

SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR BOARD

Board Meeting 5 May 2020 by telephone

Present

George Walker (GW)	SHR Chair
Andrew Watson (AW)	SHR Board member
Bob Gill (BG)	SHR Board member
Helen Trouten Torres (HTT)	SHR Board member
Colin Stewart (CS)	SHR Board member
Siobhan White (SW)	SHR Board member
Mike Dailly (MD)	SHR Board member (items 1 – part of item 11)
Ewan Fraser (EF)	SHR Board member

In attendance

Michael Cameron (MC)	Chief Executive
Iain Muirhead (IM)	Director of Digital & Business Support (items 1 – 10)
Ian Brennan (IB)	Director of Regulation (items 1- 10)
Roisin Harris (RH)	Corporate Governance Manager (items 1- 10)
Tracy Davren (TD)	Communications Manager (item 4)

1. Apologies and declarations of interest

GW welcomed all present and thanked everyone for participating by telephone.

There were no new declarations of interest.

2. Consent agenda items

The Board considered the consent agenda items.

The Board agreed to note and approve the consent items including the:

- matters arising update;
- minutes from the 14 April 2020 Board meeting;
- Chair's report & member activity; and
- ARAC update, noting a correction on who was present will be updated ahead of ARAC considered the minutes formally on 23 June 2020.

3. Chief Executive's report

MC presented his report on issues and developments of significance in regulated bodies, the wider housing environment, and SHR. MC highlighted specific points relating to the coronavirus pandemic including:

- the monthly data return SHR has asked landlords for and that the feasibility of turnaround timescales is being tested in the first collection;
- consideration SHR is giving to data presentation and ongoing discussions with the Scottish Housing Resilience Group;
- pressures on contractors and related discussions with Scottish Government and the Scottish Housing Resilience Group; and
- emergency legislation that will extend timescales for RSLs to submit accounts to SHR.

The Board considered his report and discussed:

- PPE, noting concerns expressed at the Scottish Housing Resilience Group and the work that the Scottish Government is leading to coordinate procurement, but that this is challenging with a huge demand for resources. The Board noted the potential risk to service delivery;

- alignment of those fleeing domestic violence to local GP surgeries, asking MC to highlight the issue to CIH, which is working with Women's Aid;
- information from the Scottish Housing Resilience Group hosted on the SFHA's website asking IM to explore links from SHR's website; and
- data trends, noting the first monthly data collection return due and pressure could be expected around arrears, voids and lets to people who are homeless. It noted that SHR will share this data with the Scottish Housing Resilience Group and Scottish Government.

The Board also discussed the withdrawal of one contractor from some repair contracts with social landlords. BG declared an interest as an employee of a contractor that provides services to the housing sector. The Board discussed:

- the lead-in times to secure and mobilize replacement contractors;
- potential drivers for the withdrawal; and
- work that SHR is doing to scope out the scale of the impact, noting it has also flagged the issue to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Housing Resilience Group.

MC reported that landlords have started procurement exercises or are utilizing existing frameworks and that some landlords with direct labour organisations have offered peer support. The Board noted the Chair and Chief Executive will also discuss this with the Minister at a forthcoming meeting.

The Board noted the Chief Executive's report.

Actions:

- **MC to highlight a potential issue on registration at GP surgeries to CIH.**
- **IM to explore links from SHR's website to the Resilience Group briefings on the SFHA website.**

4. Communications Strategy

TD presented a refreshed Communications Strategy for 2020-22. She outlined the work that the Board did at a previous strategy event and follow up workshops with SHR staff to inform development. TD reflected on the achievements of the previous strategy in building SHR's brand and highlighted current aims and objectives emphasising visibility, targeted direct communications, accessibility, transparency and digital focus.

The Board considered the strategy and discussed the importance of reaching the most vulnerable stakeholders as well as tenants who are not active in the representative organisations. It noted the work SHR has done to reach tenants via their own landlords including the videos that it has shared with landlords and follow up work plans for 2020. The Board noted the National Panel research last year found participants across all age groups were generally confident using digital technology.

The Board also discussed:

- how RTOs are using the lockdown and growth in digital technology use to attract new participants;
- Facebook and the potential for more active two way conversation on social media platforms, noting SHR's limited resource capacity. It asked IM and TD to consider the pros and cons of the various social media platforms further; and
- the importance of emphasizing that SHR's communication objectives reflect the organisation's approachability and that it listens to stakeholders' views and priorities.

The Board thanked TD and IM and approved the strategy. It asked them to take account of its feedback and to involve HTT and CS in further discussions around how SHR uses social media.

Action: IM & TD to take account of Board feedback and involve HTT and CS on further discussions on how SHR uses social media.

5. How we involve tenants and others in our work

IM presented a refreshed strategy on how SHR involves tenants and others highlighted the commitment already set out in SHR's Corporate Plan. He reported on plans to make a short video to promote the strategy.

The Board considered the strategy and discussed:

- videos about SHR and the potential to involve HTT and CS in a future productions;
- work that one regional network is piloting;
- SHR's website analytics, asking IM to provide more information on popular pages; and
- an appetite to involve Board members in SHR's RTO liaison group.

The Board thanked IM, approved the strategy and asked CS and HTT to seek an opportunity to become involved in SHR's RTO liaison group.

Actions:

- **CS and HTT to seek an opportunity to become involved in SHR's RTO liaison group.**
- **IM to provide information on website analytics.**

6. Annual report 2019/20

RH presented draft narrative for the 2019/20 annual report. The Board welcomed the input from members into drafting and noted the process leading to publication later in 2020.

RH confirmed ARAC will consider the accounts on 23 June 2020.

The Board approved the report narrative and noted plans to publish on SHR's website as html to comply to accessibility regulations.

7. Quarter four Corporate Performance report

MC presented the final performance report for 2019/20. He highlighted the impact of the Coronavirus on SHR's work plans. The Board considered the report and discussed:

- SHR's resource capacity for existing and emerging casework, noting the risk-based approach to prioritising casework;
- plans for the Board to consider risk and how SHR sets itself to respond to the impact of the Coronavirus in the medium term, including the impact on how SHR manages risk and internal work started that will be presented to it in June;
- intervention in asking IB to provide further information on one case; and
- SHR's inquiry into services for people who are homeless in Glasgow, noting the impact of lockdown and how SHR is engaging with the Council during the pandemic.

The Board noted the report.

Action: IB to provide further information on SHR's intervention in Ruchazie Housing Association.

8. Any other business

GW updated the Board on the direct impact that Coronavirus Covid -19 has had on some of SHR's staff.

The Board also discussed:

- recent media coverage in Scottish Housing News and potential next steps;
- video conferencing, noting constraints on the Scottish Government network that SHR staff use and asked IM to explore what may be possible for SHR Board to use.

Action: IM to consider options for future video conferencing for SHR Board.

9. Effectiveness of meetings and papers

The Board noted the fuller agenda resulted in a longer telephone call and that format is more challenging than meetings in person or that are video-based.

10. DONMs

The Board will next meet for a strategy and planning workshop on 2 June 2020. It discussed options for further additional meetings during lockdown and asked GW to discuss frequency with MC.

Action: GW and MC to agree frequency proposals for additional meetings during lockdown.

11. Private Session

The Board held a private session with the Chief Executive.

Post meeting notes

The Board agreed by correspondence on 28 May 2020 to extend the submission date for the Five Year Financial Projections to SHR until 30 September 2020 and also the deadline for submission of the Annual Financial Statements to SHR until 31 December 2020.

Between 5 May – 16 July 2020 the Board received information by correspondence on:

- on statutory intervention in two RSLs;
- publication of the monthly dashboard to help understand the impact of Coronavirus on social landlords;
- the Scottish Social Housing Resilience Group updates;
- external audit;
- publication of SHR's plan and video on how we involve tenants and service users in our work 202-2022; and
- extension of financial return submission dates in light of the Coronavirus pandemic.