

1.0 AIMS OF THE SBHA MEMBERSHIP POLICY

- 1.1 The Association is formed for the benefit of the community. Its objects as outlined in the Rules, approved by shareholders in 2023, are:
- a) to provide for the relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage through the provision, construction, improvement and management of land and accommodation and the provision of care.
 - b) any other purpose or object permitted under Section 24 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 which is charitable both for the purposes of Section 7 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and also in relation to the application of the Taxes Act.
- 1.2 This Policy reflects SBHA's Rules and Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and the Privacy Policy,

2.0 CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 SBHA wishes to ensure that its membership is representative of the communities which it serves. Applications are welcomed from:
- tenants of the Association;
 - service users of the Association;
 - other persons who support the objects of the Association;
 - organisations sympathetic to the objects of the Association including, Scottish Borders Council. The Association will normally expect such organisations to operate in the Scottish Borders.

Applicants for membership must be age 16 or over and Members can only hold one share.

Employees of SBHA or any other organisation within SBHA's group, or any close relative of any such employees, are not eligible for Shareholding Membership.

- 2.2 Applications are accepted from individuals and organisations.

3.0 APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- 3.1 Application forms can be obtained from any of SBHA's Head Office or SBHA's website www.sbha.org.uk. Completed forms should be returned to SBHA Head Office, South Bridge House, Whinfield Road, Selkirk TD7 5DT, along with a £1 fee. The Board of Management will consider all membership applications as soon as reasonably practicable and, if the application is approved, applicants will immediately become a Member and their name and other necessary particulars will be included in the Register of Members within seven working days. New Members will then receive:

- An SBHA share certificate;
- A copy of the Association's Rules;
- A copy of the Tenant Participation Strategy; and
- Details of how to stand for election to the Association's Board of Management and Sub-Committees.

3.2 In order to maintain regular contact, each Member will receive a copy of the Annual Report and a copy of the Annual Audited Accounts on request. Members are invited to attend SBHA's Annual General Meeting.

4.0 UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

4.1 While the Board of Management's intention is to encourage membership, the Board has absolute discretion to accept or reject any membership application. An application shall be considered by the Board as soon as reasonably practicable after its receipt by the Association. An application for membership will not be considered by the Board within the period of fourteen days before the date of a general meeting.

4.2 An application may be refused by the Board of Management on the following grounds:

- Where membership would be contrary to the Association's Rules or policies; or
- Where a conflict of interest may exist which, even allowing for the disclosure of such an interest, may adversely affect the work of the Association; or
- Where the Board considers that accepting the application would not be in the best interests of the Association.

4.3 If an application is rejected, written reasons for refusal will be given. [An applicant will then have one further opportunity to request membership, and to give reasons why the decision should be changed; this request should be made in writing. The Board of Management will consider the request at its next scheduled meeting.]

4.4 The decision of the Board of Management is final.

5.0 REPRESENTING AN ORGANISATION

5.1 An organisation which is admitted as a Member must nominate to the Association a person it considers suitable as its representative. The Association will consider the suitability of such person in accordance with the criteria set out at para 4.2 and will notify the organisation of the outcome.

5.2 If a nomination is accepted by the Association from a member organisation, then to confirm the identity of a representative, the organisation must send the Association a copy of the authorisation or appointment of an individual as a representative. This should be signed by a Director, Secretary or Authorised Signatory of the organisation which signature must be witnessed, or in the case of a local authority, by the Chief Executive or properly authorised Officer of the local authority. The representative will then represent the organisation and exercise all of the organisation's rights and powers at general meetings.

5.3 An organisation can change the identity of the person entitled to represent that organisation at any time by nominating another person, and upon that person being considered by the Association to be suitable (see paras 2.0 and 4.0), by confirming the

identity of the new representative per para 5.2 and withdrawing the authority of the original representative.

- 5.4 Representatives from organisations cannot also be an individual member. If they are already a Member as an individual when they start to represent a member organisation, the Association will suspend the person's individual membership until such time as they are no longer a representative of the member.

6.0 PARTICIPATING IN THE ASSOCIATION

- 6.1 SBHA wishes to include all its Members in the running of the organisation and values the contribution made by its Members. The Association aims to positively promote an active membership by holding meetings at accessible venues, making arrangements for people who require assistance to attend and having information available in accessible formats (Braille, tape, pictorial, signing or appropriate languages, on request). It will also ensure that at least 14 days notice is given of any Annual or General Meeting and will regularly review its communication with Members to take into account Members' views and concerns.

- 6.2 The Association wishes to encourage shareholding members with the relevant skills to support the organisation by serving as Board or Sub-Committee elections. There are annual elections and shareholders are notified in writing of vacant places. Membership of the Board and Sub-Committees is outlined in the election procedures.

7.0 ENDING OF SHAREHOLDING MEMBERSHIP

- 7.1 Membership of the Association will end and the Board will cancel a member's share and record the ending membership in the Register of Members if:-

- The Member resigns giving seven days notice in writing to the Secretary at the registered office.
- The Board reasonably believes that the Member has failed to tell the Association of a change of address (except in the case of tenants who transfer their tenancy to another property owned and managed by the Association);
- For five annual general meetings in a row the Member has not attended submitted apologies or exercised a postal vote.

- 7.2 Membership may also be ended if the Association receives a complaint about the behaviour of the Member and two-thirds of Members voting at a Special General Meeting agree to ending the membership.

- 7.3 If membership is ended they will immediately cease to be a Member from the date that the resolution to end membership was passed and any further application for membership will need to be approved by two-thirds of the Members voting at a general meeting.

- 7.4 Tenant Members who cease to be a tenant, will automatically become an Independent Member as from the date on which the tenancy ends, and the Secretary will amend the Register of Members to reflect the change in your category of membership.

- 7.5 If an individual is a Member and becomes (a) an employee of the Association or of another organisation within the Group or (b) a Close Relative of a person falling within (a), the Association will suspend your membership until such time as you no longer fall within (a) or (b).

- 7.6 The £1 membership fee is non-refundable, and shares cannot be sold by Members. Shares can be transferred if the Board agrees and only in circumstances set out in SBHA's Rules (Rule 17.1 – 17.3)

8.0 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

- 8.1 SBHA values the diverse perspectives and experiences that enrich our community and enhance decision-making. It strives to ensure that Shareholding Membership is representative of the tenants and communities it serves and that Members feel valued and supported, with barriers to participation removed.
- 8.2 All members and applicants will be treated fairly, and SBHA is committed to ensuring that all individuals, regardless of background, have equal access to shareholding membership. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, SBHA will not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. In order to achieve full representation, the Association particularly welcomes applications from people from under-represented groups and will work with applicants to ensure the application process is as inclusive as possible.
- 8.3 Applicants for shareholding membership and members are asked to complete an equalities monitoring form to help ensure that SBHA's membership processes are fair, inclusive, and reflective of the diverse communities it serves. The equality data collected is used to help keep under review the existence or absence of equality of opportunity or treatment between groups of people within the same categories to promote or maintain equality within SBHA.

9.0 REVIEW OF POLICY

- 9.1 The Board of Management will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this Policy to ensure it continues to meet its aims and objectives. This review will take place every 3 years or earlier if legislative or other changes make this necessary.