



Blackpool Coastal
Housing

TERMS OF REFERENCE

TOWER SCRUTINY PANEL

INSPIRING PEOPLE TO BUILD **BETTER COMMUNITIES**

Our purpose

The TOWER (Together Overseeing Where Excellence is Realised) Scrutiny Panel provides an independent, customer focused, advisory and consultative role to Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) and Blackpool Council. They act as a positive critical friend assessing and challenging the service that BCH provides on behalf of its customers. As part of co-regulation, BCH is committed to greater involvement of tenants and residents in decision making and scrutiny of services that will lead to greater customer satisfaction and the continued delivery of excellent services.

Our Mission Statement and Vision

Blackpool Council's vision is to 'build a Blackpool where aspiration and ambition are encouraged and supported.

Its priorities are to:

- Tackle child poverty, raise aspirations and improve educational achievement.
- Safeguard and protect the most vulnerable.
- Expand and promote our tourism, arts, heritage and cultural offer.
- Improve health and well-being especially for the most disadvantaged.
- Attract sustainable investment and create quality jobs.
- Encourage responsible entrepreneurship for the benefit of our communities.
- Improve housing standards and the environment we live in by using housing investment to create stable communities.
- Create safer communities and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Deliver quality services through a professional, well-rewarded and motivated workforce.

BCH reflect the Council's priorities by its mission to be "an organisation working with current and future customers as well as partners to improve not only people's homes but also their quality of life. Their vision is 'Inspiring people To Build Better Communities.'

Their values are:

- Integrity and honesty.
- A clear accountability both individually and organisationally.
- A focus on being a caring organisation.
- We aim to empower staff and customers.
- Building and encouraging aspiration in both staff and customers.

TOWER aim to support these by ensuring that they are upheld and inherent in the work that it carries out and in its role of scrutinising BCH.

What is TOWER's Role?

TOWER agrees what areas of BCH frontline services it wishes to scrutinise and is provided with the information required, in order to gain a detailed view of how BCH performs in that area. TOWER's role and duties includes the following:

- Producing an annual scrutiny programme and meeting schedule, scrutinising individual areas of BCH's frontline services on a programme basis.
- Carrying out structured scrutiny exercises that assess a wide range of information and data as well as carrying out targeted consultation as part of any scrutiny exercise
- Monitoring performance of individual service areas and making recommendations for improvements.
- Maintaining links and ensuring effective communications with the Board and Senior Management Team.
- Ensuring the Board and Senior Management Team's decision making meets residents' reasonable expectations.



- Ensure that tenant/customer priorities are being used as a basis for performance assessment.
- Provide tenants/customers with the opportunity to comment on service delivery and to drive forward service improvement.
- Enable tenants/customers to benchmark services with others.
- Link in to existing customer involvement activities and customer feedback to inform their work.

TOWER will undertake the following:

- TOWER will access a range of key information and personnel to keep an overview of performance and to help inform the selection of topics for future scrutiny.
- TOWER will report to the Senior Management Team (SMT) their findings upon the completion of each scrutiny review. This may take the format of the presentation and/or a written report containing recommendations.
- TOWER will agree what recommendations are to be taken forward in conjunction with the service manager (and subject to Board approval) and an action plan will be drawn up and jointly agreed.
- TOWER will present their report and action plan to the Board.
- TOWER's action plan will be issued to the Audit Committee for monitoring of actions being implemented.
- If TOWER feels that the SMT or the Board have not responded appropriately, failed to act or cannot agree, TOWER can refer the matter to the Council.
- TOWER will feedback to customers and staff through its own channels, which includes social media as well as via BCH's main internal and external communication channels.
- Members will also attend other resident involvement events to discuss and promote their work.
- TOWER members will monitor their annual budget and collectively agree spend. Annual budget planning sessions will take place facilitated by the Involvement and Communications Officer.

Code of Conduct

Each member will sign up to a code of conduct between members. The Code of Conduct document outlines and sets the standards for how TOWER conduct themselves towards each other, and also everyone they come into contact with, during the course of the scrutiny work they are involved in.

Conflict of Interest

The TOWER member must:

- Disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any tenant or customer group, which might possibly affect or influence their approach to a scrutiny or service review task.
- They must also offer to withdraw from a scrutiny where a conflict of interest is clear and substantial.

Confidentiality

All TOWER members must sign a Confidentiality Agreement.

During the course of their duties, TOWER members will come into contact with information that is confidential to BCH, its customers, partners and stakeholders.

TOWER will respect the confidentiality of personal information regarding individuals and their views which is provided for the purpose of conducting a scrutiny.

TOWER will not mention specific individuals or cases which may lead to the identification of an individual.



Gifts and Hospitality

If any gifts or hospitality are received by any member in the course of acting as part of TOWER these must be declared to the group. These will be logged by the Involvement and Communications Team in line with BCH and Council policy.

TOWER Membership

Members will be recruited by the TOWER members working in partnership with the support of the Involvement and Communications Team.

- Membership is open to any BCH tenant or leaseholder aged over 18
- Each new member will be invited to an informal chat with TOWER members and the Involvement and Communications Team.
- Membership to TOWER shall be no greater than 10 members.
- All members will be able to reclaim expenses for reasonable costs incurred in their role with TOWER, in line with Blackpool Coastal Housing's expenses policy.
- If a member wishes to step down/resign they should inform TOWER or the Involvement and Communications Team.
- All members will receive ongoing individual support and a tailored training program will be jointly created with an officer from the Involvement and Communications Team

Management

TOWER will determine their schedule for meetings and scrutiny exercises during the year. It is expected that the group will meet regularly but will have no less than 12 formal meetings during the course of the year and complete at least 2 Scrutiny's in each 12 month period.

The quorum for any decision making will be 50% of the group present. The group will reach decisions by consensus. If this is not possible members will vote and a majority will be required.

Monitoring and Review

Each year a health check of TOWER will take place by the Involvement and Communications Team to ensure that it is performing its duties effectively.

All agreements and documents will be reviewed with panel members as part of this process.

If there are concerns with the performance and/or conduct of the group the BCH Board have the right to commission an independent review of TOWER.

Members of the group will receive ongoing 1-1s, training and support in order to carry out their duties as part of TOWER.

Dealing with Breaches

Where a member is deemed to be in breach of the Code of Conduct, Terms of Reference or Confidentiality Agreement or is involved in activity which brings the name of TOWER or BCH/The Council into disrepute, action will be taken.

An investigation will be carried out by the Involvement and Communications Manager/Director of Resources in conjunction with a TOWER representative. All investigations will take place within 10 days and the outcome communicated within 3 days.

In the first instance or if the breach is deemed to be minor following investigation a warning will be given and the member will receive relevant training and supervision.

In the case of a second breach or more serious breach, following investigation, the member will be suspended and removed from the Scrutiny Panel and the outcome will be notified in writing.

Examples of serious breaches include but are not confined to the following:

- Misusing or disclosing tenant feedback or other tenant information.
- Acting in a manner that causes offence to another person e.g. displays of prejudice, verbal or non-verbal.

In all cases the member has the right to appeal and these should be forwarded to the Involvement and Communications Manager or Director of Resources, whichever is preferred.

I confirm I have read and understood the above and agree to act in accordance with the Terms of Reference:

NAME: _____
SIGNED: _____
DATE: _____