

Oxford City Council Housing and Homelessness Panel Scoping Template

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Topic	Housing Associations' Approach to Tenant Engagement
Chair / lead member	Cllr Lizzy Diggins (Chair, Housing and Homelessness Panel)
Other Standing Panel Members	Cllr Paula Dunne, Cllr Laurence Fouweather, Cllr Jabu Nala-Hartley, Cllr Rosie Rawle, Cllr Jo Sandelson
Officer support and allocate hours	Scrutiny Officer support – approx. 1 day per week for Housing and Homelessness Panel work, to be split between other areas of work the Panel wishes to consider. Additional support from other Council officers as required.
Background and rational	<p>The Housing and Homelessness Panel selected a number of Scrutiny-commissioned items to consider during the 2023/24 municipal year – one of which related to Housing Associations' approach to tenant engagement.</p> <p>Having previously undertaken a mini-review of Tenant Involvement and Empowerment in 2021/22 which focused on the work that Oxford City Council delivers as a social landlord and tenant voice in Council properties; and the Scrutiny activity planned during 2023/24 on supporting private sector tenants (i.e. via a review of Selective Licensing implementation) the Panel is of the view that it would be helpful to undertake a further review in relation to the work of Housing Associations operating within Oxford to understand how housing across different sectors and providers works across the City; and how different approaches are aligned to deliver the wider housing sector and tenant support. It is intended that this review would focus on social housing provided by Housing Associations; interlinking with other work being undertaken by the Panel during the 2023/24 municipal year.</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence suggests that, in conducting ward casework on behalf of tenants, there is a disconnect between the work of the Council and Housing Associations; it is not clear where there are interlinkages and there is uncertainty around the route which should be taken to ensure swift resolution of issues for tenants. Through developing a better understanding of the work and processes of Housing Associations, councillors would be better placed to support tenants across the City and work with Housing Associations.</p> <p>A review of different approaches across the City will assist with sharing learning and experiences; along with helping tenant voice and tenant experience to be considered (and therefore aligned/consolidated) across the City, rather than the existence of singular organisational approaches across Oxford.</p>

Purpose / Objective	<p>To review the approaches of Housing Associations operating within the City to better understand their processes, how they align/work with Oxford City Council and how they engage with and empower tenants. Key lines of inquiry to include:</p> <p>Tenant Voice, Engagement and Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident engagement framework • Governance structures and how they allow tenant voice and influence to flow through the organisation <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach to managing complex issues and complaints and how councillors can be most effective in providing help and support to tenants; including interlinkages between Housing Associations and the Council • Communications and engagement with tenants (and councillors when undertaking ward casework)
Indicators of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide and constructive engagement with officers, stakeholders, experts and tenants • The production of a final report and recommendations • The majority of recommendations are agreed and implemented • Positive feedback from Members, officers and witnesses • Improved knowledge of Council and Housing Association processes and how they align; leading to improved working relationships – and improved tenant experience
Out of scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Supply/build pipeline; stock condition (<i>with the exception of tenant voice/experience, which is in scope</i>). • Tenancy Strategy – this will be picked up as a separate piece of work, which Scrutiny will have the opportunity to consider. • How Housing Associations might support the broader work of the Council such as their role in preventing homelessness and actions within the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 – this element will be picked up through the annual reporting of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28, which Scrutiny will have the opportunity to consider. • Standards/regulation, including Housing Associations' compliance with the Social Housing Regulation Bill and regulatory standards, performance data and alignment with the Homes for Cathy commitments. The Housing Ombudsman is looking at Housing Associations and it is likely that they will be more closely monitored by the regulator in future; it is recommended that the outcome of this work, and implementation of work to comply with the Social Housing Regulation Bill is understood before the Panel undertakes any detailed work
Methodology/	Evidence gathering could include:

Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inviting written and/or verbal evidence from Council officers, key stakeholders, expert witnesses and tenants; • Call for evidence from councillors and Advice Centres on their experiences and types of issues that they are presented with • Consideration of information provided by Housing Associations • Desk research / literature review.
Witnesses/ Experts	<p>Cllr Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing Nerys Parry, Head of Housing Services Richard Wood, Housing Strategy and Needs Manager Amie Rickatson, Strategy and Service Development Manager Housing Associations operating within the City Ward Members Advice Centres</p>
Panel Meetings	1-2 meetings (dates tbc)

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