

ROCHDALE BOROUGHWIDE HOUSING

REPRESENTATIVE BODY MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING 29TH MARCH 2022



MEMBERS PRESENT: P Worthington (Employee Representative [Chair]), A Butterworth (Tenant Representative), A Johnson (Tenant Representative), L Brosnan (TMO Representative and Vice Chair), J Begum (Employee Representative), S Edwards (Employee Representative), B Nicholson (Employee Representative), F Altham (Tenant Representative), M Ansari (Tenant Representative), D Chadwick (Tenant Representative), T Mortenson (Tenant Representative), H Mirza (Tenant Representative), D Anderson (Tenant Representative)

EMPLOYEES: G Swarbrick (Chief Executive), N Khan (Director of Customer and Community [part]), A Holden (Customer Engagement Lead [part]), P Heron (Head of Customer Experience [part]), S Wigley (Head of Legal and Compliance [Secretary]), J Goodall (Governance Manager), S Jones (Governance Coordinator [Minutes])

ALSO PRESENT: P Joyce (Non-Executive Director)

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from A Tumilty (Board Chair), D Ferguson (Tenant Representative), J Wenn (Employee Representative), A Allen (Employee Representative), J Coutts (Employee Representative) and J Taylor (Tenant Representative)

ABSENT: B Wood (Tenant Representative), C Byram-Leech (Tenant Representative), M Mackenzie (Tenant Representative), and A Gorczyca (Tenant Representative) were absent from the meeting and no apologies were received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: G Swarbrick and P Joyce declared an interest in item 9.1 and would leave for the discussion element of this item.

P Worthington, Chair convened the meeting at 6.10pm

G Swarbrick informed Representatives of sad news of the passing of a former Representative Body member, David Fenwick-Finn.

REF	ITEM/DISCUSSION
Mar-1	PREVIOUS MINUTES AND POINTS
Mar-1.1	Representative Body meetings 22 nd November 2021, 1 st December 2021, 25 th January 2022 and 9 th February 2022. No comments or questions were submitted in advance of the meeting. Resolution: The Representative Body approved the meeting minutes from 22nd November 2021, 1st December 2021, 25th January 2022 and 9th February 2022 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Mar-1.2 The Representative Body Action Tracker was reviewed. S Wigley informed Representatives all actions were either complete or on track.

Mar-1.3 S Edwards asked if the councillor role profile is referring to a Councillor or if it is for a Council Representative. J Goodall confirmed it is referring to the nominated Representative from the Council. It was agreed the action needs rewording to make this clear.

Action: Reword the comment in action SJ/34aa/21121 to state 'Council Nominated Representative' as opposed to 'Councillor Role Profile' **Lead:** S Jones **Due Date:** 30/03/22

Resolution: The Representative Body noted the progress made on the action tracker.

Mar-2 REPORTING IN

Mar-2.1 P Worthington summarised the reporting in. No comments or questions were submitted in advance of the meeting and no further discussion was held.

Mar-3 Corporate Strategy Deep Dive

Mar-3.1 N Khan presented the Improving Together (Core Services) highlight report informing Representatives that in 48 hours the Homelessness service and Homechoice will transfer back to Rochdale Borough Council, we have 40+ employees transferring to the Council. As a result, we have developed our own Allocations Policy which will go live in July, until then we will continue to use the Council Allocations Policy.

Mar-3.2 D Chadwick asked if the contract is being given back to the Council due to all the issues surrounding College Bank. N Khan assured Representatives it is completely unrelated. The Council completed a review of all services and found the same people were accessing different services from RBC and also Homelessness and Homechoice services and that this was inefficient and ineffective. By having everything under RBC, services would be delivered in a more joined up way.

Mar-3.3 S Edwards commented the report refers to reducing headcount in terms of efficiency savings in the Repairs Service and this sounds like redundancy. N Khan confirmed there are less posts but there have been no compulsory redundancies.

Mar-3.4 N Khan informed Representatives the Deep Dive will be focusing on Together with Tenants. Together with Tenants has been around for nearly 3 years, A Johnson worked with us in the first year developing the Together with Tenants commitments. As we have come out of lockdown and started to engage with our customers more, we felt it was the right time to review and seek views on how we move forward over the next few years.

Mar-3.5 A Holden gave a presentation on Together with Tenants which explained where it came from, how and why it was developed, how RBH became early adopters and the ongoing work of the steering group.

- Mar-3.6 N Khan asked Representatives for their views on how we move forward.
- Mar-3.7 A Johnson commented it was an excellent summary in terms of Together with Tenants both past and present. Tenants need to be at the heart of the decision-making process with their housing providers, our values reflect that. We need a sustained push towards tenants being at the heart of everything. He went on to suggest we could look at the relationship between this idea and membership, we are a member owned mutual and how can we make membership reflect the ethos that A Holden had explained. L Brosnan added the ethos of RBH is about Together with Tenants and has been from day one. We need to be better at telling people what the group is about and develop beyond the steering group.
- Mar-3.8 P Heron added that S Edwards will be completing a wider piece of work on membership which the Engagement Team would be looking to work closely with.
- Mar-3.9 S Edwards commented the key is in the Engagement Strategy delivery plan and linking it back to Together with Tenants commitments.
- Mar-3.10 J Begum questioned if it is too early to move towards being an engagement group. A Holden responded it is quite timely with what we are doing with the Engagement Strategy, we are keen to have those conversations and develop that group with the Together with Tenants Steering Group.
- Mar-3.11 L Brosnan commented the Membership and Communications Working Group is currently looking at the Communications Plan and how we can reach those who are not online.
- Mar-3.12 T Mortenson queried if holding engagement meetings on a weekend or evening will be offered to give tenants who work the opportunity to get more involved. A Holden responded we are now looking to increase the membership on the group and we need to have the conversation more widely, there is a survey going out asking questions on how they want to communicate and what times work best, this will hopefully help guide us. J Begum added holding meetings somewhere with childcare would also enable more people to get involved.
- [A Holden and P Heron left the meeting]*

Mar-4 BOARD QUESTION TIME

- Mar-4.1 There were no questions for Board members.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

Mar-5.1 NOMINATIONS TO NOMINATION COMMITTEE

- Mar-5.1.1 S Wigley presented the report commenting that recruiting our Board Members is one of the most important things for the Representative Body. We are looking for four Representatives to form the Nominations Committee along with the Chair of the Board to recruit two Non-executive Directors. G Swarbrick added Representatives who have previously been involved have found it a great development opportunity. D Chadwick shared that she has previously been on the Nominations Committee and found it extremely worthwhile and encouraged people to take up the opportunity.

- Mar-5.1.2 It was asked what level of time commitment is involved. S Wigley explained there will be a training session of approximately 1 hour taking place in May followed by a shortlisting exercise which would last between 1-2 hours then the interviews themselves would be a full day in early June. Ideally the training and shortlisting will happen on the same day and so will be around half a day in total.
- Mar-5.1.3 B Nicholson, J Begum, F Altham and A Johnson put themselves forward.
- Mar-5.1.4 S Wigley thanked them for their nominations and informed them we will get dates in diaries as soon as possible.
- Mar-5.1.5 S Edwards queried if anyone could take part in the training session to get a feel for it. S Wigley agreed this would be beneficial, an invite to the training session will be extended to all Representatives.

Resolution: The Representative Body nominated B Nicholson, J Begum, F Altham and A Johnson to form a Nominations Committee.

[N Khan left the meeting]

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Mar-6.1 EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

- Mar-6.1.1 J Goodall presented the report explaining an Effectiveness Review is carried out by all the governing bodies including the Representative Body and the results feed into an action plan which is monitored by the Mutual Governance Commission. J Goodall reminded Representatives that if they need any equipment to help fulfil their role as a Representative you can get in touch with the Governance Team who are more than happy to provide any equipment you might need.
- Mar-6.1.2 J Goodall asked Representatives to discuss areas scoring on the lower end of the scale.
- Mar-6.1.3 Discussion took place around the questions 'The Representative Body communicates with, listens to and responds to RBH members and other stakeholders effectively' which scored an average of 2.6 and 'Representatives feedback information about their activities to Members and the wider community' which scored an average of 2.5. It was agreed that the Membership and Communications Working Group and the Representative Body Review Action Plan should help to address these. P Worthington informed Representatives the Membership and Communications Working Group is currently looking at how the Representative Body can better communicate with members and other stakeholders as well as looking at having members involved in Working Groups going forward.
- Mar-6.1.4 Discussion took place around the question 'There is sufficient time allocated for debating key decisions or contentious issues and the quality of discussion is good' which scored an average of 2.6. J Goodall explained that following the Representative Body review the Delegated Panel has been introduced and forward plans have been reviewed which should hopefully improve this score. We are very conscious when undergoing the agenda planning process that there is sufficient time allocated to those items identified as being most important by the Representative Body. L Brosnan commented that it can be quite daunting to feel

confident to speak up in a big group, we are looking to explore this at the Away Day on Monday.

Mar-6.1.5 Discussion took place around the question 'The relationship between the Representative Body and the Board works effectively' which scored an average of 2.9. S Edwards commented it is a difficult question to answer and depends on peoples understanding on what is meant by the Representative Body and the Board working effectively. He felt the Representative Body review will help address this relationship.

Mar-6.1.6 P Joyce commented he feels the relationship is good but it's the flow of information between the two bodies which could be improved upon. L Brosnan agreed it is where we are lacking and commented Together with Tenants should also be picking up on this.

Mar-6.1.7 P Worthington commented there should be something transparent that enables Representatives to track the progress of items that matter to Representatives and Members that have gone to the Board for review. This should also happen the other way round. B Nicholson added should we be looking at a more informal mechanism.

Action:

1. Methodology for tracking outcomes for challenges from Representative Body to Board to be implemented. Board to review challenges and respond to Representative Body with options/solutions for review.

2. Standard agenda item on joint meetings for the Board and Representative Body to discuss the most current and/or significant issues for members.

(actions will be collated as part of the effectiveness action plan – see recommendation below)

Mar-6.1.8 Discussion took place around the question 'The distinction of the role of Non-Executive Directors versus the role of Representatives is well understood by Representatives' which scored an average of 2.6. J Goodall commented this score is understandable given the newness of some Representatives and this will be picked up at the Away Day.

Mar-6.1.9 J Goodall explained that areas that were put down to develop knowledge further will be picked up at the Mutual Governance Commission. We are looking to develop a new Development Programme for the Representative Body and are conscious that it is peoples time and don't want to take up too much of it. S Edwards added if anyone has any views on this it would be good to share these with J Goodall so it can be discussed at the Mutual Governance Commission.

Resolution: The Representative Body noted the effectiveness review summaries and discussed those areas scoring 1 strongly disagree and 2 disagree and that the following actions would form part of the Action Plan:

- 1. Methodology for tracking outcomes for challenges from Representative Body to Board to be implemented. Board to review challenges and respond to the Representative Body with options/solutions for review.**

2. Standard agenda item on joint meetings for the Board and Representative Body to discuss the most current and/or significant issues for members.

CONSIDERATION PACK

Mar-7.1 REPRESENTATIVE BODY ATTENDANCE

Mar-7.1.1 S Wigley presented the report informing Representatives that a discussion has taken place with the Chair and Vice Chair over concerns of low attendance and how it would be addressed. It was suggested that if we have still had no contact and no attendance at this meeting, we would approach with letters to see if we can prompt a response. The content of the letter would be shared with the Chair prior to it being sent out and would use softer language keeping in mind that Representatives are volunteers. P Worthington added that it would be beneficial to free up the spaces for others who are eager to get involved.

Mar-7.2 MINUTES OF WORKING GROUP / TASK & FINISH GROUP MEETINGS

Mar-7.2.1 No questions were raised in advance of the meeting.

STANDARD ITEMS

Mar-8.1 REPRESENTATIVE BODY FORUM (to raise operational issues for signposting)

Mar-8.1.1 D Chadwick raised concern over her previous property at Miller Street in Heywood still not being ready to relet despite her moving out over 10months ago.

Mar-8.1.2 L Brosnan raised concerns around repairs. Fences are only repaired if they are at the front of the property and not at the back of the property. There have been charges around wear and tear of locks.

Mar-8.1.3 S Wigley informed Representatives that these issues would be passed on to the relevant team to look into.

Mar-8.2 KEY ISSUES (matters to escalate or refer to the Mutual Governance Commission)

Mar-8.2.1

- Effectiveness review

Mar-8.3 KEY MESSAGES FOR BOARD

Mar-8.3.1 Representatives agreed that the key messages for Board should be:

- Together with Tenants discussion
- Forming of the Nominations Committee

Mar-8.4 KEY MESSAGES FOR MEMBERS

Mar-8.4.1 Representatives agreed that the key messages for Members should be:

- Together with Tenants discussion
- Communications to members and where it is up to

Mar-8.5 REPRESENTATIVE BODY AND JOINT MEETING FORWARD PLANS

Mar-8.5.1 J Goodall presented the forward plan informing it is kept under review at agenda planning meetings.

Resolution: The Representative Body noted the forward planners.

Mar-8.6 REFLECTION ON MEETING (Post meeting survey)

Mar-8.6.1 **What worked well:**

Well presented items and time allowed for discussions.

Good discussions with clear actions.

Mar-8.6.2 **What Contribution did we particularly make:**

Good contributions throughout all agenda items.

Formation of the Nominations Committee.

Mar-8.6.3 **What could we do better:**

Face to face meetings.

Work on ensuring deep dives get into the detail and allow for sufficient discussion.

Mar-8.6.4 **Report Quality:**

Good.

Mar-8.6.5 **Consideration of Values:**

Democracy and Responsibility.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

Mar-9.1 BREACH OF CONDUCT PANEL HEARING RECOMMENDATION

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

The Chair closed the meeting at 20:40



Signed.....(Representative Body Chair) As a true and correct record of the Representative Body conference meeting held on 29th March 2022