



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Role

TITLE: Elected Tenant and Leaseholder Representative

SERVICE: Housing Services: City Homes

REPORT TO: Resident Engagement Officer

PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives (TLR) are elected every four years through majority vote by city council tenants and leaseholder. The purpose of the role is to represent the interests of City Council tenants and leaseholders on the Housing Scrutiny Committee and show commitment to overall representation of and engagement with City Council residents. The Committee scrutinises the decisions of the Executive Councillor for Housing. TLRs have voting rights on decisions relating to the landlord function of the council.

MAIN ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attend the Housing Scrutiny Committee whenever it is convened.
- Attend TLR briefings held prior to a sitting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee.
- Attend bi-monthly TLR update meetings.
- Read the agenda and supporting documents in preparation of each sitting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee
- Represent the interests of tenants and leaseholders in all decision making and in the conduct of council business.
- Contribute to the Council's efforts to engage a wider demographic of tenants and leaseholders.
- Act in a professional manner, ensuring that the Council's equality and diversity pledge is adhered to at all times.
- Contribute to the development of policy decisions and development where required.
- Publicise the TLR role and raise awareness of its function within the council and community.
- Use the Open Door publication to update all council tenants and leaseholders on the recent debates and decisions at the Housing Scrutiny Committee
- Contribute to other housing related publications where required.
- TLR's shall subscribe to the Tenant and Leaseholder Code of Conduct adopted by the City Council, including any amendments.
- The Resident Engagement Officer shall ensure that TLR's are given appropriate and adequate training and support.

Tenant and Leaseholder Representative Role- FAQs

Cambridge City Council is committed to creating an inclusive environment where everyone can contribute; if Representatives have difficulty completing any aspect of the role, we have facilities to support their involvement. To discuss individual needs in confidence, contact the Resident Engagement Officer.

Q: What is the Housing Scrutiny Committee (HSC)?

A: The Executive Councillor for Housing makes all the council's big housing decisions, the function of HSC is to scrutinise these decisions to ensure they are robust and are accountable. HSC's membership is made up of City Councillors and Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives, both of which can vote on decisions.

Q: Why do tenants and leaseholders sit on HSC?

A: Tenants and leaseholders give a different insight to scrutinising housing decisions, they represent the voice of City Council residents and ensure their best interests are met on decision which will impact them.

Q: How would I prepare for an HSC meeting?

A: Preparation for each HSC meeting follows three stages:

- 1) Representatives receive the agenda seven working days before the HSC meeting. Agendas will vary in size so it could take anywhere from 2 to 10 hours to read, this can be done at times which suit the individual rather than all at one go.
- 2) A few days after receiving the agenda the briefing will take place, this allows Representatives to ask questions about the agenda
- 3) Finally, a few days after the briefing the HSC meeting will take place where Representatives debate and vote on the items within the agenda alongside councillors.

Q: What do Tenant Representatives do during HSC?

A: During the meeting all members sit around a large table, the Chair will go through the agenda; officers will join the table and present their reports one at a time. There will be the opportunity for Members to discuss the report and ask questions or raise any objections. There is no pressure for Members to speak if they do not want to. The items will then be voted on by a show of hands.

Q: Why do Tenant Representatives have to sign a Code of Conduct?

A: The Tenant Representative role is in public office so there is a standard of behaviour that is expected from all Council Members and employees whilst they are carrying out the role, it also ensures the equality and diversity pledge is always adhered to. Representatives are privy to confidential housing information so part of the Code is a commitment to maintain this confidentiality.

Q: I don't have any experience/knowledge of technical housing issues; will I still be able to carry out the role?

A: Yes. The main requirement of the position is to represent resident's views and speak on their behalf in relation to decisions which will impact them. The role is not politically affiliated, and Representatives should not have a specific personal agenda; they are there to represent all Cambridge City Council tenants and leaseholders. All Representatives receive full training from City Council officers before attending a committee meeting and there is ongoing training available. Like with any new role it takes time to learn so there is no expectation for the Representatives to know everything straight away. Learning at one's own pace is the best approach.

Q: Do I have to claim the allowance?

A: No, you do not have to claim the allowance; if you choose not to the council will still cover the cost of your travel to the meetings and any other expenses incurred such as childcare or carers costs etc.

Q: If I choose to claim the allowance how do I do this?

A: The allowance is claimed every 6 months by submitting a form to the Resident Engagement Officer. The form details all the work you have undertaken as a Tenant Representative during the previous 6 months, this includes attending and travelling to meetings and the preparation like reading agendas. The allowance level is split into 3 separate amounts which rises in value relative to the number of hours dedicated.

Q: There are approximately 12 meetings each year which Representatives are required to attend, what time of day are these likely to be at?

A: The 12 meetings:

- 4 meetings of the Housing Scrutiny Committee at the Guildhall, these begin at 17:30pm and do not have a definitive end time, they could last from 2 hours to 4 hours. The time of these meeting cannot be changed.
- 4 briefings in preparation for HSC. These take place a few days before the HSC meeting. Representatives are required to read the agenda reports before a meeting of the committee, the briefing is an opportunity to ask council officers questions about the reports so that they are fully informed in order to make a decision on them. These briefings usually last 1 hour and can take place either in the day or early evening to suit availability. The location can be at any council building across the city.
- 4 informal meetings between Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives and the Resident Engagement Officer. Enables Representatives to ask questions, raise issues and provides an opportunity for them to be updated on forthcoming issues. These meetings usually last 2 hours and can take place either in the day or early evening (5 or 6pm) to suit availability. The location can be at any council building across the city.

There are several other meetings, volunteer and training opportunities for Representatives to take part in if they wish to, but these are not core requirements of the role.