



Local Housing Forum

Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose

1.1 To enable all Bristol City Council tenants, within a defined locality to come together to raise area based issues with their landlord Bristol City Council.

1.2 To encourage wider tenant participation to take place.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

2.1 To promote positive and effective tenant participation.

2.2 To provide an opportunity for tenants to comment on the Environmental Improvement Programme and work with officers, in partnership to develop ideas.

2.3 To establish and maintain links with the Housing Scrutiny Panel and Service User Groups.

2.4 To act as a sounding board and area based test of opinion as and when required.

2.5 To assess the impact of tenant involvement on Homes and Landlord Services.

2.6 To act as a link between Bristol City Council tenants, CIL 106 committees and other community agencies and activities.

2.7 To provide an opportunity for tenants to have a local voice on the Housing Management Board which will feed into citywide and strategic issues affecting Bristol City Council tenants.

2.8 To support tenants in developing their skills and confidence which will ensure tenant involvement is effective, with the aim of influencing wider positive outcomes for tenants.

3.0 Terms of Reference

- 3.1 The Forums are part of the participation structure within Bristol City Council, which includes the Housing Management Board, Housing Scrutiny Panel, Service User Group and Involvement Register.
 - 3.2 The Forum will abide by the rules relating to tenant participation activities, and in particular, the Code of Conduct; the Equal Opportunities Policy and Expenses Policy.
 - 3.3 The Forum will nominate a representative to sit on the Housing Management Board, so the forum can feed into citywide and strategic issues affecting BCC tenants.
 - 3.4 The forums will develop a local approach to further tenant involvement by:
 - a) Producing an annual forward meeting calendar.
 - b) Promoting and publicising the work of the Forum, using innovative means, including digital engagement.
- In addition, in order to advance its aims the Forum will;
- 3.5 Actively oppose all forms of discrimination and respect all views and opinions supporting these aims.
 - 3.6 Support the Housing Scrutiny Panel and Service User Groups in testing opinion and the function of the services provided, by holding events, themed meetings, mystery shopping, drop in sessions and other activities as appropriate.
 - 3.7 Track the progress of issues raised, gathered, prioritised and signposted, ensuring feedback takes place.
 - 3.8 Consider the training needs of Forum members.
 - 3.9 Arrange presentations from individuals, or organisations to better understand relevant issues.
 - 3.10 Liaise with other groups to actively encourage and support community based solutions to local issues e.g. low level ASB.

4.0 Membership

- 4.1 The Forum is open to Bristol City Council tenants and members of their households, within a defined area.

- 4.2 Anyone attending a Forum will agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for meetings.
- 4.3 Any individual who breaches the Code of Conduct may be excluded from the Forum.
- 4.4 Councillors whose wards fall within the defined area can attend as co-opted members of the Forum; however they are not voting members.
- 4.5 Bristol City Council Leaseholders are welcome as co-opted members of the Forum; however they are not voting members.

5.0 Nominating a representative to the Housing Management Board (HMB)

- 5.1 Normally the Forum will appoint a new representative to the Housing Management Board at the beginning of a municipal year (April) with the exception of the first year, which will commence during the year.
- 5.2 Representatives will be expected to act as the link between the Forum and the board and report back with information about what is happening at a citywide level, as set out in the role description.
- 5.3 The normal term of office on the Housing Management Board will be for 1 year with the exception of the first year.
- 5.4 Any BCC tenant willing to commit to the role (with the exceptions listed at 5.5) and undertake any training as necessary may put their names forward.
- 5.5 The following will not be eligible for nomination to the HMB:
- Leaseholders who have a separate nomination process to the board.
 - Tenants who are employees of Bristol City Council Homes and Landlord Services
 - Any tenant who is the subject of a current notice or Court Order in respect of rent arrears or anti-social behaviour.
- 5.6 If there is more than one nominee selection will be made by ballot at a Forum meeting. Meetings will be publicised in advance. Any individual who is interested but unable to attend the meeting may submit an expression of interest for consideration by the Forum in their absence.

5.7A representative may put their name forward again for nomination at the end of their term of office on the HMB, but will be considered alongside other interested individuals wishing to volunteer for the role.

5.8If a HMB representative steps down for any reason, the Forum may appoint a replacement until the end of the term of office using the procedure as set out in this document.

6.0 Administration and Support

6.1The Forum will be supported by dedicated admin support to arrange meetings, book venues, pay expenses, take minutes, distribute notes/action points in accordance with the signposting agreed and help with publicity and training and other tasks necessary to the running of the Forum.

6.2It will be up to each Forum to decide how it wishes to manage its business. However it is suggested that a member of the group be appointed to act as chair. This could be by rotation, by nomination and/ or for a fixed term.

6.3Members may hold more than one role where practical. However where there is more than one individual wishing to volunteer for a role it is suggested that priority be given to someone who does not already hold a position.

6.4The Forum also needs to appoint a member of the group to act as its 'Digital champion', who can support the Forum to reach out to a wider audience and help promote the work of the Forum through digital engagement. This could also be by rotation, by nomination and/ or for a fixed term.

6.5Members will be supported in their personal development if they require training in appropriate skills, particularly in terms of the skills required to be a "Digital Champion" for each area.

6.6Anyone who is representing their area at the Housing Management Board will be supported by Bristol City Council with the relevant technology, training and help with costs of accessing the internet.

6.7The Forum can apply to Tenant Participation for funding for relevant activities. This will be subject to Terms and Conditions/ annual budget availability and administered by the Tenant Participation Team.

7.0 Functions

- 7.1 Forums will be held 4 times a year in the local neighbourhoods and will always take place at least a week before the Housing Management Board.
- 7.2 Dates of meetings of the Forum will be planned for the year ahead. The dates of the Forums will be published on the BCC website in the Tenant Participation Section, Housing Services Facebook pages and Housing News Magazine.
- 7.3 Meetings should be held at a time and place that encourages attendance and consideration should also be given to other means of involvement that allow the widest contributions on particular issues.
- 7.4 Forums will liaise with other groups and agencies establishing links in order to ensure effective communication with their area communities.
- 7.5 The minutes from Forum meetings will be made available through the BCC website in the Tenant Participation Section and from the Tenant Participation Team.

8.0 Reviewing these Terms of Reference (TOR)

- 8.1 Tenant Involvement has supported the drafting of these TOR. We will review these TOR annually with our involved tenant panels.

Approval: 2018

Date for next review: 2019

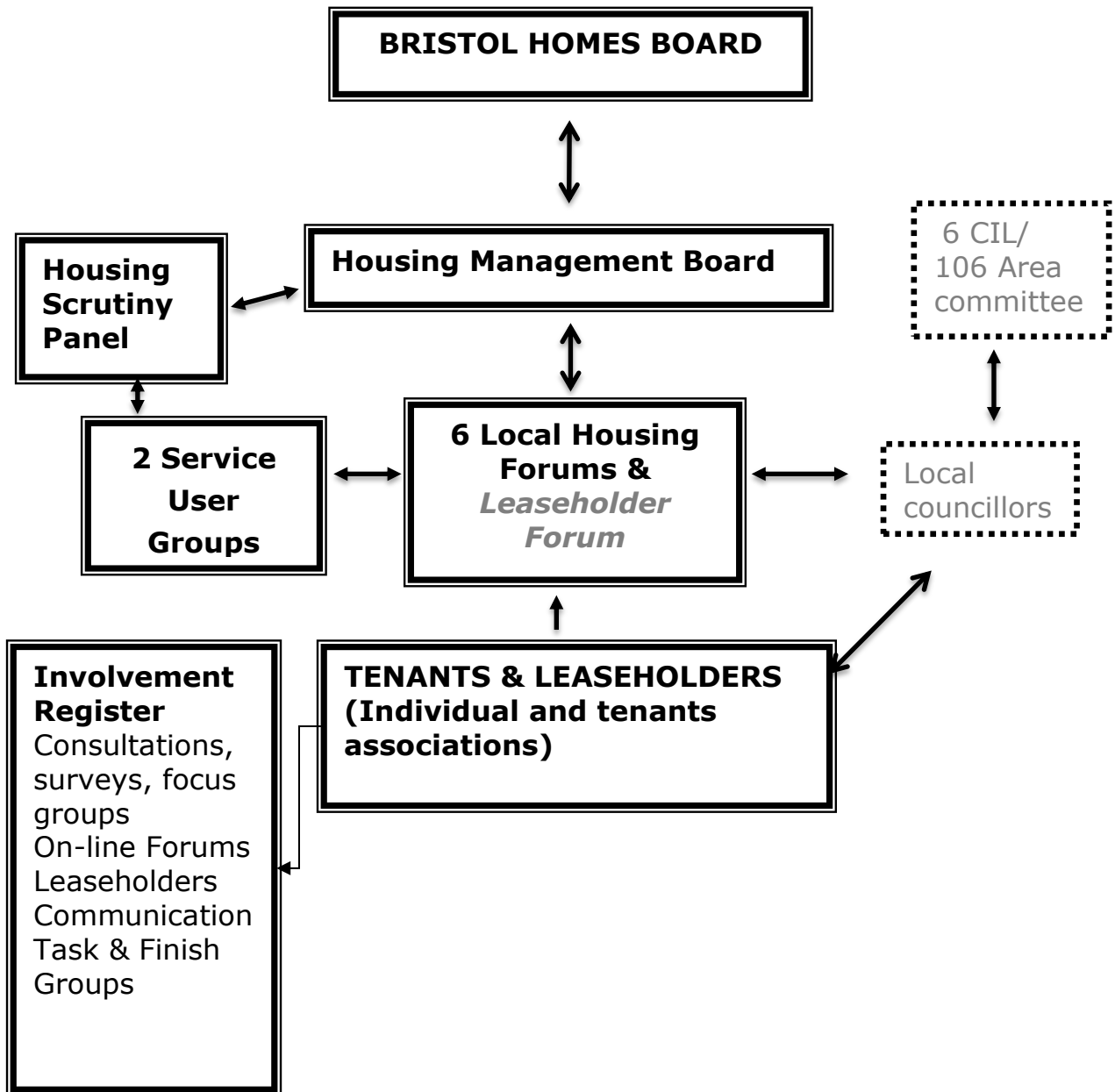
Appendices

A	Glossary of Terms
B	Formal Tenant Participation Structure
C	Role description – HMB Representative
D	Code of Conduct
E	Expenses policy Statement
F	Equal Opportunities Policy

Glossary of Terms	
Anti-social behaviour (ASB)	Acting in a way that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress.
Attendees	A person who attends a meeting or event etc.
Ballot	To vote or decide by ballot
Breaches	An act of breaking or failing to observe a law, agreement, or code of conduct.
Business plan	A written document that describes in detail how a business, is going to achieve its goals. It lays out a written plan from a marketing, financial and operational viewpoint.
Code of conduct	An agreement on rules of behavior for the members of a group or organisation.
Chair	The chairperson of a meeting ensures that participants are following the rules of the meeting. They may also have a casting vote.
Community Infrastructure Levy 106 (CIL 106)	CIL a planning charge (planning act 20018) for local authorities within England and Wales to support development within their area. Section 106 is part of planning legislation and enables local authorities to request developers to set aside money to put towards community development.
Confidentiality	The principle of keeping secure, secret or private.
Council tenant	Someone who lives within a property which is owned by their local council.
Court order	A direction issued by a court or a judge requiring a person to do or not do something.
Digital champion (Forum)	A person who is good at using the internet and is happy to use their skills to show others and to be the main person to promote the forum.
Digital engagement	Using the internet to promote, or make contact with someone.

Environmental improvement programme	Programme managed by Estate Services which can help make improvements in the local areas.
Estate services	The landlord service that manages properties and garages collects rent, provide support to older people and provide caretaking services.
Housing management board (HMB)	A forum where nominated tenants and leaseholder meet senior housing managers and councillors to discuss and influence the development and management of council housing services.
Housing scrutiny panel (HSP)	A panel made up of council tenants and leaseholders who review and influence services that relate to the management of council homes.
Leaseholder	Tenants who live in flats and buy them from their landlord are called leaseholders. The leaseholder does not own the land their home is built on, and pays a ground rent/ service charges for a fixed number of years.
Municipal year	A period used by local government in the United Kingdom and usually follows any local elections.
Nominate	To propose or formally enter as a candidate for election
Policies	Policies define the way in which an organisation conducts its affairs and sets standards of behaviour.
Strategies	Strategies set out the methods by which the organisation will try to meet its medium and long term objectives.
Tenant participation	A two way process involving sharing of information and ideas, where tenants are able to influence decisions and take part in what is happening.
Terms of reference	A description of the objectives and structure of a meeting, committee or project.

Tenant Participation Structure 2018





Role Description - Tenant / Leaseholder Board Member

Housing Management Board (HMB)

The Housing Management Board is a forum where tenants and leaseholders meet senior housing managers and councillors to discuss and influence the development and management of Bristol City Council's (BCC) housing services.

The role of the board

Overview:

- Review the business plan for council housing (known as the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan).
- Review budgets on an annual basis.
- Review draft reports on key decisions taken by the cabinet or council on a wide range of housing issues (not confined to the management of council housing).
- Consult and advise the Director for Homes & Landlord Services on changes to policies, procedures and practices, as well as significant changes and development proposals.
- Annually review performance statistics.
- Promote tenant involvement, ensuring there are opportunities for tenants to influence decisions and services.

Board Membership

The Board consists of councillors (including the Executive Member and a representative of each of the other main parties) 6 tenant board members and 1 leaseholder board member.

The Director for Homes and Landlord Services and other staff, as appropriate, attend and advise the HMB.

The role and duties of tenant and leasehold board members

- To act as the link between the Local Housing Forum or *Leaseholders Forum* and the board, ensuring views are brought to the board and reporting back with information about what is happening at a citywide level.

- To work in partnership with senior managers and councillors.
- To influence proposals and decisions to improve services for tenants.
- To champion tenant and leaseholder viewpoints and rights.
- Attend quarterly board meetings, pre-meetings and training sessions as required.
- Act as Ambassadors for the Board, attending local and national events as appropriate.
- Read any relevant paperwork prior to attending meetings.
- Abide by the Code of Conduct, Confidentiality Policy, Equalities and other policies contained within the HMB Terms of Reference.

Term of office

- The normal term of office on the Housing Management Board will be for 4 years.

Time commitment

Tasks	Approximate Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read all relevant papers prior to attending meetings 	1 hour prior to each meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend HMB meetings 	Quarterly meeting 2 hours Pre-meeting (if required) 1 hour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend training or events 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in an annual review/appraisal as required. 	Annually 1 -2 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend and report back to Local Housing Forum meetings 	Quarterly 2 hours

Support for tenant / leaseholder board members

Training and information will be provided to tenant /leaseholder board members as required to support them to carry out their role.

Tenant and Leaseholder board members can claim travel expenses, reasonable carer's costs and other out of pocket expenses in accordance with the Tenant Participation Expenses policy.

The appropriate technology, training and help with the costs of accessing the internet will be paid for and provided for by the Council.

Local Housing Forum – Code of Conduct

Anyone attending a Forum will agree to abide by these rules during any meeting or activity connected to the Forum for e.g. visits, training or events.

1. The Forum will make visitors and observers feel welcome and will encourage new membership.
2. Attendees will show civility and courtesy to each other at all times. All tenants and leaseholders are entitled to be heard with respect.
3. All attendees will wait for the chairperson's permission to speak. It is not acceptable to talk when someone else is speaking unless there is an open forum.
4. All attendees have the basic right to express an opinion without fear or favour and each person's opinion is of equal importance.
5. Aggressive, abusive or discriminatory behaviour, shouting or bad language are not acceptable.
6. Decisions are made through discussion and by way of a majority vote. The chair remains impartial. In the event of a tie the chair has the casting vote.
7. Individual problems are not a matter for the Forum unless they are used as an example to demonstrate a common issue.
8. Attendees must not speak, write or act on behalf of the Forum without its prior agreement.
9. Attendees are asked to respect confidentiality. Any Personal information about any individual should automatically be treated as confidential.

Dealing with complaints and disputes

Any breaches of the code should be brought to the attention of the chair and or council staff in attendance.

Breaches can usually be managed within the meeting by the members or, where appropriate, the chair and/or council staff. If an issue escalates to one of a serious nature then the Tenant Participation code of conduct rules may apply as set out in the Tenant Participation Partnership Agreement.

The chair / council staff in attendance reserve the right to ask any individual to leave the meeting in the event of a serious breach.

Following the meeting tenant chairs and any complainants will be supported by Tenant Participation to implement the code of conduct procedures and equalities policy.

Individuals can be written to following a breach of the code of conduct and may be:

- Asked to apologise in writing to the Forum
- Asked to attend appropriate training provided by Tenant Participation
- Asked, if the breach is an equality issue, to attend equalities training or seek mediation from the Equalities Team if the issue is more complex.

If issues are of a serious nature and/or involve Council staff the council's corporate policies will apply. Serious or persistent failure to comply with the code of conduct could result in removal or suspension from the Forum, or result in a ban from tenant involvement activities. Individuals subject to code of conduct procedures have a right to be heard by the Tenant Participation Team, as part of any investigation.

Adapted from the Model Code of Conduct (Bristol City Council, Tenant Participation Partnership Agreement July 2012 - Page 19 16.1)

TENANTS' EXPENSES POLICY

Travel expenses

Generally, tenants are expected to use public transport or their own cars to attend meetings. If a person is disabled or the journey would be difficult to make by public transport (i.e. due to connections, timing or personal safety) a taxi fare will be reimbursed subject to prior agreement with the Tenant Participation Team. All claimants are expected to complete a claim form and to produce receipts where appropriate. For tenants using their cars mileage is paid at 42p per mile, motorcycles 24p per mile, bicycle mileage is paid at 20p per mile.

Carer's expenses

If a tenant needs to pay a carer while at a meeting or on a training course, expenses of up to £7.38 per hour will be paid (for a maximum of 6 hours) subject to prior agreement with the Tenant Participation Team. Expenses will not be paid for care provided by household members. A receipt /note from the carer must be attached to the claim form.

Making a claim

A claim form, showing details of meetings or training attended, together with receipts, should be completed and authorised by a member of Bristol City Council Staff.

Only in exceptional circumstances may it be possible to pay expenses without receipts.

Claim forms can be obtained from the Forum Administrator at the meeting you are attending or from the Tenant Participation Team.

If you are unsure about what can be claimed, please contact the Tenant Participation Team email tpu@bristol.gov.uk or Tel: 0117 3521444.

(Adapted from BCC Tenant Participation Partnership Agreement 2012)

Equalities Policy Statement

Equality of opportunity is essential in creating a fairer society where everyone has the same chance to fulfil his or her potential. To participate fully in the economic and social life of the community and have access to the services they need.

Under the Equality Act 2010 the Bristol City Council has a legal duty to ensure equality and diversity is embedded in all functions and processes of the Council. This duty extends to those who work on our behalf to provide services to the public, including the partners in tenant involvement and empowerment (i.e. staff, contractors and tenants).

The Equality Act states: 'No-one should be treated less favourably on the basis of their sex, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race, religion/belief, disability, marital status, sexuality, age, marriage/civil partnership or pregnancy/maternity'. These are known as "Protected Characteristics".

We want to be able to reach as many people within the community as possible. We want people from different backgrounds and with different experiences to be part of our activities.

We expect everyone who works for us or with us to share and support us in ensuring that we;

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote good relations between people

In short, we encourage and promote tenant involvement to all current and future Bristol City Council tenants regardless of background to participate in and/or comment on the management of their homes. A copy of Bristol City Councils full Equality and Community Cohesion Policy can be found at www.bristol.gov.uk/people-communities/equalities-policy

(Adapted from BCC Tenant Participation Partnership Agreement July 2012 Pages 16 & 17)

Contact us

To find out more, please get in touch with the Tenant Participation Team

Contact: Tenant Participation

Tel: 0117 352 1444

Email: tpu@bristol.gov.uk

Web: www.bristol.gov.uk/councilhousing

Facebook: www.facebook.com/bristolcouncilhousing