



Resident Scrutiny Panel

Terms of Reference

Principles:

- Project to be a two-year pilot
- To keep the project flexible and responsive
- To try out approaches, assess their effectiveness and learn from this

Vision (outcome)	
To develop greater tenant influence into decision-making and strategic direction (including from those tenants often seen as 'harder to reach'); increasing the capacity of tenants, staff and board, leading to improved processes and better services.	
How we will measure success (impact)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of tenants actively engaged • Number of new tenants involved (measured by diversity as well) • Increased satisfaction of Scrutiny Panel with opportunities to influence decisions • Increased satisfaction of staff/Board with opportunities for Scrutiny Panel to influence decisions • Number of accepted recommendations • Number of accepted recommendations that lead to changed actions • Outcomes from these changed actions • Increased capacity (as measured through skills analysis) 	
Heading	Action required
The role of the Scrutiny Panel	The role of the Scrutiny Panel is to achieve its vision through scrutinising services, business decisions, governance and constitutional decision-making – thereby acting as a critical friend to the organisation and ensuring resident-centred services/decision making
Selection of Panel members	Scrutiny Panel members will be selected using a system where residents can both self-assess and be assessed to see if they are suited to the job and whether the job suits them. The recruitment

	<p>process will be open and transparent, assessing people’s interest and suitability, taking full account of the desire to provide equal and fair opportunity.</p> <p>As far as possible, membership will reflect the general profile of residents, subject to skills needs.</p> <p>Serving Board members will not be eligible to apply for the role of Scrutineer. Similarly, retiring Board members will not be eligible to apply for the role of Scrutineer for the first twelve months following retirement.</p> <p>A clear description of who can/cannot apply for the role of Scrutineer can be found in the Role Profile.</p> <p>For the lifetime of the pilot (2 years), a member of the Auditor Team may attend scrutiny meetings to ensure clear communication, separation of roles and effective partnership working.</p>
<p>The way the Panel will operate</p>	<p>The Scrutiny Panel will operate independently of staff, however for the length of the pilot (2 years) there will be a named member of staff who will act as support – the level of which is to be agreed by the Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>There will be one Westward Housing Scrutiny Panel. However, due to the geographical split of the Westward Group the Panel will have the facility to come together and/or divide themselves differently in order to meet their aims.</p> <p>Although independent, the Scrutiny Panel is responsible to the Chairs of Audit/Scrutiny Champions and reports to the Westward Group Audit Committee.</p> <p>Programmes of work: The Scrutiny Panel will set the programme and priorities for scrutiny, based on evidence from sources such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service review groups • Focus groups/working parties • Performance indicators and other operational reports • Departmental Action / Improvement Plans • STATUS and other surveys • Complaints received • Key Line Of Enquiry (KLOE) self assessment • Inspections, mock inspections and peer reviews • Resident Auditor reports • Internal Auditor programme/reports • Benchmarking

- Tenant Services Authority reports (including self assessments)

This programme will be developed in line with residents' priorities identified from sources above with regard to budget and available resources. It will then be presented to relevant Senior Management Teams/Boards for information.

The Panel reserves the right to make changes to their programme and priorities for scrutiny at any time, where this is for the benefit of tenants.

No target or restriction on the number of scrutiny projects undertaken per year will be set during the pilot period subject to budget restrictions

Powers:

The Panel may co-opt members for specific projects where these members have specific skills or knowledge deemed necessary for the success of that project.

The Panel may serve Notices of Action/Improvement (*in line with agreed procedure - TBA*) if they deem this necessary to secure a response from the Group/Association(s)

The Panel may contact any external authority at any point (*in line with agreed procedure - TBA*) should this be deemed necessary to secure a response from the Group/Association(s)

The Panel will scrutinise concerns raised by residents within the framework of a Community Call to Action (*procedure TBA by Panel once established*). This procedure will sit alongside and should not be used in place of the formal Complaints process,

Access to information:

The Panel will have access to management and other information in a similar manner to Board members/Auditors and will be required to sign a confidentiality clause.

They may contact staff direct, but this must be agreed by the Panel, and relevant to the project they are undertaking

Activities:

The Panel will decide on activities to be undertaken in partnership with the Resident Auditors and any other relevant group

Whistle-blowing:

Whilst the Panel will respect the confidentiality of the information it receives, there may be times when the Panel comes across information it needs to make public under the Westward Whistle-

	blowing Policy. This must be made clear where relevant (eg staff interviews)
Running their meetings	<p>Meetings: The Panel will meet as often as they deem necessary for the successful completion of their aims. Venues will be varied to suit the needs of the Panel</p> <p>Officers: The Panel will decide whether to elect a Chair (to both facilitate meetings and act as Project Manager outside of meetings) or share this between Panel members or employ an independent person to take this role</p> <p>The Panel will decide whether to elect an Administrator to take notes of meetings, write reports etc or to buy this service in</p> <p>The Panel will elect or appoint any other officers as they see fit to ensure successful completion of their aims</p> <p>Length of Service: Because of the training, skills and experience needed to undertake the role, membership should not be considered short term. Length of service will be similar to that of Board members. Retirement will be staggered to ensure effective turnover whilst maintaining a pool of skilled and experienced members. The mechanism for this will be agreed by the Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>An Annual Appraisal will be held to explore the effectiveness of the Scrutiny Panel and its members and to identify any skills gaps to be filled by appointment or further training</p> <p>Quorum: The quorum for decision-making shall be (<i>same as for Board</i>)</p> <p>Decisions: Decisions will be made by majority vote, although consensus will be encouraged</p> <p>Code of Conduct: All members will be required to sign and uphold the Code of Conduct. Any breach of this will trigger disciplinary proceedings, in line with the Westward Group's document 'When Things Go Wrong'</p> <p>Grievances: Grievances will be dealt with in line with the document 'When Things Go Wrong'</p>
Communication	From Scrutiny Panel to Senior Management Team/Board:

<p>protocols</p>	<p>The Scrutiny Panel will present their recommendations to Senior Management Team, then the next available Westward Group Audit Committee.</p> <p>The Committee will then direct the Senior Management Team of the Group/Association(s) to take relevant action</p> <p>From the Group/Association(s) to Scrutiny Panel: The Senior Management Team will agree a timeframe for action with the Committee/Scrutiny Panel which will be monitored by the Scrutiny Panel</p>
<p>Training and support</p>	<p>Training: Scrutiny Panel members will be expected to undertake the basic scrutiny training course prior to joining the Panel. They must be prepared to commit to ongoing specialist training in all areas of skill needed for the role throughout their time as a member of the Scrutiny Panel. This will include an element of reflective study (as part of the self assessment/review of performance/appraisal system)</p> <p>Training may be shared with other residents/staff/board (where appropriate) or even other organisations in south west</p> <p>Mentoring/coaching support for Scrutineers will be provided. This may take the form of external support. Alternatively this could be provided by trained and supported experienced members</p> <p>Support: In order to fulfil their function, Panel members will need reasonable access to computers/internet/phones</p> <p>Administrative support: Where possible, the Panel will provide administrative support from within its members. Where this is not possible, the Panel will out-source this</p>
<p>Budget and expenses</p>	<p>Budget: For the period of the pilot, the Panel will nominally hold the budget, making all decisions regarding its spending (with due regards to monies available and value for money principles). However, in reality it will be held by Westcountry/Tarka Resident Involvement Managers who will spend it only at the Panel's request.</p> <p>The budget will be reviewed as part of the bi-annual impact assessment of the Panel and this will feed into Westcountry and Tarka's budget planning process.</p> <p>Expenses:</p>

	<p>All reasonable expenses will be paid in line with Resident Expenses Policy. This will include (but not exclusively):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mileage/travel costs • Carers costs • Venues • Refreshments • Internet • Phone • Printing/copying • Stationery
Accountability	<p>To ensure that the Scrutiny Panel continues to evolve and develop members will have an annual appraisal following a similar pattern to that of the Board. This appraisal aims to explore the effectiveness of the Scrutiny Panel and its members and to identify any skills gaps to be filled by appointment or further training</p> <p>The Panel will undertake a bi-annual impact assessment and this will be independently reviewed.</p> <p>Scrutiny Panel reports, once seen by the (relevant) Senior Management Team/Board will be made available on Tarka and Westcountry websites. Summaries of all reports will be included in residents' newsletters.</p>
Monitoring, evaluation and review	<p>The Scrutiny Panel will develop a Project Plan with proposed outcomes at the start of each project.</p> <p>Learning and development will be reviewed at the end of each project and will feed into the bi-annual impact assessment</p> <p>The Scrutiny Panel will be subject to external scrutiny themselves, Westward Board are able to trigger this if they have concerns about the standard and approach taken by the Panel which they have previously expressed and feel have not been addressed.</p>
Equality and diversity	<p>The Scrutiny Panel recognises the existence and importance of the different ages, races, genders, abilities and lifestyles within the resident profile and will strive to ensure that no group or individual will be disadvantaged as a consequence of its activities.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Panel is committed to promoting equality of opportunity to all persons in every respect of activities carried out by it. Members must sign and abide by the Code of Conduct and Breach of Code of Conduct procedures which undertake to deal firmly and promptly with any cases of discrimination or harassment</p> <p>All members must undertake mandatory Equality and Diversity training.</p>

	<p>The Scrutiny Panel and its work will form part of Westcountry/Tarka's Equality Impact Assessments</p>
--	--