

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
12th May 2009

Present:

Mrs M Horn (Chair)	Grange Park Residents Association
Mrs C Thornber	Boston Way Tenants' Association
Mrs J Feeney	Boston Way Tenants' Association
Mr T Clayton	Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association
Mrs C Hardiman	Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association
Mrs J Sanderson	Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association
Miss D Wightman	Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association
Mr B Rogers	Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association
Mrs A Stringer	Grange Park Residents Association
Mr J Newton	Queens Park Residents Association
Mrs G King	Queens Park Residents Association
Mr M Christian	Ingthorpe Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mrs E Christian	Ingthorpe Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mrs A Allen	Mereside Tenants' and Residents' Association

In Attendance:

Mrs D Williams	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr M Glennon	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs S Grundy	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms J Ellis	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms S Tomlinson	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr P Whittaker	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr M Watson	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr J Wilcock	Blackpool Build Up
Miss G Atkinson	Democratic Services, Blackpool Council
Miss S Baxter	Democratic Services, Blackpool Council

Action

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed those in attendance and passed on her gratitude for the cards and flowers that she received while she was in hospital.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Henderson and Councillor Lee.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 10th March 2009

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th March 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM – BLACKPOOL BUILD UP

The Chair agreed that a supplementary item be considered at the meeting, appertaining to a presentation by John Wilcock, Blackpool Build Up.

The three-year scheme was funded through the Council's Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) and aimed to assist local residents to access local employment in Blackpool by training them with the relevant

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
12th May 2009

skills. Blackpool Build Up had been involved in Blackpool Coastal Housing's (BCH) social inclusion work which required the Decent Homes contractors to employ locally.

Mr Wilcock advised the Forum that the scheme predominantly provided training in the construction field, involving roles in general operatives, tiling and plastering. Training in commercial cleaning was also provided, as well as environmental based positions, such as mowing and trimming. Skills-based qualifications would be achieved through both direct training and work experience. It was reported that since January 2009 the scheme had assisted 181 local residents to obtain full-time employment.

In response to a question raised, Mr Wilcock advised that the scheme was aimed at all residents and that a number of female trainees had enrolled on courses such as tiling and commercial cleaning. The scheme was flexible in that it could effectively respond to the local employment market.

The Forum was advised that trainees would continue to receive their benefits, such as Job Seekers Allowance, as the scheme was fully sanctioned by the JobCentre.

The Forum thanked Mr Wilcock for his presentation.

4. POLICY AND PERFORMANCE

Mr Whittaker advised the Forum that the BCH Business Plan 2008/2013 had been recently refreshed and that a draft copy of the document had been circulated to members for consultation. It was reported that the majority of the document, which focused on the aims and objectives of BCH, remained the same.

As a number of members had not received their copy of the Business Plan, it was requested that important documents also be sent via email, as well as in hard copy.

Mr Watson provided an outline of the outcome of the STATUS survey that was conducted in November 2008. The survey results would be used to understand customer needs and aspirations and improve service delivery. As the survey had only focused on General Needs tenants, a further survey would be conducted for Sheltered Housing tenants.

In addition to the regular SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), the Business Plan now included a PEST analysis which outlined the Political, Economic, Sociological and Technological influences that could have an impact on BCH.

The Forum was advised that the STATUS survey had also been used to measure customer satisfaction with the service provided by BCH and the results had been benchmarked on a national level with 42 other Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs).

In response to a question raised, Mr Whittaker advised that the survey was undertaken by a specialist organisation that had distributed 2,000 questionnaires across Blackpool on a sample basis to ensure that the results received would be representative of the area. In order to achieve validity in the results, the government had required a minimum of 600

Mike
Glennon

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
12th May 2009

completed surveys to be submitted. This figure had been exceeded by a 40 per cent response rate to the survey.

A concern was raised regarding the validity of the results and whether they were representative of the area and it was agreed that the organisation that co-ordinated and distributed the STATUS survey be invited to the next meeting.

Peter
Whittaker

The presentation continued with an update on the financial information relating to the BCH Revenue Budget. It was reported that there was a slight under spend from 2008/09 which would be carried over to the 2009/10 budget and would help to offset the costs associated with the relocation of the BCH offices. The new venue would be the building that was previously occupied by Harveys on Abingdon Street and it was anticipated that the relocation would be completed by the end of 2009.

With regard to final part of the document which contained the Action Plan, the Forum was advised that this would be continually updated to monitor progress against the achievement of the objectives.

Mr Whittaker informed members that the two vacancies for the BCH Board would be advertised in the June edition of Viewpoint. Two information meetings would be held in June to advise potential candidates of the duties associated with being a member of the BCH Board. The Tenants Participation Advisory Service would be co-ordinating and administrating the ballot and the two successful candidates would be appointed at the BCH Board AGM meeting on 16th September 2009.

The Forum thanked Mr Whittaker and Mr Watson for their presentation.

5. HIGHWAYS AND STREET SCENE SERVICES

As there was not a representative from either the Highways or Street Scene Services present at the meeting, the Forum agreed that this item be deferred until the next meeting.

6. HOUSING MATTERS

(a) Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH)

Mr Holland advised the Forum that the first phase of the Decent Homes programme had been completed within nine months and had carried out works to over 2,000 properties, including the following:

- 700 new kitchens and bathrooms fitted;
- 400 new heating systems installed;
- 250 roofs and gutters replaced;
- 300 new windows fitted; and
- 71 external render systems fitted.

It was reported that 97 per cent of tenants had demonstrated satisfaction with the work completed under the scheme. Previous issues with the performance of certain contractors had been resolved and therefore the customer satisfaction target for the second year of the programme had been set at 98 per cent.

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
12th May 2009

Mr Holland advised that the previously determined local employment targets had now been achieved and over 80 per cent of those employed by the contractors were Blackpool residents. It was hoped that this figure would improve over the remaining four years. The second year of the Decent Homes programme had now commenced and a copy of the work that had been scheduled throughout the year would be circulated to all tenants.

It was reported that a community calendar would be developed to schedule a series of events throughout the year involving the five contractors and members were invited to forward any suggestions of future community events that could be incorporated into the calendar.

In response to a query raised, Mr Holland advised that the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review would help to structure the remaining years of the programme.

With regard to the contracts for the environmental based work, the Forum was advised that the successful contractors had now been appointed and were due to commence work on 1st June 2009. The Forum agreed that one of the successful contractors, Connaughts, be invited to attend the next meeting to provide a presentation on the work they aimed to deliver for BCH.

Cyril Holland

(b) Sheltered Housing and Community Centres

Mrs Williams provided the Forum with an outline of the proposed plans to install new kitchens and redecorate a number of the community centres.

With regard to the recruitment of Scheme Managers, it was reported that the three vacant posts had now been filled. One manager had already commenced employment with BCH and the other two employees were due to commence in June 2009. As the Sheltered Housing Team Leader was due to leave BCH in the near future, Mrs Williams would be temporarily supporting the service until the vacancy had been filled.

The next Sheltered Housing Forum had been scheduled for 12th June 2009 to consider its affiliation to the Tenant Liaison Forum. Should this be approved, an amendment to the TLF Constitution would be required to enable other groups to join the Forum.

Mike
Glennon

With regard to a number of issues raised relating to access to community centres, Mrs Williams advised that potential resolutions for this were currently being considered and would be reported back at a future meeting.

Denise
Williams

It was reported that one of the recommendations included in the Sheltered Housing Scrutiny Action Plan was now being implemented, to prevent empty sheltered housing properties being re-let to any individual with drug or alcohol abuse behaviour.

(c) Performance Indicators

Mr Glennon advised members that the Performance Indicator information had not yet been presented to the BCH Board and would therefore be provided at the next meeting.

Mike
Glennon

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
12th May 2009

7. CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT

Mr Glennon informed the Forum that the aims and objectives of the Tenant Project Fund had received very positive feedback from the BCH Finance Sub-Committee. They had requested that the formal procedures for the Project Fund be forwarded to the Council's Internal Audit service for comment, prior to being presented to the BCH Board for approval.

With regard to Munster Avenue Tenants and Residents Association (TARA), it was reported that a new Chair, Vice-Chair and three additional members had recently been appointed. Two new representatives would be attending future meetings of the Forum. In addition, the All Hallows area of Blackpool had recently established a TARA and therefore a further two new representatives would also be joining the Forum in the near future.

The Forum was provided with an outline of the Customer Involvement Database figures for April 2009 which detailed the different types of the 146 tenant involvement activities that had been undertaken throughout the month. It was explained that this information was essential in ascertaining which types of tenants participated in certain activities and would assist BCH to identify areas which groups needed to be engaged with more effectively. An evaluation exercise to determine the effectiveness of each individual tenant involvement activity would also be undertaken to ensure that it achieved its aims and was cost effective. It was agreed that this information be regularly presented to the Forum.

Mike
Glennon

It was reported that an induction scheme would be piloted in the near future to provide new tenants with a two-hour information session relating to their tenancy and the services that BCH and the Council provided. An update on the success of the pilot would be presented at a future meeting of the Forum.

Mike
Glennon

Mr Glennon informed the Forum that a funding application had been submitted by Queen's Park TARA for £197 for a charcoal barbeque. This would be available for other TARAs to use and BCH would arrange for transportation. The Forum approved the application.

With regard to the Customer Suggestion Scheme, Ms Ellis reported that a suggestion had been submitted regarding the installation of letter catchers to the rear of doors for elderly and disabled tenants. The Forum agreed that this was a good idea and requested that BCH consider it further.

Jen Ellis

8. TENANT TRAINING

The Forum was advised that each TARA would be eligible to apply for funding for training and that a total of £3,000 had been allocated to the budget. An application form was circulated at the meeting for comment. Members felt that it would be useful to also have an evaluation of the training immediately following the course and after a three-month period, to demonstrate how the course had assisted the TARA.

It was reported that the aim of the funding was to enable the TARA members to attend training courses to develop their skills and enhance the service provided to the community. Furthermore, a number of short training programmes had been designed to assist tenants in their homes, such as DIY, gardening and budgeting.

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
12th May 2009

The Forum agreed that members be invited to provide a brief overview of the training courses they had undertaken at future meetings.

TLF
members

9. TENANT COMPACT REVIEW

Mr Glennon provided the Forum with an overview of a Compact document. This was an agreement between BCH, the Council and tenants that determined how tenants should be involved in decisions that impacted their homes and communities.

The Compact document included the formal agreement and an action plan which would be presented to the Forum on a regular basis to enable tenants to monitor progress. A summary document was also included which would be delivered to all tenants to provide an outline of the agreement.

At present, the BCH had a standard Compact document appertaining to the whole borough area. The use of special interest Compacts that supplemented the main document was discussed which would provide bespoke approaches to particular groups that focused specifically on their needs.

With regard to the core standards, Mr Glennon advised that these included the priority areas of the agreement that would need to be considered by all three parties. The importance of having a comprehensive and robust document was outlined to the Forum, together with a frequently updated Action Plan to allow effective monitoring of progress to be achieved.

It was reported that the next Compact Workshop meeting had been scheduled for 26th May at Kingcraig community centre.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business raised.

11. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Tuesday 14th July 2009, commencing at 10.00 a.m. in the City Learning Centre.

The meeting ended at 12.45 p.m.

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
Georgina Atkinson, Senior Democratic Services Adviser
Tel: (01253) 477164, e-mail: georgina.atkinson@blackpool.gov.uk