

AREA PANEL INFORMATION PACK

West North West Homes Leeds is keen to involve their tenants and leaseholders in the decision making of the business.

To increase customer involvement and to enable a focus on local issues we have four Area Panels.

These Area Panels cover the Inner West area (Armley and Bramley & Stanningley), Inner North West area (Hyde Park & Woodhouse, Kirkstall, Headingley and Weetwood), Outer West area (Calverley & Farsley, Farnley & Wortley and Pudsey) and Outer North West area (Guiselley & Rawdon, Otley & Yeadon, Adel & Wharfedale and Horsforth).

The remit of the Area Panels is wide and encompasses several service areas. Area Panels have a number of functions including: monitoring services and influencing their design, being consulted on policy changes and making recommendations on changes to these to the Board.

The Area Panels are responsible for a budget which covers:

- Support for tenants groups
- Support for community groups
- Local environmental budgets
- Local Community safety budgets

Area Panels meet every two months.

Each of these Area Panels will be made up of up to twelve tenants or leaseholders who live in the area, two Ward Councillors from that area and also one Director from the West North West Homes Leeds Board.

We are keen to make sure the diversity of the area is reflected in the Area Panels, particularly to give a voice to young people and those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Area Panel members will serve for three years, with four members being appointed each year. At the first annual meeting of the Area Panel four tenant members will retire, these will be those members who have served the longest. If members became members on the same day then those to retire shall be chosen by lot.

Why become an Area Panel member?

You will have the opportunity to make a real difference to tenants, their homes and their communities. You will gain the satisfaction of being involved in a programme of modernisation that will radically improve Council housing in Leeds for tenants now and in the future.

As an Area Panel member you will be able to contribute to discussions on issues such as creating safer communities, tackling anti-social behaviour and regenerating communities.

You will have the opportunity to attend a series of training sessions. These sessions will be designed to provide members with a range of skills, which will be useful, both within and outside the formal Area Panel meeting setting.

What else do you need to know?

Area Panel members should:

- Be open minded;
- Be prepared to read all relevant papers before a meeting;
- Be prepared to listen to alternative points of view
- Ask questions and seek clarification if information is unclear;
- Be prepared to contribute fully by using your skills, experience and time to help reach good decisions ;
- Draw conclusions based on evidence, not on individual opinion;
- Accept collective responsibility for all decisions;
- Maintain confidentiality;
- Disclose any private or personal interests, financial or otherwise; and
- Be prepared to have a public profile.

You would be required to abide by the Code of Conduct. A copy of this is available on request.

Area Panels must consider diverse communities when making decisions and how decisions may impact upon different communities.

We are keen to ensure that every tenant has the opportunity to act as a Panel member, regardless of any disability that they might have. Every effort will be made to address any transport difficulties and access issues that an individual may have. If you have concerns then please telephone the Governance Team on (0113) 247 7543 for advice.

Area Panel members will not be paid wages, but neither should you be out of pocket from being on an Area Panel. Therefore, Panel members will be able to claim expenses for travel costs, parking charges, childcare, carer costs and the like.

Expenses could be claimed whenever the member is on official West North West Homes Leeds Area Panel business.

What do you need to do to apply?

All Tenant and Leaseholder Area Panel members are expected to meet basic criteria.

The criteria include:

- Being a Tenant or Leaseholder of WNWHL;
- The ability to understand and digest complex information and reports, help is available with translations;
- Having an understanding of the need for and accepting collective responsibility;
- Being prepared to abide by the Code of Conduct; and
- Being prepared to undertake relevant training.

Whenever an application is received an interview will take place with the candidate to judge whether or not they meet the criteria.

The process of becoming a member of an Area Panel is separate from the process of becoming a Board Director.

Enclosed with this information you will find an application form. If after reading this information you would like to nominate yourself to become an Area Panel member please fully complete the form and return it to:

West North West Homes Leeds
Freepost RRJX-TUHK-JKAA
Westfield House
Lower Wortley Road
LEEDS
LS12 4PX

For further information please contact Stephen Towler, Community Participation Coordinator on 0113 2477104 or email Stephen.Towler@wnwhl.org.uk