# Tenant Board Appointment Questionnaire January 2016

# Summary and Proposals for the Board

**Report and Recommendations**

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The purpose of the questionnaire was to glean opinion and ideas on the topic of tenant board appointment at Hexagon. It was sent to all current Board members and Directors. There was a 100% return of filled in questionnaires.

The recommendations are based on the highest number of ticks in the check boxes provided by the Board Members only. The comments in Appendix B represent the views of both Board Members and Directors. The views of Directors were sought for information only. All comments have been anonymised.

The statistical summary can be found in **Appendix A**. and the respondents’ comments and additional remarks can be found in full in **Appendix B**.

## The results of the questionnaire show the following:

1. **Summary**
   1. There was a majority in favour of candidates applying for vacancies in response to a job description as for ‘ordinary’ board members.
   2. The information about the vacancy should be advertised in as many ways as possible providing it is not too costly, but not by using an outside agency.
   3. In terms of the method of selection, there was a split between those who wanted selection by interview panel and those who wanted a combination of selection and election. **See below\*** The Board will have to decide whether to continue with election or not.
   4. Since all respondents agree there should be an element of selection by an interview panel, the Board must choose whether the panel is selecting a single candidate or a short-list, and also how many candidates should be on the short-list.
   5. Overall, nominations were not popular, so this should not be an option.
   6. Voting rights should be extended to all tenants, not just one vote per household, and also to all residents in any type of tenure or property. Although there are questions about how feasible this second proposal is in practice, as Hexagon may not hold data on all residents.
   7. The make-up of the selection panel should include a combination of board members, the chair of the Board and the chair of the Residents Forum. The number of persons on the panel is to be decided.
   8. A majority wanted candidates to write election statements, but there was an even split as to whether the statements should be vetted. However, most people wanted the candidates’ claims to be verified as for ordinary board members.
   9. A majority felt that elections were important in terms of tenant involvement/empowerment, but the same number said that the current system was not democratic.
   10. There is a strong case for extending the pool of those eligible to stand for election, beyond the tenants to include all residents and lease holders. Again this will require a verifiable database of named residents and resident leaseholders.
   11. In terms of qualities that the candidates should possess, *ability to communicate clearly* came top, with *ability to work as part of a team* and *skills and experience to meet need of the board at time of vacancy*, second and third. The other skills and qualities listed were also considered essential or desirable by most respondents. How to gauge these qualities was an issue for some. A number of respondents commented that TBM candidates should not be treated differently from ordinary board candidates, for example by asking them to sit an exam, or by requiring them to undertake additional training before they become eligible.
   12. There was general agreement that prospective candidates should have some knowledge of what the role of board member entailed before being appointed. This could come from other relevant experience, or through training of some kind. Broadly it was felt that training should be provided on a case by case basis, without too rigid a rule being applied.

## Recommendations

These recommendations are based on preferences indicated in the Questionnaire.

# The Board is asked to asked to approve the following recommendations

1. That an upcoming **vacancy for a tenant/resident board member should be advertised**, as for ordinary board member vacancies, with a request for applications from eligible residents. Those applying will be supplied with a job description and person specification.
2. That **residents should be informed of the of the vacancy**, via all the following means:- article in Home News, text message, mail shot to each home, social media, promoted at events such as workshops or community days, email message, article on Hexagon website, poster in Hexagon office. (Four board members also opted for “through the work of the Tenant Empowerment Officer”, but this position does not currently exist.)
3. That candidates who submit acceptable application forms will be invited to be interviewed by an **interview panel**.
4. That the Board choose of **one of these two options for the work of the interview panel** :

* 2.4.1. **Option 1**. A single candidate is selected and **appointed by the interview panel**
* 2.4.2. **Option 2.** A short-list of candidates is **selected by the interview panel**, which then goes forward for **election by resident ballot**.

1. That the pool of those **eligible to apply for the post of RBM (TBM)**, be widened out to include “named” residents 18+, resident leaseholders, and shared owners, as well as tenants as per the current system.
2. That the **interview panel** be made up of the following:- one tenant board member, one ordinary board member, Chair of the Board, Chair of the Residents Forum. The number of panel members should be **four**.
3. That the interview panel will choose either a single candidate or a short-list,(whichever is decided) on the basis of **the job description and person specification**, reflecting the **skills and competencies that meet the needs of the Board at the time of the vacancy.**
4. That if the interview panel does not find a candidate (Option 1)or candidates (Option 2) who currently possess the skills and competencies required, but who show potential, then that person or those people will be offered targeted training to ‘bring them up to speed’. If (Option 1) is chosen, then the candidate will be appointed and given training as soon as possible, while serving on the Board.
5. If the Board opt for **election** (Option 2), that new measures should be put in place to increase the percentage of residents who vote. This should be done in **two ways**:

* 2.9.1. **Extending the vote to a wider group** to include, ‘named’ residents 18+, resident lease-holders, shared owners, as well as one vote for each tenant named on the tenancy.
* 2.9.2. **Introducing additional voting methods** beyond the paper ballot, to allow residents to register their vote by, for example, smart phone, email, Hexagon’s website and social media.

1. If the Board opt for **election,** that candidates should write **election statements.**

* 2.10.1.However, **the Board should** **decide** if the statements should be **vetted**. If the statements are to be vetted, then the vetting should be done by the members of the interview panel.
* 2.10.2. Candidates’ claims and/or experience should be **verified**.

## Additional Recommendation

* 1. That the name of the post be changed from **Tenant Board Member** to **Resident Board Member**, to reflect the wider demographic.

**\*RE. Section 1.3.** Apologies here, as I realise there’s a lack of clarity in the setting of the questions. I had included both options, *Selection of short-list of candidates, followed by ballot* and *A combination of selection and election,* which on reflection are not differentiated clearly. If the stats from the two options are added together then it results in 6 board members who opt for election/ballot and five who do not.