

**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 22 March 2023
at the Council Chamber, Wychavon District Council, Civic Centre, Queen
Elizabeth Drive, Pershore WR10 1PT**

Members present:	Sally Higham (Chair)	Boris Worrall	Group Chief Executive (GCE)
	Colum Goodchild (Vice Chair and Senior Independent Director) (CG) (part)	Sam Morgan	Executive Director - Resources (EDR)
	Claire-Elaine Arthurs Payne (CEAP) (part)	Caroline Allen	Head of Governance (HoG)
	Lenna Cumberbatch-Nichols (LCN)	Lisa Nicholls	Executive Director - Operations (EDO) (part)
	Daisy Halford (DEH)	David Hannon	Executive Director - Investment (EDI) (part)
	Wayne Harris (WH)	Andrew Ledger	Head of Risk and Assurance (HoRA) (part)
	Myron Hrycyk (MH)	Kayleigh Sterland-Smith	Head of Finance (HoF) (part)
	Tessa Rollings (TR)	Lee Ashmore	Head of Housing (HoH) (part)
	Jonathan Wallbank (JW)	Josh Neary-Pegler	Housing Diversity Network (HDN) (JNP) (part)
		Ruth Organ	Senior Governance Officer (SGO) (minutes)

3376 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence received.

3377 Declarations of interest

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

It was noted that the EDI declared an interest in confidential agenda items 4.5 and 4.6.

All attendees declared an interest in agenda items 8.2 and 8.3 – Board Appraisals process 2023 and Annual Report of Board Members' Declarations of Interest.

3378 Any Other Business items

There was one Any Other Business item raised - External appointment to the Matrix Housing Partnership: Wayne Harris to replace Sally Higham

Action

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CHAIR

- 3379 Draft minutes of the joint meeting of the Boards of RHG and RHA held on 25 January 2023**
- RHG and RHA:** It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes of the joint meeting of the Boards of RHG and RHA held on 25 January 2023 be approved.
- 3380 Notes of the risk workshop, held on 25 January 2023**
- RHG and RHA:** It was **RESOLVED** that the notes of the risk workshop held on 25 January 2023 be approved.
- 3381 Outstanding Actions List**
- RHG and RHA:** Members noted the progress on the Outstanding Actions List.
- 3382 Draft confidential minutes of the additional meeting of the Nominations and Performance Committee held on 22 February 2023**
- This item was minuted separately.
- 3382.1 Minute number 161 Board Appraisals process 2023 – see minute number 3397**
- CG joined the meeting.
- The EDI, EDO and HoRA left the meeting.
- 3383 Draft confidential minutes of the Special meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on 27 February 2023**
- This item was minuted separately.
- 3383.1 Minute number 109 Confidential item – see minute number 3384**
- 3384 Confidential item**
- This item was minuted separately.
- The EDI, EDO and HoRA re-joined the meeting.
- 3385 Group Chief Executive, Performance and Executive Team overview reports**
- The GCE reported on the current inflation level and how it was expected to drop by the end of the calendar year.
- An update on the development on the St Oswald's site was provided with an expected exchange of contract by 31 March. The legal advice provided would be uploaded to the Diligent Reading Room for Board Members to view. The HoG confirmed that everything being proposed was within our Rules. The EDR commented on the substantial legal fees that had been incurred as part of this work and how it meant that there were high abortive costs against this scheme. The GCE confirmed that once the contract had been signed a report on the scheme costs and completion/planning approval dates would be provided to the Board.

EDI

CHAIR

3385.1 Performance

The GCE commented on the current rent arrears figure and how the void performance had improved. He added that there had been a high number of voids in January and February.

The Chair stated that the performance dashboard showed that Rooftop was good at collecting rent but customer satisfaction was not so good. She added how colleague sickness and turnover had improved significantly over the last 12 months.

In response to a query from WH on the reduction to two repairs categories the EDO explained the reasoning for this including that it would align with Platform Property Care (PPC) and customer consultation of 784 individuals was broadly in favour of this change at 70%. The key priority for customers was for a reliable repairs service rather than the number of days required to wait. WH noted that the Pobl Group, which he worked for, had a two category repairs service system and it did not always fit with the repair requirement and a 28 day wait. The EDO advised that key to usage of this approach would be effective triage through knowledgeable Repairs Officers. She explained that for the 28 day category there would be occasions due to vulnerability for example that this would be responded to quicker and for emergency through triage the team would ensure responses that were required as immediate would be actioned. She confirmed that the emergency repairs jobs had been reviewed previously and they were largely genuine emergencies.

CEAP joined the meeting.

MH questioned what was being done strategically to turn the red Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) green and whether the Target Operating Model (TOM) would assist with the performance changes. The GCE explained that the TOM would create a leaner organisation focussed on landlord services. He suggested that a report be provided to the Board mapping the changes year on year and which departments now covered which services.

EDR

The number of void properties and reasons behind them were discussed along with the work to improve the void standard to turn them around quicker and provide improved customer satisfaction. The EDO advised that the numbers of voids being seen annually was high and also the numbers of properties requiring extensive works through component and other major repairs was also high. This was a challenge in terms of meeting the KPI for turnaround and also the budgeted spend per property to meet the new minimum void standard.

3385.2 Operations overview

The EDO summarised the report noting the earlier improving picture on voids and the significant level of demand on her team from customers. The responsive repairs historic backlog was near completion with 36 now due, although the jobs over 28 days work in progress was rising due to high levels of demand. The EDO also highlighted the ongoing work on colleague training for customer care and complaints handling with improved oversight and monitoring of them.

The Chair noted in the report that there had been 100% gas compliance in the last month which was good to see. She queried the effect of the anti-social behaviour cases on colleagues. The EDO explained that there was a support network within the team and external advice was made available to them.

There was a discussion on how PPC was following our policies in relation to the quality of the repairs and communicating with customers about them. The EDO outlined the current approach to communications with customers on repairs, advising that Rooftop was working with the PPC planners and that there were further changes happening such as the Repairs Officers moving to become patch based.. This would ensure customers had one point of contact and provided continuity of contact. The Repairs Officers would now be contacting those customers regularly in relation to their repair within the backlog of cases. The EDO explained that from April, PPC operatives would be booking any return visits whilst at our customers homes so that the customer didn't have to chase an appointment. The EDO advised that the plan was to achieve the target of 28 days to complete a repair including around 1,500 currently beyond the 28 day timescale by the end of the year. This would be communicated and dealt with incrementally over the year to manage customer expectations. This would be supported by effective communications throughout the year on current performance in the new categories.

It was discussed how previous levels of investment in stock and the need to rebalance the expenditure for new stock against the condition of the current stock were potentially among the reasons for the current repairs levels. The ongoing Stock Condition Surveys (SCS) were helping to provide more accurate and timely data and the updated colleague roles and realignment of resources into investing in current stock and landlord services was expected to improve customer satisfaction levels over time. JW confirmed that this was a similar issue across the rest of the sector.

3385.3 Investment overview

The EDI updated Members on the result of the bid to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as part of the Matrix consortia bid to secure Wave 2 funding to improve 157 properties lower than a Band D energy rating. The work with the Wave 1 funding was now being completed and focus would move onto this new programme.

The EDI noted the key points in the report adding that a licence to demolish the Almonry Close site had been obtained as the issue with badgers on the site had been resolved. He added that the ISO 9001 – Quality Management System re-certification had been completed and Rooftop had once again achieved this standard.

He reported that planning permission on the Cleavelands site at Bishop's Cleeve had been refused but that Rooftop would consider appealing against this decision.

CEAP asked whether the works on hold within the kitchens and bathroom replacement programme could allow other works to be brought forward. The EDI advised that he would need to respond to this query separately.

EDI

The Homes for Refugees programme was discussed and how this would be supporting those refugees who were being decamped from local hotels and resettled.

The EDI reported on the recent renegotiation of the Homes England (HE) Strategic Partnering 2 (SP2/NWOW2) funding against a reduced development programme and that HE recognised that housing associations were stimulating and helping to keep the construction business going. There was also a move towards more social rent properties rather than a 50/50 split with Shared Ownership properties.

There was a discussion on how the data from the SCS was being captured in the QL housing management system and what condition some of the properties were in and had not been reported by customers. The EDO advised that periodic audits of properties would be carried out to address the issue of 'silent' customers. The EDI noted that those Category One hazards being identified in the SCS were being monitored, addressed and tracked through the compliance reporting.

3385.4 Resources overview

The EDR noted that the key items in her report were included in this meeting agenda for discussion.

The EDR responded to a query from WH on the level of surplus reported at the end of year by explaining how it was a forecast against the approved budget.

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

3386 Confidential item

This item was minuted separately.

The HoF joined the meeting.

3387 Annual Plan 2023-24 and Corporate Plan 2023 to 2026

The EDR reported that the Corporate Plan would now cover three years instead of five as part of the focussed TOM. She added that the KPIs were still to be finalised following customer and stakeholder consultation.

The Chair asked that a section on People to be added to the Annual Plan.

EDR

CEAP queried that the statement in the Vision on why Rooftop exists was too broad and needed to reflect the Rules. She also asked whether the Stage 1 and 2 complaints dealt with within timescales (KPI 16) was a realistic target or that it should be 100% against the Complaints Policy, and that the wording of the corporate objectives should be more positive. The EDR and EDO explained that the KPI was set within policy timescales and where there were complex cases these would be reported in the compliance report.

EDR

There was also discussion on Pre-Tenancy Assessment Completion prior to Ready To Let (KPI 17) relating to pre-tenancy completion and the GCE noted that this should be removed as it was an operational KPI.

EDR

		Action
	<p>LCN raised a concern in relation to the requirement for colleagues to achieve the necessary qualifications and how this could exclude certain groups of colleagues. The EDR explained that investment in colleague training was high and open to as many as possible. All job descriptions had been reviewed and all unnecessary qualification requirements had been removed. The HoG added that Rooftop also recognised the value of on the job experience. It was agreed that the phrasing of the objectives, especially in relation to qualified colleagues, would be amended.</p> <p>MH commented on whether we were being ambitious enough with the KPIs and how the TOM should help to improve our performance. The GCE explained that the key to the TOM was what could we improve on with £1 million less available to us and now with around 5% fewer colleagues. MH suggested this should be articulated. The GCE agreed that the Repairs Completed Right First Time (KPI 11) should be increased to 90% and Overall Customer Satisfaction (KPI 15) reconsidered. The EDR advised that the focus was on customers and it would take time to embed the TOM changes into the organisation so she expected that targets for next year would be higher. It was suggested we could set the target to improve by 5% based on the previous years' position. TR added that the TOM was started in a different economic position and the changes had been made to keep the organisation at the same level but recognised the ambition of the Executive Team.</p> <p>The GCE confirmed that the amendments requested would be made followed by customer and stakeholder consultation. The final version would be emailed to the Board for their final approval.</p> <p>RHG: Due to the changes requested the decision was withdrawn and would be requested of Members by email.</p>	EDR
3388	<p>Group Budget 2023/24 (Confidential)</p> <p>This item was minuted separately.</p>	
3389	<p>RHG Financial Business Plan 2023 – Principles and Stress Testing</p> <p>The EDR reported that this provided an outline on what the Board would be seeing at the May meeting and how useful the advice from treasury advisors Centrus had been in the production of this report and on the Financial Business Plan itself.</p> <p>JW advised that he had met with the EDR prior to this meeting and the key points in the report were the flexibility of the development programme and the exposure of an impairment risk against covenant cover. The EDR confirmed that a new stress test would be created for the exposure of an impairment risk and a test would be carried out on the development programme.</p> <p>JW queried the discounted land value on the St Oswald's site. The EDI confirmed that the red book market valuation on the site was available and how there were restrictions on how we use the land to develop on.</p> <p>RHG: It was RESOLVED that the proposed stress testing scenarios and the Defensive Action Plan, as documented in Appendix 2 be approved.</p> <p>The HoF left the meeting.</p> <p>JNP joined the meeting.</p>	EDR

3390 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

3390.1 Housing Diversity Network (HDN) external review

The EDO noted the findings of the external review including the high level of engagement provided by the Rooftop team and paid thanks to the Head of Income who acted as coordinator. She thanked HDN on its challenge to the organisation, highlighting that the assessment was focussed on providing us with feedback to enable us to continue to develop our approach, whilst accreditation was a bonus this was not the driver of this work. The Chair added that EDI was being taken seriously and was given additional prominence in the revised board appraisal process.

JNP gave a presentation on the findings of the external review. The Chair asked for a benchmark on Rooftop's performance against other housing associations. JNP advised that the majority of the recommendations were minor or an addition to what was already being done and the 23 areas of distinction was a good score. However, he could not give a definite answer on how Rooftop compared to others.

CEAP commented that it was important to recognise the commitment by colleagues and their drive in this area against the good result of this review. She added that some recommendations were already being made as part of this journey that Rooftop was taking. The Chair agreed that this was a good result for Rooftop.

WH asked whether if all recommendations were implemented what the result would be if a review was carried out in two years. JNP responded that Rooftop would be at a Gold level standard as HDN was planning to create a bronze, silver and gold level of accreditation in future.

The Chair stated that it was good to learn where Rooftop was in comparison with others.

RHG: Members noted the content of the Housing Diversity Network (HDN) external review report.

3390.2 Revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Policy

The EDO explained how both the Strategy and Policy had been amended following the HDN external review and its recommendations. She thanked LCN and CEAP for their feedback on the documents.

LCN praised the positive changes already being made but that litigation was an area of risk for both colleagues and customers.

CEAP queried how customers could be encouraged to come forward as future Board Members and the potential for a trainee board member programme. The HoG explained that the Customer Academy had provided this opportunity in the past. The EDO added that this point was included in the Strategy Action Plan.

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy be approved.

JNP left the meeting.

3391

Quarterly Financial Monitoring - see Quarterly Monitoring Q3 2022/23 Reading Room

The EDR noted the budget forecast for the end of the financial year including the increase in voids and repairs and maintenance costs.

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

The HoH joined the meeting.

3392

Customer Voice

The EDO explained the key drivers for customer satisfaction and what had been done to improve it through new processes and training.

The HoH gave a presentation to explain the tools now in place to improve customer satisfaction against customer expectations and the changing culture in the organisation.

The Chair noted the honest report from the HoH and welcomed how quantitative and qualitative data was being tracked and the accountability of colleagues.

The HoH and EDO explained how surveys were prompted by customer contact and that they were carried out throughout the year. They also asked whether the customer was interested in becoming more involved with Rooftop and if they were happy to be contacted in relation to their responses.

In response to a query from LCN on the response from the Housing Ombudsman (HO) on the cases it was reviewing, the HoRA advised that it was taking up to 18 months or longer to complete its investigations. LCN asked that an additional communication level be created to keep the customer updated whilst their HO case was being reviewed.

EDO

CEAP reported that she had seen a shift in the number of service charge cases from Tribunal level to HO level and expected that this would reverse with the length of time that the HO was taking to complete its investigations. She added her praise in the change in the culture and how Rooftop was using the data to communicate to customers. The EDO explained that a new Customer Voice monthly report was in development for stakeholders that will go live in Quarter 1.

The HoH noted how dissatisfaction cases were analysed and what the actual dissatisfaction correlated to.

In response to a query from DEH on the Customer App the EDO advised which functionality on it had been turned off as some systems were not currently beneficial to the customer. Once the systems had improved they would be turned back on.

The GCE reported on the planned movement of ownership of complaints onto PPC from 1 April but it was key that these were handled correctly by PPC and not escalated to the HO. He agreed that Rooftop was doing the right things and had a handle on complaints with the data available. The EDO added that PPC was considering putting in place a customer care team to deal with future complaints.

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

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CHAIR

The HoH left the meeting.

3393 Compliance, Health and Safety Report to 31 January 2023

The HoRA reported on the 100% gas compliance for February and that this level of compliance was being maintained as much as possible. He added that the project group on Damp, Mould and Condensation causes was being reconvened and would meet fortnightly.

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

3394 Risk update

The HoRA commented on the recent risk workshop and how it was informing the annual review of the Risk and Assurance Policy and Framework, including the new risk appetite levels.

RHG and RHA: Members noted the content of the Risk update report.

3395 Revised Rent and Service Charge Setting and Management Policy

JW reported that there was no section on the approach to relets in the Policy, which the EDO agreed to add.

EDO

LCN queried the language used under section 11.1 and was happy to provide the EDO with alternative wording.

LCN

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Rent and Service Charge Setting and Management Policy be approved, subject to the amendments requested.

3396 Annual review of the Matters Reserved for the Board, Scheme of Delegations and Financial Regulations

The HoG explained the reason for the review of the Financial Regulations at this time and that there was an addition to the table at 3.2.1 which was that the new post of Head of Customer Experience would be included in the £25,000 level.

She noted that WH had provided some suggested wording changes in a couple of the sections of the Scheme of Delegations which she would incorporate but there would be no material change in the meaning of these sections with these amendments.

RHA: It was **RESOLVED** that the updated Matters Reserved for Board, Scheme of Delegations and Financial Regulations be approved, subject to the minor amendments requested.

3397 Board Appraisals process 2023

The HoG commented on the feedback provided by LCN at the Nominations and Performance Committee including the potential for unconscious bias in the feedback that Members gave one another. This would be included in the appraisal guidance notes prior to the appraisals in May.

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the process and associated templates for the Board Member Appraisal 2023 (to be implemented from May 2023) be approved.

3398 Annual Report of Board Members' Declarations of Interest
RHG: That Members note the content of the Annual Report of Board Members' Declarations of Interest.

3399 Joint meeting of the Boards Forward Plan
 The HoG reminded Members that the June Strategy Day would now be a one day event on Thursday 8 June.
RHG and RHA: Members noted the content of the Joint meeting of the Boards Forward Plan report.

3400 Any Other Business

3400.1 External appointment to the Matrix Housing Partnership: Wayne Harris to replace Sally Higham

The Chair noted that WH had already attended a meeting as an observer.
RHG and RHA: It was **RESOLVED** that the external appointment: Matrix Housing Partnership - Wayne Harris be approved.

3400.2 CEAP asked whether the Board Member site visits could restart as they were seen as beneficial. The Chair noted that they were very helpful to Members and would discuss this as part of the appraisals, noting that not all Members lived within the Worcestershire area. The GCE offered that these could be held after board meetings on a voluntary basis. The EDI suggested that scheme opening events should restart as these had not be held for four years.

EDI

3401 New or emerging risks

The Chair noted the emerging risk that had been identified earlier in the meeting.
 There being no other business the meeting closed at 1.18 pm.