

The Role of Chair of Link Group

Introduction

Link Group is a housing association with charitable aims that creates positive change in people's lives. As well as providing affordable homes and services to around 15,000 people, Link is the parent company to a group comprising four other housing association, a support and care company and a company which employs our in-house trades teams and provides other services on a commercial basis. We empower people to learn, access work and discover their creative talents. Based throughout the central belt of Scotland we also work with people who are homeless, have mental ill health, physical disabilities, learning difficulties, multiple needs and who have a wide range of accessibility challenges. Our work enables people to move on and lead independent lives.

The Chair is responsible for the leadership of the Board and provide high-level strategic direction to Link Group to ensure delivery of its key objectives.

The Chair should promote the wellbeing and efficient operation of the Board, ensuring that all board members work together effectively and have the confidence in the procedures laid down for conduct of Business. They ensure that Board members apply the highest standards of corporate governance and observe the accepted principles of public life.

The Chair ensures that the Board discusses those issues which it needs to discuss and discharges its responsibilities in a business-like way. They must be assured the Board sub-committees, which play a central role in the proper conduct of the Boards business, report back appropriately.

The Chair will ensure that Link Group is well connected to its stakeholders, including to staff and customers, and plays an ambassadorial role on behalf of Link Group.

Key responsibilities:

1. Strategic leadership

- 1.1 Ensure the Board sets, and actively drives, Link Group's vision, mission, values and standards and that its obligations to its stakeholders and others, including its regulators, are understood and met.
- 1.2 Promote good governance and ensure that Link Group's affairs are conducted in accordance with generally accepted codes of performance and propriety.
- 1.3 Contribute to the effective governance of the organisation through membership of appropriate committees.
- 1.4 Establish and maintain a clear division of responsibilities between the Board and Executive team, ensuring there is respect for each other's roles with limited

- 1.5 Ensures the organisation controls risk, responds to opportunity and its business is conducted to maintain long term viability.
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2. Conduct of the Board's business

- 2.1 Ensure the business of the Board and the general meetings are conducted efficiently.
 - 2.2 Ensure that the Board fulfils its responsibilities for effective governance through compliance with required regulatory frameworks, governance standards and effective business assurance and management of risk.
 - 2.3 Ensure that Board members are given the opportunity to express their opinions and that their views are sought before important decisions are taken.
 - 2.4 Deal with paperwork associated with the function of chairing Board meetings, including development of the agenda with the Chief Executive.
 - 2.5 Ensure that the Board delegates sufficient authority to its Committees, Chair, Chief Executive and others to enable the business of the Link Group to be conducted efficiently between meetings of the Board and also to ensure that the Board monitors the use of these delegated powers.
 - 2.6 Enable the Board to receive professional advice when it is needed either from its senior staff or from external sources.
 - 2.7 In the case of urgent business occurring between meetings, to take necessary decisions on behalf of the Board, in accordance with Link Group's approved policies and scheme of delegation.
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3. Working with the Chief Executive

- 3.1 Build a constructive working relationship with support for the Chief Executive. This will include meeting with the CEO regularly, developing a professional relationship, with clear performance management framework and two-way feedback to nurture shared goals and their development.
 - 3.2 Ensure that the Board makes proper arrangements to appraise the performance of the Chief Executive, to set objectives and to determine the remuneration of the Chief Executive and to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for remuneration of other senior staff.
 - 3.3 When necessary, ensure that, in conjunction with other Board members, the Chief Executive is replaced in a timely and orderly manner in line with Link Group's employment policies.
 - 3.4 Ensure clarity of each party's respective roles in representing and championing the organisation.
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4. Developing the Board team

- 4.1 Understand how to recognise people's skills and make the most of their contributions.
- 4.2 Consider what the business needs from non-executive skills and take an active role in Board renewal, recruitment and succession planning.
- 4.3 Ensures that on appointment, all new board members receive a comprehensive, formal and tailored induction and that resources are available for on-going training and development for board members, collectively and individually.
- 4.4 Invest time in individuals and the collective to build an effective Board and Executive team. This will include ensuring that annually the performance of individual Board



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- members, including the Chair, and the Board's collective performance, is evaluated.
- 4.5 Promote Board member connection, planning, learning with events and engagement outside the meeting cycle.
 - 4.6 Establish a constructive working relationship with the Vice Chairs, Chairs of Partner Boards and Chairs of Sub Committees

5. Working with Partners and Promoting the organisation

- 5.1 Liaise with and develop strong relationship with chairs of all the Link Partner companies, promoting Link's aims and ethos.
- 5.2 Be an ambassador for Link Group externally and help build its brand and public image, ensuring an effective profile, in consultation with the Chief Executive.
- 5.3 Promote the interests of Link Group to local authorities, other stakeholder partners, the Scottish Housing Regulator, lenders and other advisors and agencies involved in the Board's work.
- 5.4 Represent Link Group with key stakeholders, such as other regulators and decision-makers, including the Scottish Government and the Scottish Federation of housing Associations.
- 5.5 Attend ad-hoc meetings as required to promote the values and purpose of the organisation.

Chair – person specification

Knowledge and experience:

- a. Understands the role of non-executive director/Boards, with good governance insight; prior vice chair / chair experience will be advantageous, prior Board experience essential
- b. Adept at chairing meetings, provides focus, manages contributions, facilitates rather than dominates.
- c. A genuine interest and commitment to the provision of social housing services and the building of inclusive communities including the people and communities Link Group works with.
- d. Pertinent insights into governance in the housing association, voluntary and community, political awareness or other relevant sector.

Skills and abilities:

- e. Skilled at bringing people together to generate a strong team spirit, encourages collaboration with Board and Executive colleagues.
- f. Able to think strategically to steer the organisation.
- g. An ability to read, understand and analyse written and numerical reports presented to the Board, drawing out points for discussion.
- h. Is skilled in expressing views succinctly and effectively in a formal Board/Committee meeting environment, making reasoned and considered contributions.



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- i. An ability to challenge constructively while respecting the roles, views and feelings of others.
- j. Skilled at forming a consensus with other Board members, through persuasive and engaging discussion.
- k. Can make sound judgements, for balanced and informed decision-making.
- l. An ability to consider the long-term implications and broader view of issues, spotting opportunities, identifying key risks and the means of mitigating them.
- m. Is skilled at being an organisational ambassador within formal and informal gatherings.

Attributes and behaviours:

- n. Understanding of, and commitment to, Link Group's values and culture.
- o. Ability to lead Link Group's Board to ensure its strategy reflects its vision and mission – and is delivered.
- p. Ensure that Link Group maintains the highest standards of governance and probity, leading by example.
- q. Model the core values and make a visible personal commitment to Link Group and its mission.
- r. Is recognised as a person with a high degree of probity and integrity.
- s. A commitment to the interests of current and future residents and the enthusiasm to implement change and improve services.
- t. Commitment to equality diversity and inclusion, so that it informs all we do.
- u. Emotionally intelligent, is self-aware and adept in reading relationships and behaviours.
- v. Can devote the necessary time and effort to the role.
- w. Respects confidences, able to manage sensitive situations.

Other information about the role

We would hope for five years (re-election annually in accordance with the Model Rules) as a commitment from the Chair.

We do try as far as is possible to have a board composition that broadly reflects the local community and our service users. Ideally, our Chair will live, work and or have personal hand experience of Link Group's operating area -.

Being Chair of the Board is a big responsibility – you are leading the non-executive directors of the business. Individually and collectively, the non-executives are expected to add value to Link Group's business by contributing experience, expertise and insight to determine strategy, direction, and control in the interests of tenants, other service users and the wider community of vulnerable adults in Scotland.

The Chair of the Board is responsible for guiding the Board to achieve excellent governance of Link Group, including developing and maintain a constructive partnership with the executive. The Board's central role is to direct and control the association's work; that is, to determine strategic direction and policies and to establish and oversee control and risk management frameworks that will ensure that Link Group achieves its vision, mission and strategic aims. Management is delegated to staff.

The Chair also has a key relationship with the Chief Executive Officer. The Chair's role is to act as a sounding board and provide constructive challenge and support as well as, with other board members, to ensure that the Chief Executive Officer is regularly appraised and their remuneration and terms of employment are reviewed in line with best practice.

All board members share responsibility for its decisions. Each board member should act only in the interests of Link Group and not on behalf of any interested party. Board members should put Link Group's interests before their own interests.

Much business is done at formal meetings, but the role of a board member involves ongoing responsibilities and input. It is important for the Chair to encourage every board member to contribute, and add value, in and out of board and committee meetings. As Chair occasionally, you will transact business delegated by the Board under Chair's Action which will be reported back to Board meetings.

Link Group has Directors' and Officers' insurance as part of its insurance policy. The purpose of this insurance is to protect trustees, directors, officers and employees in respect of their personal liability following an alleged or actual wrongful act committed in the course of their duties.

Commitment

The Board currently meets 6 times a year, although other meetings on particular topics may be arranged

- 6 board meetings
- 1 board Strategy day
- 1 AGM

The Chair will be a member of the Remuneration Committee which meets annually and will be expected to attend Audit and Risk meetings.

The Chair may be expected to:

- Attend various stakeholder and Link Group celebration events and activities

- Be a member of a panel which hears, and adjudicates on, tenants' complaints
- Participate in collective and individual board appraisals
- Participate in collective and personal training and development
- Complete an induction programme within one month of appointment.

For this, we anticipate the time commitment to be the equivalent of between 3 – 5 days a month (although this is likely to be an accretion of hours, rather than whole days) with other duties as required

Every board member is required to, annually complete a Register of Business Interests and Related Parties questionnaire, and sign our Code of Conduct.

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