MEETING THE CHALLENGE

REVIEW OF THE YEAR
2019-2020

LAMBETH & SOUTHWARK
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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CHAIR'S REPORT

The report by Mark Jackson, LSHA's CEO, over the page shows how the usual rules for looking back over the year became irrelevant.

In normal times, I would have written about how we made value-for-money savings, benefiting our tenants directly.

For instance:

- Retendering, with tenant input, our grounds maintenance and estate cleaning contracts
- Retendering our gas servicing and electrical works contracts I would have reported on our Community investment Strategy, which we began by providing four tenants with professional training on undertaking survey work, and by them surveying LSHA tenants to understand their priorities better.

I would have noted the slow but substantial progress toward adding thirty new homes to Antony House and Roderick House in Southwark, using innovative airspace construction – our largest single development in many years.

I would have recorded how, despite the challenging economic backdrop of Universal Credit, we helped tenants reduce the overall level of rent arrears to four per cent, the lowest for many years.

But I can't ignore the brutal fact of the Covid-19 pandemic, even though most of its effects became apparent only after the year end. I will make just two linked points about it. The first is that Mark and his team responded magnificently to the challenges Covid created. Working from home, with remote rather than face-to-face meetings between staff, and between staff and tenants and staff and contractors, was a new experience for all of us.

But my Board colleagues and I were hugely impressed by how quickly and how well the staff team adapted to it – though at the time of writing, we have just taken up residence in our new offices!

The second is that one lesson of the pandemic has been to remind all of us that society's economic priorities have been deeply skewed – that many of those crucial to all our welfare have been massively undervalued over many years. This pandemic has confirmed how much we depend on delivery drivers, care workers, NHS staff, cleaners and many others. Providing not just 'somewhere to live' but a genuinely decent home is another essential, and another often undervalued service.

I am proud to be part of an organisation dedicated to doing this, and to doing it well.

Howard Webber

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Well what a year it has been!

We normally aim to publish our annual report for the year in the Spring. I had a meeting arranged with our marketing team in the middle of March to discuss layout and content.

As it was our meeting was thrown into disarray by the imminent Covid-19 lock down. From a routine meeting to agree on how best to reflect on the year past, we were in overdrive on website updates, urgent tenant newsletters and procuring PPE!

We picked it up again in the late Summer only to have our plans thwarted again when I fell foul of the Covid-19 virus. Fortunately now very much on the mend and indebted to the support from staff and Board during my absence.

The last few months have indeed been the most challenging LSHA has faced since the dark days of the Second World War. No amount of business continuity planning and scenario testing could have prepared us for the speed and scale of this change. That said, we were able to change to home working with remarkable ease.

Our investment in IT and phone systems over the last few years has proven itself for us as for so much of the economy. It does go to prove that despite being a small organisation LSHA can and must keep up to date with new technology if it is to continue to offer a good service to tenants. No redundancy or furloughing was required, and as I write this introduction we are looking at a slow return to a 'new normal'.

It is fitting that our most recent development acquisition is an NHS key worker block of flats. 'It was always vital that those who deliver our key services should have affordable and good quality places to live, in the heart of the communities they serve. The past few months have reinforced this obvious truth. Too much of inner London is made up of areas that seem reserved for the wealthy, with the poor taking whatever is left over. We need a balance, and LSHA has a role to play in helping deliver this vision.

I do hope you find something of interest in our annual report, and that you keep safe & well.

Mark Jackson

It would be impossible to prepare this report without a reference to the remarkable and often daunting times we have been living through as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are incredibly grateful to our tenants, staff and contractors for their forbearance and understanding during these unprecedented times.

COVID 19

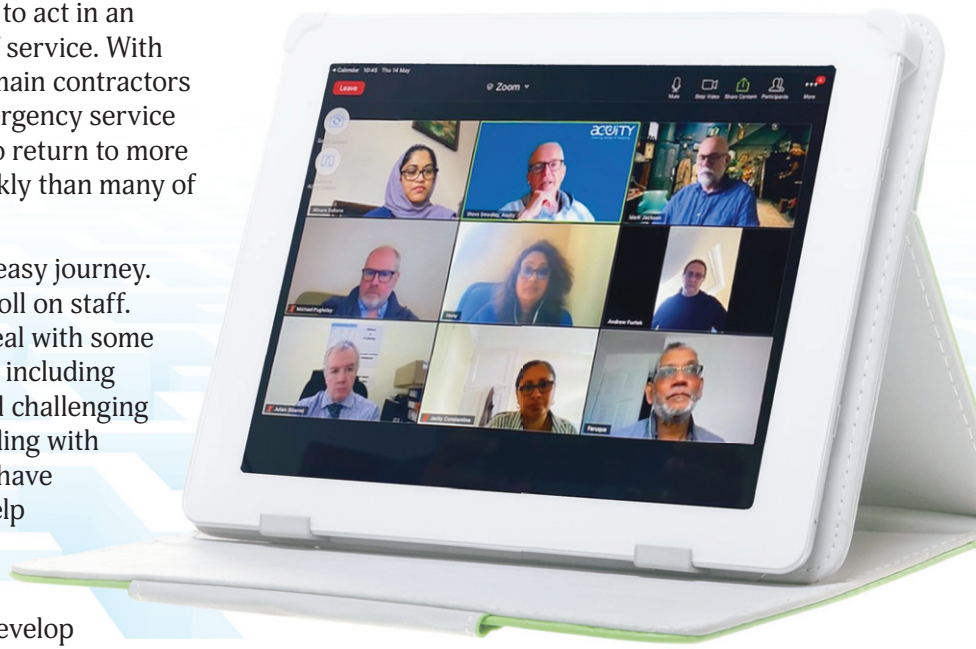
If there is one thing to be grateful for, it is the fact that these events have taken place in 2020 and not a few years ago. The investment we have put into technology, be it a cloud based platform; mobile working technology and upgraded phone systems have allowed us to ensure we can continue to provide a good service to tenants and other stakeholders in a way that simply would not have been possible even a few years ago.

Despite being a small organisation, or perhaps because of it, we have been able to act in an agile way to ensure continuity of service. With fantastic support from our two main contractors we were able to maintain an emergency service throughout. We were also able to return to more routine repair service more quickly than many of our peers.

I will not pretend it has been an easy journey. Working remotely does take its toll on staff. Front line officers have had to deal with some extremely distressing situations, including reports of domestic violence and challenging anti-social behaviour. When dealing with such incidents in an office, staff have the 'water cooler' moments to help offload some of the impact of these distressing events.

Based at home we have had to develop alternatives ways of sharing and supporting our colleagues.

We have all become too used to the Zoom meeting. A novelty for all of us only a matter of months ago but now an intrinsic part of office life. Zoom Board meetings seem almost to be 'normal'. We have also used Zoom to meet with tenants, both in groups and individually. Indeed, in certain circumstances Zoom has enabled us to engage with residents who might otherwise not be comfortable attending meetings. That said, I know I speak for everyone at LSHA, Board and staff when I say how much we are looking forward to being able to meet again in person.



DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

We have been working on this project in partnership with Apex Airspace since 2017 so we are really pleased that by the end of 2020 we will have started on site. This will be LSHA's largest ever single development and will represent a 10% increase in our stock size.

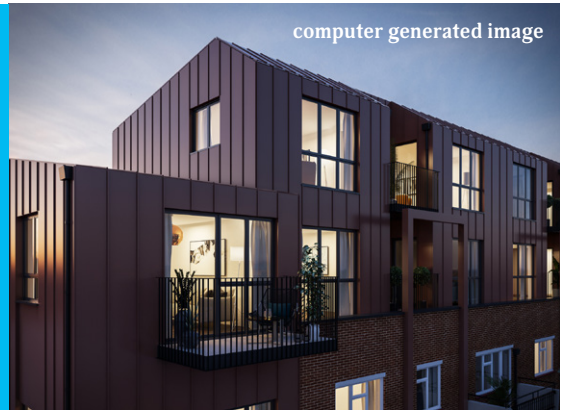
As with so much in 2020 our development plans have been severely impacted albeit not derailed.

We were really pleased to finally be awarded planning permission for the construction of thirty new homes in an airspace development at Antony and Roderick House in Bermondsey.

computer generated image

We appreciate that as an airspace development this project will have a significant impact on the lives of existing residents. We have been keen to engage with residents from the outset. During the pandemic, the requirement for social distancing and limits on numbers who can meet have meant we have had to use innovative approaches to consultation. More traditional consultation events have been replaced by one-on-one meetings by appointments. The were challenging and time consuming to organise but ultimately very successful as a way of engaging with residents.

Perhaps the strongest message that came through from residents was that they wanted more homes to be available for local people to rent. We listened and restructured the proposal to increase the number of affordable and social rented homes from 11 to 30.



STOCKWELL PARK ROAD GARAGES

Following our unsuccessful planning appeal to replace the three garages at Stockwell Park Road with a modest block of four flats, we took the decision to dispose of the site under open tender.

I am pleased that the successful buyer is a local resident who has committed to replacing the garages with a single family dwelling for a family member. Provision of a single family dwelling would not have represented value for money for LSHA but an outcome that does enable local people who might not otherwise have been able to afford to live in the area is something we would support.

PROGRAMMED WORKS

The emphasis in 2020 has been on fire safety works. We undertook fire risk assessments of all our stock during the summer of 2019. As standards have rightly changed in recent years we have had to plan for the recommendations that have been made.

We are fortunate that no high priority recommendations were made and the plan was that we would roll out necessary works over 2020 and 2021. We were days away from signing contracts in March before lockdown 1.0 put a hold on everything. Despite our best endeavours, circumstances, including serious supply chain issues, conspired against us and we were unable to complete all contracts by September 2020, our financial year end. The works are being carried over into 2020/21 and we fully expect full completion by early 2021.

We are open about how we meet our targets and manage our finances. Each year we publish our annual report so that residents, partners and stakeholders can see how we are performing against agreed standards.

Our financial statements explain how we have managed our money. These are agreed by the Board in January and are published on our website.

VALUE FOR MONEY

SIGNIFICANCE

Maximising the value for money derived from scarce resources is always important for any housing association; never more so than at the present time as we begin to experience the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on tenants. As a small housing association with limited levels of activity we are constrained in the ways by which we can easily make savings without impacting the quality of our service.

As part of our published financial accounts we seek to publish a robust self assessment which sets out, in a way that is transparent and accessible to stakeholders, how we achieve Value for Money.

The assessment:

- Enables stakeholders to understand the return on assets measured against the organisation's objectives;
- Sets out the absolute and comparative costs of delivering specific services;
- Evidences the Value for Money gains that have been and will be made.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

A key objective of LSHA's Business Plan is to deliver affordable quality in homes and services. Through Value for Money (VFM) LSHA aims to ensure:

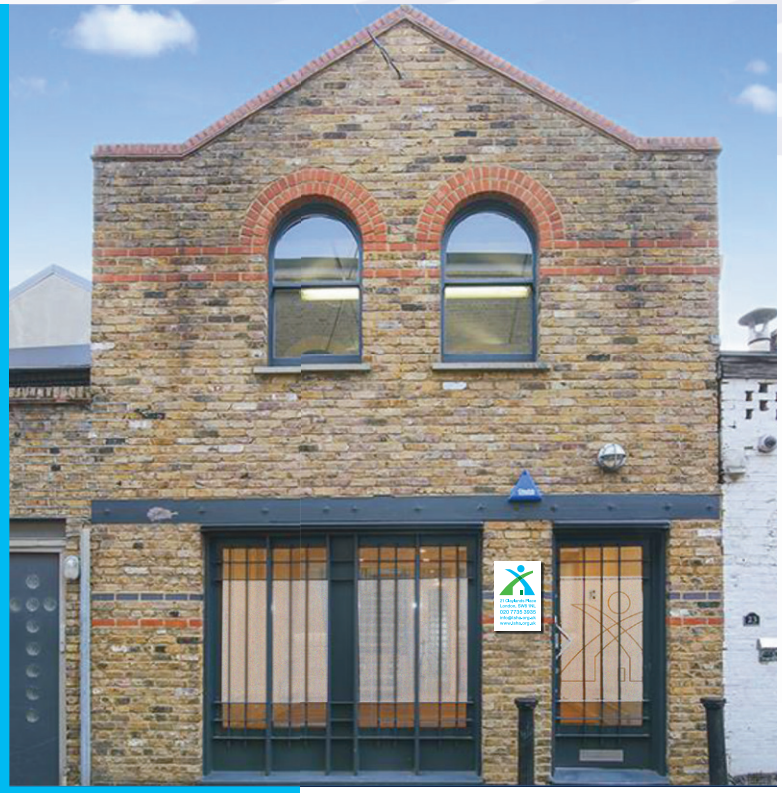
- That resources are available to achieve the association's Business Plan objectives and key priorities;
- A balance between cost, quality and performance;
- A good level of customer satisfaction.

Three significant areas of investment, development, community investment and staffing, have received particular attention by the Board during the year, with a focus of making the best use of resources to enable further investment, particularly in developing new homes. We are absoutely delighted to have received planning permission for the delivery of thirty new affordable rent tenancies in Bermondsey.

We also operate in an environment where staff are encouraged to take ownership of opportunities that could be used to achieve VFM and for business improvement.

Practical examples of the ways in which VFM savings have been made include:

- Fixed price commissioning of thirty new, affordable airspace homes at Antony and Roderick House
- Procurement of new, level access, office able to support an increasing staffing level and host Board meetings
- Implementation of a paperless invoicing system
- Creation of a community investment resident group to help identify areas of internal improvement and external investment.
- Relocation to a new office capable of servicing a larger staff team and hosting meetings.



NEW OFFICES

At the time of writing, we have just taken up residence in our new offices!

Exciting times lie ahead for Lambeth & Southwark Housing Association Ltd. We are pleased to announce that we have just moved. After thirty years we have finally outgrown our the office at 7a St. Agnes Place, and have moved, just around the corner to: 21 Claylands Place, Oval, London SW8 1NL

MONEY MATTERS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ACCOUNTS

HISTORICALLY LOW LEVEL OF SURPLUS ENABLING HIGHER LEVELS OF INVESTMENT IN EXISTING STOCK

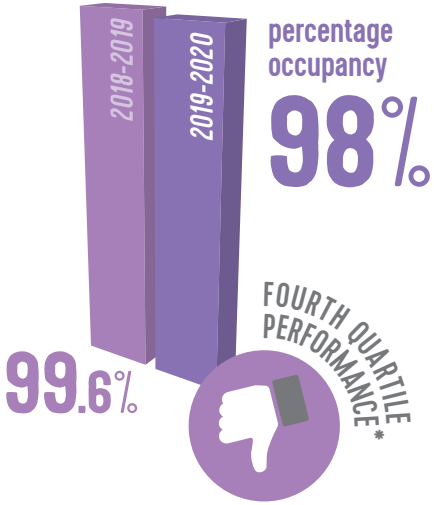
4.1% INCREASE IN RESERVES HELD

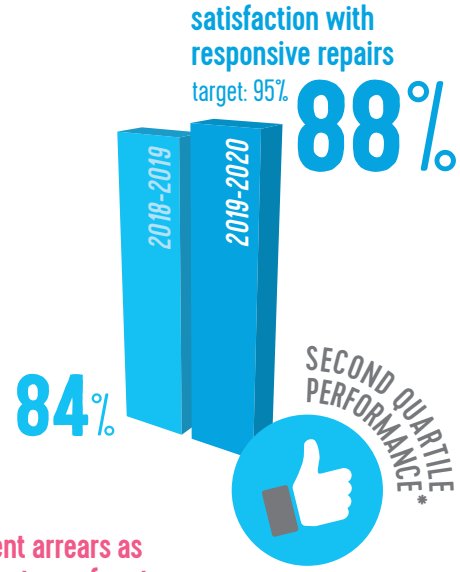
		Year to:
Summary of our Audited Accounts	**30.9.20**	**30.9.19**
Income & expenditure	**£000s**	£000s
Income from rents and other sources	**2189**	2161
less repair and adminstration costs	**1747**	1756
Sale of fixed asset	**113**	
gives an operating surplus of:	**556**	405
deduct interest on our loans	**131**	124
add interest received	**7**	8
gives an available surplus of:	**431**	289
Balance Sheet		
Cost of investment in homes	**22610**	22942
Long-term Investments	**987**	1008
Funds we hold	**1256**	722
Total	**24853**	24672
Social housing grant	**10643**	10784
Long-term loans	**5498**	5594
Reserves we hold	**8711**	8294
Total	**24853**	24672

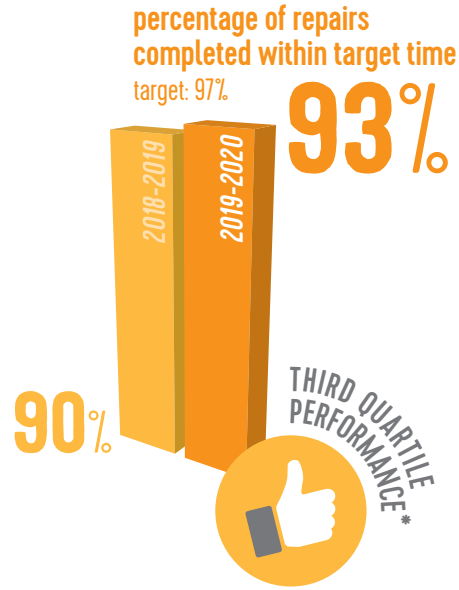
A copy of the full audited financial statements is available from the registered office and on our website

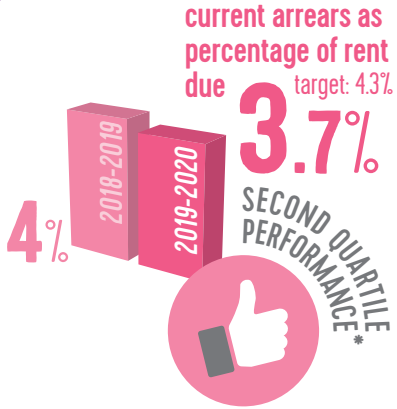
As part of reporting it's annual accounts, LSHA includes a section on highlighting key sector wide indicators and how this compares with our peers.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS





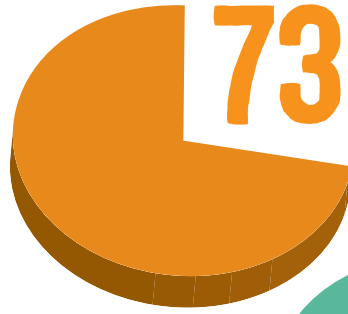




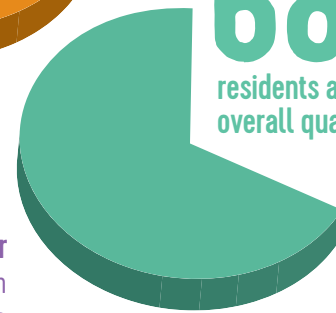
*quartile performance is compared to available peer group benchmark data

2020 CUSTOMER SURVEY

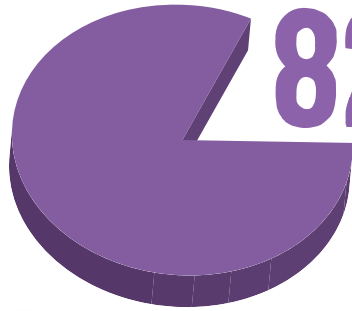
KEY FINDINGS



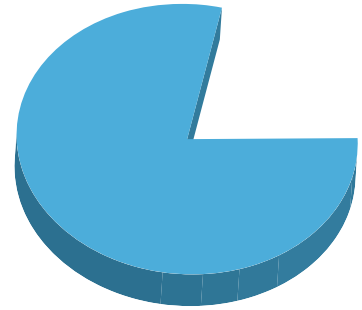
73% of residents are satisfied with the services provided by LSHA although 15% are dissatisfied and a further 11% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied



68% of LSHA's residents are satisfied with the overall quality of their home



82% of LSHA's residents are satisfied with the value for money of their rent although fewer (59%) are satisfied with the value of the service charge they pay



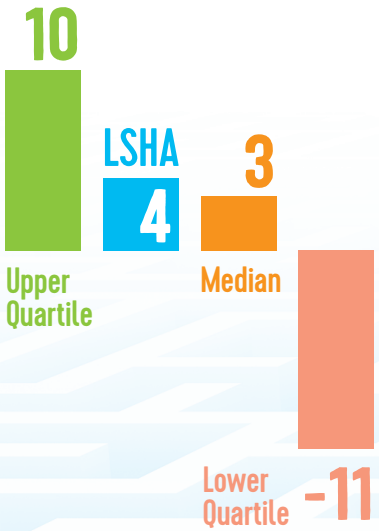
79% of LSHA's residents are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live, with those in Lambeth highly satisfied: 88%

NET PROMOTER SCORE

The Net Promoter Score, or NPS®, is based on the fundamental perspective that every company's customers can be divided into three categories: Promoters, Passives, and Detractors.

By asking one simple question, *'How likely is it that you would recommend LSHA to friends or family?'* it is possible to track these groups and get a clear measure of our performance through residents' eyes.

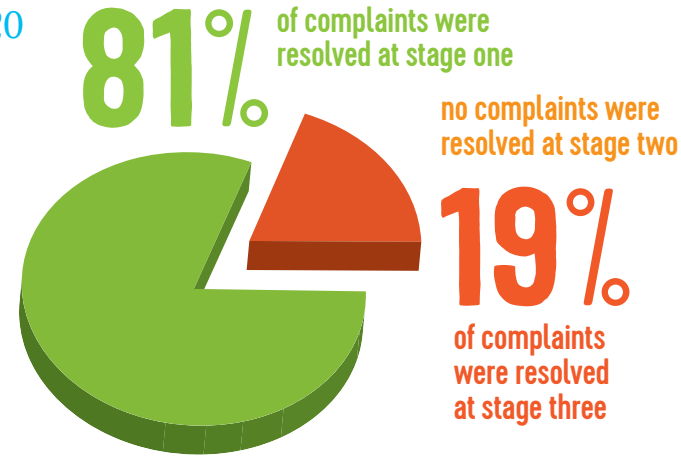
It is also possible to compare the net promoter score from LSHA with those of other London based housing associations. In this context, LSHA scores well compared to other London housing associations who have employed the NPS question and is in the second quartile.



COMPLAINTS

At LSHA we are the first to admit that we make mistakes and don't always get things right first time. What we do do is treat every complaint seriously. Few people enjoy making a compliant and if someone feels the need to complain about any aspect of service they have had from LSHA then we need to try and learn from any mistakes and improve the way we do things.

For the year 2019/20 we received a total of 11 complaints



The proportion of complaint responses sent within Code timescales were:

- Stage one
  Stage one
  (with extension):
  100%
- Stage two
  Stage two
  (with extension): 75%
- *One complaint was referred to the Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman did not find against LSHA.*
- *We received three Member of Parliament enquiries.*
- *One complaint was made to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).*

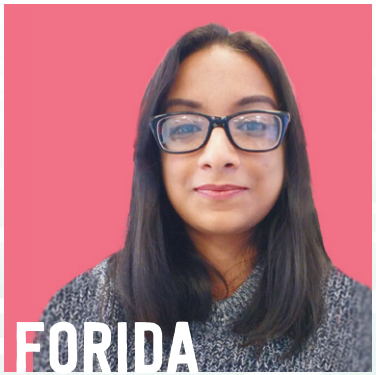
OUR STAFF TEAM...

MARK JACKSON
Chief Executive

ANGELA BAILEY
Operations Manager

ROCKY CHARLES
Finance Manager

ELAINE BROWN
Housing Officer



FORIDA KAHN
Finance Officer

DIANE THOMPSON
Housing Officer

HARRY WALDEN
Surveyor

SEKADA YARDA
Maintenance and Administration Officer

BOARD MEMBERS...

The Board comprises the following volunteers who have served at some time during the year:

Howard Webber, *Chair*
Retired Civil Servant

Hilary Barber
Retired Housing Professional

Delia Beddis
Planning and Development Consultant

Danny Friedman
Housing and Social Policy Research Director

Sandra Ferguson
Community Involvement Consultant & Trainer

Alicia Azucena
Retired Housing Finance Manager

James Cross
Housing Development Manager

Veronica Lindsey
Housing Association Accountant & Finance Director

Nicholas Arthur
Housing Management and Asset Manager

Rachel Askew
Development Consultant

ESTATE MAINTENANCE

Clive Gayle and Derek Smith

& PARTNERS

REGISTERED AUDITORS

Beever & Struthers
15 Bunhill Row
London
EC1Y 8LP

BANKERS

Barclays Bank PLC
180 Oxford Street
London
W1D 1EA

SOLICITORS

Batchelors Solicitors
Charles House
35 Widmore Road,
Bromley
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Lambeth & Southwark Housing Association – Working for Better Housing

Registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014
Registered Office: 7a St Agnes Place, London SE11 4AU

Designed & produced by Buchanan Dean Design tel: 01494 677362 www.bddesign.co.uk