

**Report to Housing Management Board
04 October 2023**

Topic: Review of the HMB Terms of Reference and Recruitment of Housing Management Board tenant and leaseholder representatives

Ward: N/A

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Level of Decision: Non-Key Decision

City Outcome: To support implementation of the housing service objectives and Moving Forward Together programme pledge

Purpose of briefing, summary of issue / proposal and key background information:

To discuss and seek agreement on proposals to consult the HMB on updates to the Terms of Reference (TOR) and upon the future recruitment of Housing Management Board tenant and Leaseholder representatives that includes:

- Draft proposals to update and strengthen the TOR that reflect TPAS recommendations and expectations of the new consumer standards.
- Overview of historic and current recruitment of tenant and leaseholder representatives to the Housing Management Board.
- Research and national best practise.
- Proposals for future recruitment arrangements and timeline.

1 Proposed updates to the HMB TOR

TPAS summary recommendations for HMB (BCC commissioned desk top review 2022)

- a) There needs to be clearly defined roles and intended outcomes for tenants within the governance arrangements for housing services, to be incorporated within terms of reference.
- b) The HMB works as an advisory body and has access to decision makers, it's power to influence needs to be more clearly defined.
- c) A clear approach to capturing and evidencing where residents' voices have influenced decisions that are housing related and to keep the board and wider residents updated.
- d) Reference to tenant scrutiny should be made formally within the Housing Management Board terms of reference and sets out the relationship, how they will receive recommendations and respond.
- e) To broaden the number and diversity of those engaged by reviewing the elective process to join the Housing Management Board and a member of this group to join the Bristol Homes Board.

The suggested amendments for consultation with the board have been highlighted within appendix 1 (HMB terms of reference), in order to address points a - d. Except for point (e) where options are set out below for consideration.

2 Recruitment of Housing Management Board tenant and leaseholder representatives - History and current approach

The Housing Management Board was set up in February 2007. The first tenant board members were appointed by way of an open recruitment and selection process. 21 people expressed a formal interest in applying to become a board member, however the board and recruitment was disconnected from the rest of the resident engagement activities.

In 2008, a new housing management board was recruited. This time recruitment included a specific invitation to tenants already involved with tenant participation. The benefit of this approach was that the tenants recruited had good, long-standing knowledge and experience of how the housing service works. However, one of the drawbacks to this approach, is that tenant participation structures were not representative of our tenant profile. People from a black and minority ethnic background and younger people (below 50 years old) were and continued to be under-represented in tenant participation and were therefore less likely to access opportunities to become a board member.

In 2013 we reviewed our approach and appointed board members via recruitment and selection process from the wider tenant population. This approach made board membership accessible to a much wider range of tenants and helped us to achieve a more diverse board at that time. However, recruitment was an intensive process, including applications, pre- interview training and interview. If anyone stood down during the period of tenure this resulted repeated large scale recruitment exercise. The process also put some residents off from applying and it was felt by involved residents that the connection and links with other parts of the formal engagement structure was lost.

Our current approach:

In 2017 BCC introduced Housing Forums and a new method to recruiting tenant and leaseholders to the board. Membership was made open to BCC tenant and leaseholder population citywide, through submission of an expression of interest, and selection to the board was made annually via the Forums.

In March 2020 there was agreement to defer the appointment of new tenant and leaseholder members due to the start of the pandemic and the transitioning of all meetings for the first time online. The format for Forums also moved to citywide topic focused meetings, which meant this route for selection to the board would need to be reviewed. In 2022 as an outcome of the 'Moving Forward Together' programme and changes because of the pandemic, the Tenant Participation service on behalf of Housing Services commissioned TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) to undertake a review of our formal resident engagement structure. During this time the board has continued to meet for continuity. Where there have been vacancies, these opportunities have been made available for tenant and leaseholder volunteers to attend as associate members to gain experience of the board until such time as the full review was completed.

3. Research and National best practise

Summary of key findings:

- Many social landlords have/ are looking at enhancing their most senior Resident Influencing Vehicle (RIV). Examples include:
- New types of the senior RIVs emerging were panels with a mix of representation, including geographic, and open membership. (Hackney and Camden)
- Removal of the most senior Resident Influencing Vehicle (RIV) that were like BCC HMB (Hull and Sheffield)
- Strengthened Forums (Sometimes below a more senior board with shared membership) – High profile, digital and in person, tenants meeting officers and with some elected member input.
- LAs (& ALMOs & HAs) continue to make use of their involvement structures as the basis for membership of their senior RIV. Either geographical split or others have drawn participants from their themed forums or panels. (Example Leeds Housing Board)
- Others have used open recruitment and co-opted additional independent members (Example Manchester Housing Advisory Board)
- New focus in resident involvement around three key functions: Performance monitoring, Strategy, Scrutiny.

Additional Insight from TPAS 2023 also provided further considerations around:

- How we make the board more representative and ensure we are hearing a range of views that reflect the wider tenant population.
- How we create a stable membership of the HMB, and therefore an experienced/ useful body. For e.g., by increasing the term of office for tenant and leaseholder members.
- How tenant and leaseholder members will get deeper insights from the wider tenant body regarding housing services if they are no longer selected from/ attend area forums.
- How the board will maintain links with lower groups and the wider involvement structure.

4 Proposal for increasing diverse range of voices on the board.

To increase and improve our connection with underrepresented communities, and ensure we are hearing a range of voices that reflect our tenant and leaseholder population. We are proposing the following amendment to the TOR to allow co-options:

The membership of the Board will include up to three co-options to increase the influence of underrepresented communities. These may be individuals* or representatives of organisations that are well connected with [numerically significant] communities or represent specific equalities groups that are not currently well represented in the tenant participation structure.

The recommended tenure would be to mirror that of tenant and leaseholder board members and to review representational requirements at the end of each term.

5 Proposals for tenant and leaseholder board member recruitment arrangements

Option A. Recruitment from lower bodies

Appointed of a minimum of 6 tenant / leaseholder representatives from lower bodies. Drawing representatives from Housing Forums x 2, themed Service User Groups x 2, Leaseholder Forum x 1 and an associate membership for Housing Scrutiny Panel representative. (plus, additional new seats for representatives from emerging groups).

Representation selected from lower bodies will ensure links are maintained between the formal tenant participation structure and the selection route to the board. This will also act as an incentive to encourage and promote membership of lower bodies. Representatives will also have access to deeper insights from a wider group of residents regarding lived experiences of housing services.

There is also opportunity for additional seats for representatives from any new groups developed around emerging themes for example, building safety or shared ownership, which will allow the board to grow in the future and be able to draw on insights related to specific service areas or tenure.

All Tenant/Leaseholder representatives will be expected to attend maintain close links with their respective groups. Including short reporting slots on agendas, but it is not intended HMB representatives should dominate meetings and they should primarily be in listening mode, as outlined in an updated role description.

Opportunities to participate in all lower bodies and selection to the board would be widely promoted to all BCC tenants and leaseholders using an inclusive range of channels. Recordings of meetings and relevant information relating to the board and membership would also be made available on dedicated web pages via the BCC website and via the Tenant Participation Service.

Recommended tenure is 3 years. To support the development of board members skills and experience, create a stable membership of the HMB, and therefore an experienced/useful body.

If any representative steps down during this period, the respective lower body may select another representative to fulfil the remaining period of tenure.

Access and accountability to wider tenant and leaseholder body, will remain as tenant and leaseholders can submit questions to the board and/ or attend and observe. Recordings of meetings and relevant information relating to board membership will also continue to be made available on dedicated web pages via the BCC website and via the Tenant Participation Service.

TOR's for each lower body would also be updated to include a new section that includes the route to appointment to the board.

Option B. Citywide recruitment and selection process

Appointment of minimum 6 members via open citywide advertising to BCC tenants and leaseholders and selection via interview process.

Interview process to be conducted with representation from outgoing membership and councillors and supported by Tenant Participation Service. As interview and selection processes are normally resource and time intensive it is suggested that any applicant who is successful but not appointed due to higher scoring applicants should be held on a reserve list and approached to fill any vacancies should they arise during the tenure of that board. If there are no other suitable candidates for the position from the first round of city wide recruitment, the opportunity would then be readvertised for the remaining period of tenure tenants and leaseholders on the open involvement register.

To maintain accountability links with the rest of the involvement structure. Tenant and leaseholders appointed will be expected to maintain close links with other elements of the tenant participation structure. Including attending a minimum of at least 2 meetings of different types of lower bodies per year. Tenant and Leaseholder members may also be required to attend and

provide short reports to lower bodies, but it is not intended HMB representatives should dominate meetings and they should primarily be in listening mode.

The recommended tenure is 3 years for the purposes set outlined in option A.

Access and accountability to wider tenant body will remain as set out in option A.

Option C: A hybrid of options a and b above.

6 Timeline

October to March 2024	To maintain continuity, it is recommended that current tenant / leaseholder board members be asked to remain in post until at least the end of the financial year.
October 2023	Agreement of proposed updates to the TOR by the current board and agreed approach to recruitment
Autumn/ Winter	Wider engagement on the proposals with other resident panels/groups
March 2024	Agreement on any further improvements following wider engagement
April 2024	Proposed recruitment to commence from April 2024. This will allow for planning and citywide promotion of opportunities including in the Spring/ Summer addition of Housing News which goes out to all BCC tenants and leaseholders. It is anticipated that following promotion and selection process via either lower bodies/ or interview panels
Summer/ Autumn 2024	New board in place

7 Future reviewing the HMB TOR

It is recommended that the HMB TOR should be reviewed annually with board members to ensure they are fit for purpose, and the intended aims are being met.

In addition, new guidance around recruiting to the board and working with the board will be developed (in order to strengthen transparency and provide clear evidence of board influence).

8 Next Steps / Steer sought

Agreement to the proposed amendments and arrangements for the next round of recruitment in principle with a view to discussing with tenants and leaseholder representatives at the Autumn/ Winter (October) HMB meeting.

Appendices

HMB TOR appendix 1.