

Local Groups Terms of Reference

1. Role of the Local Groups

- a. The aim of each Local Group will be to work with EKH, Councils, tenants and leaseholders to resolve local community issues, to support local community projects and to oversee estate improvements.
- b. The Local Groups will carry the following functions in meeting the above aim:
 - Provide feedback and make recommendations regarding the Councils' housing related policies and strategies
 - Raise local communal & community issues, not individuals' issues, with EKH and the local council on behalf of tenants and leaseholders and recommend solutions
 - Make recommendations for service improvements
 - Support and/or promote community projects

2. Membership

a. Numbers and composition

Each Local Group will have a maximum of twelve members. Each of these members will have voting rights.

b. Membership criteria

Local Group members should be a tenant or leaseholder of the local council.

A Group can involve one 'independent' member; this will be someone who has an interest in the area/local community and/or someone who can bring additional, relevant skills or knowledge to support the work of the Group. However, it should be noted that expenses will not be payable to 'independent' members, in line with EKH's Resident Involvement Expenses and Incentives Policy (approved by the Board in March 2017), nor will they have voting rights.

c. Restrictions on membership

The following will not be eligible for membership of Local Groups:

- Current EKH Board members
- Current councillors
- EKH or Council officers
- Any tenant who is in breach of their tenancy conditions and EKH has commenced possession proceedings
- Anyone who has an 'unspent' conviction (as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974)
- Any resident who has committed a serious breach of the code of conduct for involved residents
- Anyone who is unreasonably persistent or a vexatious complainant, as defined by the Housing Ombudsman and set out in EKH's Vexatious Complaints Policy (March 2015).
- Anyone who is motivated to join the Group to address their own personal grievances

- Only one member of any household will be able to be a member of the local group at any one time.

d. Non-voting members

The following people will be invited to attend the Local Groups' meetings but will not have voting rights:

- Appropriate local councillor(s) will be invited to attend, participate and observe, in relation to local council services.
- EKH Resident Board members – each Resident Board Member will attend the Local Group meetings in their district. They will receive feedback housing related issues from Local Groups to the Board and will provide feedback and updates from Board meetings.
- Independent members (i.e. members who are not EKH tenants or leaseholders)

Invitations to attend will also be extended to EKH and Client Officers, contractors and local businesses when their specific input is required. The Local Group will write to invitees, setting out the date, time and venue for the meeting, the agenda and a description of the information the Group requires and the reasons the information is required.

e. Length of membership

There will be no limit on the length of time anyone can be a member of the Local Group.

3. Selection of members

- a. The Local Group members, along with support from EKH, will carry out periodic publicity campaigns to help attract new members. Publicity methods may include, but not limited to, promoting membership of the Local Groups through community events/consultation and promotional information. Groups will also be required to carry out their own promotional activities to attract new members?
- b. Anyone interested in joining a Group should attend 2 consecutive meetings, to help them and the Group to assess whether involvement in a Local Group is right for the interested person. After the second meeting, the Local Group will decide, by means of a vote, whether the interested person should be invited to become a member. Anyone who is chosen to become a member of a Group must meet the eligibility criteria set out in 2.c. above.

4. Roles and selection

- a. Each Local Group will have a chair, vice chair and secretary as a minimum.
- b. Any Group that will be directly managing funds on behalf of their Group should appoint a treasurer.
- c. Nominations will be sought for each role each year in advance of the Group's AGM. (Secret) Ballots will be held by each Group to select the

Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary (and the Treasurer if applicable). The ballot will be held at the AGM for each Local Group.

- d. Nominations will be accepted from tenants and/or leaseholders and no one person will hold more than one role within the committee.
- e. Groups can choose to have other positions, if these are deemed essential to the running of the Group, and to select a member to take up these positions using the selection process mentioned above in 4c.

5. Meetings

a. Agenda items

Each Local Group will consider the following items on a regular basis:

- Local issues – each Group will work in partnership with EKH and the local council to resolve local issues. However, if the Local Group is unable to resolve an issue despite repeated attempts (i.e. an issue is raised at two consecutive meetings and remains unresolved), the Group will escalate their concerns to the Residents' Panel. Please see escalation process set out in Appendix A.
- Local Council consultations regarding housing related policies and strategies
- Community Projects
- Feedback from Residents' Panel and Task and Finish/Project Groups – Local Group representatives who are members of the Residents' Panel will provide feedback from the Panel meeting. A summary or round up of the Task and Finish/Project Group activities will be given to Local Groups. This information may be provided in the form of a regular e-newsletter rather than provided at each Local Group meeting.
- Monitor feedback from estate inspections, accompanied by action plans to address issues identified.

b. Frequency

Local Groups will meet quarterly and their meetings will fit in with the cycle of meetings for Residents' Panel and Board.

c. Quorum

Local Groups will be quorate when three quarters of the members (e.g. 8 out of 12) are present. Wherever possible, the Group should reach a consensus when making recommendations. If a vote is taken, a simple majority is required to ratify a decision. In the case of a tie, the chair person will have a casting vote.

d. AGM

Local Groups will hold an AGM each year. The purpose of the meeting will be as follows:

- To elect chair, vice chair, secretary (and treasurer and any other positions, if applicable)
- To provide a report about the Group's activities and outcomes in the previous year

- To announce which community, housing related projects will be supported by the Group

Local EKH tenants and leaseholders, councillors, EKH Board members and officers will be invited to attend the AGMs.

6. Local Group Independence

- a. The Local Groups will take responsibility for the following activities:
 - Setting the agendas for their meetings
 - Take minutes of the Group's meetings, with support and training from EKH
 - Send invitations to officers, councillors, Board members, contractors or any other persons that the Group need in order to deal/respond to issues on their agenda
 - Send meeting agendas and minutes to EKH for distribution
- b. Support and promote the opportunity to carry out tenant surveys, in partnership with EKH, about repairs, grounds maintenance, etc, and to use this information to feedback to local contract meetings
- c. To help Groups to operate effectively, EKH will provide up to date information, for example, regarding improvement and planned maintenance programmes and about the contracts for services in their district.

7. Dealing with items not covered in the Terms of Reference

The Local Groups' Terms of Reference will not cover all eventualities that may arise. Anything not covered will be dealt with by the Local Groups by way of a decision by majority vote of the members present. Any decision made will be a one off decision and may be considered by all Local Groups for future inclusion in any review of the Terms of Reference.

8. Review process

The Local Groups' Terms of Reference will be reviewed 1 year after it is implemented and then at least every three years thereafter, by the Panel members and officers working together.

Date:

Date of next review:

Appendix A: Escalation protocol – example

