



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Matthew Pennycook MP**

*Minister of State (Housing,  
Communities and Local  
Government)*

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Communities &  
Local Government**

4th Floor, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

Martin Boyd  
Chair of The Leasehold Advisory Service

**[www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)**

3 February 2025

Dear Martin,

As you know, I value the work LEASE does and I appreciate the energy you and the new Board have brought to its operation. As I made clear to you during our constructive introductory meeting in September, the government believes LEASE has a vital role to play as an independent source of trusted advice to residential leaseholders and park home residents. That role will only grow in importance as we work to increase the pace of building safety remediation and advance our ambitious leasehold and commonhold reform agenda.

The government is determined to honour the commitments made in our manifesto and do what is necessary to finally bring the feudal leasehold system to an end. In addition to progressing the wider set of reforms necessary to do so, including reinvigorating commonhold through the introduction of a comprehensive new legal framework and taking further steps to make it the default tenure, work continues on implementing those reforms to the leasehold system already in statute.

I need not tell you that the programme of secondary legislation required to bring into force the various provisions of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 is extensive and technically demanding. I welcome your recognition that in progressing it we must balance the need to act urgently with taking the necessary time to ensure that reforms are watertight.

As I outlined in my 21 November 2024 Written Ministerial Statement on Leasehold and Commonhold Reform, the work of LEASE will be crucial to ensuring that residential leaseholders and freeholders understand and take advantage of the reforms as they are implemented. As this complex regulatory landscape undergoes significant change, LEASE's advisers will be well placed to use their expertise and experience to ensure consumers make informed decisions about their homes.

### **Remit and priorities**

This Chair's Letter sets out LEASE's remit over the next 12 months. As Chair, you are responsible for ensuring the effective operation of the LEASE Board. I expect you to lead the Board in bringing expertise, support, and challenge to the Chief Executive and the wider team. LEASE's remit in 2025 will be to deliver three immediate priorities:

#### **Improving and modernising the core advice service**

There are approximately five million leasehold households in England and Wales and LEASE provided bespoke advice to c.35,000 consumers and had just over a million unique visits to its website in the 23/24 financial year. I am aware you want to greatly increase the reach of LEASE's advice service. This ambition, and how to achieve it, will need to be reflected in your upcoming three-year strategic plan and future business plans. There is also a considerable backlog of cases, and

the website, which has so much potential for encouraging self-service, needs significant modernisation.

The biggest priority for the year ahead should be improving the core advice service. I want you to continue the comprehensive overhaul of how LEASE operates, so that advisers' expertise and efforts are being as effectively deployed as possible.

Improving the core service includes:

- Delivering a digital transformation to modernise the website, improving navigability and the accessibility of the advice material on it.
- Providing customers with the highest quality advice and securing a greater reach of the service.
- Seeking to resolve the long standing pay issues, with the department's support.
- Securing office space to enable LEASE staff to work in a hybrid fashion, as is common across government, and encourage them to connect with their colleagues in person.

Improving the organisation's core advice will be critical to effectively implementing the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act. As we commence its various provisions, there will be a pressing demand for direct bespoke advice to consumers about the new rights, powers and protections that become available but also a more general need to create more informed consumers through an improved digital offer – whether through advice pages or the eLearning offer.

#### Improving data collection and analysis

LEASE's digital transformation, of which I am fully supportive, will not only enable more consumers to self-serve but also represents a significant opportunity for greater data collection and insights. The government is keen to use technology to deliver better public services. I know you share this ambition, including with regard to the opportunities provided by AI. I therefore want you to ensure the momentum behind LEASE's digital transformation gathers pace over the coming year and share your progress and data insights with the department.

This includes:

- Carrying out more detailed collection and analysis of how consumers interact with the service, including the website.
- Developing approaches to analysing how effectively government guidance, policy announcements and reforms are reaching consumers.
- Developing further data to demonstrate how well the advice service delivers for consumers, including through targeted and outcomes-oriented surveys, and working with the department to align with (and add value to) upcoming activities.

Going further, I also want LEASE to become an authoritative voice in respect of leasehold data, both for government (not least to aid our evaluation of reforms), and the sector. To achieve this, I would like LEASE to develop and publish insights reports on the trends you are discovering and to that end would like a plan for insights reports in 2025/26 by the beginning of the next financial year (April 2025). The production of these reports will position LEASE as an influential voice in the sector and a source of high-quality advice for consumers. Publishing the reports will be an integral part of LEASE's role in sharing and amplifying consumer voice and securing recognition as a result.

#### Leading the effective coordination of the redress landscape

The final area I want you to focus on this year is redress. As you know, the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act seeks to provide homeowners with greater rights, powers and protections over their homes. Redress is an important part of consumers' ability to act on their rights, both through redress schemes and, where necessary, the courts system.

LEASE should work with redress providers to find ways to add value to the consumer journey, including, for instance, encouraging leaseholders to seek its advice on their case before progressing through the most appropriate route to resolution.

I look forward to hearing your suggestions for how LEASE can play an active role in working with redress services and helping leaseholders resolve their complaints. In my view, this will include:

- Developing effective relationships with the Property Ombudsman, the Housing Ombudsman, the Financial Ombudsman Service, Property Redress, and relevant tribunals, to work with leasehold redress providers to share data, insights and signpost to each other's material as relevant, and to then share relevant insights back with the government.
- Leading this network in developing clear, concise and collectively agreed messaging on the various routes to leaseholder redress, ensuring alignment with the work of the government, so the public receives consistent information on their options from the whole ecosystem.
- Improving the LEASE advice service and spearheading redress provider join up for leaseholders. LEASE should become a recommended part of the consumer journey, encouraging leaseholders to seek its advice on their case before progressing through the most appropriate route to resolution.

### **Delivery of the Business Plan and Key Performance Indicators**

I expect the Board to support and robustly challenge the development and delivery of a business plan and key performance indicators (KPIs). I am aware that LEASE's historic KPIs do not represent a robust set of metrics to hold the organisation to account as it moves forward with this evolved remit. I am keen for LEASE to include metrics on improving the customer experience through better quality advice and website functionality as well as the wider remit points outlined in this letter.

Furthermore, I would like you to hold LEASE to account through quarterly performance reporting and monitoring against the objectives and KPIs in the business plan. I expect the escalation of any emerging issues to be prompt and transparent with the sponsorship team in MHCLG, who are currently responsible for holding LEASE to account in relation to its performance and corporate governance and stand ready to support you.

### **Governance**

LEASE's Board has been in place since March 2024 and I am looking to you to continue to lead and support it to provide effective, proportionate support and challenge to the executive team. I expect you to conduct a Board Effectiveness Review by the end of March 2025, as per the usual ALB governance processes. This letter also provides a summary of MHCLG's governance expectations of a Chair in Annex A in line with current Cabinet Office guidance.

I am grateful for the continued efforts of you and your Board to deliver improvements and high-quality outcomes. I look forward to seeing LEASE continue to develop over the coming year and meeting you to discuss progress towards the above priorities on a regular basis.

The importance of maintaining an open, honest and trust-based partnership supported by the principles set out in relevant government guidance cannot be overstated. I look forward to seeing the delivery plans for this remit in your new three-year strategic plan and business plan ahead of the next financial year.

Best wishes,

**Matthew Pennycook MP**  
Minister of State for Housing and Planning  
CC: Joanna Key, Caroline Crowther, Charlotte Spencer

## **Annex: Governance Expectations of the Chair**

This annex issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), sets out the standard governance expectations of Chairs within its portfolio. This is not an exhaustive list of the duties of a Chair, and should be read alongside the Chair's letter. This annex does not supersede or alter any responsibilities as set out in LEASE's Framework Document or other constitutional documentation.

The Department expects the Chairs of its Arm's Length Bodies to lead the Board in an effective and collegiate manner, and adhere to best practice corporate governance standards where possible in undertaking their roles. It is your responsibility, as Chair of LEASE to lead the Board, and ensure that it undertakes all of its responsibilities as set out in LEASE's governance framework. The Chair should set the tone from the top of LEASE and promote an effective and appropriate culture in both the Boardroom and the wider organisation.

Your responsibilities are to act in accordance with the highest standards of corporate governance, and are complemented by requirements and expectations of you by Government. Below is a list of some of the core governance expectations of MHCLG regarding your duties as Chair encompassing both of these elements. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and does not supplant any responsibilities set out in LEASE's governing documentation:

### **Set the Board's agenda**

You should set LEASE's Board's agenda in good time ahead of a Board meeting. There should be sufficient visibility of items for forthcoming meetings to allow Board members, Executives, and stakeholders as necessary to prepare and engage with the Board. The agenda should focus upon LEASE's strategy and any policies as set by MHCLG. In addition, the Board's agenda should interrogate LEASE's ongoing performance, culture, and value for money, all while being cognisant of its overall accountability to the taxpayer.

### **Encourage engagement from Board members**

You should encourage Board members to engage with LEASE both within Board meetings, through active participation in discussions and decisions, and more widely. You should encourage Board members to join Board committees where they can add value. You should support Board members to contribute their expertise where relevant to LEASE on an ongoing basis. You should foster effective relationships based on trust, mutual respect, and open communication between Board members and the Executive team, both inside and outside of the Boardroom. You should monitor and manage conflicts of interest among Board members in order that the Board may function appropriately, in accordance with the conflicts of interest policies of and LEASE.

### **Foster relationships between the Board and stakeholders, including Government**

You should be the principal point of contact between stakeholders and the Board. You should foster constructive relationships with all relevant stakeholders to LEASE. You should also maintain a constructive relationship with MHCLG in the course of your work.

### **Develop a strong working relationship with the Chief Executive**

The relationship with the Chief Executive is key to the long-term success of LEASE. You should provide support and advice to the Chief Executive, while respecting their executive responsibility. You should work with the Chief Executive to consider the strength of the broader executive team. Under your leadership, the Board should consider executive succession planning on a regular basis.

### **Work with HM Government on the composition of the Board, and the appointment of new Board members**

You should consider the composition of the Board in line with the requirements of LEASE on a continual basis, providing regular feedback to MHCLG as appropriate. You should work with MHCLG to consider appointments to the LEASE Board. You should engage in the appointment process as appropriate as per the agreed framework, and in compliance with rules or regulations governing appointments to the LEASE Board.

### **Provide mentoring and an induction to new Board members**

You should lead the induction to new Board members on behalf of LEASE. You should make sure new Board members are introduced to all relevant people both within LEASE and among stakeholders. This should be done in cooperation with MHCLG. The induction process should familiarise new Board members with LEASE and its overall governance framework.

**You should encourage Board members to develop their knowledge and skills**

You should continually consider the knowledge and skills that the Board requires to discharge its duties to LEASE. Where the Board would benefit from additional knowledge and skills, which can be met without the need to recruit new or additional Board members, you should encourage Board members to undertake relevant training and education where possible.

**Lead the annual evaluation of the Board, which should be externally facilitated at least every three years**

You should ensure that a review of the Board's effectiveness is undertaken on an annual basis. This should be facilitated by an external provider at least every three years. Where the evaluation is not externally facilitated, you should lead the process, gathering feedback from Board members regarding the Board's functioning. You should also consider how stakeholders can input into the review, to provide comment upon the Board's effectiveness in engaging with Government and stakeholders. Reviews should produce a written report. You should be responsible for overseeing the implementation of any recommendations arising from a review as necessary.

**Evaluate the performance of non-executive Board members at least annually**

You should undertake a review, at least annually, of the performance of non-executive Board members. This review should consider their contributions to the Board, and the value they add to LEASE. You should write these reviews and be prepared to share them with MHCLG in an appropriate manner. A written review of performance may be necessary to support any reappointment decisions for Board members.

**Be subject to an annual performance evaluation**

You should engage with an evaluation of your performance on an annual basis. You should allow the Senior Independent Director to gather feedback on your performance from the perspective of Board members. MHCLG shall gather feedback from Government and other stakeholders. This will be collated by MHCLG and provided to the Principal Accounting Officer in an appropriate manner. A written review of your performance may be necessary to support any reappointment decision.