Thank you for expressing an interest in this exciting opportunity. We are looking for a new Group Board Member to complement our existing board members and provide constructive challenge and support to our Executive Team.

I thought you might find a little history and background to our organisation helpful. Gentoo was formed in 2001 with the transfer of Sunderland City Council’s housing stock to form Sunderland Housing Group. In total, 36,356 properties were transferred, generating a receipt of £200 million for the council. This remains the largest transfer of properties in England to date. At the time, £450 million of loans were secured in order to purchase the stock and to commence a major programme of modernisation and improvement works.

In 2015 the association was downgraded by our regulator, the former Homes and Communities Agency. The regulatory judgement was the catalyst for the board’s decision to divest of certain non-core activities that had been delivered through subsidiaries and to refocus on being an outstanding landlord. A further downgrade for weak governance was issued by the regulator in 2017. This downgrade is something the board and myself have taken very seriously and transformational change throughout the business is now well underway.

We currently have over 1,200 employees, a turnover in excess of £183m and an operating margin of 24.9%.

Our development subsidiary, Gentoo Homes, has built more than 2,000 new homes over recent years, for a mixture of affordable rent and sale, and we have delivered improved services to thousands of customers and communities. Since converting to a Charitable Community Benefit Society in 2016, the Group’s priorities have been realigned to deliver on our objectives through a more efficient operating model.

In April 2017 a new Group Board was created through the amalgamation of the previous parent board and our largest operating subsidiary, Gentoo Sunderland. With this new board in place we are now on a positive path forward and are looking for a high quality individual to support us on our ongoing journey.

You will help to shape our business by applying your skills and experience gained at board, committee or senior executive level in an organisation of comparable scale and complexity. We are particularly keen to speak to individuals whose current experience and professional expertise is in governance, ICT, corporate or commercial law.

If you would like a confidential conversation about this role, don’t hesitate to get in touch with Bill Barkworth at Campbell Tickell, whose contact details are enclosed in this pack. I wish you all the best in your application.

Keith Loraine OBE  
Chair of the Board
About Gentoo

Gentoo is a housing association and new homes developer, managing over 29,000 properties and housing more than 70,000 customers. This makes us one of the biggest landlords in the North East. We’re also one of the largest employers in Sunderland with over 1,200 staff.

We are focused on delivering an outstanding service to our customers and as a responsible business, we pride ourselves on inspiring people to make a difference.

We collaborate with key partners and other housing associations to influence things that affect our colleagues, customers and society.

What makes us special?

Gentoo’s uniqueness and strength come from the dedication, skill, and energy of our staff; they live our values daily and work to deliver Gentoo’s vision. We are proud to have been awarded IIP Gold status in recognition for our commitment to our people.
Our vision and values

Vision

Great Homes

Strong Communities

Inspired People

Values

Do the right thing

Make a difference

Work together

Keep learning

Give all you’ve got
Current executive structure

Following changes to the executive structure of the Group, the board is keen to ensure that the Group has the correct leadership to deliver on the business plan. This includes the recruitment of a new Chief Executive Officer.

**Group priorities for 2018-21 include:**

1. Working with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to achieve a compliant governance assessment
2. Continuing to manage the transition to the current delivery model with less resource
3. Mitigating the risks from Welfare Reform and the roll out of Universal Credit
4. Implementing the findings from ongoing service reviews including allocations, voids and stores

**Gentoo Homes’ priorities include:**

1. Deliver £3.7m net profit to the Group
2. Return to a 4-star NHBC customer rating (aspirational 5 star)
3. Continue to attract Homes England external project funding
4. Full compliance with governance requirements
5. Build on the positive health and safety culture by achieving a 95% audit score (aspirational score of 100%)
The current executive structure is as follows:

Interim Chief Executive Officer
David Jepson

Executive Director (Property)
Graham Gowland

Executive Director (Corporate Services)
Louise Bassett

Executive Director (Operations)
Michelle Meldrum

Executive Director (Finance)
Nigel Tooby

The board

Gentoo’s governance structure is made up of a Group Board and a number of subsidiary boards and committees. Depending upon the board/committee, membership is comprised of executive directors, independent non-executive directors, tenant and council members. They all play a key role in the leadership and decision-making processes of the Group, providing direction, valuable challenge and scrutiny.

In addition, there is a Scrutiny Panel (Ustoo), made up of our tenants who review and monitor our performance.
Current Group Board structure

Keith Loraine
Group Chair
Keith has 40 years’ experience in the housing sector, the last 24 as Chief Executive Officer of Isos Housing Group. He retired in December 2016 and was awarded an OBE in recognition of his services to housing and the North East community.

Keith joined the board of Gentoo Group in February 2017 to continue his career in the sector, in a non-executive capacity. Through his role at Isos Housing Group, he brings a wealth of knowledge of the local area, and the North East more widely. He also has a strong understanding of the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing and will assist Gentoo through his knowledge of governance, finance and performance best practice.

Colin Blakey
Colin has had a distinguished career at board level within the public, private and voluntary sectors and has held executive and non-executive roles. He has an in-depth knowledge of social and affordable housing, regeneration, planning and development activity in the North East, and was directly responsible for a number of new build and major regeneration schemes including Downhill, Sunderland.

Knowledgeable and experienced in board corporate governance requirements, and while Chief Executive of Asset Trust Housing Association Colin worked closely with the regulatory team in the HCA to define and introduce a new regulatory regime for private registered providers. He is also Chair of Gentoo Homes.

Mary Coyle
Mary joined Group Board in 2013. A highly skilled and experienced board level executive, she has over 20 years’ board trustee experience. She was the Chair of an NHS Clinical Commissioning Group until 2009 and was the Regional Director of Common Purpose for ten years.

She brings significant experience in leadership development and particular expertise in board leadership and accountability; stakeholder engagement; partnership development; diverse networks and political awareness; and interpersonal and communication skills. Mary has developed a strong understanding of risk, particularly within the social housing sector.
Current Group Board structure

Les Herbert
Former policeman Les Herbert is now the tenant member of Group Board and Chair of the Operations Committee. He has been a member of Gentoo Sunderland’s Board since 2012 and brings extensive experience to the Group role. He is also familiar with the Group’s housing management and operational issues.

In addition to his service on the board of Gentoo Sunderland and the Management Committees, he has served as a mentor and governor at various local schools and was formerly a member of the Sunderland Police Welfare Club Committee for 15 years. Les has experience of chairing his local residents’ association and the staffing committee of a local school of which he is a governor.

David Murtagh
David Murtagh joined the board as Chair of Risk and Audit Committee. A Chartered Accountant since 1989, he has held senior finance roles within the engineering and manufacturing sectors.

David is currently a Finance Director within a major multinational company but in addition he has nine years’ experience on the board of Teesside-based Thirteen Group. His technical expertise and commercial experience is a welcome contribution to the skills on the board. David has a strong understanding of risk, particularly in the context of social housing.

Frank Nicholson
Frank Nicholson is an experienced non-executive Director and former Managing Director of Vaux Breweries Ltd in Sunderland. Frank has a broad range of skills, and, since 1999, has been employed in a wide variety of businesses and charities including Northern Rock Foundation, Matfen Hall Hotel, the Port of Sunderland board, Port of Tyne Authority, University of Sunderland, Lycetts and International Centre for Life.

Frank has a strong understanding of the North East from his extensive portfolio of past and current non-executive appointments and has a well-developed network within the North East business community.
Current Group Board structure

**Brian Spears**

Brian Spears joined the Gentoo Sunderland Board as Chair in 2015 and Group Board in 2016. He brings considerable experience of housing and regeneration with a career spanning 40 years in local government, housing and regeneration including a previous role of Chair of the Northern Housing Consortium and a member of the North East Housing board.

Brian has managed departments and organisations across a full range of Local Government services and has vast experience in business planning, risk assessment and financial planning. He has a background in leading change, including the successful restructure of Durham City Council, bringing efficiencies and improving customer access to services.

**Philip Tye**

Councillor Philip Tye is one of Sunderland City Council’s nominees appointed to Group Board in 2015. Previous to this, he sat on the Gentoo Sunderland Board between 2007 and 2008.

Philip was elected as a Ward Councillor for Silksworth in May 2006. He is currently an Operations Manager for a large North East manufacturing and construction company covering all operational matters for the business. He has been a school governor for over 20 years as well as being Chair of a local charity Youth Almighty Project (YAP).

**Chris Watson**

Chris Watson was appointed onto Group Board in September 2017. He is a civil engineer and Head of Strategic Asset Planning and Economic Regulation at Northumbria Water Ltd. He has extensive experience of complex asset management and working with the industry regulator, OFWAT.

From 2007 to 2015 he was a non-executive Director of Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, which was rated outstanding by the CQC. Chris also brings strong health and safety understanding through his management of Northumbrian Water’s capital plan and as a previous Director of Constructing Excellence in the North East.
Role Profile

**Purpose**

Board members provide leadership to the Group and contribute by setting the strategic vision and direction of the organisation. All activity should be in line with regulatory requirements and the Group’s objectives, ensuring good governance and effective strategic planning.

**Key accountabilities**

**Strategic leadership**

- Provide leadership regarding the direction and control of the Group.
- Contribute to setting the vision and values of the business, ensuring that obligations to stakeholders are understood and reflected in strategy and policies.
- Set objectives for the business and determine the strategic aims and required outcomes.
- Promote continuous improvement and set challenging targets for improving services.
- Contribute to the effective governance of the business through membership of internal committees, panels or subsidiary boards.

**Effective governance**

- Ensure compliance with the Group’s financial regulations, standing orders, delegated authorities, the Regulator of Social Housing regulatory framework and the National Housing Federation’s Code of Governance.

**Risk management**

- Contribute to the evaluation of opportunities, threats and risks across the Group’s external environment and strengths and weaknesses in the internal environment, to ensure effective strategic decision-making.
- Review the Risk Management Framework and Corporate Risk Register and obtain assurance the Group has a robust and prudent approach to business planning, risk identification and control.

**Board performance**

- Ensure the board’s business is conducted efficiently and effectively through a framework of delegation and systems of internal control.
- Contribute to overseeing organisational performance, ensuring the organisation is managed efficiently and effectively.
- Scrutinise and review performance against agreed targets and budgets.
- Read reports prepared by employees and advisors and contribute to appropriate debate of key issues.
Role Profile

Adding value

- Apply personal expertise, skills and knowledge with due regard to the business and its social purpose.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of, and keep up to date with sector issues.
- Be a role model for good governance practices and behaviours.
- Attend and provide constructive challenge at board meetings.
- Actively participate in board events and training.

Relationships

- Build and maintain effective working relationships with the Chair, Group Executive, senior staff and other board members.
- Participate in the board appraisal process and where appropriate, in the appraisal of the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Directors and other board members.

Representing the Group

- Act as an ambassador for the organisation, upholding the reputation of Gentoo and its values and principles.
- Network and promote the achievements of the business.
- Build and maintain relationships with key stakeholders, including the regulator, key local authorities, funders and residents.
Person specification

Gentoo is seeking a board member with skills in these specific areas, gained at either executive or non-executive level. Please use your supporting statement to detail your experience in at least one of these areas:

**Governance** – experience of maintaining governance frameworks, monitoring business assurance processes and knowledge of best practice in corporate governance within a high level of external regulation.

**Law** – experience of commercial, contract or corporate law, obtained either in practice or as an in-house corporate lawyer.

**Strategic ICT** – experience of assessment and transformation of core systems, operational intelligence systems and the implementation of digital technology.

**Risk** – experience of identifying and evaluating risk, integrating risk assessments into mainstream business and ensuring risk management processes are robust.

**Human Resources** – experience of human resource leadership within a large customer focused business, including experience of leading significant technical and organisational change.
Person specification

Experience and knowledge

• Senior experience – extensive experience of operating at a senior level (ideally as an executive and/or non-executive) within an organisation of similar scale and complexity.

• Governance understanding - knowledge of good practice in one or more sectors.

• Sector knowledge – awareness and interest in current national and policy issues impacting the housing and care and support sectors.

• Social housing – knowledge of the Group’s overall strategy and the ability to stay informed of trends in the external environment.

• Risk management – possess sound financial reasoning and the ability to assess risk without being risk averse.

Skills and abilities

• Strong strategic planning skills.

• The ability to challenge appropriately and hold themselves and others accountable.

• Able to work collaboratively and take collective responsibility for decisions made.

• Strong negotiating skills and the ability to work with others effectively.
Behaviours

- Acts with integrity and actively promotes Gentoo and the services it provides.
- Is committed to accountability, openness, and transparency.
- Demonstrates commitment to equality and diversity.
- Possesses excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Embraces learning and development and promotes this across the Group.

- Inspires others through an open, engaging and enthusiastic leadership style.
- Exhibits personal and professional credibility, commanding confidence in the business and with stakeholders.
- Has the ability to interpret and analyse complex information and reports in a timely manner.
Terms and conditions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Group Board Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration</td>
<td>£10,000 per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>3 days per month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>3 years (renewable after 3 years subject to performance)</td>
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Recruitment timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project stage</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
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<tr>
<td>Closing date</td>
<td>15 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Longlist agreed</td>
<td>20 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary interviews</td>
<td>29 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final interviews</td>
<td>11 July</td>
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If you are likely to be unavailable for any of the relevant interview dates specified above, please contact Bill Barkworth, Senior Associate at Campbell Tickell on mobile: 07706 369273 or email: bill.barkworth@campbelltickell.co.uk
How to apply

To apply you should submit:

1 - An up-to-date CV which shows your full career history (we recommend that this is no longer than three pages)

2 - A supporting statement explaining why you are interested in this role and how you fulfil the person specification (we recommend that this is no longer than three pages)

3 - A completed declaration form – completion of the equalities section is not mandatory, this is requested for monitoring purposes in line with our commitment to equality and diversity

Applications can only be considered if all documentation is complete. Please indicate on the declaration form if you cannot attend any of the interview dates.

Please send your application in MS Word format to Gentoo@campbelltickell.com quoting the job title and organisation in the subject line.

Applications must be received by Friday 15 June at 12noon.

You will receive an acknowledgement within 24 hours of receipt. If you have not received acknowledgement after this time, please contact Campbell Tickell to confirm receipt on 0203 434 0990.

For further information or an informal discussion about the role and Gentoo please contact our retained advisor at Campbell Tickell: Bill Barkworth on mobile: 07706 369273 or email: bill.barkworth@campbelltickell.co.uk