

**Date:** 20 July 2023 (08:30-12:00)

**Location:** online

**Chair:** Mike Turner (Chair)

**Minutes:** Andrew Burke (Deputy Secretary)

**Attendees:** Aaron Mitchell, AJ Eaton, Alex Thomas, Andrew Burke, Amy Boothman, Ben Johnson, Ben Virgo, Chris Pritchard, Connaire McGreevy, David Miller, Dean Fazakerley, Ettan Bazil, Fiona Lund, Helen Francis, Holly Anna, James Ellis, Jayne Elliott, Katherine Billings, Lewis Garley, Matthew Scott, Matt Constable, Martyn Stones, Melissa Woodall, Mike Parrett, Mick Worrell, Mike Turner, Paul Maghie, Paul Rogers, Peter McAteer, Rob Munns, Rosie Hughes,, Sarah Levett, Simon Davis, Simon Lowe, Stephanie Harris, Stephanie Hunter, Stephanie Lloyd-Foxe, Tyron Stalberg & Victor Salciuc.

## NHMF Service Provider Forum Meeting Minutes

### Agenda:

No.	Description	Who
01.	Welcome & Introduction	Mike Turner
	MT welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Service Provider Forum, especially new members, and guests. He reported that they had met their target of 60 members that week.	
02.	Compliance update	Andrew Burke
	<p>AB summarised the imminent deadlines social landlords were facing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EBDS – all heat networks to be registered by 25 July 2023</li> <li>• Building Safety Act all HRRBs to be registered by Oct 2023</li> <li>• Heat Network – first 4-yearly assessment Metering &amp; Billing Regs. Due Dec 2023.</li> </ul> <p>AB explained the challenges social landlords (clients) were facing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damp, mould, and condensation – continued scrutiny with the Govt introducing new regulation, such as Awaad's Law (social landlords to fix their homes within strict new time limits), RSH requiring evidence that D&amp;M is being effectively dealt with and the Ombudsman uncovering unacceptable failings. This is only going to get worse with rising energy costs next Autumn. The Housing Ombudsman has made it clear to social landlords they need to improve their service in relation to cases of damp and mould. It shares examples of good practice to encourage learning by social landlords, something the NHMF wants to help with. Better stock management will involve innovation and technology - opportunities for SPF. NHMF Study Tour at OBU saw some of the research going on with this.</li> <li>• Building Safety has been a major focus for the sector and the Act places new requirements on landlords and building owners with</li> </ul>	

HRRBs. BSR has launched its New 'Be Ready' campaign to help industry to prepare for the new safety regime and provided guidance on the Building Safety Case. It only has 3 months to register its HRRBs by October 2023. Landlords will need to submit key building information when registering each HRRB. Building Assessment Certificate process expected to begin in April 2024. Social landlords need to start building their Golden Thread of building information now. It is expected that this will use BIM- not just for new buildings but for existing ones. One of the NHMF Awards went to a project developing its BIM models of its existing stock. AB encouraged members to have a look at that Award.

- 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 going to be high next Autumn but landlords, with their supply chain, can plan and work to improve the EE of stock. This will be needed anyway to meet Band C deadline and then NZC! SHDF helps but only if landlords have engaged with supply chain.
- New Regulations will be introduced later this year and next (2024):
  - Social Housing Regulation Bill & Awaad's Law
  - Heat Networks Market Framework – Ofgem will regulate HN like any other utility, such as gas, water.

There will also be new Standards and reporting requirements, such as Tenant Satisfaction Measures and the revised Decent Homes Standard.

The [Best Practice](#) website explains these regulations and what social landlords must do. It is a good place to go to for your clients to understand all the demands they are facing. The NHMF is committed to sharing best practice so that social landlords can learn from one another and provide the best service possible for their residents. AB reported on recent updates since the previous meeting – EBDS registration and HHRB Registration & Key Building Information deadlines, as well as Q&A on Damp, mould & condensation. The NHMF Awards also highlighted best practice and the role of service providers.

NHMF ran a Webinar on 11 July 2023 about how social landlords needed to ensure they were compliant with their Communal Heating schemes and to explain how they can prepare for the forthcoming Market Framework.

**Discussion:**

- SPF should look at the TSM in more detail because members have valuable comments to offer. AB requested that the SPF inform him concerning the outcome of these discussions so that he could pick it up with the contacts the NHMF now has with officials.
- There was concern that SHDF would not be well spent and that the requirement to achieve EPC Band C would not help achieving NZC. A whole house, fabric approach was required.
- MT reported that at the CIH conference in June, the shadow Housing Minister confirmed that they would invest in social housing, remain committed to TSMs in place and end leasehold tenancies if elected.

	<b>Action:</b> Members to comment on TSM and SPF to send summary of comments to AB for discussion with officials.	
03.	<b>Frameworkx</b>	Mike Turner David Miller
	<p>DM provided an update on the Frameworkx for SPF members, reporting that there had been 27 awards in total, including 2 energy consultancies, 10 on NZC and 10 for passive fire safety. There were 11 clients about to award and other possible ones (16-18 potential awards). He summarised the current position in terms of which lots had been awarded, which had tenders returned, those out to tender and future tenders.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted how difficult and confusing it was to evaluate different Frameworks because there was no register. Since most Framework providers operated commercially, it was necessary to search each provider individually. This was one of the drivers for the NHMF Frameworkx and members were encouraged to speak to DM to get a better picture. It was felt there were too many Frameworks but no gold standard.</li> <li>• Technology was being adopted by the sector to address black mould and it would be needed for the Golden Thread in relation to compliance for the Building Safety Act. Members thought technology could be an aspect worth including in Frameworkx because it was unclear what was on offer and which firms the sector should approach.</li> </ul>	
04.	<b>Building and fire safety</b>	Stephanie Lloyd-Foxe Head of Building Safety, Magna HA
	<p>SLF summarised the challenges for the sector and implications for the supply chain and SPF. There were lots of changes to regs and new regs had come into operation, while others were still being implemented. There was now an enhanced regulatory regime by the HSE (BSR) for HRRBs as a result of the Hackett Review.</p> <p>Other challenges facing the sector included Awaad's Law, 25% increase in complaints with strengthened residents' voice and bad press affecting the sector's image. In addition, landlords (SPF clients) also had to plan to achieve NZC and address DMC but with a limited talent pool and competing demands. All with a rent cap (7% max) and strong inflationary pressures.</p> <p>These pressures and constraints were encouraging innovation so that the sector could use its limited resources better. Skill and competency was a massive challenge with experienced trades</p>	SLF

people retiring/leaving and insufficient people being trained, even though there is the demand for such people.

She suggested this had implications for the SPF because BSR required clients to have competent people and to demonstrate regulatory compliance. BSR would have greater powers but it was unclear what that would mean in practice. The supply chain had to look at what competencies were required for HRRBs (could be expanded to other buildings) and also major refurbishments. SLF thought that this should apply to all R&M work because it could affect resident safety. Members should look at BSI PAS 8670, 8671, 8672 (contractors) and 8673 for what competencies were required. Accountable Persons responsible for HRRBs would be looking for competency when procuring R&M work and contracts would include requirements for competency. They needed an in-depth knowledge of buildings or face criminal charges. Contractors were the clients' eyes and ears, who had to report issues they found.

Clients had to keep safety case reports up to date, they needed to be living documents to maintain safety. Contracts were being drafted and awarded quickly to meet these requirements but some clients were not well-prepared and so looked to outsource their responsibilities. It was important for SPF to check contract documents and any changes to understand the implications of these new duties. A Golden Thread would be developed for all buildings, not just HRRBs, to ensure clients had comprehensive information to manage them safely. Contractors would have to keep good records of products used and work done, including photo evidence to maintain the Golden Thread. Technology can help and there are systems suppliers can use but they needed to ensure their systems could accommodate this data. Suppliers should consider urgent requests carefully to ensure they could be delivered or posed too high a risk. They needed to keep abreast of technology.

There needed to be cultural change in the sector because there was still a race to the bottom but there needed to be a focus on keeping people safe. The supply chain needed to have a safety culture/attitude that was more than 'ticking the box', minimum compliance. The Hackitt Review echoed the Egan and Latham reports. A risk-based approach was required because sheltered schemes had a greater number of fires and more vulnerable residents.

It was agreed that training for these and future requirements was more than a course because suppliers had to demonstrate competence. This had implications for recruitment because it was not just about qualifications because operatives needed to be trainable and maintain competence through CPD and their performance audited. The whole supply chain had to support the Golden Thread by being able to demonstrate right materials used and installed correctly. This involved main contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers, who all had to capture and provide evidence. Software, systems and platforms could help but there was no universal system and clients needed to select ones that suited their requirements and allowed information transfer.

**Discussion:**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While these new requirements were challenging, they were not impossible but the sector should not wait for prescriptive guidance. Lessons from other disasters, such as Piper Alpha showed solutions could be found and these need not be costly.</li> <li>• Competence needed to be owned with shared responsibilities but qualifications alone were not adequate. TS reported he was on the Golden Thread working groups and would share its work with the SPF. He was disappointed that the sector still did not have the right culture even after the Egan and Latham Reports because risk was still being transferred. A collaborative approach was needed instead of each organisation trying to protect itself.</li> <li>• There was increased scrutiny because the Regulator was focused on high quality data about stock and residents. This will affect the supply chain's systems and information for reporting.</li> </ul>	
05.	<b>The causes of damp and condensation</b>	Michael Parrett, Consultant Building Pathologist
	<p>MP explained that dampness was excess moisture that should not be there. It was a national problem costing the NHS £1.4bn/yr and a serious hazard in about 6m homes. 60% of defects related to dampness but often this was poorly diagnosed because it needed multi-disciplinary working. With the spotlight on D&amp;M in the sector, especially when the Ombudsman said it was 'not lifestyle', it was challenging to rectify defects and get homes in order. The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act supported complaints and the Building Safety Act required landlords to keep residents safe. This legislation would be supplemented by the Social Housing Regulation Bill and Awaad's Law, with media scrutiny highlighting delays faced by residents in getting defects sorted.</p> <p>In response to the consultation on Awwad's Law, MP proposed a national dampness diagnosis methodology because surveyors were using inappropriate diagnosis techniques, such as electrical moisture meters (should only be used for timber and not other building materials). There was a need for independent pathology to identify causes of dampness, such as whether a cracked downpipe or resident usage was the cause of internal D&amp;M. In one case he explained that correct testing had demonstrated that the D&amp;M was not being caused by the downpipe leaking but rather from condensation because the brickwork was only damp on the surface. Surveyors needed to understand the benchmarks for acceptable levels of dampness in different building materials i.e., know what 'dry' meant before they could assess if dampness was present.</p> <p>Retrofit could make the problem worse by trapping moist air in the building. CWI can result in the inner leaf being very wet, leading to black mould. In one case this was due to timber and debris in the cavity that had not been checked visually before it was filled. His experience was of a high risk of CWI transferring moisture across the cavity but it was still being specified to achieve the required EPC.</p> <p>He explained there were 10 causes of rising damp but a failed DPC was very unlikely. Research had shown chemical injection</p>	

	<p>does not work. BRE had reported that EWI could prevent natural vapour movement. BS 5250 explained the mechanism for condensation from moisture content of air and temperatures internally.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the ventilation strategy required by PAS 2035 help? MP explained that MVHR should help reduce excess moisture but Positive Ventilation Systems were not effective and residents often turned them off. While MVHR is required by Passivhaus, he thought it was difficult to maintain the levels of airtightness with factory-made panels throughout the life of a building, i.e., when any building work is carried out.</li> <li>• Salford Energy House is examining retrofit, airtightness and ventilation.</li> <li>• Boroscope inspection should be carried out to inspect defects before insulation is installed, installers needed to be trained in this (Salford and his company ran courses on this) but they were risk averse.</li> <li>• It was agreed retrofit CWI was a disaster but normally adopted to achieve the required EPC. It was possible to build new homes with effective CWI.</li> <li>• EWI can be successful but, again, requires careful assessment before specifying.</li> <li>• Supply chain needed to have proper discussion with clients on what was the right work for the properties that considered all the issues that need to be addressed, such as cladding, energy efficiency, water/damp.</li> <li>• With higher energy costs, landlords want to ensure their tenants are warm but need to consider what is the appropriate way to insulate each home, investigating its structure and measuring performance before specifying EWI or possibly IWI. MP advised against specifying CWI because of all the problems. Care was also required in insulating suspended timber floors that were designed to breathe.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>06.</b></p>	<p><b>How Service Providers make use of new online asset management solution</b></p>	<p><b>Simon Davis</b></p>
	<p>SD introduced the new M3 Vision, an asset management database that allowed landlords full sight of all maintenance (both past and projected). It had a unique functionality and was the first database to be specifically built around the M3NHF Schedule of Rates, to combine responsive &amp; planned works. It was available to all suppliers, contractors and so relevant to the SPF. It was designed for end users with an enhanced scoring system than the Decent Homes Standard to provide an answer to the question of Stock Condition. Rands were part of the DHS2 consultation and had been developing the functionality for the expected DHS2. It provides a realistic view of each property to help clients understand what repair work was required. Photos were included and tagged in relation to the type of survey used. It was designed to be open to all systems through an accessible software solution that gave users full functionality to update the database independently through a completely user configurable, secure, hosted web-based system. He illustrated how the hub could be used to display a variety of requirements, including Government EPC data. They were working with others, such as SAVA to model energy performance before retrofit undertaken.</p> <p>It had been designed to help landlords keep stock information up to date, particularly recording reactive repairs in stock</p>	

	<p>condition databases to provide a clear summary. An investment planning toolkit was being developed to bring together different work packages to avoid a siloed approach to asset management. Another future development would be to go beyond the min. level to a safe level.</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MT suggested a follow-up presentation at next SPF meeting to.</li> </ul>	
07.	<p><b>CIH update on the Better Social Housing Review (BSHR) &amp; the CIH Action Plan Report (see Action 3)</b>  <b>What are our plans for supporting Action 3?</b></p>	<p><b>Dr Matthew Scott Policy &amp; Practice Officer, CIH</b></p>
	<p>MS explained that NHF &amp; CIH's BSHR had been started because of increased scrutiny of the sector, including ITV documentaries and campaigning. The English Housing Survey (EHS) confirms the extent of the problem in both social and PRS housing. It is probably an under-estimate because BRE suggest there are other hazards. The Review's recommendations identified that there were structural inequalities that needed to be addressed because some groups suffered more problems and there needed to be a focus on equality and diversity, especially in relation to recommendation 3.</p> <p>MS explained he was leading on Recommendation 3 about R&amp;M services and resident dissatisfaction (EHS 30%, equivalent to about 1m social homes out of 4m). The review had identified poor landlord attitudes and poor quality work. With the financial pressures on the sector from 2021 onwards, there was a need to improve efficiency and ensure R&amp;M provided good value. It was planned to start with a review of the R&amp;M process by involving tenants, contractors, and frontline staff because the sector had to improve. An action plan had been published [SLIDE] and a R&amp;M group had been set up with MT representing the SPF to develop best practice case studies. A Best Practice working group to take forward 3 workstreams (partnership/engagement).</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MS asked the SPF to consider 3 questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ What general comments and observations were there?</li> <li>◦ What challenges should the WG address?</li> <li>◦ How can WG best engage with and incorporate the perspectives of contractors? How can SPF be involved?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• CIH would present at subsequent meetings to engage SPF.</li> <li>• MT explained he was also representing NHMF as well as SPF on BSHR. Feedback to the WG had to be coordinated. He suggested a workshop at the September meeting for this.</li> <li>• There was a need to agree on the quality of a R&amp;M service by engaging with all end-users, identifying barriers, and look at how it could be improved. This was important to residents. SPF needed to be bold and consider 'ripping up' the existing model, while recognising the challenge of allowing low-level bids by contractors separate for work. TS keen to be involved.</li> </ul>	

	<p>SPF was also involved with DWF who would be attending the September meeting and also the January Conference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In relation to M&amp;E repairs, there was a need to increase first time fix rates, even more important with resource constraints. A need to improve efficiency and increase jobs/person/day.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Action: All to consider CIH's 3 questions for Sept. workshop</b></p>							
08.	AOB & Dates for the diary	Mike Turner						
	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MT explained that the NHF, CIH &amp; DWF would be joining as guests for the social after the next SPF meeting.</li> <li>MT asked if people were interested in joining the committee as there is one space available from Jan 2024 since he would be stepping down and MW would take over as chair and Amy B as deputy chair. This would be an opportunity to review the operation of the SPF and to recruit new members. Anyone interested in joining the Committee to let MT and BV know.</li> <li>Members were encouraged to submit schemes for the <a href="#">NHMF Awards</a> and to book for the <a href="#">NHMF Conference</a>.</li> <li>It was suggested the SPF should discuss the challenges in the sector, especially with firms failing recently. TS agreed to prepare a short session for the September meeting on how to address and how to change. This could feed into the CIH WG.</li> </ul> <p>MT concluded by commenting it had been a very full agenda and reminding members of the next meeting and the NHMF Conference (see below).</p> <p><b>Dates for the diary</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="236 1339 1169 1597"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Event</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>13 Sept 2023</td> <td>Forum Meeting – followed by drinks at <a href="#">Willows on the Roof</a>.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23-24 January 2024</td> <td>NHMF Conference – including Frameworx lounge (Stratford-upon-Avon)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Event	13 Sept 2023	Forum Meeting – followed by drinks at <a href="#">Willows on the Roof</a> .	23-24 January 2024	NHMF Conference – including Frameworx lounge (Stratford-upon-Avon)	
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