

**Minutes of the joint meeting of the Boards of
Rooftop Housing Group Limited and
Rooftop Housing Association Limited
held at 9.30 am on Wednesday 14 September 2022
at 70 High Street, Evesham**

Members present:	Sally Higham (Chair)	Boris Worrall	Group Chief Executive (GCE)
	Colum Goodchild (Vice Chair and Senior Independent Director) (CG)	David Hannon	Executive Director - Investment (EDI)
	Claire-Elaine Arthurs Payne (CEAP)	Sam Morgan	Executive Director - Resources (EDR)
	Daisy Halford (DEH)	Lisa Nicholls	Executive Director - Operations (EDO)
	Wayne Harris (WH)	Caroline Allen	Head of Governance (HoG)
	Myron Hrycyk (MH)	Andrew Ledger	Head of Risk and Assurance (HoRA)
	Paul Spooner (PS)		
	Jonathan Wallbank (JW) (part)	Marc Mayall	Platform Housing Group (MM) (part)
		Duncan Palmer	Platform Property Care (DP) (part)
		Adam Rudge	Platform Property Care (AR) (part)
		Will Simmons	Head of Property (HoProp) (part)
		Ruth Organ	Senior Governance Officer (SGO) (minutes)

Action

The Chair welcomed WH to his first board meeting and PS to his last board meeting.

She asked Members to note the reports in the Board Information Pack.

3293 Apologies for absence

There were apologies for absence received from Tessa Rollings.

3294 Declarations of interest

Where members served on other bodies, their declaration of interest was taken as read.

3295 Any Other Business items

There were no additional Any Other Business items raised.

3296 Appointment of Wayne Harris

RHG and RHA: It was **RESOLVED** that the appointment of Wayne Harris to the Boards of RHG and RHA for an initial term of three years be approved. This included TR approval by email.

3297 Draft minutes of the joint meeting of the Boards of RHG and RHA held on 13 July 2022

RHG and RHA: It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes of the joint meeting of the Boards of RHG and RHA held on 13 July 2022 be approved. This included TR approval by email.

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CHAIR

3298 Outstanding Actions List

RHG and RHA: Members noted the progress on the Outstanding Actions List.

3299 Group Chief Executive, Performance and Executive Team overview reports

The GCE welcomed WH to Rooftop and noted how his asset management skills would be utilised in his Board Member role.

The GCE reported on a data discrepancy concerning the voids and re-lets times being reported. This was being investigated and would be reported to the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting, with an internal audit undertaken on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in general. The findings would be reported to the Committee in January. It was added that this was not a material problem as the Executive Team had been focused on the financial data and implications rather than a definition/reporting issue of the KPI around time to relet a property. The EDR confirmed that the void cost was reported to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) rather than the number of days.

The GCE noted that legal advice had indicated there was not a requirement to self-refer to the RSH on projected non-compliance with carbon monoxide and smoke alarms. The Board discussed how they supported the GCE and Executive Team proposal to informally contact the RSH regarding the declaration that we would not be compliant against the deadline of having carbon monoxide and smoke alarms fitted into all properties by 30 September. The Board agreed that this was right in the spirit of our values and co-regulation. It was noted that 51% of properties had been fitted so far and this was expected to be completed by the end of quarter four. Members asked that we should demonstrate to the RSH the robust plan that was in place if needed.

The EDR noted that a rent cap of 5% was expected for next year and how this would affect the Financial Business Plan was being calculated. Options would be provided at the Board Strategy Day in October.

3299.1 Performance

The GCE noted the benchmarking data and, in his estimation, that Rooftop was probably in the top one third for customer satisfaction levels, the hard work of the Income team in keeping rent arrears low and maintaining rent collection and the stability in staff turnover.

It was discussed how several utility companies were being contacted to gain knowledge on their customer service experience and whether this could be developed for use at Rooftop. CEAP noted that the key was to not overcomplicate processes and to get the basic services and communications right. The EDO responded that there was focussed work being undertaken to get it right at the first point of contact.

It was noted how colleague turnover had decreased. The EDR explained that the job market had slowed down and there were more suitable candidates applying for the posts being advertised. The EDO commented that the culture in the organisation had also improved with the introduction of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) professional standards and leadership programme. Training contracts were also being created for some colleagues and further work on succession planning within teams was underway.

3299.2 Operations overview

There was a discussion on the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Plan, how progress of it should be added to the Compliance report and whether the alarm checks could be carried out at the same time as the Gas Safety and Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) checks. The EDO confirmed that having a combined home safety check was being planned, with the Building Inspectors being trained to carry out these checks. The plan was also to fit mains hard wired alarms wherever possible and battery run carbon monoxide detectors. WH suggested fitting alarms that could be remotely tested in future via an Internet of Things (IoT) solution. The EDO explained that short term hardwiring and battery was necessary to obtain early compliance. However, in partnership with asset investment, longer term solutions would be explored that made the best use of technology. In addition, she advised that customer communications on their responsibilities concerning the regular testing of the alarms was being posted on the website and via social media. In future there was also an aspiration for customer access safety information to be available via the online portal. CG asked that an update on the future plans be provided to the Board.

HoRA

EDO

PS praised the Income team on its performance and queried what support would be provided to low income families from the autumn. The EDO responded by advising that extra funding was being obtained to support them along with development of a food network to ensure coverage across rural communities in partnership with Wychavon District Council.

3299.3 Investment overview

The EDI gave an update on the proposed scheme at St Oswald's, Gloucester noting that an approval would be sought by the Board at the October Board Strategy Day in relation to a change in the purchase price of the land from Gloucester City Council. It was discussed that Rooftop should speak to the Council Leader and stress the need for partnership working going forward in the light of late changes to the terms.

PS commented on the fantastic new scheme on Swan Lane that was of a high quality. CEAP added that Rooftop needed to publicise the new schemes more.

The asset investment programme was noted and how a plan was being developed to get it back on target including the possibility that the work may be outsourced.

WH asked that those solid wall properties that had bathrooms and kitchens due to be installed were also insulated at the same time.

JW joined meeting.

3299.4 Resources overview

The EDR noted that vacancies in critical roles were being recruited through agencies and by other means.

There was a discussion on the future requirements of the Communications team and how social media was now being monitored by the Customer Experience Manager.

The work on adding the Compliance data to the QL system was discussed and how teams were working together to get it completed. The expectation was that it would be completed by quarter one 2023 at the latest. The GCE confirmed that the progress was being reviewed on a monthly basis by the Executive Team. The EDO added that the QL system had been developed following the work on assets components and also work on data reconciliation for safety and compliance. There were two phases to the work, the first being component coverage and report development and the second being development of the management requirements.

Business continuity against a cyber attack was noted and how there was an internal audit being undertaken in quarter one of next year. The Chair had also spoken to the GCE in regard to this particular area of risk to the organisation.

RHG and RHA: Members noted the content of the Group Chief Executive, Performance and Executive Team overview reports.

MM, DP, AR and the HoProp joined the meeting.

3300 Cost Sharing Group update

This item was minuted separately.

MM, DP, AR and the HoProp left the meeting.

3301 Quarterly Financial Monitoring – see Quarterly Monitoring Q1 2022/23 Reading Room

The EDR commented on the report including that there were no covenant issues.

There was a discussion on the cost implications regarding the increase in voids and how the easy to let properties were being prioritised first. The EDO commented on the options being explored including reviewing our lettable standard and what voids preparation work we could do before Platform Property Care (PPC) first attended the void property.

RHG and RHA: Members noted the content of the Quarterly Financial Monitoring report.

3302 Customer Voice

The EDO explained the work being undertaken to improve satisfaction figures including working with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) on bringing the Customer Charter and Engagement Framework to life.

The Chair commented positively on the customer comments included in the report.

The EDO confirmed that the Neighbourhood Officers were a customer touch point for the organisation and would update the diagram accordingly for future reference.

EDO

PS stated that it was an encouraging report and queried the current complaints process. The EDO responded that there was still some work to do with compliance to the complaints process including quality and that an improvement plan was in place following the internal reviews and recent audit report findings.

RHG and RHA: Members noted the content of the Customer Voice report.

3303 Compliance Report to 31 July 2022

The HoRA noted that the results compared favourably with those reported this time last year and that compliance was improving year on year. Those areas that were not currently compliant were being progressed and he had been provided with the assurance that the correct processes were being followed.

CG queried how the asbestos figures had been calculated and whether it would be included in future property surveys. The HoRA agreed to confirm the asbestos calculations and gain further assurance from the Safety and Compliance Team. The EDI added that he would review what was currently included in the property surveys and would report back.

HoRA
EDI

RHG and RHA: Members noted the assurance given in the report and actions being taken to address areas of non-compliance.

3304 Key Risks update Q2 2022-23

The HoRA summarised the report noting that growing assurance was being received under health and safety and the proposed changes to the risk scores for Safety of Customers, Voids Loss and Poor Complaints handling.

The HoRA added that TR had commented prior to the meeting on including the installation target on smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and the potential rent cap as Strategic Risks. It was agreed that this should be discussed at the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting in October. The EDR noted that consideration of the liquidity and covenant requirement risks were needed in relation to a rent cap.

HoRA

There was a discussion on the reasoning behind the decrease in the risk score for Safety of Customers and how the consistent compliance performance of 80% warranted this decrease. The GCE provided confirmation that the Executive Team agreed with this decrease as it was reflective of our performance and external validation had added to this assurance. It was agreed that the Audit and Risk Committee would discuss this proposal further so that the Board could confirm the decrease at the next meeting.

HoRA

The Chair praised the HoRA on his report.

WH commented on whether the Cost of Living Crisis figures were too optimistic. The HoRA explained how they had been calculated with the Head of Income and the scoring mechanism used.

RHG and RHA: Members noted the content of the Key Risks update Q2 2022-23.

3305 Treasury Management Policy update

The EDR stated that this was the annual review of the Policy with few changes made. She confirmed that Centrus had been consulted as part of this review.

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Treasury Management Policy be approved. This included TR approval by email.

RHA: It was **RESOLVED** that the Board Resolution as detailed in appendix 2 of the report be approved.

3306 Revised Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

The EDO explained how the two policies had been combined and that the review reflected the relevant legislative changes.

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy be approved. This included TR approval by email.

3307 Communications Strategy

The EDR reported that the Strategy had been updated following the actions raised at the last meeting and that she and the Head of Communications had met with CEAP to discuss it further.

DEH asked that reference be made to the National Housing Federation Together with Tenants charter.

There was a discussion on the ownership of the Strategy implementation and making communications more proactive. The EDO advised that her Heads of Service were all targeted to produce team specific customer communications plans which were in development.

The EDR explained how customers from different backgrounds were being listened to as to their communications preferences through customer surveys and this also linked to the Data Strategy. The EDO added that there was a piece of work identified for a specific policy to ensure that communications met the diverse needs of our tenants.

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the Communications Strategy be approved, subject to the minor amendment requested. This included TR approval by email.

3308 Reallocation of grant funding between Upton Snodsbury Rd, Pinvin and Almonry, Pershore

RHG and RHA: Members noted the content of the decision taken report.

3309 Review of Board role descriptions: Board Representatives; Chair of a Subsidiary (RHA); Senior Independent Director

The HoG commented that this review had been brought forward due to the changes made to the Board Representative roles and roles of the Chair and Senior Independent Director as discussed at the last meeting.

The HoG confirmed that all representative roles were filled with the exception of the People and Culture role. This would be undertaken by the new Board Member when in post. CEAP offered to continue in this role until then.

EDR

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the updated role descriptions for the Board Representatives, Chair of a Subsidiary (RHA) and the Senior Independent Director be approved. This included TR approval by email.

3310 Board Skills Matrix – review of core criteria and competencies

The HoG explained that this document provided an updated assessment of the skills required for the Rooftop Boards and Committees. It had included the recommendations for the Altair Consultancy and Advisory Services external governance review.

She added that the next step was for Members to rate themselves against the skills matrix.

The Chair praised the HoG for the work involved in creating this new matrix.

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Skills and Competencies Matrix be approved. This included TR approval by email.

3311 Governance Calendar 2023/24

The HoG gave her thanks to the SGO for the level of consultation work involved in creating the calendar.

RHG and RHA: It was **RESOLVED** that the Governance Calendar 2023/24 be approved.

3312 Joint meeting of the Boards Forward Plan

RHG and RHA: Members noted the content of the Joint meeting of the Boards Forward Plan report.

3313 Any Other Business

There was a presentation to PS as it was his last board meeting with speeches given by the Chair, GCE and PS himself.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.55 pm.