



Homes that change  
people's lives

## BOARD AND INDEPENDENT COMMITTEE MEMBER INFORMATION PACK

August 2024



Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a Board or Independent Committee Member.

We celebrated our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year and we are proud of all that the organisation has achieved over those sixty years. However, the need for the homes and the services we provide is even more important than ever in these uncertain and challenging times.



As you will see from “Our Plan for the Future 2023 – 2028”, over the next five years Elim will continue to grow and evolve and is looking to increase the number and quality of the homes and services we provide.

As a new Board or Independent Committee Member you would be joining us at an exciting time. We want your support in setting ambitious targets and guiding the team to the delivery of our challenging objectives.

We are particularly looking for a Board Member with development experience and knowledge, ideally in the housing sector. Experience of living in social housing and community involvement would also be welcomed.

All Board and Independent Committee Members must be able to demonstrate a commitment to our values and support our vision.

Additionally, we want to build the diversity of the Board and we warmly welcome applicants that reflect the communities where we work in.

Attitude and values are as important as technical skills, so if you believe that you are not the sort of person that would normally be on the Board or Committee of a housing association, you might be just the person we are looking for.

I hope you are as excited as I am by these opportunities and will feel encouraged to apply for the role. You will hear from some of our existing Board Members later in the pack.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sally Mason". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S'.

Sally Mason (Chair

## Introduction

This information pack is designed to give a brief insight into the work of the Elim Housing Group for prospective Board and Independent Committee Members. We would be happy to discuss any aspect in more detail with you before you apply – please contact Alishia Augustine on [a.augustine@elimhousing.co.uk](mailto:a.augustine@elimhousing.co.uk). If you are recruited to the Board, full induction training will be given. The areas covered in this pack will therefore be more fully explained in the context of the role during your introductory months.

## Our Story

Last year we celebrated Elim Housing Association's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. From humble beginnings in 1963, when a group of like-minded individuals came together, with a passion to address the undersupply of social housing, Elim have grown to an organisation that supports over 300 individuals across our supported housing schemes each year.

We have experienced many changes over the last 60 years and continue to evolve and adapt to support some of the most vulnerable individuals.

60 years on, we remain true to our values, continuing our mission to increase social housing supply, and are proud to add value in the areas we serve, delivering homes and specialist services that may be otherwise overlooked, due to scale or complexity, by other housing providers.

We look forward to seeing where the next 60 takes us!

## Who We Are

Our vision is to meet housing needs and deliver homes that change people's lives.

We are a small association with large ambitions. Our customers include families and single people living in properties for rent, residents of our supported accommodation services who are at risk of homelessness, young people undertaking apprenticeships or training and people buying houses we have developed among others. We are also the leading provider of managed sites for Travellers. We have the same aim for all these relationships: to ensure that the housing and services we provide serve as a platform for growth, facilitating all our customers to achieve their aspirations.

In this way we make our homes truly life-changing, ensuring that our service has a positive impact even after an individual's time in an Elim home.

In 2016 Elim launched our commercial subsidiary, Lime Property Ventures, providing new homes for sale, either on the open market or on behalf of clients or partner associations seeking specific housing solutions. Their first development was 22 units of student housing, still going strong today.

For further information on our history and organisation, please visit [www.elimhousing.co.uk](http://www.elimhousing.co.uk).

## Our Values



### **CUSTOMERS FIRST**

Customers are at the heart of our services and decision making.



### **ASPIRATIONAL & ACCOUNTABLE**

We are ambitious for our customers, colleagues and stakeholders. We work with integrity, learn from mistakes and do what we say we will.



### **RESULTS**

We work hard and deliver great results for our customers and for Elim.



### **EVERYONE'S VIEW MATTERS**

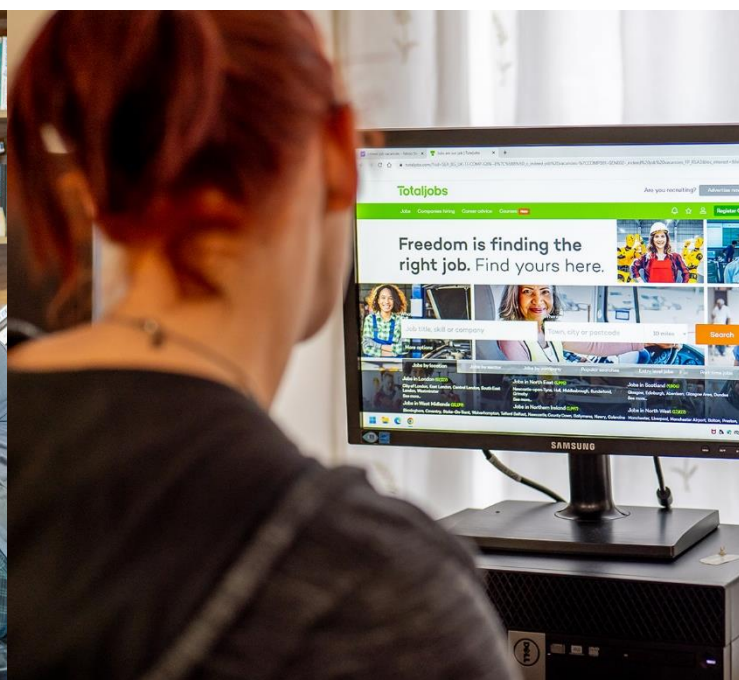
We listen to understand, improve and build our services.



### **SUPPORTIVE**

We tackle challenges head on and inspire each other to achieve our potential.

Elim CARES Values were created in partnership with our customers, colleagues, Board and other stakeholders, and they represent our commitment to how we deliver our services and work together successfully.





## Our Plan for the Future

Elim is a small association with large ambitions and we hope these are captured in our 2023 – 2028 Corporate Plan. In the context of the economic uncertainty and social challenges of the current environment, this plan and our vision to meet housing need and deliver homes that change people's lives is more relevant than ever.

Over the next five years Elim will continue to evolve and grow. We will increase the number and quality of the homes and services we offer, and we will work with a diversity of customers, colleagues and other stakeholders to provide affordable homes that meet customers' needs.

### 2023 - 2028:

- **Increase In Size:** We expect Elim to pass the 1,000 homes mark. We will do this because we want to help more people with housing, and in some cases, support needs.
- **Diverse Workforce:** We are working to ensure that our diversity matches that of our customers and that our services and processes reflect the differing needs of the people we serve.
- **A National Provider:** Elim is the largest national provider of Gypsy Roma & Traveller accommodation. We will play our role in national networks to share and to learn from good practice and to advocate for our customer groups.
- **Customer Engagement:** We will do more to involve our tenants and other customers in guiding our services both at an organisational and a local level.
- **Specialist Services:** More of the homes we build will provide for specialist needs identified by our stakeholders and commissioners.
- **Digital Push:** We will expand the channels available for customers to contact us and our use of technology to improve efficiency and service delivery.

Download our 2023 / 2028 Corporate Plan [here](#).

## How are the Board and Committees organised?

The primary purpose of the organisation is to provide social housing - often referred to as affordable housing - which can be for rent or sale. The maximum level of rent that can be charged by housing associations is set by the Government. Rents are set at levels that allow people with fewer choices in the housing market to afford them.

The Board currently has 12 members including the Chief Executive. The maximum number of consecutive terms that a Board member can be on the Board is two, limiting service to six years before a break must be taken. In exceptional circumstances members can serve an additional term of three years by agreement with the Board and Regulator. In addition to the Chair and Vice Chair roles, we have 4 members who chair the sub-committees and a Board member who sits on the Lime Property Group Board.

The Board meets at least four times a year, with meetings lasting 2-3 hours. The meetings take place in the mornings and can be attended in person or online. There are also up to two annual Strategic Planning Days for Board members and occasional PR events and other meetings to attend. There are also opportunities to join one of our sub-committees and a programme of seminars in the evenings on key topics.

We have four sub-committees: Finance and Risk; Customer Service, Development and Growth and Organisational Development. The committees are made up of Board Members, the Executive Team and Independent Committee Members. Our Independent Committee Members do not attend the Board Meetings but are welcome at our Strategic Planning Days and other events.

## What is the role of the Board?

The purpose of the Board is to direct and control the organisation's affairs. The Board sets the overall aims and objectives and ensures that the organisation is meeting them and complying with legal requirements promoting the lasting interests of the organisation.

The Board does not run the organisation on a day-to-day basis as it has paid professional staff to do this. The Chief Executive and the Executive Team are responsible for the operational management of the organisation. The Board delegates full operational powers to the Chief Executive to act and authorise decisions on its behalf.

The Board's key functions are to:

- (a) Define and ensure compliance with the values and objectives of the new organization.
- (b) Establish policies and plans to achieve those objectives.
- (c) Approve each year the Budget, Financial Statements and Annual Report, before publication.
- (d) Establish and oversee a framework of delegation and systems of control.
- (e) Make decisions that might create significant financial or other risk to the organisation, or which raise important issues that might clash with our vision and values.
- (f) Monitor the organisation's performance in relation to the plans, budgets, controls and decisions.
- (g) Appoint (and if necessary, dismiss) the Chief Executive and be represented in the appointment of key second-tier managers.
- (h) Satisfy itself that our affairs are conducted lawfully and in accordance with generally accepted standards of performance and propriety.
- (i) Ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory obligations, including equal opportunities.

## What is the role of the Committees?

The Finance and Risk and Customer Service committees meet 4 times a year and the other committees meet twice a year in the weeks before the Board Meetings are scheduled to take place. The meetings last 2/3 hours and allow time for the Independent Committee Members to explore their areas in more detail in order to report to the Board. The Board also delegates some decision making to the committees.

The Committees key functions are to:

- a) To oversee and proactively direct, where appropriate, the Group's business, monitor outcomes and provide reassurance to the Board in their respective areas.
- b) To ensure delivery of the group's plans for internal and external audit, growth and asset management and the Group's organizational design to deliver excellent customer service respectively.
- c) To ensure that there are suitable frameworks in place for the Executive to manage the organisation and to also promote efficiency, good practice and deliver improvement.
- d) To provide reports to the Board and other Committees on various matters within their remit

### **Do the Board and Independent Committee Members receive payment?**

It has been agreed that Board members will receive payment for their role. The levels of payment are agreed by the Board, who take external advice but as a guideline, current Board Members receive £2500 per annum. Committee roles are unpaid.

Both Board and Independent Committee Members can claim travel, childcare and other expenses properly incurred by them in connection with their attendance at Board or Committee meetings. We will give you full details on the procedures and claim forms covering both the claiming of expenses and any payment once you have been appointed.

### **Do I need to have previous experience as a Board or Independent Committee Member?**

No previous experience is required - it is more important that you share the values of the organisation and are willing to bring the benefit of your own unique perspective to the Board or Committee.

We want individuals who are willing and confident to challenge existing thinking in a positive way so that the Board and the organisation can get the benefit of different experiences and backgrounds. Working together is also key to a successful Board and Committee as well as the ability to stand back and look at the bigger picture. We are committed to providing support and training for those individuals stepping into a board role for the first time.

More guidance on the skills, knowledge and personal qualities of the role of Board and Independent Committee Members is attached in the role profiles in appendix 1.

### **Our Current Board**

The Board must have a diverse range of skills, qualities, experience and knowledge to function effectively. However, we do not expect Board Members to have skill or experience in all areas. We will provide coaching and support in areas such as governance or finance, which are key areas of focus.

We currently have 12 Board Members including the Chief Executive but two of our Board Members will reach the end of their term in September 2024. For some of us this has been our first experience of being a Board Member, others bring experience from different areas such as School Governors or charities. We have Board Members with financial expertise and knowledge, organizational design and property development; some with experience of social housing and others bring different perspectives from the private sector. We are all also customers and bring a variety of views on excellent customer service to ensure the best outcomes for our own Elim customers. All of us share a commitment to social housing and providing the best possible outcomes for our Elim customers.

To learn more about the individuals making up the Board, have a look at our website <https://www.elimhousing.co.uk/about-elim/elim-housing-board/>

We also value the contribution made by our Independent Committee Members who bring their own experiences and knowledge to our committees on a more detailed level than the Board members. It is an ideal stepping stone to becoming a Board Member and understanding more about what is involved.

Currently we have an Independent Member on each committee but are interested in recruiting additional members for all our committees.

We would welcome applications from our own customers on both the Board and Committees.

### **Creating a Diverse Organisation**

As you will note from our document “Our Plan for the Future”, one of our strategic aims is to create a diverse workforce which includes our Board and Independent Committee Members. We have a working group to focus on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plans and strategy that reports to the Board to help us achieve our objectives in this area. Our Chair has signed up to the National Housing Federation’s “Chairs Challenge”, which is a public commitment to take the Board on a journey to understand how diverse and inclusive we are and develop a vision for the future.

### **What considerations have you made on accessibility for Board Members?**

Most meetings take place in our offices which are designed to be accessible including lifts and disabled toilet facilities. Meetings are also accessible online. If we arrange meetings in other venues, any requirements are also taken into account when choosing that venue.

Board papers can be available in larger print, and we would be keen to make reasonable adjustments based on individual requirements.

### **Do Board and Independent Committee Member s receive training and induction?**

The new Board will provide development and training for all Board and Independent Committee Members, starting with your appointment. All new members will be provided with an induction pack including the major policies, Business Plan, Annual Report etc. and will be invited to meet the Company Secretary and Chief Executive as part of their induction. The induction plan will include also a review of the first papers and principal issues for the next Board or Committee meeting as well as a chance to meet residents and staff. There is also an annual training programme for Board and Independent Committee Member s.

In previous years this has included attendance at National Housing Federation training events designed for Board and Independent Committee Members, financial support for attending sector conferences as well as tailored sessions on relevant topics prior to a Board or Committee meeting. We can also arrange for you to ‘shadow’ Elim colleagues and ‘buddy’ with an existing Board member to learn more about the organization and the role.

### **How frequently should I attend Board/Committee meetings?**

Board members must be committed to attending at least 75% of all Board and Committee meetings and both Strategic Planning Days in a year. Independent Committee Member s should attend at least 75% of the Committee meetings. Given the limited number of meetings the Chair hopes that board members will exceed this minimum requirement. The agenda will be sent to you at least five days in advance of the meeting, electronically, and it is expected that you will have read all the reports in advance of the meeting.

### **How does the Board operate?**

A Housing Association is governed by Rules setting out its purpose and how it operates. It must also adhere to legislation and the requirements of its regulator, the Regulator of Social Housing.



We also have a framework of internal best practice policies and procedures. In common with much of the not-for-profit sector, Board members are expected to operate to the highest standards of probity, and this means that they cannot obtain personal or family gain from their Board position. We have clear processes in place to explain to board members their particular duties in this respect.

### **Will I be personally liable?**

All Board members are required to be shareholders, and their liability as a shareholder is limited to the value of the £1 share purchased.

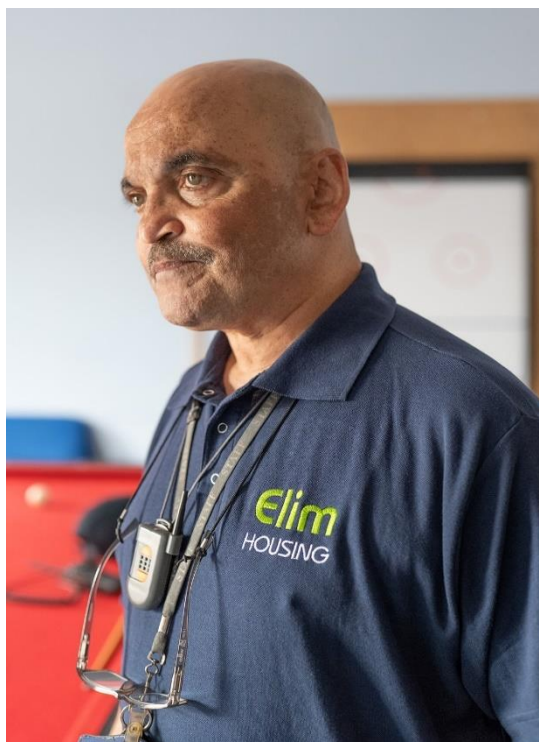
However, a Board member's potential liability is greater because the Board is ultimately responsible for the acts of the organisation. This should be taken seriously but the risk should not be exaggerated – there is no known case where an individual board member of a housing association has been made personally liable.

Also remember that the Board is supported in carrying out its responsibilities by the Chief Executive and other members of staff, and insurance cover is in place to protect Board members against personal liability for matters arising from their role as Board members.

Independent Committee Members are not required to be shareholders and hold no voting rights.

### **Are we a Charity or Company?**

We are a Community Benefit Society registered with charitable rules. This means that we are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Regulator of Social Housing rather than Companies House or the Charity Commission.



## Hear from our current Board Members on what it is like to be on the Board



"Hi, I'm David Heyes, a Board Member since September 2017 and Chair of the Organisational Development Committee.

I'm humbled to be able to support such a professional, capable and caring organisation. I love working with everyone and being able to support Elim to make real differences to the lives of everyone it helps and houses. Incredibly rewarding and I'm very proud to be a part of the Elim team."

"Hi, I am Meenakshi Sharma. I joined Elim in 2016, first as a co-opted member of the People and Culture Committee and last year became a board member. I was attracted to join as I have a strong belief in social housing and have worked in the sector, therefore I was aware of the impact on peoples' live and the wider community. In addition, I found attractive Elim's commitment to work with Gypsy and Traveller Communities. I feel privileged to be part of Elim, with its 60-year history and its plans for the future. This year I have taken on the role of Board Member with Responsibility for Complaints"



Details of how to apply are on our website. <https://www.elimhousing.co.uk/Jobs/ElimJobs/> . If you would like to talk to someone about the role, please contact Alishia [a.auguustine@elimhousing.co.uk](mailto:a.auguustine@elimhousing.co.uk) or Jane [j.okonkwo@elimhousing.co.uk](mailto:j.okonkwo@elimhousing.co.uk) and they will be happy to put you in touch with someone who can help.

*If you live in an Elim property, please can you tell us in your application.*

**Base: Thornbury, Bristol**

**Remuneration: From £2500 plus expenses per year for Board Members**

**Closing Date: Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

Role Profile – Board Member
Purpose of role
<p>The Board is collectively responsible for the direction and control of the organisation and each individual Board member must carry out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the constitution of the organisation, the law and regulatory requirements.</p>
Core tasks and responsibilities
<p>As a minimum, we ask that all Board members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• devote sufficient time to Board work, including preparing for and attending meetings, training sessions and other events as required.</li> <li>• consider and understand documents, tables and statistics.</li> <li>• challenge and ask questions.</li> <li>• work as part of a group</li> <li>• listen to and respect the contribution of others and contribute to group discussion.</li> <li>• be flexible and support collective decisions.</li> <li>• uphold the vision, values and objectives of the organisation.</li> <li>• act professionally, with integrity and in the best interests of the organisation</li> <li>• maintain confidentiality.</li> <li>• adhere to the principles and practice of equality, diversity and inclusion.</li> <li>• commit to involving and consulting residents and stakeholders.</li> <li>• adhere to the National Housing Federation (NHF) Code of Governance and NHF Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• be able to respect boundaries between executive (staff or day to day) and governance functions.</li> </ul> <p>It also helps to have an interest in social housing and the motivation to make a difference. Board member responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leading change and continuous improvement</li> <li>• defining and ensuring compliance with the vision, values and objectives</li> <li>• establishing strategies, policies and plans to achieve the vision, values and objectives.</li> <li>• approving each year's budget and accounts</li> <li>• establishing and overseeing an appropriate framework of delegation and control</li> </ul>

- making decisions that might create significant financial or other risk to the organisation or which raise important issues that might clash with our vision and values.
- monitoring organisation performance in relation to plans, budgets and decisions.
- read and digest reports prepared by staff and advisors and contribute to appropriate debate of key issues amongst Board members to ensure decisions are well founded.
- appointing the Chief Executive
- attending induction and at least 75% of meetings and training events and both Strategic Planning Days, the AGM and informal meetings and other events during the year.
- joining at least one committee which support the Board.
- participating in activities that will develop skills and knowledge (such as training and appraisal)
- acting as ambassadors for the organisation and not taking part or being involved in activities which may bring organisation into disrepute.
- acting with the same skill and care as any prudent person managing their own personal business affairs
- ensure key principles of diversity, inclusion, involvement and empowerment are evident in decision making.

### Board member skills, qualities, experience and understanding

In order to govern properly, the Board as a whole must have a diverse range of skills, qualities, experience and knowledge. We do not expect Board Members to have skill or experience in all areas, but each Board member is expected to have experience and knowledge of one of these areas:

- Direct knowledge of the needs and aspirations of the communities and people the organisation serves.
- Customer service
- Legal and governance matters
- Financial and treasury issues
- Asset management
- Organisational development and human resources
- Risk and performance management
- Communications, marketing and public relations
- Housing management
- Business transformation and change
- Property development
- Community Involvement

Training and support would be given in all cases to ensure board members feel able to comment on and provide scrutiny on the strategic priorities of the organisation.

The following is a list of personal qualities that we would expect from a Board Member.

- Commitment to the mission and values of the organisation as a not-for-profit charitable housing association
- The ability to think and operate in the bigger picture understanding the priorities of the organisation

- Able to analyse and assess key information to monitor the performance of the organisation against the given goals.
- Take into account the views of others but also be able to influence based on their own experience and opinions.
- Solve problems and make decisions based on a variety of views and information.
- Can communicate with confidence with a range of people including colleagues, residents and partners.
- Sound judgement based on integrity and ethics.
- Respects others, particularly those from diverse and different backgrounds
- Has energy and enthusiasm

#### Other Guidance

- All Board members share the same legal status and have equal responsibility for decisions taken that affect the success of the organisation.
- Each Board member must act only in the interests of the organisation and not on behalf of any constituency or interest group.
- No one who serves as a Board member should be in a position to gain or benefit from their dealings with the organisation.



## Role Profile – Independent Committee Member

### Purpose of role

The Committees are responsible for the direction and control of the organisation and each individual Independent Committee member must carry out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the constitution of the organisation, the law and regulatory requirements.

### Core tasks and responsibilities

As a minimum, we ask that all Independent Committee members:

- devote sufficient time to Committee work, including preparing for and attending meetings, training sessions and other events as required.
- consider and understand documents, tables and statistics.
- challenge and ask questions.
- work as part of a group
- listen to and respect the contribution of others and contribute to group discussion.
- be flexible and support collective decisions.
- uphold the vision, values and objectives of the organisation.
- act professionally, with integrity and in the best interests of the organisation
- maintain confidentiality.
- adhere to the principles and practice of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- commit to involving and consulting residents and stakeholders.
- adhere to the National Housing Federation (NHF) Code of Governance and NHF Code of Conduct.
- be able to respect boundaries between executive (staff or day to day) and governance functions.

It also helps to have an interest in social housing and the motivation to make a difference.

Independent Committee member responsibilities vary according to the purpose of the committee but include:

- reporting to the Board with recommendations, advice and risks
- defining and ensuring compliance with the vision, values and objectives
- advising on strategies, policies and plans to achieve the vision, values and objectives.
- approving each year's budget and accounts
- establishing and overseeing an appropriate framework of delegation and control

- making decisions that might create significant financial or other risk to the organisation or which raise important issues that might clash with our vision and values.
- monitoring organisation performance in relation to outcomes, plans, budgets and decisions
- read and digest reports prepared by staff and advisors and contribute to appropriate debate of key issues amongst Committee members to ensure decisions are well founded.
- attending induction and at least 75% of meetings
- participating in activities that will develop skills and knowledge (such as training and appraisal)
- acting as ambassadors for the organisation and not taking part or being involved in activities which may bring organisation into disrepute.
- acting with the same skill and care as any prudent person managing their own personal business affairs
- ensure key principles of diversity, inclusion, involvement and empowerment are evident in decision making.

### Independent Committee member skills, qualities, experience and understanding

Each Committee is delegated to focus on a different area of our operation.

FRAC (Finance and Risk Committee) is looking for individuals who can support in the following areas:

- Legal and governance matters
- Financial and treasury issues
- Risk and performance management

DAG (Development and Growth Committee)

- Property development
- Growth Opportunities

Customer Service

- Asset management
- Customer Service

Organisational Development

- Organisational development and human resources
- Communications, marketing and public relations
- Business transformation and change

All our committees welcome those with direct experience of social housing and have commitment to the mission and values of the organisation as a not-for-profit charitable housing association

Training and support would be given in all cases to ensure committee members feel able to comment on and participate fully in committee work.

### Other Guidance

- Each Committee member must act only in the interests of the organisation and not on behalf of any constituency or interest group.
- No one who serves as a committee member should be in a position to gain or benefit from their dealings with the organisation.