

Terms of Reference

Housing and Homelessness Working Group (of the Scrutiny Committee)

1. Purpose

The Housing and Homelessness Working Group is a sub-group of the Scrutiny Committee, established to support the Committee in carrying out its responsibilities by reviewing strategic housing policy, homelessness, housing service performance, and landlord-related issues, including the Council's engagement with tenants.

2. Status

The Working Group is an informal, non-decision-making body created by the Scrutiny Committee. It operates under the authority of the Committee and report its findings and recommendations for formal consideration.

3. Scope of Work

The Housing and Homelessness Working Group will:

- Review strategic housing policy and housing-related decisions
- Monitor the performance of housing and landlord services
- Review homelessness prevention strategies and services
- Examine housing need and supply, including delivery of affordable housing
- Consider tenant engagement processes and outcomes
- Scrutinise executive decisions related to housing and homelessness
- Contribute to the Scrutiny work plan by identifying key themes and emerging issues in housing

4. Membership

Membership will be set by the Scrutiny Committee and drawn from all non-executive members. It will not be required to reflect the Council's make up. The Housing and Homelessness Working Group will comprise four councillors or up to one member from each political group.

The quorum shall be 2 members. Substitution will be allowed.

5. Chairing

The Chair shall be elected by the Scrutiny Committee at the first meeting of the municipal year, or at the time of the group's formation.

The Chair will be responsible for leading meetings and reporting the Group's findings and recommendations back to the Scrutiny Committee. They may also be invited to present these outcomes to the Cabinet.

In the absence of the Chair, members present shall elect an acting chair for that meeting.

6. Meetings and ways of working

- The Scrutiny Committee will commission and scope the work of the Housing and Homelessness Working Group and therefore has final agreement on its recommendations.
- The agenda will be issued in advance, however the usual requirement for 7 days' notice do not apply.
- Meetings will be held 5 times each year. Additional meetings must be approved by the Monitoring Officer.
- Members are expected to review papers in advance and contribute constructively to discussions with a focus on evidence-based scrutiny.
- Meetings are not legally required to be held in-person and are not subject to the Local Government Act 1972 requirement to be held in public.

7. Attendees

Officers or cabinet members shall attend the meetings from time to time where their attendance is required as a result of an item on the agenda.

Directors and Company Secretaries of Council-owned companies may be invited to attend meetings for businesses relating to their companies.

External guests or other members of the council may be invited to meetings where their input is required to inform the work of the Working Group.

8. Access to information

Members of the Housing and Homelessness Working Group will have access to relevant papers, including those concerning Council-owned companies. It may request additional information as necessary to support its work.

9. Confidentiality

All information shared within the agenda and meeting concerns decisions to be taken. It will, from time to time, contain personal and commercially sensitive information. As such all information provided in the meeting shall be kept confidentially by those in attendance unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer, following a request to share information outside of the meeting.

10. Relationship with Scrutiny

The Housing and Homelessness Working Group supports the broader work of the Scrutiny committee. It acts in an advisory and investigative capacity, with its

outputs feeding into the formal scrutiny process via reports and recommendations for the Committee's consideration.

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