



Board Member Recruitment Pack

February/March 2025



Welcome to Hightown Housing Association!

I am delighted that you are interested in joining Hightown. We are a charitable housing association, operating in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, aiming to help people who need support and care or who cannot afford to buy or rent a home at market values. We do this by building much-needed new homes and providing care and supported housing services for a wide range of people.

Hightown is going through a time of change, I started my tenure as Chair in September 2024 and our Chief Executive, David Bogle, is leaving in the spring after more than 30 years of dedicated service. He leaves us in excellent shape and we welcome Maxine Epsley as our new Chief Executive. I am confident that through Maxine's leadership we will continue to thrive and deliver much needed services to our customers and communities.

We manage 9,250 homes, employ over 1,000 staff and have a reputation for strong financial management. We are currently one of the fastest growing Housing Association in the UK and our track record of developing social housing with no exposure to outright sales activity has provided over 1,500 homes in the last three years. We aim to reach 10,000 by March 2027.

Hightown is led by a Board of Non-Executive Directors, responsible for providing scrutiny and long-term, strategic direction for the Association. The Board comprises ten elected non-executive members and, after reviewing its succession plan, agreed that the composition of

the Board would benefit from:

One new Board Member with experience of care & supported housing services and;

A Board Member from a different sector who can contribute an alternative perspective, plus strategic and analytical thinking to the Board.

Board Members usually sit on two or three of our committees and most meetings are held in the evenings at Hightown's main office in Hemel Hempstead.

Candidates should have an understanding of governance and regulation, a commitment to inclusion, a strong interest in social housing and support services, financial acumen, sound judgement, accountability and the ability to work collaboratively. Above all you should share Hightown's values and put residents and service users first.

We have included headline information about Hightown in this pack and there is a wealth of information on the links and on our website. I hope you find this both helpful and stimulating and that you are encouraged to apply. We genuinely welcome all applications - the current Board is diverse both in relation to personal and professional background and places an emphasis on the value that this brings to its collective decision making.

Best wishes,

Qadeer Kiani

Chair

About Us

Hightown Housing Association Limited is a charitable housing association operating principally in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Berkshire, providing a wide range of housing and support services for families and single people including people with disabilities.

Hightown's primary objectives are:

- To provide excellent services to its existing residents and service users; and
- To develop new affordable housing and services to meet the urgent needs of people who are vulnerable or disabled or who cannot afford to buy or rent housing at market rates in the area.

We provide care and supported housing, enabling people to be more independent through support and housing that suits their needs and is accessible. In 2023-24 we delivered 2.2 million support hours. We are proud that all our services are rated good or excellent.



640 Affordable new homes developed in 2023/24

313 More homes developed so far in 2024/25



9,250 Homes owned and managed



1000+ Staff employed



£136m Annual Turnover

Mission

Building homes. Supporting people

Hightown's aim is to provide as many homes as we can at below market rates and a wide range of housing and support for people who are vulnerable and/or disabled. Hightown's history over more than 50 years shows our continuing focus on our strong social purpose.

Hightown is committed to retaining its distinctiveness and its reputation for making projects happen which demonstrate Hightown's values and contribution to society.

We believe that, by developing decent homes and supporting individuals to live with confidence, independence and choice, our work delivers a tangible positive impact for local communities.



Our values

- Put residents and service users first
- Treat people with respect
- Be cost effective
- Don't compromise standards or safety
- Develop passionate and committed teams

Our culture

Hightown's culture aligns with our values and social purpose. We are supportive, inclusive and responsive and share an ambition to learn and to develop for the benefit of current and future residents and service users.

Strategy

Along with other 'traditional' housing associations, Hightown has responded to local housing needs by developing a wide range of housing and services for different client groups. Hightown considers itself to be an agile, 'can do' organisation that can move quickly in response to changing local housing and support needs. Hightown's Corporate Strategy for 2024-27 encapsulates that in these key areas:

Service

To focus on our residents and service users through positive engagement and co-design of standards, delivering well-maintained homes and high quality services in diverse communities.

Viability

To safeguard Hightown's future through strong governance and effective financial controls and risk management - maintaining the agility to learn and adapt to change and challenge.

People

To maintain a high performing working culture through values based recruitment, fair pay, specialist training and refining our wellbeing and recognition offer.

Needs

To increase the supply of quality, affordable and sustainable homes and services - enhancing community resilience and reducing homelessness.



Our target of 10,000 homes by 2027 comes from this strategy, you can see more about our ambitions here:

[High Town Strategy 2024-27](#)

Details of our impact can be seen here: [Impact Report 23-24](#)

Board Members

Hightown's Executive Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that the Board's strategic priorities are delivered and for the management of the day to day running of the Association.

The Board annually reviews its own performance and effectiveness and is mindful of the need to ensure that collectively, it has the diversity, skills and attributes required to help Hightown to achieve its objectives. The board member biographies demonstrate the broad range of skills that benefit the effective governance of the Association.

Governance rating

G1

Viability rating

V2

Credit rating (Moody's)

A3 stable



Qadeer Kiani OBE

Chair

Joined September 2024

Member of the Remuneration & Nominations Committee.

A senior leader with social housing background and wealth of experience which spans over 30 years in diverse, multi-faceted, complex organisations in the private, public and not for profit sectors. A former housing association Chair and Chief Executive, he now runs his own successful Housing and Management Consultancy Practice .



Cordelia Pace

Vice-Chair

Joined Board 2017

Member of Remuneration & Nominations, Operations and Investment Committees.

Designated Board member for Whistleblowing.

Senior Legal Counsel. A qualified solicitor, employed as Senior Legal Counsel and Compliance Manager for INEOS Oil & Gas UK.



Sarah Barton

Joined the Board in 2021

Chair of Risk & Audit Committee and Member of Investment and Remuneration & Nominations Committees.

FCA Qualified Finance Director.

Former Interim Finance Director at CARE International UK. Previously Director of Financial Reporting at The Guinness Partnership.



Olayinka (Yinka) Bolaji

Joined September 2024.

Chair of the Operations Committee and Member of the Investment Committee.

Currently Executive Director for Property and Development at Wandle. Over 30 years' experience, Yinka has worked in senior roles at Genesis and Anchor Trust. He has a degree in Quantity Surveying, an MBA from University of Cambridge and a Leadership 2025 alumni.



Leslie Channon

Joined September 2024.

Member of the Operations and Risk & Audit Committees.

Leslie began her housing career as the Tenant Chair of an award-winning Scrutiny Panel. She has over 13 years' experience working in resident engagement, housing policy and research, data analysis and insight, consumer regulation, and public affairs.

Charmaine De Souza



Joined the Board in 2021

Chair of Remuneration & Nominations Committee and Member of Operations Committee.

Board lead for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.

Experienced HR leader. Currently Chief People Officer at Oxford Health NHS Trust.



Chris Ellmore

Joined Board 2023

Member of the Risk & Audit & Treasury Committee.

A qualified Accountant and qualified chartered Treasurer. Director of Corporate Finance for Moat Homes. Chris has responsibility for treasury, long term planning, regulatory returns, investment appraisal and rent setting.



Zeena Farook

Joined the Board in 2023

Member of the Investment and Operations Committees.

Chartered Civil Engineer and employed as Strategy Director for ArcadisGen, Zeena has over 18 years' experience in the Built Environment, from development, leading site works on major projects, to sustainability and digital solutions.



Alan Head

Joined the Board in 2018.

Chair of the Investment Committee and Member of the Risk & Audit and Remuneration & Nominations Committees.

Retired building surveyor.

Experienced non-executive director in the residential development and construction sectors.

Alan's last employment was Head of Major Projects at Three Rivers District Council.



David Matthews

Joined the Board in 2020.

Chair of the Treasury Committee and Member of the Risk & Audit Committee.

A professional banker. Currently Managing Director, Head of Loan Capital Markets EMEA at Barclays Investment Bank.

Hightown is led by a Board of Non-Executive Directors. The Board is responsible for providing long-term, strategic direction for the Association.

Board Committees and 2025 Meeting Dates

Hightown Board

The Board meet seven times a year in addition to two Strategy Days. The Board is supported by five Committees who each meet four times a year to scrutinise issues in depth and make recommendations to the Board. Meetings are usually in the evenings except the Treasury which meets in the afternoon, by Zoom. Strategy Days are in the afternoon

Date

Thursday 27th February
Wednesday 2nd April - Strategy Day
Thursday 24th April
Thursday 22nd May
Thursday 17th July
Thursday 25th September - Meeting and AGM
Wednesday 8th October - Strategy Day
Thursday 13th November

The current Committee Structure is as follows:

Risk & Audit Committee - who oversee Hightown's systems of internal controls and its risk management framework as well as maintaining a direct relationship with Hightown's Internal and External Auditors.

Date

Tuesday 8th April
Tuesday 1st July
Tuesday 14th October

Treasury Committee - who maintain an oversight of Hightown's funding arrangements including the management and mitigation of the treasury risks.

Date

Thursday 10th April
Thursday 3rd July
Thursday 23rd October

Operations Committee - who focus on the performance of Hightown's services to its residents and service users to gain assurance that services are maintained at a high standard and that insight from residents' experience influences Board decisions.

Date

Wednesday 30th April
Wednesday 23rd July
Wednesday 22nd October

Investment Committee - who monitor and review Hightown's development strategy and programme to support the Association to maintain its ambitious delivery objectives.

Date

Monday 28th April
Monday 7th July
Monday 3rd November

Remuneration & Nominations Committee - who maintain oversight of the membership, composition, and skills of the Board to ensure good governance of the Association. The Committee also make recommendations to the Board in relation to senior staff remuneration issues and review the Associations performance in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and policies in relation to Hightown's people.

Date

Tuesday 10th June
Tuesday 9th September
Tuesday 18th November

Role Description

JOB TITLE: Board Member

ROLE PURPOSE

To work with the Board and Chief Executive to lead Hightown in its mission to build homes and support people.

To provide collective and collaborative leadership, engaging with the rest of the Board to create effective governance for Hightown.

To work with the Board to define strategy.

To contribute relevant experience, expertise and insight in order to help ensure that Hightown fulfils its potential.

To ensure that the views and interests of residents, staff and other key stakeholders are represented at a strategic level.

To maintain oversight of operational risks.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Share responsibility for the direction and control of the Association with the rest of the Board and Chief Executive.
- Work with colleagues to set the Association's vision and values and ensure that obligations to Hightown's residents and other stakeholders are understood and reflected in its strategy and policies.
- Uphold the values of Hightown and provide appropriate oversight, governance, leadership and challenge to Hightown in pursuit of its strategies.
- Scrutinise the performance of the Association and its management team in meeting agreed goals and objectives and monitor the reporting of performance.
- Ensure the financial viability of the Association through effective business
- planning and budgeting. Ensure that financial controls and systems of risk management are robust and that the Board is kept fully informed through timely and relevant information
- Contribute to the review and evaluation of opportunities, threats and risks in the external environment and the relative strengths and weaknesses of the Association to ensure effective strategic decision making.
- Ensure that appropriate human resources are in place for the Association to meet its objectives, including contributing to the succession planning for the Board and Executive team.
- Promote the highest standards of corporate governance in compliance with regulatory requirements including ensuring compliance with key legislative requirements including Health & Safety and Equality and Diversity.



Terms of Service

Salary: £5,800 pa

Commitment: 7 Board meetings (evenings) and 2 Strategy Days (afternoon) per year + Committees + ad hoc visits to services and events

Duration: Up to two terms of 3 years

Person Specification

All Board members are required to be able to commit sufficient time to prepare for and attend all meetings including reading Board and Committee papers in advance and to make ad hoc visits to our services.

Interest in or understanding of social housing and support services.

Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion principles.

Ability to combine financial acumen with a concern for Hightown's residents.

Ability to make sound judgements and willingness to be accountable for expressed views.

Competencies

Each year, Hightown reviews the collective Board skills that are required and this informs the specific technical skills which are sought to fill each vacancy that arises.

In this recruitment we are seeking TWO Board members with either:

Care & Supported Housing experience: at a senior, strategic level and involving work with non-executive Boards, or have been a board member.

OR

Experience gained outside the housing and care sector: at a senior level and may have been gained in a private sector, third sector or commercial business such as legal, retail, finance or charity. You should have experience in a corporate capacity that has involved working with non-executive Boards, or have been a board member.

There are also a number of core competencies that we require of all Board members.

- Effective communication skills
- Ability to make an active contribution and provide constructive challenge
- Ability to analyse complex information
- Effective teamwork skills and ability to work collaboratively in the interests of Hightown
- Resident/customer/stakeholder focus



Recruitment Process

Recruitment Process:

To Apply:

Please provide a CV (no more than 3 sides A4) together with a supporting statement (also no more than 3 sides of A4) and complete the confidential Monitoring form. You can download a monitoring form by clicking [here](#).

The supporting statement should demonstrate your suitability for the role and address the key elements of the Experience and Competencies section of the person specification, enclosed in this pack. Please ensure you provide evidence, with recent examples, of your experience.

Send your application (CV/Statement/Monitoring Form) by **9.00 am on Monday 24th March**:

By email to: rec@thehousingexecutive.com

ALL applications will be acknowledged by email or telephone within 24 hours.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this post or the process, in confidence, please call Tony Clark or Julie Kellaway, directors at The Housing Executive, on 020 7620 3048.

The Housing Executive will conduct screening interviews, via video MS Teams for those candidates longlisted by Hightown.

The second stage will consist of a panel Interview with Hightown Housing Association.

We look forward to receiving your application - do call if you have any queries.



Recruitment Timetable

Closing Date: **Monday 24th March**

Screening Interviews: **wc Monday 7th April**

Hightown Interviews: **wc Monday 14th April**

Final Interview: **Friday 2nd May**