



Housing Scrutiny Panel Annual Report 2022/2023

Foreword by the chair of the panel Peter Edwards

It has been a promising year; we have embraced new technology and are taking zoom meetings in our stride now. Since Covid 19 we have had to change the way we scrutinise and continue to modernise our approach.

We've also carried out recruitment and as a result, three new members have been formally welcomed onto the Panel during the year and we look forward to working with them.

We have also seen changes for social housing landlords and residents over the last year with the progression of the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill and Social Housing White Paper. These give a greater emphasis on the voice of residents and the panel will be following how this will progress.

Content

This report summaries the main activities and projects the panel have undertaken from April 2022 - March 2023.

Meetings

The panel have transitioned meetings online and meet regularly on the first Tuesday of every month.

We have:

- Held 12 monthly Business meetings
- Attended 4 Training events
- Organised 1 Networking event
- Panel recruitment sessions and interviews
- Attended national Scrutiny Panel meetings
- Attended Arch meetings
- Supported Housing Forums, Service User Groups
- Attended Housing Management Board



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- Acted as the 'Tenant Reference Group' for the review of Tenant Participation and representatives were invited to attend and speak to Bristol City Council Scrutiny Committee.

Projects and activities

The panel has been involved with several task and finish activities and other projects throughout the year, including.

- **Looked at best practice in Engagement and Scrutiny** – The panel hosted a conversation and were joined by representatives from the Bedford and Oxford Housing Association partnership.
- **Acting as a reference group for the review of resident involvement** - contributed to consultation earlier in 2022 with tenants citywide and desk top review carried out with TPaS. Working with the Tenant Participation Team, helping to shape the next steps for the project. This is an ongoing project that the panel will be following closely and involved with during 2023/2024.
- **New bathroom programme** - Provided feedback on how to go about engaging with residents in shaping the programme. Requested periodic updates from the project to find out how the service has engaged, and progress made.
- **Received briefings from Housing and Landlord Services Policy and Practise Team** – about upcoming workplans and policy reviews impacting services and processes for tenants. Discussed how the panel can work with the Team to ensure timely involvement of tenants and leaseholders in shaping policy.
- **Engaged with the Housing Allocations review and consultation survey** – made recommendations around communication with tenants, including that this should be free of jargon and easy to read and accessible to all communities.
- **Provided feedback on proposals for a new Garden Policy - aiming to** standardise policies around the use of community gardens and **ASB policy** – looking at how tenants currently report issues. Panel members shared experiences and discussed potential impact of policies for tenants and leaseholders.



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- **Tenancy Changes policy** - Acted as a sounding board, raised questions and provided comment on proposals.
- **Annual Report to Tenants** - Reviewed the report that provides tenants with an overview of how the council is performing as a landlord and looked at potential areas for tenant scrutiny.
- **Repairs and Maintenance Service** – Met with the new Head of Service and received an update on the service, upcoming priorities, and regulatory changes around building and fire safety. The panel highlighted issues around communal heating in community room, which resulted in this being checked citywide. Also raised concerns regarding waiting times for ringing the call centre and reporting repairs which is being taken up.
- **Social Housing Regulations** – The panel has joined national conversations to network with tenants and keep up to date on changes.
- **Requested an update from the Support to Older People Team** – On projects and improvements made since the panel last received an update.

Training

During the year the panel undertook specialist training with staff organised through the Tenant Participation Team. This was a two-part course on 'Understanding Performance Data' conducted by Mal Harrison of TPaS.

The panel also undertook scrutiny refresher training provided by the Tenant Participation Team and individual support to engage online.

Recruitment

The panel were supported by the Tenant Participation Team to promote opportunities for tenants and leaseholders. This was promoted citywide in the Annual Report sent to all Tenants, via social media and to involved tenants and leaseholders.

Interested tenants and leaseholders were invited to meet the panel and observe meetings before applying.



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As a result, three new members have been formally welcomed onto the Panel during the year.

Plans for 2023/2024

Creating a work plan to include:

- Reviewing and modernising our TOR to ensure its fit for purpose
- Involvement in the review of Tenant Participation and co-design of opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to get involved.
- Team building and training activities.
- Following the progression of the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill and Social Housing White Paper.
- Supporting the development of landlord services for residents, providing input into consultations and policy design.