



## **Code of Governance**

### **Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation**

#### **Introduction**

We are an established Tenant Management Organisation and have been successfully managing council owned housing stock since 2006. Operating as a tenant-controlled organisation led by a board of 11 directors consisting of tenants, owner occupiers and co-opted members we deliver a service designed by local people for local people

#### **Our mission**

‘By listening to our community and putting people first we will work together to make Dovecotes a better and safer place where people want to live’.

In doing this our TMO

- acts in accordance with our Constitution, and
- promotes inclusion, equality and respect for diversity in accordance with our equality and diversity policy
- represents and protects the interests of all members of the Company, collectively and individually, with regards to their dealings with the City of Wolverhampton Council.
- provide services of every description in relation to the Dovecotes Estate and to maintain, repair, renew, redecorate, repaint, clean, construct, alter and add to the estate.

## Leadership

Our Management Board are in control of the business. Board members must work together, in the interest of the TMO as a whole.

The Board is responsible for all actions taken by the TMO. This includes the responsibility to ensure that the TMO acts in accordance with the law and regulations and with its contracts, including its management agreement with the City of Wolverhampton Council. The Board will therefore make sure that it is fully aware of its legal responsibilities and will seek expert advice where necessary, for example concerning health, safety and employment.

Action on behalf of the TMO can only be taken as authorised in the Board minutes where all decisions are recorded. The Board decides who can make decisions, and act, on behalf of the TMO. This authority may be given to any of

- Officers and Board members,
- staff,
- sub committees and working groups of members, and
- agents and contractors.

The Board records delegated authority in its scheme of delegation which is regularly reviewed and kept up to date. Where authority or responsibility is given to Officers or to a subcommittee or other group, the Board agrees written terms of reference clearly showing what this authority or responsibility is and what records and reports are to be produced. TMO staff are recruited, appointed and instructed by the Board and act only with the authority of the Board in accordance with their job descriptions and the TMO's staffing procedures.

If a decision is needed that is not authorised in accordance with delegated powers, then the matter is referred to the Board for decision.

In an emergency, essential action may be authorised by the Chief Officer. Such cases must be reported to the next Board meeting which will consider if the action was justified by a genuine emergency and whether policies or schemes of delegation should be reviewed.

The Board meets regularly not less than 6 times per year. In conducting its business, the Board follows its code of conduct.

At meetings, the Board

- considers business on the agenda, and
- receives reports which enable it to monitor the performance of the TMO.

To prepare properly, Board members receive

- written reports and information to help make decisions after considering facts and options, and
- training including using national and local training programmes when available

The TMO's Officers include a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, who are appointed or elected in accordance with the Constitution. Their roles, and the method of selection, are in the Officers' role descriptions.

Board members, officers and staff may not receive money, goods or services except for

- expenses paid in accordance with the expenses policy, and
- salary paid to staff under contracts of employment.

Any other gifts or benefits must be recorded in the register of gifts and hospitality.

A conflict of interest is any situation where a Board member (including a close relative or friend, or an organisation which the Board member belongs to) might make a gain from a Board decision, over and above the ordinary benefit to any user of the TMO's services. These conflicts of interest are dealt with in accordance with our conflicts of interest policy

The Board is in control of the TMO's finances. The Board sets a budget each year and reviews income and expenditure compared with this budget. No goods or services may be ordered, and no money spent without Board approval. The Board delegates authority to receive, commit and spend money in accordance with its financial standing orders. The Board is responsible for ensuring that accounts are prepared, audited and presented in accordance with the law and the TMO's standing orders and management agreements, that the TMO manages its income and expenditure properly and legally, and that we plan and conduct TMO business to ensure good value for money with accountability to members, residents and landlords.

All actions and decisions must be in accordance with the TMO's policies. These are periodically reviewed to ensure that they are up to date and complied with.

The Board reviews and monitors the TMO's activity and performance through the routine reports presented regularly to Board meetings. These reports include ways to measure the performance of the TMO.

To ensure that a competent Board will continue into the future, the Board has a succession strategy. It regularly reviews its own membership and seeks to recruit new members by

- co-opting where necessary to ensure that the Board has the skills it needs, and
- encouraging participation and attracting new candidates to stand for election

The Board is responsible for all staff, agents and contractors working on behalf of the TMO. Staff are recruited and employed in accordance with the TMO's policies and procedures and

their contracts of employment. The Board ensures that staff are properly supervised, supported, trained and rewarded, and are given clear and realistic objectives in line with the Board's plans and strategies.

Contractors and agents are recruited in accordance with the TMO's procurement policies and procedures. They have written contracts or terms of reference and are suitably insured for their liabilities to the TMO.

The Board recognises and values the services of all the TMO's staff, contractors and agents, and regularly monitors and reviews their powers and performance.

## **Communication**

The Board is open about its business. We consult about services, priorities, significant changes and future plans and strategy. We listen and answer to the people and bodies who are entitled to take an interest in our business:

- our members,
- residents of the homes we manage,
- landlords, and
- the wider community

All TMO documents are public and are available on request, *except* for any information that is properly kept private and is therefore covered by the TMO's code of confidentiality.

The constitution says who is entitled to become a member, and how members are accepted. We seek to attract as many people as possible to become members, in accordance with the membership policy. Members hold us to account by

- electing the Board, and
- being able to attend General Meetings (meetings of all members) which take place in accordance with the constitution.

Residents are the people who live in the homes we manage, especially including tenants and leaseholders who have legal rights to occupy homes and to become members of the TMO. The Board encourages all eligible people to become members with a vote at General Meetings. The Board regularly reviews its success in achieving maximum membership.

Where residents choose not to apply for membership, this does not alter our commitment to ensuring that all tenants, leaseholders and other users of our services enjoy the best possible standards and opportunities for consultation.

Residents can scrutinise the services they receive, by checking published information including performance results and the TMO's annual report. Residents are encouraged to

give feedback on the services they receive through meetings and consultation, and to make complaints in accordance with the Complaints Policy.

The Board may also offer formal, independent scrutiny arrangements so that tenants and leaseholders may review performance and services, and make recommendations for the Board to consider.

We manage services on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council in accordance with our management agreement. Under this agreement, we provide reports and information so that the landlord can monitor our performance. The Board responds promptly and openly to requests, suggestions and proposals from the City of Wolverhampton Council, and take part in formal liaison arrangements.

We are a democratic, community organisation responsible for spending public money on local services. While working primarily for the benefit of our members and residents, we aim also to promote harmony and a good quality of life in the wider community. We support participation in shaping services in our neighbourhood. We respond promptly and willingly to comments and requests for information from members and officers of public authorities. We strive to promote an inclusive, democratic society and to serve the national movement for tenant management.

We work with;

- the City of Wolverhampton Council
- West Midlands Police
- the National Federation of TMOs
- PALS
- Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Wolverhampton Homes (ALMO)
- Local educational bodies
- Dove family centre
- Local charities and other 'not for profit' organisations
- Foodshare and local foodbanks

## **We are Strategic**

The Board thinks about and sets the TMO's strategy.

We consider and review plans, objectives, resources and governance, taking account of opportunities to improve and grow services, and of pressures from inside and outside. We look ahead. Our strategy is based on a realistic view of the resources available to us – money, people and our ability to manage. We try to use these resources as effectively as possible to achieve our objectives.

We prepare an annual business plan with aims and objectives for each year, working towards our longer term strategic aims. Our annual business plan takes account of our budget, our available cash, our staffing and contracting arrangements, and our methods for controlling and directing these. We aim to get the best use from the resources we have available. We consider risks and plan to provide resources to cope with these risks. Where we are able to build up reserves and surpluses, we use these prudently to secure our future and to provide improved or extra services, in line with priorities set by residents through consultation, as allowed by our constitution and our management agreements.

Our strategy, policies and annual business plan are used to guide staff and others responsible for day to day work.

We monitor performance and progress against our strategy and annual business plan, and revise details accordingly.

We consult on and publish our strategy and we encourage comment and discussion about how well we are doing in meeting it.

We keep our own performance, as a Board, under review. We regularly review and assess our work to check that we are working in accordance with this Code of Governance and that we have the skills and knowledge required to operate as an effective board. We develop action and training plans to address issues that are identified in the review.

#### Document Control

<b>Date Adopted</b>	<b>Review Required</b>	<b>Initials</b>
28/08/2019	July 2021	JC TMO Chair