



Supporting BME Communities
and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods

Unity Housing Association

Chair Designate - Recruitment Pack

Our Mission

Providing housing choice, improve life opportunities and address inequalities.

Our Objectives

Involve and work with our tenants and the communities we serve to inform and improve services

We will engage with our tenants and BME communities to develop a good evidence base to help us design our services and influence the policy and delivery of services of others. On this basis we will seek to represent BME communities, and others, in the multi-cultural neighbourhoods within which we work

Provide and continue to develop good quality mixed tenure housing which reflects needs and aspirations

We will ensure the highest standards of repair and maintenance of our existing stock. We will continue to develop new high quality stock in geographic areas of Leeds where members of the BME community would choose to live. Our new development programme will consist of the type and tenure of unit for which we know there is a growing need.

Provide high quality housing services

We aim to achieve the highest level of tenant satisfaction through the delivery of a range of flexible high quality services which respond to the needs of our current tenants. We will take account of emerging needs of new tenants and redesign our services accordingly. We will be sensitive to the needs of existing and new tenants in regard to the current economic climate and the Government's legislative programme.

Provide training and employment opportunities and promote financial inclusion

We will carry out programmes of work aimed at ensuring our tenants have the best advice and access to training and sustainable employment opportunities. This will include training and employment opportunities with our contractors in relation to repairs, servicing, planned maintenance and new developments. We will undertake complimentary programmes of work with our tenants aimed at promoting and sustaining financial inclusion.

Provide business support services and encourage local enterprise.

Through our Unity Enterprise company we will offer affordable managed workspace to support the needs of a wide range of small businesses and other organisations. We will provide direct support to encourage local enterprise and we will offer business advice to our existing business tenants.

Work with partners to encourage the regeneration of our target neighbourhoods

We will work in partnership to deliver physical, social and economic regeneration programmes to help create and sustain neighbourhoods where BME communities to live. We will focus our efforts in those neighbourhoods where our tenants live and where there are high percentages of BME communities.

Be a progressive and expanding business with a sound resource base.

We will be a strong and forward-looking organisation. Our governance and performance management arrangements will be of the highest standard and we will be a place where people want to work.

Our Values

Integrity – being honest, transparent and sincere with strong principles

Respect - in the way we treat people, service users and each other

Flexible - in how we work for the benefit of our tenants, other people, the organisation and each other

Equality – in the way we work and deliver our services

Commitment - to provide services to meet the needs of our tenants, local people and local neighbourhoods

1. Opening message from the current chair

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming the Chair Designate of Unity Housing Association.

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.

This is a very exciting time to be joining Unity Housing Association and I wish you every success in your application.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Morley

Chair of the Board

2. About Unity Housing Association

Unity Housing Association is an organisation committed to building strong, sustainable neighbourhoods through the provision of high quality housing and social and employment opportunities. We are a modern, successful and visionary organisation that understands and represents the needs of all tenants of all ethnic backgrounds.

Unity was formed in 1987 with the aim of building a strong, BME-led, community housing association to meet the housing needs of black and minority ethnic communities throughout Leeds. Two decades have since passed and Unity continues to be the lead BME housing association in Leeds delivering a range of housing and regeneration services as well as playing an important strategic role in the city.

For the past 25 years Unity Housing Association has been providing choice, improving life opportunities and addressing inequalities in Leeds. Our initial focus was on the Chapeltown area, we have since spread into neighbouring Harehills, across the city to Beeston and then most of the other inner city areas of Leeds.

In 2000 the association established a subsidiary company, now called Unity Enterprise. We are driven by offering both housing and business tenants a responsive and high level of customer service. During the past quarter century Unity has added nearly 1200 affordable homes to local housing stock. We continue to be involved in regeneration and encourage enterprise to fuel the local economy. Our tenants play a growing role in everything we do.

For further information about Unity Housing Association and its board please visit our website at: <http://www.unityha.co.uk>

3. About the role

Unity Housing Association has adopted the National Housing Federations Code of Governance. The Code states that an individual can only serve on the board for a maximum of 9 years. The current chair, Karen Morley will retire from the board in December 2014. 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. Unity 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 Unity Housing Association. We recognise that the Chair Designate will join us at an exciting time where Unity HA is well positioned to deliver its local aspirations whilst also facing broader sector challenges including changes to welfare, housing and planning policy. All of this presents risks and challenges but also creates opportunities. The Chair Designate will need to work constructively with the current Chair and other board members and the executive team to safeguard core business and manage these risk to maintain 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 / 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.

This position is remunerated at a level of £4,000 per annum. The Chair will sign an Agreement for Services in line with our policy.

The current Chair of the board also attends some committee meetings and other events and meetings with tenants, partners and the Executive Team. The Chair Designate will attend such meetings as an observer as part of the induction process.

For a list of future Board meeting dates (including the AGM), please see Appendix One.

4. Role description and person specification

The purpose of the Chairs role is to direct the affairs of Unity Housing Association ensuring the day to day management is effectively delegated and carried out by the Chief Executive and the staff.

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.

Key accountabilities:

The Chair shares the key accountabilities and responsibilities of other board members in addition to the specific duties set out here. The board member role description can be found at Appendix Two.

Management of meetings

- To ensure that the boards work plan is appropriate and agendas are forward looking, business and strategy focused.
- To ensure the efficient and effective conduct of the boards 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 Unity Housing 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 ensure that the board matches the capabilities of the members with the skills requirements of Unity Housing Association and 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 boards 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' minority views and concerns are addressed appropriately.

- To ensure that the board agrees the role of the Deputy 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 Deputy 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 Unity Housing 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 Unity Housing Association is positively represented in the wider community and with key current and potential stakeholders and partners.
- To ensure the prompt and effective management of any critical event with a potentially adverse impact on Unity Housing 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 management in an organisation of a similar size to Unity Housing Association and also 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 Unity Housing 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 Unity Housing Association, representing Unity HA 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 Unity Housing Association.
- Genuine desire to work in the community.
- Ability to give appropriate time commitment.

5. Board members time commitment

As a guide, we have set out below the estimated annual likely time commitment (excluding travel time) to fulfil the role and responsibilities. Individual responsibilities will vary. Some of this time will be spent at meetings or at Unity Housing Association functions or Unity Housing Association business and some will be spent at home, preparing for meetings etc.

Activity	Equivalent full time days per annum (based on a 7 hour day)
Preparing for and attending a minimum of 4 board meetings and 2 away days in 2014 -15	5
Preparing for and attending committee meetings	2
Attending stakeholder meetings and other contacts	1
Attending a minimum of one site tour (in addition to any arranged within board meetings and/or away days)	1
Participating in collective and individual appraisals	1
Participating in collection and individual training and development	1
Attending other meetings, events and activities (e.g. task and finish groups, recruitment, presentations, scheme openings etc.)	1

The estimated time commitment for the Chair, Deputy Chair and committee Chairs is likely to be significantly more, given their additional responsibilities.

The expectation is that members will attend at least 80% of meetings. Unity Housing Association believes that effective board membership is as much about mutual board member respect and support in addition to the quality and added value of the individual's contributions across the whole of the boards business.

There will be an additional time commitment for new members, primarily in the first six months for induction purposes.

6. Recruitment timetable

Publicity and search campaign commences	4 August 2014
Closing date for applications	29 August 2014
Short-listing and references	Week comm. 1 September 2014
Interviews	Week comm.1 or 8 September 2014
Appointment	30 September 2014
Induction	Early October 2014

7. Further information

For a confidential, informal discussion about this role, please contact:

Angela Lomax, Director, David Tolson Partnership on 07970 221 3809 or email a.lomax@davidtolsonpartnership.co.uk

Or

Ali Akbor, Chief Executive, Unity Housing Association on 0113 200 7700 or email ali@Unityha.co.uk

8. How to apply

You are asked to provide five documents:

- A detailed **CV** (no more than four A4 pages) including details of positions held (and dates), size of budgets and teams managed and key achievements, as well as qualifications and 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. 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 Unity Housing Association.
- 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.

Electronic submissions are preferred to a.lomax@davidtolsonpartnership.co.uk but if you wish to send a hard copy by post, the full address is as follows:

Angela Lomax, David Tolson Partnership, Eastray, Broad Carr, Holywell Green, Halifax, HX4 9BS.

9. The assessment and selection process

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 after our initial meeting with Unity Housing Association. If you are unsuccessful at this stage you will be offered feedback.

Appendix One: Board timetable

Board meetings

3 December 2014

4 March 2015

3 June 2015

9 September 2015

Annual General Meeting

16 September 2015

Unity Enterprises Board

19 November 2014

25 February 2015

27 May 2015

26 August 2015

Audit Committee

12 November 2014

18 February 2015

24 June 2015

19 August 2015

Operations Committee

8 October 2014

5 February 2015

6 May 2015

5 August 2015

Appendix Two: Board member role profile

Introduction

Unity Housing Association expects all Board members to ensure that the Association complies with the eleven principles of good governance set out in the Excellence in Governance produced by the National Housing Federation and which are reproduced below. We are working to support and uphold the Code and believe that the foundation of good governance is a talented diverse and effective Board working as a team in partnership with the Chair of the Board.

The principles of good governance are:

Standards

It operates according to high ethical standards, explicit values and the Excellence in governance.

Ethics

It operates according to high ethical standards, explicit values and the Federation's codes of governance and conduct.

Accountability

There is proper accountability to, and involvement of, all the organisation's stakeholders, primarily its residents.

Customer First

Organisations should put the needs of their existing and potential service users at the heart of business decisions and strategy.

Openness

There is a spirit of openness, making full disclosure of governance matters and other information.

Diversity and inclusion

There is fairness and equality of opportunity and a recognition of diversity in all aspects of the organisation's governance.

Review and renewal

There are formal and open processes for the periodic review of the board's own performance, and to ensure its renewal on an ongoing basis.

Clarity

There is clarity of roles and responsibilities between the organisation's board members, paid staff and shareholders.

Control

There are effective systems for internal delegation, audit, risk management and control. The board receives adequate and timely reports and advice to inform its decisions. The board has an effective relationship with internal auditors, external auditors and regulators.

Structures

There are effective staffing and committee structures to support the board's work.

Board Member - Role Profile

Each Board member has:

- A general duty to act in the interests of Unity HA and its subsidiaries, being committed to the corporate objectives and core values of Unity HA.
- A duty to ensure that Unity HA and its subsidiaries observes their rules.
- a duty to govern Unity HA and its subsidiaries with proper skill and care, contributing to, abiding by and assuming collective responsibility for, board decisions.

In addition, there are essential functions laid out in the NHF Excellence in Governance. A copy of the Code will be provided for all board members and a briefing on any changes will be provided as and when such changes occur.

Leadership

- Share accountability for the direction and control of the Association within the agreed strategy, policy and planning framework, reviewing that framework as necessary.
- Ensure that obligations to stakeholders are understood and reflected in strategy and implementation.
- Establish a strong and positive working relationship between the board, the Chief Executive and other senior staff.
- Support the Chair in his/her role of providing strategic leadership and creating positive board climate.
- In conjunction with the board as a whole, appoint and if necessary, dismiss/remove the Chief Executive and/or the Chair of the Board.

Strategy

- Set objectives for the Association in the context of the Association's aims, strategy and policy and determine the strategic aims and outcomes required.
- Review and evaluate current and future external opportunities, threats and risks together with current and future internal strengths and weaknesses to ensure effective decision making.
- In conjunction with the board as a whole, be accountable for the quality and effectiveness of the Business Plan in contributing to delivering long term sustainability for the Association.

Performance monitoring

- Ensure there are agreed budgets for both revenue and capital expenditure that drive the outcomes set in the Business Plan.
- Review and monitor the performance of the Association against the Business Plan and ensure that the management information provided to the Board is of the nature and quality required.
- Monitor the Association's performance in the light of customer feedback and the performance of comparable associations.

Risk

- Ensure that there are systems in place to identify, manage and report risk to safeguard the Association's assets.
- Agree policies and take decisions on all matters that might create significant financial or other risk to the Association.
- Ensure the climate is monitored and appropriate actions taken to deliver a positive climate for staff and board members.

Governance

- Ensure that the Association complies with all legal and statutory obligations and that all regulatory requirements are met.
- In conjunction with the board as a whole, establish and review a Code of Conduct for all board and committee members and staff.
- Assess how the Association follows the recommendations of the NHF Excellence in Governance and state compliance or non-compliance in the Association's annual review and accounts.

Personal Development

- Be both well informed (undertake appropriate background reading, develop and maintain an appreciation of the key challenges faced by the Association) and contribute specialist knowledge, expertise and/or experience to the board.
- Contribute to creating and sustaining the "learning board" by participating in or leading board induction and development activities.

Representation

- Promote the reputation and image of the Association by representing the Association as an ambassador at key events and interlaces with tenants, stakeholders, staff etc., both internally and externally.

Board Member - Role Specification

The Board should possess the qualities required to lead the Association and its subsidiaries and control their affairs. Through annual individual and collective appraisal, the board will ensure that members have relevant skills and experience to lead the Association.

Knowledge

- Understanding of current issues in affordable/social housing.
- Understanding of the social, economic and/or political context in which the Association operates.
- Understanding of the regulatory and compliance framework within which the Association operates.
- Knowledge of residents' needs and concerns and of the wider communities served by the Association.

Experience

- Experience of working with or for not for profit, public sector, private sector and/or social enterprise bodies.
- Experience of customer care and service delivery.
- Experience of operating in a climate of significant change and challenge.
- Experience of working as part of a team.

Abilities

- Ability to make a constructive contribution to meetings through preparation and understanding.
- Ability to understand complex issues, including financial information Ability to take an active part in collective debate and decision-making Ability to attend Board meetings, training and development events and other corporate activities which may be held in the evening and at weekends.

Skills

- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Committee/meeting skills
- Good problem solving skills
- IOT literacy

Personal Qualities

- Commitment to the vision and values of Unity Housing Association
- Commitment to equality and diversity in employment and service delivery
- High standards of personal and professional integrity
- From time to time the Board will require members with specific expertise in the following areas:
Accountancy, financial management and treasury management
Legal knowledge relevant to housing
Asset management, development and procurement

Procurement, partnering and contracts

PR, media and communications

Human resource management

Social exclusion, worklessness and community investment

Board Member - Competencies

Introduction

Unity Housing Association has reviewed the competencies needed by board members to ensure that the Association is effectively governed. The following list the competencies expected of each board member.

Leadership

Inspires confidence in key stakeholders, the Association's executive team and staff members.

Leads by example and inspires loyalty and commitment to the Association's success.

Demonstrates commitment to the Association's values.

Creates an expectation of high performance against high standards.

Delegates responsibility appropriately.

Strategy

Ensures all the business implications are researched and taken into account when considering plans or actions.

Understands the Association's wider operating environment and emerging trends across the social housing domain.

Recognises the need to balance obligations to residents, staff and the wider communities within which the Association operates.

Takes into account the longer term needs of the Association and identifies risks and opportunities that arise.

Performance monitoring

Keeps a strong focus on performance against the Business Plan, scrutinising, monitoring and providing feedback on performance against financial and nonfinancial measures.

Challenges underlying evidence, information and assumptions before drawing conclusions

Offers appropriate and relevant comparisons or parallels.

Ensures the customer perspective is taken into account in assessing performance against targets.

Keeps to the required (strategic) level of detail.

Risk

Demonstrates clarity of thought and objectivity in actively evaluating risks to the Association

Ensures that identified risks are managed in a focused and cost-effective manner

Demonstrates perceptiveness and intuition, focusing on the essentials and how they may impact on different aspects of the Association's business

Identifies when external, independent professional advice is required

Governance

Adheres to relevant financial, legal and domain regulation
Ensures highest standards of probity and integrity are maintained throughout the Association.

Demonstrates and supports renewal and succession planning for the board
Demonstrates a sound understanding of individual and collective responsibility for decision making.

Personal development

Carries out relevant reading and preparatory work to ensure effective participation in board and other meetings.

Participates in regular board development and training sessions.

Maintains an understanding of the wider political, environmental, social and technological environments in which the Association operates.

Applies specialist knowledge appropriately in arrange of contexts and ensures that the knowledge base is maintained and remains current.

Representation

Acts as an ambassador for the Association, seeking opportunities to influence external agencies or individuals who can contribute to the Association's success.

Makes the most of opportunities to advance the Association's interests, promote its activities and enhance its image.

Effectively lobbies key people in the interests of the Association.

Time Commitment

The Board meets six times a year with Committee meetings on a quarterly cycle.

In addition to reading, preparation for and attendance at these meetings, other time commitments include:

- Annual General Meeting and any Special General Meetings
- Appropriate working groups and occasional panels
- Annual strategic planning away events (may be evenings and/or weekends)
- Training and development as identified by the annual appraisal process
- Additional duties required of chairs, deputy chairs and board champions.
- Team building

Board members are expected to attend scheduled meetings and events regularly and persistent (as defined by the rules) non-attendance will result in removal as a board member.

Equality and Diversity

Unity recognises that there is no place for discrimination or harassment within its business. We are eager to promote an understanding of the importance of equality and diversity amongst our staff and Board members and encourage good practice from our partner organisations. The commitments in our equality framework reflect our key aim of operating in a fair, open and accountable manner. We are working to foster

a culture of respect based on understanding the equal value and worth of individuals so they can fulfill their potential. We have also made a commitment to ensure that our services are equally accessible to all of our customers, and that all of our customers have an opportunity to put their views forward.

Annual Appraisals of Board Members

Board Members will be appraised in relation to the

- Role Profile
- Role Specification
- Competencies

Review

We will review this policy at least every two years or when there are new codes of governance published by the HCATSA or NHF.

Review Date: August 2013

Next date of review: August 2015