

## AHBRA 45<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting Minutes

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| Date          | 21 July 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Venue         | Hybrid – AHBRA Offices and online via Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Time          | 09.00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Chaired by    | Eddie Lewis (EL)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Board Members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oonagh Breen (OB)</li> <li>• Jillian Mahon (JMN)</li> <li>• Seamus Neely (SN)</li> <li>• Geraldine Hynes (GH)</li> <li>• John McCarthy (JMcCY)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| In attendance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fergal O’Leary (FOL) – Chief Executive</li> <li>• Paula Nyland (PN) – Head of Regulation (Registration and Assessment)</li> <li>• Louise Farrell (LF) – Interim Head of Finance and Corporate Services</li> <li>• Leona McMahon (LMcM) – Head of Legal</li> <li>• Antonia Smyth (AS) – Head of Regulation (Regulatory Oversight and Communications)</li> <li>• Thomas Halligan (TH) – Senior Data Manager, partial attendance for item 7</li> <li>• Jenny Murphy(JM) – Senior Regulatory Manager Registration and Assessment - partial attendance for time 5(b)</li> <li>• Tom Rogers (TR) – Governance and Compliance Leader in capacity as Board Secretary</li> </ul> |
| Apologies     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michael Cameron (MC)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

### 1. Preliminaries

#### a. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

The Chair noted that Michael Cameron presented his apologies.

Declaration of interests were sought. No interests were declared from attending Board members.

### **b. Previous Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of the Board meeting held on 23 June 2025 were distributed in advance to the Members and tabled at the meeting. It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 23 June 2025 be and are hereby adopted.

The Board approved the minutes of the Board meeting held on the 23 June 2025.

### **c. Matters arising**

Members were apprised of the status of the appointment of new Board members. Concerns were raised on the length of time it is taking to recruit new Members.

Members were also informed that the Office of the Information Commissioner upheld an appeal by a journalist on a refusal by AHBRA to disclose information on AHBs under a Freedom of Information Request on the grounds of commercial sensitivity and confidentiality. It was confirmed that AHBs will be contacted to confirm that this information will be released once a deadline for an appeal to the High Court has passed.

## **2. Q2 Report**

The Chief Executive provided an update performance across key functional areas, including staff recruitment and regulatory functions. It was noted that a paper on stakeholder engagement will be presented to the September Board meeting. The increased time required for completion of assessments as well as the impact of vacancies in the Corporate Services division were noted. A query arose on the development of a targeted engagement function. FOL undertook to liaise directly with MC on this.

## **3. Update on an Investigation**

The Board considered the contents of a report completed by Crowe on the status of an AHB's compliance with AHBRA's standards. A discussion ensued on the capability of the AHB to bring itself into compliance with the standards in a timely and effective manner. Whilst there have been recent positive actions, further time-bound improvements will need to be demonstrated in the coming months to avoid consideration of further regulatory action. In considering potential enforcement actions, Members agreed that AHBRA's approach would align with the Charities regulator response where possible. It was agreed that this matter will be discussed again at the September Board meeting.

#### **4. Legislative Review**

A paper on the legislative review of the 2019 Act was presented to the meeting. Members were informed that the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) has confirmed in a recent meeting with AHBRA that the Minister's strategic review of the Act is expected in the first quarter of 2026. It was confirmed also that DHLGH will formally write to AHBRA setting out their intended scope and approach for the review.

Members also considered briefly the European Building Performance Directive and implications for standards of older AHB housing stock and tenancy management. It was agreed to return to this issue as AHBRA's position on the Act is developed.

The Board noted the update on the legislative review.

#### **5. Regulatory Update**

##### **(a) Proposed timings of 2025 AMF**

The Board considered the timing of the 2025 Annual Monitoring Programme, noting that the sectoral analysis completed in 2024 has now been published. Members were informed that the Regulatory Oversight team will now engage with the new Communications Lead to agree the further data sets to be released in the coming months.

It was proposed to make an adjustment to the timing of the AMF for 2025 to simplify the timing of the data to be collected from AHBs. It was proposed that data would be collected for the calendar year, as opposed to September to September.

Members enquired whether AHBs were to be consulted on this change, as concerns were raised that the timing of the 2025 AMF may impose an additional workload. AS confirmed that it is planned to engage with AHBs once the matter is considered by the Board. It is anticipated that AHBs would support the proposed change to the timing of the 2025 AMF due to the streamlining of data required.

The Board approved the proposed change of timing of the 2025 AMF.

### **(b) Developments in AHB Register activities**

A paper on developments in AHB register activities was distributed in advance and tabled at the meeting. Members were informed that Section 28 of the Housing (regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Act 2019 ("the Act") requires AHBs to enter into the register the activity to which registration relates. It was argued that a more detailed breakdown of the type of activity should be undertaken. AHBRA conducted extensive research and consulted with other bodies in considering a wider definition of type of activity, including DHLGH, the Irish Council of Social Housing (ICSH), the Charities Regulatory Authority and Local Authorities. A list of 9 activities was proposed for consideration. Members were asked to approve an amendment to the next Annual Monitoring Programme to request data on the primary activity of the AHB and up to two other activities that best reflects the operation of the AHB. It was suggested that the question for AHBs would be amended to request the AHB select a housing activity from the list proposed.

After further discussion on the definition of AHB activities, the Board approved the proposal subject to suggested amendments.

## **6. Finance and Corporate Services Update**

### **(a) Quarter 2 Management accounts and 2026 Budget update**

Members reviewed the updated management accounts for quarter 2 2025 and the proposed budget for 2026. Members were presented with a breakdown of payroll and

non-payroll elements for year-to-date. It was noted that the 2026 budget had increased from the figures presented at the last Board meeting to reflect an increased figure for investigations and increases in legal costs and staff training in line with feedback from the last Board meeting and after discussions with DHLGH. The payroll budget has also increased to reflect the staff proposed under the Workforce Plan 2026.

The Board approved the updated management accounts and 2026 budget.

#### **(b) ARC Chairperson update**

The ARC Chair presented a verbal update to the Board on the work undertaken by the Committee in the last quarter.

The Chairperson's submission was duly noted by the Board.

### **7. Governance Update**

Members were presented with a comprehensive update on the IT transformation project. The Chief Executive introduced the update and confirmed that, whilst the current IT infrastructure is stable, the system needs to be enhanced. This will necessitate a fresh procurement. Members were informed that a standard CRM platform, with some customisation, is the preferred way forward.

It is proposed that a Request for Information (RFI) will now issue which will inform project timescales and costs, followed by a Request for Tender (RFT). It was noted that the assumed project timescale is two years.

Members underlined the importance that risks related to the project are carefully managed and a clear governance framework put in place for the duration of the project. It was noted that the ARC would require a separate IT project risk register to provide robust oversight of inherent risks for the duration of the project. It was suggested that the IT project proposal would also be presented to the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) at an early stage to get views on the suggested approach as well as the process for formal sanction.

The Board noted the contents of the IT transformation project report and approved proceeding along the lines set out.

## 8. Risk Management

### (a) Risk Management policy update

Members were informed that the policy was substantively reviewed by the ARC over the past few months to incorporate the implementation of divisional risk registers. The Board duly approved the updated risk management policy.

### (b) Risk register review

The up-to-date risk register was presented to members. It was noted that the format of the register was updated to reflect Members wishes to include mitigating actions. No changes in the ratings of risks were observed upon review. The Board approved the risk register as presented.

## 9. AOB

The date of the next meeting is set at 8 September at 09.00.

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed 10.35.

**Signed:**

**Eddie Lewis**  
**Chairperson**

Signed by:  
  
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**Date:** 9/11/2025