Bristol City Council Housing & Landlord Services
Housing Scrutiny Panel
Terms of Reference

Abbreviations:

BCC	**Bristol City Council**
HSP	**Housing Scrutiny Panel**
H&LS	**Housing and Landlord Services**
RCP	**Resident and Community Panel**

Role of the Scrutiny Panel

To take an independent and objective view of Bristol City Council Housing and Landlord Services (BCC H&LS). The Housing Scrutiny Panel (HSP) will consider all areas of service performance against agreed local and national standards, make comments and sometimes will investigate and make evidence-based recommendations, for ongoing service improvement. The panel supports a collaborative way of working and operates within the spirit of BCC Tenant Involvement policies.

Aim

To operate in the interests of BCC tenants and leaseholders to review, assess and challenge ensuring that BCC H&LS provides tenant-centred Housing and Landlord Services of the highest standard.

Objectives

- Give an independent and objective view of Housing and Landlord Services provided by BCC.

- To establish priorities for reviewing BCC H&LS performance and to undertake and oversee tenant led scrutiny activities including scrutiny bootcamps.

- Make evidence-based recommendations arising from reviews to H&LS Senior Leadership Team with copies provided to Resident and Community Panel (RCP).

- Make recommendations from scrutiny bootcamps and task & finish scrutiny to the project lead or head of service.

Review resident satisfaction data, including Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and transactional satisfaction data performance data to identify areas requiring further scrutiny.

- To form an integral part of the overall governance of BCC H&LS through effective links with the RCP, including appointing members to other bodies as requested and as appropriate.

The purpose of the HSP is to fulfil the aims and objectives set out above.

1. What we are

1.1 Membership

i. A maximum of 12 places will be available for membership.

ii. Normal term of office will be 3 years; however, the Panel aims to achieve a balance of retaining skills and experiences for consistency whilst encouraging new membership. Members who step down at the end of their term of office may be re-selected but will be considered after any other suitable applicants at that time if there are more applicants than places.

iii. New applicants will be given an application pack with which to apply for a place. Successful applicants will be selected from those considered to best meet the role profile following informal discussions with the selection panel.

iv. In the event of the need to more applicants than places, 3 members (volunteers or drawn by lots) will be asked to step down after the initial 3 years. They may reapply the following year or if a place otherwise becomes available.

v. The HSP may co-opt members with specific skills considered appropriate to assist the Panel in its duties. These co-options will normally be for renewable terms of 12 months

vi. A panel member, who fails to attend three consecutive meetings and fails to provide any apologies, will forfeit their

membership of the panel. Planned absence, agreed with the panel, will not be subject to forfeiture of membership.

1.2 Quorum

i. A quorum will be 50% of current number of members plus 1 e.g. if membership is 9, a quorum will be 5.
ii. Inquorate meetings should be noted, and recommendations ratified at the next quorate meeting.

1.3 Chairing meetings

i. The HSP will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair or two Co-Chairs by unanimous vote or ballot. Any HSP member, willing to undertake relevant training, may put their name forward.
ii. Terms of office for Chair and Vice-Chair will normally be 2 years. The Chair and Vice- Chair or Co-Chairs may stand for re-election at the end of their term of office but will be considered alongside other suitably trained HSP members wishing to be considered for office.
iii. Maximum number of terms of office for either Chair or Vice-Chair or Co-Chairs will be subject to agreement by the panel.
iv. The Vice-Chair will deputise for the Chair in their absence. When Co-chairs are appointed one of them will chair each meeting.
v. The Chair or Co-Chairs will liaise with officers and relevant others as necessary to plan for forthcoming meetings.

1.4 Frequency of Housing Scrutiny Panel meetings / subgroups

i. The HSP will normally meet monthly then meet as required with a minimum of four quarterly meetings per year.
ii. To meet the demands of projects and reviews the frequency of meetings may be increased. Scrutiny bootcamps and training sessions may be required in addition to regular scheduled meetings.
iii. The HSP may establish Task and Finish Groups to undertake specific activities, which may include all Panel members. t Task and Finish Groups may include members of groups that are part of the formal BCC engagement structure or external groups such as Tenant/Resident Associations and other community groups.

Where a task and finish group does not comprise of the full panel, the group must report to the full panel at an agreed frequency.

1.5 Recruitment and succession

i. The HSP will be responsible for succession planning and ongoing recruitment of new members with support of the Resident Engagement Team.
ii. The HSP will also assume responsibility for any appeals from unsuccessful applicants regarding the recruitment process. Such appeals will be heard by members not directly involved in the recruitment process.
iii. Recruitment and selection will be carried out in accordance with BCC Resident Engagement policies.

2. How we are supported

2.1 Administrative support

i. HSP will undertake it's own administration, including the minuting of meetings, in liaison with a Resident Engagement Officer. The HSP will undertake necessary training to enable them to take greater responsibility for administration to further enhance their independence.

2.2 Resources

i. Accessibility needs will be met to support full participation. BCC H&LS will provide administrative support, training, meeting resources and a dedicated officer to support the Panel's work and development.
ii. Members will be offered payment for involvement and reasonable travel and carers expenses where applicable.

2.3 Training

i. All new members will be provided with a handbook of key documents. This will be in accessible formats as required. New members will undertake an induction programme and initial training facilitated by the Resident Engagement Officer(s).
ii. Capacity building requirements will be assessed annually by the Resident Engagement Officer after the work plan for the year has been developed. The Resident Engagement Officer

will develop a training programme. They will deliver the programme once it has been agreed with the Panel.

2.4 Ongoing Support

i. BCC H&LS's will provide staff time to support the Panel and it's work.

ii. Requests to fund the fixed term provision of an independent Mentor to provide specific advice and support to the HSP, will be considered by BCC H &LS's.

iii. BCC H&LS's will support panel members to attend suitable ongoing learning and development events including and to engagement with other relevant organisations.

3. What we do

3.1 Relationships with other Resident Engagement groups

i. The HSP with the support of Housing and Landlord Services will develop communication channels to support and enable links with Resident Engagement groups. This includes both internal groups and external groups and the panels of other landlords.

ii. The HSP will refer to a wide range of formal and informal sources of information to inform its work programme and priorities. One formal route for tenants and leaseholders is to bring matters to the attention of the HSP through established protocols. The HSP will consider if an existing programme of work should be revised to take account of any such tenant trigger.

3.2 Programme of work

~~i.~~ The HSP will develop a rolling programme, of scrutiny work, usually looking at least 3 months ahead, with support from the Resident Engagement Officer

ii. The priority areas for review will be decided using feedback from all available sources of information, including:

a. Performance Indicators including Tenant Satisfaction and Transactional data

b. Reports from Service Review Groups, Focus Groups,

and Service-specific Working Groups

c. Communication with Tenant / Leaseholders Associations
d. Communication with Local Panels /Groups and Community Forums
e. Satisfaction Surveys
f. Complaints analysis reports
g. Annual HSP self-assessment
h. Annual reports

3.3 Access to information

i. The HSP will be enabled to request reports and information from BCC to carry out its scrutiny activities. Where appropriate information is not readily available, the HSP may request information reports (appropriate in scale and content to the scrutiny being undertaken and subject to available budget) and/or invite officers or managers to meet with the HSP to provide evidence.

ii. All requests for information and evidence must be made via the Resident Engagement Officer, in accordance with the agreed Access to Information protocol.

4. Accountability and evaluation

4.1 Accountability to tenants and leaseholders

i. The HSP will ensure that reports and recommendations they make focus on improving BCC H&LS performance and services to tenants and leaseholders. These will be made widely available to tenants and leaseholders via the HSP page on the BCC website. The panel will also provide an annual report on their activities and outcomes on the webpage.

ii. The HSP promotes equality in its recruitment, training, and activities.

iii. HSP members will be willing to respond to requests to speak to tenant/leaseholder groups

4.2 Submission of HSP Reports and Concerns.

i. Reports of the HSP including its findings, recommendations and

any concerns relating to the performance of H&LS will be submitted to the H&LS senior leadership team and copied to the Resident and Community Panel (RCP). The HSP will usually request a formal response to its recommendations.

ii. H&LS senior leadership team will provide an initial response to the HSP within 14 days from the date of submission and will advise when a full response that includes agreement of an action plan to bring about improvements will be available

Iii. Where the HSP is dissatisfied with the initial response to its recommendations or concerns, it will set out its concerns in writing to the H&LS Senior Leadership Team. The following process will then be used:

1. H&LS Services Senior Leadership Team will consider the concerns raised and arrange for appropriate senior managers, including the relevant service lead, to meet with the HSP at a mutually convenient date within 21 days to discuss the issues and provide a further response.
2. If the matter remains unresolved the HSP and representatives from H&LS senior leadership team will work together to seek independent advice or guidance, for example from another tenant scrutiny organisation.
3. Where significant concerns remain unresolved following this process, the HSP may request that the matter is brought to the attention of the relevant Council committee or governance body for consideration.
4. If the HSP remains dissatisfied it may refer its concerns to the Regulator for Social Housing

4.3 Concerns regarding HSP compliance with these Terms of Reference

Where H&LS has concerns about the HSP's compliance with these Terms of Reference, representatives of H&LS will meet with the HSP at its next scheduled meeting, subject to at least 14 days' notice being given. The aim will be to agree any actions needed to ensure the HSP is meeting the requirements set out in these Terms of Reference.

4.4 Relationships with Other Groups

i. Relationship with the Resident and Community Panel.

The Housing Scrutiny Panel (HSP) and Resident and Community Panel (RCP) have distinct but complementary roles. The RCP provides resident oversight, influence and assurance on housing services, while the HSP undertakes detailed scrutiny and review of service performance and outcomes.
The Housing Scrutiny Panel will maintain a collaborative relationship with the Resident and Community Panel to ensure alignment and avoid duplication.

- Key issues, recommendations for scrutiny may be referred to the from the RCP to the HSP for deeper investigation or review.
- The RCP Chair/Co-Chair or nominated representative may attend HSP meetings and vice-versa to share insights and updates.
- The HSP will share scrutiny reports with the RCP for oversight 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.

4.5 Evaluation of Scrutiny Panel activities.

The work of the HSP will be subject to a monitoring and evaluation programme once every three years. This will include a self-assessment exercise and if necessary, the support of an independent assessor. Outcomes of the evaluations will be reported to tenants and leaseholders and to the senior leadership and the RCP

5. Reviewing the Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference were reviewed and approved by the Housing Scrutiny Panel on 14 July 2026 and will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant and effective.