



Interim Membership Strategy

(September 2024 – March 2025)

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Strategy Title	Interim Membership Strategy
Author/Reviser/Owner	Representative Body / Jo Goodall, Governance Manager
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Rochdale Boroughwide Housing Limited is a charitable community benefit society.
 FCA register number 31452R.
 Registered Office: Unique Enterprise Centre, Belfield Road, Rochdale OL16 2UP.
 Registered as a provider of social housing. RSH register number: 4607

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.
- 1.2 As a Mutual Society, we are owned by our customer and colleague members and anyone who lives in one of our homes or works as part of our team is invited to join the Membership. Every decision that we take is focused on the positive impact it can make to our customers, their homes and the communities they live in. We want to create a culture where colleagues feel valued and RBH is a great place to work.
- 1.3 Our mutuality is focused on bringing genuine voice and influence on our customers and our colleagues in how we deliver our services. We continue to work hard to bring genuine influence, voice and participation to those who want to be heard through open membership of our Society.
- 1.4 As we've refocused our Corporate Strategy back to our core housing role, we've taken the opportunity to work with our customers and colleagues to review and modernise the values that motivate us and will underpin everything we do.

2. Context

- 2.1 RBH has gone through a significant amount of change over the last two years, which has seen a resetting of the Society's values and priorities. As part of this reset, the Rules that govern the Society were updated in November 2023 and the roles of the Representative Body, Board and the Executive Team were aligned to ensure compliance with the regulatory standards.
- 2.3 Much has changed with what the Membership Strategy is intended to achieve and what needs to be delivered. Over the last 12 months a new Board has been appointed along with a new Chief Executive and Executive Team. A one-year Corporate Strategy was developed in partnership with the Board, Executive and Representative Body for 2024-25. This allowed time for the recovery plan to be delivered and for the Board to consider its long term strategic ambitions.
- 2.4 In line with the Corporate Strategy, time is needed to reflect what the ambitions for a new three-year Membership Strategy should be and this will include widespread member consultation. As a consequence, a six month interim strategy is being presented pending this review.

3. Methodology

- 3.1 A sub-group of the Representative Body worked together to produce this strategy and it was endorsed by the RBH Board and approved by the Representative Body.

4. Aims of the Strategy

- 4.1 There are three key aims of this Strategy which will provide a solid base to develop a new three-year strategy. All the aims support the long-term vision of a thriving Society that puts the views of the Membership at the heart of the governance framework.

4.2 Aim 1 – Ensure 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 develop a communication plan that sits under the overarching Communication Strategy approved by the Board in July 2024. This 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 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.

As part of the development of a new three-year strategy we will undertake a comprehensive consultation exercise to listen and learn from our Members and non-members. This will not only be used to inform the new Strategy, but it will improve Members and non-members understanding and how they can get more involved.

Outcomes:

- Improved understanding of the Mutual model and how it reflects to them.
- 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.

4.3 Aim 2 – Develop the membership offer to provide clarity on the benefits

Building on issues raised in Aim 1, the benefits of being a member are unclear. Therefore, 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 and take the opportunity to influence the way services are improved and delivered.

Working alongside the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and Engagement Strategy, we will build on the motivation of customers and colleagues to get involved in influencing the work of RBH. 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 to be involved in the governance and formal decision making. We aspire to every member to be a 'champion' for mutuality who inspires and encourages others to join.

Outcomes:

- Improved understanding of the Mutual model and how it relates to them.
- 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.

4.4 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. 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 start to work harder to ensure that our membership reflects the diversity of our communities, to ensure everyone feels able to play their part 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 customers 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.

We will survey members as part of our engagement to understand what they want from being a Member of the Society.

Outcomes:

- Clarity on the make up of our current membership and plans to address gaps.
- Improved Member satisfaction on how they are communicated with.

5. Monitoring

- 5.1 Developing, maintaining and monitoring the Membership Strategy is the responsibility the Representative Body.
- 5.2 An annual report will be presented to members at the Annual Members Meeting which will include the following:
 - Actions regarding ensuring the membership is representative of those eligible for membership;
 - Progress in implementing the Membership Strategy; and
 - Any changes to the Membership Strategy.

6. Review

- 6.1 All RBH strategies, policies, service standards and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis in order to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' and comply with all relevant legislation and statutory regulations.
- 6.2 This Strategy is an interim Strategy whilst a new three year Strategy is being developed which will be approved in March 2025.

6.3 A new three year strategy will be developed between September 2024 and March 2025. The Board will be engaged in the development of this alongside the Representative Body being engaged in the development of the Corporate Strategy.

7. Links to other Strategies

7.1 This Strategy links to the following relevant documents:

- Corporate Strategy
- Engagement Strategy
- People Strategy
- Diversity, Belonging and Inclusion Strategy