

LEASE – The Leasehold Advisory Service and Lease Conferences Limited

Minutes of Board Meeting on 20 November 2014 11am at LEASE

Present:

Deep Sagar (Chair) (DS), Justin Caffrey (JC), Steve Jackson (SJ), Geneviève Mariner (GM), John May (JM).

In attendance:

Anthony Essien (Chief Executive) (AE), Shabnam Ali-Khan (SAK), Audrey Minton (AM), Vikki Hawkins (note-taker)

Observer:

Paul Sadgrove (DCLG) (PS)

2014/11/1. Apologies for absences and declarations of conflicts of interest

Apologies were received from Nicola Mullany and David Kuenssberg of DCLG. No conflicts of interests were declared. The chair welcomed PS in particular to the meeting.

2014/11/2. Chair's comments

The chair made the following main comments:

- (i) He attended a recent Lease Conferences' training course for professionals: it was well delivered but revealed the great unfulfilled potential in this market.
- (ii) For income increases and to explore service delivery he and AE will be meeting WG civil servants later in the week and are seeking a meeting with Richard Blakeway, Deputy Mayor of London. A meeting with the Housing Minister has been requested too.
- (iii) He suggested an informal strategy session in December. Dates will be circulated. (*Action: ND*)

2014/11/3. Minutes of the Board meeting of 11th September 2014

Minutes were approved with changes which had been suggested by SJ, NM by email.

2014/11/4. Action points and matters arising since last meeting

Previous action points and matters arising were noted as in the report. Specific additional actions were agreed as follows:

- Develop more advertising spots on home page. (*Action: AM*)
- Define and achieve outcome from working with housing associations in Wales. (*Action: SAK*)
- The stakeholder forum should be focused on informing LEASE's work and advice it provides and the agenda should reflect this and avoid being a 'talking shop'. If attendance is likely to be low then the event should be postponed to January. (*Action: AE*)
- The advice guides need to be reviewed in order to make them more 'customer orientated' ie aimed at those customers who do not have a background in leasehold law/management. (*Action: AE*)

2014/11/5. Performance report

AE and SAK presented this report. The following actions were agreed:

- Customer feedback survey scores are encouraging as is feedback from the website survey. Presentation of statistical data would be revised to separate park homes and Conferences from LEASE England and LEASE Wales. (*Action: AM*)
- Can telephone hold message be updated to include an estimate of hold time? If not, revise hold message to help manage expectations of callers that occasionally the wait can be long. (*Action: AM*)
- Is LEASE measuring the right outcomes? Measure what it is people want from us and how we deliver against that. PS suggested that current KPIs don't show LEASE's work to its best advantage and suggested an early meeting with sponsors to review and consider new baseline. (*Action: AE*) SJ will mentor this work to get to new KPIs.
- Wales performance has slowed down a little in the period to date. (*Action: AE, SAK*)

- Data on customers served should include a separate column for England. Telephone coverage would be reviewed to see that attention on emails is not leading to reduction of telephone service. *(Action: AE)*
- Park homes' outreach events numbers are excellent and LEASE should look to maintain this performance while working on new commercial avenues. *(Action: AE)*

2014/11/6. Financial report to October 2014

AM presented the reports. The chair pointed out that if the eight-month trend continued for the full year Conferences' income would be below target. The following actions were agreed:

- Review directory prices and add automatic renewal feature. *(Action: AM)*
- Consider outsourcing routine administration ie chasing bills, invoices, renewals, price changes etc in order to concentrate efforts on income generation. *(Action: AM)* SJ to mentor this activity
- The FTT summaries project needs to be expedited *(Action: AE)*. PS would seek views from finance colleagues at DCLG on progress of business case submitted for FTT summaries project. *(Action: PS)*

2014/11/7. Chief Executive's report

The CE's report was noted.

- PS updated the board on progress of recruitment to board posts. Margaret Longden has been appointed as the new board member. On the Chair position, interviews have been completed and a submission to the minister is likely in the week beginning 24 November.
- As one way to make advice provision more efficient, the Board discussed whether customers should be asked to provide basic data, in addition to bringing a copy of their lease, in a simple form so that face-to-face advice sessions could be more effective. Also consider whether it might be practical to produce a brief written summary of the advice for the customer.
- It was agreed that PI cover for potential form filling for park homes would be examined. *(Action: AM)*

2014/11/8. Board and Audit Committee meeting dates

The proposed dates for 2015 were agreed.

2014/11/9. Training session

Judith Goulden, retired judge at the First-tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) (Residential Property), led this session and facilitated discussion on how LEASE could better help customers coming to the tribunal. It was agreed that LEASE should provide a clear, simple, written description to customers on what they could expect to be addressed by the LEASE adviser at the London tribunal. *(Action: AE)*

2014/11/10: AOB

- The chair expressed gratitude on behalf of LEASE to JC for his service as a board member and for chairing the Audit Committee.
- JM expressed the board's thanks to DS for his service as chair of LEASE.

Next Board meeting: 11.00am 22 January 2015 at LEASE.