



PUBLIC MINUTES
of the Board meeting
on Tuesday 21 January 2025
PG49, 2 Marsham Street

10 Remote and virtual participation

10.1 Any member may validly participate in a meeting virtually through the medium of conference telephone, video conferencing or similar form of communication equipment, provided that all persons participating in the meeting are able to hear and speak to each other throughout such meeting, or relevant part thereof. A Board member so participating shall be deemed to be present in person at the meeting and shall accordingly be counted in a quorum and entitled to vote.

10.2 A meeting shall be deemed to take place where the largest group of those Board members participating is assembled or, if there is no group which is larger than any other group, where the chair of the meeting is.

Present

Bernadette Conroy (BC)	Chair
Jo Boaden (JBo)	
Kalpesh Brahmhatt (KB)	
Liz Butler (LB)	
Deborah Gregory (DG)	
Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs	
Robert Light (RL)	
John Liver (JL)	
Fiona MacGregor (FM)	Chief Executive
Geoff Smyth (GS)	

In attendance

Jim Bennett (JB)	Assistant Director, Policy, Strategy and Impact (item 7)
Kate Dodsworth (KD)	Chief of Regulatory Engagement
Angela Holden (AH)	Director of Regulatory Engagement (LARPs)
Richard Peden (RBP)	Director of Finance and Corporate Services via MS Teams
Will Perry (WP)	Director, Strategy
Emma Tarran (ERT)	Senior Assistant Director, Head of Legal & Company Secretary
Jonathan Walters (JW)	Deputy Chief Executive

Minutes

Christine Kitchen	Board Secretary
-------------------	-----------------

1 Welcome and apologies

01/01/25 There were apologies from Richard Hughes (RH) and Harold Brown (HB).

2 Declarations of Interest

02/01/25 There were no new declarations of interest or any conflicts of interest relating to items on the agenda.

3 Minutes of meeting 19 November 2024

03/01/25 The confidential and public minutes from 19 November 2024 were AGREED, subject to minor amendments.

4 Matters arising

04/01/25 The updates against the actions were noted.

21/10/24: RBP advised of timescale for internal audits which will be during 2025/26 and 2026/27 respectively. Work is on-going on both areas in the business.

50/07/24 and 19/06/24: Referrals internal audit: this area was considered recently, timing for the next internal audit will be discussed with GIAA. There will be some pick up under the 2025/26 GIAA audit of New Regulatory Processes and Assurance.

05/01/24: Board Teach-ins: the induction programme for JL and RL is being rolled out. The Chair encouraged other members to also consider attending these sessions as a refresher. The reintroduction of teach-ins will be considered when the induction sessions have been completed.

5 Board forward planner

05/01/25 Members NOTED the forward planner. The March away-day will be at Friends House, Euston.

6 Chair's update

06/01/25 *NED recruitment:* BC updated members on the recent round of NED recruitment which closed at the end of December 2024.

07/01/25 BC gave a readout of her meeting with Baroness Taylor which was considered to be very useful.

08/01/25 *Departmental briefing:* the next briefing is scheduled for 23 January.

7 Chief Executive Update – JB joined the meeting.

FM provided the following updates:

09/01/25 *HCLG select committee:* this non-inquiry hearing was held on 14 January. The previous week there had also been Select Committee Inquiry session with Angela Rayner and Sarah Healey on the work of the Department, which covered, among other matters, whether there should be annual housing targets. The 14 January hearing comprised two 45 minute sessions and was titled Housing Associations; development and finance . At the first session there were representatives from NHF, G15, and two HAs. Discussions included the financial pressures facing the sector and the impact on contributing to the 1.5m homes delivery target, subsidies and trade-offs for the sector between investing in existing stock and new supply.

The second session was the one at which FM gave evidence alongside Chris Buckle, Savills UK and Neil Jefferson, Home Builders Federation.

- 10/01/25 WP gave members an overview of the session. The points of discussion in relation to financing of the sector, market perception, S106 were interesting. FM fielded questions on challenges to the sector, building safety work, new and future standards, improvements to existing stock and our regulatory approach to all these areas. WP noted that the recent government consultation on rent policy has closed: MHCLG are considering the responses. Members will be kept informed should we get requests from the select committee for further information/action.
- 11/01/25 *Engagement with MHCLG and senior officials:* KD advised that she and KED had had another useful meeting with Baroness Taylor where we were able to give her assurance that we regularly engage with landlords following the publication of judgements.
- 12/01/25 *Fire remediation update:* Members were advised that MHCLG have published their Remediation Acceleration Plan (RAP) which included proposals to legislate for landlords of high risk buildings to remove dangerous cladding on all 11m+ buildings within clear timescales or face potential penalties. There was discussion about what flexibility might be available if buildings and responsibilities for works are the subject of legal dispute. The plan covers all 11m+ buildings and does not separate out social housing, however a specific Social Housing Strategy is expected to support the Plan. The Plan proposes creation of a register of 11-18m buildings in addition to the register of 18m+ buildings. We currently collect some of this data but only for the social housing sector.
- 13/01/25 JL queried the presentation of results of the fire remediation survey. WP responded that we are seeking to give a factual presentation of results and ensure that fire remediation is given appropriate prominence in our regulation. He also noted that quarterly reporting is relatively frequent and there may not always be significant change to report. FM added that reporting indicates significant activity to achieve progress such as multiple surveys and establishing responsibility with building owners or constructors, which may not yet have translated into definitive timescales. It was encouraging that Government is considering imposing completion dates which would provide a benchmark against which to measure progress. KED added that we follow up with providers identified as outliers in the data on a quarterly basis.
- 14/01/25 *Tenant Satisfaction Measures:* we published the results of the first year of TSMs and the National Tenant Survey which received a good level of media attention. The results broadly align with data from Housemark. Our analysis show various factors can influence for satisfaction levels, such as density of homes, demographics and living in urban areas, particularly London, but the quality of service and quality of repairs are the biggest drivers of satisfaction levels.
- 15/01/25 *Fees and Resources Advisory Panel (FRAP):* met at the end of December 2025 and talked through the proposed fees for 2025/26. We were challenged on the level of fee increase, especially for LAs. RBP said that we had to make our case and JW said that the sector generally accepts that fees are required to fund regulators but will need to show VfM. The sector was also impacted by the increase in fees from the HOS, and we have to be mindful about our increases and ensure they are necessary and offer VfM and that there is a balance between LAs and PRPs.

- 16/01/25 *2024 Global Accounts:* have been published for the year up to 31 March 2024. As usual the publication has been very well received by the sector. The results show the sector's financial position has weakened and a record level of expenditure on repairs and maintenance, development and supply of new homes. There is pressure on the sector and interest cover is at the lowest it has been since 2008. The forecasts based on FFR data show that financial pressures are expected to continue and new development is likely to reduce.
- 17/01/25 Performance Report: SK-S queried the wording of the progress update target 41 on delivery of EDI work which is described as a self-imposed (as opposed to a statutory requirement) target and could be interpreted as not being important to the organisation. RBP gave assurance that this is not the case at all but rather poor wording. Our EDI strategy is in place and in the process of being updated and the targets are important to us. DG added that she too had picked up this point and was given assurance that EDI remains a very important target for the organisation. SK-S said that she did not doubt that in substance we are committed and it is important that we communicate this.
- 18/01/25 *LA reform:* RL asked how we will address LA reform where authorities with different levels of performance may combine, and how we will ensure that areas of weakness are addressed. FM advised that we have a methodology that we apply for PRPs that in mergers the presumption is that lowest grade is applied to the merged entity until they are inspected as the new entity. We will need to consider how we do this for LAs once it is clearer how proposed LA reform would work. It was AGREED that we provide Board with our thinking on devolution as the reforms develop.

8 ARAC report to the Board and ARA

- 19/01/25 LB gave members a readout from the ARAC meeting from the previous day. NAO had submitted their audit report and do not anticipate any delay in getting sign off. They had completed the review of the 2023-24 annual accounts. The NAO had highlighted one unadjusted error of £180k in respect of the City of Westminster Local Government Pension Scheme's accounts, for which no adjustment was required in the regulator's accounts. NAO's review of the move to our new payroll system, which has been operational for two years, had been considered by their IT specialists with some suggested learning for future procurements, but would not impact the accounts. We agreed to keep their recommendations in mind when we undertake a similar exercise in future.
- 20/01/25 NAO advised the committee on progress with dealing with the backlog of LA audits. The devolution agenda is likely to have an impact on their remit going forward.
- 21/01/25 All internal audits were on target, with 2 audits to be completed in Q4. GIAA had submitted to ARAC the previous day a proposed audit plan for 2025-26 which was largely agreed and will be finalised at the April meeting.
- 22/01/25 ARAC reviewed the refreshed SRR following the full review in November and there had been a good discussion on appetite vs tolerance. LB recommended that the Board have a discussion on this. This will be added to the board forward planner. **RBP**
- 23/01/25 *2023-24 Annual Report and Accounts:* the board have seen the ARA previously and subject to a few minor changes that have been highlighted, the ARA is being recommended by ARAC to the board for endorsement and recommendation that the Letter of Representation is signed by FM as Accounting Officer. LB asked that

the hard work and effort of the finance team is noted and asked RBP to pass on thanks to all involved. BC agreed and also thanked LB for her hard work and commitment as Chair of ARAC, taking the organisations through some complex situations and managing the relationship with the NAO. BC welcomed JL as the new chair of ARAC.

9 Any other business

24/01/25 AH gave members an overview of the LA representatives that are coming to the workshop session.

Date of next meeting: 18 February 2025