



OAK TREE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

GOVERNING BODY RECRUITMENT POLICY

Adopted: 2014

Last Reviewed: April 2019

Next Review Due: April 2022

Oak Tree Housing Association Governing Body (usually known as either the Management Committee or Board) Recruitment Policy

Introduction

- 1.1 The Governing Body have the important responsibility of directing and controlling the Association. As a registered social landlord, it is vital that we have people with the right skills and experience to carry out this role.
- 1.2 We will therefore:
 - Be clear about the mix of skills and experience necessary for our Governing Body to operate effectively, and re-assess these annually.
 - Annually assess the skills and experience which Governing Body members currently hold and match these against the skills and experience we need (skills audit).
 - Identify gaps between the skills and experience required and those currently held.
 - Take steps to fill those gaps by a mix of:
 - Structured training and development programmes for the Governing Body as a whole and/or for individual Governing Body members.
 - Recruitment (through election at the AGM and by co-option during the year) of additional members in an open and transparent basis.
 - Ensure a process of succession planning is in place, to protect and enhance the skills and experience held by individuals in the event of their departure from the Governing Body.
 - Support the work of the Governing Body through organisational measures in order to make the most of the contributions made by voluntary Governing Body members.
- 1.3 This Policy sets out the steps we will take to secure additional skills through recruitment; but as indicated above it forms part of a range of governance measures designed to increase the capacity of the Governing Body of OTHA.

What we are looking for

- 2.1 We are looking for individuals to serve as Governing Body Members who can demonstrate the following:
 - A **commitment** to supporting the **local communities** that Oak Tree HA engage with, or the needs of our service users through the provision and development of high quality housing and housing related services, and

- A **willingness** to work as a member of a **team** which has responsibility for **directing** the work of the organisation within Oak Tree.
- 2.2 In addition, prospective Governing Body members should have knowledge, skills and experience of, in **at least one** of the three areas listed below.
- **Local Knowledge:** for example, awareness of the housing needs in the areas we work in, knowledge of local issues in Greenock and Inverclyde and the people who live here awareness of concerns facing the association's customers, familiarity with Inverclyde Council's plans, priorities and practices.
 - **Business Skills and Knowledge:** for example, strategic and business planning, personnel or human resource issues, financial planning and control, monitoring and control of performance, corporate management/administration or legal experience.
 - **Specialist Housing Knowledge:** for example, knowledge of housing management and maintenance, housing-related legislation, Regulatory Framework for Scottish RSLs, OSCR's requirements, housing finance, equal opportunities.
- 2.3 It is not expected that every Governing Body member will be an 'expert' in all or even most of these areas. We are looking primarily for those who feel they have a contribution to make to the work of the association and who can offer relevant knowledge and/or experience; we will ensure that Governing Body Members, once on the Governing Body, have the opportunity to enhance their existing skills and knowledge through development and training.
- 2.4 We are committed to equality of opportunity in the way our Governing Body operates. We welcome applications from all individuals, irrespective of age; disability; gender reassignment; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. We are particularly keen to provide opportunities for involvement to individuals who are under-represented in public life or who are currently under-represented on our Governing Body. This however will not take precedence over the need to have people with the right skills and experience.

What Governing Body Members get out of it:

- 3.1 As a voluntary organisation, we do not provide payment to members of the Governing Body. However, that does not mean to say that Governing Body members get nothing in return for their time and commitment. Amongst the rewards from being a Governing Body member are:

- The satisfaction of helping improve the lives of local people
- The opportunity to develop knowledge and personal skills
- The opportunity to work in a stimulating and mutually supportive environment
- The chance to socialise with others with a shared commitment
- The opportunity to stand for one of the office bearer positions e.g. Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or Secretary
- The knowledge that members are contributing to an organisation committed to improving the quality of life of its customers and communities

Recruitment

- 4.1 In addition to developing the skills and knowledge of existing Governing Body members, we will seek to recruit to fill gaps identified through the skills audit and annual Governing Body review processes. The recruitment will be done in accordance with our constitution, and will take the form of co-option (the number of co-optees is limited to one-third of the membership of the Governing Body) or the filling of casual vacancies left by the retirement of existing Governing Body members. Recruitment does not supersede the rights of shareholding members to seek election to the Governing Body.
- 4.2 Annually, we assess the skills, knowledge, diversity and objectivity needed to provide capable leadership, control and constructive challenge to achieve OTHA's purpose, deliver good tenant outcomes and manage the Associations affairs. Through recruitment, we will attempt to fill any gaps which have been identified and set out in the checklist which is set out in a schedule to this Policy. These are the current priorities which we are looking to fill by recruiting new Governing Body Members.
- 4.3 We will also seek to identify any current groups which are underrepresented on our Governing Body, with reference in particular to age, gender, ethnic origin and disability, in pursuit of our commitment to equal opportunities.
- 4.4 We will promote the opportunity to become a member of the Governing Body through the use of:
- Advertisements in the local press
 - Circulation of information to partner organisations and other stakeholders
 - Circulation of information to tenant organisations and community groups
 - Circulation of information to members of the Association
 - Circulation of information to local business interests and their representatives

- Circulation of information to West College Scotland and other educational establishments connected to Inverclyde
- Circulation of information to other voluntary organisations and social enterprises

In each case inviting enquiries from interested individuals.

- 4.5 The advertisement will highlight the particular skills and areas of experience where gaps have been identified, and will invite applications from underrepresented groups.
- 4.6 Those enquiring will be issued with a **recruitment pack**, consisting of the following:
- **Information on Background and History of OTHA**
 - Explanatory **information** on the process of **becoming a Governing Body Member**
 - **Governing Body Member Role Description**
 - **Itemised checklist of the skills, knowledge and other qualities** sought (Schedule 1)
 - **Application form**, which asks for information on the areas of skills, knowledge and experience which the applicant can offer, and for personal information to allow equal opportunities monitoring.
- 4.7 The process of advertisement may be supplemented by personal approaches from members of the Governing Body and senior staff of the Association. In the event of such an approach being positive, the details of the individual will be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer/Depute Chief Executive Officer, who will issue the recruitment pack as described above.
- 4.8 Completed application forms will be sent to the Association's offices, and The Chief Executive Officer/Depute Chief Executive Officer will screen the applications with a view to confirming eligibility.
- 4.9 Eligible applicants will then be invited to attend an informal meeting with The Chief Executive Officer/Depute Chief Executive Officer and one or more members of the Governing Body (of whom one will normally be the Chair). The purpose of the meeting will be to:
- Confirm the applicant's eligibility to act as a member of the Governing Body.
 - Establish the applicant understands the role of Governing Body members, including the likely time commitment involved.
 - Establish the potential contribution likely to be made by the applicant, in the light of the skills, knowledge and experience sought by the Association.
 - Answer any questions from the applicant.

- Explain the potential benefits of having an experienced Governing Body Member supporting and mentoring the applicant, if successful.
- 4.10 Within 24 hours of the interview, the applicant will be informed of the result of the interview:
- 4.11 Successful applicants will be invited to attend a meeting of the Governing Body as observers before their membership of the Governing Body is confirmed.
- 4.12 Co-opted members of the Governing Body are encouraged to become shareholding members of the Association but this is not a requirement. Co-opted members cannot vote on matters relating to the membership of the Association or the election of office bearers; nor can they themselves stand for election as office bearers. They can only serve as co-optees on the Governing Body till the AGM following their co-option, at which point they must, if they wish to continue to serve as members of the Governing Body, stand for election.
- 4.13 The co-option process may also be used to fill casual vacancies left by the retiral or resignation of existing Governing Body members during the course of the year. Under the Association's Rules, an individual filling a casual vacancy must first become a member of the Association.
- 4.14 You cannot be a member of the Governing Body if you do not agree to adopt and sign the Governing Body Members Code of Conduct.

Skills audit

- 5.1 When new members are first appointed or nominated to the Governing Body, they will be invited to a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer/Depute Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson in order to find out more about the skills and experience they have to offer; this will form part of the induction programme. We want to make sure that we are able to recognise and build on what new members have to offer, and to identify any immediate priorities for further training and development.
- 5.2 Thereafter there will be an annual opportunity (annual Performance Reviews) for each member to update this assessment through a skills audit interview. This will be linked to an assessment of individual performance. On the basis of that interview, we will draw up a structured training and development programme. Training and development opportunities will be pursued under the terms of our Governing Body Member, Performance and Development Review Policy.

Schedule 1

Checklist of Skills, Knowledge and other Qualities

(As at April 2019)

1. In terms of knowledge and understanding, we are looking for individuals able to demonstrate the following:
 - Strategy and policy
 - Business planning
 - Service delivery
 - Engagement with tenants
 - Asset Management
 - Responsibilities to owners
 - Procurement and contract management
 - Supporting tenants on low income
 - Financial planning and control
 - Employer responsibilities
 - Current housing policy and legislation
 - Role of regulators e.g. Scottish Housing Regulator; Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)
 - Equality and diversity

2. In terms of skills, we are looking for the following:
 - Ability to work as a member of a team with other Governing Body members and with staff
 - Ability to contribute to discussions about strategy and policy
 - Ability to interpret and question information received
 - Ability to identify what is important for the Associations success as a business
 - Ability to communicate effectively, contribute to decision-making and to challenge constructively

Please note this is not essential criteria, as individuals when serving on the Governing Body, will acquire these skills and knowledge.

3. We are also looking for those able to demonstrate these qualities:
- Contributing ideas and new perspectives
 - Respecting confidentiality
 - Making sure that personal relationships or agendas do not interfere
 - Keeping one's own knowledge up-to date
 - Accepting collective responsibility for decisions