

Terms of Reference for Area Contract Panel Meetings

Background

Area Contract Panels were originally set up as part of the tendering and monitoring process for Housing Management Compulsory Competitive tendering in 1996.

Contract Panels have developed a scrutiny role of housing service, which includes Ascham Homes as part of its management agreement with the London Borough of Waltham Forest. Ascham Homes became effective on 1st May 2003 and has taken over management of the London Borough of Waltham Forest's housing stock.

1.0 Scope and Objectives

- 1.1 Scrutiny of Ascham Home's proposals and strategies for improving the housing management functions it delivers on behalf of the London Borough of Waltham Forest.
- 1.2 Scrutiny of any customer-consultation regimes employed or proposed to be employed by Ascham Homes.
- 1.3 To facilitate scrutiny, Ascham Homes will supply data about current and past performance.
- 1.4 To discuss bids under the Major Repairs Allowance and agree how the Major Repairs Allowance should be allocated. This will be discussed and agreed at a special meeting where voting rights will be restricted to a maximum of two for each tenant and resident association (TRA) or stakeholder group representing blocks, roads or estates.

2.0 Participants

- 2.1 Contract Panels will be made up of tenants and leaseholders recognised by Ascham Homes. These will be known as 'Participants'. Only tenants and leaseholders of that Contract Panel Area have voting rights, but residents from other Areas can attend Contract Panel meetings.
- 2.2 For the Contract Panel meeting to be quorate there must be a minimum of 3 representatives, who would be entitled to vote, present, e.g. appointed TRA representatives, Estate Stakeholders and Recognised Scattered Tenant Representatives.
- 2.3 Directors of Ascham Homes are excluded from voting, but may attend Contract Panel meetings.

- 2.4 In order to support the groups' scrutiny role, Ascham Homes staff will attend to present, discuss and provide feedback on related agenda items. For each meeting these staff will be agreed at the Contract Panel Resident Leadership Co-ordinators Meeting.
- 2.5 Ascham Homes and Contract Panels may propose, (where possible through the Contract Panel Resident Leadership Co-ordinators meeting), that certain groups are invited to the Contract Panel.

3.0 Operational Involvement

- 3.1 Contract Panels shall have the right to determine the programme needs to be met for their area using a maximum of 15% of the major repairs allowance.
- 3.2 Ascham Homes will provide data and support for Contract Panels to enable them to make the best informed decisions on the MRA programme.

4.0 Strategic Involvement

- 4.1 Contract Panels shall have the right to be consulted over the strategic direction of Ascham Homes and shall be formally asked to comment on the Business Plan.

5.0 Conduct of Business

- 5.1 Each year in April the contract panel will elect a Chair and Vice Chair who should be a resident of Ascham Homes from the relevant Contract Panel Area.
- 5.2 The Chair or the Vice Chair shall chair meetings.
- 5.3 (a) A maximum of 2 representatives from each Tenant and Resident Association are entitled to vote. It is the responsibility of TRA committees to be clear who has voting rights on their behalf at each meeting.

(b) Recognised Estate Stakeholders and Scattered Tenants have 1 vote each.
- 5.4 All participants of contract panel will abide by the attached code of conduct. (See Ascham Homes 'Code of Conduct' for Board Members and Employees).
- 5.5 All participants must abide by the Data Protection Act Legislation. Issues relating to specific addresses should not be raised as part of the

contract panel meeting. Any items relating to individual tenants or leaseholders can only be discussed where members have obtained the written consent of the tenant or leaseholder, these items should be raised with Ascham Homes staff outside the meeting and not be included within the minutes of the meeting unless they are anonymous i.e. they do not contain the name or address of the tenant or leaseholder or contain information which will identify the tenant or leaseholder.

- 5.6 All Contract Panels shall agree an outline agenda, which will include standardised items including performance and report back from Ascham Homes at Contract Panel Resident Leadership Co-ordinators Meetings.
- 5.7 Ascham Homes shall circulate ahead of each meeting and in good time any supporting material required, including any exception reports on Decent Homes and MRA reports.
- 5.8 Contract Panels recognise that a relationship exists between Ascham Homes and the London Borough of Waltham Forest and that this involves certain reporting protocols. Ascham Homes may therefore not be able to discuss some items with the Contract Panels. It may also have to delay exposing certain matters to the scrutiny of Contract Panels at any time where it has not been possible to raise the matter with the London Borough of Waltham Forest first.
- 5.9 Agreed minutes shall be classified as open documents.
- 5.10 Supporting information supplied by Ascham Homes to Contract Panels, to assist the scrutiny process, shall be classified as open documentation.
- 5.11 The contract Panel are to meet a minimum of 8 times a year, including one meeting dedicated to the MRA programme

6.0 Resources

- 6.1 Ascham Homes will provide at Contract Panels a minimum of a Senior Officer, however many competent officers required to present reports and a minute taker.
- 6.2 Legitimate transport expenses for any participant with a genuine special need will be met by Ascham Homes where these are not already covered by existing funding arrangements for Tenant and Resident Associations.
- 6.3 Ascham Homes will provide a newsletter for Contract Panels participants and those who have recently attended the meetings, to share good practice and keep all Chairs and panels advised of what is happening in other areas.

7.0 Accessibility and Diversity

- 7.1.1 Ascham Homes and the Contract Panels will work together to increase accessibility of these meetings to all residents.

8.0 Record Keeping

- 8.1 Minute taking and Approval – Minutes will be taken on a standard template, jointly agreed with Ascham Homes and the Contract Panel Resident Leadership Group. Where a representative cannot attend a meeting, they may send comments on accuracy or matters arising to the Resident Involvement Team. These will be brought to the meeting to be discussed, before they are agreed. This will mean that the panel may agree the minutes of the previous meeting, even if those present do not amount to a quorum.
- 8.2 Attendance Records – It shall be the duty of the Chair of each meeting to ensure that the Signing – In sheet is completed by all present at the earliest opportunity.

Signed _____ Date _____
Paul Olford, Chair of the Board of Ascham Homes

Signed _____ Date _____
Hassett E Auguste, Chief Executive of Ascham Homes

Signed _____ Date _____
Nana Osei, Chair of Area 1 and 2 Panel

Signed _____ Date _____
Lilly Evans, Chair of Area 3 Panel

Signed _____ Date _____
Florence Bedwell, Chair of Area 4 Panel

Signed _____ Date _____
M.A Bakare, Chair of Area 6 Panel