

London Tenants Federation

Annual Report 2007 - 08



Bringing together London's borough-wide tenants' federations and organisations

Sharing and exchanging

LTF general meetings this year have continued to provide opportunities for representatives of London's borough-wide council tenant federations and organisations to discuss revisions to national and regional housing policies and the way they impact on London's tenants.

A special exchange meeting was held focusing on our member organisations, how they are organised and funded and key issues for our boroughs' tenants.

Extensive debate was held on the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Determinations for this year and the resultant rent increases of between five and six per cent across London.

LTF held a successful 'open' meeting in February on the draft Mayor's Housing Strategy - Climate Change Issues. Officers from the Mayor's Energy Team and the Greater London Energy Efficiency Network were key speakers. Guest facilitators from Friends of the Earth, The Consumer Council for Water, the Mayors Housing and Homelessness team and the Energy Centre for Sustainable Communities worked alongside LTF members. Workshops were held on Fuel and Cool Poverty, Water Supply and Flooding, Design of New and Existing homes and The London Picture and Sustainability.

The Mayor's Housing Strategy will be London's first statutory housing strategy. Formal consultation, due to commence in May, has been delayed since Londoners have elected a new Mayor, who is likely to draw up a different strategy.

LTF members spoke at meetings and tenants' conferences on our involvement at the regional level and / or facilitated workshops on regional housing issues in Islington, Enfield, Lambeth, Croydon and Sutton.

Responding to consultation

Detailed discussion took place in preparation for participation in consultations on - the Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP), the Cave Review of Social Housing, Government's tenant empowerment consultation, the Housing Green Paper and the Housing and Regeneration Bill.

Our response to the draft FALP secured LTF invitations to take part in the Examination in Public (EiP) of the proposed alterations.

The EiP was a major piece of work for the LTF this year, with members from Lambeth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Islington, Camden, Barnet and Haringey taking part. They expressed concerns about over-development and high density in London and failures by the authorities to meet the need for low cost rented housing and social infrastructure.

Despite concerns about the dominance of developers and service providers at the EiP, LTF members ensured the voice of tenants was heard. They were asked by the Chair of the Panel to lead the debate on some issues. We also worked with other voluntary sector organisations who attended the EiP, in order to strengthen the community sector voice within the debate. The LTF Autumn newsletter was devoted entirely to EiP.

Representation at the regional level

LTF has two delegates on the Mayor Housing Forum (MHF). Both have continued to raise concern to LTF member organisations - including those raised at the EiP of the FALP.

LTF also has two delegates on the Community Engagement sub group of the MHF; one of

whom was elected chair the sub-group this year.

The sub-group was established as a direct result of representation made by LTF delegates at the MHF on the need to increase involvement of tenants of all tenures in decision making at the regional level. Through LTF's efforts representatives of the London Leaseholders' Network and of and a housing association tenant representative are now formally represented on that sub-group.

A PowerPoint presentation on our regional involvement has been prepared and any of London's borough-wide federations or organisations is welcome to make use of it.

Building links

LTF continues to build and maintain links with other London tenant and voluntary sector organisations. Our success at the EiP of the FALP, was enhanced by LTF members working closely with other community and voluntary sector groups. This included Friends of the Earth, Age Concern, the London Civic Forum and the London Forum for Amenity and Civic Societies.

LTF has developed strong links with other regional tenants' organisations, from the North East, North West, South / South East, Yorkshire and Humberside and the East Midlands. LTF members have met regularly with them this year and together they have drawn up agreed protocol for regional tenants organisations. LTF and other regional tenants' organisations also met this year with Tenants and Residents Organisations of England, the Confederation of Co-operative Housing and the National Federation of TMOs met regarding the proposed National Tenants Voice.

Campaigning

The 'Right to Rent' campaign was initiated by Leeds Tenants Federation. Its chair spoke at the LTF's AGM last year. Since then, there has been agreement between England's regional tenants' organisations - from London, the NW, NE, Yorkshire and Humberside and the S / SE to campaign together on the Right to Rent. Each regional organisation will lead the campaign in their own areas - focusing on the particular issues relevant to their region.

One LTF's member organisations (Lambeth Tenants Council) organised a conference on 'The Right to Rent and Affordability' in October 2007. LTF was invited to speak and facilitate a workshop. LTF aims to build the campaign further over the coming months.

LTF has maintained its links with and formally supports the 'Moonlight Robbery Campaign'. This focuses on the government's 'robbery' of tenants' rents (of around £1.4 billion a year) while they continue to rise and there is chronic under funding of the repairs, management and maintenance of our homes (of more than £1.1 billion a year).

With a review of the national Housing Revenue Account system commencing this year, the LTF aims to continue to raise the profile of both the 'Moonlight Robbery' of tenants' rents as well as the general lack of affordability of rents in London.

Funding

LTF has been funded for the past 5 years by 'London Housing', the housing section of London Councils (previously the ALG). Reorganisation at London Councils has resulted in the loss of the 'London Housing' and its merger into other directorates. LTF has been allocated 6 months funding this year and encouraged to apply for funding through its grants committee. LTF has submitted a bid and will know by the end of July if it has been successful.

London Tenants Federation is an umbrella organisation, bringing together London's borough wide council tenants federations and organisations. It aims to provide a strong regional voice for London's council tenants.

It does not aim to supersede any of its member organisations, but rather to strengthen them by bringing them together to share and exchange information, to respond to consultation and at times to campaign.

LTF has representation on the Mayors Housing Forum and chairs its community engagement sub group.

LTF is a democratic and accountable organisation that operates by consensus.

Representatives of LTF member federations and organisations are elected in their own boroughs and accountable to tenants in their own boroughs. Each federation and organisation is of equal importance to the LTF.

LTF has links with many other tenants' organisations; of various tenures, regional, national and international.

London Leaseholders Network is an associate member of LTF.

LTF has had funding for five and a half years from London Councils, covering administrative costs and the wages of our part time support worker.

Many LTF members as well as our worker devote large numbers of voluntary hours to the work of London Tenants Federation. It is as a result of this that LTF continues to grow in strength and influence.

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