

Brighton & Hove City Council Housing Area Panels Terms of Reference 2023

Purpose

Area based panel consisting of ward councillors, tenants, and leaseholders of the city council to engage and consult tenants on strategic city wide and area-based housing issues and improvements on council land, funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Panels will cover the following boundaries:

- East
- West
- Central
- North

Panels will not consider individual tenants' and leaseholders' issues. Tenants and leaseholders will be directed to other appropriate channels.

Panels will not consider individual leaseholders fees and charges related to planned and major works. Leaseholders will be directed to other appropriate channels.

1. Areas of responsibility

- a) To receive and provide comment, feedback and recommended actions on reports relating to the council's role and performance as a housing service.
- b) Issues for consideration will include the performance of housing services provided directly by the council and by contractors.
- c) Non housing issues will be referred to the appropriate council service, other agency, community forum or committee for consideration.
- d) Area Panel(s) may request time limited task and finish groups on persistent and/or key strategic city-wide or area-based issues, subject to available resources and competing priorities.

2. Budgets

- a) An annual Estates Development Budget (EDB) will be devolved to each Area Panel.
- b) There will be at least one specific Area Panel meeting each year for decisions on main EDB bids.
- c) Voting on main EDB bids is by tenants only ¹ and consultation of leaseholders where applicable.
- d) All EDB quick bids up to £1000 will be decided upon by the citywide resident EDB panel. This panel is made up of tenant representatives from each area

who are elected through the Improvement and Empowerment Service Improvement Group.

3. Membership and participation

Membership and participation of each area panel is open to:

- a) All ward councillors whose constituency falls within the boundaries of the Area Panel.
- b) A representative from any tenants' and residents' association within the boundaries of the Area Panel.
- c) All council housing tenants who live within the boundaries of the Area Panel.
- d) All resident leaseholders of the council that live within the boundaries of the Area Panel.
- e) A Leaseholders Action Group representative that lives within the boundaries of the Area Panel.
- f) All tenants or leaseholders can submit a question to an Area Panel meeting. (See section 7 below for process).

4. Chairing

- a) All Area Panels will be co-chaired by a councillor and a representative of a Tenants and Residents Association.
- b) The councillor co-chair will be a sitting councillor on the council's Housing Committee unless no Member of the Panel is a member of the Housing Committee.
- c) Area Panel will elect the Councillor Co-Chair annually, consideration will always be given to appointing a co-chair from Housing Committee. The election to take place at the first Area Panel after Annual Council.
- d) The resident co-chair will be elected annually by the tenant association representatives.
- e) Co-chairs will chair meetings alternately unless otherwise mutually agreed between the co-chairs.
- f) Co-chairs will set the agenda for each meeting together.

5. Format of meetings

- a) All meetings will be hybrid.
- b) Council's Democratic Services will provide the secretariat for the meetings including but not exclusively the circulation of meeting invitations, agendas and associated papers including meeting any accessibility needs, creating and maintaining action logs and taking minutes of the meeting.
- c) The agenda, minutes and action log will be sent ten working days before the meeting.
- d) The agendas and minutes of the Panel (unless confidential) will be public documents published on the council's website.

- e) Agendas, minutes, and actions of Area Panel meetings will be provided to the co-chairs, all ward councillors, and the nominated representative of all tenants' associations in the area panel boundary.
- f) All reports and papers will be produced in an accessible format.

6. Frequency of meetings

- a) There will be four meetings of each panel per year.
- b) Special Area Panel meetings may be called by the co-chairs, the chair of Housing Committee or the Executive Director for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities, if needed but only for exceptional and urgent business.
- c) Days and times of meetings will vary to maximise opportunities for participants attendance.

7. Submission of Residents Questions

- a) All tenants and leaseholders can submit a question for an Area Panel meeting providing it is in line with the purpose of an Area Panel.
- b) All submitted questions will be submitted, considered and prioritised at the Resident Only meeting.
- c) Any members of a Tenants and Residents Association or any council tenants and leaseholders can attend the resident only meetings.

8. Agenda Planning

Area Panel meeting agendas will follow a set format including covering the following areas:

- a) Reports on housing policy and performance of Housing.
- b) Reports from city-wide housing management groups, e.g., Senior Housing Action Group.
- c) Residents Questions identified at the Resident Only meetings that precede Area Panel meetings; with a maximum of five 3-Star questions per meeting.
- d) Presentations and reports from other services/groups funded by Housing Revenue Account.

9. Conduct

- a) All participants should share their views respectfully and treat all other participants with respect.
- b) All participants should recognise there are differing views and opinions expressed at the Area Panel and will look for a compromise and shared solutions.
- c) If behaviour is repeatedly not following the above, then individuals may be asked to leave a meeting by the co-chairs.