



Your Homes
Newcastle

Board Succession Plan 2009/2010

Version 1: November 2009

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1 Introduction

The Board has a responsibility to lead the organisation and it is therefore crucial that board members have the right skills, knowledge and behaviours for today's activities and also for future changes and challenges. The Board acknowledges that the skills, knowledge and experience required to lead the organisation will change in response to market developments, requirements, opportunities and challenges.

This plan sets out the actions necessary to retain, develop and recruit board members and by reviewing the plan each year we can be assured that when we recruit we know what the board requirements are, what course of action it is planned to take, when it will be taken and how.

2 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the Board Succession Plan are to:

- ensure that the organisation takes a strategic approach to board continuity;
- demonstrates how Your Homes Newcastle will plan for the future when dealing with board member recruitment, retention and development;
- ensure that effective and efficient governance of the organisation is assured at all times through the board and its committees.

The Plan has four objectives. These are:

1. **The Board possesses the required skills, knowledge and behaviours to enable it to effectively carry out its role:** this relates to annual appraisal and continued development of board members and focussed recruitment addressing any skills gaps.
2. **The Board is representative of the community it serves** – this demonstrates the organisation's commitment to equality and diversity in all that we do and will be monitored by an annual demographic survey.
3. **Board Members receive appropriate learning and development** – this recognises that additional skills might be required for board members. This demonstrates the commitment of the organisation to providing team and individual development opportunities.
4. **To raise the profile of the Board in the community** – this recognises the need to stimulate interest in people wanting to put themselves forward for board membership.

3 Business Planning

As the organisation changes the Board should change to meet new challenges. An effective board is key to the success of the organisation and board members must have the skills, knowledge, experience, and drive to lead the strategic delivery of the organisation's mission and objectives.

Our mission statement

"Your Homes Newcastle intends to be the best housing provider in the North East"

Our strategic objectives determine how we will achieve our mission. They provide the framework for our organisation and determine how our priorities are set and how performance throughout the organisation is measured.

Our strategic objectives

- **S**upport and care to communities
- **T**hree star excellent services
- **A** quality workforce
- **R**efurbishing and building homes

To deliver our mission and objectives, the organisation needs to be well run and well managed: led by a Board that understands its governance responsibilities and that demonstrates its commitment to achievement through actions.

The Board has ultimate responsibility for setting the overall strategic direction of the organisation. The Board's central role is to direct our work and to make decisions that are in the organisation's best interests as well as in the best interests of our customers.

The Board therefore needs the right people and the organisation needs to work to retain them and to continually develop them as individuals and as a Board.

4 Equality and Diversity

The Plan demonstrates how we intend to meet the commitment the organisation has made to the principles of equality and diversity, including working towards a Board that is representative of the communities it serves in respect of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation and religious belief.

Your Homes Newcastle recognises that everyone's needs must be met in different ways and believes that everyone should be treated fairly and with respect in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.

Equality and diversity is at the heart of everything we do on a day to day basis and the Board has a strategic role in developing this culture.

We have a determination to have a Board that is representative of the communities it serves and a Board that has a high level of knowledge and awareness of local issues that affect our diverse communities.

To understand the equality and diversity make-up of the Board we will conduct an annual demographic survey so that we can compare the board profile with that of our customers to help us achieve a board that is representative of the communities we serve.

5 The Governance Structure

Your Homes Newcastle is an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) set up in April 2004 to manage Newcastle City Council's housing stock.

It is managed by a Board made up of six council nominees, six independent members, six tenant members and a Chair who is independent of these three groups.

To support the Board in delivering effective and efficient decision-making there are four committees: Audit; Finance and Resources; Customer and Service Delivery; and Performance. These committees have delegated powers to perform on behalf of Board in relation to functions, matters and services. This committee structure means that the Board can focus on its strategic leadership.

The day to day operational activities of the organisation are managed by the Chief Executive and his Senior Management Team.

6 Board Development

We need to make sure that our Board is equipped with sufficient expertise and knowledge to exercise capable leadership and control of the organisation. We are therefore committed to developing the knowledge and capability of our board members.

Board members undergo a comprehensive induction programme that includes personal development in their roles and responsibilities as company directors. We have an annual learning and development plan and deliver training to meet the needs of the individual. We have a Buddy Scheme in place for new board members and we encourage board members to undertake a Governance Qualification.

We value Board Member appraisal as an integral part of succession planning. This is a valuable tool in reviewing and monitoring the performance of individual members, the Board and its committees. The appraisal process is carried out each year by the Chair of the Board.

The Chair of the Board is appraised each year by a panel of board members.

7 Succession Planning

The Articles of Association set out the rules governing succession through a rotational plan for the three groups of board members with tenants and independent board members standing down from the Board at each Annual General Meeting.

The rotational plan benefits the organisation because there is a level of continuity and consistency within the Board at all times yet it provides an opportunity to refresh the Board with people who can bring new ideas, knowledge, skills and experience.

Your Homes Newcastle has set the maximum time that a board member can serve to three terms, a maximum of nine years.

Board members who are standing down can put themselves forward for re-appointment, if they are eligible to do so. They are considered along with any other people who put themselves forward to the positions of board member.

The table below illustrates how the rotational plan applies to board members:

	AGM 2005	AGM 2006	AGM 2007	AGM 2008	AGM 2009	AGM 2010
Independent	2	2	2	2	2	2
Tenant	2	2	2	2	2	2
Council	The six council nominees are nominated each year by Newcastle City Council at the Council's Annual Meeting in early May.					

It is the Chair's responsibility to lead the Board and therefore it is essential that the Chair has the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to lead the strategic direction of Your Homes Newcastle.

The Chair is appointed by Board in accordance with the Articles of Association. The appointment of the Chair also needs the written approval of Newcastle City Council. The Chair is appointed for a term not to exceed three years. There is no restriction in the Articles as to the number of terms that a Chair may serve; however it would be good practice for the Chair to serve the same number of terms as a board member, that is no more than three terms. On appointment, a Contract for Services is entered into with the Chair. This contract includes the period of appointment and the position on termination.

The Action Plan for future recruitment of a Chair will include a review of the postholder's performance by a panel including board members. The panel will consider the need for a level of continuity and consistency balanced with the opportunity of appointing someone who can bring new ideas, knowledge, skills and experience to the Board. The issues contained in the

Action Plan 'Towards a Representative Board' will be followed in relation to retaining or replacing the Chair.

8 The Action Plan

The Action Plan 'Towards a Representative Board' sets out the issues that have to be taken into account and the processes to be followed in relation to retaining or replacing board members.

9 Review

The Plan will be reviewed each year.

10 Action Plan - Towards a Representative Board

Objective 1: The Board possesses the required skills, knowledge and behaviours to enable it to effectively carry out its role				
	Action	Timetable	Lead Officer	Intended Outcome
1.1	Board Members to complete an appraisal with the Chair of the Board	Annual By 31 July each year	Company Administrator Chair	Review of individual and Board performance and identification of training and development needs (individual and team) to feed into the Board Learning & Development Plan
1.2	Induction programme for new board members including Buddy Scheme	September to December	Company Administrator	To understand board members roles and responsibilities; Familiarisation with the services YHN delivers. Gain confidence and knowledge to contribute to decision making.
1.3	Board Members to complete a self-assessment of skills and knowledge	Annual By January	Organisational Development	To identify skills gaps to guide recruitment
1.4	Advertisements written to highlight the skills needed on the Board	Annual or as required eg: casual vacancies	Company Administrator	To address skills gaps by encouraging new board members with the required skills/knowledge
1.5	Target individuals in the community and professional bodies (such as CBI, Chamber of Commerce, Women into the Network, Business into the Community)	Annual or as required eg: casual vacancies	Company Administrator	To address skills gaps through targeted recruitment
1.6	Advertise vacancies for tenant and independent board members	Annual or as required eg: casual vacancies	Company Administrator	Open recruitment for tenant and independent members. Opportunities to attract wider potential candidates to meet aims of achieving a representative board.

Objective 2: The Board is representative of the community it serves				
	Action	Timetable	Lead Officer	Intended Outcome
2.1	Demographic survey of current board to compare with customer profile in particular age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation and religious belief.	Annual December	Company Administrator /Policy & Research Team	To understand the equality and diversity make-up of the Board compared to our customer profile to achieve a board that is representative of the communities the organisation serves.
2.2	Advertise and promote board membership : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups representation BME, LGB, Young people • Tenants Federation • Tenants & Resident Associations • BME Groups • SIAG • Professional bodies 	As vacancies arise and at appropriate events during the year	Company Administrator	Increase local awareness that appointments to board are open to all.
2.3	Advertisement to include reference to those areas where we are under represented and images, where used, to be representative of the targeted groups	At design of advert	Company Administrator	Increased representation from targeted groups
2.4	Advertise vacancies in local press, website, community housing officers, community centres, voluntary organisations/representative groups	As vacancies arise	Company Administrator	Publicise board vacancies
2.5	Promotion material to be produced in different languages as required	As vacancies arise	Company Administrator	To make sure that we reach a wider audience.
2.6	Advise Newcastle City Council about need for a representative board in terms of the six diversity strands	At time of annual selection	Company Administrator	For NCC to nominate reps who are representative of our customers

Objective 3: Board members receive appropriate learning and development				
	Action	Timetable	Lead Officer	Intended Outcome
3.1	Learning and Development Plan to deliver corporate training (such as equality and diversity; governance) and individual training needs identified at appraisal	Annual End of April	Organisational Development/Company Administrator	To have a Board that is equipped with the skills and knowledge to make strategic decisions to take the organisation forward.
3.2	External conferences	As they arise	Company Administrator Board Members	Encourage board members to look for opportunities to develop their knowledge relevant to their role and to YHN.
Objective 4: To raise the profile of the Board in the community				
	Action	Timetable	Lead Officer	Intended Outcome
4.1	Early approach to raising with board the rotational requirements for board members to stand down	Annual March	Company Administrator	Board continuity
4.2	Advertise board meetings in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homes + People • City Life • Evening Chronicle • Website • Community Housing Offices • Tenants Federation Offices 	Throughout the year	Company Administrator	Increase awareness of the organisation and Board. To encourage/raise public local interest in the work of the Board
4.3	Promote the work of the Board at tenant and leaseholder events and at Neighbourhood Meetings	Throughout the year	Company Administrator Tenant Involvement Leasehold Team Housing Managers	Raise awareness of the Board and opportunities for board membership
4.4	Publish board papers and minutes on website	Throughout the year	Company Administrator	To demonstrate transparency in decision making.
4.5	Articles in Homes + People	Twice yearly	Company Administrator Communications Team	Increase interest in the work of the board and stimulate interest

				in joining the Board
4.6	Hold Board information event and invite potential board members to attend board meetings as observers	Annual	Company Administrator	To promote board membership and understanding of the organisation and role of board members before putting in an application
4.7.	Maintain records of people interested in board membership	Throughout the year	Company Administrator	Draw up a pool of people who are interested in board membership.
4.8	Attend tenant involvement events to promote board membership	When suitable events are programmed	Company Administrator Tenant Involvement	To promote board members and encourage potential board members

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