



Railway Housing
Association

**Board Member / Chair
Designate**

Recruitment Information Pack

Introduction

Railway Housing Association was established in 1919 and is a registered charity and registered social landlord with 1,431 units of accommodation, primarily in the North East and Yorkshire & Humberside areas.

The Board face the challenges of regulation and ensuring good governance arrangements while continuing to improve our services and provide new homes during the current difficult economic times.

Our current Chair's term of office ends in the summer of 2016 and we are seeking to appoint an individual who will act as an Observer and Chair Designate from May 2015. This individual will be appointed as a Board member and take over the Chair at our Annual General Meeting in August 2016.

We are seeking a strong candidate to be our Chair Designate; someone who can work collaboratively with the board, staff and tenants of our organisation to help achieve our vision and deliver our priorities for the communities in which we work.

Preferably candidates will have previous experience of non-executive board level work and some understanding of social housing policy, combined with a commercial outlook and strong stakeholder engagement skills.

Meetings are held in Darlington approximately 6 times per year, plus committee meetings, away days, training sessions and the additional input required of a Chair.

If you feel you have the appropriate skills, experience and commitment we would like to hear from you.

Full details of the process, the role and Railway Housing Association are set out in this pack. For further details and an information pack please call our retained advisor Angela Lomax at DTP on 07702 213809 or email a.lomax@davidtolsonpartnership.co.uk

The closing date for applications is **12 noon on Wednesday 13th January 2016**, with dates set for interviews on **Wednesday 3rd and Thursday 4th February 2016**.

How to Apply

You are asked to provide five documents:

- A detailed CV (no more than four A4 pages) including qualifications, employment history, relevant experience and details of any other current or recent board memberships and key achievements, as well as voluntary activity in the last 5 years.
- A supporting statement addressing the person specification and competencies and summarising how you think that your knowledge and experience make you a suitable candidate for the Chair Designate. Please also explain your motivation in applying and give examples of specific achievements in the last 5 years which demonstrate your competence for this role.
- Full contact details (name, job title, organisation, phone and email) for two referees. Please note we will not take up references without your prior permission.
- A completed diversity monitoring form (separately appended as a Word document). Please note, this is for monitoring purposes only and will not be seen or used by Railway Housing Association in the recruitment and selection process.
- A completed "Declaration of Interests Form" and "Fit and Proper Person Form" (separately appended as a Word document).

Your application will be acknowledged and treated with strictest confidence.

Applications should be sent to Angela Lomax at: Eastray, Broad Carr, Holywell Green, Halifax, HX4 9BS or by email to a.lomax@davidtolsonpartnership.co.uk

If you have any queries regarding the Association or the application process please contact Angela Lomax at DTP on 07702 213809

Should candidates wish to discuss the position with the current Chair, please contact Geoff Proudlock on 01723 363936 or 07719 095891.

All applications will be considered and assessed against the requirements of the Person Specification and Competencies in order to shortlist candidates. If you have been successful at this stage, David Tolson Partnership will contact you to invite you to interview. If you are unsuccessful at this stage you will be offered feedback.

The interview panel will comprise Carol Bustard, Vice Chair; Alistair Brown and David Goodman, Board Members; with Anne Rowlands, Chief Executive, and Angela Lomax, consultant, in attendance as advisors.

Timeline

Activity	Date
Closing date for applications	12 noon on Wednesday 13th January 2016
Shortlist drawn up by the interview panel	Friday 15th January 2016
Interviews - held in Darlington	Wednesday 3rd and Thursday 4th February 2016
Successful candidate to attend board meetings as an observer	Wednesday 2nd March 2016 Wednesday 4th May 2016 Wednesday 29th June 2016
Appointment as board member and chair	Formal appointment from 3rd July 2016

About the Association

Established in 1919, Railway Housing Association & Benefit Fund is a registered charity (reg. no. 216825) and Registered Social Landlord (reg. no A1855); regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency and the Charity Commission.

The Association owns 1,431 units of rented accommodation located within 24 local authority areas in the North East of England and Hereford. This wide geographic spread means that the Association's biggest challenges are ensuring that we provide an equitable service to all, and establishing a presence within the local community.

In addition the Association manages 73 units of leasehold accommodation for the elderly. The areas in which the Association has a significant presence are Doncaster, Hull, York, Darlington & Durham County. We specialise in the provision of rented accommodation for older people. However, we also have general needs properties, mainly in Darlington and York.

The Association employs 36 members of staff. The majority work from our head office in Darlington. The remainder are based in our sheltered schemes providing local housing management services.

The Association's governing body is its Board of Trustees which comprises 9 volunteers. Details of the current Board are set out below.

The Association's Business Strategy & Financial Forecast 2015-2020, which outlines the Association's seven strategic goals and provides details of key achievements, commitments and actions to achieve these goals, is included with this pack.

Further details on the Association, including policies, the Association's Annual Report to Residents and newsletters, can be found on our website www.railwayha.co.uk

Vision

Providing high quality affordable homes that contribute to sustainable communities.

Mission

To be an excellent landlord that puts people at its heart and provides services that are value for money and meet the aspirations of current future residents.

Values

To have integrity

To be approachable

To embrace change

To be transparent

To be ethical

To value diversity

About the Role

Railway Housing Association has adopted the National Housing Federation Code of Governance. The Code states that an individual can only serve on the board for a maximum of 9 years. The current chair, Geoff Proudlock will retire from the board in the summer of 2016. Recruiting for a Chair Designate now will provide for a robust handover to the new post-holder and sufficient time for a smooth transition to a new Chair. Railway Housing Association has taken the decision to open the recruitment process to current board members and to external candidates.

The organisation considers that the role of the Chair is vital to achieving the aims and objectives of Railway Housing Association. The Chair Designate will need to work constructively with the current Chair and other board members and the senior management team to focus on the current challenges within the social housing sector, to maintain our core business and manage risk to ensure Railway continues to meet the long term interests of residents and the organisation.

We are looking for a person who shares our passion and our drive to help people create a better future for themselves and their communities. Your background does not have to be in housing but you should have substantial senior experience in a successful business with a strong customer or social focus and you'll ideally have previous non-executive board level experience - we will select the candidate who best matches the profile overall.

In return for your time, energy and expertise, we can offer you a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and the opportunity to work with us to shape our future.

Details about the commitment required are set out below.

Governance Structure

The board comprises nine members. Board members are initially appointed for a three year term, in line with the National Housing Federation Code of Governance, and are eligible to apply for further terms up to a maximum of three.

The Chair holds the position for a maximum of two terms.

The Association aims to have a balanced board reflecting a wide range of skills, knowledge and experience.

There are currently two committees within the governance structure:

- Audit Committee
- Remuneration Committee

Responsibilities of the Board

The essential functions of the Board are listed below. The Board operates in accordance with Railway Housing Association's Trust Deed.

- Define and ensure compliance with the values and objectives of the Association
- Establish policies and plans to achieve those objectives
- Approve each year's budget and accounts prior to publication
- Establish and oversee a framework of delegation and systems of control
- Agree policies and make decisions on all matters that might create significant financial or other risk to the Association, or which raise issues of principle
- Monitor the Association's performance in relation to these plans, budgets, controls and decisions
- Appoint (and, if necessary, dismiss) the Chief Executive and be represented in the appointment of Functional Managers.
- Satisfy itself that the Association's affairs are conducted lawfully and in accordance with generally accepted standards of performance and propriety
- Establish and oversee a risk management framework in order to safeguard the assets of the association
- Carry out an annual risk appraisal and review exercise
- To receive minutes from committees for consideration and approval of any decisions as necessary
- On an annual basis appraise the effectiveness with which it conducts its business
- Assess how the association follows the requirements of the NHF Code 'Excellence in Governance'
- Establish and monitor a mechanism for communicating and receiving feedback from the organisation's stakeholders and shareholders
- Establish a strong working relationship between the Board, Chief Executive and other senior staff
- Follow the organisation's constitution in appointing (and if necessary, removing) the chair of the board
- Establish a code of conduct and expected behaviour for the Board

Commitment

It is estimated that the Chair will commit around one and a half days per month to Railway Housing Association. This time will be employed flexibly and can vary depending on the demands of the business.

An initial induction with the current Chair, Chief Executive and members of the senior management team takes place over 2 or 3 days within six months of formal appointment as an Observer.

The board has six regular meetings per year at the Association's head office in Darlington which are currently on Wednesdays, usually starting at 9.30am and finishing at 12.30pm with lunch. The Board Meeting Plan for 2016 is set out below and shows the standard agenda items considered by the board at each of its meetings. All Board Members are expected to prepare thoroughly for these meetings. The Chair will have an additional role in agreeing the agenda and attending a pre-briefing.

In addition there is a full day board away day and a business strategy review day, with all staff, held each year away from head office. Again, the Chair will have an additional role in shaping these events.

Audit Committee meetings are held at our head office four times per year with a Remuneration Committee meeting once per year.

Additional board or committees meetings and discussion / away days are arranged if necessary to consider specific topics or issues outside of the formal board meeting environment.

Training sessions are arranged as necessary and a training programme is in place. Board members also have the opportunity to attend external training, conferences and networking sessions; and are encouraged to do so.

The Chair will also have a role in undertaking collective and individual appraisals of the board, attending other meetings, events and activities (e.g. task and finish groups, recruitment, presentations, scheme openings etc.) in line with the business of Railway Housing Association.

What the Association Expects from Board Members

- 1.** To uphold the values and objectives of the Association.
- 2.** To uphold the Association's core policies including those for equality and diversity.
- 3.** To prepare for and attend meetings of the Board of Trustees and Committees.
- 4.** To participate in meetings, contributing expertise where applicable.
- 5.** To contribute and share responsibility for the Board's decisions.
- 6.** To prepare for and attend training sessions or other events.
- 7.** To attend and prepare for reviews linked to individual performance and that of the Board.
- 8.** To represent the Association as appropriate.
- 9.** To ask for training where it is needed.
- 10.** To declare any relevant interest.
- 11.** To respect confidentiality of information, and
- 12.** To uphold the Code of Governance and Code of Conduct.

What Board Members Can Expect from the Association

- 1.** Induction and other specialist training, as appropriate, to enhance the skills of all Members.
- 2.** Support of the Chair and Senior Management Team.
- 3.** Reimbursement of incidental expenses, including travel, associated with attending meetings and other events.
- 4.** Access to the Board Members Portal on the Association's website which contains the key documents of our business.
- 5.** Notification of the annual meeting schedule.
- 6.** Agendas and meeting papers circulated in advance of meetings.
- 7.** Access to publications and literature relating to the social housing sector and board membership.

Chair: Role Description and Person Specification

The Chair provides leadership to the board and creates the conditions for collective and individual board member effectiveness, both within and outside of the board room. He/she is also line manager for the Chief Executive.

The purpose of the Chair's role is to direct the affairs of the Association ensuring the day to day management is effectively delegated and carried out by the Chief Executive and the staff. It is vital the Chair commits to the values of Railway Housing Associations and contributes to an organisational culture which upholds these values.

Key accountabilities:

The Chair shares the key accountabilities and responsibilities of other board members in addition to the specific duties set out here.

Management of meetings

- To ensure that the board's work plan is appropriate and agendas are forward looking, business and strategy focused.
- To ensure the efficient and effective conduct of the board's business.
- To ensure that sufficient time is allowed for the constructive discussion of complex or contentious issues, where appropriate arranging informal meetings beforehand to enable thorough preparation for the board discussion.
- To ensure that the board receives accurate, timely and clear information that enable the board to take sound decisions and monitor the effectiveness of the Association.
- To ensure that appropriate internal/external professional advice is available at all times.
- To ensure that decisions are correctly recorded and that matters arising and other follow up actions are monitored.

Board members

- To identify the skills requirements of the Association and ensure that it makes best use of the skills, competencies and experience of all board members.
- To encourage the active engagement of all members in all aspects of the board's business.
- To ensure that appropriate standards of behaviour are maintained in accordance with a code of conduct and any such probity policies as approved by the board.
- To ensure that all board members are given the opportunity to make their contribution before any important decision is taken.
- To ensure that individual board members' views and concerns are addressed appropriately.
- To ensure that the board agrees the role of the Vice Chair and other board members and any committees.

Chief Executive and Executive Team

- To ensure that the respective roles and responsibilities of the Chair and Chief Executive are clear.
- To establish and develop a constructive and supportive relationship with the Chief Executive.
- To ensure that the board as a whole acts in partnership with the Executive team.
- To ensure that the board makes proper arrangement to appraise the performance of and determine the remuneration of the Chief Executive.
- To ensure where necessary, that the Chief Executive is replaced in a timely and orderly manner.

Delegation

- To ensure that the board delegates sufficient authority to its committees, panels, the Chief Executive and others to enable the business of the organisation to be conducted effectively between meetings of the board.
- To ensure that any decision taken under urgency procedures are as inclusive as possible and practical.
- To ensure that the board monitors the use of any delegated powers.
- To ensure that the board agrees the role provide for the Vice Chair and other board members.

Learning and development

- To lead and establish proper and appropriate arrangements for the boards' collective and individual appraisal, including the Chairs own appraisal.
- To promote and deliver continuous improvement in the boards effectiveness.
- To ensure that adequate resources are available for ongoing training and development for the collective board and individual members.
- To ensure that there is a properly constructed induction programme for every new board member which is comprehensive, formal and tailored.

Succession planning

- To facilitate the development of an implement a succession plan for board membership that balances continuity with the need for fresh skills and perspectives.
- To ensure that the board has the requisite skills, competencies and experience appropriate for the business.
- To ensure timely and open recruitment processes for board members.

Support

- To ensure that board members have appropriate administrative and other support to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.
- To encourage a positive culture of mutual support and appreciation within the board and with senior managers.
- To ensure that scrutiny systems are in place and that there are robust plans to monitor the work of the organisation.

Probity and integrity

- To ensure that the board receives professional advice when it is needed, either from its senior staff or from external sources to ensure appropriate levels of compliance.
- To ensure that the Association's affairs are conducted in accordance with all relevant legal, regulatory and best practice standards.
- To ensure that the board develops understanding of the views and priorities of its major stakeholders.

Transparency and openness

- To ensure that the board's deliberations and decisions are as open as practicable to all board/committee members, staff and other stakeholders.
- To promote and demonstrate effective two way communications between board, committees and other entities throughout the organisation.
- To establish and maintain the board's visibility and appropriate communications with staff.

Ambassadorial role

- To ensure that the Association is positively represented in the wider community and with key current and potential stakeholders and partners.
- To liaise where necessary with the relevant legal and regulatory bodies on behalf of the Association.
- To ensure the prompt and effective management of any critical event with a potentially adverse impact on the Association's reputation.

The details outlined in this Role Description, particularly the principal accountabilities, reflect the content of the job at the date the Role Description was prepared. It should be remembered however, that it is inevitable that over time the nature of individual roles will change, existing duties may be lost and other duties gained without changing the general remit of the duties or the level of responsibilities entailed. Consequently the Company will expect to revise this Role Description from time to time and will consult the postholder at the appropriate time.

Person specification

Knowledge and experience

- Previous non-executive board level or committee Chair experience in a customer focused organisation (not necessarily within the affordable housing sector).
- A track record in providing effective leadership and of working with groups of diverse stakeholders.
- Understanding of governance and regulated sectors (public or private).
- Evidence of strong business acumen.
- Understanding of social policy.
- Evidence of understanding and support for the concept of a social business and the environment that the Association operates in.
- Experience of being an ambassador for an organisation and evidence of effective public speaking.

Competencies

- Leadership and the ability to run meetings effectively - Board Meetings are properly chaired, with business conducted effectively, Board decisions are reached and recorded effectively.
- Inclusiveness - giving Members opportunities to express their views in Board Meetings, ensuring that appropriate standards of behaviours are maintained. Management - ensuring that there is a constructive working relationship between the Chair and Executive Team.
- Acting as an ambassador - ensuring the Chair is an excellent ambassador for the Association and representing the Association through networking.
- Learning continuously - ensuring new ideas are embraced and supports the learning of others.
- Influencing skills - the ability to negotiate, broker and act as an ambassador.
- Strategy - the ability to think laterally, broadly and to consider many strategic aspects simultaneously.

Other

- Personally uphold the values of the Association.
- Genuine desire to work in the community.
- Ability to give appropriate time commitment.

Board Meeting Plan 2016

<p>Wednesday 2nd March Policy Audit Committee Minutes: February Balanced Scorecard: Quarter 3 Management Accounts: Quarter 3 Treasury Management Quarterly Update Business Strategy 2017-2022 Financial Forecast 2017-2022 Budget Approval 2017/2018 Rent Setting Policy 2016 Performance Indicator Targets 16/17 Review of Mileage Allowances / Rates Risk Register Write Offs</p>	<p>Wednesday 4th May Policy Annual Governance Report Statement on Internal Control Value for Money Strategy Housemark Report</p>
<p>Wednesday 29th June Policy Audit Committee Minutes: April Remuneration Committee Minutes: May Balanced Scorecard: Quarter 4 Management Accounts: Quarter 4 Treasury Management Quarterly Update Self Assessment Against the Regulatory Framework Value for Money Self Assessment Risk Register Board Member Vacancy from October 2015</p>	<p>Wednesday 31st August & AGM Policy Audit Committee Minutes: July Balanced Scorecard: Quarter 1 Management Accounts: Quarter 1 Treasury Management Quarterly Update Treasury Management Strategy Annual Report to Residents Annual Accounts 2015/2016 Letter of Management Representations Write Offs</p>
<p>Wednesday 19th October Policy Risk Register Annual Review of Financial Regulations Annual Review of General Standing Orders Meeting Plan 2017 Risk Register</p>	<p>Wednesday 14th December Policy Audit Committee Minutes: November Balanced Scorecard: Quarter 2 Management Accounts: Quarter 2 Treasury Management Quarterly Update Pay Award 2017 Rent Setting Policy 2017</p>

Board Away Day:

Wednesday 1st June 2016

Business Strategy Review Day:

Wednesday 9th November 2016

Current Board Members

Geoff Proudlock: Chair

Appointed to the Board: July 2006

Geoff is a housing professional with over twenty years experience in the sector. He is currently a lecturer for Coventry University and a member of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Geoff is a member of the Remuneration Committee.

Carol Bustard: Vice Chair

Appointed to the Board: November 2007

Carol is a retired Development Manager previously working for Network Rail. She has experience in project management and business skills.

Carol is a member of the Audit Committee.

Alistair Brown

Appointed to the Board: December 2011

Alistair qualified as an accountant (ACMA) in 1997 and has worked for the Department of Work and Pensions since 1983, currently employed as Head of Financial Assurance and Control.

Alistair is Chair of the Audit Committee.

John Moorley

Appointed to the Board: April 2010

John is a retired Personnel Director (South West Durham Health Authority) with the NHS having joined them in 1976. John is a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development and a Life Member of Manchester Business School Association.

John is a member of the Remuneration Committee.

Pat Wanless

Appointed to the Board: April 2013

Pat has over twenty years experience in the housing sector and recently retired as Director of Neighbourhoods with Dale & Valley Homes. Prior to this Pat was employed as Customer & Tenancy Services Manager with Leeds North West Homes.

Pat is a member of the Audit Committee.

Sarah McManus

Appointed to the Board: April 2013

Sarah currently works as a Services Manager with A Way Out and also has over twenty years housing management experience working with Tees Valley Housing, Broadacres, Citizens Advice Bureau and Ryedale Housing.

Sarah is a member of the Remuneration Committee.

David Goodman

Appointed to the Board: November 2013

David is a retired accountant / auditor who worked for the Audit Commission for over thirty years, progressing to regional director, focussing on legal and governance matters.

David is a member of the Audit Committee.

Fiona Coleman

Appointed to the Board: August 2014

Fiona is currently Development Manager at Broadacres Housing Association and has been involved in social housing development for 25 years, also working for Bradford & Northern Housing Association, Cadarn Housing Association and Yorkshire Rural Community Council.

Fiona is a member of the Remuneration Committee.

Jon Mitford

Appointed to the Board: August 2015

Jon is MCIPs qualified and is currently Head of Development & Procurement with Your Homes Newcastle, seconded to Leazes Homes as Managing Director.

Jon is a member of the Audit Committee

Senior Management Team

Chief Executive:	Anne Rowlands
Director of Finance:	Joanne Watson
Director of Policy:	Sheila Hastie
Director of Customer Services:	Andrea Abbott