This is the Terms of Reference of Tandridge District Council Residents Forum. Use of the word Resident refers to council tenants and council leaseholders.

What is the purpose of the Terms of Reference?

The Terms of Reference set out how the Tandridge Residents Forum will operate, how its decisions will be made and to make sure those decisions are representative, efficient and accountable.

What are the Aims & Objectives of the Forum?

The aims and objectives of Tandridge Residents’ Forum are:

- To create a partnership between Tandridge tenants and leaseholders and Tandridge District Council and improve communication and accountability between Tandridge District Council and its tenants and leaseholders.

- To promote an effective working partnership between staff and tenants and leaseholders of Tandridge District Council and to provide opportunities for all tenants and leaseholders to participate in local decisions at the level that they choose.

- To represent the interests and views of all tenants and leaseholders of Tandridge District Council to the Housing Service.

- To take part in developing Tandridge District Council’s related Housing Strategies and capital programs, and in the review of strategies, finances, policies and practices that determine the provision of housing services.

- To take an active part in the planning, review and delivery of housing services, including identifying areas where remedial action is needed, with a view to improving service delivery.

- To assist in the monitoring of performance against agreed targets and to propose remedial action if performance on housing services is falling short.

- To act as a consultative body, providing a residents perspective, on all aspects of housing services for tenants and leaseholders of the District.

- To interact with Tandridge District Council and other agencies and organisations for the benefit of tenants and leaseholders in the area.

- To develop, monitor and review the Resident Involvement Service Standard.

- To promote awareness of the Forum and its work to all tenants and leaseholders in the District and produce regular newsletter articles for Tandridge Tenants Talk.

- To be non-party political.
Equal Opportunities

The Residents Forum opposes any form of discrimination and will aim, at all times to promote awareness of equality of opportunity issues and good practice in resident participation initiatives.

The Residents Forum will not discriminate on any grounds. This includes, but is not restricted to all of the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation).

The Residents Forum will ensure there is full participation and equality of opportunity for all members in the operation of the Forum and its members will encourage involvement in the wider tenant and leaseholder population.

In its meetings and in the conduct if its business in general terms, the Residents Forum will not tolerate any discriminatory remarks. The Chair has the discretion to ask any member of the Forum making such a comment to leave the meeting.

Membership

Membership of the Residents Forum is open to any named tenant or leaseholder of Tandridge District Council, except in the circumstances named below:

- Where the Council has commenced legal proceedings for rent arears or a serious breach of its tenancy conditions or if proceedings have been commenced against the tenant in the previous two years.
- Where the Council has started legal proceedings against a leaseholder for recovery of service charges or any other breach of their leasehold conditions.

Existing members will have their membership suspended if the Council issues legal proceedings against them for rent or service charge arrears or for any other breach of their tenancy or lease agreement.

All persons wishing to join the Residents Forum must initially apply to the Council to enable their eligibility to be confirmed. The Council will maintain a register of membership of the Residents Forum.

Members of the Residents Forum are not elected and therefore represent tenant opinion as a whole.

Membership should be encouraged to be representative of the wider resident body as a whole in terms of both geographical area and equality and diversity.

Members of the Residents Forum shall be required to sign up to the Tandridge District Council Resident Forum Code of Conduct.

It is a condition of membership that forum members uphold the objectives of the Residents Forum and conduct themselves in a reasonable manner when attending forum meetings. Any form member may be excluded for breach of this condition or for any other conduct contravening the objectives of the Forum by a majority of those present and voting at any forum meeting. Any forum member so excluded will have the right of appeal to the next or subsequent meeting of the forum.

Membership is open to any tenant or leaseholder of Tandridge District Council, regardless of race, colour, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, cultural background, disability or illness, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, class, appearance or employment status and subject only to the conditions set out above.

For logistical reasons, it has been agreed by the Forum that its membership shall not exceed 40 people. If more than 40 people seek membership of the Forum an appropriate solution will be sought in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair.
Any member wishing to resign from the Forum should confirm this in writing to the Chair or Council nominated representative.

**Officers and Representatives**

The Forum shall have a Chairman and Vice-Chairman and may create other officer positions as necessary.

The forum shall be empowered to elect representatives to represent residents on other bodies.

All officer posts will be subject to election annually, usually at the first meeting held on or after 1 April each year.

Nominations of officers must be proposed and seconded by existing members of the forum, having first sought the Forum member’s agreement.

Anyone being nominated to the position of Chair must have been a member of the Forum for a period of two years immediately prior to their nomination.

In the event that more than one nomination for an officer position is received a ballot shall be held, administered by the Council’s representative.

**Attendance**

Members of the Residents Forum are expected to attend a minimum of two meetings each year. Anyone who fails to meet this minimum attendance criterion will be deemed to have resigned from the Forum subject to the discretion of the Chair in respect of any special circumstances.

Any member of the Forum who is unable to meet the minimum attendance criteria for reasons of ill health will have their entitlement to membership reviewed by the Chair and Vice Chair.

Members of the Residents Forum must send their apologies in advance for their non-attendance to either the Chair or Vice Chair of the Forum or the Council’s nominated representative.

**Meetings**

The Forum shall meet at least four times per year. Meeting dates will be agreed for the coming year at the first meeting held on or after 1 April each year.

Housing Services shall receive proposed Agenda items from Forum members at least 15 working days before the next scheduled meeting.

The Agenda will be drawn up by the Forum Chairman in consultation with Housing Services, no later than 10 working days prior to the date of the meeting.

The Agenda and any necessary supporting papers will be sent to Forum members and invited Officers at least 5 working days before meetings.

All meetings of the Forum shall be minuted and circulated to all members of the Residents Forum within 5 working days of the Chairs approval.

The Forum Chairman will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate Officers and Ward Councilors are informed of decisions taken and recommendations are referred to the Partnership Group.

Meetings of the Forum will be open to the public who will have the opportunity to ask questions and comment on issues affecting their homes and environment during the Question and Answer Session. At other times, non-Forum members will only be permitted to speak at the Chairman’s discretion.
Invitations to Forum meetings may be extended to Tandridge District Council Officers, or other agencies and Ward councilors to address the meetings, inform the debate and to hear residents’ views.

Councilors may request in writing permission from the Chairman to attend a Forum meeting. Any written request must be received by the Chairman at least 15 working days prior to the meeting they wish to attend. If a request to attend is approved, permission will be confirmed in writing by the Chairman at least 10 working days in advance of the meeting.

Special meetings of the Forum may be called at the request of an ordinary Forum Meeting. When a special meeting has been called, notifications shall be sent to all registered Forum members to notify the purpose, date, time and place of the meeting at least 10 working days in advance.

In the absence of the Chair the Vice-Chair will be responsible for running the meeting. Should neither the Chair nor Vice-Chair be present, those Forum members attending will select a chair for the purpose of that meeting only.

Quorum
Meetings of the Residents Forum will be deemed to be quorate if at least six registered forum members are present. In the event that there are less than six forum members in attendance then the Chair may decide to continue the meeting on an informal basis. In the event of an informal meeting, no decisions can be taken.

Decision Making
Members of the Residents Forum should aim to make decisions by consensus.
Where a vote is necessary, every Forum member present shall have one vote and every decision shall be made by a majority of votes.

A resolution that is put to the vote of the meeting will be decided upon a show of hands unless a ballot is demanded by either the meetings Chairperson or at least five members of the Residents Forum who are present and entitled to vote.

Unless a ballot is demanded, a declaration by the Chairperson of the result of the show of hands shall be proof of that fact.

Where the number of votes cast in any matter is equal, then the Chair shall have a casting vote in addition to his / her vote.

The result of any vote will be fully recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Forum Sub-Committees or Working Groups
The Forum may establish themed sub-committees or working groups.

All Sub-Committee or Working Groups shall draw up a Terms of Reference which will define the purpose of the group, the relationship with the Forum, the frequency of meetings, chairmanship and decision making powers, and shall be agreed by the Forum in advance.

Sub-Committees or working groups shall meet at least two weeks in advance of the Forum, in order that the considerations and recommendations of sub-committee or working group meetings may be reported to the Forum.

Council Support
The Council will provide reasonable financial, administrative and practical assistance to support the meetings of the Residents Forum and the training and development of its members.

A representative from the Council will attend all meetings of the Residents Forum in order to service the requirements of the forum. The attendance of other Council officers and elected
Members will be at the request of the Residents Forum, subject to availability, or for the purpose of presenting or discussing agenda items.

The Council will promote the existence of the Residents Forum and regular information about the forum will be included in the tenant’s newsletter, Tandridge Tenants Talking and via the Council’s website.

**Restrictions**

Forum members acknowledge that their membership of the Residents Forum does not grant them any additional rights other than as tenants or leaseholders of Tandridge District Council and they should not use their position for any personal or perceived gain or benefit.

Individual tenancy matters or other individual problems are outside of the constitution of the Residents’ Forum and should be raised in accordance with accepted procedures.

Any conflicts of interest must be declared prior to discussion.

**Vote of no confidence**

If a vote of no confidence is taken and carried by a majority of forum members then either the Chair or Vice Chair must relinquish his or her post. They do not have to resign from the Forum. Only one vote of no confidence may be taken in any one year.

**Review and Amendments to the Constitution**

This constitution shall be reviewed by the Council and the Chair and Vice Chair automatically once every three years or on the request of the Chair or the Council. Any proposed changes must subsequently be approved by a majority of those present and voting at a forum meeting.

**Suspension of the Residents Forum**

In the event of any meeting of the Residents Forum breaching this agreed constitution and code of conduct, the Council reserves the right to temporarily suspend the operation of the Forum.

**Dissolution of the Forum**

The Forum may recommend its dissolution to the Council after consultation with Forum members and in order to make way for a new tenant involvement structure.

This revised constitution was approved by a majority of those present at the meeting of the Residents’ Forum held on 5 February 2018.