

Appendix 1 BCP Homes Governance Review

Introduction

The governance of social housing providers is under increased scrutiny with the Social Housing Regulation Act and new Consumer Standards introduced in April 2024. These changes emphasise the need for deeper transparency, accountability, and meaningful resident involvement.

The Regulator of Social Housing now requires landlords to demonstrate robust oversight that ensures tenants are safe, listened to, and treated with respect. Councils must evidence understanding of their housing stock, respond effectively to complaints, and use data to drive improvements. Good governance is about fostering openness, responsiveness, and continual improvement.

Resident involvement is essential, not just as a regulatory requirement but as good practice that enhances service delivery and strengthens trust. Effective governance includes structures for residents to influence decisions, scrutinise performance, and hold landlords to account, with opportunities for genuine engagement and impact.

Robust governance requires clear decision-making, risk management, and regular performance monitoring. Councils must show their housing functions are well-led, financially viable, and meet regulatory standards for safety, transparency, and tenant engagement.

Executive oversight should include:

- Regular scrutiny of housing performance data, including complaints, repairs, and tenant satisfaction
- Clear accountability between housing officers, senior leadership, and elected members
- Independent assurance processes, such as audits and resident panels
- Timely, transparent reporting to the Regulator and public

With the removal of the "serious detriment" test, the Regulator can intervene earlier and more frequently, placing greater responsibility on councils for continuous oversight and swift action on risks or failures.

In summary, strong governance and executive oversight are vital to protecting residents, maintaining public trust, and delivering high-quality housing. Councils must ensure their governance frameworks are agile, inclusive, and embed resident voice at every level of decision-making.

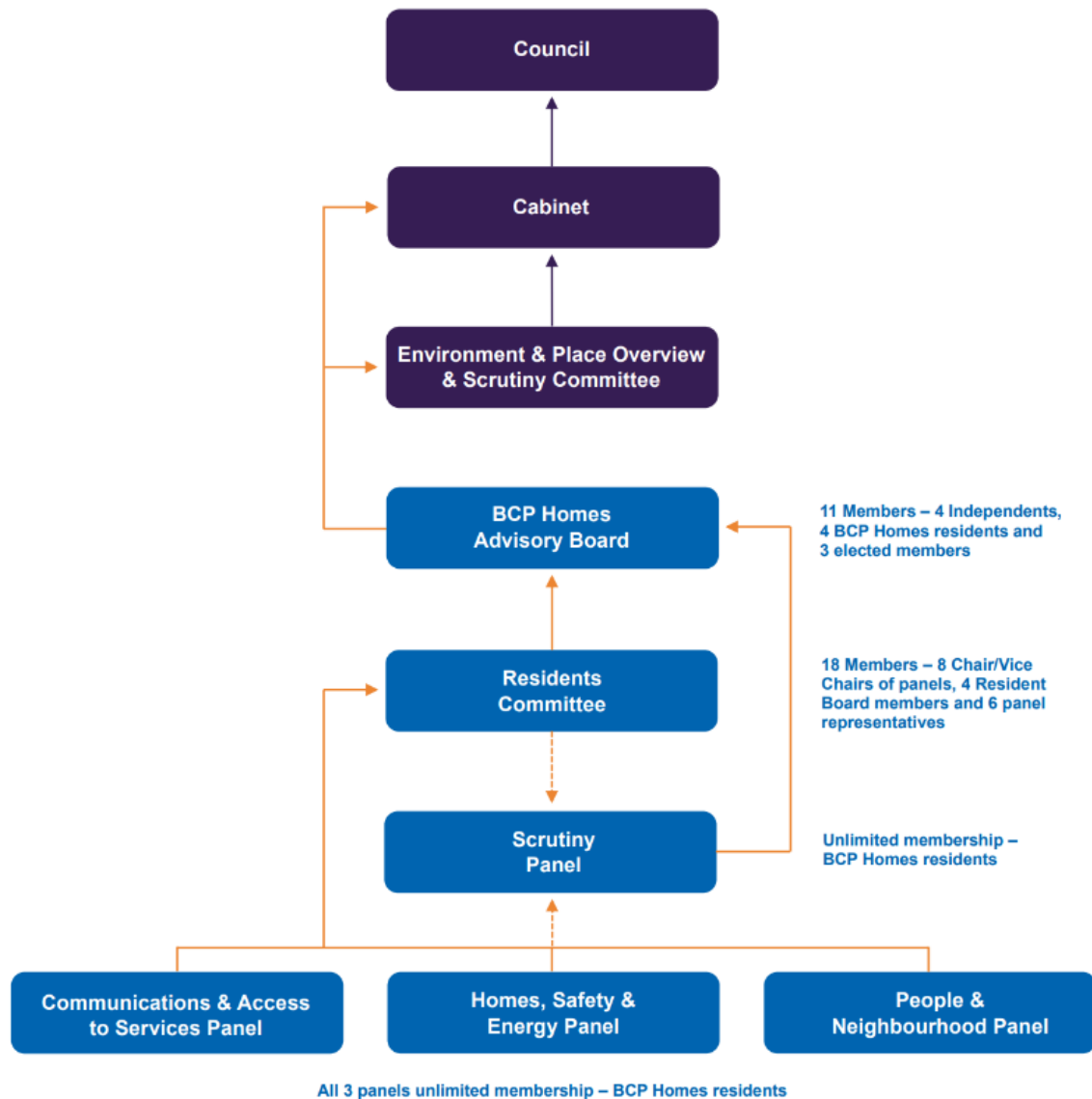
This review will assess how well BCP Homes' governance aligns with these expectations and how residents are involved in shaping our services. It will identify opportunities to strengthen oversight, improve transparency, and ensure resident voices are heard and acted upon.

BCP Homes

Current Context of BCP Homes and Governance Review

BCP Homes was established in July 2022 following extensive consultation with council tenants. The governance of BCP Homes is embedded within the broader constitution of the council, ensuring that housing landlord services align with the council's strategic objectives. The specific governance structure for BCP Homes is designed to provide oversight, ensure compliance, and engage residents in decision-making processes.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



At the core of this structure is the BCP Homes Advisory Board which was established in 2022. The rationale behind its creation was rooted in the council's decision to consolidate housing management into a single in-house service, replacing the previous dual model where Poole Housing Partnership (PHP) managed Poole's housing stock and Bournemouth's was managed directly by the council.

BCP Homes Advisory Board

Key Reasons for Establishing the Advisory Board:

1. Unified Governance and Oversight

The advisory board was designed to provide strategic oversight, expert advice, and resident insight into the newly formed BCP Homes service. The aim being to ensure that the council's landlord functions are subject to robust scrutiny and continuous improvement, aligning with the expectations of the Social Housing Regulator.

2. Resident-Centric Approach

A core aim was to embed resident voice into the governance framework. The Advisory Board includes tenant and leaseholder representation, ensuring that those who live in council housing have a direct role in shaping services, influencing decisions, and holding the council to account.

3. Integration of Best Practice

By merging the strengths of PHP and Bournemouth's housing teams, the council sought to create a "best of both worlds" model. The advisory board supports this by drawing on diverse expertise and experience to guide service development and delivery.

4. Response to National Context

The Grenfell tragedy and subsequent regulatory reforms highlighted the need for stronger accountability and resident engagement in social housing. The advisory board was part of BCP Council's proactive response to these national imperatives, ensuring that safety, transparency, and tenant empowerment are central to its housing strategy.

5. Support for Transformation and Efficiency

The board has also played a role in supporting the council's wider transformation agenda—helping to modernise services, improve efficiency, and ensure that housing management is aligned with corporate priorities and the needs of local communities.

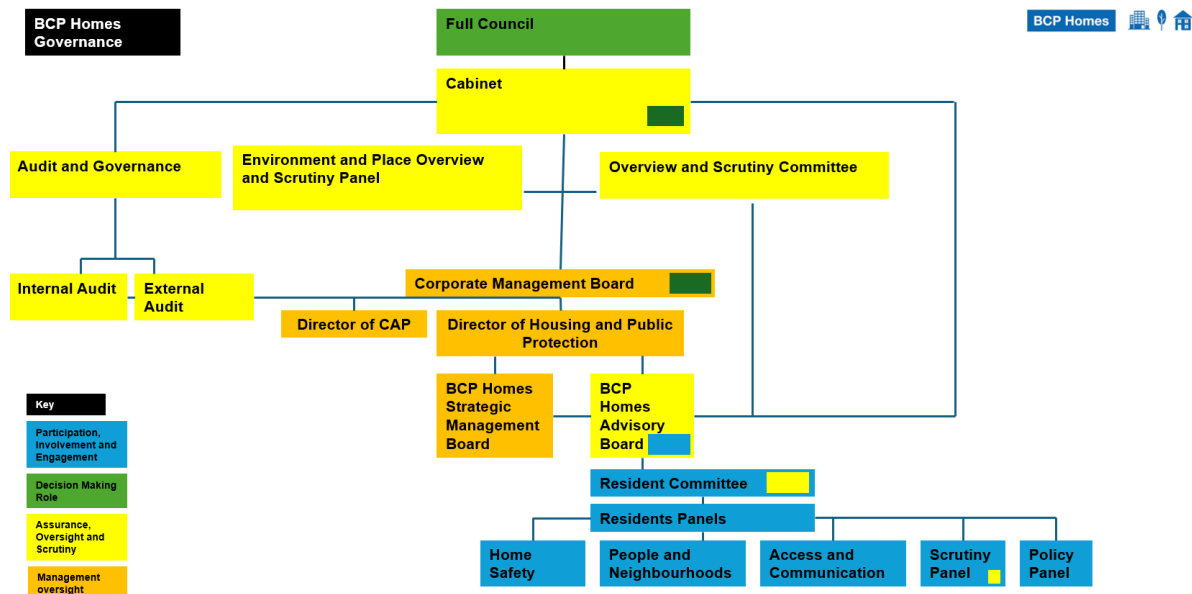
The board is composed of elected members, residents, and independent specialists who work together to oversee the activities of BCP Homes. The primary purpose of the Advisory Board is to provide oversight to the operational delivery of the housing landlord service, ensuring it meets the council's strategic objectives. The board also makes recommendations on housing strategy, policies, and the annual Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget, which are then considered by the BCP Cabinet and Council.

The Advisory Board acts in an advisory capacity on all matters related to services provided through the HRA. It ensures compliance with regulatory standards and provides assurance to the council on key matters contained within housing legislation and regulatory changes. The board serves 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 Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman. It also acts as a formal link between the Council's Cabinet and its tenants and leaseholders, ensuring that regulatory expectations are met and that residents are fully engaged in service oversight and improvement.

The board is made up of 11 members, including four independent members, four residents (two each from Poole and Bournemouth), and three elected members. The council aims to achieve diversity in the board's membership, including both tenants and leaseholders among the resident representatives. The independent members are selected based on their specialist skills and knowledge relevant to the aims of BCP Homes. The board meets at least six times per year.

Terms of Reference for the BCP Homes Advisory Board can be found at [here](#).

BCP Homes Governance in the wider Council



Overview of Housing Governance, Scrutiny, and Audit Functions

The council's housing governance framework is supported by strong leadership, transparent decision-making, robust audit processes, and effective scrutiny mechanisms. The Council's Constitution sets out the decision making framework for the council overall and can be viewed [here](#)

Cabinet

Cabinet provides strategic leadership, proposes budget and policy frameworks, and makes key decisions as set out in the council's constitution. Decisions that involve spending or saving over £500,000 or have a significant impact on two or more electoral wards are included in the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Overview and Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Committees review Cabinet decisions, monitor implementation, advise on policy, and support effective service delivery;

- The Overview and Scrutiny Board oversees major areas including finance, regeneration, and community safety, scrutinising budgets and reporting annually to Full Council.
- Specialised committees focus on Health and Adult Social Care, Children's Services, and Environment and Place, each ensuring statutory requirements are met and that policies serve the community's needs.
- The Environment and Place Committee plays a pivotal role in scrutinising housing, sustainability, planning, and flood risk management.

Housing Strategy Steering Group

Formed in April 2025, this cross-party group monitors progress of the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan (2025–2027), recommends priorities for review, and supports the development

of future housing strategies. It reports annually to Cabinet and collaborates with the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Audit and Governance Committee

The Audit & Governance Committee independently oversees audit, assurance, and reporting practices, ensuring risk management, strong internal controls, and effective financial reporting. It supervises both internal and external audit processes for comprehensive assurance.

Internal and External Audit

Internal Audit: Provides independent assurance on the efficiency and compliance of council housing services, evaluates internal controls, risk management, and helps drive continuous improvement.

External Audit: Offers independent scrutiny of financial management, asset control, and service quality. Recent external assessments, such as the Big 6 Management Plans, ensure compliance in key areas like water, asbestos, electrical, fire, gas, and lift safety.

Leadership Oversight

Oversight within the council's leadership is provided through our structure and functions of leadership and management boards, each playing a distinct role in governance, strategic planning, and service delivery.

Corporate Management Board

The Corporate Management Board acts as the council's senior leadership team, comprising the Chief Executive, Chief Operations Officer, corporate directors for Children's Services, Marketing, People and Culture, Finance, IT, Law and Governance, and other key roles. Together, they drive strategic direction and oversee day-to-day operations across all departments.

Corporate Strategy Board

This board ensures the council's corporate strategy is effectively delivered. Its responsibilities include:

- Reviewing performance and managing risk to track progress against strategic goals.
- Identifying and addressing trends in performance.
- Sharing best practices between departments.
- Owning delivery of key actions and maintaining accountability.
- Supporting improvement in underperforming areas.
- Conducting annual evaluations to refine priorities.

The Strategy Board helps align operational activity with long-term objectives, ensuring services remain responsive and focused on outcomes for residents.

BCP Homes Strategic Management Board

Chaired by the Director of Housing & Public Protection, this board oversees the council's landlord functions and the management of housing services. Its key functions include:

- Managing and monitoring major projects affecting service delivery.

- Ensuring senior staff accountability and robust risk management.
- Safeguarding assets and ensuring financial integrity.
- Setting budgets, business plans, and maintaining high standards in stock and asset management.
- Promoting a positive culture and embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Setting and upholding the values, vision, mission, and strategic objectives of BCP Homes.

The board oversees planning, compliance, investment, and risk, ensuring BCP Homes remains effective and aligned with residents' needs.

This structure supports effective governance, transparency, and a strong focus on delivering quality outcomes for the community. The Terms of Reference for this Board can be viewed at appendix 1.

Consumer Standards BCP Self Assessment and Improvement Plan

In August 2024, the council commissioned the Housing Quality Network (HQN) to conduct a deep dive review and self-assessment against the Consumer Standards. The findings, presented in early 2025, highlighted significant progress but also identified fundamental elements requiring urgent attention.

In response, BCP Homes developed an ambitious Delivery Plan for 2025/26, focusing on key improvement themes. The plan emphasised the need for a review of governance arrangements to ensure enhanced councillor oversight and tenant involvement in decision-making processes.

In July 2025, Cabinet received a report on the performance of BCP Homes against the Consumer Standards, including Tenant Satisfaction Measures, an update on the self assessment and review by HQN. Cabinet resolved to approve the Delivery Plan and actions required to improve performance. Papers from this Cabinet meeting can be viewed [here](#).

Review Approach

The approach to this review has been shaped by a broad and thoughtful process, drawing on multiple sources of expertise, experience, and feedback. Central to the review are the requirements set out by the Regulator of Social Housing, whose standards serve as the benchmark for all our governance efforts. The findings from the Housing Quality Network's deep dive further inform our direction, offering both a critical external perspective and actionable insights.

To ensure our practices reflect the best in the sector, we have examined national models of good governance, seeking out lessons that resonate with our local needs. The past three years of delivering the BCP Homes Advisory Board have also provided valuable firsthand experience, highlighting what works well and where improvements can be made.

Consultation has been a vital component throughout, involving not just the BCP Homes Leadership Team but also staff, Advisory Board Members, councillors, and the Senior Council Leadership Team. Resident voices have been gathered through committee and panel discussions, ensuring that those most affected by our decisions are heard and considered.

Importantly, the review maintains a clear focus on resourcing and capacity—recognising that the governance structure must be supported by sufficient expertise and time commitment to ensure robust oversight. At every stage, we have kept in mind the evolving needs of BCP Homes as a landlord, looking towards a future where effective governance underpins safe, accountable, and responsive housing services.

In summary, this review is not just a technical exercise but a collaborative process grounded in regulatory requirements, best practice, lived experience, and the views of our community. Our aim is to build a governance approach that is comprehensive, sustainable, and fit for the challenges ahead.

What do other councils do?

Across local councils, the governance structures supporting social housing reveal a spectrum of models, each shaped by local priorities, traditions, and resources. A review of practices elsewhere highlights both consultative forums and formal oversight arrangements, as well as variations in resident and councillor involvement.

Bolsover operates a Housing Liaison Board that is consultative in nature, comprising councillors and residents, and visibly integrated into the governance framework. Complementing this, Bolsover also convenes a Customer Service Scrutiny Committee which covers housing, enhancing their oversight.

Chesterfield utilises a Housing Advisory Board made up of residents and councillors, but notably, this body does not possess decision-making authority. This consultative approach is echoed in Waverley Borough Council's Landlord Services Advisory Board, which similarly includes councillors and residents without direct powers to implement decisions.

Dacorum and High Peak councils both rely heavily on councillor-led forums: Dacorum through its Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which focuses on review and scrutiny, and High Peak with a dedicated Housing Board comprised exclusively of councillors.

In Lambeth and Westminster, housing governance is strengthened by dedicated scrutiny bodies—the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee in Lambeth, and a Scrutiny Committee in Westminster—both staffed by councillors and tasked with in-depth review and oversight.

Mansfield has recently introduced a new Housing Board, distinguished by an independent paid chair and membership including the Portfolio Holder, residents, the Chief Executive, and the Director, demonstrating a broader commitment to inclusive governance.

Medway's HRA Governance Group takes a different approach by bringing together officers and Portfolio Holders, focusing on internal expertise and leadership in their oversight model.

West Lancs stands out with its Landlord Services Working Group, which encompasses councillors, officers, and residents, fostering a collaborative environment for governance and service improvement.

Wealden is notable for its Wealden and Tenants Together Housing Board, which combines residents, councillors, and independent members, further encouraging broad representation.

This comparative assessment underscores the diversity in governance models across councils: some emphasise consultative engagement and inclusivity, while others maintain a tighter focus on councillor-driven oversight or adopt mixed structures to strengthen scrutiny and accountability. The presence or absence of decision-making powers, as well as the degree of resident involvement, are key factors that shape the effectiveness and responsiveness of each approach.

Findings

Key Points

Strengths: Clear commitment to regulatory compliance, a strong resident voice on the Advisory Board, and established performance reporting mechanisms.

Challenges: Need for greater integration of the Advisory Board into the Council's formal governance structure. Resident engagement is sometimes fragmented, and the feedback loop between resident input and decision-making could be strengthened. Capacity constraints in servicing governance processes can delay actions and responses.

Opportunities: Streamlining committee structures, clarifying roles and reporting lines, and improving communication channels will support more responsive, accountable, and agile governance. Enhancing oversight by Cabinet and Corporate Management Board will provide greater assurance that regulatory standards are being met and sustained.

Findings Outline

BCP Homes Advisory Board

The governance structure of BCP Homes demonstrates a dedication to robust oversight, guided by the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing. Effective governance is characterised by transparent decision-making, regular performance monitoring, and meaningful resident involvement. Distinctively, BCP Homes is among a select group of local authorities to include independents, alongside councillors, the portfolio holder, staff, and residents, on its Advisory Board. BCP Homes officers further underpin this with strong resident engagement through established committees and panels.

Formal processes are in place for reporting performance, risk, and compliance to both the Advisory Board and Cabinet. Nonetheless, there is scope to further strengthen oversight by

increasing the frequency and depth of reporting, particularly on regulatory compliance and health and safety matters, to the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board. The Advisory Board's remit should be clearly defined to ensure it complements, rather than duplicates, work already covered by other areas such as Finance, Information Governance, Housing Strategy, new homes delivery, and staffing.

Challenges to accountability and responsiveness stem from delays in responding to Advisory Board requests and action points, largely due to capacity constraints faced by the BCP Homes team in servicing a complex and demanding work programme. To address this, a more proactive and transparent approach to delivery planning is needed, with regular meetings aligned to the wider council governance timetable. It is recommended that the frequency of Advisory Board meetings be reduced to four per year. This adjustment would better match the available capacity, allowing for a more focused set of requirements and ensuring that meetings are purposeful, well-prepared, and able to drive meaningful outcomes. By concentrating on the most critical issues at each meeting, the Board can maintain robust oversight without overextending resources, and support timely follow-up on action points. The planned restructure of BCP Homes, scheduled for implementation in January 2026, aims to enhance support for resident engagement, compliance, performance management, and governance.

It is also vital that officers and members understand the Advisory Board's role; dedicated development time and regular reviews against the Terms of Reference are recommended. Reviewing the standing agenda and forward plan can help ensure key areas—such as budget oversight and resident committee input—are addressed.

Currently, the Advisory Board's exclusion from the formal governance structure and its reliance on a single Portfolio Holder for Cabinet liaison result in gaps in scrutiny and challenge. Greater integration within the council's governance structure will improve accountability, though the Advisory Board's role should remain advisory, not decision-making, in keeping with the council's democratic arrangements.

A disconnect has been identified between the Advisory Board's terms of reference—which empower referrals through formal decision-making and scrutiny structures—and current practice. Achieving greater clarity of purpose and ensuring all parties understand the Board's role would address these gaps, improving its contribution to governance and overall efficiency.

Publishing Advisory Board papers on the council website, in addition to making them available to all councillors, would further improve transparency and resident engagement. Introducing a forward plan for BCP Homes decision-making and reporting would provide a structured overview of upcoming issues, creating a clear “golden thread” of information and supporting active participation from all stakeholders.

Independent advisory board positions are currently voluntary and appointed for their diverse skills and experience. As current terms end, future recruitment will focus on specific expertise to strengthen scrutiny and advisory capacity, with consideration given to introducing remuneration packages to attract and retain highly qualified candidates.

Governing Body and Executive Oversight

Existing plans for extending the scope and regularity of reporting to Cabinet and the Corporate Management Board (CMB) are positive steps towards enhancing oversight and accountability. To further promote transparency, it is suggested that this reporting programme

be included on the BCP Homes webpages. This will provide residents and stakeholders with clear and accessible information about upcoming decisions and reports.

Additionally, the new Housing Strategy Steering Group presents an excellent opportunity for further consideration of BCP Homes' performance and its alignment with the broader housing strategy. This group can play a pivotal role in ensuring that housing management is integrated with the council's strategic objectives. It is also recommended that there be a greater role for lived experience in this space, ensuring a broad range of resident perspectives and feedback are actively considered in shaping the overall strategic direction of the council's approach to housing. This will not only enhance the effectiveness of the governance framework but also strengthen trust and engagement with the community.

Assurance is a fundamental requirement of the governance framework for BCP Homes, ensuring that operations are conducted transparently, responsibly, and in alignment with regulatory standards. While baseline assurance is already part of the current arrangements, there is a need for improvement to meet the evolving expectations of stakeholders and regulatory bodies. Enhancing assurance levels involves leveraging both internal and external opportunities. Internally, this includes regular audits, performance monitoring, and resident feedback mechanisms. Externally, it involves engaging with independent auditors and regulatory bodies to gain objective insights and validation. Establishing an annual assurance programme that is systematically reported through the governance structure—from the Residents Committee to the Advisory Board, Corporate Management Board, Overview and Scrutiny, and finally to the Cabinet—would further ensure continuous oversight and improvement. This structured approach not only strengthens accountability but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement and trust among residents and stakeholders.

Resident Engagement

Resident engagement is essential for responsive governance. While efforts to consult tenants and leaseholders are underway, current arrangements result in fragmented committee structures, risk inefficiency and limit the impact of resident voices through the higher levels of the governance structure. A coordinated approach that streamlines committee roles, clarifies the distinct functions of the Residents Committee, Resident Panels, and the Advisory Board, and addresses potential overlaps, will foster greater inclusivity and ensure that resident feedback is central to decision-making.

There is an opportunity to make relatively simple changes to the resident engagement structure within the overall governance framework by formalising reporting and links, rather than making significant changes to the purpose of the various elements. By channelling all resident feedback through the Residents Committee to the Advisory Board and Cabinet, a clear and consistent 'golden thread' could be created, ensuring residents' voices inform decision-making and oversight. This streamlined approach will enhance the clarity and effectiveness of resident engagement, ensuring that residents' perspectives are consistently integrated into decision-making processes and oversight activities.

The current structure of the residents committee and panels is not sufficiently linked to the advisory board and visa versa. The potential for duplication between the residents committee and the residents panels has also been raised. In addition, the ongoing role and function of the scrutiny panel requires clarification having been set up as a temporary measure during a significant period of policy alignment. There is a need to ensure the role of scrutiny is clear and duplication is avoided. In order to strengthen the role of resident scrutiny and provide clear ownership, the resident committee could hold responsibility for

this and for ensuring there is a conduit for all resident panel activity reported through to the Advisory Board.

Resident engagement can be strengthened by formalising reporting lines and links within the governance framework, rather than altering the core functions of existing groups. The Residents Committee should coordinate all resident panel activities and hold responsibility for scrutiny, with its chair regularly reporting to the Advisory Board and attending meetings where possible. In turn, the Advisory Board should act on these recommendations and a representative should attend Residents Committee meetings to maintain effective communication.

Improving the Use of Data and Insight to Inform Strategy and Policy

The Regulator of Social Housing now requires landlords to demonstrate robust oversight that ensures tenants are safe, listened to, and treated with respect. Councils must evidence understanding of their housing stock, respond effectively to complaints, and use data to drive improvements. These standards include the need for landlords to demonstrate robust oversight, ensure tenant safety, and use data to drive improvements. The regulator emphasizes the importance of understanding the condition of tenants' homes and using data to inform decision-making and policy development. BCP Council's approach to data and insight involves developing the capability to use data to drive strategy, service design, performance monitoring, and continuous improvement. This includes ensuring data governance and protection, sharing data across services, and using data to understand customer needs and improve service delivery.

Best practices for using data and insight to inform strategy and policy include:

1. **Building a Culture that Values Data:** Leaders should set an example by incorporating data in decision-making and targeting resources to maximize the value of data for decision-making, accountability, and the public good.
2. **Using Data to Guide Decision-Making:** Data should be used effectively, routinely, transparently, and appropriately in policy, planning, and operations to guide decision-making. Sharing the data and analyses behind decisions is crucial.
3. **Turning Data into Policy:** Data-driven policy actions help with evidence-based decision-making, supporting proactive policy decisions rather than reactive ones. This involves using data analytics and visualisation to design policies that save time and resources and demonstrate deeper impact.

Although BCP Homes has begun to harness data and insights within its operations, its progress is currently constrained by the pending implementation of a new housing management system. This forthcoming system, scheduled to be operational from 2026, promises to unlock substantial opportunities for advancement in data-driven decision-making and service delivery.

To ensure BCP Homes is prepared to fully benefit from the new system, several key initiatives are being undertaken. In the interim, the organisation is focusing on refining its data management practices. Efforts include conducting regular audits to maintain data accuracy and currency, as well as introducing robust interim data governance policies to improve accessibility and reliability. These measures are designed to lay a solid foundation for future enhancements.

Recognising the importance of capability, BCP Homes is investing in staff training to bolster data literacy across the board. The aim is that, once the new system becomes active, staff

will be well-equipped to utilise its advanced features and maximise its impact on service delivery.

Stakeholder engagement sits at the heart of these preparations. BCP Homes is actively consulting with residents and other key stakeholders to identify their specific data requirements. Through ongoing feedback sessions and consultations, the organisation seeks to ensure the new system is tailored to genuinely meet the needs of its users.

As part of a careful transition, pilot projects are being launched to trial the new system's capabilities. These pilots serve to highlight any potential challenges early, enabling BCP Homes to address issues proactively and ensure a smooth, minimally disruptive full-scale rollout.

Finally, a continuous improvement framework is being embedded to regularly review and enhance data practices and policies. This approach ensures BCP Homes remains agile and aligned with evolving best practices in data management.

By embracing these strategies and complying with the Regulator of Social Housing's requirements, BCP Homes is strengthening its governance framework, heightening accountability, and amplifying residents' voices. The result will be more effective service delivery, greater trust, and a housing management system that is both responsive and inclusive.

Conclusion

In conclusion, BCP Homes demonstrates a clear recognition of the significance of housing regulation and is committed to embedding a culture of continuous improvement, underpinned by the development of an explicit tenant and resident engagement strategy linked to governance. Alongside these efforts, the organisation is making considerable strides in strengthening its use of data and insights to guide decision-making, policy development, and operational planning. By refining data management practices, investing in data literacy training, and engaging with stakeholders to identify data requirements, BCP Homes is laying the groundwork for a more robust, evidence-based approach. The forthcoming housing management system, supported by interim data governance measures and pilot projects, is set to unlock substantial opportunities for data-driven service delivery and enhanced accountability.

To ensure effective oversight and meaningful engagement, it is essential that sufficient expertise and time are dedicated to these efforts, and that mechanisms are established to synchronise resident involvement with the Council's democratic timeline. Transparent sharing of data and the evidence behind decisions will further confirm that resident perspectives are genuinely shaping outcomes. The findings from the HQN report and ongoing discussions with stakeholders reinforce the value of integrating data-driven insights into governance, highlighting opportunities to enhance scrutiny, clarify decision-making processes, and streamline policy approval. Collectively, these targeted improvements will enable BCP Homes to deliver a governance structure that is not only robust but also more inclusive, responsive, and attuned to the needs of its residents.

Recommendations and Options

1. Strengthen Governance Integration and Oversight

Recommendation: Further embed the Advisory Board within the Council's governance structure, enhancing its role to strengthen transparency, influence, and accountability, and provide greater assurance.

Recommendation: Establish and implement a formalised assurance framework that includes both internal and external audit support.

Options for Implementation:

- Redefine the Advisory Board as the "Housing Board" with explicit terms of reference and delegated authority for scrutiny and oversight.
- Develop a clear governance map, showing all relevant committees, reporting routes, and escalation points for housing issues.
- Clarify and the Advisory Board's purpose and remit to ensure its role within the council's governance structure is clearly understood by both board members and supporting officers, thereby closing existing gaps and enabling the Board to contribute more effectively to decision-making and oversight.
- Ensure regular (at least quarterly) reporting of compliance, risk, and performance to Cabinet and the public.
- Increase reporting to Cabinet, including annual reports on Tenant Satisfaction Measures, Regulatory Compliance, HRA Delivery Plan, Complaints Handling, Service Improvement, and Compliance.
- Develop an Assurance Framework

2. Enhance Resident Engagement and Influence

Recommendation: Develop a comprehensive resident engagement strategy that empowers tenants and leaseholders to shape services and policies.

Options for Implementation:

- Simplify and clarify the roles of Resident Panels, Committees, and the Advisory Board to prevent overlap and ensure resident feedback is channelled through the Residents Committee to the Board and Cabinet, creating a clear and consistent "golden thread" of resident input in decision-making.
- Create regular forums or meetings for chairs of Resident Panels to coordinate agendas and ensure alignment of resident-led priorities.
- Publish clear records of how resident feedback has informed decisions, with regular updates to all residents.
- Ensure the Resident Engagement Strategy reflects the role of residents in BCP Homes' governance and decision-making, incorporating findings from the Governance review.

3. Improve Communication and Feedback Mechanisms

Recommendation: Establish transparent, two-way communication between the Advisory Board, Resident Committees, Panels, and the wider resident community.

Options for Implementation:

- Ensure all governance bodies are listed on the Council's democratic webpages, with meeting agendas and minutes published in a timely manner.
- Implement a feedback system so residents receive timely, transparent responses to issues raised and understand the impact of their contributions.
- Ensure the resident voice is reflected in all decisions and oversight requested of the Cabinet.
- Consult on revised Terms of Reference with the Advisory Board, Residents Committee, and Resident Panels.

4. Clarify Decision-Making and Delegation

Recommendation: Agree a delegation framework for housing policies and strategies, identifying which decisions require Cabinet or Council approval and which are delegated to senior officers.

Options for Implementation:

- Streamline policy approval so Resident Panel feedback flows through the Resident Committee as the main conduit, ensuring the resident voice is represented throughout the decision-making structure up to Cabinet.
- Clarify the role of the Advisory Board as a consultative body within the decision-making structure.

5. Build Capacity and Expertise

Recommendation: Ensure governance arrangements are supported by sufficient staff and specialist expertise to fulfil oversight responsibilities and regulatory requirements.

Options for Implementation:

- Review resource allocation for servicing the Advisory Board, resident engagement, and regulatory reporting.
- Invest in governance training for all board and committee members (including residents and independents).
- Consider appointing independent chairs or members with targeted expertise where necessary.
- Implement a revised governance structure to ensure effective use of capacity in supporting meetings and requests.

6. Enhanced Use of Data and Insight

Recommendation: To enhance the use of data and insight in informing strategy and policy, BCP Homes should focus on several key areas. While we have made strides in utilising data, the implementation of the new housing management system in 2026 presents a significant opportunity for further improvement.

Options for Implementation:

- Enhance current data management practices by ensuring data is accurate, up-to-date, and easily accessible. This will involve regular data audits and the implementation of interim data governance policies.

- Invest in training for staff to improve their data literacy and ability to use data effectively. This will ensure that when the new system is implemented, staff are ready to leverage its full capabilities.
- Engage with residents and other stakeholders to understand their data needs and ensure that the new system is designed to meet these needs. This will involve regular consultations and feedback sessions.
- Implement pilot projects to test the new system's capabilities and identify any potential issues before full-scale implementation. This will help to ensure a smooth transition and minimize disruptions.
- Establish a continuous improvement framework to regularly review and update data practices and policies. This will ensure that BCP Homes remains at the forefront of best practices in data management and use.

7. Monitor, Evaluate and Sustain Improvement

Recommendation: Embed regular review and evaluation of governance effectiveness, aligning outcomes to the priorities of BCP Council, the Regulator, and residents.

Options for Implementation:

- Establish annual governance self-assessment, informed by external and resident feedback.
- Introduce performance metrics specifically linked to resident satisfaction, regulatory compliance, and council objectives.
- Publish an annual governance and resident engagement report, setting out achievements, challenges, and action plans.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this Review highlights the importance of strong governance, transparency, and resident involvement in social housing management. The review identifies areas where improvements can be made, such as clarifying the role of the Advisory Board, enhancing resident engagement, and ensuring effective communication and feedback mechanisms.

By implementing the recommendations and options outlined in the review, BCP Homes can strengthen its governance framework, improve accountability, and ensure that residents' voices are heard and acted upon. This will ultimately lead to better service delivery, increased trust, and a more responsive and inclusive housing management system.

