



Panel meeting

3 December 2020, 10am-12noon *via Zoom*

KEY NOTES AND ACTIONS

Present: Loretta Lees (Chair)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will McMahon (Action on Empty Homes) • Caitlin Wilkinson (Generation Rent), • Eloise di Gianni (Children’s Rights Alliance for England / Just for Kids Law) • Maria Morgan (Kineara) • Sebastian O’Kelly (Leasehold Knowledge Partnership) • Anna Kear (Tonic Living) • Derek Bernardi (Camden Community Law Centre), 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greg Robbins (London Federation of Housing Co-operatives (LFHC)) • Ilinca Diaconescu (London Gypsies and Travellers) • Sharon Hayward (London Tenants Federation) • Phil Kerry (New Horizon Youth Centre) • Fiona Dwyer (Solace Women’s Aid) • Nigel Long (Harrow Association of Disabled People)
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Apologies: Fiona Colley (Homeless Link) Pam Orchard (The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields), Rohan Ranaweera, GLA

In attendance: Leila Baker and Mary Carter (Panel Secretariat), Manny Hothi (Trust for London), Ellen Storrar, GLA, Jonathan Schifferes, GLA

The following joined part of the meeting: Tom Copley (Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development), James Hall, Senior Advisor to the Deputy Mayor.

1. Chair’s welcome

The Chair extended her thanks to Lauren Johnson-King, Disability Advice Service Lambeth for her contribution to the panel and welcomed Nigel Long, Harrow Association of Disabled People who now joins. The chair also thanked Ellen Storrar for her commitment to the panel and welcomed Jonathan Schifferes who will work with the panel from January 2021. She thanked Greg Robbins for pulling together panel case studies into an excellent booklet. The chair also thanked the secretariat.

Since the October meeting, the chair has held meetings with members, GLA officers and has attended her first Homes for Londoners board.

The chair then summarised how she is seeing the panel’s next steps. The panel’s first year was about having discussions and coming up with priorities. Its second year needs to be

about achieving change and moving more quickly. It has had some wins - it has been influential in pushing for 53% social rented housing in the Affordable Homes Programme. The panel needs to demonstrate its impact both in order to be accountable for its current funding and also to make the case for future funding – hoping for 5 year funding. The chair will also be looking for its impact to be highlighted in a more documented way by the GLA in future consultations etc.

Thinking about the panel's priorities –

- Increase the level of social rented housing - we need more social rented homes, that's a given. Post covid look at role of small housing associations and councils
- Supporting Londoners to be heard and thrive. Equalities impact assessments are beginning to be expected and embedded eg in Affordable Homes programme but there is a ways to go in terms of the detail of how this might play out in reality.
- Take action on temporary accommodation – a lot has changed with covid, Brexit and job losses, changes in the rental market.

The chair proposed to panel members that right now focusing on the most vulnerable with respect to housing – people living in temporary accommodation – seems sensible. A focus on TA right now does not mean that the other 2 priorities are to be ignored, however.

2. Updates

Everyone attending the meeting gave a 60 second update about what their group or organisation is doing or working on at the moment.

Issues from Panel members around TA included:

- Kineara has a lot of learning to share from their Open Door project moving people into the private rented sector and thought this could be useful for work on TA
- Trust for London and Oak Foundation are planning some work on the experience of living in TA and will keep the panel involved in that. Solace has raised the lack of furniture when women move into TA.
- Recommendation 3 in the report from the Together Alliance collaboration between HAYN and London Youth Gateway covers ideas for better use of underused HA stock. <https://nhyouthcentre.org.uk/news/2020/11/25/together-alliance-report>
- London Federation of Housing Co-operatives raised the potential contribution for vacant properties to be used for short-life housing.
- The Empty Homes Agency's wealth investment research is uncovering previously unknown levels of empty homes (an extra 3k in Southwark alone).

Frontline projects report continued pressures:

- Harrow Association of Disabled People reported delays with Universal Credit and isolation of people living with autism.
- New Horizon Youth Centre are seeing more young rough sleepers; and Camden Community Law Centre reported on a postcode lottery for homelessness support, particularly for people who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). London Gypsies and Travellers has been forced to close its advice service to meet

overwhelming support needs. Tonic Living also reported greater complexity of needs due to covid.

- Solace's emergency refuge has been able to allocate 10 spaces for people with NRPF out of 30 beds in its emergency accommodation.

Other updates included

- Community Plan for Holloway are awaiting new plan from Peabody
- London Tenants Federation expect to publish their Tenant Manifesto in Jan 2021.
- Generation Rent are setting up a coalition around the Renters' Reform Bill.
- Children's Rights Alliance for England / Just for Kids Law have made a submission to the UN around children's rights.

The Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, Tom Copley, attended this part of the meeting. He highlighted work around NRPF that he and others are doing in partnership with London Councils and civil society organisations to push for at least a temporary suspension. He thanked Loretta for her words about the AHP and agreed that he was glad that the AHP was at least a majority social rented housing.

3. Strategic workshop: Temporary accommodation roundtable planning

The chair introduced the focus of the workshop - inclusive action to enable people to exit temporary accommodation – and noted that the panel will need to work out how to work with local authorities on this. Specifically, creative solutions that might be an exit strategy for those in TA, getting them into permanent housing as soon as possible. She acknowledged that this is a difficult nut to crack but that the panel is well-placed to input and draw in expertise including international ideas and looking at where local authorities have been successful in addressing this.

GLA officers provided a summary of data about temporary accommodation in the capital and existing initiatives to improve the time people spend there. They also noted that there are parallels between work on TA and GLA work on PRS. Officers advised the panel that working with councils on this is critical, and to hold in mind the political challenges about tackling temporary accommodation and to hold in mind that there are structural challenges involved like the impact of welfare reform. If the panel chooses to focus on households where there is a duty, then it's recommended to focus on a specific group. And be prepared to respond to questions about who will pay.

The chair invited views and ideas from panel members and said that there were three questions to be addressed: where and how can the panel make a difference; who should be present for the proposed joint GLA/Panel roundtable and how can panel members' networks be engaged?

The discussion that followed has been written up into a set of notes to support next steps See Appendix A to these notes.

4. Log of agreed actions

The meeting was invited to update and ask questions about actions already included in the log of agreed actions which can be found in the Panel members [dropbox](#).

The meeting agreed to add the following actions and updates to the log:

- Secretariat to pull together a summary note from the TA workshop and share that back with the chair to determine next steps in collaboration with GLA officers
- GLA officers will keep the panel in touch with their thinking about the social housing white paper. The panel was invited to flag if there are areas it wants to work on with the GLA.
- February panel meeting the panel and GLA will do some work together on equalities impact assessments and what partners could be required to provide
- Chair asked panel members for any ideas for the one panel meeting and document that are budgeted.

5. Date of next meeting

The next Panel meeting is on Thursday 11 February 2020 from 9.45am for 10am - 12noon.

Appendix A

Summary from the Panel's 3 December 2020 strategic workshop session: Temporary Accommodation Roundtable - planning

Thousands of London households are trapped in temporary accommodation. The London Housing Panel is working with the GLA to develop a roundtable (or similar) that will focus on urgently finding new inclusive ways that will enable people in temporary accommodation to move into settled homes.

We know that many of the barriers to people being able to move out of temporary accommodation are structural – loss of security, rent levels, housing supply. Where the panel can add value around these structural issues we will continue to do so.

Who? Distinguishing the group of people in TA that the roundtable will focus on

This work will focus on 2 groups: people in TA with NRPF and people (families with children and vulnerable single adults) in TA because the council has a duty. It will not focus on rough sleeping.

Ideas shared

- Housing coops could be in a position to take care of empty homes
- Homes earmarked for demolition could be improved and made okay to live in
- Learn from Kineara Open Door project which aimed to support people from TA in to PRS. It identified the need for a supply of housing, rent regulation and buy in from councils
- Is there an opportunity to ask the boroughs/GLA to put some funding into/second people into a taskforce to work on this. Get people in and get going
- Is Housing First a way to approach this? Solace has two such projects and it works out cheaper. If the panel takes this approach then worth looking at the APPG on Ending Homelessness which is carrying out a Housing First enquiry.
- What about looking at a social lettings model
- Yes, a lot of the barriers are structural and also TA sits with councils so what *can* the GLA take forward/where can it take a more active role? E.g., rent deposits
- Housing Coops are bringing properties back into use – technical issues – producing model agreements to use with separate LAs that the GLA could endorse. Support at central level to support the work we do.
- Can the GLA lead on reframing this – This is our capital, we all want to solve this crisis of TA. Present it as a social value.
- Is there potential to demonstrate savings
- Bring the voices of children to the table. And what changes would they like to see?
- Can the Mayor use his convening power e.g. to help with the idea of a taskforce?
- Supply and look at making best use of existing stock

- This would be an opportunity to try some things out e.g. negotiated stopping
- All the boroughs have the capacity to charge an empty homes premium. It's not clear where that goes. But it could go on refurbishment. And then could we encourage match funding? LA lawyers would fight not to spend that. But the public would get it.
- LA gatekeeping. Some councils have a policy of only offering homeless households a PRS option and because that is so expensive that means being moved out of borough

What do we need to do?

- Work with local councils and London councils on both housing and social care. Invite them to join a meeting with the panel
- Consider what data/evidence might the roundtable require in addition to what the GLA has already provided; what data is there on savings and costs/who will pay
- Identify examples that exist where good work has been done by councils (or others?)