



**CLARION**  
HOUSING

## **Merton Community Panel Terms of Reference**

### **1. Background**

1.1 Clarion Housing is a charitable registered provider of social housing, regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH). It is part of the Clarion Housing Group (“the Group”).

1.2 Clarion Housing’s fundamental charitable purpose is the provision of housing and associated services for those in need, in particular the provision of social and affordable housing for rent and for sale to those unable to access market housing.

1.3 Housing stock within Merton was transferred in 2010 by the London Borough of Merton (“LBM”) originally to Merton Priory Homes, now Clarion Housing as of (December 2016).

### **2. Statement of Purpose**

2.1 The Merton Community Panel is a consultative panel established in April 2017 to provide a local voice and to support Clarion Housing in monitoring the following activity in Merton:

- 2.1.1 regeneration activity
- 2.1.2 delivery of the housing and estates services
- 2.1.3 participation in the Group’s community investment programme in Merton.

2.2 The Panel will be a source of intelligence for shaping and informing Clarion Housing’s activities in Merton and act as a two way communication conduit between locally based Panel Members and the Clarion Housing Board.

### **3. Key Areas of Activity**

- Monitoring the role of Clarion Housing in managing successful neighbourhoods in Merton, and, in partnership with the Regional Housing Director, advising on the operation of the local neighbourhood budget (covering issues not provided for under existing repairs and maintenance or neighbourhood management budgets);
- Overseeing the neighbourhood planning model; ensuring local issues are understood and addressed through service and asset management plans;
- Scrutinising landlord services, focussing on effective delivery and value for money, and including matters such as charges to tenants and leaseholders. In

doing so, the Panel will maintain an effective dialogue with the Clarion Housing Board and the Regional Scrutiny Committee;

- Providing local engagement in helping to shape regeneration activity;
- Support Clarion Housing in understanding local markets and opportunities for growth and in informing plans for investment in new affordable homes in the area;
- Promoting excellent local partnership working;
- Determining priorities for the allocation of the community investment budget in Merton, in line with the priorities set by the Trustees of Clarion Futures of our charitable foundation.
  
- Standing items on the Agenda:
  1. Housing Performance
  2. Resident Involvement – where the panel encourages intransigent issues to be brought forward by residents.

#### **4. Duration and Meetings**

4.1 The Panel shall continue for a period of 10 years or such shorter period as Clarion Housing with the consent of LBM might reasonably determine having regard to the Panel's effectiveness. There will be a review at the end of each period of 2 years to consider the effectiveness, terms of reference, activities and membership (Current review completed 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019). Any changes arising from such reviews shall be with the consent of LBM, where such consent will not be unreasonably refused.

4.2 LBM contact is Steve Webb, Business Support and Relationship Manager, Merton Housing Needs and Strategy.

4.3 It is anticipated that the focus of the Panel's activities will concentrate primarily on regeneration activity within Merton.

4.4 It is expected that the Panel shall meet four times each year, with any changes being agreed by the Panel with Clarion Housing.

#### **5. Membership**

5.1 The Panel shall consist of between 8 and 12 members, ideally (at full membership) 7 residents, 3 independents and 2 nominees from LBM. Employees shall not be members. The Chair shall be an independent member appointed by Clarion Housing. The Panel shall appoint a tenant Co-Chair and a Vice Chair, this could be a resident of any tenure. The Panel may co-opt up to 3 (non-voting) co-optees, to fill temporary vacancies or to meet a skill gap on the Panel.

5.2 All resident members must be tenants, leaseholders or Freeholders of Clarion Housing and should live in the Merton area. It is intended that all independent members

will either reside in or work in the Merton area, although it may be desirable to appoint independent members from outside the area in some circumstances. It is intended that resident panel members will come from a representative range of areas and tenure types.

5.3 Panel members will be recruited and selected in accordance with the Group's policies, having regard to the skills, knowledge and experience required.

## **6. Membership Requirements**

6.1 Resident members must not be in breach of their tenancy/lease nor be in legal dispute with Clarion Housing for a period of 12 months prior to appointment and during their membership (and may be removed on written notice from the Company Secretary if they are). Membership is limited to one member per household at any one time. Household members are allowed to be resident members.

6.2 Clarion Housing will provide LBM with a statement of skills and experience necessary for the LBM nominees. LBM shall use reasonable endeavours to nominate persons with the required skills and experience. Clarion Housing shall be entitled, acting reasonably, to decline a nomination should the nominee not meet the required skills.

6.3 Panel members shall be expected to comply with the Group's Code of Conduct and any other relevant policies, regulations or guidance. Clarion Housing shall be entitled to remove a member after consultation with the Chair of the Panel should the member be in breach of such Code, policies, regulations or guidance.

## **7. Liaison and Escalation**

7.1 The Panel shall be supported by the Regional Housing Director Marek Witko on operational issues and shall have an Executive Director Sponsor Michelle Reynolds who will lead on strategic issues.

7.2 Should the Panel consider that there is a significant service failure it will request that the matter be examined by the Clarion Housing Board, which shall report back to the Panel in a timely fashion having regard to the nature of the issue referred.

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