



Cambridge City Council

Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives on the Housing Advisory Board

Code of Conduct

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Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide tenant and leaseholder representatives (TLRs) clear guidelines as to their standard of behaviour and responsibilities in fulfilling their obligations on the Housing Advisory Board (HAB).

The role of a TLR is a voluntary role. The City Council recognises the immense benefits that TLRs can bring, and the bridges that they build between the Council and the wider tenant and leaseholder community. The Council values the contribution that TLRs make as part of the decision-making process.

1. General Obligations

TLRs must act and make decisions on behalf of all the council's tenants and leaseholders in a way that supports the functions of the board set out in its terms of reference, using their skills, knowledge or experience and seeking expert advice where appropriate.

TLRs are required to attend the meetings outlined within their role description, the Council will try to accommodate all TLR availability and accessibility when organising meetings. If a TLR is unable to attend an organised meeting they should give as much notice as practicable. Consistent failure to fulfil the role in this respect may lead to the Council asking the TLR in question to withdraw from the role. However, this would always be preceded by a warning.

TLRs are eligible to claim an allowance, the amount corresponds to the level of TLR activity undertaken in the preceding 6 months. TLRs are also eligible to claim expenses; any claim should be made with integrity. Fraudulent claims are likely to lead to instant dismissal from the role.

TLRs agree to ensure that their rent and/ or service charges will be kept in good standing. If a TLR feels that their account is at risk of falling into arrears they should notify the Income Management Team within City Homes as soon as possible to help manage the situation and agree a solution in a timely manner. In the event that arrears do accrue the TLR should proactively seek to agree arrangements to repay the arrears with the Income Management Team.

TLRs are likely to receive information which is not in the public domain; possibly relating to individuals, organisations or financial matters. It is the responsibility of each TLR to ensure that this information remains confidential. TLR must never use confidential information for their personal advantage or the advantage or disadvantage of anyone known to them. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain (unless it has been made public as a result of the volunteer's breach of confidentiality) or where the law permits or requires disclosure.

TLRs are expected to comply with the Council's Equal Opportunities and Health & Safety policies while they are on its premises or undertaking any of their volunteering duties. The Resident Engagement Manager should ensure that their induction includes an explanation of these policies and procedures and any other policies which are relevant to the volunteering work (e.g. Safeguarding). Copies or links to policies should be given during their induction.

2. General Principles

TLRs will apply the following principles at all times:

- Selflessness- TLRs should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
- Honesty and Integrity- TLRs should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.
- Objectivity- TLRs should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.
- Accountability- TLRs should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly.
- Openness- TLRs should be as open as possible about their actions, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.
- Personal Judgement- TLRs may take account of the views of others, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.
- Respect for Others- TLRs should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability (Equality Act 2010). They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the Council's statutory officers, and its employees.
- Duty to Uphold the Law- TLRs should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.
- Leadership- TLRs should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.

3. Disclosure of Interests

TLRs must make a declaration prior to their election of any interests that may affect them discharging their role as a TLR in an impartial manner. TLRs must make a declaration at each meeting if they have an interest in any item of business on the agenda which would affect them more than tenants or residents of the ward(s) affected generally.

4. Gifts and Hospitality

All TLRs must avoid any conflict between their own interests and the interests of the Council; not accepting gifts or hospitality from organisations or suppliers that the Council has dealings with.

TLRs do not need to declare trivial gifts or hospitality; e.g. tea and biscuits at a meeting, or the gift of a calendar. Anything more substantial that has been prompted by their status as a TLR should be declared. TLRs do not need to make a declaration if they were offered gifts/hospitality but refused the offer.

5. Complaints

The City Council promotes an open and transparent working environment. If a TLR wishes to make a formal complaint they should submit a complaint through the Council's corporate complaints process.

6. Breaches of the code

It is always preferable for breaches of the Code to be dealt with in a timely manner. A complaint against a TLR or report of a breach will be notified to them in writing.

Depending on the nature and severity of the breach a decision about further action will be made in consultation with the relevant Director. In relation to a minor breach the relevant Director has authority to give the TLR a verbal warning about their actions and outline the seriousness of repeating them. In relation to a major breach the relevant Director has the authority to impose sanctions including suspension from the role of TLR. If a TLR is convicted of a criminal act during service the Council will review the circumstances and will need to consider dismissal from their role.