

# Proposed Terms of Reference – Housing Board

The Housing Board (HB) is a body of Tenant and Leaseholder representatives and Councillors which supports the Cabinet's decision-making process and performance. It is separate and distinct from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees which are responsible for the council's scrutiny functions and led members. As an advisory group, it can provide non-binding advice, recommendations, and critical feedback to support Cabinet Members and decision-makers, helping to inform policy development and improve decision-making while remaining distinct from formal scrutiny or executive functions.

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide advice and recommendations to decision-maker(s) regarding housing policies and initiatives, addressing community needs.
- 1.2 To review housing strategies and policies delegated to the Lead Member for Housing.
- 1.3 To serve as the main discussion forum between Cambridge City Council, its tenants and its leaseholders for all matters relating to the social landlord function (for example, effectiveness of current housing services, management and maintenance of stock, etc).
- 1.4 To advise and be consulted on issues that affect these responsibilities. Feedback and proposals from the HB will be considered as part of the decision-making processes in line with the Council's constitution, including by the Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members or Officers.
- 1.5 To monitor and consider community engagement and communication activity, both as part of the Housing Development Agency programmes as well as wider initiatives, for activity that most impacts tenant and leaseholders.

## 2 Objectives

The objectives of the HB in relation to the interests of the Council's housing tenants and leaseholders, are to advise and make recommendations for the improvement of CCC housing services on behalf of all service users and tenants, including:

- Playing a proactive role in ensuring tenant and leaseholder experience is at the forefront of decisions that impact them.
- Acting as a critical friend, recommending improvements and ensuring the Council delivers high standard social housing services

- Ensuring the housing service is fair, equitable and tenant friendly
- Representing tenant and leaseholder priorities, and ensuring their views are an integral part of the decision process
- Ensuring the Council's housing service offers value for money, meets government regulatory standards and reflects the Council's business plan objectives

### **3 Membership**

#### **3.1 The Housing Board will consist of:**

- the Cabinet Lead Member for Housing (or a nominated substitute in their absence)
- Six politically proportionate Councillors
- The Assistant Director for Housing and Health (a non-voting member) (or a nominated substitute in their absence)
- six elected Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives (a maximum of one of which is to be a leaseholder)

3.2 Where appropriate, the Board may appoint up to 2 Independent Members to serve a maximum of 3 years per term and only serving 2 consecutive terms. These independent members would be non-voting on any recommendations provided by the Housing Board.

3.3 Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives to the HB will be elected every 4 years by the tenants through a citywide ballot conducted by an independent organisation to ensure fairness and transparency.

3.4 Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives will be tenants or leaseholders of Cambridge City Council. Tenants in breach of their tenancy conditions will not be eligible to be or remain as a Board Member.

3.5 Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives terms of service will reflect the wider Tenant Engagement Strategy (refreshed in late 2025).

3.6 The Communities Group will provide secretariat support for the HB.

3.7 The Lead Cabinet Member for Housing and Assistant Director for Housing and Health will be permanent members of the Housing Board.

- 3.8 If a tenant representative leaves before the end of term, a new tenant representative will be co-opted until the end of the term. Resident Engagement will advertise the board opening and accept applications for suitable replacements to be co-opted onto the board and present them to the HB who will select which candidate should be appointed.
- 3.9 HB members, except for the AD for Housing and the Lead Member for Housing, who fail to attend two meetings and fail to provide any apologies will forfeit their membership of the Board.
- 3.10 HB members agree to use digital communications including video conference, shared facilities which may include MS Teams or a central document library. Meetings will be held either online or face to face.
- 3.11 HB members agree to make available contact details with colleagues to facilitate work between meetings.
- 3.12 HB members will attend training sessions where appropriate and where possible.
- 3.13 HB members will read any material provided prior to attending the meeting
- 3.14 HB members will be compliant with Cambridge City Council equality and GDPR policies.
- 3.15 All HB members agree to abide by the Council's code of conduct.
- 3.16 The HB will plan their annual work programme and may consider requests from Cabinet, Council, Overview and Scrutiny Committees or individual Councillors to investigate specific issues.

## **4 Quorum**

*Note: a **quorum** refers to the minimum number of members required to be present at a meeting for it to be considered valid. This ensures that there is sufficient representation to conduct business effectively and that recommendations are not made by an unrepresentative minority.*

A meeting will only go ahead if at least half of the Tenant and Leaseholder representatives and half of all Councillors are present, as well as either the Lead Councillor for Housing or the Assistant Director of Housing. Independent members do not form part of the quorum. For example, if there are 12 members in total, at least 3 Tenant and Leaseholder reps and 3 other members must attend, including either a Councillor or the Assistant Director of Housing. If there aren't enough people for a quorum, the meeting should be recorded as inquorate and any decisions made will need to be approved at the next meeting with a quorum.

## **5 Chairing Meetings**

- 6 Two chairs shall be elected, one by the councillor HB members and another by the tenants and leaseholders' representatives. They will then take it in turns to chair the meetings.

6.1 Each Chair will deputise for the other in their absence.

6.2 Maximum term of office for the Chairs will be 4 years.

6.3 The Chairs will liaise with officers and relevant others as necessary to plan for forthcoming meetings. Any HB member can request to add additional items to the agenda. These should be submitted at least 4 weeks before the meeting.

## **7 Frequency of HB Meetings**

7.1 The HB will normally meet quarterly with a minimum of four quarterly meetings per year.

7.2 To meet the demands of projects and reviews, the frequency of meetings may be increased.

7.3 Board members are expected to attend every meeting; however, they must attend a minimum of three Board meetings per annum unless there are extenuating circumstances that have been agreed to by the Board.

7.4 The HB may establish Task and Finish Groups to lead on specific activities, where there are council resources available to support such activities.

7.5 Task and Finish Groups could be internal tenant groups or external groups

7.6 Task and Finish Groups must report to the HB at an agreed frequency

## **8 HB Support**

8.1 Administrative support for the HB will be provided by the Resident Engagement team. Democratic services will publish agendas and papers.

8.2 Minutes of the HB meetings will be made available within four weeks of the meeting.

8.3 All new members will be provided with a handbook of key documents and undertake an induction programme and training.

8.4 Training requirements will be assessed, and a training programme will be developed, delivered, and regularly reviewed.

8.5 All tenant and leaseholder representatives will be eligible for an allowance in line with the members allowance scheme, this is the Real Living Wage of £12.60 per hour, plus an additional amount for expenses such as travelling costs and

additional support for childcare / carers costs. The allowance can be claimed twice a year six months in arrears. The other expenses should be claimed monthly.”

## **9 Access to Information**

- 9.1 The HB will be provided with supporting documents a minimum of one week prior to each meeting.
- 9.2 Agendas will be published on the Council website a minimum of 5 working days before the meeting.
- 9.3 Minutes will be published on the Council website 4 weeks after a meeting takes place.
- 9.4 HB can request additional data, reports and information to carry out their activities.
- 9.5 Where appropriate information is not readily available, the HB may request information reports (appropriate in scale and content subject to available resources) and / or invite officers or managers to meet with the HB to provide additional information or insight.
- 9.6 All requests for information and evidence must be made via the Resident Engagement Team.
- 9.7 The HB is a public meeting and will endeavour to ensure meetings are as accessible as possible. If you are interested in attending a meeting, please reach out to (email tbc)

## **10 Accountability**

- 10.1 The HB meetings will be publicised on the Cambridge City Council website.
- 10.2 Minutes, agendas and meeting papers will be made available to the public on the Cambridge City Council website
- 10.3 Tenants will be able to ask questions to their Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives via (email tbc).

## **11 Reviewing the Terms of Reference**

These Terms of Reference were approved by Cllr Gerri Bird, Cabinet Member for Housing, and AD for Housing, and ratified at a meeting of the HB held on the [date]

The Board will review the terms of reference regularly to ensure they reflect the duties and responsibilities of the Board.

Next review: July 2026