

Tenant and Customer Services Committee

Terms of Reference

December 2023

1.0 Purpose of the Committee

The Board of the Housing Executive (“the Board”) wishes to prioritise and strengthen further its strategic role to facilitate more of its time being focused on strategic issues which are of fundamental importance to the current and future direction of the organisation.

Accordingly, the Board has established a Tenant and Customer Services Committee. Its primary function is to support the Board in carrying out its constructive challenge and oversight function and, as such, the Board has delegated executive powers to the Committee to make decisions in line with the scheme of delegations up to the value of £5 million (see below).

Whilst it is not intended that the activities of the Committee should be constrained, it is also the duty of the Committee to report to the Board any matters of strategic significance, irrespective of any delegated limit or other power.

2.0 The role of the Chair

- a. Provide effective leadership to the Committee, this includes how the Committee operates, builds relationships and engages with stakeholders;
- b. Meet with the Board Chair as required;
- c. Ensure that the Board is briefed on matters deemed significant on behalf of the Committee;
- d. Ensure that new Committee Members and Independent Advisers are briefed on appointment;
- e. Ensure that that induction and training needs are considered and met; and
- f. Ensure that Independent Advisers’ performance is formally assessed on an annual basis.

3.0 The role of the Committee - Overall Objectives

The Committee exists primarily to ensure that the voice and experience of the tenant and wider customer strongly informs the design and delivery of NIHE services.

- a. The Committee will provide constructive challenge and oversight of the items identified below and refer on to the Board for approval.
- b. It will defer any decision which could be deemed novel and contentious. For the avoidance of doubt, this does not affect the discretion of the Committee to refer any of the items identified as requiring its approval to the Board for approval, for any other reason, as it considers appropriate and proper.

In light of the powers delegated by the Board, the Committee has responsibility for agreeing and approving the items identified below:

- c. To assess and report to the Board on relevant performance matters which impact tenants and customers, including:

- i. the level of reduction in rent arrears, pace of housing allocations and levels of tenancy sustainment;
 - ii. the impact of mitigation measures and the impact of the roll out of Universal Credit or other benefits;
 - iii. relevant issues impacting on the health and social wellbeing of tenants and communities;
 - iv. the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion in respect to the services it delivers for its customers.
- d. Annually review progress on relevant key tenant and customer-related strategies, and ensure the monitoring of the end user experience in relation to tenant and customer satisfaction, including:
 - i. Community cohesion;
 - ii. Community welfare and safety;
 - iii. Community involvement and tenant participation;
 - iv. Customer excellence;
 - v. Community planning and schemes supporting Community Development initiatives and interagency partnerships.
- e. To ensure the monitoring of the experience of NIHE tenants and customers to ensure that their views are reported to the Board.
- f. Agree and approve (under delegated authority from the Board), any grant rate amendments for Private Sector Improvement Scheme (PSIS) grants, up to values of £5 million.
- g. To ensure the monitoring of performance against objectives and Key Performance Indicators in relation to the Supporting People Strategy.
- h. To ensure the monitoring operation of the Housing Selection Scheme.
- i. Provide assurance in relation to the design and provision of homelessness services, including setting and maintaining standards in temporary and other forms of accommodation for people experiencing homelessness.
- j. To ensure the monitoring of the end user experience in relation to tenant and customer satisfaction and in relation to specific NIHE initiatives, for example, Together Building United Communities (TBUC) and in the promotion of community cohesion.
- k. To ensure the monitoring of the performance of the NIHE in terms of Community Planning and schemes supporting Community Development initiatives interagency partnerships.
- l. Report to the Board on the contribution of innovative design and delivery applied to the social housing stock to meet a range of needs and notably in relation to Social Sector Size Criteria.

4.0 Membership

- a. The Committee will comprise three Board Members and up to two Independent Advisers who shall be appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the Board Chair.

- b. Decisions of the Committee are taken by Members, in line with the powers delegated by the Board to the Committee. Independent Advisers do not have a role in decision-making and are not responsible for any decisions taken by the Committee but provide expert advice and guidance to the Committee and its Members.
- c. One of the Board Members of the Tenant and Customer Services Committee will be appointed as the Chair of the Committee by the Board on the recommendation of the Board Chair.
- d. In the event of the Committee Chair not being able to attend a scheduled meeting, the other Members of the Committee should appoint one of the remaining Board Members as a temporary Chair to facilitate the effective management of the meeting. An Independent Adviser should not be appointed a temporary Chair.
- e. The Board reserves the right to rotate Committee Membership at any time;
- f. The Board Chair may attend the Committee as a non-Member.
- g. Any Board Member may attend Committee Meetings in the capacity of an observer, or to assist the Committee with discussions on particular matters.

Role	Membership
Committee Chair	Jim McCall
Committee Member	John McMullan
Committee Member	(Vacant)
Independent Adviser	David Thompson
Independent Adviser	Linda Watson

5.0 Quorum

The quorum of the Committee shall be three Members, namely the Chair (and/or nominated Chair) and two other Members.

In the event of a vacancy or emergency meeting, the quorum of the Committee shall be two Members, namely the Chair (and/or nominated Chair), and one other Member.

6.0 Declaration of Interests

Members and Independent Advisers are reminded of their legal obligations in relation to the disclosure of pecuniary interests as imposed by sections 28, 29 and 146 of the Local Government (NI) Act 1972, as applied to the Board by Schedule 1 of the Housing Order 1981.

- a. A Declaration of Interests Register will be kept and Members and Independent Advisers will be required to declare any interests in accordance with the Code of Practice for Board Members;
- b. Members and Independent Advisers must update the declaration of interests register at least annually, or as changes occur.

Members and Independent Advisers are also reminded of:

- c. The obligation not to misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political profit;
- d. Or to promote their private interests or those of connected persons or organisations.

7.0 Meetings

- a. The Committee shall meet at least four times per year;
- b. The Committee shall meet with the Central Housing Forum (CHF) at least once per year;
- c. The Chair of the Committee may convene additional meetings as deemed necessary;
- d. Notice of Meetings will be given in accordance with Standing Orders and Board Scheme of Delegations;
- e. Officials attending by invitation of the Committee must include:
 - i. Chief Executive;
 - ii. Director of Housing;
 - iii. Director of Regional Services;
 - iv. Other Directors as appropriate;
 - v. Assistant Directors as appropriate; and
 - vi. Any other internal Officer(s) as required.

8.0 Conduct

All Committee Members and Independent Advisers are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life and the same expectations for conduct as set out in the current Code of Practice for Housing Executive Board Members.

9.0 Reporting Responsibilities

The Committee Chair shall provide a verbal update at the next Board meeting. The update to the Board should summarise:

- a. Any specific matter that the Committee wishes the Board to make a decision or provide approval;
- b. An overview of the Minutes; and
- c. Any decisions reached by the Committee in accordance with the executive powers delegated to the Committee.

10.0 Committee Support

The Board and Committee Support Team and other relevant officers will:

- a. Ensure all meeting participants have electronic access to their papers at least one week in advance of all meetings;
- b. Ensure minutes of meetings are drafted and adequately reflect salient points and capture all necessary actions;
- c. Develop and roll-out an Induction Plan for new Committee Members and Independent Advisers;
- d. Facilitate the Committee's annual self-effectiveness review in line with Best Practice;
- e. Facilitate the annual performance appraisal process for Independent Advisers;
- f. Facilitate reviews of the Terms of Reference as required and publishing accordingly;
- g. Ensure appropriate training arrangements are progressed as required.