

LEASE - The Leasehold Advisory Service

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Wednesday 8th May 20204 at 2 Marsham Street

Present:

Martin Boyd (MB) Wendy Wilson (WW), Paula Higgins (PH), Emer McNally (EM), Kim Caddy (KC)

In attendance:

Alice Bradley (AB), Sally Frazer (SF) CEO)

Observer: Mohammad-Ali El-Zein (ME), Razeeb Ahasan (RA) (DLUHC) Ella Norman (EN) LEASE Staff Member

1.0 2024/05/1 Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.

2.0 2024/05/2 Declarations of Interests

2.1 Full declaration to be recorded at the inaugural meeting and Board members will update on changes only at subsequent meetings.

2.2 **MB** - declared that he is Chair of Trustees for Leasehold Knowledge Partnership (LKP), he is also Chair of the RMC at Charter Quay, Kingston.

2.3 **PH** - sits on the Shared Ownership Council, Property Compliance Code Group and a number of other groups PH will provide a list. **(ACTION PH)**

2.4 **WW** - nothing to declare.

2.5 **KC** - Councillor - Wandsworth.

3.0 2024/05/3 Confirmation of the Board meeting held on 31st January 2024

3.1 The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 31st January 2024 were approved as a true and accurate copy. There were no matters arising from the last meeting.

4.0 2024/05/4 An update from the CEOs (Reflections on the first 3 months)

4.1 The CEO's updated the Board on their initial reflections from their first quarter in the role. They noted it was a small but expert organisation. The systems worked but were highly manual and the corporate centre was too small currently to manage the level of ambitious change the Board envisaged. Improving some of the operational systems and strengthening the corporate centre was a priority for the CEOs in order to free up their capacity to manage the change process.

4.3 The Board asked to understand how early recruitment plans fitted within the wider people plan clearances needed through the Remuneration Committee. The CEOs felt there was scope to slightly increase the senior management immediately while longer term planning continues to recruit a COO - or COO type post - and committed to sharing these plans with the Board ahead of the Remuneration Committee for permission to proceed. **(ACTION CEOs)**

4.5 CEOs also noted the positive reactions from the sector engagement they had done to date and genuine appetite and enthusiasm from partners for the convening and consumer champion role that the draft new Strategic Plan included.

4.6 They set out their priorities for the next 3 months - focusing on publication of the strategic plan and annual business plan (including new KPIs), recruitment, pay bench marking, finishing an initial basic compliance assurance exercise (ahead of wider policy review later in the year) and standing up the digi. transformation business case.

5.0 2024/05/5 Chairs update

- 5.1 Agreed previous minutes and confirmed with the Board that they should expect papers a week before Board meetings and asked that Board reflections on papers were received 2 days prior to the Boards.
- 5.2 The Chair hoped that the Board's induction meetings within the Department had demonstrated the level of momentum behind what he and they wanted to achieve but stressed the need to affect change rapidly while political attention - engendered by the passage of the Bill - supported the development of LEASE's consumer champion work. The Chair reiterated that addressing the pay issues in the organisation was really important to him and the Board.
- 5.4 Currently LEASE only has the capacity to directly assist 0.5% of leaseholders per year through meetings, phone or written advice. LEASE will need to develop systems so it can better support leaseholders working together via their resident associations and wider groups- helping reach better solutions and more people. The recent work of LEASE with EOCS and cladding groups was really demonstrating how powerful LEASE can be when it harnesses stakeholder experience, data and expertise.
- 5.5 The Chair was clear - and had been clear with the Minister - that he doesn't want to temper the Board's ambitions based on the budget we're set this year and would be seeking partnership from the wider public and private sector partners to support LEASE work. The Minister had encouraged the LEASE work with cladding groups - particularly to improve insurance data - and this would be a priority for LEASE's stakeholder work - helping demonstrate what LEASE could achieve in its new role.

6.0 2024/05/6 End of Year finance update

- 6.1 Full accounts and external audit would be presented to ARAC later in the month. The CEOs noted that they had finished the year almost exactly on budget and had managed to address some historic pay issues ahead of end of year.
- 6.2 KC - reminded the CEOs that a full contracts list should be prepared ahead of ARAC and EM noted that although 70% of expenditure was salaries - there may be scope to make savings or efficiencies on running costs from bringing some processes in house or consolidation. CEOs agreed that work was needed and could well allow some efficiencies. **(ACTION ND)**

7.0 2024/05/7 Performance Update

- 7.1 The CEO's presented data against KPIs that would inform the Annual Report. LEASE was generally hitting overall response KPIs. However, the needed to be refreshed to be more meaningful, reflect LEASE's new remit and customer's needs. This refresh had been agreed with the Sponsors.
- 7.2 The Board asked CEOs to confirm separately if no shows showed up in the statistics. The Board also reflected that the data made it hard to measure where self-service might be more appropriate, and on the number of calls that were genuinely adding value above the website content. **(ACTION CEO)**
- 7.3 Google analytics may be able to improve how content is searched and accessed and the CEOs agreed to explore what more quick wins/no regrets work could be done in this area. The Board also asked that the CEOs do some work to map how demand might be expected to change over the next 5 years (it was noted the Bill changes, currently in the Lords, would effectively remove the need for some areas of advice). **(ACTION CEOs)**

8.0 2024/05/8 KPI Refresh

- 8.1 CEO's updated on work to refresh KPIs in line with the new Strategic Objectives.
- 8.2 KC – Asked what more data or survey information we could build around outreach events. Was the organisation confident they were the right events in the right places and reaching the right audience?
- 8.3 PH - suggested social media around events can really help with the impact of the outreach and should also be explored. For example Facebook live events and webinars needed to be more of a focus. YouTube also a good platform to reach larger demographic.
- 8.4 EM& PH - stressed that outcomes measures were more important than outputs and should be the focus of the work.

8.5 The Board agreed the new LEASE convener role was really important. CEOs confirmed that measures for that objective were being workshopped this week and currently not reflected in this paper. The Board asked if KPIs could reflect how many/which orgs are sign posting to LEASE? Org. should also use the reform Bill as a springboard for a LEASE campaign in terms of broadening reach/recognition. **(ACTION CEOs)**

9.0 2024/05/9 Strategic Plan Draft

9.1 The Chair stressed the unique position the organisation was in - crossing many Depts and policy areas across Government and providing support in both England and Wales. The new Vision needs to reflect the consumer champion role more strongly and be clear that LEASE want to support the whole sector - everyone to lift their game. The Board challenged the CEO's to reframe the vision as a unique opportunity - a 'moonshot'. The vision should also appear upfront in the document and the plan needed to be more clearly framed as a description of what LEASE will be in three years' time. The vision isn't framed in terms of the leaseholder enough - and reads like it's focused on employees. It needs to do both jobs. Ella confirmed that it should inspire staff as well as reassure them of what's achievable. **(ACTION CEOs)**

10.0 2024/05/10 Future Boards and Committees

10.1 Board asked for change committee monthly please and asked the secretariat to recirculate list of membership for all Board Groups. Asked secretariat to get 1 year forward programme of meetings in. **(ACTION ND)**

11.0 2024/05/11 AOB

11.1 Ella reflected That after 15 years LEASE now sees a revolution in the way that it advises. Traditionally, we had to react to change, now we form part of the change and have influence in it; the new meetings with stakeholders were very liberating and enriching in in terms of broadening the adviser experience and the reach and impact of LEASE's work. Staff welcomed the clear priority the Board were putting on the pay review work.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 12.00.

Next meeting date and time TBC

