

KIRKLEES COUNCIL HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

Item: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Issued: April 2021

Review Due: April 2022

Version: FINAL (v.8)

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Housing Advisory Board ('the Board') ensures Kirklees Council have the appropriate governance arrangements for a housing function of the scale and complexity that is the Kirklees Homes and Neighbourhoods Service.
- 1.2 The Board aligns with the Council's governance and decision-making structures and supports tenant focussed decisions. The Board achieves this by ensuring the voice of tenants and leaseholders ('Tenants') is aligned to strategic decision making in relation to the delivery, management and growth of council housing services in Kirklees. For clarification, a Tenant is an individual who holds a secure tenancy or lease of a residential property from and occupies a property belonging to Kirklees Council (funded by the Housing Revenue Account or HRA).
- 1.3 The operation of the Board will be reviewed after the transition year (2021/22) and, subject to its continuation, the effectiveness of the Board will be reviewed every 3 years thereafter.

2. Role

- 2.1 To provide Kirklees Council's Cabinet (via the Portfolio Holder) with information, views, and expert advice on a range of housing and related strategies and policies.
- 2.2 To ensure that agreed service delivery standards for Tenants is achieved and, that expectations and outcomes of the Consumer Regulatory Standards are met, as follows:
 - Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard – provide choice and effective communication to customers, including complaint handling
 - Tenancy Standard – letting homes in a fair and transparent way
 - Home Standard – ensure homes are safe, decent and in a good state of repair
 - Neighbourhood and Community Standard – keeping the wider area clean, safe, promote wellbeing and tackling anti-social behaviour
- 2.3 To have early sight of proposed strategy and policy developments to ensure the views of tenants have informed proposals and, that the tenant voice is visible, heard and responded to.

- 2.4 To review and track risks (and sub-risks), controls and mitigations relating to tenant facing services through the appropriate risk registers.
- 2.5 To comment and advice on decisions that seek to ensure value for money is achieved across all housing revenue account (HRA) services e.g., review of relevant housing budgets at least annually.
- 2.6 The Board will, in advising the Cabinet via the Portfolio Holder, consider the following key areas:
- The council's current and subsequent housing strategies
 - The management and investment in the council housing stock and services to Tenants and wider residents
 - Property management and maintenance including safety and statutory compliance and the strategy and implementation of capital and revenue funds on investment, refurbishment, servicing and maintenance and repairs
 - The council's strategic housing function including housing strategy and operational services such as homelessness, adaptations, and private rented sector compliance
 - The housing growth agenda including new build council homes and specialist supported housing
 - Place, environmental and community services that relate to council housing neighbourhoods and environmental standards (including aspects of grounds maintenance, community safety and waste collection as appropriate)

3. Membership

- 3.1 The Board has a maximum membership of 12 including the Chairperson. The Board is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Democracy who has full voting rights.

Tenant Members

- 3.1.1 The wider membership of the Board includes up to 6 Tenant representatives. Leaseholder representation is desirable but not compulsory and there cannot be more than 2 leaseholders on the Board. Tenant representatives, if possible, will reflect North and South Kirklees and the four areas across the district, Huddersfield, Rurals, Batley and Spennings Dale and Dewsbury and Mirfield.

Co-opted Members

- 3.1.2 The wider membership of the Board includes up to 4 professional co-optees. Co-optees will be selected based on their abilities to meet the Council objectives for housing services and will have full voting rights.

Council Officers

- 3.1.3 Kirklees Council's Strategic Director, Growth and Regeneration is a member of the Board who has full voting rights. The Strategic Director is also the local authority's nominated person responsible for complying with the Regulator for Social Housing's consumer regulations including health and safety requirements.

3.1.4 Other Council officers may be invited to sit on or, to attend the Board by agreement with the Chair, in an advisory capacity. Other Council officers do not have voting rights on the Board.

Elected Members

3.1.5 Elected Members can attend meetings of the Board at the discretion of the Chair. Elected Members do not have voting rights.

4. Meetings

4.1 The quorum for the transaction of the business of the Board is no fewer than 3 Tenant members and 1 co-optee (professional) plus the Chair.

4.2 The Board will meet a minimum of 6 times per year at approximately equal intervals (every 2 months).

4.3 Council officers or elected members in attendance at the Board do not account towards a quorum.

4.4 Decisions arising at a Board meeting are decided by the majority vote. Each member present in person (including at virtual meetings) is entitled to one vote. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chair has the casting vote.

4.5 Any Board member who has an interest in any item tabled at the meeting, will disclose that interest to the Chair before the item is discussed. Where necessary, the Board member will not remain present during the discussion or take part in any related decision, unless agreed by the Chair. If the declaration of interest is by the Chair, the decision will be taken collectively by the Board members present.

4.6 All decisions made by the Board at a meeting or, by a Board member or council officer acting on behalf of the Board will stand. The exception being if it transpires that there was a defect in the appointment of that Board member (s) that would disqualify the person from holding that position.

5. Requirements of Members

5.1 Members will be expected to:

- Be committed to inclusively represent all Tenants of Kirklees
- Be able to see the bigger Kirklees picture understanding that places and communities are diverse and that needs are different
- Adopt an approach that is fair, honest, and friendly
- Have great communication skills in terms of listening to others and the confidence to participate in discussions
- An ability to make effective decisions based on the facts presented
- A desire to improve and change housing services for the better
- A commitment to be present and to support other Board members

5.2 The following persons are not able to join the Board:

- Elected Members (excluding the Portfolio Holder)
- Council Officers (excluding the relevant Strategic Director)
- Contractors/Consultants of the council who are directly involved with housing activity
- A person who lives in the same household as an existing member of the Board
- A person who is bankrupt or has an outstanding County Court Judgement or, is forbidden from being a Company Director
- A person who has failed to attend three meetings in a row without reasonable excuse

5.3 Any person who is considered to:

- Be in serious breach of their tenancy agreement e.g., rent arrears with no agreed payment plan, involved in Anti-Social Behaviour etc
- Have demonstrated any serious inappropriate behaviour at the Board
- Have brought about any action that has brought the Board or Kirklees Council into serious disrepute

5.4 Any co-optee will cease to be a member of the Board if they (i) cease to be a member of a professional body whose membership was conditional on their appointment (ii) are subject to personal censure by a professional body or (iii) cease to be an employee of an organisation when employment by that organisation was conditional on their appointment.

6. Management of Meetings

6.1 A Council Lead Officer will also be identified to oversee management of Board meetings. The officer will:

- ensure that an agenda is produced for each meeting
- agree the agenda with the Chair of the Board in advance of each meeting
- oversee the follow up of actions from Board meetings
- ensure papers are circulated at least 1 week in advance of the meeting
- ensure that Minutes are formally recorded for each meeting
- ensure the Chair receives a copy of the draft Minutes within 1 week (excluding public holidays)

7. Recruitment of Board Members

Tenant Members

7.1 A maximum of 6 Tenant members will be recruited to the Board, through a formal process to ensure the Board membership reflects, as far as possible, the demographics of the council's Tenant community. The opportunity to join the Board will be promoted through a wide range of local networks and including tenant publications and networks and, social media. Leaseholder representative is desirable but not compulsory and there cannot be more than 2 leaseholders on the Board. Tenant representatives, if possible, will reflect North and South Kirklees and the four areas across the district, Huddersfield, Rurals, Batley and Spennings Dale and Dewsbury and Mirfield.

7.1.1 Up to 3 Tenant representatives appointed to the Board can be invited to join the Council's Tenant Advisory and Grants Panel (by the Chair of the Panel). The Tenant Advisory and Grants Panel is a Tenant member only forum working to ensure the voice of tenants and leaseholders influences good management of council housing services.

The Panel also foster close working between Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs), the wider tenant community and the Council.

Co-Optees (Professional)

- 7.2 The wider membership of the Board includes up to 4 professional co-optees. Each co-optee will, in addition to the generic responsibility of all Board members, hold a specific housing portfolio. Co-optees will be selected based on their abilities to meet the Council objectives for housing services.
- 7.3 Where the total number of Board members remaining on the Board at any time, is less than two thirds of the maximum membership of 12, an interim selection process will take place as soon as possible to replace either Tenant and/or Co-optee vacancies.

8. Payment

- 8.1 Board members will not be remunerated for their services. However, the Council reserves the right to reconsider the option to pay Co-optees to attract and retain Board members who can support the Council to meet key objectives for housing services.
- 8.2 The reimbursement of reasonable travel and other expenses will apply to all Board members (e.g., childcare) in accordance with the Council's standard arrangements.

9. Terms of Office and Termination of Membership

- 9.1 The term of office of appointment for each Board member is normally for 3 years. However, membership can be extended for a period of 1, 2, or 3 years formally by the Board to enable the business of the Council to continue to be delivered effectively but should not exceed 6 years continuously or cumulatively for any member.
- 9.2 Board members may have their membership terminated if they are absent for more than 4 consecutive months without the permission of the Board or, attend less than 60% of the meetings of the Board during a 12-month period

10. Support and Development

- 10.1 Board members are expected to attend appropriate training in relation to their role.
- 10.2 Board members will have access to Council officer support e.g., responsible for circulation of report packs, responding to Board member enquiries relating to packs, attending meetings, dealing with expense claims etc.
- 10.3 Induction and relevant training will be made available to all Board members and will include (but is not limited to):
- personal development opportunities (internal and external) such as shadowing, mentoring, and undertaking relevant training or qualifications as resources allow.
 - Board members will be able to access IT equipment as required to carry out their role e.g., PC's, tablets, chrome books etc and, if appropriate, can book council meeting space to support their work and enable full participation in meetings and board activities

