

AHBRA 48th Board Meeting Minutes

Date	24 November 2025
Venue	Hybrid – AHBRA Offices and online via Zoom
Time	09.30
Chaired by	Eddie Lewis (EL)
Board Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oonagh Breen (OB) • Jillian Mahon (JMN) • Geraldine Hynes (GH) • John McCarthy (JMcCY) • Seamus Neely (SN) • Nicola Dunleavy (ND) • Kenneth Owens (KO) • Sean Cremen (SC)
In attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fergal O’Leary (FOL) – Chief Executive • Paula Nyland (PN) – Head of Regulation (Registration and Assessment) • Louise Farrell – Acting Head of Finance and Corporate Services • Leona McMahan (LMcM) – Head of Legal • Antonia Smyth (AS) – Head of Regulation (Regulatory Oversight and Communications) • Caoimhe McDaid (CMD) – Ambit Consultancy – partial attendance for agenda item 3(c) • Ken Jackson – Senior Regulatory Manager (Regulatory Oversight and Communications) partial attendance for agenda item 4(c) • Tom Rogers (TR) – Governance and Compliance Leader in capacity as Board Secretary
Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Cameron (MC)

1. Preliminaries

a. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

The Chair noted that Michael Cameron (MC) had presented his apologies.

Declaration of interests were sought. No interests were declared by attending Board members in relation to any agenda items.

b. Previous minutes

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 20 October 2025 were distributed in advance to the members and tabled at the meeting. The Board made note of some minor amendments to be made. Subject to the aforementioned changes, the minutes of the meeting were approved.

<p>IT WAS RESOLVED by the Board that the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 20 October 2025 be and are hereby approved.</p>

c. Matters arising

Members were apprised of developments relating to cancellation of AHBs with charitable status and engagement with the Charities Regulator. The Chair noted that the charitable status of AHBs may be further considered as part of the legislative review process.

2. CEO Report

The CEO report was distributed in advance to the members and tabled at the meeting. FOL provided an update to members on AHBRA’s appearance before the Committee of Public Accounts on 20 November. The Board suggested that a formal debrief be completed to take stock of any arising lessons learned in relation to how AHBRA communicates its work and regulatory decisions. It was proposed that recommendations arising from the lessons learned be listed as separate categories to ensure consistency and aid readability.

Members were updated on several projects, all are progressing well within the limits set by resource constraints. A query arose as to whether AHBRA could be deemed to be the primary Regulator of the sector for the purpose of carrying out of investigations or other regulatory actions. It was confirmed that this matter has been raised with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and will be considered as part of the legislative review process.

1. Legal Update

a. Legislative review update

The Board received an update on preparations for AHBRA's submission to the DHLGH as part of the statutory review of the 2019 Act.

LMcM outlined the proposed structure for AHBRA's submission, organised into three tiers and summarised its key themes.

Members considered the proposed structure and content of AHBRA's submission to the DHLGH and agreed that the submission should reflect a balanced approach reflecting both issues that have impacted the smooth and efficient operation of AHBRA and longer-term strategic considerations arising from the new Housing Plan and the report of the Approved Housing Body Strategic Forum.

The Board also discussed the approach to stakeholder engagement adopted by the Department and noted that AHBRA had engaged with the DHLGH to discuss consultation themes.

Board members agreed that a final draft of the strategic review submission can be circulated by email for approval, provided that the final draft does not alter the strategic scope confirmed by the Board.

b. Update post investigation actions

Members noted the papers circulated in advance and received an update on recent engagements with an AHB which have focused on, in addition to issues found in previous reports, the requirement to build and strengthen executive capacity and capability.

Among the list of further actions to be undertaken by the AHB in the coming months, the Board emphasised the importance of completing the work on updating the fixed asset register. The Board further noted that potential additional regulatory responses remain under active consideration in line with AHBRA's statutory functions.

c. Annual Data Protection Officer (DPO) report to the Board

The DPO's annual report, prepared by Ambit, was distributed in advance to members and tabled at the meeting. A presentation was made by Ambit on the report.

The Board members noted the updates on the activities of the Data Protection Working Group, the GDPR internal audit report and associated training initiatives proposed for 2026.

During the discussion, the Board sought clarification on how the organisation's HR policies interface with data-protection governance. It was confirmed that, as a matter of policy, any serious or repeated data-handling issues would be addressed through AHBRA's established disciplinary procedures. It was noted that no such incidents had occurred in AHBRA to date. The Board noted this assurance and the Chair thanked Ambit for the comprehensive report and work done this year.

3. Regulatory Update

a. Assessment Policy

PN provided members with an outline of proposed revisions to the Assessment Policy which had been circulated in advance. It was noted that the updated policy will allow (in the case of mixed non-compliant outcomes across the Standards) the option to include all recommendations in a Compliance Plan. This will be less administratively burdensome for AHBs and AHBRA. The Board also noted the Legal & Regulation Committee's recommendation to approve the revised policy. Following consideration, members approved the policy as presented.

The Board approved the Assessment Policy as presented.
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b. Annual Monitoring Policy

Members were informed that consultants Crowe have been appointed to review the monitoring programme. Members discussed the timing of the annual monitoring programme and potential funding implications for AHBs who are not in compliance with the Standards.

KJ provided members with an outline of changes to the Annual Monitoring policy, which was reviewed by the Legal and Regulation Committee and recommended for approval by the Board.

The Board approved the Monitoring Policy as presented.

c. AHBs in non-compliance – verbal update

Members agreed on the approach to providing progress reports to the Board, including how AHBs' compliance with Standards and the 2019 Act are tracked in quarterly reports. The Chair also suggested proposed that the criteria for invoking enforcement action be considered at a future Board meeting.

d. Consideration of Regulatory Approach to AHBs without tenants

The Head of Legal presented a paper on the application of the Tenancy Management Standard to AHBs that do not have tenants in the traditional legal sense.

The Board noted that there are practical challenges in regulating such AHBs and that regulatory practice in applying the Standard continues to evolve. The paper outlined the legal considerations and presented options available to the Regulator. Members were requested to note the current evaluation of these legal considerations. Following discussion on the distinction between tenants and licensees and related regulatory responses, the Board requested the Executive to reflect on discussions and revert with recommendations. In the meantime, the Legislative Review Working Group will consider this issue in the context of the upcoming legislative review submission.

4. Finance and Corporate Services Update

a. Review of Management Accounts and financial position

The Board was advised that three new staff members are due to commence employment at AHBRA in January 2026.

Members were informed that two internal audits are currently in process relating to prior year recommendations and internal controls. Further risk training will be conducted in mid-December.

Finally, the Board was given an update on the budget allocation from DHLGH for 2026 and noted the implications for the workforce plan.

5. Risk Management

a. ARC Chairperson's Report – verbal update

Board members were apprised of the work undertaken by the Committee in the last quarter. Activity in the quarter focused on reviewing financial policies and procedures and seeking assurance on procurement. It was noted that the ARC received a presentation from the Executive on the status of the ICT upgrade project.

Members noted that the ARC effectiveness review will be finalised in the first quarter of 2026 along with the ARC workplan for 2026.

The revised ARC Terms of Reference (ToR) as presented contained minor administrative amendments. The revised ToR were duly approved by the Board.

The Board approved the revised ARC Terms of Reference.
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b. Risk register review

Members were apprised of changes to two risks upon review, which was considered by the ARC at its recent meeting.

Following discussions on the level of control effectiveness attributed to top risks, it was agreed that suitable wording would be considered to explain the level of control effectiveness on the risk register as part of the risk register review in December and January 2026

6. Governance Update

a. Report from LRC Chair

The LRC Chairperson's report was distributed in advance to the members and tabled for approval at the meeting. Board members were informed of the work undertaken

by the Committee in the last quarter. Revised LRC Terms of Reference were also presented to members.

The revised Terms of Reference were duly approved by the Board.

The Board approved the LRC revised Terms of Reference.
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b. LRC ToR Review and appointments of LRC members

Members were informed that the appointments of LRC members were not formally renewed in June 2025. The Board approved the appointment of Seamus Neely, Micheal Cameron and Geraldine Hynes as LRC members to February 2026 and also affirmed the appointment of Seamus Neely as LRC chair.

Members noted that two meetings of the LRC were convened since June 2025 and that no decisions required ratification.

c. Board update on policies reviewed in the year

Board members noted the list of policies reviewed in the year.

7. AOB

The date of the next meeting is set at 9 February 2026 at 11.00.

There being no further business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 12.20.

During a meeting without the Executive present, following the conclusion of the main meeting, the Board approved the appointment of Nichola Dunleavy to the LRC and the appointments of Kenneth Owens and Sean Cremen to the ARC. The Board also noted that Oonagh Breen has stepped down from the ARC and thanked her for her contribution during her term on the Committee.

Signed:

Signed by:
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Eddie Lewis
Chairperson

2/10/2026

Date: