



Statement of Governance Principles for Byker Community Trust

Byker Community Trust (BCT) aims to serve customers and communities through the provision of excellent services and engagement with all our stakeholders. Our vision is about securing for the Byker estate high quality, sustainable housing and services; a place where people want to live and work with a sense of pride in their home and community. We are committed to innovative and pioneering activity and this approach governs our work in local communities, our delivery of quality services as well as our broader economic and social role. It applies to the ways in which our staff and Board Members conduct themselves and fulfill their roles.

We are committed to good governance as the basis for demonstrating our charitable purposes, ethical conduct and our commitment to a values based approach to all our actions. This document is a summary of our approach and we ask all partners, stakeholders, customers and communities to judge us by how well we deliver the principles highlighted here. We welcome feedback on how we perform against the standards we set for ourselves and will undertake an annual appraisal of Board effectiveness to seek continuously to improve governance as well as the overall performance of BCT.

We have adopted the National Housing Federation Code 'Excellence in Governance' which incorporates the main elements of 'The Good Governance Standard for Public Services' which, we believe, is a statement of best practice meeting the needs of all those with whom we work as well as satisfying the requirements of our Regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency. The six principles and our adherence to them are summarised below.

First, focusing on purpose and outcomes

We are firmly focused on the promotion of our customers' needs through the services provided by our strategic and service partners as well as in the economic and social investment we are bringing to the Byker estate. We have clear strategies and plans and our decision making is consistent with our governing documentation and our legal and regulatory obligations.

Second, performing effectively

Our Board and staff have clearly defined roles and act in the best interests of BCT's mission. Board and staff working relationships are constructive and effective reflecting a commitment to joint working and collective responsibility. Board Members are committed to giving appropriate time to fulfill their governance responsibilities. We have clear delegation arrangements and the Chief Executive is accountable to the Board for operational matters and performance management within the agreed corporate strategy. Our ethical approach is defined in our Code of Conduct, reflected in our Register of Interests and the duty of the Board to reach decisions based on evidence and, where necessary, external professional advice as well as the work of the expert staff team.

Third, promoting values for the whole organisation:

We have a clear statement of values which commits us to being positive, open and honest, respecting and valuing people. We are committed to the principles of equality and diversity and conduct our affairs with integrity ensuring our good reputation and the trust which can be placed in us. This guides the activities of the organisation at every level to do our very best for Byker.

Fourth, taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk

The Board and any Committees and associated ad hoc bodies act and make decisions in a way which is consistent with our Rules, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation. The Board receives information and advice which enables it to fulfill our strategic oversight role and to hold staff to account for performance in achieving our purpose and outcomes. We monitor, measure and evaluate performance and publish information about our activities. We exercise and implement clear risk management principles to enable us to operate effectively. We publish on our website Board Papers considered in open session and key corporate documents which govern our actions.

Fifth, developing the capacity of the Board to be effective

The Board, Chief Executive and staff team have the skills, knowledge and experience to exercise capable leadership and direction of the organisation. We are committed to open recruitment processes, periodic assessment of skills and capability and the provision of induction, training and support to sustain organisational effectiveness. We are committed to regular reviews of the skills and composition of the Board to ensure we can fulfill governance responsibilities and to have succession planning in place for future Board development.

Sixth, engaging stakeholders and being accountable

We work closely with partners, stakeholders and funders to ensure we do what we promise and deliver value for money. We engage with local people and customers to make sure we are open about service performance and our future plans. We publish regular information about service performance through our Newsletters and Annual Report to Tenants. We encourage involvement in our work through shareholding membership of BCT and welcome feedback about our effectiveness as an agency.

Adopted by the Byker Community Trust Board on 19 March 2014. Updated November 2016.