Connecting Boroughs Governance and Decision-Making Framework[1]

1. Introduction

Connecting Boroughs is committed to maintaining transparent, ethical, and effective governance to support its mission of assisting vulnerable individuals. This framework outlines the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes of the trustees, ensuring accountability and alignment with the charity's objectives and legal obligations.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Governance and Decision-Making Framework is to:

- Ensure that trustees fulfill their legal duties and responsibilities.
- Define a clear structure for decision-making, delegations, and accountability.
- Promote transparency, integrity, and the effective use of resources to achieve Connecting Boroughs' goals.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees

3.1 General Duties

Clause 9.1 of the charity's constitution sets out the functions and duties of the charity's trustees.

3.2 Specific Responsibilities

- **Strategic Oversight**: Establishing long-term objectives and strategies, ensuring that Connecting Boroughs' activities align with its mission.
- **Financial Oversight**: Approving budgets, reviewing financial performance, and ensuring that funds are allocated effectively.
- **Risk Management**: Overseeing safeguarding and risk management frameworks, ensuring the safety and well-being of beneficiaries.
- **Compliance**: Ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, including data protection and health and safety obligations.

[1] **Note to Queeny**: We have made changes to this document to align with the charity's Constitution, which is the key document that sets out the charity's governance arrangements and decision-making processes. We have summarised relevant parts of the Constitution in section 4. We would also recommend not making more commitments in this document than are already set out in the Constitution (for example, there is no requirement in the Constitution for the charity to hold an AGM, and this is always something the trustees can introduce later once the charity is more established).

- **Accountability**: Ensuring that the charity's operations are transparent and its decisions are accountable to beneficiaries and stakeholders.

4. Decision-Making Process

4.1 Trustee Meetings

- Any trustee may call a meeting of the trustees. Subject to that, the trustees shall decide how meetings are to be called, and what notice is required.
- The trustees may appoint one of their number to chair their meetings and may at any time revoke such appointment.
- Clause 15 of the charity's constitution sets out additional detail in relation to meetings of the trustees.

4.2 Quorum and Voting

- The quorum for trustee meetings is two trustees, or the number nearest to one third of the total number of trustees, whichever is greater, or such larger number as the trustees may decide from time to time.
- Decisions are made by a simple majority of those trustees eligible to vote.
- In case of an equality of votes, the person who chairs the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

4.3 Electronic Meetings

- Meetings may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the trustees in which each participant is able to communicate with all of the other participants.
- Clause 15.4 of the charity's constitution sets out additional detail in relation to participation in meetings held by electronic means.

5. Delegation of Authority

Trustees may delegate specific operational tasks to staff or designated volunteers. However, trustees retain ultimate responsibility and oversight. Clause 14 of the charity's constitution sets out the provisions relating to delegation by the trustees, including the creation of committees and the terms and conditions of any delegation.

6. Conflicts of Interest

Trustees are required to act in the best interests of Connecting Boroughs at all times, avoiding any conflicts of interest. Clause 7 of the charity's constitution sets out the trustees' responsibilities regarding conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty.

7. Accountability and Transparency

- **Annual Report and Financial Statements**: Trustees are responsible for preparing and publishing annual reports and financial statements in compliance with UK Charity Commission requirements.
- **Stakeholder Engagement**: Trustees regularly consult beneficiaries, partners, and stakeholders to ensure that Connecting Boroughs' activities remain relevant and responsive to community needs.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Regular Reviews**: Financial, operational, and strategic performance are reviewed regularly by the trustees, with any necessary adjustments made to achieve charity objectives.
- **Annual Impact Assessment**: An annual evaluation of the charity's impact on beneficiaries and the community helps inform future planning and improvement.

9. Framework Review

- **Annual Review**: This governance framework is reviewed by the trustees annually and updated if required to ensure it aligns with regulatory standards, best practices, and the evolving needs of Connecting Boroughs and its beneficiaries.

10. Trustee Code of Conduct

Trustees are expected to act with integrity, respect, and professionalism in all matters, and must at all times:

- Act in the best interests of Connecting Boroughs and its beneficiaries.
- Comply with charity law and the regulatory requirements of the UK Charity Commission.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive information and comply with applicable data protection requirements.
- Manage Connecting Boroughs' resources responsibly, ensuring financial sustainability and safeguarding assets.
- Abide by Connecting Boroughs' policies and uphold the values of transparency, respect, and inclusivity.