



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities
and Local Government

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government**

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24th
September 2020

Clive Betts MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Clive,

Chair of the Board of Homes England

Our former Permanent Secretary, Melanie Dawes, wrote to you on 16 September 2019 advising of my intention to appoint a new Chair for the Homes England Board.

Following an open competition conducted in line with the 'Governance Code on Public Appointments', I have selected Peter Freeman CBE as my preferred candidate for the role.

My officials have worked closely with your Clerks on arranging a pre-appointment scrutiny hearing with Peter on 12 October. I am grateful for the support and guidance they have provided.

I would like to publicly announce the selection of Peter as my preferred candidate on 29 September. In advance of that announcement I am sending you information on both Peter and the recruitment campaign; which I am mindful will be made available to the public at the hearing and published with the Committee's report.

As required, the information includes Peter's 'Declaration of relevant interests'. Without wanting to prejudge the Committee's discussions, I am taking steps to ensure that any conflicts of interest are managed appropriately – should Peter be appointed to the role. My officials will be able to provide the Clerks with further information on these measures closer to the Hearing on 12 October.

I hope you will agree this is a first rate appointment. I know Peter is looking forward to speaking to the Committee at your hearing.

RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP

Best wishes, Robert.



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PRE-APPOINTMENT SCRUTINY HEARING

Date: 12th October 2020

Role: Homes England Chair

Information about the preferred candidate

Following a recruitment campaign, the Secretary of State has selected Peter Freeman as his preferred candidate for the role of the Homes England Chair.

Current CV: Attached as Annex A

Declaration of relevant interests made by the candidate:

"I have two significant property interests that should be disclosed and managed.

1. Argent My brother and I founded Argent in 1981. In 1998, we both stepped down from full time roles as joint chief executives a year after the purchase of the then-listed company by the British Telecom Pension Scheme. After 1998, we became co-investors in all Argent development projects including King's Cross. I am still a director of the key Argent companies and of the King's Cross ownership vehicle and my family are investors in it. The only Argent project in which Homes England has an interest is Brent Cross South (BXS). Homes England has recently signed a £148m loan to Argent Related for this project. Although I receive Board reports at the Argent Board with responsibility for delivering BXS, neither I nor my brother have an investment in BXS.

2. Mayfield Market Towns Ltd. (MMT) I am chairman of MMT and became a shareholder when it was formed seven years ago. MMT's business has been promoting a new town of 7,000-10,000 homes in West Sussex. We control approximately 1,000 acres at very low purchase prices that enable us to provide the entire social and physical infrastructure at a cost of £304m without the need for grant. Most of the land is in Horsham DC, some is in Mid Sussex DC. Mid Sussex is opposed but Horsham has included Mayfields in a Reg. 18 list and will be deciding how to slim the Reg. 18 list down to a smaller number of sites for the Council to promote at a Local Plan Inquiry next year. The MMT Board believes that we have a compelling offer. We are not looking for grant from Homes England as the development is viable without. However, in time our site will form part of the broad market competition for Homes England's Northern Arc at Burgess Hill, five miles away. It is also competition in terms of allocation for Reg. 19 in Horsham where Homes England are part of a consortium

promoting “West of Ifield”. If I became Chair of Homes England, I should not receive papers concerning West of Ifield and Burgess Hill while I remain involved in Mayfields.”

Declaration of relevant political activity made by the candidate required under paragraph 9.2 of the Governance Code on Public Appointments: No relevant political activity.

Proposed terms of appointment and remuneration (if any):

- **Remuneration:** £95,000
- **Time commitment:** Up to 2 days a week
- **Term:** Three-year term with the potential for reappointment

Information on the campaign

Campaign Launch Date	01/11/2019
Campaign Closing Date	13/06/2020
Reason for any changes in timetable to that originally published	N/A
Advertising strategy	<p>The Secretary of State agreed that an executive search agency should support the appointment.</p> <p>Odgers Berndtson were appointed to ensure we developed and attracted a diverse and strong candidate field.</p> <p>The role was advertised on the Cabinet Office Public Appointments website, Odgers website and LinkedIn page, Women on Boards, and on the department’s social media platforms.</p>
Advisory Assessment Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeremy Pocklington – Permanent Secretary, MHCLG – Chair; • Wendy Barnes – Senior Independent Panel Member; • Michael Jary - Lead Non-Executive Director, MHCLG – Panel Member; • Tracey Waltho – Director General, Housing Planning & Building Safety, MHCLG – Panel Member; and, • Emma Fraser - Director, Housing Markets Strategy, MHCLG – Panel Member

Number of applicants	53
Number of candidates invited to interview	8 (1 withdrew prior to interview)
Number of candidates found appointable	3

Diversity Data

Statistical disclosure control – where there are fewer than 5 candidates in any category, diversity data has not been shared as the candidate may be potentially identifiable.

Table A: Gender

	Percent Male	Percent Female	Percent Identify another way	Percent Not declared
Applicants	77%	17%	0%	6%
Shortlist (applicants invited to interview)	75%	<5	0%	<5

Table B: Ethnicity

	Percent White	Percent Ethnic minority	Percent Not declared
Applicants	85%	9%	6%
Shortlist (applicants invited to interview)	88%	0%	<5

Table C: Disability

	Disabled	Non-disabled	Not declared
Applicants	2%	91%	7%
Shortlist (applicants invited to interview)	0%	88%	<5



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CURRICULUM VITAE

Founder & Non-Executive Director, Argent Group (1981 – Present)

Argent Group of Companies was formed in September 1981, it was listed on the Stock Exchange in 1994. It then went private through a sale to the British Telecom Pension Scheme in 1997 at a 50% premium to the listing price three years prior. Argent entered into a series of personal joint ventures between the Freemans, key Argent staff and BTPS. Argent has been part of many joint ventures including King's Cross and Brent Cross South.

Chair, Mayfield Market Towns Ltd (2012 – Present)

MMT is a special purpose company seeking to create an exemplary new market town in West Sussex

Owner & Publisher, Freeman Publishing PLC (2000 – 2005)

Total guide to the property industry – in print and online.

Producer, Argent Film and Television (1982 – 1983)

Film production for Channel Four.

Business Non-Executive Director Roles;

- Singula Decisions (Software, Business Process Outsourcing) – (1999 – Present)
- Land Securities (Property) – (2001 – 2004)
- MEPC (Property) – (2006 – 2011)

Property industry roles;

- Chair of steering group and author of "Housing Sprint – How to Solve the Housing Crisis" – 2019-20;
- Chairman of the Investment Property Forum;
- BPF Policy Committee;
- Bank of England Property Forum;
- Property Week Columnist;
- Lecturer (LSE, Oxford Business School, Reading University and trade conferences)

Other Roles;

- Chairman, Artichoke – Leading Arts Charity – (2015 - 2018)
- Marlborough College - Member of Council and Chair of Buildings Committee – (2015 – Present) Member of United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Board – (2015 – Present)