



**Our purpose is to
work with a co-
operative ethos to
help people and
their communities
to flourish**

Board Members - Co-op Homes

Candidate Information Pack

June 2022

Candidate Brief:

Board Members - Co-op Homes

An opportunity to join the Board of an organisation that helps people and communities flourish by providing high-quality housing management services and affordable housing in London and the Thames Valley.

About us

[Co-op Homes](#) (South) Ltd (CHS) was set up in 1986 by a group of housing co-operatives to provide expert housing management services to housing co-operatives and other small, resident-led housing organisations, helping them to retain their independence. In December 2005 we joined the Richmond Housing Partnership (RHP) Group. This helps us achieve efficiencies and gives us access to in-house specialist support yet still retain our personal service and stay involved at a grass roots level.

We provide housing management services to 30 housing co-ops and other community housing organisations, own and manage some 300 properties, and manage 5 short life properties which are leased to us by local authorities and other landlords. We have ambitions to grow across the Greater London and Thames Valley areas by supporting more housing co-ops and other community housing organisations and by building new homes for the first time.

We are a registered housing provider with charitable status. We are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and are a member of the National Housing Federation. We are also an active member of the Confederation of Co-operative Housing and the London Federation of Housing Co-operatives.

We operate as an independent organisation as part of the larger RHP Group, which owns and manages some 9,000 properties in South West London. Our Board of Management made up of paid members, determines and ensures compliance with our vision, values, organisational culture and strategy. It also leads, directs and controls the organisation's affairs, and scrutinises performance. RHP Group Board operates with tight oversight in some areas, such as our business plan, treasury strategy and financial statements, and loose oversight in other areas.

Our values

Along with our co-operative ethos, we feel that our values are fundamental in delivering our purpose. These are:

Respectfulness: Respecting communities and the ways in which our client co-ops (and any organisation we work with) operate; encouraging but not enforcing modernisation and taking the views of our clients into account.

Co-operation: Working with a co-operative ethos- working collaboratively (both as a team and alongside the organisation we manage).

Positive Social Impact: Expanding our business whilst maintaining, building and reinforcing communities.

Compassionate Commercialism: Continuing to work with charitable and not-for-profit organisations and expanding our clients in these sectors. Accepting that our profit margin will be lower as a result.

Being a Board Member – what’s involved

Every not-for-profit organisation has a Board – they work to ensure that the organisation is effective in carrying out the purpose for which it was set up. Board Members have responsibility for overseeing the work of CHS, ensuring it is financially stable, well-run, and fulfilling its vision and mission.

Boards govern effectively by:

- Focusing on their governance responsibilities
- Being clear about the role of the Board vs the role of the Executives - and fostering good relationships between both
- Ensuring the Board itself operates effectively

Board member recruitment

Our Board of Management provides creative leadership to ensure that CHS achieves its business objectives and fully delivers its co-operative ethos. We have an active Board, currently made up of six members, bringing a variety of skills and backgrounds. We appointed a fantastic new Chair last year and are now looking to further increase and diversify the experience on our Board.

We are seeking up to three new Board members who between them and in combination will provide the following:

- Expertise in housing management.
- Expertise in Finance and Risk (not necessarily a qualified accountant).
- A contribution to our board’s cognitive diversity – we will welcome applications from generalists with a passion for our mission and a range of skills and experience, and we will particularly welcome applications from members of groups who are currently underrepresented on the boards of housing associations.

Please see the job description and selection criteria below for further information.

Statement on diversity:

We are looking for people who can act as advocates for CHS and who will be committed to our mission and grassroots approach. Our approach to diversity supports everything else we are committed to do and we expect all our Board members to demonstrate a personal commitment to diversity. We are looking to increase the diversity of our Board as our Board needs to be as diverse as our colleagues and the people we serve. We also know that people from different backgrounds bring perspectives and skills that create fresh ideas, thinking and approaches which make the way work is undertaken more effective and efficient.

Candidates do not require previous experience as a Board member to apply and all new Board members will be offered a full induction as part of the onboarding process.

We are an equal opportunities employer, our Inclusion Diversity and Equality Strategy can tell you more about our [approach](#).

What we can offer you

Becoming a Board member is a fantastic and fascinating way to engage in the charitable sector. It's a role which will give back just as much as you put in and often much, much more. Though often challenging, a Board role will reward the adventurous and ambitious with a wealth of personal and professional skills which are valuable for both work and personal life whilst empowering you with a new sense of contribution in the pursuit of a wider purpose.

Contributing to a great cause

There is no doubt that being a Board member is one of the most powerful ways in which you can contribute to your local community or to a cause you really care about. As a Board member at CHS, you will play an integral part in good governance, not only ensuring the organisation remains viable and sustainable but that it adheres closely to its mission and works in the interests of its beneficiaries.

Strategic experience

Strategic experience can be hard to come by. It can often take decades to find yourself in a role which requires strategic oversight. A Board role is a fantastic way of getting a head start on this, at once giving you the opportunity to develop and hone your critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills as well as developing vital strategic sensibilities and team working skills. The strategic experience which can be gained through a Board role can have an immediate and powerful impact upon your career, opening doors to new responsibilities and more senior job prospects.

Equally for those who have already had some strategic responsibilities, a Board role provides an opportunity to use those skills in a significantly different context.

Continued personal development

Joining a Board can be a very interesting experience, not least because it allows you to adapt and apply everything you have learned to date into an entirely new context. Through a Board role you can gain a clearer idea of your own professional strengths and weaknesses whilst simultaneously learning altogether new skills. Understanding how to adapt your professional knowledge to useful and impactful ends is a good reminder of your own versatility, giving you confidence in your existing abilities whilst challenging you push the boundaries of your expertise.

Teamworking

As a member of our Board you are part of a team and will have the opportunity to apply your unique skills and experience while learning from others. Working closely with a passionate team of people who have different perspectives is often one of the most enjoyable aspects of the role. You will use your ability to collaborate effectively with others. You will also use your ability to constructively challenge the ideas of fellow Board members as well as those of the Senior Management Team. This is essential to ensure the Board's strategic decisions are scrutinised and tested before being implemented. Negotiating, empathising, listening and clearly communicating ideas and concerns are huge factors in this process and often help to set the tone and culture of Board meetings.

Role description – Board member

Location and time commitment	<p>Board meetings are held quarterly, usually in March, June, September, and December. They are usually held on Thursday afternoons, at CHS offices in Teddington. There are also one or two Board away days, and the AGM (September).</p> <p>You will be expected to be available for formal and informal conversation with fellow board members and with the staff team between these meetings, as required based on the needs of the organisation, and you may be asked to join sub-committees when relevant.</p>
Remuneration	<p>The remuneration for the role is £3,000 per annum and all reasonable expenses are paid.</p>

Members of the Board of Management are responsible for the governance and strategic direction of Co-op Homes (CHS). The term of appointment is three years, with the possibility of renewal for another three-year term.

Board members are required to sign an agreement for services that formalises the role and outlines the level of remuneration. The overall purpose of the Board is to lead Co-op Homes innovatively within a framework of continuous improvement and effective control, which enables risks to be properly assessed and managed.

The aims of Board members are to:

- Define and ensure compliance with the values and strategic objectives of CHS, ensuring its long term success.
- Establish a framework for approving strategies, policies and plans to achieve those objectives.
- Promote and develop CHS, its equality and diversity strategy, customer care ethos, and quality standards.
- Question intelligently, debate constructively, challenge rigorously and decide dispassionately on all matters presented to the Board.
- Establish and comply with the code of conduct and expected behaviour for the Board and employees, ensuring CHS' affairs are conducted lawfully and in accordance with generally accepted standards of performance, probity, good practice and regulatory requirements.
- Monitor CHS' performance in relation to its strategies, plans, budget, controls, decisions, customer feedback and the performance of comparable organisations.
- Establish and oversee a system of internal controls (reviewed annually) and a framework for the identification, management and reporting of risk.
- Liaise with the parent RHP, to consider succession planning, remuneration levels, changes to structure and size of the Board, and other areas of governance.

Selection criteria

Following a recent Board appraisal are seeking a new board member with specific experience, not restricted to:

- Expertise in housing management.

- Expertise in Finance and Risk (though not necessarily a qualified accountant).
- An understanding of customer led services.
- An understanding of co-operative principles and a commitment to social housing, and empathy with the charitable aims, objectives and values of CHS.
- A high degree of probity and integrity.
- A commitment to diversity, equal opportunities and access in employment and service provision.
- The ability to work effectively in a team with other board members and the Senior Management Team.
- The ability to read, understand, and analyse electronically presented written and numerical reports and to draw out pertinent points for discussion.
- The ability to express views succinctly and effectively in a formal Board/Committee meeting environment making reasoned and thought through contributions.
- The ability to consider the long term implications and have a broader view of issues, spotting opportunities, identifying risks and the means of mitigating them.

Additional information about Co-op Homes, including its Board and Executive team, is available on our website <https://www.coophomes.coop>.

How to apply?

Application is by CV and a covering letter which should indicate why you are interested in applying for a Board member role and how you meet the role requirements. Please send this to Bernice Rook at our recruitment partners Eastside Primetimers, recruitment@ep-uk.org. If you would like a call to discuss the role in more detail, please email Bernice, bernice@ep-uk.org to arrange a convenient time. Having a call of this kind will not influence the success or otherwise of your application.

We want you to have every opportunity to demonstrate your skills, ability and potential; please contact us if you require any assistance or adjustment so that we can help with making the application process work for you.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 1st July** with shortlisting interviews taking place the week after. Interviews with CHS will take place early to mid-July.