



**Your Service,
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Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference

1. Name of Group

Tenant Scrutiny Panel.

2. Background

Tenant-led scrutiny is a system introduced by a social landlord that supports a self-regulation approach to continuously improve services. The system enables tenants and members of the community to have a formal role to assess and influence the performance, service delivery, plans and behaviour of the landlord.

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

3. Purpose of Group

The Scrutiny Panel will be independent from housing, supported by the Housing Equalities & Engagement Facilitator. It will

- Scrutinise housing services
- Look at high level long term service planning
- Monitor delivery of the Local Offers agreed in April 2011
- Monitor performance
- Challenge weakness
- Undertake one off in depth examination of specific service aspects
- Prioritise work on services which show low tenant satisfaction.

4. Activities to be undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel

The Panel will produce an annual work plan, which will detail its scrutiny activities. The work plan will focus on a minimum of two topics per year.

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

- Performance information
- Satisfaction data and will focus on topics with a low tenant satisfaction
- Senior Housing Officers may suggest topics for scrutiny
- Topics received from Tenants

The 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 Scrutiny Panel and will cease to exist once their work has been completed.

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

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

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

Tenants are eligible to apply to join the panel, provided that they:

- Are not employees of City of York Council
- Are not in rent arrears without an agreement to repay
- Have not breached their agreement to repay arrears
- Do not have a notice seeking possession in place for a breach of tenancy
- Are not subject to any anti-social behaviour order or investigation.

The scrutiny panel may co-opt additional members (including independents) with no voting rights to the panel if they feel they add a particular skill or expertise that is not catered for on the existing panel.

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 Scrutiny Panel

The Scrutiny panel will determine its schedule for the year. It is expected the panel will meet monthly (with at least ten monthly meetings), 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.

Scrutiny Panel members will be given the opportunity to declare any 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 will be expected to withdraw from scrutiny in that area.

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.

The scrutiny panel will be supported and facilitated by the Housing Equalities & Engagement Facilitator.

All members of the scrutiny panel will be expected to comply with the City of York Council code of conduct.

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

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 scrutiny panel member wishes to resign they should inform the Chair via the support officer in writing or by email.

7. Equality and Diversity

The scrutiny panel will aim to ensure it is representative of the tenants it serves and will encourage applications from all diversities

The 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 which will be required within one month.

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

A timeline for implementation of the agreed actions will be agreed.
To be agreed within one month of the report being presented.

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

If the recommendations are not implemented as agreed approaches will be made to Senior housing Managers/The Director of housing or the Executive Member. If recommendations are still not implemented approaches will be made 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 tenant scrutiny panel will lead the health check in partnership with Senior Housing Managers.

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