



Bridgewater Housing Association Policy

Policy name	Standing Orders Policy
Policy category	Corporate (HR)
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Equalities impact assessment required	No
Links to other documents	• The Association Rules and Objects • Board Member Recruitment, Retention and Succession Policy • Persons Not Eligible to Become Members of The Association Policy • Board Terms of Reference/Remit policy • Scheme of Delegation policy
Consultation	No

This document can also be provided in large print, braille, audio, or other non-written format and in a variety of languages, on request.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These Standing Orders apply to the conduct of business by the Board, its sub-committees and working groups. These Standing Orders are supported by a Scheme of Delegation and include Remits for the sub-committees established by the Board.

2. MEETINGS OF THE BOARD, SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

- 2.1 Normally, meetings of the Board will be held eight times per year in accordance with a schedule agreed at the first meeting following the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Variations to this schedule will be agreed, with the Chair. Meetings will normally be held on a Wednesday at 5:30pm.
- 2.2 Sub-committees will normally meet four times each year in accordance with a schedule agreed by the Board at the first meeting following the AGM. Meetings will normally be held on a Wednesday at 5:30pm.
- 2.4 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will act as principal adviser to the Board and will normally attend all Board meetings. Members of the senior management team will normally attend Board meetings, together with such other staff as the Chief Executive may determine is appropriate to aid the Board's consideration of the business.
- 2.5 All meetings of the board and sub-committee will be hybrid in nature meaning that they may be attended in person or remotely (electronically) via the agreed method of conducting virtual meetings (currently via Teams). Members attending remotely will be considered to have attended the meeting and will have the same voting rights as if they had attended the meeting in person.

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

- 3.1 The Board may establish sub-committees and working groups with delegated authority and/or responsibility for specific matters. Sub-committees will be responsible for overseeing specific aspects of Bridgewater's business. The Board is responsible for approving the remit(s) of any such sub-committee and working groups and all remits must be formally recorded and kept under review.
- 3.2 Sub-committees must have at least four Board members and three members are required to form a quorum. Co-optees can participate fully but cannot make up the quorum. Sub-committees will elect a Chair at the first meeting following the AGM. A designated member of the senior management team will act as principal adviser to each sub-committee and will attend each meeting, together with additional staff relevant to aid the sub-committee's consideration of the business.

- 3.3 Sub-committees will be expected to provide copies of minutes to the Board for noting and referring any matters that fall beyond the agreed level of delegated authority to the Board for consideration and approval.
- 3.4 The Board may establish ad-hoc working groups to consider specific matters such as special projects or new initiatives. Working groups will usually be advisory and will not normally have decision making authority. The Board is responsible for approving and recording the terms of reference for all working groups, including their intended life-span, membership, requirement for specialist advice or support and their expected outputs. A member of staff will be appointed as principal adviser to all working groups.
- 3.5 The Board has established two sub-committees:
- Housing, Land and Property Services (HL&PSSC)
 - Finance & Corporate Services (F&CSSC)

Board members may be members of both sub-committees.

- 3.6 The Board shall appoint up to seven members to the Housing, Land and Property Services Sub-Committee at its first meeting following the AGM. Both elected and co-opted Board members can be appointed to the sub-committee but a co-opted member cannot be elected as Chair. The Board Chair cannot act as Chair of the sub-committee.
- 3.7 The Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary will, by reason of their office, be encouraged to become members of the Finance & Corporate Services Sub-Committee. Where any of these office bearing roles is not held by a Board member, the Board may appoint another of their number (and one more) to ensure that membership of the F&CSSC is not less than four. The Board shall appoint up to seven members to the F&CSSC at its first meeting following the AGM. Both elected and co-opted Board members can be appointed to the sub-committee, but a co-opted member cannot be elected as Chair. The Board Chair cannot act as Chair of the sub-committee.
- 3.8 Sub-committees have full authority to act within the terms of their delegated authority as set out in the remit agreed by the Board.

4. NOTICE OF MEETINGS AND PREPARATION OF PAPERS

- 4.1 The Head of Corporate Services shall give notice of all ordinary meetings of the Board to members and shall specify the matters to be considered at the Meeting by annexing to the notices a properly prepared agenda. The agenda will normally be subject to prior discussion between the Chief Executive and Chair in advance of being issued.
- 4.2 Board members may add items to the agenda by notifying the CEO or Chair at least 14 days before the scheduled meeting date; such requests will not be unreasonably refused, however, the timing of when an item is included on the agenda may be amended (e.g. by the Chair) to enable report preparation or accessing supporting information.

- 4.3 The principal adviser shall give notice of all sub-committee meetings and will, in consultation with the Chair, specify the matters to be considered by issuing a properly prepared agenda.
- 4.4 Agendas and papers for all Board and sub-committee meetings will normally be issued at least seven days in advance of the meeting date electronically.
- 4.5 It is the duty of Bridgewater's Chief Executive and senior staff to ensure that the Board and its sub-committees are informed to be able to carry out their responsibilities effectively. All agenda items will be the subject of written reports or a presentation that will contain the necessary background information and adequate detail to enable Board members to make informed decisions. All Board papers will identify sources of additional relevant information, as well as the author, who will be available to Board members in advance of the meeting to offer additional clarification where required.
- 4.6 A Special Meeting of the Board will be convened in accordance with Rule 56.1 of the Association's Rules.
- 4.7 Items to be considered as AOCB should be notified to Chair at start of the meeting and added with agreement of those present; this should be reserved for exceptional items that could not be notified in advance for inclusion on the agenda. The Chair may refuse to add items as AOCB in favor of adding to a future agenda. The AOCB item must be within remit of Board/sub-committee meeting.

5. APOLOGIES

- 5.1 Members are required to submit their apologies for non-attendance at a Board Meeting, where possible, a minimum of 24 hours prior to the time of the meeting.

6. MINUTES

- 6.1 The Minutes of the Board will be prepared by the Corporate Services Assistant, in consultation with the Chair and Chief Executive and copies sent to each member with the papers for the next meeting.
- 6.2 All Minutes will be prepared in accordance with Bridgewater's agreed protocol to ensure consistency of style and recording.
- 6.3 The minutes of Board meetings will be presented for formal approval at the next Board Meeting. When formally approved the minutes will be recorded as agreed and retained in accordance with agreed practice. They will be published on Bridgewater's website.
- 6.4 Minutes of sub-committee meetings will be prepared by the Principal Adviser, in consultation with the sub-committee Chair and issued in draft form to the members of the sub-committee within 28 days of the meeting having taken place. The minutes of sub-committee meetings will be presented for approval to the next meeting of the sub-committee. Once approved, the minutes will be recorded as agreed and retained in accordance with agreed practice.

- 6.5 Minutes of sub-committee meetings will be presented to the next Board meeting for information; this may involve the minute being presented in draft format – where this occurs, any subsequent amendments to the draft will be notified to the next possible Board meeting.

7. QUORUM

- 7.1 4 elected Board members must be present to form a Quorum for an ordinary meeting of the Board to take place. If at the hour of the meeting, or 15 minutes thereafter, a quorum of members is not present, the Meeting shall stand adjourned. If it is found at any time during the Meeting that a quorum is not present, the proceedings shall be adjourned. Where a meeting is adjourned the meeting shall be re-arranged within 7 days of the original meeting date.
- 7.2 At least three Board members must be present for a meeting of a sub-committee to take place. If at the hour of the meeting, or 15 minutes thereafter, a quorum of members is not present, the Meeting shall stand adjourned. If it is found at any time during the Meeting that a quorum is not present, the proceedings shall be adjourned. Where a meeting is adjourned the meeting shall be re-arranged within 7 days of the original meeting date.
- 7.3 The requirements for a quorum for working groups will be specified in the terms of reference that establish the working group.

8. CO-OPTEEES

- 8.1 Co-optees can only serve until the next annual general meeting or until removed by the Board.
- 8.2 Co-optees can take part in the Board's discussions and vote at Board meetings on all matters except those that directly affect the membership of the Association or the election of the Association's Office Bearers. Co-optees may not stand for election, nor be elected as one of the Office Bearers of the Board (Rule 42.2)
- 8.3 Board members co-opted in this way must not make up more than one-third of the total number of the elected Board members at any one time. The presence of co-optees will not be counted at meetings of the Board when establishing if the minimum number of Board Members are present to allow the meeting to take place.

9. MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

- 9.1 All motions and amendments must be formally proposed and seconded.
- 9.2 After it has been made or intimated, no motion shall be withdrawn except by leave of the seconder. In the absence of the member who has given notice of a motion, the Meeting may dispose of the same or postpone it as they think fit.
- 9.3 Motions or amendments that are not seconded shall not be discussed or put to the Meeting or printed in the Minutes.

- 9.4 After a motion has been made and seconded, any member wishing to move an amendment and any member wishing to move a further amendment may do so by stating its terms to the Meeting.
- 9.5 When a motion and a number of amendments are before the Meeting, the Chairperson shall put the last moved amendment receiving the greater number of votes against the next proceeding amendment until all are disposed of, when he/she shall put the remaining amendment against the original motion.

10. ORDER OF SPEAKING

- 10.1 The Chair shall determine the order of speaking. All contributions must be directed through the Chair and Board members are required to respect the Chair's authority.
- 10.2 All members must maintain strict confidentiality.

11. POWERS OF CHAIRPERSON

- 11.1 It will be the duty of the Chairperson to ensure that the business of the meeting is conducted efficiently; to preserve order and to ensure that all members are encouraged to contribute and obtain a fair hearing.
- 11.2 The Chair shall decide all matters of order, competency and relevancy and such ruling shall be final and shall not be open to discussion. They shall also decide between two or more members wishing to speak by calling on the member whom they observed first to raise their hand.
- 11.3 They shall be entitled, in the event of disorder arising, to adjourn the meeting to a time they may then or afterwards determine, and their leaving the Chair shall indicate the Meeting is adjourned.
- 11.4 The Chairperson shall have both a deliberate and a casting vote.

12. DISSENTING MEMBER

- 12.1 Any member who disagrees with any decision of the Board may ask to have their dissent recorded in the Minutes. For the avoidance of doubt, all Board members are bound by the principle of collective responsibility and are required to uphold all decisions properly made by the Board, irrespective of an individual's dissent being recorded.

13. VOTING

- 13.1 A vote may be taken by ballot or by a show of hands, as decided by a majority of the members present and voting. Votes will be counted by the principal adviser to the meeting. Where a member is required to participate in a ballot when attending a meeting remotely, they may convey their vote verbally or in the case of secret ballots these can be emailed to the principal advisor of the meeting.

14. EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

- 14.1 Where urgent decisions that have policy or other significant implications become necessary at times when it is impractical to call a meeting of the Board, a written paper must be prepared with the authority of the Chief Executive and presented to the Chair. The paper must set out the nature of the matter and its significance, together with the options available, the decisions required and their implications. The Chair (or, in their absence, the Vice-Chair) must consult with as many of the office bearers as possible. The approval of the Chair or Vice-Chair and at least one other office bearer will be obtained before action is taken and recorded by means of their signatures being applied to the written paper previously referred to and dated or by the collection of email approvals. Any such actions will be reported to the next Board meeting, to which a copy of the approved report should be circulated.

15. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

- 15.1 Any of the Standing Orders, upon a motion being made at any time during a meeting, may be suspended in regard to any business at such a meeting, provided that the said motion shall be held to be carried by two-thirds majority of those members present and voting.

16. CHANGES IN POLICY

- 16.1 Any policy decisions properly taken at a meeting of the Board or sub-committee will be regarded as the policy of the Association and will not be amended within a period of three months unless significant new information becomes available. Any reconsideration of approved policy within this three-month period must be approved by the Chair.

17. TWO HOUR RULE

- 17.1 A maximum time of two hours will be set for each meeting and will be exceeded only following a majority decision of those members present. Where such an extension is agreed, discussion cannot continue for more than a further thirty minutes. Meetings will therefore be subject to a maximum time limit of two hours and thirty minutes where this is agreed.

18. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 18.1 This policy will be reviewed annually following the AGM, unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation operational requirements or feedback.