



PUBLIC MINUTES
of the Board meeting
on Tuesday 27 June 2023
Hybrid - City Tower, Manchester and MS Teams

6 Remote and virtual participation

6.1 Any member may validly participate in a meeting virtually through the medium of conference telephone, video conferencing or similar form of communication equipment, provided that all persons participating in the meeting are able to hear and speak to each other throughout such meeting, or relevant part thereof. A member so participating shall be deemed to be present in person at the meeting and shall accordingly be counted in a quorum and entitled to vote.

6.2 A meeting shall be deemed to take place where the largest group of those members participating is assembled or, if there is no group which is larger than any other group, where the chair of the meeting is.

Present

Bernadette Conroy (BC)	Chair
Liz Butler (LB)	Via MS Teams
Jo Boaden (JBo)	
Deborah Gregory (DG)	
Richard Hughes (RH)	
Geoff Smyth (GS)	
Paul Smee (PS)	
Kalpesh Brahmhatt (KB)	
Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs (SK-S)	
Fiona MacGregor (FM)	Chief Executive and Board Member
Jonathan Walters (JW)	Deputy Chief Executive

In attendance

Harold Brown (HB)	Senior Assistant Director, Investigation and Enforcement (SADI&E)
Richard Peden (RBP)	Director, Finance and Corporate Services (DF&CS)
Kate Dodsworth (KD)	Director of Consumer Regulation
Will Perry (WP)	Director, Strategy
Maxine Loftus (ML)	Director, Regulatory Operations
Emma Tarran (ERT)	Assistant Director, Head of Legal & Company Secretary
Kirsty Morris (KM)	Board apprentice

Minutes

Christine Kitchen (CK)	Board Secretary
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1 Welcome and apologies

01/06/23 There were no apologies.

- 2** **Declarations of Interest**
- 02/06/23 There were no new declarations of interest.
- 3** **Minutes of meeting 23 May 2023**
- 03/06/23 The confidential and public minutes from 23 May 2023 were considered and subject to minor amendments, these were AGREED. The notes from the workshop were also accepted.
- 4** **Matters arising**
- 04/06/23 Members considered the matters arising from previous meeting and actions were AGREED. Vision and values will be presented at the July meeting.
- 5** **Board forward planner**
- 05/06/23 Members considered the forward planner. BC confirmed that the future workshop topics will be on strategic areas for the board to consider.
- 6** **Chair's update**
- 06/06/23 BC and all members of the board, congratulated KD on her appointment to the Chief of Regulatory Engagement role.
- 07/06/23 BC updated members on the stakeholder engagements she had attended which included a session with the Northern Housing Consortium and a meeting with the Scottish Regulator. Two of the four planned communication sessions with Chairs of RPs have been very successful and BC thanked those members who had attended/will be attending these sessions.
- 7** **Deputy Chief Executive's update**
- General Update**
- 10/06/23 *Levelling Up Housing and Communities Committee inquiry into the finances and sustainability of the social housing sector.* This is looking at both RPs and LAs. There have been representations from the RP sector, lenders and LAs. Members will be sent the briefing notes. We expect to be called in the Autumn.
- 11/06/23 *Supported Housing PAC enquiry.* RSH was mentioned in respect of South Devon.
- 12/06/23 *PMQs:* RSH was mentioned in reference to Birmingham City Council.
- 13/06/23 *AO meeting:* Josh Goodman has now left his role as Director of Housing. Fees were also discussed.
- 14/06/23 *Quarterly survey* – data shows that the sector's liquidity remains robust, however cash balances are at their lowest level in almost eight years.
- 16/06/23 *Social Housing (Regulation) Bill:* the House of Lords was considering the Bill; we expect only professionalisation to be given further substantive consideration.

The Bill then goes back to House of Commons, we hope on 10 July. We are ready to launch our consumer standards consultation as soon as Royal Assent is obtained.

17/06/23 *Decent Homes:* we continue to engage with DLUHC on their revisions to the Decent Homes Standard.

18/06/23 *Rents:* we are involved in a number of work areas with DLUHC in connection with their rents policy development. We regularly hear from stakeholders that the sector is very keen to have clarity on future rents policy and regulation.

19/06/23 *Stakeholder feedback:* some provider boards are having several meetings before signing off business plans, so it is possible that we will receive requests for extensions to submissions.

20/06/23 *Consumer regulation:* KD advised that we are keeping to our programme in rolling out proactive consumer regulation and stakeholder engagement responses continue to be very positive.

21/06/23 *Unite Union strike action:* members were advised that the strike action by some staff will delay publication of a number of RJs by a week.

8 Committee meetings feedback

Audit Risk and Assurance Committee

22/06/23 LB, the Chair of ARAC, reported from the meeting.

23/06/23 GIAA had submitted their annual audit report with a substantial assurance rating.

24/06/23 The Committee had reviewed the first draft of the ARA, which was in a very good place.

25/06/23 The in-depth assurance paper was on whistleblowing. It provided a good insight into our systems, and the Committee took assurance on the approach. The Committee and management are looking at a programme of future in-depth assurance topics and invited board members to suggest any they think would be beneficial.

Nominations and Governance Committee

26/06/23 PS, the Chair of the NGC, reported back from the meeting. He advised members that the Committee had received a paper on the transformation project preparing us for new powers. It is a complex project, but the Committee had been assured that it was progressing well.

10 Investigation and Engagement

36/06/23 HB provided further updates to those set out in the paper.

37/06/32 *Rapport:*

38/06/23 *Parasol:*

39/06/23 *Rochdale:*

40/06/23	Case work is substantial. The team have two new members starting and the additional resource will be very welcome.	
41/06/23	HB advised that the Use of Powers guidance is being updated to reflect the incoming powers as part of the Social Housing Regulation Bill and has been reviewed by internal work groups and discussed at a number of workshops, and will be presented to the Executive group before coming to Board. We are required to carry out a statutory consultation.	
42/06/23	BC asked that papers coming through should reflect options and background to the proposals.	REG
11	Consumer Regulation	
43/06/23	The paper was taken as read and KD advised that preparations are well underway for wave 3 of the pilots. Wave 2 of the pilots covered LAs. We are keen to discourage any misconception that we have a set approach in place which does not reflect the circumstances of an organisation before the start of our new approach and are messaging publicly to that effect.	
45/06/23	<i>Consumer cases:</i> the board workshop on regulation of LAs will pick up the discussion around LA financial constraints and challenges.	
12	Consumer Service Standards	
48/06/23	KD explained the rationale for the change which was to ensure we standardise the rules for meeting our standards on response times across the organisation. In answer to various questions, KD explained that: the volume of referrals is increasing as is their complexity; dealing with the more complex cases often require cross team working; we are thorough in our investigations and careful with the responses we send.	KD/RBP
13	Operations Update	
49/06/23	The paper was taken as read. ML said there is a lot of interaction between operations and I&E. It has been decided that finalising the IDA programme content for Q4 will be deferred to September. The QS figures are as at year end and therefore include the annual data on impairments.	
50/06/23	Members were advised of two new mergers which have been publicly announced - Sanctuary and Johnnie Johnson and Poplar Harca and Tower Hamlets.	
51/06/23	ML was asked how we get assurance that inflationary costs are not masking issues on actual spending, and assurance was given that we do investigate these factors, but in the present economic climate it is not possible to ignore inflationary costs. We look back on forecasts of spend and test the actual spend against them, but RPs are having to work hard to overcome the impact of inflation on costs. Stability checks also highlight outliers.	

14 F&CS

52/06/23 RBP reported on the highlights of the report - full year outturn, which is ahead of budget. The pension scheme has gone from deficit to surplus for accounting reasons.

53/06/23 Staff survey response rate was good. The headlines are comparable to 2021 results and the results from this survey will be presented to Board in September.

15 Q4 Performance & Risk

54/06/23 Members NOTED the risks above appetite. There have not been many other changes. The budget was Amber, but now that the budget has been confirmed by DLUHC, the rating will change. Recruitment has been difficult, but is improving.

16 Registration Decisions

56/06/23 The report was NOTED. It has been a quiet quarter but there is a lot of restructuring activity in the sector.

17 Private Finance Update

57/06/28 The report was taken as read. WP highlighted the key messages.

18 Any Other Business

59/06/23 There were no other matters of business to discuss.

19 Review of meeting papers

60/06/23 Good quality and informative papers.

Date of next meeting: 25 July 2023 – Friends House, Euston