

LEASE – The Leasehold Advisory Service

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Thursday 30th May 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) Michael Tourville (MT), Beaver & Struthers (for part)

Observer: Jose Espineira (JE), MHCLG

2019/05/1 Welcome and apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2019/05/2 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.

2019/05/3 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 19th March 2019

The Minutes of the Board meeting held 19th March 2019 were approved as a true and accurate copy.

2018/05/4 Matters arising and action points from previous meetings

AE updated the Board, and after discussion the Board requested clarification from MHCLG why it would need sight of the business plan regarding LEASE equalising its staff benefits to make them comparable to staff at MHCLG **(ACTION JE)**

The Board also requested that MHCLG clarify whether Cabinet Office approval would be required in the event that LEASE sought to change its name. **(ACTION JE)**

2019/05/5 Chair and Chief Executive's Report

WG updated the Board on her meeting with Heather Wheeler MP; and AE set out sector updates and the meetings attended and planned, before informing the Board that LEASE's Head of Operations and a Senior Adviser had both resigned and would leave LEASE at the end of July.

The Board expressed their thanks to both for their service and contribution to LEASE.

2019/05/6a Performance Report to April

AE presented the paper and the Board raised its concern about the response time for written enquiries. The Board requested that management consider whether written enquiries need to be tackled in a different way. **(ACTION AE)**

The Board also requested that future performance reports should be no more than 2½ pages in length. **(ACTION AE)**

2019/05/6b Annual Staff Survey Report

TC presented the paper and explained that the plan to move to Civil Service People Survey OCR would not be possible in 2019-20, because the supplier had an existing waiting list of 15 other public sector organisations. The Board suggested that management change the timing of the survey to October for a better response rate; and requested that management ask MHCLG's Head of Organisational Development and Engagement to share MHCLG's Pulse Survey with LEASE **(ACTION JE)**

2019/05/7 Draft 2018-19 LEASE Annual Report

The Board approved the paper subject to the following amendments:

- Page 3 – Correct the Secretary of State's title
- Page 3 – Correct the reference to Lease Conferences Ltd to say that it has not traded
- Page 4 – Remove paragraph 3
- Page 10 – Change “win let alone to have been nominated” to “nominated let alone to win”

(ACTION AE)

2019/05/8a Draft 2018-19 LEASE and Lease Conferences Audited Accounts

The Board approve the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2019.

2019/05/8b Draft 2018-19 Auditor's Management Letter

The Board approved the Auditor's Management Letter.

2019/05/08c Draft 2018-19 Regulatory Compliance Report

The Board approved Regulatory Compliance Report.

2019/05/08d Draft 2018-19 Letters of Representations

The Board approved the 2018-19 Letters of Representations for LEASE and Lease Conferences Ltd.

2019/05/08e Finance Report April

The Board noted the paper.

2019/05/08f LEASE 2018-19 Value for Money Report

AE presented the paper and after discussion it was agreed that content on the cladding fund, such as FAQs, would improve LEASE's fire safety content. **(ACTION AE)**

JE notified the Board that the Building Safety Programme (BSP) is currently working on guidance for the cladding fund and the Board requested that AE contact BSP and request that it shares the guidance with LEASE. **(ACTION AE)**

2019/05/08g Strategic Risk Register

AE presented the paper and after discussion it was agreed that failure to comply with data protection (GDPR) is currently a higher risk to the organisation. It follows that the risk register needs to be revised, including controls/mitigation, to reflect the position. **(ACTION AE)**

The Board requested that the size of the risk register is reduced to reflect the size of the organisation. **(ACTION AE)**

The Board requested that management implement the outsourced wireless alternative to maintain business continuity for the telephone, email and other advice service channels. **(ACTION TC)**

2019/05/08h Update on Business Plan progress to April

The Board noted the paper.

2019/05/09a Board Skills Audit

AE presented the paper and after discussion Board members confirmed that they are prepared to complete online courses in developing their skills. The Board requested that management should review the answers provided to the skills audit, to establish what needs to be resolved amongst current Board members, and then feed this back to the Board **(ACTION AE)**

2019/05/09b Future Work Plan and Meeting Dates

The Board approved the paper.

2019/03/09c Any Other Business

There was no further business.

Next Board meeting date and time: 11.30am on Thursday 25 July 2019 in Room LG7 at Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London, EC4Y 8JX.