

Communities and Housing

Witnesses

Lord Victor Adebowale

Lord Victor Adebowale is the Chief Executive of the social care enterprise Turning Point and was one of the first to become a People's Peer. In 2000 he received the CBE in the New Year's Honour List for services to the New Deal, the unemployed, and homeless young people. In 2009 he was listed as one of the 25 most influential people in housing policy over the past 25 years by the housing professionals magazine *Inside Housing*.

Turning Point is a care organisation providing services for people with complex needs, including those affected by drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems and those with a learning disability. In addition to providing direct services, Turning Point also campaigns nationally on behalf of those with social care needs.

Andrea Baker

Andrea is Director of Housing at Poplar HARCA. She joined Poplar HARCA in 2008. She has also worked for Richmond Housing Partnership, Swan Housing Group, Tower Hamlets Council and Southwark Council.

She has worked in housing for over 20 years, 16 of them Tower Hamlets. In her 13 years working for Tower Hamlets Council she was responsible for, amongst other things, putting together the Common Housing Register and Choice Based Lettings scheme.

Andrea's team at HARCA is responsible for delivering housing services including income, ASB, lettings, tenancy and leasehold management and customer services. In the last year there has been a 19% increase in resident satisfaction which follows a major restructure last year. The new housing roles focus on a model of management based on building relationships with residents and early intervention.

Andrea also has a corporate portfolio which includes Strategy, Communications and Organisational Development. She is a Trustee for Neighbours in Poplar and on the Boards of Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group, Capital Conflict Management and Resolution for Life all not-for-profit organisations whose missions are very close to her heart.

Poplar HARCA was created by Tower Hamlets Council as a means to raise much-needed funding to regenerate one of the most deprived areas of the country. Our mission is to make our area a place where people choose to live, work and enjoy life.

In 14 years we have established an organisation that is internationally-recognised and a sector leader in Community Regeneration and we are investing over £1billion to realise our mission. We now own and manage almost 9,000 homes in four square miles. Over one-third of our award-winning staff lives locally.

With partners and local residents we facilitate community projects, initiatives and social enterprises from Community Hubs on our 12 estates.

We have not achieved so much alone and work closely and productively with key statutory and third sector agencies – not least of which is the Council which remains one of our most important stakeholders.

Our Board has a resident majority. Our residents drive us and we have an award-winning empowerment and governance structure which ensures that they have a direct and meaningful say in the decisions taken. We have a Youth Empowerment Board which secures resident-driven governance into the future.

You can find out more about Poplar HARCA at www.poplarharca.co.uk

Alan Benson

Alan Benson has been Head of Housing at the Greater London Authority since October 2004. He is responsible for advising the Mayor's Office on housing strategy and investment, including responsibility for producing the statutory London Housing Strategy. He manages the GLA's Housing Policy, Strategy and Services Unit, which includes the commissioning and delivery of housing services recently devolved from central government, including rough sleeping and housing mobility.

Alan has been in local government since 1988, working mainly in housing and corporate strategy. Immediately prior to joining the GLA in September 2003, he was responsible for housing strategy and performance management at the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.

Duncan Bowie

Duncan Bowie has extensive experience of spatial planning and housing strategy practice, having worked in senior positions for the Mayor of London, the Association of London Government, the Housing Corporation, the London Docklands Development Corporation and the London boroughs of Newham and Lambeth. He joined the University of Westminster in September 2010 as senior lecturer in spatial planning. He has published in professional journals on spatial planning and housing issues and published a book on planning and housing in London under the Mayoralty of Ken Livingstone (*People, Planning and Homes in a World City* Routledge 2010).

Duncan convenes the Highbury Group on Housing Delivery, which is a practitioner/academic policy forum. He is a member of the RTPi/ CiH affordable housing network, a member of the policy council of the Town and Country Planning association, chairs the Regional Studies Association London and SouthEast branch and coordinates a research network on the comparative governance of London, Paris and Berlin.

Jamie Carswell

Jamie is the Director of Investment for Tower Hamlets Homes.

Sheron Carter

Sheron Carter was appointed as Chief Executive of Gateway Housing Association in May 2011 following the retirement of Adrian Greenwood who led the Association for 35 years.

Sheron's housing career dates back to 1984 when she was appointed as a resettlement worker with Sandwell Homelessness & Resettlement Project. Sheron went on to work for 3 Birmingham based housing associations as a housing officer and senior housing officer before moving to London in 1992 to set up and lead a homelessness charity.

Sheron has since held several senior management positions with London based housing associations including Head of Community Development at Ujima Housing Association, Head of Regeneration at Genesis Housing Group and Chief Executive at Arhag Housing Association. Sheron has also worked intermittently as a housing consultant and assignments included undertaking the Equality Impact Assessment of Tower Hamlets Choice Based Lettings Scheme and setting up Tower Hamlets Homelessness Partnership.

Gateway is the most established community based housing association in Tower Hamlets. Gateway was formed in 2008 when Bethnal Green & Victoria Park Housing Association merged with Labo Housing Association. Its early formation however goes back to 1926 when we began life as Bethnal Green Housing Association.

Our mission is to develop good quality homes and excellent housing and support services for people in need in and around Tower Hamlets. We are committed to alleviating income deprivation, improving health and well-being, and creating better places to live.

We offer a range of housing tenures for those less economically able to meet their housing need in the wider housing market at various critical points in their lives. We are uniquely the largest provider of sheltered housing in the borough but also provide extra-care housing, residential care, supported housing, social/affordable rent, shared ownership, and leasehold accommodation.

We utilise our surpluses to reinvest in new homes and to improve the social and economic well-being of the communities we serve. We support a range of communities activities to:

- Improve life chances
- Create better places to live, and
- Improve health and well being

We are particularly pleased to be a joint investment partner in the social enterprise, Academy 4 Housing, which has in 10 short months become the second largest provider of Chartered Institute of Housing accredited learning in the UK. This has enabled Gateway to launch an apprenticeship programme and provide accredited learning for young people aged 16-24.

Paul Hackett

Paul Hackett has been director of the Smith Institute since 2008. He has overall responsibility for the Institute's programme of research and events. He was previously Special Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott MP and other ministers at the Department of Communities and Local Government (1997-05). Paul has worked in various policy areas including, sustainability, industry and finance, regulation, housing and regeneration, cities and urban policy, planning, regional policy, local government, third sector, and public-private partnerships. Paul previously worked for the Financial Times, the Economist Group, Trades Union Congress, and the Parliamentary Labour Party under the late John Smith. He was also adviser to the House of Commons Trade & Industry Select Committee, EU, OECD, ILO, UN, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Dun & Bradstreet International.

The Smith Institute is a leading independent 'think tank' which promotes progressive policies for a fairer society. We provide a high-level forum for new thinking and debate on public policy and politics. Through our research, reports, briefings, monographs, events, lectures, education, and our website, the Institute offers a platform for thought leadership on a wide range of topics. We are interested not only in innovation and new ideas but also in how to translate policy into practice.

Dr Anne Kershen

Dr Anne Kershen was Barnet Shine Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Politics, Queen Mary University of London, from 1990-2011 when she (semi) retired. She founded the Centre for the Study of Migration at Queen Mary in 1995 and was its Director from its foundation until her retirement. Her area of specialisation is immigration and settlement in London, from the 17th century until the present day, with particular focus on the area now known as Tower Hamlets. She has broadcast on radio and television and published widely, one of her books being, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields 1660-2000*, which appeared in 2005. She is currently Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Migration at Queen Mary and an Honorary Senior Research Associate at The Bartlett School of Graduate Studies, University College, London.

Maureen McElaney

Maureen McElaney is the Director of Housing Choice Ltd, providing consultancy and interim management services to the social housing sector. She has over 25 years' experience in social housing, holding a range of senior management roles, with more than five years as director of housing in a diverse and demanding inner-city environment. She has worked in a range of housing organisations in London and elsewhere, and is also a Board Member of a dynamic regeneration focused RSL.

Dick Mortimer

Dick is the Group Director of Development and Asset Management at Family Mosaic. Dick's main role is to strategically manage the growth program and ensure the long term management of Family Mosaics of some 23,000 homes. Dick's experience within the sector is wide ranging, encompassing both Housing Associations and Local Authorities. He is well known to both the public and private sectors. Dick has held Director positions at Pavilion HA, Swan HA and Southwark Council.

Rebecca Roberts-Hughes

Rebecca is Policy Manager for the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). She manages the RIBA's public policy programmes and research, and think tank Building Futures, leading on housing policy and the impact of good design. Rebecca is the author of the RIBA's 2011 report [*The case for space: the size of England's new homes*](#) and co-author of the 2012 social research report [*The way we live now: what people need and expect from their homes*](#). She provided the research secretariat for the Future Homes Commission, whose report [*Building the Homes and Communities Britain Needs*](#) was published in October 2012.

Before joining the RIBA Rebecca worked for affordable housing provider Metropolitan Housing Association, in data research and analysis to inform development decisions and local authority housing policy in London. She has also worked for John McAslan + Partners architectural practice, Westminster City Council, and is currently researching a PhD in philosophy and architectural theory at King's College, London. Twitter: @BeccyRH

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) champions better buildings, communities and the environment through architecture and our members. It has been promoting architecture and architects since being awarded its Royal Charter in 1837. The 40,000-strong professional institute is committed to serving the public interest through good design, and represents 85% of registered architects in the UK as well as a significant number of international members. www.architecture.com

Owen Whalley

Having graduated with a degree in Town and Country Planning in the late 70's Owen headed straight for the dynamism and the challenges that town planning in London did and still represents and cut his teeth as an Assistant Planner with the London Borough of Lambeth.

He obtained wide experience of all aspects of the planning service and after 11 years moved north of the river to join Tower Hamlets Council where some 24 years later he is now the Service Head of Planning and Building Control. In this role, Owen is responsible managing an integrated service focussed on improving the lives of all those living and working in the Borough. The service is in the main statutory and it impacts significantly and constantly on the whole of the Borough.

In managing development pressures, it delivers new and affordable housing, facilitates and supports economic growth and regeneration, identifies and facilitates the provision of new social infrastructure including health care, public transport, education, leisure facilities and open space. Owen is also responsible for setting the direction and framework for progressing some of the largest private sector development schemes in the country, the preparation of development frameworks, briefs and masterplans, and steering the delivery of the borough's Local Development Framework documents.

Despite working for the same organisation for over 24 years, Owen finds the increasing pressure for development and the continuing imperative to address housing need and employment opportunities as challenging today as in the 1980's. The borough has been transformed over this period but much remains to be achieved.

Once a keen long distance runner, pressures of work has reduced Owen's ability to maintain the necessary training regime and so now in his spare time he is a rather more passive but no less keen follower of sport including football, rugby union and cycling. Living on the Kent/Surrey borders, Owen is also often tempted into the countryside in an effort to find a remote public house serving a decent pint of beer.