

## 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 Waltherton 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:housingcommittee@london.gov.uk). If you have anything further to contribute, do email us.