

Parent Board Chair and Independent Board Member Recruitment Pack



If you're committed to using your skills to improve the lives of the people who live in our communities, **we want to hear from you!**

Contents

- 1. Introduction from the Chief Executive**
- 2. Equalities Statement**
- 3. About Southway**
- 4. Southway's Governance Structure**
- 5. About the Role**
- 6. How to Apply**

1. Introduction from the Chief Executive

Thank you for expressing an interest in joining the Parent Board here at Southway.

We are a community-focused social business and landlord that provides high-quality affordable homes for rent and sale, as well as a range of community investment services in South Manchester. Our vision is of Thriving Communities and our priorities are the people, homes, and neighbourhoods where we work. Our Chair, and one other longstanding member, are due to retire and we are looking for people who share our vision and values to join our Board.

This pack provides further information about the roles and the application process.

The Parent Board has overall responsibility and accountability for Southway's operations - what we do and how we do it. It sets our strategies and financial plans and oversees their delivery to ensure we achieve our objectives.

The position of Chair is an important leadership role in the organisation. We are looking for someone with experience at senior level in their profession; someone who has led teams and had responsibility for large budgets and setting strategy. This is an excellent opportunity to use those skills and experience in a non-executive role and to give something back to the local community.

For our independent member vacancy, we are particularly interested in hearing from people with experience in property management or construction, with knowledge of property and asset management, investment planning, building and construction, and contract management.

This a challenging time for the Housing Sector and you will need to demonstrate the ability to navigate and discuss complex topics; respecting and supporting our tenants and communities to achieve their potential in a difficult environment while delivering the ambitious growth and development plans in our Futures Strategy. Most importantly, you will be committed to using your skills to improve the lives of the people who live in our homes and communities.

I wish you every success in your application.



Karen Mitchell
Chief Executive

2. Equalities Statement

Southway is committed to diversity and inclusion. We aspire to a governance structure that reflects our tenants and the wider communities in which we operate. We encourage people from all backgrounds and experiences to apply for roles in our governance structure and welcome a diverse range of people. We value difference of thought as we know this enhances our organisation. We particularly, though not exclusively, welcome applications from disabled people, people who identify as women, people who identify as LGBT+, and BIPOC.

This pack includes written material and a written application process. If you would prefer or require a different approach to allow you to show your best, please get in touch for further guidance. Audio and visual recorded applications will also be accepted where they cover the same requirements.

If you need reasonable adjustments for any part of the recruitment process, please contact the Governance team at governance@southwayhousing.co.uk so we can contact you directly to help.

3. About Southway

Southway Housing Trust is a community-based housing provider and social business established in 2007. Working in and around South Manchester we are a trusted landlord and provide good quality, affordable rented homes for around 6,000 households and employ over 270 staff.

- Our interest is in People, Homes, and Neighbourhoods. We take our role as a key stakeholder seriously, working in partnership with others to achieve more than we can alone.
- We invest over £1m every year in strengthening our communities and supporting the people who live there.
- In the 10 years up to 2026 we will have built around 1600 new homes, the majority of which will be affordable homes for rent and low-cost home ownership.
- Over the next 5 years, we will create profit in our commercial subsidiary Southway Plus, ring-fenced to subsidise the cost of new affordable homes in the higher-value areas of South Manchester.

Southway's Vision, Values and Mission

Our long-term vision is of **Thriving Communities**.

A thriving community is a place that people are proud of; homes are secure and good quality, and neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green, and sustainable.

People choose to live in a thriving community because it has a sense of place and belonging. People of all ages can access what they need to have a healthy and fulfilled life. Equality and diversity are valued. People look out for each other.

We will track our direction of travel towards this vision. Over the next 10 years, we expect our thriving communities to be characterised by:

- Levels of child poverty reducing
- Levels of loneliness and isolation in all age groups reducing
- Higher levels of employment and social connectedness
- A supply of homes that is closer to meeting needs
- A smaller carbon footprint
- Higher levels of satisfaction with our communities as a place to live.

The way we do things is determined by our values:

We are **Caring, Committed** and we will be **Successful Together**.

Southway Housing Trust has a clear sense of purpose:

- We provide and build homes that people on below-average incomes can afford. We understand our role as a 'steward' on behalf of our local communities.
- We are community-based. Our focus on South Manchester, and areas nearby, means we understand our neighbourhoods and, with our tenants and residents, we know what works.
- We care about the people who live in our homes. We build trust and confidence and believe that we can achieve success together.
- We use our skills and resources to address inequality, reduce poverty and improve lives in our diverse communities. We support, advise, and enable people to achieve their potential and live well.
- Our services provide value for money. We are creative in solving problems and we use our financial strength effectively. We work with others to create greater outcomes.
- We will promote what we are good at, if that helps others, and make profit for the purpose of building more affordable homes in South Manchester.

Futures Strategy 2020-2025

Southway was formed in 2007 when homes were transferred from Manchester City Council. Our initial focus was the delivery of the promises made to tenants prior to the transfer; making improvements to homes and neighbourhoods and building a strong landlord service. All Southway homes now exceed the Decent Homes Standard, and our core landlord services achieve above-average performance and tenant satisfaction ratings.

In 2015, we published an updated Futures Strategy that set a new direction, while building on the foundations established over the first 8 years. The current version of the Strategy was launched in 2020. It seeks to make the best use of Southway's financial capacity to deliver our vision and purpose, and to ensure the business is diverse and resilient.

The Strategy sets priorities for the five years to 2025. It is available to view by clicking this [link](#).

For 2023/24, we have set a corporate plan that has a focus on making sure we listen to our tenants and that we improve our core services, as well as delivering our ambitious development programme and investment and decarbonisation plans for our existing homes. Feedback from our tenants has reinforced our understanding of the importance of the services we offer and of the need for clear communication. We want to get the basics right.

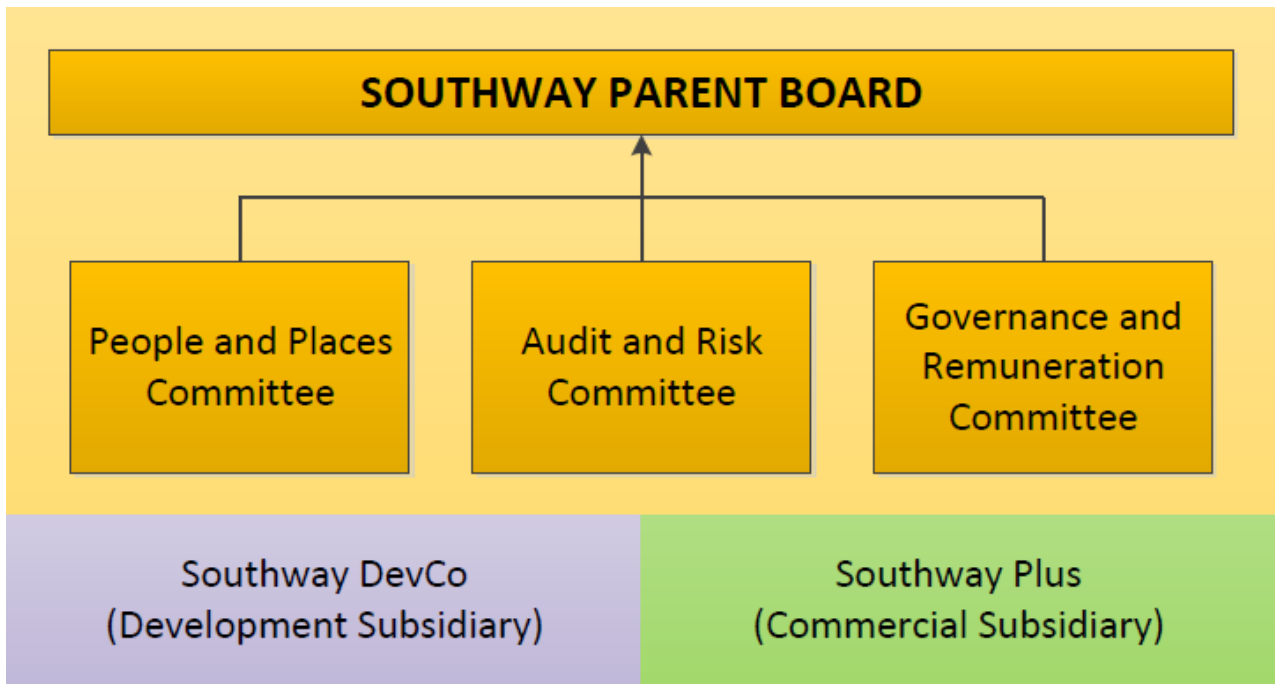
This means that:

- Our core landlord and community services are accessible
- Our homes are well maintained
- We communicate clearly and in good time with our customers and communities
- We are efficient and productive, making good use of our resources.

4. Southway's Governance Structure

The Parent Board has nine members, with five independents, two Southway Housing tenants and two Manchester City Council nominees, as the Council is our main strategic partner. We have recently recruited a co-optee to the Board with skills and expertise in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Appointments to the governance structure are based on the knowledge and skills that individuals can bring to the overall mix.



5. About the Role

What you will bring to the role

Members in all parts of the governance structure must demonstrate a commitment to and understanding of the vision and values of the Trust, as well as being able to understand the wider organisation's activities and priorities, and make key decisions, leading the organisation effectively.

Pay and Support

This is an unpaid role. The Board has decided that all Board and Committee Member roles will not be remunerated, as it has a strong commitment to the importance of volunteering and believes that this fits best with Southway's ethos and direction.

All reasonable expenses incurred while engaged in Board duties will be met. Support can be provided based on individual needs, which will be discussed during recruitment and induction. This might include adjustments to enable a person with a disability to play an active role, or support with childcare costs where this would otherwise be a barrier to attendance.

Time Commitment

The Parent Board meets **four** times per year and has **two** annual Away Days.

Meetings take place in the evening, starting around 5.30pm, and each requires up to a day of work, considering reading and preparation, plus around 2-3 hours for the meeting itself. Papers are issued seven days before meetings.

All members are required to also join a committee (except for the Chair). There is an Audit & Risk Committee and People & Places Committee. These Committees meet four times a year and have one Away Day.

In preparation for your role on the Board, you would take part in an induction programme which will include:

- Meeting the Chief Executive
- Meeting other members of the Executive and the Board to discuss Southway's priorities and challenges
- Taking a tour of our neighbourhoods
- A governance briefing to learn about the role and its requirements.

There is a full training and development plan for all Board and Committee members, with the opportunity to attend external training and networking as well as internally led sessions to increase knowledge of the organisation, the wider sector, and meet our staff and tenants.

Additional Responsibilities of the Chair

The Chair would meet regularly with the Chief Executive and be expected to meet regularly – at least monthly – to discuss emerging issues and strategy.

Each spring, all members attend an appraisal with the Chair and Chief Executive to review their effectiveness and that of the Board, and to identify any training and development needs.

A full description of the Chair's duties is available in Appendix A.

Appendix A - Chair Role Description

Purpose

The Chair of the Parent Board has overall responsibility for leading the Southway Group. They lead the Parent Board in setting the vision, values and strategic direction of Southway Housing Trust and its subsidiaries, ensuring that whilst each part of the Group operates independently, they have a coherent goal. The Chair has an important role in managing relationships between members within the governance structure and must have a strong working relationship with the Chief Executive. The Chair specifically leads and facilitates the Parent Board, ensuring it fulfils its functions efficiently and effectively.

Main Responsibilities and Duties

Leading the Southway Group

1. Ensure that all parts of Southway's governance structure, including any Committees and Subsidiaries, work towards a common goal in line with Southway's vision and values.
2. Ensure the Board delegates sufficient authority to its Committees and its Chair, the Chief Executive, and others, to enable the business of Southway to be carried on effectively between board meetings.
3. Ensure all elements of the governance structure understand their functions, powers, and accountabilities.
4. Monitor that delegated powers are used properly.
5. Develop and maintain effective working relationships with Committee and Subsidiary Chairs.

Relationship with the Chief Executive

6. Establish a constructive yet challenging working relationship with the Chief Executive and ensure the Board works in partnership with the Executive.
7. Liaise with the Chief Executive as necessary outside of Board Meetings.

Leading the Board

8. Ensure the efficient conduct of Board meetings and other meetings, including those of Southway DevCo.
9. Ensure that all Board Members are given the opportunity to express their views and appropriate standards of conduct and behaviour are maintained in accordance with Southway's Code of Conduct.
10. Ensure that the Board's governance arrangements are undertaken to a high standard and meet all regulatory requirements.
11. Ensure the Board receives professional advice when required from the Executive or external consultants.

Appraisal and Succession Planning

12. Lead a regular appraisal process, as well as ongoing performance management, to ensure all Members fulfil their responsibilities and are properly supported.
13. Lead a regular review process to evaluate the performance of Southway Housing Trust's Board, any Committees and Subsidiaries, and the Group as a whole.
14. Ensure there is an effective succession plan for future Board membership.
15. Ensure that there are proper arrangements to appraise the Chief Executive.

16. Ensure that the Chief Executive is replaced in an orderly and timely manner when necessary.

Other

17. Take decisions delegated to the Chair as set out in Board Standing Orders.
18. Represent Southway at external events and act as an ambassador for Southway.

6. How to Apply

Recruitment Timetable

We will be holding interviews 15th May. The date is to be confirmed, but we would like the successful applicant to be appointed in time for the next Parent Board meeting on Tuesday 20th June.

The interview panel will be advised to shortlisted candidates.

Further Information

For further information on the contents of this pack or the recruitment process, or to arrange an informal discussion with Karen Mitchell, Chief Executive please contact Matthew Maouati, Head of Corporate Services, at governance@southwayhousing.co.uk

Useful Reading

[Published Accounts 2021/22](#)

[Futures Strategy](#)

[Southway Stories](#)

[Gecko Website](#)