

ARHM Conference 2015 Report

We have been catching up with day to day matters following our very successful conference on 11th June. The conference was held in central Birmingham and we saw over 80 attendees come together to participate in the day.

The day was hosted by ARHM Chair, Paul Silk and with the CMA report as the backdrop. The theme of the day was very much about how different stakeholders could work together to implement the recommendations outlined in the report published in December 2014. (<https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/residential-property-management-services>).

Firstly we were pleased to welcome Douglas Cooper Project Director CMA who gave delegates a helpful overview of the report findings before moving on to look at the recommendations and the expectations around implementation which would focus on the sector and relevant bodies addressing and implementing the recommendations. The ARHM's involvement in moving the recommendations forward with other parties was acknowledged in the presentation.

One of the key areas identified in the report was the information provided to leaseholders in the pre purchase process. In order to highlight the issues and encourage greater cross working we heard perspectives from Simon Gerrard, President of the National Association of Estate Agents and External Communications Director, Stephen Ward, Council of Licenced Conveyancers (CLC). Debbie Matusевичius provided us with a Managers' view and Yashmin Mistry took the lead from a leaseholder angle.

Delegates had lots of opportunity for valuable networking over an excellent lunch and returned for a stimulating session provided by Stephen Lewis, Law Commissioner on 'Transfer Transparency'. Stephen outlined the nature of the project which is to consider the problems caused by terms in residential leases generally (and in the retirement sector in particular) which require the lessee to pay a fee on a transfer of title or change of occupancy. Then went on to highlight the dangers and case for transfer fees before setting out proposals for reform which centre around transparency and utilising the appropriate Government approved Codes for compliance. The Commissioner thanked the ARHM for its contribution to the project so far. Following a period of consultation from October this year, recommendations are expected in March 2016.

Our workshops proved as popular as ever with delegates having the choice between Health and Safety: Fire Safety, a jointly hosted session by Lukas Rootman, Nabarro LLP and Terry Jones Quantum Compliance and Nicholas Kissen LEASE Senior Adviser giving a round up latest case law in the sector.

As we moved towards close of the conference, Roger Southam, Chair, LEASE shared his thoughts on the future of LEASE and emphasised again the value of working together to achieve improvements in the sector. Finally a joint session delivered by Andrew Bulmer, UK Residential Director, RICS, Martin Perry, Chair, ARMA and the ARHM's Don Kennedy, who has played an integral part in the Code revision drew together the strands from the day about working in partnership, avoiding duplication and creating improvements in the sector to benefit leaseholders. This was with particular reference to the ARHM and RICS Codes of Practice and ARMA the possibility of a unified Code was mooted as a longer term objective.

The feedback from the day has been extremely positive with delegates leaving the conference feeling better informed and being able to take the learning back to their day jobs. The high calibre of all the speakers was acknowledged and appreciated and we would also like to extend our thanks to all those who gave their time to ensure the success of the conference and to everyone who attended.

Keep an eye on the website for details of next year's conference and our 25th Anniversary.