

TH Federation of TRAs Minutes

Monday, 31st October 2011 at 7.00pm.

Collingwood Hall, London E1



PRESENT			
Phil Sedler - Chair	Alison Thomas	Brian Stanley	Glyn Robbins
Clive Palmer	Jill Strudwick	Geoff Juden	Nick Heath
Jenny Fisher	Gerry Mathews	Nick Gopaul	Lene Milaa
Jean Taylor	Bill Valentine	Stephen Beckett	
Uche Onwubiko	Greg Robbins	Kate Scannell	
Ezinne Uchechukion	Ian Cambell	Mark Taylor	
Darren Pauling	Eileen Short	Azezzun Zahraah	
Lucy Rogers	Myra Garrett	Clr Rabina Khan	
Renah Zahrah	Katrina Blannin	Jackie Odunoye	

ITEM		
	Apologies: Claire Winter, Terry McGrenera, Fabian Tompsett	
1	<p>Minutes of September Meeting</p> <p>These were agreed as an accurate record.</p> <p>It was agreed that we would seek to have a Council Officer along to our next meeting to outline the effects of the proposed government changes in Housing Benefit with a view to our producing a leaflet on this, and a petition to Parliament with signatures led by the Mayor and by Cllr. Rabina Khan, and with support from our local MPs.</p> <p>We have now been promised the grant from the council for which we had applied, but have not yet received it</p> <p>It was noted that the Poplar HARCA has announced its intention to charge 70% of market rents on all new tenancies.</p>	
2	<p>Expanding Our Membership</p> <p>We have been working hard to ascertain which estates are managed by which provider and also to find details of TRAs and other representative organisations. Suggestions for contacts were noted.</p>	
3	<p>Session with Cllr Rabina Khan (Also present Jackie Odunoye and Alison Thomas)</p> <p>A list of questions had been submitted based on the ideas mooted at our September meeting. These were put by Federation members and there were opportunities for follow-up.</p> <p>The following points were agreed:</p> <p>A Council speaker would attend our next meeting if he was available to discuss HB as above. A future speaker would be approached to inform us of the effects of the 2012 changes in housing finances.</p> <p>Jackie would send us any information the Council has regarding management of estates and the existence of TRAs as above</p>	JO

	<p>A letter would be sent out by Jackie “tomorrow” explaining the situation for leaseholders on Robin Hood Gardens. Cllr Khan undertook to liaise with Darren on this issue, and to keep Phil informed of her meeting on November 3rd with Swan Housing. Compensation for carpets and curtains was a particular concern. In addition to this, Cllr Khan was monitoring closely what the Poplar HARCA was doing regarding the decanting of Balfron Tower. Was there indeed a need to decant?</p> <p>Cllr. Khan recognises that new tenancies linked to market rents would not be affordable, especially given the changes to HB. She would do her best to influence the Registered Providers (RPs now rather than RSLs), but had no real power. She reiterated the Mayor’s determination to have 4000 new homes built each year, at least 35% of which would be genuinely affordable. This could rise to 50% where RPs were developing new sites outside of existing estates.</p> <p>Jackie agreed to publish the stock transfer documents on the Council website so that these could be used to pressurise the RPs.</p> <p>Once the ALMO’s contract expires in 2013, the Mayor intended to take THH housing stock back in-house.</p> <p>The Council is monitoring RPs to see what service charges are being levied, and would particularly look at sheltered housing</p> <p>On the issue of perceived discrepancies between leaseholders’ and tenants’ service charges on similar properties, Cllr. Khan agreed that this was an ongoing problem on which a lot of work was being done, but also pointed out that some of what leaseholders were being charged was included in tenants’ rents.</p> <p>Some concern had been expressed about the Council’s policy on under-occupation. Jackie explained that they had no control over Central Government regarding the payment of HB, so that under-occupying tenants would have their HB removed if Westminster so decreed.</p> <p>Disquiet was expressed about the lack of any infrastructure improvements on the Columbia Estate for many years.</p> <p>It was agreed that there needs to be a mixture of people and sizes of family on new housing projects to ensure sustainable communities.</p> <p>Cllr. Khan was interested in the idea of a Petition to Parliament on the effect of HB changes on the people of TH, but would need to consult as to whether she could sign this. We are also considering a deputation to a future Council meeting regarding the poor performance of local TPs.</p>	<p>JO</p> <p>JO</p> <p>CRK</p>
THE MEETING ENDED AT 9.30PM		

Signed

Phil Sedler

Chair THFedTRAs

Date