



BOARD MEMBER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Policy Classification: Board

Status: Approved

Policy Lead:	Chief Executive Officer
Last Review Date:	June 2022
Review Due Date:	June 2025
Review Period:	3 years unless required earlier due to changes in the law, regulation, best practice or requirement of the Association

REFERENCE PAGE

Document Title:	Board member Recruitment Policy
Aim:	To recruit people with the right skills and experience to carry out the role of Board member.
Objective:	1 The Eildon Group will ensure that the highest standards of governance and partnership working are adhered to, including compliance with our regulatory frameworks
Scope of Policy:	Board Members
Nominated Officer:	Governance Officer
Approval Source:	Board
Legal and Regulatory References:	Eildon Housing Association Rules
Procedural References:	Eildon Housing Association Standing Orders
Consultation Completed:	N/A
Risk Implications:	1- Existing policy, minimal change
Equalities Assessment:	All Eildon policies and key documents are developed with the clear objective of ensuring that they do not discriminate against any person and have negative impacts for equality groups. We will always welcome comments on the impact of a policy on particular groups of people in respect of, but not limited to, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation, being pregnant or on maternity leave and children's rights and wellbeing.
Accessibility:	Accessible electronically/online and in print. All documents can be translated and made available in audio, braille and large print versions upon request.

Board Member Recruitment Policy

Introduction

Our Board has responsibility for leading and directing Eildon Housing Association. As a registered social landlord and a Scottish charity, it is vital that we have people with the right skills and experience to carry out this critical role.

We will therefore:

- Be clear about the mix of skills and experience necessary for our Board to operate effectively, and we will re-assess these annually
- Annually assess the skills and experience which Board Members currently hold and match these against the skills and experience we need
- Identify gaps between the skills and experience required and those currently held
- Take steps to fill those gaps by a mix of:
 - Structured training and development programmes for the Board as a whole and/or for individual Board members
 - Recruitment (through election at the AGM and by co-option during the year) of additional members in an open and transparent way
- Ensure a process of succession planning is in place, to protect and enhance the skills and experience held by individuals in the event of their departure from the Board
- Support the work of the Board through organisational measures in order to make the most of the contributions made by voluntary Board Members.

This Policy sets out the steps we will take to secure additional skills through recruitment; but as indicated above it forms part of a range of governance measures designed to sustain and increase the capacity of the Board.

What we are looking for

We are looking for individuals to serve as Board Members who can demonstrate the following:

- A commitment to supporting the local communities that Eildon engages with or the needs of our customers and service users through the provision and development of high quality housing, housing related services, social care services and
- A willingness to work as a member of a team which has responsibility for leading and directing the work of Eildon.

In addition, prospective members should have knowledge, skills and experience of **at least one** of the three areas listed below.

- **Local Knowledge:** for example, awareness of the housing and social care needs in the areas we work in, knowledge of local issues in the Borders and the people who live here; awareness of concerns facing the Association's customers, familiarity with Scottish Borders Council's plans, priorities and practices.
- **Business Skills and Knowledge:** for example, strategic and business planning, Personnel or Human Resource issues, financial planning and control, monitoring and control of performance, corporate management/administration or legal experience.
- **Specialist Housing, Social Care and Related Knowledge:** for example, knowledge of housing management and maintenance, housing-related legislation, Regulatory Framework for Scottish RSLs, Caee Inspectorate Requirements, OSCR's requirements, housing finance, equal opportunities, energy efficiency, renewables, regeneration and rural issues.

It is not expected that every member will be an 'expert' in all or even most of these areas. We are looking primarily for those who feel they have a contribution to make to the work of the Association and who can offer relevant knowledge and/or experience; we will ensure that Board Members, once serving on the Board, have the opportunity to enhance their existing skills and knowledge through development and training.

We are committed to equality of opportunity in the way our Board operates. We welcome applications from all individuals, irrespective of age, gender, racial origin, sexual orientation and disability. We are particularly anxious to provide opportunities for involvement from individuals who are under-represented in public life or who are currently under-represented on our Board. This however will not take precedence over the need to have people with the right skills and experience.

What Board Members get out of being involved

As a voluntary organisation, we do not provide payment to members of the Board. However, that does not mean to say that Board Members get nothing in return for their time and commitment. Amongst the rewards from being a Board Member are:

- The satisfaction of helping improve the lives of local people
- The satisfaction of contributing to an organisation committed to improving the quality of life of its customers and communities
- The satisfaction of helping to sustain and promote local communities
- The opportunity to develop knowledge and personal skills
- The opportunity to work in a stimulating and mutually supportive environment
- The chance to socialise with others with a shared commitment
- The opportunity to stand for one of the office bearer positions

Recruitment

In addition to developing the skills and knowledge of existing Board Members, we will seek to recruit to fill gaps identified through the annual Board review process. Recruitment will be carried out in accordance with our constitution and will take the form of co-option (the number of co-optees is limited to one-third of the elected membership of the Board) or the filling of casual vacancies left by the retirement of existing Board Members. Recruitment does not supersede the rights of shareholding members to seek election to the Board at the AGM.

Annually, we identify the skills, experience and expertise required to lead and direct Eildon's affairs. Through recruitment, we will attempt to fill any gaps which have been identified: these are set out in the checklist which is attached as a schedule to this Policy. These are the current priorities which we are looking to fill by recruiting new Board members.

We will also seek to identify any current groups which are underrepresented on our Board, with reference in particular to age, gender, ethnic origin and disability, in pursuit of our commitment to equal opportunities.

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

- Advertisements in the local press and specialist housing press/professional journals where appropriate
- Circulation of information to:
 - partner organisations and other stakeholders
 - tenant organisations and community groups
 - members of the Association
 - local business interests and their representatives
 - educational establishments connected to the Borders
 - other voluntary organisations and social enterprises

In each case inviting enquiries from interested individuals.

The advertisement will highlight the particular skills and areas of experience where gaps have been identified.

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

- Information on Background and History of Eildon Housing Association
- Explanatory information on the process of becoming a Board Member
- Board Member Role Description
- Itemised checklist of the skills, knowledge and other qualities sought (see Schedule 1 appended).

- Application form, which asks for information on the areas of skills, knowledge and experience which the applicant can offer, and for personal information to allow equal opportunities monitoring.

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 Officer, who will issue the recruitment pack as described above.

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

Eligible applicants will then be invited to attend an informal meeting with the Chief Executive Officer and one or more members of the Board (of whom one will normally be the Chair). The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Confirm the applicant's eligibility to act as a member of the Board
- Establish the applicant's understanding of the role of Board Members, including the likely time commitment involved
- Establish the potential contribution likely to be made by the applicant, in the light of the skills, knowledge and experience sought by Eildon
- Answer any questions from the applicant
- Explain the potential benefits of having an experienced Board Member supporting and mentoring the applicant, if successful.

The applicant will be informed of the result of the meeting as soon as possible afterwards. This will depend on the number of candidates being interviewed. We will aim to inform candidates, wherever possible, within 5 working days.

Successful applicants will be invited to attend a meeting of the Board as observers before their membership of the Board is confirmed.

Co-opted members of the Board are encouraged to become shareholding members of the Association, but this is not a requirement. Co-opted members cannot vote on matters relating to the membership of the Association or the election of office bearers; nor can they themselves stand for election as office bearers. They can only serve as co-optees on the Board until the AGM following their co-option, at which point they must, if they wish to continue to serve as members of the Board apply for membership of Eildon (if not already a member) and stand for election.

The process described above may also be used to fill casual vacancies left by the retirement or resignation of existing Board Members during the course of the year. Under the Association's Rules, an individual filling a casual vacancy must first become a Member of the Association.

Skills Audit

When new members are first appointed or nominated to the Board, they will be invited to a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer and Chair in order to find out more about the skills and experience they have to offer; this will form part of the induction programme. We want to make sure that we are able to recognise and build on what new Members have to offer, and to identify any immediate priorities for further training and development.

Thereafter there will be an annual opportunity for each member to update this assessment through an annual review. This will be linked to an assessment of the contribution and effectiveness of individual Board Members to Eildon's governance. On the basis of this review, we will draw up a structured training and development programme. Training and development opportunities will be pursued under the terms of our Board member Development Policy.

The Policy will be reviewed every 3 years or unless required through a change in legislation or circumstance.

Schedule 1

Checklist of Skills, Knowledge and other Qualities (to be reviewed annually at the Board Strategic Planning event)

1. **Knowledge and Understanding:** we are looking for individuals able to demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Strategy and policy
- Business planning
- Community planning
- Service delivery
- Engagement with tenants
- Asset management
- Responsibilities to owners
- Procurement and contract management
- Housing support
- Economic development and/or regeneration
- Financial planning and control
- Employer responsibilities
- Equality, diversity and human rights
- Current housing policy and legislation
- Health and Safety
- Care and Repair
- Role of the regulator
- Marketing and media

2. **Skills:** we are looking for one or more of the following:

The ability to:

- work as a member of a team with other Board members and with staff
- contribute to discussions about strategy and policy
- interpret and question information received
- identify what is important for Eildon's success as a business
- contribute to effective decision making
- communicate effectively, contribute to decision-making and to challenge constructively

3. **Qualities:** We are also looking for people able to demonstrate these qualities:

- Contributing ideas and new perspectives
- Respecting confidentiality
- Focus on the best interests of Eildon, its tenants and service users and its aims and objectives rather than personal interests
- Keeping one's own knowledge up-to date
- Accepting collective responsibility for decisions
- Working as a member of a governance team, exhibiting respect for other team members.