

Resident Board Terms of Reference

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- **Approved by:** Tony Turnbull (Neighbourhood Manager) **Date Approved:** 28 June 2024

This document should be read in conjunction with the code of conduct and role profile for the Resident Board membership.

1. Purpose of the board

- 1.1 To monitor and review Slough Borough Council's compliance with the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England.
- 1.2 To support the scrutiny of housing services including the identification of topics for resident review, receiving scrutiny reports and monitoring agreed recommendations.
- 1.3 To make recommendations for improvements to service delivery and policies in respect of the council's landlord service to the Director of Housing, and council's lead member for housing oversees resident engagement and landlord services.
- 1.4 To participate in the formulation of policy regarding resident involvement and monitoring the delivery of that service.
- 1.5 In order to fulfil its purpose, the Board will:
 - Represent the communities it serves so far as is reasonably practicable
 - Be open and accountable to residents
 - Work in partnership with council officers and elected members
 - Ensure the Board operates within its Terms of Reference, Constitution and the law
 - Ensure that information is shared with all members of the group so that members can carry out their role effectively and to make informed decisions.

2. Structure of the board

- 2.1 The Board will have up to 12 members in total including 9 tenants and 3 leaseholders.
- 2.2 Membership is open to any tenant or resident leaseholder (*not absent leaseholder*) of the council subject to the following:
 - They have maintained a rent and/or service charge account in credit for the preceding 12 months or have an agreed payment plan in place.

- They have not been subject to any formal or legal action by the Council for any anti-social behaviour or harassment committed in the preceding 12 months by the tenant/leaseholder, any member of their householder or any visitor to the property.
 - They are not subject to any other legal action by the council.
 - They are not a Councillor or member of staff of the Council.
 - Membership is restricted to one person per household.
 - Membership may be restricted to one person per scheme/street/area to achieve as wide a representation as possible across the borough.
 - The Board will seek to reflect the makeup of the wider resident body in recruitment of members.
- 2.3 If a leaseholder become an absent leaseholder, this means they no longer meet the membership requirements above and will be required to resign.
- 2.4 The Board may, at its discretion, agree to membership for a member of a tenant's or leaseholder's household on condition that they are over 18 years of age and have lived with the tenant/leaseholder for at least 24 months continuously prior to their application to join the Board.
- 2.6 The Board will be chaired by an independent person with the required skills and experience and will be appointed by the council, following consultation with the Board.
- 2.7 The Board may wish to elect one of their number as Vice Chair who will deputise for the Chair whenever they are unavailable.
- 2.8 Board members may volunteer or be selected by the Board to take key responsibility for an area of scrutiny work. The key areas of responsibility will be decided by the Board from time to time and no Board member is required to take on a key role.
- 2.9 While members are free to be affiliated to or be a member of any political party, pressure group or campaigning organisation they may not represent any such organisation in their role as a member of the Board.

The Resident Board must ensure that new members joining the board bring skills and experience that meet the needs of the board.

3. Terms of service

- 3.1 The Term of Service for a Resident Board member is 3 years after which the member must step down but may put themselves forward for re-selection for an additional term, serving up to a maximum of six consecutive years in total.
- 3.2 On the formation of the Slough Resident Board, members will initially be appointed for three years, with the option to stand down after one year. However, in recognition unforeseen personal circumstances, a member who wishes to stand down before of the end their first year in the role, should inform chair.
- 3.3 If there are other candidates applying for selection at the time a member steps down, they will all be considered equally in respect of the Board Member Role Profile.

3.4 Each year the Board will hold an Annual General Meeting which will ratify any appointments made to the Board since the last AGM, elect members of the Board including those submitting themselves for reselection, approve the Annual Impact Statement and the Annual Report to Residents.

4. Resident Board meetings

4.1 There will be a minimum of 6 Resident Board meetings per year. Additional meetings may also be held as determined by the Board and these meetings may not follow the usual formal structure of Board meetings.

4.2 Members of the Board should make every effort to attend meetings and to send apologies in advance of the meeting to the Chair or Vice Chair if they are unable to attend. Board Members are required to attend a minimum of six of the formal meetings per year.

4.3 Majority of meetings are held online with a few meetings in person. Members who are unable to attend in person can join online. Adequate notice must be given of all board meetings and agenda sent minimum 5 working days before meetings.

4.4 Minutes of meetings will be kept in a format to be agreed by the Board and will, at a minimum, record those present, all decisions taken, and actions agreed.

4.5 The independent Chair and officers will prepare an annual schedule of all board meetings in advance and share with the Board for input.

4.6 Board members are expected to read information sent and come prepared to ask questions/ request clarification before or at meetings.

4.7 The quorum at meetings shall be 50% of the total current board members.

4.8 Meetings will be chaired by the Chair of the board, or in their absence by the Vice-Chair, or in both their absences another board member appointed by those present.

4.9 The Chair shall report on the group's activities and recommendations to the Housing Director and lead member for Housing.

5. Specific responsibilities of the Resident Board

5.1 In carrying out its co-regulatory role, there are a number of specific activities that the Resident Board will undertake. These include:

- Regular (at least quarterly) monitoring of performance information in a form to be agreed between the Board and the council.
- Annual review of the council's compliance with Consumer Standards or any other requirements of the Housing Regulator
- Annual review of the council's compliance with the Complaints Handling Code or any other guidance from the Housing Ombudsman.
- An Annual Impact Statement re resident engagement activity to be compiled by the Board and council officers.
- Approve Annual Report to Residents which will be drafted by the council.

- Contribute to and approve the council’s Annual Plan for Resident Engagement.
- Review structure of resident engagement and Board Terms of Reference every three years or when required.
- Conduct annual Board appraisals including appraisals of individual Board Members, the Board as a whole and the Independent Chair.
- Contribute to drafting of Resident Surveys and reviewing the resulting action plans.
- Monitor delivery of the action plans resulting from resident surveys.
- Scrutinise specific service areas as deemed necessary by the Board. This may include referrals for scrutiny by council officers.
- Consult with the wider body of residents as appropriate and provide information on Board activities to the resident body.
- Making decisions about which areas of performance to scrutinise
- Monitor the delivery of actions arising from scrutiny activity.
- Consulting with the wider group of tenants and leaseholders
- Participate in formulation of the council’s resident involvement strategy.
- Evaluate its own performance annually.
- Report to the council’s lead officer for Housing and Lead Member for Housing who oversees resident engagement and landlord services as appropriate on the results of scrutiny activities and with recommendations for improvements to service delivery. Some of the recommendations may be shared with the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee.
- Nominate, each year, the three representatives from the Board to the Scrutiny Panel which oversees resident engagement and landlord services.
- Delegate scrutiny activities to panels or working groups as appropriate.
- Maintain a link with the Lead Member for Housing by inviting them to at least two Board meetings annually to discuss matters of interest and concern.

This list is not exhaustive and may be added to by the council as appropriate and in consultation with the Resident Board.

5.2 The Resident Board is accountable to the resident body and to the council in its capacity as co-regulator of services.

6. Specific responsibilities of Slough Borough Council

6.1 Slough Borough Council recognises the Resident Board’s co-regulatory role and commits to assist the Resident Board in its performance of that role. In particular, the council will:

- Conduct an annual assessment of compliance with Consumer Standards and/or other regulatory requirements.
- Conduct an annual assessment of compliance with the Ombudsman’s Complaints Handling Code.
- Produce an annual Report to Residents in consultation with the Resident Board.
- Annually review the action plan for Resident Engagement and present to the Resident Board.
- Prepare an annual Impact Statement in conjunction with the Resident Board.

- Carry out annual resident Tenant Satisfaction Measures surveys (including leaseholders).
- Develop an action plan to address issues identified in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- The Resident Involvement team will review training needs with Board members (for both individuals and the group) and develop a programme of training to enable residents to be effective in their role.
- Provide sufficient resources to enable residents to effectively scrutinise council services.
- Develop a wide range of resident engagement activities to enable as many residents as possible to be involved and/or give feedback.
- Provide residents with the information needed to be able to effectively scrutinise council landlord services.
- Recruit a suitably experienced and skilled Independent Chair for the Resident Board.
- Organise and fully service Resident Board meetings.
- Provide Board members with adequate IT resources to enable it to operate effectively which may include portable computer equipment (tablets), means to communicate and share resources (e.g., Microsoft Teams), printing facilities, web portal, information bank.
- Provide out of pocket expenses due to involvement activities including travel and childcare expenses.
- Provide information relevant to the work of the Board as requested by the Board or a member of the Board.
- The council will be respectful and mindful of board members' time and limit communication via email to once a week unless there is a need for an urgent communication.

This list is not exhaustive and may be added to by the council as appropriate and in consultation with the Resident Board.

6.2 The Resident Board and councillors are accountable to the council and to the Regulator for Social Housing as well as to the resident body in their capacity as co-regulator of services.

7. Expenses & incentives

7.1 Provide out of pocket expenses due to involvement activities including travel and childcare expenses upon receipts.

7.2 Members will be appreciated for their time with two options for incentive, a gift card of choice or rent account credit worth £25 per meeting attended.

7.3 Incentives will be processed at the end of each quarter.

7.4 The council will provide the relevant letters upon request for benefit or tax purposes, to ensure there are no negative implications to members.

8. Conflicts of interest

8.1 Board members will declare any conflicts of interest and will not take part in any Board discussion, be a member of another Panel or inspection/scrutiny activity that relates to the area of interest as per the Board Code of Conduct.

9. Reporting and accountabilities

9.1 To enable the Board to carry out its role effectively, it is important that it can hold officers to account and that recommendations of the Board are taken seriously.

The Board will therefore:

- Make reports and recommendations to senior officers and to the council with recommendations for changes to services and processes.
- Receive prompt responses from officers to their recommendations.
- Receive regular reports on progress with all recommendations that have been accepted.
- Invite officers to attend Board meetings to report on issues raised by the Board.
- In doing so, the Board will keep in mind that the relationship with officers is one of mutual respect and partnership.

The Board is accountable for its performance to the council's lead officer for resident engagement and an annual Board appraisal will be undertaken with the Chair of the Board to evaluate the work of the Board as a whole and that of individual Board members.

If a Board member is deemed to be not performing their role to an acceptable standard, they may be asked to step down.