



CAMPBELL  
TICKELL

# Chair of Audit and Risk

Recruitment Pack | March 2025



## Your application

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Thank you very much for your interest in this Chair of Audit and Risk post at Populo Living. On the following pages, you will find details of the role and the selection process to assist you in completing and tailoring your application.

You will no doubt do your own due diligence but do read this pack carefully as it will provide you with a good overview of the organisation and roles. After you have done that, please feel free to get in touch with me, so that we can talk through your offer and get a sense of how that aligns to what Populo Living is seeking.

To apply, we will need the following from you:

- A CV. Make sure this confirms your current/most recent roles (you can sum up earlier roles, say before the last 15 years), tell us about your achievements so we get a picture of your skills and experience, and try to keep it to two pages or three at most;
- A personal statement. We want to hear about your motivation, why this role/ organisation, and you will also want to evidence how relevant your offer is to the role specification; again ideally in two to three pages; and
- The declaration form, which is accessible via the role page on our website and includes space to indicate if you cannot attend any of the interview dates.

Please submit your completed application documents using the online form, which is accessible via our jobs page: [www.campbelltickell.com/jobs](http://www.campbelltickell.com/jobs). You will receive an email confirmation and see an onscreen confirmation message after submitting your application, but if you have any issues, you can call 020 3434 0990.

**The role closes on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025.** Please ensure we receive your application in good time.

Do call me if you wish to have an informal discussion about the role and organisation, or if you have any other questions to help you decide whether to apply.

Kind regards,

*Alice Morris*

**Alice Morris**  
**Recruitment Consultant, Campbell Tickell**  
**07931 432 033**

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## Welcome to Populo Living

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Thank you for your interest in joining Populo Living, the Board and I are very pleased that you are looking at this opportunity. Populo was set up to build new homes to a high standard for the people of Newham and have been on a rapid growth trajectory since our founding - we don't see that slowing down any time soon. To date we have built c. 800 homes, and we have plans for considerable further development.

Newham is one the fastest growing, young and diverse boroughs in the country, but also ranks among the most deprived. Like in many parts of London, the housing crisis in the Borough is acute, so there is much for us to do at Populo to bring new housing supply to the market.

We are able to achieve a 50% rate of affordable housing in our developments, with the rest for market rent with the revenue from the latter supporting the former. This is a remarkable achievement, and has been possible by building an excellent in-house development team that manages our development work, and by keeping a single-minded focus on the commerciality of what we do.

Populo is in something of a unique position in that as a subsidiary with some independence, we can bring a commercial sensibility to housing development, but at the same time we are owned by and working on behalf of our single shareholder and we are responsive to and engaged with Newham Council at all times. Our Board then needs to be able to both help steer and support the executive as they deliver on our aims, while being mindful that we are operating in a political environment and supporting the positive engagement with council officers and elected members.

With a current Board member stepping down, we are excited to be recruiting for a new Chair of Audit and Risk, who will also be a full Board member at Populo Living.

- Chair of Audit & Risk Committee: you will be a qualified finance professional with very good insight into how this committee ensures that assurance systems support organisational control and ambition. Prior chairing experience and ARC experience for this role would be helpful.

The team here, both staff and executive, are delivering something quite special, and for the Board there is plenty of challenge and reward as we steer and support the organisation. This is an exciting time to join Populo as we take stock after a period of rapid growth and refocus on our systems and governance processes. Having read this information pack, I hope that you are encouraged to apply for one of these great opportunities.

*Tony Travers*

**Tony Travers**  
**Chair**

## About Populo Living – *Making Newham Home*

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Populo Living is a development and housing company wholly owned by our single shareholder, Newham Council. We enable Newham to keep control of Council land and build high quality, low carbon homes and neighbourhoods whilst retaining the developer profit for Newham Council, in the form of new affordable homes and long-term investment income. We build homes for private or affordable rent.

Since our formation we have grown considerably through the tireless hard work of our team, stakeholders, and partners. Today, we have 800 homes with 75 more in development. Of these, 251 are affordable rent managed by our subsidiary Populo Homes, and the rest are Build to Rent homes and owned / managed through Populo Living. The Group has secured planning consent for a further 2,700 homes, creating an exciting growth opportunity for the foreseeable future.

### The Carpenters Project

Populo, in partnership with Newham Council, is leading on London's largest regeneration project. The Carpenters Estate is a 28-acre site next to Stratford Station, where we are implementing our redevelopment masterplan which will see a comprehensive transformation of the area. Around 300 of the existing homes will be retained and refurbished, and 2,152 Modern and sustainable new homes will be built - 50% of which will be genuinely affordable - as well as significant commercial space, and new streets and roads will provide greater connectivity.

### The Populo Group

The Populo Living Group consists of three companies:

- **Populo Living** – managing homes to rent on the open market
- **Populo Homes** – our registered social provider business, managing high quality genuinely affordable social homes, along with a small number of shared ownership
- **Populo Design & Build** – the business overseeing design and construction of all our homes, working with partners and suppliers

### Our Values

**We do things better:** We are constantly learning and seeking to improve things. We believe that people in Newham should enjoy the best possible design, build and management standards. We innovate in order to create and deliver quality homes responsibly and sustainably. We look for ways to deliver the best quality we can while ensuring value for money.

**We care:** 'Populo' means 'with the people' – we put people first. We engage with our residents and each other because we know that Newham is its diverse people, and our success depends on both our team and our residents. We're dedicated, passionate and believe that what we do matters.

**We create community:** Newham should be home for everyone that wants to live here. We include, involve, and support existing communities and create strong new ones. We're committed to providing an attractive and more sustainable built environment; we want local communities to thrive. We're here for the long-term and are planning for the future.

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to design, develop and manage high quality homes and neighbourhoods across Newham. Our sustainable developments will become new communities and strengthen existing ones. Whether for private or social rent, residents will enjoy excellent standards of design and customer service and stay for the long term. In delivering this, we will provide a stable financial return to Newham Council.

### Vision Statement

Our vision is that by 2030 we will manage at least 2,000 new high quality sustainable rented homes in Newham and generate significant social value investment through our Community Wealth Building Strategy and as a Net Zero Carbon company. This Vision aims to support the wider Council vision that is centred on using Community Wealth Building as a powerful force for economic and social justice, creating a fairer, more equal, and sustainable borough in which people have a genuine opportunity to reach their potential.

### Our Strategic Objectives

We have five Strategic Objectives, these are:

1. Deliver at least an additional 2,000 new homes direct and for LBN by 2030 - of which 50% will be affordable.
2. Deliver a financial return to the London Borough of Newham.
3. Drive best performance, achieving top-quartile service levels while ensuring our homes are safe and sustainable, and our communities are places where people want to live.
4. Develop an organisational culture focused on continuous improvement and operational efficiency where we consistently maximise the 'triple dividend' for The Council.
5. Grow the talent in our team, maximise diversity, inclusion, and investment in our people that underpins our growth ambitions.

**Key documents:** For more details, read our [2023-24 business plan](#).

## Our Board

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**Tony Travers**  
*Chair*

Tony has over 35 years of industry experience with John Laing Construction and as Managing Director at Countryside Properties PLC. He led Countryside's drive into London, delivering projects such as the Hackney 5 estates, the Peckham Partnership and Greenwich Millennium Village. He has overseen all aspects of the development process and delivered in excess of 30,000 homes on both brown and greenfield sites, many of which have been recognised as award winning by the RIBA, RTPI and CABE. He is passionate about adding both economic and social value through the design process.



**Caroline Snowden**  
*Non-Executive Director*

Caroline Snowden is an experienced real estate and finance professional and a chartered surveyor. She has 30 years' experience, over that time working with and advising a wide range of clients from SME housebuilders through to large quoted companies. Having recently worked at Lloyds Bank on their '1 million new social and affordable homes' initiative with participants from across the housing industry, Caroline is committed to helping increase the supply of safe and affordable homes across the country. Caroline is a recognised leader in sustainability having completed a Cambridge University course on leadership in real estate sustainability and authored a paper for the Green Finance Institute on retro fitting real estate in the UK.



**Darren Mackin**  
*Non-Executive Director*

Darren is the Director of Community Wealth Building at the London Borough of Newham and is the Council's representative on the Board of Populo Living.



**Jo Sedley-Burke**

*Non-Executive Director*

Jo Sedley-Burke is an experienced housing professional with a strong background in Social Housing and Technology. She has over 20 years of experience in housing management, with a focus on improving service delivery. Jo is passionate about leveraging innovative solutions, such as digital tools and data-driven approaches, to enhance resident experience and streamline property management. She has worked with various housing associations and technology providers in the sector leading initiatives to improve access to affordable housing and support sustainable community development. As an Executive and a NED, Jo's expertise in both operational management and strategic planning makes her a respected leader in the sector



**Paul Lowenburg**

*Non-Executive Director*

Paul was appointed as a NED on Populo Living and Populo Design and Build boards in January 2025. He is an experienced non-executive Chair and Director. He was Chair of Sixty Bricks from October 2020 – May 2024, the Waltham Forest Council housing development company. During this period the company completed 300 homes, 70% of which were for social housing. He has also been Chair of Dawson Housing, a start-up Registered Provider focused on providing specialist housing services in the North-west. He is a NED on Islington Law Centre and Rightsnet, an IT based advice service organisation. Paul established and has run a public service management consultancy practice for over 25 years. Much of his work is in social housing with Councils and Housing Associations. Recent clients including Haringey and Sutton Council's housing organisations and Peabody and Yarlinton HAs. He is committed to ensuring Populo works closely with Newham Council to deliver its housing targets, the 'triple dividend', and maintains its financial sustainability



**Suzanne Forster**

*Non-Executive Director*

A finance and business improvement professional, with over twenty-five years' experience advising and operating at a senior executive level within the affordable housing sector.



## Our Team

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**Deborah Heenan**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Deborah is the Chief Executive Officer of Populo Living, building new homes in Newham, East London, on behalf of Newham Council. Deborah and the Populo Living team are committed to providing more homes that are affordable and high-quality places that will stand the test of time. Her career ranges from Strategy Director for a major residential developer, to advising the former PM on Housing Policy, to delivering large scale residential schemes directly. Deb is also a Professor of Practice at the University of Wales, Trinity St David.



**Michael Holland**  
*Deputy CEO*

Michael is Deputy CEO and part of the Executive Team. He is responsible for all development and construction activities across Populo Living. Michael has previously worked for both private and public sector organisations and has extensive experience of development over his career to date.



**Louise Graham-Smith**  
*Director of Customer Services*

Louise Graham Smith is Populo's Director of Customer Services. With over 15 years of experience in housing and asset management, Louise is passionate about continuous improvement and customer engagement. A qualified housing professional with senior leadership experience, Louise is committed to building strong teams and delivering services that make a tangible difference in people's lives by ensuring access to safe, stable, and high-quality housing.

## Role profile

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### Role Summary

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- Jointly responsible for the overall effective governance and strategic leadership of the company and directing the executive team.
  - In accordance with the strategic plan ensuring effective control, accountability and high standards of conduct and probity. Ensuring financial viability and long-term sustainability.
  - As Chair of Audit & Risk Committee provide leadership and strategic direction to the Committee to provide assurance on all matters covered by Populo's risk and compliance framework.
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### Key Responsibilities and requirements of the role

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#### General Board member responsibilities:

1. To serve as a member of the Board and adhere to the adopted code of Governance.
  2. Work closely with the Chair to ensure that the Company is well governed.
  3. To act as an accountable Director of the Company's Governing Body.
  4. To ensure that an effective contribution is made to the Board.
  5. To ensure the effective strategic leadership of the Company.
  6. To define the Company's values and objectives.
  7. To ensure that effective policies and procedures are in place to enable the Company to deliver its objectives.
  8. To approve the budget and accounts of the Company.
  9. To establish and oversee a framework of delegation, systems of control and audit.
  10. Oversee organisational performance and continuous improvement, ensuring that the company operates efficiently, effectively, and economically.
  11. To monitor the Company's performance in relation to its plans, budgets, controls, and decisions.
  12. To establish and oversee a risk management framework in order to safeguard the assets and reputation of the Company.
  13. To ensure the Company's affairs are conducted lawfully and in accordance with accepted standards of performance and propriety.
  14. To promote the Company where appropriate and to represent the Company in a professional manner.
  15. To exercise sound financial oversight and maintain financial viability.
  16. To attend regularly and contribute at Board meetings, having thoroughly prepared by reading the reports / papers provided and by drawing on wider experience and be ready to robustly scrutinise.
  17. To attend appropriate training events.
  18. Build and maintain effective and constructive working relationships with the CE and other senior staff.
  19. Support the building and maintenance of good relationships with key stakeholders, including the statutory bodies, local authorities, health organisations, local businesses, and residents.
  20. Network to promote the company, acting as an ambassador and representative, upholding and enhancing the organisation's reputation.
  21. Uphold and promote the core policies, values, and objectives of Populo.
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**Chair of Audit and Risk responsibilities:**

22. Set the risk appetite and monitor risk
    - a. As Committee Chair, ensure effective overview of the process to set and keep under review the Board's appetite for risk.
    - b. Ensure the Committee supports the Board so that major risks are reviewed regularly and an effective risk management framework is maintained.
  23. Ensure an effective business plan and budget is in place and that the business remains financially viable
    - a. Ensure that the Committee is satisfied as to the integrity of financial information, with a particular focus on loan compliance.
    - b. On behalf of the Board, ensure that the Committee has robust oversight of the details behind the annual accounts, annual budget and business plan.
    - c. As a Board member, approve each year's accounts prior to publication and approve each year's budget and business plan.
  24. Ensure that performance is monitored and managed through internal controls and delegation
    - a. Ensure that the Committee delivers an annual assessment of the quality of the internal control environment and the effectiveness of risk and audit systems to the Board
    - b. Ensure there are appropriate mechanisms, both internal and external, to verify that the Board receives a balanced and accurate picture of how Populo is performing.
    - c. Ensure that internal controls and systems are audited and reviewed regularly.
    - d. Monitor performance at a strategic level in relation to plans, budgets, controls and decisions.
    - e. Participate in regular reviews of Board/Committee performance, and in Board/Committee appraisal; to participate in Board/Committee development and training, and in other learning activities as required.
  25. Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties and responsibilities for the proper governance of Populo including compliance
    - a. Act reasonably and always in the best interests of Populo and comply with its code of conduct; to ensure your behaviour as a Committee Chair/Board Member models the values of Populo.
    - b. Contribute to and share responsibility for decisions of the Board and the leadership and decision making of the Audit & Risk Committee.
    - c. Work in partnership with the Chief Executive and the Executive team, including relevant senior staff at the Council, to challenge colleagues constructively.
    - d. Satisfy yourself that Populo's affairs are conducted lawfully and in accordance with regulatory requirements and generally accepted standards of performance and probity.
    - e. Make sure that equality, diversity and inclusion matters are considered and addressed appropriately.
    - f. Engage effectively with key stakeholders as required, particularly customers; internal/external auditors; regulators; and other key professional advisors for the Committee's work.
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## Person specification

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### Experience

- a. Experience in leadership roles, with Board exposure as an executive or NED.
- b. Experience of the wider strategic context for the social housing sector, including regulation, with good insight into housing finance, risk, and compliance.
- c. Holds a UK recognised finance professional qualification e.g. CIMA, CIPFA, ICAEW etc.
- d. A track record of chairing meetings. Experience of chairing an audit/risk committee or similar would be an advantage.
- e. Excellent financial acumen, can lead and contribute to discussions about budget, business plan etc.
- f. Strong experience and understanding of risk management and compliance frameworks and delivery of workstreams within those frameworks.
- g. Track record of senior leadership and achievement in a commercially focused environment.
- h. Track record of motivating and leading teams to deliver strategic objectives.
- i. Experience of working effectively with various stakeholders and influencing key decision makers.
- j. Experience of persuading and communicating effectively with third parties on property investment and development matters.

### Skills

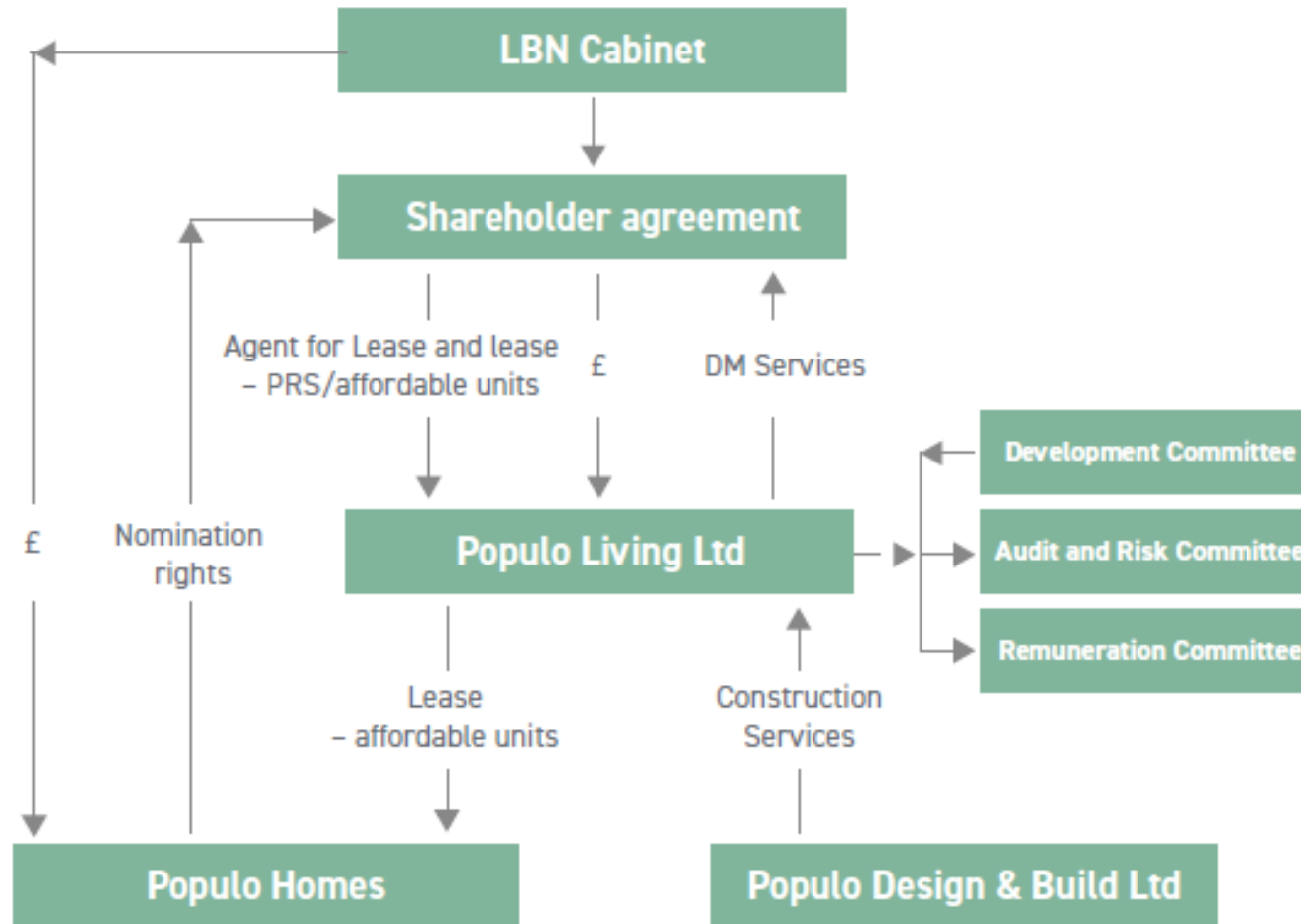
- k. Ability to assimilate complex information, often in report format.
- l. Knowledge and understanding of best practice in corporate governance.
- m. Knowledge of the business planning process.
- n. Understanding of approaches to identifying and monitoring risk.
- o. Financial Awareness and ability to understand budgets, management accounts, financial statements
- p. Understanding of the business development process.
- q. Knowledge of local markets and customer needs.
- r. Commitment to involvement, diversity, and equal opportunities.

### Qualities

- s. Enthusiastic approach – with a desire to make a positive contribution.
  - t. Commitment to the Company's mission, objectives, and values.
  - u. An engaging and enthusing style, with the gravitas for an ambassadorial role.
  - v. Open and supportive of others.
  - w. Open to change and encourages innovation and creativity.
  - x. Commitment to attend Board meetings regularly and contribute to ad-hoc discussions as required.
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## Organisational Structure

### The Populo Living Group Structure



## Key terms and conditions

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### The role

Chair of Audit and Risk

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### Remuneration

The role is remunerated at £10,000 per annum.

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### Time commitment

We expect NEDs to commit two days per month to include Board meetings, preparation and additional duties as required as part of the role.

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### Term of office

Three years initially, reviewable on an annual basis.

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### Location

Board meetings take place in-person at our offices: 373 High Street Stratford, London.

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## Key dates and the selection process

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**Closing date: Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 at 9am**

After the role closes, the assessment and selection stage will be managed by Populo Living.

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**First interviews: date TBC**

Longlisted candidates will be interviewed by a Populo Living panel.

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**Final interviews: date TBC**

Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed by a Populo panel led by Tony Travers, Chair.

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# Chair of Audit and Risk

£10,000 pa | London

Do you want to develop high quality homes that people can be proud of? Populo Living is Newham's dedicated property company, focused on creating affordable, sustainable communities. We believe in the power of home to shape lives and futures we strive to provide residents with safe, comfortable living environments while fostering a sense of community and belonging. We build great homes for the people of Newham, while both keeping land under council ownership and adding genuine social value.

100% owned by Newham Council, we are an innovative property and housing company that is building homes to help solve the housing crisis. Our new developments include 50% affordable housing, a ratio we are able to achieve through strong in-house development expertise and an unrelenting focus on commerciality. We have 800 homes (with many more in development), of which c.250 are affordable rent managed by our subsidiary Populo Homes, and the rest are market rental properties owned and managed through Populo Living.

We are seeking a senior finance professional to become our new Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. You will bring prior Board experience and ideally experience at a similar committee, an exposure to risk management and an understanding the role of assurance in a regulated environment. We are open to whether your experience in the housing sector has been gained on a Board or from a senior substantive post. This is a dual role, where you are both a Committee Chair and member of the main Board. So, managing relationships and information flow across this set-up is a key part of this role.

If you're ready to take on a role with a purpose-driven property and housing company that is delivering social value for the people of Newham, we'd love to hear from you.

**If this sounds like the kind of challenge you'd like to learn more about, then please contact Alice Morris at Campbell Tickell to arrange a conversation in more detail at [alice.morris@campbelltickell.com](mailto:alice.morris@campbelltickell.com) or on 07931 432 033.**

**Closes: 9am Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025**

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Telephone 020 8830 6777  
Recruitment 020 3434 0990

[info@campbelltickell.com](mailto:info@campbelltickell.com)  
[recruitment@campbelltickell.com](mailto:recruitment@campbelltickell.com)  
[www.campbelltickell.com](http://www.campbelltickell.com)