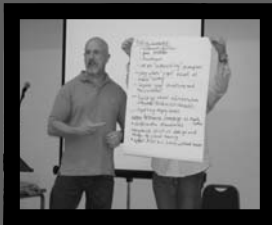


# London Tenants Federation



Annual Report  
2006 - 07

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

**Sharing and exchanging** Our general meetings, this year, have continued to provide opportunities for representatives of London's borough wide council tenant federations and organisations to come together to examine existing and planned housing and planning policies and the way they impact on London tenants.

Discussion at our meetings this year have focus on the numerous reviews of housing and consultations papers that have been put out by central and regional government, including the John Hill's Review of Social Housing, the Cave Review of the Regulation of Social Housing, 'From Decent Homes to Sustainable Communities', Alterations to the London Plan and the Mayors Housing Strategy.

As usual we have invited speakers to a number of our meetings including officers from the Greater London Authority (GLA), Shelter and London Councils. In future we aim to hold some larger meetings during the year, open to a wider number of London's borough wide tenants' federations and organisations members.

Our 'Tenants Vision for Housing in London' conference held in September '06 was our most successful conference to date. It was prompted by John Hills' review of social housing which was commissioned by central government. We sent John Hills a report which included the recommendations agreed at our conference and noted our concerns that despite the review being focused on the needs of tenants, formal consultation was with housing professionals not tenants.

The conference was organised and chaired by our members with the support of our part time worker. Workshops were also facilitated by our members alongside - European tenants, officers of the GLA and London Councils and representatives of cooperative organisations

Representatives of 17 London borough wide council tenants' federations and organisations attended, as did a few housing association and cooperative tenants. Also in attendance were tenant representatives from seven European countries and the General Secretary of Habitat International Coalition.

Recommendations made at the conference have added to LTF policy. They are referred to in our responses to consultations and by our delegates at the Mayors Housing Forum meetings.

**Responding to consultation** The LTF has responded to a number of consultations this year, including to the Welfare Reform green paper, which included housing benefit reform proposals. The LTF argued strongly against the introduction of a 'standard housing allowance' and what the government calls a 'shopping incentive' for council and housing association housing benefit claimants. Thankfully, whilst government has pushed ahead with these proposals in the private rented sector, following their consultation, they have shied away from introducing it into the social housing sector – for the time being anyway.

We also responded to the recent Cave Review of the regulation of social housing.

There have also been two major pieces of regional consultation this year- the Further Alterations to the London Plan and Towards the Mayors Housing Strategy, both of which we have responded to.

The LTF's response to consultation on the early alterations to the London Plan gained us an invitation to take part in the Examination in Public (EiP) of the proposed alterations, at City Hall in June '06. We were the only tenant organisation and one of only a few community and voluntary organisations to be invited. Our recent response to the further alterations to the London Plan has argued that there should be fewer developers and service providers and more community and voluntary organisations invited to the next EiP.

**Representation at the regional level** With the establishment of regional housing boards in 2003, the LTF necessarily argued for tenant representation at regional level. We first gained representation in 2005 and this year our representation has doubled. We now have two delegates on the Mayors Housing Forum. We also have delegates on two of the forums sub groups.

In September '05 the LTF put forward a paper arguing for housing association tenants to also be involved in regional decision making. Our paper was accepted, and as a result, a Community Engagement Taskforce was established to make recommendations relating to structures to involve tenants of all tenures in regional decision making. This year our delegates have continued to take part in discussions about this and in January a report proposing the development of borough wide housing association tenant forums was accepted by the Forum.

**Building links** The LTF continues to build its links with tenants' organisations locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. This year LTF representatives attended conferences in Brussels and Athens as a result of our links and as already noted, tenants from Europe and further afield attended our September '06 Conference. The chair of Leeds tenants federation and of the NE regional tenant forum will give a presentation at our AGM.

We continue to maintain links we have developed with other organisations with an interest in housing and planning, such as Shelter and London's Civic Forum. We have met with and made some shared responses to the further alterations to the London Plan with other community and voluntary sector organisations.

**Changes to our structure and intended growth** The LTF has grown considerably over the last four and a half years. Our work load has more than doubled and we need to look for additional funds to support this. In order to fund raise we need to make some changes to our structure. We will ensure though that we retain what we feel is good about our organisation – that is that it doesn't supersede any of our individual members federations and organisations but rather brings them together, to share and exchange, to respond collectively to consultation and to campaign, where there is consensus. This year our finance sub group has drafted a funding strategy. We have amended our constitution and drawn up policies and procedures.

Our long term vision is the establishment of a London Tenants Resource Centre shared by regional tenants' organisations of different tenures and with voluntary organisations working with homeless groups. Please see our funding strategy for more information.

The London Tenants Federation is an umbrella organisation, bringing together London's borough wide council tenants federations and organisations. 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.

The LTF is a democratic and accountable organisation that operates by consensus aiming to provide a strong collective voice for London's council tenants.

Representatives of the 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.

Some decisions about housing and planning are now made at the regional level. The LTF campaigned for representation at the regional level and now has delegates on the Mayors Housing Forum and on two of its sub groups.

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

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

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

*LTF is an umbrella organisation bringing together London's borough wide council tenant federations and organisations*

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