



## Terms of Reference

Second Edition, November 2023

### 1. AIMS/OBJECTIVES

**1.1** To provide St Leger Homes with a tenant led scrutiny panel which investigates policy documents, procedure and services in order to identify issues and instances where changes could be made in order to create improvement of delivery of service, performance and/or provide alternatives that would represent better value for money for the Organisation.

**1.2** To establish a working partnership between the Organisation, Councillors, Council officers and other charitable organisations and voluntary bodies.

**1.3** To consult with the Organisation and provide the Executive Management Team (EMT) and Performance and Improvement Committee (P&I) with scrutiny reports for consideration and implementation.

**1.4** To campaign to improve standards of service and meet the standard for the regulatory tenant satisfaction measures.

### 2. POWERS

**2.1** In furtherance of the aims and objectives, the Panel shall have the power to:

- (A)** Collect and disseminate information on all matters relating to its aims and objectives and to exchange such information with other organisations and bodies having similar aims.
- (B)** Bring together in meetings and discussions Local Members, Officers of St Leger Homes, the Council, other agencies and individuals.
- (C)** Provide community empowerment opportunities.
- (D)** Be able to call a review into any St Leger Homes policy document and work with the relevant Service Manager, Head of Service and/or the EMT.
- (E)** Be provided with all supporting documentation in advance of any scrutiny review or desktop review in order to maintain best business practice by the Organisation.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

**3.1** Membership of the Panel will be open to all tenants and household members over the age of 18 years and up to a maximum of 1 person per property with the following exceptions.

**3.2** There is a breach of tenancy such as:

- (A)** Having been served notice for anti-social behaviour during the last 12 months.
- (B)** Have been served with a live possession order by the court for rent arrears or other tenancy breaches.

*Note: This is not a limited list, it includes anything that is seen as a breach of tenancy.*

**3.3** The Panel may accept membership from a tenant or resident, following a Panel meeting where members present agree that it is in best interest of the Panel. It should also be identified that the

individual does not belong to a neighbouring group or organisation that would conflict with the objectives of the Panel and that the person will work in partnership with the Panel.

**3.4** No member of the St Leger Board or current elected member of the Council should be a member of this Panel due to a potential conflict of interest.

**3.5** All members will sign a confidentiality agreement covering all aspects discussed at meetings and any on-going communications.

**3.6** TSP is an independent body of tenants working together to improve services and work to ensure that every tenant applying to the Panel are treated fairly. Anyone wishing to apply to become a member would firstly be invited to attend a Panel meeting as an observer. Following this an application would be submitted which would be reviewed by the by the Chair and Vice Chair. If a request to join the Panel was refused, then a full explanation would be provided, and any refusal would be in line with the requirements specified within this constitution.

**3.7** Non-attendance by any member for 3 meetings in a calendar year with no apologies, will automatically remove that member from the Panel.

#### **4. ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**4.1** The Committee shall be nominated and elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Panel, which shall be held within two weeks either side of the annual anniversary of the date of formation. This meeting will be attended by a member of the Customer Involvement Team.

#### **5. THE COMMITTEE**

**5.1** The Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and two other members as a minimum.

**5.2** In the case of resignation by the Chair or Secretary, it is the responsibility of the Panel to advise the Company as soon as possible once a replacement member has been co-opted into that position to ensure that contact details are up to date.

**5.3** Non-attendance by any Committee member for 3 consecutive meetings with no apologies, will automatically remove that member from the Panel. In this situation the Panel is empowered to co-opt a replacement member onto the committee.

#### **6. VOTING RIGHTS**

**6.1** All members of the Panel will have equal voting rights on all business matters in general panel meeting.

#### **7. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

**7.1** The Panel will be always non-party political in its views and actions.

#### **8. CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

**8.1** Any member of the panel involved in supervising or working with groups of children or vulnerable adults must agree to complete a Criminal Records Bureau check.

#### **9. MEETINGS**

**9.1** Panel Meetings – to discuss and where appropriate, vote on business and recommendations to be placed before meetings. Notice of the Annual General Meeting to be given to members by letter, leaflet or poster (as appropriate) at least 14 days before the meeting.

**9.2** Annual General Meetings – to be held within two weeks either side of the previous year's Annual General Meeting and shall:

**(A)** The current Committee shall stand down.

**(B)** Elect the Committee for the forthcoming year.

**(C)** Discuss any other business.

**9.3** The Panel shall hold general meetings for all members either in person or virtually (or both) on 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month at 10.30am.

**9.4** The Organisation will ensure that the Panel will have a facilitator in attendance at every meeting.

**9.5** Attendance to the Panel's meetings are by invitation only. Any invited employees of the Organisation may be asked the leave should there be any conflicts of interests.

## **10. QUORUM**

**10.1** Four members of the Panel shall form a quorum. The Panel will have a maximum of 11 members overall at any one time. Should there be a request for more than 11 members then this will be reviewed by the Panel and a decision made based on workload and resources required at the time. The Panel shall have the right to keep an up to date waiting list for potential new members wanting to join the panel. Subject to that individual meeting the criteria set out in the membership clause.

## **11. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

**11.1** The Panel is opposed to any form of discrimination or oppression against any gender, people from minority ethnic groups, disabled people, members of the LGBTIQA+ community and any other group, which is part of our local community. The Panel agrees to adopt and work within the appropriate policies and code of conduct and sign an Equal Opportunities form.

## **12. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

**12.1** A special general meeting may be convened by the Chairperson or by one-third of the members of the Panel by written request to the Secretary. The Secretary must give at least seven days' notice of the meeting and only the business for which the meeting is called can be discussed.

## **13. CONDUCT OF MEMBERS DURING THE COURSE OF MEETINGS**

**13.1** The Chairperson, acting Chairperson or other officer of the Panel has the right to ask any member to leave a meeting if, in his or her view, the member is under the malign influence of alcohol or any other substance, or the member is behaving in such a manner as to cause offence to other members or general disruption to the meeting. Under such circumstances the member will be excluded from further meetings of the Panel until such time as he/she has agreed in writing to observe the rules of the Panel.

**13.2** Until such time as the member has given such an assurance, the secretary will on behalf of the Panel take reasonable steps to ensure that information pertaining to the business of the Panel is made available in writing to the member. Letters from the excluded member pertaining to the business of the Panel, which are received during the period of exclusion, will be received by the Secretary and dealt with in Committee under the heading of 'Correspondence'.

**13.3** Any member of the Panel excluded from meetings under the heading of 'Conduct' will have an automatic right to make an appeal in writing to the Secretary and that appeal will be given due consideration at the next meeting following its receipt.

**13.4** An opportunity will be available for the appeal to be heard by an independent arbitrator.

## **15. TRAINING**

**15.1** All new members will undergo an induction and training as specified by St Leger Homes.

**15.2** All existing members will undergo both refresher and on-going training as identified by St Leger Homes and in order to have the skills to fulfil their membership function and must have access to appropriate IT equipment.

**15.3** All equipment provided by St Leger Homes will be returned if the panel member dies, resigns or has their membership terminated and in the same condition as received.

## **16. BUDGETS**

**16.1** Panel will have access to a small annual budget which will be utilised with the agreement of Panel for any costs incurred to deliver the TSP function successfully.

**16.2** The Organisation will provide the Panel with it's end of year financial statement to ensure transparency on what the Panels costs have been for that year.

## **17. EXPENSES**

**17.1** Panel members work on a voluntary basis and all reasonable expenses will be paid in line with St Leger Homes Expenses Policy.

### **Document details:**

This document was created and agreed by a sub-group of members of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel following a request by the Company to move away from a written Constitution and to a Terms of Reference document.

The document will be reviewed annually to ensure it considers and reflects any new national guidelines.

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