

Annual Report to Members

2025/26





Welcome from Andrew

A message from the Chair, Andrew Johnson

Welcome to our 2026 Annual Report to Members. As a mutual organisation, RBH is strongest when members have a genuine voice in the decisions we make and the services we provide. Mutuality is not only part of who we are; it is something we continue to strengthen through our governance, our scrutiny work and the opportunities we create for members to shape services and contribute to their communities.

Over the past year, the Representative Body and members involved in scrutiny have demonstrated real commitment in holding RBH to account and helping to shape improvements. Through scrutiny activity, oversight of the Membership Strategy and involvement in key areas of policy and performance, member insight has continued to influence how we listen and how we improve. We are grateful for that contribution and look forward to widening opportunities for more members to get involved, further strengthening scrutiny and the role of membership across RBH.

This year has also marked important progress in delivering the first year of our Membership Strategy. Our focus has been on getting the fundamentals right—improving how we support members to understand their role within a mutual, strengthening the membership offer and ensuring the right information, support and resources are in place. As we move through the second year of the Strategy, this focus is now expanding to enable greater involvement, with more opportunities for members to take part in areas such as scrutiny and to ensure their contribution has a clear and visible impact.

We also know that many people continue to face real pressures in their daily lives. In that context, RBH remains focused on working across teams to provide support, guidance and clear signposting, while continuing to improve services and maintain the quality homes and neighbourhoods that residents rightly expect and deserve.

Looking ahead, we encourage all members to make the most of the opportunities available, whether through scrutiny, engagement activities or local initiatives. Your involvement plays an important role in shaping services, strengthening our mutual model and supporting thriving communities across Rochdale.

Finally, I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to all Representative Body members, both past and present, for their ongoing commitment and contribution over the past year. I would also like to recognise the officers who have supported the delivery of scrutiny activity and the Membership Strategy, ensuring that this work continues to develop and deliver meaningful outcomes. My thanks extend to Claire Dalton for her continued support and guidance in her role as Representative Body Advisor, and to all members who have provided valuable feedback, helping to strengthen scrutiny, shape membership activity and support the continued development of RBH.

Get involved

At RBH, there are lots of ways for customers and colleagues to get involved and help shape the services that matter to them. There's something to suit everyone.

You can:

- Become a member of the Representative Body, made up of customers and colleagues.
- Join a group or forum, such as the Complaints Panel or Scrutiny Panel.
- Attend one-off workshops or sessions, including Customer Voice Forums or policy reviews.
- Take part in surveys or give feedback digitally, whether online, by phone, or through social media.
- Share your views at events and community drop-ins held across the borough.

Getting involved gives you a chance to share what's working and what needs to change. It's a key part of how RBH meets the new regulatory standard for transparency, influence and accountability – making sure customers are at the centre of decisions.

What customers get from it

- A chance to make a difference in their community
- Opportunities to meet other customers and share experiences
- Learn new skills and build confidence
- Access to training and support
- A greater understanding of how housing services work Many customers say getting involved has helped them feel more connected and confident – and even led to new work or volunteering opportunities.

Hearing directly from customers means we can:

- Deliver services that reflect what matters most to people
- Spot problems early and find better ways of working
- Build trust and improve accountability
- Work in partnership with communities, not just for them

Customer involvement helps us stay grounded in real experiences and continually improve how things are done. It also means decisions are more informed, fair and effective.

Membership in numbers



The Representative Body
met **eight times** in 2024-25.

As at 31 March 2026, we have
4,183 tenant members
and **318 employee members.**

30.1%
of all
tenants are
members

55.2%
of all
employees are
members



Our Membership Strategy

A Membership Strategy has been developed alongside the new three-year Corporate Strategy, reflecting our commitment to making a positive impact in all that we do.

At the heart of this is our mutual model, which provides a strong foundation for ensuring that the voices of customers and colleagues are heard clearly and consistently across the organisation.

Our Membership Vision Statement:

“To create an engaged, inclusive and values-driven Membership that drives positive change. We will redefine the Member experience ensuring a lasting impact for customers, colleagues and our communities.”

This vision is underpinned by three key aims, which support the long term ambition of a thriving Society where Membership is central to our governance framework:

- **Aim 1: Develop the Membership offer to provide clarity on the benefits**
- **Aim 2: Ensure all Customers and Colleagues understand what mutuality means**
- **Aim 3: Make it easier for Members to have their say and communicate the outcomes of their contribution.**



Our Membership Strategy (continued)

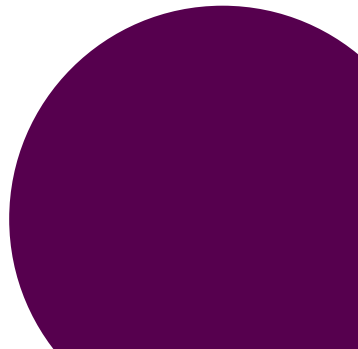
The Strategy sets out clear milestones over a three-year period, with a focus on:

- growing and retaining Membership
- increasing Member engagement and participation
- strengthening the Membership offer and benefits
- building a stronger sense of community and co-ownership
- improving two-way feedback and Member influence
- enhancing communication through digital innovation
- raising awareness and recognition of Membership across our communities.

The development and delivery of the Strategy is led by the Representative Body. To support this, a Task and Finish Group has worked alongside the Representative Body to shape the Year One action plan, ensuring that priorities are informed by Member insights and focused on what matters most to our Membership. This approach continues to support the ongoing development and refinement of the Strategy.

The Representative Body maintains oversight of the Strategy, regularly reviewing progress and ensuring that delivery remains aligned with Member feedback and organisational priorities.

This annual report sets out how we have engaged with Members and the progress made in delivering the Membership Strategy over the past year.



Membership Strategy - year one progress

This year saw the Representative Body deliver the Year One actions from the Membership Strategy. Key actions are summarised below, alongside the progress made in strengthening engagement, improving understanding of mutuality, and increasing opportunities for Members to influence our services.

Aim 1 – Develop the Membership offer

- Developed a Membership Communications Plan to improve how we engage with Members.
- Created a new Welcome Pack, including a leaflet, Chair's letter and supporting materials.
- Promoted Membership across events and engagement activities. While this has not yet resulted in the expected increase in membership numbers, this has been identified as a key focus for Year Two, with further work planned to strengthen targeted engagement and increase participation.
- Embedded the Membership email across communications, with processes in place to log and respond to feedback.
- Expanded scrutiny involvement, with wider participation beyond the Representative Body.

Aim 2 – Increase understanding of mutuality

- Developed a one-page mutuality explainer to clearly communicate what Membership means.
- Embedded Membership within colleague inductions, strengthening onboarding processes.
- Strengthened Membership messaging through wider communications, including newsletters
- Used customer census feedback to better understand Member views and priorities.
- Identified the need to increase awareness across all engagement activity and reach underrepresented groups.

Aim 3 – Make it easier for Members to have their say

- Used customer feedback, including TSMs and census data, to inform scrutiny and decision-making
- Delivered a Membership Annual Report at the Annual Members' Meeting, sharing progress and impact.
- Increased Representative Body presence at engagement forums and events.
- Completed Member journey mapping to identify key opportunities to promote Membership.
- Began engaging less active Members, with further work planned for Year Two.

Overall progress

Strong foundations have been established in Year One, including new materials, improved communications, and better insight into Member views. These insights have informed the next phase of delivery, which will focus on increasing membership and participation through targeted recruitment, improved use of data and insight, and expanding opportunities for Members to get involved and influence services.



Membership Strategy: our Year Two Action Plan

As we move into Year Two of the Membership Strategy, the Representative Body has taken a more targeted and insight led approach to refining the Action Plan.

On 1 June 2026, the Representative Body held a dedicated Membership workshop to review progress from Year One, reflect on what has worked well, and identify areas where further development is required. This session enabled members to shape priorities for the year ahead, ensuring the Strategy continues to reflect member experience and feedback.

This was further supported by a Task and Finish Group, which worked to develop these priorities into a structured and deliverable Action Plan. The updated plan focuses on increasing participation, strengthening understanding of mutuality, and ensuring that members can clearly see the impact of their involvement.

The emerging Year Two Action Plan builds on this approach, with a stronger focus on increasing membership and participation. Areas of focus include strengthening targeted recruitment, improving how membership is promoted at key customer touchpoints, widening participation in scrutiny activity, and addressing barriers to engagement using data and insight.

There is also a continued emphasis on improving communication, ensuring Members can clearly see how their feedback influences decision-making and service improvement. The Action Plan will continue to be refined and is subject to formal approval by the Representative Body.



Your Representatives leading on the scrutiny process

The Representative Body carries out customer led scrutiny to review key services and ensure that customer voice is central to how services are delivered and improved.

Each review draws on evidence from surveys, workshops and validation sessions involving both customers and colleagues, helping to identify priorities for change and drive meaningful improvements.

How to get involved in Scrutiny

There are several ways Members can take part in scrutiny and help shape services:

- Join the Representative Body – elected members lead scrutiny reviews and represent customer views
- Take part in scrutiny projects – contributing to reviews of key services and helping identify improvements
- Share feedback and experiences – helping highlight areas where services can be strengthened
- Engage with consultations and service reviews – ensuring customer voices are reflected in decision-making

Getting involved in scrutiny gives Members the opportunity to influence how services are delivered, contribute to improvements, and help hold the organisation to account.

You can visit www.rbh.org.uk/scrutiny to find out more or get in touch using the contact details on the back page.





Scrutiny review 1: allocations

The first review of the year centred around allocations and lettings, particularly the application process. The aim was to evaluate the fairness, transparency and effectiveness of the Lettings Application Process.

What customers told us:

Customer feedback highlighted a generally positive experience, with many customers satisfied with the support received and the overall process. However, a number of common themes were identified:

- Some customers experienced long waiting times and bid on multiple properties over extended periods.
- Customers with additional needs highlighted challenges in finding suitable accommodation and navigating the process.
- There were requests for more face-to-face contact rather than relying solely on digital communication.
- Some customers required additional support with digital processes, including bidding for properties.
- Customers also valued positive experiences where support was available, and the process was explained clearly.

Key Recommendations:

- Improve transparency and communication, including clearer guidance on banding and decisions.

- Increase accessibility, including more face-to-face support and digital inclusion.
- Strengthen fairness through better monitoring of outcomes and diversity.
- Improve processes, including how our systems integrate with the Council
- Enhance support for vulnerable customers before and after allocation.

Actions Taken:

- Improved communication with applicants, including the use of preferred contact methods.
- Introduction of a glossary within the Lettings Policy to improve accessibility.
- Development of a Direct Offer process to strengthen transparency.
- Establishment of a permanent lettings administration function to improve efficiency.
- Strengthened tenancy sustainment support including after allocation
- Improved communication around banding and allocation decisions.
- Ongoing work with Rochdale Council to improve systems, streamline processes and strengthen monitoring of outcomes.
- Promotion of digital inclusion and outreach activity to improve access.



Scrutiny review 2: repairs communication

The second review of the year focused on how effectively RBH communicates with customers during the repairs journey, particularly at the follow-up stage.

What customers told us:

Customers highlighted the importance of clear and consistent communication, including:

- Better updates when repairs are delayed or require follow-on work.
- Clearer explanations about repairs and responsibilities.
- More reliable appointments and improved follow-up after completion
- Some customers also valued existing good practice, such as appointment reminders and being informed in advance of visits.

Key Recommendations:

- Improve clarity of communication from operatives and at first contact.
- Introduce more proactive, consistent updates throughout the repairs process.
- Improve communication across text messages, letters and the customer portal.
- Strengthen appointment management and follow-up processes.
- Improve accessibility and consistency of communication, including for vulnerable customers.

Actions Taken:

- Operative training is being delivered to improve clear, customer-friendly communication, with refresher training planned.
- A customer communication protocol is being developed to standardise updates.
- Monthly checks are being introduced to monitor communication standards.
- Improvements to text messages, letters and portal information are planned and in development.
- Repairs scripting and customer information are being updated to better set expectations.
- Work is underway to improve consistency across systems and communication channels.
- Accessibility and customer communication needs are being considered as part of system and process improvements.



Scrutiny review 3: subcontractors

The third review focused on how RBH manages and monitors repairs subcontractors. A “Game of Homes” approach was used, bringing together customers and colleagues to co-design solutions.

Key Recommendations:

- Improve how issues are managed when sub-contractor work goes wrong
- Strengthen communication and planning before work begins
- Refine post-inspection processes to ensure quality and consistency

What customers told us:

Customers want reassurance that subcontractor work is well managed, clearly communicated, and completed to a high standard.

Actions Taken:

This was the final review of the year, and we’ve now started to implement the action plan. This includes:

- new performance measures about the time taken for sub-contracted work to be completed, and better information for customers about how much time work is likely to take
- training and support for new sub-contractors so that they are fully aware of the standards and behaviour we expect
- a new process for inspecting work that has been completed, and addressing any issues that are noticed in these inspections
- a new customer engagement panel to make sure we listen to the views of our customers about the work that has taken place and make further improvements

Scrutiny: views from customers and colleagues

Kirsty Wild, Interim Head of Independence and Well-Being, involved in the Allocations Scrutiny Project:

When I heard the word 'scrutiny', my thoughts immediately went to the negative, but I couldn't be more wrong so I wanted to share a really positive experience from the recent Representative Body scrutiny work. Scrutiny projects give Rep Body members the opportunity to review our services in detail, using customer feedback and performance insights to identify improvements. This year, one of the focus areas has been Allocations.

I took part in a panel session looking at our processes and how we view our customer journey as well as how we work with Rochdale Council, and it proved to be a really valuable exercise. The questions were thoughtful and helped challenge our thinking, giving us a fresh perspective on how our processes work in practice and how they're experienced by customers. It was surprising how aligned their thoughts were with ours. We accepted all of the recommendations and have already implemented most of them.

During this process, I also got the opportunity to attend the Rep Body meetings and work with one of the Rep Body members directly, something which I haven't done before. It gave great insight, but it also gave a sense of what mutuality really feels like. Overall, it's been a constructive and positive process that's helped us refocus and improve our approach. I am grateful for the opportunity and would welcome the chance to take part in any future reviews.

Lynne Brosnan, Customer Member – Panel Member, Repairs Communication Scrutiny:

I chose to get involved in scrutiny because I believe tenants should have a voice in reviewing and improving the services they receive. Before taking part, I expected scrutiny would involve reviewing services, making recommendations and receiving feedback on the outcome.

My experience has been both interesting and rewarding. One of the highlights was being able to witness services firsthand through shadowing opportunities, including spending time with the Planning Team. This gave me a much better understanding of the challenges involved in managing repairs, particularly where access to properties can be difficult. It also provided valuable insight into the work involved in arranging appointments and addressing access issues.

Throughout the process, I felt my views and feedback were listened to, and I enjoyed working alongside Representative Body members and RBH colleagues. The experience made me feel more involved as a customer and gave me confidence that customers can help shape improvements. I believe scrutiny can make a real difference. During the review, I raised a number of points around repairs access issues and the importance of keeping customers informed, for example through newsletters explaining the impact of non-access on resources and service delivery. Recommendations such as these can help improve understanding and support better outcomes for customers.

For me, one of the most important aspects of scrutiny is receiving feedback on what happens next. Knowing how recommendations are considered and responded to helps customers feel that their contribution has been heard and valued.



Feeding back

What your Representatives have been up to on your behalf this year



Received tailored training and development to support effective scrutiny, understanding of performance information and decision-making



Approved the Membership Strategy Action Plan for 2025/26 and monitored delivery of the Strategy



Delivered three scrutiny reviews and agreed priorities for next year: planned maintenance, ASB, and rent



Held a dedicated membership workshop, exploring ways to increase membership, improve engagement and strengthen the membership offer



Approved the procedures and timetable for the 2026 Representative Body elections



Received a presentation on RBH's brand values and identity, including plans to improve consistency and accessibility



Received a six-month update on the Corporate Strategy including delivery progress and areas for improvement



Received a finance update, including oversight of financial performance



Received a complaints update, including performance against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code



Reviewed strategic risks and horizon scanning updates, including oversight of key risks



Approved the Annual Report to Customers, including Member feedback and assurance on performance information



Reviewed key performance indicators, including oversight of performance and assurance on areas of underperformance

Representative Body

The year ahead

As we look ahead to the coming year, we do so with a renewed sense of purpose and energy, reflecting our ongoing commitment to making a positive and lasting difference for our Members, customers, colleagues and the wider communities we serve across Rochdale.

The Representative Body remains focused on driving forward the objectives outlined in the Membership Strategy. We are committed to strengthening engagement, amplifying Member voices, and fostering a culture of inclusivity and transparency across all of our work. We will actively monitor delivery of the three-year Membership Strategy to ensure that customers are empowered, their voices are heard across the organisation, and they play an active role in shaping the services they receive.

We will also continue to ensure that our Members feel listened to, developing opportunities for us to work together and deliver positive outcomes for the people of the Borough of Rochdale.

Equally, we remain committed to fulfilling our scrutiny role with diligence and integrity—ensuring that services continue to improve and evolve in response to the needs and expectations of both our customers and colleagues. Through collaboration, innovation and accountability, we will continue to drive improvement and champion positive change where it matters most.

The Representative Body held a scrutiny workshop on 8 April 2026, where they considered a series of in-depth sessions from across the business, including performance data, customer communications, contact centre, property services and neighbourhoods.

The Representative Body agreed that its scrutiny areas for 2026–27 will be:

- Investment Programme (planned maintenance)
- Anti-Social Behaviour (complex/high-risk)
- Income Management (rent collection)

As part of this, Members will continue to have opportunities to get involved in scrutiny activity throughout the year. We look forward to your involvement in helping shape services and deliver positive change.



Customer Representatives



Andrew Johnson
Representative Body Chair



Rob Dyson
Representative Body Deputy Chair



Samantha Scotson



Jose Castanheira



Atif Hussain



Richard Rudd



Andrew Butterworth



Lord Nsala



Mark Slater



Olufemi Shangobi



Dylan Williams



Shakil Ahmed

Council-appointed Representatives

Colleague Representatives



Davina Unsworth



Jamie Kelly



Rachael Ray



Sam Purdy



**Get in touch
with your
Representatives**

Email **rep.body@rbh.org.uk**,
call Freephone **0800 027 7769**
and ask for the Governance
Team, or visit **www.rbh.org.uk**.

Thank you to the Representatives who have left the Representative Body over the past year (between September 2025 and September 2026):

Customer Representatives: Andrew Brown, Bernard Cass, Harold Hull, Antony Mallinson, Jason Reilly

Colleague Representatives: Piotr Sipowicz, Claire Fouracre, Rebecca Burke, James Coutts, John McDermott

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing Limited is a charitable community benefit society. FCA register number 31452 R.
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