



PUBLIC MINUTES
of the Board meeting
on Tuesday 28 June 2022 at 1000
RSH Manchester Office

Present

Bernadette Conroy (BC)	Chair
Paul Smee (PS)	
Liz Butler (LB)	
Jo Boaden (JB)	
Kalpesh Brahmhatt (KB)	
Deborah Gregory (DG)	
Richard Hughes (RH)	
Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs (SK-S)	
Geoff Smyth (GS)	
Fiona MacGregor (FM)	Chief Executive and board member

In attendance

Jonathan Walters (JW)	Deputy Chief Executive (DCEO)
Maxine Loftus (ML)	Director, Regulatory Operations (DRO)
Richard Peden (RBP)	Director, Finance and Corporate Services (DF&CS)
Emma Tarran (ERT)	Senior Assistant Director, Head of Legal and Company Secretary (SAD Legal)
Will Perry (WP)	Director, Strategy (DS)
Kate Dodsworth (KD)	Director, Consumer Regulation (DCR)
Jim Bennett (JB)	Assistant Director, Policy and Communications – item 7
John O’Mahony (JOM)	Assistant Director, Corporate Services – items 9 & 10
Chris Kitchen (CK)	Board Secretary, Minutes

1 Welcome and apologies

01/06/22 There were apologies from Simon Dow (SD), member and Harold Brown (HB), Senior Assistant Director: Investigation and Enforcement.

2 Declarations of Interest

02/06/22 There were no new declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of last meeting – 24 May 2022

03/06/22 The confidential and public minutes from the meeting on 24 May 2022 were considered and subject to some minor amendments, were APPROVED.

4 Matters Arising

04/06/22 Members NOTED the actions.

5 Forward Planner

05/06/22 NOTED.

6 Chair's Update

06/06/22 The Chair had previously thanked members for their contributions and participation in the RP CEOs' session the previous day and also at the discussion over dinner, which had been very informative. The Chair thanked KD and ML for leading the discussions at the dinner.

07/06/22 *CEO announcement:* the Chair acknowledged with sadness the recent update from FM about her plans to stand down in due course. These had also been made public by way of press release.

08/06/22 *Board effectiveness survey/future board meetings:* having considered the feedback from the effectiveness review and the feedback from members on meetings and papers, the Chair proposed some changes from September 2022:

- The cycle of holding board meetings every month apart from August and December would continue.
- Wherever possible, formal papers from officers would be concentrated onto the agenda of every other meeting.
- The intervening meetings would receive only those formal reports that could not wait to the following month.
- The agendas for these intervening meetings would focus on board discussion of strategic issues.
- All meetings would be minuted.
- Future meetings would take place at RSH offices in Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham as well as the London office.
- Management would confirm a forward plan of locations, agendas, workshops and teach-in topics.

JW

09/06/22 *Monthly meetings with DLUHC:* The Chair advised that she will be attending monthly catch-up meetings with DLUHC, and would feed back to members from these meetings.

10/06/22 *Skills Matrix:* Members had been asked to populate a skills matrix. The Chair requested these be completed as soon as possible so that the results can feed into conversations with DLUHC in respect of future board member recruitment.

11/06/22 *Additional Board meeting:* Members were asked to advise the board secretary of their availability in August after which the date for the meeting will be confirmed. The August meeting will be a virtual meeting.

7 Deputy Chief Executive update

12/06/22 Members NOTED the information in the slides and the DCEO gave some additional background information as follows.

General updates

On-going policy discussion with DLUHC

- 13/06/22 *AO Meeting 27 May:* The Chair and the DCE had attended the May AO meeting with DLUHC.
- 14/06/22 *Decency:* decent homes remains a critical area of focus for the current SoS, and the intention is still to review the Decent Homes Standard (DHS).
- 15/06/22 *Rent settlement:* the sector would like clarity as soon as possible about the Government's intended approach to rent setting for 2023 onwards, in light of predicted CPI figures for September 2022. Sector boards are already wrestling with the competing challenges of the increase in cost of living, including rents, versus the impact on business plans of a lower increase in rents together with inflation of costs. There have been suggestions for the sector to make voluntary undertakings, but this seems unlikely to be workable. If a cap on rent increases is introduced, the sector would like to know whether the foregone income can be recovered by landlords in future years or not. If the change is to be implemented by DLUHC it would be necessary for us to be directed by the SoS.
- 16/06/22 In response to a question on what analysis was available on the potential number of tenants who could lose their tenancies as a result of the increase in cost of living, WP advised that there was very little socio-economic data available on tenants as they are not required to provide landlords with this kind of information.

Policy updates

- 17/06/22 *The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill:* The second reading of the Bill had passed, with the main focus of debate on electrical safety and greater parity between social rented sector and PRS.
- 18/06/22 *A Fairer Private Rented Sector: White Paper and decision statement on s.21 evictions:* The private rented sector white paper has been published. Government has sought to strike a balance between the rights of tenants and the interests of landlords, and has proposed the abolition of no-fault evictions (s.21 evictions). There is some pushback from some MPs.
- 19/06/22 *Prime Minister's Housing Speech: 9 June:* Right to Buy scheme to be extended to housing association tenants, with government pledging to build a new social home for every one sold. "Benefits to bricks" - rules on welfare to change to allow benefits to contribute towards a mortgage.
- 20/06/22 *General debate on social housing and building safety, House of Commons: 9 June:* The debate reiterated the themes of the Social Housing White Paper around safety, respect, holding landlords to account, complaint handling. The RSH was referenced in relation to carrying out rapid inspections and issuing unlimited fines.
- 21/06/22 *Fire Safety and Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry:* debate continues in the Commons. There was some parliamentary discussion of the issues illuminated by the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry.
- 22/06/22 *Tenant Satisfaction Measures:* there will be an opportunity for consideration of the draft TSM decision statement at the July Board.

Operational updates

- 23/06/22 *Registrations:* NOTED.
- 24/06/22 *Regulatory operations:* NOTED.
- 25/06/22 *Consumer regulation – reactive cases:* a regulatory notice was published for London Borough of Ealing on 11 May 2022 and regulatory notices on East Suffolk Council and Swan Housing Association were published on 25 May 2022.
- 26/06/22 *Performance:* NOTED.

Publications, media and stakeholder engagement

- 27/06/22 Members NOTED the updates and the high level of stakeholder engagement undertaken and scheduled.

Key messages received from sector stakeholders: concerns about rent setting in 2023/24 (as mentioned earlier in this meeting) and increased concerns about the recruitment and retention of housing officers with some evidence that in addition to the usual challenges, morale is being affected by media coverage. There is a growing demand for mental health support for tenants.

Key messages from tenants: tenants continue to report that their main concerns are repairs services and communication from landlords. There was a discussion about tenants turning to “no win, no fee” solicitors to pick up complaints re repairs, rather than liaising with their landlords – this is a growing concern in the sector.

8 ARAC Feedback

- 28/06/22 *Strategic Risk Register:* The Chair of ARAC advised members that ARAC had reviewed the revised Strategic Risk Register. A lot of good work has been done and there were no suggestions for amendments to the content. The revised SRR will be presented to Board and their input will be required to capture and document organisational risk appetite and risk tolerance.
- 29/06/22 *Internal Audit:* The meeting was the first for the new internal auditors (GIAA) and they presented their proposals for internal audits in the first quarter, all of which are F&CS areas. Management to review other areas for audit.
- 30/06/22 *ARAC Effectiveness:* the responses were positive and discussed by the committee, but there had been no responses from DLUHC or external auditors, so the pool of feedback was limited.
- 31/06/22 *External Board effectiveness review:* This proposal for the next annual review was progressing.
- 32/06/22 *Annual accounts:* Following the NAO audit, these will go back to ARAC before recommendation for adoption to the Board.
- 33/06/22 The Board thanked ARAC for their work and the feedback.

9 Annual Report

- 34/06/22 The draft annual report was presented for Board to consider.

10 Finance and Corporate Services update

36/06/22 The paper was for NOTING. On financial reporting, RBP advised members that the outstanding fees from small providers were now down to £10k. The location strategy had been attached for information.

11 Investigation and Engagement update

37/06/22 In the absence of HB, JW introduced the I&E report which gave members background information to current cases. He reminded members that some of the information is market sensitive and confidential. He gave members an update on the key developments on cases, which included:

38/06/22 *Clarion*: Clarion have reported to us that they are experiencing IT system issues caused by a cyber security incident and are working urgently with a cyber security partner to restore their systems as soon as they can.

40/06/22 *Larch Housing Association*: members noted the update.

41/06/22 *Inclusion*: members noted the update.

42/06/22 *Eldonians*: members noted the update.

Gradings under Review

43/06/22 *RCVDA Community Housing C.I.C*: have been placed on the GUR list.

44/06/22 *Shepherds Bush HA Ltd*: members noted the update.

45/06/22 All other updates in the paper were NOTED. There was a discussion about whether there was a pattern to live cases involving financial viability concerns, and it was noted that the September FFR will provide more data around financial viability.

46/06/22 The longer term cases were discussed and as previously advised there are a range of reasons for cases taking a long time to resolve. Management were asked to consider our engagement with these as a potential workshop/teach-in session.

JW/HB

Interim Consumer Regulation Update

47/06/22 Members NOTED the paper and KD provided an update on an emerging case in respect of *Industrial Dwellings Society (1885) Limited (IDS)*.

48/06/22 *New cases: East Suffolk Council, London Borough of Ealing and Swan Housing Association*: We published non-compliant regulatory notices for all three providers in May 2022.

49/06/22 *Existing case: London Borough of Croydon*: We are continuing to engage intensively with LB Croydon.

12 Review of papers/meeting

50/06/22 There were no comments on the papers and members felt that the meeting and discussions were fluid and constructive.

14 Any other business

50/06/22 There were no other matters of business to discuss. The Chair thanked members and officers for their input to the discussions.

Date of next meeting: 26 July 2022 – 1000, London