

Resident Advisory Panel (RAP): Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

This RAP Terms of Reference sits alongside the RAP Code of Conduct and Working Together Protocol, which details operational procedures agreed by the RAP and Haringey Council 2023.

The Terms of Reference should be seen as guidance and does not constitute a contractual relationship between the RAP member and the RAP or Haringey Council

The Terms of Reference reflect the positioning, role, and responsibility of RAP as part of the Community and Resident Engagement Strategy adopted by Haringey Council in July 2022. The scrutiny working model and compliance remains consistent with the previous named Resident Scrutiny Panel (RSP).

2. Background

The RAP is the new name for the RSP established in 2011. Residents have proven to be effective in carrying out housing services reviews and associated activities to encourage continuous service improvement.

All RAP members are recruited through a competency recruitment process. Recruitment events will be held periodically to ensure that membership numbers are maintained to an acceptable level and will be agreed and planned by the RAP.

The guidelines or operating principles should be flexible to allow the RAP to make operating changes to the way they work that enhance their ability to work as an effective and efficient as required which will be reported to the Resident Voice Board as part of the annual impact assessment report. Any changes must be approved by the majority of RAP members and recorded in the RAP minutes.

3. RAP Operating Principles

The RAP will operate under the following basic principles:

- Achieving full access to internal performance data, comparative benchmarking data and resident feedback.
- Ability to commission independent evidence gathering activities through the utilisation of other resident involvement and consultation activities.
- Provision of an annual budget to cover cost for Mentor and running of the RAP.
- Ability to gather information and liaise with members of staff, councillors, tenants and leaseholders as required.
- Undertake a range of reality checking activities including, resident surveys, interviews, focus groups, job shadowing/observation, telephone surveys etc.

- Ability to escalate any critical concerns before completion of a service review report to the Scrutiny Champion for sharing with the appropriate officer or service lead.
- To provide confidential comprehensive reports detailing key findings and recommendations from reviews of services managed and delivered by the Placemaking and Housing Directorate in Haringey Council.
- Follow the agreed scrutiny process outlined in the Scrutiny Guidance Manual.

4. Purpose

The RAP is the independent resident-led panel that holds London Borough of Haringey, Placemaking and Housing Directorate to account through scrutiny and challenge, acting as the critical friend to ensure continuous improvement in service delivery for residents. The RAP is independent and reports to the Resident Voice Board. The RAP will welcome the opportunity to support officers, and elected councillors by considering requests for specific housing service reviews to provide independent assurance on customer experience.

5. Responsibilities

The RAP will operate as an independent panel free from the influence and control of other resident engagement groups in carrying out its scrutiny role but shall remain accountable to the Scrutiny Champion and Haringey Council Placemaking and Housing Directorate. There may be times where other resident engagement groups may benefit from partnership working with the RAP, and a flexible and welcoming approach will be provided.

The responsibilities of the RAP are:

- To ensure that tenants' and leaseholders' feedback, aspirations and priorities are central to improving service delivery and performance.
- To hold the organisation to account to its residents.
- To act as a driver for continuous service improvements.
- To strengthen the links between resident engagement and the Haringey Board, to ensure that tenants and leaseholders are able to influence the organisations' decision-making processes in the interests of delivering improvements in services in line with current and new regulatory changes
- To carry out RAP reviews as detailed in the annual work plan approved by the Scrutiny Champion
- To be objective honest and demonstrate integrity at all times
- To nominate scrutiny monitors from the RAP to observe agreed service improvement.
- To review all Housing operational services delivered or managed by Haringey Council.
- To agree all reviews and their scope through the scrutiny review proposal process.

- To produce an annual RAP impact and assessment report detailing all activities and learning outcomes.
- To provide annual RAP member personal development reviews and plans to support individual members.
- To use the RAP Probation Policy to assist newly appointed RAP members to become integrated into the panel.
- To promote the work and role of the RAP at community and engagement events, newsletters, and presentations etc.
- To provide on the job and specialist training to aid capacity building for all RAP members.
- To hold regular team building activities to motivate and ensure the RAP operates effectively and efficiently as a team.

6. Functions

Role and remit

The RAP is positioned within the Community and Resident Engagement structure as part of the resident engagement strategy, but operates independently but within the role remit agreed and compliant with Haringey Council high standards of integrity and compliance

The RAP's activities will focus on resident experience, service quality and performance. The RAP's remit may include other areas of the business as determined by the Scrutiny Champion. The RAP will consider service review requests from other involved residents, Resident Voice Board, employees and Councillors. The final decision to carry out any reviews requested remains with the RAP.

Scheduling RAP's activities

The service areas to be reviewed by the RAP will be informed in the main through resident feedback or performance information. The RAP is resident-led and will lead on determining areas of service to be reviewed but are committed to supporting Haringey Council to meet their aspiration to be recognised consistently as a high performing social landlord.

The RAP will develop an annual review work programme and present it to the Resident Voice Board for consideration and information as part of the annual impact assessment process.

Scheduling of the RAP activities will be determined by: -

- Availability of RAP resources.
- Time availability within the annual work plan.
- Capacity of RAP members to carry out required roles.
- Approval of review proposals in a timely manner.

In addition to the annual core schedule of activities, the RAP may respond to consultation requests from the Housing regulator etc. demonstrating the pro-active support of residents to demonstrate a voice to influence potential changes to regulation and compliance.

Values

The RAP will be governed by the following core values:

- Recommendations must be proportionate, evidence-based, and reflect the operating context.
- Respecting the remit of the Housing Board in making final business decisions.
- Accountability to tenants and leaseholders of London Borough of Haringey residing in homes owned and managed by the Council.
- Acting with honesty, integrity and transparency.
- Adding value to the business through increasing levels of tenants' satisfaction.
- Respecting and considering the needs of others.

Accountability

The key objective of the RAP is to ensure it achieves a high degree of accountability to the tenants and leaseholders of London Borough of Haringey. This is facilitated by adoption of the following measures:

- All RAP reports to be considered by Resident Voice Board and approved by the Haringey Housing Board.
- A requirement that the RAP publishes a summary review report from its scrutiny activities in line with the agreed Haringey Council Communication Strategy.
- An annual impact assessment report to be provided to the Resident Voice Board
- A requirement that the RAP publishes its achievements in the Haringey Council residents' annual report.

7. Safeguards

These include:

- A person specification and a set of standard competencies.
- A competency-based recruitment process.
- Adoption and signing of the RAP code of conduct, 'Working Together Protocol' and confidentiality agreement. This does not imply or mean that a contract exists between Haringey Council, RAP and the Member.
- A requirement for members to commit to the approved capacity building training programme.
- Use of a suitably qualified Independent Mentor to assist the RAP's operations and assess collective competence.

- A requirement that the RAP will publish its activities in newsletters
- A maximum of 6 months probationary period for each newly recruited RAP member.
- Providing a personal development review for each RAP member to identify training and development needs and where appropriate review membership.
- An annual impact assessment carried out by the RAP.
- Ability for the Haringey Placemaking and Housing Board to initiate a full external scrutiny of the RAP.

8. Independent Mentor

The independent Mentor will be appointed by the RAP and procured in line with the Haringey Council procurement policy. The remit for the independent Mentor is to deliver agreed scrutiny reviews in line with the annual work plan, and on occasion work requested through the Scrutiny Champion and Haringey Council. The remit includes delivery of tailored scrutiny training, and support to capacity build the RAP to deliver effective scrutiny. Training will be carried out through 'on the job' training and covers all activities associated with scrutiny. The service standards for the Independent Mentor are outlined in section 2.2 of the 'Working Together Scrutiny Protocol'.

9. Membership

It is vital that the RAP is collectively competent. Measures that ensure that this is achieved include:

- A person specification set of standard competencies, competency-based recruitment process and an annual appraisal system (see Safeguards).
- Priority given to recruiting people with the right skills with the caveat that the panel will aim to have a diverse representation from both tenants and leaseholders.
- Restricting membership to a maximum 10 places (excluding the Independent Mentor). Ensuring that individual availability for participation during working hours is provided by at least 50% of the total membership, and a ratio no higher than 1 leaseholder to 5 tenants.
- The RAP may change its membership numbers following a majority vote by the RAP and will be reported to the Resident Voice Board in the next annual impact assessment report.
- Membership is restricted to one member per household.
- Members cannot be employed by Haringey Council; an elected councillor of Haringey Council; a business partner or a potential business partner of Haringey Council
- Be over 18 years of age
- Live in a property owned or managed by Haringey Council and pay rent or service charges *

- **Not** be in breach of their tenancy or leasehold agreement
- **Not** being a named person or part of any current or past legal action against Homes for Haringey, Haringey Council or the RSP renamed the RAP
- **Not** be known/recorded as a vexatious complainant

10. Your commitment to RAP

The RAP has a responsibility to carry out and deliver effective reviews and identification of service improvements. To meet these requirements, you must: -

- Attend all RAP monthly meeting (twelve).
- Attend all additional capacity building training.
- Engage in reality checking activities.

The RAP will meet a minimum of 12 times a year. Additional time commitment will be required from members involved in training and specific service reviews. The RAP has the right to call additional meetings as required. Meetings will take a hybrid format of in person and virtual.

11. Quorum

The quorum of the RAP shall be 5 members or half of the current membership (whichever is the lower).

12. RSP Officers if agreed by the RAP at their annual review- normal practice appointing a rolling Chair to facilitate meetings and review leads for specific activities

- A) Chair
- B) Vice Chair

The Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed through a secret ballot process for a term of one year but can stand again. The Chair and Vice Chair will follow and take on the roles and responsibilities detailed in their role descriptions. Delivery of scrutiny and overall project management will be the responsibility of the Chair supported by the Vice Chair and Independent Mentor.

15. Support for RAP members

Out of pocket expenses including: -

- Travel by public transport/car
- Printing and stationery
- Taxis will be arranged in agreement with the Scrutiny Champion

The Scrutiny Champion must authorise and approve expenses. All claims must be supported by receipts and submitted in a format that meets Haringey Council volunteer expense claim policy.

16. Healths and Safety

RAP members should carry out their role in a safe manner in accordance with any control measures and report any health and safety concerns to the Scrutiny Champion.

17. Equality and Diversity statement

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on the activities of the RAP and reviewed annually to ensure that, as a Resident Involvement activity, it is as accessible as possible for all residents. The RAP will seek to be representative of the local demographic and reach out to hard to reach groups regarding membership and participation with activities undertaken by the RAP

The RAP will also carry out an Equality Impact Assessment as part of each scrutiny review. The panel will look at the service area being scrutinised to see how it could be made more accessible to residents.