

# Non-Executive Director

Candidate Information Pack



# Introduction from Our Chair

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Thank you for taking the time to explore this opportunity of being a non-executive member of the bpha Board.

At bpha we build and maintain quality homes and actively support communities so people can live happily and safely in a home they can afford. bpha is a successful organisation that has an enviable record of achievement in customer service delivery, the quality of our homes, the scale of our development programme and our standards of governance. We are fully committed to our social purpose.

But there is much more to do. This is a busy, challenging, and exciting time to be a board member of a housing association. We have a broad and expanding agenda which includes further improvements in our engagement with tenants and customers, building safety, addressing environmental impacts, developing more homes, maintaining and improving existing properties and ensuring greater efficiency and effectiveness in all of our activities.

*Dr Paul Leinster CBE*

Chair, bpha

We have a bold and ambitious vision, and we are looking for people with a real interest and passion for the work we do to help us continue to improve.

We would like to hear from people with a diverse range of backgrounds and work experience. No previous experience as a non-executive director is necessary. This role is about helping change lives and making a real difference for people living in streets, neighbourhoods and communities. If you think you can contribute to our work and help us achieve our ambitions then we would be delighted to hear from you.

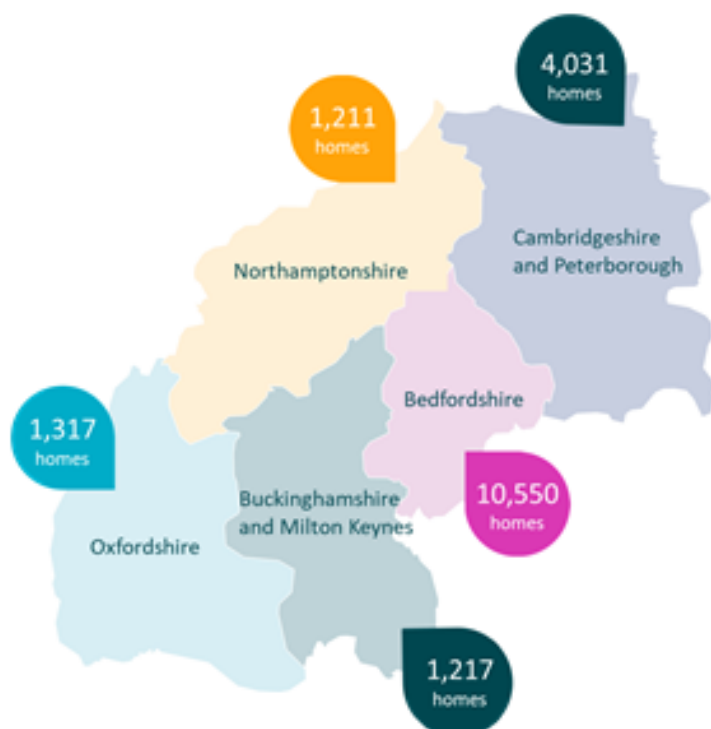


# About bpha

bpha is the largest single provider of affordable housing within the Oxford to Cambridge arc. Over the last 30 years, it has grown from its roots as a Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer (LSVT) from North Bedford Borough Council to being a strong regional organisation with 19,250 homes. From a start point of 100 employees and a stock value of £63m we now have 460 people and a stock value of £1.25 billion.

Throughout its 30 year history, bpha's purpose has not changed. We are here to provide affordable housing to people who cannot access the open market. However, the way in which we do this and the services we now provide have changed considerably. This has been driven by regulation, technology, economic cycles and societal priorities and will continue to change and evolve, probably at an ever increasing rate. The customers' needs and the communities in which they live have remained firmly at the heart of our evolution. As a result we work hard with a range of partners to offer the services people need to help them maintain their tenancies, to live their lives in a decent and safe home and to support the communities in which they live. In addition we maintain a full and challenging pipeline of new developments in order to provide as many new affordable homes as we can to help address the country's well documented housing crisis.

We are a 'social business' with charitable aims so whilst the organisation is run with a commercial ethos to achieve high 'value for money' standards, all surpluses that are generated (£27m in 2019/20), are reinvested in the organisation and our work. All the money we make is used to invest in existing homes, to enable us to build new homes, and to deliver new and improved services.



## OUR VISION

Our vision summarises our overall ambition and paints a picture of the world we are trying to create: **To build communities where people can live happily in a home they can afford.**

## OUR MISSION

Our mission statement sets out how we will make our vision a reality: **To build and maintain quality homes and thriving communities by being increasingly efficient and always considering the needs of those we house.**

## OUR VALUES

Our values are shared by us and the people who work for us. They reinforce our commitment to making our vision a reality:

- **Customers first** – we listen to our customers and put them at the heart of everything we do
- **Right first time** – we strive to get things right first time and to keep getting better
- **As good as our word** – we act with integrity; we do the right thing, and deliver what we say we will
- **Open and informative** – we respect our employees and customers by sharing information and communicating in an open and easy to understand manner
- **Effective relationships** – we know we achieve more by working effectively with others
- **Pride and ownership** – we are proud of the work we do and always take responsibility for our actions

Our values are shared by all bpha employees and we promote them with partners and stakeholders. They reinforce our commitment to making our vision of thriving communities a reality and underpin the way we work.

We are delighted to be recognised as one of the UK's Best Workplaces in the annual Great Place to Work survey, the results of which were published within the Sunday Telegraph newspaper on 2 May this year. Within this survey of larger businesses we were the only housing association and one of only two non-for-profit organisations to feature in the list. Our ranking is based on an employee survey and an externally assessed Culture Audit, a business-driven questionnaire that reveals and evaluates HR and leadership practices, policies and culture. Our top-rated areas in the results highlighted our commitment to corporate social responsibility, strong line management, and the working environment and processes.

We support a wide range of community activities that help improve the quality of life for our residents, bring people together and benefit the wider communities in which they live. Although social distancing measures have stopped us meeting our partners face to face, thanks to digital technology we've been able to continue our partnership working. And thanks to the strong relationships we've built over the years, we're linking up with a number of organisations to give support to communities during these difficult times.

# Our Strategy



In September 2019, the Board approved its Corporate Strategy 2025/30. This far sighted document imagines the affordable housing and community needs of the future in order to set out a vision for the organisation's services and the way in which they will be delivered. Whilst the organisation's intrinsic purpose will not change, the corporate strategy calls for a step- change in performance based on five core principles:

**The Customer** - it is all about the customer/tenant/resident and how best we can fulfil their needs.

**Value for Money** - ensuring that we operate an efficient organisation that works as close to its customers as possible from a lean, central 'hub'.

**Systems Thinking** - affordable housing is just one element of supporting people within communities to live productive, safe and fulfilled lives. We work to bring housing together with other core services such as health (primary and public) and social care at a community level, so our customers will benefit from easy access to joined up services as and when they are needed.

**Lifetime Costs** - when planning investments, we consider the full lifetime cost to prevent short-term decision-making creating higher than necessary costs over the longer term.

**Sustainability** - we understand the impact of our actions on the environment and work systematically to minimise waste and to protect natural resources, open spaces, habitats and the indigenous plants and animals that live there.

# Our Strategy (Cont)

Careful and prudent organisational management, along with pre-emptive and strategic decisions have ensured that we are in a position of financial stability with a good service delivery record, new home record, health and safety compliance, and regulatory standing. However, our operational world is changing, and we are adapting to meet the challenges facing the sector, as well as our communities. With a difficult and uncertain economic outlook, the continuing effects of the pandemic, increased costs and regulation and higher environmental standards, our leadership team has a complex set of issues to manage. We are leading the way in developing a systems approach, and a broad and holistic approach to housing.

As we adapt to these challenges, our culture will build on its values around professionalism, partnership, and improvement. Most importantly, we will continue to develop a genuinely customer centric mindset, where services are developed with the present and future needs of individuals at the heart of what we do.



# Thank you

## **OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

We are committed to increasing diversity and inclusion within bpha and the wider housing sector. This means reflecting critically on issues of diversity and inclusion within all that we do, identifying and taking appropriate actions to reduce inequality.

We welcome applications from anyone regardless of disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexuality, religion or socio-economic background.

We are committed to inclusive working practices, and during the application process we commit to:

- Making any reasonable adjustments during the application and interview process.
- Providing this document in a Word document format readily available to download.
- Offering a first stage interview to disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the role.

If there is anything else you're concerned about or think we could provide, please let us know.

# Role Overview

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bpha is led and governed by its Board supported by an Audit and Risk Committee, a Remuneration and Nominations Committee, a Group Treasury Committee, a Customer Committee and a Development and Asset Committee.

The Board as a whole is collectively responsible for ensuring the success of bpha and compliance with all legal and regulatory obligations by directing and supervising bpha's affairs.

## **The Board**

- Provides leadership.
- Sets the organisation's strategic aims, ensures that the necessary financial and human resources are in place and reviews management performance.
- Sets the organisation's values and standards and ensures that its legal and regulatory obligations are understood and met.

## **The role of Board Members**

- Act on behalf of the Board and in the best interests of bpha.
- Represent the organisation in an appropriate manner.
- Comply with the statutory and regulatory requirements of a Board Member.

## **Responsibilities of Board Members**

- To contribute to the leadership and motivation of the organisation.
- To build a constructive relationship with and between other Board Members and with the Executive Leadership Team.
- To contribute to the setting and oversight of strategy for the organisation.
- To participate in group decision making by contributing to debate and challenging the views of others where appropriate.
- To utilise skills and knowledge to analyse issues and assist the Board in making decisions.
- To ensure integrity in all aspects of bpha's activities.

## **Governance Duties**

- To ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements including, but not limited to, the requirements of the Economic and Consumer Standards under the Regulatory Framework.
- To ensure compliance with bpha's adopted Code of Governance and Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and any organisational policies relating to Board Member activity.
- To work within bpha's risk management framework, ensuring decisions are balanced and in line with bpha's risk appetite.
- To act within and in accordance with bpha's Rules.
- To uphold and promote the core policies, purpose, values and objectives of bpha (including its commitment to equal opportunities).
- To attend induction, training and performance review sessions and other such sessions or events as are reasonably required by bpha.
- To attend all meetings of the Board (and all Committees of which the Board Member is a member) and to read Board and/or Committee papers (as applicable) before meetings.



# Person Specification

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We are looking for **ONE** new Board member who has experience of service delivery in a business with a strong customer service ethos; where customer engagement using a blend of digital and other engagement approaches has underpinned improvements in customer experience and satisfaction. It is anticipated that this new Board member would also join our Customer Committee.



Candidates need not meet all of the person specification criteria to apply. However, there is an expectation that all candidates will be able to demonstrate suitable knowledge and experience of being in a strategic leadership role.

## **Organisational:**

- Understanding of legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a Board Member of bpha
- Able to provide the required time and commitment to the role
- Awareness and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion
- Collaborative approach to working towards one common goal

## **Personal Qualities:**

- Good independent judgement
- Impartiality, fairness and confidentiality
- Tact and diplomacy
- Respect for others
- Respected and trusted by other Board Members
- Effective networking skills and ability to build partnerships
- Team player
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Strategic vision
- Creative thinking
- Integrity

## **Experience:**

- Working at Board level or in a senior executive role
- Demonstrable skills that could be applied at Board level within a significant Social Housing organisation
- Experience of building a strong foundation of customer relationship
- Experience of implementing and operationalizing digital solutions such as Customer Relationship management to enhance customer engagement and satisfaction.
- Experience of successfully building multiple communication channels with customers using technological advances such as self-service portals and other means to improve the interaction with customers and thereby facilitate efficient consistent service delivery.

# Additional Information

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**Term of office:** Board members will serve an initial three-year term to be eligible for re-appointment for one additional term of three years.

**Time Commitment:** The anticipated time commitments of approximately 30 days per annum to include Board and Committee meetings, preparation time and other requirements including but not limited to Board development days and training.

**Location:** Due to current government guidelines around Covid-19, all meetings are currently being held remotely until further notice. It is anticipated that as lockdown restrictions ease, a blend of face to face and virtual Board & Committee meetings are likely to be scheduled. Board development days will be face to face. Face to face Board meetings would usually take place at our Head Office, Bedford Heights, Manton Lane, Bedford, MK41 7BJ.

**Remuneration:** Board member remuneration is £12,000 p.a.

**Conflicts of Interest:** All candidates will be asked to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, and these will be discussed with the candidate to establish whether and what action is needed to avoid a conflict or the perception of a conflict.



# How to Apply

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The recruitment process is being undertaken by Inclusive Boards on behalf of bpha if you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following:

- A detailed CV setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements.
- A covering letter (maximum two sides) highlighting your suitability for the role and how you meet the person specification. Please note that the covering letter is an important part of your application.
- Details of two professional referees together with a brief statement of their relationship to you and over what period of time they have known you, referees will not be contacted without your prior consent.
- [Diversity monitoring form](#) - your data will be stored separately from your application and will at no time be connected to you or your application.

If you have any questions or would like to arrange a call to discuss the role please email [bpha@inclusiveboards.co.uk](mailto:bpha@inclusiveboards.co.uk) or call 0207 267 8369

Please send your CV and cover letter to [bpha@inclusiveboards.co.uk](mailto:bpha@inclusiveboards.co.uk) by 23.59 06/06/2021.

