

Tenant and Leaseholder Panel Constitution (Revised Jan 04)

1. Aim

- 1.1 To enable Council tenant and leaseholder representatives to express their views and influence decisions affecting the delivery of housing services across the Borough.

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 To discuss policy issues affecting all tenants and leaseholders and make recommendations to the Cabinet or the Director of Housing.
- 2.2 To consider issues of practice and policy in the management and maintenance of the housing stock.
- 2.3 To receive recommendations from the Community Housing Panels, reports from the Housing Sounding Board and residents' working groups/panels as appropriate regarding their monitoring of the performance of the housing management services and priorities for planned maintenance and capital works.
- 2.4 To make recommendations on the recognition of residents' associations and awards of grants to these groups.

3. Equalities

- 3.1 The Panel shall positively promote equal opportunities and diversity within the community and will treat all people with dignity and respect, recognising the value of each individual. The Panel shall work for the elimination of all forms discrimination against persons on grounds of race, gender, age, sexuality, disability and religion.
- 3.2 Panel members are responsible for representing the best interests of residents of their residents' group. They should try to reflect and understand the views of the whole community.

4. Membership of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel

- 4.1 The Panel will consist of Croydon Council tenants or leaseholders representatives elected from each of the Community Housing Panels.
- 4.2 The Panel will also include 2 representatives from the Leaseholder Panel, the Sheltered Housing Panel, the Youth Forum and CAACTA.

- 4.3 Seven Councillors (4 majority and 3 minority) will be nominated by their respective parties to attend the Panel as non-voting members.
- 4.4 Council officers will attend Panel meetings as non-voting members.

5. Resident representatives

- 5.1 Residents' representatives will be asked to commit themselves to acting as Panel members for one year.
- 5.2 Every 12 months residents' representatives of the Panel will stand down. Each Community Housing Panel, the Leaseholder Panel, the Sheltered Housing Panel, the Youth Forum and CAACTA will be asked to nominate representatives for the following year. Existing representatives may, if nominated, serve for a further period of a year, up to a limit of five years' service on the Panel. After five years, a Panel member should stand down for a minimum of one year, unless there is no other nomination.

6. Chair

- 6.1 Both the Chair and Vice-Chair will be appointed from among the resident members of the Panel.

7. Meetings

- 7.1 The Panel will meet 3 times a year. The Panel's business will usually be conducted through presentations followed by informal round table discussions and feedback.
- 7.2 Any residents' representative who is absent for 2 consecutive meetings will be deemed to have resigned, unless otherwise agreed by the Panel. The vacancy can be filled by a nomination from the relevant group.
- 7.3 Additional residents' representatives may attend a meeting of the Panel, but no-one, other than Panel members, may take part in the discussion at the meeting, unless specifically invited to speak by the Chair.
- 7.4 The Panel may invite outside speakers to its meetings, as required.
- 7.5 Where any matters to be considered by the Panel are of a confidential nature, the Chair, with the agreement of the Panel, shall request the withdrawal of any observers present.
- 7.6 Any item to be included on the agenda must be notified in writing to Democratic Services at least 21 days before the date of the meeting.
- 7.7 The agenda for each meeting will be distributed to Panel members seven days

in advance of the meeting. Minutes of the meeting will be prepared by Democratic Services staff and will be circulated to Panel members.

8. Quorum

- 8.1 Attendance by one third of the total number of resident members of the Panel will constitute a quorum, which is the minimum number of members to enable voting to take place and resultant decisions to be recorded.
- 8.2 If the Panel meeting is not quorate, the meeting will proceed but no decisions can be made.

9. Voting

- 9.1 Voting in elections for Chair/ Vice Chair of the panel and of any panel representatives shall be by secret ballot where the number of candidates exceeds the number of posts.

10. Code of Conduct

- 10.1 All members of the Panel will abide by the Code of Conduct which is attached to this Constitution as Appendix 1.

11. Alteration to the Constitution

- 11.1 The Council retains the sole right to amend this constitution following consultation with Panel members.
- 11.2 The Panel may request an amendment to this constitution. This must receive the approval of a minimum of two-thirds of all resident Panel members, and must receive the endorsement of the Director of Housing.

12. Decision Making

- 12.1 Where an agreement or compromise cannot be reached between the majority of Panel members and the Council, the final decision will rest with the Council. The reason for this being that the Panel can not make decisions that are contrary to Council or Government policy, illegal, or where financial or other resources may not be available. When this happens the Council will explain its reason(s) for making the decision.