

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES TENANT INVOLVEMENT AGREEMENT



This Tenant Involvement Agreement is the Council's recognition criteria for formal Panels and guidance to enable tenants and residents to be actively involved with the delivery of housing services.

The agreement is also part of the Council's commitment to offer as many opportunities of involvement in parallel to Redditch Borough Council's Tenant Involvement Strategy.

This agreement has been developed in consultation with Tenant representatives.

There are different ways in which tenants can become involved; however, in order to be formally recognised by Redditch Borough Council and to be involved in decision making that affects how Services are delivered Panels must have a constitution.

Constitution:

Panels must have a constitution that:

- Shows the Council it is accountable, representative, open and honest.
- Demonstrates inclusiveness through an equal opportunities statement that is regularly reviewed.
- Have clear aims and objectives to include making their local area a better place to live by working together.
- Has a code of conduct and clear and open procedures for election and suspension of members.
- Is not party-political.
- Identify the geographical area they are representing.
- States clearly how changes can be made to the constitution.

Agreement Standards

Meetings:

Panels must:

- Hold three general meetings a year as a minimum, one of which shall be an AGM.
- Have a quorum (the number of people who must attend meetings) of 4 - 6 tenants or residents.
- Any resident living in the area may join a group but have no voting rights on tenant related matters e.g., Capital improvement programme.
- Notify Tenant Involvement Officers of all meetings and invite area Officers to attend.

Committee:

Panels must:

- Have a committee that live in the area they represent and consists of as a minimum, Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. (If applying for grant funding).
- Have a committee that is elected at the AGM.
- Elect up to 2 of its members to join the Borough Tenants Forum.
- When a decision is required by vote each member present is entitled to one vote with decisions by simple majority. The chair has a casting vote.

Communication:

Panels must:

- Produce regular newsletters or other written communication for their members.
- Provide notice of meetings.
- Produce a brief, written annual report which is given to Redditch Borough Council.

Finance:

To be eligible for an annual running grant Panels must:

- Hold a bank account in the name of the Panel.
- Produce independently audited accounts every year or if a change of Treasurer occurs.
- Have a least 3 nominated signatories (to include the Treasurer) for the bank account (only 2 to sign at any time).
- Make the latest bank statements available at all committee meetings.
- Balance sheet to be made available at the AGM.

Performance Development Panel Agreement

The Performance Development Panel is responsible for monitoring and reviewing Tenant Involvement as well as housing performance.

The Panel will meet bi-monthly and agenda's will be set with the Chair and Tenant Involvement Officers.

Membership of the group will consist of the following:

- Chair (Tenant)
- Vice Chair
- 2 Co-opted Local Councillors
- A maximum of 2 members from each recognised Community Panel
- Tenant Involvement Officer (support – no voting rights)
- Volunteers from the database of interest or any involvement groups/panels to undertake Mystery Shopping.
- Representative from the Housing Services Wider Management Team (depending on the service area that is being monitored or reviewed).

Information discussed during these meetings will be fed back to the Borough Tenants Forum as a standard Agenda item and will be the responsibility of the Chair and Tenant Involvement Officer.

An AGM will be conducted annually where the Chair and Vice Chair will be elected and an annual action plan produced.

All members of the Forum must comply with the Tenant Involvement Agreement Standards and Code of Conduct.

An annual budget will be provided for this Panel and will be held by Tenant Involvement Officers.

Borough Tenants Forum Agreement

The Borough Tenants Forum is the umbrella group of Tenant Involvement and is representative of all groups and panels.

The Forum will meet bi-monthly and agenda's will be set with the Chair and Tenant Involvement Officers.

Membership of the group will consist of the following:

- Chair (Tenant)
- Vice Chair
- 2 Co-opted Local Councillors
- A maximum of 2 members from each recognised Community Panels
- Tenant Involvement Officer (support – no voting rights)

NB: Non-tenants can be part of the Forum; however, hold no voting rights on any housing related matter.

It is the responsibility of the Members of the Forum to feedback and consults with members within their local Community Panels.

An AGM will be conducted annually where the Chair and Vice Chair will be elected and an annual action plan produced.

The purpose of the Forum is to focus on strategic aims of involvement and to be consulted on council documents such as policies and procedures where key decisions will be reached. An annual action plan will be produced in line the Councils Forward Plan and Overview and Scrutiny Committee planned actions.

All members of the Forum must comply with the Tenant Involvement Agreement Standards and Code of Conduct.

An annual budget will be provided for this Panel and will be held by Tenant Involvement Officers.

Involvement in the Housing Advisory Panel

The Housing Advisory Panel is a panel of local Councillors specifically elected to oversee Housing and is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Housing. Officers are invited to the Panel to present any information central to the delivery of Housing Services.

The Panel meet 4 times and year and the Chair from the Borough Tenants Forum (or representative in their absence) are co-opted onto the Panel.

Involvement in Overview and Scrutiny Reviews

Any member of the community is entitled to request to be involved in a Scrutiny Review being under taken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In Housing related reviews Members of any panel or group are encouraged to become involved and information upon request will be provided by Tenant Involvement Officers.

To express an interest in becoming part of an Overview and Scrutiny review should be done by contacting either the Councils Committee Services or the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

De-recognition:

The Borough Tenants Forum is the umbrella group of representatives from all groups and includes local Councillors.

The Forum has responsibility for tenant involvement and will make the final decision on whether a Panel should continue to be recognised. A Panel will only be de-recognised as a last resort.

Any grant funding will be returned to the Council should a group be de-recognised.

Code of Conduct:

It is a condition of all groups, panels and forums that members behave in an appropriate way. Members must promote good working relationships and practice and abide by this Code of Conduct.

- All members shall commit themselves to promote equal opportunities within the community and within their memberships.
- Members must not be political
- At meetings members should speak through the Chair and conduct themselves in a manner which will not cause offence to another person or bring the role of the group into disrepute. This includes
 - Racist, sexist or other inflammatory remarks
 - Preventing other members from having a say and
 - Refusing to accept instructions from the chair.
- The Chair has a right to ask any member behaving in such a manner to leave the meeting.
- Any group member may be excluded from the group, panel or forum for breach of the Code of conduct by a majority vote.
- Any member that has been excluded has the right of appeal to the Tenant Involvement Team.