

Tenant Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference

1.0 Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 To work on behalf of the tenants and leaseholders of Epping Forest District Council to ensure that the Housing Directorate provides services of the highest standard, with tenants at the heart of decision making.
- 1.2 To provide an independent check and, if necessary, a challenge to Housing service delivery and performance.
- 1.3 To provide a 'customer led' focus to help improve performance, influence standards and improve service delivery.

2.0 The Role of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel

- 2.1 To take an independent view of EFDC Housing Directorate's performance.
- 2.2 To undertake all scrutiny activities on behalf of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation ('the Federation').
- 2.3 To assess EFDC Housing Directorate's performance against expected standards through its published Housing Service Standards, Local Offers, Tenant-Selected Performance Indicators, and benchmarking reports.
- 2.4 To liaise with the Federation to decide a programme of service reviews of the Housing Directorate.

3.0 Remit

- 3.1 The Tenant Scrutiny Panel's remit will extend to the following areas:
 - a) Service quality and performance; and,
 - b) Organisational and local service standards.
- 3.2 The Tenant Scrutiny Panel's remit will **not** cover non-landlord activities of EFDC's Housing Directorate.

4.0 Programme of Work

- 4.1 Consideration of Tenant-Selected performance indicators on a quarterly basis, and recommendations for improvement.
- 4.2 Consideration of performance against Service Standards and Local Offers, and proposed changes.
- 4.3 Consideration of feedback from Mystery Shopping exercises and recommendations for improvement.
- 4.4 Consideration of the annual report on choice-based letting.
- 4.5 Consideration of the annual ethnic monitoring of housing applicants and allocations.
- 4.6 Consideration of new and updated Housing Service Strategies.
- 4.7 Complaints monitoring on a quarterly basis.
- 4.8 In depth service reviews of individual services within the Housing Directorate identified and referred by the Federation (generally one a year) and, with the assistance of the Tenant Participation

Officer, the production of an outcome report for consideration by the Federation and the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

- 4.9 Analysis of the results of satisfaction surveys.
- 4.10 Monitoring of the Tenant-4.8 Agreed Improvement Action Plan on a six-monthly basis.
- 4.11 Consideration of benchmarking reports, including Housemark benchmarking reports.
- 4.12 Consideration of six-monthly progress reports on the HRA Business Plan's Key Action Plan.

5.0 Accountability

- 5.1 The Tenant Scrutiny Panel will report to the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation through representative attendance at Federation meetings.
- 5.2 The Tenant Scrutiny Panel will report to all tenants and leaseholders, when appropriate, through the Council's quarterly Housing News publication and through the Council's website.
- 5.3 The Tenant Scrutiny Panel will provide a yearly report on its work through the Council's Annual Report to Tenants.
- 5.4 The reporting mechanisms for the Tenant Scrutiny Panel will be in accordance with the diagram in the attached Appendix, Tenant Scrutiny Model – EFDC.

6.0 Membership

- 6.1 Up to 10 places will be available for membership.
- 6.2 Membership will be open to all tenants and leaseholders of Epping Forest District Council.
- 6.3 Applicants will be selected on the basis of those considered to be best able to help the Panel to meet its aims and objectives following an informal application and interview process.
- 6.4 There is a requirement that successful applicants will comply with the Panel's Terms of Reference and commit to undergo any training and development required as part of their role.
- 6.5 Members of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation can be members of the Panel.
- 6.6 Terms of office will be 3 years. Members who have served 3 years may be re-selected but may be considered alongside other suitable applicants through the selection and interview process.
- 6.7 Interviews for membership to be carried out by an interview panel comprising the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, the Chairman of the Housing Scrutiny Panel and a representative of the Director of Housing.
- 6.8 Membership vacancies to be advertised in Housing News, local press and through the Council's website.

7.0 Chairman of the Panel

- 7.1 The Chairman of the Panel shall be appointed by the Federation on the recommendation of the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Federation and Director of Housing initially, following the selection process.
- 7.2 The Chairman will become a member of the Federation and invited to attend and participate in all Federation meetings.

8.0 Frequency of Meetings

- 8.1 As and when required with a minimum of 4 meetings per year to be timed to occur at an appropriate interval prior to Housing Scrutiny Panel meetings.

9.0 Support from EFDC and Access to Information

- 9.1 The lead officer for the Tenant Scrutiny Panel shall be the Assistant Director of Housing (Private Sector and Resources).
- 9.2 The Tenant Participation Officer will provide support to the lead officer and Tenant Scrutiny Panel and will act as the main link between the Scrutiny Panel and the Council.
- 9.3 The Tenant Participation Officer will administer expenses claims on behalf of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. This will include support to get to and from meetings.
- 9.4 The Tenant Participation Officer will ensure that reports are submitted to Panel meetings in a timely fashion.
- 9.5 The Principal Housing Officer (Information and Strategy) will be the initial point of contact for the Tenant Scrutiny Panel in respect of requests for information and reports, or staff who may be need to be included in a scrutiny review. All requests for information will be granted in accordance with the Council's access to information protocol.
- 9.6 The Tenant Scrutiny Panel will be provided with the relevant resources to operate effectively.
- 9.7 Where it is considered necessary to provide information on specific issues, the appropriate Housing Manager will attend Tenant Scrutiny Panel meetings.

10.0 Training

- 10.1 All members of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel will be given sufficient training to enable them to carry out their duties. Further training opportunities will be provided on an ongoing basis in line with new legislation or scrutiny requirements.
- 10.2 Peer mentoring will be encouraged through the Council's partnership-working with other housing providers.

11.0 Quorum

- 11.1 At least 3 members of the Panel shall constitute a quorum.