

Final Scoping Framework

Title of Review: Housing Associations Scrutiny Panel

PART 1: THE REVIEW

Section 1 - Terms of Reference

To seek clarification as to the regulation of social landlords and housing associations. There is a need to scrutinise the current situation and operations with regards to a limited number of housing associations within the town, together with service standards, satisfaction and complaints received, ideally with witness sessions from various housing associations.

It was felt important to explore options to improve the work between the council and various RSLs, resulting in a positive outcome for residents.

Section 2 – Reasons for the Review

At the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in March 2023, clarification was sought as to the regulation of social landlords and housing associations. It was felt it would be beneficial to scrutinise the current situation with regards to a limited number of housing associations within the town, together with service standards, satisfaction and complaints received, ideally with witness sessions from various housing associations.

It was noted the OSC had previously received a report ([SHAP/69](#)) containing information on the housing associations operating in Crawley and third-party data was difficult to mandate, particularly as the Council is not the regulator for RPs.

It was discussed at the OSC Training Session and approved at the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in June 2023 that this follow up would be beneficial in the format of a 'Spotlight' Scrutiny Review. A Spotlight Review usually takes 2-3 sessions (4 maximum) and involves:

1. Introduction, scoping and identifying witnesses.
2. Witness sessions.
3. Finalising recommendations (or Obtaining additional information if required).
4. Finalising recommendations (if not completed in 3).

Section 3 – What will be in scope

Whilst the previous report [SHAP/69](#) identified key points, this Scoping Framework is specific in that the **scrutiny panel should focus on the activities where the council can influence and add value.**

- a) Review report [SHAP/69](#).
- b) Main priorities and issues faced for residents in social housing, in relation to their landlords.
- c) RSL's current targets and achievements in various service areas eg maintenance (and repairs) – especially of the public realm, overall environmental appearance, customer contact, general customer satisfaction, anti-social behaviour.
- d) What influence the council can have.
- e) The openness and approachability of specific RSLs in the borough.

Overall aims –

- a) Improved method of contact.
- b) Reduction in complaints received by council/councillors regarding housing associations.

Section 4 - What will not be included in the scope (and why)

Potentially this could become a huge review, but it is proposed to keep this review more proportionate and concise by focusing on where it can add most value. Specific cases, actions or decisions taken by officers of the council of housing associations, unless they are related to policy. Anecdotal evidence may be used to inform areas, policies or habits to investigate but specific people are not to be scrutinised and the Panel should aim to avoid assigning blame to individuals.

PART 2: EVIDENCE GATHERING AND PLANNING

Section 5 - Key Documents and Background Information the Panel may find useful for research.

It will be necessary to take into consideration current and proposed policy documents when undertaking this Panel's work to ensure work is in line with Council policies and priorities.

- a) [Housing Associations Operating in Crawley OSC Report - SHAP/69](#)
- b) [Regulatory Standards \(Regulator of Social Housing\)](#)
- c) [Decent Homes Standard: Definition and Guidance for Implementation \(DCLG\)](#)
- d) [New Consumer Standards \(out for consultation\)](#)
- e) [Tenancy Strategy 2019-2024 Report SHAP/77](#) and [Tenancy Strategy 2019-2024](#)
- f) [List of current RPs \(CBC website as of September 2023\)](#)

Section 6 - Witnesses that may be invited

(some initial suggestions listed below – but probably will need to be more focused and selective)

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Name/Position</u>
CBC	Head of Strategic Housing
CBC	Head of Crawley Homes
CBC	Other Councillors may also be invited to provide evidence (including the Cabinet Member for Housing).
External	RSLs operating within the borough – potential witness sessions (Moat Housing Association, Hyde Housing Association, Clarion Housing and Guinness Trust), with the possibility to liaise with others via email.
External	Regulator of Social Housing

Section 7 - Site Visits and Attendance at Events

<u>Location/Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Purpose of Visit</u>
Potential visits dependent on issues of concern	TBC	Informal site visits by councillors

Section 8 - Community Engagement Proposals

TBC if required

PART 3: ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKLIST

Section 9 – Planning the Panel’s Work Programme		
	Date (prov)	Details: (e.g. witnesses, objectives etc.)
Projected start date	Sept 2023	
1 panel meeting	14.9.2023	Background report and scoping framework
2 panel meeting	23.11.2033	
3 panel meeting	7.2.2024	
4 panel meeting – IF REQ	18.3.2024	

Section 10 - Resources and Responsibilities	
Chair of Scrutiny Panel	Cllr Lunnon
Other Members of Scrutiny Panel	Cllrs Ayling, Hellier, Lunnon, Piggott and Pritchard
Lead Officer(s)	Ian Duke
DSO	Heather Girling
Cabinet Member	Cllr Irvine
Head of Service	Head of Strategic Housing

Section 11 - Reporting Arrangements	
Committee/Body	Date (prov.)
Final report of Panel to Overview and Scrutiny Commission	TBC
Final report to Cabinet (as appropriate)	TBC
Final report to other Committee, full Council or Body (as appropriate)	TBC

Section 12 - Approvals		
Details	By whom	Date
Panel agreed	OSC	26 June 2023
Scoping Framework - drafted	Democratic Services	21 July 2023
Scoping Framework - first agreed	Panel	14 September 2023