

Independent Chair of Resident Board

October 2023

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Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in the position as Independent Chair of the Slough Resident Board. The coming year will be an important one for the Board as we seek to further develop its capacity to represent the voice of Slough Borough Council's tenants and leaseholders. The Board has an important role in scrutinising the council's landlord function and working in partnership with the council to improve services.

The current Independent Chair is stepping down after leading the Board from its inception in July 2019 and the council has gone through a period of change over the last two years. We are looking for a new Chair to lead the Board in responding to the changes in landlord regulation with its greater emphasis on tenant satisfaction and to work with the council to develop its approach.

We're currently working on developing our resident engagement strategy, so it is an exciting time to join us and support with bringing the strategy to life. Strengthening resident engagement is a key priority for us and its clear we need to provide range of opportunities to ensure that tenants and leaseholders (residents) can share their views and influence decisions which affect their homes and neighbourhoods. The Social Housing Regulation Act (2023) and upcoming changes to the consumer standards will fundamentally change our relationship with the Regulator of Social Housing. We recognise that collaborative working with residents is the best way to achieve what is required of us, strengthening tenants' rights and ensure a better quality of life and safer homes for tenants and Leaseholders

This Information Job Pack gives a full explanation of the job, which I hope will encourage you to apply for the post.

To apply for this position please supply your CV together with a supporting statement of no more than two pages setting out how you meet the requirements of the role.

Your application should be sent to getinvolved@slough.gov.uk by no later than midday on 23rd October 2023.

Interviews will take place on 31st October and 1st November, shortlisted candidates will also be asked to do a short presentation to the Resident Board on the evening of the 7th November.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Stratford
Director of Housing

How to Apply

Key Dates

Closing date for applications: 23 October 2023 (12:00 noon)

Interviews will be held on: 31st October and 1st November 2023

Meet the Board: 7th November 2023

Reply Details

Your application must reach us by closing date. Applications received after this date will not be considered. Application forms should be returned by:

E-mail: getinvolved@slough.gov.uk

Post: Anita Jan, Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 2EL.

Further Information

Should you have any queries relating to any aspect of this appointment process, or require additional information, then contact getinvovled@slough.gov.uk

Next Steps

If you are selected for an interview, we will contact you by telephone and confirm the details in writing.

If you have not heard from us within 4 weeks of the closing date, please assume that, on this occasion, your application has been unsuccessful.

The council's priorities for 2022-25 are:

- A council that lives within our means, balances the budget and delivers best value for taxpayers and service users.
- An environment that helps residents live more independent, healthier and safer lives.
- A borough for children and young people to thrive.
- Infrastructure that reflects the uniqueness of Slough's places and a new vision for the town centre.

Housing Property & Planning Directorate

The Tenancy Management Service manages some 6,000 tenants and 1,400 leaseholder homes throughout the borough. This includes 400 low rise blocks of flats; 8 de-designated blocks which ten years previously were sheltered housing; 2 tower blocks; with self-contained housing predominantly 2 and 3 bedroomed in nature. There are a further 167 flats and houses belonging to James Elliman Homes which was an affordable housing company set up by the council for key workers and families.

The pandemic and other factors have constrained the council and the overall housing service. Leaving this behind, the council has created a new Directorate containing all services related to social housing to ensure there can be strong governance and focussed improvements on the service being and to be provided to tenants and leaseholders.

Independent Chair of the Resident Board

Job Description

The Role

The Social Housing Bill 2023 has recently received Royal Assent, the Housing Regulator is strengthening Resident Engagement. This means that as a landlord we have to make major changes, ensuring we are listening to our residents and involving them in decision making processes.

Slough Borough Council's Housing Service is currently updating its Resident Engagement Strategy to ensure we have a plan and resource to meet the requirements of the Regulator.

Slough's Housing team is looking to recruit an Independent Chair for the Resident Board. The Board is an important part of the council's governance structures. The Board is responsible for co-regulating, scrutinising, and influencing the Housing Service offer. The Board consists of nine tenants, three leaseholders, a vice chair and an independent chair.

The role of the Independent Chair of the Board is to make sure the voice and experience of the wider tenant and leaseholders customer base is being taken into consideration in decisions that affect them.

They do this by looking at a wide range of sources of information about services to tenants and leaseholders such as performance data, complaints, and survey feedback to provide ongoing challenge. The overall aim is to consider tenant and leaseholder perspective in everything it does.

The Chair must direct, manage, and guide Board members through a significant period of change, raising the profile and visibility of the Board's activities during the three-year tenure.

We are particularly interested in those candidates who have a sound knowledge of housing, but also wider understanding of the commercial, and economic pressures being faced by communities especially those occupying affordable housing.

Requirements

- Working closely with the resident engagement team and in consultation with Board members to coordinate priorities, agendas, dates, and times of meetings.
- Working with the resident engagement team in preparing reports and supporting papers ensuring the Board has the information it needs to effectively co-regulate and scrutinise and influence service priorities.
- To support, guide and develop the Board in matters relating to performance regulatory framework and scrutiny.
- To engage with the Chair of the council's Scrutiny Panel (details on this to be included) on matters of mutual interest and importance.
- 'Support the development of reports to the scrutiny panel based on recommendations made by boards'.
- Willingness to attend up to three Resident Board meetings in person.

Knowledge and skills

- Excellent knowledge of current and upcoming social housing regulation.
- Understanding and knowledge of resident engagement best practice.
- Experience of working within the housing industry with leaseholder and tenant groups.
- Experience of working with tenants and leaseholder groups.
- Understanding of differences and common interests of tenants and leaseholders.
- Experience of engaging with senior officers and elected Members of the Council.
- Ability to communicate with diverse communities.
- Ability to read and understand reports which may on occasions be of a complex nature.
- Ability to provide clear leadership, motivating others to achieve excellent performance.
- Experience of chairing and committee membership.
- IT, presentation, and numerical skills.
- Maintain confidentiality and handle confidential information.
- Knowledge of GDPR.
- Political awareness within a local authority environment.
- Experience of scrutinising performance.

Time required

- Chairing up to 10 evening board meetings per year.
- Working with staff to plan agendas and topics of discussion for Resident Board meetings and Steering groups.
- Preparation and reading time.
- Contribution to annual appraisal and training plan for Resident Board members.

Out of pocket expenses to be paid for travel etc

Scoring criteria.

Experience

Skills

Knowledge

Achievements past and present

Value for money

References two be supplied upon request.



Resident Board Terms of Reference

Purpose of the Board

To monitor and review Slough Borough Council's compliance with the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England.

To co-ordinate the scrutiny of housing services including the identification of topics for resident review, receiving scrutiny reports, and monitoring agreed recommendations.

To make recommendations for improvements to service delivery and policies in respect of the council's landlord service to the council's lead officer for resident engagement and to the council's Scrutiny Panel which oversees resident engagement and landlord services.

To participate in the formulation of policy regarding resident involvement and monitoring the delivery of that service.

Specific Activities

The Resident Board will carry out specific activities to fulfil its purpose and these will include:

- Making decisions about which areas of performance to scrutinise
- Consulting with the wider group of tenants and leaseholders
- Receive reports on performance and service reviews.
- Participate in formulation of the council's resident involvement strategy.
- Monitor delivery of the council's annual resident involvement plan and the annual report to residents
- Review and evaluate the framework for resident involvement.
- Evaluate its own performance annually.
- Review annually the council's assessment of compliance with the regulatory standards
- Report to the council's lead officer for resident engagement and to the Scrutiny Panel which
 oversees resident engagement and landlord services as appropriate on the results of
 scrutiny activities and with recommendations for improvements to service delivery.
- Nominate, each year, the three representatives from the Board to the Scrutiny Panel which oversees resident engagement and landlord services.
- Monitor the delivery of actions arising from scrutiny activity.
- Delegate scrutiny activities to panels or working groups as appropriate.
- Maintain a link with the Lead Member for Housing and will arrange to meet annually to discuss matters of interest and concern.

Key Principles

To fulfil its purpose, the Board will:

- Represent the communities it serves so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Be open and accountable to residents.
- Work in partnership with council officers and elected members
- Ensure the Board operates within its Terms of Reference, Constitution, and the law.
- Ensure that information is shared with all members of the group so that members can carry out their role effectively and to make informed decisions.

Structure of the Board

The Board will have up to 12 members in total including 9 tenants and 3 leaseholders. Membership is open to any tenant or leaseholder of the council subject to the following:

- They have maintained a rent and/or service charge account in credit for the preceding 12 months or have an agreed payment plan in place.
- They have not been subject to any formal or legal action by the Council for any anti-social behaviour or harassment committed in the preceding 12 months by the tenant/leaseholder, any member of their householder or any visitor to the property.
- They are not subject to any other legal action by the council.
- They are not a Councillor or member of staff of the Council.
- Membership is restricted to one person per household.
- Membership may be restricted to one person per scheme/street/area to achieve as wide a representation as possible across the borough.
- The Board will seek to reflect the makeup of the wider resident body in recruitment of members.

The Board may, at its discretion, agree to membership for a member of a tenant's or leaseholder's household on condition that they are over 18 years of age and have lived with the tenant/leaseholder for at least 24 months continuously prior to their application to join the Board.

The Council may recommend membership for a tenant/leaseholder who does not fulfil the above criteria if there are compelling reasons to do so. In no circumstances will the Board be made aware of a proposed Board member's personal situation.

The Board will be chaired by an independent person with the required skills and experience and will be appointed by the council, following consultation with the Board. The Board will elect one of their number as Vice Chair who will deputise for the Chair whenever they are unavailable and will have lead responsibility for scrutiny activity.

Board members may volunteer or be selected by the Board to take key responsibility for an area of work eg Complaints Handling, Performance Reporting, Repairs and Maintenance. The key areas of responsibility will be decided by the Board from time to time and no Board member is required to take on a key role.

Members of the Board should make every effort to attend meetings and to send apologies in advance of the meeting to the Chair or Vice Chair if they are unable to attend. Board Members are required to attend a minimum of 75% of formal meetings per year.

While members are free to be affiliated to or be a member of any political party, pressure group or campaigning organisation they may not represent any such organisation in their role as a member of the Board.

Minutes of meetings will be kept in a format to be agreed by the Board and will, at a minimum, record those present and all decisions taken.

There will be a minimum of 6 Resident Board meetings per year. Additional meetings may also be held as determined by the Board and these meetings may not follow the usual formal structure of Board meetings.

The Term of Service for a Resident Board member is 3 years after which the member must step down but may put themselves forward for re-selection. The maximum number of terms that a resident may serve is three. If there are other candidates applying for selection at the time a member steps down, they will all be considered equally in respect of the Board Member Role Profile and Person Specification.

Each year the Board will hold an Annual General Meeting which will ratify any appointments made to the Board since the last AGM, elect members of the Board including those submitting themselves for reselection, approve the Annual Impact Statement and the Annual Report to Residents.

Conflicts of Interest

Board members will declare any conflicts of interest and will not take part in any Board discussion, be a member of another Panel or inspection/scrutiny activity that relates to the area of interest as per the Board Code of Conduct.

Reporting and Accountabilities

To enable the Board to carry out its role effectively, it is important that it can hold officers to account and that recommendations of the Board are taken seriously.

The Board will therefore:

- Make reports and recommendations to senior officers and to the council with recommendations for changes to services and processes.
- Receive prompt responses from officers to their recommendations.
- Receive regular reports on progress with all recommendations that have been accepted.
- Invite officers to attend Board meetings to report on issues raised by the Board.
- Report regularly to the Scrutiny Panel which oversees resident engagement and landlord services on the work of the Board, any recommendations for that Panel and any problems it faces in carrying out its role.

In doing so, the Board will keep in mind that the relationship with officers is one of mutual respect and partnership.

The Board is accountable for its performance to the council's lead officer for resident engagement and an annual Board appraisal will be undertaken to evaluate the work of the Board as a whole and that of individual Board members.

If a Board member is deemed to be not performing their role to an acceptable standard, they may be asked to step down.

Expectations of the Resident Board

In carrying out its co-regulatory role, there are several specific activities that the Resident Board will undertake. These include:

- Regular (at least quarterly) monitoring of performance information in a form to be agreed between the Board and the council.
- Annual review of the council's compliance with Consumer Standards or any other requirements of the Housing Regulator
- Annual review of the council's compliance with the Complaints Handling Code or any other guidance from the Housing Ombudsman.
- An Annual Impact Statement re resident engagement activity to be compiled by the Board and council officers.
- Participation in Complaints Panels as required by the council's Complaints Policy.
- Approve Annual Report to Residents which will be drafted by the council.
- Contribute to and approve the council's Annual Plan for Resident Engagement.
- Review structure of resident engagement and Board Terms of Reference annually.
- Conduct annual Board appraisals including appraisals of individual Board Members, the Board as a whole and the Independent Chair.
- Contribute to drafting of Resident Surveys and reviewing the resulting action plans.
- Monitor delivery of the action plans resulting from resident surveys.
- Scrutinise specific service areas as deemed necessary by the Board. This may include referrals for scrutiny by council officers.
- Consult with the wider body of residents as appropriate and provide information on Board activities to the resident body.

This list is not exhaustive and may be added to by the council as appropriate and in consultation with the Resident Board.

The Resident Board is accountable to the resident body and to the council in its capacity as coregulator of services.

Expectations of Slough Borough Council

Slough Borough Council recognises the Resident Board's co-regulatory role and commits to assist the Resident Board in its performance of that role.

In particular, the council will:

- Conduct an annual assessment of compliance with Consumer Standards and/or other regulatory requirements.
- Conduct an annual assessment of compliance with the Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code.
- Produce an annual Report to Residents in consultation with the Resident Board
- Prepare an annual Plan for Resident Engagement for approval by the Resident Board
- Prepare an annual Impact Statement in conjunction with the Resident Board
- Carry out regular resident surveys including a survey of all residents at least once every three years.
- Develop an action plan to address issues identified in resident surveys.
- Provide a programme of capacity building/training for residents to enable them to be involved in a meaningful way.
- Provide sufficient resources to enable residents to effectively scrutinise council services.
- Develop a wide range of resident engagement activities to enable as many residents as possible to be involved and/or give feedback.
- Provide residents with the information needed to be able to effectively scrutinise council landlord services.
- Recruit a suitably experienced and skilled Independent Chair for the Resident Board.
- Organise and fully service Resident Board meetings.
- Provide Board members with adequate IT resources to enable it to operate effectively
 which may include portable computer equipment (tablets), means to communicate and
 share resources (eg Microsoft Teams), printing facilities, web portal, information bank.
- Provide information relevant to the work of the Board as requested by the Board or a member of the Board.

This list is not exhaustive and may be added to by the council as appropriate and in consultation with the Resident Board.

The council is accountable to the council and to the Regulator for Social Housing as well as to the resident body in their capacity as co-regulator of services.

Board Member Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct provides a set of guidelines that all members of the Resident Board agree to adhere to whenever they are carrying out their role. Acceptance of the role offered assumes acceptance of these guidelines.

1. General

All Board Members will:

- Promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully or otherwise against any person.
- Treat others with respect.
- Work for the benefit of all residents, setting aside personal interests.
- Not use their position as a Resident Board member to gain or seek undue favour, influence, or benefit.
- Attend at least 75% of Resident Board meetings during any 12-month period.
- Continue to meet the eligibility criteria for Board membership.

2. Confidentiality

The business of the Board may involve dealing with issues, which are controversial, sensitive or confidential in nature. Members of the Board must therefore, exercise discretion and care in performing their duties. Any confidential information that is presented to or discussed by the Board must not be disclosed to anyone apart from members of the group to allow the business of the meeting to take place.

Members of the Board should never disclose or use information they have received by virtue of their membership of the Board for their own personal advantage or that of anyone known to them or to the disadvantage or discredit of the Council or anyone else.

Board members should also respect all individual tenants' confidentiality and should refrain from mentioning specific matters, which may cause embarrassment or the identification of any individual. Prior consent should be obtained from any tenant if it is necessary to make a personal reference to them at any meeting.

Personal information volunteered during any meetings or training sessions must remain confidential.

Members of the Board shall ensure that all paperwork provided to them in connection with this membership should be kept in a secure place and returned to the Council when they cease to be a Board member.

3. Conflicts of Interest

Board members must ensure that private or personal financial interests never influence their decisions and never use their position for personal gain of any sort.

They should disclose to the Chair any direct or indirect financial interest or other interest that could influence their judgement or give the impression that the member is acting for personal motives.

Withdraw from any discussion at a meeting in which the member could be seen to have an interest. If, during a meeting, an item arises in which a member could be regarded as having an interest, they must declare an interest and offer to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of that item.

If asked by the Board to remain, they must not participate in any discussion or voting, unless permitted to do so by agreement of the group.

Members should not gain any special advantage by virtue of their membership if they use the services of a consultant, contractor, professional advisor or other individual or firm employed by Slough Borough Council.

4. General Conduct

- Be considerate. You are working with others as a team so be considerate of how your actions or contribution affects your colleagues and the community.
- Be respectful. Treat one another and members of the community with respect and consideration. Members should recognise and respect that some may have more time to participate than others and that all members can make a valuable contribution to the Board.
- Be collaborative. When you disagree, consult others. When you are unsure, ask for help.
 Nobody knows everything and nor are you expected to be perfect. Asking questions can
 avoid many problems in the future and so questions are encouraged. If you are, asked for
 help, you should be responsive and helpful.
- Be available. Check your e-mails regularly and answer them promptly even if it is just to say when you will be able to respond fully.
- Be honest. Sometimes the hardest thing to say is "no" or admit you have forgotten to do something. Be honest with each other and you concerning what your say and what you can realistically commit to.
- Be tolerant. Differences of opinion are bound to occur from time to time and members should recognise this and respect the differing views. Be prepared to talk the differences through and accept majority decisions made after discussion. Disagreement is no excuse for poor behaviour or poor manners.

5. Conduct of/at meetings (Ground Rules)

For Board meetings to be conducted effectively and, in recognition that members are giving their time on a voluntary basis, the following 'Ground Rules' will apply:

- Read meeting papers before the meeting and bring all relevant papers to the meeting.
- Aim to arrive in good time for the start of the meeting.
- Meetings should start on time and finish at the specified time unless the meeting agrees to carry on.
- Late arrivals should enter quietly and not interrupt the meeting with apologies.
- Turn off mobile phones unless in emergency and only with the Chair or Vice Chair's permission.
- If you need to leave before the finish of a meeting, inform the Chair at the start.

- Speak through the Chair do not interrupt or talk over others and keep to the agenda.
- Follow the guidance of the Chair in the conduct of the meeting.
- Follow the agenda and help each other reach effective solutions and decisions to the issues being discussed.
- Members are there to give their own views and are not representing the views of others.
- Remember that the purpose of the meeting is to benefit residents generally and not specific individuals.
- Respect the views and opinions of other members (even though they may differ from your own views).
- Be courteous and allow each other the opportunity to speak and comment.
- Respect the collective decisions made at meetings.
- Focus on issues and not individuals do not personalise issues.
- Do not hold side conversations whilst the meeting is in progress.
- You can disagree without being disagreeable behaviour and language that is deemed
 offensive or abusive to others is unacceptable.
- Avoid jargon and explain acronyms.
- Do not record meetings or any part of meeting using any audio/video devices without the full consent of all present.
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.

6. Attendance

Members of the Board should make every effort to attend meetings and to send apologies in advance of the meeting to the Chair or Vice Chair if they are unable to attend. A Board member's attendance will form part of the annual appraisal process.

People on every project come and go and the Board is no different. When members leave or disengage from the Board, in whole or in part, they should do so in a manner that minimises disruption to the group. This means they should inform the Chair of the Board or project leader they are leaving and take the proper steps to ensure that others can pick up where they leave off including all paperwork in their possession and briefing, where appropriate, those who will take over from them.

7. Residents' concerns

The nature of being a resident committee member means it is likely that members will occasionally be approached by other residents and asked to represent or be involved in, individual concerns.

It is crucial that committee members recognise the need to behave impartially, and not to get involved in detailed operational matters except where it is relevant for them to do so.

In dealing with matters raised by individual residents therefore, Board members should operate as follows:

• Encourage the enquirer to approach the relevant staff member or team.

- Never take sides with the enquirer there are always two sides to a story.
- Do not get involved with any lobbying for allocations or transfers.
- On complaints about service, encourage the enquirer to raise the matter through the Council's Complaints Procedure.
- If the enquirer raises issues about Council policies, raise the policy issue at a Board meeting or with a member of staff for discussion.
- If you are uncertain how to proceed, contact a member of the local staff team or the Chair of the Board.

8. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

I agree to comply with this Code of Conduct,

If a member breaches the Code of Conduct at a Board meeting, the Chair may warn him/her that, if they break the code again, they may be asked to leave the meeting. If the member continues to breach the Code of Conduct the Chair may ask the meeting to vote on whether the member should be asked to leave the meeting.

Should an issue arise, which means that an existing Board member does not meet the eligibility criteria for Board membership, SBC may notify the Board Chair that the member is to be suspended or removed from the Board.

SBC will require suspension if a Board member is being prosecuted by SBC for Anti-Social Behaviour or other legal action where SBC believe that the Board member could not effectively carry out duties commensurate with the role for the duration of the prosecution.

The instruction will come from the Service Lead to the Chair of the Board (Or Vice Chair if it involves the Chair). Suspension should be considered a neutral act and does not imply any judgement about the legal case.

The Board member may be offered reinstatement to the Board if the prosecution is determined in their favour. If the prosecution is found in SBC's favour the Service Lead may require the Board member to step down.

Any other complaints about breaches of the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Chair (or the Vice Chair in the absence of the Chair) who will investigate and decide whether to recommend that the member should be issued with a warning or whether their membership of the Board should be revoked.

Any such warnings or proposal to end the person's membership of the Board shall be referred to the next Board meeting for decision and the member will be able to present their own case at that Board meeting.

Signed by:	
Name:	Date:

"We Value Diversity "

Slough is one of the most ethnically diverse places in the UK; it also has one of the youngest populations of any large UK town. Promoting inclusion is at the heart of what we do and encompasses all the things which make us different and can influence our opportunities in life. This includes ethnicity, age, gender, disability, religious belief, sexual orientation, gender identity and income levels. Slough Borough Council is committed to delivering high quality services which are accessible to all those who need them, improving outcomes and reducing inequalities between groups.

We do this by:

- Promoting the principles and practices of equality throughout the council's workforce and service delivery.
- Implementing clear internal policies and procedures to address inequality and ensure that employees and service users are not discriminated against based on any protected characteristic.
- Challenging all forms of unfair discrimination and harassment through existing procedures and where relevant enforcing appropriate legislation.
- Promoting good relations between people of different equality groups.
- Ensuring that council policy decisions are fair, proportionate and take account of equalities implications.
- Celebrating diversity.





Job vacancy: Independent Chair of the Resident Board

Salary: £5,000* per year, plus expenses

We are looking for a new Chair for our Tenant and Leaseholder Advisory Board, the key body for providing tenant oversight of the work of Slough Borough Council's housing service.

At the moment, the housing department is working to correct poor practice and improve service delivery to its tenants. The role of Chair of the The Resident Board is critical to helping ensure that change takes place and that council tenants and leaseholders receive the service they deserve from their landlord.

This role is key in making sure the voice of tenants and leaseholders is clearly heard and that improvement is embedded.

Resident

If you are passionate about housing and resident participation, we want to hear from you.

Chair Personal Requirements

- Experience of managing Board agendas and meetings in an effective manner.
- Understanding of the new Housing Regulatory Standards.
- Dynamic and innovative record in shaping tenant and leaseholder involvement in housing.
- Able to prepare relevant documents, including reports, and presentations.
- Experience of leading and promoting training plans for Resident Board members.
- Excellent communication skills and collaborative working to empower and engage with resident board members.

Closing date:

12 noon, Monday 23 October 2023 For more information email: getinvolved@slough.gov.uk

 * Additional uplift in salary might be considered for exceptional candidate

