

**Minutes of the joint meeting of the Boards of
Rooftop Housing Group Limited and
Rooftop Housing Association Limited
held at 9.15 am on Wednesday 18 September 2024
at 70 High Street, Evesham and electronically**

Members present:	Sally Higham (Chair) Claire-Elaine Arthurs Payne (CEAP) Lenna Cumberbatch-Nichols (LCN) Daisy Halford (DEH) Wayne Harris (WH) Myron Hrycyk (MH) Alykhan Meghani (AM) Tessa Rollings (TR) Jonathan Wallbank (JW) Colum Goodchild (Vice Chair and Senior Independent Director) (CG) (via Teams) (part)	Boris Worrall Claire Lees Sam Morgan Rebecca Pitt Caroline Allen Andrew Ledger Marc Mayall Gary James Stuart Hitchman Observer: Mark McEgan Ruth Organ	Group Chief Executive (GCE) Interim Executive Director - Operations (IEDO) Executive Director - Resources (EDR) Executive Director - Investment (EDI) Head of Governance (HoG) Head of Risk and Assurance (HoRA) Platform Property Care (MM) (part) Head of Repairs and Maintenance (HoRM) (part) Head of Digital and ICT (HoDICT) (part) (MMc) (part) Senior Governance Officer (SGO) (minutes)
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Action

3644 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence received. CG was attending the meeting via Teams and would need to leave the meeting by 12 noon.

The Chair welcomed AM to his first board meeting in post and to MMc ahead of his formal appointment as Executive Director – Operations in November.

3645 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations made. Where members served on other bodies, their declaration of interest was taken as read.

3646 Any Other Business items

There were no Any Other Business items raised.

3647 Draft minutes of the joint meeting of the Boards of RHG and RHA held on 17 July 2024

RHG and RHA: It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes of the joint meeting of the Boards of RHG and RHA held on 17 July 2024 be approved.

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CHAIR

3648 Draft summary notes of the St Oswald’s Park discussion held on 15 July 2024

RHG and RHA: It was **RESOLVED** that the draft summary notes of the St Oswald’s Park discussion held on 15 July 2024 be approved.

3649 Outstanding Actions List

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

3650 Confidential item

This item was minuted separately.

3651 Confidential item

MMc left the meeting.

This item was minuted separately.

MMc rejoined the meeting.

3652 Group Chief Executive, Performance and Executive Team overview reports

The GCE summarised performance noting that rent arrears was holding steady for now and void loss was improving. In terms of customer satisfaction, he noted that the methodology in collecting Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) data was changing. The GCE added that there were no issues with colleague turnover and sickness to report.

3652.1 Performance

The void loss performance was discussed and how it was expected to continue to reduce. The IEDO advised that Platform Property Care (PPC) was handing back at the right target level but there were around 30 properties in the system with PPC. There was a possibility to use a subcontractor in the short term to get these properties repaired and back for relet.

DEH queried the delays in contacting customers when they had gone into arrears. The IEDO explained that it had been identified that there were some issues with the current software system being used and a solution to this was being requested from the software provider. She agreed that communications would be sent out to customers to advise of this issue.

DEH raised the issue of house abandonment and how customers had reported multiple times but no action seemed to be taken. The IEDO explained that processes had to be followed which did take time and asked for details of any that DEH was aware of.

There was a discussion on bad debt provision and how the number of customers in arrears had decreased but the level of debt had increased. AM asked what the average value of debt was per customer which the IEDO advised that she would need to report back to him outside of the meeting as she did not have the data to hand.

IEDO

IEDO

In response to a query from AM of any possible similar issues to the reported Ferry View case, the IEDO confirmed that checks had been made and there were none identified. She added that weekly repairs reports were being provided to her.

CEAP questioned why resources were being removed in certain areas of responsive repairs. The EDI and IEDO explained that this was being monitored as there had been some changes within the Team including temporary resources added to cover off colleague long term sickness and annual leave and that the administration post was only temporary to cover the summer period.

3652.2 Operations overview

The IEDO summarised her report.

WH gave a positive comment on the case study included in the report.

The Chair stated that it was important to give the Board time to discuss the Ferry View case which she had been briefed on. It was noted how the repair (pendant request) may be removed from the repairs process in future and that the fundamental cause was human error due to job processing. A review had found that this had happened around 10 times in 20,000 jobs in the past 12 months. A system was now in place to check this weekly and the wider system of providing and charging for pendants was being reviewed.

WH commented on how repairs requests may need to be prioritised differently where there were vulnerabilities identified.

It was discussed how Rooftop needed to be clear on its' duty of care to customers and reducing the liabilities when providing additional services that were not part of its' core services. It was suggested that signposting to providers of the additional services was the way forward. The GCE added that this would be reviewed and would be included in the new Supported Housing Strategy being provided at the next meeting for approval.

MH stated that from the discussion his conclusion was that assurance was being provided to the Board that the issue had been identified and appropriate steps taken.

3652.3 Investment overview

The EDI summarised the key points of report.

CG left the meeting.

The acquisition of Evesham Baptist Church and Seward Close lease was discussed and how it was now going through the legal process.

The EDI advised that the Broomhall, Worcester development scheme was being monitored against costs owing to delays and she would inform the Board if additional cost approval was required for this scheme.

3652.4 Resources overview

The EDR gave an update on the progress work against the new Procurement Act requirements with training and e-learning being undertaken with the relevant colleagues.

The EDR confirmed that development contracts over the cost of £500 were published on the Rooftop website.

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

3653 Responsive repairs update

MM and the HoRM joined the meeting and CG rejoined the meeting.

This item was minuted separately.

MM and the HoRM left the meeting.

3654 People Strategy annual Action Plan update

The EDR reported that there was improved performance against management visibility in the colleague survey results and that the overall results were broadly in line with previous years.

LCN stated that this was a comprehensive document. She asked about the aspirations on culture change which the EDR advised would be discussed as part of the Executive Team and Leadership Team meeting being held the following day, especially on culture and accountability, along with cross team working.

The HoDICT joined the meeting.

RHG: Members noted the content of the People Strategy annual Action Plan update report.

CG left the meeting.

3655 Data Strategy 2024

The HoDICT gave a presentation on the new Data Strategy and the objectives within it.

The HoDICT explained how the ICT Strategy was the overarching Strategy and that the Data Strategy related back to it. He added that data literacy within Rooftop was improving and was being continually developed.

In response to a query from MH, the HoDICT confirmed that the annual Strategy Action Plan update to the Board would include the progress against the outcome measures.

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** to approve:

- i. The Data Strategy 2024.
- ii. The provision of £60k additional RHG budget for the use of a contractor.

The HoDICT left the meeting.

3656 Updated Service Standards

The IEDO advised that the Service Standards followed the Board approved Customer Strategy and were based on the previous Customer Promise and Standard documents. She added that they aligned to proposals around consistent phone/opening times across teams. The Customer Scrutiny Panel was reviewing the document and it would then be sent out to all customers for consultation in the next few weeks.

LCN asked that it be provided in multi formats, languages and in an easy to read document. The GCE explained how the document would need to be published in its complete form but an easy read summary would be created as requested.

RHG: Members noted the content of the Updated Service Standards report.

IEDO

3657 St Oswald's Park

There was a discussion held on the proposed scheme and options.

RHG and RHA: Members noted the content of the St Oswald's Park report.

3658 Voids and Lettings process review update

The HoG and Chair left the meeting.

The IEDO summarised the report.

The HoG and Chair rejoined the meeting.

CEAP commented that there needed to be a balance between the quantity of void properties handed back after the required work had been completed and a quality control on the work undertaken. The IEDO explained that this quality control of the works completed would be included in the plan.

TR commented positively on the report, the information provided, and the progress being made in this area.

RHG and RHA: Members noted the content of the Voids and Lettings process review update report.

3659 Customer Voice

The HoRA summarised the report.

CEAP thanked the HoRA for the additional information on complaints and how there were clear themes which were: the need for better communication to customers; understanding the customer viewpoint and how we present ourselves to them throughout the complaint process. The GCE advised that targets were being set against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and this would be reviewed through the performance framework. The GCE added that consistency on dealing with complaints was an issue that was being focussed on by the Executive Team.

LCN asked that a disability focus group was created to capture their views. The IEDO advised that the newly recruited Customer Engagement Manager would be responsible for the recruitment of the Strategic Customer Group and could look into the creation of this group as well.

IEDO

WH left the meeting.

AM asked for further information on the escalation of complaints which the GCE advised would be covered in the Risk Workshop at the forthcoming Board Strategy Day. AM also enquired about how the compensation levels being paid out compared to Rooftop’s peers. The EDR advised that a review of the Compensation Policy was being undertaken and this included researching the procedures from other housing associations.

WH rejoined the meeting.

DEH left the meeting.

The HoRA advised that he was looking at Rooftop’s approach to dissatisfaction and how to get it right.

In response from a query from CEAP, the EDR advised how the learning from complaints would be monitored through an assurance map in future and that this would be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee.

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

3660 Quarterly Financial Monitoring

The EDR explained how an increase in the insurance premium which was paid in July had affected the RHG budget performance for the month.

DEH rejoined the meeting.

The EDR noted the higher costs on repairs and maintenance budget and how there would be a focus on this at the end of Quarter 2. Although she had no concern in not meeting the interest cover and lenders covenants targets, she expected that the RHA budget would be overspent at the end of the year.

AM queried the headroom levels for the interest cover and lenders covenants targets against the expected overspend in repairs and maintenance. The EDR agreed to confirm this to him.

EDR

TR asked for further explanation on the reasons behind the overspend.

EDR

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

3661 Compliance, Health and Safety report to 31 July 2024

The HoRA highlighted the key points in the report including the proposal to include reporting on the next 30 days and that gas safety was again 100% compliant.

TR commented that it was useful to have oversight on the Housing Ombudsman (HO) determinations. However, she asked that future reports contain further information on how Rooftop was mitigating against the issues raised by the HO, when they had been raised and when the actions had to be or had been completed. She asked that for complaints related to Damp and Mould, which Housing Health and Safety Rating System category level these were in.

HoRA

LCN raised a general concern with the incorrect completion of Equality Impact Assessments and the need to explain what mitigations were in place. The GCE agreed that this was an area for improvement and would review this.

GCE

The Chair and GCE commented on the need to review and refresh the Repairs Plan B option at the next board meeting in light of the current performance of PPC.

GCE

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

3662 Q2 2024/25 Risk update including any new or emerging risks

The HoRA summarised the report including the three main Strategic risks and the introduction of a new Risk Impact category of Consumer Compliance.

RHG and RHA: Members noted the content of the Q2 2024/25 Risk update report.

3663 Revised Anti-Fraud Policy

The HoRA commented on the minor changes in the Policy and LCN noted the positive use of gender inclusion language in it.

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Anti-Fraud Policy be approved.

3664 Revised Complaints Policy

The HoRA noted that the Policy now aligned with the Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Incidents Policy and that it also included how to deal with complaints received from non-Rooftop customers.

LCN asked for clarity on the type of Complaints Policy it was, for example, for customers or for colleagues. She added that in section 15.1, the statement of disability needed to be removed or it had to reference other groups in line with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles.

HoRA

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Complaints Policy be approved, subject to the minor amendments.

3665 Revised Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

The IEDO noted that there had only been minor changes required to the Policy.

TR stated that reference should be made to the 'Keeping children safe in education' Government document and that it was updated on an annual basis.

HoH

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy be approved, subject to the minor amendment requested.

3666 Revised Treasury Management Policy

The EDR noted following a recent internal audit there had been no comments received on this revised Policy.

JW queried whether there should be a reference to money markets. The EDR explained that there was no intention to use these at the moment and could be added to the Policy when required.

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Treasury Management Policy be approved.

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

3667 Reappointment of External Auditor

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the reappointment of BDO to act in the financial year 2024/25 be approved.

3668 Responsive Repairs Sub-Contractor Spend

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

3669 Standing Orders of the Board – Roles and Obligations

The HoG commented that the review had included incorporating the new Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Code of Practice and Consumer Standards.

LCN asked that gender neutral language be used in the documents.

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Standing Orders of the Board (A to D) be approved, subject to the minor amendment requested.

HoG

3670 Board Skills and Competencies Framework – annual review

The HoG reported the minor amendment previously requested to the Framework.

RHG: It was **RESOLVED** that the updated Skills and Competencies Matrix for 2024/2025 be approved.

3671 Governance Calendar 2025/26

The HoG advised of the complex process that the SGO followed to create the Calendar every year and wished to record her thanks.

RHG and RHA: It was **RESOLVED** that the Governance Calendar 2024/25 be approved.

3672 Joint meeting of the Boards Forward Plan

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

3673 Any Other Business

The Chair thanked CG as he was stepping down in his role of SID and congratulated MH on taking on this role.

There was a presentation to JW to mark his final board meeting. The Chair noted the support that he has provided to her, to the EDR and his work on the Audit and Risk Committee. The GCE added his thanks to JW, bringing a social heart and commercial head to the Board. JW thanked Rooftop for the opportunity to be a Board Member, its great teams that he had worked with and how well run it was as an organisation.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 1.22 pm.

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CHAIR