

Neighbourhood Management Elections

Information for candidates

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Section 1: What is required? - Standing for Election

Elections take place every two years for 2 Boscombe and 2 Springbourne places. A postal ballot is administered independently, using the Councils' electoral register.

The key criteria for Resident Board members include:

- Willingness to participate and commitment to NM process
- People with an ability to speak their mind and not be intimidated by others
- Awareness of the needs of the local area
- Willingness to represent views / interests of the community (i.e. not solely their own personal interests)
- Ability to devote the necessary time

Any resident can stand in the NM elections.

To ensure that candidates comply with some basic criteria we put in place some basic vetting procedures for the following reasons:

- To ensure candidates understand principles of NM and what we want to achieve
- To ensure candidates understand what is expected in terms of the role and responsibilities
- To ensure candidates will act in the best interests of NM
- To ensure candidates act in a way that does not bring NM into disrepute (by past or future actions and behaviour)

Therefore all candidates have to:

- Agree to the responsibilities set out in the document "Partnership Board Agreement" (see Section 3: Responsibilities)
- Familiarise yourself with the agreed constitution (see Section 4)
- Attend a workshop event where roles and responsibilities are outlined
- Agree to undergo a Criminal Record Check. (see Section 5)
- Agree to abide by the election Campaigning Rules (see Section 6)
- Sign up to our agreed Code of Conduct and agree to adhere to it (see Section 2)
- Sign up to support the basic aims and principles as set out in the Delivery Plan. (see Section 7: Basic Principles Document)

To enable candidates to know what is expected of them we ask you to become familiar with the above-mentioned documents, that are contained in this information pack.



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The workshop events, of which one must be attended, where roles and responsibilities are outlined, are scheduled for: (Venue 22 Sea Road, Boscombe)

- Tuesday 9th August 2005 2pm – 5pm
- Saturday 20th August 2005 10am – 1pm
- Wednesday 24th August 2005 5.30pm – 8.30pm
- Thursday 1st September 2005 5.30pm – 8.30pm

Finally.....

We recommend you familiarise yourself with our Delivery Plan for 2005/06, which can be downloaded from our website, or a copy can be collected from our offices. Our website also contains valuable information in relation to our achievements to date and our aims and objectives for the future.

Section 2: Code of conduct

for Neighbourhood Management (NM) Board members

1. Introduction

As a Board member you play an important role. You are overseeing the NM pathfinder, aiming to:

- Improve outcomes for local people
- Join up and improve service delivery in the area
- Listen to and represent the views of residents in the area, though it must be remembered that Board Members are in no way surrogate councillors.
- Promote the area and NM

With this important role come responsibilities. This code of conduct sets out standards of behaviour for Board members. Adherence to the code will ensure that the Board works well together and that all members are effective ambassadors for the area and NM.

It is assumed that members of the Board will adhere to standards set out in this document, as they are reasonable, common sense standards. This code of conduct has been produced so that in the unlikely event that a member behaves in a way that is of concern to other members of the Board, rules exist to deal with the situation.

2. Working Together

a. Collective decisions

Board members will inevitably have differences of opinion on issues under debate. This is healthy. After full discussion, when the Board has made a decision, all members must uphold this decision. Speaking against any Board decision in public will undermine the Board. Hence each Board member has a responsibility to stand by collective decisions of the Board and to present a unified front in public.

b. Respect

Board members must respect each other and each other's opinions. Differences of opinion are welcomed and debate must not be acrimonious. In meetings Board members must listen to each other and respond to each other politely. All contributions at meetings must go through the Chair. Where necessary constructive criticism is the most welcome form of feedback.

c. Diversity

We are all different. Board members will respect and welcome this diversity.



In all the Board's work, members will treat other Board members and those affected by the work of the Board fairly. This means not:

- making assumptions about a person or group of people
- making judgements about a person or group of people
- discriminating against any person or group of people

on the basis of their ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, disability or age.

The Board will ensure that all the community of Boscombe West and Springbourne can participate equally in and benefit equally from NM.

d. Mutual Support

Board members are carrying out a challenging role and it is important that they support each other in this task. This will involve sharing information and knowledge and enabling learning from each other. Any Board member experiencing difficulties of whatever sort should be able to rely on help from other Board members or from the Management Team.

e. Involvement and Commitment

Board members are expected to attend Board meetings and involve themselves in the work of the Board. An indicative commitment of @18 days per year was made when members applied to join the Board. Regular attendance at Board meetings is a key element of this requirement. While it is expected that Board members make every effort to meet this commitment there is also an understanding that work and domestic commitments will impinge on Board members' ability to commit their time to NM.

Resident Board members are expected to attend local Forums and other relevant meetings to ensure two-way communication between themselves and other residents.

3. Representing NM

NM Board members must promote both the initiative and the area positively. They must also build and inspire confidence in NM. This means that Board members must not behave in a way that could undermine themselves and consequently the Board. Board members should not make public statements on behalf of the Board unless they have been authorised by the Board to do so.

4. Confidentiality

In general information that Board members are party to will be publicly available. There will however be instances where sensitive or confidential information is under discussion. A clear statement will be made if information provided in a report is of a confidential nature. Board members must respect confidentiality and therefore not disclose such information to any other person.

5. Conflicts of interest

The constitution deals with conflicts of interest, stating that members are expected to disclose any potential or actual conflict of interest.

It is acknowledged that all those involved in a partnership will, due to its nature, have an interest of some sort. Such interests must not be allowed to result in actual or perceived undue benefit or conflict and to unsound decision making. For further clarification the types of conflict include:

- Where an individual or connected person (this includes spouse / partner / relative) stands to gain financially or benefit from a Board decision
- Many individuals “wear more than one hat” and may have a conflict of loyalties, for example as an employee or Board member of a potential beneficiary e.g. bidding for funds or contracts

An interest does not have to be financial for the purposes of disclosure. If it is likely or would, if publicly known, be perceived as being likely to interfere with the exercise of the member’s independent judgement, then the interest, financial or otherwise, should be fully disclosed to the Board before the matter is considered.

Members must not receive gifts (above a value of £5), hospitality or benefits of any kind from a third party which might be seen to compromise their personal judgement or integrity. Any offer or receipt of such gifts, hospitality or benefits should immediately be reported to the Chair.

Related to this is the issue of Board members potentially having a range of involvement in other community or voluntary groups and political organisations. Where this is the case it is important that the Board member is clear, when making statements in public, which organisation they are representing. Confusion could compromise the NM Board.

6. Breaching the Code of Conduct

The constitution sets out that where the code of conduct is thought to have been breached, an investigation will be undertaken and the member can be asked to leave the Board if the breach is proven.

If a Board member (or anyone else) has a concern that another Board member has breached the Code of Conduct the Chair must be advised. The Chair will, if s/he feels it necessary, raise the issue at the next Board meeting. The member under discussion will be invited to represent their case to the Board before a decision is made.

If the Chair doesn't feel the concern raised warrants a Board discussion three other Board members can instruct the Chair to place the item on the agenda.

Section 3: Responsibilities

Partnership Board Agreement

Each Board member will jointly and individually (as appropriate) accept the following responsibilities

Responsibilities:

1. To manage and oversee the effective and efficient development of the Springbourne and Boscombe West Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Delivery Plan in accordance with the appropriate Government / NRU guidelines.
2. To manage and oversee the effective and efficient implementation of the Delivery Plan and provide the monitoring and forecast information as required by the Government Office.
3. To ensure effective appraisal and approval of leverage funded interventions developed through the work of Neighbourhood Management.
4. To approve budgets and monitor Community Win and Management and Administration spend.
5. To demonstrate financial propriety to Government Office's satisfaction, including the setting up and maintenance of financial records, and the safeguarding of any assets held by the Neighbourhood Management Board.
6. To ensure an annual Statement of Grant expenditures is produced, which will be certified by independent auditors.
7. To ensure the widest number of community groups and residents are involved in and consulted with regards to the on-going development and implementation of the Delivery Plan.
8. To ensure that funded activities have been recognised as grant aided by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, Neighbourhood Management Programme.
9. To ensure that any publicity materials produced by the partnership will where possible include the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's logo.
10. To ensure that claims for grants are prepared after the end of each quarter and submitted to Government Office for those activities which have defrayed expenditure during the quarter and also detail any costs relating to management and administration.



11. To ensure that with each claim a quarterly progress report is prepared in support of each of the claims detailing activity during the quarter and progress made to date and explaining variations from forecast expenditure.
12. To ensure that all grant claims are prepared quarterly in line with schedules and specifications of the Government Office.
13. To abide by any requirements set out in the Annual Funding Agreement.
14. To ensure an annual delivery plan is prepared which identifies outputs, outcomes, milestones, and targets and spend for the next and future financial year.
15. To ensure the programme is effectively evaluated, assessing impact made in relation to the baseline indicators as agreed with the Government Office.
16. To ensure the pathfinder complies with GO / NRU performance management, mid year and annual review cycles, preparing and implementing improvement plans.

Section 4: Constitution

1. Introduction

The S&BWNMB is established to manage the development and implementation of the Neighbourhood Management Delivery Plan. Board members' responsibilities are set out in the document "Partnership Board Agreement". This document establishes the working practices of the Board.

2. Membership

The Board is made up of the following members:

Residents

Residents from Springbourne 4 elected

Residents from Boscombe West 4 elected

Agencies

Council 1 appointed

Police 1 appointed

Health 1 appointed

Elected member 1 appointed

Other

Business 1 selected

Voluntary 1 appointed

Faith 1 selected

The Neighbourhood Management Board has four co-opted non-voting members, one from each of the following groups:

Disability

Youth

BME (Black & Minority Ethnic)

JobCentre Plus

The Board will review which agencies it seeks nominations from on the agreed two yearly cycle.

3. Elections, appointments and selections

- i. **Half the Residents** will be elected every two years by postal ballot of all registered electors in the NM area. The first election was in November 2003 and then every two



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years thereafter. Resident Board members must live within the NM area and be over 18 years old.

- ii. **Agencies** will be approached every two years starting in November 2004 for their appointment. They may appoint new members to fill any vacancies arising through the year.

Agencies' representatives must be paid officers of the appointing organisation. Agency Board members may appoint a non voting deputy, approved by the Board, to attend meetings on their behalf, provided they are eligible as above.

- iii. **Business, voluntary and faith organisations** will be approached every two years, from their appointment date, to forward nominations. In the absence of a group that can provide an agreed nomination, the NM Board will establish a panel to select representatives from the nominations received.

The business representative must be an employee or director of a business located or delivering services within the NM area.

The faith representative must be a member or employee of a faith organisation based in or delivering services within the NM area.

The voluntary sector representative must be an employee, member or director of a voluntary organisation based in or delivering services within the NM area.

- iv. **Co-optees** - If an organisation is not identified as a suitable organisation to nominate a co-optee, and the Board feel that the group should be represented by an individual, the suggested individual should be interviewed by Resident Board Members and the Neighbourhood Manager and attend a Board meeting prior to appointment.

4. Co-options

The Board may appoint up to 3 non voting co-optees to provide specific skills and experience the Board have identified as being required.

The requirements of co-optees are identical to those of non co-opted Board members and they are required to abide by the Code Of Conduct.

5. Length of membership

Resident Board members are elected for four years.

Others are selected / nominated for 2 years.

Any resident Board member who leaves the area, or resigns, will give up their place on the Board.

The following rules apply for replacing a resident Board member, as agreed at Board July 2004:



Board members will not be replaced within three months of the next election.

When replacing a Board member the next person from the previous election should be invited to join the Board with the proviso that they have received at least 40% of the winner's votes. If the place cannot be filled this way, selection will take place.

When a board member is replaced it will be a direct substitute i.e. if a replacement takes over an elected seat they will come up for election when the seat was due for election and not automatically be up for election the next time elections are held.

Agency, faith, voluntary sector and business members who can no longer take up their Board place will be replaced using the process set out in point 3.

6. Election of chair and vice chair

The chair and vice chair of the Board will be from the resident members of the Board and will be elected annually, after any change of membership of one third of the members, by all members of the Board.

In the event of one / both of these positions not being filled by residents each meeting will elect a chair / vice chair for that meeting until a resident chair / vice chair is elected.

In electing the chair / vice chair Board members will endeavour to fill these positions from both Springbourne and Boscombe West residents.

7. Board Meetings

Will be held every month and are open to all residents.

Residents who attend have observer status and can only contribute to the meeting if notice has been given to the Chair in advance of the meeting, or in exceptional circumstances if the Chair permits.

Agenda items must be sent to the Chair at least 2 weeks before the meeting to enable the agenda and reports to be available for Board members at least 3 working days before the meeting. Items received beyond this deadline will be discussed at the discretion of the Chair.

Members who attend Board meetings will be refunded out of pocket expenses. The policy on expense claims can be found in the 'Support' section of this document.

8. Voting

The decisions of the Board will be decided by a majority of votes of those present at a quorate meeting.

All members of the Board will have equal votes. The chair will have a vote as a member and in the event of a vote being tied will have a second and casting vote.

9. Annual Meeting

An annual meeting will be held each year, at an appropriate time to discuss the year's progress of Neighbourhood Management and the issues for the forthcoming year.

10. Quorum

Meetings of the NMB are quorate if: there are an equal or greater number of resident Board members in attendance and, at least 7 voting members at present.

11. Changes to the Constitution

Changes to the constitution will require a two thirds majority of all voting members of the Board.

12. Confidentiality

Board meetings are open to the public and minutes, agendas and reports are available to the public. However where agenda items contain information that is confidential members of the public will be excluded and relevant documentation will not be made publicly available. The type of information that will be treated as confidential may include:

- Commercially sensitive information
- Individuals' personal details
- Unconfirmed proposals, which could lead to the spread of misinformation

13. Conflict of interests

A conflict of interest may arise where a member of the Board or an organisation they are linked to could benefit or be disadvantaged by a Board decision.

At the beginning of each meeting members will be asked to declare any conflicts of interest that may arise through the meeting. Declarations can also be made during the meeting as issues arise.

The meeting will decide whether the conflict of interests is such that the Board member is barred from being present/ contributing to the debate and / or voting on the item.

Further guidance appears in the Code of Conduct.

14. Code of conduct

All members will adhere to the agreed Code of Conduct. If any member of the Board is found by the Board to be in breach of the Code of Conduct they may be asked to leave the Board. The Board must decide on a majority vote:

- whether the Board member is in breach, and
- whether this justifies removal from the Board

15. Equal opportunities

The NM Board will operate equal opportunities policies and practices in all aspects of its work. The Board will strive to ensure that in its own operations and in the way it influences services in the NM area there will be equality of opportunity regardless of age, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability.

An equal opportunities statement, available from the Administration Manager, has been adopted by the Board and must be adhered to by Board members.

Section 5: Criminal record checks

All candidates will have to undertake a criminal record check although the aim is not to deter anyone who has any criminal history. The aim is to ensure candidates are suited to the position and there is nothing in their past to suggest they should not take on this responsibility. It is not possible to set out exactly which convictions will be a bar to standing for the election and which will be ignored.

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. However, the following guidelines will apply.

- All candidates will be CRB checked.
- Candidates with convictions will not be automatically barred. However, persons with convictions in the following categories will not normally be considered to stand as candidates: sexual crimes, crimes of violence, trafficking or supplying controlled drugs. In every case factors such as age at time of offence, period of time since offence occurred, seriousness of the offence, repeat offences, will be taken into account before a decision is made.
- Persons who are shown to be persistent offenders will also be barred.
- A panel consisting of a NM resident Board member, representative from the accountable body and the Neighbourhood Manager will make the final decision.
- If the CRB check does not come through before the elections candidates will still be able to stand and their election will be subject to the results of the Criminal Record Check.
- Confidentiality will be observed at all stages of the procedure.

A criminal record will not necessarily bar anyone from becoming a resident Board member.

Section 6: Campaigning Rules

1. Candidates are not permitted to hire, for pay, anyone to canvass on their behalf.
2. Supporters, other than the candidate, are prohibited from spending any money on promoting the candidate. Anyone who spends money without the candidate's permission is seen as being guilty of a corrupt practice.
3. Any campaigning material being distributed by the candidate, or on behalf of the candidate should include a contact name and full postal address, although this could be a PO Box number.
4. Any campaigning material should be passed to the Neighbourhood Manager for approval prior to distribution. The Neighbourhood Manager will place a NM logo on the material to prove its authenticity.
5. All campaigning material should include the NM logo as residents will be advised that without it, approval of the material has not been given by the candidate.
6. Any material distributed should not make false statements, and should only provide details on issues i.e. not about other candidates. They should not be to the detriment of other candidates by relating to the personal character or code of conduct of candidates, this type of action is an offence under electoral law.

These rules apply to anyone standing for election that wishes to campaign.

Please note that Neighbourhood Management distribute election material containing personal statements from candidates and should be contacted to find out about more campaigning opportunities.



Section 7: Basic Principles Document

– the document candidates are asked to sign up to before the ballot takes place.

As a candidate standing in the NM elections I support the following principles of NM and will, if successful, adhere to these principles as a Board member:

The aim of NM is to:

- Join up and improve services, influencing mainstream services
- Ensure joint working between service providers
- Ensure residents are central to NM and the changes brought about
- Ensure close partnership working between agencies and residents
- Find lasting solutions to long standing problems

The approach is:

- The Board is the strategic body, setting the direction and making decisions about spend
- NM groups research problems and explore the best ways of addressing them, making recommendations to the Board
- The Delivery Plan sets out the plans for the forthcoming year and the Board makes sure, through the Officers, that this happens
- NM staff work to the Board and there is mutual support and respect between the Board and staff

Key outcomes set out in the Delivery Plan are:

- Better standards of housing
- A cleaner environment
- A safer community
- Better employment opportunities
- More leisure and social facilities
- Improved health
- Increased success and involvement in education

I also:

- Agree to abide by all the requirements set out in the Code of Conduct
- Accept the responsibilities of a Board member, as set out in the Partnership Agreement
- Agree to abide by the election campaigning rules

Signed

Name (Print Name).....

Date

Section 8: Elected Members' Induction

All new Board members meet with Neighbourhood Management representatives to receive a fuller briefing about the NM programme and current activities. This will be held as a workshop, providing more detail than the pre-election workshop. In addition individual meetings will also be held with each new member to answer specific questions and discuss any training or information needs.

A full set of documents:

- Delivery Plan
- NM Bulletin
- Board members' handbook

will also be made available.

Section 9: Elected/Board Members' Support

All new and existing Board members are entitled to claim for expenses incurred due to their activities undertaken as a Board member. This includes actual telephone call charges, travel and subsistence costs for conference attendance, childcare/dependent expenses, and postage/stationery costs. Full details of the policies and procedures for claiming expenses can be found in the Board members' handbook, which is available at the Board members' Induction, or from the Administration Manager.