

HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose

The Housing Advisory Board (HAB) is a non-executive advisory body established to:

- Provide strategic advice and assurance to the Cabinet Member for Housing
- Ensure that the voice of tenants and residents informs housing policy, service design and delivery
- Support continuous improvement in housing services in line with the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards

The Housing Advisory Board operates alongside, and does not replace:

- Overview and Scrutiny
- Audit Committee
- Cabinet
- Six Town Housing Board

2. Role and Functions

The HAB will act as a strategic advisory and co-production forum, and will provide:

2.1 Strategic Advice

- Provide input into the development and review of:
 - Housing Strategy
 - Homelessness Prevention Strategy
 - Asset Management Strategy
 - Tenant Engagement Strategy

2.2 Performance and Assurance

- Review and provide assurance on:
 - Compliance with Housing Regulatory Standards
 - Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)
 - Complaints handling performance
 - Building safety and regulatory compliance
 - Delivery of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

2.3 Tenant Voice and Engagement

- Ensure:
 - Tenant feedback is effectively captured and acted upon
 - Diverse tenant voices are represented
 - Co-design principles are embedded in service delivery

2.4 Service Delivery Oversight (Advisory)

- Consider performance relating to:

- Repairs and maintenance
- Neighbourhood management
- Housing allocations and lettings
- Homelessness prevention

2.5 Pre-decision Input

- Provide early advice on key housing policies prior to Cabinet consideration

3. Membership

Membership of the Board will be as follows:

3.1 Core voting members:

- 5 Elected Members (to include 2 opposition members to sit on the Board)
- Cabinet member for Housing to Chair the Board – this would ensure that the Board would be assured that there is a clear connection between it and Cabinet.
- 4 Tenant members appointed from the wider tenant body (not more than one of which can be a leaseholder)
- 2 Independent Members – one of who should bring skills and experience related to housing, tenancy management and customer service and the other to bring skills and experience related to asset management, repairs and building safety.
- Officers attending on an ex officio basis (Director of Housing Operations, any Council officer as the HAB may require.)

Tenant and independent members will be recruited through an open and transparent process.

For tenant members, the positions will be advertised to the wider tenant body and any tenant who does not have an active Notice Seeking Possession, can apply for the role. Applications will be shortlisted and interviewed based on the tenant member role profile.

For independent members, the positions will be advertised on Greater Jobs and other platforms to attract suitable candidates. Applicants will be shortlisted and interviewed based on the tenant member role profile.

3.2 Co-opted Members

The Board may invite additional participants in a **non-voting advisory capacity** for specific items.

Substitutes are permitted for elected members in line with Council procedures.

3.3 Chairing Arrangements

- The Cabinet Member for Housing will chair the Board
- In their absence, a Chair will be elected from elected members present

4. Meetings

4.1 The Housing Advisory Board will meet every 2 months.

4.2 The date and timings of the meetings will be fixed in advance by the Council, as part of the agreed schedule of meetings.

4.3 Additional meetings may be convened at the request of the Chair, and with the agreement of the Council Leader.

4.4 The meeting will be Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing. In the absence of the Chair - A replacement Chair will be elected for the duration of the meeting from the Core Membership.

4.5 A quorum of three will apply for meetings of the Housing Advisory Board including at least one elected member and one other member.

4.6 Members will adhere to the agreed principles of the Council's Code of Conduct.

4.7 Declarations of Interest – Any personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interests held by members should be declared in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct on any item of business at a meeting, either before it is discussed or as soon as it becomes apparent. Interests which appear in the Council Register of Interests should still be declared at meetings, where appropriate.

4.8 Decisions are to be taken by consensus. Where it is not possible to reach consensus, a decision will be reached by a simple majority of those present at the meeting. Where there are equal votes the Chair of the meeting will have the casting vote, there will be no restriction on how the Chair chooses to exercise his/her casting vote.

4.9 The Director of Housing Operations will act as the lead officer.

4.10 Workload – Work Programme to be determined annually by the Board.

4.11 The agenda and supporting papers shall be in a standard format and circulated at least five clear working days in advance of meetings.

4.12 The work of the HAB will be shared with all Councillors and, tenant organisations and placed on the Council's web site, minutes of the meetings will be shared with all members.

4.13 Meetings will be clerked by a representative of Democratic Services.

4.14 The Board may decide to establish short term task and finish groups to undertake specific pieces of work.

4.15 Members of the Board will be required to attend training to assist in undertaking the role as an advisory Board member.

5.1 Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually to ensure continued effectiveness.

February 2024
These terms and reference will be reviewed annually
Revised May 2025 then on May 2026