



Lancaster City Council

Housing and Property:
Council Housing

Tenant Voice: Terms of Reference

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1. Membership

- 1.1. 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.
- 1.2. The Tenant's Voice would also like to recognise the membership of residents in the Lancaster district who may not be Lancaster City Council tenants but who are nonetheless involved parties. This could be stakeholders, interested parties, leaseholders and other involved agencies. It is important that everyone has a voice.
- 1.3. Tenant members are limited to 4 per estate but additional residents can attend from these estates with prior agreement from the Chair. This should be monitored as the Tenant's Voice grows, the group have no intention to turn anyone away but may need to in order to manage meeting numbers proportionately.
- 1.4. 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.
- 1.5. 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.

2. Purpose

- a) To co-ordinate member's activity in line with regulatory requirements as set out in the social housing regulatory framework.
- b) Consider housing policy and finance issues and scrutinise the housing service's performance making recommendations.
- c) Work with other member groups, including scrutiny to improve services and help review objectives and aspirations.
- d) 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.
- e) Review housing publications and communication.
- f) Consider and make recommendation in relation to housing finance, which will include involvement in rent and budget setting.
- g) The group should always give due consideration to value for money, available resources and the corporate objectives.

3. Councillor/Council Representation

- 3.1. Councillors are invited members of the group in a non-voting capacity. Councillor representation comprises the Cabinet Member with responsibility for housing plus 3 other Councillors invited by the Cabinet Member.
- 3.2. A minimum of 3 Council Officers should attend plus any further ones who are invited as deemed relevant to an agenda item set by the group. A decision not to invite councillors will be taken by the committee.

4. Aims

- 4.1. To co-ordinate Tenant's Voice members with Council Housing to help communities thrive and flourish.
- 4.2. To maintain great communication between Council Housing and Tenant's Voice members, to continue to foster better community spirit.
- 4.3. To work in partnership with Council Housing to co-regulate the management of our homes and have a voice regarding the delivery of services.
- 4.4. To celebrate the work of our communities and community groups.
- 4.5. To promote the interests of all members of the district and to help maintain good relations between all members of the community.
- 4.6. 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.
- 4.7. To act as a consultative group on all issues concerning tenants and residents at a district wide level.
- 4.8. 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.
- 4.9. Members of the Tenant's Voice 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. A scrutiny sub-group will then be proposed, and additional information requested by them where necessary. The group will then meet outside of the Tenant's Voice group.
- 4.10. Recommendations from the group will be passed to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Chief Officer of Housing and Property. These recommendations will be discussed with the sub-group and either implemented or reasons will be given why they are not able to be implemented. A member of the sub-group will feedback at the next Tenant's Voice meeting.

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 Tenant's 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 no less than 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.
- 6.2. The group may establish working groups or sub-committees as it may deem necessary to consider specific issues. The membership of these shall normally be drawn from the representatives of the group. All finding and recommendations shall be presented to the Tenant's Voice for a final decision.

7. Special Meetings

- 7.1. Decisions to hold a special meeting must be made to the Tenant's Voice committee who will agree the request. This should be publicised to wider members with no less than 7 calendar days' notice.

8. Decision Making

- 8.1. Decisions can only be made if there are two thirds of the Tenant's 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 Chairperson or Vice Chair will have the deciding 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 Tenant's Voice group and council officers but must be agreed at the next Tenant's Voice meeting or AGM.