



**PUBLIC MINUTES**  
**of the Board meeting**  
**on Tuesday 16 July 2024**  
**PG49, 2 Marsham Street**

**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
Jo Boaden (JBo)	
Kalpesh Brahmhatt (KB)	
Liz Butler (LB)	
Deborah Gregory (DG)	
Richard Hughes (RH)	
Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs (SK-S)	
Fiona MacGregor (FM)	Chief Executive
Geoff Smyth (GS)	

**In attendance**

Jim Bennett (JB)	Assistant Director, Policy, Strategy and Impact (item 8)
Harold Brown (HB)	Senior Assistant Director of Investigation & Enforcement
Kate Dodsworth (KD)	Chief of Regulatory Engagement
Karen Doran (KED)	Director of Regulatory Engagement (PRPs)
Angela Holden (AH)	Director of Regulatory Engagement (LARPs)
Althea Houghton (AEH)	Assistant Director, Registrations and New Entrants (item 14)
Emma Payne (EP)	Director of Housing, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (from 1pm)
Richard Peden (RBP)	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Will Perry (WP)	Director, Strategy
Emma Tarran (ERT)	Senior Assistant Director, Head of Legal & Company Secretary
Claire Wilde (CW)	Head of Policy, Strategy & Impact (workshop)

**Minutes**

Christine Kitchen	Board Secretary
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- 1 Welcome and apologies**
- 01/07/24 There were apologies from Deputy Chief Executive, Jonathan Walters.
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
- 02/07/24 SK-S declared a new declaration which has been NOTED by the Board Secretary.
- 3 Minutes of meeting 18 June 2024**
- 03/07/24 The confidential and public minutes from 21 May 2024 were AGREED.
- 4 Matters arising**
- 04/07/24 Noted. Dates for 28/05/24, 31/05/24 and 38/05/24 will be confirmed. **CK**
- 5 Board forward planner**
- 05/07/24 Members NOTED the forward planner, including the plan for the 2025 meetings. KB asked to include an update on the communications strategy discussion in the forward plan and RH suggested a lessons learned from the water sector funding issues.
- 6 Chair's update**
- 06/07/24 *General Election and new Ministers:* BC advised that she and FM had attended an online briefing with the Permanent Secretary, who raised the general challenges with NED recruitment which had been paused over the election period.
- 07/07/24 *Stakeholder engagement:* BC reported that she and FM had met with the NHF and there had been a discussion about their pre-election talks with Labour which had been useful to hear. Suggestion that we invite Kate Henderson to one of our board meetings will be taken forward for a future meeting.
- 08/07/24 *Chair appraisal feedback:* BC thanked everyone who had given her feedback for her appraisal and flagged the areas to take forward.
- 7 Nominations and Remuneration Committee (N&RC) update**
- 09/07/24 DG gave members an overview of the N&RC. Following the review of the Terms of Reference and Standing Orders, the committee will be meeting four times a year going forward. The forward planner has been agreed with some standing agenda items.
- 10/07/24 Papers presented to and discussed at the meeting were:
- GGI recommendations
  - Board Effectiveness review
- Others were verbal updates.
- 11/07/24 *Pensions:* RBP provided and update.
- 12/07/24 *Pay-award:* awaiting information on civil service pay award.

13/07/24 *Recruitment and resources:* 15% vacancies remain against the full planned recruitment which will be started again in October. Generally, new staff have settled in well and brought a range of skills and knowledge to the organisation. A wellbeing survey has recently been undertaken and is being analysed.

14/07/24 *Organisational development:* received updates from various workstreams which are all feeding into the development of the RSH People Strategy. RBP committed to providing N&RC an update on recruitment. There has been a positive shift in the EDI figures for grades up to Assistant Director, and we will continue to find ways to improve this figure amongst the senior grades. RBP explained the challenge for senior staff recruitment is the low turnover amongst those grades, so at this stage it is difficult to put a timescale on when EDI figures will change amongst the senior team, but FM said that improving diversity is a top priority.

RBP

15/07/24 BC thanked DG for the update and said that Board would want to remain sighted on these issues and N&RC to test the people strategy when it is presented to them.

## 8 **Chief Executive update – JB joined the meeting.**

### **General Updates**

16/07/24 *New Government:* FM gave members an overview of the announcements since the general election. The department has reverted to being the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Members NOTED the new Ministers are now in post and following the Chancellor's speech, it is clear that the focus for this Government will be on growth and house building including affordable and social housing. There appears to be good relationships amongst ministers and between the Treasury and MHCLG.

17/07/24 *King's Speech:* JB gave members an overview of what is expected to be covered in the King's speech on 17 July. Three Bills of particular relevance to the regulator are expected to be passed (Bill titles may change):

- *Renters Reform Bill:* including extending Awaab's law to the private sector.
- *House Building Bill:* to include new planning powers
- *Local Control:* to include devolution plans.

18/06/24 *MHCLG:* a lot of the shadow Ministers now have the same briefs in Government, so come with an understanding of the issues facing the sector. There are two London Ministers in MHCLG, which will put a focus on local issues as complaints about housing in London are high. They are also likely to be interested in the pace of remediation and fire safety, building communities, devolution and service charges.

19/07/24 SK-S asked about the Code of Governance for profit-making RPs, and FM said that it is unclear at this point what impact this will have. The NHF Code does not cover for-profits, and this code fills the gap. It is not meant to be a rule book, but we will need to wait and see it in action.

20/07/24 KB asked about the negative comments at the Housing Conference in respect of the TSMs. FM said that we understand that the points raised at the conference were more measured than reporting would suggest and were around what data we are getting from the TSMs. BC added that we have been clear that the TSM data is a tool to get a moment in time measure and is a can opener for discussions.

21/07/24 The remainder of the slides were NOTED.

## **9 Annual Report and Accounts (ARA)**

22/07/24 RBP presented the first draft of the 2023-24 draft ARA and is based on the version presented to ARAC in June. The style and layout have remained the same as last year and we will present it to the NAO after their year-end audit. LB confirmed that the risks set out in the report reflect the strategic risks as at 31 March 2024.

24/07/23 RBP confirmed that the timetable for the ARA is, the next iteration to ARAC and Board in October (dependent on NAO sign-off). If October is not achievable, RBP flagged there will be a need for an additional meeting in November.

## **10 Finance and Corporate Services update**

25/07/24 RBP presented the paper which contained the management accounts up to May 2024. He advised that in future, the Board will receive these reports quarterly. The accounts are favourable to budget. Invoicing of fees was carried out in two phases this year. Cashflow forecast is on track.

## **11 Investigation and Enforcement update**

27/08/24 The paper was taken as read and HB provided members with additional updates:

### *Casework*

HB provided updates on:

30/07/24 *Ravenscroft*: this is a small co-operative that is in financial difficulties. We have placed them on the GUR list.

31/07/24 *Octavia*: we have issued our first C3 judgment to this provider.

32/07/24 *Auckland Homes*:

33/07/24 *Heylo*:

34/07/24 HB committed to bring out in the next paper the themes that are emerging from current case work.

Emma Payne from MHCLG joined the meeting.

## **12 Regulation Engagement**

35/07/24 AH introduced the paper as the quarterly update across the regulation directorate and confirmed that it was informed by our objectives, assurance from landlords and from direct engagement.

36/07/24 We have met with all large LARPs and these initial meetings have resulted in some self-referrals. Inspections have also started. The first RJs arising from

our inspections are due to be published soon. We will shortly be commencing the Q2 inspection and stability checks. Quality assurance and finalisation of provider improvement work is on-going.

37/07/24 KED updated on the Q1 PRP inspections. The initial results from the inspections are showing a mix of consumer grades.

Work is progressing with the strategy team on the outcomes from the financial forecast returns (FFR), with the Q2 quarterly survey due in this month and preparation started for the annual stability check (SC) programme which takes place during September to January.

38/07/24 It was acknowledged that this is an evolving report, and JBo asked for assurance on how we are dealing with existing cases (those with a previously published Regulatory Notice) in respect of health and safety issues. She also asked what assurance we can give on the risk and scale of health and safety issues under the new regime for providers with C2/C3 gradings and at what point cases will pass to I&E.

39/07/24 In response, KD advised that existing cases will be reported on by exception. Risks are owned by landlords, but we work with landlords to try to ensure that they prioritise the health and safety of tenants. For those landlords graded C3 it is anticipated that most will sit with regulatory engagement however we have built into the operating model the flexibility to have cases move to the investigation and enforcement team where more intervention is needed.. AH explained that those cases where a Regulatory Notice was published under our previous regulatory framework, we are continuing to manage through our new landlord improvement work, and these are managed in the same way as new C3 cases.

40/07/24 In response to a query about LARP self-referrals and their engagement with tenants when issues are identified, AH confirmed that most are keeping their tenants well informed and are being transparent, but there have been some exceptions and we will continue to monitor this. AH confirmed that we have the capacity to deal with an increase in responsive cases.

41/07/24 BC thanked the team for the report and asked that future papers try and draw out themes, and have reference to our purpose and objectives up front.

AH/KED

#### **MHCLG update – Emma Payne**

42/07/24 BC welcomed EP to the meeting and introductions were made. EP gave an overview of the new Ministerial team and priorities. Minister portfolios are being confirmed.

43/07/24 EP set out the immediate priorities, which are very focused on the Manifesto commitments:

- Delivering 1.5 million new homes in the Parliament
- The biggest increase in social housing in a generation
- Planning reforms to increase housing delivery – also mentioned in the Chancellor's growth plan speech
- Changing the AHP to deliver more affordable housing
- Reviewing RTB discounts
- Increasing the capacity of councils and HAs to deliver more affordable housing

- 45/07/24 Upcoming events:
- The King's Speech and state opening of Parliament – 17th July
  - Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry final report – 4th September
  - Spending Review – to be confirmed
- 48/07/24 BC thanked EP for her time and EP committed to continuing open dialogue with the CEO and team.
- 13 Service Standards**
- 49/07/24 AH presented the paper, which was for information, following the previous discussion with Board. She explained that the approval of the service standards is operational and whilst not explicitly set out, it falls within the wider delegations to the CEO.
- 50/07/24 AH confirmed that our operating model had changed and gave assurance that the revised standards would not delay response times, but rather are intended to maintain standards and in some cases give assurance to and signpost tenants earlier in the process. In response to a question, AH confirmed that there will be QA and QC on decisions made with senior level sign-off for both verbal and written responses. It was suggested that ARAC schedule an IA on referrals in 2025.
- 51/07/24 AH explained when asked how proposed service standard 4 works; this is now an amalgamation of consumer and economic standards work. She confirmed that external standards will be reported in the ARA. Internal standards will be reported and managed through management information and are a means of ensuring that we are meeting the external standards.
- 14 Decisions of the Assistant Director Registration and New entrants**
- 52/07/24 AEH joined the meeting on-line and presented the update paper
- 15 Any other business - none**
- 16 Review of papers and meeting**
- 55/06/24 Members agreed that the papers were of a good standard and future papers will draw our themes and link back to our objectives. BC confirmed that executive will identify a future meeting to invite EP to attend. BC thanked members and management for their contributions to the discussions.
- 56/07/24 There was a closed session with NEDs.
- Date of next meeting: 17 September 2024**

**LB/RBP**