Blackwood

BOARD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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Policy Owner	Head of Business Services
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Proof Read	Suzie Valente Admin & Governance Team Leader
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Audience – Training and Awareness Method	Board Members will be made available of the final version of this policy via email. This policy will then form part of the Good Governance Guide, and will be part of the Induction Pack for new Board Members.
Effective Date	18th March 2015
Internal References	Recruitment and Succession Policy
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Role of the Board Member Appendix 2 – Role of the Chair Appendix 3 – Example of individual Learning and Development Plan Appendix 4 –Blackwood Board Target Skills Profile Appendix 5 – Board Member skills matrix Appendix 6 – Overall Board Learning and Development Plan 2015-16 Appendix 7 – Share The Learning template
Comments: Reference to the SHR Regulatory Framework – published 2012	

BOARD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   This policy sets out Blackwood's arrangements for Board Member Learning and Development. All learning and development for the Board will be carried out to support the Board to deliver the approved 5 year Strategy and Business Plan.

1.2   The Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR's) Framework Section 5 – Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management, published in 2012, states that:

"The people on the Governing Body, and the skills and knowledge they collectively have, are the most significant contributors to the good governance of the Registered Social Landlord (RSL)".

1.3   In order that Blackwood provides the most effective support for its Board Members, whilst at the same time complying with the SHR Framework, we have developed this policy and suite of supporting documents. This policy outlines a learning and development structure which can be offered to all Board members starting at induction.

1.4   This policy also supports succession planning for Blackwood Board and ensures that Board members have the correct skills to enable them to exercise effectively their current and future roles within the Board.

2.   ROLE OF THE BOARD MEMBER

2.1   New Board members will be recruited in accordance with the Board Recruitment and Succession Policy.

2.2   As part of the Board Member recruitment process, applicants will be issued with a copy of "The Role of the Board Member" - which can be found at **Appendix 1**. The purpose of this document is to ensure that existing and prospective Board Members know what their role is, and how that role fits into the wider governance structure within Blackwood.

2.3   There is also a "Role of the Chair" document which can be found at **Appendix 2**. This outlines the specific duties of the Chair over and above that of a Board Member.

3.	**INDIVIDUAL LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

3.1	New Board Members will be offered the opportunity to have an individual Learning and Development Plan – an example of which can be found in *Appendix 3*. This will include elements of induction training such as:

- Meetings with members of the Executive Management Team (EMT) – to provide familiarisation with the different operational teams within Blackwood
- Attendance at external training courses
- Recommended reading such as policies and guides

3.2	Individual Learning and Development plans will also be offered to existing Board Members.

3.3	The Admin & Governance Team Leader will co-ordinate the arrangements for the briefing and training contained within the Individual Learning & Development Plans and work with Board Members to plan learning activities in a schedule which suits their requirements.

3.4	Individual Learning and Development plans will be kept up-to-date by the Admin & Governance Team Leader, with particular focus being made at times when Board Members take on new roles such as chairing a Committee. Board Members will regularly receive a copy of their updated plan.

3.5	New Board Members will also be given the opportunity for support from a Mentor. A Mentor will be a fellow member of the Board who will be able to support the new Board Member in their first few months in post, answering questions and offering guidance from a Board Member perspective. It may be beneficial to match the new member to a Board member who is on the same Committee so that experience of both Board and the Committee can be shared.

4.	**BOARD MEMBER SKILLS MATRIX**

4.1	In 2014, Blackwood Board approved a target skills profile for the Board as a group – this can be found in *Appendix 4*. This profile shows the ideal range of skills that Blackwood Board would like have across its membership.

4.2	A review of the target skills profile will take place as required, but at least on a bi-annual basis, to ensure that the profile is fully aligned with the strategic direction of Blackwood.

4.3	The Board assesses its individual Members skill profile using a Skills Matrix Template – found in *Appendix 5*. At the time of joining the Board, new Board Members will be asked to complete this matrix, which requires the Member to consider and self-assess their level of skills, knowledge and experience in a variety of areas.

4.4 Thereafter all Board members will update their Skills Matrix as part of the annual Board Member Appraisal process.

4.5 The information from individual Skills Matrices will be summarised in a Board Members Skills Matrix profile. This overall profile clearly shows the level of skills of the Board in each area and highlights any areas where there may be a shortage of skills and/or a development need.

4.6 The information from the skills matrices will be used to identify skills gaps and:

- Inform the Board Learning & Development Plan – which can be found in *Appendix 6*. This Plan outlines the training & briefing sessions scheduled for Board and/or Committees to undertake as a group.
- Inform the Individual Board Member Learning & Development Plans
- Inform future Board Member recruitment

5. APPRAISAL OF BOARD MEMBERS

5.1 All Board members will participate in our annual Board Member Appraisal process, including those who are on special leave of absence (where appropriate) and new Board members.

5.2 The appraisal process will follow a two year cycle as outlined as follows:

5.2.1 *YEAR 1 PROCESS*

- All Board Members will complete an online self-assessment and update their Skills Matrix profile

- All Members will attend a face-to-face appraisal meeting with the Chair/Vice Chair. At that meeting, the discussion may cover:

  o The online self-assessment report
  o Attendance record at Board & Committee
  o Learning & Development – both undertaken and planned
  o Improvement opportunities identified – both personal and as a Board
  o Succession Planning for future roles within Board & Committee

- The Chair/Vice Chair will complete a record of appraisal discussion document which must be signed by both the appraiser and appraisee.

- Each Board member will receive a copy of the signed documentation following the meeting.

- A detailed report will be prepared for Board which may outline:

  o A summarised skills profile of the Board
  o Key areas of success for the Board
  o Areas for the Board to improve

        o   Skills gaps and proposals for future recruitment needs

        o   Learning & Development needs for Members

5.2.2   *YEAR 2 PROCESS*

- A less intensive process will be followed for year two.

- All Members will be issued with a copy of their current Skills Matrix profile, and asked to provide an update of any changes

- All members will have a discussion/meeting with the Chair / Vice Chair. This discussion could be face-to-face but could also be by telephone or video-conferencing. Any new Board members will have a face-to-face discussion with the Chair, in order to maximise support in the first year.

- These discussions will be based on the updated Skills Matrix and will utilise the appraisal record from Year 1. Discussions may cover:

        o   A review of annual performance and in particular any significant changes identified since previous year.

        o   Learning & Development – both undertaken and planned

        o   Improvement opportunities identified – both personal and as a Board

        o   Succession Planning for future roles within Board & Committee

- The Chair/Vice Chair will complete a brief record of the appraisal discussion which must be signed by both the appraiser and appraisee.

- Each Board member will receive a copy of the signed documentation following the meeting.

- A brief summary report will be prepared for Board by the Chair / Vice Chair which may outline:

        o   A summarised skills profile of the Board and implications thereof

        o   Areas of significant change for Board in previous year and key areas for improvement

        o   Learning & Development needs for Members

5.3   The Chair/Vice Chair appraisals will be conducted first, where possible, before the remaining Board Members. The Chair will be appraised by the Vice Chair and two other Board Members as nominated by the Board. A record of the appraisal discussion will be taken by the Vice Chair and signed by the appraisers and the Chair. The Vice Chair will be appraised by the Chair.

5.4   The Board will review and approve the Annual Appraisal Report and agree an action plan for improvement for the year ahead. The Board Learning & Development Plan will also be updated, along with Individual Board Member

Plans as appropriate. The Board will also identify any future recruitment requirements if known.

6.   SHARE THE LEARNING

6.1   Following attendance at a training session or seminar, Board members are encouraged to complete a "Share the Learning" template a copy of which is provided at **Appendix 7**. This information will be shared with all Board Members on the Board Zone area of the website.

6.2   To enable us to ascertain value of the training for Board members over a 12 month period, we will compare the Board members Skills Matrix summary annually. This will show the areas where there has been an increase in Board Member skills and knowledge having attended training sessions or seminars. The Board will receive a report which will review the training undertaken by members and how this is reflected in the Skills Matrix.

7.   POLICY REVIEW

7.1   This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if required.