

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The following Terms of Reference for LHT’s Scrutiny group, ETHOS, have been developed and agreed by tenants and staff. The terms of reference have been developed in order to set rules to guide both tenants and staff to enable scrutiny to run effectively.

**Aims and Objectives**

* To drive continuous improvement in performance and customer service excellence through the process of Resident Led Self-Regulation (RLSR).
* To ensure that tenant views, aspirations and priorities are central to and directly influencing LHT’s strategic direction and that this can be clearly evidenced.

**Purpose and Role of ETHOS**

Residents’ concerns and priorities must be at the heart of RLSR and consequently LHT’s priorities should reflect local needs and aspirations. The purpose of the group is to scrutinise performance information and service areas within LHT. The group is the central tenant body that will:

* Independently scrutinise individual areas of LHT’s business on a programmed basis.
* Identify and prioritising areas of service that should be scrutinised via discussion with the Board, customer consultation and looking at data such as performance information and customer feedback and agreeing an annual programme
* Provide detailed reports and analysis of their findings to present to Senior Management Team (SMT), Board and Service Managers.
* Develop and support the process of establishing negotiated, customer focussed performance indicators.
* Ensure recommendations have been implemented and impacts evidenced

**Scope**

The scope of the group will focus on the following areas:

* Access to service
* Service standards, quality, satisfaction and performance
* The impact of our services on customers
* Strategic direction of the service
* Continuous improvement
* Tenant consultation
* Value for Money.
* Commissioning of independent evidence gathering activities to assist scrutiny projects

ETHOS activities will initially be focused on service standards, quality, satisfaction and performance.

**Core Principles**

* To be accountable to the wider Tenant Panel
* To act with integrity and transparency
* To ensure that ETHOS activities clearly reflect the needs and aspirations of the wider tenant body
* Members will not be actively involved in the audit process of any scrutiny project commissioned by ETHOS
* To respect the primacy of the LHT Board
* To report findings and recommendations to Service Managers, SMT and Board, as appropriate, summarising scrutiny projects based upon robust evidence that is proportionate and reflects the local and national context in which LHT operates

**Programme of Work**

The group will plan their programme of work using the following methods and information to prioritise the areas they wish to scrutinise:

* Annual Summary Performance Report
* Customer Survey (to be developed)
* Requests from Board, Senior Management Team and Service Managers

**Recruitment**

A formal recruitment drive will be carried out every three years. All LHT tenants will be informed of ETHOS vacancies by advertisements and information in the Highlights and Tenant Panel newsletters. This will include a description of the group, its roles and responsibilities and a person specification.

Informal recruitment and promotion of the group will be ongoing.

Each tenant expressing an interest in the group must match the person specification and complete a self assessment. There will be a short interview process. This is to ensure that the tenant understands the role of the group, the commitment required and also that there is a balance of skills and the group is representative of the wider tenant profile.

Prospective members may be invited to observe meetings.

**Membership**

The group will consist of up to ten members. Sub-groups will be formed when required to perform tasks, drive the project forward and meet timescales. These will be determined and agreed by the whole group as required.

Tenants not eligible to apply are:

* Tenant Board Members
* Any tenant in breach of their tenancy agreement

Members must adopt the Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Statement and abide by their terms.

Members may be in office for a up to three years, at which point they should stand down. Previous members may be re-selected and must follow the recruitment procedure alongside other applicants and will be sugject to the same selection criteria and process.

If a member wishes to resign from office a period of four weeks’ notice would be preferred. Resignation should be made in writing to the Leader of the group with a copy to LHT.

Any breaches of a member’s tenancy agreement will be considered a breach of the code of conduct and will be subject to the “Breach of Code of Conduct” conditions.

**Accountability**

A key objective of ETHOS is to ensure that it is clearly accountable to the wider customer body. This is facilitated by adoption of the following measures:

* A requirement that ETHOS publish an Annual Scrutiny Programme.
* That ETHOS publishes its findings in an Annual Report.
* A mechanism that allows LHT’s involved groups to influence the focus of ETHOS.
* A mechanism that will enable the wider Tenant Panel[[1]](#endnote-1) to instigate a full scrutiny of ETHOS in the event of collective concerns about the group’s effectiveness or probity. This will enable the wider Tenant Panel to influence the group through a formal duty on ETHOS to respond to a ‘Call for Action’ from a tenant group or collection of customers. The ‘trigger’ could, for example, be a petition signed by one third of the Tenant Panel. Requests to instigate a full scrutiny of ETHOS activities should be forwarded to the Resident Involvement Team Leader. All requests will be fully investigated and responded to within 20-working days
* To receive feedback from SMT and Board, as appropriate, in direct response to specific recommendations made and submitted within scrutiny reports

**Skills, Training and Representation**

LHT is committed to RLSR and therefore it is essential that ETHOS members are collectively competent and representative of our diverse communities. Measures that ensure that this is achieved include:

* A robust selection process which focuses upon skills, commitment and group competence
* That ETHOS membership, as far as possible, reflects the tenant demographic
* Development of a succession planning strategy, which will include

 the training and development of other involved tenants

* Ensuring that ETHOS activities clearly reflect the needs and aspirations of the wider tenant body
* Induction training for all new members
* An annual appraisal and skills assessment for all members

Any training needs will then be discussed and a training/ development programme put in place. The appraisal is an opportunity to identify areas where support is required, to identify strengths and discuss any issues. Members are required to fully participate in identified training and personal development. Members must be committed to personal and group development. This may mean taking part in formal training sessions, working with an independent mentor or LHT staff to develop skills.

**Frequency of Meetings**

Meetings will be held monthly by agreement with group members.

**Leader**

An ETHOS Leader will be a tenant elected by group members for a period of two years. A Vice Leader will also be elected for the same period to deputise for the Leader in the event of his or her absence.

The Leader will:

* Effectively chair and operate the meetings
* Support and encourage group members
* Liaise with the group and appropriate LHT staff members to draw up the agenda
* Be the spokesperson for the group when needed.
* Champion scrutiny within and on behalf of LHT
* Ensure scrutiny projects are completed within agreed timeframes

**Servicing and Support**

The Resident Involvement Team will initially provide support to ETHOS. The group will be provided with information, advice and assistance to enable it to reach decisions and recommendations. The Resident Involvement Lead Board Member will adopt a non-executive role in supporting the development of this group, in unison with the Resident Involvement Team Leader.

## The designated officer from the Resident Involvement Team will ensure that the group is effectively serviced by –

* Ensuring that the group is given full access to internal performance data, comparative benchmarking data and customer feedback

## Ensuring minutes and agendas are produced and distributed

## Making necessary travel arrangements for tenants to get to and from meetings

## Identifying tenants to ensure full group membership

## Providing ongoing support to allow full participation e.g. identifying appropriate training

## Keeping the group up to date with best practice information

## Provide access to computers, telephones, meeting rooms etc to meet the group’s needs in carrying out their functions

## Being the initial point of contact in requesting information from staff or tenants

## Ensuring that the specific needs of each member is considered and catered for to ensure maximum accessibility to participate fully

**Budgets/Value for Money**

ETHOS costs are met from an identified annual budget and the costs of scrutiny should be met from this budget. The panel will be mindful of costs and ensure value for money when undertaking their activities.

Equally, ETHOS will bear in mind resources and costs when making recommendations arising from their scrutiny activity.

**Publicity**

There will be regular updates of scrutiny activities reported through Highlights newsletter. ETHOS will produce a summary of activities and achievements in an Annual Report.

**Changes to the Terms of Reference**

Any proposed changes to the Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct or Confidentiality Statement must be proposed in writing to the ETHOS Leader and the Resident Involvement Team Leader. The proposed changes will then be tabled as an agenda item at the next meeting. A minimum of seven members must be present to make a decision. The changes will then be circulated to all members in writing. An information report will also be sent to LHT’s Senior Management Team and Board. LHT will consult with ETHOS and review the terms of reference on a regular basis.

1. ‘The Tenant Panel’ is the collective term for all involved LHT tenants. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)