

Blenheim Gardens Residents Management Organisation

'BUILDING A GREENER, SAFER AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE WITH
THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE'



GOVERNANCE RESOURCE PACK FOR EXISTING BOARD MEMBERS

Compiled under the RMO's 'UNITY' Plan

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Background

This resource pack focuses upon governance on Blenheim Gardens Estate. It is the prime duty of the board and each Board member to ensure good governance in delivering housing management services. Achieving the highest standards of performance depends on it on Good Governance as does creating sustainable and vibrant communities.

A Board that is confident in its governance and control arrangements will be confident to embrace the risks associated with change and enable it to prepare the RMO for the future. This resource pack highlights the role of the board and the duties of each board member in meeting his or her obligation and the challenges we face together to improve our services, homes and our community on Blenheim Gardens Estate.

Message from the Chair

Dear Fellow Board Member

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for dedicating your time and energy in becoming a board member of Blenheim Gardens Resident Management Organisation. I know you will find this a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

As members of the board, it is our duty to ensure the right governance structure is in place for us not only to achieve the organisations own Mission Statement, Vision and Values, but in partnership with United Residents Housing and other partner organisations, deliver Decent Homes and Sustainable Communities while continuing to provide high quality Housing Management Services for the Residents of Blenheim Gardens Estate.

We have been elected by our fellow residents to improve the homes, services and community on Blenheim Gardens Estate for all. To fulfil these obligations and to be confident in our duties, we recognise that board members, both new and experienced, will require training. We have therefore developed a 'free' training programme for all board members as well as introduced a board member 'buddy' system to make the process easier.

This booklet has been developed to not only aid residents' in their role as board members but to also act as a point of reference. The booklet also complements our Unity Plan and our Resident Recruitment pack.

Without the dedication of board members, the RMO would simply cease to exist so we have been given a real opportunity to make a difference.

Finally, we, the board, have been empowered by our fellow residents to make a difference and provide the services not only to a high standard, but to provide services that are reflective of our needs', lets us ensure we deliver and set an examples for others to follow

I look forward to working with you all in making Blenheim Gardens Estate a Greener, Safer and Prosperous place to live now and in the future.

Warmest regards

Angie

Angela Bartley
Chair of Blenheim Gardens RMO

1 The Board

1.1 Our Mission Statement, Vision and Values

Our Mission Statement.....

'TO BUILD A GREENER, SAFER AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE WITH THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE'

Why have a mission statement?

A mission statement embodies the **vision and values of an organisation** and ensures that everyone knows what they are aiming for. It is important that the all internal (staff) and external (our customers) stakeholders of the organisation identify with and **'own'** the mission. If they do not, the mission is unlikely to be achieved, particularly if you are offering services (which depends on the commitment of all). A Mission Statement should also be able to fit the mission to the idea of what the organisation is about.

Our Vision BGRMO is committed to working for the Residents of Blenheim Gardens Estate in order to improve and build a better quality of life for all.

- Providing the best housing service possible for all our residents
- Ensuring we continue to communicate, consult and involve all members of our community in our decision making.
- Working to increase the level of resident involvement
- Improving our housing stock and environment for all residents
- Working Transparently
- Eliminating community and financial exclusion
- Working in partnership with other community groups to improve the area immediately surrounding Blenheim Gardens Estate
- Undertaking projects and initiatives that will benefit our community.
- Working towards securing greater independence for the RMO from Lambeth Council
- Endeavoring to build a sustainable and cohesive community.

How we will achieve Our Vision

We will achieve our vision by:

- Finding out about our communities to ensure that the strategic and service delivery is reflective of the identified needs and aspirations
- Demonstrating our commitment to engaging with the community we serve by developing resident participation structures that provide and promotes wider community involvement

- Making connections that show how residents are able to not only shape decisions, but are also equal partners in the process
- Tailoring communication channels to meet the needs of our community

Our Values

The following Values encompasses the core values of the RMO developed in order to reflect our commitment to resident participation and to provide value for money services:-

- We will at all times endeavour to put our residents first
- We will provide services reflective of local need and priorities
- We respect our community and care about people
- We celebrate the diversity of our community and will strive to ensure we represent and serve all residents in a fair and equitable manner
- The contribution of our residents is central to all that we do
- We believe in Resident Participation and in Community Empowerment and encourage our resident's to have the confidence and imagination to create solutions. We value our resident's opinions.
- We believe in actively improving the quality of life for all residents
- We will invest in the development of our organisation and its workforce.
- We will establish leadership through effective governance and accountability.

Our organisation is not for profit but to benefit our residents and their environment. All surpluses generated from effective budgetary management will be ploughed back into estate improvements.

1.2 Terms of Reference for the Board

A generic definition of “governance” is mentioned below:

“The systems and processes’ by which Boards lead, direct and control their functions in order to achieve organisational objectives and by which they relate to their partners and the wider community”.

The duty of the RMO Board is to add value to the organisation, enabling it to deliver decent homes, sustainable communities and service improvements. It does this by providing a framework of good governance within which the organisation can thrive and grow.

The RMO Boards role is to provide active leadership of the organisation within a framework of controls, which enable risk to be assessed and managed. The control framework consists of three overlapping systems:

- **Controls Assurance:** A process designed to provide evidence that RMO is doing their “reasonable best” to manage themselves so as to meet their objectives and protect tenants/staff/local authority and stakeholders against risk.
- **Performance Management:** The way in which the RMO Board controls the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of services and policies.

- **Risk Management:** A system that is used to identify and control the risks to the achievement of the organisation's objectives.

The RMO Board has ultimate responsibility for the governance practice of the RMO. The Board's central role is to direct the organisation's work - that is to determine strategic direction, deliver the terms of the management agreement (both with the Local Authority and United Residents Housing) and approve overall expenditure and policies.

The RMO Board has:

- Set the vision – *where or what does the organisation want to do.*
- Set the objectives - *the stages for reaching the vision.*
- Define the strategy – *the details of how the organisation will deliver the objectives.*
- Defined the core values – *how should the organisation act and behave.*

Management, that is the implementation of the above, is delegated to the paid staff of RMO. The Board however, provides active leadership. The word leadership is open to many interpretations however in the context of Blenheim Gardens RMO it is taken as meaning the following:

“Leadership is the art of getting things done by enabling others to do more than they could or would do otherwise.”

In carrying out their leadership role the RMO Board will ensure that:

- All Board members take collective responsibility for decisions made by the Board. Each member is to act only in the interests of the organisation and not on behalf of any constituency or interest group.
- To discharge their responsibilities for the direction of the organisation, Board members must have or acquire a diverse range of skills, competencies and experience. These will cover the following broad areas:
 - Working as an effective team to take strategic decisions for social outcomes
 - Direct knowledge of the needs and aspirations of the community and Estate Residents'
 - General business, financial and management skills
 - Other relevant skills, such as legal, property, development, and public affairs.

A Board member will be given a formal introduction specifying the Board member's obligations. A copy of the Code of Conduct will be signed to indicate acceptance.

The Board will annual review the effectiveness of their own Governance arrangements. A checklist of key areas is provided in the in Annex 1 for information.

1.3 The Roles' and Responsibilities of the Board

The role of the RMO Board is to ensure the organisation provides the delegated services on the behalf of the Council and United Residents' Housing in an equitable, transparent and cost-effective manner. The RMO Board does this by providing a framework of good governance within which the organisation can thrive and grow.

The Board has ultimate responsibility for the governance practice of RMO. The Board's central role is to direct the organisation's work - that is to determine strategic direction, deliver the terms of the management agreement, and approve overall expenditure and policies. As part of this role, the board will establish and oversee control and risk management arrangements.

Role of the Board Members

The Board meets once every month at the office of the RMO offices (24 Prague Place) on the first Wednesday in the month.

The Board members are elected at the Annual General Meeting each year.

The RMO Board consist of the Chair, the Secretary and The Treasurer Meetings are chaired by the Chair, in their absence usually by the Secretary or other 'key' board officers (for example, the Treasurer). Agendas for each meeting are to be drawn up in advance, and usually consist of standard items (such as minutes of previous meeting, Estate Directors report Declaration of interest and Chairs Action). Board members should contact the Chair or the Secretary/Treasurer in advance if they want an item for discussion placed on the agenda.

The fundamental role of the Board is to ensure that the RMO is run in accordance with its Constitution, Rules, Lambeth's policies and procedures (where applicable), and to the best advantage of its members and residents.

The RMO Board as the strategic overview of the activities of the RMO. It is aware of where it wants the organisation to be heading, and decisions should be made with this direction in mind. The RMO mission statement has been developed to elucidate more clearly the direction in which the Board wishes the RMO to go, and the kind of service it expects to provide to the residents.

The RMO Board directs the day-to-day activities of its staff in line with its mission statement, through the mechanism of the monthly Board meeting.

RMO Board meetings receive reports about the full range of activities of the RMO. These should include reports on the RMO's progress as measured against Lambeth's performance targets (rent collection rate, void turnaround time, repairs satisfaction, etc), on the RMO's financial situation of the organisation and hold monthly Financial Sub Committee meetings, the performance of its contractors, staff issues (performance, sickness and absence, etc). It will also consider any proposals made by staff, members of officers, such as proposals to change staff structure or appoint new staff, etc ensuring that the changes offers value for money, and does not breach UK legislation or the RMO Management Agreement with either the Council or United residents' Housing.

The RMO Board is responsible for making decisions on all-important matters affecting the RMO, such as how any surplus should be spent, or deficit dealt with, any change to staff structure, etc. Routine decisions about the management of staff and the day-to-day running of the office and estate should be left to the discretion of the Estate Director.

The Board chooses what elements of decision-making should properly be delegated to the Estate Director and what they should retain the Boards responsibility.

The Chair can take 'Chair's Action' on any important decisions that must be made urgently in between Board meetings. A record of all such decisions (in the form of an item on each board meeting agenda) is kept.

More detailed discussions of particular activities should be reserved for sub-committee or working party meetings (including focus groups, residents panels) set up for such purpose e.g. Finance Sub Committee Meetings

Board members use board meetings to discuss issues raised, pass on general concerns or queries raised by other residents, and investigate complaints made about staff and/or about the general running of the estate.

Board meetings are not a place for Board members to raise issues to do with their own repairs, rent accounts or nuisance reports. These should be made in person or in writing to the office during normal working hours. Equally, if any Board member wishes to report a general repair to the estate (such as communal lights being out, bushes needing cutting back, paving stones to be replaced) or raise an incident of nuisance, again these should be made to staff in the office during normal working hours. If incidents have been reported several times without any discernible action being taken, however, these should properly be raised either with the Chair before the meeting or at the meeting itself.

RMO Board Members

All board members must complete a skill and experiences proforma, identify training needs, and attend the following training courses must be completed within the first year of becoming a RMO board member;

- Equal Opportunities and Diversity
- Financial Management of an RMO
- Respecting Others in Meetings
- Benchmarking and Measuring Performance

Apologies for not attending the meetings must be sent to the Estate Director or members of the board. Members should attend at least six monthly board meetings per year, unless a disability or a family/caring commitment restricts you. Board members who do not attend five consecutive meetings will be written to by the chair of the board to confirm their intentions to continue.

None of the activities discussed within the boardroom should be discussed with anyone other than officers of the RMO; this includes the RMO staff, non-elected neighbours, and outside organisations. Any board members discussing or defaming the members of the board or the organisation is in breach of the RMO's constitution and can face disciplinary action, which can lead to a formal investigation and possibly dismissal from the RMO board.

Role of Chair of RMO

The Chair is the guardian of the democratic processes of the RMO. It is their responsibility to consider the issues facing the RMO and how they should best be democratically determined. The Chair should consider whether the agreed procedures of the RMO are adequate in protecting the rights of individual members and the concerns of the membership as a whole.

The Chair shall have all the responsibilities defined in the Rules or in Standing Orders of the RMO, and shall remain responsible for the actions of anyone to whom they may delegate any such responsibilities. The same rules and standing orders shall govern anyone to whom the RMO in committee or General Meeting shall delegate responsibilities of the Chair, while they carry out their duties.

Chairing meetings- In chairing meetings the Chair (whether the chair of the RMO or any other person elected for the purpose) will ensure that:

- The time for the meetings is one that members could reasonably be expected to attend, and that the place of the meeting is of suitable size, accessible to members, sufficiently comfortable, conducive to effective discussion and involvement of members, and that the place is prepared for the meeting clear notice is given of those items of business on which decisions must be made or on which policy must be formulated those attending know the agenda, and that an appropriate amount of attention is given to each issue, commensurate with its significance, and that the length of the meeting is reasonable each person present has the opportunity to participate in the discussion
- The meeting is conducted in an orderly manner in accordance with the procedures of the RMO.
- Resolutions and amendments are properly put and recorded in the minutes together with decisions taken upon them
- Where there is an equality of votes on a resolution, the chair shall have a second vote, which shall be cast in favour of the status quo.
- The Chair of the RMO shall act as Chair of Board meetings, General Meetings and the Annual General Meeting, but may delegate this responsibility with the agreement of the meeting concerned.
- The Chair shall sign copies of the Minutes of all meetings they have chaired, having given those present the opportunity to correct inaccuracies or omissions.
- The Chair will receive copies of the Minutes of all sub-committees and working parties in order to effectively co ordinate the decision making procedures within the RMO.
- The chair of the RMO will ensure that the voluntary work in managing the affairs of the RMO is spread as effectively as possible amongst the membership, and that training is arranged or other measures taken to enable tasks to be handed on when anyone completes their term of duty.
- The Chair will ensure that responsibilities are shared between members of the Board, and take steps to encourage members of the RMO to serve on the Board.

Relations with other Bodies

- The Chair will act as spokesperson representing the views of the RMO to outside bodies or at public events. Anyone representing the RMO should take steps to ensure that the views expressed on the RMO's behalf represent as closely as possible those held by the Board.
- The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the RMO is effectively represented at meetings of bodies in which it participates.
- The Chair shall be responsible for interpreting the meaning of decisions taken by the RMO as they apply in particular circumstances, having taken appropriate advice. This includes the interpretation of procedures, standing orders, rules or the determination of where responsibility lies between sub-

- Where a decision is needed between meetings of the Board or sub-committee responsible, the Chair will follow the following procedure for Chair's Action:
- The Chair shall only take Chair's Action where it would not be in the interest of the membership or adequately protect the rights of an individual member to postpone the decision to the next Board meeting.
- All decisions made by Chair's Action shall be recorded in board meeting minutes and signed by the Chair.
- Any decision made by Chair's Action must comply with the agreed policies and established practices of the RMO.
- A decision shall not be made by Chair's Action if the Chair has any reason to believe that a meeting of the Board would not have made that decision.
- All decisions taken by Chair's Action shall be ratified at the following Board meeting, and the date of the meeting entered in the minutes.

Role of the Secretary of the RMO

The Secretary co-ordinates the constitutional functions of the RMO, and maintains the RMO's records.

The Secretary as all those responsibilities defined in the Rules and Standing Orders of the RMO, and shall remain responsible for the actions of anyone to whom they may delegate any such responsibility. Anyone to whom the RMO in Committee, sub-committee or general meeting delegates responsibilities of the Secretary shall be governed by the same rules and standing orders in carrying out their duties.

Records

The Secretary shall maintain the following records:

- Register of members
- Loan stock register (if any stock is issued)
- Policy and Procedures guide
- Record of the names of all officers and of members of the Committee and of sub-committee
- A book of minutes of General Meetings
- An historical record of Minutes of Committee Meetings and sub-committee meetings

The Secretary shall keep the seal of the RMO to be used under the direction of the Committee. Sealing shall be attested by signatures of the Secretary and two members of the Committee

Specific Responsibilities

The Secretary shall be responsible for:

- Calling General Meetings and all Committee meetings, but shall not be responsible for calling Sub-committee meetings unless this is specified under the terms of reference.

- Taking minutes of General Meetings and of the Committee Meetings but not of sub-committee meetings
- Keeping those records of the RMO listed above up to date, and making them available for inspection by the members and others with an interest in the RMO by arrangement at all reasonable times.
- Access to information at all reasonable times under the rules or standing orders of the RMO shall be interpreted as for at least one hour between 9.00am on Saturday morning and 6.00pm on Saturday evening of any week, and for at least one hour on three evenings of every week between 7.00pm and 10.00pm.

Role of Treasurer of the RMO

- The Treasurer is responsible for the financial records of the RMO and for reporting to the Board and the rest of the RMO and ensuring that they are informed of the state of the RMO's finances.
- The Treasurer shall have all these functions enumerated in the Rules and Standing Orders of the RMO, and shall remain responsible for the actions of anyone to whom they may delegate any such responsibility. Anyone to whom the RMO in Board or subcommittee or General Meeting delegates responsibilities of the Treasurer shall be governed by the same Rules and Standing Orders in carrying out their duties and responsibilities
- Ensuring the staff draft an annual budget for presentation to the Finance subcommittee and all Finance Sub Committee (FSC) meetings should be held in accordance with the FSC Quorum.
- Regular meetings with the Finance Manager to monitor income and expenditure against budget, reporting any significant variations to the finance subcommittee and the Board.
- Attending Board meetings with special responsibility for drawing the Board's attention to the financial Implications' of proposals and their decisions.
- Ensuring the preparation of the draft accounts and presentation of annual accounts to the Annual General Meeting.
- Meeting with the staff and the RMO's auditor to discuss the general management and recording of the
- RMO's financial transactions and the quarterly finance reports.
- Researching sensible arrangements for the investment of the RMO's reserves.
- Recommend changes where necessary to finance standing orders in order to maintain adequate systems of financial management and control.

In summary the duties of the RMO Board is to:

- Define and ensure compliance with the values and objectives of the organisation.
- Agree the annual Delivery Plan with its Partner organisations.
- Establish policies and plans to achieve the Delivery Plan and meet the agreed objectives.
- Set and approve each year's budget and accounts prior to publication.

- Establish and oversee a framework of delegation and systems of control.
- Agree policies and make decisions on all matters that might create significant financial or other risk to the organisation, or which raise material issues of principle.
- Monitor the organisation's performance in relation to these plans, budgets, controls and decisions taking decisive action to correct under performance and to achieve continuous improvement.
- Satisfy itself that the organisation's affairs are conducted lawfully and in accordance with generally accepted standards of performance and propriety.

Functions of the Board

- Ensure compliance with the Management Agreement between the RMO, Local Authority and United Residents' Housing.
- Define and ensure compliance with the delivery plan through the agreement of:
 - Policies for action
 - Budgets
 - A framework of delegation and system control including performance monitoring
- Ensure the affairs of the RMO is conducted lawfully and ethically and within the terms of its constitution.
- Ensure arrangements are in place for urgent decisions to be made in between meetings.

Collective Board responsibilities

- Acting in the interests of the RMO and not on behalf of any constituency or interest group.
- Acceptance of collective responsibility for decisions made.

1.4 Board Review and Renewal

The RMO Board will ensure their continuing effectiveness; this needs clarity of purpose, and a focus on performance and renewal. The Board will consider and implement succession-planning arrangements, to ensure a planned and orderly renewal of the Board over a period of years. In doing so, the board should bear in mind the need to reflect the organisation's commitment to equality of opportunity in the composition of the Board. In particular it will:

- Carry out a regular review of its own strengths and weaknesses in order to ensure its continuing effectiveness.
- Carry out regular equal opportunities monitoring of the Board to ensure it reflects the community it represents and positive recruitment principles are followed where there is under representation.
- Ensure that new members are recruited or elected on a systematic and continuous basis, and thus avoid bigger changes at infrequent intervals.
- Publish how new members are recruited.
- Set maximum terms of office for individual Board members, the Chair and other officers of the Board.
- Use a range of recruitment techniques to secure a wider choice of Residents' and attempt to identify potential Board members.
- Appraise the training needs and provide induction training for new members and ensure that effective arrangements are made to maintain and enhance the skills and motivation of all Board members.
- Ensure that all Board members fully understand their role and responsibilities.
- Have an annual Board member appraisal system to ensure all Boards members comply with the code of conduct and constitution.

1.5 Checklist for the Recruitment of Board Members

- Identify skills, knowledge and experience gaps of Board against current and future requirements.
- Consider gender, race, and age profile of Board identifying under represented.
- Design person specification for approval by Board.
- Consider appropriate recruitment media dependent upon person specification
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of position including the consideration of potential and significant conflicts of interest
- New member to declare other interests to the Secretary in accordance with the constitution.
- Report and minute approval of appointment at Board.
- Enter details in Register of Members and Secretary.
- Identify induction and training programme.

1.6 Expenses for Board Members

Memorandum of Associations and Articles of Association approved by the Government presently prohibit the payment of Board members. The payment of legitimate expenses however, is permitted. The RMO will provide adequate financial reimbursement to ensure that no Board member is disadvantaged financially from attending the Board meetings or other designated events of the Board.

Our expenses policies includes':

- Definitions of the organisations business that expenses will be paid.
- Special consideration for members with mobility problems including the provision of taxis.
- Carers (to include care of elderly, infirm or children of school age) allowance that differentiates between meetings and overnight events.
- Agreed rates of payment for the use of member's own car.
- Agreement on the use of public transport.
- Consideration of the use of taxis for evening meetings where fear of crime is a concern.
- Reimbursement of telephone, computer and mobile calls.
- Payment of all reasonable expenditure when Board members are requested to attend events/ training/conferences on behalf of the Board.

The RMO also has a Low- income friendly policy to ensure that participation in the Board activities does not infringe on Board members' cash flow and income. Our Policy includes:

- Attending events away from home can be expensive and considerations of a reasonable daily allowance to ensure Board members attending conferences and training events are fully able to participate.
- For certain events expense and or tickets /bookings etc should be available in advance.
- Ensuring that there are no restrictions on the frequency of reimbursements and that arrangements' are made to ensure swift repayment.

1.7 Organised Meetings

Effective conduct of the Board business is vital to good governance. Without suitably clear and incisive documents, no Board can hope to make wise decisions. It is also a principle of good governance that all RMO Board members should contribute to making decisions, which may involve the organisation in significant financial or other risks, or which, raise material issues of principle. Very occasionally, such decisions will be required urgently between meetings and the systems must be robust enough to deal with these properly.

- Board decisions will, wherever possible, be based on full agendas and documents circulated to members well in advance of meetings.
- Board Members will receive succinct reports, which focus upon both strategic and operational issues.
- Consideration is given to the time that Board members have to read and digest reports. It is recommended that where possible Board papers are despatched at least **3 working days** prior to the Board meeting.
- Board agendas will reflect the relative importance of key papers and a reasonable time allocation should be given to papers, which require discussion/debate and decision.
- Points for decision will be clearly identified in those documents.
- Board reports will provide sufficient information to enable informed decision making. Information should be presented as cogently as possible.
- Boards will ensure they operate in an open and inclusive manner. Holding meetings in public and using a range of 'easily accessible' venues throughout the estate of operation are useful mechanisms for optimising the involvement and engagement of the public.
- Decisions will be clearly recorded in the minutes.
- The Board will be an annual assessment of how effective it is in conducting its business.
- Urgent decisions will be taken in accordance with predetermined arrangements as set out in the organisation's constitution or standing orders.

1.8 Our Board Member Charter

BGRMO exists for the benefit of the residents within the estate. It pledges to

“BUILD A GREENER, SAFER AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE WITH THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE”

by: -

Delivering excellent customer service by providing a fair, equal and confidential service to all people and groups of people living on the estate.

Ensuring that all residents and staff are free from discrimination and harassment on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religious belief, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Ensuring that incidences of harassment, nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour are investigated and dealt with.

Managing repairs and other estate services effectively and efficiently.

In consultation with residents, we will negotiate the financing and delivery of major improvements and cyclical maintenance projects with our partner organisations.

Striving to constantly improve performance in its key tasks, measuring progress and sharing the results with all residents.

Encouraging active participation from all residents.

Giving all residents a voice at open and general meetings.

Keeping residents informed of progress and events via a regularly published newsletter.

Managing the relationship with the Local Council and United Resident Housing in the best interest of all Residents.

Where necessary, represent residents individually in dealing with the Local Council and other agencies.

2 Propriety, Openness and Equality of the Board

2.1: Openness

Blenheim Gardens RMO is an open and accountable organisation. Transparency in decision making is recognised as an important element in demonstrating that individuals are treated fairly. At the same time the board needs to balance the difficult task of being open and accountable and at the same time respecting confidentiality. This task is not easy and the board has established clear guidelines and these will also need to be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Our Openness and Confidentiality policy includes:

- The information the Board makes available concerning its work, its Board and its employees.
- The details of which organisational information will be accessible for example personnel file, tenancy files, policies etc.
- Providing appropriate and informed information to major stakeholders.
- In what circumstances personal information will be provided both internally and externally including:
 - What information will be kept confidential
 - Rights of access for the individual
 - In what circumstances information will be disclosed
 - Informed consent of the person concerned
 - Who can speak on behalf of the organisation to the press etc
 - Identification of which minutes and Board papers are confidential and the authorisation and penalties for release of papers to third parties
 - A section detailing whistle blowing for staff and Board members
 - Data protection
 - Freedom of Information

2.2: Board Membership Policy and Code of Conduct for Board Members

Membership to the Board

Membership to the RMO board is open to any person aged eighteen years, and over, who is a lawful Tenant, Leaseholder, or Freeholder of dwellings within Blenheim Gardens Estate.

Any person who qualifies and wishes to become a board member, must first obtain a share certificate in accordance to the **Registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 – 1978**) IPS Act. Upon being nominated, to the board, and the payment of ten pence for a BGRMO share certificate.

A sealed certificate shall be issued, to one share per qualifying resident, and duly noted in the BGRMO share certificate records, and these records should be made available for the yearly financial audit.

Your agreement to be bound by the provisions of the **RMO's Code of Conduct Rules'**, can only be accepted upon signing the following **Code of Conduct Rules**.

General

1. This **Code of Conduct Rules for Board Members** provides the operating guidance, duties and roles and responsibilities for board members and co-opted members, once elected or co-opted to the Board. By signing this **Code of Conduct Rules for BGRMO Board Members**, you are agreeing to abide by the duties stipulated therein.
2. Board/ Co Opted Members of BGRMO are required, when representing the Board to conduct themselves in a way that brings credit to the organisation and does not in any way bring it into disrepute.
3. Board/Co Opted Members should be aware that they are ultimately responsible for the running of the estate, and should not make public criticisms about the Board, the staff running the estate at anytime and at General or Annual general meetings. These should be properly brought up at Board meetings, where concerns can be addressed in detail.
4. Board/Co Opted Members are representative of other residents and may deal with difficult and confidential matters. They will be required to exercise discretion and care in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. Board members and co-opted members must not discuss outside the BGRMO, confidential information regarding tenants, office operations, law enforcement agencies and contractors. Failure to comply to this will be considered a serious breach of the code of conduct and could lead to dismissal from the board under disciplinary code.
5. The Board must ensure that the Board meets its responsibilities effectively and fairly. In doing so the Board members must seek to protect the rights of individual tenants, employees and council employees who have been seconded to the Board.
6. Board/Co Opted members must ensure that the Board operates within the BGRMO's constitution and within the terms of the management agreement with the council, or any other organisation with which it may have a similar agreement.

Membership

7. Only members of the Board have the right to attend Board meetings. However, other individuals, or external advisers may be invited to attend all or part of any board meeting as and when appropriate, only upon agreement from the Chair, Secretary or Treasurer.
8. Appointments to the board shall be for a period of up to three years, re-election to the board shall be made at the BGRMO Annual General Meeting.
9. The Board shall vote and appoint the board members to fulfill the key roles e.g. Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

Powers and Duties of the Board

10. The Board may delegate any of its functions to subcommittees made up of members of the Board and such other persons as it sees fit provided that Board members remain in the majority on any subcommittee. Any subcommittee so formed shall in the exercise of its powers conform with any regulations imposed upon it by the Board.
11. All cheque's, promissory notes, drafts, bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments, and all receipts for monies paid to the Society shall be signed, drawn, accepted, endorsed or otherwise executed in such manner as the Board shall from time to time by resolution determine.
12. At every Board, meeting the Chairperson shall preside, but in the event of her/his, absence or unwillingness to act the, members present shall choose one of their number to be Chairperson of the meeting.
13. Questions arising at Board meetings shall be decided by a majority of votes of those present. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.
14. If the Board falls below the minimum number as expressed in these rules, the Board shall act to fill such vacancies or to call a General Meeting of the Society, and for no other purpose.
15. A resolution in writing signed by all members for the time being entitled to vote at meetings of the Board shall be valid and effective as if the same had been passed at a meeting duly convened and held and may consist of several identical documents each signed by one or more members.

Conduct between Board Members

16. Board Members are all volunteers and give their time according to the level of commitment they are able to make. The purpose of this section of the Code is to ensure that every Board Member feels equally valued for their time and effort. Board Members will:
17. Address each other with respect and by an agreed form of title.
18. Allow every person the opportunity to express an opinion on every issue as it arises even if they personally disagree with that opinion

19. Protect each other from outside criticism by ensuring that the General Code above is observed and referring criticisms to full Board Meetings for consideration
20. Recognise and respect the experience of other Members and the time donated voluntarily on an equal basis
21. Agree to be bound by decisions formally delegated to the Chair, Officers or any sub-committee
22. Once the Board has passed a proposal then all Board members must take responsibility for the collective action, even if they have voted against the proposal. Board members must not voice opposing views outside of a Board meeting.

Personal Issues of Board Members

23. Board/Co Opted members should not receive more or less favourable treatment or other advantage by virtue of being a Board Member.
24. Board/Co Opted members will be expected to use the procedures used by all other Blenheim Gardens tenants and leaseholders when raising issues on behalf of themselves. This will include such matters as repairs, transfers and rent arrears.

Training

25. All new Board members must undertake induction training (**including the four compulsory training courses to be taken within one year of becoming a board member**) this includes a skills audit, training needs analysis, instruction about the code of conduct and their board duties.
26. All Board members will be required to attend training annually and undertake other activities, to ensure that they are competent to undertake their role as Board members.
27. Board members must co-operate with any annual appraisal process agreed by the Board.

Cessation of Membership to the Board

28. A member shall cease to be a member immediately if s/he:
 - Resigns in writing to the Secretary; or
 - Ceases in the opinion of the Board to qualify for membership
 - Under the provisions of Rules or
 - Is expelled from membership in accordance with Rules; or
 - Dies
29. A member may be expelled by a resolution carried by a majority of no less three members of the board and after completing an investigation under the BGRMO grievance procedures. Due notice has been given, provided that the grounds for expulsion have been specified in the notices calling the meeting and that the member whose expulsion is to be considered shall be given the opportunity to state her/his case to the meeting. If on due notice having been served the member fails to attend the meeting, the meeting may proceed in the member's absence.
30. No member expelled from shall be re-admitted except by a resolution carried by a majority of

not less than two-thirds of the BGRMO members voting at any Board or emergency meeting of which due notice have been given, for all to attend.

Code of Behaviour at Board Meetings

31. Board members must contribute to board meetings in a constructive and orderly way using formal meeting procedure, laid out in the BGRMO roles and responsibilities.
32. Board members should come to meetings ensuring that they have read and understood documents relating to any decision that they are required to make.
33. Board members should arrive at meetings on time and contribute to ensuring good time keeping through out the meeting.
34. During meetings Board members should clearly, state whether the view they are expressing is personal or representative of the view of any specific group of residents.
35. Concerns about the conduct or content of meetings should be raised with the Chair in the first instance and if the Board member is not satisfied, using the Board complaints procedure.

Dealing with Employees

36. Board/Co Opted members shall at all times, be courteous to staff.
37. Board members should not issue instructions directly to staff other than the Key Officers, or his/her deputy in his/her absence, who will convey requests and requirements to appropriate staff members through the line management process.
38. Complaints about staff should be taken up with the lead officer who will take appropriate action. Where the board member feels the matter is serious, the complaint should be made in writing to the lead officer. Complaints about the lead officer should be made in writing to the chair of the BGRMO.

Dealing with Residents

39. Board/Co Opted members shall at all time, be courteous to residents and observe strict confidential concerning their tenancy/residential affairs.
40. If the resident has a complaint then s/he should be advised to make a complaint using the formal complaints procedure and referred firstly to the Estate Director, as part of that process.
41. Complaints regarding the RMO should be directed to the Estate Director, unless the resident specifically requests the BGRMO board to investigate and resolve the complaint.
42. Residents should be given a notice of 10 working days inviting them to attend a meeting to discuss their grievance/complaint under the BGRMO residents complaints procedures.
43. Complaints about staff member(s) should be taken up with the Estate Director, who will take appropriate action.
44. Complaints about the Estate Management should be made to the Chair of the BGRMO.

45. Resident's wishing their complaints to be dealt with a BGRMO Board panel should be submitted in writing, and all documentary evidence of events and any background information pertinent to the complaint should be submitted to board members selected to hear the complaint, a minute of all recommendation/decisions should be made and a copy provided to the resident/complainant and Estate Director for the residents files.
46. All matters discussed during the complaints process and any discussions, recommendations or decisions made should be treated as confidentiality, and no parties outside of the organisation should be informed of the outcome/discussions, unless the matter is referred to housing auditors, Lambeth Council, URH, subject to a court order, forms part of a criminal investigation or the expressed permission of the resident also known as the complainant has been obtained in writing.

Declaration of Interest

47. A board member or Co Opted member must declare any involvement they have in any organisation with which the BGRMO, may either now or in the future do business. This information, must be recorded in the Members Interests Register kept by the Secretary, and must be completed each financial year. It is the responsibility of the individual board/Co Opted member to ensure that this information is up to date. Failure to disclose an interest, would be regarded as serious misconduct and a serious breach of this Code of Conduct Rules.
48. A board/Co Opted member must inform the BGRMO, prior to any discussion, of any issue which affects them, or would put them into a situation of conflict of interest; for instance about the improvement of properties, the environment that includes the board members home or the environment around their home or during recruitment/contract tendering exercise. The RMO may at their discretion, exclude such a board/Co Opted member from the discussion and/or any decision arising from such discussion.
49. A board/Co Opted member must inform the BGRMO of any interest, financial or otherwise s/he may have in any company or organisation that tenders for any work covered in the Blenheim Gardens Management agreement. If the interest is financial, the member shall be excluded from the discussion (except in the capacity of contractor) and any decision making relating to that company or organisation. If the interest is other than financial the BGRMO board may at its discretion exclude the Board member from the discussion and/or any decision.
50. Any Board/Co Opted member who is subject to a court order for e.g. rent arrears, ASBO, nuisance or any litigation with the BGRMO, which brings their tenancy, leasehold, or freehold at risk must declare an interest, and withdraw from any meeting while the subject is being discussed, and/or any decision is being made, and/or any decision arising from such discussion is made.
51. Any Board/Co Opted member involved in legal action as defined in point 50, may be suspended from the board, until such times as the Board agrees on their re-instatement. This will also relate to any other legal action, being taken out against a serving board/Co Opted member of the BGRMO.
52. Any Board/Co Opted member with a court order or subject to a criminal conviction which breaches their tenancy, leasehold or freehold as defined in the householders contract or tenancy agreement, must resign from the Board.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct Rules

53. Any breach of the code of conduct by a board member or board members will be considered misconduct. Serious or persistent breach of the code of conduct will be investigated. If misconduct is proven this will result in action, (according to the level of seriousness of the misconduct), being taken against the member involved.
54. Allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct by elected Board members, may be made using the Board complaints procedure. Any board member against whom an allegation is made will be required to co-operate with an investigation process and be given right of reply.
55. All allegations of breaches will be considered by the board at the next board meeting. In the case of alleged serious breach the board may convene a special meeting to discuss the matter, and determine a course of action.
56. If the allegation is made against the chair, then the vice-chair/secretary must take the chair during the discussion.
57. The board has the power to immediately suspend the member from the board pending the outcome of investigation. The board has the power to deal with minor infringements of the code of conduct rules within its meeting to the power to recommend the removal of the member from the board.
58. The board has the power to recommend the expulsion of any offending Board member from the RMO. This would be done at a general meeting under the provision in the RMO constitution.
59. In the case of misconduct by the chair, a vote of no confidence may be passed in accordance with standing orders and a new chair elected, or the Vice Chair/secretary requested to take the chair role until the next elections.

Confidentiality

60. Board members must respect confidentiality. Information made available to available to Board members in the course of their duties, concerning the personal circumstances of any resident, staff member, or prospective resident shall not be disclosed to any non-board members except with the express permission of the person or persons concerned.
61. Information acquired as a Board member must not be used to further personal business interests.

Board Meetings

1. Board meetings shall be held every first Wednesday of the month, unless the Board decides at a convened BGRMO board meeting to change the meeting date, and such actions should be relayed to all board/Co Opted members.

Quorum of Meetings

62. The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be a minimum of **five** members, of whom the majority should be no more than one co-opted members and at least one key officer. A duly convened meeting of the Board at which a quorum is present shall be competent to exercise all or any of the authorities, powers and discretions vested in or exercisable by the Board.

Notice of Emergency Meetings

63. Emergency meetings can be summoned by any of the BGRMO Board member's request, but only on the agreement of the key holding positions and if it is agreed that the matter needs to be discussed prior to the next monthly BGRMO board meeting.
64. Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date together with an agenda of items to be discussed, shall be forwarded to each member of the Board and any other person required to attend no later than 5 working days before the date of the meeting. Supporting papers shall be sent to Board members and to other attendees as appropriate, at the same time.

Minutes of Meetings

65. The Secretary or nominated minute taker, shall minute the proceedings and resolutions of all meetings of the Board, including recording the names of those present and in attendance.
66. The Minute taker shall record any conflicts of interest divulged at the meeting.
67. Minutes of Board meetings shall be circulated to all members of the Board before the next meeting of the Board.
68. Amendments of the minutes should be noted and the completed minutes signed when or if all changes needed to be completed and have been accepted; by the Chair, or in the absence of the Chair signed by one of the Key Officers(Secretary/Treasurer).

Annual General Meeting

69. Members of the Board shall attend the Annual General Meeting, prepared to respond to any questions on the Board's activities.
70. An Annual General Meeting shall be held within six months of the close of the financial year, the business of which shall comprise:

The receipt of the accounts and balance sheet and all reports of the Board and of the auditor;
The election of Board members;
The appointment of an auditor;
Such other business as may have been included in the notice convening the meeting.

Auditors

71. The BGRMO shall, in accordance with the Friendly and Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1968, appoint in each year one auditors to whom the accounts shall be submitted for audit as required by the Act, and who shall be invited to Meetings, and be given access to books and information as provided by the Act.
72. Every such auditor shall be appointed by the BGRMO Annual General Meeting, and in the case of any auditor so appointed who is a qualified auditor under Section 7 of the Act the provisions of Sections 5 and 6 thereof apply to her/his re-appointment and removal and to any

resolution removing her/him or appointing another person in her/his place and agreed by the board.

Annual Return

73. Every year not later than June 30th, or not later than three months after this date in accordance to the IPS Act, the Secretary shall send the annual return, in the form prescribed by the IPS Act.
74. Included in the return together with; a copy of the report of the auditor on the BGRMO account for the period included in the return; and a copy of each balance sheet made during that period and of the report of the auditor on that balance sheet.

Records and Seal

75. The BGRMO shall keep at its registered office a Register of Board Members and shall enter the following particulars:
 - The names and addresses of the members;
 - A statement that one share only is held by each member and that ten pence has been paid,
 - The date at which each person was entered in the register as a member,
 - The names and addresses of all Board members,
76. The Board shall ensure that proper minutes are kept of all General, Board, Sub-Committee and Forum meetings of the BGRMO. Such minutes shall include a record of those present and of any decisions taken and shall be available for inspection by any Board or Cop Opted member and residents unless considered to be confidential to the operations of the BGRMO.
77. The BGRMO shall have a seal kept in the custody of the BGRMO office, and used only by the authority of the Board. Sealing shall be attested by the signature of two Board members.

Amendments to Code of Conduct Rules

78. Any code of conduct rules may be rescinded or amended or a new rule made by a vote of three quarters of the members of the BGRMO board present and voting at a board meeting of which fourteen clear days prior notice has been given, such notice to include details of the change(s) to be proposed at the meeting.

2.4: Equality

The RMO Board has a responsibility to serve the whole community of Blenheim Gardens Estate equally. Equality of opportunity needs to be a core objective of the organisation and therefore the Board in promoting good governance on equality the Board will ensure:

- Their own membership reflects the community they represent
- Recruitment to the Board or sub committees is fair and transparent and positive action principles are followed where there is under representation
- That training for Board members on equality issues is provided and taken up
- That employment and recruitment policies and procedures for staff are fair and open and positive action principles are followed where there is under representation
- That training for all staff members on equality is provided and attendance is monitored
- That regular reports are received on the effectiveness of the equality policies including monitoring and analysis of information on employment, services of the RMO, the use of contractors and recruitment.

3 Management by the Board

3.1 Performance Management

Performance management is essential in order to ensure that the RMO is focused upon its key priorities and continues to deliver improvements in services.

Performance measurement can contribute to effective services:

- What gets measured gets done – but you must ensure these are the right measures
- If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure
- If you can't see success, you can't reward it
- If you can't reward success, your probably rewarding failure
- If you can't see success, you can't learn from it
- If you can't recognise failure, you can't correct it
- If you can demonstrate results, you can achieve earned autonomy.

The Local Authority and United Residents' Housing will assess the performance of Blenheim Gardens RMO in addition the RMO's own monitoring functions. Blenheim Gardens RMO however, needs to ensure it has adequate monitoring systems and management systems in place

to confirm level of performance in key areas. The board will ensure the performance level is challenging and that a strategy is developed for the organisation to constantly improve year on year.

Performance Management checklist for action by the RMO Board includes the following questions:

- How well is your Organisation performing in delivering key targets?
- Which are the priority areas we need to improve?
- Is BGRMO improving its performance – e.g. key targets for services to improve, resources required to deliver improvements?

Risk Management

Risk is the threat that an event or action will adversely affect an organisation's ability to achieve its objectives and to execute its strategies successfully.

It is essential therefore that the RMO Board decisions are taken using all available information on possible outcomes – this is risk management. The main principle underlying controls assurance is that the RMO has assured that it is managing all risks as effectively as is reasonably possible within the resources available. This requires the RMO organisation to continuously review risk and the controls in place to mitigate risk through a process of critical self-assessment to assure itself and others that systems are in place and working effectively.

There are many different types of risk, some of which are cross cutting. For the RMO some of the key risks include:

- Financial Risks – for example, not having sufficient funding to meet all our commitments, potentially resulting in a projected deficit at year-end.
- Performance Risks – for example, a failure to achieve or retain the expected performance level or star level with United Residents' Housing may result in the RMO being unable to draw down the financial resources necessary to deliver decent homes, decent estates and sustainable communities.
- Reputation Risks – for example arising from adverse publicity about a failing within the RMO.
- Legal Risks – for example, due to a lack of understanding, performance failure or implementation of legislation leading to litigation.
- Our RMO Risk Management checklist for action included asking the following questions:
 - Does the RMO know what risks it faces?
 - Is the board satisfied that the RMO has a robust response to manage and minimise such risks?

- Does the Board know the significant risks facing its partners in achieving two stars and delivering decent homes, decent estates and sustainable communities?

Annex 1: Good Governance - A Self Audit Check List

It is the Board of Blenheim Gardens RMO with whom the Council has used powers under a Management Agreement with the Council and United Residents' Housing.

Checklist for Board of Blenheim Gardens RMO

Properly Governed

The RMO operates according to its constitution.

The Board meets regularly and acts within its constitution and all relevant legislation.

The Board has established effective arrangements to ensure compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations.

The Board has effective with a wide range of expertise –supported by appropriate systems of governance and control;

The Board has a wide range of skills, expertise and up to date knowledge and regularly assesses its performance as a Board.

The Board identifies gaps in knowledge and takes positive action to ensure on going training and development.

The Board is diverse and reflects the community it represents.

Individual Board members act in a personal capacity

Organisational management structures reflect the objectives set out in the Delivery Plan.

A Code of Conduct for the Board and staff is in place including a payments and hospitality policy.

The Board has established appropriate mechanisms to ensure that prejudice, bias or conflicts of interests do not influence members and employees of the body.

Make publicly available the names of all Board members, together with their relevant other interests.

The Board should work with its partners in an open and co-operative manner. It

should notify anything that might be a breach of these requirements or affect the ability of the RMO to fulfil its obligations

The Board will consider any areas where there is a need for improvement and actions agreed with its partners.

There is an agreed disputes mechanism in place with its partners.

The Board maintains the highest standards of probity in all its dealings and act at all times to maintain the good reputation of its partners.

- *Approved terms of reference for committees and delegation are in place.*
- *Sound procurement practices are in place and partnerships with other organisations are clearly defined and documented.*
- *There are internal control systems and the Board regularly reviews their effectiveness.*
- *External audit reports are considered and acted upon by the Board.*

Financially Viable

The RMO operates the highest standards of financial management and probity at all times

- *Accounts and returns are submitted on time and demonstrate the RMO is and will remain solvent.*
- *Financial policies and procedures are in evidence. And the Board has timely and accurate financial information to inform its decision making process.*

The Board protects the public investment it is responsible for.

- *The Board has established formal procedural and financial regulations to govern the conduct of its business.*

The RMO must operate as a viable business

The RMO business plan demonstrates its priorities and strategy for achieving its objectives including commitments to its partners, residents and other stakeholders.

The RMO operates a risk management framework that effectively identifies and then manages any risks that might prevent the RMO meeting its objectives.

The RMO business planning is informed by asset management information, which is reviewed regularly.

Properly Managed

The Board regularly review activities and policies including new business opportunities and a clear case is developed for the proposed or existing direction

Any material changes of direction are considered by the Board contained in the Delivery Plan and reported to its partners

The RMO must have management arrangement resources, systems and skills that are appropriate for the circumstances, scale and scope of the operation. Ensuring their activities are;

Monitored

Best value

And are backed by proper systems of assurance for internal control

The Board receives reports on all areas of the RMO's performance.

The Board has established clearly documented management processes for the development, implementation and review of policy and for decision-making, monitoring, control and reporting. That services and structures are regularly subject to challenge and the principles of best value and that the RMO can demonstrate via benchmarking that its services compared to other similar organisations are competitive

Engaged and Communicating

The RMO seeks and is responsive to residents' views and consult with other external organisations in carrying out its duties.

- *Regularly provides residents with the opportunity to comment on the RMO's performance.*
- *Enables residents to play an active part in decision making.*
- *Information about the RMO is regularly published and distributed to tenants and other stakeholders.*
- *An effective complaints procedure is publicised and operated.*
- *The RMO uses a range of methods of consultation consistent with the Unity Plan and other consultation mechanisms such as the Residents Compact.*
- *Residents are supported and encouraged to play an active part in the Board and all other management activities.*
- *Meetings of the Board are open and accessible.*
- *Residents and stakeholders have access to the AGM and all reports to the AGM.*
- *Report publicly the processes for making appointments to the Board.*

Annex 2 Board Monitoring Form for New Members

NAME:	DATE:
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1. Skills and Experience

The RMO Board needs to ensure that collectively its members have the skills necessary for it to manage the organisation. Please indicate your own assessment of your skills and experience against each of the headings below by ticking the appropriate box and completing the evidence/comments section. If more space is required, then please use a separate sheet.

Levels of Skills and Experience	
Good – A	Reasonable – B
Some - C	Little/None - D
Meaning:	
Good	Understand the area well having had personal experience of it, up-to-date on current issues and developments and able to take the lead in any discussion on the area.
Reasonable	Understand the area and able to contribute to discussions with knowledgeable observations and questions.
Some	Understand generally the area and able to contribute to discussions with common sense observations and questions.
Little/None	Unfamiliar with the area and able to contribute to discussions with questions of clarification.

	A	B	C	D	Evidence/Comments
A. General Business and Management					
Strategic Decision-taking					
Business Planning					

Staff Management					
Working as an Effective Team					
Corporate Governance					

	A	B	C		Evidence/Comments
B. Local Authority Housing					
Housing Issues in Lambeth					
Needs and Aspirations of Residents and their Communities					
Equal Opportunities					

Tenant Empowerment					
C. Specific Areas					
Community Relations and Needs					
Management of Property and Contracts					
Finance and Treasury					
Legal					
Management of Information Technology					

Public Relations and Presentations					
Working with Local Authorities/Partners					

Other Skills

Do you have other skills/experience not previously listed, which you think would be useful in your role as a Board Member?
 If so, what are they and how do you think they could be used?

Qualifications

Please list your qualifications below

Annex 3 Board Members Appraisal Form

NAME:	DATE:
--------------	--------------

1. Skills and Experience

The Board needs to ensure that collectively its members have the skills necessary for it to manage the business of the organisation. Please indicate your own assessment of your skills and experience against each of the headings below by ticking the appropriate box and completing the evidence/comments section. If more space is required, then please use a separate sheet.

Levels of Skills and Experience			
Good – A	Reasonable – B	Some – C	Little/None - D
Meaning:			
Good	Understand the area well having had personal experience of it, up-to-date on current issues and developments and able to take the lead in any discussion on the area.		
Reasonable	Understand the area and able to contribute to discussions with knowledgeable observations and questions.		
Some	Understand generally the area and able to contribute to discussions with common sense observations and questions.		
Little/None	Unfamiliar with the area and able to contribute to discussions with questions of clarification.		

	A	B	C		Evidence/Comments
A. General Business and Management					
Strategic Decision-taking					

Business Planning					
Staff Management					
Working as an Effective Team					
Corporate Governance					

	A	B	C		Evidence/Comments
B. Local Authority Housing					
Housing Issues in Lambeth					
Needs and Aspirations of Residents and their Communities					

Equal Opportunities				
Tenant Empowerment				
C. Specific Areas				
Community Relations and Needs				
Management of Property and Contracts				
Finance and Treasury				
Legal				

Management of Information Technology					
Public Relations and Presentations					
Working with Local Authorities/partner Organisations					

Other Skills

Do you have other skills/experience not previously listed, which you think would be useful in your role as a Board Member?
 If so, what are they and how do you think they could be used?

Qualifications

Please list your qualifications below

6. What parts of your role as a Board Member do you think you?

(a) Do best?

(b) Do less well?

(c) Fail to enjoy?

(d) Have difficulty with?

(When considering this section, think about all of the different aspects of being a Board Member, such as attending/participating in meetings, sitting on working parties etc., fostering good staff relations, attending promotional events and representing the organisation externally)

7. Training and Development Needs

Can you think of any training or other personal development that would help you in fulfilling your role as a Board Member? When listing, please indicate your preferred means of achieving e.g. individual coaching, external courses, reading material, change of Boards, increased responsibility.

8. Other Comments

Please use this space to record any additional remarks, notes, questions, suggestions or other comments you wish to make.

CHAIR'S COMMENTS

(To be completed by the Chair after the review)

9. Agreed Training and Development Needs

Give details of any training or personal development needs agreed with specific objectives, priorities, appropriate timescales and preferred means of achieving.

10. Action Planner

Any other agreed courses of action, objectives or plans should be recorded below.

What is to be achieved? When is it to be achieved by? How will it be measured?

11. Additional Chair’s Remarks (if any)

Signature of Chair **Date**

Signature of Board Member **Date**

ANNEX 4 Board Member Training Plan

The RMO recognises that in order for Board Members to carry out their duties to a satisfactory level, they may need some training. To identify possible training and development needs the board completes a Skills and Experience Audit with all new board members, to ensure they receive the right training for the role they are undertaking within the organisation. All training required and or requested by a board member is provided **FREE OF CHARGE**. An example of our skills and Experience Audit and Training Needs Proforma is below.

Skills and Experience Audit

This information will provide the organisation with the list of your skills and experiences, and help identify training needs.

Name	
Address	
Post Code	
Work	
Post Code	
Please provide details of your skills and experiences e.g. Accounting, Invoicing, Law, Office Administration etc.	
Additionally, the tasks	

completed within the above examples and any relevant experience that you feel will help your participating in BGRMO board activities.	
Email Address	
Home Telephone Number	
Work Telephone Number	
Mobile	

Topic	Content and Outcomes	Designed for	Want to do	Priority
Annual Legislative Update	Straightforward guide to all the legislative changes impacting upon TMOs, including a guide to changes in procedures are required.	Staff and Board Members		
Governance & Board Functions	A layman's guide to the Board's responsibilities and job roles including: - Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, employing staff, managing Board meetings, selecting new Board Members and confidentiality.	All Board Members		
Employing Staff	Linked to a simple guidance document, this event covers: - Recruitment and Selection, Equal Opportunities, Terms and Conditions, Job Descriptions,	Board Members and staff		
Managing Staff	Motivating staff, performance management, appraisal and how to manage training.	Board Members and staff		
Communications and Marketing	Designing and producing effective residents newsletters, residents questionnaires, involving residents and engaging the youth population.	Board Members and staff		
Business Planning	Business planning, finance management and budgeting.	Board Members and staff		
Managing Contractors	Negotiating and contract management.	Board Members and staff		
Anti-social Behaviour	How to manage anti-social behaviour, including what constitutes acceptable behaviour, what the law allows, ongoing strategies and who can help.	Board Members and staff		

Customer Service	How to provide excellent customer service, including: - Dealing with complaints, managing difficult residents, measuring quality.	Board Members and staff		
Housing	General housing administration awareness (Beyond Office Induction).	Board Members		

Our Resident Board Member training program is designed to focus on the individual board member training needs and how their skills and commitment can be developed. There is also a strong focus on collective responsibility of the Governance of the organisation. If you can think of any training or other personal development that would help you in fulfilling your role as a Board Member, please do not hesitate to ask.

ANNEX 5

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Blenheim Gardens RMO is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all in the services and employment it provides, regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion age, gender, health, marital status or sexual orientation. In order to promote active policies and to eliminate discrimination, the organisation wishes to monitor Board member recruitment. We therefore request your co-operation in Sections A, B, and C (please tick one box for each section):

I would describe myself as:

Section A	Section B	Section C
Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Black <input type="checkbox"/>	Male <input type="checkbox"/>
Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	White <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
African <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
South-East Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed <input type="checkbox"/>	
British/European <input type="checkbox"/>		
Irish <input type="checkbox"/>		
Other <input type="checkbox"/>		

If you suffer from any disability as stated in the Disabilities Discrimination Act '96 (definitions of disability are attached) please tick box

If yes, please state what the disability is:

THE DEFINITION OF A DISABILITY

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) states that “ a person has a disability ... if they have a *physical or mental impairment* which has a substantial and long-term *adverse effect* on their ability to carry out *normal day-to-day activities*”. If an individual is to be protected under the DDA, he or she must satisfy the four main conditions (*in italics*) of the definition of disability under the Act.

Physical and Mental Impairment

Physical impairment is not defined by the DDA, but includes impairments that affect the senses, e.g., hearing or sight.

Mental impairment is defined as impairment resulting or consisting of a mental illness only if the illness is a clinically *well recognised* illness. This could include manic depression, schizophrenia and severe extended depressive psychoses. A clinically well-recognised illness is an illness that is accepted to exist by a body of respected medical practitioners, e.g., World Health Organisation.

A mental impairment as defined in the **Mental Health Act 1983**, can fall within the definition of a mental impairment in the DDA, but this does not mean that a mental impairment that falls within the definition of a mental impairment in the DDA, must also fall within the definition of mental impairment in the Mental Health Act, to be a mental impairment under the DDA.

Normal day-to-day Activities

Impairment is to be taken to affect the ability of the person concerned to carry out normal day-to-day activities only if it affects one of the following:

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical co-ordination
- continence
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- perception of risk of physical danger

Disabilities Controlled by Medication or Special Aids

Generally, an individual with a disability is protected by the DDA, even if he or she successfully controls or corrects his or her disability (for example, individuals with epilepsy controlled by medication). However, an individual with a sight impairment, which is corrected by spectacles, contact lenses or any other means, will not be protected by the DDA. The mere use of medication or special aids does not automatically indicate the presence of a disability as defined in the DDA.

ANNEX 6

The Unity Plan

What is the 'Unity' Plan?

THE WORD 'UNITY' FORMS PART OF THE WORD COMM'UNITY' AND THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBES WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE, WITH YOUR HELP, FOR BLENHEIM GARDEN ESTATE:

- U - We need U to help build a cohesive and sustainable community for the Resident's of Blenheim Gardens Estate
- N - Become Nationally known as the best Resident-led Housing Management Organisation within Lambeth
- I – Integrity: ensure all our policies and procedures are transparent and reflective of the community we serve
- T - Teamwork, need we say more?
- Y – Yes, together we can do it!

All members of the Blenheim Gardens Estate form part of the 'Unity Plan' since the Governance of the RMO is open to all Residents to serve all residents. The Unity Plan seeks to ensure all residents, especially those who do not normally become involved, have the opportunity and choice to directly influence the decisions that affect their homes and their community.

It is important that we have a clear Communication Strategy in place to ensure that all our stakeholders have access to clear and appropriate information. Stakeholders are all those in the service process (residents, staff, council members, external partners, wider community groups etc). The aim of the UNITY plan is to:

- Positively Promote and Encourage the involvement of all Residents in the planning and delivery of the services provided by the RMO
- Provide effective and accessible information on the range of opportunities available to Residents to become involved either individually or collectively
- Provide the necessary support resources and training to ensure effective involvement of residents who wish to play an active part
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Unity Plan in delivering agreed expectations and priorities

The Unity plan is a vehicle to drive change

We recognise that not all residents will want to get involved at the same level and the Unity plan reflects the different levels of involvement.

Involvement

Resident Involvement is key to the progress of the RMO since after all without the involvement and support of residents the RMO would cease to exist, it is that simple.

By helping more residents become involved in the organisation, the organisation will become more transparent and the services provided will reflect what matters most to residents.

How Residents can become involved:

- Writing, telephoning or emailing your ideas and/or concerns to the estate office
- Completing surveys, Questionnaires and service evaluation forms
- Participating in focus groups
- Attending residents meetings
- Becoming a board member or sub committee member
- Participating in Estate Inspections (Quarterly)
- Participating in resident training programmes
- Estate compact

Communication

Access to information is a pre requisite for effective involvement. Residents need to know about the services available and the issues affecting the services provision, particularly in relation to the wider housing policies and practices. Often residents do not know what services are available and or how to access them. It is the aim of the Unity Plan to keep residents informed about the services provided and to ensure you have your say in how the services will be provided. The 1985 Housing Act placed a duty on Landlords to provide information and consult with residents regarding the decisions being taken. We believe however, that on Blenheim Gardens Estate residents should be the driving force for change and the Unity plan provides a basis for this.

How we communicate to Residents:

- Newsletter (Every quarter)
- Annual Report
- Residents Sub Committees (Finance and Residents Panel)
- Internet www.bgrmo.org.uk
- Estate Office
- Telephone
- Resident Notices
- Estate Notice Boards
- Email
- General / Special Meetings

Consultation

The Unity Plan recognises that communication is a two way process and in addition to ensuring that all residents have access to information, we will make sure that we listen to you and give you every opportunity to give us your views in the decision making process.

The arrangements used for consultation will be vary according to the issue being covered and who is involved. To ensure our consultation process is reflective of the different community we serve, we use a number of means to consult.

How we will consult with Residents:

- Questionnaires
- Service Evaluation Forms
- Feedback (formal and informal)
- Internet www.bgrmo.org.uk
- Focus Groups
- General Meetings
- Annual General Meetings
- Estate Compact

How we will Measure our Success:

- Increase level of stakeholders in the RMO
- Increase in board member nominations at AGM's
- Increase in responses to consultation
- Improvement recorded in responses following consultation
- Improvement in residents satisfaction

The Unity Plan is seen as a mainstream component of improving policy-making and service delivery on Blenheim Gardens Estate now and in the future.

ANNEX 7 **Restricted – BGRMO Staff and Board Members**

**Blenheim Garden Residents Management Organisation – Register of Interests Proforma
Covering the Period - 31 March _____ to 1 April _____**

Please indicate which sections are relevant to you by completing either:

**I have no interests or relevant
employment record to declare**

Tick here

Please go straight to **THE SECTION(s) APPLICABLE**, then sign and date the form. Please forward the completed form to the Estate Director.

Or: Declare your own financial interests at Section A; and
Declare the interests of your immediate family at Section B; and
State any relevant previous employment in Section C
State any other relevant interests in Section D then sign and date the form and forward to your line manager.

Section A: Financial interests e.g. shares in companies contracted to complete works

Company/Organisation	Please give <u>full</u> details of interests

Section B – Interests of immediate family members

Please complete this form to declare interests of your immediate family members. You only need to give brief details of each interest. For example, “shares held in company [insert name of company]”. You should not disclose the name or identity of the immediate family member who holds the interest.

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Section C - Previous Employment

Please state your previous employment within public housing (or other relevant sectors if appropriate) below:

Company/Organisation	Please give <u>full</u> details and state year, position and key responsibilities	Start date and finish date

Complete on separate sheet if necessary

Section D: Other Interests

Please state any other interests that may be regarded as affecting impartiality and any other comments relevant to this declaration in the space below and then sign and date the form. Where the matter relates to another individual or an interest held by another individual, you should not disclose the name or identity of that individual.

DECLARATION

I declare the information contained is correct and in accordance with **BGRMO Board Members Constitution, Membership and Code of Conduct.**

Signed:

Name (printed):

Date:

FOR COMPLETION IF SECTIONS A, B, C OR D HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. THE ACTION TAKEN MUST BE MINUTED, THE DOCUMENT/MINUTE MUST REMAIN WITH THIS FORM.

I confirm that I have discussed this information and action has been taken in accordance with BGRMO Board Members Constitution, and the BGRMO Financial Audit Procedures.

Signed:
Chair of BGRMO
Date:

Name (printed):

