



Annual Report 2024-25

Following a recruitment drive, we were very pleased to welcome two new members to our group this year - Steph Presdee and Maggie Newton - bringing us to full capacity.

Not only have Steph and Maggie brought new ideas and energy to the group it also takes the pressure off existing group members as there are now more people to complete the work that goes into a scrutiny review.

Paul, who joined us in 2023, had the excellent idea of going over previous scrutiny reviews to see how well our recommendations have been implemented. We were pleased to take this suggestion on board and now alternate between completing a new review, and then checking on progress with a previous one.

We have since revisited the ASB action plan, first looked at a few years ago, and will be reviewing Cottsway's process for ending a tenancy next so we can identify how this can be improved.

Overall, 2024-25 has been busy but rewarding and we are looking forward to working together in 2025-26 to bring about improvements to services for all Cottsway customers.

The Scrutiny Group

Vanda White (Chair), Gill Browning, Paul Jamieson, Maggie Newton, Steph Presdee, Carole Scott

ACTIVITIES OVER THE YEAR

Review of the ASB action plan

In November, we revisited the actions implemented from our earlier review of the anti-social behaviour (ASB) service.



We originally reviewed this in 2020, making 20 recommendations for service improvements and we found that 15 of these had been fully implemented and 5 partially implemented.

Those needing additional work will be delivered under the guidance of Cottsway's new Tenancy and Neighbourhood Housing Manager, Alison Owens, and we will continue to track progress over the coming months.

Focusing on performance

Given the publication of the Regulator of Social Housing's new Tenant Satisfaction Measure results in November, and the implementation of the new consumer standards, we decided we needed to focus more on how Cottsway are performing.

We now dedicate one meeting each quarter to reviewing the previous quarter's performance in



detail, as well as attending the regular Customer Insight Group meetings with staff to get a wider perspective on performance across the organisation.

Training and conferences

It's been a busy year for training as we inducted two new members and continue to work on keeping our skills and knowledge up to date.



We also attended the following, either online or in-person:

- Tpas' Eastern Members meeting
- Tpas Introduction to Scrutiny (new members)
- Tpas' Scrutiny Club meetings
- Tpas National Scrutiny Conference
- HQN workshop on the Social Housing Regulation Act (2023)
- Training and monthly IT security sessions.

You may notice much of our training is delivered by Tpas, 'the tenant engagement experts'.

Cottsway are Tpas members and, as such, all Cottsway customers can access their specialist resources, helping customers of registered providers hold their landlords to account. For more information and to sign up visit:

- www.tpas.org.uk/tenant



Membership and meetings

We now have six active members - bringing a range of skills and experience to the

group - and we meet online every two weeks, with every third meeting being in-person, usually at Cottsway House.

We held a Scrutiny Liaison Group meeting in April 2024 where we met with Board members and senior managers. Our Chair, Vanda, also attended two meetings of the Board's Customer Committee, in April and October.

We also continue to attend Cottsway's Customer Insight Group, a quarterly meeting of staff and senior managers where we review the feedback received from customers and focus on Cottsway's performance.

Networking with others

Over the summer we attended Oxfordshire Play Association's play and activity day in Witney with members of the Communities Team. We really enjoyed meeting Cottsway customers at the event and took the opportunity to talk to them about our role as scrutiny members.



We also met with some of Soha Housing's own Scrutiny Group members for a 'speed-dating' style event at Cottsway House in October. As well as being a great way to break the ice, we were able to share information on our working practices and approach to scrutiny.

This was followed by a joint Housing Quality Network workshop in January (pictured below), where we all learnt more about the events following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017 which led to the Housing Regulation Act (2023), and the new consumer standards that landlords like Cottsway have to adhere to.



Get involved

If you'd like to help out and share your views on future Scrutiny reviews from time to time, you can sign up to let us know you're happy for us to contact you at:

- www.cottsway.co.uk/scrutinygroup

Social media

Follow us on Facebook where we will keep you updated on our activities:

- www.facebook.com/CottswayScrutinyGroup