

# Tenant Board Member Elections 2009



## Information for Tenants and Leaseholders on Standing for Election



In association with



[www.gloscityhomes.co.uk](http://www.gloscityhomes.co.uk)



## Introduction

This information pack is for tenants and leaseholders of Gloucester City Homes who are interested in standing for election as Tenant Board Members in the September 2009 elections.

This booklet gives you information on:

- ✓ The role of the Board
- ✓ How the Board works
- ✓ Board members' responsibilities
- ✓ The nomination process
- ✓ The election process



## About Gloucester City Homes

Gloucester City Homes is a not for profit company which is responsible for managing council homes on behalf of Gloucester City Council.

The organisation came into existence on 12 December 2005. It is a company wholly owned by Gloucester City Council, but managed by a Board of Directors rather than a council committee.

The company manages around 4600 properties and provides all the landlord services to these properties. We also manage over 240 leasehold properties, and a lifelink alarm service to 700 non-tenants.

By setting up a separate company to manage council homes and achieving a two-star rating from the Audit Commission, we have been able to access £39 million in funding from the Government. The funding is being used to make major improvements to council homes to bring them to the Decent Homes standard.

## What is the role of the Board?

The Board of Directors manages Gloucester City Homes. The Board is made up of 15 directors: five tenant members (including one leaseholder), five council members and five independent members (who are selected for specific skills and experience).

The Board provides strategic direction for the company, ensures that its commitments under the Management Agreement are delivered, monitors the company's performance and finances, and approves the policies of the organisation.

## What would my responsibilities be as a Board member?

**The people we are looking for to be Board members will:**

- ✓ Be willing and able to spend their time and effort ensuring that Gloucester City Homes is managed efficiently and effectively
- ✓ Care about providing an excellent housing service and getting the best possible value for money
- ✓ Be able to speak up in a meeting and express their view
- ✓ Be able to read and digest written reports

**As a Board member you will be expected to:**

- ✓ Be committed to the values and objectives of Gloucester City Homes and actively promote the company
- ✓ Contribute to and share responsibility for the Board's decisions
- ✓ Prepare for and attend meetings, training and other events
- ✓ Be committed to equal opportunities
- ✓ Respect confidentiality of information
- ✓ Contribute from your particular experience to help the Board come to the best decisions
- ✓ Work together as a team

## **What skills and experience will I need?**

You don't need any qualifications to be a Tenant Board Member - just enthusiasm, commitment and common sense with an ability to communicate well and read and understand detailed information.

You also need to have basic literacy and numeracy skills, and be able to attend and take part in Board meetings.

A full training programme will provide you with a range of knowledge and skills to help you in your role.

## **Will I need to represent other tenants or leaseholders?**

You are elected onto the Board to bring a customer's general perspective. You are not elected in order to represent individual tenants or leaseholders, or groups of tenants or leaseholders who elected you. Your role is to help ensure that Gloucester City Homes provides high quality, customer focused housing services for all tenants and leaseholders across the city.

## **How many meetings will I have to attend?**

As a Board member you will be expected to attend at least three quarters of the board meetings held in a 12 month period. Main Board meetings currently take place during the evening, starting at 6.00 pm and lasting up to a maximum of 3 hours. On top of this you may have to join one of the committees, and attend training sessions and other events. Times of meetings are regularly reviewed and tenants are encouraged to apply whether or not they are in paid employment.

If a Board member misses four consecutive meetings without good reason or misses 25% or more meetings in any 12-month period they will cease to be a member of the Board, and can only remain if the Board vote to retain them.

## **How does the Board operate?**

The company rules set out the company's purpose and how it operates. This includes arrangements for the appointment of tenants (and leaseholders) to the Board.

The Board has also agreed detailed governance arrangements. These are the systems and processes that set out how the company is managed, controlled and held to account.

## **Will I be paid?**

No, but you can claim all reasonable expenses incurred in undertaking official duties. This includes the cost of transport to and from meetings and child or other care costs. We will also loan a computer to help with your duties and pay towards your internet connection.

## **How many places are there?**

- ❖ This year there is one space on the Board up for election.
- ❖ There may also be casual vacancies from time to time.

## **How long do Board members serve on the Board?**

Board members serve for three years. If you are elected in 2009 you will be a Board member until the Annual General Meeting in 2012. On completion of their term, a Board member may stand to serve a further term. There is no set maximum number of terms.

Board members can resign during their term in office. This will result in the appointment of a replacement member for the remainder of the period that the original member of the Board had left to serve.

## Can board members be disqualified?

Yes, you can be disqualified, for example if you:

- ✗ Become bankrupt or make any arrangement or composition with your creditors (a composition is where creditors accept partial payment in settlement of their claims)
- ✗ Become prohibited by law from being a director of a company
- ✗ Become incapable due to a mental disorder
- ✗ Are removed by a resolution of the other Board members
- ✗ Stop being a tenant or leaseholder
- ✗ Are in breach of your tenancy conditions or lease

## Who can stand for nomination and election?

There are some restrictions on who can stand for election. These are set out below.

- ✓ You need to be a secure tenant of Gloucester City Homes (i.e. you must have signed a secure tenancy agreement), or a leaseholder, to be eligible to stand in the elections
- ✗ You are not eligible for election if you have rent/service charge arrears or another serious breach of your tenancy or lease e.g. anti-social behaviour
- ✗ Officers or employees of Gloucester City Homes cannot be Board members
- ✗ You are not eligible for election if you have a mental disorder which makes you incapable of managing your property and affairs

## I'm interested...what do I need to do?

If you would like to be nominated as a Tenant Board Member, you need to return the nomination form to Electoral Reform Services in the pre-paid envelope provided. This includes an election statement which will be provided to voters (you will have a chance to review your statement before the ballot, and training is available if you need help writing it). Your nomination must be supported by two other tenants or leaseholders.

**You must also sign the Candidates Code of Conduct (see page 10)**



## What happens next?

An Election Panel will meet to ensure that all the nomination forms are valid. The Elections Panel is made up of current Board members.

The Panel will check your nomination form to make sure that all the questions have been answered and that you have met the eligibility criteria.

You will then be invited to attend a short, informal interview with the Panel, where we can find out more about you and you can ask any questions that you may have. You must attend for interview otherwise we cannot progress with your nomination.

## What happens in the election?

If there is more than one eligible candidate for either of the posts (tenant or leaseholder), there will be an election. Ballot forms will be sent to all tenants and leaseholders asking them to vote for their preferred candidate. Ballot forms are returned in pre-paid envelopes to Electoral Reform Services.

Voting will also be available by other methods such as telephone, texting and internet. The voting will be carefully monitored and regulated by Electoral Reform Services, on behalf of Gloucester City Homes.

During the election, candidates may be invited to attend

Tenants and Residents meetings or other events to help voters decide who to vote for. The Code of Conduct must be strictly observed by candidates (see next page).

The candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected onto the Board. The results will be announced at our Annual General Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and published on our website and in the local press.

If there is only one eligible candidate for either of the posts (tenant or leaseholder), they will be appointed to the Board and no election will be held for that post.



## The Candidates Code of Conduct

- ❖ Candidates must conduct themselves in a manner which complies with the equal opportunities policies of Gloucester City Homes. Behaviour contravening the equal opportunities policies of GCH will not be tolerated.
- ❖ Candidates must not discriminate against anyone, irrespective of age, cultural differences, disability, family make-up, gender identity, marital status, mental health, political affiliation, race, religious belief, sexual preference, caring responsibilities or history of criminal conviction.
- ❖ Candidates must conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at meetings or in premises used by Gloucester City Homes.
- ❖ Candidates must conduct themselves in line with the aims of Gloucester City Homes.
- ❖ Candidates must not do anything which brings the company into disrepute.
- ❖ Candidates must not contact the press or comment to the press on what is an internal election to the Board of GCH.
- ❖ **A candidate who breaches any part of this Code of Conduct will be disqualified from the election.**



## Who do I speak to about becoming a Board member?

Contact us by phone, text, email, online, in person or in writing using the following contact information:

Paul Masters  
Gloucester City Homes  
Atlantic Suite  
Southgate House  
Southgate Street  
Gloucester GL1 1UW

Customer Services Line:

0800 408 2000

Or 01452 530262

Fax: 01452 396599

Text: 0778 148 2656

Minicom: 01452 396161

Email: [governance@gloscityhomes.co.uk](mailto:governance@gloscityhomes.co.uk)

If you wish, we can arrange for you to have an informal discussion with one of our Tenant Board Members.

Please note our website is speech enabled and you can adjust the size of the text and translate it to other languages.

### Bengali

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রেটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

### Chinese

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

### Gujerati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજ બીજી ભાષા અથવા રચનામાં જોઈતો હોય, અથવા જો તમને ઈ-ન્ટરપ્રિટરની સેવાઓ જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક સાદો.

### Polish

Aby uzyskać ten dokument w innym języku lub formacie, albo jeżeli potrzebujesz usług tłumacza, skontaktuj się z nami.

### Urdu

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔