



TOWER HAMLETS FEDERATION NEWS

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An organisation run by and for residents of Council or social housing properties in Tower Hamlets.

Newsletter of Tower Hamlets Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs)

Housing White Paper due Tuesday

Housing campaigners will have our ears glued to our radios on Tuesday morning, when the Government's long-awaited White Paper on housing strategy is due to be published.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 was meant to set housing policy for this Parliament. It concentrated on running down Council and other forms of social housing and encouraging more owner occupation. Now the new Prime Minister seems to have had a change of heart (or, perhaps, a reality check). Two key measures in that Housing Bill have already been mothballed: "pay to stay" and forcing Councils to sell off high value homes.

Housing Minister Gavin Barwell was out and about over the weekend previewing the new Housing White Paper – and suggesting that it would see further reverses in housing policy. He hinted that the Government would make it easier to build homes for rent, including Council homes.

However, Mr Barwell also confirmed that the Government is standing by its last General Election Manifesto, which stated that "everyone who works hard should be able to own a home of their own". Experts have already said that the pri-

ivate sector cannot build enough new homes to come near to meeting need. There is therefore concern that the White Paper will use the public sector to share the *building* of homes so that more are produced overall. This will act as something of a break on house prices, which would allow more people to buy property – while not triggering a crash like the one which began the global market crash of 2008. Under "right to buy", public sector homes could then be transferred back to the private sector as properties are bought up by their tenants.

On the other hand, Mr Barwell also hinted that the White Paper will make life easier for tenants, with the introduction of minimum tenancies and also some control over rent levels. The Minister wanted to see more homes let out at affordable rents. The usual government definition of "affordable" rent is "80% of market rent" – but Mr Barwell spoke of "at least 80% of market rents".

Even if the changes in the White Paper are there because the Government has realised that past housing policy was not working, they may at least be a step in the right direction.

Prepare for Power and Advance to ASB

The Federation holds regular meetings on the third Monday of the month. We try to cover topics which will help TRAs and housing activists keep up to date with what is happening in Tower Hamlets and in the housing world beyond.

20th February

How People Power Can Win
Larry Herman from the Selby Estate TRA will be talking about how the TRA won a victory over how the estate will be developed.

20th March

Cllr Shiria Khatun, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, is in charge of the Council's strat-

egy on dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), which she has been reviewing.

The April meeting will be on the fourth Monday, 24th April, as the third Monday is Easter Monday.

All meetings take place between 7-9pm, at the Collingwood Hall, Collingwood Street, E1 5DY (Ramped entrance, no internal stairs, disabled toilet)
All Tower Hamlets residents are welcome.

Contact the Federation
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Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) Sub-Group February Meeting

7pm, Monday, 13th February
Sidney Estate TRA office,
2 Jarman House, Jubilee St.
(Disabled toilet, level inside, high doorbell).

Open to all residents but of particular interest to residents on LBTH estates managed by THH.

Tower Hamlets Council O&S Housing Scrutiny Sub-Group

6.30pm, Monday, 6th February
Town Hall, Mulberry Place

Presentations on how local social landlords (Harca, Swan and Gateway) and THH manage repairs. Why not go along and see if you recognise what your landlord has to say as being anywhere close to their residents' experiences in real life?