

## **Tenant Scrutiny Panel Code of Conduct**

### **1. General**

- 1.1 Panel members agree to work constructively with staff, Councillors and other tenants and leaseholders of Cannock Chase Council to seek to improve services. This does not prevent the Panel or Panel members being critical of a service or services as part of their work.
- 1.2 The aims of the Panel are set out in the Terms of Reference. All Panel members will make sure that they know and understand the Terms of Reference and that they take these into account when carrying out their work.
- 1.3 Members will not use the Panel or its meetings to pursue individual complaints or queries.

### **2. Confidentiality**

- 2.1 Members will treat information they receive or which is provided by Cannock Chase Council to assist in any service review as confidential.
- 2.2 The business of the Panel may involve members in dealing with issues which may be sensitive and/or controversial. Members must exercise discretion and care in carrying out their role as Panel members.
- 2.3 Publicity about the work of the Panel will be agreed with Cannock Chase Council. Members of the Panel will not deal directly with the press or other media to discuss the work of the Panel or its recommendations.

### **3. Respect and Discrimination**

- 3.1 All members will treat fellow Panel members, other tenants, staff and Councillors with dignity and respect, regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 3.2 No member will discriminate on any grounds against any other member of the Panel, other tenants, staff or Councillors. Members will not use discriminatory or offensive language in any of the Panel's discussions.

#### **4. Declaring Interests and Conflicts of Interest**

- 4.1 Panel members will disclose any interest whether personal or on behalf of any group they represent or belong to where this may affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion.
- 4.2 Members will not use their position to obtain any financial gain, preferential treatment or other advantage from Cannock Chase Council.
- 4.3 Individual members may be affiliated to/or be members of a political party but they may not represent a political party in their role as a member of the Panel.

#### **5. Conduct (including behaviour at meetings)**

- 5.1 All members will:
  - i) Show respect and be courteous to each other and support and assist other members in seeking the best possible solution to problems being discussed;
  - ii) Allow each other the opportunity to speak and comment;
  - iii) Follow the guidance of the Chair in the conduct of the meetings;
  - iv) Raise questions during meetings through the Chair;
  - v) Follow the agenda at meetings and help each other reach effective decisions;
  - vi) Bear in mind the rights of individual tenants and the duties of staff when proposing solutions to problems;
  - vii) Only speak or write on behalf of the Panel with prior agreement of the Chair;
  - viii) Make available to all members any correspondence sent on its behalf;
  - viii) Only request reports, data and information in line with agreed protocol.
- 5.2 Any Panel member who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs/substances or who causes disruption during any Panel meeting will be asked to leave the meeting and may have their membership ended.

#### **6. Attendance and Performance**

- 6.1 Members of the Panel will make every effort to attend meetings; where they are unable to attend, they will send apologies in advance of the meeting.
- 6.2 Panel members will be expected to prepare for meetings and carry out tasks agreed with them.
- 6.3 Members who regularly miss Panel meetings and/or fail to carry out agreed tasks will have their membership reviewed at any time and may be removed from the Panel.

## **7. Breach of Code of Conduct**

- 7.1 If a member of the Panel does not abide by the Code of Conduct and/or persistently behaves improperly or offensively, or obstructs the conduct of business, the Chair has the right to ask that they leave the meeting. If the breach is deemed serious, their membership may be ended.
- 7.2 If a member of the Panel feels that the Chair has breached the Code of Conduct, they may ask the Panel to vote on whether the Chair should be asked to leave the meeting. If the majority of the membership is dissatisfied with the performance of the Chair they may vote to remove the member from that role or to end their Panel membership.
- 7.3 I agree to abide by the Code of Conduct and know that failure to do so can result in me being removed from the Panel.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Tenant Scrutiny Panel - Terms of Reference**

### **Aim**

To improve the services provided by Cannock Chase Council's Housing department.

### **Objectives**

- To operate through service reviews;
- To engage with tenants, leaseholders and staff;
- To support value for money;
- To scrutinise performance; and
- To recommend improvements.

### **Membership**

To be open to all tenants and leaseholders of Cannock Chase Council with the following exceptions:

- Councillors;
- Council housing employees;
- Residents with a history of Anti Social Behaviour, in serious dispute with the Council or in serious rent arrears.

No more than one person per household can join the Panel.

There will be a minimum of 4 members and a maximum of 8 members (although other residents may help with Service Reviews). There will be three-year terms of office, with the opportunity to renew twice.

### **Operation of the Panel**

The Panel will elect a Chair and Vice Chair annually.

Behaviour of Panel members is governed by the Code of Conduct.

### **Service Reviews**

1. The Panel will consider performance information and views from the Council before agreeing a topic for Service Review.
2. The Council will appoint a policy lead to work with the Panel on the Service Review.
3. The Panel will receive a presentation on the topics and then agree objectives, methods and questions for the review.
4. The Panel will then conduct the review.
5. The Panel will meet with the Policy Lead to bring together the information gathered, and identify findings and recommendations.
6. The Panel, supported by the Council, will prepare a report for submission including recommendations and evidence and discuss this with the Head of Housing and Partnerships.
7. The Panel will agree the report and submit the report to the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets and Housing Portfolio Leader.

8. The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets and Housing Portfolio Leader will consider the report and decide upon the recommendations, including sharing these with the Housing Board, Leadership Team and Cabinet if the Panel recommendations are outside their delegation.

## **Support for the Panel**

The Council will provide a support officer, or officers, to work with and support the Panel. This will include arranging meetings, transport, minutes and other arrangements. It will also include liaison with housing staff and outside agencies to support collation of information, interviews and visits. They will also act as an anchor for the Panel within the Council, providing insight and advice on the work of the Council.

The Council agrees to provide other staff support through agreeing a Policy Lead for all reviews and for the Panel to access housing staff and information.

The Council will arrange for induction and training for the Panel, including the role of the housing service, understanding performance information, confidentiality (including GDPR) and interviewing skills. The Council may arrange for attendance at Tenant Conferences and other training as agreed with the Panel. The Council and Panel may agree to bring in external support as necessary.

The Council will meet all reasonable expenses, including travel costs and childcare.

## **Disputes**

In the event of a dispute between the Council and Panel then the Chair of the Panel and Head of Housing and Corporate Assets shall discuss the issue and seek to resolve it.

## **Agreement of Terms of Reference**

The Housing Portfolio Holder shall agree the Terms of Reference and any future amendments.

## **Future Recruitment**

Recruitment will be an open process, with interested parties interviewed for suitability and added to a waiting list. New members will be added to the Panel at the start of the next review if space is available upon the Panel.