since developers can spread the market sale of homes on a given site over a number of years.

¹² For example see: [Solutions for the housing shortage](#), Shelter, July 2013, page 17; [We must fix it](#), Institute for Public Policy Research, December 2011, page 29.

simply, the Committee believes that surplus public land in London should be used to increase the number of homes being built each year by boosting the capacity within the industry to build. Selling it predominantly to large developers who already have current and strategic land banks may not be the best way of achieving this goal.

A different approach

An alternative would be to divide some large sites into smaller parcels of land and commission homes on these sites from different bidders. While this may increase the length of the disposal process for each site, it might also help accelerate house building if several builders worked on a site at once, a point made by the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research at our meeting.¹³ This approach would also help boost competition in the sector if some of the land parcels were reserved for SME developers and/or other new entrants to London's house building industry.

Parcelling public land into smaller sites prior to disposal is common in other countries. The standard approach to development in the Netherlands has been for the municipality to buy undeveloped land, provide the necessary infrastructure and services, parcel it into lots and sell them at prices that recover at least the costs involved.¹⁴ If replicated in London, this approach would – in some cases – require significant upfront investment from London government. The Committee welcomes the £400 million fund that you and the Chancellor of the Exchequer recently announced to support Housing Zones in London.¹⁵ When you review bids from London boroughs later this year, we encourage you to prioritise proposals where public subsidy is used to support 'additionality' (i.e. overall output in the sector). And when you agree Delivery Frameworks with boroughs to establish Housing Zones, we urge you to include requirements that zones encourage development by new and/or small developers, perhaps by parcelling individual plots prior to sale. These will address some of the issues that you raise in your consultation document.¹⁶

Finally, we would like to state our support for the 'end-to-end project management' proposal that you set out as a future policy option.¹⁷ Not only would this place less reliance on developers with deeper pockets to build homes on public land (or land acquired using CPO powers), but developed, serviceable land would generate bigger capital receipts for the public sector once that land is sold. Of course, there would be risks with this approach as well as benefits. We recommend that the GLA conducts research into how other countries approach land assembly, in particular the Netherlands, which has a similar population density to England and scarce land.¹⁸

Helping SMEs

In January, you told the Assembly that the LDP was created to accelerate housing delivery on medium to large sized housing-led developments on public sector land.¹⁹ You added that the GLA

¹³ Sarah Monk, Cambridge Centre for Housing & Planning Research, Housing Committee, 25 March 2014.

¹⁴ [International review of land supply and planning systems](#), Joseph Rowntree Foundation (and Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research), March 2013, page 27.

¹⁵ [Housing Zones: A Prospectus](#), Mayor of London, June 2014.

¹⁶ For example, Housing Zone bids must answer the following: Is there evidence of market capacity for the proposed increase in housing? What strategies are proposed to accelerate housing delivery and overcome issues of market absorption? ([Housing Zones: A Prospectus](#), Mayor of London, June 2014, page 26).

¹⁷ [Housing Zones: A Prospectus](#), Mayor of London, June 2014, page 22.

¹⁸ [International review of land supply and planning systems](#), Joseph Rowntree Foundation (and Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research), March 2013, page 12.

¹⁹ Answer to Mayoral question ([2014/0149](#)), Supporting small and medium-sized builders, 29 January 2014.

LONDON ASSEMBLY

is exploring the potential to set up a framework for SME house builders to improve the supply and delivery on smaller housing developments and to help this part of the sector. Small builders need more help. The Federation of Master Builders told us that since sites available on the open market are so highly priced, and since access to finance remains difficult for SMEs, the release of public land over the next few years is going to be an increasingly important factor in whether or not new entrants emerge in London.²⁰ It added that, currently, small bodies do not even understand how they can access public sites. We would therefore welcome more openness about the framework that the GLA is considering to help small builders, such as when it might be up and running, and how the GLA intends to reach out to small builders so they are aware of it once it is established.

Transparency

However the GLA decides to dispose of its land assets, it must do so transparently. At our meeting, one guest raised the issue that – on paper at least – the LDP risked appearing like a cartel. In her experience, large developers often take turns in bidding for land, rather than genuinely competing with each other.²¹ In order to avoid any accusations of unfairness, it is in the GLA's interests to publish key information in an accessible place about each LDP disposal after a successful bidding round is completed. At the very least, the names of successful bidders for each disposal should be published prominently on the LDP web page, as well as the size of the plot of land that was sold and the value of the capital receipt. Once a disposal is completed, commercial sensitivities should not be used as a reason to prevent this disclosure. Moreover, since much of the information is already published in Mayoral Decisions, it should not be overly burdensome to collect it in one place.²² Doing so will enable Londoners to see who is buying London's land, where and for how much.

Conclusion

Large developers will continue to play a major role in easing London's housing crisis. The LDP will be a useful vehicle for disposing of some public land and ensuring that homes are built on it; certain sites – particularly those that involve high rise developments – may not lend themselves to smaller developers. But we must also use public sector resources, such as land, to help new developers add to the house building industry's overall output where they can. The GLA has one chance to sell its land: it must use it as a catalyst to boost London's house building capacity over the longer term.

The Committee therefore seeks some reassurances about your approach to disposing land through the LDP and the effects on London's house building industry from excluding small builders from the panel. Our concerns are not alone: the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) also recently called on the GLA to actively recruit smaller developers to the LDP.²³

²⁰ Paul Rayment, Member of Federation of Master Builders, Housing Committee, 25 March 2014.

²¹ Sarah Monk, Cambridge Centre for Housing & Planning Research, Housing Committee, 25 March 2014.

²² There is already some good practice of disclosure. For example, in [DMPCD 2013/140](#), MOPAC explained that the Hendon site attracted 12 expressions of interest from LDP members, seven formal responses of which four were shortlisted. It then explained that it received two responses following the formal invitation to tender that both exceeded the expected price.

²³ [Getting our house in order: the impact of housing undersupply on London's businesses](#), London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, May 2014, page 6.

LONDONASSEMBLY

I would be grateful if you could respond to each of the following points by **Friday 19 September 2014**:

1. What effect do you anticipate the LDP to have on the absorption problem in London's house building industry?
2. Where the GLA wishes to dispose of land that does not require large amounts of assembly work prior to development, will you explore the possibility of dividing large sites into smaller parcels before disposal, with some reserved for SME developers to help support new entrants into London's house building industry?
3. As you agree Housing Zone Delivery Frameworks with boroughs later this year, will you add requirements to ensure that zones maximise delivery by new and/or small developers? (These requirements could specify that boroughs parcel a proportion of land within Housing Zones into smaller plots, targeted at SME developers.)
4. Will you commission comparative research and publish a paper later this year on how the GLA could take a greater role in land assembly and 'end-to-end project management'?
5. Please provide the Committee with more details about the proposed alternative London development framework to help SME developers access public land, including when it might be up and running and how the GLA intends to market it to SME developers so that they know it is available.
6. To ensure greater transparency, will you commit to publishing a register of key information about past and future LDP disposals prominently on the LDP website? (For each disposal, the register should include as a minimum the number of expressions of interest from panel members, the name of the winning bidder, the size of the plot of land and the value of the capital receipt.)

The full transcript from the Committee's meeting is available here:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s35678/Minutes%20-%20Appendix%201%20-%20Transcript.pdf>

I would be grateful if you copy your response to Dan Maton, Budget and Performance Adviser, 020 7983 4681, Dan.Maton@london.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Darren Johnson AM
Chairman of the Housing Committee

Cc. David Lunts, Executive Director of Housing and Land, GLA

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MAYOR OF LONDON

Darren Johnson AM

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA

Our ref: MGLA220714-2500

Date: 16 SEP 2014

Dear Darren

Encouraging diversity in London's house building industry

Thank you for your letter of 21 July. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

Like you, I am keen to get more players involved in meeting the London house building challenge. To this end, I am pleased by the findings of a recent report for the Greater London Authority (GLA) by Molior consultants, 'Barriers to Housing Delivery in London – Update', which has found that the number of developers starting larger housing sites (over 20 units) for market sale in London has increased from 82 firms in 2011 to 103 firms in 2013.

However, I recognise that more must be done, especially for the SME sector, and I am grateful for your comments and suggestions on behalf of the committee. Here are my responses to the points that you raise.

You ask about the role of the London Development Panel (LDP) in accelerating development and assisting smaller builders. As you know, I established the LDP to speed up the process of bringing public sector sites to market, and therefore to accelerate the delivery of new housing. This is working well and we now have a substantial number of boroughs and other public bodies using the panel alongside the GLA, Transport for London, London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and the Metropolitan Police Service. This is encouraging but in itself does not, as you acknowledge, always deal with the 'absorption rate' challenge associated with large sites. You therefore suggest whether I have considered the division of large sites into smaller parcels before development, reserving some of these for SME developers.

I have considered this carefully but the scope for adopting such an approach is now limited by the small number of major development sites that remain in GLA ownership and that are not currently in development or active procurement. Of the 670 hectares of land that the GLA inherited from the London Development Agency, the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation and the Homes and Communities Agency, over 85 per cent has either been developed, is under construction, is contractually committed or is being marketed. This includes most of the larger

MAYOR OF LONDON

sites, many of which will deliver significant numbers of new homes for London (as well as requiring large amounts of assembly work prior to development). The scope for doing what you ask is therefore limited, and, following a review of my current land holdings, it is not clear that such an approach would prove effective, not least because the complexity and costs associated with bringing forward strategic sites inevitably favours larger and better funded developers that can apply their financial and operational capacity to the task of site preparation, infrastructure, marketing and risk. Although I will continue to look at the potential to seek an element of SME activity in our remaining larger sites as they come forward for procurement, it is far from clear, therefore, that smaller builders will find these opportunities either appealing or appropriate. However, the GLA has other investment programmes from which smaller developers can benefit. For example, the GLA has established a £21.7m revolving fund with Pocket Living to deliver homes across London over a ten year period.

Notwithstanding this, I agree that we need to address the constraints that can apply to the rate of building new homes on larger sites where these are in the hands of traditional house builders. As you point out, there are limitations in terms of market appetite to sell beyond local 'market absorption' levels. To address this I am adopting a new approach on larger sites whereby in addition to conventional market and affordable housing we will also require a level of long term market rented housing to be provided. This, as you will appreciate, does not face the same absorption constraints as build for sale, and can accelerate build rates.

You point to international examples where the state organises development land into smaller parcels and building is undertaken by SMEs. As you point out, this approach would require very substantial investment in infrastructure and site preparation from the public sector to achieve the results that you are suggesting.

You ask if I will add requirements to Housing Zone contracts to ensure that small and/or new developers can help to maximise housing delivery. Housing Zones are intended as a flexible approach to unlock and accelerate housing supply and although I agree that utilising a range of developers could be useful to accelerate delivery, and I hope to find examples through Housing Zones of being able to test this in practice, I am reluctant to impose such requirements on bids as it may not always be an appropriate mechanism. I have already made it an explicit condition of Housing Zone status and funding that bids must identify practical and deliverable ways to accelerate the building of homes across tenures, and SMEs may well play a useful role in certain instances.

You also ask if I would commission and publish research into the 'End-to-End project management' option set out in the Housing Zones prospectus. This option was set out as an example of what could be explored in Housing Zones, and was stated in the prospectus to be a longer term possibility. It is for boroughs to bid for Housing Zone status and to propose to the GLA what they would like to see happen in each location, which may or may not include this option. Given this, I feel that it is premature to commission research on an approach that boroughs may not want to pursue. I will keep this under review and give it further consideration once we see the bids from boroughs.

Regarding the work that has been undertaken by the GLA to explore the potential for a developer framework, along the lines of the LDP, but for SME builders. Officers have considered how such a framework may work but have concluded that it would not be possible to operate such an arrangement effectively at a pan-London scale. A London-wide SME developer panel would need

MAYOR OF LONDON

to include a very large number of members to ensure that it covered the whole of the city and provide the capacity required to meet the needs of panel users. It would therefore be very difficult to assess the quality and capability of panel members and ensure that these standards are maintained during the length of the framework contract. In addition we have no evidence of SME appetite for such an arrangement, which would inevitably require a considerable investment of effort on their part prior to bidding for inclusion on a panel.

It is my view that SME developer and contractor panels are likely to work best at a sub-regional level, and we are aware that a number of Boroughs are considering establishing such frameworks. Where this is the case, the GLA will be supportive. We also continue to encourage LDP members to use, support and partner with the SME sector through contracts won through the LDP. A number of smaller developers and constructors have formed consortia with LDP members to bid for sites, a good recent example being the Floating Village in the Royal Docks, which is using the small Dutch developer Montefiore as part of the development team.

Your letter also asked whether I would publish a register of key information on LDP disposals on the LDP website. I intend to do this on the GLA website by the end of October, although the capital receipt will be commercially confidential.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours ever,



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London

Cc: Dan Maton, Budget and Performance Adviser, GLA

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Subject: Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness

Report to: Housing Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 16 October 2014

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This paper proposes that the Committee notes its recent report on rough sleeping and single homelessness.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes its report, *No Going Back: Breaking the Cycle of Rough Sleeping and Homelessness*, as agreed by the Chair under delegated authority.**
- 2.2 **That the Committee notes the responses from the Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform, and Kris Hopkins MP, Minister for Homelessness, to the relevant recommendations in *No Going Back*.**

3. Background

- 3.1 During 2013/14 the Housing Committee undertook an investigation into rough sleeping and single homelessness in London.
- 3.2 An initial meeting in May 2013 assessed the success of the Mayor's No Second Night Out initiative and found that there is a sizeable group of people who sleep out intermittently, caught in a cycle of temporary accommodation solutions and rough sleeping.
- 3.3 In October 2013 the Committee then held a second meeting examining service provision for repeat rough sleepers.
- 3.4 This was followed up in January 2014 by a visit to a homeless hostel in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.

3.5 The Housing Committee, on 12 February 2014, resolved:

“That authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree a short report on the impact of welfare reform on housing.”

4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 The Chair of the Committee, Darren Johnson AM, agreed, in consultation with Lead Members, the Committee’s report on rough sleeping and single homelessness. On 31 July 2014, the Committee published this report, *No Going Back: Breaking the Cycle of Rough Sleeping and Homelessness*. The report can be found at **Appendix 1** and on the London Assembly website at:

www.london.gov.uk/priorities/regeneration/publications/mayor-caught-napping-as-rough-sleeping-rises.

4.2 The report made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The Government should amend the priority need conditions to entitle single homeless people in England to settled accommodation. This should not affect boroughs’ ability to manage their housing allocations, though they may wish to review them as appropriate, taking into account local circumstances.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor should monitor and report on boroughs’ contributions to GLA-funded homelessness programmes such as No Second Night Out to encourage active participation in this pan-London challenge.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor should begin discussions with the Government and London Councils to establish pan-London and sub-regional commissioning arrangements for services supporting single homeless people and rough sleepers. The Mayor should be responsible for these arrangements. This will ensure that rough sleepers have access to a properly coordinated suite of services to help them stabilise their lives.

Recommendation 4

The London Health Commission should assess how health services can be made to join up with and complement other services which support rough sleepers and single homeless people, including whether the Mayor needs a statutory responsibility and power to achieve this.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor should write to the Ministerial Working Group on Rough Sleeping to highlight the need for greater flexibility in the design of JobCentre Plus and NHS systems, for example, to enable homeless people to participate in and realise full benefit from them.

The Mayor should also lobby the Department for Work and Pensions to broaden the easement to the Jobseeker’s Allowance (Homeless Claimants) Amendment Regulations 2014 so that it covers all homeless claimants, not just those who are newly homeless, and for the duration of their hostel stay,

not just the first four weeks, so that vulnerable people without stable accommodation are best supported to acquire and sustain accommodation and employment.

And the Mayor should lobby Government to maintain welfare assistance payments (the former Social Fund) and to be allocated a tranche of these funds which would help support access to the PRS for single homeless people across London.

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should continue to make the case with the boroughs for a Living Wage procurement standard, emphasising the positive impacts the Living Wage would have on keyworkers as well as the longer-term cost savings effective keyworker support offers to the boroughs and other public service budgets. He should also write to the Ministerial Working Group on this issue.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should press hard for at least a proportionate share of Department of Health hostel funding for London which has by far the largest number of rough sleepers and single homeless people in the country. He should also press DCLG to clarify urgently what revenue funding will be available to support homelessness projects in London for 2015-16 and beyond.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor should monitor and report on the availability and location of different types of hostel accommodation in London over time to enable a strategic view to be taken on what provision is needed and where. As part of this he should assess whether the Arlington model, of low-support housing and training facilities combined with social enterprise space, could usefully be replicated in each sub-region.

Recommendation 9

As indicated in our April 2013 report *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*, the Government should ensure Local Housing Allowance rates are regularly reviewed and properly take account of the higher rental costs in London than elsewhere in the country.

Recommendation 10

The Mayor should work with the boroughs and London Councils to establish what needs to happen to make the achievement of the homelessness 'gold standard' a reality.

- 4.3 The Committee has invited the Mayor, and others to whom recommendations are made, to respond. Responses have so far been received from the Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform (letter attached at **Appendix 2**) and Kris Hopkins MP, Minister for Local Government with responsibility for homelessness (letter attached at **Appendix 3**). Any further responses will be reported to the Committee, at which time any potential follow-up actions will be considered.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1: *No Going Back: Breaking the Cycle of Rough Sleeping and Homelessness*

Appendix 2: Letter to the Chair from the Lord Freud, dated 28 August 2014

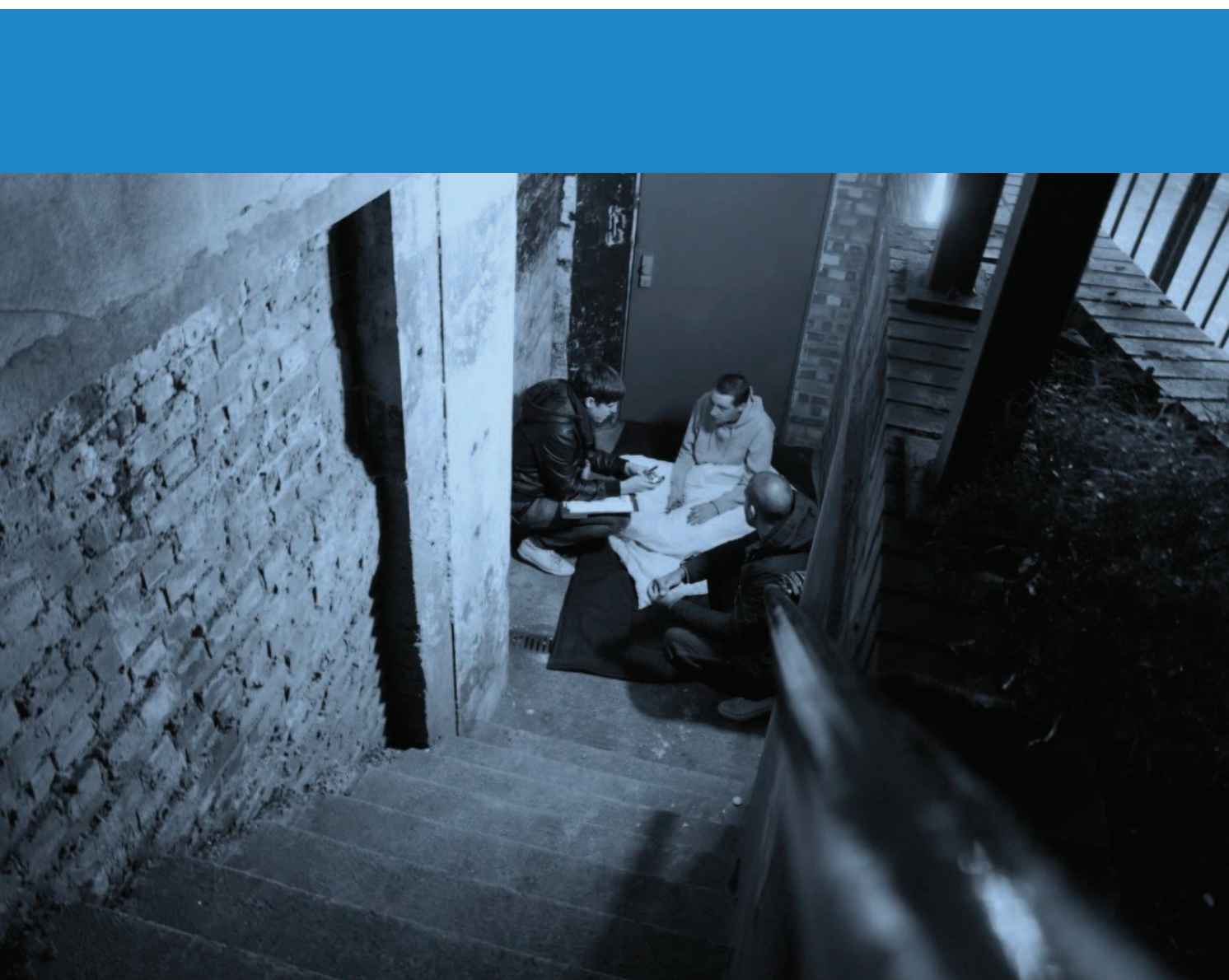
Appendix 3: Letter to the Chair from Kris Hopkins MP, dated 9 September 2014

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: None
Contact Officer: Lorraine Ford, Scrutiny Manager
Telephone: 020 7983 4000
E-mail: scrutiny@london.gov.uk

No Going Back

Breaking the cycle of rough sleeping and homelessness

July 2014



Housing Committee Members

Darren Johnson (Chair)	Green
Tom Copley (Deputy Chair)	Labour
Andrew Boff	Conservative
Nicky Gavron	Labour
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Cover photo: Thames Reach. Photographer Gareth Nicholls.

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Foreword



Nobody should be left sleeping rough on London's streets for more than one night. This aim has been broadly supported since Homeless Link proposed the target in 2006.

But in this report we look at what happens after the first few nights and, why one third of the people picked up by 'No Second Night Out' workers end up on the streets again.

The Mayor has shown strong leadership and strategic coordination for the No Second Night Out services, and his initiative to help entrenched rough sleepers who have been living on the streets has achieved considerable success. But he has done less for those people who fall in the middle, those who struggle to move on from emergency hostels to a stable home, job and life.

Many of those people returning to the streets are single, and are owed no duty by councils. We think this should be changed, perhaps following the example in Scotland.

We have heard that the support services offered to former rough sleepers can be inadequate or even inappropriate. There is a big variation in provision across different boroughs, and often a serious shortage of accommodation for people moving on from emergency hostels. Coordination with other services such as the NHS is also often poor, letting vulnerable people slip through the gaps and onto the streets.

This is reminiscent of the problems in outreach services for rough sleepers, and would benefit from the same strategic coordination the Mayor has brought to bear there.

We have also found that these problems are made worse by barriers such as 'local occupancy' rules which can bar rough sleepers from qualifying for social housing; housing benefit rates which don't recognise the cost of renting in London; and benefit sanctions which can cut off vital financial support to people whose lives are too unstable to always meet the regimented requirements of Jobcentres.

The Mayor should join us in lobbying for reforms to ensure that every former rough sleeper is given the right help to sustain a home and stable employment.

In such a wealthy city, we must end rough sleeping once and for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' and 'J' followed by a long horizontal line.

Darren Johnson AM
Chair, Housing Committee

1 Introduction

London's Mayor is committed to ending rough sleeping in the capital. The No Second Night Out (NSNO) project, launched in December 2010, was designed to ensure that no-one would sleep a second night out on London's streets. NSNO has seen some success in addressing the needs of new rough sleepers and the Mayor also oversees a range of further projects focusing on London's most entrenched rough sleepers. But the statistics on rough sleeping collected for the CHAIN database indicate not only that the number of people sleeping rough in London continues to grow, but that a sizeable subset of these people are intermittent rough sleepers, returning to the streets on and off, sometimes over a period of years.

During 2013-14 the London Assembly's Housing Committee undertook an investigation into rough sleeping and single homelessness in the capital. A range of expert guests attended two meetings in May and October 2013 to discuss the key issues and offer advice to the Committee. This was followed by a site visit to a homeless hostel in January 2014.

The report which follows documents the findings of this investigation, drawing conclusions and making recommendations on how the Mayor and other key players in the field of homelessness could work together more effectively to make a difference.

Ending rough sleeping is an extremely bold aim and one which the Committee endorses. The conclusions and recommendations in this report are intended to support the realisation of that ambition.

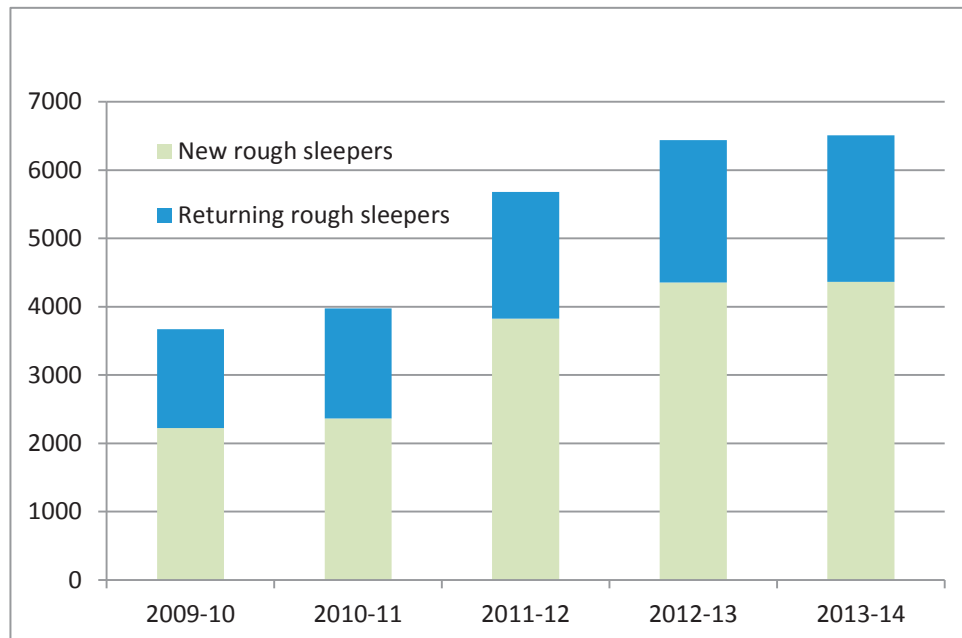
In this report the case study names used are fictional although the cases describe real people's experiences.

2 The Plight of Single Homeless People

In England there is no statutory duty placed on local authorities to provide accommodation for 'single homeless' people unless they meet strict priority need criteria. This means that men and women without dependent children must be deemed particularly vulnerable (by virtue, for example, of their age or a disability) in order to be eligible for housing. Otherwise, single homeless people are entitled only to advice. Longstanding concerns over the quality and availability of this advice have been compounded recently by funding cuts, leaving single homeless people particularly vulnerable to rough sleeping.

In London the number of rough sleepers has grown substantially in recent years. Some 6,500 people were seen sleeping rough in London at least once during 2013-14, a 64 per cent rise on 2010-11.

Growing Numbers of People Sleeping Rough in London



Source: Street to Home Report, Broadway, June 2014

Of these, one third had also been seen sleeping rough in previous years, a proportion which has remained stable over the last three years.¹

¹ Street to Home Report, Broadway, June 2014

The No Second Night Out initiative was developed in support of the Mayor's commitment to ending rough sleeping in London.

No Second Night Out

NSNO was launched by the Mayor in December 2010. It ushered in a new approach to addressing rough sleeping within the sector, establishing contact with clients as soon as they appeared on the streets and making a single coordinated offer of assistance. It links those who migrate to London back into support located where they are most likely to sustain life away from the streets, while also providing offers of accommodation (based on the assessment of each individual's needs) where appropriate. Having begun as a six-month pilot project in 2011, it has been operating pan-London since June 2012. It is currently funded until 2015.

Over the last three years, around six in ten rough sleepers have only slept one night out, and of those who attended NSNO, the vast majority (85 per cent in 2013-14) had not been seen sleeping rough again,² illustrating that NSNO has seen some success. But since around one third of those found sleeping rough in London have also been seen sleeping rough in previous years, it is clear that NSNO, though beneficial, needs to be complemented by similarly intensive efforts to help people move on. There are deeper-seated issues here which require more extensive investigation and longer-term management. This report looks at two areas where the Mayor could make a difference: the provision of better-tailored services and an increase in hostel and 'move-on' accommodation.

Single homeless Londoners who are found sleeping rough and are entitled to claim benefits are usually offered 'direct access' or emergency hostel accommodation. Such hostels may deliver a range of services or simply respite from the streets, until the client is ready to move on to 'second stage' or 'move-on' accommodation. Move-on projects offer transitional accommodation with support to assist clients in moving to independent living. The focus is on rehabilitation and resettlement programmes.

Our investigation revealed a range of issues which hamper clients' recovery from homelessness during this transition phase. Tackling these

² *Street to Home Report*, Broadway, June 2014

issues will help to ensure that many fewer single homeless Londoners end up on back on the streets.

One particularly powerful new initiative can be found in Scotland where the 2012 Homelessness Commitment legislation has now been introduced, effectively abolishing the priority need criteria. This means that all unintentionally homeless people now have a right to settled accommodation. The legislation is still in the early stages of implementation, but the Scottish Parliament's Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee published a progress report in March 2012 which noted that working towards the 2012 commitment had facilitated a culture change. In oral evidence, Rebecca Maxwell of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives said that the "culture shift has been to recognise from a whole-council perspective that homelessness is not just a housing issue but something that we need to take a corporate approach to and which is a significant part of the agenda".³ It is this kind of cultural shift at regional and borough level that we are seeking to foster, where the silos of service provision are broken down to ensure an appropriately tailored service is provided for those who might otherwise repeatedly end up on the streets. This might involve a wide range of services, from education and skills to health and probation.

Access to the right support

Many homeless people have a dual diagnosis, for example they suffer from mental health problems as well as being alcohol- or drug-dependent. Yet evidence from Homeless Link suggests that homelessness services are increasingly generic rather than specialist in their offer and may exclude those with the most complex needs. For example, the proportion of projects offering specific services to those with mental health problems has fallen dramatically from around one in five (22 per cent) in 2011 to one in 25 (4 per cent) in 2013.⁴ And the number of projects refusing access to people whose needs were too complex for them has risen again in the last year, from 63 per cent in 2013 to 74 per cent in 2014.⁵

Furthermore, faced with severe financial pressure and the disappearance of ring-fenced funding to support homelessness services, boroughs are increasingly applying local connection clauses to their provision, offering access only to those who reside within the borough boundaries. In 2013

³ *Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee, 2nd Report 2012, Homelessness in Scotland: the 2012 Commitment*, Scottish Parliament, March 2012

⁴ *Survey of Needs and Provision*, Homeless Link, March 2013

⁵ *Support for Single Homeless People in England*, Homeless Link, April 2014

only just over half of London homeless projects accepted clients from outside the borough.⁶

Case Study: Local Connections

Louis is a homeless man in supported housing who has been living in the same borough all his life. He has HIV. Due to a recent deterioration in his health he is now taking antiretroviral drugs to delay or prevent the onset of AIDS but this also means he needs specialist help and a higher level of support which is not available in his home borough.

The combination of local connection clauses and complex needs means that many homeless Londoners are finding it more difficult to access the provision required to manage their particular circumstances. The loss of sub-regional funds from government has not helped. Not every borough needs each type of service and providing specialist services is unlikely to be economic at an individual borough level. But Duncan Shrubsole of Crisis told us that we do need a strategic overview to ensure that the necessary provision is available in the capital, either at a sub-regional or pan-London level.⁷

From the third sector providers' viewpoint fragmentation of provision borough by borough is also problematic, particularly for outreach services. Many such providers tender for contracts in a number of boroughs, yet each borough has its own commissioning system and process, with which the provider must grapple in order to submit their tender. Equally, in terms of project outcomes and validation, each borough has its own targets – there is no common standard for what success looks like. This means that providers must adapt their operations and outcomes measures for each circumstance, which is very resource-intensive. Indeed, one third sector provider told us that as much as ten per cent of their service cost is spent on the commissioning process. In short, a very localised model is unhelpful to homelessness service providers.

The Mayor's NSNO project is a good example of a service which can most effectively be provided on a pan-London basis, but it does not always receive the level of support from all the London boroughs that it should.

⁶ Fifty-six per cent of London projects accepted people without a local connection compared with 72 per cent in England as a whole (*Survey of Needs and Provision*, Homeless Link, March 2013)

⁷ Transcript of London Assembly Housing Committee meeting, 17 October 2013

Some boroughs are increasingly unwilling to take on responsibility for hosting the London-wide NSNO hubs which are essential to this provision, even where appropriate sites have been identified, presumably because of fears that the hubs would act as a magnet, drawing in more homeless people with little local return – though there is no evidence to substantiate those concerns.

We want the Mayor to examine the case for further pan-London or sub-regional commissioning to take place through the Greater London Authority. Clearly, where boroughs can offer more effective service provision on a sub-regional basis they need to work together to do so. Otherwise the Mayor may need to step in to ensure the necessary services are available in the right places.

In particular, the statutory mental health service does not traditionally work well with people abusing drugs or alcohol. This in turn excludes many homeless people from the health services they need for recovery. Working with experts on the London Health Board, the Mayor should look at how he could support the commissioning of mental health services for repeat rough sleepers who also suffer from substance abuse.

Recommendation 1

The Government should amend the priority need conditions to entitle single homeless people in England to settled accommodation. This should not affect boroughs' ability to manage their housing allocations, though they may wish to review them as appropriate, taking into account local circumstances.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor should monitor and report on boroughs' contributions to GLA-funded homelessness programmes such as No Second Night Out to encourage active participation in this pan-London challenge.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor should begin discussions with the Government and London Councils to establish pan-London and sub-regional commissioning arrangements for services supporting single homeless people and rough sleepers. The Mayor should be responsible for these arrangements. This will ensure that rough sleepers have access to a properly coordinated suite of services to help them stabilise their lives.

Recommendation 4

The London Health Commission should assess how health services can be made to join up with and complement other services which support rough sleepers and single homeless people, including whether the Mayor needs a statutory responsibility and power to achieve this.

3 Developing Supportive Systems and Policy

The reasons people become homeless are many and varied and their needs are equally individual. A 2013 report by Homeless Link assessing effective and economical innovations in tackling rough sleeping found that collaboration between agencies to increase capacity and enhance provision is a vital ingredient in successful resettlement: “People with multiple and complex needs often fall between the gaps of statutory service provision, who find it difficult to know how to support them.”⁸ The same report also concludes that because the additional demands placed on the system by entrenched rough sleepers are considerable,⁹ a tailored support offer drawing together many agencies is also cost-effective. Yet the systems of support offered by our public service provision, including access conditions, continue to be siloed and inflexible. For example:

- A Department of Health commissioned report in 2012 found that only a third of homeless people admitted to hospital in England had received any support around their homelessness. Many homeless patients were discharged straight back to the streets, often without their housing or underlying health problems addressed, resulting in frequent readmissions.¹⁰ Recent research by Homeless Link suggests some improvement has been made since then but nonetheless finds that 36 per cent of homeless patients had nowhere suitable to go on leaving hospital.¹¹
- Homeless people are much more likely (31 per cent) to suffer benefits sanctions than other Job Seeker’s Allowance claimants (3 per cent) and the most common reason for the sanction is failure to attend a JobCentre Plus (JCP) interview.¹² The Government has recently laid down welcome regulations which allow JCP work coaches discretion to disapply sanctions for up to four weeks for newly homeless people provided they are taking reasonable steps to find accommodation. But there are often valid reasons why people in hostels or other temporary

⁸ *A Year of Transition: Innovations to end rough sleeping*, Homeless Link, June 2013

⁹ Arising for example from repeat eviction, hospital admission and criminal justice costs

¹⁰ *Improving Hospital Admission and Discharge for People Who Are Homeless*, St Mungo’s and Homeless Link, March 2012

¹¹ *The Unhealthy State of Homelessness*, Homeless Link, 2014

¹² *A High Cost to Pay*, Homeless Link, September 2013

accommodation fail to attend interviews: letters may not reach their intended recipient in a hostel or the person may already have moved on, the chaotic behaviour of people with complex needs may prevent them from keeping appointments, and so on. So the regulatory easement should apply to all homeless people, not just those who are newly homeless, and for the duration of their hostel stay, not just the first four weeks. Work coaches also need to take a supportive approach when assessing whether clients are actively seeking accommodation.

- Although the principle of outcome targets applied under the Work Programme has merit in getting some people into jobs, this system tends to disadvantage vulnerable groups such as homeless people who are far from job-ready and so least likely to be supported by providers chasing targets. A recent Work and Pensions Select Committee report into the Work Programme found that “the Work Programme appears not to be reaching the most disadvantaged jobseekers”. It advocates additional support for homeless people to prepare them for engagement with the Programme.¹³ In fact within a year of its inception, St Mungo’s withdrew from the Programme as there was no call for its specialist support. The prime providers were passing over homeless clients in favour of those who might become job-ready more quickly, so no homeless clients were being referred on to St Mungo’s.

Case Study: Benefits Sanctions

Caroline is a mental health client who was assessed as fit for work. Her medication was changed when her health deteriorated affecting her sleep pattern and metabolism. As a direct result of this, she woke late on the morning of an interview with DWP, missed her appointment and was sanctioned.

Positive examples do arise of flexibilities being designed into services where partnerships are developed between the range of relevant practitioners. The YMCA, for example, has developed local partnerships with JCP staff to work to make the sanctions regime as flexible as possible. But such relationships are developed ad hoc and are therefore time-consuming for the individuals and organisations concerned.

¹³ *Can the Work Programme Work for All User Groups?*, House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee, May 2013, p6

Case Study: Finding Creative Solutions

The Assembly's Housing Committee visited a homeless hostel as part of our investigation and this demonstrated the value of a strong partnership between borough, third sector provider and other public services in managing these challenging times creatively. There, St Mungo's Broadway, the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham and the local police and health services are finding ways to work together to resolve issues arising from service and budgeting boundaries and cuts, which might otherwise prevent them from offering the services they know really help. For example, arrangements have been made to commission the hostel's work with clients over five years (instead of the normal two) because its residents have complex needs which take time and intensive support to address. Small personalised budgets supplement existing support services allowing the hostel staff a measure of flexibility in the service offer they can make to each individual. The Borough has worked with the local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group to make arrangements for a peripatetic nurse to attend the hostel, which would not otherwise have been possible. Where resources are effectively shared across services, managers need to be able to demonstrate a payback at some level, albeit elsewhere within the budget. Accordingly, hostel staff collect the data which monitor wider cost savings; for example, one resident had visited the local A&E on 292 occasions during the year prior to arrival at the hostel but this fell to 15 in his first year of residence, saving A&E around £32,000.¹⁴

Homeless people may also be subject to discrimination and false assumptions when accessing or engaging with public services, including the police.¹⁵ This means they are less likely to achieve positive outcomes and more likely to reject or abandon an offer of help made before positive progress can be made.

Policy problems

Our experts identified a number of policy clashes which can prevent support reaching those who are vulnerable to repeat rough sleeping. For example:

¹⁴ Based on an average cost of attendance at A&E in England of £114 (Source: *Reference Costs 2012-13*, Department of Health, November 2013)

¹⁵ See for example *Improving Hospital Admission and Discharge for People Who Are Homeless*, Homeless Link and St Mungo's, March 2012 and *Police Seize Possessions of Rough Sleepers in Crackdown on Homelessness*, *The Independent*, 24 May 2013

- The caps on household benefits and the extension of the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) to under-35s are likely to mean that more people become vulnerable to homelessness. Research by Homeless Link in 2013, for example, found that less than six per cent of properties in London are affordable to those receiving the SAR,¹⁶ suggesting that many will struggle to find accommodation in the private rented sector (PRS).
- The Social Fund (which previously offered the crisis loans and grants homeless people often used to pay for rent in advance or rent deposits) was devolved to local authorities in 2012 but not ring-fenced. This means that many local authorities have become reluctant to fund welfare assistance, and around half the financial year's allowance nationwide, including in London, remained unspent in February this year.¹⁷ The Department for Work and Pensions has also announced that it will no longer fund the schemes at all from 2015. Yet the PRS is increasingly needed to house homeless people in the absence of social or other supported housing. In fact Ieuan ap Rees of the West London Housing Partnership told us that the PRS is now the primary tool in homelessness prevention¹⁸ and all our October meeting guests attested to the importance of rent in advance and rent deposits in securing a PRS tenancy.

Case Study: Putting Together a Private Rented Sector Deposit

Frank needs to stay in his home borough as his children are at school and nursery there. His home borough does not offer assistance with rental deposits. However, he can only save £2 per week via a Credit Union towards the deposit required to move into the PRS. The alternative to speed up this process would be to approach a high APR lender but the repayments are unlikely to be affordable.

See chapter 5 below for more on the use of the PRS.

¹⁶ *Nowhere to Move*, Homeless Link, May 2013

¹⁷ See for example: *The Crisis in Welfare Assistance Explained*, theGuardian.com, 20 April 2014

¹⁸ Transcript of London Assembly Housing Committee meeting, 15 May 2013

Recommendation 5

The Mayor should write to the Ministerial Working Group on Rough Sleeping to highlight the need for greater flexibility in the design of JobCentre Plus and NHS systems, for example, to enable homeless people to participate in and realise full benefit from them.

The Mayor should also lobby the Department for Work and Pensions to broaden the easement to the Jobseeker's Allowance (Homeless Claimants) Amendment Regulations 2014 so that it covers all homeless claimants, not just those who are newly homeless, and for the duration of their hostel stay, not just the first four weeks, so that vulnerable people without stable accommodation are best supported to acquire and sustain accommodation and employment.

And **the Mayor** should lobby Government to maintain welfare assistance payments (the former Social Fund) and to be allocated a tranche of these funds which would help support access to the PRS for single homeless people across London.

In recent years, homelessness projects, especially those offering accommodation, have relied heavily on Supporting People funding. However, this funding stream is no longer ring-fenced and since 2011 has been rolled into the formula grant provided to the boroughs. Significant reductions in central government funding for local authorities have resulted in cuts to homelessness projects with over half of those experiencing funding cuts nationally reporting a reduction in keyworker support (as the bulk of project costs relate to staffing).¹⁹ Projects in London have been no exception. Borough commissioners are inevitably pressing for keen pricing which means that contracts are often bid down. Duncan Shrubsole of Crisis told us that this results in a 'race to the bottom'.²⁰

Clearly, the level of funding has a direct bearing on the quality of provision and positive client outcomes – although volunteers and peer mentors make a very valuable contribution to support programmes, core professional staff are vital, and professionalism must be paid for. Moreover homeless people often need personal coaching based on a one-to-one relationship to get to grips with the challenges they face; a schedule of discrete housing or medical interventions alone, offered by a

¹⁹ *Survey of Needs and Provision*, Homeless Link, 2013

²⁰ Transcript of London Assembly Housing Committee meeting, 17 October 2013

multiplicity of providers is simply ineffective. These services need to be linked and tailored to match client needs. Keyworkers are focused on the needs of their clients, developing an in-depth knowledge of each individual's strengths and abilities as well as their challenges. They develop a trusting long-term relationship which enables clients to take risks and engage in ways they would otherwise be unlikely to do. And they are flexible, able to recommend the particular type and method of support which will help their clients progress towards independent living.

Case study: Supporting Alex to Sustain a Tenancy

Alex had a long history of rough sleeping. He was a volatile individual, always on the brink of an outburst, with no long-term relationships he could rely upon. He had been in and out of prison. Alcohol abuse had often seen him thrown out of hostels. Since 2010 he has been working with Thames Reach keyworkers. His life has not been turned round overnight; these things take time and tenacity. Having achieved a supported tenancy in West London, he was again evicted, because of his offensive and drink-related behaviour. But the trusting relationship he has developed with his keyworker provides coherence and stability to counter the vestiges of a chaotic lifestyle. Because of this bond, his relapse was quickly addressed and he agreed to book into a rehabilitation hostel. Intense pre-tenancy support followed, building his skills for independent living. He is now managing to sustain a private rented sector tenancy and is undertaking courses which should help him on the road to recovery.

To be effective, then, keyworkers need a wide range of skills and personal qualities, together with extensive knowledge of available support systems. So funding to support qualified keyworker staff is vital in securing London's homelessness services and in minimising the demands homeless clients will otherwise make upon other public service provision.

Ten London boroughs are already accredited London Living Wage employers and two more are in the process of accreditation. Islington, for example, was one of the first two authorities to become accredited in 2012 and 92 per cent of its contractors now pay the Living Wage. The Mayor has committed to making the Living Wage the norm in the capital by 2020;²¹

²¹ 2020 Vision: Ambitions for London, GLA, June 2013

boroughs should consider whether they could support his commitment by ensuring the Wage is paid to their keyworkers.

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should continue to make the case with the boroughs for a Living Wage procurement standard, emphasising the positive impacts the Living Wage would have on keyworkers as well as the longer-term cost savings effective keyworker support offers to the boroughs and other public service budgets. He should also write to the Ministerial Working Group on this issue.

4 More Hostel, Especially Move-On, Accommodation

All of our expert guests highlighted the lack of move-on accommodation – non-emergency hostel or supported housing places – as a key issue for homeless people in London. Accurate data on rough sleeping and homelessness is hard to come by, given the essentially hidden and shifting nature of the problem. However, the most robust London data available backs up the reports made to our meetings: the number of beds, both for second stage (move-on) and direct access (emergency/night shelter) accommodation, fell by one quarter between 2011 and 2013.²² This compares with the growing number of rough sleepers noted earlier, up by 64 per cent between 2010-11 and 2013-14. In all some 6,500 individuals were seen sleeping rough at some point in London during 2013-14.²³

The Mayor is spending money on an important programme of hostel refurbishment and modernisation in London, replacing dormitory-style accommodation with self-contained units. These offer residents the privacy and independence which support speedy recovery, but also imply a loss of bed spaces as unit density is reduced. The Committee fully supports this renewal activity but notes that it serves to intensify the pressure on hostel places – London needs more hostel accommodation.

²² *Atlas of Services for Homeless People in London*, London Housing Foundation, 2011 and 2013

²³ *Street to Home Report*, Broadway, June 2014

Case Study: Arlington

Arlington in Camden is a successful mixed community facility housing social enterprises, a conference centre and a range of sub-market rent accommodation for low-income workers and homeless people. It offers support services on-site including education and training to help homeless people who are relatively close to the job market to progress towards independent living. However, with other central London hostels having been closed for refurbishment or sale (for housing), the facility has taken on residents with more complex needs who are unable to benefit from the services it offers. So the lack of hostel accommodation is in this case directly affecting the productivity of other services.

The dearth of move-on accommodation means that hostel residents can remain in emergency provision for some time, risking the institutionalisation this may cause and hampering their progress towards independent living. On average, accommodation projects in England report that one third of their clients are ready to move on but have been unable to do so, and of these, one fifth have been waiting for more than six months.²⁴ There are serious knock-on effects for those who are sleeping on the streets because the limited emergency hostel places available are blocked. The relative success of the Mayor's NSNO project could therefore be jeopardised if the supply of move-on provision further lags behind the growing need for direct access hostel places.

This issue will be compounded if move-on to the PRS continues to become more difficult. With social housing increasingly scarce, the PRS has become the first port of call for homeless people looking to move on from hostel accommodation. But our guests were all agreed that active brokerage is vital to facilitate a move into the PRS. This is needed both to enlist and incentivise landlords who, in a buoyant sellers' market, may not otherwise consider renting to a tenant who was previously homeless, and also to support tenants through the process of change and in managing their finances and new responsibilities. The Government is supporting some initiatives to assist with accessing the PRS, as are some third sector and borough providers. But in London's over-heated rental market, the purchasing power of those dependent upon capped Housing Benefit or the Shared Accommodation Rate is declining month by month, moving the PRS increasingly beyond their reach. So although in principle the PRS can offer a valuable solution to the squeeze in move-on accommodation,

²⁴ *Support for Single Homeless People in England*, Homeless Link, April 2014

its usefulness is in practice currently limited in London. Termination of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy is now the primary cause of statutory homelessness,²⁵ suggesting an increasing failure rate among vulnerable households moving into the PRS. Recent evidence to our investigation into the impact of the welfare reforms on London also identified a four-fold increase in the number of tenancy terminations since 2010.²⁶ St Mungo's Broadway therefore considers move-on to the PRS an unsustainable solution in the current environment.

Despite the pressing need for more hostel places, there is no new dedicated funding stream within the Mayor's Affordable Housing Programme 2015-18 comparable, for example, with Homelessness Change, which previously provided some £13 million of funding. The Department of Health has, however, allocated £40 million in the 2013 Spending Review to hostel places nationally. It remains as yet unclear how much of this will come to London or for what. London currently offers 28 per cent of England's total bed spaces²⁷ and the data noted earlier demonstrates the growth in need in the capital.

Moreover, in the last spending round, the Mayor received around £8.5 million per annum from the Department for Communities and Local Government to support revenue projects tackling homelessness in London.²⁸ No such funding has yet been confirmed beyond 2015, but this money is desperately needed to support vital homelessness projects.

²⁵ Most recent DCLG data indicates that termination of an AST was the reason for homelessness in 36 per cent of cases in London during the first quarter of 2014, a figure which has almost quadrupled over the last four years (GLA Homelessness Dashboard analysis of DCLG Detailed Local Authority Level Homelessness Figures)

²⁶ *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*, London Assembly, April 2014

²⁷ *Survey of Needs and Provision*, Homeless Link, 2013

²⁸ This funding supports the NSNO project as well as, for example, a rapid assessment service and emergency beds for entrenched rough sleepers, a Housing First pilot offering accommodation for entrenched rough sleepers without requiring them to go through a fixed hostel pathway, and a range of other London homelessness projects. The Mayor also received £5 million of DCLG funding over three years from 2012 to support a Social Impact Bond using money from external investors to fund a payment by results programme.

Falling off a cliff edge? Future funding for homelessness programmes after 2015 is still uncertain

Name of funding	Total funding available for London (£m)	Period covering	Description
Homelessness Change Programme	13	2011-15	Capital funding to provide eight specialist supported housing schemes across London. The programme runs until March 2015.
Rough Sleeping Services	33.8	2011-15	Revenue funding of £8.45 million per year for rough sleeping programmes. This funding is only guaranteed until 2014-15.
Social Impact Bond for Rough Sleepers	5	2012-15	Revenue funding whereby the GLA pays two providers based on their results in achieving specified outcomes (such as reducing homelessness).
Department of Health funding for new hostel places	40 (nationally)	2015 to 2018	Capital funding for new hostel places announced in the 2013 Spending Round. The Department of Health has not yet allocated London its share.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should press hard for at least a proportionate share of Department of Health hostel funding for London which has by far the largest number of rough sleepers and single homeless people in the country. He should also press DCLG to clarify urgently what revenue funding will be available to support homelessness projects in London for 2015-16 and beyond.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor should monitor and report on the availability and location of different types of hostel accommodation in London over time to enable a strategic view to be taken on what provision is needed and where. As part of this he should assess whether the Arlington model, of low-support housing and training facilities combined with social enterprise space, could usefully be replicated in each sub-region.

Recommendation 9

As indicated in our April 2013 report *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*, **the Government** should ensure Local Housing Allowance rates are regularly reviewed and properly take account of the higher rental costs in London than elsewhere in the country.

5 Culture Change by Focusing on Prevention Rather than Cure

There is good evidence demonstrating that early intervention not only effectively prevents homelessness but also saves public money where a duty to house is owed.²⁹ A focus on prevention will drive the culture change we are so keen to promote. Government's cross-departmental ministerial working group also says that prevention should be prioritised. The Berkeley Group's 2013 debate on tackling homelessness identified prevention as one of its key issues. The Welsh Government has recently introduced a bill which will require councils to take reasonable measures to prevent homelessness. And following consultation with the Assembly, the Mayor's new Housing Strategy has been adjusted to include a new policy "to ensure that...the flow of new rough sleepers onto the streets is minimised".³⁰

Despite this, no robust data exists on how many Londoners are currently vulnerable to homelessness and the Mayor does not currently monitor this. The Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property confirmed to us that the Mayor's funding thus far has not been intended to support prevention but to help people who have already arrived on the streets.³¹

But there is a need to understand the issues and size of the problem better if preventive support is to be improved. Paul Anderson of Homeless Link told us about the lack of preventive work undertaken by local authorities. This was corroborated by the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Land and Property, who indicated that 31 per cent of those presenting in need of help at the NSNO hubs had been to their local Housing Options service first, and that adequate local authority advisory services would help NSNO enormously.³² Borough Housing Options services are often criticised as undertaking a gatekeeping, rather than an advisory, role, constructing barriers which effectively prevent clients from making a homelessness application. But in the face of shrinking budgets and with no prospect of new sub-regional funding, the London boroughs, in common with local authorities up and down the country, have shown

²⁹ See for example *Homelessness Prevention: Can we afford not to?*, Depaul UK, 2011; *Evaluating Homelessness Prevention*, Department for Communities and Local Government, December 2007

³⁰ *Homes for London: The London Housing Strategy*, GLA, April 2014 (p42)

³¹ Transcript of London Assembly Housing Committee meeting, 15 May 2013

³² *ibid*

no enthusiasm for achieving the 'gold standard' service status the Government launched in April 2013. Indeed, by November 2013 just one English council had started the initial peer review process, despite 93 per cent of English local authorities having signed up to the scheme.³³

Part of the problem, noted earlier, and confirmed by Jeremy Swain of Thames Reach, is the difficulty of drawing in non-housing related services to resolve issues which continue to be viewed as a housing problem.³⁴ Our investigation heard how important word of mouth is among the homeless community: given that effective help is not on offer, many vulnerable people do not even bother approaching the council, making the size of the 'hidden homelessness' problem even more difficult to gauge.

Despite all these challenges, some homelessness service providers and their borough partners are trialling new ways of delivering better preventive support. St Mungo's Broadway, for example, is piloting a partnership with two London boroughs in which their staff with direct experience of homelessness support the local Housing Options services to resolve the homelessness issues of their vulnerable clients. As noted earlier, the availability of DCLG revenue funding beyond 2015 currently remains uncertain. This is just the kind of project which such funding could deliver, helping to demonstrate across the capital the wider benefits of preventive measures.

Recommendation 10

The Mayor should work with the boroughs and London Councils to establish what needs to happen to make the achievement of the homelessness 'gold standard' a reality.

³³ *Councils Snub Gold Standard Scheme*, Inside Housing, 29 November 2013

³⁴ Transcript of London Assembly Housing Committee meeting, 15 May 2013

6 Conclusion

The Committee supports the Mayor's ambitious aim to end rough sleeping in London. Our investigation found, however, that the priority need criteria essentially exclude single homeless people from any offer of accommodation. Review of this system, combined with a focus on preventive measures, would go a long way towards realising the Mayor's laudable aim.

A more proactive and strategic approach to homelessness is also needed. The boroughs need to work together more effectively and the Mayor needs to take a more determined lead. He should press Government not only to support the bricks and mortar projects London needs, but also to continue vital revenue funding. Then he should use this to develop a clearer overview of need and provision across the capital which would help to identify the gaps which need filling, either through sub-regional or cross-borough activity, or through his own involvement. This would help make best use of London's homelessness resources overall.

Appendix 1 Recommendations

Recommendation 1

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The London Health Commission should assess how health services can be made to join up with and complement other services which support rough sleepers and single homeless people, including whether the Mayor needs a statutory responsibility and power to achieve this.

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The Mayor should write to the Ministerial Working Group on Rough Sleeping to highlight the need for greater flexibility in the design of JobCentre Plus and NHS systems, for example, to enable homeless people to participate in and realise full benefit from them.

The Mayor should also lobby the Department for Work and Pensions to broaden the easement to the Jobseeker's Allowance (Homeless Claimants) Amendment Regulations 2014 so that it covers all homeless claimants, not just those who are newly homeless, and for the duration of their hostel stay, not just the first four weeks, so that vulnerable people without stable accommodation are best supported to acquire and sustain accommodation and employment.

And **the Mayor** should lobby Government to maintain welfare assistance payments (the former Social Fund) and to be allocated a tranche of these funds which would help support access to the PRS for single homeless people across London.

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The Mayor should continue to make the case with the boroughs for a Living Wage procurement standard, emphasising the positive impacts the Living Wage would have on keyworkers as well as the longer-term cost savings effective keyworker support offers to the boroughs and other public service budgets. He should also write to the Ministerial Working Group on this issue.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should press hard for at least a proportionate share of Department of Health hostel funding for London which has by far the largest number of rough sleepers and single homeless people in the country. He should also press DCLG to clarify urgently what revenue funding will be available to support homelessness projects in London for 2015-16 and beyond.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor should monitor and report on the availability and location of different types of hostel accommodation in London over time to enable a strategic view to be taken on what provision is needed and where. As part of this he should assess whether the Arlington model, of low-support housing and training facilities combined with social enterprise space, could usefully be replicated in each sub-region.

Recommendation 9

As indicated in our April 2013 report *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*, **the Government** should ensure Local Housing Allowance rates are regularly reviewed and properly take account of the higher rental costs in London than elsewhere in the country.

Recommendation 10

The Mayor should work with the boroughs and London Councils to establish what needs to happen to make the achievement of the homelessness 'gold standard' a reality.

Orders and translations

How to order

For further information on this report or to order a copy, please contact Teja Zbikowska, Project Officer, on 020 7983 4510 or email: teja.zbikowska@london.gov.uk

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You can also view a copy of the report on the GLA website: <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/publications/housing-planning>

Large print, braille or translations

If you, or someone you know, needs a copy of this report in large print or braille, or a copy of the summary and main findings in another language, then please call us on: 020 7983 4100 or email: assembly.translations@london.gov.uk.

Chinese

如您需要这份文件的简介的翻译本，请电话联系或按上面所提供的邮寄地址或 Email 与我们联系。

Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

Greek

Εάν επιθυμείτε περίληψη αυτού του κειμένου στην γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ καλέστε τον αριθμό ή επικοινωνήστε μαζί μας στην ανωτέρω ταχυδρομική ή την ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση.

Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinize çevrilmiş bir özetini okumak isterseniz, lütfen yukarıdaki telefon numarasını arayın, veya posta ya da e-posta adresi aracılığıyla bizimle temasa geçin.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਡਾਕ ਜਾਂ ਈਮੇਲ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज का सारांश अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটা সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে ফো করবেন অথবা উল্লেখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا خلاصہ اپنی زبان میں درکار ہو تو، براہ کرم نمبر پر فون کریں یا مذکورہ بالا ڈاک کے پتے یا ای میل پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Arabic

الوصول على ملخص لهذا المستند بلغة، فراجع الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الاتصال على عنوان البريد الإلكتروني أو عنوان البريد الإلكتروني أعلاه.

Gujarati

જો તમારે આ દસ્તાવેજનો સાર તમારી ભાષામાં જોઈતો હોય તો ઉપર આપેલ નંબર પર ફોન કરો અથવા ઉપર આપેલ ટપાલ અથવા ઇ-મેઇલ સરનામા પર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

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Darren Johnson AM
City Hall
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SE1 2AA

28 August 2014

Dear Darren Johnson,

Thank you for your letter of 12 August which gave detail on the London Assembly Housing Committee's recent report on homelessness and rough sleeping.

At the Autumn Statement 2012, the Government announced that increases to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) would be limited to 1 per cent in April 2014 and April 2015 in line with some other benefits. Alongside this, the Government also announced that it would be using some of the savings from this measure to increase some LHA rates beyond the 1 per cent limit. These savings are known as the Targeted Affordability Funding and there is £45 million available in 2014/15 and £95 million in 2015/16.

We are using this Targeted Affordability Funding to increase some LHA rates by up to 4 per cent in 2014/15 in areas where rising market rents are significantly reducing the availability of affordable accommodation. Using the latest rental data we have identified those rates with the greatest divergence between the baseline LHA rates and the 30th percentile of local rents. From April 2014, a total of 126 LHA rates (out of 960 overall) have been increased by up to 4 per cent, rather than 1 per cent.

Of the 70 London Broad Rental Market Area rates, 35 have been increased by the Targeted Affordability Funding by up to 4 per cent. All other London rates which do not benefit from the Funding have been increased by either the 30th percentile of local rents or 1 per cent, whichever is the lower of the two.

We estimate that around three quarters of Targeted Affordability Funding for 2014/15 is directed to London Broad Rental Market Areas.

Limiting increases to 4 per cent balances the objective of supporting the areas where rents are rising fastest with the funding available. Setting a higher limit would see relatively few rates benefit, whereas setting a lower limit would spread the funding too thinly and not provide enough support where it is needed.

Maximum limits to LHA rates will continue to apply however, so no rates can be increased beyond these levels. From April 2014, the LHA caps have been increased by 1 per cent and are:

- Shared Accommodation Rate/one bedroom – £258.06;
- two bedrooms – £299.34;
- three bedrooms – £350.95; and
- four bedrooms – £412.89.

The LHA rates for 2014/15, (effective from April 2014), were published by Rent Officers in January 2014 together with the 30th percentiles of local rents.

The Government is committed to making savings from this measure over the two years. We will continue to monitor the divergences between the LHA rates and rents, including those in the areas where LHA rates were capped in 2011.

Further Targeted Affordability Funding will be available for 2015/16 and we will consider the local rental market data before deciding how it should be allocated. However, we remain committed to our original policy intention to limit the amount of LHA which can be paid in the most expensive areas, as taxpayers cannot be expected to support private sector rents regardless of their level or how fast they are increasing.

In areas where rents rise rapidly there should be no presumption that Housing Benefit will always pick up the bill. In the current difficult economic situation we are still increasing rates each year.

As you may be aware, in July, we introduced a new easement which gives work coaches the scope to treat some recently homeless claimants as available for and actively seeking work. As the change builds on the existing domestic emergency provision, the easement was introduced in recognition of the particular issues faced by those claimants who are suffering a domestic emergency as a result of recently becoming homeless.

Although the easement is likely to be most suitable for rough sleepers and those staying in direct access hostels, it may also be applied to other homeless claimants. For example, those leaving care or in a hostel akin to a direct access hostel, if their individual circumstances can be considered a domestic emergency, are recently homeless, and whose homelessness is the main barrier to finding and retaining a job.

The decision to target this measure at the recently homeless rather than longer-term homeless is because those who have only recently become homeless are more likely to benefit from a temporary easement in conditionality requirements to allow time for them to resolve their accommodation issues sufficiently to subsequently enable them to focus on job search activities.

The intention is to prevent individuals becoming entrenched in a homelessness lifestyle and aligns with interventions such as 'No Second Night Out' which targets new rough sleepers and seeks to help them off the streets as quickly as possible.

If a claimant fails to attend an interview, then that non-participation in an interview would normally lead to disentitlement to benefit. However, if a claimant makes contact within five days, explaining the reasons for their failure to attend the interview, then the claim will continue and no sanction will apply as long as the decision maker is satisfied that the claimant had good reason. Of course, a person's domestic situation or homelessness will be considered and the impact this has had on their participation.

Assuming that the claimant has declared their homelessness, suitable arrangements should already be in place to make sure they can access and respond to any correspondence. If a claimant cites their reason for failing to attend an interview as having not received a letter, then further information would need to be obtained, such as: the address to which the letter was addressed; the security of that address; whether or not it was the address agreed with the claimant as their normal contact address; and whether there were problems receiving mail at that address before or reported difficulties receiving mail.

The decision maker would then need to consider if, taking all the individual circumstances of the case into account, that on the balance of probabilities the claimant did not receive the notification. If the claimant is able to show that the notification has not been received the notification cannot be treated as correctly served under the legislation.

It is for all these reasons that it is vital that claimants make work coaches aware of their homelessness, so that they can discuss the flexibilities available when work-related requirements are set, and so that they can have access to the right help at the right time. That includes discussing how their homelessness, and the need to find accommodation, impacts on their ability to take the reasonable steps for them to find work, as well as arrangements to keep in touch, respond to correspondence and adhere to their Claimant Commitment.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Freud

Minister for Welfare Reform



Department for
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Our Ref: BL/KH022256/14

09 SEP 2014

LONDON ASSEMBLY HOUSING COMMITTEE REPORT - NO GOING BACK: *BREAKING THE CYCLE OF ROUGH SLEEPING AND HOMELESSNESS*

Thank you for your letter of 12 August enclosing a copy of the London Assembly's report.

This Government is committed to tackling and preventing rough sleeping and homelessness and over £1 billion has been made available over the spending round to do this and support vulnerable households affected by welfare reform. This includes £34 million to the Greater London Authority to tackle rough sleeping across London and I commend the efforts of the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Group for their pioneering work.

Our funding helps to ensure that local authorities and the voluntary sector are able to provide the support people need to get off the streets – through schemes such as No Second Night Out and Streetlink.

In terms of aiming high on rough sleeping, I want all local authorities to ensure that they continue to offer a No Second Night Out service. Clearly the success of the project in London, with around three-quarters of new rough sleepers only spending one night on the streets, and the adoption of the NSNO standard in other local authorities across the country is the way forward.

I do not believe that anyone should have to sleep rough in the 21st century. Clearly local authorities play a key role in helping to prevent people ending up on the streets in the first place. They are required to provide advice and assistance and I do not envisage further legislative change. However, I recognise that some ought to do more and I want to encourage all local authorities to raise their game. That is why I have made available £8 million Help for Single Homeless funding so local authorities can do more together to improve services.

This additional funding is on top of the existing £14 million provided to Crisis to help single people access private rented sector accommodation. This scheme has helped around 8,000 single people into a tenancy in the private rented sector.



KRIS HOPKINS MP

Subject: Response to *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform Report*

Report to: Housing Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 16 October 2014

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out for noting the detailed response from the Mayor to the Housing Committee's report, *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the response from the Mayor to the report, *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*.**

3. Background

- 3.1 On 17 June 2014, the Housing Committee noted its report on the consequences of welfare reform in London as agreed by the Chair of the Committee, Darren Johnson AM, under delegated authority, in consultation with Lead Members.
- 3.2 The report sets out findings and recommendations on the consequences of welfare reform. The report made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The Mayor should publish regular monitoring data on the impact of welfare reforms against his housing priorities, including the risk for investment partners and potential opportunities.

The Mayor should publish regular monitoring data on the impact of welfare reforms on London's households, including a disaggregation by tenure and equality group.

Recommendation 2

The Government should ensure LHA rates are regularly reviewed and properly take account of the higher costs in London.

The Mayor should ask the Government to regularly review the Local Housing Allowance Targeted Affordability Fund to ensure that sufficient numbers of areas of London are receiving assistance.

The Mayor should lobby the Government to ensure that the category of 'vulnerable' claimants, whereby rents will continue to be paid directly to landlords, is defined broadly and includes tenants with complex credit and debt problems.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor and London Councils should produce an assessment of the impact on movement of claimant households within, and out of, London, and publish regular monitoring data.

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should continue to make the case for significant discretionary housing payments funding for London boroughs. There is a particular opportunity to influence this when the government decides on both the overall budget and individual allocations for discretionary housing payments for 2016/17.

London Councils should work with boroughs to ensure that there is sufficient monitoring and transparency over how boroughs are allocating their discretionary housing payments, that boroughs are allocating these payments in the most effective and sustainable way and that best practice is shared.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor should seek additional mitigation for households placed in temporary accommodation that are subject to the overall benefit cap.

The Mayor should also seek an exemption from direct payments for those in temporary accommodation, to minimise the risks to social and private landlords.

3.3 The report can be found on the London Assembly's website at:
<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/publications>.

3.4 The Committee invited the Mayor to respond to these recommendations.

4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 The Chair of the Housing Committee received a detailed written response to the Committee's report from the Mayor in October 2014, attached at **Appendix 1**.

4.2 The Housing Committee is asked to note this report. This does not preclude the Committee from making more detailed consideration of this response at another time.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Response from the Mayor to the report *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
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List of Background Papers: None

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MAYOR OF LONDON

Darren Johnson AM
City Hall
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London SE1 2AA

Our ref: MGLA220714-2483

Date: 26 SEP 2014

Dear Darren

Thank you for your letter of 18 July regarding the Housing Committee's report on the impacts of welfare reform and for your hard work on this report. As requested, I have responded to each of your five recommendations in turn below and I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

Recommendation 1

The Mayor should publish regular monitoring data on the impact of welfare reforms against his housing priorities, including the risk for investment partners and potential opportunities. The Mayor should publish regular monitoring data on the impact of welfare reforms on London's households, including a disaggregation by tenure and equality group.

Response

Others, including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), London Councils, the Local Government Association and the National Housing Federation, publish detailed analyses of the impact of welfare reform regularly. Some of these, including London Councils', are London-specific, while other national studies cover regional variations in impacts. These analyses also include the impacts of welfare reform on particular tenures and/or equality groups where this data is available.

I do not consider that it would represent a good use of GLA resources for me to embark on an independent London-specific monitoring project, given the quantity and quality of existing work. I am also unconvinced that the GLA is as well-placed to conduct such monitoring as some of the bodies who are already embarked on programmes of assessment – for example, in terms of having access to DWP data. But I do, of course, keep a close eye on these analyses and especially their insights into the particular impacts of welfare reform in London.

Recommendation 2

The Government should ensure LHA rates are regularly reviewed and properly take account of the higher costs in London. The Mayor should ask the Government to regularly review the Local Housing Allowance Targeted Affordability Fund to ensure that sufficient numbers of areas of London are receiving assistance.

The Mayor should lobby the Government to ensure that the category of 'vulnerable' claimants, whereby rents will continue to be paid directly to landlords, is defined broadly and includes tenants with complex credit and debt problems.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Response

LHA rates already take some account of London's high rents, as the baseline from which LHA rates increase each year was originally determined with reference to local market rents, as well as by caps on awards where the 30th centile of market rents exceeds what it is reasonable for the public purse to pay for someone's accommodation. However, the Government, in line with cross party support for limiting overall benefit expenditure, has set the annual increase in LHA rates for a three year period in the 2012 Autumn Statement at 1 per cent. This will keep expenditure on Housing Benefit for private sector tenants in check.

As you note, the Government introduced Targeted Affordability Funding, using the savings resulting from changes to LHA, to support increases of more than 1 per cent in LHA rates in some areas where private sector rents have risen more rapidly. However, the Office of National Statistics' rental index indicates that, across the capital, private sector rents have consistently shown below inflation rent increases over the last ten years. Given this, I would be wary of measures that may counter one of the original stated aims of reducing LHA rates that is to exert downward pressure on rent levels, in contrast to the inflationary effect we witnessed when Local Housing Allowance was first introduced in 2008 and landlords increased rents to match LHA levels.

On the issue of vulnerable claimants and direct payment of LHA, direct payment became the norm when the previous Government introduced LHA back in 2008. I think it is right that claimants are generally expected to manage their own finances and I applaud the Government for encouraging greater personal responsibility through its welfare reform programme. But I do recognise the need for exceptions in some cases, as does the Government, which requires local authorities to make payments directly to the landlord where the claimant is more than eight weeks in arrears with their rent. The Government has also given local authorities discretion to make direct payments in a wide number of cases, such as where a claimant may have difficulty in managing their affairs, where direct payment will assist the claimant to secure or retain a tenancy, and where a claimant has previously had their LHA paid directly to the landlord due to rent arrears. This seems to me to give local authorities ample scope to arrange direct payments for claimants who need such arrangements.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor and London Councils should produce an assessment of the impact on movement of claimant households within, and out of, London, and publish regular monitoring data.

Response

London Councils has published data on changes in the numbers of Housing Benefit claimants in different London boroughs over time. Indeed, you used a map capturing such data produced by London Councils to introduce your report. However, we must recognise that households receiving Housing Benefit move for all sorts of reasons other than the impact of welfare reform.

London Councils' Inter-Borough Accommodation Agreement (IBAA) facilitates the collection of data on instances where boroughs place homeless households in accommodation in another borough, as do the PIE reports on provision for homeless households that local authorities routinely return to the Department for Communities and Local Government. This is a matter for the boroughs. My Housing Strategy makes clear that I expect local authorities to use mechanisms such as London Councils' NOTIFY system.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Recommendation 4

The Mayor should continue to make the case for significant discretionary housing payments funding for London boroughs. There is a particular opportunity to influence this when the government decides on both the overall budget and individual allocations for discretionary housing payments for 2016/17.

London Councils should work with boroughs to ensure that there is sufficient monitoring and transparency over how boroughs are allocating their discretionary housing payments, that boroughs are allocating these payments in the most effective and sustainable way and that best practice is shared.

Response

The GLA undertook a substantive amount of work with Government to secure a healthy share of the budget for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) for London. I will continue to make the case for London as the Government determines future budgets.

I note that London authorities spent almost all of the DHP budget allocated to them for 2013/14. As to increasing monitoring of how boroughs spend their resources, the Government has already enhanced its monitoring of local authorities' use of DHPs. But it is ultimately up to individual authorities to determine how their budgets can be most effectively used, and it is for London Councils to determine whether it feels there is value in introducing further monitoring of its own.

Recommendation 5


The Mayor should seek additional mitigation for households placed in temporary accommodation that are subject to the overall benefit cap. The Mayor should also seek an exemption from direct payments for those in temporary accommodation, to minimise the risks to social and private landlords.

Response

The range of options available to local authorities to help them mitigate the impact of the total benefit cap on households are generally as suitable for use with households in temporary accommodation as with other households affected by the cap, so I am unconvinced that additional measures are required.

Thank you again for sending me the report.

Yours ever,



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London

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Subject: Housing Committee Work Programme	
Report to: Housing Committee	
Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat	Date: 16 October 2014
This report will be considered in public	

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the proposed work programme for the Committee during the 2014/15 Assembly year.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee agrees a proposed adjustment to its work programme as identified in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3.**

3. Background

- 3.1 In order for relevant preparatory work to be undertaken, Members need to agree the subject of the next project they wish to investigate later in the Assembly year.
- 3.2 Members will receive a report at each Committee meeting on the progress of the projects agreed as the basis for the work programme. Additional projects will be included in the work programme from time to time reflecting the need for the Committee to respond to tasks such as consultations or other events as necessary.

Criteria for topic selection

- 3.3 The criteria for selecting topics are some, or all, of the following: That the topic
- 1) Addresses a strategic challenge relating to housing in London, with a particular emphasis on:
 - developing and maintaining sustainable communities
 - reducing inequalities and offering opportunities to all Londoners;
 - 2) Relates to the responsibilities and priorities of the Mayor and GLA Group;
 - 3) Provides an opportunity for the Committee to influence policy ; and

- 4) Provides an opportunity for the Committee to add value by bringing significant new evidence or new perspectives to the debate.

4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 The Committee has agreed improving the affordability of home ownership as its next new topic for investigation. In order for sufficient preparatory work to be undertaken alongside the Committee's two other ongoing investigations, it is proposed that the Committee's first meeting on this topic be moved from November to December.
- 4.2 The Mayor published a new Housing Strategy, following consultation, in April 2014.¹ The Strategy contained outline proposals for a range of significant initiatives, notably seeking to increase the supply of new homes in London and to improve quality standards in the private rental sector. Six months on, these proposals have been taken forward:
- the London Rental Standard was launched in May 2014 with the aim of raising professional standards in the private rented sector, by promoting longer tenancies and tackling rogue landlords;
 - the deadline for bids for the Housing Zone designation passed on 30 September 2014 and an announcement on successful bids is expected in November, although early bids have been following a fast-track timetable. The Mayor is combining £200m of his housing funding with match-funding from the Treasury to try to unlock or accelerate housing supply; and
 - a discussion paper on the Mayor's proposed London Housing Bank was published in April and consultation closed in May 2014. In its first phase, using £200m of GLA funding, the Bank is intended to provide soft loans or investment to support Registered Providers in the delivery of additional affordable homes outside of the regular routes. A prospectus was expected in the Summer with an announcement in November but no further information has yet been made public.
- 4.3 It is therefore proposed that the November meeting slot be used for an update from GLA Housing and Land on progress with these key elements of the Mayor's new Housing Strategy. This session would also assess the extent to which the Committee's recommendations relating to these matters have been taken into account or implemented, such as those contained in the Committee's reports on rent reform² and its letter on encouraging diversity in London's house building industry.³

Future topics

- 4.4 The table below sets out the allocated dates for the Housing Committee in 2014/15 and lists the main business proposed for each date at this stage. The business for future dates is subject to change as the Committee develops proposals for its work. Dates may be used for formal Committee meetings, informal meetings, site visits or other activities for the Committee. The work programme also provides for the Committee to respond to any matters that arise at short notice.

¹ [Housing in London, GLA, April 2014](#)

² [Rent Reform: Making the Private Rented Sector Fit for Purpose \(June 2013\)](#)

³ [Letter to the Mayor – London Development Panel and Diversity in the Housebuilding Industry \(August 2013\)](#)

Housing Committee meeting date	Proposed topic
Tuesday 11 November 2014	Update on Mayor's Housing Strategy 2014
Tuesday 2 December 2014	Improving the affordability of home ownership
Tuesday 20 January 2015	Improving the affordability of home ownership
Tuesday 10 February 2015	<i>To be agreed</i>
Tuesday 17 March 2015	<i>To be agreed</i>

4.5 Other topics proposed for later in the municipal year include:

- **Affordable homes numbers** – the Committee will wish to keep the number of affordable homes built in London under review;
- **Lettings agencies** – following up on the Committee's work last year on the private rented sector, assessing the effectiveness of different models for regulating lettings agencies and including consideration of social lettings agencies;
- **Student housing** – looking at build quality and prices of new student accommodation in London;
- **Rent controls** – also following up work from the Committee's Private Rented Sector report published in 2013, considering the range of mechanisms applied in Europe and whether or how they might work in London; and/or
- **Housing Zones** – scrutinising proposals for the Mayor's new Housing Zones which are identified in his recent Housing Strategy.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report: None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers: None

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