

# Housing Resident and Community Panel

## Terms of Reference

Approved 24 February 2026

## 1. Purpose

The Housing Resident and Community Panel (RCP) is a formal panel where residents and community stakeholders can actively influence, shape and monitor Bristol City Council (BCC) Housing and Landlord Services.

The panel's purpose is to strengthen resident voice by fostering meaningful two-way dialogue with senior leaders and decision-makers. Its role is to provide oversight, assurance and advise on key housing policies, strategies and service issues —placing resident voice and influence at the heart of decisions making.

## 2. Objectives

1. To request and receive progress updates on the Housing and Consumer Standards Programme and influence its delivery, championing the views and experiences of residents and communities.
2. To review, give feedback and advise on housing policies, strategies, service delivery and resident engagement.
3. To share and use resident experience to co-design solutions with officers and partners.
4. To provide oversight and hold services accountable for improving performance.
5. To promote inclusive participation and building community capacity.

## 3. Scope

The RCP will have regard for the council's duties, responsibilities and constitution, including the system of delegated authority and the remit of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee. The RCP is an advisory body e.g. not decision-making. RCP will receive reports for consideration and resident advice and influence in relation to the Landlord Service.

## 4. Membership and representation

- RCP membership will comprise of up to 20 participants, including council tenants and leaseholders (14), community representatives (5) and an independent chair (1).
- Panel members are recruited through open calls to register interest and targeted outreach to ensure diversity and inclusion. The panel will aim for balanced representation across area, age, ethnicity, tenure type and lived experience.
- Panel members will stand for a duration of two years from the date of its first meeting (November 2025).
- Bristol City Council will hold a reserve list of successful candidates to be offered the opportunity to succeed if a panel member stands down during their tenure.

## 5. Panel Member Responsibilities

Panel members will have a role description and in addition, are expected to:

- Attend panel meetings regularly and notify BCC of any absence
- Prepare by reading meeting papers in advance
- Participate actively and respectfully in discussions
- Consider and/or represent broader community views, not just personal opinions
- Adhere to the code of conduct, declare any conflicts of interest and maintain confidentiality as appropriate
- Promote the panel's work city-wide.

## 6. Panel Chair Responsibilities

The panel will appoint a chair by vote. The Chair will be a resident member or independent member. The Chair of the panel will:

- Lead and facilitate meetings in a fair, inclusive and efficient manner
- Encourage participation and communication and uphold the panel's values and purpose
- Ensure all voices are heard and discussions remain respectful and focused
- Work with officers to agree agendas and review meeting summaries
- Represent the panel in wider forums or meetings when required
- Support the resolution of any disputes or breaches of conduct

A Vice-Chair (resident or independent member) may be appointed to support the Chair and step in when needed

## 7. Officer Responsibilities

The Executive Director for Housing holds the relationship with the RCP and will provide resources and mechanisms to ensure the panel is effective, impactful and working towards positive outcomes for residents.

Officers supporting the panel will

- Coordinate meeting logistics, agendas and documentation
- Facilitate inclusive participation and ensure follow-up actions are completed and reported back to the panel
- Provide support to the Chair and panel members and act as a link between the panel and service leads

- Support panel communications and reporting to relevant bodies.

## 8. Equality, inclusion and accessibility

- Bristol City Council will work in accordance with the council's accessible communication and accessible meetings policies
- RCP members are required to adhere to the council's Equality and Inclusion Policy. Panel members using discriminatory language or behaviours will be subject to an agreed procedure in line with the code of conduct and may be removed from the panel.

## 9. Code of conduct, confidentiality and conflict of interest

- All panel members are required to observe the code of conduct and ground rules for panel meetings and will not bring the panel into disrepute.
- Panel members will have access to information about Bristol City Council, its services, suppliers, service users and employees. Any information that is deemed to contain information that is commercially or particularly sensitive will be clearly labelled. Panel members must treat all confidential or sensitive information confidential and in accordance with council data protection policies. If panel members are in doubt about whether something is confidential, they must check with housing engagement team. All panel members will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement (see appendix a).
- A conflict of interest arises when someone's personal views or connections might influence or affect decisions on matters that are under discussion. Panel members should therefore disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any group they represent, that they consider may affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion. Further information is provided in appendix a.

## 10. Forward Plan

- The panel will agree a forward plan annually, outlining key themes, priorities and scheduled topics for discussion. The plan will help ensure strategic focus and allow members to prepare for upcoming discussions. It will be reviewed at the end of each meeting and updated as needed to reflect emerging issues or resident priorities.
- Topics for the forward plan may be selected by panel members in the following ways:
  - By choosing priority topics from the Homes and Housing Delivery Committee forward plan
  - By 'calling in' items on the consumer standards improvement strategy and/or Tenant Satisfaction Measures action plan and hold the programme/service accountable for delivery.
  - The panel may also accept issues and questions escalated by resident groups and present these to senior leaders for a response.

## 11. Panel Meetings

- The panel will meet four times a year, with the option to hold two additional meetings and optional working groups as needed
- Meetings may be held in person, online, or in hybrid formats to ensure accessibility. Times and venues will be agreed annually
- Quorum for the meeting will be 50% attendance of active members, including majority representation from residents and at least two senior officers from Bristol City Council
- RCP meetings will be limited to two hours. Any issues not addressed in this time will be carried over, unless members agree otherwise
- The Chair of the Homes and Housing Delivery Committee and the Executive Director of Housing may call an emergency meeting, giving a minimum of seven days notice to all panel members, with the reason for calling a meeting under exceptional circumstances
- RCP members may call a special meeting, via a written notification to the Executive Director of Housing, signed by each member, with the stated reason for the meeting. The Executive Director will then notify all panel members when a meeting will take place.

## 12. Distribution of Meeting Papers

- Agendas and supporting meeting papers, will be shared with panel members at least five clear working days in advance of each meeting
- Papers will be distributed electronically unless a member requests a printed copy
- After each meeting, draft summaries and action logs will be circulated within 10 working days
- All documents will be stored in a shared, accessible location for panel members to refer to.

## 13. Requesting Agenda Items

- Panel members may request agenda items by contacting the Chair or designated officer at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting
- Requests should include a brief description of the topic and its relevance to the panel's purpose
- The Chair and officers will review and confirm inclusion based on relevance, timing and capacity
- Urgent items may be requested and added the agenda at the discretion of the Chair.

## 14. Community Notice Board

Each meeting will include a 'Community Notice Board' agenda item to allow panel members and resident groups to submit questions or escalate serious community issues and concerns directly to the panel.

- Questions or requests for the Community Notice Board should be submitted five working days in advance of the meeting
- Items must be relevant to the agenda or related to community issues for example neighbourhoods in crisis, areas in need of priority attention that have not been resolved through routine service requests. This item is not for escalation of individual cases or complaints
- Community issues raised will be recorded, acknowledged and referred to the appropriate service or officer for follow-up
- The panel will monitor responses and recurring themes and may escalate unresolved matters to Homes and Housing Delivery Committee where necessary.

## 15. Voice and Influence – influencing decisions/decision making

The Chair of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee, the Executive Director of Housing and Housing Directors will attend panel meetings.

The panel may influence decisions in several ways:

### **a) Reaching consensus on a proposal**

- The panel operates a consensus-based approach. Where consensus cannot be reached, a simple majority vote will be used. Each member has one vote; abstentions will be recorded but not counted. The Chair remains impartial. In the event of a tie, the Chair has the casting vote
- Once an issue has been decided upon, it should be accepted by all present. Panel members are expected to demonstrate a shared responsibility for decisions made
- Consensus will be documented in meeting summaries including the rationale and any dissenting views and reviewed at the next session.

### **b) Calling items in for update, oversight or to seek assurance and recommend next steps:**

The panel can 'call in' items for update or review. These items related to:

- initiatives on the consumer standards improvement plan,
- initiatives on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures action plan and complaints improvement plan
- updates on the delivery of recommendations made by the Housing Scrutiny Panel

- areas of concern in relation to risks and compliance

**c) Taking part in working groups to co-design policy, strategy, resident communications or housing projects**

**Decision Transparency**

- Where the panel's activities lead to influencing decisions, service delivery or policy, a summary will be published and shared with residents and other stakeholders
- Officers will provide updates on how the actions have been implemented or responded to
- Transparency will be maintained through open communication, accessible documentation and regular reporting.

## 16. Working Groups

- As part of their work, the panel may choose to organise or attend working groups or co-design workshops on policy areas. Working groups and workshops will be organised online or in person and typically will involve attendance at one, two or three one-hour meetings.

## 17. Referrals and Escalation

- The panel may also escalate serious concerns as appropriate to the Homes and Housing Delivery Committee, where serious concerns are not responded to by the Committee within agreed timescales the panel may choose to escalate to Regulators (via the Homes and Housing Delivery Committee) as appropriate.

## 18. Reporting Panel Outcomes

- Outcomes from panel discussions and decisions will be shared with relevant service teams and senior management and the Homes and Housing Delivery Committee. A summary of actions and responses will be published on the BCC website and in the Housing News newsletter.
- An annual impact report will highlight key achievements, recommendations, and service changes influenced by the panel. Feedback loops will be maintained to ensure residents are informed of how their input has shaped services.

## 19. Communication Protocols

- Communication between panel members and officers will be respectful, timely, and inclusive.
- Email will be the primary method of communication, with alternative formats available for accessibility needs.
- Officers will respond to panel member queries within five working days, unless otherwise agreed.

- Panel members are encouraged to raise concerns or suggestions through agreed channels, including email, feedback forms or during meetings.
- Confidential matters will be handled discreetly and in line with Data Protection policies.

## 20. Relationship with other bodies

### **Homes and Housing Delivery Committee**

- The Chair (or Vice Chair) of the Homes and Housing Delivery Committee will attend panel meetings.
- The panel will have a regular agenda item at the Homes and Housing Delivery Committee meetings as an opportunity to share updates with committee members.
- Updates may be presented by representatives of the panel or submitted via a written statement and copy of meeting summaries.

### **Housing Scrutiny Panel**

- The Resident and Community Panel will maintain a collaborative relationship with the Housing Scrutiny Panel to ensure alignment and avoid duplication.
- Key issues, recommendations for scrutiny may be referred to the Scrutiny Panel for deeper investigation or review.
- The Housing Scrutiny Panel Chair or nominated representative may attend RCP meetings and vice-versa to share insights and updates.
- Housing Scrutiny Panel will share scrutiny reports with the RCP and seek their endorsement, therefore strengthening resident voice and influence on issues that matter most to residents.
- Officers will support communication and coordination between both panels to strengthen resident influence and accountability.

## 21. Representing the panel

- The panel may choose to form relationships with wider bodies, for example, the One City Homes and Communities Board.
- Panel members may be asked to attend local, regional or national events, conferences on behalf of the panel and/or to represent Bristol residents.
- Individual panel members may not speak in public on behalf of the panel without prior agreement.

## 22. Panel Support and Development

- Accessibility needs will be met to ensure full participation and a dedicated officer will support the panel's work and development.

- Agendas and supporting papers will be developed in accordance with the council's Accessible Communications and Accessible meetings policies.
- Members will be offered payment for involvement and reasonable travel and carers expenses where applicable.
- All members will receive an induction covering the panel's purpose, structure, and expectations. Ongoing training will be offered on topics such as housing services overview, housing policy, equality and diversity and effective communication.
- Members will be supported to develop skills and confidence through coaching, peer support, external training and networking opportunities.
- Membership of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service and signposting to free national training and development opportunities is included for panel members
- Feedback will be sought to ensure development activities are tailored to meet member needs.

### 23. Panel Member Feedback

Panel members will be invited to provide regular feedback on their experience, the effectiveness of meetings and the support provided. Feedback will be collected through surveys, informal check-ins and annual reviews. Officers will use this feedback to work with the panel to improve meetings and engagement processes. A summary of feedback themes and actions taken will be shared with the panel annually.

### 24. Panel Review and Evaluation

The RCP Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually with input from panel members. The panel's impact will be evaluated and evidenced through feedback, case studies/stories and service improvements.

### 25. Appendices

- a) Code of conduct and confidentiality agreement

# Housing Resident and Community Panel Code of Conduct

Approved 24 February 2026

All panel members are expected to adhere to the code of conduct.

## 1. Code of conduct

Panel members are required to:

- Uphold the values of respect, curiosity, transparency, accountability, and inclusion.
- Support and encourage each other to contribute fully, working collaboratively and constructively to achieve the shared goals of the panel, even when views differ
- Follow the agreed ground rules for panel meetings and working group activities
- Declare any conflicts of interest and ensure personal actions do not bring the panel into disrepute
- Treat all participants with respect, courtesy, and fairness. Everyone has the right to express their views without fear or favour, and all opinions should be valued equally
- Comply with Bristol City Council's Equality and Inclusion Policy, avoiding discriminatory, offensive, or aggressive behaviour or language
- Comply with the panel's confidentiality agreement
- Maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information shared within the panel
- Refrain from speaking or writing on behalf of the panel without prior agreement. Any correspondence or representation must be approved by the panel and made available to all members
- When representing the panel collectively, ensure that communication is delivered as one agreed voice.

## 2. Confidentiality

Panel members will have access to reports, documents and conversations containing information about Bristol City Council, its services, suppliers, service users and employees. Any information that is deemed to contain information that is commercially or particularly sensitive will be clearly labelled 'confidential'. Personal data of individual residents will not be disclosed in reports or documents shared with the panel.

Panel members must treat all documents marked 'confidential' or 'sensitive' confidential and in accordance with data protection policies. If panel members are in doubt about whether something is confidential, they should check with the Housing Engagement Team. All panel members will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Examples of confidential information include:

### 1. Panel members' personal details, for example:

- Addresses, contact information, tenancy details or other information shared during meetings.
- Health or disability-related information disclosed to support accessibility needs.

### 2. Sensitive complaints or casework, for example:

- Information about individual complaints, repairs, or staff conduct.

- Information about disputes between residents or with the council.
- 3. Internal service data, for example:
  - Draft reports or unpublished KPIs.
  - Early-stage policy proposals or service changes not yet public.
- 4. Panel discussions, for example:
  - Comments or feedback shared in confidence by panel members.
  - Internal disagreements or conduct matters under review.
- 5. Escalation and regulatory referrals, for example:
  - Details of issues being considered for referral to external regulators.
  - Evidence or documentation supporting serious concerns.
- 6. Conflict of interest declarations, for example:
  - Personal or financial interests disclosed by members that could affect impartiality.

### 3. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when someone's personal views or connections might influence or affect decisions on matters that are under discussion.

Panel members must declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may affect their impartiality or ability to participate in discussions. This includes:

- Personal, legal or financial interests in matters under discussion
- Relationships with organisations or individuals that may benefit from the panels influence or the matter under discussion
- Any situation where a member's objectivity could reasonably be questioned.

Declarations should be made at the start of meetings or as soon as a conflict becomes apparent. The Chair or facilitator will decide on appropriate action, which may include recusal from specific discussions or decisions.

Panel members should not expect to receive more or less favourable treatment by others because of their membership on the panel.

Panel members must not accept payment or gifts from any third party that they know or suspect is offered with the expectation that it will obtain a business advantage for them. Panel members must notify the Chair and/or a Bristol City Council officer as soon as possible if they believe or suspect that bribery has occurred or may occur in the future.

#### 4. Political Affiliation

Panel members may be affiliated to or be members of a political party but may not represent a political party in their role as a member of the Panel.

#### 5. Lobbying or protesting against Bristol City Council

Panel members have the right to express concerns about housing standards and service delivery. However, to maintain the integrity of the panel and ensure constructive engagement, the following arrangements apply:

- Members wishing to participate in protests or campaigns must do so outside of official panel meetings and activities

- The panel encourages constructive dialogue and escalation through agreed processes before resorting to protest
- Members involved in lobbying or protest must declare this at meetings if it relates to issues under discussion. The Chair will decide if the member should abstain from voting on related matters.

Personal advocacy vs panel role:

- Members may lobby or protest in a personal capacity or as part of a resident group but must not present these actions as representing the panel unless formally agreed by the panel.
- When acting personally, members should avoid using panel branding or implying official endorsement by the panel.

Formal representation:

If the panel collectively agrees to escalate concerns publicly (e.g. a letter, petition, or meeting with senior leadership), this must be:

- Approved by a majority vote
- Documented in meeting summaries
- Coordinated with officers to ensure compliance with organisational policies for example, complaints.

#### 6. Breaching the Code of Conduct

The panel will be supported by the Housing Engagement Team to implement the code of conduct by offering advice, guidance and training. If an issue cannot be resolved informally, the council may take action in line with the code of conduct and/or the council's equality and inclusion policies.

#### **Complaints**

Complaints are taken seriously. Attempting to resolve the issue informally is usually the first step in helping to put things right. If an issue cannot be resolved informally complainants may also use the council's complaints procedure.

#### **Procedure**

- The initial complaint should be reported in writing if possible, to one of the following:
  - Chair of the panel
  - The Executive Director of Housing and/or the Chair of the Homes and Housing Delivery Committee
  - The Housing Engagement Team Manager
- The complaint should state which part of the code of conduct has been breached.
- Complaints will be logged and acknowledged within five working days
- The complaint will be investigated and a response provided within 10 working days
- The person investigating the complaint will reach a decision and may propose actions to resolve the breach and prevent it happening again
- All complaints regarding resident engagement will be recorded

An investigation where a panel member is found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct may result in:

- An apology to the group – to the individual/s concerned and/or council officers
- A verbal or written warning
- A request to attend appropriate training or to seek mediation if the issue is more complex

Serious or persistent failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in removal or suspension from the panel, withdrawal of funding or a ban from resident engagement activities.

The response will be decided by the Chair in consultation with the Housing Engagement Team and will depend on the severity and context of the breach. If issues are of a serious nature and/or involve council employees, the council's corporate policies will apply.

Any panel member subject to code of conduct procedures have a right to be heard by the Housing Engagement Team, as part of any investigations.

**7. Code of conduct declaration**

I have read and understood the contents of the Resident and Community Panel Code of Conduct. I agree to adhere to this code of conduct and I understand that if I breach any part of the code of conduct, I may be subject to sanctions or asked to step down. This code of conduct declaration stands for the duration of tenure (November 2025 - November 2027) and will be refreshed on an annual basis.

Panel Member Name:

.....

Signature: ..... Date:

.....

**8. Confidentiality agreement**

As a Resident and Community Panel member you may have access to confidential information, as a necessary part of your role. The information is held by Bristol City Council’s Housing Directorate and must only be processed for the notified purposes in accordance with the Data Protection Act and the council’s information security policies.

Access to such information will be strictly controlled and only provided if it is necessary for the specific panel activity being carried out. Information shared in confidence will be marked ‘**confidential**’ and will be for the sole purpose of the Resident and Community Panel in its activities.

The information marked ‘confidential’ or ‘sensitive’ must be kept confidential at all times and should not be disclosed or discussed with anybody outside of the panel. Any breach of confidentiality will be considered by the Housing Engagement Manager, who will take the appropriate action in accordance with the panel’s terms of reference and code of conduct.

Please sign, print and date the form below to indicate you understand the terms and conditions of this confidentiality agreement and return to Bristol City Council Housing Engagement Team.

Panel Member Name .....

Signature ..... Date.....