

A Housing Scrutiny Panel Project



Housing Scrutiny Panel (HSP)  
Scrutiny Report  
**Scrutiny Panel Self-Assessment**

DEC

MAR

2014-5

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## Glossary/Acronyms

BCC	Bristol City Council
HD	Housing Delivery
HSP	Housing Scrutiny Panel
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
SIT	Service Inspection Team
SUG	Service User Group
TPT	Tenant Participation Team

## 1. About the Housing Scrutiny Panel

### What is the Housing Scrutiny Panel?

The Housing Scrutiny Panel is a diverse group of tenants and leaseholders whose role is to take a closer look at the services provided by Bristol City Council's Housing Delivery Service.

The scrutiny, inspection and monitoring of services by tenants is recognised as good practice for landlords wishing to improve their services and ensure that housing standards are being met.

The panel takes an in-depth look at the services provided by Housing Delivery in relation to the running and maintenance of homes and services. The panel takes a positive critical eye and assesses performance against both local and national housing standards. If failings are found it makes recommendations for improvement.

Working in this way can help improve Bristol City Council performance and increase tenant satisfaction and involvement.

## 2. Acknowledgements

The Housing Scrutiny Panel would like to thank all the panel members (both current and previous) who were involved in this self-assessment review process, the independent trainer and mentor, who supported us, and Bristol City Council staff who took part.

## 3. Introduction

This report details the findings of the Housing Scrutiny Panel project to review the activities and effectiveness of the Housing Scrutiny Panel itself. The project was facilitated by an independent advisor, but led by members of the scrutiny panel and undertaken as part of the HSP accountability and transparency agreement incorporated in the HSP Terms of Reference.

The aim of the project was to seek to ensure that the panel is carrying out its role and responsibility effectively.

## **Aim**

To review the activities and effectiveness of the Housing Scrutiny Panel, using a self-assessment process carried out by panel members and overseen by an independent advisor.

## **Objectives**

The project will seek to ensure that the panel is carrying out its role and responsibility effectively, has identified changing requirements arising from the restructuring within Bristol City Council Housing Delivery, and that it identifies a programme of implementation to ensure that it is operating effectively within the new structure.

## **4. Methodology & Timetable**

The Housing Scrutiny Panel carried out this project between Dec 2014 and March 2015.

The content and structure of the Self-Assessment review process was documented in a written proposal. This proposal was agreed between the Housing Scrutiny Panel and Bristol City Council Housing Delivery. The Self-Assessment proposal was used as a working document throughout the review to direct and monitor the review progress.

The Panel used a variety of methods to carry out the review, by undertaking:

- group workshops
- panel group members' self-analysis
- surveys and questionnaires
- staff and stakeholders feedback
- individual meetings
- confidential feedback
- demographic analysis etc –  
See Appendix 1 Self Assessment Proposal

## **5. Key Findings**

The HSP acknowledged that Bristol City Council is going through a period of significant change notified as follows:

*...." significant changes that have taken place in the City Council in the last year  
In summary - BCC have taken a greater degree of control over change projects to ensure that these do contribute to the priorities of the council as a whole; and that resources needed to deliver change are put to the council's highest priorities. This is a change for Housing Delivery who used to have a level of 'autonomy' to make decisions about resourcing change projects that were important to housing and our tenants.*

*There has also been a reduction in the resources available to help deliver change.  
Tenant participation staff have moved to become part of a wider community*

*development team to involve all tenures of local residents in decisions about their neighbourhood. "*

Major Change Projects in Housing Delivery (& BCC) 2015 – Document supplied by Nicky Debbage, Service Manager – Strategy, Planning & Governance  
Housing Delivery - – Appendix 3

- In response:
  - HSP are keen to work in partnership with BCC, and will therefore taking the time between Dec 2014 and March 2015 to review its own effectiveness, and not undertake any further performance-related scrutiny reviews until after April 2015. This is to allow a period of settling into the new BCC structure. However, when monitoring previous scrutiny reviews and the partnership working arrangements with HD, HSP identified several areas of concern. These were noted in response to a meeting with the Service Manager in Appendix 3a:

The areas of concern and recommendations for improvement are noted in Appendix 3a.

### **5.1 Group Health Check** workshop 4th December 2014 Appendix 2 - What makes a good team?

Each current panel member was asked to identify and evaluate “what makes a good team?” and to score each item identified on a 0 – 5 basis, with 0 being ineffective and 5 being highly effective. The maximum score would be 25. This enabled the panel to determine areas for improvement, when working as a team, as follows:

Four key areas scoring low were:

- Is the team following the protocols sufficiently correctly? (total score 12)
- Individual weaknesses (eg Personal Skills and Personal Effectiveness) (Score 14)
- Communication between members of the team (Score 15)
- Knowledge of the problem (Score 17)

Key areas scoring high:

- Team working (25)
- Realistic expectations (24)
- Respect for each other (25)
- Support and trust for each other (25)
- Ability to overcome difficulties and find alternative solutions (24)

As a result of this analysis improved group working arrangements, opportunity for personal development, and additional training needs have been identified.

It was also identified that when the group work well together much has been achieved. There are three successful scrutiny reviews completed and the work of the HSP acknowledged by other social housing providers as good practice.

**5.2 Diversity** – Analysis of the group’s equality and diversity strategy to ensure it is representative. (See recommendations for improvement at end of this report)

The panel viewed and analysed the following documents:

- *Sustainable Tenancies, background information*
- It was indicated to the panel (separately by email) that there are approximately 1451 leaseholders:

Key points noted:

- Leaseholder information was inadequate and BCC does not keep information on the demographic breakdown of leaseholders. There has been no leaseholder survey carried out recently. There is no leaseholder group or association.
- The panel brought into question the number of leaseholders indicated, as being “low”.
- The HS panel has a leaseholder representative who is able to present the views of leaseholders and their concerns.

**5.3 The Scrutiny Process** – Analysis of the overall scrutiny process:

### **Methods**

It was determined that the current methods used for scrutiny are all working well. A variety of scrutiny methods have been tried and tested and are all useful depending on the review and its scope and complexity. Each separate review will be looked at to determine how to conduct the review, gather evidence and which method to use. Methods include mystery shopping, desk top review, surveys and questionnaires, interviews etc.

**Relationship with Managers, Directors** - Proposals for improvement include:

- Clear commitment from the Board, Senior managers and staff, including a better understanding and improved knowledge of the HS panel and its function as a tool to assist and help staff to improve services. This should include building trust, mutual respect and partnership working with shared objectives.
- HSP request that they are “allocated” a designated person or persons (“champion/s”) from within HD to improve communications and support. HD to nominate the relevant persons.
- HSP would welcome unrestricted access to all relevant information required for a scrutiny review
- There needs to be an improved monitoring and reporting function for previous (and future) scrutiny reviews
- There is a need for HSP to have the ability to scrutinise both Housing Delivery and Corporate Business if relevant to the scrutiny project.

“**Criteria for Priorities**” and “**Triggers for Scrutiny**” documents have both been discussed and updated.

#### **5.4 Training** – Update Training Needs Analysis

The HSP are in the process of recruiting new panel members. An intermediate Training Needs Analysis has been completed for existing members. Once the Self-Assessment process is completed and new members recruited to the panel, a new programme of training will be identified and initiated. This will be put on the HSP Business meeting as a regular agenda item and training reviewed and updated each month. A HS panel member will be asked to take on the responsibility for progressing the training agenda.

#### **5.5 Support** – (Levels of support and resources required by the HSP in the new BCC structure.)

- Levels of support have been determined and can be seen in Appendix 4
- Budget requirement has been identified – Appendix 5
- Updating the IT systems in the Tenants Resource Centre including a WiFi system.
- A dedicated BCC officer is requested to assist with the communications between HSP and BCC HD.
- HS panel is able to determine the role of the dedicated officer and their relationship with the panel and the line of communication within BCC HD.

**5.6 Individual Assessment – 1-1’s** The main objective of the Individual Assessment was to capture the views and opinions of the current members of the panel who have experience of being on the HSP and conducting scrutiny reviews. A selection of comments was recorded as follows:

Concerns raised by panel members were:

- that members don’t have enough experience of working in a practical role of being on a panel or as a committee member.
- In order to have a more diverse representation of the BCC tenants we need to attract more recruits from among the diverse ethnic population and younger members, as well as from the employed communities.
- Panel members should
  - Be better prepared for a meeting, reading papers making notes etc.
  - Be able to digest data, facts + figures.
  - Be objective and see the bigger picture, not just the place where they live.

- Be aware of the timescales/deadlines, which should always be set at the start of projects.
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct and if persistently not working within the code that the behaviour is noted and actions taken to resolve. Either by agreed procedures or adequate training put in place.
- Continual recruitment process in place – to avoid a drop in panel membership by establishing a “waiting list” of prospective panel members who are able to engage with the work of the panel.
- No member should make a statement on behalf of the HSP without discussion and / agreement of the panel.
- Any grievances should follow the agreed protocol
- The role of the scrutiny panel is set apart from other panels and previous groups and should have a positive outlook and not allow negative experiences influence the approach by the HSP
- Allocation of roles and responsibilities within the panel are fairly attributed according to the nomination and selection process. All are open to each panel member equally depending on skills, knowledge and experience and willingness to undertake such a role.
- Meeting agendas, timings and other protocols are adhered to by every member and points raised respectfully at AOB if necessary.
- The bureaucracy involved in such bodies. There is far too much damping down and restriction on innovation – notwithstanding verbal assurances. Most officials are happy with the status quo and do not welcome change as they are afraid it could be a threat to their entrenched position.
- Perhaps people needed more guidance in their role as investigator. There seemed to be a degree of lack of initiative or direction.
- Working across council departments and subgroups with sporadic meetings and lengthy feedback times.
- Accept the input from the rest of the team and use it after discussion. Dismissing other’s work when it has been scheduled does not make for a happy panel!

The HSP should be responsible for the recruitment of the HS panel members with a clear succession policy in place.

**Other comments include:**

- Among some of the things acknowledged that the panel was doing well is that there is resilience both individually and as a group, which is commendable. This has enabled HSP to press on and push through some quite knotty issues and other personal commitments to complete each project.
- One person can make a difference – even if the difference is small. There are many opportunities for people to participate and it is a pity that so few avail themselves of it.

- The panel worked fairly well as a unit but with possibly not enough Indians and too many chiefs! Perhaps more realistic and less idealistic targets would be better.
- There was a willingness to work together and get the job done.
- The panel could be a very useful resource for the Council (.). Training seems a necessity and there is possibly a too strong implication of how the Council will react to the Panel. If the Panel is independent it should not consider the tender feelings of Council members nor assume their reaction to its recommendations.
- In an attempt to develop and maintain a transparent working relations and partnership with BCC HD, panel members need to be both bold and fair in speaking their minds and being clear about their findings and recommendations, within our shared purpose to improve and maintain a high standard of services within Housing Delivery.

### **5.7 Policies and Agreements**

Review of Terms of Reference (ToR) and Code of Conduct (CoC).

- The ToR and CoC were reviewed and updated. Amendments will be submitted to BCC for agreement and approval. The new documents reflect the progress that the HSP has made since its induction in 2011/12 and the move towards increased independence and accountability.

### **5.8 Business Plan**

The panel agreed not to put together a separate business plan document at this stage of their development but to note that the HSP business plan consists of a combination of the following documents:

- The Role and responsibility of the Housing Scrutiny Panel (Appendix 6)
- The Work Programme (Appendix 7)
- The Training Needs Analysis
- The budget (Appendix 5)
- The Support requirements (Appendix 4)
- Anticipated outcomes for better housing services for tenants.
- The Tenant Participation Agreement

### **Tenant Participation Agreement**

This document has been reviewed and it was agreed that at this stage there would be no significant change to this document and therefore it would remain in place in essence and in the spirit of the agreement.

### **5.9 Communications strategy – updated for improved communications**

Several areas for improvement were identified including

- Internal Group Working
- Improved relationships with BCC
- Promotion of the Panel to the wider BCC/HD council tenants and leaseholders
- Bi-annual newsletters
- Update Website
- Address and postal improvements
- Better use of technology including emails, text, Twitter and Skype

An enhanced training and communication programme has been identified and incorporated into the recommendations.

### **5.10 Group Membership**

The panel has reviewed the Roles and Responsibilities of membership of the HSP in a group workshop and the documents were updated and further actions recorded in the Action Plan – (Appendix 6)

### **5.11 Recruitment**

The recruitment process to include an “Open Day” (first one scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> April 2015) to encourage new members to join to the HSP. Open Days will be facilitated by HSP group members and will be an informal opportunity for tenants and leaseholders to explore the opportunities available and ask questions directly to HS panel members.

Recruitment documentation (Recruitment Pack, Expressions of Interest, Assessment Forms, Questionnaires, Registration, Equality and Diversity analysis, etc) will be reviewed and used once interest has been established and prospective panel members are willing to go forward to the formal recruitment process.

**5.12 Stakeholders views** - The main objective was to capture the views and opinions of managers who have worked with the HSP and have supported the panel when conducting previous scrutiny reviews. Summary of findings as follows:

### **Estate Management**

*“The Report was well written and presented including a 360 degree view which is very helpful when continually trying to improve our Service. The recommendations made sense and linked well to the findings.*

*As you are aware we agreed an Action Plan that supported implementation of the Recommendations many of which we could easily implement and others that were tied to our Service Review and implantation of new ways of working are pending implementation. We are hoping to fully implement new processes this year subject to having staff in place which will lead to all other outstanding recommendations to be implemented. As you are aware, I have updated EM SUG on where we are with staff recruitment and both Martin Owen and I have given regular updates to the SUG on where we are with our Service review and embedding new ways of working.*

*Personally I think the monitoring via the SUG is working but the question is do the SUG believe they are monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan and if not how can it be improved.*

*I guess all reports should be evidence based that has looked at best practise elsewhere to then help inform recommendation*

- The HSP expressed concern that no new Tenant Visits have been made since 2014.
- This has raised concerns from the HSP that tenants are not being properly supported at the beginning of their tenancy.
- HSP noted that the paper work has been significantly improved since the review

### **Caretaking Services**

Have given feedback as follows:

- *Were the conclusions and recommendations easy to understand? **Yes***
- *How many of the recommendations are implemented/working and have improved performance. **Recommendations 1, 3, 4, 6 & 8 have been done/implemented***
- *How many of the recommendation are left and timescales for them to be implemented? **Recommendations 2, 5, 7, 9, 10 & 11 are outstanding, timescales to be agreed at next Caretaking SUG meeting in April***
- *Do you think the monitoring of the project through the Service User Group is working? **No not yet as due to restructuring nobody has picked this, but it was agreed at last Caretaking SUG meeting in Feb that this would now be a standard AGM item and a progress report be produced at each SUG meeting***
- *Do you have any ideas on how the group can improve the reports in the future? **Benchmarking was not carried out which was a critical piece of work that should have been done to help with the outcomes of the report on whether Caretaking service charges are VFM.***

*Additional comments:*

*The only other comment that I would like to add is I feel a more effective way of consulting with staff would have been to hold a workshop rather than the formal interview process that the 4 Managers attended.*

*The reason I say this that by having a workshop format you can generally come to some sort of consensus with the answers to your questions rather than you having to record 4 lots of different responses.*

It was noted that

- Benchmarking was pinpointed as something that the HSP should not overlook in the future.
- Monitoring of the Caretaker report was not in accordance with the agreed protocols (monitoring should have been every three months) and was overlooked.

### **5.13 Action Plan**

Action plan is completed. Appendix 8

#### **5.14 Project Analysis**

Project Analysis has been incorporated in the Training Needs Analysis as an identified training need.

HSP will be asking for a 5 minute slot on SUGs to provide feedback from the HSP and to receive feedback from the SUGs.

#### **5.15 Project Management**

This has been incorporated into the Training Needs Analysis.

#### **5.16 Ex-Panel member's survey -**

A short questionnaire was completed anonymously by ex-members of the HSP, those who had joined the group at its inception (2011) and those who had joined at a later stage.

(see Appendix 9) for covering email and Questionnaire.

The full text is available upon request.

Summary for recommendations:

Several of the "ex-group membership" concerns have been identified as an ongoing training requirement, eg Managing Conflict, Improving Meetings, Personal Effectiveness, Building Relationships, Understanding the working of the Housing Delivery, Partnership working, Scrutiny, Leadership, Chairing Skills, Motivation, Project Management.

It is proposed to build in a training element to each HSP business meeting including increased awareness of the purpose of the HSP and the roles and responsibilities of each member.

HSP will review the protocols for scrutiny reviews to ensure that robust project management is in place, with clear aims and objectives. Also it should improve the understanding of the strategic view taken by HSP but also identify what can be achieved in a shorter space of time.

HSP will develop an enhanced Recruitment strategy and process to encourage and engage tenants with the skills, knowledge and experience required at this level of involvement. It will endeavour to recruit a number of new panel members to a total of 12 with a reserve list – encouraged to undertake training – and to be co-opted if necessary. With full capacity therefore the HSP will be better able to distribute the

work load and aim to achieve results in a shorter space of time.

Also to make it clear in the recruitment of new members to HSP that the time and commitment and energy required increases during a scrutiny review and that additional time to attend meetings and research projects may be necessary.

A proposal has been agreed for an improved communications strategy with BCC Housing Delivery, following their new structure and a request for a dedicated officer, and other champions for the HSP within BCC HD.

It has been agreed to hold meetings at different times of the day to ensure that the work of HSP is accessible to a wider number of tenants.

A proposal has been submitted for the required level of support needed for the HSP including increased access and use of ICT, clear budget requirements, and an improved time for response to scrutiny reviews.

Within the communications strategy is a strategy for an enhanced image of the HSP including producing newsletters, promotional material and submitting entries for Housing News.

It is proposed to review the role of the Chair and Vice-Chair and to consider alternatives to the current role and the sharing of the responsibility of the chair.

Follow up of projects – should be more timely now that the BCC HD department new structure is complete and managers can focus on service improvements

## 6. Conclusions

This has been a comprehensive review of the purpose and the work of the Bristol City Council Housing Scrutiny Panel. The panel acknowledges the excellent support it has received from BCC in carrying out its scrutiny reviews in the past and the panel looks to the future to continue its work by re-establishing robust partnership arrangements with BCC, whilst at the same time maintaining a level of independence. An open and honest working arrangement, access to information and a willingness by all parties to work together will enable the HSP to deliver not only value for money, but improved service effectiveness and efficiencies.

The panel feels that its work is not just about housing but all aspects of the services that BCC provides that affect tenants (including things like procurement and grounds maintenance). It is about how tenants feel about where they live that impact upon their lives. In this respect it may be appropriate to carry out scrutiny reviews that fall (in part) outside of the services provided by Housing Delivery.

There are many recommendations for improvement from the panel's perspective and the panel acknowledges that it requires the support, the tools and the expertise to fulfil its objectives.

The panel has completed three excellent reviews to date.

The panel is determined to grow and to expand its expertise and professionalism that is needed to ensure it is effective in improving the living standards for the tenants and leaseholders of Bristol City Council.

The panel will continue to improve how it works and to function as an independent scrutiny panel in order to be viewed as making a real contribution to the business success and reputation of BCC and Housing Delivery.

## 7. Further Recommendations

<p>Group Health check</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review protocols – every 12 months</li> <li>• Update members with protocols every 3 months</li> <li>• Every meeting one hour set aside dedicated to training – put on the agenda</li> <li>• Review at start of every new scrutiny project</li> <li>• Group members to take more responsibility for reading documents and greater preparation for meetings, projects and events enabling the chair to have to undertake less administration eg photocopying documents etc.</li> <li>• Timings of meetings are reviewed to enable recruitment of HS panel members who are unable to attend meetings during week days.</li> </ul>	
<p>Diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The whole issue of leaseholders representation within BCC should be reviewed</li> <li>• Accurate records should be maintained to establish correct number of BCC leaseholders</li> <li>• Establish when the last survey carried</li> </ul>	

	<p>out and what were the results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be a survey / questionnaire carried out with leaseholders within the next six months</li> <li>• Once the Panel have received accurate detailed information regarding the demographics of BC council tenants and leaseholders, the panel will identify a strategy on how to make direct representation to the key people in the various BME organisations in Bristol to encourage them to join the HSP. This to be included as part of the overall communications plan.</li> <li>• A HSP member should be invited to attend Neighbourhood Partnerships meetings to promote the HSP profile and to engage with the people who represent the area</li> <li>• Other stakeholder groups and community partnerships will be determined and analysed to raise awareness of the HSP and seek membership and / or representation as appropriate.</li> </ul>	
<p>The Scrutiny Process</p>	<p>Relationship with Managers, Directors - Proposals for improvement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear commitment from the Board and Senior managers including a better understanding and improved knowledge of the HS panel and its function as a tool to assist and help to improve services, including building trust, mutual respect and partnership / shared objectives.</li> <li>• HSP are “allocated” a designated person or persons (“champions”) from within HD. HD to nominate relevant persons.</li> <li>• Unrestricted access to all relevant information required for a scrutiny review as specified by HSP.</li> <li>• Improved monitoring and reporting</li> </ul>	

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	<p>function for previous scrutiny reviews.</p> <p>Need to look at both Housing Delivery and Corporate Business if relevant to scrutiny projects</p>	
Training	<p>The HSP are in the process of recruiting new panel members. An intermediate Training Needs Analysis has been completed for existing members. Once the Assessment process is completed a programme of training will be identified and initiated. This will be put on the Business meeting agenda and reviewed each month.</p> <p>A further full training needs analysis will be complete at the time of full membership.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that the HSP appoint a Training Officer that has responsibility to define and develop a training programme as determined within the role and responsibilities policy.</p>	
Support	<p>HSP are able to define the role of the "support" / liaison person and their relationship with the Panel and the communication lines with BCC HD.</p>	
Individual Assessments	<p>Issues that arose within Individual Assessments have been covered elsewhere in the recommendations. These include Training and a review of roles and responsibilities and improved communications.</p>	
Policies and Agreements	<p>All have been updated as part of the self-assessment and will be reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p>Information is provided on how HD will incorporate HSP within the new BCC HD structure to ensure that tenant led scrutiny and co regulation meet the HCA regulatory requirements.</p>	
Group Membership	<p>Roles and responsibilities have been updated. When full membership is achieved it will be possible to allocate</p>	

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	<p>these to group members as appropriate.</p> <p>Several new posts were redefined to reflect the new way of working and to cover for absences.</p> <p>Further detailed analysis will take place after the recruitment process and when new members join the HSP.</p>	
Recruitment	An enhanced recruitment process is put in place – with the HSP taking the lead in this process.	
Stakeholders Views	<p>Caretaking: Improved monitoring arrangements of the review with a 3 monthly report from the SUGS to the HSP.</p> <p>Benchmarking: The HSP are limited in what they can access from elsewhere and this does not assist in making a comprehensive review. Therefore HSP would like BCC HD to take on the necessary benchmarking exercise as agreed with HSP in relation to their scrutiny reviews.</p> <p>Monitoring: HSP request a joint Management and HSP workshop to review how monitoring of projects will be undertaken in the future and to establish relationships with new and previous managers and new departments.</p> <p>Estate Management – Six Weeks visit. The whole process need to be implemented as agreed and HSP requests a full report within 3 months</p>	
Action Plan	A rolling Action log has been established and will be updated at each business meeting.	
Project Analysis and Project Management	These have been identified as Training Needs for each HSP member and particularly at the start of each new	

	scrutiny review	
Ex-HSP members	<p>Several of the “ex-group membership” concerns have been identified as an ongoing training requirement, eg Managing Conflict, Improving Meetings, Personal Effectiveness, Building Relationships, Understanding the working of the Housing Delivery, Partnership working, Scrutiny, Leadership, Motivation, Project Management.</p> <p>It is proposed to build in a training element to each HSP business meeting including increased awareness of the purpose of the HSP and the roles and responsibilities of each member.</p> <p>HSP will review the protocols for scrutiny reviews to ensure that robust project management is in place, with clear aims and objectives. Also to improve the understanding of the strategic view taken by HSP but also to identify what can be achieved in a shorter space of time.</p> <p>HSP will develop an enhanced Recruitment strategy and process to encourage and engage tenants with the skills, knowledge and experience required at this level of involvement. It will endeavour to recruit a number of new panel members to 12 with a reserve list – encouraged to undertake training – and to be co-opted if necessary. With full capacity therefore the HSP will be better able to distribute the work load and aim to achieve results in a shorter space of time.</p> <p>Also to make it clear in the recruitment of new members to HSP that the time and commitment and energy required increases during a scrutiny review and that additional time to attend meetings and research projects may be necessary.</p> <p>A proposal has been agreed for an</p>	

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	<p>improved communications strategy with BCC Housing Delivery, following their new structure now it is in place and a request for a dedicated officer, and other champions for the HSP within BCC HD.</p> <p>A proposal has been agreed to hold meetings at different times of the day to ensure that the work of HSP is accessible to a wider number of tenants.</p> <p>A proposal has been submitted for the required level of support needed for the HSP including increased access and use of ICT, clear budget requirements, and an improved time for response to scrutiny reviews.</p> <p>Within the communications strategy an enhanced image of the HSP can be created by producing newsletters, promotional material and submitting entries for Housing News.</p> <p>Review the role of the Chair and Vice-Chair – consider alternatives to the current role and the sharing of the responsibility of the chair.</p> <p>Follow up of projects – should be more timely now that the BCC HD department new structure is complete and managers can focus on service improvements</p>	
Terms of Reference	<p>Have been updated and will be submitted to BCC HD for agreement. When BCC next review their TOR they will benchmark against other housing providers' terms of reference.</p>	
Communications strategy	<p>Review of the Roles and Responsibilities including backup support for officers and panel members re allocation of work if</p>	

	<p>required. Also a succession strategy for the panel members.</p> <p>Communication strategy will be reviewed on a regular basis in conjunction with the Communications Officer and the Training Officer.</p> <p><i>Communications strategy</i> Several areas for improvement were identified including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Group Working</li> <li>• Improved relationships with BCC</li> <li>• Promotion of the Panel to the wider BCC council tenants and leaseholders</li> <li>• Bi-annual newsletters</li> <li>• Update Website</li> <li>• Address and postal improvements</li> <li>• Better use of technology including emails, text, Twitter and Skype</li> </ul>	

This completes the Self-Assessment review of the Housing Scrutiny Panel.

For further information please contact:

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