



PUBLIC MINUTES
of the Board meeting
on Tuesday 18 June 2024
MSTeams

10 Remote and virtual participation

10.1 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 Board 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.

10.2 A meeting shall be deemed to take place where the largest group of those Board 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
Deborah Gregory (DG)	
Richard Hughes (RH)	
Geoff Smyth (GS)	
Kalpesh Brahmhatt (KB)	
Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs (SK-S)	
Jo Boaden (JBo)	
Liz Butler (LB)	
Fiona MacGregor (FM)	Chief Executive

In attendance

Jonathan Walters (JW)	Deputy Chief Executive
Kate Dodsworth (KD)	Chief of Regulatory Engagement
Will Perry (WP)	Director, Strategy
Richard Peden (RBP)	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Emma Tarran (ERT)	Assistant Director, Head of Legal & Company Secretary
Karen Doran (KED)	Director of Regulatory Engagement (PRPs)
Angela Holden (AH)	Director of Regulatory Engagement (LARPs)
Harold Brown (HB)	Senior Assistant Director of Investigation & Enforcement
Jim Bennett (JB)	Assistant Director, Policy, Strategy and Impact (items 8, 10 & workshop)
Anna Furlong (AF)	Assistant Director, Policy, Strategy and Impact (item 8)
Jack Smith (JS)	Assistant Director, Assessment & Tenant Engagement (item 9)
Tom Crawshaw (TC)	Strategy Manager (item 10)
Claire Wilde (CW)	Head of Policy, Strategy & Impact (workshop)
Trish Hardy (TH)	Strategy Manager (workshop)

Minutes

Christine Kitchen	Board Secretary
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- 1 Welcome and apologies**
- 01/06/24 There were no apologies. LB left the meeting at 11am and re-joined at 11.40am.
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
- 02/06/24 JBo declared a new declaration which has been NOTED by the Board Secretary.
- 3 Minutes of meeting 21 May 2024**
- 03/06/24 The confidential and public minutes from 21 May 2024 were AGREED, subject to a few amendments.
- 4 Matters arising**
- 04/06/24 Noted. Dates for 28/05/24, 31/05/24 and 38/05/24 will be confirmed.
- 5 Board forward planner**
- 05/06/24 Members NOTED the forward planner.
- 6 Chair's update**
- 06/06/24 *NED recruitment:* BC confirmed that extensions for SK-S, GS and KB have now been confirmed to the end of October. The new NED appointments were not progressed before the general election was announced and neither was the extension for the ARAC chair beyond August 2024. All these will have to be re-submitted after the election.
- 7 ARAC update**
- 07/06/24 LB gave members an overview of the ARAC meeting the day before. The meeting discussed:
- *NAO update* - confirmed that their audits are continuing during the pre-election period. Their interim audit had reviewed our payroll processes and gave it a clean audit report.
- 2023-24 accounts* – first draft and no major issues.
- *GIAA* - presented their annual report which was positive and reflected a well run organisation. In addition, there was an update of the IA audits that are progressing. LB confirmed when asked, that audits are decided in joint discussion with the Executive and GIAA as the Accounting Officer has responsibility for agreeing, and ARAC seek assurance from those discussions.
 - *SRR* – ARAC received and reviewed the revised strategic risk register and this will come to the July Board for their input.
- 8 Chief Executive update – JB and AF joined the meeting.**
- General Updates**
- 08/06/24 *General Election:* FM gave members an overview of the guidance and protocols in place for Civil Servants which also apply to ALBs. At a meeting with the

Permanent Secretary after the election was announced, this guidance for the Civil Service (which applies to associated bodies) was reinforced in relation to political neutrality which also applies to NEDs and Senior Executives. This includes very careful consideration of undertaking any speaking events and care around any social media posts – including liking or re-tweeting messages. The message to all was to err on the side of caution and not to undertake any actions that could compromise, or be perceived to compromise, the Regulator's obligations on political neutrality.

09/06/24 *BAU in pre-election period:* Members were given an update on our engagement with our sponsor team

10/06/24 *Publications in pre-election period:* Where judgements are judged to represent business as usual, we will publish, ensuring that the publication narrative is completely neutral and with less media focus.

Legislation updates

11/06/24 Updates provided on:

- *Renters Reform Bill:* The Bill did not pass into law before parliament was dissolved. All four main parties have committed in their manifestos, to completing the measures of this Bill with the three shadow parties also committing to banning no-fault evictions.
- *Grenfell Tower Inquiry final report:* report will be published on 4 September. Board will be kept informed. There will be time for a discussion at the September board meeting on anything we might have to respond to. During the summer, the team will be reviewing the evidence from the two hearings to anticipate if it could lead to any recommendations for us.
- *Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act:* this was passed before Parliament was dissolved. There are some dividing lines between the political parties on the provisions of the Act. It was confirmed that there will be no impact of this Act on shared ownership properties as most are new developments.

Inspections update

12/06/24 KD advised that there has been a strong start to the inspection programme. The first tranche has included a mix of organisations. AH advised that the first batch of reports are being prepared and assurance meetings are scheduled to address any gaps in information from providers. In response to a query on staff morale following the first round of inspections, Board was given assurance that the training and induction programme has been invaluable. Whilst there is an understandable level of anxiety around the first batch of gradings, generally staff are positive and report feeling supported and the mix of experienced and new staff in the inspection teams has worked well.

9 Regulatory Referrals

15/06/24 JS joined the meeting and AH introduced the item which had originally been scheduled as a board teach-in, but executive considered this to be a better forum to discuss the new assessment process, what data we get and how we intend to use that data to inform our regulatory engagement and next steps.

16/06/24 JS explained to members our definition of what constitutes a referral, the routes these referrals can come to us and what we do with the information a referral may contain. If information is sourced from wider regulatory work this will be dealt with as an internal referral.

17/06/23 A triage model has been implemented and JS highlighted the benefits of this approach. It allows us to sign-post the referrer if the issue raised is outside of our remit, allows us to harvest data which can be fed into our responsive engagement and pick up any trends or patterns of data on particular landlords. This model is very much an open feedback mechanism for tenants to tell us about their landlords and also for us to get relevant data from the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) on completion of their investigations or for us to sign-post the HOS for issues relating to individuals. JS explained that this model has been operational for a short time, so data is limited at this time, but it is the intention that we will look at service standards, learn from the data and decide how that intelligence will be used in our regulatory engagement.

18/06/24 JS responded to queries about clarity of our communication so tenants are aware of the route to use for a referral or an individual complaint. Monitoring of our website is showing a reduction in the number of referrals coming to us which would need to be re-directed and this might be as a result of the clarity of the guidance we have published. In respect of gathering intelligence on patterns or trends, JS confirmed that the RRE team continue to be the first point of contact and review and log all the information even if it is then re-directed and that data is analysed by the assessment team. The data will be shared with the Business Intelligence team. We are still progressing our review of what else we will do with the data beyond what we do currently. JS and AH gave assurance that Dynamics which is the system we currently use has the capability to produce analysis and can be further developed as the current method beds in. A QA process will ensure that every case has been assessed and reviewed correctly. Landlords also have a duty to provide their tenants with a route to raise concerns. We will continue to have a method to share information between us and the HOS on the completion of their investigations, should our intervention be deemed necessary.

19/06/24 The Chair thanked JS for an informative presentation and it was agreed that a review of how the process has worked will be brought back to the Board perhaps in a year's time.

10 RSH-HOS Memorandum of Understanding

20/06/24 JB and TC joined the meeting. FM explained that the MOU would normally have been published by now, but due to the pre-election restrictions this will now happen post-election. KD advised that there has been a lot of work done by the operations and strategy teams and in agreement with HOS, the MOU would reflect the changes in the remit of both organisations. There have been discussions with DLUHC, the RSH and HOS about the MOU. It is aimed principally at landlords and it was agreed that this distinction should be as clear as it can be. It is a technical document and guidance and signposting for tenants is better placed on both the RSH and HOS websites. The revised MOU reflects a number of changes including but not limited to:

- information exchange between the two organisations and improvements to the way this is carried out.
- more regular casework meetings.
- improved reporting mechanisms for HOS referrals to the regulator to ensure we have appropriate HOS information to support scoping of inspections.
- expectations around sharing of publications.

21/06/24 Members were given assurance that the risk areas of information overload, consistent and timely data sharing and scope for overlap of responsibilities between the two organisations are areas covered in the revised MOU. Next steps are that the MOU will be signed off by the CEO and will be published along with the letter to the sector in the week commencing 8 July. The Chair extended the Board's thanks to all staff involved in getting the MOU finalised.

11 Any Other Business

22/06/24 There were no other matters of business for discussion.

14 Review of meeting and papers submitted for consideration

23/06/24 Members were content with the quality of the papers and that they were received on time. The meeting had worked well as an on-line meeting, and consideration will be given to whether this format can be repeated for future meetings.

Date of next meeting: 16 July 2024