

Board Member Chair of Audit & Risk Committee **Recruitment Pack**

May 2023



Welcome

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Board Member of English Rural Housing Association. As part of our approach to succession planning, we are currently looking to appoint one exceptional candidate to join the Board and fulfil the role of Chair of Audit & Risk Committee. This recruitment pack includes useful information about English Rural and the role.

The Chair of Audit & Risk Committee will play a crucial role in ensuring sound financial and risk management within our organisation. They will be responsible for collaborating with the wider Board and Executive Management Team, as well as leading the Audit & Risk Committee to maintain strong governance. We are seeking a candidate with experience in strategy development, team leadership, and working in a regulated sector.

This is an exciting time to join the Board, as English Rural continues the successful delivery of an ambitious Business Strategy, which supports our position as a leading provider of affordable rural homes. Through the Strategy we are investing more than ever in our agreed purpose - *'The provision and management of affordable housing for local people in rural villages in England and to be an advocate for affordable rural housing'*.

I hope on reading this recruitment pack you will find yourself inspired by the valuable work that we do. I look forward to receiving your application.

Best wishes,

Pam Reynolds
Chair





Globe Meadow
Created by
2019 The Pwces Trust
Patron, English Rural Housing Association
on 11th September 2020



ENGLISH RURAL

About Us

English Rural is a leading specialist rural housing association with an active development programme. We build and manage homes in village locations, principally across the South of England. We currently own and manage over 1,500 homes in almost 200 villages. Our ambition is to build a further 200 homes as part of our [Business Strategy 2021-26](#).

All the homes we build are enabled in partnership with local communities and are designed to help local people. Our developments are high-quality and have a small footprint, with an average scheme being only six homes. We are also one of the prominent national advocates of affordable rural housing, with HRH The Princess Royal as our Patron.

Generally, we build our homes on 'rural exception sites'. This enables us to ensure they are affordable and secured for local people, forever.

Our residents and the local community are at the heart of what we do.



"We pride ourselves on our reputation for excellence"

About Us

Affordable does not mean poor quality. We design our homes to high standards, incorporating local architectural features. Our 'fabric first' approach to design and build makes sure that environmental impact is minimal. Our ambition is to ensure that both new and existing homes perform well, making them affordable to live in. We do this by innovating and using renewable energy technology.

English Rural was an early adopter of the National Housing Federation 'Together with Tenants' initiative and through this work has started a process of improving resident voice within the organisation. Residents are at the fore of what we do. Our ambition is to listen to residents and work with them to continuously improve the quality of the services we offer.

Fundamental to our success is the commitment of the Board and staff team. Their work makes sure we are well run and financially sound. Our ratings with the Regulator for Social Housing are the highest available, V1 (for viability) and G1 (for governance). We also work with Homes England, who invest directly in our ambition to build more affordable homes.

Annual turnover is currently £11.4m and our total borrowing will reach £45m during the year. These figures representative of the English Rural Group, which also incorporates a small, localised housing association (The Cambridgeshire Cottage Housing Society) and commercial development subsidiary (ER Homes Ltd).

More information about English Rural, including our latest Annual Report 2022 and [Business Strategy](#) 2021-26 can be seen on our website: [englishrural.org.uk](https://www.englishrural.org.uk)





About the Audit & Risk Committee

The **Audit & Risk Committee** is made up of five members, including an independent. It plays a critical role in supporting regulatory compliance as well as an influential role in stewarding strong financial performance across the Group. The Committee's work directly informs the Group Board's decision-making on all aspects of audit and risk. It oversees the Group's external and internal audit programmes, risk management framework and corporate governance.

The Committee also oversees the development of the financial business plan and is responsible for aiding the testing of the plan and associated recovery options. It also reviews Annual Reports and Financial Statements, accounting policies and system of controls. It is responsible for advising on the Group's insurance arrangements and managing a regular programme of audit on key areas of compliance including health and safety, development, and data protection. The Committee is accountable to the Group Board as well as residents and stakeholders.



Role Overview

Job Title:

Board Member (Chair of Audit & Risk Committee)

Hours:

Typically five board meetings a year, plus three committee meetings, and two or three days visiting sites or attending external events. For up to two terms of three years each.

Responsible to:

Chair of the Board

Salary:

Unremunerated (associated expenses paid)

Location:

Board and committee meetings are generally held in London or can be facilitated by remote video access. Board Members are expected to attend at least some meetings in person.



Principal Responsibilities

- ✓ Prepare for, attend, engage, and positively contribute at board and committee meetings to help form business strategy and objectives
- ✓ Act responsibly to ensure sound financial and risk management; ensuring that the assets and interests of English Rural and its residents are protected;
- ✓ Scrutinise the performance of the Association in the delivery of objectives, budgets, strategies and good governance; making sure effective financial and control systems are in place
- ✓ Make sure English Rural acts in accordance with its agreed purpose, values, rules, and governance framework, and that it complies with legal and regulatory duties
- ✓ Act as an ambassador for English Rural and at all times promote its purpose and values both internally and externally through networks, rural communities, and stakeholders
- ✓ Uphold the highest standards of behaviour, equality, and probity; preserving confidentiality and data protection
- ✓ Attend functions, training sessions and meetings relevant to English Rural and from time-to-time work with other Board Members, on Committees or Panels



Specific Responsibilities as Chair of Audit & Risk

- ✓ Ability to apply leadership skills to ensure strong and appropriate governance
- ✓ Act as Chair of Audit & Risk Committee meetings so that they are conducted efficiently and effectively
- ✓ Ensure that the Group's risks and financial performance are clearly understood and managed
- ✓ Commitment to collaborative working with the wider Board and Executive Management Team



Principal Competencies

The experience of:

- ✓ Developing strategies and providing strategic direction
- ✓ Working effectively as part of a team
- ✓ Leadership and good decision making qualities
- ✓ Effectively communicating ideas and listening to those put forward by others
- ✓ Supporting the principles of good governance
- ✓ Working in a regulated sector
- ✓ Interpreting and challenge complex information and data
- ✓ Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to develop successful networks and influence
- ✓ Working with rural communities
- ✓ Good judgment and skills of persuasion
- ✓ Understanding of, and support for, equalities and access legislation, policies and practice
- ✓ A customer service focussed environment
- ✓ Culture and values of the not-for-profit sector

Current knowledge or skills in the followings areas

- ✓ Audit/Accounting
- ✓ Risk Management
- ✓ Corporate Governance



Additional Desirable Criteria

- ✓ High level of business acumen, able to make sound judgements and take robust commercial decisions
- ✓ Qualified accountant, auditor or similar qualification suited to the role, for example professional risk or corporate governance qualification.
- ✓ Collegiate working style and ability to work well within a team setting
- ✓ Ability to think strategically, absorbing large amounts of complex information in supporting good decision-making
- ✓ Previous experience of working in or with a non-executive role
- ✓ Understanding the needs and limitations of a smaller business



Recruitment Timeline

Recruitment Stage	Date
Closing date	Monday 29 th May 2023
Interviews	Week of 12 th June 2023
Board meeting to confirm appointments	Wednesday 19 th July 2023

Further Information

For an informal and confidential discussion about the position with either the Chief Executive or current Chair of Audit & Risk, please contact:

Martin Collett, Chief Executive

T. 020 7820 7930

E. martin.collett@englishrural.org.uk

For queries about the recruitment process please contact

Karen Eagles, Governance & Executive Support Manager

T. 020 7820 7933

E. karen.eagles@englishrural.org.uk





ENGLISH RURAL

Our Values & Mission

As a non-profit organisation, English Rural exists to provide and manage housing services which help to sustain the economic and social life of rural communities. English Rural works in partnership with those communities, local authorities and other agencies and aims to be the foremost specialist provider of rural affordable housing in England.

Our Vision

Putting rural communities front and centre is key to our vision: “For rural communities to thrive, we believe local people deserve to live in high-quality, well-managed homes that are comfortable, safe and affordable”.

Our Mission

So that we can deliver on our vision, we need to be clear about our mission. We need to build more affordable rural homes. We need to build them with and for the local community. Our mission is: “To build and manage affordable housing for local people in rural communities in England and to be an advocate for affordable rural housing”.

This mission is underpinned by our five **Core Values** which can be seen over the page:



Our Core Values



COLLABORATIVE

We work together effectively as a team, recognising individual strengths and contributions

We form powerful external partnerships to achieve our purpose and ambitions



APPROACHABLE

We pride ourselves on having a transparent and accountable culture

We are open to exploring new perspectives and will respond positively to change



RESPECTED

We value our trusted position within the sector as experts and a leading rural housing specialist

We are professional and will always act with the utmost integrity



RESOURCEFUL

We are innovative, creative and will not easily give up when problems arise

We will run an efficient and effective business, applying our resources to delivering our purpose and ambitions



DISTINCTIVE

We value the difference that comes from being a leading rural housing specialist

We will encourage new ideas and offer unique solutions when they help us to achieve our purpose





Our Purpose

How Do We Maintain Our Purpose?

There are a number of fundamental elements that enable our expert team to maintain our purpose, which is as relevant today as it was when the organisation was formed.

These Include:

- ✓ Good governance which keeps pace with internal and external requirements;
- ✓ Sound finances and value for money (VfM);
- ✓ The satisfaction of services and relationships from residents and partners on whom we depend;
- ✓ Access to capital finance for investment;
- ✓ Effective risk management, including stress-testing of the Business Plan.





ENGLISH RURAL

How to Apply

To apply for a Board Member position, please email the following to karen.eagles@englishrural.org.uk:

- ✓ A detailed CV including details of positions held, and dates
- ✓ A supporting statement explaining your motivation in applying and also addressing how you meet the requirements of the person specification
- ✓ Full contact details (name, job title, organisation, phone and email) for two referees. Please note we will not take up references without your prior permission.

As part of its commitment to equality and diversity, applicants are also asked to complete the online equality and diversity monitoring form via the following link – [Equality and Diversity Survey](#). English Rural recognises the positive value of diversity and promotes equality. We welcome and encourage job applications from people of all backgrounds

The closing date for applications is: 10:00am on Monday 29th May 2023. Your application will be acknowledged and treated with strictest confidence.

