

### Committee Recruitment pack

#### February 2020

# About housing associations

Housing associations provide housing, mainly for rent but also low cost housing for sale, shared equity and mid-market rent, for people across Scotland. Social rented tenants have Scottish Secure Tenancies (SST) and the housing stock is expected to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH). Housing associations are part of the social rented sector (along with councils) and provide homes for people who are in housing need. There are a wide range of housing associations – some very large, some small, some are based in specific geographical areas (e.g. part of a city or town or a rural area) whilst others specialise in providing housing for particular groups of people (such as older people or people with particular needs). Housing associations do not trade for profit and all of the income that they generate is used to meet their running costs and invest in their current and future activities.

# About Trafalgar Housing Association

Trafalgar Housing Association is a small community-controlled housing association formed in 1990 with stock in Dalmuir and Radnor Park in Clydebank. With just over 300 properties we are West Dunbartonshire’s smallest housing association but we’re a highly performing housing association with high levels of tenant satisfaction. The Association is committed to providing the highest possible level of service to tenants whilst ensuring that our rent levels remain as affordable as possible.

## Our strategic direction

We recognise that for the next five years we need to ensure we continue to improve our governance, maintain service delivery and organisational performance. From our analysis of our operating environment, we know that there are some significant challenges ahead.

We will continue to embed the improvements we have made, strengthen our collaboration and partnership working, seek to re-energise our tenant and community engagement activities and deliver tangible and positive social benefits.

## Strategic objectives

* **People**: To support our tenants, residents, staff, volunteers and future service users and ensure we provide them with a vibrant community where they can realise their full potential.
* **Performance**: To maintain sector-leading performance throughout all KPIs and inspire full confidence from customers, and commitment from staff and volunteers.
* **Property**: To ensure that our principle assets, the homes which we manage and maintain, compare favourably with other housing options in terms of affordability and standards.

# Housing association governing bodies

Associations are overseen by governing bodies, which draw its members from the Associations’ membership. Trafalgar’s governing body is referred to as the Management Committee. Committee members are not paid for their contribution, although out of pocket expenses are reimbursed.

## Regulation & governance of housing associations

The Association is regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and the charity regulator (OSCR). The Committee is expected to exercise proper control over Trafalgar’s activities and make decisions in the best interests of the Association, its tenants and others who use our services.

Governance is the term used to describe the arrangements for leadership, direction and control within an organisation. Good governance means:

* Having a clear purpose, vision and values for the Association and knowing how the association will achieve these
* Promoting the values of the Association and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour and conduct
* Making transparent decisions based on good quality information & advice
* Ensuring legal & regulatory compliance
* Ensuring the Association is financially sound, identifying & reducing risk on an on-going basis
* Having an effective partnership between Committee & senior staff with both working together effectively in clearly defined roles
* Demonstrating mutual respect, integrity, openness and accountability
* Taking account of tenants & other stakeholders, and understanding their priorities & needs
* Ensuring all Committee members and senior officers have the skills & knowledge to be effective.

**Summary of Committee member roles & responsibilities**

The key roles and responsibilities associated with being a Committee member of Trafalgar Housing Association are:

* To set the strategic direction for Trafalgar
* To ensure that Trafalgar is managed efficiently, effectively and in line with the requirements of the law, regulatory bodies and best practice
* To ensure that risks to the organisation are understood and that arrangements are in place to properly manage them
* To act only in the interests of Trafalgar
* To uphold the reputation, values and objectives of Trafalgar
* To ensure the Association is accountable to members, tenants and other stakeholders.

**Key roles and responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities associated with being a Committee member of Trafalgar Housing Association are:

* To lead the Association
* To set and oversee the long-term strategic direction for the Association
* To ensure that the Committee fulfils its duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of the Association
* To determine and regularly review the Association’s values, strategic aims and performance standards
* To promote and uphold the Association’s values
* To ensure the Association is adequately resourced to achieve its objectives, meet its obligations and to ensure financial viability
* To ensure tenants’, and other stakeholders’, views, priorities and needs are taken account of in respect of Association policies, rents, service charges and services
* To regularly review and approve policies to allow the organisation to achieve its objectives
* To ensure that performance is monitored and managed
* To ensure management and mitigation of any risk to the Association
* To ensure that the Association operates within, and is compliant with, the relevant legal, financial and regulatory frameworks.

The **Role specification**, **Expectations of Committee members** and **What you can expect from Trafalgar** are set out in Appendix 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

**Appendix 1**

**Role specification**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge & experience** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| Understanding of governance and role of the Committee member |  | \* |
| Understanding of current issues in housing |  | \* |
| Understanding of the social, economic and/or political environment within which Trafalgar operates |  | \* |
| Understanding of regulatory and legal frameworks |  | \* |
| Understanding of customer care and service delivery |  | \* |
| Understanding of Human Resources |  | \* |
| Understanding of accountancy, financial planning, budgeting |  | \* |
| Understanding of health and safety |  | \* |

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| **Skills & abilities** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| Ability to make a constructive contribution to meetings and make decisions in the best interests of the Association | \* |  |
| Ability to understand complex issues including financial information | \* |  |
| Good interpersonal and communication skills | \* |  |
| Ability to work as a member of a team with other Committee members | \* |  |
| Ability to attend Committee meetings, training and development events and other corporate activities | \* |  |

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| **Personal qualities** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| Commitment to the visions and values of Trafalgar | \* |  |
| Acting at all times in the best interests of Trafalgar | \* |  |
| Commitment to equality and diversity in employment and service delivery | \* |  |
| High standards of personal and professional integrity | \* |  |
| High level of personal drive | \* |  |
| Meeting the standards set out in Trafalgar’s Code of Conduct | \* |  |
| Developing the skills and knowledge you bring to your role as a Committee member | \* |  |
| Making sure that you base your decisions on facts and evidence | \* |  |
| Declaring any relevant interests | \* |  |
| Respecting the confidentiality of information you receive in your role as a Committee member | \* |  |

**Appendix 2**

**Expectations of Committee members**

Committee members are expected to:

* Attend and be well prepared for meetings
* Contribute effectively to discussions and decision-making
* Contribute to annual reviews of the association’s performance, activities and progress
* Take part in training and other learning opportunities
* Take part in an annual review of the effectiveness of the association’s governance and an annual appraisal of your individual contribution to that governance
* Maintain and develop your knowledge of relevant issues and the wider housing sector
* Represent the association positively and effectively
* Respect and maintain confidentiality of information
* Treat colleagues with respect and help ensure effective working relationships within the Committee and between the Committee and staff
* Register any relevant interests as soon as they arise.

**Appendix 3**

**What you can expect from Trafalgar HA**

Governing body members undertake their role on a voluntary basis and do not receive payments for their duties. However, all reasonable travel and other expenses (including child care) are paid.

In return for your commitment and time, Trafalgar HA will provide you with:

* Clear guidance and information on your responsibilities and the work of the Association
* Induction into the activities of Trafalgar HA and the social housing sector generally
* Reports for meetings which are clearly written (and presented) and which are circulated a week in advance
* The opportunity to develop your knowledge and skills about housing and the wider environment; about your role as an employer and as a governing body member
* The experience of working in a team
* The opportunity to meet other people with a wide variety of backgrounds, skills and interests
* The opportunity to network with other housing association members and participate in seminars and conferences
* Clear support, professional advice and guidance from senior staff to ensure your decisions are informed and transparent
* An opportunity to make a difference to the communities we work in.