

Housing Management Advisory Board - Terms of Reference

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The role of the Housing Management Advisory Board (HMAB)

The Housing Management Advisory Board (HMAB) is a group of council tenants and leaseholders, councillors and staff who work in partnership with the Council's Executive and other relevant committees and acts in an advisory role on housing related decisions.

The HMAB makes recommendations to the Portfolio holder for Housing, Health and Older People, the Council's Executive and Full Council as appropriate acting as the link to other involved housing customer groups including the Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP).

The HMAB's work includes:

- Involvement in the development of housing related strategies.
- Involvement in the development of the housing business plan, how this is delivered and the key projects identified within the plan.
- Involvement in budget setting for housing
- Reviewing overall, high level performance.
- Regular review of the Business Plan and associated Capital and Revenue Budgets.
- Review and comment on draft reports on key decisions to be taken by the Executive.
- Involvement and ability to comment on key changes to strategy, key policies, significant service changes and development proposals.

The HMAB is not involved with day-to-day operational matters or matters of detailed service delivery or performance. It will monitor key performance indicators using a red/amber/green system to highlight areas of concern, where concerns are related to operational matters they may be discussed.

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1. Mission

- 1.1 The Housing Management Advisory Board is committed to working to improve housing services for customers through 'co-regulation', involving tenants and leaseholders in decision-making and scrutinising housing services.
- 1.2 This supports the Council's corporate objective to be a "co-operative council".
- 1.3 The HMAB is actively involved in shaping the future for housing services through early involvement in policies and strategies and important business decisions.

2. Vision

- 2.1 The vision is for council housing services to be effective and accessible; meeting the needs of customers and the local community.
- 2.2 The HMAB's strategic direction, challenge and advisory guidance will promote continuous improvement and value for money in housing services.

3. Values

- 3.1 HMAB will be professional and transparent in its activities.
- 3.2 HMAB will reflect the needs of all customers, including internal customers, showing respect for all regardless of background, ethnicity or orientation. This is in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity Framework.
- 3.3 The work of HMAB will be representative of the Council's corporate values.

4. Responsibilities, objectives and functions of the Housing Management Advisory Board

- 4.1 HMAB commit to the following to achieve the mission and vision:
 - a. A key strategic overview of the management of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business, including the 30 year plan and associated strategies
 - b. Early involvement and influence in the creation of key strategic policies and strategies
 - c. A key consultation mechanism and representative voice between the Council's Executive and customer engagement structure on all HRA management matters including, but not exclusive to, rent setting, capital programme, service level performance
 - d. To represent tenants, residents and leaseholders, to ensure that the Council provides high standard housing services that meet resident needs
 - e. To operate in the interests of the whole borough and not as individuals or areas
 - f. To challenge and question staff who manage and deliver the service
 - g. Make strategic recommendations on how housing services can be improved
 - h. To commission (as appropriate) and receive Service Reviews and reports from Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP)
 - i. To monitor the service improvement plans agreed after CSP reviews on a six monthly basis. The CSP representative will be responsible for this item.
- 4.2 HMAB will not cover the following:

- i. Operational staffing concerns (although strategic reviews of structures will be received)
- ii. Procurement decisions (where staff are already delegated to take decisions),
- iii. Individual cases (which are best handled through other mechanisms)

5. Membership

- 5.1 The membership of the HMAB will comprise of up to ten housing customers (tenants and one resident leaseholder), five councillors and two Stevenage Borough Council Housing staff - the relevant Assistant Directors dealing with housing, investment and repairs
- 5.2 Staff may be co-opted onto HMAB provided they have relevant knowledge.
- 5.3 One of the customer members will be a member of the Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP), elected by the full CSP.
- 5.4 Councillors are elected by their political party after public elections (usually in May) to the HMAB and subject to party selection processes they may stay on HMAB for the remainder of their term as a councillor.
- 5.5 To remain a member of HMAB, tenants/leaseholders must
 - Be a current tenant or resident leaseholder of Stevenage Borough Council;
 - Be within the terms of their tenancy/lease without any breaches;
 - Not be an employee of Stevenage Borough Council
- 5.6 To remain a member of the HMAB, staff must
 - Be a current employee of Stevenage Borough Council;
 - Not become a tenant or leaseholder of Stevenage Borough Council;
 - Not be subject to any disciplinary action in their capacity as a member
- 5.7 To remain a member of the HMAB, councillors must
 - Be a current councillor of Stevenage Borough Council
- 5.8 All HMAB members must adhere to the code of conduct.
- 5.9 Recruitment is carried out using the Council's website and via an interview with existing HMAB members.
- 5.10 Members must send apologies via the Chair if they cannot attend a meeting. Missing three consecutive meetings without sending apologies will result in a resignation being assumed.
- 5.11 The quorum for meetings is six HMAB members, with three customers, two councillors and one member of staff. This is proportional.

Term of office for HMAB members

- Councillors may remain on HMAB for the term of their councillor office (four years). Councillors may serve two terms on HMAB. A maximum of 8 years.
- Tenants and leaseholder members of HMAB serve a term of four years. Tenants and leaseholders may serve two terms on HMAB. A maximum of 8 years.
- Staff HMAB members remain in post during their employment in the position related to HMAB membership.

6. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

- 6.1 The positions of Chair and Vice Chair will be elected annually at the Away Day or the first meeting after Annual Council whichever comes first.
- 6.2 The Chair should either be a tenant or a councillor, on a yearly rotation with the Vice-Chair as the opposite.

- 6.3 Either the Chair or Vice-Chair can attend the Executive meeting; alternatively another member can be co-opted to attend.

7. Training and induction

- 7.1 HMAB members will receive induction training.
7.2 This will be a minimum of basic housing law and introduction to social housing.

8. Access to information

- 8.1 The board will adhere to the requirements of the data protection legislation.
8.2 The board will only access information that is applicable to their activities.
8.3 All information will be kept confidential; breaches in confidentiality will result in exclusion from the HMAB.
8.4 Confidential information will be heard as “part two” items and identified by printing on pink paper. This information will not be available to the public.

9. Accountability

- 9.1 The Board are accountable to tenants and leaseholders and the council’s Executive.
9.2 Declarations of interest should be made at the beginning of each meeting under “Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest.”
9.3 The Portfolio Holder for Housing is invited to attend the meetings of the HMAB. They will observe, respond and report back to the Executive. They are available to answer queries and inform HMAB on policy decisions.

10. Governance and support

- 10.1 The Resident Involvement Team and Housing Performance and Improvement Officer will provide support for HMAB, providing appropriate resources to help it operate effectively, for example:
- relevant training;
 - access to IT equipment;
 - expenses to cover any HMAB-related activities
 - Updating the tracker.
- 10.2 Constitutional Services Officers will provide administrative support including distributing papers and providing minutes.
10.3 These terms of reference will be reviewed every three years. (Next renewal due 2020) or where structure changes in the council require this to be necessary.

11. Communication

- 11.1 The HMAB will publish information about their work and meetings on the Stevenage Borough Council website and in their annual report; this will include the generic email address.
11.2 The tracker will be available on the website and updated monthly.

12. Meetings information

- 12.1 Decisions will be made by show of hands, and the Chair shall have the casting vote. A simple majority in favour will carry a proposal. HMAB members may abstain from voting.

- 12.2 HMAB will meet monthly. Papers will be published five clear working days in advance.
- 12.3 The Away Day will take place in July; this will review the work over the past year and be an opportunity to set the work plan.
- 12.4 The work of HMAB is linked to the Council's forward plan (Future Town, Future Council) plus the wider housing arena.
- 12.5 The public may attend part one of HMAB meetings in an observer role only.