

Tenants' Voice

Terms of Reference 2024

1.0 Objective

Tenants' Voice is a resident-led group set up to ensure that tenants of the council have their needs, concerns and aspirations listened to, heard and acted upon by LBTH.

2.0 Remit and powers

2.1 The role of *Tenants' Voice* is three-fold:

- Consultative:

To be consulted on proposals affecting the provision of housing services to LBTH tenants and residents including strategies, policies, service design and works programmes.

- Advisory/challenge:

Using performance and complaints data to oversee the operational performance of LBTH housing services for tenants and leaseholders and make recommendations for service improvements.

- Scrutiny:

To undertake scrutiny reviews of identified areas of concern and make recommendations for action.

2.2 Building safety will be a key area of focus for the group.

2.3 Residents of the *Tenants' Voice* act as an advisory body and do not have powers on the operational running of the housing service.

2.4 Budgetary decisions and staffing considerations will NOT be within the *Tenants' Voice* remit.

2.5 *Tenants' Voice* will work closely with other resident groups in Tower Hamlets.

2.6 The *Tenants' Voice* group has the power to commission/request the following:

- Request service managers to report and attend meetings
- Invite LBTH Directors as well as other external experts to meetings
- Request for more data from service areas
- Commission focus groups with key resident groups
- Request visits to relevant high performing organisations
- Request relevant expert advice

- Commission 'mystery shopping' of services
- Commission satisfaction surveys
- Members can request a 15min slot, for a private discussion without the presence of LBTH staff, at the start or end of the meeting

2.7 *Tenants' Voice* will select, on an annual basis, the performance indicators to be presented at meetings.

3.0 Membership, recruitment, servicing

3.1 The group will have a maximum of 12 members and will comprise of:

- Eight tenants
- Three leaseholders (resident within Tower Hamlets)
- One tenant of a leaseholder

Initially and in addition an interim independent Chair for a maximum of 6 months – see para 8.1

3.2 The following will not be eligible to be a member of the group:

- Members of any other formal body or committee within the LBTH governance structure
- Members of any formal body within the LBTH tenant and leaseholder engagement structure
- Elected Members
- Anyone holding a formal role [Chair; Vice Chair. Secretary; Treasurer] within a Tower Hamlets Tenants' and Residents' Association

3.3 Any tenant or resident who is the subject of a serious complaint or has any previous or current history of anti-social behaviour, will not be eligible.

3.4 Residents may attend *Tenants' Voice* meetings as observers or co-opted members.

3.5 All decisions made by *Tenants' Voice* will be based on the overall majority vote. Observers are excluded from this.

3.6 Expressions of interest to participate in the group will be sought. Interested residents will be asked to complete a short form with their details, setting out why they want to get involved and what relevant skills and experience they can offer. Informal interviews will be carried out by a panel made up of one member of the Regulatory Assurance Team, two existing group members and a member of the current administration nominated by the Mayor.

3.8 Meetings will generally be hybrid i.e. facilitating both in-person and on-line participation.

3.9 Agendas and papers will be circulated at least 5 working days prior to meetings. Minutes of the meeting will be circulated within 10 working days. All papers will be published on-line.

4.0 Links to LBTH governance

- 4.1 The Mayor or Lead Member for Housing will attend a minimum of two meetings per year.
- 4.2 Recommendations from *Tenants' Voice* will be considered by the Lead Member for Housing as part of one-to-one meetings with the Director of Neighbourhoods.
- 4.3 The Director of Neighbourhoods will feed back to *Tenants' Voice* and to relevant internal council meetings the Lead Member's response to the recommendations.
- 4.4 A written update on the work of the *Tenants' Voice* will be provided to Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on at least an annual basis.

5.0 Conduct of members

- 5.1 Members should treat each other, officers and others with respect in line with the values of the council and the aims of the *Tenants' Voice* group. They should promote equality, openness and transparency. All members of the group will adhere to a Code of Conduct that covers social media, networking and engagement values. The council has the power to remove any members who are in breach of these values.
- 5.2 Members should try and understand and reflect the views of the whole community.
- 5.3 Members must not bring LBTH into disrepute when undertaking their duties and must maintain confidentiality. This includes not sharing or inappropriately using contact details of other members of the group.

6.0 Length of Service

- 6.1 Members will serve for a maximum of 3 years.
- 6.2 Members may seek an additional term. However, this will be considered in line with other applications for membership.

7.0 Frequency of meetings

- 7.1 The group will generally meet every two months. The maximum number of meetings will be six per year.
- 7.2 Members who fail to attend two or more consecutive meetings without appropriate notification will be considered to have resigned from their role on the *Tenants' Voice*.
- 7.3 The quorum for the *Tenants' Voice* is a minimum of 4 members.

7.4 Scrutiny reviews will be scheduled as additional sessions to the scheduled *Tenants' Voice* meetings.

8.0 Chair of the *Tenants' Voice*

8.1 The group will have a dedicated chair for a maximum period of three years. Initially this may be an independent for a maximum period of 6 months; thereafter elections to the post from the membership of the group will be held.

8.2 The group will have two vice chairs for a maximum period of three years. The vice chairs will be responsible for chairing meetings in the absence of the chair.

9.0 Annual Work Plan

9.1 The group will have an annual work plan. The work plan will be agreed in quarter four or at an annual away day.

10.0 Annual Review

10.1 An annual review of the effectiveness of the group and the Terms of Reference will be carried out by the Regulatory Assurance Team in conjunction with the Chair.

11.0 Training and Development

11.1 Members may request access to training to support them in their roles. This will be available subject to cost and availability of the training requested.

12.0 Additional support

12.1 Support may be provided for childcare needs, to residents with mobility issues and for other reasonable adjustments. Group members should speak to the Regulatory Assurance Team should they require assistance.