

Board Recruitment: Proposed Appointment of Safia Jama as an Independent Board Member of Tower Hamlets Homes

In early summer 2015 an external recruitment campaign and selection process was carried out to fill two Independent Board member vacancies on the Board. The campaign included a targeted search by Campbell Tickell, a consultancy with a strong presence in the housing sector, as well as advertisements through EastEnd Life, a Campbell Tickell bulletin, and the THH website. We received 10 applications and interviewed five candidates.

As a result of this campaign, in early August 2015 the Board recommended the appointment of Andrew Bond and Caroline Compton-James as Independent Board Members. This recommendation was formally approved by the Mayor on 10 September 2015.

Prior to the interviews for the then two vacant Independent Board Member positions, the Chair held informal discussions with existing Board Members, the Executive member and the Client about the proposal to increase the size of the Board to 12 members: four Councillors, four Residents (two tenants and two leaseholders) and four Independents.

This change was agreed by the Mayor at the October 2015 Strategic Housing Meeting and was formally ratified by a Mayor's Executive Decision on 12 January 2016. This created a need to recruit one further Independent Board Member, in addition to the two who were appointed through the above recruitment campaign.

After the interviews for the two, original vacant Independent Board positions, Safia Jama completed a successful management transfer to Poplar Harca and therefore ceased to be eligible to stand on the Board as a Resident Board Member.

To fill the remaining Independent Board Member vacancy, the Board selection panel (comprising the Independent Chair of the Board, the Leaseholder Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee, and the Chief Executive) has revisited the results of the recruitment campaign alongside consideration of Safia Jama's skills. The selection panel is unanimous in agreement that of all the available candidates, Safia Jama would add the most value to the Board as an Independent Board Member and is the best skill and competency match.

Prior to her change of tenancy, Safia had been active as a Board Member designate and Resident Board Member for over 18 months. During this time, she demonstrated clear commitment to the Board and contributed vital skills and knowledge that would otherwise be absent. Specifically, she brought skills and knowledge around vulnerability, financial inclusion, welfare reform and resident engagement to Board discussions. Additionally, Safia is a member of the Somali community and lives in the borough. Somalian residents represent the second largest BME community among THH residents but are currently severely under-represented among residents who engage with THH and LBTH.

In light of her previous contributions to the Board and her greater skill and competency match than other available candidates, THH recommend that Safia Jama should be retained as an Independent Board Member.

Consequently, on this basis we are seeking agreement from the Council to appoint Safia Jama as an Independent Board Member.