

Resident Steering Group Meeting for Alice Shepherd House & Oak House

24th Nov 2025

31 Alice Shepherd House and via Zoom

Residents:

Cynthia Owusu (CO)
Jane McGregor (JM)
Sharon Holmes (SH) via zoom
Sasha Manley (SM)
Alia Begum (AB)

Resident Advocate

Mike Tyrrell (MT)

Riverside

Paula Huzjak (PH)
Isaak Amoah (IA)

ITLA:

Murselin Islam– Open
Communities, (MI) Chair

LBTH

John Harkin (JH)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies.

1.1 MI took the Chair and welcomed attendees.

1.2 Apologies – Daniel Palman (DP) and Ray Coyle (RC)

1.3 MI suggested to discuss Item No 4 before any other items as the main focus of this meeting. Meeting agreed.

2 (Item No 4 on Agenda). The Tower Hamlets (LBTH) allocation policy explained by John Harkin who works for the council (JH).

2.1 JH introduced himself as the Team Manager of Tower Hamlets' Housing Options Service, and he manages the housing register (the housing waiting list). He said he will talk about the council allocation policy and how that fits in with the regeneration scheme that's going on at Alice Shepherd and Oak House. JH informed the policy they are currently using has been in operation since November 2020, and the sections that he will talk about were really carried over from previous allocations policies. There hasn't been any major changes in this particular area for many years.

2.2 LBTH have been working closely with One Housing/ Riverside on the regeneration schemes they've got going around the Isle of Dogs. They have worked really hard and really closely on Byng Street & Bellamy Street, to get tenants moving on from there. And many of the tenants took advantage of some of the offers that are available in the Borough's allocation policy.

2.3 JH said his understanding of the Landlord Offer from Riverside is that if a tenant move to a new home in the new scheme, then they will be offered a home that will be of same size that they are living in now (Like for like) but within that there is a clause that says that if

circumstances change, and that could be someone's bedroom needs increase or decrease, then their application will be reassessed which may impact on the size of home that they are entitled to as part of our allocations policy.

2.4 JH explained if an offer in place for adult sons and daughters of tenants whose homes are being regenerated, and the offer is that if they've been living with the tenant as their main and principal home, and for at least a year prior to the Decant being declared, the LBTH will actually place them in the same priority band that tenants are placed in, which is Band 1B. And then that means that they will be offered a social tenancy within months, rather than within years. It is an accelerated housing application process. They will see them moving into their own social tenancy very quickly, but how quickly will depend on their choices and their preferences e.g. ground floor only, immediate area only etc.

2.5 If an adult child applies then LBTH will look at tenant's application and will take that adult son/daughter and all off the tenant's application, and reassess the tenant's housing need, the bedroom size that they need. In some cases, it won't make any difference at all, even with that young person moving out, the housing need, the bedroom size will stay exactly as it was, and there'll be no impact. But in some cases, with the young person moving into their own home it may impact and reduce the size of accommodation that LBTH assess the tenant as needing.

2.6 JH informed if someone has an adult son and daughter who's living in tenant's home, who's got their own bedroom they will very unlikely get a social tenancy from LBTH. We would assess them as being suitably housed, put them in a no-priority band, and that young person would never get a tenancy. With current level of demand for social housing if adult children sharing a bedroom, they will get a level of priority, but they'll get a level of priority that means they probably will wait 5-6 years to get a social tenancy through the housing register. JH used an example of family with a mother, father, two sons, and a daughter in a three-bedroom, if one of those sons takes the opportunity and moves out, they're still going to need 3 bedroom, so that application won't be accepted. If the daughter moves out then it will have an impact, because LBTH policy says the two sons can share a bedroom regardless of their age, so now they only need two bedrooms.

2.7 People being rehoused through the general housing list, which is for some sons and daughters, will be 5, 6, 7 years. For some of them, it'll be never. For tenants with adult child and grandchildren In a regeneration block, LBTH will rehouse the adult son and daughter to a home that meets their needs, but not for someone who needs a four-bedroom because LBTH just haven't got enough four bedrooms, and it would be a paper exercise to say, LBTH going to give son and daughter and their four children for example. If the need is for one and two bedrooms, LBTH is happy to accommodate. Also, LBTH won't accept joint applications from adult sons and daughters, so if two brothers, brother and sister, want to apply for a two-bedroom, it is not allowed by policy. It has to be single people or dependent children.

2.8 JH informed the tenant has to be on the housing list as well, because LBTH have to have a transfer application from the tenants to process the waiting list application on. LBTH will not make a tenant's transfer application necessarily active until the son or daughter's move, depending on the scenario. For example, in a regeneration scheme where

there are adult sons and daughters already on the housing register, and in that case, LBTH will just automatically upgrade them into the highest band or where adult sons and daughters coming forward after the scheme is announced, they have to demonstrate that they've lived there. Where adult sons and daughters who turn 18 during the course of the scheme LBTH will accept that as well. Tenants can bid unless an adult child has taken up the offer. Normally tenants only bid if they want to move off the scheme.

2.9 JM and CO said this was not clarified before the ballot for the scheme and 'like for like' promise was highlighted to residents without explaining the associated condition for 'adult child offer'. It was never mentioned that if adult children move out then tenant will not get 'like for like' option and their housing needs will change. JM said from her point of view One Housing/Riverside lied by omission.

2.10 JM asked JH to explain how the policy will apply to her if she uses her housing scenario where she lives in a three-bedroom property with three adult children who would like to move out by taking up the adult child offer. She said she was under the impression that she will qualify to over occupy by one extra bedroom even all the adult children move out (according to the LBTH Policy) but Riverside have advised that she will only qualify for one bedroom in that scenario. PH said she does not agree as MT has gone through the previous minutes and such claim was not spotted in any of the minutes and also, she was not present in those meetings. She does not know exactly what as or wasn't said but that isn't in the minutes. MT clarified JM's claim that JM is referring to how the sections in the offer document on 'like for like' and the "adult child offer" were never aligned together and clarified to residents. PH said the offer document does refer to LBTH's Allocation Policy.

2.11 JH informed (using JM's housing scenario) if LBTH manages to rehouse all three of the adult children, that will then leave JM as a single person or a couple in a three-bedroom property as an under-occupier. An under-occupier in a three bedroom is eligible to ask for an extra bedroom. So, under the terms of LBTH allocation scheme, JM can ask for that extra bedroom. Basically, this means for JM as a tenant of a three bedroom or larger property, if all her adult children move out using the adult child offer then she will still be eligible for two-bedroom property (over occupying by one bed). JH outlined there needs to be a down size from the residual property in order to under occupy in the allocation policy for this to be applicable.

2.12 SM asked for guidance on a scenario where a tenant got an adult son (with a grandchild), she's in a two-bedroom, if he moves through the offer, would she be eligible to have the one extra bedroom. JH said the tenant will not qualify for one extra bedroom (over-occupy) and the reason why is that the council have no gain in that situation. In this scenario tenant is moving from 2 bedroom to 2-bedroom homes, they are not under occupying. Each tenant will have their own scenario and allocation policy will apply to each case scenario.

2.13 AB asked if someone gives up bedroom do they qualify for an allowance for downsizing. PH will check Riverside policy to confirm. Council will only pay for council tenant and not for Riverside tenant. JH also clarified that adult children do not qualify for Home Loss payments, it is only for tenant.

Action – PH to find out Riverside incentives for giving up spare room.

2.14 SM asked for clarity on a scenario where the tenant is in a two-bedroom, her adult children have already left the house. In that instance, would she still be eligible for her like-for-like home. JH said it will be down to Riverside and what is in the offer document.

2.15 AB wanted explanation of whether (in a three-bedroom property) two sons (or daughters) will qualify for extra bedroom (if they are currently sharing same room) and if they have a sister (or brother) who moves out using the adult child option. JH said it will not have any impact on bedroom needs if they are of same sex irrespective of their age group. In terms of opposite sex, they are entitled for separate bedroom irrespective of their age group. LBTH will allow resident to make choice up to age of 10 (regardless of sex) to qualify for benefit for two-bedroom property. For overcrowded young family the wait is around 9-10 years. Ground floor properties are very high in demand and most of the cases it decided by medical condition of the applicants.

2.16 JH advised that up until now Riverside was working on tenants' applications to be registered onto the system and getting them updated. LBTH is now taking that over and will be dealing with registering and updating any applications from Riverside. The reason for the change is that the Riverside stock in Tower Hamlets makes up such a small part of Riverside's rehousing team's work and there they have limited knowledge of LBTH's IT system, so to ensure quicker service many of the common housing register partners are asking LBTH to carry out that works as many use their own different system.

2.17 JM asked how easy it is to get registered on the housing system as there are a number of IDs and proof of address that are required and not many young adults have that numbers of relevant documents. JH informed it is done through online portal and basically a passport is mainly used as a photo ID (to confirm eligibility) and then proof of living in their current home for three years and that could be bills, bank statements, voting card, invoices, secondary school or college letters, tenancy files, anything reasonable that has their name, address and a date on it. JH said there are flexibility around the requirements as sometimes younger people struggle to have bills in their name as these may be in their parents name. LBTH also can look for details into benefit system or council tax records.

2.18 AB asked about chances for someone who lives on higher floor to be re-housed on a ground floor. JH said this is not 'like for like' and as ground floor properties are very limited and prioritised mainly for families with children with serious autism and behavioural issue, where it is no safe for them to live on higher floors. Anyone has that situation will be going through an assessment to confirm the condition and the risk associated with person's autism. PH informed properties on the Isle of Dogs will not be built just on the ground floor. They have to either be maisonettes, or they'll be above ground. They cannot be all living accommodation on one floor level, which is ground floor on the Isle of Dogs, because it's a flood risk zone.

2.19 MT said there'll be small number of ground floor maisonettes on the block over Oak House site and after dealing with like-for-like (only few) and then after dealing with medicals, does JH expect Riverside to hand over to LBTH to use the list in general or still

prioritise rehousing people in Alice Shepherd House and Oak House. JH said (speaking personally) rather than from the borough, that medical need trumps any sort of wish to be on the ground floor. Because every allocation on the new scheme, even if it's for internal transfer people already, that has to be done and tied up through the borough's IT system. All the voids coming on will have to be on the borough's void system as well. They'd be checked. Borough would like to see housing needs are prioritised over preferences.

2.20 AB expressed her frustration of impact of allocation policy that has been holding her preferred moves to ground floor as she wanted. PH said policy does not dictate that someone needs to be on 8th floor in the new scheme if they are now on 8th floor, there will be flexibility to move down few floors, but ground floor is not guaranteed as this needs to be assessed by relevant medical assessor. AB also expressed frustration about slow progress of her registration process as well. JH said if she has mentioned about her son's situation then borough can do the OT assessment at this stage, there is no need to wait for the scheme to finish. PH said even if the application is not supported by OT, Riverside still can look into providing a home on the first or second floor, but that stage has not come yet. Riverside are keeping record of residents preferences and will be looked into at the time of allocation. AB said as things are very difficult, she would consider moving out now if the bidding number has been sorted which she has been waiting for months.

Action – Riverside will discuss with LBTH.

2.21 RSG thanked JH for providing valuable insight of the allocation process and clarifying some of the complication from 'like for like' and 'adult child offer' terms and how they work in real terms. JH said if residents have further queries, then they can raise them through IA and PH.

3. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 27th Oct 2025 - agreed

4. Matters Arising.

4.1 (3.7) Request for Paul Handley to attend November RSG meeting and ask someone from the council to attend as well – JH attended and PH would be able to attend the RSG in January if the RSG want him to.

4.2 (3.9) Question raised and answers given will be noted and displayed at No 31 and put on the website. Project updates will also to be displayed in the ground floor lobby area and in/opposite. No 31 will have key information displayed – Works in progress.

4.3 (3.11) MT to ask PH for the measurement of homes based on the plan for the Right to Buy, which is more reliable than other sources – MT has requested redacted lease plan from Riverside. PH will follow up with the issue – Works in progress.

4.4 (4.4) Hill to organise site visits as soon as possible to show their work and that of the architects – **Due.**

4.5 (4.6) DP to find example of schemes where height have been reduced through the process – **Due.**

4.6 (4.8) Flow chart to be produced on design and consultation phases – A draft has been distributed during the meeting, and an electronic copy will be sent to all members by MI. Members has been requested to provide feedback as soon as possible. A final copy will be sent to RSG members before it get issued to rest of the residents.

Action – MI to send an electronic copy of the flow chart to RSG members. A final copy to be distributed to RSG members before issuing to rest of the residents.

5. Update by Riverside

5.1 MT said for Tiller Road planning application committee meeting lots of questions were asked about play facilities for the over 11s. As there are lot of the new build schemes on that side of the island instead of providing play space for Under 11s, developer's are committing to pay extra money to go into Sir John McDougall Gardens and over here it is going into St John's Park. This is an issue to be pointed out to residents to start thinking about. Residents felt that the scheme should consider having something on this site rather funding the parks nearby as they have enough funding coming in and will be overused. PH said the design has not progressed to that stage yet.

5.2 MT informed for the community centre at Tiller project they've already chosen someone to run the community centre but the councillors during the committee meeting questioned about management of the centre. They wanted to have the first refusal on the community centre. MT said he hopes not to get into same base at this site. PH said this matter is not a planning matter, and it's not for that meeting to decide

5.3 CO said residents need to start thinking of their own plan for running of the proposed community centre. MT suggested to have same sort of decision-making that was done over at the project in Tiller Road. RSG members with few other interested residents were involved in helping to decide who was to run the facility. An organisation called Augarde and Partners came in to help residents to go through identifying community projects and then identifying possible providers and then helping them through the recruitment of the provider. They are a regeneration specialist in terms of setting up community facilities around London.

5.4 PH informed there are two residents in Oak House under offer to property, one person is due to move soon, the other is still waiting, because it's through Tower Hamlets, so LBTH offered them a property, so now just waiting for those to go through.

5.5 Residents inquired about planning process and the time required for that's stage. PH and MT explained the challenges involved in the process and provided example from Tiller Rd project. Sometimes planners require architects to adjust some of the layouts, parking arrangements, rubbish collection method/s and bin location, cycle sheds etc and these challenges always cost more time and requires re-consultations.

5.6 MT informed that the committee at the Council that considered the Tiller Road Project asked why the additional social housing rate provision was 28% and not 40%? The officer said that the scheme would be unviable at 40%. Then the committee asked about density and the officer said that's going to be offset by the giving £6.392 million to Council and £1.4 million for the Mayor of London to improve facilities in the area. MT added there will be £222,000 been given to improve access to the Crossharbour DLR station, and £112,000 given to Sir John McDougal Park to make improvements to offset providing Over 11 play space). Officers in that meeting said that the NHS requested £500,000 for local healthcare, but they've got to apply to the borough through this community infrastructure leverage. MT said it will be interesting to see how the challenges on health, education and transport will be tackled with all the new developments taking place in the island and how these money raised get distributed. The committee also asked about environmental impact and the PEST control challenges.

5.7 Residents said if these are questions raised in this type of planning committee meeting then Hill and Riverside should be prepared enough and experienced enough to address the issues straight away and a well-informed application should address this type issues in advance to save time in the planning application process.

6. AOB with Riverside – none

7. AOB without Riverside – none

8. Date of next meeting – 26th January 2026 (No meeting in December)