

Housing management board terms of reference

The Housing Management Board (HMB) is one of a range of ways that Bristol City Council (BCC) tenants and leaseholders can get involved, influence and scrutinise housing services and hold their landlord Bristol City Council to account.

Definition

1.1 The Housing Management Board (HMB) is a body set up to consider and advise on key issues affecting the City Council's Landlord Services (the management, maintenance, improvement and development of council tenancies and homes).

Its role will be to:

- Advise on development of the strategy for Landlord Services.
- Advise on and review the Landlord Strategy delivery plan and the key projects identified within the Strategy.
- Review overall, high level performance.
- Annually review the draft Business Plan and associated Capital and Revenue Budgets.
- Review risk and risk management arrangements.
- Review draft reports on key decisions to be taken by the Cabinet or Council.
- Be consulted on and advise the Director and Executive Team on key changes to strategy, key policies, significant service changes and development proposals.
- Maintain an overview of the development of tenant participation.

1.2 The Housing Management Board can refer items to the Bristol Homes Board.

1.3 The HMB will not be involved with day-to-day operational matters or matters of detailed service delivery or performance.

2. Key Aims

2.1 The aim of the HMB is to contribute to the delivery of effective landlord services, by monitoring and influencing service development and delivery.

2.2 The HMB will operate as an advisory body and provide opportunity for BCC tenants and leaseholders to meet directly and influence decision makers, including the Director and Executive Team, Portfolio holder and Elected Councillors.

3. Duties

3.1 The HMB will have regard for the Council's powers and responsibilities and its constitution, including the system of delegated authority.

3.2 The Board will receive annual reports, for consideration, regarding the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

3.3 HMB will, in setting its work programme each year, have regard to the remit of Bristol's Scrutiny function and relevant boards.

4. Membership

4.1 The membership of the HMB will comprise of: a minimum of six council tenants, one leaseholder, six Councillors (proportionally representing the political administrations) and may be attended by the relevant Cabinet Member.

4.2 Each elected Councillor will be selected by his or her political group.

4.3 The Board may also invite an Independent Housing professional to join the board as an independent member. The Independent member will be subject to annual reappointment every three years.

4.4 The Chair of the Board will be one of the tenant or leaseholders or the independent member and will be elected at each annual meeting. The Board may elect a vice-chair (preferably a tenant or leaseholder representative). At each annual meeting the Board will also elect one of the tenant representatives to sit on the Bristol Homes Board.

4.5 The Board may invite 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. Co-opted members will be subject to appointment every three years. Representational requirements will be reviewed at the end of each 3-year term.

4.6 Tenant, leaseholder representatives will be appointed to the Board following election from the city wide housing forums. Tenant/leaseholder members will be expected to maintain close links with other elements of the tenant participation structure. – Subject to review

4.7 Tenants and leaseholder members will stand for a period of one year three years.

4.8 The Director of Housing and Landlord Services, members of the Executive Team and other staff, as appropriate, will attend and advise the HMB.

5. Organisation of the HMB

5.1 The HMB shall be vested in the Council, which will be responsible for organising and facilitating the affairs of the HMB.

5.2 The HMB will meet at least 3-4 times a year. The dates, times and venues for the meetings will be agreed annually.

5.3 The Cabinet Member and, or the Director of Housing and Landlord Services can call an emergency meeting and a minimum of seven days' notice will be given to all members of the HMB, with a notice detailing the reasons for calling a meeting under exceptional circumstances.

5.4 Three members of the HMB can call a special meeting, written notification of which must be sent to the Director of Housing and Landlord Services, signed by each, with the stated reason. The Service Director will then give notice to the HMB as detailed in 5.3.

5.5 Minutes will be taken at all meetings and used to evidence where residents' voices have influenced decisions and shaped service delivery and improvement. A rolling action log will be developed, with regular updates and outcomes provided to the board.

5.6 Minutes of previous meetings will be circulated within 10 days after the meeting and will include notice of the agenda items for the next meeting.

5.7 Agendas and supporting papers will aim to be made available two weeks prior to meetings but will be available at least one week prior to meetings of the HMB. Late reports will be circulated as soon as possible and the HMB will determine whether to consider them.

5.8 The HMB will consider reports from BCC resident Housing Scrutiny Panel (HSP). Where the HSP raises concerns regarding housing service delivery and/or safety or related issues, the panel will make a formal request for a response from the HMB. The HMB will review such reports at the next scheduled meeting of the board, subject to adequate notice being given as set out in 5.7. If an emergency meeting of the HMB is needed a notice detailing the reasons for calling the meeting will be sent out as detailed in 5.3.

5.9 BCC Tenant and leaseholder members from lower bodies may also escalate serious matters for concern regarding service delivery and/or safety or related issues to the HMB. If they are dissatisfied with the performance of the Service in improving provision and providing sufficient opportunity has been given to correct this. If an emergency meeting of the HMB is needed a notice detailing the reasons for calling the meeting will be sent out as detailed in 5.3.

5.10 Members of the public will have the right to attend any HMB meeting except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting, or a part of it, is therefore held in private.

5.11 Members of the public can submit questions or make statements to the HMB, related to items on the agenda, so long as these are received one week in advance of the meeting.

5.12 HMB meetings will be limited to two hours. Any issues not addressed in this time will be carried over unless the members agree otherwise.

5.13 Members of the HMB are required to disclose the existence and nature of any personal interest which they have in any item of business to be considered at a HMB meeting, ahead of its discussion.

6. Code of Conduct

6.1 All members of the HMB are required to comply with their relevant codes of conduct:

- Tenant members: Tenant Participation Agreement Code of Conduct.
- Councillor members and advising Officers: Code of Conduct, Protocol on Member, Officer Relations.
- Council staff: Bristol City Council Code of conduct for employees.

6.2 All members of the HMB are expected to follow the good practice principles for effective meetings, listed below:

- All questions should be directed through the Chairperson.
- Everyone will be given equal respect and personal verbal attacks against members of the HMB or officers will not be tolerated.
- The Chair's position should be respected at all times.
- Any conflict of interest must be declared to the HMB at the start of the meeting.

- No member of the HMB should behave in a way likely to bring the reputation of the HMB into disrepute.
- Members will be expected to read papers before the meeting.
- All meetings and discussions will be solely confined to policy and strategy matters and will exclude any discussion of cases of individual properties, tenants or events.
- The Chairperson will have the authority to give a verbal warning to any member of the HMB or officer, whose behaviour is unacceptable. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, then the Chairperson will have the authority to ask the member of the HMB to leave the meeting. If the behaviour is considered to contravene relevant codes of conduct, the matter will be referred accordingly.
- All members of the HMB are required to make their best efforts to attend meetings or to send their apologies.
- All members are expected to take part in training where this is agreed.

7. Equal Opportunities

7.1 All members are required to comply with the Equal Opportunities statement and policy of the Council.

7.2 Members of the HMB using racist, sexist or other inappropriate language or behaviour will be subject to an agreed procedure and may be removed from the HMB.

8. Annual Review

8.1 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed on an annual basis at the start of the municipal year.