

Terms of Reference Scrutiny Group

(March 2018)

1. Purpose / role of the Scrutiny Group

- To ensure there is scrutiny of housing services with the aim of making improvements.
- To act as a critical friend, providing constructive, evidenced feedback to Bolton at Home (BH).
- To ensure housing services are accessible and meet the needs of all customers.
- To promote value for money and identify areas of waste.
- To inform and involve the wider tenant body in the activities of the group.

2. How the Scrutiny Group will achieve its aims

2.1 The Scrutiny Group will:

- Identify services for review, taking evidenced based approach by using a range of data, including performance reports and customer feedback.
- Complete reviews of services and seek improvements, giving recommendations from a customer's perspective.
- Develop the operation approach to scrutiny, i.e. the methodology for reviews.
- Work positively and collaboratively with Bolton at Home and relevant customer groups, in the spirit of co-regulation.
- Adopt an evidence based approach to all of their work.
- Monitor and use performance data and customer feedback.
- Commission research from residents and officers (e.g. satisfaction surveys, interviews, presentations, reports) to inform their work.
- Produce review reports with recommendations for improvement, to be discussed with management and presented to the Operations Committee for approval.
- Oversee and monitor delivery of agreed actions as outcomes from previous reviews.
- Oversee recruitment and development of volunteers to the Scrutiny Group.
- Widely publicise reports and the outcomes of reviews.

- 2.2 The Scrutiny Group will aim to undertake 1-2 service reviews each year (depending on scale and scope) and adopt an evidence based approach to the reviews and associated recommendations for improvements. The Group will consult management on these proposals before recommendations to Operations Committee for their consideration and approval. Scrutiny Group will report to the Board where the Operations Committee decides that there are budget implications beyond existing budget provisions.

3. Membership

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Group is made up of a minimum of 8 members made up of a majority of tenants, alongside leaseholders and customers.
- All appointments will be for up to a maximum of nine years from the date of appointment which will comprise of two, three year fixed terms, followed by one year terms up to a maximum of three.
 - All service on BH governance counts towards overall maximum term, and all appointments will be subject to an annual review.
- 3.2 The Scrutiny Group will have a Chair and Vice Chair voted by all members of the group annually.
- The Chair, or a nominated member of the group, will present scrutiny/service reviews to Operations Committee.
 - The agenda will be agreed with the Scrutiny Group Chair.
 - When applicable the Chair will have a casting vote.
- 3.3 Membership to the Scrutiny Group is only open to those who meet at least one of the following criteria:
- are current tenants of Bolton at Home; or
 - are former tenants of Bolton Council or Bolton at Home who (in either case) have exercised the Right to Buy and still live in the property so bought from Bolton Council or Bolton at Home; or
 - are current customers of Bolton at Home, i.e. are currently in receipt of, and pay for, regular or periodic ongoing services from Bolton at Home, e.g. leaseholder, careline etc; or
 - are currently living, and have done so for at least the previous 2 years, in a Bolton at Home property, but not the tenant. The above 'Criteria for Membership' applies to the person who is applying to be on the Scrutiny Group; however, the tenant of the property would also have to comply with the criteria in respect of bankruptcy, ASB, tenants who are in breach of their obligations as a tenant and rent arrears; or
 - are not a member of staff.
- 3.4 Exclusions will apply where the customer is on any Bolton at Home Board or Committee, employee of Bolton at Home or is in serious breach of tenancy or lease agreements.
- 3.5 All vacancies are publicized, and anyone who is interested can express an interest. Every individual who does so will be invited to find out more, and supported to complete an application form.
- 3.6 New members to the Scrutiny Group will be appointed through a selection process.

- 3.7 New members of the group will participate in an induction training programme to help them fulfil their role. They will also participate in further training as and when required to support them in their role.
- 3.8 Members will be expected to act as individuals and not represent any interested group, area or political party.
- 3.9 Continuing membership will be subject to an annual appraisal process which will take account of attendance, contribution to reviews and how members work as part of a team.
- 3.10 Membership to be reviewed annually through the Personal Development Review process.
- 3.11 Any member who is in breach of their tenancy conditions or becomes involved in any activity which brings the name of the Scrutiny Group and/or Bolton at Home into disrepute will be suspended, pending investigation, and may be asked to resign.
- 3.12 If a group member wishes to resign, they should inform the Governance and Regulation Team in writing or by email.
- 3.13 If a group member breaches the code of conduct they will be asked to leave the group.

4. Meetings

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Group will agree to meet as and when required, and the number of meetings will be determined by the group members and a work plan outlining the timescales and remit will be developed by the group.
- 4.2 If members are unable to attend, apologies should be sent to the Governance and Regulation Team as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary costs.
- 4.3 The quorum of any formal Scrutiny Group meeting shall be 50% of the group and two-thirds for any decision making.
- 4.4 An attendance register is to be kept for all meetings (to include apologies and authorised absences).

5. Administrative support

- 5.1 Bolton at Home will provide support from the Governance and Regulation Team who will be responsible for overseeing the effective running and smooth administration of the group.

6. Safeguards

- 6.1 Members must:
 - adopt and abide by the Scrutiny Group's code of conduct;
 - agree to undergo a mandatory induction and training programme;
 - uphold Bolton at Home's high standards of conduct and probity by adhering to the code of conduct and respecting confidentiality of information; and

- remain objective and not bring personal issues into their work with the Scrutiny Group.
- 6.2 Scrutiny Group members must not disclose confidential information to anyone else outside the group. Members who breach confidentiality will be removed from the group.
- 6.3 The Scrutiny Group shall conduct an annual review of its work and effectiveness, possibly in conjunction with an independent mentor, and with the support of Governance and Regulation Team. This review will include a review of the terms of reference.

7. Responsibilities of Bolton at Home

- 7.1 Bolton at Home agrees to:
- support a minimum of two service reviews a year;
 - respond to requests for information as soon as possible, within 10 working days;
 - provide an induction and any necessary training for all members;
 - respond to any agreed recommendations made by the Scrutiny Group with a formal action plan as soon as possible;
 - allow the Scrutiny Group access to any relevant information requested;
 - cover any reasonable out of pocket expenses such as stationery, travel cost, in line with Bolton at Home's Allowances for Operations Committee and Scrutiny Group members' policy';
 - deliver a training programme which will include mandatory training on data protection and other governance related matters; and
 - provide ID badges for Scrutiny Group members.

8. Programme of work

- 8.1 The Scrutiny Group will develop an initial programme of scrutiny work and review this each subsequent year.
- 8.2 The priority areas for review will be decided, using feedback from all available sources of information including:
- performance indicators;
 - customer satisfaction surveys;
 - customer complaints;
 - audit reports;
 - feedback from staff;
 - feedback from managers; and
 - compliance against National Standards.
- 8.3 The Operations Committee may also make recommendations to the Scrutiny Group for reviews. These will be communicated to the Scrutiny Group for consideration and inclusion in their work programme, however the Scrutiny Group will make the final decision.

9. Reporting

- 9.1 The Scrutiny Group will consult fully throughout and take account of management responses to findings.
- 9.2 Following service reviews, the Scrutiny Group will produce a report summarising the outcome of the review, including any recommendations, to the Operations Committee.
- 9.3 The Scrutiny Group will feedback the contents of the report and any recommendations to the managers and staff involved in the service review.
- 9.4 The Scrutiny Group will report back to customers regularly through Door to Door and other regularly used forms of communication, including the website and social media.

10. Access to information

- 10.1 The Scrutiny Group can request/review reports and information from Bolton at Home to carry out its scrutiny activities. They may also invite officers and relevant customer groups to meet with the group to provide evidence.
- 10.2 All requests for information and evidence must be made in accordance with Bolton at Home's Data Protection Policy.

11. Training

- 11.1 An annual training programme will be developed with members and reviewed annually.
- 11.2 All new members will undertake an induction and be offered support of a customer mentor from the Scrutiny Group.

12. Communication between meetings

- 12.1 Members of the Scrutiny Group should respond to communications (emails, letters, phone messages) promptly, unless a shorter or longer response time has been set.

13. Equality and Diversity

- 13.1 The Scrutiny Group will recognise the existence and importance of the different ages, races, genders, abilities and lifestyles within the customer profile of Bolton at Home, and will ensure that no group or individual will be disadvantaged as a consequence of its activities.
- 13.2 The Scrutiny Group will be committed to promoting equality of opportunity to all persons in every respect of activities carried out by it.

14. Probationary period

- 14.1 Each member will undergo an initial 12 month probationary period. At the end of this they will undertake an appraisal. The aim of this is to identify training and

development needs. Ultimately, however, it may result in members being asked to stand down from the Scrutiny Group.

14.2 The appraisal process will be repeated every 12 months.

15. Disputes

15.1 In the event of the Scrutiny Group entering into any disputes, concerns should be brought to the attention of the Governance and Regulation Team. The investigating officer will interview both parties within 10 working days and feedback with a solution/decision within a further 10 working days.

15.2 In the event of a dispute between the Scrutiny Group and the Governance and Regulation Team, concerns should be brought to the attention of the Secretary. The investigating officer will interview both parties within 10 working days and feedback with a solution/decision within a further 10 working days.