

Tenant and Leaseholder Panel Constitution

(Revised July 2013)

1. Aim

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

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 To discuss housing policy and strategies affecting all tenants and leaseholders and make recommendations to the Cabinet or senior council officers.
- 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 Housing Services Forums, Specialist Housing Panels and Service Review Groups, as appropriate, regarding their monitoring of housing performance, reviews of housing management services and priorities for planned maintenance and capital works.
- 2.4 To receive reports from the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

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. They should try to reflect and understand the views of the whole community.

4. Membership of the Tenant & Leaseholder Panel

- 4.1 Any Croydon Council tenant or leaseholder or freeholder who pays a service charge to the council is eligible to join the panel subject to them demonstrating that they possess the required competencies through the completion of a self-assessment application form.
- 4.2 All application forms will be considered by a panel made up of two existing panel members plus a member of the resident involvement team. The maximum number of resident members will be 32. When this level of membership is reached applications will close.

4.3 Seven Councillors (4 majority and 3 minority) will be nominated by their respective parties to attend the Panel as non-voting members. The role of councillors is to listen to the views of panel members and feed these back to the Cabinet and their respective political groups. They should also be expected to explain council policies when required.

4.4 Council officers will attend Panel meetings as non-voting members.

5. **Resident members**

5.1 Residents members will be asked to commit themselves in writing to acting as Panel members for a minimum of one year.

6. **Chairing**

6.1 Both the Chair and Vice-Chair will be appointed from among the resident members of the Panel. Every 12 months the Chair and Vice-Chair will stand down. Existing post holders may, if elected, serve for a further period of a year, up to a limit of three years. After three years, a post holder should stand down for a minimum of one year, unless there is no other nomination.

7. **Meetings**

7.1 The Panel will meet 4 times a year. Any resident member who is absent for 2 consecutive meetings will be deemed to have resigned, unless otherwise agreed by the Panel.

7.2 Additional residents 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. During discussions the Chair should invite resident panel members to speak first.

7.3 The Panel may invite outside speakers to its meetings, as required.

7.4 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.

7.5 Any item to be included on the agenda must be notified to the Resident Involvement Team at least 21 days before the date of the meeting. A meeting will be arranged between the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Resident Involvement & Scrutiny Manager to agree the agenda for each meeting.

7.6 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 and published on the Council's web site.

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. **Representation of views of the panel**

- 9.1 The panel will elect resident members to represent the panel at the following groups/organisations:

London Tenant Federation
Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH)
Croydon Congress
Croydon Voluntary Sector Alliance

10. **Voting**

- 10.1 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.

11. **Code of Conduct**

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

12. **Alteration to the Constitution**

- 12.1 The Council retains the sole right to amend this constitution following consultation with Panel members.
- 12.2 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 Council.

13. **Decision Making**

- 13.1 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.

