

# **Shropshire Rural Housing Association**



**SHROPSHIRE  
RURAL HOUSING**  
ASSOCIATION

## **BOARD RENEWAL AND RECRUITMENT POLICY**



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**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the arrangements for recruiting new members to the Board of Shropshire Rural Housing Association.

The policy is consistent with our Rules, our Standing Orders, the Terms of Reference and the Regulator for Social Housing's Code of Governance and Regulatory Standards.

**2. Principles**

The principles underlying this policy are as follows:

**2.1. Accountability**

We should ensure that our business is directed by a Board which reflects the needs and expectations of our members, customers and local communities, and that the Board is accountable to them.

**2.2. Expertise**

Our Board should possess the range of skills as defined in the agreed skills matrix (see appendix 1), experience and objectivity to give effective strategic direction, ensure excellence in governance, deliver good customer outcomes and achieve value for money.

**2.3. Openness**

Interested individuals should have the opportunity to put their names forward as potential members of the Board.

**2.4. Equality**

No eligible individual (as defined in the Code of Conduct) will be excluded from being considered as a potential Board member.

## **2.5. Values**

Board members should operate within the values of the Association and should be respectful of others internally and externally when representing the Association.

## **3. Size and Composition of the Board**

As agreed by the Board and within the adopted rules of the Association, (NHF Rules 2015), the Board will have a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 12 members (including co-optees). The Board has determined that this shall be no less than 7.

We will keep under continuous review the size and composition of our Board in order to ensure that it is able to exercise its responsibilities effectively.

We recognise that having a mix of established and new members on the Board is key to achieving good governance, the Association benefiting from both experience and new ideas. We will also review the mix and composition of the Board in the light of the 9-year rule on Board Membership as defined in the Rules of the Association, and to ensure proactive succession planning.

The in-depth knowledge and understanding of experienced members is vital, however, new members can bring essential objectivity and independence to familiar practices and thinking. We will endeavour to encourage a diverse range of voices within our governance structures. When recruiting we will seek to appoint people with wide ranging skills and competences, including social housing lived experience.

We will aim for a reasonable turnover of the membership of the Board over time to ensure fresh thinking.

Members of the Board must be shareholding members of the Association.

Wherever possible members of the Board will serve on at least one of the Association's Committees (Development and Finance, Housing Management or Human Resources) for at least 1 year months before becoming a Board member.

As a matter of principle, Shropshire Rural Housing Association is committed to ensuring that our tenants have the opportunity to be actively involved in the running of the organisation. In pursuit of this principle, we will provide information, support and training to tenants who are interested in becoming involved in the Committees and Board.

## **4. Routes to becoming a member of the Board**

In seeking to recruit new members of the Board, we will:

- 4.1. Use the annual board appraisal and skills matrix, to identify skills and expertise gaps on the Board, and seek to fill these through a process of advertising and co-option;
- 4.2. Consider targeted advertising for vacancies where specific skill gaps have been identified

## **5. Co-option**

The Board can co-opt anyone to the Board that it considers suitable to become a Board Member. Co-optees do not need to be members of the Association, but they can only serve as co-optees on the Board until the next annual general meeting or until removed by the Board. A person co-opted to the Board can also serve on one of the committees.

Co-optees may take part in the deliberations of the Board and vote at meetings on all matters except those directly affecting membership of the Association or the election of officers. Not more than two such persons shall serve on the Board or any committee at any one time.

The Board will regularly consider whether there is the need for co-option to fill identified needs (skills and competencies) and how identified vacancies should be filled. This may include targeted approaches to suitable individuals and targeted advertising/specific approaches.

## **6. Promotion of Board and Committee Membership Opportunities**

We will promote the opportunity to become a member of the Board or Committee through the use of:

- Advertisements in the local press or relevant trade journals;
- Targeted advertising or promotion;
- 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;
- Registration with any relevant registers of potential members;
- Articles in our newsletters and website.

In each case we will invite enquiries from interested individuals.

The advertisement or circulated information will identify any particular skills or areas of experience where gaps have been identified, and will in particular invite applications from underrepresented groups. The advertisement will also advise which of the Committees, prospective Board members will join in advance of joining the Board.

Those enquiring will be issued with a recruitment pack, consisting of the following:

- Information on Background and History of Shropshire Rural Housing Association;
- Explanatory information on becoming a Board member;
- Board Member Role Description;
- Committee structure;
- Details of how to apply which will include an up to date CV and covering letter or personal statement;
- An Equal Opportunities monitoring form (which will be processed separately from any application).

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 Chief Executive, who will issue the recruitment pack as described above.

Completed application forms will be sent to the Association's offices, and the Chief Executive will review the applications with a view to confirming eligibility.

Eligible applicants will then be invited to attend a meeting with the Chair of the Association and Chief Executive. The Chair may invite an additional Board member (or members) to participate if appropriate. For example, the Chair of one of the Committees.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Confirm the applicant's eligibility to act as a member of the Board and Committee;
- Establish the applicant understands the role of Board/Committee member;
- Establish the potential contribution likely to be made by the applicant, in the light of the skills, knowledge and experience sought by the Association;
- Answer any questions from the applicant;
- Explain the potential benefits of having an experienced Board/Committee member supporting and mentoring the applicant, if successful.

Following the meeting, the Chair will report to the next Board meeting on the outcome of the meeting(s) with a recommendation as to which (if any) applicant(s) be appointed.

## **7. New Board and Committee Members**

New Board and Committee members (whether elected or co-opted) will receive a letter of welcome. Accompanying this letter, will be an Induction Pack, consisting of the following:

- The Association's Rules
- The Association's Standing Orders
- The Association's governance policies, including (but not necessarily confined to) the following:
  - Code of Governance
  - Code of Conduct
  - Equal Opportunities Policy
  - Confidentiality Policy
  - Board/Committee Expenses Policy
  - A copy of the Association's Whistleblowing Policy;
  - The organisation's structure chart
  - A schedule of Dates for Board and Committee meetings and work plans
  - Board and Committee Terms of Reference
  - Board appraisal and skills matrix documents
  - A copy of the Regulatory Framework for RSLs;

New Board or Committee members will be required to sign the Code of Conduct. Acceptance of the terms of the Code is a requirement, and membership of the Board or Committee will not take effect until the Code has been signed.

The Board may appoint an experienced member of the Board or Committee to support and where necessary mentor the new Board member during the first six months of his/her tenure. Mentoring will consist of being available to answer queries on the role of the Board and its members, advice on procedures and conduct, and support to ensure that the new member is comfortable with his/her responsibilities.

The new member will receive a structured induction programme, tailored to his/her needs, and be expected to engage positively in the board appraisal process.

## **8. Equal Opportunities**

We are committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and will not discriminate in the operation of this policy on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, family circumstances, political or sexual orientation, medical condition or disability. We aim to promote equal opportunities and comply with all current legislation.