

## **SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR BOARD**

### **Board Meeting 14 April 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 1-6)
Ewan Fraser (EF)	SHR Board member

#### **In attendance**

Michael Cameron (MC)	Chief Executive
Iain Muirhead (IM)	Director of Digital & Business Support (items 1-6)
Ian Brennan (IB)	Director of Regulation (items 1-6)
Roisin Harris (RH)	Corporate Governance Manager (items 1-6)

#### **1. Apologies and declarations of interest**

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

HTT declared her sister Karen Campbell is participating in a resilience group led by the Scottish Government's Better Homes Division. The Board noted the update.

There were no other declarations.

#### **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 23 March 2020 meeting; and
- Chair's report & member activity.

#### **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:

- SHR's communications with all landlords around changes in regulatory work;
- postponement of engagement plans;
- ongoing critical engagement;
- extension of deadlines for regulatory returns and that these are being kept under review; and
- the nature and volume of recent Notifiable Events and how SHR has used these and direct contact to establish a baseline for landlords.

The Board considered the update and discussed:

- the nature of lettings service and how this relates to homelessness duties, noting related information that will be gathered through monthly returns from all landlords;
- arrears, noting the likelihood of a lag in impact and that information on this will be collected in the monthly landlord returns;

- the impact of the potential pressure on landlord pension liabilities due to lower interest rates and stock market performance;
- ongoing engagement with RSL finance directors;
- organisations that may be most exposed to risk due to existing engagement, size of staff team or provision of care services, noting challenges around the provision of personal protection equipment for staff across many aspects of housing services and the Scottish Government's role in coordinating procurement; and
- regulatory deadlines for financial returns, noting the challenges for landlords around forming realistic five year projections.

MC also updated the Board on:

- the work of the Social Housing Resilience Group, explaining membership and how the work group has been working to date;
- plans agreed with the Resilience Group to gather a very short monthly data return from all landlords from the end of April; and
- ongoing engagement with UK Finance and individual investors in social housing, which the Board welcomed.

GW reported that SFHA surveyed delegates on SHR's work at the Finance conference in November 2020 and again at the Chair's conference in January 2020. The Board noted the snapshot survey findings, responses around appeal arrangements and how these related to a matter arising from SHR's February Board meeting. MC also updated the Board on feedback from membership bodies on SHR's response so far to the pandemic.

GW and MC updated the Board on preparation of a response to recent correspondence from the Local Government and Communities Committee Convenor. The Board discussed SHR's response and agreed it was important to highlight:

- the time SHR Board has spent reflecting on the allegations;
- the important work that volunteers drawn from the sector and appointed to governing bodies do;
- published governance information through hyperlinks to SHR's website;
- the case conference format that SHR uses to inform key regulatory decisions, take account of cost and find the most proportionate approach that protects the interests of tenants;
- training that SHR staff have had from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman; and
- feedback from organisations that have gone through statutory intervention.

The Board welcomed plans for developing the final response and noted the Convenor has requested this by the end of April 2020.

The Board noted the Chief Executive's report and asked him to keep it updated.

#### **4. Any other business**

The Board discussed:

- changes to SHR's website to highlight regulatory advice relating the pandemic and discussions with the Resilience Group to encourage creation of a single source webpage for landlords.
- the process for developing SHR's annual report narrative ahead of audit, agreeing some of the Board input could be achieved by correspondence; and
- the outline agenda for the next meeting on 5 May, noting that this is likely to be a longer meeting.

### **5. Effectiveness of meetings and papers**

The Board agreed that the meeting was effective. It noted one member has limited access to electronic papers and agreed to discuss potential for further support after the meeting.

### **6. DONM**

The Board will next meet on 5 May 2020 and will continue to meet monthly while the lockdown is ongoing.

### **7. Private Session**

The Board held a private session with the Chief Executive.

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### **Post meeting notes**

From 14 April - 5 May 2020 the Board received information by correspondence on:

- Standards Commission update including the refreshed draft model code of conduct
- advice for landlords on fraud and cyber security
- communication around monthly data returns from landlords
- launch of new landlord directory format on SHR's website
- SHR advisory guidance for governing bodies
- correspondence with the Scottish Parliament's Local Government & Communities Committee