



Lancaster City Council

Housing and Property: Council Housing

Tenant Voice: Terms of Reference

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide a voice for tenants / leaseholders of Lancaster City Council in relation to the work of the Council Housing service in relation to their homes, neighbourhoods and services provided.
- 1.2. Specifically, the group will through meaningful engagement:
 - a) Consider housing policy and finance issues and scrutinise the housing service's performance making recommendations.
 - b) Work with other tenant/leaseholder groups, including scrutiny to improve services and help review objectives and aspirations.
 - c) Review and make recommendations regarding housing policies relating to services for Lancaster City Council tenants/leaseholders, including the service improvement plan, considering value for money, cost and resources.
 - d) Review housing publications and communication.
 - e) Consider and make recommendation in relation to housing finance, which will include involvement in rent and budget setting.
- 1.3. The group should always give due consideration to value for money, available resources and the corporate objectives.

2. Aims

- a) To work together with Council Housing to help communities thrive and flourish.
- b) To maintain great communication between Council Housing and Council tenants and leaseholders, to continue to foster better community spirit.
- c) To work in partnership with Council Housing to improve the management of our homes and have a voice regarding the delivery of services.
- d) To celebrate the work of our communities and community groups.
- e) To promote the interests of all council tenants of the district and to assist in maintaining good relations between all members of the community.
- f) To hold the Council Housing service to account and be able to engage in different ways that meet our needs and that engagement in meaningful.
- g) To act as a consultative group on all issues concerning tenants/leaseholders at a district wide level.
- h) To promote equality of opportunity by making sure that no individual or group is treated less favourably than another on the grounds of race, gender, marital status, ethnic or national origin, religious denomination, disability, age or sexual orientation.
- i) To set the themes for the meetings. Tenant/leaseholder members of the Tenants Voice Group will set the themes for the meetings by consulting with their wider community and bringing topics to be discussed and request officers to attend where appropriate to give the group detailed information regarding the topic of interest. Where appropriate Tenants Voice will put forward suggestions for consideration as part of a scrutiny group¹ the findings of which will be reported back to Tenants Voice and any recommendations from the group will be passed to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Chief Officer - Housing and Property.

¹ Only one Scrutiny Group Review will be resourced at any given point.

3. Membership

- 3.1. The Tenant Voice group is made up of tenant and leaseholder representatives. Councillors and Officers are invited to attend to give input and guidance where appropriate.
- 3.2. Tenant members are limited to 4 per estate but additional residents can attend from these estates with prior agreement from the Chair.
- 3.3. In the first instance membership will be those members in place as of July 2023 after a review of resident involvement in previously named District Wide Tenants Forum.
- 3.4. Elections for the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary will be held every three years. Nominations for any of the three posts will be taken at the meeting prior to the elections. Tenants/leaseholders will be voted in on a show of hands at the election Tenants Voice meeting.

4. Councillor/Council Representation

- 4.1. Councillors are invited members of the group in a non-voting capacity. Councillor representation comprises Cabinet Member with responsibility for housing plus 3 other Councillors invited by the Cabinet Member. A minimum of 2 Council Officers should attend plus any further ones who are invited as deemed relevant to an agenda item set by the group.

5. Conduct

- 5.1. All members of the group shall actively seek to represent the various needs of the district and promote equality of opportunity by making sure that no individual or group is treated less favourably than another on the grounds of race, gender, marital status, ethnic or national origin, religious denomination, disability, age or sexual orientation.
- 5.2. Members of the Tenants Voice shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner when attending meetings or any other function in connection with the Tenants Voice group. Failure to comply may lead to exclusion from subsequent meetings.

6. Tenant's Voice Group

- 6.1. The group will meet 4 times a year but may be adjusted to accommodate specific circumstances and requirements in agreement with the Chair of the group and the Community Engagement Officer. Additional informal meetings, focus groups or special meetings may take place as required.

7. Special Meetings

- 7.1. A special meeting of the Forum can be called by two Tenant Voice Representatives or the Council by submitting to the Chief Officer of Housing and Property in writing a request for such a meeting and their reasons for calling the meeting.

- 7.2. The Chief Officer of Housing and Property shall arrange for the meeting to take place within twenty-one days and shall publicise the meeting at least five days in advance.

8. Decision Making

- 8.1. Decisions can only be made if there are 5 members of the Tenants Voice group present at the meeting. It is expected that the group will reach agreement by consensus. However, if agreement cannot be reached a vote will take place and in the event of votes for and against being equal the chair will have a second or casting vote.

9. Review of the Terms of Reference

- 9.1. The panel and council will review the terms of reference on an annual basis to ensure they reflect the duties and responsibilities of the group.
- 9.2. Changes to the terms of reference will be agreed between the Tenants Voice group and council officers.