



MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY

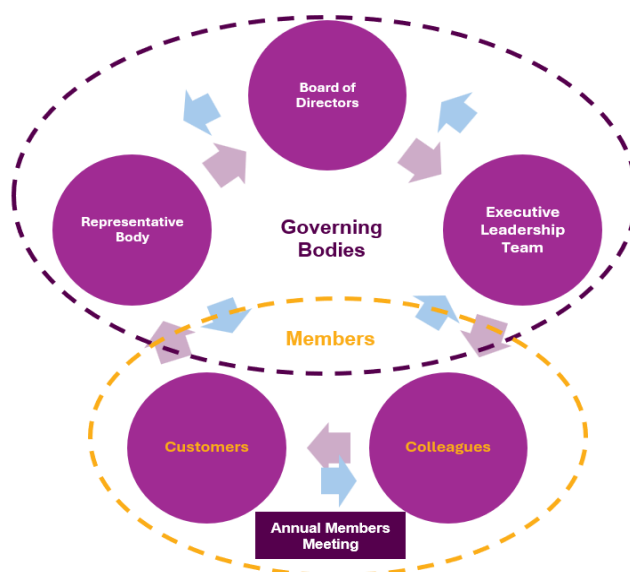
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Owner Name / Job Title	Representative Body & Jo Goodall / Governance Manager	
Author Name / Job Title	Representative Body & Jo Goodall / Governance Manager	
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 On 26 June 2013, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing Limited (RBH) became the first UK social housing provider to become a Mutual Society. We are proud to be the first and largest Mutual Society in the housing sector in England. This means that we are co-owned and managed by our customer and colleague members¹ and provide a platform for a diverse range of customers and colleagues with shared ambitions to have a collective voice that will take the organisation forward positively and with a strength that is unique to our Mutual Society.
- 1.2 Being a Mutual Society, **we are co-owned by our Customer and Colleague Members** which means, in a very real and structured way, they shape and have a deeper connection to the future of RBH.
- 1.3 Our governance model has three component parts; our Board of Directors who set our Corporate Strategy and oversee its delivery, our Executive Team who is responsible and accountable for delivering the Corporate Strategy and achieving the strategic outcomes, and our Representative Body which is made up of fifteen customers, eight colleagues and two Council representatives who set the Membership Strategy and are responsible for ensuring the voice of the Membership is heard and reflected in strategy and service delivery. We refer to this as the three cogs in the wheel of making RBH a success – each of which must move together to continue to proceed.



- 1.4 Our mutuality is focused on bringing genuine voice, influence and participation to our customers and our colleagues in how we deliver our services through open Membership and co-ownership of our Society.
- 1.5 Our mutuality is focused on challenging inequalities and making a positive difference to the lives of the people who live in our homes and communities across the Borough of Rochdale and those colleagues who bring their passion for doing good into our business every day.

¹ Our Mutual Rules refer to Tenant, Employee and Associate Members however we have opted to define Tenant Members as Customers and Employee Members as Colleagues in line with our new Corporate Strategy for the purposes of this Strategy, which exclude Associate Members unless specifically referenced.

2 Membership Vision

- 2.1 Our vision is to develop an actively engaged and meaningful Membership and over the next three years, we want to encourage and ensure Members have a real voice in shaping how RBH develops. This Strategy outlines the measures we will put in place during 2025 to 2028 to achieve that vision, which will be supported by communication and action plans.
- 2.2 Our Vision Statement:
“To create an engaged, inclusive and values-driven Membership that drives positive change. We will redefine the Member experience ensuring a lasting impact for customers, colleagues and our communities”.
- 2.3 We recognise that building a representative Membership body is an opportunity for us to learn from, respond to and deliver for our customers and colleagues. It is also an ideal opportunity for RBH to build a loyal base of diverse customers and colleagues with shared ambitions who want to live in our communities and support RBH as customers and colleagues.
- 2.4 However, we also recognise that for Membership to really work, we must articulate a compelling vision why becoming a member is important. We must describe the benefits and reasons for people to join us in our work, which centres around a deeper connection with RBH that comes from mutual co-ownership. Under our Membership scheme, our Members will:
- Be given the opportunity to get involved with RBH activities to the level they choose;
 - Be given the opportunity to change their level of involvement at any time according to their wishes;
 - Be updated regularly on RBH activities via regular internal and external newsletters, the RBH website/internal intranet and social media;
 - Be given the opportunity to take part in and vote for their Representative Body Members;
 - Be given the opportunity to voice their opinion on upcoming Representative Body subject matters;
 - Be provided with the opportunity to feedback and influence which areas of RBH’s activities the Representative Body should scrutinise;
 - Be included in additional levels of consultations regarding service delivery; and
 - Be invited to contribute to scrutiny activities to ensure that the services delivered to customers are viewed and improved through the eyes of those receiving them, and colleagues who deliver them.

3 Context

- 3.1 Over the past two years we have invested time and effort into bringing to life our mutuality and embedding it into the way we work. There is more to do, and this remains a focus weaved throughout this Strategy, but this is not a badge we wear, it is a tangible and meaningful way of governing our business to bring benefit to

the Members of the Society, our customers and our colleagues. Every decision we make is taken in the spirit of co-ownership.

- 3.2 This Membership Strategy provides a platform for ensuring that every decision that we take is focused on the positive impact it can create for the customer and colleagues Members who co-own RBH. Anyone who lives in one of our homes or works as part of our team is invited to join our Membership. We want to create a culture where customers and colleagues feel valued and RBH is a great place to work.
- 3.3 Our mutuality presents a unique opportunity to engage our customers who live in our homes and our colleagues who work as part of RBH in a different way – a way that gives real voice and influence in all that we do. It enables us to demonstrate how we are listening to customers and colleagues ensuring their voice is heard loud and clear throughout our business. It will help us to demonstrate how we are delivering positive change that is felt behind the front doors of the customers living in our homes and colleagues within the workplace.
- 3.4 In line with our new three-year Corporate strategy, we will focus on the work that we will deliver to support customers who live in our homes today and our customers of the future and making the organisation one that our customers are proud to call their landlord, and colleagues take pride in working for RBH.
- 3.5 Our Values were developed with our customers and colleagues in 2024. They get to the root of who we really are and what we stand for. They set out the culture that we aim to deliver every day, and we expect and welcome to be held to account for delivering against them at every level in our business.
- 3.6 Our Membership is made up of diverse customers and colleagues with shared ambitions who stand by and live our shared values to ensure everything we do is for the benefit of customers, colleagues and communities. Members have the right to hold us to account to ensure everything we do is in the spirit of Mutuality by:



**Putting
People First**

We listen with empathy, respond with compassion, and make it easy for our customers to access our services.



**Doing What
We Say**

We earn trust through honesty, integrity, caring and keeping our promises.



**Working
As One**

We embrace our mutuality and work together to deliver great outcomes for the people living in our homes and communities.



**Delivering
Quality**

We invest wisely in our people and make it easy for them to deliver services and create places that our customers are proud to call home.



**Open &
Transparent**

We are curious, embrace diverse ways of thinking and seek feedback to help us improve.

4 Methodology

- 4.1 A sub-group made up of customers and colleagues of the Representative Body worked together to produce this Strategy, but it reflects the views across all elements of our governance structure and the objectives and promises to our customers and colleagues are owned and supported by all.

5 Membership

- 5.1 Customer and colleague Members have equal rights in our mutual model and have access to information, a voice in the Society, and the opportunity to be a representative in our governance model through election to the Representative Body.
- 5.2 We recognise that Membership must have a value. Through Membership, the views of our customers and colleagues are heard, and they have a real say in the management and provision of services. From the Membership, Representatives can be elected to the Representative Body where they represent the wider Members' interests and are held accountable by our Members as co-owners in the running of RBH.
- 5.3 Members can be involved in as little or as much as they wish through taking part in text surveys, policy reviews, taking part in and/or feeding into service scrutiny reviews, attending and speaking at a variety of meetings through to formal involvement in our governance structure by election onto the Representative Body.
- 5.4 We know that our Members' time is valuable, therefore we will do everything we can to make it as easy as possible for Members to engage in a way that they feel comfortable with. We will aim to engage our Members in a variety of ways that enable Members to speak to us, for example without leaving home, within communities or through meetings at our offices.
- 5.5 Membership is voluntary so customers and colleagues can make a choice on whether they wish to become a Member in addition to being a customer or a colleague. Our mutual approach means that we take the lead from our Members who represent all customers and colleagues to ensure their voices are heard and we deliver on the things that are important to them. We will do this through regular contact with our Membership, so that as priorities change for our Members, the work we undertake will also change.
- 5.6 Members are entitled to attend and observe meetings of the Board of Directors and the Representative Body and are invited to attend the Annual Members Meetings and any Special Members Meetings where they:
- Receive the Board of Directors Annual Report and Accounts;
 - Receive the Representative Body's Annual Report on its activities;
 - Receive the Annual Report on the delivery of the Membership Strategy;
 - Approve changes to the Mutual Rules (when required); and
 - Approve the appointment of the External Auditor (when required).

- 5.7 There are two main constituencies of Members:

Customer Members

Those persons named as a tenant in a tenancy agreement with RBH or any part of the RBH Group or who are named in a tenancy agreement in relation to a property which is managed by RBH.

The spouse, partner and family members of any tenant who are 18 years of age or older and who are living in the property as part of the tenant's household.

Colleague Members

Persons employed by RBH, or any part of the RBH Group, whether in full or part time employment which includes employees in their probationary period, apprentices, trainees and graduate trainees.

5.8 Associate Members

Associates are not Members but are entitled to play a part in the Society and may attend and speak at Members Meetings, however they do not have the right to vote or take part in Representative Body elections.

Customers and colleagues who are over 16 years of age but under 18 years of age are eligible to be an Associate Member. In addition, the following are also eligible to be Associates if over 18 years of age:

- Leaseholders in any lease of a dwelling granted for a period exceeding twenty years by the Society or any member of the RBH Group.
- Those living in a property of a tenant as a lodger who are not a member of the tenant's family, provided that evidence of their residence for at least 12 months is provided.
- Those not employed by any part of the RBH Group but seconded to the Society or any part of the RBH Group for a period exceeding 6 months.
- Those employed by a Tenant Management Organisation with which RBH has a management agreement, subject to the approval of the Tenant Management Organisation.

- 5.9 We will collect a range of information about our Members (including age, gender, ethnicity, communication preferences etc) and will use this data to maintain a Membership database. This database will be reviewed to ensure that Membership is representative of the communities that we serve and where under representation is identified, these groups are targeted to ensure a representative Membership.

6 Aims

- 6.1 The aims of this Strategy outline how we take our mutual governance model to the next level of positive impact. It articulates how every decision is taken together and owned across the three elements of our governance model and how we will create a 'golden thread' through our work that engages with the mutual ethos throughout.
- 6.2 Our overall aim is to ensure that all our Members have an opportunity to get involved, have a say and through different levels of engagement, can help shape services and play a part in decision making.
- 6.3 There are three key aims of this Strategy which support the long-term vision of a thriving Society that puts the views of the Membership at the heart of the governance model:

6.4 **Aim 1 – Develop the Membership offer to provide clarity on the benefits**

We will promote and champion the benefits of Membership and the positive impact our mutuality has on a range of stakeholders using a variety of ways to communicate.

We want to encourage more customers and colleagues to become Members. In doing so, we will convey how Membership can influence the way services are improved and delivered by RBH.

Working alongside the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and Engagement Strategy, we will build on the motivation of customers and colleagues to identify areas of RBH's work where Members can become involved and influence the way services are delivered.

We will focus, not just on increasing the number of Members, but on ensuring Members are informed and fully understand the mutual model, its characteristics and the unique opportunity it gives customers and colleagues as co-owners to be involved in the governance and formal decision making.

We will aspire for every Member to be a 'champion' for mutuality who inspires and encourages others to join.

What we will do:

Year 1

- Develop ways to make Members feel valued and interested in the work that we do and make them feel that their opinion counts.
- Explore and identify the range of opportunities/involvement menu for Members to get involved and have a say.
- Map how Members voice, consultation and involvement influences and shapes services, strategies and priorities.
- Develop a programme of Representative Body led activities to bring Membership to life for example 'meet your Representative' sessions.
- Champion the unique opportunity for Members to be elected to or vote for a fellow customer or colleague to be elected to the Representative Body.
- Review Representative Body election materials to strengthen mutuality and Membership benefits.
- Increase numbers of Members voting in the Representative Body elections.
- Increase numbers of involved and diverse Members standing for election to the Representative Body.
- Develop short videos talking about the work of the Representative Body (encouraging feedback, sharing examples where feedback has led to a development/improvement and to encourage Membership).
- Improve the format of Annual Members Meetings to make it more of a wider engagement event.
- Develop and deliver ongoing Member enquiry support.

Year 2

- Champion the unique opportunity for Members to help support and underpin the work of the Representative Body by becoming involved in its scrutiny work.
- Explore opportunities for Members to be involved in decisions regarding charitable activities.
- Review existing Membership recruitment and engagement materials and develop new recruitment materials for example letters/emails.
- Build an annual plan of events following evaluation from Year One.

- Identify any barriers to Membership and use this data to breakdown any barriers.
- Have a contested election for both customer and colleague representatives.
- Diversity of candidates and elected representatives are reflective of the Membership.
- Develop a volunteering offer for Members.

Year 3

- Develop proposals for engaging with groups that are less well represented within the Membership base.
- Subject to learning from Year One and Two, develop a comprehensive plan for continuous engagement with under-represented groups.
- Review recruitment materials through feedback from Members via survey and/or engagement events and refresh where appropriate.

What we will achieve:

- Improved understanding of the Mutual model through evidenced increase in engagement.
- Demonstrate how the Representative Body involves Members and how this can influence and shape services, strategies and priorities.
- Strengthen our approach to mutuality to ensure it is making a positive difference to customers living in our homes and our colleagues.
- Members have clarity on what the benefits of being a Member are.
- Increased Membership that is more representative of the people and communities we employ and serve.

6.5 Aim 2 – Ensure all Customers and Colleagues understand what mutuality means

Feedback from Members, both customers and colleagues has identified a lack of clarity about what mutuality means for them and RBH. Participation in elections and consultation has been limited, and further work is needed to explain what it means to be a Member and how it impacts on them.

We will explain how the Representative Body, the Board and the Executive Team work together to deliver the best services possible to our customers and support thriving communities and RBH is an employer of choice.

We will develop a communication plan which will clearly articulate what it means to be a Member of the Society and will promote the positive work of the Representative Body in undertaking Scrutiny and influencing the future direction of RBH.

We will develop a series of promotional activities in order to reach out to all customers across the Borough of Rochdale, and with our colleagues through regularly sharing promotional material segmented between Members and Non-Members where the content will be tailored to their needs.

We will aim to grow our Membership year on year to ensure that our Members are representative of our communities and workforce. New Members will bring fresh ideas and thoughts and will extend our reach in our communities and business.

We will ensure that all prospective Members are aware of the opportunity to become a Member and will make sure that Membership sign up is a simple and straightforward process.

New customers and colleagues will be introduced to Membership at an early stage (tenancy sign up stage for customers and induction stage for colleagues).

We will undertake a comprehensive consultation exercise to listen and learn from our Members and Non-members and to promote how they can get more involved.

We will survey Members as part of our engagement to understand what they want from being a Member of the Society. The Year One survey, will provide a baseline and help shape targets for Years Two and Three.

What we will do:

Year 1

- Develop an elevator/plan on a page based on the principles of the Membership Strategy to use in promotional and engagement opportunities.
- Ensure every new home let and colleague induction includes a detailed briefing on what it means to be a Member and document where they decline to join to understand the reasons so this can be addressed.
- Broaden out the role of scrutiny to include Members from across our Membership base.
- Have a dedicated Governance Officer to support and deliver the Membership Strategy.
- Develop an action plan of activities to ensure that Membership is meaningful, and Members feel they are making a difference.
- Re-launch the Membership Newsletter with a focus on Membership involvement and engagement opportunities. Ensure this is also shared with colleagues via corporate communication channels and on the website/RBH Connect.
- Consult/survey all Members and Non-members around what they want from Membership and use this feedback to further develop the Membership Offer.
- Use diversity data to target under-represented groups to ensure Membership is reflective of the communities we employ and serve.

Year 2

- Re-survey all Members and Non-members with consistent questions to enable analysis of results and to show progression.
- Review the action plan to ensure this is delivering the aims of the Strategy and takes into account Members feedback.
- Deliver the action and communications plans and assess against the benefits.

Year 3

- Re-survey all Members and Non-members with consistent questions to enable analysis of results and to show progression.
- Review the action plan to ensure this is delivering the aims of the Strategy and takes into account Members feedback.

- Survey all Members and Non-members on the development of a new three-year Strategy for 2029 to 2031.

What we will achieve:

- Increased Customer Membership to 50% of all households.
- Increased Colleague Membership to 75% of all employees.
- Improved understanding of the Mutual model and how it relates to Members.
- Use our mutual status to good effect in tapping into the voices of the many.
- Members have clarity on what the benefits of being a Member are.
- Encourage an increase in Membership of the Society to further strengthen the impact of our mutuality on delivery customer outcomes.
- Increased Membership that is more representative of the customers, employees and communities we serve and employ.

6.6 Aim 3 – Make it easier for Members to have their say and communicate the outcomes of their contribution

Our Members' time is valuable, and this can impact on how and when they will engage with RBH. We will ensure that when we ask you for their time they can do so in a wide variety of ways, for example, by completing text surveys or joining one of our customer or colleague engagement forums.

We will include ways for Members to speak to us, without leaving their home, within the community or through engagement sessions held throughout the Borough of Rochdale. We will also determine what a digital engagement model could look like for inclusion in the future Membership Strategy. This will include channels for those that want to contribute virtually at a time that suits them.

We will work harder to ensure that our Membership reflects the diversity of our communities, to ensure everyone feels included in our Mutual Society. This will be a first step towards an inclusion approach that will form part of our longer-term strategy. The first step will be to understand the current make up of our Membership, where we have gaps and how we will encourage engagement from those who are under-represented.

We will seek to engage people from across the Membership to create an inclusive Representative Body with a diversity of views and skills that will take the leadership of the Membership forward.

We recognise that harnessing views from Members from different communities, neighbourhoods, backgrounds, ages and outlooks is essential to influencing and shaping strategy, policy and future plans. It is also how the Representative Body can achieve their role in providing meaningful advice, support and guidance to the Board and ensuring that their voice is heard loud and clear throughout our business.

Keeping in touch with our Members is very important. They will have different reasons for becoming a Member, but regularly letting them know our news, telling them about opportunities to get involved, will ensure they feel part of our mutual.

We will communicate our messages to key stakeholders and our wider audience to ensure that they are aware of our mutuality, our Values, and our key

achievements using standard communication methods via our website, social media channels, newsletters etc.

What we will do:

Year 1

- Act on any feedback received as part of the customer census.
- Review how the benefits of Membership are articulated to ensure this is an attractive proposition to potential Members.
- Produce a Membership Report for Members (focusing on the work of the Representative Body, any feedback and responses, and areas for development/improvement).
- Identify any established forums to promote Membership and engagement.
- Review the website to ensure the Membership pages are engaging and the content is informative including newsletters, short videos and updated events.
- Develop a Communications Plan:
 - embed the benefits of mutuality into Corporate communications.
 - to improve understanding of the Mutual Model and how it relates to Members.
 - to promote the benefits of Membership to customer and colleagues and the different ways to get involved.
 - to promote the work of the Representative Body and ways Members can get in touch with Representatives.
 - promotional materials for new tenancy sign-ups and colleague recruitment and induction.

Year 2

- Review/update Communications Plan to develop more targeted Member specific communications.
- Develop ways for highlighting issues raised by Members and for feeding back any follow up actions and/or results.
- Produce Membership Report for Members (focusing on work of the Representative Body, any feedback and responses, and areas for development/improvement).
- Use new Membership levels/segmentation data to target Members for participation in surveys, workshop and other engagement opportunities.

Year 3

- Review/update Communications Plan.
- Produce Membership Report for Members (focusing on work of the Representative Body, any feedback and responses, and areas for development/improvement).
- Analyse which issues and articles have been read the most in the Membership Newsletter/webpages and keep content up to date with new content.
- Make any improvements based on feedback from the Year Two Membership Survey.

What we will achieve:

- Promote our mutuality, Membership and the organisation's work.

- Clarity on the make-up of our current Membership and plans to address gaps.
- Improved Member satisfaction on how they are communicated with.
- Improved relationships between Members and the Representative Body by improving communication.
- High levels of customer and colleague engagement thereby increasing Member motivation to get involved.
- Identify further opportunities for two-way communication between Members and RBH.
- We are hearing the voices and tackling the issues that affect both customer and colleagues through Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Net Promotor Score surveys.
- By incorporating an element of Member-only communication, this helps convey the value of Membership.

7 2028 Key Achievements

7.1 The Strategy aims to deliver measurable success across several focus areas, ensuring growth, engagement and enhanced Member experience. There are clear milestones which we aim to achieve in Years 1, 2 and 3 which means by 2028 we will:

1. **Membership Growth** – increase in the number of new Members and strong retention rates of existing Members.
2. **Member Engagement** – higher levels of actively engaged Members with strengthened connections between Members and RBH.
3. **Member Benefits** – development of benefits and improvements of existing ones, leading to greater Member satisfaction.
4. **Community Building** – stronger sense of co-ownership, community and networking opportunities among Members.
5. **Feedback** – range of two-way feedback mechanisms with Member driven influence on strategy, policy, and service delivery.
6. **Communication Advancements** – adoption of new technologies to improve Member communication and enhanced overall Member experience through digital innovation.
7. **Brand Recognition** – enhanced visibility and reputation within our Communities and wider stakeholders.

8 Monitoring

8.1 Developing, maintaining and monitoring the Membership Strategy is the responsibility of the Representative Body. The Representative Body have established a sub-group who will develop and monitor the action plan which will set out how this Strategy will be delivered.

8.2 The Representative Body will regularly review the progress against the action plan to ensure that we are delivering on what our Membership tell us is important. They will provide updates on the work undertaken through our website, social media channels and the Membership and Customer Newsletters.

- 8.3 An annual report will also be presented to Members at the Annual Members Meeting which will include the following:
- Actions that ensure the Membership is representative of those eligible for Membership;
 - Progress in implementing the Membership Strategy; and
 - Any changes to the Membership Strategy.

9 Review

- 9.1 All RBH strategies, policies, service standards and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' and comply with all relevant legislation and statutory regulations.
- 9.2 The Representative Body have agreed that the Membership Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure this is in keeping with Members feedback and meets their expectations.

10 Links with other Strategies

- 10.1 This strategy links to the following relevant documents:
- Corporate Strategy
 - Engagement Strategy
 - People Strategy
 - Diversity, Belonging and Inclusion Strategy

11 Inclusivity statement

- 11.1 We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all. We ensure that everyone is valued and respected. Our policies aim to be inclusive, and will comply with UK laws, including the Equality Act 2010, to create a diverse and supportive environment for people to thrive.
- 11.2 We understand not everyone absorbs information the same way. If you have any difficulty understanding or interpreting this document, please email governance@rbh.org.uk or call Freephone 0800 027 7769. We will work with you to ensure your individual needs are met.

12 Action Plan (to be developed by the Representative Body sub-group once the Strategy is approved in April 2025)