

**Poole Housing Partnership**

**Housing Strategy Panel (HSP)**

**CONSTITUTION**

March 2008

1. NAME

The group shall be known as the Housing Strategy Panel (HSP) herewith referred to as “the Panel”.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main Aims and Objectives of the Panel are:

- 2.1 To represent Council Tenants and Leaseholders on all matters relating to the strategy, policies and performance of Poole Housing Partnership and the Council on issues affecting existing or future tenants and leaseholders of the borough
- 2.2 To consider the impact of changes in legislation affecting services to Tenants and Leaseholders
- 2.3 To promote greater understanding of housing and related matters in the community

3. MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 The Panel comprises tenant and leaseholder representatives elected in the following ways:
  - a) Two representatives elected from the Leaseholder Customer Service Panel
  - b) One representative from each Community Housing Action Team (elected by resident representatives if more than one 'general' representative stands)
  - c) Four representatives elected by resident representatives on the sheltered housing forum
  - d) Up to ten representatives of 'special interest' groups who are under-represented in the main participation structure may be co-opted onto the panel, for example people with disabilities or younger people. (Currently 2 reps from the 'Focus on Disability' group have been invited)
- 3.2 If representatives cease to be Council Tenants or Leaseholders, they shall cease membership of the Panel, and be replaced by another appropriate panel member, elected by the relevant constituency

- 3.3 The Borough of Poole will elect three Members to serve on the Panel. These Members will be non-voting, but will take part in any debate, and act in an advisory capacity. Substitutes will be allowed.
- 3.4 The Poole Housing Partnership will elect three members of the Board to serve on the Panel. These members will be non-voting, but will take part in any debate and act in an advisory capacity. Substitutes will be allowed.
- 3.5 Poole Housing Partnership will provide Administration Support to the Panel
- 3.6 The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Panel shall be elected on an bi-annual basis. Elections will take place at the first Panel meeting after May each year except in 2005 when the election may take place at a different date. Nominees for election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman must come from the Panel. Both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be elected by the voting members of the Panel. The voting for a new Chairman and Vice Chairman shall be done by show of hands. Any members giving apologies prior to the meeting shall be given the opportunity to vote by ballot. Should the Chairman's post become vacant during the course of the year, the Vice Chairman will continue until the next election. Nominees for post of Chairman must be tenant representatives. Only when no tenant representatives are nominated may a leaseholder representative stand for this position. The chair must stand down after two consecutive years in post.
- 3.7 In the absence of both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, the meeting will elect a Chairman for that meeting from the voting members present.
- 3.8 Any Panel member who misses three consecutive meetings, without satisfactory explanation will, unless otherwise agreed by voting members, be treated as having resigned, and will be replaced by a new representative, elected by the appropriate constituency.
- 3.9 The meetings will be open to the public but members of the public will not have the right to speak unless invited to do by the Chair for a specific purpose

#### 4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The Panel may make recommendations on strategic, policy and performance issues relating to housing services provided by Poole Housing Partnership, or by the council where the interests of current and future tenants and leaseholders may be affected
- 4.2 The Panel will monitor on an annual basis the implementation of the Tenant and Leaseholder Partnership Agreement.
- 4.3 All members will aim to make a positive contribution to working in partnership with Poole Housing Partnership and the Council and have a commitment to improving the quality of life for current and prospective tenants and

leaseholders in the borough. Members of the panel will have an interest in the overall strategic, policy and performance issues of PHP and the council.

4.4 Members will provide feedback to their relevant constituency

4.5 The Chair would not normally vote unless a casting vote is required

4.6 Attend training events related to membership of the panel

## 5. CONDUCT

5.1 All members will be expected to sign and abide by the Code of Conduct

## 6. THE PROCESS OF DELEGATION

6.1 Poole Housing Partnership and Housing and Community Services will endeavour to obtain the views of tenants and leaseholders on all issues relating to the provision of housing related services. The panel will be the principal forum for consulting on issues of strategy, policy and performance though other forums such as focus groups and working groups will also be used.

The panel will typically consider the following issues:

- Any changes to policies
- The impact of and response to changes in legislation
- HRA land and other asset disposal
- Development of the Business Plan and Housing Strategy
- The annual budget
- Best Value Reviews
- Annual Service Plans
- Overall performance reports
- The partnership agreement
- The overall budget for tenant participation
- Feedback from and to Community Housing Action Teams and the other participative forums
- Any other appropriate matters relating to overall housing strategy and policy

## 7. QUORUM

7.1 No meeting of the Panel will be held (or continue) without at least five voting members present, of which at least three must be tenants

## 8. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

8.1 Minutes of the meeting will be taken by PHP and signed by the Chair at the next meeting as a true record.

8.2 No discussion shall take place upon these minutes, except at 'Matters Arising'.

8.3 Agendas, minutes and reports of the meeting will be forwarded to representatives seven days prior to the Panel meeting

## 9. VOTING

9.1 The mode of voting at meetings shall be a clear show of hands by voting members only. The vote will be counted by the Chairman/Vice-Chairman and recorded in the minutes.

9.2 The Chair of the Panel or the acting Chair will have, in the case of equality of votes, a casting vote.

## 10. DURATION/DETAIL OF MEETINGS

10.1 The meeting of the Panel will normally take place on a Wednesday evening. The dates for the year's meeting will be agreed and scheduled as early as possible each municipal year.

10.2 No meeting shall normally proceed for longer than two hours without a five minute break.

10.3 The Chair may evoke a ten minute guillotine on discussion of any item at the meeting. If no agreement is reached, the item can be deferred to the next meeting.

10.4 Meetings will normally be held at the Meeting room at Poole Housing Partnership offices in Wimborne Road, Poole.

10.5 The Chairman / Vice-Chairman will ensure that meetings are run in a fair and democratic way so that everyone in attendance gets their chance to speak and is kept informed. All members of Panel should take care not to criticise named members of staff, colleagues or members of the Council in the meetings and act in accordance with the Code of Conduct. The ruling of the Chairman shall be final.

## 11. AGENDA

11.1 Any member of the Panel may request an item on the Agenda, by giving four weeks notice to PHP

## 12. FINANCES

12.1 Tenant and leaseholder representatives are entitled to claim reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for meetings as agreed with Poole Housing Partnership

## 13. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

13.1 This Constitution may be amended if at least two thirds of voting representatives vote in favour.

13.2 This Constitution will be formally reviewed in February 2006 and every two years thereafter

14. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

14.1 Members of the Panel will demonstrate a commitment to creating an environment that is free from harassment and discrimination.

14.2 The Panel will ensure that it does not discriminate on any grounds including: disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, medical condition, race, colour, nationality or religious beliefs

14.3 The Panel will actively encourage representatives from under-represented groups to ensure their voice is heard

14.4 The Panel will be non-political in all of its activities.

**This Constitution was adopted as the Constitution of the Housing Strategy Panel on .....**

**By:**

**SIGNED: .....**

**Chair of HSP**

**SIGNED: .....**

**VICE-CHAIR OF HSP**

**SIGNED: .....**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF POOLE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP LTD**

**WITNESSED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**SIGNED:** .....

**DATED:** .....