



CROYDON PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY LICENCE FORUM – DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Aims

The Croydon Private Rented Property Forum (the forum) aims to enable landlords and private sector tenants to express their views, receive reports and give feedback to the Council on the operation of the Croydon Private Rented Property Licensing Scheme (the scheme). This will include consideration of existing or new Council policies which may relate to the scheme.

The forum will have no decision making powers but will provide a landlord / tenant perspective and context to decisions taken by the Council's Private Rented Property Licensing Scheme operational board.

Role and responsibilities

The forum will:

- Act as an information provider between Croydon landlords and the Council;
- Promote a strong ethos of partnership working;
- Review outcomes against key performance indicators assigned to the scheme
- Comment on how Council resources are allocated in respect of operation of the scheme

Membership

The forum will be chaired by the Council's public protection manager and meet four times a year. Forum members will be responsible for inviting relevant officers, through the Chair, to meetings to ensure the forum's role and responsibilities are met.

Any Croydon landlord, managing agent or private tenant will be eligible to join the forum subject to them demonstrating that they possess the required competencies through the assessment form that must be completed as part of the application to join the forum. All applications received by the [initial date] will be considered and determined and appointed by the Council's public protection manager. The maximum number of forum members will be 12. Subsequent applicants will be held on a waiting list and considered as vacancies on the forum arise.

Forum members will be expected to commit to attendance at forum meetings for a minimum of one year. If a forum member misses two consecutive meetings they may be removed from appointment to the forum by the Council's public protection manager who may then consider a replacement from the waiting list as above.

Meetings

The forum will meet every quarter.

The agenda for the meeting will be decided by the Chair.

Any item which a forum member wishes to be considered for inclusion on the agenda of a meeting of the forum must be provided to the Chair a minimum of 14 days prior to the next meeting. The agenda and previous minutes will be provided to members 7 days prior to the meeting by email.

All members must adhere to the Council's code of conduct; see Appendix 1, failure to do so will result in removal from the forum.

Appendix 1 - code of conduct

This code of conduct applies to landlords, managing agents, private tenants, and council officers whilst they are carrying out their role in forum involvement in Croydon, such as taking part in groups and panels, or completing surveys etc.

1. Common principles

1.1 All elements of the following code, apply equally to landlords, tenants, managing agents, and officers, hereafter referred to as participants, unless specifically noted.

1.2 All participants must understand and appreciate their respective positions and responsibilities if a strong partnership is to exist.

1.3 Participants are required at all times to act in a courteous manner and strive to develop and maintain a balanced relationship of mutual respect which is open and honest. Personal attacks, offensive and abusive comments are not acceptable.

1.4 In carrying out their role, no participant will discriminate against any person in a manner that is contrary to Croydon Council's Equal Opportunities Policy on any ground whatever. All participants shall acknowledge that everybody has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of ethnic or national origins, disability, gender, marital status, age, sexuality, religion, or any other matter which causes people to be treated with injustice.

1.5 Participants must consider the council's obligation, under health & safety, human rights and other legislation, to ensure the effective operation of the groups and consultation processes and its duty to protect residents, councillors and members of staff from verbal, physical abuse or harassment.

1.6 At meetings, all participants shall at all times operate within the rules laid down in the constitution of the group which they are attending.

2. Officer code

2.1 At all times, officers shall act in a professional manner and shall treat representatives with courtesy and respect.

2.2 Meetings organised by the council for participants shall be held in a suitable venue which is accessible and, as far as possible, held at a time which does not exclude sections of the community (e.g. people who work or have child care responsibilities).

2.3 Officers shall make themselves available to meet participants providing reasonable notice is given and demands are not excessive.

2.4 Officers shall, with reasonable notice, supply information to participants regarding the delivery of the Croydon Private Rented Property Licensing Scheme and local activities. This will not include information relating to any individuals (except at that individual's request or with their consent) or to staff which is confidential.

2.5 Officers shall not provide more favourable treatment to representatives in relation

to the provision of services, nor shall they be treated any less favourably.

2.6 Officers are responsible to the council. Their job is to carry out the council's work, with reference to the policies and decisions made by the elected councillors.

2.7 Officers will work with and give advice to, participants on the operation of this code of conduct.

3. Participants code

3.1 Participants shall be courteous at all times in their dealings with officers, councillors, contractors, agencies, other residents and members of the public.

3.2 Participants are responsible for representing the best interests of residents in their area/estate. They should try to reflect and understand the views of the community.

3.3 Officers shall not be asked for their personal views about the policies, management, staff or elected councillors of Croydon Council.

3.4 Participants must respect the impartiality of officers and must undertake not to make political statements of a derogatory nature at meetings or in their role as a landlord representative.

3.5 Participants shall not give officers instructions on the day to day performance of their duties. Participants wishing to comment on the performance of an officer should do so through an appropriate manager.

3.6 Officers will try to attend all relevant meetings. However, participants should appreciate that such availability will sometimes be restricted by personal or operational commitments. Participants should give an officer or councillor at least two weeks' notice of all meetings.

3.7 Participants will not speak or write to external groups or agencies on behalf of their group or panel without the prior agreement of the group or panel they represent. Any correspondence sent on behalf of the group or panel should be agreed in advance by the group or panel and copies provided to all panel members.

3.8 Where participants are representing their group or panel at another panel or working group, it is the responsibility of that participant to represent the views of their parent group and feedback to their parent group.

3.9 From time to time, participants may acquire and have access to confidential information and information that has not yet been made public. When participants are advised that information is confidential it must not be disclosed to other people under any circumstances. Participants may be asked to sign an agreement that such information will not be disclosed. Such information must not be used for personal gain.

4. Legal considerations

4.1 Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, the council has a statutory duty to

ensure the physical and psychological health and safety of its workforce, including safe systems of work and support. This includes taking reasonable care, and such steps as are necessary, to remove or avoid a reasonably foreseeable risk of stress or anxiety induced personal injury.

4.2 The council must also be mindful of its obligations to councillors, officers and residents under The Human Rights Act 1998 and other appropriate legislation.

5. Breach of the Code of Conduct

5.1 Should there be a breach of this code by any participant, at a meeting; the chair of the meeting has the power to give a verbal warning to the individual. In addition any member of the group or panel can propose that another member be given a verbal or written warning.

5.2 If, despite a warning, a participant continues to breach this Code of Conduct, or otherwise seriously disrupts a meeting, they can be expelled or suspended from meetings by the chair of the meeting.

5.3 If the chair of the meeting fails to expel a participant who continues to breach this code, officers will refer those present to this code of conduct but reserve the right to withdraw from the meeting.

5.4 As this Code of Code of Conduct applies to participants involved in various roles, participants must note that breaches of the code, outside of meetings, will be considered and dealt with in a similar manner. Abusive or racist language will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Appendix 2

Croydon Private Rented Property Licence Forum Assessment Form

Please use this form to show which if the required qualities and experiences you have by ticking the relevant boxes. There is a space to provide additional information about the qualities and experience you can bring to the forum.

Please complete and return to:

Selective Licensing & Housing Team Manager
Housing Standards & Enforcement
3rd Floor Zone D
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk
Croydon CR0 1EA

Or by email: propertylicensing@croydon.gov.uk

Full Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Tel Number	
Email	

Qualities and experiences

	YES	NO	Not sure
I am a Croydon landlord, managing agent or private tenant.			
I understand and am committed to upholding the principles of equality and diversity?			
I can commit the time needed to read background documents in advance and attend quarterly forum meetings			
I am able to make decisions based on fact and not allow personal views to affect my decision making.			
I am prepared to familiarise myself with and abide by the code of conduct			

Please specify what you would like to be able to bring to the forum and what outcomes would you like to see achieved?