

LEASE – The Leasehold Advisory Service

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Tuesday 19th March 2019

Present:

Wanda Goldwag (Interim Chair) (WG), Steve Jackson (SJ) (Victoria Elvidge (VE), and Tariq Kazi (TK)

In attendance:

Anthony Essien (Chief Executive) (AE), Tim Courtenay (TC) Nicolette Davis (Note taker) Nick Haler (NH) (for part)

Observers: Claire Mathys (MHCLG)

2019/03/1 Welcome and apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2019/03/2 Declarations of interest

- WG declared that she is an advisor to Smedvig Venture Capital; a lay member of the QC appointments panel; Chair of the Office of Legal Complaints, a Non-Executive Director of the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust and Chair of the Financial Conduct Authority's Consumer Panel.
- TK declared that he is an employee of Optivo Housing; and a Board Member and Finance Committee Chair of Stonewater Housing. TK makes the comment for the record as each of these, alongside their main social housing rental activities, is also a freeholder that has dealings with leaseholders through their low cost home ownership activities. There is no professional conflict as each is a not-for-profit charitable organisation that is a Registered Provider regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing.
- SJ declared that he has been appointed to the Audit Committee of Southway Housing Trust, a not-for-profit charitable organisation that is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. SJ makes the comment for the record as alongside its main social housing rental activities, it is also a freeholder that has dealings with leaseholders through their low cost home ownership activities.
- VE declared that she is on a panel reviewing the Board of Directors of Ebsfleet Development Corporation; and is Chairing the Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement Best Practice Group.
- VE, TK and SJ all declared that they are long leaseholders.

2019/03/3 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 21st January 2019

The Minutes of 21st January 2019 were approved as a true and accurate copy.

2018/03/4 Matters arising and action points from previous meetings

The Board noted the paper and WG updated the Board on her teleconference with MHCLG's Permanent Secretary on 12th March.

2019/03/5 Chair and Chief Executive's Report

The Board noted the paper and WG updated the Board that Project Open Door's Advisory Board held its first meeting on 12th March.

2019/03/6a Performance Report to February

The Board noted the contents of the paper and after discussion requested that in future a single performance report, with three or four key metrics and what targets are not being met, should be presented. **(ACTION AE)**

2019/03/6b Digital services update to February

The Board noted the paper and requested that the link from the homepage to the Park Homes portal should be checked as it was not working **(ACTION NH)**

WG updated the Board that she had requested to meet with MHCLG's Digital Director, Paul Maltby, to discuss LEASE's website as regards improving the user experience. **(ACTION AE)**

2019/03/6c Marketing Update to February

The Board noted the paper.

2019/03/7a Draft 2019-20 Business Plan

AE outlined the draft business plan and after discussion the Board made the following suggestions:

- That Objective 1 should be reworded as it currently read as too internally focused; and
- That delivering outstanding customer service should be made more prominent. **(ACTION AE)**

2019/03/7b HR Strategy

The Board approved the HR Strategy subject to:

- The strategy making more of working at LEASE being a hallmark to the next part of a staff member's career; and
- That the strategy should emphasise LEASE as a high performance organisation.

TC drew to the Board's attention that LEASE staff members are out of step as regards some employment benefits when compared to staff at MHCLG e.g. annual leave rising by one day per year up to a maximum of 30 days. CM agreed that she would make enquiries at MHCLG as to who management should contact to compare benefits **(ACTION CM)**

2019/03/08a Finance Report to February

The Board noted the paper and requested that the presentation of expenditure variances is to be made clearer. **(ACTION TC)**

2018/03/08b Update from interim ARC Chair (incl draft Minutes of ARC meeting held on 14 February 2019)

The Board noted the draft Minutes and VE explained that a correction of the draft would be required to reflect that her apologies were not proffered as she was unaware that she was required to attend further Audit Committee meetings. TK added that his declarations would need to be corrected at the appropriate time. **(ACTION AE)**

2019/03/08c ARC recommendation of Board Assurance Framework and Risk Management Plan

The Board approved the recommendation.

2019/03/08d Report on ARC Self-assessment review

The Board noted the paper.

2019/03/08e Strategic Risk Register

The Board noted the paper

2019/03/08f Update on Business Plan progress to February

The Board noted the paper

2019/03/09a Draft Board Narrative to 2018-19 Statutory Accounts

The Board approved the paper, subject to management obtaining clear assurance from MHCLG that the proposed changes posed no issues. **(ACTION TC)**

2019/03/09b Report on the Greater London Authority's Leaseholder portal

The Board noted the paper.

The Board requested that AE follow up with Iain Kennedy of Rightmove as regards the content for prospective leaseholders. **(ACTION AE)**

The Board were advised that WG is due to meet with the Land Registry, and to continue to build relationships with CAB.

2019/03/09c Future Work Plan and meeting dates

2019/03/09d Any other Business

The Board requested that for the July Board meeting, papers should be reduced in keeping with 2019/03/6a above. **(ACTION AE)**

The Board asked management to investigate what would be required to change the company name to 'The Leaseholder Advisory Service' and if there would be any operational implications as a consequence this. **(ACTION TC)**

The Board agreed that, from 1st April 2019, Board and ARC meetings will be held on the same day; and that all three current committee members will remain on the committee.

Next Board and ARC meeting date and time: 10.30am on Thursday 30 May 2019 in Room LG7 at Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London, EC4Y 8JX.