

Leasehold Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference



1. Name of Group

Leasehold Scrutiny Panel.

2. Background

Resident-led scrutiny is a system used by social landlords e.g. councils to support a self-regulatory approach to continuously improve services. The system enables tenants and members of the community to have a formal role in assessing and influencing the performance, service delivery, plans and behaviour of the landlord, e.g. councils.

Following the changes to Housing Regulation, brought about by Government in 2010, resident-led scrutiny is now the main form of external challenge to landlords regarding the delivery of housing services.

3. Purpose of the Group

The Leasehold Scrutiny Panel will be independent of Housing Services and supported by Communities and Equalities team. It will

- Scrutinise leasehold services
- Look at high level long term service planning
- Monitor performance
- Challenge weakness and recommend changes
- Undertake one off in depth inspection of specific service aspects
- Prioritise work on services which show low leasehold satisfaction.

4. Activities to be undertaken by the Leasehold Scrutiny Panel

The Panel will produce an annual work plan which will detail its scrutiny activities.

The panel will select topics for the work plan based on the following criteria:

- Performance information
- Topics with a low leasehold satisfaction level
- Topics suggested by Senior Housing Officers
- Topics suggested by leaseholders

The Leasehold Scrutiny Panel may appoint sub-groups or 'task and finish' groups to carry out specific elements of the scrutiny process. The groups will report to the Leasehold Scrutiny Panel and will cease to exist once their work has been completed.

The Panel will report its findings and recommendations to the Senior Management Team / Assistant Director for Housing / Executive member responsible for Housing (as appropriate) upon completion of each scrutiny review and will receive a formal response.

The Scrutiny Panel will feedback to Leaseholders and staff on its work through the Leasehold Forum meetings; Streets Ahead; the Annual Report; the website; intranet and via other methods. Leasehold Scrutiny Panel members will attend other resident involvement events to discuss their work as appropriate,.

Leasehold Scrutiny Panel members with their support officer will identify training and development needs and take part in training and development sessions as appropriate.

5. Recruitment of Panel Members

New members to the panel will be appointed through a selection process

Leaseholders are eligible to apply to join the panel provided that they:

- Are not employees of City of York Council
- Do not have any housing related debt without an agreement to repay
- Have not breached their agreement to repay
- Are not subject to an order or investigation for anti-social behaviour.

The leasehold scrutiny panel may co-opt additional members (including non leaseholders) with no voting rights to the panel if they

feel they add particular skill or expertise that is not catered for on the existing panel.

Leasehold Scrutiny Panel members will be appointed for a term of three years. Members of the panel will be required to stand down in a rolling programme of three members each year based on the length of service starting on the third anniversary of the panel's formation. Members may be reappointed to the panel through the selection process but may not serve longer than six years.

New members of the panel will participate in an induction training programme to help them fulfil their role. They will also participate in further training as and when required to support them in their role.

6. Management of the Leasehold Scrutiny Panel

The Leasehold Scrutiny panel will determine its schedule for the year. It is expected the panel will meet monthly with at least ten monthly meetings held each calendar year, Additional meetings may be arranged dependant on the need.

There shall be a maximum number of 12 panel members

The quorum of any formal meeting shall be 50%+1 of current membership of the panel. A quorum must include either the Chair or Vice chair.

The panel will reach decisions by consensus. If this is not possible members will vote on an issue by show of hands. A majority of one will be required to agree a decision. In the event of a tie the motion will not be carried and the Chair will not have a casting vote.

Council Officers who support the panel will at all times seek to ensure the independence of the panel.

A Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed for a one year term via self nomination, followed by a closed ballot of panel members. Both posts are eligible for re-election annually.

Leasehold Scrutiny Panel members will be required to declare an interest in any of the activities the panel will be undertaking. This will be recorded at the meeting. If there is a clear conflict of interest the member must withdraw from scrutiny of that topic.

Members will be expected to attend 75% of meetings and not miss more than three meetings in a row. The panel may agree to long term absence based on panel members' individual circumstances.

If an Officer position becomes vacant during a term of office the Leasehold Scrutiny Panel can elect a replacement from the Panel

The leasehold scrutiny panel will be supported and facilitated by the Communities and Equalities team.

All members of the leasehold scrutiny panel will be expected to comply with the code of conduct.

Leasehold scrutiny panel members who do not comply with the code of conduct will be asked to resign by the leasehold scrutiny panel.

Leasehold scrutiny panel members must not disclose confidential information to anyone else outside the panel. Members who breach confidentiality will be removed from the panel.

If a leasehold scrutiny panel member wishes to resign they should inform the Chair in writing or by email.

7. Equality and Diversity

The leasehold scrutiny panel will aim to ensure it is representative of the leaseholders it serves and will encourage applications from all sections of the community

The leasehold scrutiny panel will consider the impact of equality and diversity in all aspects of its scrutiny work.

8. Completing Scrutiny

An informal report outlining the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny topic will be sent to the appropriate Officers for feedback. Officer feedback will be required within one month of the report being issued or longer if agreed by the panel.

This feedback will inform the final report which will be presented to Senior Management Team; Assistant Director of Housing / Executive Member responsible for Housing as appropriate.

A timeline for implementation of the agreed actions will be set for accepted recommendations. Implementation will usually start within one month of the report recommendations being presented and endorsed.

The leasehold scrutiny panel will monitor the actions and timeline to ensure delivery of the recommendations

If the recommendations are not implemented as agreed this will be reported to senior Housing managers / The Assistant Director for Housing or the Executive Member as appropriate. If recommendations are still not implemented this will be reported to the Leader of the Council.

9. Monitoring and review

Each year a health check of the panel will take place to ensure it is performing its duties effectively. The leasehold scrutiny panel will lead the health check and will be supported by council officers.

The terms of reference will be reviewed annually as part of the process.