

# ROCHDALE BOROUGHWIDE HOUSING

## REPRESENTATIVE BODY MEETING

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING 25<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022



**MEMBERS PRESENT:** P Worthington (Employee Representative [Chair]), A Butterworth (Tenant Representative), A Johnson (Tenant Representative), J Taylor (Tenant Representative), L Brosnan (TMO Representative and Vice Chair), A Allen (Employee Representative), J Begum (Employee Representative), J Coutts (Employee Representative), S Edwards (Employee Representative), B Nicholson (Employee Representative), J Wenn (Employee Representative), I Wharton (Tenant Representative), T Mortenson (Tenant Representative), B Wood (Tenant Representative), F Altham (Tenant Representative), H Mirza (Tenant Representative)

**EMPLOYEES:** G Swarbrick (Chief Executive), N Khan (Director of Customer and Communities), J Goodall (Governance Manager), S Wigley (Head of Legal and Compliance [Secretary]), H Stockham (Head of Service Change (Housing)) P Blayney (HomeChoice Manager) S Chambers (HomeChoice Coordinator) Z Downham (Transformation Project Manager) S Jones (Governance Coordinator [Minutes])

**ALSO PRESENT:** P Joyce (Non-Executive Director)

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from A Tumilty (Board Chair), A Gorczyca (Tenant Representative) and D Ferguson (Tenant Representative)

**ABSENT:** D Chadwick (Tenant Representative), C Byram-Leech (Tenant Representative), M Mackenzie (Tenant Representative), M Ansari (Tenant Representative) and D Anderson (Tenant Representative) were absent from the meeting and no apologies were received.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** J Taylor, G Swarbrick, N Khan and P Joyce declared an interest in item 2.6

*P Worthington, Chair convened the meeting at 6.00pm*

REF	ITEM/DISCUSSION
Jan-1	<b>TASK &amp; FINISH GROUP MINUTES</b>
Jan-1.1	P Worthington gave a summary of where the formation of the Delegated Panel has come from.
Jan-1.2	Representatives noted the minutes from the Forward Planning, Delegation and MGEF Task and Finish Group from 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2021, 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2021 and 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2021.
	No comments or questions were submitted in advance of the meeting.

### ITEMS FOR DECISION

*[S Chambers, P Blayney, H Stockham and Z Downham joined the meeting]*

## **Jan-2.1 LETTINGS POLICY**

- Jan-2.1.1 N Khan provided some background on the development of the lettings policy. The Homelessness and Homechoice contracts RBH managed on behalf of Rochdale Borough Council (RBC) have been part of wider review of services by RBC. The RBH Board and Representative Body have previously agreed to the early termination of both contracts. A lot of work has been taking place to transfer the service back and it is all on track to complete on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. As a result of the contracts being terminated, RBH need an allocations policy as we currently use the RBC policy to allocate most of our homes. 80% of homes would continue to be allocated from the Councils housing register in line with the Stock Transfer Agreement but we require our own policy to allocate the other 20% of homes. Various sessions have taken place with the Representative Body to gain a steer on what this policy should look like. The purpose of tonight is to look at the feedback gathered over these sessions as well as share feedback from other groups. The policy is due to go to the Policy Approval Board in mid-February to ensure it is in place for 1<sup>st</sup> April.
- Jan-2.1.2 S Chambers shared a presentation with Representatives.
- Jan-2.1.3 J Wenn suggested having a document that accompanies the policy that was in more customer friendly language, possibly laid out in bullet points and remove any acronyms. P Worthington suggested a short video to explain the main points.
- Jan-2.1.4 J Coutts voiced concern about the lowering of the age for ILS Schemes and queried whether it was possible for scheme managers to have more of a say in the allocations process as they have to deal with any issues that arise. S Chambers responded that she has already discussed this with them and they are keen to get involved in pre-tenancy work and like the idea of having a panel to make the decision as it gives a balanced view. H Stockham added younger people won't necessarily want to live in an Independent Living Scheme.
- Jan-2.1.5 H Mirza questioned if pre-approvals for applications can be done online. S Chambers advised that as part of the policy development there is a lot of work ongoing with digitalisation, there will be an automated part of the system that will check if people meet the criteria as well as working document which will explain how we give the allocations and come to the decision of making the offer.
- Jan-2.1.6 T Mortenson queried how the banding system will work as it is currently not very clear to tenants. S Chambers responded that RBC have the statutory duty to provide homelessness and housing register services. There will be an 80/20 split in respect of nominations with the 20% being allocated under the RBH policy to create more movement and flexibility. T Mortenson went on to ask about under occupancy and how it works. S Chambers clarified if you apply and if you can afford a property you can bid on up to 1 bed extra if you have working extra priority only, we want to level it out and if it is affordable you should be able to have it. There is massive housing demand and there will always be someone in need for that property. N Khan added we want to give people the respect to make their own decision, under occupation allows for a more stable community and also allows people to grow into a home.

Jan-2.1.7 B Nicholson asked if the vision is to have a pre-application process where if someone doesn't meet the criteria it will automatically sign post elsewhere. P Blayney confirmed it will stop the process if someone isn't eligible, it won't let a customer go all the way through the application.

Jan-2.1.8 S Edwards stated in terms of the Representative Body we have a responsibility to communicate out to our members and feeding back the outcomes of this kind of topic is something we would like to do. It looks as though you have taken a mutual approach and have fitted most of the values in however can you provide more information on who you have consulted with such as numbers and reason for consulting as well as how it has influenced the policy.

**Action:** Provide Representatives with further information on who has been consulted on the lettings policy as well as how the consultation has influenced the policy **Lead:** S Chambers **Due Date:** 28/02/22

**Resolution: Representatives commented on the proposed lettings policy.**

*[S Chambers, P Blayney, H Stockham and Z Downham left the meeting]*

## **Jan-2.2 DELEGATED PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Jan-2.2.1 J Goodall presented the report requesting approval of the Terms of Reference for the Delegated Panel.

**Resolution: Representatives approved the Delegated Panel Terms of Reference.**

## **Jan-2.3 APPOINTMENTS TO THE DELEGATED PANEL**

Jan-2.3.1 J Goodall presented the report highlighting in relation to the new Rules which were approved at the AMM in September 2021, the Representative Body will need to appoint annually to the Delegated Panel. The Delegated Panel comprises of a maximum of nine Representatives with the majority being Tenant Representatives and at least three Employee Representatives. The Chair of the Representative Body must be on the Delegated Panel and in this instance will count towards Employee Representative numbers.

Jan-2.3.2 J Goodall informed Representatives the following tenants have expressed an interest: T Mortenson, D Anderson, M Ansari, L Brosnan and F Altham and the following employees have expressed an interest: J Begum, S Edwards, J Wenn, J Coutts. To meet the criteria, we have one too many employees.

Jan-2.3.3 J Begum stated she would be happy to stand down at this time. P Worthington commented she will get first refusal when reviewing the Panel membership in September 2022.

Jan-2.3.4 Representatives approved the appointment of the Tenant and Employee Representatives to the Delegated Panel.

Jan-2.3.5 S Edwards queried where the breakdown comes from. P Worthington clarified it is a reflection of the main Representative Body. S Edwards voiced he would prefer it to be an equal split. F Altham added we are trying to break down the barriers between us so it shouldn't matter if we are Employee or Tenant Representatives.

P Worthington informed Representatives that the current Rules prevent the split being equal. J Goodall added we can add this to the list for consideration at the next Rules review.

**Resolution: Representatives appointed P Worthington, T Mortenson, D Anderson, M Ansari, L Brosnan, F Altham, S Edwards, J Wenn and J Coutts to the Delegated Panel.**

*Items 2.4 (Forward Plan) and 2.5 (SPSS) were taken together*

**Jan-2.4 /  
Jan-2.5 FORWARD PLAN & SPSS**

Jan-2.4/5.1 J Goodall presented the report explaining the Task and Finish Group looked at what items should go to the Representative Body and what should go to the Delegated Panel to enable the Representative Body to devote enough time at meetings to have the meaningful discussions they want to have. At the last meeting the Representative Body ratifying decisions was considered however after further exploring this option it is evident that it wouldn't work in practice or be the most effective route for approval especially for time sensitive matters. The Rules allow the Delegated Panel to exercise all powers of the Representative Body therefore the Delegated Panel can be an approving body. To ensure the Representative Body as a whole is still involved, the meeting pack for the Delegated Panel would be available to all Representative with the option to provide comments so that your views can still be aired. Alongside this there would be a reporting in summary at the subsequent Representative Body meeting.

Jan-2.4/5.2 J Goodall informed Representative a proposed list of topics was provided in the report and the proposal is to split the meetings so that Representative Body would formally meet quarterly with an additional meeting in October as an introduction for new Representatives and the Delegated Panel would also meet quarterly in-between.

Jan-2.4/5.3 It was noted that in the Communications Strategy is not down to go to the Representative Body. J Goodall explained the Task and Finish Group proposed it is delegated back to the Board. S Edwards asked for clarification around the thinking and commented he feels the Communications Strategy is an important document and as we have a Communications and Engagement Working Group should it not stay with the Representative Body. P Worthington stated the Strategies the Representative Body would be looking at in depth include the Membership Strategy and the Engagement Strategy both of which talk about communications. It doesn't mean that Representatives won't be involved in the development of the Communications Strategy it would just be the monitoring and approval.

Jan-2.4/5.4 G Swarbrick added communications is something to think about a little bit further, there was a discussion at Board last week and it was clear some Board members want more involvement in shaping proactive positive communications and one suggestion was setting up a working group including both Board and Representative Body members. P Joyce commented the Board wouldn't do anything in isolation it is an inclusive process.

Jan-2.4/5.5 J Goodall explained there was a clear view that Representatives want to be involved in the development of core strategies, when wider consultation events are taking place Representatives will be invited to attend, that way it doesn't take up time on the agenda but the involvement is still there.

Jan-2.4/5.6 B Nicholson suggested at looking at more ways to collaborate such as forums and discussion groups rather than just the option to send an email as this would generate ongoing discussion and allow for contribution where needed. J Goodall advised that A Holden was working on engagement options for strategy and policy development.

Jan-2.4/5.7 It was questioned if a review of the Delegated Panel is scheduled to see how things are going. J Goodall commented as part of the Rules the Representative Body will appoint annually to the Delegated Panel following the AMM so this may be a good time to carry out a review.

**Action:** Add 'Review of Delegated Panel' to the Representative Body forward plan for July/August 2022 **Lead:** J Goodall **Due Date:** 04/02/22

Jan-2.4/5.8 S Edwards suggested putting something together to inform the Membership of our plans going forward.

**Action:** Pick up with Karl Astbury on putting something together to cascade to Members informing them of Representative Bodies plans going forward. **Lead:** G Swarbrick **Due Date:** 28/02/22

**Resolution:** Representatives approved the forward plans and list of items delegated to the Delegated Panel.

**Resolution:** Representatives approved the amended Strategy and Policy 3 year schedule and approved the list of proposed strategies and policies which the Representative Body would like to be involved in at the development stage.

*[J Taylor, N Khan, G Swarbrick and P Joyce left the meeting]*

Jan-2.6 **CONFIDENTIAL - PANEL TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGED BREACH OF CONDUCT**

*Redacted - provides information relating to the financial or business affairs of RBH or a particular individual*

*The Chair closed the meeting at 19:50*

Signed..........(Representative Body Chair) As a true and correct record of the Representative Body conference meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022