

Sustainability Strategy Group

Terms of reference

National Groups: purpose

The Federation's national groups are a crucial element in meeting our core values – to put members at the heart of everything we do, and work together to achieve that. National Groups support us in developing and testing new policy ideas, gathering vital market intelligence, and informing our responses to government and other key stakeholders. Groups should support us in delivering our business plan, and should be flexible in response to the external environment and salience of key issues. They should also provide added value for members through the opportunity to shape debates at a national level, in a dynamic setting and with high quality support from Federation staff.

We are committed to several key principles in relation to national groups; and our approach to member engagement more broadly:

- **Fairness** - all members are clear about who is on the group, the reasons why, and the mechanisms /rationale for involvement;
- **Inclusivity** – all members are clear about the group's purpose and how to contribute in the fullest way;
- **Transparency** – the group operates in a way which is clear and visible to other members.

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Federation's **Sustainability Strategy Group** exists to lead, inform and influence the Federation's work on Sustainability, with a particular focus on the issues of decarbonisation of housing association stock.

The group's specific activities and work plan will be driven in part by the strategic direction laid out by the National Housing Federation's Board and in part by changes in the external operating environment. The group will maintain a strategic focus, as this is where it best adds values to the Federation and the sector, and will ensure its areas of focus remain consistent with the strategic themes listed above.

2. Membership

The group will comprise of 12 - 15 members, at CEO level. All members must be staff of organisations affiliated to the National Housing Federation. Members will be selected in a fair and transparent way, and NHF will ensure consistency in the process.

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National Housing Federation Limited
Trading as National Housing Federation
A company with limited liability
Registered in England No 302132

The group does not seek to be wholly representative (there is no vote or mandate), but will encourage genuine diversity of members. The following factors will be taken into consideration when assessing applications:

- The need to ensure there is at least one member from each size band of housing Association: large, medium and small
- The need to ensure the group membership is formed of housing associations from a range of geographical locations
- The need to ensure a diversity of skills and expertise among the individual members of the group
- The need to ensure a diversity of strategic and operational understanding of issues among the individual members of the group .

3. Length of term

Appointments are for a fixed term, renewable after three years with a maximum tenure of nine years. Upon the end of the fixed term members may apply to seek re-election. After 9 years members will come to the end of their tenure and step down from the group, without the ability to re-apply.

4. Meetings and commitment

- Up to 6 x core meetings per year (must be able to attend 4 out of the 6 meetings)
- Includes 1 extended wider engagement/open meeting per year
- Includes some activity in between meetings e.g. acting as a virtual sounding board on emerging policy issues, promoting group activity with members' own networks.

We expect the approximate time commitment will be 12 – 15 hours a year. This will rise to up to 20 hours for the Chair.

Members will be expected to attend all core meetings and participate in activity in between meetings. Membership will be individual by housing association, and sending substitutes will not be permitted. With the agreement of the Chair members will be able to bring colleagues to meetings to offer specific expertise or input.

5. Chairing

The group will be expected to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from within their number. The Chair will be expected to:

- Be an active Chair at meetings
- Act as an effective ambassador for the Federation externally
- Work with the Federation lead and the wider group to shape agendas and group activity
- The appointment is for a fixed term of three years, with a maximum tenure of six years. Upon the end of the fixed term, the group will elect a new Chair. The outgoing Chair will have the same tenure length as other members.

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The Vice-Chair will be expected to:

- Chair meetings on behalf of the Chair where appropriate
- Act as an effective ambassador for the Federation externally
- Work with the Chair and Federation lead to shape agendas and group activity
- The appointment is for a fixed term of three years, with a maximum tenure of six years. Upon the end of the fixed term, the group will elect a new Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair will have the same tenure length as other members.

6. Expectations of group members

Group members will be expected to:

- Provide creative, critical and constructive feedback in order to strengthen the Federation's policy work and support us in delivering the objectives in our business plan
- Attend all core meetings where possible
- Act as an effective ambassador for the Federation and the group with both members and external audiences
- Contribute blogs, articles or other activities from time to time in order to support us in reaching out to the wider membership
- Take actions forward outside of meetings as appropriate (e.g. provide views on email, canvas opinion from other members)
- Have their names published on our website as part of the group information section, and in alignment with Federation commitments around transparency and openness

7. What group members can expect from the Federation

Overall we promise to ensure our approach is FIT for purpose:

- Fair – in our processes and decision-making
- Inclusive – in that we will always seek to reflect the diversity of our membership
- Transparent – in how we make decisions, and how we work with you

9. Review

We want to make sure the engagement mechanisms we have are strong and successful, and support us in delivering our business plan. We will review the group after the first 6 months and on an annual basis thereafter. We will always involve our members in discussions around changes.

The outcome of the review, including impact and successes, will form part of the agenda for the annual open meeting.

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