



aster

Candidate information



How you can
make a difference





Welcome

Thank you for your interest in finding out more about our regionally-based Customer Boards and Aster's group-wide Customer Scrutiny Panel. We want to ensure customers continue to be at the heart of decision making on key issues that affect them.

We're now looking for customers to work with us and take part in decisions that reflect the priorities of our customers. We also need a number of independent members to work with us.

We believe the Customer Boards and Customer Scrutiny Panel will have an immediate effect on the way we work - helping us make better decisions and making sure services keep on improving.

You can play a vital role by volunteering your time, skills, insight and know-how.

This brochure sets out details of the role and responsibilities of the Customer Boards and Customer Scrutiny Panel, along with the skills required for each role.

You'll find an application form at the back.

"Despite being disabled, I've passed some tough exams, which have helped with my work as a Customer Scrutiny Panel member. We're a friendly and diverse bunch and welcome people from all walks of life. If you want to make a change, join us!"

Julia Barlow
Customer Scrutiny Panel member
Ex-hotelier and retailer

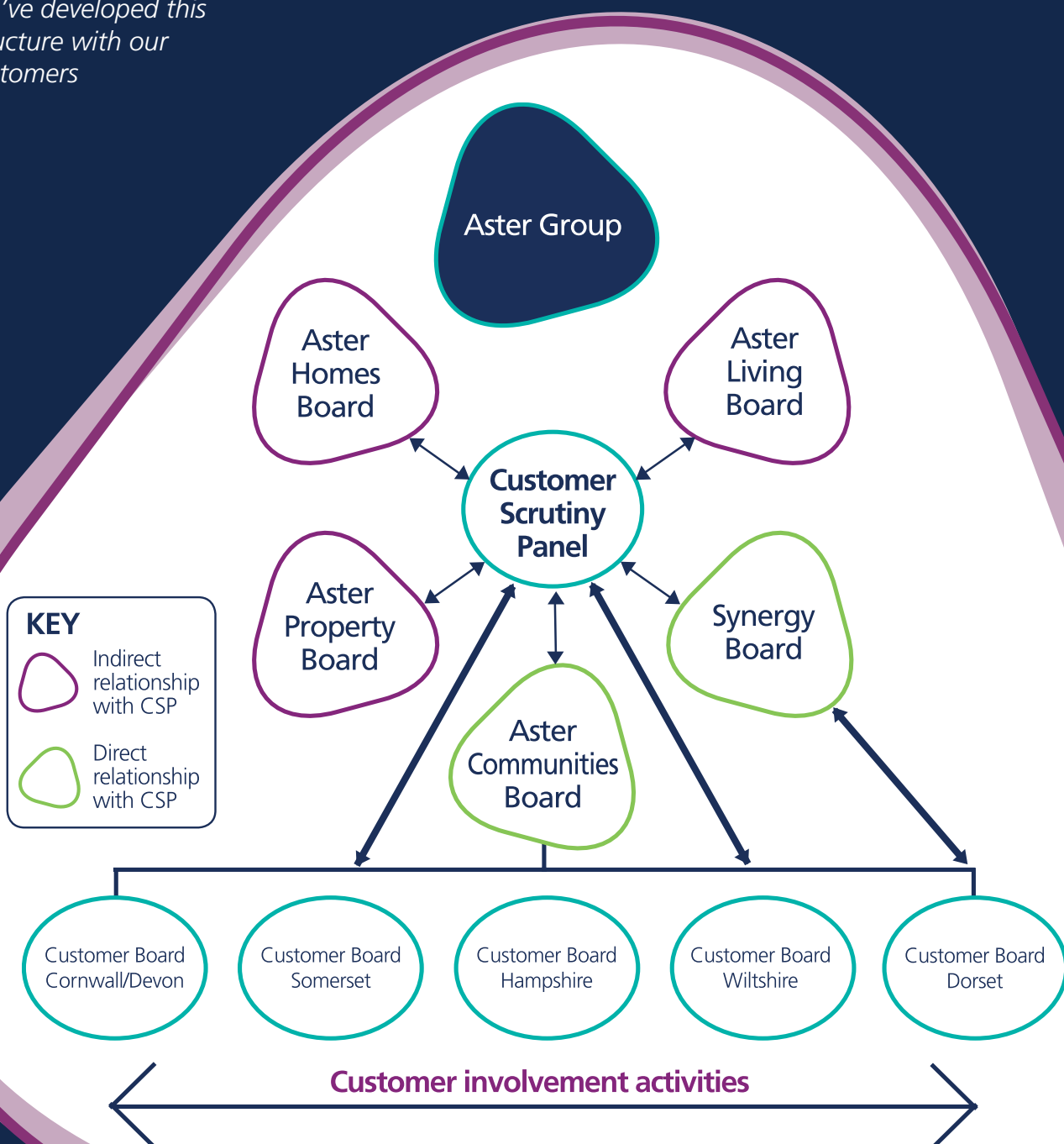
All about you

You'll be able to bring ideas to the table and make a real difference to the services we offer customers. You'll learn new skills, work with people who share a passion for making things better and help us improve our services for all customers.

You'll need a high level of commitment. We'll select members on the basis of the skills and experience they can offer. A positive attitude, energy, enthusiasm and a commitment to improving our services are more important than qualifications.

You'll be able to tell us about yourself and how you'd like to work with us on the application form at the back of this brochure.

We've developed this structure with our customers





Customer Scrutiny Panel

What will the Customer Scrutiny Panel do?

The Customer Scrutiny Panel will work closely with residents, colleagues, management and the Board to examine our services and performance, and to identify areas for improvement. Members will make sure we 'do what matters for tenants'. The panel will work across all Aster companies.

What sort of commitment is it?

The Customer Scrutiny Panel will meet four times a year along with reading and reviewing documents between meetings. There may be extra meetings or activities that you'll need to attend, including training and visits to other organisations.

What's in it for me?

You'll build on your current skills and develop new ones, make new friends and help us to improve our services for all residents. You'll receive reasonable expenses (travel, child care etc.)

Who can apply?

All customers who are tenants or leaseholders, and who are over 18, can apply. We'll select members on the basis of the skills and experience.

The Customer Scrutiny Panel has a membership of 12 customers.





Customer Boards

What will Customer Boards do?

Customer Boards have an influential, empowering and pivotal position within our governance structure.

They input into our priorities, review our performance and ensure customer involvement has taken place in relation to new strategies and policy. They also make decisions on any items delegated by Aster Communities Board and Synergy Board.

What sort of commitment is it?

Customer Boards will meet four times a year along with reading and reviewing documents between meetings. There may be extra meetings and training that you'll need to attend.

What's in it for me?

You'll build on your current skills and develop new ones, make new friends and help us to improve our services for all residents. For this you'll receive an allowance of £1,000 per year plus reasonable expenses (travel, child care etc.)

Who can apply?

All customers who are tenants or leaseholders, and who are over 18 can apply. We're also looking for independent members. We'll select members on the basis of the skills and experience.



Customer Scrutiny Panel

Roles and responsibilities

Customer scrutiny panel members, as part of a team, will:

Shape our housing, community and other related services

- Ensure appropriate action is being taken as a result of strategic customer consultation making recommendations to appropriate body (it will depend on the specific consultation as to whether the lead will be Customer Boards or Customer Scrutiny Panel)
- Be involved in consultation activities (other activities that members may be involved in).

Monitor our housing, community and other related services

- Monitor against standards to ensure that they are achieved, and agree remedial action
- Monitor improvement plans against delivery (it will depend on the source of improvement plan whether the lead will be Customer Boards or Customer Scrutiny Panel).

Review our housing, community and other related services

- Prioritise service improvement activities to be completed through annual review of service statements
- Commission specific scrutiny exercises, e.g. mystery shoppers, tenant inspectors
- Review feedback from scrutiny exercises and make recommendations for future improvements to relevant service area.

Scrutinise the service

- Scrutinise access and customer care service standards
- Develop an annual scrutiny plan based on Customer Board insight and other relevant data sets
- Scrutinise outcomes arising from strategic consultations making recommendations to Aster Communities and Synergy Boards
- Scrutinise expenditure against budgets to ensure value for money
- Control of delegated scrutiny budgets
- Scrutinise learning/outcomes from complaints.

Customer Board

Roles and responsibilities

Customer scrutiny panel members, as part of a team, will:

Shape our housing, community and other related services

- Input into the organisational business plan/corporate plan to reflect customer priorities
- Input into strategy development and make recommendations to Aster Communities/Synergy Board
- Ensure customer involvement has taken place in strategy and policy formulation
- Propose annual key performance targets to Housing Leadership Team
- Input into the budget setting process
- Approve delegated policies from Aster Communities Board and Synergy Board
- Recommend approval of policies to Aster Communities Board and Synergy Board
- Consider and approve actions arising from service reviews
- Ensure appropriate action is being taken as a result of strategic customer consultation making recommendations to appropriate body (it will depend on the specific consultation as to whether the lead will be Customer Boards or Customer Scrutiny Panel)
- Be involved in consultation activities (other activities that members may be involved in)
- Sign off customer annual report
- Agree service standards
- Have control over some local budgets.

Monitor our housing, community and other related services

- Monitor against standards to ensure that they are achieved, and agree remedial action
- Monitor performance of local services (all KPIs)
- Monitor complaints and compliments, taking action as required
- Monitor improvement plans against delivery (it will depend on the source of improvement plan whether the lead will be Customer Boards or Customer Scrutiny Panel)
- Monitor outcomes from involvement activities, i.e. neighbourhood panels.

Review our housing, community and other related services

- Input into reviews of strategy.

Role of a Chair person

If you're interested in becoming the chair person of either the Customer Scrutiny Panel or a Customer Board, then there are a some essential requirements to meet.

- The ability to lead and direct a team with credibility and enthusiasm and gain commitment to achieving the objectives set.
- An open, engaging and enthusing leadership style.
- The ability to promote effective relationships and communications between the Customer Boards, the Customer Scrutiny Panel and the wider governance structure.
- The ability to think strategically, seeing the bigger picture and making links and connections in order to spot opportunities or avoid problems
- A strong organisational commitment, willingness and ability to align with the ambitions and values of Aster
- Drive and determination to achieve significant business improvements through challenge
- Self-confident with a belief in ability to make clear decisions and a willingness to speak out and deal positively with challenges, commanding confidence with others
- Good communication and interpersonal skills, an ability to communicate with others that ensures understanding and gains acceptance
- A willingness to put in time and effort in order to understand others, their concerns, interests and requirements in demonstrating respect for diversity
- A good team worker who is willing to work co-operatively and collaboratively, and give support where necessary
- Commitment to diversity and equal opportunities
- Networking skills to establish sound working relationships with people outside Aster in order to keep informed and further the goals of the organisation
- Knowledge of the social housing sector



Margaret Williams
Customer Board member
Former nurse

“My nursing career made me aware of the diverse needs people have. I feel it’s important to speak up, particularly for those who aren’t able to do so. Being a Customer Board member ensures residents’ voices and views are at the heart of everything Aster does.”

Person specification

Criteria	Details	Essential	Desirable
Time commitment	Attendance to a minimum of four meetings per year	✓	
	Attending training courses	✓	
	Preparing for meetings, enabling full participation	✓	
Experience and knowledge	Commitment to excellent customer and housing service and how to apply it in the best interests of the current and future customers, leaseholders and shared owners.	✓	
	Understanding of value for money		✓
	Understanding of performance information		✓
	Financial awareness		✓
	Understanding of co-regulation		✓
Abilities and skills	Ability to understand what is important to customers	✓	
	Ability to remain objective	✓	
	Ability to work as part of a team	✓	
	Ability to understand and analyse reports and information	✓CSP	✓CB
	Be computer literate	✓	

Person specification

Criteria	Details	Essential	Desirable
Communication	Verbal communication skills	✓	
	Build relationships and represent business internally and externally	✓	
	Build positive relationships with the Customer Board and Customer Scrutiny Panel members, and colleagues	✓	
	Actively promote the organisation and seek opportunities for its development	✓CSP	✓CB
	Presentation skills		✓
	Express views clearly and effectively in a formal meeting setting, making reasoned contributions	✓	
Personal qualities	Getting the best from people	✓	
	Learning and improving	✓	
	Thinking strategically		✓
	Leading by example		✓
	Focusing on outcomes	✓	
	Promoting excellence	✓CSP	✓CB
	Positively challenging negative behaviour	✓CSP	✓CB
	Offering support and guidance to others	✓	
	Promoting and encouraging communication and new ideas	✓	
Equality and diversity	Understanding and demonstrating a commitment to equality and diversity	✓	

Other benefits

Customer Scrutiny Panel

Support and training

All Customer Scrutiny Panel members will be required to attend an induction process.

Training to develop knowledge and skills will be available to support members of the Customer Scrutiny Panel to achieve their objectives. A full training programme will be offered although members are required to attend a minimum of four sessions per year.

There will be a regular appraisal process. There will also be an annual assessment of collective and individual skills and competencies so that a development programme may be devised to ensure continuous improvement and effective governance.

Expenses

Pre-agreed expenses will be reimbursed for travel and child care costs and caring responsibilities. Current rates are set out in our expense procedure. Payment of expenses will be paid monthly on receipt of a complete expense form.

Customer Board

Support and training

Customer Board members will receive payment of £1,000 per year. Payment will be made monthly.

All Customer Board members are required to attend an induction process.

Training to develop knowledge and skills will be available to support members of the Customer Board to achieve their objectives. A full training programme will be offered although members are required to attend a minimum of four sessions per year.

There will be a regular appraisal process. There will also be an annual assessment of collective and individual skills and competencies so that a development programme may be devised to ensure continuous improvement and effective governance.

Expenses

Pre-agreed expenses will be reimbursed for travel and child care costs and caring responsibilities. Current rates are set out in our expense procedure. Payment is made along with the monthly pay allowance payment.

"I first became involved when the houses were owned by the council. They were in a terrible state, mainly because they had flat roofs. I've continued to be involved in a number of groups at Aster and made a difference. Customer involvement really works."

John Lushington Cockaday
Customer Board member
Full-time coachbuilder





Customer Scrutiny Panel

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The merger between Aster Group and Synergy Housing gave us a great opportunity to review the involvement structures within each organisation, look at best practice in the sector and develop a refined, fit-for-purpose involvement structure for the merged organisation.
- 1.2 Customers from each organisation developed a new structure over a period of eight months, taking the best from their respective organisations. This was approved by Aster Communities and Synergy Boards in August 2012.

2. Our involvement structure

- 2.1 The involvement structure introduces a group-wide Customer Scrutiny Panel.
- 2.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Customer Scrutiny Panel have been designed around the following factors:
 - Allowing scrutiny to be an entirely separate and independent function
 - Making sure regulatory standards are met
 - Being transparent and accountable
 - Learning from the champion models that the working group explored in their meeting in May 2012.
 - Making sure value for money is at the heart of current and future delivery
 - Wanting to strengthen and build on current practice within both organisations
 - Having customers at our heart.

3. Overview

Number of panel members

Up to 12 customer members (including a representative from Aster Living)

Membership

Will be open to all customers, leaseholders and shared owners.

Quorum

50% members present plus the chair or acting chair.

Frequency of meetings

At least four times every calendar year.

Appointments to the Customer Scrutiny Panel

The Customer Scrutiny Panel can appoint and remove members subject to the approval of the Aster Communities group services director and regional director.

Chair

It's intended that the Customer Scrutiny Panel will be chaired by a customer. However, this is a decision for the Customer Scrutiny Panel.

The Chair will normally serve a three year term but will not serve more than two consecutive terms.

Term

Maximum membership will be for a period of nine years. However, to ensure that not all members will stand down at one time, two Customer Scrutiny Panel members will have an initial membership of one year, two Customer Scrutiny Panel members will have a membership term of two years and two Customer Scrutiny Panel members will have a membership term of three years. These will be drawn by lots.

4. Roles and responsibilities – what they will do

4.1 The Customer Scrutiny Panel has an important role, with the primary focus being on scrutiny.

4.2 The outcomes of the Customer Scrutiny Panel are contained within four main areas:

- Shaping our housing, community and other related services
- Monitoring our housing, community and other related services
- Reviewing our housing, community and other related services
- Scrutinising our housing, community and other related services.

Shaping our housing, community and other related services

1. Ensure appropriate action is being taken as a result of strategic customer consultation and making recommendations to appropriate body. (It'll depend on the specific consultation as to whether the lead will be the Customer Scrutiny Panel.)
2. Involvement in consultation activities (and other activities that members may be involved in).

Monitoring our housing, community and other related services

3. Monitor against standards to ensure that they're achieved, and agree remedial action.
4. Monitor improvement plans against delivery. (It'll depend on the source of improvement plan whether the lead will be the Customer Scrutiny Panel.)

Reviewing our housing, community and other related services

5. Prioritise service improvement activities to be completed.
6. Commission specific scrutiny exercises e.g. mystery shoppers, customer inspectors.
7. Review feedback from scrutiny exercises and make recommendations for future improvements to relevant service areas.



Customer Scrutiny Panel

Terms of Reference

Scrutinising the service

1. Scrutinise access and customer care service standards.
2. Develop an annual scrutiny plan based on customer board insight and other relevant data sets.
3. Scrutinise outcomes arising from strategic consultations making recommendations to Aster Communities and Synergy Board.
4. Scrutinise expenditure against budgets to ensure value for money.
5. Control of delegated scrutiny budgets.
6. Scrutinise learning/outcomes from complaints.

5. Relationship to our governance structure and the Customer Scrutiny Panel

- 5.1 The responsibilities of the Customer Scrutiny Panel will be delegated by the Aster Communities and Synergy Boards.
- 5.2 There will be facilitated meetings and events between representatives from Aster Communities and Synergy Boards, Customer Board members and Customer Scrutiny Panel members. The meetings will focus on sharing success and areas for improvement and will happen twice a year.
- 5.3 The Customer Scrutiny Panel will operate across the group, but it's anticipated there will be concentration on Aster Communities, Aster Property and Aster Living activities.

6. Membership

- 6.1 The group-wide Customer Scrutiny Panel aims to cover all the geographical areas: Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset, Cornwall and Devon. The Customer Scrutiny Panel will have a maximum of 12 members and all will be customers.
- 6.2 There are circumstances where it would be appropriate for the removal of a Customer Scrutiny Panel member by the Customer Scrutiny Panel. These are similar to those circumstances that apply to the Aster Communities Board members.



Customer Scrutiny Panel

Terms of Reference

7. Meeting procedures

7.1 The order of business at meetings is:

- In the absence of the Chair and the Vice Chair the Board must elect a member present to chair the meeting
- To receive any declarations of interest
- To approve the written minutes of the last meeting, which will then be signed by the Chair as a correct record
- To consider matters arising from the minutes not already covered in the agenda for the meeting
- To deal with the agenda before the meeting. Agendas will be set in accordance with the forward plan and members are able to request that future items be added.

7.2 No business will be done at any meeting of the Customer Scrutiny Panel, unless at least one half of the members of the panel are present. This must include the Chair or in the Chair's absence a member acting with agreement of all in a Chair's capacity. This is described as a quorum.

7.3 The panel should try to make decisions that everyone at the meeting agrees to. However, if they cannot agree, they can take a vote and make a decision based on the option that more people vote for.

7.4 Where there is no quorum within 15 minutes of the meeting's scheduled start time (or if during the meeting the Chair states there is no longer a quorum) the meeting will stand adjourned to a date and time fixed by the Chair. However, the Chair can agree for the meeting to proceed on an informal basis and include any actions requiring a decision as recommendations to the next meeting.

7.5 Appropriate conduct during meetings is very important. All members should pay due regard at all times to the Code of Conduct generally and in particular to those provisions concerning conduct at meetings.

8. Role description

8.1 There is a role description and person specification for Customer Scrutiny Panel members.

9. Code of Conduct

9.1 There is a separate Code of Conduct.

9.2 Customer Scrutiny Panel members will have access to information which is business sensitive and all members will be required to maintain confidentiality at all times. Members will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.



Customer Scrutiny Panel

Terms of Reference

10. Training

- 10.1 Training to build capacity and skills will be available to support members of the Customer Scrutiny Panel to achieve their objectives. Where possible, new members will be mentored by existing members. A training programme will be developed, delivered and regularly reviewed.
- 10.2 There will be an induction process for all new members, which will identify training and development needs.
- 10.3 After that, training will be planned based on the outcomes from the annual Customer Scrutiny Panel appraisal process.
- 10.4 There will be a mechanism in place to ensure good practice and learning arising from the work of the Customer Scrutiny Panel.

11. Support

- 11.1 The Customer Scrutiny Panel will be provided with administration support from the customer involvement and community development team.
- 11.2 There will be a regular appraisal process for members of the Customer Scrutiny Panel. There will also be an annual assessment of collective and individual skills and competencies so that a development programme can be devised to ensure continuous improvement and effective governance.

12. Expenses and payments

- 12.1 Customer Scrutiny Panel members will not be paid.
- 12.2 Expenses will be reimbursed for things like travelling, child care costs and caring responsibilities.

13. Equality and diversity

- 13.1 Customer Scrutiny Panel members will work within the Aster Group's values and its equality and diversity strategy.

14. Review

- 14.0 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

Customer Board

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The merger between Aster Group and Synergy Housing gave us a great opportunity to review the involvement structures within each organisation, look at best practice in the sector and develop a refined, fit-for-purpose involvement structure for the merged organisation.
- 1.2 Customers from each organisation developed a new structure over a period of eight months, taking the best from their respective organisations. This was approved by Aster Communities and Synergy Boards in August 2012.

2. Our involvement structure

- 2.1 The involvement structure introduces a Customer Board for each region.
- 2.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Customer Board have been designed around the following factors:
 - Making sure regulatory standards are met
 - Being transparent and accountable
 - Learning from the champion models that the working group explored in their meeting in May 2012
 - Making sure value for money is at the heart of current and future delivery
 - Strengthening and building on current practice within both organisations
 - Having customers at our heart.

3. Overview

Number of board members

Up to six customer members (including a representative from Aster Living), one independent member and a Regional Director.

Each Customer Board will have the option to reserve an additional place for a local authority member.

Membership

Will be open to all customers, leaseholders and shared owners.

Quorum

50% members present plus a regional director.

Frequency of meetings

At least four times every calendar year.

Customer Board Terms of Reference

Appointments to the Customer Board

The Customer Board can appoint and remove members subject to the approval of the Aster Communities group services director and regional director.

Chair

It's intended that the Customer Boards will be chaired by a customer. However, this is a decision for the Customer Boards. The Chair will normally serve a three year term but will not serve more than two consecutive terms.

Term

Maximum membership will be for a period of nine years. However, to ensure that not all members will stand down at one time, two Customer Board Members will have an initial membership of one year, two Customer Board Members will have a membership term of two years and two Customer Board members will have a membership term of three years. These will be drawn by lots.

4. Roles and responsibilities – what they will do

4.1 Customer Boards are in place to ensure customers are at the heart of our business and have been designed so they have an influential, empowering and pivotal position within our governance structure. They are part of our governance structure with delegated decision making responsibilities.

4.2 The outcomes of the Customer Boards are contained within three main areas:

- Shaping our housing, community and other related services
- Monitoring our housing, community and other related services
- Reviewing our housing, community and other related services.



Customer Board

Terms of Reference

Shaping our housing, community and other related services

1. Input into the organisational business plan/corporate plan to reflect customer priorities.
2. Input into strategy development and make recommendations to Aster Communities /Synergy Board.
3. Ensure customer involvement has taken place in relevant strategy and policy formulation.
4. Propose annual key performance targets to housing leadership teams.
5. Input into the budget setting process.
6. Approve delegated policies from Aster Communities Board and Synergy Board.
7. Recommend approval of policies to Aster Communities Board and Synergy Board.
8. Consider and approve actions arising from service reviews.
9. Ensure appropriate action is being taken as a result of strategic customer consultation making recommendations to appropriate body. (It'll depend on the specific consultation as to whether the Customer Boards will implement appropriate action.)
10. Involvement in consultation activities.
11. Sign off customer annual report.
12. Agreement of service standards.
13. Control over some local budgets.

Monitoring our housing, community and other related services

1. Monitor against standards to make sure they are achieved and agree remedial action.
2. Monitor performance of local services (all KPIs).
3. Monitor complaints and compliments, taking action as required.
4. Monitor improvement plans against delivery. (It'll depend on the source of improvement plan whether the lead will be Customer Boards.)
5. Monitor outcomes from involvement activities, i.e. neighbourhood panels.

Reviewing our housing, community and other related services

6. Input into reviews of strategy.

5. Relationship to our governance structure and the Customer Board

- 5.1 The responsibilities of the Customer Boards will be delegated by the Aster Communities and Synergy Boards.
- 5.2 There will be facilitated meetings and events between representatives from Aster Communities and Synergy Boards, Customer Board members and the Customer Scrutiny Panel. The meetings will focus on sharing success and areas for improvement and will happen twice a year.

Customer Board

Terms of Reference

6. Membership

- 6.1 The five Customer Boards will cover the geographical areas of Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall and Wiltshire.
- 6.2 There are circumstances where it would be appropriate for the removal of a Customer Board member by the Customer Board. These are similar to those circumstances that apply to the Aster Communities and Synergy Board members.

7. Meeting procedures

- 7.1 The order of business at meetings is:
- In the absence of the Chair and the Vice Chair the Board must elect a member present to chair the meeting
 - To receive any declarations of interest
 - To approve the written minutes of the last meeting, which will then be signed by the Chair as a correct record
 - To consider matters arising from the minutes not already covered in the agenda for the meeting
 - To deal with the agenda before the meeting. Agendas will be set in accordance with the forward plan and members are able to request that future items be added.
- 7.2 No business will be done at any meeting of the Board, unless at least one half of the members of the Board and the regional director are present at the start of the meeting. This is described as a quorum.
- 7.3 The Board should try to make decisions that everyone at the meeting agrees with. However, if they cannot agree, they can take a vote and make a decision based on the option that more people vote for.
- 7.4 Where there is no quorum within 15 minutes of the meeting's scheduled start time (or if during the meeting the Chair states that there is no longer a quorum) the meeting will stand adjourned to a date and time fixed by the Chair. However, the Chair can agree for the meeting to proceed on an informal basis and include any actions requiring a decision as recommendations to the next meeting.
- 7.5 Appropriate conduct during meetings is very important. All Members should pay due regard at all times to the Code of Conduct generally, and in particular to those provisions concerning conduct at meetings.

8. Role description

- 8.1 There is a role description and person specification for Customer Board members.

Customer Board Terms of Reference

9. Code of Conduct

9.1 There is a separate Code of Conduct.

9.2 Customer Boards will have access to information which is business sensitive and all members will be required to maintain confidentiality at all times. Members will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

10. Training

10.1 Training to build capacity and skills will be available to support members of the Customer Boards to achieve their objectives. Where possible, new members will be mentored by existing members. A training programme will be developed, delivered and regularly reviewed.

10.2 There will be an induction process for all new members, which will identify training and development needs.

10.3 After that, training will be planned based on the outcomes from the annual Board appraisal process.

10.4 There will be a mechanism in place to ensure good practice and learning arising from the work of the Customer Boards.

11. Support

11.1 The Customer Board will be provided with administration support from Aster Communities and Synergy Housing.

11.2 There will be a regular appraisal process for members of the Customer Board. There will also be an annual assessment of collective and individual skills and competencies so that a development programme may be devised to ensure continuous improvement and effective governance. **12.**

Expenses and payments

12.1 Customer Board members will be paid.

12.2 Expenses will be reimbursed for things like travelling, child care costs and caring responsibilities.

13. Equality and diversity

13.1 Customer Board members will work within the Aster Group's values and its equality and diversity strategy.

14. Review

14.0 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.



Customer Boards and Scrutiny Panel Code of Conduct

Why do we need a Code of Conduct?

The Code of Conduct makes sure all Customer Board and Customer Scrutiny Panel members (in this document referred to as CB/CSP members) understand the standards of behaviour expected of them.

The conduct of CB/CSP members will give Aster Communities and Synergy customers, other customers, stakeholders and funders confidence that members will show professionalism and integrity, and their actions will be accountable and transparent. The primary duty of CB/CSP members is to act in the interests of Aster Communities, Synergy Housing and the Aster Group, and their customers.

This Code of Conduct has been developed in line with the National Housing Federation Code of Conduct and the findings of the Nolan Committee on 'Standards in Public Life', but also goes beyond these. It may be reviewed from time to time by the Aster Communities and Synergy Housing Boards, in consultation with the Customer Boards and Customer Scrutiny Panel.

Findings of the Nolan Committee

The seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee in its first report guide the content of this Code of Conduct.

- Selflessness: take decisions solely in terms of the Group's values and mission. We should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves or our family and friends
- Integrity: not place ourselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our duties
- Objectivity: ensure that in the delivery of services, we remain impartial and that choices are made on merit alone
- Accountability: accept accountability for our decisions and actions to our customers, the providers of public funds and other stakeholders, and submit ourselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate
- Openness: be as open as possible about all decisions and actions that we take. We should give reasons for our decisions and restrict information only when individual or commercial confidentiality clearly demand it
- Honesty: declare any private interests relating to our duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that is lawful, and protects the Group's reputation, values and mission
- Leadership: promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Customer Boards and Scrutiny Panel Code of Conduct

Personal Conduct

CB/CSP members should demonstrate the following behaviours and attitudes at all times:

- Show exemplary courtesy to other members and to staff
- Be welcoming and friendly
- Act with integrity, honesty and openness
- Remember that their involvement is to benefit the community, not to pursue personal aims
- Not speak or write to the press relating to the Group without prior agreement
- Behave appropriately and not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Treat all paperwork, discussions and personal information about customers as confidential unless stated otherwise
- Not make comments that could be seen as racist, sexist, homophobic or of a derogatory nature
- Not discriminate against any person on the grounds of age, sex, race, nationality, sexuality, political views, religious beliefs, marital status, disability or health
- Not use offensive, intimidating, threatening, abusive, patronising or demeaning language or behaviour
- Understand and respect that people will have different tolerances of such language or behaviours
- Not be in arrears with rent, service charges or any other financial commitment or have legal proceedings being taken against them by the Group
- Be especially careful of relationships with customers, staff and contractors and never allow any personal relationship with a customer, employee or contractor to conflict with the Group's best interests
- Avoid gifts, except in very limited circumstances, as the giving and receiving of gifts can create a relationship that can be seen to influence our judgement. Small personal gifts of nominal value, such as diaries, calendars, stationery may be accepted by an individual. Modest hospitality will be allowed, but only with the approval of the Chair and in line with the Group gifts, hospitality and anti-bribery policy.
- Avoid jargon.

Conduct at meetings

- Arrive on time for meetings
- If unable to attend give apologies in advance of the meeting
- Switch off mobile phones, or refrain from using unless prior agreement has been given by the Chair
- Members should follow the guidance of their Chair in the conduct of the meeting
- Members should follow the agenda and help each other reach informed and effective decisions
- Members should prepare properly for each meeting by reading all relevant papers and bring these to the meeting
- Speakers at meetings should go through the Chair and keep to the subject being discussed
- Only one member should speak at a time
- Any other business will only be used for urgent items and will be agreed at the beginning of the meeting.

Customer Boards and Scrutiny Panel Code of Conduct

Confidentiality

CB/CSP members may deal with sensitive and controversial issues. They must exercise discretion and care in performing their duties and responsibilities. If confidential information is discussed it must not be passed on to anyone who is not a member unless otherwise agreed at the meeting.

Conflict of Interest

CB/CSP members are expected to:

- Ensure their private or personal interests do not influence their decisions and they do not use their position to obtain personal benefit
- Disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any group they represent that they consider may affect any matter under discussion
- Declare any interest in an item and leave the meeting if requested to do so by the Chair
- Use the normal procedures for reporting or dealing with any aspects of their tenancy, for example reporting of repairs.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If any member of the Customer Board or Customer Scrutiny Panel does not abide by this Code of Conduct during a meeting the following action may be taken:

- They will be made aware of the breach by the Chair who may warn the member they may be asked to leave the meeting if they breach the Code again
- The Chair may give up to two further warnings, either in that meeting or in further meetings
- If the member continues to ignore the Code of Conduct the Chair will ask the members present at the meeting to vote on whether that member should leave the meeting.

The Chair will make a member aware if they breach the Code of Conduct and bring the Group into disrepute. The member will be warned they may be asked to leave the Customer Board or Customer Scrutiny Panel.



Application form



I wish to apply for the position of

Customer Board

- Hampshire
- Wiltshire
- Somerset
- Dorset
- Devon and Cornwall

Customer Scrutiny Panel

- Hampshire
- Wiltshire
- Somerset
- Dorset
- Devon and Cornwall

Chair of panel and board

- Hampshire
- Wiltshire
- Somerset
- Dorset
- Devon and Cornwall

Personal details.

Full names:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone (landline):

Mobile:

Email:

Please provide full detail of any current employment or volunteering information.

Company name:

Job title:

From:

To:

Details of your role:

Company name:

Job title:

From:

To:

Details of your role:

Please outline below your reason for applying for this role.
Please look at the person specification and relate your application to the skills we are looking for. This'll help us to assess your application fairly.

Declaration: I declare that the information given on this application form is to the best of my knowledge true. I understand that if it is subsequently discovered that the statement is false this may affect my position.

Signature:

Date:

What'll happen next?

We'll review your application and will contact you within the next 14 working days to explain the next steps.

Thank you for your application.

Once completed, please send this form to:

Aster Group, Sarsen Court, Horton Avenue,
Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 2AZ

Tel: **0333 400 8288**

Email: **leanne.crook@astercommunities.co.uk**

aster 

aster communities 

aster homes 

aster living 

aster property 

Synergy
Housing