

London Tenants Federation



Report on
**Housing and Planning
in SW London**

LTF sub-regional meeting
24th November 2008



**LONDON
COUNCILS**

· **London Tenants Federation**

Report on Housing and
Planning in SW London LTF
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London Tenants Federation's SW London Housing and Planning meeting November 2008

This meeting was the first of a series of London Tenants Federation sub-regional meetings across London.

The aim of the meeting was to facilitate greater understanding of and engagement in sub-regional and regional policies and strategies, among SW London borough-wide tenants organisations.

London has 5 sub-regional housing partnerships - SW London, SE London, East, West and North London.

Speakers at the event were Shelagh Hair, Director of the SW London Housing Partnership and Carole Forrest, Housing Policy Officer, Greater London Authority.

Workshops were organised on the following

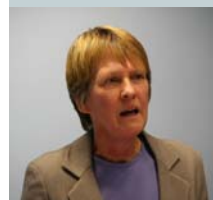
1. How to influence local planning policies (facilitated by Richard Lee, Just Space - a network of voluntary and community groups committed to raising awareness of, and involvement in, planning policies in London, which can be contacted via the London Civic Forum.)
2. How to challenge a Planning Application (facilitated by Nancy Astley, Planning Aid for London)
3. Tenants' housing priorities in SW London and opportunities to link on common issues (facilitated by Sharon Hayward, LTF Coordinator)

Sutton Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (SFTRA) hosted the event. It was chaired by Jean Crossby (chair of SFTRA)

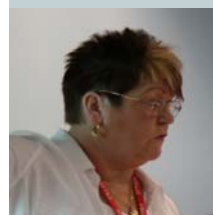
Attendees: Ken Coates, Liz Reeves, Maureen Symes and Guy Pile (Croydon Tenant and Leaseholder Panel, Jennifer Whiddett, Jean Vincent, Sadiq Mohamed, Ray Brown, John Russell and Sue Harrison (Kingston Federation of TRAs), Ron Hollis, Graham Nicholls, Barbara Booth, Cathy Butler, Patricia Squires and Angela Miller (Lambeth Tenants Council), John Munday, Robert Brown, Barbara Harding and Jean Crossby (Sutton Federation of TRAs), Joan Lagendijk (Wandsworth Tenants and Leaseholder Panel) and Chris Graham (London Leaseholder Network).



Shelagh Hair



Carole Forrest



Jean Crossby



The SW London Housing Partnership, its housing strategy and how tenants can influence it – Notes from presentation by Shelagh Hair, Director, SW London Housing Partnership

The SW London Housing Partnership coordinates work of Croydon, Lambeth, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton and Wandsworth

When the 'London Housing Strategy' has been agreed the SW London Housing Strategy will be updated

Shelagh co-ordinates the work of the 7 local authorities who come together to form the SW London Housing Partnership. The Partnership was established 4 years ago when the Housing Corporation began to allocate funding for new housing sub-regionally rather than locally. The partnership member boroughs are controlled by different political parties but attempt to find common ground around the work of the partnership.

It has a housing strategy; its members share good practice and promote effective housing delivery. It is helpful to have the 7 boroughs working together as it provides a bit more weight or voice for SW London and enables the running of some housing schemes together more effectively. It is not a legal entity.

The partnership has lead member meetings and also officer meetings. It has sub-groups where much of the work gets done. It runs a special housing project around overcrowding with funding allocated by the department for Communities and Local Government.

Most of the funding that comes to the sub-regions is from the National Affordable Housing Programme. The partnership also receives GLA Targeted Funding Stream funding for its private sector programme and also a small amount of funding for extensions, de-conversions and conversions of council stock to make larger units.

The SW London Housing Strategy was produced in 2005. It needs to be updated. This will occur once the London Housing Strategy is formally agreed and in place. Its priorities were however updated in 2007 and an action plan produced. This can be found on the SW London Housing Partnership website (www.swlhp.org).

Environmental issues have been given higher priority and where the 2005 strategy focuses much on development of the partnership, with that all formally established there is now a clear consumer focus.

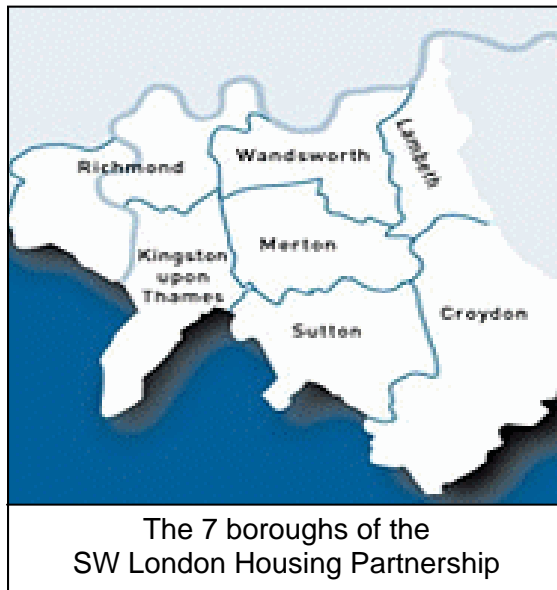
There is added value in the boroughs of the sub-region working together, including - being better able to:

- Deliver programmes (such as the Private Sector Renewal Funding)

- Provide some cross-borough supported housing schemes
- Raise standards through promoting good practice
- Improve efficiency
- Bring in some additional resources to SW London (such as the overcrowding project).

Two ago the Mayor’s Housing Forum agreed a report that set out recommendations relating to tenant involvement at the regional level. Shelagh noted that soon after this, the SW Housing Partnership allocated a page on its website for tenants, although as yet this has not been utilised. There is therefore a facility already in place that could be made use of for engaging with tenant representatives.

Proposals around increasing opportunities for tenants to engage at the sub-regional and regional level was agreed by the Mayor’s Housing Forum in December 2006



Shelagh said she was very pleased to attend the London Tenants Federation’s SW sub-regional meeting. She proposed the following steps might assist tenants to engage at the sub regional level:

- Improve the flow of information between tenants and the partnership
- Consider how the SW London Housing Partnership website may be used to provide information for tenants
- Organise some sub-regional meetings – for example. around the Mayor’s Housing Strategy
- Engage tenants in the review of the SW London housing strategy next year.

Questions and comments from meeting attendees and responses from Shelagh Hair

Kingston

Despite my 2 years of involvement with Kingston Fed, including meetings with lead members and officers, I've never heard anything about the partnership or its strategy. This kind of meeting should be held regularly

Lambeth

Given the fact that the strategy was written at least 3 years ago, how much of it is still relevant? Tenants' federations and organisations get together through the LTF, but I'd never heard of the boroughs getting together in the sub-regions.

Shelagh Hair

While many of the housing issues that were of concern in 2005 are still relevant, elected members and officers have though moved on. The partnership's website lists the latest Lead Members and Officers involved in the partnership. From this meeting today we could look to see how we can provide a good flow of information to and from tenants.

Lambeth

Does the building of new homes come from government funding or also from local authorities?

Shelagh Hair

Funding for new homes comes from government, via the Homes and Communities Agency (previously the Housing Corporation). There are also some targeted funding streams from the GLA – but this is small scale in comparison.

Sutton

How will the changes that have occurred since the Mayor of London changed affect what the SW London Housing Partnership is doing?

Shelagh Hair

The Mayor has just published a new (draft) London Housing Strategy. Members and officers of the SW London Housing Partnership will look at how the strategy relates to their 7 boroughs in January. They will make a formal response together, on issues where there is consensus. once the public consultation commences in March or April. We could perhaps organise a meeting for SW London tenants during the consultation period and possibly SW London tenants representatives could also put together a joint response.

Lambeth

Could Shelagh expand a little on the additional resources – how much and what has those resources funded in the sub region?

Shelagh Hair

There has been 2 supported housing schemes, covering Merton

and Sutton. The scheme to provide conversions and extensions to homes has provided funding for 40 units, some of which were in Lambeth. The private sector grant for the sub-region has been about £20 million over the last few years. The Communities and Local Government (CLG) grant for the overcrowding scheme – aimed at moving tenants from under-occupied properties has amounted to £110,000 per borough and a total of £100,000 revenue funding (for staff). The Mayor has responsibilities around targeted funding (from the regional housing pot). The targeted funding streams include: funding for Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant, the Settled Homes Initiative (to support halving the number of households in temporary accommodation), the Innovations and Opportunity Fund (a new programme to support innovative environmental and delivery solutions) and to fund improvements to the condition and use of existing properties.

Is the targeted funding just for the private sector?

Lambeth

No, there is funding for:

Shelagh Hair

- achieving ‘beyond decent homes’*
- bringing empty homes into use*
- encouraging the release of public land in a way that minimises the up-front costs and improves development outcomes*
- improving the condition and use of existing public and private homes (including bringing long-term empty homes into use)*
- improving the condition of homes occupied by vulnerable households*
- carrying out conversions and de-conversions.*

The funding available totals around £179 million for 2009/10 and £106 million for 2010/11.

It's good to have these figures. How much is there for the National Affordable Housing Programme and what definition of affordable housing is being used?

Lambeth

The definition of affordable housing is that set out in the London Plan. Target rents for council and housing association homes are set by a government formula. Ordinarily you would not expect that a household would have to spend more than 25% of its income on rent. The London Plan suggests 35%. The GLA aims to

Carole Forrest

do some work on this – relating to each borough. The information will be set out on our website.

Shelagh Hair

The Affordable Housing Programme allocation for SW London 2006/08 was £250 million and is currently £110 million for 2008/11. There have been changes in the way the funds are allocated. There will be continuous allocation of funds over the three years so the figure for 2008/11 will increase. SW London gets about 15% of London's funding and it is hoped that it will end up with a similar amount to the amount allocated previously.

Lambeth

We have massive housing problems in Lambeth - particularly of homes still not reaching the decent homes standard and little chance of getting any money to achieve this. The number of housing repossessions is increasing and likely to reach 45,000 by then end of the year and new build in London has just about dried up. The Mayor is reducing targets for the number of social rented homes. We have no feed back from councillors about what they are doing with other boroughs in the sub region.

Shelagh Hair

The councillor meetings in the sub-region tend to cover discussion on what is being done in the SW under the partnership. We could ensure that future agendas are published on the partnership website.

The following can be found on the SW London Housing Partnership website address:
www.swlhp.org.uk

- A copy of the SW London Housing Strategy
- Information on its key projects
- Details of Lead Members for Housing and Lead Officers for the Partnership
- SW Housing Partnership's action plan
- Details on Housing Associations operating in SW London
- A page for tenants and residents

London-wide housing and planning policies and how they impact at the local level – Notes from presentation by Carole Forrest, Greater London Authority Housing Policy Manager



The Greater London Authority (GLA) is a statutory authority with a number of regional responsibilities:

- the preparation of statutory strategies on transport, spatial development, economic development and the environment
- drafting non statutory strategies
- setting budgets for the GLA, Transport for London, the London Development Agency, the Metropolitan Police and London's Fire Services .

The Mayor's activities are scrutinised by an elected Assembly.

Every 6 weeks there is a Mayor's question time, where he answers questions from Assembly members. These meetings are open to the public.

The Mayor's real powers, when it comes to housing and planning, are the London Housing Strategy and the London Plan, which set out the Mayor's vision of what London should look like and how it will develop.

The current London Plan was set out by the previous Mayor, Ken Livingstone. The London Plan has to be agreed by government and takes a long time to change.

Each of the London boroughs' planning guidance must comply with the London Plan and if it doesn't the Mayor has powers to object to it.

The Mayor's powers relate to applications for more than 150 homes and he can direct a borough to refuse an application. He also has the power to take over planning applications for strategic schemes.

The Mayor is obliged to update the London Plan periodically. Consultations are carried out on any proposed changes and an important part of the process is a formal 'Examination in Public' chaired by an independent panel is held.

The panel from the Examination in Public of the Further Alterations to the London Plan (held in July 2007) agreed that the current London Plan should be revised.

The Mayor's 'London Plan' is a statutory planning document. His 'London Housing Strategy' will also be a statutory document. All London borough's housing and planning policies and strategies must comply with these two documents.

Boris Johnson's 'Planning for a Better London' is the first step in a revision of the 'London Plan'.

As a first step towards doing this, the current Mayor, Boris Johnson, published a consultation document in July 2008 called 'Planning for a Better London'. The document sets out what he describes as his 'direction of travel' that will characterise his term of office and sets out a programme for revision of the plan.

Whilst Ken Livingstone felt that setting targets were the way to achieve things, for example relating to levels of affordable housing in London, Boris Johnson says he wants to use a more consensual, as opposed to a target setting, approach with the boroughs.

He is still committed to achieving the same levels of affordable housing promised by Ken Livingstone (50,000 over the next 3 years) but is also looking for greater opportunities for the intermediate housing market.

In the draft London Housing Strategy (published in November 2008) he says he wants to raise aspirations, increase housing choice and to achieve more homes of all tenures.

Public consultation on the draft 'London Housing Strategy' will commence in spring 2009

Consultation about the strategy commences with the London Assembly members and the various GLA 'family organisations' – such as Transport for London and the London Development Agency. Formal public consultation commences afterwards, in spring 2009.

Questions and comments from meeting attendees and responses from Carole Forrest

Boris Johnson has different views from those of Ken Livingstone on the allocation of funds for affordable and private homes; how will this fit in with his desire to have a 'range of housing' and what is the likely impact?

Sutton

Ken Livingstone had a target for 50,000 new affordable homes to be built in London over the next three years. His targets were for 70% of affordable homes to be social rented and 30% intermediate. Boris Johnson is not interested in specifying the tenure, but said he would be unhappy if he didn't see many social-rented homes being built.

Carole Forrest

It seems unlikely that this is going to work.

Sutton

Boris Johnson has new responsibilities as Mayor of London and Chair the Homes and Communities Agency in London (which combines the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships). The delivery agencies have not been told that he will go for anything other than the private/affordable split determined by the previous Mayor.

Carole Forrest

How many empty and void properties are there across London?

Lambeth

2007 figures for London were – 85,576

Carole Forrest

The need for family dwellings in London is huge, but most of what appears to be going up in our borough is one or two-bed properties. I recall that Boris said he didn't want to see the building of homes for 'hobbits' – is he looking to increase targets for family-sized dwellings in London?

Lambeth

There are very high levels of overcrowding in London – even more reason to look at building homes for families. Infrastructure is also needed – community and church.

Lambeth

Analysis suggests 42% of social-rented homes should be of 4 bedrooms or more. Boris Johnson has noted the need for more family-sized dwellings in the draft London Housing Strategy. The Housing Corporation (now the Homes and Communities Agency) targets have been agreed. 42% of its new social homes should be 3 bedrooms or larger and 16% of intermediate homes. It is also the case that developers are finding that they have more and more 1- and 2-bedroom properties that are empty and so they may be more inclined to build family-sized homes.

Carole Forrest

Wandsworth

Housing allocations are also an issue. Because there is not enough housing, those who are homeless get priority above those who have been on waiting lists for years.

Carole Forrest

Allocations policies are determined at the borough level, not by the Mayor, but councils do have statutory duties around those who are homeless and in priority need.

Sutton

Are the targets set out for affordable homes enforceable? Are they simply aspirational?

Carole Forrest

No, they are not enforceable. The previous Mayor felt that what gets measured gets done and so was keen to set targets for each borough. The current Mayor is not keen to set targets for each borough but instead wants to negotiate targets with each of them.

Links to:

- **Planning for a Better London** - <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/planning/docs/plan-better-london.pdf>
- **Draft London Housing Strategy** (for the London Assembly and its functional bodies) - <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/housing/strategy/docs/strategy.pdf>

The Mayor's 'Planning for a Better London' was published in July 2008 with a November 2008 deadline for consultation. The LTF's response to the consultation was supported by 15 of London's tenants' federations and organisations.

The Mayor's draft 'London Housing Strategy' was published in November 2008. There are 2 periods of consultation. A 3-month formal public consultation will begin in spring 2009.

Workshop 1. Intervening in your local planning framework.

Regional Spatial Strategy London's 33 boroughs form the *London Region* and *Boris Johnson (The London Mayor)* is now responsible for the *Spatial Strategy* - the '*London Plan*'.

The existing *London Plan* (Ken Livingstone's *London Plan*) is in force until *The new Mayor's* plan is complete and adopted. This can be downloaded from www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan/thelondonplan.jsp. Your local library may hold a hard copy.

Under the *London Plan* sits each local authority's *Unitary Development Plan (UDP)*. This can be downloaded from your council's web site. Your local library may hold a hard copy.

Councils are engaged in the process of replacing *UDPs* with: Local Development Frameworks a 'folder of local development documents' comprising:

- ***Local Development Scheme***
- ***Development Plan Documents comprising:*** Core Strategy, Site specific Allocations, Proposals Maps, Area Action Plans (optional)
- ***Supplementary Planning Documents***
- ***Statement of Community Involvement***
- ***Annual Monitoring Report***
- ***Local Development Orders and Simplified Planning Zones*** (optional)

The London Plan and borough Local Development Frameworks do not supersede or negate other laws.



Borough Plans sit under the Mayor's 'London Plan'

The London Plan and Local Development Frameworks do not supersede legislation.

Local Borough Core Strategies develop specific detail and interpretation of issues in the London Plan

Identifying when you can best intervene and working with others will help in attempts to change Local Core Strategies

Common land, rights to light, easements and leases are governed under separate provisions in law.

Land ownership must be respected, but there can be grounds for compulsory purchase.

Research your Local Development Scheme (which lists all the planning documents your council will prepare) and identify where you have most right, need and opportunity to intervene.

The most obvious item to get involved with is your local borough's Core Strategy. The Mayor can challenge your borough's Core Strategy if it differs from his London Plan.

Common land, rights to light, easements and leases are governed under separate provisions in law.

Land ownership must be respected, but there can be grounds for compulsory purchase.

The fact that a change is shown in the plan does not by itself make it happen.

Your Local Borough Core Strategy develops specific detail and interpretation of issues in the London Plan. A debate takes place between the London Plan and Core Strategies For example:

- Local Definition of Urban and Sub-urban may differ between boroughs
- Local targets for affordable housing may differ.
- Watch for proposed changes to land use. When new uses are introduced existing ones are lost - such as:
 - Change of Open space to Housing
 - Change of Green Belt to Housing
 - Change of Industrial land to Housing

There are four stages to the development of a core strategy:
1. Issues & Options, 2. Preferred Options 3. Submission Stage
4. Public Examination

The earlier that intervention is made the better, since:

- As time and stages in the process pass officers become attached to their policies.
- Those that submit comments at the earlier stages acquire a right to submit evidence at the public examinations that are part of the Plan process.
- If you have not made a submission, sympathetic others who have may be able to call you as a witness to give evidence.

- Work with other organisations anyway for mutual support and let it be seen that you speak for a public consensus.
- Attending an examination will give you experience and information for use in the future.

Experience tells us that changes can be made to better accommodate our needs if we follow a robust, staged intervention strategy of our own:

- State your contention concisely, detailing precisely what is wrong or insufficient, what wording needs amendment, what wording you like substituted and what evidence you have to support the argument for the alteration.

Your local borough will use statements found in the London Plan that suit their purpose. You can use London Plan statements as evidence to suit yours.

Your Local Authority must produce a detailed evidence base to justify its Core Strategy. This includes Housing Land Supply and Housing Needs assessments.

Much evidence can be found on the GLA and local authority web sites, both in planning documents and other studies.

As an example, Islington's own employment study highlights concern that most of the little manufacturing employment left in Islington was threatened by the building of the Emirates Stadium.

Add evidence of your own, drawn from local experience within your borough. Assemble evidence that the planners will be happy to use to back up the change that you ask for, perhaps when they have to deal with the Mayor!

Make your argument irrefutable and present the officers with no work to do other than to overtype their words with yours and you ought to succeed.

Planning is a quasi-judicial process and decisions need to be evidence based.

Those attending the workshop noted that they had previously little knowledge of the process. They expressed particular concern around the following issues:

- That their comments concerning planning would be ignored.
- Consultation is not real and is often the presentation of information and decisions already taken.
- Loss of green belt.

Following a robust staged intervention strategy can result in changes in local plans that meet our needs

Planning is a quasi-judicial process and decisions must be evidence based

Workshop 2. How to Challenge a Planning Application

Planning is covered by various acts of parliament and planning permission is required for most developments

Building Regulations are a separate matter and not subject to public consultation.

Key legislation relating to planning is contained in the following

- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - which provides the basic framework for planning legislation.
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 - which contains information on Listed Buildings, Listed Building Consent, Conservation Areas, Conservation Area Consent, the 'duty' to pay attention to the 'desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area', the need to notify the Local Planning Authority if carrying out works to trees in the Conservation Area.
- Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations 1992
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

Building Regulations, relate to structure, insulation, fire risk and drainage are a separate matter to planning permission. Building regulation consent is given by Building Inspectors.

Planning Permission is required for most developments. Issues considered include: land use, layout and design, highway safety, impact on surrounding areas and on residential amenity.

Development proposals are assessed against policies in **Unitary Development Plans** or **Local Development Frameworks**.

For any proposals except 'change of use' an applicant may apply for planning permission in two stages.

First, an **outline application**, which looks at the proposed use and development on the site, as well as indicative layout, access points and potential maximum/minimum dimensions of each building. Consent will be given if the development is acceptable in principle, subject to later approval of **reserved matters** or details. Owners or developers often use this method if they intend to sell the land with 'outline' permission.

Permission normally lapses if an application for approval of all reserved matters is not made within a year. Once reserved matters have been agreed, a developer normally has 2 years to implement the planning permission.

Full Planning Applications cover all issues at one time. Permission is normally subject to 'conditions'. Unless a time-limit condition is added, planning permission must be implemented within 3 years.

Once a council receives a Planning Application, it is registered and placed on a 'Planning Register' which may be available on a council's website. A copy of the application must be made available for public comment. Consultation notices are sent out to certain residents (at least immediate adjacent neighbours), statutory bodies and other council departments. Major applications also require an advert; placed in local newspapers.

A planning case officer negotiates amendments if necessary and makes a recommendation to approve or refuse the application. An application may be considered by officers under 'delegated powers' or by a committee of councillors.

The council must consider the policies in its development plan documents and issues such as loss of light, noise and activity, road safety, security, conservation, disabled access, parking, crime and safety. It must also consider written representations from the public, if they are about planning matters.

In some instances an **Environmental Assessment** is also required - normally applied to major developments.

Section 106 Agreements - formal agreements between the council and those with an interest in a piece of land, to provide a benefit often outside the boundaries of the development site, but which is necessary to the proposal, for example, providing land for a new school to address pressure for school places arising from a new development.

All s. 106 agreements are local land charges and are placed on the land charges register so that future buyers of the land are aware in advance of the agreement. Once a development starts the local planning authority should enforce the agreement.

Planning Appeals can be made by a developer to an Independent Planning Inspectorate against a refusal, against conditions imposed, enforcement notices or listed building consent. There is no third-party right to appeal, although the Secretary of State can 'call in' a decision where government is concerned that it does not conform to planning guidance.

The workshop attendees generally had negative experiences of the planning system and felt that community groups are often disadvantaged by the system, are less aware of the technical issues upon which they might make objections and, as volunteers, don't have sufficient time or money to effectively participate.

The council makes its determination on a planning proposal in accordance with its development plan documents, unless 'material considerations' indicate otherwise

Developers can appeal against a planning application refusal, but there is no third-party right of appeal.

Workshop 3. Tenants' housing priorities in SW London and opportunities for us to link on common issues.

Similarities and differences in housing issues impacting on SW London boroughs

- There are wide differences between the boroughs in the SW sub-region, stretching from inner to outer London.
- Home ownership levels are almost equivalent to national averages (more than 70%) in outer SW London boroughs. They reduce to 52% in Wandsworth and 37% in Lambeth.
- Private renting has increased in all SW London boroughs.
- Kingston is one of the most prosperous parts of London and the SE. Richmond upon Thames has some of the highest property prices in the country. Lambeth has high levels of deprivation, with 3 of its wards in the top 10% most deprived in the country and 16 in the top 20%.
- Pockets of deprivation and need for more social rented housing exist in all SW London boroughs .
- There are differences in the meeting of targets for attaining the decent homes standard. Croydon is nearly there since it had a long-term policy of maintaining its homes and didn't need to go for stock transfer, PFI or an ALMO.
- Kingston is 60% off the decent homes target
- Lambeth has set up an ALMO but still hasn't got any extra money to bring its homes up to a decent standard. It is looking to put its rents up by an average of £12 a week
- Sutton also has high levels of non-decent housing.
- Borough housing strategies should give detail on all types of housing issues. Croydon's strategy is up to date and gives lots of information; others are out of date and thin in content.

Common housing priorities for tenants across SW London

- The main issue/need across the sub-region is for more social rented homes – especially for bigger homes.
- There is also need for homes that specifically address the requirements of older people; accessible homes, possibly bungalows. This need often gets forgotten.
- Many older residents are also living in larger-sized dwellings. If there were possibilities for older people to move to better and more suitable homes in their own neighbourhoods, this would free up family housing.
- Many older residents are living on the top floor of blocks of flats; some of them almost stranded within their own homes.

Pockets of deprivation and need for more social rented housing exists in each of the SW London boroughs

Older people's housing needs often get forgotten

- There needs to be more ground floor housing available for older residents – life-time homes and sheltered housing.
- Differences in local authority allocation policies should be addressed. Some boroughs only offer a 1-bed property to elderly single people or couples who want to move from a 3-bed property. For many a 2-bed, would be more appropriate.
- The biggest problem is that the Right to Buy has removed much family housing from the council rented sector.
- There is not enough housing full stop. The point system for council housing has effectively collapsed since there is not enough even to address the most urgent/emergency type lettings. Similar and fair allocations policies across boroughs, would help people to understand what is possible.
- The major problem is the lack of flexibility around council policies. A more tenant-focused service is needed so that, for example, elderly residents who wish to stay in the home they have lived in for most of their lives, can with some support, do so, as well as accommodating those who want to move to a smaller property.

Possible opportunities for SW London tenants' representatives to share, exchange and link

- Joint meetings of borough-wide federations and organisations. A SW London tenants meeting around the Mayor's Housing Strategy as suggested by Shelagh is supported. The SW Housing Partnership - with some support from the LTF - could arrange this.
- The LTF London-wide meetings are very valuable. Travelling to central London is, though, a problem for some from outer London. Additional sub-regional meetings would be welcomed.
- Themed meetings organised by individual SW London tenants' organisations, to which tenants from other boroughs in the sub-region are invited - such as the one held by Sutton Fed around the Housing Revenue Account review.
- Occasional invites to attend each other's general meetings.
- E-mail exchange amongst those who attended this meeting.
- Information sharing on the SW London Partnership's website could include minutes of meetings, links to websites of borough wide tenants' organisations and a report of this event.
- LTF and borough-wide organisations to retain contact with Shelagh Hair/SW London Housing Partnership.

Each borough needs more life-time homes and sheltered housing to address the needs of older residents.

More sub-regional tenants meetings would be welcomed.

London Tenants Federation (LTF) 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 together.

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.

London Leaseholders Network is an associate member of LTF

Many of our members devote large number of voluntary hours to the work of our organisation.

LTF has representation on the Mayor's Housing Forum and chairs its Community Engagement Sub-Group. It has links with many other tenants' organisations; of various tenures, regional, national and international.

LTF has been funded by London Councils for the last 6 years and has recently gained a further grant for 4 years - covering administrative costs and the wages of our part-time coordinator/support worker.

**London Tenants Federation, C/o Camden Federation of T&RA,
11- 17 The Marr, Camden St, London NW1 OHE**

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