

Guidelines For Elections Of Tenant Representatives To The Board of Brent Housing Partnership

Introduction

These guidelines cover the procedures and rules governing the election of tenant representatives to the Board of Brent Housing Partnership. The definition of ‘tenant’ for the purposes of these elections means an individual who holds a secure tenancy or lease of a residential property from and occupies a property belonging to Brent Council. There are six tenant representatives on the Board of Brent Housing Partnership, not less than one of which and not more than two of which will be leaseholders.

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that:

- An election is held every three years, leading to the filling of any vacancies, for tenant members on the Board of BHP.
- The outcome of the election is known before the AGM of BHP.
- The constitution of BHP requires that all tenant members retire at the first annual general meeting, three at the third annual general meeting and then three at the sixth annual general meeting and so on with three retiring every three years.
- For the purposes of the election the borough will be divided as follows:
 - four geographical areas for tenant nominations
 - two geographical areas for leaseholder nominations
- Requests for nominations from specific areas will be dependant upon the number of vacancies occurring, whether the vacancy is a leaseholder or tenant and in which area the vacancy(ies) occur(s).
- Every qualifying Brent Council tenant is given the right to stand, and cast a vote, in the annual election process. Every qualifying Brent Council tenant may vote for the nominations within their area.
- All the tenants standing in the election have the necessary skills and attributes required to serve on the Board of BHP or have the ability to acquire such skills in a relatively short period of time.
- That the Ballot process be conducted independently of BHP.

Responsibility for the smooth running of the election process will be with the Company Secretary of Brent Housing Partnership.

These guidelines cover:

- The Election process.
- The Rules covering the election process.
- Guidance for candidates' interviews.
- Information to be provided to candidates at interview.
- The skills required by candidates to stand in the election.
- Supporting documentation

The Procedure

The Company Secretary will determine the number of Tenant Member vacancies, if any, to be filled 14 weeks prior to the date of Brent Housing Partnership's AGM.

The Company Secretary will arrange for a ballot to be held, to fill the vacancies, the results of which will be no later than 17 days before the BHP AGM.

The Company Secretary will then run the election as follows.

Table One: Election Procedure

Week Number	Event
1	Determine number of vacancies and areas to be filled. The results of the ballot to be available at least 17 days before the BHP AGM.
2	Prepare leaflet to advertise the election in consultation with Press Officer to invite nominations from all qualifying Brent Council tenants. Liaise with BHP's Communications Officer for notification of the election to appear in the Local Press and Tenants Newsletter or another suitable alternative.
3	Copy of text to printers, appointment of independent ballot servicing organisation and ordering of tenant address labels.
5	Arrange with distribution company to send leaflets to all qualifying Brent Council tenants.
5 – 9	Time for tenants to notify BHP of their wish to stand and receive help to fill in their nomination papers and election statements.
10 – 12	Interview of candidates by representatives of the BHP Board, together with the Company Secretary, to inform candidates about the role and duties of the Board and its members, answer any questions and confirm that the candidate has the necessary skills to serve as a BHP Board

	member or has the ability to gain such skills.
12	Address labels and candidates details to the Electoral Reform Ballot Society.
13	Ballot forms out to tenants.
14	At the end of week 14, giving tenants 14 days to return their ballot papers, the close of ballot and count will take place.
14	Managing Director, Directors, Board Members and all candidates informed of election results.
15	Text for next Tenants Newsletter, informing all tenants of the ballot result, to Press Officer.

Rules Covering The Election Process.

The rules governing the election process are as follows:

- 1 The election will be held every three years and be completed at least 17 days before the BHP AGM.
- 2 The purpose of the election is to fill tenant vacancies on the BHP Board resulting from the retirement of Board Members.
- 3 Retired tenant members may stand for re-election.
- 4 All council tenants, over the age of 18 years, are eligible to stand for and vote in the election process.
- 5 Notification of the election will be sent to all households via BHP's Tenants Newsletter, Local Press and/or a special mailing arranged for that purpose.
- 6 Tenants will be given 2 weeks to return their completed nomination forms and must provide the following information:
 - Their name address and contact details
 - Their date of birth
 - Any further information required for Equal Opportunities monitoring purposes.
- 7 Candidates will be given the opportunity to provide an election statement, which will be sent out with the ballot forms, of up to 400 words. Candidates will be given assistance in preparing this statement if they request it. Candidates will be given a least one-week to provide this statement. Whilst candidates will be permitted a considerable degree of latitude in the style of their statements, BHP reserves the right to edit any statement which, in its view, is libellous or racially or sexually inflammatory.

- 8 Candidates will be invited to an interview with representatives of the Board of BHP and the Company Secretary. Attendance at the interview will be compulsory. Part of the interview will be used to assess if the candidate has the skills, or the capacity to develop the skills, required by a Board member. If the candidate is unable to do this then they will not be able to stand in the current election but will be offered assistance to gain the necessary skills to stand in subsequent elections.
- 9 Current Tenant Board Members who are re-standing in the election process will not be required to be interviewed and will automatically go through to the ballot. (Board decision 26.06.03)
- 10 The postal ballot process will be conducted by an organisation, which is independent of BHP. Tenants will be given at least 2 weeks to cast their vote and be provided with a stamped addressed envelope in which to return their ballot papers.
- 10 Where only one nomination is received this person will be elected by default.
- 11 In the case of a tie the winner will determined by the drawing of lots.
- 12 In the case that no-one comes forward for the ballot then the vacancy will be filled by way of co-option by the BHP Board in consultation with the Area Housing Boards, or any other body which the BHP Board believes to be representing the interest of BHP tenants.
- 13 Inviting the unsuccessful candidate who gained the next highest number of votes to join the committee, subject to the agreement of the Board of BHP, will fill casual vacancies, occurring between elections.
- 14 The decision of the Board of BHP regarding the interpretation of these rules will be final.

Guidance For Candidates Interviews

It will be compulsory for all candidates to attend this interview as part of the qualification criteria to stand in the election. The aims of the interview are as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for candidates to gain a better understanding of their potential responsibilities as Board Members, and what assistance will be available to them to help them successfully fulfil this role.
- For an assessment to be made which will ensure that the candidate has the skills, or the ability to gain the skills, required by a successful Board member.

Representatives of the BHP Board with the support of the Company Secretary, will carry out the interview.

The interview will be held in a relaxed and informal manner.

If it is felt that the candidate does not have, or would not be able to reach the minimum skill level required, in a relatively short period of time, then the candidate would not be allowed to go onto the ballot paper for this election. The candidate would be offered training and support, by the relevant Principal Community Initiatives Officer to develop their skills in time for the next election.

Information To Be Provided to Candidates At Interview

During the course of the interview candidates should be provided with the following information:

An explanation of:

- The role and responsibilities of a Board member
- The Role of the Board and its committees
- The number and format of Board meetings
- The support available to Board members

Skills Required By Candidates Wishing To Stand In the Election

The Community Housing Task Force's Governance Resource Pack contains criteria for the performance of ALMO Boards and covers many skills and competency requirements. Some of these skills are required by all Board members while others skills may be simply enjoyed by some individual Board members. When devising the minimum skills required from a potential new Board member consideration has been given to the Governance Standards. It is important to note that candidates standing do not need to demonstrate that they have already gained the full range of skills required by Board members. However, as a minimum they must be able to demonstrate that they have the potential to gain the minimum skills required in a relatively short period of time.

After the interview process the following form should be completed. In order to qualify to have their name placed on the ballot paper the candidate must be able to demonstrate that they have/or are likely to have at least 4 of the skills listed in the form.

Skills [or competencies]	What Does It Include?	Does this person have the skill or the ability to gain this skill?
To be able to work as a Team Member.	Develop and maintain constructive working relationships with colleagues.	
To be able to assess own training needs.	Identify skills and knowledge required. Identify own strength's and weaknesses.	
To be able to plan and review activities.	Agree work objectives. Plan activities. Contribute to decision making. Review progress.	
To be able to assess options.	Obtain and assess information. Decide on a course of action	
To be able to contribute to consultation process.	Identify people who need to be consulted. Identify appropriate methods of consultation. Ensure consultation is organised effectively. Evaluate and review events.	
To be able to exercise financial control.	Evaluate and review financial information. Contribution to the implementation of financial policies. Monitor and control activities against budget.	
To be able to be an effective committee member.	Time and commitment to attend meetings. Commitment to read papers in advance and evaluate information provided. Make effective contributions to the decision process.	
To be able to negotiate and monitor housing services.	Interpret performance data. Review performance.	
To be able to present information – written and spoken.	Organising and presenting information.	
To be able to Establish and maintain working relationships with other organisations.	Identify and contact other organisations. Develop working relationships. Deal with conflict.	

To be able to understand the legal framework of the Board.	Operate within the Constitution. Raise matters in an appropriate manor.	
Ability to develop Human Resources Policies.	Identify human resource policy issues. Assess relevant information. Discuss options. Decide policies.	
Ability to contribute to Marketing and Communication Strategies.	Identify marketing opportunities. Take part in marketing activities. Actively help to promote BHP	

Supporting Documentation

- Letter to tenants seeking to be candidates.
- Application form to prospective candidates.
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring Information.

Date....

Dear,

Election of Tenants Representatives To Brent Housing Partnership Board

Thank you for requesting a nomination form to stand in the above elections. Please find enclosed a nomination form together with a stamped addressed envelope for its return.

You should complete the form and return it to the above address no later than XXXXXXX.

If you would like to make an election statement, which will be sent to all the tenants voting in this election, this can be arranged. Simply attach your election statement to your nomination form.

The election statement must be no longer than 400 words. It would normally give a little background information about the candidate and why they are standing for election. It must not contain anything, which is libellous or racially or sexually inflammatory.

Your statement can be hand written or typed but must be in a legible form. If you would like any help in preparing your statement I would be happy to arrange this. If this should be the case please contact me on the above telephone number and I will make all the necessary arrangements. If I should be out when you call leave a message on my answering machine, with your phone number, and I will return your call as soon as I can.

As part of the election process you will be given the opportunity to meet a representative of the BHP Board. At this meeting you will receive information on the duties of a Board member and what help is available to support Board members. It is also a good chance to answer any of your questions. All candidates standing in the election must attend this meeting.

The Electoral Reform Balloting Service will run the election process. The ballot forms will be sent out to tenants in the XXX week of XXXX and the results made known by XXX. The Electoral Reform Balloting Service will inform you of the ballot result, in writing, on or about that date.

If you have any questions, or feel that I can help you in any way, please get in touch.

Yours Sincerely,

Linda Footer
Company Secretary

Nomination Form For Tenant Representatives To The Brent Housing Partnership Board

Please fill out this form and return it to Linda Footer,
Company Secretary, BHP, 1B Dyne Road, Kilburn, London
NW6 7XG in the envelope provided.

By XXXXXX

I am a tenant of Brent Housing Partnership and I wish to stand as a tenant representative to the Board of Brent Housing Partnership. **Note: the definition of tenant for the purposes of vacancies on the BHP Board means an individual who holds a secure tenancy or lease of a residential property from and occupies a property belong to the Council Member.**

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Post code.....

Day Time Telephone Number.....

Evening Telephone Number.....

Date of Birth.....

I am / am not attaching an election statement with this application form.
[Please delete as necessary.]

Signed..... Dated.....

Please turn over the page as there is more information overleaf.

Tenant Election Process Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

As part of BHP's Equal Opportunities Policy we will be monitoring the tenant election process. To assist in this we would be grateful if you would complete and return this form to:

The Company Secretary
BHP
1B Dyne Road,

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

- ◆ Answer **both** sections
- ◆ Tick one box in each section

Section 1

Asian	
Caribbean	
African	
South East Asian	
British/European	
Irish	
Chinese	
Pakistani	
Indian	
Bangladesh	
Combination of Above	
Other [please write in]	
Question refused	

Section 2

Black	
White	
Mixed	
Not known	
Other [please write in]	
Question refused	