

Appointment of Non-Executive Director

March 2021

Dixon Walter



Your Homes Newcastle

About Us

Your Homes Newcastle ('YHN') is an Arm's Length Management Organisation ('ALMO') set up and solely owned by Newcastle City Council. YHN was set up in 2004 to manage council properties, to improve housing in order to meet the Government's Decent Homes standard, and to provide a range of support services for Newcastle City Council. Currently YHN manages over 25,000 tenanted and 1,500 leasehold homes (where the owner owns the property but not the land the property stands on).

YHN is 'more than a business', YHN is about making a difference to people's lives and putting tenants at the heart of what we do.

As well as being a housing provider YHN also provides a comprehensive range of services which benefit tenants and leaseholders across Newcastle. Examples of some of the many services provided by YHN include:

- 🏠 Newcastle Furniture Service ('NFS') which was set up in 1989 to help tenants settle into their homes by providing essential furniture items and is now the largest furnished tenancy provider in the UK.
- 🏠 The Support and Progression Service which supports young people to find accommodation and provide the advice and support they need to live independently.
- 🏠 'Your Homes Your Jobs' and an apprenticeship programme which offer training and employment opportunities for YHN tenants. These programmes have been so successful that we've been increasing the intake so we're now able to help even more of our tenants into employment.

YHN is the sole shareholder of Abri Trading Limited, the commercial arm of the organisation. The YHN Board also acts as the "common purpose" board for Abri.

Newcastle as a city faces many challenges. Council budget cuts continue to be a significant issue for the city and, with this in mind Newcastle City Council is working with YHN to see how we can contribute to delivery of their strategic objectives.

In April 2016, YHN was awarded a ten year contract by NCC and this gives us a robust platform on which to build our own strategic direction and continue to develop and improve our services.



The Board undertook a review of the current Business Strategy 2016-2020 and agreed a refresh in line with changing demands on the business. The new business strategy – Destination 2022 was approved by the Board in December 2018, setting a clear vision of being ‘first for housing’ and purpose of ‘making living easier’, underpinned by four guiding organisational values; ready, amazing, revolutionary and energetic.

Three strategic objectives were identified to keep the strategy simple and clear:

- 1) Revolutionary services that support successful living
- 2) Amazing places where people are proud to live
- 3) Strong business fit for today, ready for tomorrow

In August 2018, YHN formally assumed responsibility of Newcastle City Council’s repairs and construction service, known as Building and Commercial Enterprise (BCE). A Memorandum of Understanding was agreed by both parties to outline the relationship and working arrangements, which affirms that whilst YHN now oversees the operation, NCC will continue to remain the employer and ultimately responsible for the service. A transformation programme to reform and improve the service began upon commencement of the new arrangements and is currently ongoing.



YHN has undergone major transformation in its customer service offer across all customer touchpoints, and in April 2019 YHN and Newcastle City Council also agreed to bring together the Contact Centres. YHN is responsible for transforming the telephony services to ensure an improved service is delivered to all tenants, customers and residents across the city.



The Board

The Board structure consists of four Council-nominated Members and eight Independent Members, including the Chair. Tenants are eligible to apply for the independent posts.

All Board Members make decisions that benefit the majority of tenants or that ensures some tenants are not better off at the expense of others. They do not take decisions that will only benefit people from one area at the expense of others.

All Board Members must sign a Board Member Code of Conduct that covers things like expected behaviour and declaring conflicts of interest. This is to ensure that people are acting in the best interests of the organisation, rather than for personal gain or other reasons.

The Board has ultimate responsibility for YHN and its trading subsidiary, Abri Trading Limited. The Board’s central role is to direct the Executive Team and to make decisions that are in the best interests of YHN and its delivery of services. The Board is not involved in the day-to-day delivery of services – this is delegated to the Executive Team, led by the Managing Director.

The Board is responsible for setting the overall strategic direction of YHN. It agrees what services are delivered each year and monitors their delivery. The Board agrees the broad detail of the capital improvements that are delivered to tenants’ homes and the financial budget for each year. It is also responsible for ensuring that YHN and its subsidiaries act within the law and within budget.

Skills required

We are seeking expertise across the following areas:

General business skills	Commercial	Customer service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic management and planning • Risk identification and management • Performance measurement and management • Experience of operating in a regulated environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic level ICT experience. Ideally gained at CIO or CTO level • Commercial awareness and management • Business development/growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer services transformation • Knowledge of areas / communities served by the organisation • Provision of care and support service

The Chair

Tony Gates, Chair



Tony was appointed as Chair of the YHN Board in January 2020. A chartered town planner, Tony has over 23 years' experience in senior executive and non-executive director roles. Previous roles have included urban and rural regeneration and landscape and heritage management in the public sector in the UK, Ireland and overseas. He currently serves as Chief Executive of Northumberland National Park Authority and is also a member of the Council of the North East Chamber of Commerce, and Deputy Chair of the North East Farming and Rural Advisory Network. Tony is a member of the Board of Northumberland Tourism Ltd and Kielder Water and Forest Park Development Trust. Tony Chairs the YHN Remuneration and Nominations Committee and is also a member of our Health and Safety Committee.

Senior Management Team

Tina Drury, Managing Director



Hailing from Kenton in Newcastle, Tina started her career in 1982 as a clerk at the City Council's housing department. Since then, she has developed her career at a number of housing associations, helping transform homes and housing services in the region in previous executive roles at South Tyneside Homes, Castle Morpeth Housing and the Isos Group, where she was Group Executive Director (Customers and Communities). Tina joined YHN as its Managing Director in 2016.

David Langhorne, Assets and Development Director



David has worked for YHN for over ten years. In 2005 he left Northumberland County Council to join YHN as the Investment Planning Manager charged with undertaking one of the largest housing investment programmes the region has seen. David became Head of Service in 2009, then Director of Property Services in 2013, later Assets and Development Director in 2017. His responsibilities cover technical services, property maintenance, investment programmes, repairs

and maintenance and health and safety.

Greg van-Enk Bones, Finance Director



Greg joined YHN as Finance Director in March 2020 after working in housing finance for the past 18 years. He brings with him a wealth of experience, with over a decade spent in non-executive Board roles and Executive Director positions in Finance, ICT, Governance and HR, as well as Development, Assets and Estates Management. As part of his MBA at Manchester Business School, Greg specialised in how regulations and culture impact on Value for Money in Housing Associations. Greg is a qualified accountant

and a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA).

Jen Vinton, Customer Services Director



Jen oversees YHN's housing customer and supported services functions. She has a long career working in customer focused roles, which began at Tyne and Wear County Council in 1983. From there, she moved into a Clerical Assistant role in the old housing department at Newcastle City Council. She has developed her career within housing in Newcastle through a number of different

roles primarily within investment delivery, regeneration and development. Jen is incredibly passionate about providing excellent customer service and putting customers at the heart of everything we do.

Governance Structure



Job Description

Role: Board member

Reports To: Chair

Remuneration: £3,000 per annum gross, plus travel expenses.

An additional £1,000 per annum gross is payable to Committee Chairs.

The role is not eligible for the Local Government Pension Scheme

Tenure: initial term of up to 3 years, with a possible further 3-year term subject to satisfactory annual appraisals

Purpose of the role:

YHN Board members are equally and jointly responsible for:

- the overall governance and strategic leadership of the business in accordance with its Business Strategy,
- ensuring YHN's continuing financial viability and long term sustainability,
- safeguarding the interests of the ALMO owners (the Council) and the public,
- representing the interests of HRA tenants and residents

Key responsibilities:

Working alongside other Board members with guidance from the Chair, all Board members play a key role in leading the organisation and the key responsibilities are:

Strategy and Performance

- Defining the statement of purpose, objectives and values of YHN, ensuring they reflect the company's obligations to all stakeholders, and ensuring sufficient resources are available to meet those objectives.
- Agreeing YHN Business Strategy, annual budget, annual Delivery Plan and key policies, delegating the responsibility for implementation to officers.
- Ensuring the organisation has an effective financial and performance management framework that monitors, scrutinises and reviews outcomes against the strategic objectives.
- Approval of annual accounts
- Holding Directors to account for the performance of the organisation.

Risk

- Ensuring the organisation has a robust risk management framework which identifies, assesses and manages strategic risks and that it is monitored and reviewed periodically for continuous improvement.
- Ensuring the organisation has a framework of delegation and systems of internal control, which is reviewed annually.

Governance

- Ensuring that structures and mechanisms are in place so that YHN complies with all applicable statutory and regulatory obligations, including Equality & Diversity and Health & Safety.
- Ensuring that YHN's affairs are conducted lawfully and comply with its rules and good governance, in accordance with the National Housing Federation Code of Governance.
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct for Board members and operate in accordance with the NHF Code of Governance.

Key requirements:

As a Board member you will be required to:

- Promote the success of YHN and its affiliated organisations for the benefit of tenants
- Act in the interests of the organisation and not on behalf of or representing any constituency or interest group
- Ensure the Board acts within its powers
- Exercise independence of judgement when making decisions
- Exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence and use the general knowledge, skill and experience that you have for the benefit of YHN
- Declare conflicts of interest in accordance with the code of conduct
- Follow the Board member code of conduct
- Read the agenda and papers and prepare for and attend Board meetings
- Undertake training appropriate to the role
- Serve on committees and task and finish groups as required
- Constructively challenge and contribute to debates at Board meetings
- Support the decisions, objectives and policies agreed by the Board
- Understand the importance of handling confidential and sensitive information in compliance with applicable legislation and guidance.
- Ensure the decisions of the board are appropriately reflective of a commitment to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010



Key skills, knowledge and experience:

The Chair will ensure that the Board and its committees have the appropriate balance of skills, experience, independence and knowledge required as set out in the Board skill matrix. Collectively, the members of the Board should have sufficient skills and experience to provide effective leadership for the organisation.

Individual Board members are expected to contribute to the effective delivery of these responsibilities and demonstrate competency in the skills specified below.

- Ability to work collaboratively as part of a team
- Ability to understand, interpret and analyse complex information, including financial
- Effective communication skills
- Ability to challenge constructively
- Ability to think strategically in providing direction whilst considering the long term implications of decisions

For certain posts, Board members may also be expected to display one or more of the following:

- Strategic level ICT experience
- Sector-specific knowledge – housing, customer service, healthcare, local government

Time commitment:

Board members are expected to devote adequate time to preparation for evening Board meetings (6 per annum), away days (2 per annum), Committees (minimum of 4 meetings), visiting projects, undertaking training and development events as appropriate, and to attend and participate in reviews linked to individual performance and that of the whole Board.

All YHN Board members are expected to be flexible within the scope of the role.



Remuneration

The annual remuneration for the role is £3,000 per annum gross, plus travel expenses. An additional £1,000 per annum gross is payable to Committee Chairs.

Time Commitment

Any Board member role is a significant time commitment. You will be expected to attend meetings of the Board, and to devote adequate time to preparation for evening Board meetings, away days, Committees, visiting projects, undertaking training and development events as appropriate, and to attend and participate in reviews linked to individual performance and that of the whole Board.

The Board meets every two months on a Tuesday at 5pm and meetings run on average for around two hours, although occasionally they may be longer. Board members are also expected to sit as a member of at least one Committee and to attend two Board away days per year; and Board training sessions (approx. 14 meetings pa).

Location

Board and Committee meetings take place at YHN House, Benton Park Road, South Gosforth, Newcastle, NE7 7LX, however some may be held virtually.



How to Apply

To find out more about this exceptional opportunity contact Jim Allcroft, Executive Search Consultant on 07388 642 631 or via email: jim@dixonwalter.co.uk

To apply for the role please submit the following to jim@dixonwalter.co.uk:

- 🏠 An up-to-date CV. Candidates are advised that following the introduction of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, you are no longer obliged to provide your date of birth on your CV.

- 🏠 A Cover Letter of no more than 2 pages that addresses both the essential and the desirable requirements in the person specification and provides details of your current remuneration and notice period.

- 🏠 Details of two referees including name, nature of your relationship, position and contact details.

- 🏠 A completed Personal Details Form



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