

Wiltshire Council's Housing Board

Terms of Reference (2024)

Objectives and Purposes

- 1) Wiltshire Council's Housing Board (the Board) shapes, influences and determines the strategic context and environment for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It is responsible for the overall direction and strategy, the protection and promotion of the interests of HRA residents (tenants and leaseholders) and their families which it serves, and the communities in which it operates, whilst also safeguarding HRA monies, controlling risk and taking all reasonable steps to build and maintain trust in Wiltshire Council as a registered provider, with its residents (tenants and leaseholders), its officers, its partners (for example, contractors), the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS).
- 2) The Board's purposes are to:
 - a) Shape and influence the strategic direction of Housing Management and ensure the provision of efficient and effective services for residents (tenants and leaseholders).
 - b) Review, shape, influence, agree, drive and monitor all plans, budgets, social purpose, mission and values, and their associated performance outcome expectations, through embedding resident focus, integrity, transparency, openness and accountability in the HRA. Ensure that these are ambitious.
 - c) Monitor the financial performance of Housing Management and the HRA and ensure to continually improve financial performance. Ensure that the HRA is financially viable and sustainable at all times, and determine, drive and deliver exercises to ensure demonstrable oversight of the HRA is realised.
 - d) In conjunction with the Heads of Service and Director, review, monitor, set and amend annual performance targets for Housing Management (including services provided by contractors). Where required, instigate and implement corrective actions to bring performance to the Board's required standard. Ensure that performance targets are constructed to complement the HRA Business Plan, are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timebound) and enable Housing Management to fulfil its social purpose. Ensure these are ambitious.

- e) To shape and influence all housing policies, plans and strategies (and similar documents) relating to the HRA, Housing Management and functions where HRA monies are spent and/or services are provided for the use of former, current or future customers of the HRA. Monitor these areas and ensure outcomes are acceptable to the Board.
- f) Monitor and report on Housing Management's compliance with the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), including but not limited to scrutiny against the latest Consumer Standards.
- g) Monitor and report on Housing Management's compliance with the expectations of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS), including but not limited to scrutiny against the latest Complaint Handling Code.
- h) Monitor and report on Housing Management's compliance with all statutory requirements' together with all other requirements imposed by Wiltshire Council.
- i) Identify, monitor and assist in minimising risk to Housing Management and the HRA, obtain assurance that controls are effective, that compliance obligations are met, that service delivery remains protected, and that all actions are in compliance with Wiltshire Council's corporate framework. Assurance mapping may form a part of this area of work.
- j) Monitor and assist in ensuring that the housing stock is utilised effectively through a robust Asset Management Strategy or Plan, that resident engagement opportunities are present, and that the housing stock is maintained to an appropriate standard.
- k) Engage in activities that the Board deems to be appropriate in order that the Board can satisfy itself that:
 - It is adding value, including but not limited to constructively holding officers to account.
 - Ensuring its membership is skilled in the required areas and is regularly reviewed, both collectively and individually.
 - The best interest of residents and their families remains at the heart of the Board.
 - Diverse methods exist for residents and their families to be involved in decision making and scrutiny of Housing Management services.
 - Greater representation of resident experiences is embraced at a strategic level and used to inform the Board's decision making, including but not limited to, bridging the gap between policy and

resident experiences that may, if present, indicate potential systemic issues rather than exceptions to the rule, and thus prevent them becoming the norm.

- 3) The Board will have access to all relevant information required to enable it to effectively fulfil its objectives and purposes.

Role of the Chair

- 4) The role of the Chair of the Board (Cabinet Member or delegated by the Cabinet Member to the designated Portfolio Holder) is to provide information and feedback from the Board, into the Cabinet and Environment Select Committee as resolved by the Board and to provide relevant information and feedback from Cabinet to the Board.
- 5) In respect of a private section of a Housing Board meeting which is not open to members of the public, the Chair shall determine if there will be any invited attendees for the private section.

Sub-Committees

- 6) Wiltshire Council's Housing Board has 3 sub-committees:
 - Development and Investment ('Place') Sub-Committee
 - Finance and Policy ('Pounds') Sub-Committee
 - Performance and Risk ('People') Sub-Committee
- 7) Areas of responsibility for each sub-committee will be set out in the Terms of Reference for that sub-committee.
- 8) The number of members (and attendees) for each sub-committee to be quorate will be set out in the Terms of Reference for that sub-committee.
- 9) Frequency of sub-committee meetings shall be determined by the sub-committee.
- 10) Each sub-committee shall report on a regular basis to Wiltshire Council's Housing Board.
- 11) All Wiltshire Council's Housing Board members will have the right to attend a sub-committee, irrespective of whether they are a member of that sub-committee or not.
- 12) Each member of Wiltshire Council's Housing Board is mandated to serve on 1 sub-committee.

- 13) Sub-committees will have a mixture of Housing Board member types (councillor, independent and HRA tenant).
- 14) Sub-committees will have a Chairman but the sub-committee Chairman need not be a councillor.

Challenge and Change Group

- 15) The Challenge and Change Group acts as a critical friend to assess performance of Housing Management and reports to Wiltshire Council's Housing Board, and where dissatisfied with the response of the service, it can raise its concerns to Wiltshire Council's Housing Board. Its scrutiny role helps the service meet the Regulatory expectations of the RSH as outlined in the relevant Consumer Standard.
- 16) Housing Management has an opportunity to provide a Management Response to the Challenge and Change Group reports. With a further Management Response being provided to the Housing Board, two Board meetings later after the initial presentation. For the avoidance of doubt, if a scrutiny report and Management Response were provided to a January meeting, then the further update would be timetabled for May.
- 17) If the Challenge and Change Group is dissatisfied and raises the matter with the Chair of the Housing Board, then the Board shall consider the Challenge and Change Groups' views and accept or reject recommendations and recommend whether the findings should be implemented and can if it wishes provide any additional comment it considers relevant.

Membership

- 18) Membership – there shall be a total of 9 members (3 councillors; 3 HRA tenants; 3 independents (which may include a leaseholder)).
- 19) Appointment – members are appointed to the Board by the Council (except for the Cabinet Member or Portfolio Holder, as 1 will automatically be a member of the Board). At least 1 of the councillor members must be from a non-ruling group.
- 20) Service (Councillor Members)- service is linked to the local Government electoral cycle (that is, appointments terminate at the point of a local Government election being held for Wiltshire Council).
- 21) Service (Independent Members and HRA Tenant Members) - Each appointment to the Board shall serve for not more than 2 terms of office (each term of office being for not more than 4 years) and each will need to be reappointed to the Board by the Chair after their first term and this process will be by way of a review of that members Performance Reviews, and may

include the collective reviews also, as well as general conduct. Should there be no alternative applicants prepared to stand to fill a vacancy then this term can be extended with the approval of the Council.

- 22) The Cabinet Member or Portfolio Holder's appointment is for the term that they hold their office with Wiltshire Council or until such time as the Cabinet Member amends their decision.
- 23) Succession Planning (staggering) – the Council may take whatever steps it deems necessary, including but not limited to, contradicting any part of the Terms of Reference and/or Code of Conduct requirements and/or term of office, to facilitate greater staggering of Board members terms to promote Board continuity, and so that succession plans can be fully implemented.
- 24) Recruitment – where a vacancy on the Board exists, applicants are required to: complete an application form; complete an equality and diversity monitoring form; attend an interview. The application form does not need to be completed by a Board member seeking reappointment.
- 25) Removal – at the discretion of the Chair and Director, a member can be removed from the Board if they fail to attend any 3 formally convened main meetings of the Board (not sub-committees) in a period of 12 months, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by either the Chair or the Director; or no longer meet the criteria for membership.

Main Meetings

- 26) Quorum – the quorum for any Main Meeting shall be 5 members including the Chair. The Chair (or his/her nominated representative) will preside at meetings.
- 27) Frequency and duration – the Board meets for its Main Meetings on a bi-monthly basis (ordinarily in: January; March; May; July; September; November). Additional meetings and/or sessions (which may include working groups on particular projects) may be held for all or some members. Main Meetings (and thus not for sub-committee meetings) are for up to 3 hours and in-person meetings in each financial year will be those scheduled for May, November and January; and the meetings held as online meetings in each financial year will be those scheduled for July, September and March.
- 28) Strategic Planning and Development Away-day sessions (informal workshops) – the away-day sessions (informal workshops) which are to be in-person meetings in each financial year will be scheduled for the preceding afternoons on the day of the main Housing Board meetings scheduled for May and November.

- 29) Meetings have an open section which can be attended by members of the public; meetings also have a private section which is not open to members of the public but the Chair has, as above, the option of inviting attendees.
- 30) Every question to be determined at a meeting of the Board shall be determined by a majority of votes of members present at that meeting. When there is an equal division of votes, the Chair of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- 31) Annual General Meeting – the Annual General Meeting of the Board will be at the November meeting.
- 32) Annual Report to Cabinet – an annual report will be provided to Cabinet.

Performance Reviews and Board Development Plan

- 33) The Board Chair is responsible, with officer support, for carrying out individual Board member performance reviews on a six-monthly basis.
- 34) The Board Chair is responsible, with officer support, for carrying out a collective Board performance review on a six-monthly basis.
- 35) The Board Chair, with officer support, will ensure a Board Development Plan is produced using the outcomes of the Chair's individual and collective performance reviews.

General

- 36) Attendance at Meetings – the following Council officers would be entitled to attend meetings of the Board:
- Director – Assets
 - Head of Strategic Assets and Facilities Management
 - Head of Estate and Development
 - Other officers, contractors, volunteers or invited guests, as required
- 37) Officer Support – officer support for the Board will be provided by the HRA Governance and Scrutiny Officer.
- 38) Dissolution – the Cabinet has the authority to dissolve the Board.
- 39) Conduct – all members when acting in their role are bound by the documents currently cited as:
- 'Wiltshire Council Constitution Part 12A Wiltshire Council Code of Conduct for Members' (October 2023)
 - 'Wiltshire Council Constitution Part 12B Wiltshire Council Code of Conduct Guidance for Members' (October 2023)

- 40) Alleged Conduct Breach – alleged breaches can be reported, and will be addressed, in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Code of Conduct document cited above.
- 41) Remuneration – the Chair is paid £8,000 per annum (pro rata). Other members are paid £3,175 per annum (pro rata). Payment can be declined. Tax and National Insurance are deducted at source. Payments are made on a monthly basis. The level of remuneration will be reviewed at the start of each new Council by the Director – Assets and can be increased, decreased or withdrawn. Any review will be based on use of comparison of remuneration levels in similar sized Registered Providers within or adjacent to the Wiltshire Council area, as reasonably interpreted.

16 April 2024