

# ROCHDALE BOROUGHWIDE HOUSING

## REPRESENTATIVE BODY MEETING

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022



**MEMBERS PRESENT:** P Worthington (Employee Representative [Chair]), A Butterworth (Tenant Representative), L Brosnan (TMO Representative and Vice Chair), A Allen (Employee Representative), S Edwards (Employee Representative), F Altham (Tenant Representative), M Ansari (Tenant Representative), D Anderson (Tenant Representative), J Taylor (Tenant Representative), H Mirza (Tenant Representative), J Wenn (Employee Representative),

**EMPLOYEES:** G Swarbrick (Chief Executive), N Hallard (Duty Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources and), C Tostevin (Director of Growth), S Wigley (Head of Legal and Compliance [Secretary]), J McGrail (Director of Finance and Resources), J Minchin (Governance Coordinator [Minutes]), P Heron (Head of Customer Experience [Part]), (A Holden (Customer Engagement Lead [Part]), G Tomlinson (Customer Insight lead Part])

**ALSO PRESENT:** P Joyce (Non-Executive Director), M Nuttall (Non-Executive Director) and A Smith (Member [Observing]).

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from A Tumilty (Board Chair),

**ABSENT:** M Mackenzie (Tenant Representative), D Chadwick (Tenant Representative), D Ferguson (Tenant Representative), B Nicholson (Employee Representative), B Wood (Tenant Representative), J Begum (Employee Representative), T Mortenson (Tenant Representative) were absent from the meeting and no apologies were received.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None

*P Worthington, Chair convened the meeting at 18:02pm*

S Wigley informed Representatives that Cliff Byram-Leech is no longer a tenant of RBH, so will cease to be Tenants Representative.

REF	ITEM/DISCUSSION
<b>AOB-1</b>	G Swarbrick notified the members that N Hallard is due to finish in her current role as Director with RBH at the beginning of June, but after discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Representative Body and the Chair of the Board Nickie has been asked to continue working for an additional 6 months, 2 days a week. This will be focusing on working with the Representative Body implementing the actions from the recent review and helping to achieve the aspirations in helping the Representative Body to drive RBH as an organisation and Mutual.
AOB-1.1	
AOB-1.2	P Worthington commented he felt Nickie has been on the journey with the Representative Body and is heavily invested in Together with Tenants so feels she will help deliver the actions required for the Representative Body.

AOB-1.3 N Hallard noted she is excited to be working the with members to implement their vision on what the Representative Body should be like in the future which will be a great benefit to RBH.

AOB-1.4 L Brosnan agreed this decision would help the Representative body move forward and implement their aspirations.

**May-1.3 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

May-1.3.1 P Heron presented the report alongside G Tomlinson and A Holden which included the feedback collected from the ongoing “Big Conversation” open consultation. Members were asked to review the feedback from surveys and to discuss the key areas for inclusion in the Customer Engagement Strategy. The draft strategy will be presented to the Board on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July for the Representative Body to approve on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August.

May-1.3.2 G Tomlinson explained to members that the 3 key areas that came out of the consultation regarding what’s important to tenants when making contact was speed, quality and communication. G Tomlinson advised they were looking to include the below targets to help implement this and asked members their thoughts on delivering against these.

- 90% call answered in 90 Seconds
- Aim for over 85% first contact resolution
- Emails responded to withing 48 hours
- Respond to queries within 72 hours

May-1.3.3 L Brosnan commented that feedback from tenants she’d previously had that the response time is crucial and getting back to the tenants. G Tomlinson noted this has come back in the feedback from last year’s survey’s and there need to be measures in place to monitor this.

May-1.3.4 G Tomlinson advised they are looking to upskill the Contact Centre team members to resolve queries where possible on first contact. P Heron commented the aim is for employees to offer a good quality service and this is to include staffing of the Contact Centre at all the peak hours, so the calls are responded to quicker.

May-1.3.5 F Altham commented that the training is important especially for the Contact Centre colleagues to be equipped with the correct valid information to respond to tenants, as this has not always been the case in previous years. P Heron advised work is being undertaken on a training program for the team to ensure information is accurate and working with the other departments across Customer and Communities.

May-1.3.6 A Allen noted there needs to be a proactive approach between department when communications are being sent out which might impact on an increase in number of tenants contacting the Contact Centre. P Heron advised they are looking to set up a group in which Tenants review the proposed future communications being sent out.

May-1.3.7 L Brosnan queried if complaints still can only be made online. P Heron said this can also be done over the telephone and the aim is to offer quality service to tenants on their channel of choice.

May-1.3.8 P Heron noted the overwhelming response in the favour of the term Tenants versus any other term in the surveys. S Edwards commented of not being surprised with the

respondents considering themselves as Tenants and this could potentially change if the question was had as a conversation and not online as they might see the possibly negative implications of being referred to as a tenant opposed to a customer.

May-1.3.9 L Brosnan noted the term tenant is what the tenants want and hopes the survey results reflects this and is honoured. P Heron commented that this was a common theme throughout those surveyed and did not believe this would change if more people responded. G Swarbrick agreed that the tenants voice should be respected and referred to as tenants.

May-1.3.10 P Worthington noted the frequent updates on the Engagement development have been well received by members and gave assurance on the direction of travel for the Engagement Strategy.

May-1.3.11 A Holden thanks D Anderson for attending the recent meeting at the Lighthouse Project and if any members wanted to attend the Together with Tenants Steering Group session in the morning they were welcome to attend.

**Resolution: Representative Body:**

- Reviewed the feedback from the recent Big Conversations and discussed the key areas for inclusion in the Customer Engagement Strategy.

*[P Heron, A Holden and G Tomlinson left the meeting]*

**May-1.2 SUSTAINABLE GROWTH STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

May-1.2.1 C Tostevin presented the report to members and noted the Sustainable Growth Strategy is being developed to help deliver Succeeding Together. It is not expected to include anything in addition to Succeeding Together.

May-1.2.2 C Tostevin noted that when Rochdale Town Centre regeneration is discussed this means the specific regeneration project in the College Bank and Lower Falinge area.

May-1.2.3 C Tostevin asked members the below questions:

- Are we focusing on delivering the right things over the next three years?
- Best ways to create opportunities for tenants and employees to work together on sustainable growth areas?
- Is it a strategy or a delivery plan for parts of Succeeding Together?
- How does the Representative Body know we are delivering in line with our values?

May 1.2.4 P Worthington queried there is a current Growth Strategy in place up to 2022. C Tostevin confirmed there is a current Growth Strategy which the Sustainable Growth Strategy would replace due to sustainability being reflected strongly in the delivery of Succeeding Together. C Tostevin noted this is a key component in the delivery plan of Succeeding Together rather than a standalone strategy. P Worthington noted that Growth was a key area the Representative Body have previously expressed an interest to oversee and this would be reported back to the Representative Body and Delegated Panel in the future.

- May-1.2.5 P Worthington commented that building homes in the right place is important and previous access to the housing register from the Home Choice contract offered an oversight for this. P Worthington noted the decision on where and what to build would be impacted by restrictions on available land and grants. C Tostevin agreed that these are constraints on building new homes. Consideration is needed on balancing priorities for RBH investment on for example enhancing the energy efficiently or building bigger homes. C Tostevin commented that Rochdale does not have a high rent income when looking at the cost to build and it would be good to have a discussion with members in the future on how RBH uses their resources and what are the priorities.
- May-1.2.6 C Tostevin informed Members that A Johnson and A Gorczyca were absent from tonight's meeting due to their involvement as Sustainable Growth Champions they had been invited to attend the Northern Housing Awards event this evening where RBH have been nominated for awards due to the work on the Abbeydale and Buckley View projects.
- May-1.2.7 P Worthington noted previous concerns were about having tenants outside the borough but that it was still worth exploring development outside the borough e.g. for outright sale. C Tostevin noted focus is the priority on communities within our Borough but if an investment opportunity did arise outside that could add to the business plan this would be looked at and discussed with the Representative Body.
- May-1.2.8 S Edwards noted there is a lot to reflect on from the report and the focus should be on tenants and employees having time to influence and the impact on the delivery plan to ensure it's delivered in a collaborative and fair way, including measures in place to monitor the impact. C Tostevin stated narrative examples can be given and brought back to representative to demonstrate working in line with the values.
- May-1.2.9 Representative members agreed that the draft Sustainable Growth Strategy or Plan in line with what had been discussed should be submitted for final approval by Board and this will help achieve the delivery of Succeeding Together. Elements of sustainable growth will be brought back to the Representative Body for further discussion.

**Resolution: Representative Body:** Reviewed and discussed the Sustainable Growth proposals for final approval of the Strategy or Plan by Board.

## May-1.1 **RBH IMPACT REPORT**

- May-1.1.1 P Worthington presented the report which details RBH Impact performance last year across the themes of Financial Inclusion, Digital Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing and Work, skills, and the Economy. P Worthington noted the draft Impact Report in the pack is with the Communications team to prepare for distribution, but the content will remain the same.
- May-1.1.2 S Edwards commented he felt proud to be part of a mutual who work in partnership with the community and other organisations to deliver a positive impact on people and communities, working together as equal partners. P Worthington noted there are actions in place to work with the Communications team to promote the work going on, particularly when linked with mutuality.

- May-1.1.3 J McGrail noted the outcomes and metrics within the report show the impact on peoples' lives.
- May-1.1.4 S Edwards noted the report does not refer to RBH values. P Worthington agreed this is a wasted opportunity and that whilst the Impact report covers all the areas achieved in the past year, it should also link back to the values.  
**Action:** Links to values to be included within the Impact Report **Lead:** P Worthington **Due Date:** Before publication.
- May-1.1.5 G Swarbrick commented that the Communications strategy is being worked on and they are discussing how to use the resources to communicate RBH's story the best we can. The first meeting is tomorrow, and this discussion will be feedback to the group on how best to use the Impact report material.
- May-1.1.6 A Allen noted the impact on the individuals will be unmeasurable and tenant participation telling their stories will help to build further trust in the mutual. P Worthington noted the Communication Team are looking for further opportunity for this.
- May-1.1.7 S Edwards commented the report demonstrates the support offered but not solutions while people are going through difficult times and in terms of democracy RBH should give a voice to the community and put their name to campaigns. P Worthington noted we need to tell our story differently because as a membership organisation our story is the tenants and employees.  
**Resolution: Representative Body:** Reviewed and discussed the Impact Report.
- May-2.1 **COMMUNITY INVESTMENT STRATEGY**
- May-2.1.1 P Worthington presented the report which sets out the vision on the delivery of the Community Investment Strategy which has been developed in the task and finish groups. This was identified as a core area the Representative Body wanted to have more ownership over and the Impact report will be presented to the Representative Body annually and quarterly to the Delegated Panel.
- May-2.1.2 S Edwards commented the amount of work, level of detail and consultation in the Strategy is reassuring. S Edwards noted the previous discussions had with the draft documents have been reflected in the current document.
- May-2.1.3 F Altham commented that the strategy had been well thought out and researched and proving the monitoring of the delivery is in place will be far more effective than in the past. P Worthington noted that the last Task and Finish group discussed how this would be monitored and reported back to Delegated Panel and the Representative Body.  
**Resolution: Representative Body:** Approved the Community Investment Strategy.
- AOB-2** P Worthington notified members of the Elections due to take place in September and if any member might consider putting forward any connections that maybe interested in becoming either Tenant or Employee Representatives and spread the word within their communities.
- AOB-3** S Wigley informed Members there will be informative sessions with prospective candidates prior to the Elections in June and July and would ideally need several Representatives Members to attend. P Worthington noted this was from an action to

ensure all potential Representative Body members are fully informed of the role and commitment involved.

**Action:** When dates are confirmed for the prospective Representative Body candidate's information session, distribute information to the Representative Body to get several current members participation at each session **Lead:** Jade Minchin **Due Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022

- AOB-4** P Worthington notified members there will be an optional session on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June exploring the results from the recent Our Voice survey. The aim is to raise the profile of the Representative Body amongst employees with tangible actions on improving the society and the experience of employees.
- AOB-5** Members discussed and agreed the next Representative meeting in June will be held in person.
- AOB-6** N Hallard asked members if they were happy with the new style of briefing notes presented in today's meeting and would appreciate any feedback. P Worthington noted the electronic feedback form would be distributed and could be a space to give feedback if required
- AOB-7** Members were advised that the Communications team were looking to have as part of the Elections campaign several short clips from existing member to bring to life the role and achievements of the Representative Body. This could be a video or written quotes

*The Chair closed the meeting at 20:17*



Signed.....

...(Representative Body Chair) As a true and correct record of the Representative Body conference meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022