

Area Board – Draft Terms of Reference (October 2017)

1. Aim

The aim of the Area Board is to monitor local housing management and contractor performance and undertake service reviews.

2. Membership

The Area Board represents tenants and leaseholders living in the contract area.

2.1 Resident Members

2.1.1 The Area Board will be made up of resident members from the following groups:

Group	Who they represent and how they are elected	Number of members
Registered Tenants and Residents Associations	Residents nominated by the local Registered TRA. TRAs can agree a nominee by vote or by discussion, including outside of a formal meeting where it is not possible to hold a meeting.	One per TRA.
Properties not covered by TRAs	Residents from the area not covered by a registered TRA subject to a selection process.	Maximum of 5; where possible, 3 tenants and 2 homeowners.

2.1.2 All resident members are required to attend an induction session otherwise they will not be able to take up their place. Further training is not mandatory, but members are strongly encouraged to undertake accredited training relevant to the role.

2.1.3 Board members are appointed for a period of two years and 50% of the membership will retire each year. Resident members can only be re-appointed for one further period, ie 4 years maximum, before having to stand down.

2.2 Councillors

2.2.1 The Lead Councillor for the Area will be a member of the Area Board.

2.3 Independents

2.3.1 Area Boards will be allowed to co-opt up to 2 non-voting independent members on the basis of skills and expertise needed by the Area Board.

2.4 To ensure no conflict of interest, no representative can be a member of an Area Board who is:

- An employee of Lambeth Council
- Employed by or affiliated to one of the member tenant groups.
- In breach of their tenancy or lease, for example with rent or service charge arrears that are not reducing on a monthly basis, according to an agreed plan.

2.5 If a representative does not attend for three consecutive meetings without good cause, they will be deemed to have resigned. Any casual vacancies arising outside of the annual meeting will be filled from a waiting list.

2.6 By taking up their place on the Board, members consent to share their current, in use contact information (including a mobile number and email) with Lambeth council officers and other members.

3. Executive

3.1 Annual elections should be held for a Chair and Vice Chair of the Area Board. Where possible, the Chair should be a tenant and the Vice Chair a leaseholder.

3.2 The same member cannot hold this position for more than two years, unless there are no nominations from alternative members – in which case they can continue for one further year, following which they must step down.

3.3 If the Chair is not present at an Area Board meeting, the Vice Chair will chair the meeting.

4. Purpose

- To review and monitor the performance of the Area Office in relation to its contract management, performance targets and/or particular service areas; the Board is able to call for evidence from Area TRAs to facilitate this either in person or in writing.
- To question members of the Area Office and contractors about their decisions and performance;
- To make recommendations to the Resident Assembly where policy or strategy issues arise from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- To help ensure services and contracts deliver value for money;
- To issue 'Notice to acts' to senior management to ensure service or performance issues are responded to within a set timescale;
- To recommend formal service reviews to the Coordinating Committee where the Board decide their initial review indicates a deeper review is required;
- To receive items for information pertaining to local service delivery and development opportunities;
- To award grants to TRAs or other resident groups for community projects and activities.

5. Organisation and Servicing of Meetings

5.1 There will be a minimum of four meetings per year.

5.2 An annual work programme will be agreed by the board and determine the agendas of the meetings. Members will be able to change service areas to be reviewed if a vote is held and the majority of members agree.

5.2.1 Service review topics will be agreed between the Board and Lambeth Council, and chosen based on council plans and objectives, resident feedback, and other service priorities. Justification for inclusion will be discussed and agreed for each service review topic.

5.2.2 When setting a work programme the Board will take into account feedback from the Council on the timeliness of review subjects and any possible overlap with other review work being undertaken by Council committees, internal teams, or external auditors.

5.3 Agendas will be circulated no less than 5 working days prior to the meeting.

5.4 Notes recording attendance, key points, and agreed actions will be circulated within 10 working days of the meeting.

5.5 The meetings will be serviced by officers within the Area Housing Office. It will be officers' responsibility to ensure reports are produced in accordance to the meeting requirements and that recommendations are actioned.

5.6 Meetings must be held in venues which meet the requirements of DDA¹ 2004.

5.7 The meetings are open; they are there for members, but non-members may attend to observe.

5.8 Dates for meetings for the whole calendar year will be agreed at the Annual General Meeting and these will be posted online and circulated to all Board Members, Councillors, and the secretaries of all registered TRAs in the area.

5.9 Board meetings will be held in the evening. The Board shall agree a regular end time of no later than 9pm.

5.10 The Area Housing Manager may call additional meetings of the Board in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.

5.11 Area officers will administer the Board and ensure it is able to carry out its work programme. The Area Housing Manager will be responsible for ensuring this happens.

5.12 The Board will undertake an annual assessment of its own performance in conjunction with officers.

6. Voting

6.1 All elected members can vote on local issues except issues related to rent setting and Housing Revenue Budget items, when only secure council tenant members can vote.

6.2 Elected members may not vote on any local issue where they have a declaration of interest to make.

7. Quorum

7.1 The quorum for meetings is 33% of the voting membership.

7.2 If the quorum is not reached within 20 minutes of the commencement time of the meeting, then the membership can decide to discuss any items on the agenda but may not make any decisions.

¹ Disability Discrimination Act 2004

8.1 All those attending Area Board meetings, whether members or observers, must abide by the Code of Conduct attached as Appendix 1. Failure to do so may result in a member being removed from the Board or an observer being removed and barred from attending future meetings.

8.2 If a Board member is in breach of the code of conduct, they will be asked attend a meeting with the Governance and Resident Engagement Manager to discuss their behaviour. If they do not attend this meeting, or if following the meeting they commit further breaches, they will be removed from the Board.

Appendix 1

Code of Conduct - Area Board

To ensure that meetings are conducted in a spirit of equality and inclusion, in which minority groups and opinions can be heard, the following code of conduct should apply to them.

1. All participants at Board meetings have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a way that does not cause unreasonable offence to others. This includes the use of abusive language, racist, sexist or other derogatory remarks or actions, behaviour that intimidates people who are speaking or wish to speak and preventing people from expressing their views through interrupting or talking while others are contributing to the debate and discussion.
2. Delegates should be particularly sensitive to the needs of those who may not be used to speaking in public or whose first language is not English.
3. Delegates who consider that this code of conduct has been broken should raise it with the chair either at the time or immediately after the meeting.
4. The chair with the advice of the relevant officers will judge whether the person has breached the code of conduct. If there has been a breach those present will have the discretion to suspend the person/s responsible from the meeting. If the matter is raised between meetings, the Chair will decide appropriate action, including suspension, to be ratified at the next Board meeting. Future participation by the person/s concerned will be dependent upon a commitment being given to the chair that such behaviours will not be repeated.