

**New Home Panel Meeting
Tuesday 22nd November, 2pm
at Coastal House**

Attendees:

Keith Myers (KM)
John Scholey (JS)
John Raine (JR)
Elaine Christian (EC)
Maurice Christian (MC)
James Jason (JJ)
Keith Edwards (KE)
Irene Bishop (IB)
Peter Rowbotham (PRo)
Colin Porter (CP)
Mary Everett (ME)
Paul Dillon (PD) – Area Manager for Grange Park and Strategic Lead for Lettings
Ian Fairclough (IF) – Technical Services Manager
Suzanne Tomlinson (ST) – Customer Involvement and Projects Officer

Apologies:

Carol Thornber
Liz Welsh
Mark Tugwood

1. Terms of Reference

All attendees were provided with a copy of the Terms of Reference for this Panel illustrating the purpose of the group which is to monitor and scrutinise the performance of the Lettings and Empty Homes services. All Improvement Panels now have Terms of Reference and a Code of Conduct for each meeting.

2. Quarterly Report/Panel Report

The homestop quarterly report was handed out to attendees and it was advised that this would be sent to members approximately two weeks before future meetings.

The performance info was read through and discussed. Narratives were provided by PD where performance had not been met or had reduced and explanations were given. Future actions were outlined to improve performance where necessary.

HSLO1e- (Percentage of new tenants satisfied with the overall standard of their home) This will be transferred to the Empty Homes Score Card. There have been issues with performance not being met on this due to the Empty Homes Standard not being issued to applicants as it was out of date.

The Panel agreed to make the following amendments to the report:

- Remove HS02 - This is a difficult area to accurately report on due to multiple offers sometimes being made.
- Remove HS08 and HS09 – Both these indicators relate to the housing waiting list (Blackpool Council), therefore performance can't be controlled by the Service Manager or BCH.
- Remove HS12 and HS13 – Both indicators relate to current tenants so this would be more appropriate to be monitored by another SIP.
- Change HS15 – Change the target from 'number of pre-termination inspections **completed**' to the 'number of pre-termination inspections **arranged**.' The target for completed inspections is unrealistic as many appointments are arranged by officers and not kept by customers.

PD advised that the performance was relating to the Homestop/Lettings service and that there wasn't much performance information relating to the Empty Homes Team. As the Panel covers both the services, it was felt that the report should reflect this. PD asked the Panel what aspects of the Empty Homes Team they would like reporting on. No suggestions were raised at the meeting but members agreed to think about it and then feed back to ST.

3. Service Development and Benchmarking

The Empty Homes Standard

The Empty Homes Standard is currently out of date. PD advised that the Repairs Service Improvement Panel had looked at it last year and a few changes had been made however it was still not fit for purpose so copies were given to the Panel and was opened up for discussion/suggestions.

Members of the panel suggested amendments and the removal of some items. All Panel members agreed with each individual amendment. For specific changes see the previous standard (Appendix 1) and the updated draft standard (Appendix 2)

The draft standard will be trialled by the Empty Homes Inspectors and new tenants between now and the next meeting. Feedback will be provided for the Panel to discuss and formally agree the standard.

Satisfaction Survey

PD produced copies of the Customer Satisfaction Survey that had been amended. The reason for the new survey was that the Impact Assessment had identified that changes to some of the questions were needed in order for the results to be more accurate and enable improvements to be made to the service. The Panel agreed the changes.

4. Complaints, Compliments and Comments

Homestop

There had been 1 complaint that had been partially upheld. The complaint related to properties not being ready to at the time of viewing. More information could have been provided to the customer. Empty Homes Team to ensure that a schedule of works is provided in time for the viewing stage so this can be discussed in detail.

There were 2 compliments received from customers who felt they had received a good service and the staff that they had dealt with were very helpful.

5. Satisfaction Results

The results from the Homestop Customer Satisfaction Survey were given out to members, read through and discussed.

Over the quarter 34 responses had been received.

ST explained that each quarter, an Impact Assessment is carried out on the survey to identify what improvements have been made to the service as a result of the activity. Over this quarter, as a result of the Impact Assessment improvements to the satisfaction survey were identified. Officers had responded to individual responses where necessary.

6. Customer Involvement Activities

ST explained the Empty Homes Inspector Scheme had been redeveloped with inspectors and re-launched. The inspections will now reflect whether or not the Empty Homes Standard has been met and will not include a 1-5 rating. An induction afternoon took place with ST and a Technical Officer who took inspectors round some empty properties that had not been worked on to give inspectors an

insight into what type of work is needed. The first inspections will be booked in shortly and the results will be brought back to the Panel.

7. Value for Money

PD explained that Sub-Regional Choice Based Lettings will be coming into effect and discussed with the group that when it does, it may no longer be necessary to advertise properties in the Blackpool Gazette. An advert is currently placed every other week which amounts to a cost of approximately £6000 per year. All properties for Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde will be advertised under 'My Home Choice' and BCH will continue to send newsletters, mailing lists and advertise properties in head office. The group agreed to discontinue advertising in the Gazette once the new choice based lettings scheme comes into effect.

8. Customer Issues

A member noted that the bidding process for Homestop can be frustrating as it is not on a first come first served basis. PD explained that the bidding cycle ran from every Wednesday for a week and properties are allocated by priority on the waiting list, not on how soon in the cycle a bid was made.

9. Any Other Business

Panel members said it was a big improvement having the Homestop office in the town centre.

Date & Time of next meeting Thursday 9th February, 2pm at Coastal House.