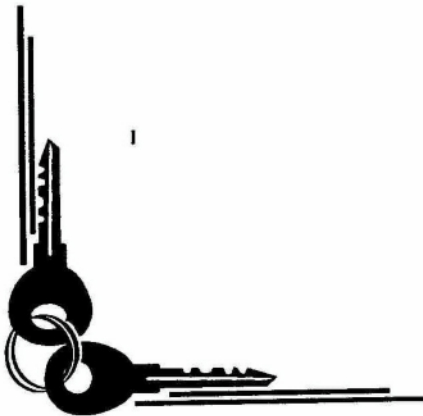


This document supersedes all previous constitution documents.



Tarka Tenant Panel Constitution as from

Name of the organisation:

Tarka Tenants Panel

Overall Aims

1. To function as an overview body that gathers and comments on performance information from a variety of sources - e.g. sub-committees, working groups, steering groups, team managers, other staff members and the wider community.
2. To help ensure a quality standard of Customer Involvement activity that makes a real difference, has built in accountability and is based on productive customer and staff engagement.

Objectives:

1. Provide constructive feedback to Tarka Housing
2. Promote partnership working at all levels
3. Review, comment and make specific recommendations on strategic and policy documents
4. Review monitoring arrangements across all sectors of Tarka Housing
5. Promote an outcome based approach to all involvement activities
6. Develop an annual training plan that will lead to improved customer capacity and empower tenants to make a difference

7. Agree an annual Action Plan based on the Panel's aims and objectives that is closely allied to Tarka Housing's Strategic Objectives
8. Ensure that the Panel's Action Plan provides for forward planning and continuing development for all members of the panel
9. Liaise with other tenant bodies in the South West area and take part in joint activities that will lead to improved capacity and performance
10. Proactively promote the work and achievements of the TP to the wider tenant community

1. The Tenant Panel will contribute to the development of Tarka Housing Limited Policies, Procedures and Strategies by:

1.1 Developing and maintaining an effective two-way channel of communication between Tarka Housing Limited and the Tenant Panel.

1.2 Considering and commenting on issues from non-confidential Tarka Housing Board papers brought to the Tenant Panel meeting by the Chair / Vice Chair who then report back to the Board.

1.3 Considering and commenting on documents from other Regional and / or National sources that have implications for Tarka Tenants.

1.4 Recommending to Tarka Housing Limited, when more extensive consultation with Tenants is required.

1.5 Assisting Tarka Housing in carrying out consultation exercises with Tenants.

2. The Tenant Panel will promote and support effective Tenant involvement across the organisation by:

2.1 Carrying out an annual review of the Customer Involvement Agreement, Strategy and Policy documents in association with the Customer Involvement Team, and provide constructive comment and recommendations to Tarka Senior Management as necessary.

2.2 Supporting Tarka Housing to ensure that involvement opportunities take into account the equality and diversity profile of Tarka tenants, in line with Tarka's Customer Involvement Policy.

2.5 Working with Tarka Housing Limited to develop prospects for increasing the skills, knowledge and confidence of involved Tenants.

2.6 Working with Tarka Housing Limited to identify, and promote greater inclusion of, hard to reach groups and those not currently involved.

2.8 Making all Tenants aware of the role of the Tenant Panel and how they can apply to become a member.

2.9 Membership of the Tenant Panel is open to any Tenant over 18 years of age, subject to 3.1 below.

3. Membership of the Tenant Panel

3.1 The Tenant Panel should have a maximum of 25 voting members, who as members will be expected to play a full and active role.

3.2 Tenant Board members will not be counted as voting members of the Tenant Panel and cannot hold a Tenant Panel officer post; they may, however, contribute to debate as tenants of Tarka Housing at Tenant Panel meetings.

3.3 The Tenant Panel will nominate representatives to produce an Annual Tenant Panel Report. This report will be reviewed by the Tenant Panel in full before publication.

3.4 Tenants who wish to be formal members of the Panel must be proposed and seconded. Membership will be confirmed by a vote of the Panel. The Panel may co-opt additional members with specialized skills as required (e.g. an accountant or local business person to provide a statement of accounts).

3.5 Tenant Panel Officers shall include a Chair and Secretary and may include a Vice-Chair and Treasurer if required.

The roles and responsibilities of the Tenant Panel Officers are as follows:

Chair

- To act as Chair at all Tenant Panel meetings (when in attendance),
- To coordinate with other officers of the Tenant Panel on the agenda for Tenant Panel meetings.
- To act as first point of contact, on matters relating to issues over the Code of Conduct and Constitution of the Tenant Panel (as laid down in the Code of Conduct).

- To act as a representative of the Tenant Panel and to keep the Tenant Panel informed of such representations and their outcomes.

Vice Chair

- To deputise for the chair in their absence and follow the same procedures as the chair.

Secretary

- To keep safe and secure all records, documents and other related information regarding the Tarka Tenant Panel.
- To administer and keep records and copies for any and all Tenant Panel disciplinary procedures.
- To compile and keep accurate records of Tenant Panel membership and whenever necessary to distribute up to date lists to Tenant Panel members.
- To keep the Tarka Housing administrator up to date with the distribution of paperwork list.
- To attend all Tenant Panel meetings (whenever possible), with a copy of the Code of Conduct and the Constitution of the Tenant Panel.
- To ensure **all** members have signed the current Code of Conduct and Constitution, and to keep copies on file.
- To act as required to act as a Tenant Panel representative and to keep the Tenant Panel informed of such representations and outcomes.

N.B. All paperwork will be handed over by the officers to their successors.

3.6 Elections of Officers will take place at an Annual General Meeting, from nominations received prior to that meeting. The procedure will be as follows:

- An application for a Tenant Panel Officer post must be submitted in writing to the Tenant Panel Chair, 1 calendar month before the AGM. The application must be supported by a proposer and seconder in writing.
- Current Tenant Panel Officers will automatically stand for re-election unless they formally indicate otherwise in writing to the Chair.
- Notification about an AGM will be advertised at least 1 month (28 days) prior to the AGM. All paperwork, including the minutes of the last AGM, AGM agenda, all candidate profiles, voting papers and Tenant Panel Annual Report will be distributed to all Tenant Panel members and made available to other Tenants at the AGM venue.

- Voting will be held by secret ballot. The result will be decided by a majority vote.
- In the event of a tie the Chair will decide whether a re-vote is necessary or to use their casting vote. The chair will nominate a non-Tenant Panel member to count the vote. The chair will announce the results.
- New Tenant Panel Officers will begin their role at the first Tenant Panel meeting following the AGM. Existing officers will serve until that meeting.
- Tenant Panel Officers will be elected for a term of 1 year, but may serve up to three years if re-elected.
- A Tenant Panel Officer can only hold one Tenant Panel Office at a time.

3.7 Any Tenant Panel Officer who fails to attend three successive meetings without giving an adequate reason to the Chair or Vice-Chair will lose their place on the Tenant Panel.

3.8 All Tenant Panel members will be required to agree and sign the Constitution and the Code of Conduct within 4 weeks of the AGM or becoming a member. It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that this takes place. Membership of the Tenant Panel is strictly contingent upon signed copies of the above being submitted to the Chair.

3.10 The Tenant Panel will meet monthly.

3.11 Tenant Panel members will be expected to take part in training as per the Customer Involvement Agreement. Failure to engage with training opportunities to improve skills and knowledge, without good reason, will be reviewed by an investigative panel convened for that purpose. The Tenant Panel and Tarka Housing will support all members to overcome any barriers to improving skills.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of members of the Tenant Panel

4.1 Members must not discriminate on any grounds including nationality, political opinion, age, race, religion, gender, sexuality, or disability.

4.2 Members will at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner, treating others with respect. Officers of the Tenant Panel will meet on a monthly basis to discuss forthcoming agenda items and any other issues.

4.3 Adhere to and abide by the Constitution and the Code of Conduct.

4.4 Disclose any interest as defined in the Code of Conduct.

4.5 Be proactive in raising suggestions for agenda items for future consideration to the Tenant Panel Officers at their monthly meetings.

4.6 Working Groups may be formed for a specific purpose by the Tenant Panel or Tarka Housing Limited. Feedback from those groups must be reported to the Tenant Panel before matters proceed to the Tarka Board.

4.7 Any Tenant who has followed established procedures and still feels that their case has not been fairly heard can, through the Chair, ask the Tenant Panel to consider their case. The Chair and Tenant Panel Officers will decide whether the case merits an additional hearing.

Quorum

No Tenant Panel meeting shall take place if less than one Officer and one third of voting members are present.

Voting

4.8 Decisions will be made by consensus (show of hands), or by secret ballot.

4.9 The Chair will not vote. However, in the event of a tie, the Chair will decide whether more discussion or a re-vote is needed to produce a decision, or they will use their casting vote.

4.10 Any member can make a formal proposal via the Chair, or an amendment to that proposal, which must be seconded by another Tenant Panel member and a vote taken.

4.11 Proxy voting is only acceptable when there are extenuating circumstances that prohibit actual attendance, and only at an AGM or EGM. All votes should be received by the Secretary at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

4.12 Only Tenant Panel members are eligible to vote at a Tenant Panel AGM or EGM, although non-voting panel members may contribute to debate through the Chair.

5. Annual General Meetings

5.1 The Tenant Panel Chair will present a written statement for the year. This report will be available at the AGM.

5.2 The AGM will take place within 15 months of the previous one whenever possible, and will be open to all actively involved Tenants of Tarka Housing Ltd.

5.4 The Quorum for the AGM shall be at least two thirds of Tenant Panel members, including 2 Officers of the Tenant Panel.

6. Changes to the Constitution

6.1 The Tenant Panel Constitution and Code of Conduct can only be changed or amended at an AGM or at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) called for that purpose. An EGM can be called for a specific reason if at least two thirds of the voting Tenant Panel membership agrees.

6.2 Any proposed changes to the Constitution or Code of Conduct should be sent to the Panel Secretary 28 days before an AGM or an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) that has been called for that purpose.

6.3 Changes to the Constitution must be agreed by a majority of Tenant Panel members present at the meeting.

7. Dissolution

7.1 To call an Extraordinary General Meeting for the Dissolution of the Tenant Panel requires two thirds voting Tenant Panel members' signatures.

Signed..... Chair

Print Name..... Signature.....

Date.....