

## What would good scrutiny look like at RBH?

### What is scrutiny?

TPAS describe tenant scrutiny as:

*“... a process for carrying out resident-led reviews of all areas of an organisation’s business. It is stated in housing regulation and forms a large part of an organisational approach to welcoming in-depth examination.”*

At its heart, scrutiny looks in detail at the way services are delivered and experienced by tenants with a view to identifying improvements. Where scrutiny results in real changes in the service experience of tenants, this can lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction and improved VFM.

Given RBH’s mutual status, it is proposed that both tenant and employee members of the Representative Body are involved in undertaking scrutiny activity. This allows for employees to provide greater insight on services provided and to hear direct what improvements need to be made to ensure provision of a high-quality service.

### Why do it?

Tenant and employee scrutiny:

- Supports effective governance.
- Ensures that tenants and employees play a key role in shaping the strategic direction that an organisation takes.
- Helps organisations to demonstrate the robustness of their decision-making process.
- Can include input to budget setting, development of corporate plans and reviews of the organisation’s vision and values (Representative Body functions already include supporting development of the corporate plan, vision, and values).
- Can play a part in broader assessment and review for example, tenants and employees could be involved in a review of Governing Board performance or the robustness of performance monitoring arrangements.

### The role of a scrutiny panel

A tenant and employee scrutiny panel:

- Acts as a ‘critical friend’ by analysing, questioning, and challenging landlord performance as part of a constructive and structured approach to continuous improvement.
- ‘Reality checks’ service delivery, assuring managers that services are ‘fit for purpose’ from the perspective of those that use them.
- Identifies difficulties for colleagues/teams delivering service and make recommendations for improvements.
- Looks at a particular service or function, called single service scrutiny, or at a landlord’s overall performance, across all service areas, on a regular and structured basis. In this case, scrutiny is comparing performance against the previous reporting period, looking at trends and identifying areas for further investigation and improvement.
- Should reflect the diversity of the wider RBH tenant population.

### What would be involved?

It is proposed that the panel would:

- Undertake all relevant training and support provided by TPAS, and/or other agencies as appropriate.
- Identify and undertake 3 scrutiny activities each year.
- Report findings and recommendations directly to the Tenant Services Committee and the Board.
- Act as scrutineer champions – supporting other tenants and residents to get involved in scrutiny activity as and when they want/as appropriate to the activity.

In the event that the Scrutiny panel undertake a review of a service area in which a member of the panel is employed, that member(s) will be able to participate in providing insight, but they will not be able to participate in undertaking the review to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

**Benefit of Representative Body members undertaking scrutiny:**

- Already have a strong understanding of the management of the organisation
- Have the right attributes, are clear about their role and have the support in place to undertake it effectively.
- Rep Body members already have organisational buy in from staff at all levels.
- Have an understanding of what's involved and why scrutiny is so important.
- Direct link to the Tenant Services Committee (on completion of reviews) and the Board (annually).

**What support/training would be given?**

Scrutiny is about assessing the real experience of tenants in receipt of services. To ensure that our approach to scrutiny is as comprehensive and effective as it can be, we have approached TPAS for support to run the first scrutiny exercise from start to finish. All future scrutiny activity should be able to run without any external support. The Engagement team will continue to support the panel and associated activity on an ongoing basis.

Tpas will support RBH and the scrutineers through our first review incorporating their recommended key elements of successful scrutiny ensuring that all the appropriate tools are in place to facilitate this covering:

1. **Scoping** (to define requirements and request evidence)
2. **Establishing the current position** (supporting the collation of all relevant information to carry out desktop review and engaging with appropriate managers and colleagues to provide this and undertake any initial conversations)
3. **Carrying out the review** (incorporating all elements required from reality checking, mystery shopping, interviewing, customer consultation etc.)
4. **Making evidenced recommendations** (supporting the analysis of information and formulation of findings and recommendations)
5. **Reporting and communicating** (facilitating the production and presentation of the report, development of action plan and ensuring the communication of findings widely across all identified stakeholders)
6. **Tracking and Reviewing** (ensuring a comprehensive, agreed system is in place, to track those actions take place and measurable outcomes are identified and monitored to establish and share impact)

While those involved in scrutiny are volunteers, as with all other tenant participation activities, all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses should be covered for example, travel costs, childcare and carer costs.