

**Minutes of the Leasehold Service Improvement Panel**

**Held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2011.**

**Present**

<b>Mrs Costello</b>	<b>Branstree Road</b>
<b>Ms Thornber</b>	<b>Bostonway</b>
<b>Mr Chamberlain</b>	<b>Kincraig Place</b>
<b>Mr Leighton</b>	<b>Kennedy House</b>
<b>Mr Clare</b>	<b>Hobart Place</b>
<b>Mr Goodwin</b>	<b>Nesswood Ave</b>
<b>Gail Moyle</b>	<b>Blackpool Coastal Housing</b>
<b>Ann Carter</b>	<b>Blackpool Coastal Housing</b>
<b>Suzanne Tomlinson</b>	<b>Blackpool Coastal Housing</b>

**Apologies**

<b>Mrs Mills</b>	<b>Warren Drive</b>
<b>Mrs Gill</b>	<b>Warren Drive</b>
<b>Mr O'Shea</b>	<b>Oban Place</b>
<b>Mrs Walker</b>	<b>Portree Road</b>

<b>Item</b>		<b>Action By / Before</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Minutes from last meeting and matters arising</b>  The minutes from the previous meeting were read through. No actions from previous meeting.	
<b>2</b>	<b>SIP Objectives/Working with other SIP's</b>  ST explained to the group that the Audit Commission are no longer responsible for inspecting Social Landlords and that the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) had taken over the responsibility for regulation. She explained that Tenant-led Self Regulation is a new approach to monitoring the services and performance of BCH and enables customers and BCH to work together. ST explained BCH's proposed new involvement structure including the Assembly and how individual Service Improvement Panels (SIP's) will work with the Assembly and each other. The aim is to formalise all Service Improvement Panels in line with the new proposed structure. This will involve members agreeing to and signing a code of conduct and making a commitment to training and attending meetings for the most part. ST explained that the role of the group will be much more strategic and members will be responsible for monitoring the performance of the services and	

	<p>the local offers. This means that the meetings will not focus on individual issues or concerns. The group will still have a consultation role and will continue to review policies, procedures and information. ST explained that training will be provided for SIP members to present a better overview of the Homeownership Service and enable customers to scrutinise and challenge services and performance. ST advised that all other SIP's will be formalised in the same way. ST explained that BCH will work with the panel to effect change and improve services however the Homeownership Team have to work to legislation and this can sometimes mean that procedures can not always be changed outright.</p> <p>A query was raised as to how much time would be required to be a member of the panel. ST advised that the panel will meet 4 times a year (quarterly) and the meetings will last a few hours. She also advised there may be reading required in preparation for meetings.</p> <p>ST advised that other involvement opportunities were available if customers felt that being a member of a SIP was not for them. ST to send out further information on involvement with the minutes of the meeting.</p>	
3	<p><b>Performance &amp; Targets</b></p> <p>GM produced the performance information and handed copies out to all. She advised a new computer system had gone live and this had caused some inconsistency with the performance. GM read through the performance and gave explanations where performance targets had not been met.</p> <p>GM asked the group if they had any questions, none raised. GM also asked if the group felt the current performance indicators were relevant and if they felt anything should be added or removed. No changes suggested.</p>	
4	<p><b>Suggested Items for future SIP's</b></p> <p>GM asked the group for suggested topics to be considered for future meetings.</p> <p>The group agreed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To look at Value for money across the service</li> <li>• To review the new invoice layout</li> <li>• To look closer at the grounds maintenance service for Leaseholders</li> <li>• To look at service charges and how they are set.</li> </ul>	
5	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>During the meeting the following issues were raised and discussed:</p> <p>A query was raised as to why the Service Charges had been</p>	

increased and why no consultation had been done. GM advised that the management charge was calculated using the cost of the service, and all leaseholders were given the opportunity to discuss this increase plus information went out in newsletters etc.

Other members of the group agreed that Service Charges had been discussed at previous meetings, which all Leaseholders were notified of, and also paperwork had been sent out.

The group expressed there was confusion around the new invoices as three were sent out and some leaseholders had had difficulty paying using the new numbers. GM advised there are limitations as to how the invoices are produced due to the computer system but advised the invoice layout would be reviewed at the next SIP with the aim of making them more appropriate to what leaseholders want. GM advised the various ways service charges can be paid. It was also noted that upon agreement and in certain circumstances, service charges can be paid monthly.

A query was raised as to why there was a service charge for grounds maintenance when some leaseholders have their own gardens and don't share communal spaces. GM advised that the service charge covers all grounds maintenance on the estate, including grass verges and open spaces and is not limited to just communal garden areas.

A leaseholder reported that they had a leak from the flat above and contacted the Out of Hours repairs service who advised they would not attend as the property was leasehold. GM advised she would investigate.

It was also reported that the insurance company had advised the leaseholder would not be insured as the leak was from a tenanted flat and therefore the tenant would have to be sued for damages. AC advised this was not the case as other leaseholders had claimed off the insurance in similar incidents. AC advised the leaseholder to contact the Homeownership Team to seek advice if any issues occur in the future.

A query was raised with regards to Gas Safety Checks and why leaseholders were required to have them done. GM advised that the Gas Safety Checks were vital for the safety of the leasehold property and the properties in the surrounding area. AC advised that Read & Errington offer a special rate for Blackpool Council Leaseholders.

It was noted that invoices for Kennedy House had not been

	<p>received. AC advised they were sent out at the beginning of April and had had queries about them from other customers in Kennedy House. AC/GM to look into the invoice that has not been received.</p> <p>A query was raised regarding leaseholders in Kennedy House buying the Freehold. GM advised this is known as Enfranchisement and required two thirds of leaseholders within the building to be in agreement. GM advised she will send out information to the leaseholder Enfranchisement.</p>	
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Date, time and venue of next SIP</b></p> <p>Times and venues of future meetings were discussed. The group agreed to continue to hold meetings at Coastal House but to make the meetings earlier on in the afternoon. A time of 2pm was agreed.</p> <p>ST to confirm date of next meeting and send invites.</p>	