

Date: 4 May 2023 (08:45-12:30)

Location: Hallam Conference Centre W1W 6JJ

Chair: Mike Turner (Chair)

Minutes: Andrew Burke (Deputy Secretary)

Attendees: Andrew Burke, Imogen Bowen, Mike Turner, Ben Virgo, Tyrone Stalberg, David Miller, Chris Sutton, Paul Maghie, Chris Brown, Adrian Rujoiu, Alex Gates, Alex Thomas, Alice Monty, Andrew Millross, Barry Roberts, Ben Burwood, Ben Williams, Chris Holcomb, Caroline Lester, Chris Monk, David Hyndman, Davina Skinner, Duncan Forrow, Duncan Michell, Ettan Bazil, Felicity Reilly, Hayley Clifford, Holly Fisher, James Gray, Jamie Stewart, James Remfry, Joseph Hayes, Luke Wright, Matt Clarke, Martin Stone, Michael McGovern, Paul Cartwright, Paul Connolly, Peter McAteer, Reece Wiggett, Rita Lad, Rob Hutton, Sam Allen, Steven Fletcher, Terry Grantham, Tony Rogers, Todd Rudin, Dean Fazackerley, Tom Kerr, David Stobbs, Vince Amorelli.

NHMF Contractor Forum Meeting Minutes

Agenda:

No.	Description	Who
01.	Welcome & Introduction	Mike Turner
	MT welcomed everyone, especially new members, Jewson and Trail Group. There were also others attending because they were interested in joining. He was pleased to report that the CF had grown in number and now included other parts of the supply chain so that it had been decided to rename it the Service Provider Forum from 5 May. The fees had remained unchanged since 2012 and he explained it was necessary to increase fees to cover the increased costs (not to make a profit). [INSERT SLIDES]	
02.	Frameworkx	Mike Turner David Miller
	DM reported progress with Frameworkx since it was launched as a concept at the 2022 NHMF Conference and went live at the 2023 Conference. Some lots had been procured, contracts had been awarded and there were 14 potential clients. [INSERT LINK TO SLIDES] There had been too few bids for vehicles. He explained the programme for future tranches. Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DM confirmed that the Framework agreements were still being finalised. While the NZC modules had been marketed with the award of the SHDF Wave 2 and there had been enquiries, no responses had been received so far. 	

03.	SoRs V8.0 update	David Miller
	<p>DM explained the background and history to the original SoR that had started in the South-West in 1993 and was launched in 1994. This led to a wider interest from the sector that resulted in the current SoR. Different versions had been introduced to cope with changing demands and the need for more items. There was now a need for V8 to address inflation and the financial impacts on the market and tenders identified in 2022. The biggest change in V8 was that scaffolding was no longer included in the rates and would be costed separately with detailed SoR to cover access requirements. Increased costs seen in hourly labour rates about 20% higher, similarly material prices and uplifts. On average, overall rates had increased by nearly 18% but this was not standard across all contracts.</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could be done with clients using older versions? Clients were often happy using older versions and they sometimes suited clients' IT solutions. No immediate solutions were proposed by members. • Disputes arose from contracts not being compatible with SoR, although clients can change the contract if they recognise the problem. Specific contracts had been written for SoR to avoid such problems and other forms of contract needed to be amended for use with SoR. • Frameworkx had been tendered in V7.2. • The latest timetable was for V8 to be rolled out between June and July. Some parts were available but others still had to be finalised. It was agreed that V8 would be shared with members in the CF area of the website. 	
04.	Compliance update	Andrew Burke & Paul Maghie
	<p>AB explained what challenges and increased Government and media scrutiny social landlords (clients) were facing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damp, mould, and condensation – Government scrutiny, Regulator requiring evidence that D&M is being effectively dealt with and the Ombudsman uncovering unacceptable failings. • Building Safety Act is now law and applies to existing buildings, with all HRRBs having to be registered by October 2023 (i.e., 30 September) • 2022 Fire Safety Regulations came into force 23 Jan. 2023 but are social landlords aware of and complying with their new duties – information to the FRS and knowing building construction • Energy bills are still high but this strengthens the case for making stock more energy efficient and aiming for Net Zero Carbon • New Regulations in the pipeline: 	AB

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Electrical safety – 5-yearly inspections o Heat Networks Market Framework – Ofgem will regulate HN like any other utility, such as gas, water. o Social Housing Regulation Bill, which includes Awaad’s Law to force landlords to fix problems within strict time limits. <p>In addition, the Government wants to improve residents’ experience of social housing and to strengthen their voice through its Social Housing Quality Panel. They are customers who expect high standards and should be provided with homes landlords and contractors would be happy to live in.</p> <p>The Best Practice website explains these regulations and what social landlords had to do. It also includes the 2023 NHMF Awards’ winners and short-listed entries that showed how contractors had helped clients deliver innovative and improved service to residents. He encouraged members to use these updates to understand what their clients had to do so that they could help them comply. The NHMF Study Tour will look at pioneering research to help landlords better manage their stock and be proactive in dealing with problems, particularly DMC. The use of AI to help diagnose problems is one area that is being researched. NHMF will also be running a webinar on DMC (14 June), and on Heat Networks, Building Safety and Net Zero Carbon later in the year.</p> <p>PM explained how contractors and the supply chain could help landlords meet these challenges by showing how things can be done differently. It was important the Forum shared experience, ideas and solutions to make a difference (i.e. not just be a ‘talking shop’). Members knew where DMC problems were and the poor condition of some client stock and could help clients identify and tackle this. Some clients had set up task forces to deal with DMC. Disrepair claims were expensive because of legal fees and clients needed to find ways to do things differently to avoid this. Building safety was to some extent a consequence of what contractors had delivered and they needed to understand their responsibilities – there was a lot of learning now available (often free). Decarbonisation was going to be discussed later but members now had experience with SHDF – how to mobilise and deliver. The next stage was to align this work with planned works and to secure longer-term funding.</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT encouraged members to use the NHMF Best Practice website because there was lots of information freely available to help them understand these requirements. It was a free resource they could share with their clients. He also encouraged members to look at the Housing Ombudsman’s website because it explained how landlords had failed residents and also showed good practice by landlords and contractors. 	
05.	Procurement Bill and Case Law Update	Andrew Milross
	AM updated members on the developments in the Procurement Bill since being published in May 2022. The latest version was Feb 2023 after lots of amendments in the Committee stages. The best estimate for Royal assent was Jan 2024 but it could be April 2024. It was hoped transitional provisions would be included to	

	<p>address uncertainty with existing contracts. He explained some of the current confusion around Contracting Authority, and proposals for thresholds, exemptions, classification of activities, valuation and aggregation rules. To signify a break with EU regs., some of the terminology has been changed (even though there was no real change to the rules), such as procurement objectives, best read in conjunction with the Government's Procurement Policy Statement. Generally, procurement procedures and associated notices are unchanged but there are time limits and conditions for participation. AM explained that Conflicts of Interest must be declared and there are exclusions for suppliers. There will be rules for awarding contracts, including through frameworks, varying contracts and contract management. Contract awards can be challenged and AM reviewed some recent cases to highlight pitfalls and how to avoid them.</p> <p>[insert link to slides]</p>	
06.	SHDF Wave 2.1... now what do we do?	Melissa Woodall & Alex Gates
	<p>AG introduced Simply Certification (UKAS accredited), offering more than certification because they wanted to provide ongoing value and be a critical friend. Their aim was to remove perceived barriers to certification. It worked with a number of stakeholders and national brands and wanted to help increase the supply chain in the energy efficiency retrofit and renewable markets. It was recognised that the UK Supply chain had to grow across the UK in order to meet targets, with more stakeholders seeing the need to work together to get to deliver on these targets. Her work identified that businesses perceived certification was difficult and created barriers. However, there are benefits from certification in terms of opportunities, increasing quality of outcomes, reduced remediation costs and healthier homes. While certification could help with quality, constant compliance and business improvement was key better instalations.</p> <p>As an example, Equans explained how they were training and improving their workforce and increasing their Retrofit skills using a Retrofit Bootcamp, developing PAS 2030/35 e-learning. In-house training/shadowing. There was also free training with Government funding. The Retrofit Academy had launched a Hub to help the sector.</p>	
	<p>MW explained the different models for delivery by contractors, either using their own DLO or sub-contracting. From SHDF, there were still lessons to be learnt and to avoid unintended consequences when delivering projects. This Forum was an opportunity to agree what members needed to tell their Clients. To start this process, MW explained roundtable exercise would be used to explore the following questions:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you anticipate your weighting to be in terms of SHDF opportunities – Direct award / Mini comp / Open tenders? • How will you manage supply chains / DLOs and build for capacity? • How will you ensure that you have the correct capability's within your supply chain / DLO? • How will you building skills and knowledge around the contractor teams – Equans Example • How do you get the best engagement from residents? Early engagement innovations – best practice approach in partnership? <p style="text-align: center;">Action: MW to summarise feedback from each table</p>									
07.	AOB & Dates for the diary	Mike Turner								
	<p>MT concluded by reminding members of the next two meetings and the NHMF Conference (see below).</p> <p>Dates for the diary</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="236 981 1168 1348"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Event</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>20 July 2023</td> <td>Forum Meeting (Online)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13 Sept 2023</td> <td>Forum Meeting – followed by drinks with clients (London)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23-24 January 2024</td> <td>NHMF Conference – including Frameworx lounge (Stratford-upon-Avon)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Event	20 July 2023	Forum Meeting (Online)	13 Sept 2023	Forum Meeting – followed by drinks with clients (London)	23-24 January 2024	NHMF Conference – including Frameworx lounge (Stratford-upon-Avon)	
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08.	Extra Session: Increasing efficiency and reducing delivery cost using video triage	Ettan Bazil								
	<p>EB outlined challenges members and their clients were facing using the traditional (inefficient) responsive repairs model. He explained how the 'Help Me Fix' system could help because it uses a video triage system (resident-centric approach) that alerts an engineer with a suitable skill set to diagnose incoming repairs and how they could be fixed, ideally with one visit. This system can reduce costs, visits and CO₂ emissions by avoiding multiple visits. It also automatically communicates with the resident after the call and is easy to configure. It had been used successfully in PRS. It can result in an improved customer experience.</p>									