

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
15th September 2009

Present:

Mrs C Thornber	Boston Way Tenants' Association
Mrs C Thornber	Boston Way Tenants' Association
Mrs C Hardiman	Linden, Edmonton and Washington Residents' Association
Mrs J Sanderson	Linden, Edmonton and Washington Residents' Association
Mr T Clayton	Linden, Edmonton and Washington Residents' Association
Ms D Wightman	Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association
Mr J Newton	Queens Park Residents Association
Miss G King	Queens Park Residents Association
Mr M Christian	Ingthorpe Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mrs E Christian	Ingthorpe Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mr A Piborough	Munster Avenue Residents' Association
Mrs C Piborough	Munster Avenue Residents' Association

In Attendance:

Councillor Mrs Henderson	Blackpool Council
Mrs S Tomlinson	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs M Cornall	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr M Glennon	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms J Ellis	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms S Grundy	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs S Weston	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms H Kay	Blackpool LINK
Mr L Streef Kirk	Streetscene, Blackpool Council
Mrs L Latham	Legal and Democratic Services, Blackpool Council

Action

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed those in attendance.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mr C Holland, Mr P Jefferson, Councillor Lee, Mrs D Williams and Mr B Rogers.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 15TH SEPTEMBER INCLUDING THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the meetings held on 15th September 2009, including the Annual General Meeting were agreed as a correct record.

4. LINK

Ms H Kay, Blackpool LINK provided the Forum with a brief overview of the work undertaken by Blackpool LINK and the context around the establishment of LINKs nationally in April 2008. She explained that the purpose of the LINK which was to facilitate a variety of different mechanisms for people who use health services to have a say about how those services are run and developed.

The Forum was informed of the composition of Blackpool LINK and she explained the key principles of its operation. It was noted that under legislation LINKs could:

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM 15th September 2009

- Ask Health and Adult Social Care Commissioners for information about their services and expect a response
- Make recommendations and expect a response from commissioners
- Refer matters to Local Authorities and the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Enter specific services and view the care provided

It was noted that current membership of Blackpool LINK included 88 individuals and 129 organisations across a number of involvement levels.

She requested that the Tenant Liaison Forum consider joining LINK as a collaborative organisation and that representatives take the proposal back to their own organisations for consideration.

The Forum thanked Ms Kay for her informative presentation.

5. Housing Matters

(a) Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH)

Mrs Cornall, Blackpool Coastal Housing reported that the organisation had been successful in a bid for Homes and Communities Funding of £5.1 million. This would build 42 new family homes within the borough on sites at Portree / Cranbrook Road and within Grange Park. It was clarified that the properties would be built on the site currently occupied by flats on Forshaw Avenue and Draycot Avenue, commencing in April 2010. Support in relocating tenants from those flats prior to commencement of the build would be provided.

The Forum was informed that preparation was being undertaken in readiness for the next Housing Management Service inspection which was due to take place before the end of the Decent Homes Programme.

It was noted that the organisation was currently out to tender for a new ICT system.

She explained that Blackpool Coastal Housing had been taking part in an apprentice project which had utilised trade apprentices to renovate an empty property.

(b) Sheltered Housing

A brief summary of the activities undertaken within Sheltered Housing was provided to the Forum.

It was noted that a Supported Housing Coordinator had recently been appointed which would reduce difficulties encountered by individuals in booking the centres.

A question was raised regarding the entry codes which had been introduced to gain access to community centres and reduce potential security risks. A request was made for keys to be reinstated in a limited capacity for centre coordinators. It was agreed that this would be investigated by Blackpool Coastal Housing.

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM

15th September 2009

Mrs Cornall, Blackpool Coastal Housing reported that a gating project had been recently completed at Argosy Court which it was anticipated would reduce instances of anti-social behaviour within the area. As part of the project, outdoor gym equipment for adults had been installed along with a trial scooter shed. If successful, it was hoped that this concept would be rolled out further across the Borough.

(c) Performance Indicators

It was noted that there was no information to report under this item.

6. Sheltered Housings Lettings Policy

Mrs Cornall, Blackpool Coastal Housing, reported that the review had been undertaken by the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the implementation of the action plan was being monitored by the Committee.

She explained that the criteria regarding the lettings of general needs flats above sheltered accommodation had been incorporated into the policy.

Members of the Forum referred to a number of individual cases where emergency placements had resulted in considerable disturbance for sheltered tenants.

The Forum noted the implementation of the Sheltered Housing Lettings Policy scrutiny action plan.

7. Tenant Project Fund

Mrs Cornall, Blackpool Coastal Housing, reported that work on the Tenant Project Fund had been undertaken during the course of the summer and a number of changes had been proposed. These included:

1. Widening access to the fund
2. Scrutinising the expenditure
3. Access to smaller grants
4. Blackpool Coastal Housing Directly Managing Projects

She reported that the Blackpool Coastal Housing Board would be considering the proposals on 16th September 2009 and a further report would be made to the Forum in due course.

It was clarified that the total fund for the current financial year was £100,000.

8. Customer Involvement

Mr Glennon, Blackpool Coastal Housing reported that the Annual Tenants Conference had been extremely successful with over 280 attendees. The conference had been used by the key service areas to undertake a variety of consultations, some of which had been interactive "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" style sessions. Feedback gathered during the course of the day would feed into the Blackpool Coastal Housing Business Plan.

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM **15th September 2009**

It was noted that Mr Newton and Mrs King had manned a Tenant Liaison Forum stand at the event. As a direct result of the conference, 42 individuals had undertaken engagement activity with the organisation for the first time.

The Customer Involvement Awards were currently being organised to take place in January 2010 and the nominations process and schedule were being finalised. TLF members were invited to attend a workshop on Tuesday 22nd September (10am) at Grange Park to agree to finalise details of the awards.

A breakdown of customer involvement for the period April – August 2009 was circulated to the Forum.

A discussion took place regarding the National Tenant's Voice which was being created. There were 26 open places on the group and applications were being processed via an online system.

Mr Glennon reported that a revised list of tenants and resident's associations in Blackpool had been submitted to TPAS. Forms would be sent to individual organisations to register. There would be no charge for this registration.

A young Tenants Conference was being arranged for 30th September 2009, aimed at those aged between 18 – 25 years. It would be jointly hosted with Walkabout, Queen Street and invitations were currently being distributed.

He explained that all groups using community centres for activities would be required to fill in a risk assessment form. If any additional activity took place within the centre, additional risk assessments on a single activity basis would be required. A training event was being organised by Ms Ellis, Blackpool Coastal Housing which would take place in October 2009.

A request was made that copies of all tenant and resident association annual accounts should be sent to Blackpool Coastal Housing on an annual basis. Copies of receipts for expenditure should accompany submission of the accounts.

9. Tenant Involvement Structure

Mr Glennon, Blackpool Coastal Housing, presented the Forum with a proposal regarding a new tenant involvement structure. He explained that it was anticipated that the new structure would separate the key functions of customer involvement and community development and would be tenant led.

He explained that the key elements of the new structure included:

- Service specific panels to allow feedback on services delivered to tenants
- Formal involvement opportunities open to all tenants and leaseholders
- New strategic body to scrutinise and recommend service improvements, monitor and assess Blackpool Coastal Housing performance and review and inform strategic policies

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM 15th September 2009

- Relaxing of criteria for tenants and resident's associations

He explained that the Tenants and Leaseholders Assembly would also incorporate four hard to reach groups and provision for two co-opted independent members.

Feedback and support for the proposals was requested from the Forum. It was noted that further work on the operational element of the model would need to be undertaken. Mr Glennon explained that a number of informal discussions had taken place between the organisation and Blackpool Council and the proposals would be presented to the Blackpool Coastal Housing Board in due course.

The Forum agreed to support the proposals and take back the information for discussion within their specific groups. In the meanwhile, the group agreed to support Blackpool Coastal Housing to continue to work to develop the model.

10. Tenant Compact Review

It was noted that the Compact Review was closely linked to the new proposed tenant involvement structure. Work would be undertaken on the Tenant Compact as part of the overall changes to tenant involvement.

11. Any Other Business

Mrs Latham, Democratic Services reported that the amendment to the Constitution in relation to the eligibility of groups to join the Tenant Liaison Forum had been formally approved by Cabinet Member Decision.

It was requested that all tenant and resident associations provided a short written summary regarding activity undertaken by the group which would be passed to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Housing for information. Mr Glennon, Blackpool Coastal Housing, agreed to arrange a tour of tenant and resident associations for the Cabinet Member and Cabinet Assistant.

The Forum was informed that an anti-social behaviour drop in session would take place at Walter Robinson Court between 2 – 4pm on 16th September 2009.

Ms Tomlinson, Blackpool Coastal Housing circulated information regarding the Wilkinson's 'Helping Hands' fund.

Mr Glennon requested that consideration be given to the time and day of the week of the interim Tenant Liaison Forum workshops. It was agreed that the venue would be rotated around different community centres although the time of 5.30pm on a Wednesday would remain. The arrangements would be reviewed again in due course.

The meeting ended at 11.57am

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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