

# KIRKLEES COUNCIL

## HOMES and NEIGHBOURHOODS IMPROVEMENT BOARD

**Item:** **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Issued:** **TBC**

**Review Due:**

**Version:** **DRAFT 1**

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Homes and Neighbourhoods Improvement Board ('the Board') ensures Kirklees Council has 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 sits within the Council's governance and decision-making structures and supports the Cabinet with its overall responsibility as the Registered Provider. The Board's primary purpose is to oversee the delivery of the housing management and maintenance services delivered by the Homes and Neighbourhood Service and in particular to satisfy itself that:
  - The service is being run in line with legal and regulatory requirements
  - That risks are being identified, and are well managed and mitigated
  - Performance reporting is timely and appropriate to inform decision making
  - There are mechanisms in place to engage with tenants and act upon their feedback
  - That the landlord's services are being efficiently and effectively delivered
  - That improvement programmes are delivered on time, within budget and with the expected outcome

The Board shall have a general duty to inform Cabinet decision making in relation to the H&N Service, and to bring to the Cabinet's attention any legal, regulatory or other concern it may have in relation to the running of the service.

- 1.3 The operation of the Board will be reviewed after its first year of operation (2023/24) 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 with oversight of the housing management and maintenance functions delivered to tenants and leaseholders by the Homes and Neighbourhoods Service.

- 2.2 To ensure that service delivery meets all legal and regulatory requirements with particular reference to the Regulator for Social Housing's Consumer Standards (and any amendments made to the Regulatory Standards from time to time):
- 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 identify the principal risks that are faced by the service and ensure that they are appropriately managed and mitigated and flow into the Council's overall risk management framework.
- 2.4 If any risk or combination of risks is likely to have a materially adverse impact on tenants or the operational delivery of the service to bring this risk directly to the attention of the Cabinet Assurance Board and Cabinet.
- 2.5 Maintain oversight of the H&N Service performance measures to ensure that continuous improvement is embedded; areas of underperformance are addressed, and Cabinet are kept apprised of any performance issues that are adversely impacting on the delivery of the services to tenants.
- 2.6 The Board will, inform and advising the Cabinet on the following key areas:
- The council's current and future housing strategies
  - The management and investment in the council housing
  - 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
  - Council strategies that impact on council housing, neighbourhoods and environmental services that have a link to the quality of life experienced by the council's tenants

### **3. Membership**

- 3.1 The Board has a maximum membership of up to 12 including the Chairperson. The Board shall be chaired by a co-opted independent member who has full voting rights.

#### **Elected Members**

- 3.1.1 There shall be up to 7 elected member who will be nominees from the political grouping within the Authority. Members will be nominated based on their skills, competency and ability to meet the Council objectives for the housing services and understand the regulatory obligations of H&N. Each member will have full voting rights.

#### **Co-opted Independent Members**

- 3.1.2 The Board shall include up to 4 professional co-optees (one of whom shall be the Chair). Co-optees will be selected based on their skills, competency and abilities to meet the

Council objectives for housing services, understand the regulatory obligations of H&N and will have full voting rights.

### **Consumer Voices Panel Member**

- 3.1.3 The Chair of the Consumer Voice Panel shall be a member of the Board with full voting rights.

### **Council Officers**

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

## **4. Meetings**

- 4.1 The quorum for the transaction of the business of the Board is 3 where there is at least one elected member and one independent member in attendance.
- 4.2 The Board will meet a minimum of 4 times per year at approximately equal intervals and has the flexibility to meet as required from time to time and in whatever format (online or in person) is agreed by members to deliver the business of the meeting.
- 4.3 Council officers in attendance at the Board do not account towards a quorum.
- 4.4 Decisions arising at a Board meeting are generally made by consensus. Where it is necessary to vote (when agreed by the Board) this will be 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 start of the meeting. Where necessary, the Board member will not remain present during the discussion or take part in any related decision of that item, unless agreed by the Chair. If the declaration of interest is by the Chair, the decision about how that agenda item will be addressed, will be taken collectively by the Board members present.

## **5. Requirements of Members**

- 5.1 Members will be expected to:
- Be committed to inclusively represent the best interests of the Council housing and its occupants in Kirklees
  - Be able to see the bigger Kirklees picture understanding that places and communities are diverse and that needs are different
  - Be committed to good governance and compliance standards
  - Adopt an approach that is professional, 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 understanding risk and effective use of resources

- 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:

- Council Officers
- 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

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 brought about any action that has brought the Board or Kirklees Council into serious disrepute

## **6. Management of Meetings**

6.1 A Council Lead Officer will also be identified to oversee administration 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, Matters Arising and agreed actions are formally recorded for each meeting
- ensure the Chair receives a copy of the draft Minutes within 1 week (excluding public holidays) for review prior to approval by the Board

## **7. Recruitment of Board Members**

### **Elected Members**

7.1 Elected members shall be nominees by the leader of their political group within the Authority. Members will be nominated based on their skills, competency and ability to meet the Council objectives for the housing services and understand the regulatory obligations of H&N.

### **Co-Optees / Independent (Professional)**

7.2 Independent Board members will be recruited to provide a range of skills and experience that will support the Board to discharge its remit. Members will be nominated based on their skills, competency and ability to meet the Council objectives for the housing services and understand the regulatory obligations of H&N.

### **Consumer Voices Panel**

- 7.3 The Chair of the Consumer Voices Panel shall have a right to a place on the board.

### **Skills, competency and experience**

The skills and experience required by the Board from all of its members will be reviewed at least biannually to ensure the Board has the required competences available to it to inform its decision making.

## **8. Payment**

- 8.1 Other than the Chair of the Board other Board members will not be remunerated for their services.
- 8.2 The reimbursement of reasonable travel and other expenses will apply to all Board members (e.g., childcare, travel out of pocket expenses etc.) 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 a Board member is normally for 3 years. However, membership can be extended for an additional 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 3 consecutive meetings without the permission of the Board or, attend less than 60% of the meetings of the Board during a 12-month period
- 9.3 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.

## **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