

Selwood Housing's Scrutiny Team Terms of Reference September 2021

Vision:

To involve and empower customers to scrutinise Selwood Housing, by completing reviews and monitoring services, to ensure that those services are effective, customer-centred, deliver value for money and are inclusive.

This allows customers to make recommendations about service and process delivery and influence decision making.

Mission:

To act as a critical friend to the organisation to help improve services by conducting customer led service and process reviews.

Accountability:

Supporting the work of the scrutiny team will be a key objective of the involvement & communities team strategy and quarterly performance report. Regular updates will be given to the executive team and board on request.

Selwood Housing's annual report will contain information about the work of the scrutiny team.

The scrutiny team will be subject to external scrutiny themselves. The board are able to trigger this if they have concerns about the standard and approach taken by the team which they have previously expressed, and feel have not been addressed.

Should such a situation arise, a mediation approach will be initiated in the first instance. The board has the ultimate authority to take appropriate action it deems fit should an agreement not be reached.

Team member selection, role, support and boundaries

The scrutiny team will operate independently of staff, with the involvement & communities team offering support. The scrutiny team should work closely with the internal auditors to ensure that they complement each other and do not duplicate work.

Although independent, the scrutiny team is accountable to Selwood Housing's board for the successful delivery of the terms of reference.

The scrutiny team (not individuals) may request information, advice and documents to help it deliver the terms of reference, providing that it is appropriate to do so.

The scrutiny team will be responsible for their own report writing and will be assisted where appropriate and/or necessary by the involvement & communities team.

The scrutiny team will be responsible for monitoring Selwood's response to the *Together with Tenants* charter

Scrutiny team led reviews:

The scrutiny team will offer Selwood's board a 6 monthly update on current and future reviews for information and will have access to relevant performance data and planning information to avoid duplication in support of deciding what to review.

The scrutiny team will develop a project plan at the start of each review. At the end of each project the team will evaluate the review process and ask the service reviewed for feedback to help continually improve the team's performance.

Completed reviews will be shared with the relevant service manager and their team for them to consider the report and the recommendations made. Both the report and the management response to the recommendations will then be presented to the Board. Reviews will only need to be presented to the executive if a recommendation is made that effects a number of teams, more resource is needed or it's a great example of good practice that should be shared.

Should a review recommendation be rejected for a good business reason (e.g. resourcing, team capacity, finance, not legally or physically possible) through the review process, the scrutiny team will need to be fully informed on the reasons behind the rejection with a view to accepting the organisation's position. If it is not possible to reach agreement, then the disputed recommendation will be included in the board report with an explanation of the differing points of view.

Whistle-blowing: whilst the scrutiny team will respect the confidentiality of the information it receives, there may be times when team members come across information that needs to be reported under Selwood Housing's Whistle-blowing policy.

Only as a last resort, the scrutiny team may contact the regulator should they identify a serious failure that Selwood Housing does not address when highlighted by the scrutiny team. The scrutiny team must be able to

demonstrate that every effort has been made to work in partnership with the organisation to resolve the issue before taking this step.

Impact measurement:

Annually:

publication of the scrutiny team's annual review
at least two scrutiny reviews delivered per year

Quarterly:

of scrutiny review actions completed (against # expected)

of scrutiny review actions in progress

of scrutiny team members

By review:

Scrutiny led end of project learning review

The Scrutiny team:

Recruitment: an annual recruitment process will be undertaken to ensure that the scrutiny team is made up of around 10 members, with a minimum of 5.

Members will be selected through the annual recruitment process. The recruitment process will be open and transparent, assessing people's interest, skill and suitability, taking full account of the desire to provide equal and fair opportunity. As far as possible, membership will reflect the general profile of customers, subject to skills needs and applications made.

A clear description of who can/cannot apply to be a scrutiny team member can be found in the person specification.

Leadership: a chair and vice chair will be elected by the scrutiny team for a minimum period of one year. At the point of appointment, the scrutiny team have the option of confirming these as three-year appointments subject to the chair's consideration.

Length of service: scrutiny team members will serve one year as a minimum on the team, and three years maximum in the first instance, with the option of a further three years consecutive service subject to the needs of the team at that time.

Scrutiny team members must serve a minimum of 12 months on the team before applying for vacancies for customer board directorships. There is no guarantee that scrutiny team membership enables successful progression to the Selwood board. If a scrutiny team member becomes a

customer board member or vice versa they need to declare potential conflicts of interests at the appropriate time.

Whilst a scrutiny team member, members are not allowed to be involved in other incentivised involvement opportunities.

Annual Reviews: Scrutiny team members will be offered an informal annual review with the chair and a member of the involvement & communities team to reflect on the previous year and agree a plan, if needed, for the year ahead.

Code of Conduct: All members will be required to sign and uphold the code of conduct which includes a commitment to declare any conflicts of interest and maintain confidentiality. Any breach of this could result in members being dismissed from the group.

Grievances: (including votes of no confidence in other team members) will be dealt with in line with the Selwood Housing's document 'Involvement & engagement - when things go wrong'. Complaints relating to members of staff will be dealt with in line with the Selwood Housing complaints procedure.

Meetings: The scrutiny team will convene formal business meetings on an at least a quarterly basis with support from the involvement & communities team and will hold regular informal meetings as required.

At formal meetings 50% of members will need to attend to ensure that the meeting is quorate. Decisions will be made by majority vote, although consensus will be encouraged.

Training: Scrutiny team members will be expected to attend all scrutiny training during their induction and the first facilitated review. They must be prepared to commit to ongoing specialist training in all areas of skills needed for the role throughout their time as a member of the scrutiny team.

Support: In order to fulfil their function, scrutiny team members will be provided with a Selwood laptop on a loan basis and will need reasonable access to phones. Members will be supported to work online and will be supported through training to access their technology in order to fulfil the role.

Administrative support: Where possible, the scrutiny team will provide administrative support from within its membership. Where this is not possible, they may request assistance from the involvement & communities team.

Budget & Expenses:

Budget: Funding for training and scrutiny team related activities will be held by the involvement & communities manager and shared with the scrutiny team chair to support planning.

Expenses: All reasonable expenses will be paid in line with the expenses policy. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Mileage/travel costs
- Carers costs
- Refreshments
- Internet /broadband (a monthly contribution towards use of own equipment)
- Printing/copying (a contribution)
- Stationery

Members of the scrutiny team will receive monthly shopping vouchers by way of an incentive for their continued involvement and commitment. The claim for the monthly incentive is subject to each scrutiny member working effectively during that period.

Equality & Diversity:

Where feasible, scrutiny team membership aims to reflect the diversity of Selwood Housing's wider customer group

The scrutiny team recognises the existence and importance of the different protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, transgender and sexual orientation within the tenant profile and will strive to ensure that no group or individual will be disadvantaged because of its activities.

The scrutiny team is committed to promoting equality of opportunity to all persons in every respect of activities carried out by it. Members must sign and abide by the code of conduct and undertake to deal firmly and promptly with any cases of discrimination or harassment.

All members must undertake mandatory equality and diversity training.

Laura Henderson (scrutiny chair) & Pete Davies (involvement & communities)
September 2021