

Constitution for the Borough Wide Housing Panel

1. Name

The group will be called the “Borough Wide Housing Panel”.

2. Role of Borough Wide Panel

- a) to assist the council in setting the overall strategic direction and priorities for the housing department
- b) to make recommendations on housing budgets and rent levels
- c) to make recommendations on support and resources needed for effective tenant involvement
- d) to make recommendations on borough wide issues (both housing and broader issues) including common concerns raised across the Housing Panels
- e) to promote and act on recommendations from the Diversity Review Board
- f) to comment on the work plan of the Community Participation & Diversity Team in line with the departmental Service plans
- g) to work with the Borough wide Leaseholder forum
- h) to provide a forum for networking
- i) to develop and monitor the Tenant Compact
- j) to develop a Borough Wide Action Plan with clear targets for improving service delivery
- k) to develop partnerships and links with outside agencies
- l) to develop a mechanism to review the success and effectiveness of the tenant participation structure

3. Equal Opportunities

- a) All members of the Borough Wide Panel will be given a copy of and abide by the Equalities Vision of Greenwich Council.
- b) The panel will include in its Borough Wide Action Plan a series of practical steps to make sure that everyone in the community is represented and has an equal opportunity to get involved. This will be informed by the Diversity Review Board.
- c) The Borough Wide Panel will aim to reflect the composition of people living in the borough with regard to different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, gender, age etc. The borough wide action plan will include steps to achieve this.

4. Code of Conduct

Everyone taking part in the Borough Wide Panel will be given a copy of and abide by the jointly agreed Code of Conduct.

5. Membership

- a) 1 tenant rep (& tenant shadow rep) from each Housing Panel. This is flexible in line with the amalgamation of the housing panels and their overall size.
- b) Councillors:
 - Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services
- c) The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services will be Vice Chair of Borough Wide Panel
- d) The role of Chair will be taken by a Borough Wide Panel Tenant member. This tenant will be elected by the Borough Wide Panel members.
- e) 1 rep (and a shadow rep) from the Leaseholder Forum.
- f) 1 rep from the Diversity Review Board (the Chair or an alternative tenant rep member).
- g) If the Council instigates legal action against a panel member, their membership will be reviewed in case there is a conflict with their role as a panel member.
- h) Positions will be provided for non voting members, 1 Person from the Leaseholder Forum & 1 Greenwich Young Peoples Council Rep (the GYPC member must be living in a Greenwich Council rented accommodation)
- i) The position of chair will be held for 2 years (re-electable by consent of the Board).

6. Voting

- a) When a decision needs to take place by a vote, each panel member will have one vote. The Chair will have a second or casting vote in the event of a tie.
- b) Shadow reps will only have a vote when they are deputizing for their Panel Rep.
- c) Voting will be by a show of hands.
- d) A secret ballot will be held where more than 3 members request it.

7. Attendance

For a decision to be made by the Borough Wide Panel one third of the panel members must be present at the meeting, including the Cabinet Member for Housing (or his/her nominated deputy).

If a panel member fails to attend 2 consecutive meetings a letter will be sent from the Borough Wide Panel to the Housing Panel asking for a new rep to be selected.

8. Meetings

- a) The panel will meet at least 4 times a year. Members will be expected to participate in a range of other meetings and focus groups.
- b) Meetings will be open to the public.
- c) Panel members will receive an agenda at least 7 days prior to panel meeting.
- d) Pre meetings & agenda setting. The panel will agree a system for setting the agenda.

9. Special Panel Meetings

- a) The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Borough Wide Panel can call a special meeting of the Panel to deal with urgent business or to consider any matter that should be referred to members in general
- b) A Special Meeting will be called at the request of more than half of the Borough Wide Panel members.
- c) The Council shall give at least 2 weeks notice of the Special Meeting, unless the matter to be tackled is urgent.

10. Servicing

The Panel and the Diversity Review Board will be serviced centrally by the Council (i.e. taking minutes, producing the agendas and publicity).

11. Publicity

- a) Meetings will be advertised in the local press including Greenwich Time.
- b) Information will be displayed in locally as agreed by the Borough Wide Panel.

12. Support, information & expenses for reps.

- a) Training will be provided for the panel members
- b) Information/visit to be arranged to a borough wide group in another borough(s)
- c) Crèches, childcare/carers' allowances and transport expenses will be paid.
- d) Translations, signers, interpreters will be available on request. Any other requirements for those with support needs will be met as far as is practicable.
- e) The Council will provide social events and opportunities for panel reps to network.

13. Reporting back

Panel reps will be expected to provide a summary report of the Borough Wide Housing Panel meetings back to their local Housing Panel meetings.