4.   The Tenants Forum

Constitution

1.   Representation

1.1   The Tenants' Forum shall have the following membership:-

   (i)   Six Borough Councillors appointed annually by the Borough Council.

   (ii)   Tenants of the Council representing neighbourhoods or housing estates within the Borough. The Tenants Representatives are to be:

- nominated by tenants associations which are recognised by the Borough Council;

- elected in those areas that do not have a recognised Association;

- co-opted in accordance with procedures agreed by the Tenants' Forum where either of the above methods fails to fill vacancies arising or in the case of casual vacancies, where the Tenants' Forum so decides.

   All tenants' representatives, except those appointed or elected to fill a casual vacancy, shall serve for four years. Elections or delegations of tenants to the Forum will take place in the second year of the Municipal term.

   Representatives appointed or elected to fill a casual vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the term of office of the representative they replace. All representatives shall be eligible for reappointment or re-election.

1.2   Any member of the Forum may appoint a substitute tenant with the same qualification for membership as themselves to attend a meeting in their place without notice. The substitute tenant must be recognised by the Council and will have signed the Tenants' Code of Conduct.

1.3   Any tenant member who fails to attend Forum meetings for any six months in a twelve month period without good reason, may be excluded from the Forum in line with the Tenants' Code of Conduct.

2.   Voting

2.1   In the case of Tenants' Associations only **ONE** delegate from the area the association covers will have a vote.

2.2   Tenants representing an area will have one vote. In the case of two or more tenants representing an area, only the elected/nominated tenant shall be eligble to vote.

2.3   Tenants who have been duly nominated or elected to vote must identify themselves to the committee administrator at the beginning of the meeting. The committee administrator shall note their names in the minutes.

3.   Chair

3.1   The Forum shall elect a Chair and a Deputy Chair at its first meeting in each Municipal Year. The Chair shall be a Borough Councillor and be nominated and elected by councillors and the Deputy Chair shall be a tenant, nominated and elected by tenants.

3.2   Where more than one person has been nominated for Chair, Borough Councillors will take part in an open vote to elect the Chair

3.3   Where more than one person has been nominated for the Deputy Chair, duly nominated or elected tenants will take part in a secret ballot.

3.4   The Chair and Deputy Chair will alternate chairing meetings of the Forum

4.   Officers

4.1   The Secretary of the Forum shall be provided by the Borough Council. The Forum shall be advised by officers of the Borough Council. All requests for the attendance of officers of the Borough Council shall be complied with where reasonably practicable.

5.   Functions

5.1   The functions of the Tenants' Forum shall be:-

(i)   to establish regular methods of consultation and discussion between the Council and representatives of each of the housing areas of the Borough on the management of council housing and neighbourhoods, and wider housing policy, subject only to such consultation and discussion being additional to such methods as may be in place for the time being for consulting with individual tenants or tenants within particular areas;

(ii)   to consider any matter referred to it by the Borough Council, or by any of the tenants' associations or individual members of the Forum;

(iii)   to comment or make recommendations to any authority or body on matters of general concern to tenants.

6.   Terms of Reference

6.1   To develop more effective lines of communication between tenants and the Council, including the publication of newsletters for tenants throughout the Borough or in particular areas.

6.2   To act as a voice for the Tenants in the Borough in order to resolve any major issues of concern.

6.3   To identify any training required for the Forum members.

6.4   To review the Tenants Participation Policy.

6.5   To review the Housing Strategy.

6.6   To make recommendations to any of the Council's executive or committees for decisions.

6.7   To be consulted on, review and make recommendations on any other issues affecting any organisation or body as appropriate.

6.8   To be the lead group for all tenant panels, this includes: Tenants' Overview and Scrutiny and Connect Editorial Panel.

7. Ethical Standards

7.1 All tenant members shall agree and abide by the Code of Conduct (separate document)

7.2 If members of the Forum abuse the rules of procedure, the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Forum may request them to leave the meeting. In such circumstances a full review will be undertaken within 10 working days

8. The Tenants' Forum shall undertake an annual review of the Code of Conduct and its constitution to ensure both documents remain relevant and meet the needs of both the council and tenants.

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the **ONE** shall be the voting representat

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matters of concern to tenants

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To be kept informed about Best Value reviews and action plans.
To keep under review the Housing Management Contract specification.
To consider the role of the Forum in monitoring the Housing Management contract
    and be involved in monitoring it.

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    Objectivity
....I
    n carrying out their public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts,
....F
    orum and its members shall make their choices solely on merit.
    Accountability

....T

he Forum shall be accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and shall submit themselves to whatever scrutiny and accountability is appropriate.

Openness

....T

he Forum shall be as open as possible about all the

....d

ecisions and actions that they take. Reasons for decisions will be given where possible and the release of information restricted only when it is clearly demanded by the wider public interest or for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

Honesty

....M

embers of the Forum shall declare to the Secretary in advance any direct or indirect interest which may arise in respect of a contract or other matter to which the Forum is, or may become, a party.

....T

he Secretary shall maintain a register of the declared interests detailing the nature and extent of such interest, which shall be open to inspection by any Member of the Forum.

....W

here a conflict of interest is declared, the relevant Forum member shall not influence any decision on the matter. They shall withdraw from the room in which the meeting is held whilst the relevant matter is being discussed.

....N

o contract, or other award shall be made to a Forum member, company or other body or individual in respect of which an interest has been declared without the prior notification of such interest to the Forum and its approval.

....W

henever Members of the Forum are unsure of the seriousness of a potential interest, they shall seek guidance from the Secretary, and if they are still unsure they shall err on the side of caution.

Leadership

....T

he members of the Forum shall promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

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