

The Tenant Oversight Panel Group (TOPG) is a formally constituted body within the Housing Service governance framework with a two-way reporting line to the Tenant Oversight Panel (TOP). TOP is also a tenant group and as its name suggests, has oversight of the work and activity carried out by the scrutiny review group and all other involved resident groups. The work and findings of the scrutiny review group will be reported to TOP, who in turn will put forward scrutiny review group recommendations for service delivery improvements at Housing Oversight Board (HOB) meetings. In this way the scrutiny review group has a powerful and important part to play in making housing services better.

Role of Tenant Oversight Panel Group

Tenant Oversight Panel Group is made up of SDC tenants and leaseholders who check how the council's housing services are delivered. It plays an important role in advising TOP on any evidence-based recommendations for improvements to services. TOP will in turn have a responsibility to use this information when attending HOB. In this way, the Tenant Oversight Panel Group group's work will play a crucial part in the decisions made at HOB and the Housing Committee.

Main Responsibilities:

To fulfil its role Tenant Oversight Panel Group will carry out a program of service reviews using performance information from a range of sources including:

- Quarterly key performance indicators (KPI's)
- Annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) reports
- Quarterly customer feedback (compliments & comments log)
- Quarterly complaints reports
- Quarterly Housing Oversight Board (HOB) reports

The Tenant Oversight Panel Group will use this information to help identify areas of service it may wish to include in its program for further investigation. The main aim of any scrutiny exercise is to identify where SDC could make changes to a service area for the benefit of tenants and leaseholders or if there are areas of strength which could be replicated in other service areas.

However, recommendations for improvement to services will need to be considered within SDC corporate objectives.

Commissioning scrutiny programs

The commissioning of scrutiny programs will be complete service reviews based on areas of concern identified by the scrutiny review group through performance reports or customer experience.

Membership

Tenant Oversight Panel Group members will be drawn from SDC tenants, leaseholders and their families. This includes partners, spouses or family members of SDC tenants who live in one of our homes and are over 16 years of age.

Scrutiny review group members may not be a:

- Current employee of SDC
- Tenant with a current breach of tenancy
- Councillor

Avoiding conflicts of interest

Tenant Oversight Panel Group members need to be independent from any other resident involvement groups and committees within SDC and will adhere to the resident involvement Code of Conduct.

Support and resources for the Tenant Oversight Panel Group

SDC will ensure that the Tenant Oversight Panel Group is supported by a dedicated resident involvement officer and that resources are available to enable the group to work effectively.

The Head of Tenant Relationships is the designated sponsor for the scrutiny review group.

To enable the Tenant Oversight Panel Group to consider performance management information, an officer with the appropriate knowledge will attend meetings to present information in a way that highlights trends or issues that will help to inform the group in deciding which areas to scrutinise.

Budget resource

Additional meetings may be required during the service reviews although these may not need to involve all Tenant Oversight Panel Group members.

Attendance and quorum

It is important that members inform the officers in advance if they are unable to attend a meeting as a minimum number of members are required to make a meeting 'quorate' or valid.

A good guideline is to have at least half of the members present at a meeting to discuss business and take decisions. This means that while there are eight (or nine) members on the panel it is acceptable to proceed with four.

Payment of members

Tenant Oversight Panel Group members will be rewarded with an incentive payment for each meeting they attend and any out-of-pocket expenses (in

accordance with the

expenses policy). Individual members may opt out of the incentive payment scheme if they wish.

Meeting agenda and work program

The panel will have a standard monthly meeting agenda which comprises of:

- Latest available Performance report (KPI's, Complaints report, TSM results)
- Latest available Customer feedback report
- Service reviews – status of current review and / or review of previous recommendations (action plan)

SDC officers will provide administration for the meetings which includes minute taking, preparing and sending out papers.

Tenant Oversight Panel Group group members who wish to add any additional items to the agenda can do so through the Chair. The Chair will advise SDC of any additional items 7 working days before the group meets. This is to enable SDC to send out meeting papers to all group members one week before the meeting.

SDC is committed to providing secretariat type support and a meeting facility for Tenant Oversight Panel Group group meetings; other budget expenditure requirements will be identified each September ready for the start of the following financial year in April. This budget will include provision for learning and development requirements.

Recruitment/Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair

The Tenant Oversight Panel Group group will elect a Chair and Vice Chair on a biennial (two yearly) basis. The Chair can be elected from within the existing membership.

The Chair and Vice Chair will be responsible for:

- Chairing Tenant Oversight Panel Group meetings;
- Representing the Tenant Oversight Panel Group externally;
- Ensuring that Tenant Oversight Panel Group members have the opportunity to present service reviews reports to Councilors, senior staff members, TOP, HOB, members and tenant representatives on the Housing Committee;
- Being the key point of contact for senior staff;
- Ensure agreement with Tenant Oversight Panel Group members on the program of work;
- Making sure members are aware of and follow the scrutiny review group's terms of reference and code of conduct;
- Summarising key points and decisions at meetings;
- Agreeing the meeting agenda with the dedicated officer;

- Keeping order at meetings.

SDC will ensure that the chair and vice chair will receive training in chairing skills and ideally all scrutiny review group members.

Frequency & time of meetings

Tenant Oversight Panel Group meetings will be held monthly on an agreed date and time.

The time and frequency will be reviewed on an annual basis to make sure that this continues to be acceptable to the majority of members

The Tenant Oversight Panel Group will complete a minimum of one service review per year. A service review can be triggered through the group themselves identifying areas of concern through performance data but consideration will also be given to requests from TOP or HOB.

Service review timescales will be agreed in advance of the review starting. The Chair and Vice Chair will support SDC to ensure these timescales are met and reports are delivered to TOP and HOB on time.

Decision Making

Where Tenant Oversight Panel Group members need to make a decision, consensus should try to be achieved in the first instance. However, where this is proving difficult a vote will be used. Each scrutiny review group member, with the exception of SDC officers, is entitled to vote. The majority vote will be carried. Where there is a split decision, the Chair will make the final decision.

A minimum of 50% of the Panel is required for the meeting to go ahead and make decisions.

Tenant Oversight Panel Group links to other forms of tenant review

The work of the Tenant Oversight Panel Group will support and be supported by the work undertaken by other formal resident involvement structures within SDC (see diagram on page?). The scrutiny review group can commission work from other tenant bodies such as mystery shoppers and focus groups as part of their service reviews.

Power to request information

It is important that the scrutiny review group can access and request information in order for it to be effective in its role. However, it is equally important that scrutiny review group members understand their responsibilities and ensure that requests for information are limited to the service review work it is undertaking.

Interface with Corporate Management/Governance

Each service review will be accompanied by a report compiled by the scrutiny review group with the support of dedicated staff. Elected members of the Tenant Oversight Panel Group will present their service review report to members of TOP, the Strategic Head of Housing and Senior Managers. This will enable senior managers to provide a response to the scrutiny review group on the recommendations prior to submission to TOP/HOB.

The response to the recommendations will take into account constitutional, legal and regulatory requirements in determining how SDC deal with the recommendations.

Attendance at SDC

The Chair or in their absence the Vice Chair will have the option to submit or present a service review report to the Housing Committee. The HOB will formally respond to TOP and the Tenant Oversight Panel Group within two months of the report providing a timetable for actions and responses.

END OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT FOR CODE OF CONDUCT