



CITY OF
Lincoln
COUNCIL

COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

between

**Lincoln City Council
&
Lincoln Tenants' Panel**

14 August 2013

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the arrangements and protocols for communication between members of the Lincoln Tenants' Panel and the City Council on all matters relating to the work of the Lincoln Tenants' Panel (LTP). For example:
- 1.2
- Submitting apologies for meetings
 - Requesting agenda items
 - Requesting information from council officers
 - Making complaints against council officers (where the complaint is in relation to LTP business).
- 1.3 It has been developed to ensure that members of the panel receive timely responses to LTP members' enquiries and requests for information to aid the Panel in co-regulating and scrutinising the City Council's Landlord Services. It has also been developed to ensure LTP members follow an agreed and transparent communication channel.

The principles underpinning this protocol are that:

- LTP will develop and publish annual work programme of performance monitoring and scrutiny review to enable officers to allocate appropriate time and resources to support LTP in delivering their work programme.
- Officers will do their best at all times to give timely responses to LTP members' enquiries in accordance with the timescales for response set out below.
- LTP members should bear in mind that officers' work priorities are set and managed through the Council's Housing Business Plan & the LTP annual work programme and LTP members should avoid undue disruption to officers work programmes by making unreasonable demands on officer time
- All LTP members follow an agreed route for communications

2) Communications process

Where an LTP member needs to contact the council about a matter relating to LTP they must first contact the chair or vice-chair of LTP as a first port-of-call.

The chair or vice-chair will then decide which route should be used to communicate the information. These routes could include:

Notifying the resident involvement team

Asking the LTP member to notify the resident involvement team directly

Referring the matter through the Single Point of Contact Route (SPOC)

either themselves or asking the LTP member to do so

Notifying the Tenancy Services Manager where it would not be appropriate to contact the Resident Involvement Team.

There are a few scenarios where LTP members will be exempt from

using the communications protocol. These are:
Making simple and quick enquires e.g. confirming the time and a meeting
Asking for transport to be arranged to a meeting
Asking for a loyalty card, expenses sheet or replacement paperwork to be sent out or brought to a meeting
If the LTP member wishes to make a complaint about the chair or vice-chair or a formal complaint against a member of the resident involvement team. In this instance the formal complaint should be submitted to SPOC or through the council's website
When the chair/vice-chair fails to provide a response within a reasonable timeframe
When the LTP member is not happy with the response provided from the chair or vice-chair.

2. Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

- 2.1 The Council will designate a named officer to be the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for receipt of all enquiries and requests for information from LTP members relating to the business of LTP.
- 2.2 The SPOC will be the PA to the Director of Housing and Regeneration – Jo Sedgwick.
- 2.3 Wherever possible LTP members' enquiries should be directed by email to the SPOC via the following designated email address for the Lincoln Tenant Panel – LTP@lincoln.gov.uk

3. Timescales for response

- 3.1 Officers will aim to respond to the LTP members' enquiries within 5 working days. The timescale to respond will depend on the nature and complexity of the individual enquiry.
- 3.2 If a full response cannot be given within 1 working day, the SPOC will acknowledge receipt of the email and in doing so provide the LTP member with the name and contact details of the officer tasked with responding to the enquiry.
- 3.3 Exceptionally, where a full response cannot be provided within 5 working days of receipt of the enquiry, the LTP member will be provided with an explanation as to why this is the case, together with the name and contact details of the officer tasked with responding to the enquiry and will be provided with an estimated date by which the LTP member may expect a full response
- 3.4 Written correspondence and telephone enquiries will be dealt with on the same basis and should be directed to the SPOC at the following address/telephone number:
Jo Sedgwick

PA to the Director
Housing & Regeneration Directorate
City Hall
Lincoln
LN2 3JR
Tel 01522 873201

4. Monitoring & reporting

- 4.1 In the initial 12 months period of operation of this protocol, the SPOC will report quarterly to the LTP on the number of enquiries received and the response times and thereafter will report annually.

5. Review

- 5.1 This protocol will come into effect from 2 September 2013 and will be reviewed annually at the time of the annual monitoring report
- 5.2 The Council reserves the right to change the designated SPOC and will give notice to LTP members should it choose to do so.
- 5.3 This protocol governs the arrangements for responding to LTP members' enquiries & requests for information made in connection with the discharge of their roles as members of the LTP. Enquiries relating to LTP members individual tenancies and any formal complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the standards set out in the Council's local offers and the Council's complaints procedure.