

BCP Homes Advisory Board

Terms of Reference and Governance Arrangements

1. The terms of reference of BCP Homes Advisory Board

1.1 Introduction:

BCP Homes is the Council's housing management service, directly providing housing management services and overseeing the provision of all services to residents funded by the Housing Revenue Account [HRA]. An Advisory Board comprising elected members, residents, and independent specialists oversees the activity of BCP Homes on behalf of the Council.

1.2 Role and Purpose of the Board

The role and purpose of the Board is to

- Provide oversight to the operational delivery of the housing landlord service for BCP Council, ensuring that it delivers against the Council's strategic objectives for this area.
- Make recommendations regarding matters to be considered by BCP Cabinet and Council, including the BCP housing strategy, BCP housing landlord policies and regarding the setting of the annual HRA budget.
- Work in an advisory capacity to the Council on all matters related to services provided through the BCP HRA.
- Work in partnership with, and be accountable to, residents in fulfilling its role.
- Provide oversight and assurance to the Council on the key matters contained within the housing white paper and subsequent legislation and regulatory changes
- Act as the main operational Board for the Council in reviewing and ensuring that the Council is prepared for and meets all standards as defined by the Housing Regulator and Housing Ombudsman

1.3 Services within the remit of Board oversight and scrutiny

The range of services within the remit of the Board includes

- Housing management
- Leaseholder services
- Tenancy sustainment and support
- Community support
- General needs and specialist housing
- Resident involvement
- Day to repairs
- Planned maintenance
- Voids

- Customer services
- Service delivery arrangements
- Grounds maintenance
- Health and safety and compliance
- Lettings
- Income
- Complaints
- Aids and Adaptations
- All areas subject to Tenant Satisfaction Measures as defined by the Social Housing Regulator

1.4 Strategic input

- Understand and apply the strategic objectives of BCP Council in the creation of and oversight of BCP Homes' operational strategy
- Recommend BCP Homes' strategy and operating plan and have oversight of the delivery
- Act as a key consultee in the development of the wider BCP Housing Strategy, and other relevant Council strategies and policies.
- Provide assurance to those Council officers holding accountability for building safety and consumer standards on delivery
- Provide assurance to the Council regarding the delivery of standards as defined by the Housing Regulator and the Housing Ombudsman

1.5 Performance management, oversight, and scrutiny

- Develop housing operating models to ensure effective service delivery across areas funded via the Housing Revenue Account
- Oversee and scrutinise delivery of all services delivered directly by BCP Homes and commissioned by BCP Homes, and ensure that agreed service delivery standards for residents are achieved
- Set out an annual operational plan for the delivery of HRA standards that supports the HRA budget recommended to Council and manage delivery of this operational plan
- Review on a quarterly basis key performance and budgetary information
- Commission and specify services delivered to residents by other Council services funded by the HRA
- Scrutinise performance in the delivery of housing management and housing maintenance services, including safety and statutory compliance
- Develop and oversee the strategy and implementation of capital and revenue funds on investment, refurbishment, servicing and maintenance and repairs
- Scrutinise performance on relevant services delivered elsewhere in the Council funded through the HRA to residents
- Scrutinise performance contained within the tenant satisfaction measures and make recommendations for improvement

1.6 Housing Management

- Deliver effective services as defined under the consumer standards in relation to housing management services.

- Lead and develop housing management teams in line with Council objectives and coordinating delivery across BCP Homes and other Council departments with regards to housing management

1.7 Asset Management

- Ensure effective service is delivered as defined under the consumer standards in relation to housing maintenance services
- Develop the 30-year capital plan for investment ensuring that this meets the Council's objectives and is contained within the Council's medium term financial plan
- Commissioning and specify property management and maintenance including safety and statutory compliance
- Ensure effective asset management is delivered in line with the 2021 Building Safety legislation and that the Accountable Officer and Building Safety Manager roles are delivered effectively

1.8 HRA planning delivery and oversight

- Develop, recommend, deliver, and monitor the annual Housing Revenue Account Business Plan in line with current Council strategic objectives
- Recommend to Council the HRA medium term financial plan and Business Plan including revenue and capital budgets
- Recommend the allocation of resources within the budgetary framework agreed by the Council
- Seek to ensure value for money is achieved across all housing revenue account (HRA) services

1.9 Resident voice

- Act as the formal link on behalf of the Council's Cabinet with its tenants and leaseholders ensuring all its landlord responsibilities including for involvement and engagement are fulfilled, and that regulatory expectations are met.
- Ensure that residents are fully engaged in the oversight of services and the design of improvements and have early sight of proposed strategy and policy developments to ensure the views of tenants inform proposals
- Oversee and deliver improvements within the tenant satisfaction measures
- Work with residents to deliver an effective resident scrutiny approach, hearing outcomes of reviews and ensure recommendations are implemented

1.10 External policy and regulation

- Understand the external policy landscape and the implications for BCP Homes
- Ensure that expectations and outcomes of the Consumer Regulatory Standards are met

1.11 Safety health wellbeing

- Ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all residents receiving housing services are prioritised in their considerations and oversight of services

1.12 **New build and growth**

- Act as a key consultee in the development of new Council housing
- Ensure that there are strong links with the development team to maximise efficiencies around maintenance programmes and delivery of effective homes for local people

1.13 **Capital programme**

- Commission and specify major capital programmes, including the retro fitting programme to improve the energy efficiency of Council Housing properties

1.14 **Risk monitoring**

- Review and track risks, controls and mitigations relating to resident facing services through the appropriate risk registers.

1.15 **Equalities**

- Monitor and review the impact of service delivery with regards equalities, ensuring that this supports delivery of Council objectives

1.16 **Other**

- Consider and make recommendations and /or act as a key consultee on any other significant matter affecting Council housing

2. **Advisory Board membership**

2.1 **Membership of the Board:** BCP Homes Advisory Board at all times acts on behalf of the Council in relation to its duties as listed in the terms of reference. It is important for the Board to be well equipped to carry out its responsibilities and therefore it needs a membership which reflects the need to be an efficient and accountable social landlord.

2.2 **Size of the Board:** There shall be a Board made up of 11 members, with 4 independents, 4 residents (two each from Poole and Bournemouth) and 3 elected members.

2.3 **Composition of the Board:** The Council will use its best endeavours to achieve diversity of membership among the Board. If possible, the resident representation should include both tenants and leaseholders. The four independents should bring specialist skills and knowledge relevant to the aims of BCP Homes.

2.4 **Board skills:** The Board will seek to include members with a broad range of skills. These may vary from time to time according to Council policies and strategies, the operating environment, regulatory requirements and Government policies and priorities, but are likely to include:

- Local authority knowledge and influence
- The ‘lived experience’
- An appropriate range of technical, professional and business skills
- An understanding of the sector
- Housing management expertise
- Customer service (including digital) experience
- Wider health/social care/community support experience
- Related local public service knowledge
- Experience of governance and/or serving on a board
- Professional/commercial skills in e.g., asset management, business, HR/Organisational development, IT, law, health and safety
- The necessary skills, energy, commitment to contribute to the success of BCP Homes

The Board will carry out an annual appraisal and assessment of the skills within the Board membership and compare these to the desirable list of skills and experience needed on the Board. They will also keep the skills needed for an effective Board under review. When there are Board vacancies, the identified skills gaps will be used to inform the recruitment and selection process.

2.5 **Member recruitment:**

- **Elected members:** Elected members will be put forward by the Council via the annual democratic process, but this is expected to include the housing portfolio holder
- **Residents:** The BCP Homes Advisory Board will have 4 residents drawn from across Bournemouth and Poole; 2 from Bournemouth and 2 from Poole.

Resident members will be selected based on their skills to be able to reflect resident views and to deliver the skills required of Advisory Board members. They will be expected to liaise with, but will not be drawn from, the BCP Homes Resident Committee, although members of the Committee may also choose to apply to be Advisory Board members.

The selection process will aim to reflect local characteristics and support a diversity of views on the Board. Recruitment will be via BCP wide advertising and selection will be based on the ability to deliver the range of skills described in the agreed job description and involve the BCP Homes Resident Committee. Applicants will be interviewed by a Panel made up of the Housing portfolio holder, a lead officer for BCP Homes and members of the BCP Homes Resident Committee.

Resident members will serve on the BCP Homes Advisory Board for the term as set out under length of service (section 2.9)

A resident member can resign at any time sending notice to the Chair of the Board. At the end of the 1st term, the Chair will discuss with the resident whether they wish to be appointed for a 2nd term, or whether the Chair wishes for them to be re-appointed.

- **Independents:** Independent members will be selected based on their skills to be able to reflect the skills set out in section 2.4.

The selection process will aim to reflect local characteristics and support a diversity of views on the Board. Recruitment will be via BCP wide advertising and selection will be based on the ability to deliver the range of skills described in the agreed job description and deliver an effective Board. Applicants will be interviewed by a Panel made up of the Portfolio holder, a current independent member, a lead officer, and a resident member of the Advisory Board.

Independent members will serve on the BCP Homes Advisory Board for the term as set out under length of service (section 2.9)

An independent member can resign at any time sending notice to the Chair of the Board. At the end of the 1st term, the Chair will discuss with the independent whether they wish to be appointed for a 2nd term, or whether the Chair wishes for them to be re-appointed.

2.6 **Member induction:** All new members will be expected to follow an appropriate induction programme.

2.7 **Member probation:** Members will be appointed for a probationary period of six months.

2.8 **Appointment of Chair / Co-chairs**

- One co-chair is expected to be the portfolio for Housing and the appointment to this Cabinet position will automatically include the co-chair position of BCP Homes Advisory Board
- The other co-chair position is expected to be selected from the Board. Board members will be asked if they wish to undertake the role and if more than one Board member puts themselves forward then Board members will vote for their preferred candidate. This co-chair position will be held for a term of 3 years or until the overall term of office on the Advisory Board ends, whichever is sooner.

2.9 **Length of service**

- In accordance with the NHF Code of Governance maximum tenure will normally be up to six consecutive years, comprising two three-year terms of office.
- A member who has left the Board may not be re-appointed for at least three years.
- Reappointment after each term will be subject to consideration of the member's appraised performance and skills, and to the wider needs of the Board at that time.

3. Meetings

3.1 Quorum

- The Quorum for Board meetings shall be no fewer than half the membership of the Board, always including at least one member of each of its constituent bodies.

3.2 Frequency

- The Board shall meet at least six times per annum.
- The meetings shall take place at pre-arranged dates. The timetable of Board meetings shall be circulated annually.
- Notice of at least seven days must be given in writing before any meeting of the Board except in the case of Emergency Board meetings which will only deal with emergency items.
- Papers for each Board meeting shall be circulated at least 5 clear working days in advance. No papers may be tabled at meetings unless they have the permission of the Chair and relate to urgent matters than cannot be held over until the next meeting.

3.3 Chairing

- The Advisory Board will have co-Chairs, who will share the chairing duties
- One of the co-Chairs will be the Portfolio Holder. The second will be selected from any of the constituent groups.
- Any member of the Panel may put themselves forward as co-Chair. In the event of more than one member doing so, a secret ballot will be held.
- The co-Chair shall be appointed for three years.
- If neither the Chair nor the Co-Chair is present at a meeting the Board shall elect a member present to Chair the meeting
- Chair's action may be taken by the Chair where it concerns any matter which for the sake of urgency or expediency cannot wait until the next meeting. Such action must be kept to a minimum and it must be reported to the next Board meeting for ratification.