

District-wide Tenants' Forum

Terms of Reference

Aims

The aims and objectives of the District-wide Tenants' Forum are:

- To promote the interests of all council tenants of the district, and to assist in maintaining good relations between all members of the community.
- To promote council tenants' rights and the maintenance and improvement of housing conditions, amenities, and the environment.
- To ensure that all tenants have effective opportunities to participate in the management of their homes and neighbourhoods.
- To promote change in response to tenants' needs and aspirations.
- To act as a consultative group on all issues concerning tenants at district wide level.
- To work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination within the community by encouraging all tenants to participate in the management of their homes and neighbourhoods.

The Forum is a constituted Cabinet Liaison Group.

The Forum terms of reference in its capacity as a Cabinet Liaison Group are:

- To share information about a particular topic and develop effective consultation and communication links with community groups and other bodies with an interest in the subject area. In this way, the Cabinet member will have a wider information and advisory platform to inform executive decision making and policy effectiveness.

- As a result of specific outcomes from meetings request for pieces of work to be undertaken by officers or partner bodies. Alternatively, make a request to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to set up a Task Group to undertake a specific piece of work.
- To make specific reports to Cabinet, Committees of Cabinet, individual Cabinet members, or other Committees of Council recommending action for determination.

Membership

The Forum is made up of two groups of representatives. Tenant representatives are one of these groups, and elected councillors form the other group.

Tenant Representation

Tenant Representative membership shall be open to all council housing tenants and leaseholders from the following estates/areas within the administrative boundary of Lancaster City Council:

Estate/Area	Number of Tenancies	Tenant Representation
Branksome	228	2
Carnforth	203	2
Higher Heysham, Middleton & Overton	183	1
Kingsway	161	1
Morecambe Central	68	1
Slyne & Bolton le Sands	58	1

Westgate	237	2
Warton, Silverdale, Yealands, & The Kellets	87	1
Beaumont	150	1
Mainway	262	2
Ryelands	378	3
Vale	454	4
Caton	82	1
City Centre	150	1
Greaves/ Bowerham	170	1
Galgate & South Villages	41	1
Hala	225	2
Halton, Hornby & Lune Villages	83	1
Marsh	252	2
Newton	130	1
Ridge	299	2
Sheltered Housing Forum Representatives		2
Total Representation		34

The following formula determines the level of Tenant representation from each Estate/Area: 1 member per 100 tenancies. The level of representation from each estate/area will be reviewed prior to elections.

Elections will be held every four years. All tenants and leaseholders will receive a nomination leaflet. These leaflets are sent out directly to tenants and leaseholders through the post. If there is a vacancy between elections nominations will be sort.

To stand for election tenants and leaseholders should complete the nomination form at the back of the leaflet. This must be returned to Council Housing Services before the deadline shown at the foot of the form. Nomination forms that are received after the deadline will not be considered. A tenant or leaseholder wishing to stand as a Tenant Representative is invited to submit a personal statement with their nomination form. This must be of not more than 100 words. If there is a need for an election a copy of the statement will be sent to all tenants on the estate/area with a ballot paper. The candidate who polls the most votes wins the election.

The two representatives from the Sheltered Housing Forum will be nominated by that group.

Councillor Representation

Councillors sit as non-voting members of the Forum. Councillor representation comprises Cabinet Member with responsibility for housing plus 5 other Councillors invited by the Cabinet Member.

Conduct

All members of the Forum shall actively seek to represent the various needs of the district, and must not discriminate on the grounds of nationality, political opinion, race, religious opinion, sex, sexuality or disability.

Members of the Forum shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner when attending meetings or any other function in connection with the Forum.

The Forum

The Forum shall elect on an annual basis a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson from the Tenant Representatives appointed to the Forum.

The Forum shall meet not less than 4 times a year.

Minutes of Forum meetings shall be available to all members, and shall be presented to the Council's Cabinet. An annual report of the Forum's activities will be made available and published through the Housing Newsletter produced by Council Housing Services and through the Impact Newsletter produced by the Forum.

The Forum may establish working parties or sub committees as it may deem necessary to consider specific issues. The membership of these shall normally drawn from the representative on the Forum but the working parties or sub committees have the power to co-opt specialist advisors and representation from the constituent groups. No sub committee or working group shall have any decision-making powers. All recommendations shall be referred to the Forum for decision.

The Forum shall select a pool of tenants' representatives who shall be available to sit on the Housing Complaints Panel. (The Housing Complaints Panel - three (3) Councillors and two (2) Tenant Representatives Council Housing Service Group 20.8.1991)

The Forum shall select its tenant representatives to external bodies.

Special Meetings

A special meeting of the Forum can be called by five Tenant Representatives or the Council by submitting to the Head of Council Housing Services in writing a request for such a meeting and their reasons for calling such a meeting.

The Head of Council Housing Services shall arrange for the meeting to take place within twenty-one days, and shall publicise the meetings at least five days in advance.

Quorum

No Forum shall take place if less than 6 Tenant Representatives are present.

Changes to the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference can only be altered at a Forum called for that purpose.

Any suggested changes to the Terms of Reference must be handed to the Head of Council Housing Services 14 days before the Forum.

Changes to the Terms of Reference must be agreed by two thirds of the Tenant Representatives present at the Forum.

Voting

Any member may make a proposal. In order for it to be voted on by other members it must be seconded, or supported, by someone else.

Only Tenant Representative members present at the meeting may vote.

Before voting any member may propose an amendment which must also be seconded.

No Tenant Representative shall exercise more than one vote.

In the event of an equal vote, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

Standing Orders

The Forum may wish to establish additional Standing Orders covering conduct during meetings, conduct of officers and Forum members, and disciplinary issue, etc.

The Standing Orders are set out in a separate document - "District-wide Tenants' Forum Standing Orders".

The Standing Orders can only be proposed at a Forum called for that purpose.

Any addition to or suggested changes to the Standing Orders must be handed to the Head of Council Housing Services 14 days before the Forum.

Any addition or changes to the Standing Orders must be agreed by two thirds of the Tenant Representative members present at the Forum.

Dissolution

The Forum may only be dissolved at a Special Meeting called for that purpose and must be advertised fourteen days before the meeting.

A proposal to dissolve the Forum shall take effect only if agreed by two thirds of the Tenant Representative members present at the meeting.

Chairperson
District-wide Tenants' Forum

Cabinet Member with
responsibility for housing

Dated:

*Lancaster City District-wide Tenants' Forum
Standing Orders*

None