

SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR BOARD

Board Meeting 16 July 2020 by video conference

Present

George Walker (GW)	SHR Chair
Andrew Watson (AW)	SHR Board member
Helen Trouten Torres (HTT)	SHR Board member
Colin Stewart (CS)	SHR Board member
Mike Dailly (MD)	SHR Board member (item 2 – 9)
Ewan Fraser (EF)	SHR Board member

In attendance

Michael Cameron (MC)	Chief Executive
Ian Brennan (IB)	Director of Regulation (items 1- 8)
Roisin Harris (RH)	Corporate Governance Manager (items 1- 8)
Robert Laley (RH)	Business Intelligence Manager (items 1- 4)

1. Apologies and declarations of interest

GW welcomed all present and thanked everyone for participating by video. The Board noted apologies from Board members Siobhan White (SW) and Bob Gill (BG) and from Iain Muirhead (IM) Director of Digital & Business Support.

EW declared that he had informal discussions based on his previous sector experience with:

- an RSL Chief Executive about group structures; and
- a building developer.

There were no other declarations of interest.

GW invited members to send end of year review paperwork to GW and the Board noted these are also used as potential evidence sources for any reappointments.

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 5 May 2020 Board meeting and a summary of a strategy session on 2 June 2020;
- Chair's report & member activity; and
- ARAC update.

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 future work planning for the remainder of 2020/21 and the impact of the Pandemic on SHR's Corporate Plan 2019 – 22.

The Board considered proposals for the Operating and Corporate Plans and discussed the:

- implications for maintaining the current Corporate Plan and options for adjusting;
- importance of the plan to SHR's staff team; and
- areas of focus, including rents, resident safety, service delivery, maintenance services and homelessness.

The Board agreed to restate the Corporate Plan and asked MC to bring proposals for this to the Board in August 2020 alongside an operating plan for the remainder of 2020/21. MC confirmed the work with SHR's RTO liaison group and the National Panel will continue. The Board also discussed future opportunities to engage with landlords, noting the work of the Scottish Social Housing Resilience Group. It welcomed platforms like Webinars that helped reach broader audiences in the absence of conferences.

The Board also discussed the recently published HARSAG recommendations. MC confirmed that SHR will engage with Scottish Government to understand its plans and what this may mean for regulation. MC confirmed the type of information SHR is collecting from landlords each month on let and homelessness.

IB confirmed the next monthly dashboard will be published on 21 July 2020. He updated the Board on the emerging trends. The Board noted anecdotal feedback around universal credit payments.

The Board noted the Chief Executive's report.

Actions:

- **MC to propose a restated Corporate Plan and operating plan for the remainder of 2020/21 in August 2020.**

4. Business Intelligence System (BIS) Strategy 2020-2025

RL presented a draft BIS strategy for 2020 – 25. He highlighted achievements from the previous strategy and the Scottish Government's current digital strategy priorities including public cloud computing. He set out the benefits of the cloud for SHR, explaining that the premise-based software updates and the related business disruption would be avoided. RL also highlighted the importance of cybersecurity and the components in SHR's BIS that are approaching end of support.

The Board considered the proposals and discussed:

- Cyber-Essentials Plus and the level of accreditation that SHR's suppliers have;
- business continuity arrangements for SHR's BIS and for the services provided by the Scottish Government such as email;
- the evaluation work, including detailed discussions with Scottish Government security and maintenance when considering new suppliers or making amendments, noting there have been no breaches of SHR's BIS in the last seven years, but that this robustness impacts agility;
- the costs involved, noting this would be predominately revenue and impact SHR's overall revenue budget position; and
- remote access, noting that the current working from home arrangements have proved that the systems are accessible remotely using a Scottish Government device which provides the authentication.

The Board thanked RL and approved the BIS strategy 2020-2025 and asked RL to clarify the impact on SHR's revenue budget.

Action: RL to implement the BIS strategy and clarify the impact on SHR revenue budget.

5. Regulatory Approach

IB presented SHR's assessment of the Regulatory Framework and recommendations for flexing its regulatory approach in response to the pandemic. He highlighted the

proportionate nature of the proposals and that SHR continues to have a volume of ongoing complex casework.

The Board considered the proposals and discussed:

- change and resourcing, noting the challenges for the SHR staff team;
- how SHR would respond to a landlord that is unable to meet the proposed new deadlines, welcoming that that it proposed to invite landlords to communicate any challenges they are experiencing, so it can work with them; and
- compliance status and the importance of understanding the impact of any temporary changes to the Regulatory Framework.

The Board thanked IB and approved:

- a consultation on temporary changes to the Regulatory Framework in response to the pandemic;
- publication of supplementary advisory guidance on the preparation and submission of annual assurance statements; and
- publication of advisory guidance on business planning to assist landlords to develop their business models and business plans to deal with the challenges of Coronavirus COVID - 19.

Actions:

- **IB to consult on the proposed temporary changes to the Regulatory Framework and present the outcome and final proposal to the Board in August 2020.**

6. Any other business

IB updated the Board on recent separate media coverage about Maryhill and Thistle Housing Associations.

GW reported that he and RH recently met with a previous Chair/Deputy Chair of Thistle Housing Association.

The Board reflected on the work carried out statutory appointees and managers and how this is communicated. EF explained the complexities and challenges he experienced as a previous statutory appointee.

7. Effectiveness of meetings and papers

The Board welcomed the video conference format. It noted that the August meeting is likely to be longer due to a fuller agenda and that RH will be in touch about dates for the 2021 meetings and workshops.

8. DONMs

25 August 2020

9. Private Session

The Board held a private session with the Chief Executive.

Post meeting notes

Between 16 July and 25 August the Board received information by correspondence on:

- Constitutional changes at one RSL
- Advisory guidance for governing bodies
- Media coverage in the National newspaper

- Media coverage on one RSL SHR is currently intervening in
- Ministerial statement on HARSAG recommendations on tackling homelessness in Scotland following the coronavirus pandemic
- Monthly dashboard for the Social Housing Resilience Group