



Bridgewater Housing Association Policy

Policy name	Board Member Recruitment
Policy category	Corporate (Governance)
Policy number	CS03
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Equalities impact assessment required	No
Links to other documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Code of Conduct 2. Standing Orders 3. Board member and Office Bearer role descriptions 4. Board Member Development Policy
Consultation	n/a

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Our Board has the important responsibility of directing and controlling the Association. As a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and a charity, it is vital that we have people with the right skills and experience to carry out this role.

1.2 Succession planning is crucial to business success, preparing the business for likely or inevitable changes now, in order to minimise difficulties and challenges later. This involves planning for the smooth continuation in key personnel which includes the Board, where the Association depends greatly on the availability of competent highly skilled people.

1.3 The Association must have the optimum mix of people, skills, and knowledge to ensure its continued success. Having a formalised succession plan enables the Association to know exactly what course of action we plan to take when and how.

1.4 We will, therefore:

- Be clear about the mix of skills and experience necessary for our Board to operate effectively and re-assess these annually.
- Annually assess the skills and experience which Board Members currently hold and match these against the skills and experience we need (skills audit).
- Identify gaps between the skills and experience required and those currently held.
- Take steps to fill those gaps by a mix of:
 - Structured training and development programmes for the Board as a whole and/or for individual Board Members.
 - Recruitment (through an election at the AGM and by co-option during the year) of additional members on an open and transparent basis.
- Ensure a process of succession planning is in place, to protect and enhance the skills and experience held by individuals in the event of their departure from the Board.
- Support the work of the Board through organisational measures to make the most of the contributions made by voluntary Board members

1.3 This Policy sets out the steps we will take to secure additional skills through recruitment, but as indicated above it forms part of a range of governance measures designed to increase the capacity of the Board.

2. SHR STANDARDS OF GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR RSL's

The standards which this policy aims to assist in achieving are:

Standard 1

The governing body leads the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.

Standard 6

The governing body and senior officers have the necessary skills and knowledge they need to be effective.

3. OUR REQUIREMENTS

3.1 We are looking for individuals to serve on the Board who can demonstrate the following:

- A **commitment** to supporting the **local communities** that Bridgewater engages with or the needs of our service users through the provision and development of high-quality housing and housing-related services, and
- A **willingness** to work as a member of a **team** that has responsibility for **directing** the work of the organisation.

3.2 In addition, prospective members should have knowledge, skills, and experience in **at least one** of the three areas listed below.

- **Local Knowledge:** for example, awareness of the housing needs in the areas we work in, knowledge of local issues in Erskine and Renfrewshire, and the people who live here awareness of concerns facing the Association's customers, familiarity with Renfrewshire Council's plans, priorities, and practices.
- **Business Skills and Knowledge:** for example, strategic and business planning, personnel or Human Resource issues, financial planning, and control, monitoring and control of performance, corporate management/administration, or legal experience.
- **Specialist Housing Knowledge:** for example, knowledge of housing management and maintenance, housing-related legislation, Regulatory Framework for Scottish RSL's, OSCR's requirements, housing finance, equal opportunities.

3.3 It is not expected that every member will be an 'expert' in all or even most of these areas. We are looking primarily for those who feel they have a contribution to make to the work of the Association and who can offer relevant knowledge and/or experience; we will ensure that Board Members, once on the Board, have the opportunity to enhance their existing skills and knowledge through development and training.

3.4 We are committed to equality of opportunity in the way our Board operates. We welcome applications from all individuals, irrespective of age, gender, racial origin, sexual orientation, and disability. We are particularly anxious to provide opportunities for involvement to individuals who are under-represented in public life or who are currently under-represented on our Board. This however will not take precedence over the need to have people with the right skills and experience.

4. WHAT WE OFFER

4.1 As a voluntary organisation, we cannot provide payment to members of the Board. However, that does not mean to say that Board Members get nothing in return for their time and commitment. Amongst the rewards from being a Board member are:

- The satisfaction of helping improve the lives of local people.
- The opportunity to develop knowledge and personal skills.
- The opportunity to work in a stimulating and mutually supportive environment.
- The chance to socialise with others with a shared commitment.
- The opportunity to stand for one of the office bearers positions.

- The knowledge that members are contributing to an organisation committed to improving the quality of life of its customers and communities.

5. RECRUITMENT

- 5.1 In addition to developing the skills and knowledge of existing Board Members, we will seek to recruit to fill gaps identified through the skills audit and annual Board review processes. The recruitment will be done following our constitution and will take the form of co-option (the number of co-optees is limited to one-third of the membership of the Board) or the filling of casual vacancies left by the retirement of existing Board Members. Recruitment does not supersede the rights of shareholding members to seek election to the Board.
- 5.2 Annually, we identify the skills, experience, and expertise required to direct Bridgewater's affairs. Through recruitment, we will attempt to fill any gaps which have been identified and set out in the checklist which is set out in a schedule to this Policy. These are the current priorities which we are looking to fill by recruiting new Board Members.
- 5.3 We will also seek to identify any current groups which are underrepresented on our Board, with reference in particular to age, gender, ethnic origin, and disability, in pursuit of our commitment to equal opportunities.
- 5.4 We will promote the opportunity to become a member of the Board through the use of:
- Advertisements on our website and social media and on occasion in the local press.
 - Circulation of information to partner organisations and other stakeholders;
 - Circulation of information to tenant organisations and community groups.
 - Circulation of information to members of the Association.
 - Circulation of information to local business interests and their representatives.
 - Circulation of information to Renfrewshire colleges and other educational establishments connected to Renfrewshire or who provide housing related courses.
 - Circulation of information to other voluntary organisations and social enterprises.

in each case inviting enquiries from interested individuals.

- 5.5 The advertisement will highlight the particular skills and areas of experience where gaps have been identified and will invite applications from underrepresented groups.
- 5.6 Those enquiring will be issued with a **recruitment pack**, consisting of the following:
- Information on Background and History of Bridgewater Housing Association.
 - Explanatory information on the process of becoming a Board Member.
 - Board Members Role Description.
 - Itemised checklist of the skills, knowledge, and other qualities sought (Schedule 1).
 - Application form, which asks for information on the areas of skills, knowledge, and experience which the applicant can offer, and for personal information to allow equal opportunities monitoring.

- 5.7 The process of advertisement may be supplemented by personal approaches from members of the Board and senior staff of the Association. In the event of such an approach being positive,

the details of the individual will be submitted to the CEO who will arrange to issue the recruitment pack as described above.

- 5.8 Completed application forms will be sent to the Association's offices, and the CEO will screen the applications to confirm eligibility.
- 5.9 Eligible applicants will then be invited to attend an informal meeting with the CEO. The purpose of the meeting will be to:
- Confirm the applicant's eligibility to act as a member of the Board.
 - Establish the applicant understands of the role of Board Members, including the likely time commitment involved.
 - Establish the potential contribution likely to be made by the applicant, in the light of the skills, knowledge, and experience sought by Bridgewater.
 - Answer any questions from the applicant.
 - Explain the potential benefits of having an experienced Board Member supporting and mentoring the applicant, if successful.
- 5.10 Within 24 hours of the interview, the applicant will be informed of the result of the interview.
- 5.11 Successful applicants will be invited to attend a meeting of the Board as observers before their membership of the Board is confirmed.
- 5.12 Co-opted members of the Board are encouraged to become shareholding members of the Association, but this is not a requirement. Co-opted members cannot vote on matters relating to the membership of the Association or the election of office bearers; nor can they stand for election as office-bearers. They can only serve as co-optees on the Board until the AGM following their co-option at which point, they must, if they wish to continue to serve as members of the Board, stand for election.
- 5.13 The co-option process may also be used to fill casual vacancies left by the retiral or resignation of existing Board Members during the year. Under the Association's Rules, an individual filling a casual vacancy must first become a member of the Association.

6. SKILLS AUDIT

- 6.1 When new members are first appointed or nominated to the Board, they will be invited to a meeting with the CEO and/or Head of Corporate Services and Chairperson to find out more about the skills and experience they have to offer; this will form part of the induction programme. We want to make sure that we can recognise and build on what new members have to offer and to identify any immediate priorities for further training and development.
- 6.2 Thereafter there will be an annual opportunity for each member to update this assessment through a board development interview (appraisal). This will be linked to an assessment of individual performance. Based on that interview, we will draw up a structured training and

development programme. Training and development opportunities will be pursued under the terms of our Board Development Policy.

7. POLICY AVAILABILITY

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

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation, operational requirements, or board member feedback.

Schedule 1

Checklist of Skills, Knowledge, and other Qualities

(As of November 2023)

1. In terms of knowledge and understanding, we are looking for individuals able to demonstrate the following:

- Strategy and policy
- Business planning
- Service delivery
- Engagement with tenants
- Asset Management
- Responsibilities to owners
- Procurement and contract management
- Supporting tenants on low income
- Financial planning and control
- Employer responsibilities
- Current housing policy and legislation
- Role of the regulator
- Equality and diversity

2. In terms of skills, we are looking for the following:

- Ability to work as a member of a team with other Board members and with staff
- Ability to contribute to discussions about strategy and policy
- Ability to interpret and question information received
- Ability to identify what is important for Bridgewater's success as a business
- Ability to communicate effectively, contribute to decision-making, and to challenge constructively
- Ability to consider information and make decisions on a strategic level irrespective of your status as a customer of the Association and how this may impact you as an individual

3. We are also looking for those able to demonstrate these qualities:

- Contributing ideas and new perspectives
- Respecting confidentiality
- Making sure that personal relationships or agendas do not interfere
- Keeping one's knowledge up to date
- Accepting collective responsibility for decisions