

CANVAS



HOUSING EDITION
SUMMER 2019

BY Saxton Bampfylde

CUSTOMERS AT THE CORE

A PURPOSEFUL AND PROGRESSIVE
HOUSING SECTOR

WELCOME

Welcome to the Summer 2019 Housing edition of Canvas, the insights update from Saxton Bampfylde and its Panorama network.

Our aim is to share interesting thoughts and perspectives on topics and issues that are relevant and current in your sector.

We welcome any thoughts, comments, or inputs you would like to share.

We hope you enjoy this edition!

CONTENTS



Pg 4

ESSENTIALS OF INCLUSIVITY

Interview with Gina Amoh, Chief Executive of Inquilab and Chair of BME London



Pg 8

LEADERSHIP SERVICES

By Mike McManamon, Partner and Consultant in the Leadership Services Practice at Saxton Bampfylde



Pg 10

REFLECTING INWARD AND LOOKING OUTWARD

Betsy Bassis, Non-Executive director at L&Q, Chief Executive of NHS Blood and Transplant



Pg 14

IN THE NEWS

We provide a brief insight into key news items that are causing a stir locally and globally



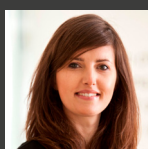
Pg 15

VIEW FROM THE RIVER

Team insight: David Munns, Partner and Consultant at Saxton Bampfylde



EDITION OVERVIEW



HANNAH SCARISBRICK
Partner, Head of Housing Practice
Saxton Bampfylde

✉ hannah.scarisbrick@saxbam.com

In our work with a range of large and small housing associations – as well as private sector property businesses – we have had the opportunity to see at first hand a range of approaches to delivering landlord services, building new homes and supporting communities.

Much has been said about how the housing sector specifically is diversifying, and yet we have been struck, through our work with a range of organisations, by what still binds housing associations together. As the housing sector moves forward and plays a bigger and broader role in addressing a range of needs at national and local levels, it is challenged to ensure that preserving, regenerating and creating thriving communities remains at the heart of the work. Organisational culture plays a critical role in meeting that challenge and few sectors are as reflective as this one about the relationship between organisational culture and the experience of the individuals and communities with which they engage. Many housing associations are putting real resource behind auditing and changing attitudes and behaviours at every level, in order to improve and deepen the relationships they have with residents as

well as their network of external partners.

That said, there is still a lot of work to be done and we observe a real appetite within the sector – as well as a call from organisations like Shelter and the National Housing Federation – to ensure that customers come first and that their voices are heard. Against that background it is clear that leaders who role model and create inclusive, responsible, connected cultures will deliver a much more progressive result for their own immediate communities and systemically those they become a wider part of.

With a career's worth of insight, we are delighted to have had the chance to talk to Gina Amoh, Chief Executive of Inquilab Housing Association and Chair of BME London. Talking about what makes the housing sector tick, the importance of establishing and maintaining a true culture and how a more inclusive approach will bring a positive impact in the future, Gina gives us an optimistic look ahead.

Stepping across sectors, we were also very lucky to have interviewed Betsy Bassis both in her non-executive capacity at L&Q and at an interesting point in her executive career

“As the housing sector moves forward it is challenged to ensure that preserving, regenerating and creating thriving communities remains at the heart of the work.”

as she left her role as Chief Operating Officer at DEFRA to join NHS Blood and Transplant as Chief Executive. With her extensive senior cross-sectoral experience, Betsy shares her learnings, observations and aspirations for the housing sector. She advocates for leaders to look beyond their walls to make a positive impact inside their own organisation and the sector more broadly.

In this edition, Mike McManamon, a Partner in our Leadership Services practice, also shares his thoughts about how to maintain team dynamics and a positive culture across the senior executive function. **6**

ESSENTIALS OF INCLUSIVITY

Interview with **Gina Amoh**, Chief Executive of Inquilab Housing Association and Chair of BME London



Gina is a veteran of the housing industry with over 30 years' experience, and almost 18 years as Chief Executive of Inquilab. This gives her considerable insight into how her organisation, and the sector overall, has moved on positively and where it still needs to make greater strides. Her passion and enthusiasm for the sector are palpable, as is her commitment to achieving the right culture both within Inquilab and for the residents and other groups she represents in her non-executive capacity. For Gina, inclusivity in all its forms is at the heart of her approach and ultimately she believes it central to the success of any organisation that is to thrive in the future.

How would you describe the organisational culture you've tried to shape at Inquilab and how has it evolved over the years?

I have been here for almost 18 years and when I first started it was a very small organisation with less than 500 units. We had a small turnover and faced some problems with governance, finance and staffing. It felt like no-one was really taking us seriously as an organisation and for me it was a challenge to see if we could turn it around.

When I came into the business, the culture was quite autocratic and not hugely collaborative between staff, executive and the board. It was a culture that was needed at that time and this was sustained partly whilst we got the right infrastructure in place.

Today, 18 years on, we have grown by three times and have a turnover of £10 million per annum. We are now financially stable and more highly regarded in the sector. It really feels like a completely new organisation.

Looking at where we are now, we have redefined our culture very much in collaboration with our staff, which I believe is fundamental to the organisation's success. We have established what we call a 'clan culture'. This essentially is a family-style culture which is friendly and fun, where we listen to our staff and allow them to be innovative and creative. We want staff to be empowered and feel they have a stake in the business. We aren't John Lewis & Partners, but we do want staff to feel like they are in a type of partnership and therefore empowered to make change and have an impact.

To make that culture work, staff need to understand the purpose and vision of the organisation. They must have a clear view of why they are here and how they have had an input into making the business the way it is. Every five years we review our vision and we closely involve staff in that process: we need to know if the values we espouse to are being lived throughout our organisation.



We also encourage openness and transparency right through from operational to board level, and every year we host a board/staff dinner where they meet and have a chance to discuss issues, giving staff exposure to board members and a real opportunity for input at a strategic and governance level.

We also encourage mentoring which is delivered in a variety of different formats. I chair the collaborative BME London group of 14 organisations and the participating CEOs mentor people across other organisations, from middle management upwards. It has been very successful and rewarding for both mentors and mentees.

In your experience what must leaders get right and what blockers may they face when shaping organisational culture?

One of the most fundamental things is to get managers and employees on the same page, as much as possible. As leaders, we should be creating and shaping an organisational culture that benefits all members of staff, with no-one feeling marginalised. If you have groups that do feel marginalised, it can have a negative impact and can seriously impact culture and morale. It is important that as leaders we are alive to this and act on it positively to embrace inclusivity.

There needs to be diversity throughout an organisation – top, middle and bottom – so that all staff from a broad variety of backgrounds can be heard. We are making progress in this area, but more needs to be done. Not only does it make it a better, more fair place to work, but it makes an organisation far more interesting and creative which ultimately impacts positively on the business.

For me, the ability to maximise creativity is fundamental. As a business leader I am not on the ground every day and so I really encourage staff to develop their creativity and strategic thinking, inviting them to come and have a discussion with me and the senior team about what we

should be doing. I can easily sit in my office and make policies and set about making change, but I need to listen to what my staff are saying and how they believe we can be shaping our business approach and improving our culture and purpose.

Resistance to change is very counter-cultural and in my experience is one of the biggest blockers. Cultural change can be really challenging, particularly for staff that have worked in an organisation for a long time and not had to face much evolution of culture or systems. We recently faced challenges in this area through the implementation of new IT systems. We tried a range of different activities to engage staff but there were those who just were not able or did not want to embrace the change and that created a natural division and ultimately a parting of ways.

Organisational culture is not just an internally-focused item, it can also be both positively and adversely affected by external factors. For example, when the government made sweeping changes after 2015 and the sector had to reduce rents, we were all left slightly reeling. We had to bring in considerable efficiencies, make staff and service changes and introduce new technologies. It was an external factor that really impacted our core business streams and in turn our culture.

“We do want staff to feel like they are in a type of partnership and empowered to make change and have an impact.”

Kate Henderson wrote recently that by “investing in a culture of accountability and respect, housing associations can provide an example to other sectors”. How far do you believe the sector has to travel to set that sort of example?

I think the sector needs to strike a balance between respect and accountability. Organisations must make sure that there are shared values between all staff, from the front line to the business executives, and that they are able to fulfil their commitments.

Our leaders in this sector are starting to take responsibility and are working to create opportunities to ensure its future health. We are all seeing that working in siloes doesn't help and that all parts of the machine need to move in the same direction.

It is sad that it has really only been post-Grenfell that we have seen the lack of trust that was apparent between some of the housing association sector and its customers. This is one area that is very clear in the Government Green Paper: we need to focus on how we build this trust up again. Somewhere along the line I think we lost sight of that amidst the pressure on efficiencies, more development and more homes needed. I think we can go as far as saying that in some areas we had lost the trust of contact with our core group and we need to rebuild that.

“We need to focus on how we build this trust up again.”

As a sector we need to create the environment to get the right outcomes and higher performance across the board. If you implement higher KPIs and give staff more tools to deliver, they need to be accountable for it. As managers and leaders, it is important that we lead by example and create a culture of ownership within our organisations.

We need to improve both the accountability for and respect towards our customers. We are doing that now, but we do need to do more. If we get it right then we will be an example to others, and I believe that we do have the infrastructure to do it quicker and more effectively than some other sectors. Ultimately it boils down to our customers and we need them to like and trust us. If they don't feel like that we might as well not exist.

Overall, I am very proud of this sector. We are embracing the need for change and are moving forward positively.



You've been part of some important collaborations including BME London and Leadership 2025. What role does inclusivity and culture have to play in supporting more partnership building and collaboration in the housing space?

Inclusivity is pivotal to all organisations and should be central to the work of any leader. We are a London-based organisation and this city is one of the most, if not the most, diverse in the world. If we are not alive to the fact that our businesses need to be inclusive, then we really have a problem.

If my staff and my customers are of completely different races and cultures there is an assumption, rightly or wrongly, that there is a disconnect. The external engagement that we have with our residents is so important and we need to ensure diversity exists within our staff base. We need partners and suppliers who understand the importance of having a diverse workforce. For example, our maintenance contract is under renewal currently and we need to be sure that those who are delivering the work for us deal with our customers respectfully and appropriately. There may be religious, racial or cultural sensitivities when carrying out work in people's homes and communities, and our chosen supplier will need to be aware of that as much as possible.

One pivotal area that needs to be encouraged and embraced is diversity of thought. The impact this has on culture is significant, bringing in people with lots of different ideas to the table. I think for some organisations this is where we are going wrong and we need to be encouraging it as much as possible.

Greater levels of collaboration are also essential for this sector as it will help support cross-sector thinking and help to drive forward best practice. Much of the work that we are doing with BME London is around collaboration. We have various workstreams around employment and procurement for example, and it is proving very beneficial to work together. It is a model that others are looking to replicate. People have asked me what the secret with BME London is: for me it is having a common purpose, being honest and leaving egos back in the office.

"The secret with BME London is [for me] having a common purpose, being honest and leaving egos back in the office."

"Inclusivity is pivotal to all organisations and should be central to the work of any leader."

Housing associations need to balance strong commercial performance with social purpose. What challenge does this pose for those shaping the culture within housing associations?

Our job is as landlords and developers, and as businesses we need to be commercially aware or we wouldn't exist. We are also social enterprises that support our communities and that is where our social purpose comes in. Any surpluses gained from our activities are put back into the business to offer support functions to the communities and our residents helping with health care needs or supporting with managing finances, for example.

I see very much that commercial and social activities are connected and are fundamental to the purpose and vision of housing associations. We want to ensure that our residents are living in homes that are suitable and safe, in communities where they feel supported and want to remain. We are dealing with a lot of tenants who come from challenging backgrounds, financially, culturally or socially.

We have a culture of support in Inquilab and of people wanting our communities to thrive and live in harmony. We want to contribute to community cohesion and that is absolutely at the core of our culture and is in the passionate and committed approach of our staff, board and partners throughout our organisation. **E**

"Community cohesion is absolutely at the core of our culture."

GINA AMOH BIOGRAPHY

Gina has worked in housing for over 30 years, starting her career as a housing officer. Gina joined Inquilab in 2001 as Chief Executive.

Before joining Inquilab, Gina was Director of Housing, overseeing the transformation of service delivery and strategic responsibility for front line services including Housing Management, Customer Services, Income Management, Leasehold Management, Community Development, asset management, repairs and maintenance.

She is Chair of BME London – a group of 14 small and medium housing associations that work in collaboration to deliver support and services to their customers and communities.

A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing, Gina also holds an MBA and is a Member of the Homes for Londoners Board.

Gina was named in the top 50 Power Players in 2018 and is the founder of the Leadership 2025 project, an initiative with a long-term ambition of supporting the creation of a housing sector that is vibrant and diverse at all levels, with better representation of individuals who are from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds at leadership levels.



HOUSING ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP - FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE



By Mike McManamon, Partner and Consultant in the
Leadership Services Practice at Saxton Bampfylde

The dual requirement for housing associations to balance their commercial and social obligations is not new, however it is something that continues to be a subject of interest, and at times tension. It provides a significant set of challenges in a very complex operating model, and therefore the skill, quality and authenticity of leadership in this sector cannot be underestimated.

Housing associations are facing more pressure than ever before, and it is vital that they have robust operating models and great leaders in place to ensure sustainability.

The personal characteristics of leaders – for instance their skills, motivations and drivers, attitudes, values, personal styles and life experiences – will have a profound effect on shaping performance and culture. Within the most senior levels of leadership, the mix of these characteristics can define how well leaders and their organisations perform and what sort of organisational culture they shape.

From our experience of working with leaders and teams across the sector, we know they must have a clear passion and sense of purpose to serve others including both the wider community and their immediate teams. With good emotional intelligence they can quickly respond to others whilst being pragmatic about the challenges and options available. We are seeing a growing need for resilience and to cope with substantial challenges and to be effective communicators to inspire others on a clear vision in order to see beyond the present tests.

Diversity, particularly that of neurodiversity e.g. thought, attitudes, learned behaviour and working styles, is increasingly important at this level as is a tolerance for alternative styles. One individual's style or motivation must not take priority, and when it comes to decisions around commercial or social impact, it is useful to have mechanisms in place to guard against this. We work very closely with a variety of leadership teams to identify their collective 'style' and support them to recognise how they might maximise their performance and where to watch out for their blind spots.

Leaders need to be resilient to pressures and conflicting interests, balance conflicting priorities and in some cases push back on stakeholders as to what is possible, but above all to have clear red lines which go to the core of their purpose and which are non-negotiable. For some, this is unquestionably the safety of their tenants. Yes, new stock is important to the bottom line and yes profits can be reinvested into the front line, but there is a need to attend to the front line at all times.

“The personal characteristics of leaders will have a profound effect on shaping performance and culture.”

At Saxton Bampfylde, our Leadership Services team works closely with organisations to profile the next leader(s) with the right attitudes, motivations and behaviours. We often look at the profiles of leadership teams and their dynamics, objectively appraise how they are performing and support them to deliver optimally.

Below is an example of an intervention we delivered, working in close partnership with the client as they transitioned through a period of transformational change:

CONTACT US

If you are interested to hear more about how we could work in partnership with you and your organisation, please do get in touch with our Mike in our Leadership Services team at:

✉ Mike.Mcmanamon@saxbam.com

TEAM DIAGNOSTIC

Our psychologists met with and profiled the Executive Team to determine their strengths and limitations and what qualities the next CEO might need to best complement the team.

LEADERSHIP PROFILING

An in-depth psychological and behavioural assessment established candidates' strengths and risk factors and identified the candidate who would be the best fit for the organisation.

ONBOARDING & COACHING

Supported and coached the successfully appointed candidate, encouraging them to think how they would deliver to their potential, nurture the executive, work with the board and deliver a strategic agenda.

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

A leadership development programme consisting of 360 appraisals of the executive, coaching and a six-month programme of half-day workshops to develop cohesion and effectiveness covering areas such as resilience, neuro-leadership and matrix working.

360 CEO APPRAISAL

A review of the CEO 12 months in to post allowed for considered insights on their performance. The data captured was used to validate the search and selection process and refine a development plan.

BOARD REVIEW

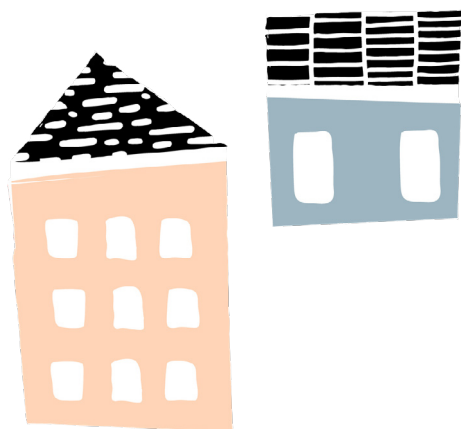
A review of the board's perceived effectiveness from the perspective of the entire board, executive and stakeholders. The outcomes from this allowed for a list of clear priorities which included how the board might better engage with the executive and local communities. **C**



REFLECTING INWARD AND LOOKING OUTWARD

Interview with **Betsy Bassis**, Non Executive Director of L&Q; Chief Executive of NHS Blood and Transplant

The opportunity to talk to Betsy and gain the breadth of her cross-sectoral experience through her reflections from both inside and outside the housing sector offers an interesting perspective to customer engagement and operational performance. Her insights demonstrate the synergies that exist across many sectors and reinforces her belief that more organisations should try to look outside their own areas to see the bigger picture.



As a Non-Executive Director of L&Q, what would you identify as the core challenges and areas of focus for the social housing sector?

I would start by saying that the shortage of affordable housing is the core challenge for the sector. That is why I am really proud to be part of an organisation like L&Q which has set such high ambitions for new development. We aim to build 100,000 new homes over the next ten years. At the same time, I strongly believe that investment in development shouldn't come at the expense of investing in our existing homes and providing high quality services to our residents. There again, I think L&Q performs well against industry benchmarks, with customer satisfaction of over 70 per cent. I still think that there is room for improvement: we don't always get things right and acknowledging that is essential in order to learn and continuously improve.

As Chair of the Customer Experience Committee, I feel very strongly committed to the ambitions of the organisation as it strives to provide more consistent, high-quality customer services and to ensure that we get the right mix of investment in new affordable homes and investment in our existing estate. Striking that balance is one of the key strategic challenges facing the sector at the moment.

Your sector perspective is broad across commercial, government and housing, and you will soon take on a substantial Chief Executive role within the health sector. Do you see any synergy in the challenges facing the housing sector compared to those across other sectors?

Absolutely. Poor quality housing has a detrimental impact on health and wellbeing. I saw one figure that said that poor quality housing costs the NHS £600 million a year. Regardless of the exact figure, there is clearly a strong link between the two. The work we do in the housing sector has a direct link to the demands placed on the NHS. Equally, cuts in local government funding can have a knock-on impact on public services that are available to support vulnerable people in our local communities. That leaves L&Q and other housing associations to try and pick up the slack, less there be a negative impact on rent arrears, anti-social behaviour or the like.

I don't think these are new insights. It is simply a recognition that organisations and sectors don't work in a bubble but are part of much larger, more complex systems.

One of the things that I really loved about my time in the civil service these last four and a half years was learning a lot more about systems thinking and watching my policy colleagues take cross-sectoral impacts into account when developing new policies and programmes. That was something that I really didn't have to consider when I was working in the private sector.

Policy aside, I think there are lots of synergies and similar challenges on the operational side that face different sectors, such as health and safety, logistics, customer service, digital, etc. I have really enjoyed applying skills gained during the 15 years I was in the energy sector to the roles I have had in the civil service and as a non-exec in social housing. I think in many respects the business models in the social housing and energy sectors are very similar. The cashflow that is made downstream – whether that is delivering energy or housing services to customers – is used to fund investments upstream. By that I mean new housing, new power generation or gas production assets. Given the very emotive nature of energy and housing, good customer service and value for money are critical. You get these elements wrong and you lose public trust. You lose public trust and you start to see government and regulatory intervention.

That is a rather long-winded way of saying that I think yes, there are lots of parallels and synergies facing energy and housing sectors and I am sure I will find a similar thing when I move into health, which is of course another critical, and therefore emotionally charged sector.

“We don’t always get things right and acknowledging that is essential in order to learn.”

Do you think there is enough partnership working being undertaken?

I see many organisations working together up and down the supply chain where there is an obvious need for partnership. I referred earlier to some of the areas where you do see partnership between health, local authorities, and social services because of the obvious knock-on impacts between them. Could people do more though? I am sure the answer has to be yes. I guess that is both at the macro policy level and at the micro level with individual organisations working with others, particularly in the same local area.

It is a very good question because [partnership] is almost counter-cultural for many organisations. A lot of the incentives for many organisations are about looking internally and optimising their particular silo. Even within individual organisations, you often see fiefdoms. One of the greatest challenges for any leader is getting people to step back from their individual part of the organisation and see the bigger picture. This is often key to establishing opportunities to drive better value, whether that is through improved outcomes, customer services, or improved productivity across an organisation. This is hard enough for a single organisation to do, let alone looking outside the organisation and spotting the opportunities and forging the alliances that will work.

I absolutely think it is the role of all leaders to highlight these opportunities and put in place incentives to encourage that kind of working.

“One of the greatest challenges for any leader is getting people to step back from their individual part of the organisation and see the bigger picture.”

From your current and previous experience how do you consider the relationship between organisational culture and customer-engagement? What are some of the things that leaders can do to shape a culture that supports customer-centricity?

I think this is a particularly relevant question for the public sector where, unlike the private sector, our customers can't vote with their feet if service is poor. After all, if I'm not happy with the service at Tesco, I can just go down the street to Sainsbury's. Or if a British Gas engineer disappoints me, I can take my custom to HomeServe or a local contractor.

This threat of competitor loss – or conversely the incentive to win new customers – tends to focus the mind in the private sector and drive a customer-centric culture where people are obsessed with customer insight, product or service development, and innovation. I think this is difficult to recreate in the public sector or in social housing because that competitive dynamic just isn't there. Customers or users often don't have a choice and so have to put up with the service no matter how bad it is.

Having said that, I think there is a lot that leaders in this sector can do to avoid complacency when it comes to customer service. Much of it comes down to organisational culture, in terms of what is valued and what is not. When I joined the L&Q board, customer service matters were delegated to the executive. When I asked why we didn't discuss it at board, I was told that the board only discussed strategic matters. I thought that very odd as I had always viewed customers as one of the biggest strategic issues facing any organisation.

I'm happy to say that customer experience is now very much considered by the board on a regular basis and it is afforded the same level of importance as development and audit and risk in that we have created a stand-alone sub-committee to scrutinise performance: our Customer Experience Committee. I don't want that to say that customer experience wasn't important or taken seriously before, because the organisation had lots of executive and operational focus on customer experience. I also don't want to suggest that everything is rosy now. But I would like to believe that the creation of this committee sends a clear message to residents and staff alike about the level of importance that we place on customer experience.

Looking at my time at DEFRA, customer experience was also a big theme for me. However, with my responsibility for corporate services, my focus was on the internal customer experience rather than external customers or users. I spent a lot of time out and about talking to staff and I found that people shared a common sense of pride and passion for the department. I did however also discover that they shared common frustrations. I was already leading a programme to transform corporate services, but that was primarily focused on cost-reduction so I decided to launch a programme called 'Smarter ways of working'. This was designed to address staff pain points and make DEFRA a better place to work – essentially putting the staff in the position of the customer. It brought a different lens to our work by looking at our service from the viewpoint of our staff. I believe that as a leader it is so important to amplify the voice of the customer, whether internal or external. I think the more you amplify the voice of the customer, the greater the need to galvanise the organisation to understand and address their unmet needs.

It will be very interesting as I go into NHSBT to understand what some of those unmet customer needs are, both internally and externally. I look forward to harnessing the expertise already there and bringing in a fresh pair of eyes to move the organisation forward positively.

“Customer experience is now very much considered by the Board on a regular basis and it is afforded the same level of importance as development and audit and risk.”

BETSY BASSIS BIOGRAPHY

Betsy Bassis was appointed to the Group Board of L&Q on 3 September 2015. She is a member of the Governance and Remuneration Committee and chairs the Customer Experience Committee.

Betsy was appointed Chief Executive at NHS Blood and Transplant in March 2019 following four and a half years as the Director General, Chief Operating Officer at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Betsy previously spent 12 years at British Gas/Centrica where she held a variety of roles including Managing Director of Community Energy, providing energy services to social housing and fuel poor households. She was a member of Business in the Community's Finance and Risk Committee from 2011 to 2014.

What levers do you think leaders have to ensure an organisation looks broadly for mutually beneficial partnerships and operates as part of an ecosystem? How can they help prevent an organisation or a sector from being inward-looking?

One of the key responsibilities of any leader is to bring the outside in. By that I mean developing relationships outside their organisation to ensure they understand the external influences that could have an impact, either positive or negative, on the organisation.

The reason I talk about bringing the outside in is that the modern world is a demanding and chaotic place. It is often difficult for busy people who are focused on internal goals to step back from the day-to-day and adapt their mindset to consider new developments, opportunities or ways of working. In competitive sectors, new entrants can disrupt markets because they aren't focused on internal legacy operations but have the luxury of reimagining the way the world works. They can more easily look through the lens of customer experience and emerging new technologies to meet pain points.

It is important then that leaders guard against this risk of becoming too internally focused. I think traditionally, leaders have relied on their strategy, business development or external marketing and media relations teams to bring the outside in. With the rise of digital technology, new levers and approaches have been introduced, such as user research and user-centred design. However, I think the lack of digital literacy amongst many senior leaders means that perhaps this lever isn't pulled as consistently as it could or indeed should be in some sectors.

I think there are more and more organisations that are also choosing to focus on diversity and inclusion. I think for some, this is driven by a sense of corporate responsibility and it being the 'right thing' to do or what is expected from them as employers. However, I think the people who really get it are those who recognise that organisations that aren't diverse and inclusive are less likely to be successful in a volatile and ever-changing world.

The problem is that diversity and inclusion are tough to make work in practice. As a US citizen in the UK, a woman in the energy industry, and more recently, a private sector person in the civil service, I can say this with some experience. It can be tough to feel like the odd one out and feel counter-cultural and that your perspective is sometimes not heard or considered. As a leader, I am not sure I have always been fully committed to leveraging diversity and inclusion; I might have been too focused on feeling like the odd one out myself.

As I look forward to starting my new role at NHSBT, I do hope that I will be able to continue creating a diverse and inclusive environment, as it is something I want to attend to. I have seen enough evidence to show that it is a critical factor in successful organisations.



“Organisations that aren’t diverse and inclusive are less likely to be successful in a volatile and ever-changing world.”

“I think private sector organisations would die for this sense of drive and connection to the core mission of the organisation.”

Housing associations, NHS organisations, local and central government structures and others have to be run commercially but retain an authentic and focused commitment to delivering on their social purpose; what challenge does that pose for leaders in terms of culture building?

I am going to be a bit provocative and say that rather than a challenge I see it as an absolute asset. I left my previous career in the private sector as I wanted to do more than maximise profits and increase shareholder value. In that respect I feel like I have found kindred spirits in the public and third sector: people who are motivated by a sense of social purpose or public good. That kind of connection to the central mission of the organisation is so incredibly powerful. It comes with a sense of pride and, subject to the right leadership, a willingness to go the extra mile. I think private sector organisations would die for this sense of drive and connection to the core mission of the organisation. This is so central to what you find in social housing and the public sector. **B**

IN THE NEWS

A BRIGHTER DAWN

Over the past few months the team at Saxton Bampfylde has selected a number of board leaders from the housing sector to discuss the reality and appetite for delivering a step-change in the role housing associations play across the UK. We have looked at many areas including key strategic issues; how boards operate and are made up; how they are responding to new levels of ambition and capacity in the sector; how they can deliver the supply and still meet needs; and ultimately how they can remain true to the social purpose at their core.

These conversations have provided insights and predictions for the future, as well as offered interesting reflections on the significant and growing importance of the board in the dawning of a brighter era for the housing sector where strong governance is absolutely essential.



From these conversations and our own background experience we shall produce a thought piece to highlight key insights and observations. We look forward to sharing this with you later in the summer.

24HOUSING: DIVERSITY AWARDS

SAXTON BAMPFYLDE SPONSOR THE 'LEADING LGBT ORGANISATION' AWARD



Saxton Bampfylde was delighted to attend the 24Housing Diversity Awards and to be sponsors of the 'Leading LGBT Organisation' award. Our housing practice Consultants - Pamela Leonce (*pictured far-left*) and Hannah Scarisbrick - represented Saxton Bampfylde at the event, held at Aston Villa Park in Birmingham in May 2019. Pamela presented the award to the winners, Home Group who were recognised for their great work promoting equality, diversity & inclusion in the sector. It was a wonderful

event celebrating housing associations, and the teams and individuals who are doing really positive work and putting themselves forward to help create more inclusive organisations and communities. Big congratulations to all the other amazing nominees and winners, and indeed everyone involved in moving the dial on diversity and inclusion for the sector.

www.24housingdiversity.co.uk/awards

KEY APPOINTMENTS

A selection of some of the roles that Saxton Bampfylde has been privileged to advise on recently.



STEPHEN STONE
Orbit Group
Board Member

Stephen has been appointed as Orbit Group Board Member & Orbit Homes Board Member. He has enjoyed a long career with Crest Nicholson and was Chief Executive of the company from 2005-2018. He was previously Managing Director of Countryside Properties until 1995.



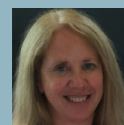
HELEN GILLET
Orbit Group
Board Member

Helen has been appointed as Customer and Communities Board Member & Governance and Remuneration Committee Member. A former Director of customer service at BT Business, Helen is currently MD on the board of Affinity for Business Ltd, an award-winning clean and waste water retailer.



SANDRA SKEETE
Octavia
Chief Executive

Octavia has announced that Sandra Skeete has been selected to become the new Chief Executive of the organisation. Sandra brings over 25 years of experience working in social housing, holding senior roles in organisations such as Peabody and Refugee Housing, and she currently sits on the Board of One Housing and the Duke of Lancaster Housing Trust.



CAROL WILLIAMS
Origin Housing
Director of Operations

Origin Housing have announced Carol Williams as their new Director of Operations. Carol has accumulated over 30 years' experience and has worked in both local Government and Housing Associations.



KATE HENDERSON
National Housing
Federation
Chief Executive

The National Housing Federation announced Kate's appointment in summer 2018. Kate is 7 months into her role and has made an energetic start.

Ben Laryea, Anna Strongman & Julia Moulder have been appointed to the Board of **Dolphin Living**.

We have recently made two confidential board-level appointments for **Grosvenor**.

VIEW FROM THE RIVER: TEAM INSIGHT

DAVID MUNNS

Take a closer glimpse into the people at Saxton Bampfylde our global colleagues with our regular team insight feature.

David Munns leads our Finance Practice and works broadly on leadership appointments across the commercial, public and not for profit sectors. He works with a broad range of clients with diverse property assets, as well as in the housing space specifically. Before joining Saxton Bampfylde in 2012, David was CFO of Rocco Forte Hotels and the Financial Times Publishing Group and he is a former Non-Executive Director of Colliers CRE.

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE – YOUR ROLE AT SAXTON BAMPFYLDE

I founded and still lead Saxton Bampfylde's CFO practice. We have two key areas that make our practice different. Firstly, we appoint CFOs and Finance Directors across a very wide range of sectors and pride ourselves on our ability to move candidates between sectors. Secondly, we believe it is the only CFO practice at a leading executive search firm to be headed by a former CFO. Before I joined, I spent twelve years as CFO at the Financial Times Group and Rocco Forte Hotels. I am also non-executive director and on the audit committee at Colliers, the real estate consultancy.

RAINY DAY DREAMS

I have very fond memories of Goodman – a fine American steakhouse – based in Moscow. When I was CFO at Rocco Forte, I spent a fair amount of time in the city and this was a wonderful place of calm in a rather frenetic environment. Last year I returned to Moscow with Saxton Bampfylde and it was wonderful to return to Goodman and be reminded of that great sanctuary from the icy Moscow rain (and snow).

TRUE PASSION

I love long distance walking and this

summer I plan to walk over 200 kilometres of the GR7, a remote route in Andalusia.

WHO – DEAD OR ALIVE – DO YOU VIEW AS A PARTICULARLY INSPIRING LEADER, AND WHY?

In spite of his faults I believe Steve Jobs was one of the great business leaders of all time. He founded Apple; was fired from it (I did mention his faults); was invited back when Apple was on the brink of collapse; and he then went on to make it a brand worth \$1 trillion at its peak, and with almost unrivalled global ubiquity. As a business leader that really is quite a feat.

HOT TIP

Nobody's Fool by Richard Russo. A hidden gem in contemporary American literature.

TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE TALENT POOL FOR SENIOR FINANCE ROLES DIVERSIFYING? HOW CAN HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS HELP ATTRACT MORE DIVERSE POOLS TO THESE CRUCIAL POSTS?

Diversification of the pool for senior talent takes time and, in the long run, relies on the continued efforts made by key players, like the Big 4, to develop those coming from more walks of life at the start of their careers.

That said, with promising gains across the profession at all levels there does seem to be a diversifying pool; most importantly in the divisional and controller roles which act as springboards to the most senior positions.

To attract this wider pool of talent, we encourage housing associations to think more frequently from the perspective of potential candidates. Will they be joining an organisation which will develop the whole person as a potential future leader? Will they be joining an organisation which talks-the-talk and walks the walk on valuing diversity? If a housing association can answer those questions in the right way, they'll attract more diverse talent.

We work with some really enlightened organisations across the commercial public and not-for-profit sectors and are really pleased to have made some fantastic, diverse appointments in finance as well as in a whole host of other general management and functional roles. **U**

GET IN TOUCH WITH DAVID

✉ david.munns@saxbam.com

☎ +44 (0)20 7227 0844

Saxton Bampfylde

9 SAVOY STREET
LONDON WC2E 7EG
+44 (0)20 7227 0800
46 MELVILLE STREET
EDINBURGH EH3 7HF
+44 (0)131 603 5700
www.saxbam.com

SAXTON BAMPFYLDE MISSION STATEMENT

We exist to change the world by changing leaders in interesting and important organisations. At the same time we aim to create an environment wherein all members of our community can grow to their fullest extent emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.
Saxton Bampfylde is an employee-owned business

GLOBAL HOUSING PRACTICE KEY CONTACTS

With over 200 consultants worldwide, our global partnership brings together leadership experts across the commercial, public and non-profit sectors. Our key consultants with a particularly strong focus in the housing sector include:

UK

Hannah Scarisbrick
Partner, Head of Housing Practice
hannah.scarisbrick@saxbam.com

Stephen Bampfylde
Partner, Chairman
stephen.bampfylde@saxbam.com

Rachel Hubbard
Partner, Head of Social Impact Practice
rachel.hubbard@saxbam.com

Pamela Leonce
Partner, Consultant Housing Practice
pamela.leonce@saxbam.com

CANADA

Shaun Carpenter
Partner
shaun@pjmsearch.com

Ranju Shergill
Partner
ranju@Pekarskyco.com

USA

Sam Pettway
Partner
sam@boardwalkconsulting.com

LATIN AMERICA

Andre Freire
Partner
andrefreire@exec.com.br

NEW ZEALAND

Stephen Leavy
Partner
leavy@hobsonleavy.com

Saxton Bampfylde is a member of Panorama,
a global partnership of 18 leading independent
executive search firms around the world.
www.panoramasearch.com

PANORAMA
SEARCH AROUND THE WORLD

