

LEASE – The Leasehold Advisory Service

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Tuesday 24th March 2020 by videoconference

Present:

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

In attendance:

Anthony Essien (Chief Executive) (AE), Nicolette Davis (Note taker) (ND)

Observer: Sandra Simoni (SS), MHCLG

1. 2020/03/1 Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2. 2020/03/2 Declarations of interest

2.1 WG declared that she is an advisor to Smedvig Venture Capital; a lay member of the QC appointments panel; a Non-Executive Director of the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust; Chair of the Financial Conduct Authority's Consumer Panel. She will become the Independent Panel Chair of the Modification Panel for the Joint Office of Gas Transporters, effective 1st January 2020, and will be stepping down as Chair of the Office of Legal Complaints on 31st March 2020.

2.2 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.

2.3 SJ declared that he is a member of 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.

2.4 VE declared that she is Chairing the Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement Best Practice Group.

2.5 VE, TK, SJ and AE all declared that they are long leaseholders.

3. 2020/03/3 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 28th January 2020

3.1 The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 28th January 2020 were approved as a true and accurate copy, subject to the correction of typos. **(ACTION AE)**

4. 2020/03/4 Matters arising and action points from previous meetings

4.1 The paper was noted, and the Board advised management not to progress the Mystery Shopper exercise and to concentrate instead on maintaining good service.

4.2 AE notified the Board that WG met with the Citizens Advice's (CA) CEO who provided a CA contact for AE to arrange for the dissemination of guidance. **(ACTION AE)**

5. 2020/03/5 Chair and Chief Executive's Report

5.1 The paper was noted. The Board emphasised the importance of continuing to keep staff updated on legal and policy developments through internal legal clinics and encouraged the use of Microsoft Teams.

5.2 The Board suggested that additional cross-training of advisers is undertaken to meet the potential upsurge in fire safety enquiries stemming from the launch of the Building Safety Fund (BSF); and that fire safety customers are e-mailed to update them on the BSF. **(ACTION AE)**

6. 2020/03/6a Performance Report to February

6.1 AE presented the paper and the Board noted the performance to February. The Board underlined the importance of ongoing service delivery, they also suggested flexible working for staff members with childcare issues.

6.2 SS volunteered to forward MHCLG's information on staff wellbeing to AE. **(ACTION SS)**

7. 2020/03/7a Finance Report to February

7.1 The Board noted the paper and requested that AE speak to Finance sponsors to clarify timescales for production of final accounts and then 2019-20 annual report **(ACTION AE)**

8. 2020/03/08a Future Work Plan and Meeting Dates

8.1 The Board agreed to move the May Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting to June whilst keeping the Board meeting as currently scheduled for 29th May.

9. 2020/03/8b Any Other Business

9.1 The Board requested a note from Digital Services Manager addressing the failure to connect VE to Microsoft Teams. **(ACTION AE)**

9.2 SS notified the Board that the MHCLG's ALB team may make enquiries regarding progress of business plans.

9.3 TK thanked his colleagues for the experience of being a Board member with LEASE and indicated he would be more than happy to assist up until the end of his term on the 23rd April 2020.

9.4 AE expressed thanks on behalf of the staff at LEASE for TK's service to the organisation and wished him well in the future.

Next Board meeting date and time: Friday 29th May 2020 at 11.30am by videoconference

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'W' followed by a large loop and a long horizontal stroke.