



Chair of the Board of Trustees

About Design South East

We believe everyone deserves good design. It is fundamental to quality of life, and to the development of more resilient, healthy and sustainable communities. Working entirely in the public interest, we leverage the power of a network of around 200 experts from a variety of built environment disciplines, leading practitioners and thinkers in their fields, to advise and guide local authorities and their stakeholders; helping them create well designed places.

An independent, not-for-profit organisation we work across the south and east of England, delivering expert design advice, facilitation and training for local authorities, the development sector and communities. Through our expert panels we bring together outstanding design expertise from individuals of national, and often international, repute to enhance the quality of the built environment, and help communities learn about well-judged and practical design quality.

Over the past 25 years we have worked with many organisations, influencing the quality of numerous places and projects. Though well-established, we are an agile organisation, enhancing the quality of development in the present, while lobbying for better outcomes in future.

This is a great time to join Design South East. Our continued success means that DSE currently enjoys an annual turnover of around £1million, with healthy financial reserves. We are a thriving organisation, well-placed to take advantage of several current market opportunities, including the those relating to sustainability, the government's growth agenda and changes to national planning policy.

For more information, please visit our website at www.designsoutheast.org.

About the role

Design South East, led by Director Chris Lamb, employs a team of 11 staff.

Design South East is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Board members are directors of the company and trustees of the charity.

After six years in the role, Ben Rogers, will be stepping down as chair of the board in 2025, and we are therefore seeking to appoint a new chair.

The successful candidate will be a well-known and highly respected leader in design, architecture, planning or development. The principal responsibilities of the chair are:

- Chairing the board (normally four meetings a year plus a Strategy Day).
- Helping the board and director shape the organisation's medium and longer-term strategy, and if necessary, responding to shorter term issues.
- Guiding, counselling, and undertaking annual appraisals for the director, and leading on appointment of his successor when the need arises.
- Helping in business development, and developing and maintaining important clients and other relationships, including those with council and government leaders.
- Representing and championing the organisation and its work at events and in the media.
- Ensuring good governance of Design South East.
- Keeping under review the composition, skills and diversity of the board and overseeing board recruitment.
- Oversight of remuneration.
- Becoming a member of the finance committee (which normally meets four times a year) would be helpful, but not essential.

Skills and Experience

The successful candidate will be a well-known and highly respected leader in one or more of the fields of design, architecture, planning or development. S/he will also have the following skills and experience:

- Experience of influencing government and its agencies.
- Significant experience of working with or for local authorities.
- Previous experience as a non-executive director. Previous experience as a chair is, however, not essential.
- Experience from employment as a senior leader and manager.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Excellent business strategy skills.
- Ability to chair meetings well, to synthesize discussion and help build consensus.
- Performance management skills and ability to challenge in a constructive way.

Terms of engagement

The role of chair is unpaid and involves a minimum time commitment of 1-2 days per month. All board meetings are in-person, and usually in London, but some committee meetings are held virtually. Reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

Term

Trustees are appointed for an initial three-year term of office which may be renewed up to a maximum of six years' service.

Diversity

Design South East is absolutely committed to ensuring that we are a diverse organisation and that we reflect the communities we serve in terms of background, life experience and skills. We particularly welcome applications from groups traditionally under-represented within the built environment and positively encourage applications from eligible candidates regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identification, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

How to apply

If you're as passionate about the environment and communities as we are and you want to join us on our journey and help shape our future, we want to hear from you.

If you would like to discuss the position further before making an application, please contact Chris Lamb chris@designsoutheast.org

To apply please submit your CV, a short covering letter explaining your interest in the position, and an outline of your relevant experience to Chris Lamb at the above email address.

Deadline and interview

The deadline for applications is 17.00 on 17 February 2025. Interviews will be held in person in March.