



Cymoedd i'r Arfordir
Valleys to Coast



Recruitment Information Pack

Board Chair

We believe in people,
we believe in you.

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**Providing homes
where people feel
happy and safe.**

Welcome to Valleys to Coast

We're delighted you are considering joining us as Chair of our Board. If you are reading this, then we already know you are passionate about making a difference, passionate about social housing, and passionate about working for an organisation that shares your values – all of which are ideal qualities for this role.

Here at Valleys to Coast our colleagues care about our customers, our local communities and our environment. They want to help us grow and make the most of the unique opportunity we have to build and grow an organisation that is more than just a landlord. You too could help us reach our potential.

As we move our business forward through the Foundation, Build and Grow phases of our 10-year Corporate Plan we have strengthened our governance and invested in a diverse Board that has a wide variety of skills and knowledge to challenge and support us.

As our existing Chair, Anthony Whittaker, will be stepping down our aim is to recruit another inspirational leader to deliver our ambitions. In our Chair, we are looking for an inspirational leader who thinks strategically and works well in a team with customers and communities at their heart. The ability to support and constructively challenge is essential.

The Chair has a vital role to play, adding to the great strides we have made in governance in the last three years since I've been Chief Executive. As part of our Board, you would be able to share your expertise across the whole business. We are focused on sustainability, regeneration, and creating safe and happy homes, in safe and happy places, for safe and happy customers who are at the heart of our organisation.

We also want to be a great employer of safe and happy colleagues, which includes our Board members. We are embracing Smarter Working which allows our colleagues a degree of flexibility about where and how they work, at all times though putting the needs of our customers first.

Being part of our team means being part of the solution to delivering excellent customer service, improving prospects across the Bridgend borough, developing and growing a talented workforce, investing in our homes and building the right homes in the right places, and reducing our environmental impact as a business.

If this sounds appealing, then we would love to hear from you! Please read through this information pack and visit our website and social media before applying, and if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to hearing from you.



Joanne Oak
Group Chief Executive

A note from the outgoing Chair of the Board

Outgoing Chair of the Board Anthony Whittaker joined Valleys to Coast after a 40-year career in housing with local authorities and RSLs – the latter 23 years as Chief Executive of United Welsh.

During his tenure, he has supported the Board and business to operate during the Covid pandemic and the challenges that came with recovery.

Anthony has built strong relationships with partners and stakeholders to support the delivery of the organisation's strategic priorities - including its ambitious programme of developing 1,000 new homes over 10 years and addressing homelessness.





I've been incredibly proud to Chair the Board of Valleys to Coast for the past five years, a time during which we have overcome many challenges but continued to grow our ambitions and strength.

Having recently celebrated our 20th birthday as an organisation, and as we move into an exciting new chapter with the creation of our wholly owned subsidiary, it feels the right time to hand over the baton.

As Chair of the Board I'm proud to see how we, as a business, have adapted to our changing environment and challenges, and how that same strength and resolve we had in 2003 has remained constant over time.

In today's difficult external operating environment, with economic pressures that are putting extra demands on our decision-making, Valleys to Coast will inevitably have to think differently about how it delivers its services and continues to be a landlord that puts its customers at the heart.

In my tenure as Chair, we have strengthened our governance to ensure good decision-making with a skills-based Board, and have created a strong partnership between the Board and the Executive Team which is built on openness, trust and mutual endeavour.

It is these strong relationships, and the diversity of experience, thought and opinion, that will help the organisation navigate the challenges that are to come whilst continuing to reach its potential.

In considering the role of Chair of the Board, I'm sure you share similar relationships, strengths and values. The new Chair can look forward to supporting Valleys to Coast as it drives forward its ambitious investment in new and existing homes – good quality affordable homes that are fit for the future, and that will play an important role in addressing homelessness in the Bridgend area.

Of course it's not all about homes, it's about our customers and communities, and as Chair you will need to keep these in the forefront of your thoughts as you stimulate, challenge and support decision-making at the highest level.

It's an exciting opportunity, and as I prepare to hand over the reins I do so with immense pride at what we have achieved and what is yet to come.



Anthony Whittaker

Outgoing Chair of the Board

Who we are, and what we do

We are a not-for-profit organisation operating across the Bridgend County Borough Council local authority area.

We provide management, maintenance, and improvement services to a portfolio of rented homes, leasehold flats, commercial properties, and garages. We also develop new homes in and around the Bridgend area to support local housing need.

We are an ambitious housing association with our customers at the heart of all that we do, an approach reflected in our 10-year corporate strategy. We're currently focusing on the

'brilliant basics' and getting our core repairs and maintenance services right; from which we will lay foundations to build and grow. Our vision is to help build a better Bridgend and Wales.

And as we grow, we're committed to being bold. In 2024 we will launch our wholly owned subsidiary, Llanw, which will deliver an improved and more efficient repairs and maintenance service for our customers and stakeholders. A new company, rooted in the same values.





Our vision

**Helping to
build a better
Bridgend
and Wales**

Our values

We value people

Seeing the potential in those
we work with and serve

.....

We think differently

trying new things to improve
peoples' lives and careers

.....

We have courage to see things through

speaking, working and acting with
conviction, strength and determination.

Bridgend – a borough full of opportunity



Location

Bridgend is a friendly town with a proud history and plenty of potential. Located along the South Wales M4 corridor, it is situated 20 miles west of Cardiff and east of Swansea making it a great place to commute – accessible within an hour's car or train travel from West Wales to Bristol.

Regeneration

Recent investment has supported the regeneration of Bridgend which now offers great retail and industrial opportunities and a place where there is huge potential for growth.

Valleys to Coast has a part to play in that – we're already building new homes; seeking creative town centre regeneration projects; engaging with local businesses and contractors through our procurement activities; working in partnership with Bridgend Council and Bridgend College on major projects; and employing the vast majority of our colleagues from within Bridgend Borough, providing good benchmarked salaries and benefits.

With additional funding we could undoubtedly deliver an even more significant positive impact so we are actively seeking additional investment and financial opportunities to support our work and aspirations for Bridgend.

Meet the Executive Team

The day-to-day responsibility for the Group business lies with the Executive Team who bring a wealth of talent, skills and experience to Valleys to Coast.



Joanne Oak

Group Chief Executive

Joanne is a qualified accountant with over 20 years of experience in senior leadership roles across the public and third sectors. She previously worked as the Director of Strategy and Corporate Services at Social Care Wales, a care and support organisation. Jo is also a passionate Board member of Bridgend College, and a Trustee for Building Communities Trust. She joined us in May 2020.



Darrin Davies

Executive Director of Development and Growth

Darrin is a Chartered Surveyor with substantial experience in both private and public sector. After joining the housing association sector in 1990 he has led on the delivery of new homes, asset and FM management, procurement, sustainability and health and safety. He joined us in April 2017.



Emma Howells

Executive Director of Housing, Customers and Communities

Emma has worked in the housing sector in both Wales and England for over 20 years, she has held leadership roles in Trivallis, United Welsh, and the London Borough of Camden, delivering a range of housing-related services. Emma has a special interest in customers' voices, restorative working, and innovative service design. She joined us in January 2020.



Huw Lewis

Interim Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Former Chief Financial Officer at the Royal Mint, Huw Lewis joins us as Interim Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services in December 2023. Huw has a wealth of accounting and commercial experience gained from a varied career at home and overseas.



Claire McDougall

Director of Governance and Assurance

A qualified governance professional with over 10 years of experience in the social housing sector in Wales, having previously worked for Community Housing Cymru and Wales and West Housing. Claire is experienced in governance policy and best practice development, as well as implementation and compliance. She joined us in April 2022.

**We believe in people,
we believe in you**

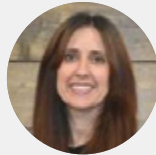
Meet the Board

The Valleys to Coast Board has a diverse range of skills and experience with not only housing sector knowledge, but also knowledge of the financial, public, governance and legal sectors too. This, along with their passion for social housing, is invaluable to us as we plan for the next 10 years.



Anthony Whittaker – Chair

Anthony has recently retired after a 40 year career working for a number of not-for-profit housing organisations. Most recently he was the Chief Executive of one of Wales' leading housing associations. In addition, he has served as a non-executive Board member for a number of housing organisations in England and Wales. A resident of Bridgend, in his spare time he enjoys walking with his dog, gardening and following his (formerly) local football team.



Joanne Smith – Vice Chair

Joanne has recently been appointed Governance and Regulation Manager for a housing association in South Wales following a two year secondment to the Housing Regulation Team in the Welsh Government. Prior to this, Joanne worked for a number of years in operational housing management during which time she gained an MSc in housing from Cardiff University. Joanne firmly believes in the benefits good quality secure homes and services can bring to improve people's health and well-being.



Mark Woloshak

Mark is a Cardiff based solicitor, who works for the South Wales firm of Howells solicitors. His professional work has included acting on behalf of housing associations, and he was previously on the Board of a housing association in Devon. Originally from London, Mark has a keen interest in social housing which he believes is of crucial importance to a society's well-being.



Andrew Wallbridge

Andrew is a management consultant for a Bridgend based consultancy firm and works with many housing associations across South Wales. He has been a tenant for over nine years and lives with his wife and family in Maesteg.



Caroline Jones

Caroline is an Associate Director at Savills, as well as a chartered surveyor and RICS registered valuer. She works in the development department advising on property development and regeneration. Caroline has worked closely with the affordable housing sector in Wales, providing valuation and consultancy advice on assets and new build programmes.



Sharon Lee

Sharon is the Chief Executive of Aelwyd Housing, a faith-based housing association operating across South Wales and has worked in housing and homelessness for almost 30 years. She is an experienced Board member and was previously the Chair of a large Welsh housing association. Sharon lives with her family in Bridgend and in her spare time helps to rescue and support the local hedgehog population.



Derek Hobbs

Derek is a Director of Digital Transformation Relationships Ltd. He has excellent knowledge and experience in technical, practical and legal aspects of modern digital, marketing and insight techniques within public, private and voluntary sectors. He is a resident of Bridgend, and has played rugby for over 35 years. He also enjoys gardening, growing a range of fruit and vegetables, and playing the keyboard. However, much of his time is spent looking after his four grandchildren.



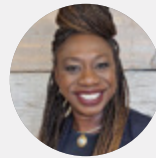
Tara King

Tara is a Director at KingShipp Sustainable Solutions, an independent advisor for circular procurement, material resource management, and renewable energy projects. She also volunteers as Chair to a Board of Trustees for a local charity, Sustainable Wales in Porthcawl, and the Red Cross. Tara lives in Caerphilly, and in her spare time she enjoys music and helping local festivals become lower carbon through re-use, recycling and green energy advice.



Sophie Taylor

Sophie is a qualified accountant and currently works as Deputy Director of Finance and Procurement at Newport City Homes. She has an excellent understanding of the challenges facing the housing sector, plus a good appreciation of the complexities of management in a public sector organisation which has to balance commercial demands with an understanding of the importance of a governance function. She is able to understand complex accounting concepts and analyse data effectively, and her role as a Senior Finance Manager means that she is able to communicate and influence effectively. She also chairs the Community Housing Cymru Finance Service Delivery Group, and sits on the Audit and Risk Management Committee of the National Housing Federation.



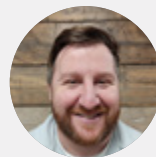
Joy Ogeh-Hutfield

Joy is an accomplished, high-performance international trainer, coach and the CEO of JT International Leadership Academy. She has a dynamic record of success in delivering diversity and inclusion, leadership development, executive coaching and women empowerment initiatives at a senior management level across a broad range of organisations in the UK, Europe, USA and Africa. Joy lives in Swansea and regularly features as an expert guest speaker on coaching principles, diversity and leadership on various BBC TV and BBC Radio Wales programmes including X-Ray, the One Show, Good Morning Wales and the Eleri Sion Show.



Mark Doubler

Mark is Director of Property for a large housing association in South Wales. He has worked in a number of senior roles in social housing including business development, front line housing and customer services. Prior to this he enjoyed a successful career in local government and commercial finance. Mark is also director of a company providing shared apprenticeship services to the construction industry.



Richard Jenkins

Richard serves as a Portfolio Executive at the Development Bank of Wales, where he plays a vital role in assisting Welsh SMEs secure funding for diverse purposes such as job creation, business acquisitions, property acquisitions, and overall business expansion. In addition to his financing responsibilities, he diligently oversees financial performance. Residing in Bridgend alongside his family, Richard's upbringing in Valleys to Coast housing has instilled in him a deep passion for understanding and advocating the essential services and impactful role that social housing fulfils within our communities.

Chair of the Board

Role description

Purpose

The purpose of the role is to provide strategic leadership to the Board and the organisation, to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities for the overall strategic direction and governance, acting wholly in the best interest of the organisation and customers of Bridgend.

Key Relationships

– Group Chief Executive

Whilst the Chair leads the Board, the Group CEO leads the Executive Team and takes responsibility for their achievements. A strong and positive relationship between the CEO and Chair is essential for the effective performance of the Board, its Committees and Valleys to Coast. The Chair needs to support the personal development of the CEO and that of Valleys to Coast.

– Vice Chair and Committee Chairs

The Chair will establish a constructive working relationship with the Vice Chair and Committee Chairs so that its business is carried out effectively ensuring excellent governance arrangements.

– Stakeholders

Promotes the work of Valleys to Coast and maintains positive relationships with the Executive Team, colleagues, customers, and other agencies and stakeholders involved in our activities.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic & Behavioural

- Lead the development of the Board contributing to strategy, policy, and planning. Lead the facilitation of the decision-making process, ensuring that all Board members are able to make appropriate contributions;
- Ensure that Valleys to Coast places customers at the heart of all it does and is open to their involvement and influence and maintains their respect by demonstrating empathy;
- Agree performance criteria that enables the Board and its Committees to manage its strategic direction;
- Ensure Valleys to Coast has a positive culture of continuous improvement and that the Board is proactively driving performance;
- Ensure that Valleys to Coast fosters positive partnerships with key stakeholders and uses them to deliver its vision;
- Acts on personal values, demonstrating good standards of personal and professional integrity;
- Has great Interpersonal and listening skills along with the ability to communicate clearly.

Financial & Governance

- Ensure that Valleys to Coast exercises efficient and effective use of its resources to deliver strategic objectives, maintaining our long-term financial viability, and safeguarding of assets;
- Ensure the separation between non-executive and executive functions of the organisation, its decision making, and delivery comply with the Rules, Scheme of Delegation and Standing Orders;
- Ensure efficient conduct of the Board's governance, legal and regulatory obligations.

Skills Knowledge and understanding

Essential

- Sound understanding of the role of a non-executive Chair and the relationship between Chair and CEO and ability and willingness to be a critical friend;
- Listen effectively, motivate, encourage, and support members to contribute and use their skills, knowledge, and experience to maximum effectiveness;
- Ability to think strategically, synthesise complex information, weigh up options, develop policy and measure risks;
- The ability to lead and empower the Board to achieve its desired outcomes;
- You will be collaborative in style; a good motivator who leads by example, encouraging fellow Board members to contribute and to feel engaged and valued;
- Champions high ethical standards, leading on issues such as diversity and equal opportunities;
- Ability to understand financial information and evaluate associated risks;
- Ability to address difficult issues with consistency, diplomacy, and tenacity;
- Seeks the views of the Board in the first instance but is able to demonstrate the ability to think independently, stating and supporting personal decisions in front of colleagues, whilst also being open to challenge;
- A sound understanding of the needs and aspirations of our local communities, ability to champion those needs, stay abreast with local and regional issues and changes that might impact on our customers, colleagues, stakeholders and communities;
- Demonstrates a belief in and is an advocate for our purpose and vision;
- Has an affinity with Valleys to Coast values.

Desirable

- Experience of being a leader in an organisation (public/private/not for profit) with complexity in how it operates, and the services provided;
- Experience of the Welsh Housing and Regulatory context and a sound understanding of the issues it faces;
- Experience of building productive and proactive relationships with a broad range of stakeholders;
- Operate with a high level of public scrutiny and accountability;
- Ability to operate across boundaries and in different settings and evidence of well-tuned political awareness;
- Ability to influence multiple stakeholders.

Essential Core Competencies

Strategic thinking: An understanding of the organisation's overall strategy, and the role of the Board in setting strategy.

Communication: Confidence to speak, contribute, constructively challenge; recognising responsibility to engage in debate. Ability to listen and have respect for other people's opinions.

Team working: Experience of working in partnership with others, working towards common goals and shared objectives. Supports shared decision-making and stands by the decisions of the Board.

Your Commitment

We are looking for a commitment to our vision, values, and purpose. A commitment to our customers and communities, ensuring they are at the heart of everything we do. Respect diversity, inclusion, and value the contribution difference brings.

The requirement will be between 2-3 days a month, which includes;

- Time to prepare;
- Attend and contribute to Board and Committee meetings both virtually and face to face;
- Strategic away-days;
- Training and development;
- Visits to our homes and estates;
- Representing Valleys to Coast.

Our Board meets at least six times each year, normally from 5pm to 8pm on a Monday evening. Our Committees meet four times a year. Meeting dates are agreed and published at the start of the year, for the whole year ahead, and invitations are sent to Board members electronically. Occasionally, it may be necessary to convene additional meetings throughout the year.

The Board is supported by three Committees – the Audit and Risk Committee, the Development and Assets Committee and the People and Remuneration Committee.

In addition to their role on the Board, all members are required to sit on at least one Committee. Each Committee meets four times per year, normally from 5pm until 8pm on a Monday evening.

- 7 formal Board meetings (including the Annual General Meeting);
- 3 strategy days;
- 2 learning and development sessions;
- Up to 4 meetings of each of the respective Committees.

Location of Meetings

We have a blended approach to our meetings, either held online through Google Meet, or at our Tremains Road office in Bridgend. They are formal, minuted meetings chaired by the Chair of the Board or the Vice-Chair if the Chair is unable to attend.

Training

Training is considered essential and all newly appointed Members must complete a formal induction.

Thereafter, ongoing training is undertaken periodically by the Board as a whole. Members are also encouraged to attend external meetings, including seminars and conferences, to broaden their knowledge and understanding.

All Board Members are subject to a formal annual appraisal undertaken by the Chair of the Board and the Director of Governance and Assurance. This process allows members to indicate how well they feel the Board is operating and provides an opportunity to discuss their contribution and any future training and development requirements to support their individual needs.

Remuneration and Expenses

This role is remunerated £9,000 plus payment of reasonable expenses for travel and subsistence costs incurred whilst fulfilling their role.

Key dates and the selection process

Application Deadline:

January 8, 2024 (12pm)

We will be in touch with candidates on January 12, 2024 to confirm the outcomes of the applications.

Assessment Centre:

February 5, 2024

The final stage of the process will involve meeting with fellow Board members, as well as our customers followed by a panel interview. The panel will comprise members of the Board and Leadership Team and will take place in person at Valleys to Coast's Head Office in Bridgend.

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If you are unable to attend on any of the identified dates for interview, please do speak to the Valleys to Coast's recruitment team before making an application.

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Useful information



[Corporate Strategy](#)



[Financial Statements](#)



How to apply



If you have read the candidate briefing information and you would like to apply, please follow the guidelines below.

Application process

Please submit an up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (CV) and covering letter ensuring that you quote reference number **ema:470**.

It is important that your CV highlights supporting evidence of how your previous experience and skills relate to the criteria outlined in the job profile and person profile. Within your CV, please supply the following:

- Full name and postal address;
- Work and home telephone number, mobile number and email address (NB most written communication with you will be electronic);
- National Insurance Number;
- Employment history (explaining any gaps);
- Education and dates your qualifications were obtained;
- Current Memberships of relevant professional associations/Institutes and dates.

Your covering letter (maximum of 3 pages) should be used to convey why you are attracted to the role describing how your experience and skills will help Valleys to Coast map out their future purpose, direction and priorities. The covering letter is considered an important aspect of your application and will be used to assess your motivation for the role.

We also request that you complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which can be downloaded [here](#). Any information collated from the Equality and Diversity Recruitment Monitoring Form will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

The timetable for the selection process is included below. In your supporting letter, please advise us if you have any difficulty with the outlined dates and/or any other dates when you are unavailable for assessment. We try to offer flexibility, but it can be difficult to convene the selection panel outside the advertised selection dates due to diary commitments.

Please return your application by noon, **January 8, 2024** (electronic submissions) to our retained consultants at ema consultancy Limited to: responsehandling1@emaconsultancy.org.uk

Assessment and selection process

All applications will be considered and assessed against the requirements of the Person Profile in order to select an initial long list of candidates.

If you have been successful at this stage ema will contact you via telephone/email immediately following the initial longlisting meeting with Valleys to Coast.

Timetable

Closing date:

January 8, 2024 (12pm)

Screening interviews:

W/C January 15, 2024

Final interview and assessments:

February 5, 2024

Enquiries

If you have any queries about the position or the selection process; or if you would like an informal and confidential discussion with our retained consultant, please contact Anne Elliott at ema on **07768 027837** or Ian Robertson on **07947 126329**.