



Annual Report 2008/2009

# A Message From The Chair & Chief Executive

Welcome to BCH's Annual Report. It has been another exciting 12 months, and in our second year of operating as a company we have continued to build on our successes and make improvements.

The Decent Homes programme is well under way and is making a real and welcome difference to our customers' homes, and we have been presented with a number of awards for the quality of the work we are doing across Blackpool.

We will use our momentum to continue with many more areas of achievement and new targets for the next year and continue to add to our successes.

We are proud of the progress we have made and wish to say thank you to all of our customers who have been involved in helping us to make improvements and look forward to working with them to continually find ways to deliver better services.

We also would like to thank all the staff at BCH for their hard work and dedication, and the Board for their support .



**Doreen Wightman**  
(Chair of BCH)

Doreen has been a Blackpool Tenant since 1984 and became a leaseholder in 2003. She is also the chair of her local Tenants Association and works full time for a local charity.

She is committed to using her insight as a tenant and as a leaseholder to make sure BCH provides services that people need and achieves the best it possibly can for tenants and leaseholders

**Peter Jefferson**  
(Chief Executive BCH)

Peter worked in several London Boroughs before moving to Colchester where he was General Manager of Colchester Borough Homes. He joined Blackpool Council in 1999 where he managed the Council Housing Service until moving over to the ALMO.

He believes passionately in involving customers and empowering staff. Peter is committed to providing excellent service to customers and believes this can only be achieved by being a top class employer.



# About Blackpool Coastal Housing

## Legal Establishment & History

Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated and registered at Companies House on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006. It became fully operational on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2007 when it began to carry out the Landlord functions for Blackpool Council's stock of tenanted and leasehold properties. BCH Limited is an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) that is wholly owned by and works in close partnership with Blackpool Council to support it in achieving its corporate aims.

The company was formed primarily to gain access to a stream of Government funding not available to the Council, but also to improve services to a specified qualifying level for significant capital funding for improvement works and to manage the improvement programme.

Services are provided by BCH under a management agreement with Blackpool Council for which BCH receives an annually negotiated fixed fee. BCH is authorised to undertake the contractual or regulatory commitments in respect of Housing Services delivered on Blackpool Council's behalf, as set out in the Management Agreement.

The first break clause in the management agreement comes into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

BCH is responsible for administering all landlord housing services, including the Building Maintenance Direct Service Organisation, which delivers the Day to Day and Void Housing Repairs Service. BCH is also responsible for determining and implementing cyclical and planned maintenance programmes.

The BCH Property Services Division provides all the day-to-day and void maintenance services and facilitates the catch-up repair and modernisation works needed to the Council's housing stock .

Housing Support Services are provided for vulnerable tenants, particularly older people and homeless people, including a Sheltered Housing Service and Emergency Housing Service. These responsibilities are delivered by BCH under the Supporting People Programme, through a contracting agreement with Blackpool Council. Contracting agreements are also in place that allow BCH to manage the Travellers site and the Re-assurance project on Grange Park.

The functions delegated to BCH can be summarised as:

- Dealing with arrears
- Tenant information and consultation on matters which are the responsibility of BCH
- Tenant participation, including involvement in monitoring and review of service standards
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Enforcement of tenancy conditions
- Similar functions for leaseholders
- Stock investment decisions
- Responsive repairs
- Planned and cyclical maintenance
- Managing lettings, voids and under occupation
- Tenancy sign up and allocation
- Estate management and caretaking
- Sheltered Housing Service.



# Our Goals & Priorities

## Blackpool Coastal Housing:

Will be '**One Team**' – where everyone identifies with the Company as a whole not just with the area in which they work.

Will have '**One Culture**' - where tenants' views are at the heart of all decision-making and customer and staff involvement not only inform but also lead the development of services in the community.

Will share '**One Vision**' to be the best housing management service in the North West, and to be an excellent employer providing services our staff are proud to deliver and our customers are delighted to receive.

## GOAL 1 To provide our customers with high quality homes and services that represent excellent value for money.

- We will Focus our attention to meet the challenges for our core services and strive for excellence in neighbourhood management, repairs, capital investment and customer involvement.
- We will work towards providing an excellent housing management service that meets Audit Commission three star standards, and towards being the best housing management organisation in the North West.
- We will learn from identified good practice to continually improve our services.
- We will improve the way we manage our performance to provide even better value for money whilst continuing to meet the needs of our customers.
- We will subject our services to rigorous self assessment, external evaluation, and use quality controls and assurance as part of a performance management framework that will support the delivery of excellent core services.

## GOAL 2 To empower our customers ensuring that they are placed at the heart of everything we do.

- We will improve our knowledge of our customers and use this information to find out what they need and what they want by the use of targeted surveys, customer profiling, benchmarking and components of social marketing.
- We will grow our business to meet customer aspirations where doing so will add value to our core services, and we will maintain a detailed awareness of the resources needed to sustain excellent core services.
- We will proactively involve our customers in deciding what kind of services we should provide and how they should be provided.
- We will provide opportunities for customers who would not normally get involved to get involved and stay involved

# Our Goals & Priorities

## GOAL 3 To contribute to the wider regeneration of Blackpool, including creating jobs and opportunities for local people.

- We will work closely and innovatively with partners to ensure that there is added value to the wider community of Blackpool in everything we do.
- We will work closely and innovatively with partners to ensure that our work supports community cohesion and sustainable communities.
- We will grow our business and our customer and client bases to provide added value to our existing customers and to the wider community of Blackpool.
- We will prioritise the use of local labour in our capital projects.
- We will seek to create local jobs for local people.
- We will work with our partners and with our communities to make the differences that our customers tell us that they want.

## GOAL 4 To become an excellent employer, supporting and developing our staff through training, appraisal and reward.

- We will continue to develop our culture of valuing people and will use reward, recognition, and good communication to do this.
- We will focus on developing staff and providing careers rather than jobs.
- We will work towards being in the Times Top 100 companies to work for.
- We will work towards being in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index top 100.
- We will make learning from excellent employers a core part of our approach.
- We will develop a reputation of being a company that is fun to work for and that people want to work for.
- We will provide our Board with more training and resources to support their decision making

## GOAL 5 To reduce our impact on the environment

- We will ensure that we comply with all relevant environmental legislation.
- We will minimise waste by evaluating operations and ensuring they are as energy and environmentally efficient as possible.
- We will actively promote recycling both internally and amongst our customers and suppliers.
- We will source our materials and supplies carefully to minimise our environmental impact.

# Housing Stock

## Stock of HRA Dwellings As at 31st March 2009

	Management Area			Total Dwellings	Dwelling Type %	
	Grange Park	Mereside	Queens Park			
<b>Tenanted Dwellings</b>						
<b>Bungalows</b>	20	59	1	80	1.3%	
<b>Bedsits</b>	9	76	34	119	2.1%	
<b>Low &amp; Medium Rise Flats</b>	803	971	1400	3174	54.7%	
<b>High Rise Flats</b>	0	0	383	383	6.6%	
<b>Houses</b>	489	732	366	1587	27.4%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1321</b>	<b>1838</b>	<b>2184</b>	<b>5343</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>92.1%</b>
<b>Hostels</b>						
Dwelling Equivalents	(154 Hostel Room Units)			52		0.9%
<b>Total Tenanted Dwellings</b>	<b>1321</b>	<b>1838</b>	<b>2184</b>	<b>5395</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>Leasehold Dwellings</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
<b>HRA Total</b>	<b>1387</b>	<b>1959</b>	<b>2400</b>	<b>5798</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100%</b>

BCH currently manages just under 5,800 dwellings, including leasehold flats and maisonettes sold under the Right to Buy and Hostel Rooms, as well as the homes let on weekly tenancies that form the majority of the housing stock.

Two thirds of the tenanted stock (66%) is made up of flats, the original stock of houses having been significantly depleted as a result of Right to Buy sales in the years since 1980. The number and proportion of leasehold dwellings in the housing stock is also high by comparison with councils or ALMOs having similar or even larger sized total housing stocks.

Previous analysis of low demand dwellings demonstrated clearly that the high proportion of flats was the primary reason for the stock of rented dwellings being declared to have over 1,700 homes (32%) that were in low demand, only 15 of them being houses on one particular estate.

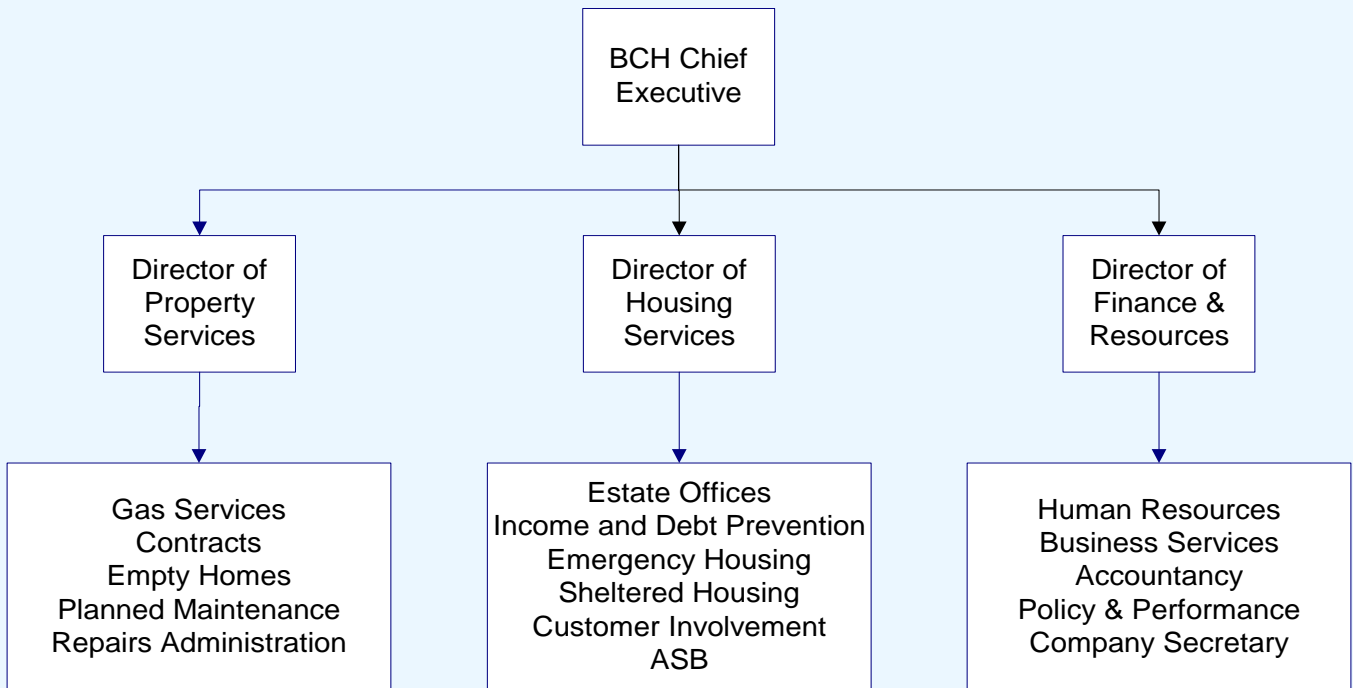
Concerted efforts were made to reduce the incidence and effect of low demand, which has met with increasing success in recent years. This was done through a combination of management initiatives to increase both initial acceptance of tenancies and longer-term tenancy sustainability. A 'systems thinking' re-engineering of void management and repair processes, together with the full implementation of a Choice Based Lettings scheme, also made a significant contribution to reducing relet times.

Partnership redevelopment with locally operating housing associations has also helped to deal with the small pockets of housing that were effectively unlettable and thus surplus to requirements. This has usually seen the demolition of unpopular flats and the construction of much needed rented family houses on the cleared sites.

# Staff, Management & Governance

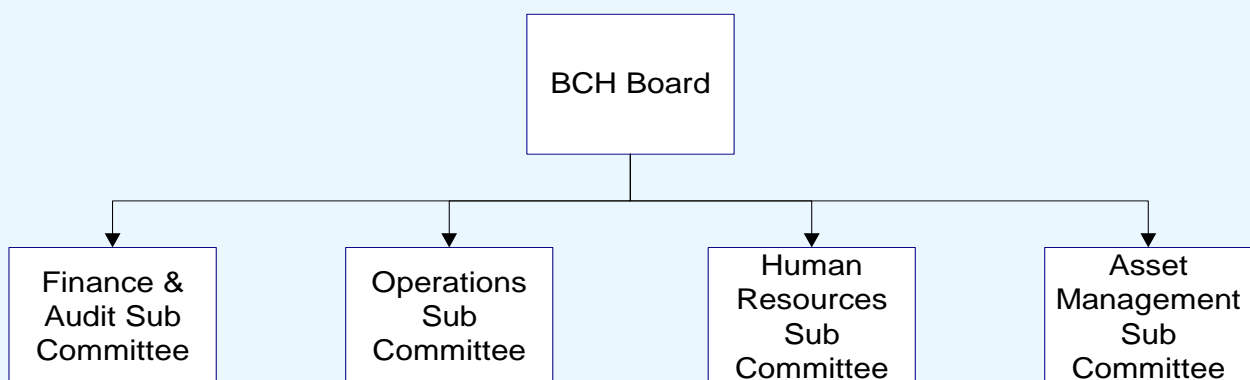
## Organisational Structure

Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) currently employs 165 staff, varying from joiners and housing officers to accountants and IT specialists. Day to day operations are delegated to the Senior Management Team headed by the Chief Executive. BCH has visible, approachable and accessible leaders who communicate well with staff. The Senior Management Team membership is stable and there is a broad mix of approaches and styles that facilitates innovation, motivation and clear leader-



## Board Structure

The Board of Management consists of 15 Non-Executive Directors. Five Directors are elected Tenants and Leaseholders, Blackpool Council nominates five and five are Independent Directors appointed by the other ten members of the Board for their knowledge, skills and experience. The Board meets every six or seven weeks and is supported by Sub-Committees that meet up to eight times a year. These Sub-Committees cover: Finance and Audit, Asset Management, Operations, and Human Resources.



# Our Performance

<b>BUSINESS PROCESS INDICATORS</b>	<b>2007/08 YEAR END</b>	<b>2008/09 TARGET</b>	<b>2008/09 YEAR END</b>
The number of properties without a current Landlord's Certificate	0	45	56
The overall percentage of repairs completed within time	NEW	98	97
The percentage of emergency repairs completed on time	97.7	98	98.5
The percentage of urgent repairs completed on time	97.2	98	99.6
The percentage of routine repairs completed on time	96.2	97	95.2
The percentage of appointments made and kept	69.1	75	76.9
Average number of days taken for emergency repairs	1.1	1	1.1
Average number of days taken for urgent repairs	3	3.5	2.2
Average number of days taken for routine repairs	3.2	6	5.1
The percentage of empty homes available for letting or awaiting minor repairs	1.8	1.8	2.2
The percentage of empty homes - other	1.3	1.3	1.4
Percentage of Hotline calls handled to calls abandoned	NEW	90	80.8
Customer satisfaction with repairs service	NEW	97	95
Percentage of repairs completed 'Right First Time'	85	88	88
SAP rating	73.4	74	75
The percentage of non-decent properties	9.3	7.5	7.2

<b>CUSTOMER INDICATORS</b>	<b>2007/08 YEAR END</b>	<b>2008/09 TARGET</b>	<b>2008/09 YEAR END</b>
Overall satisfaction with the landlord service (%)	79	79	82.3
Overall satisfaction with the landlord service for BME tenants (%)	78	79	87.5
The number of compliments received	71	84	52
The number of complaints received	60	89	92
The number of Councillor / MP / Ombudsman / solicitor enquiries	56	76	99
The average number of offers taken to let each property	NEW	3	2.2
The average number of bids per property	NEW	45	58.2
Average relet time in calendar days	30.9	29	34.8
The percentage of BME applicants on the waiting list	1.8	1.6	1.5
The percentage of disabled applicants on the waiting list	6.2	25.4	4
The percentage of BME applicants housed	2.7	1.6	2.1
The percentage of disabled applicants housed	16.9	25.4	12.3
The percentage of BME tenants	1.4	1.6	1.4
The percentage of disabled tenants	25.8	25.4	24.4
Emergency Housing occupation levels	56.6	80	65.7

# Our Performance

<b>FINANCIAL INDICATORS</b>	<b>2007/08 YEAR END</b>	<b>2008/09 TARGET</b>	<b>2008/09 YEAR END</b>
The percentage of the BCH budget spent	98	100	87
Actual expenditure on training and development per employee - £'s	310.7	320	525.3
The percentage of expenditure on planned to responsive maintenance	47	55	44
The percentage of rent collected excluding arrears brought forward	99.4	99.4	98.1
Current tenant arrears - £000's	349.2	350	371.5
The current tenant rent arrears as a percentage of collectable rent	2.3	2.3	3.3
The percentage of tenants with more than 7 weeks gross rent arrears	6.2	6	6
The percentage of tenants in arrears served with a Notice of Seeking Possession	24.3	15	14.2
The number of tenants in arrears served with a Notice of Seeking Possession	337	215	213
The percentage of tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	0.4	0.4	0.3
The number of tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	11	18	17
The percentage of former tenant rent arrears written off as a proportion of total collectable rent to date	0.8	0.8	0.5
The amount of former tenant arrears written off - £000's	NEW	131	86.9
Former tenant arrears - £000's	224	220	386.1
The percentage of rent lost through empty properties	3	2.9	3.2

<b>ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS</b>	<b>2007/08 YEAR END</b>	<b>2008/09 TARGET</b>	<b>2008/09 YEAR END</b>
The number of working days lost due to sickness absence per full time member of staff	8	7	4.9
The number of employees (excluding casuals) who have reached the sickness trigger point	25	22	26
The percentage of staff turnover	16.7	15	16.7
The percentage of permanent new entrants who voluntarily leave within 1 year of their appointment	2.8	2.5	5.6
The percentage of staff that are women	47.3	50.2	49.7
The percentage of staff from black & minority ethnic communities	0.7	1.6	1.2
The percentage of staff who have a disability	6	11.2	8.5
The percentage of top 5% earners that are women	28.6	50.2	28.6
The percentage of top 5% earners from black & minority ethnic communities	0	1.6	0
The percentage of top 5% earners that have a disability	0	11.2	0
The number of training sessions per employee	4.8	5	5.1

# What Our Customers Think

The STATUS survey, carried out in November 2008, is a survey of all general needs tenants that Local Authorities are required to carry out. The questions, format and methodology for completing the survey are set nationally and the survey includes questions that determine the value of National Indicator NI160 - Overall Satisfaction with Landlord Services. Under new rules STATUS surveys must be carried out every two years.

A benchmarking exercise was undertaken through HouseMark which is an independent organisation that collates and compares performance information from Local Authorities and ALMOs. The benchmarking exercise provided the following insights into how our customer satisfaction levels compare

Service Area	BCH Score	National Rank
% respondents very or fairly satisfied with the services / overall service provided by their HA/Landlord	82.28	64th out of 195
% respondents very or fairly satisfied with the overall quality of their home	82.15	78th out of 190
% respondents very or fairly satisfied with the general condition of their property	76.84	101st out of 191
% respondents very or fairly satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live	74.96	132nd out of 191
% respondents very or fairly satisfied with the value for money for their rent	85.07	21st out of 189
% respondents very or fairly satisfied with how enquiries are dealt with generally by their HA / landlord	78.62	32nd out of 146
% respondents very or fairly satisfied with the way their HA / landlord deals with repairs and maintenance	81.07	41st out of 173
% respondents very or fairly satisfied that their views are being taken into account by their HA / landlord	63.52	59th out of 170
% respondents who feel their HA / landlord is very or fairly good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as a tenant	79.75	76th out of 190

41.93% of BCH customers have been customers for 11 or more years and 25.52% have been customers for under a year.

Over half (53%) of tenants indicated that the service had improved in the last 12 months. Fewer than one in ten (7%) felt the service had worsened and around a third (35%) indicated it had stayed the same.

Litter and rubbish, noise from neighbours, and drug dealing were still the top three issues that customers said concerned them most. However, levels of concern with these issues have fallen with litter and rubbish down 9.3%, noise from neighbours down 3.4% and drug dealing down 8%. This would suggest that partnerships to address these issues are being productive.

Concern about traffic noise, vandalism and pets and animals has decreased but new categories added to the survey show some lower level concern about disruptive young people, and about drunkenness.

The three most important services and issues for customers were Repairs & Maintenance services, the overall quality of their homes and anti social behaviour.

# Finance - Year Ended 31st March 2009

Income	2008 £'000	2009 £'000
Management fee from Blackpool Council <i>This is the money that the Council pays us to manage their housing stock.</i>	11,275	11,672
Other income from the Council <i>This is the money that the Council pays us to run other services and projects for them, including Reassurance Plus and Child Accident Prevention.</i>	55	154
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>11,330</b>	<b>11,826</b>
Expenditure	2008 £'000	2009 £'000
Operating costs <i>This includes things like paying for our office space, our vehicles, our computer networks, repairing homes, and the materials we need to provide services to customers.</i>	7,444	7,699
Wages and salaries	2,924	3,377
Agency staff	304	127
National Insurance Employers Contribution	216	248
Employers Contribution to pension scheme	275	331
Tax	0	0
Interest payable	12	49
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>11,175</b>	<b>11,831</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>-5</b>

Baker Tilly, Registered Auditors have audited BCH's accounts in accordance with International Standards on Auditing issued by the Auditing Practices Board. The audit included examination of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also included an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the directors in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

The opinion of the auditor was that BCH accounts and financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Company's affairs at 31 March 2009 and of its surplus for the period, and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985. The auditor also confirmed that the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements.

The year ended 31 March 2009 was the second full year of operation for the Company and the financial result was a surplus of £366,000. The surplus was reduced from £366,000 to £155,000 as a result of adjustments required by the recognition of the pension liability accounted for under Financial Reporting Standards

The Company's turnover for the year was therefore £11,826,000 with a pre tax surplus of £155,000.

# Transforming Homes

## Decent Homes & The Blackpool Standard

A major focus for BCH is to bring homes to a Decent Homes standard as set by the Government.

The results of an 'aspiration' survey formed the basis of a Blackpool Standard that exceeds the standard set by government. Work towards meeting these standards is under way.

### 1. Kitchen Upgrade

- All kitchens over 25 years old to be renewed.
- All kitchens that do not meet a 'modern' layout' standard to be renewed.
- Appropriate plumbing for a washing machine to be included

### 2. Bathroom Upgrade

- All bathrooms over 25 years old to be renewed
- The standard for renewing should include a shower (over the bath), and vanity units (for storage)

### 3. Home Security

- The front doors of all houses, ground floor flats and sheltered flats to be upgraded so that existing timber doors are replaced with composite doors
- All flats and sheltered flats which have a communal door entrance to be fitted with TV type security door entry systems
- All ground floor flats to be fitted with burglar alarms

### 4. Double glazing

- All homes that do not currently have double-glazing to be fitted with timber framed double glazed windows.
- Window locks to be fitted on all homes that currently do not have an adequate locking mechanism

### 5. Heating

- Replace all warm-air heating systems with more energy efficient alternatives.
- Replace all electric storage heaters with gas central heating
- Heating programmes to be carried out alongside cavity wall and loft insulation programmes

### 6. Boundary walls & fences

- Renew, to all houses, the rear boundary fence and gate, the boundary fencing between houses and the fencing and gate at the front of houses

### 7. Rewiring

- All properties should reach the 16<sup>th</sup> Edition Electrical Regulation Standard
- Smoke detectors to all homes
- Whole house ventilation systems for all homes (as appropriate)

### 8. Off Street Parking

- All houses to be provided with hard standing, dropped kerb and walls and gates
- Flats – aim to provide an additional 20% parking provision for flats (subject to planning restrictions etc)

### 9. Reroofing

- Continue with existing Blackpool Council programme of roof renewals and replacements

### 10. Fire Improvement Works To Flats

- Smoke alarms to be installed in communal areas
- Emergency exit signage to be updated/installed
- Sprinklers systems to be installed

In 2008/09, the first full year of the Decent Homes programme, the number of decent properties has increased from 1561 to 2168 whilst the number of non decent properties has reduced from 500 to 379 during this period.

Customer satisfaction with the work done is currently at 97% based on a survey return rate of 43%.

BCH set challenging targets for local employment for the duration of the programme and are keen to maximise local employment opportunities. The first year target of 70% was exceeded with over 80% of contractor staff recruited locally.

A second scheme feedback session was held at the end of the year and the general outcome was that BCH are providing a good product with a good selection of choice.

# Customer Involvement

## Get Involved Stay Involved

We want to be able to offer all our tenants the opportunity to help us continually improve the housing service. Below is a list of ways people can be involved.

**Email, Postal, Telephone Surveys** - If we are improving the housing service or have a new housing document, we would like to know your thoughts and suggestions on these. You will be able to make comments by either email, post or telephone.

**Focus Groups** – These are held periodically and involve reading and commenting on new documents, repairs initiatives and other aspects of our service.

**Mystery Shopper** – Tenant mystery shoppers check that high standards of service and customer care are being delivered. You can do this either by visiting a local housing office, by telephone, post or by email.

**Green Warden** – We invite you to keep an eye on your local environment by reporting on the standards of such issues as grass cutting, rubbish collection. Wardens let us know if a service is good or not.

**Tenant Inspectors** – Inspectors help us to monitor the standard and the quality of workmanship on our empty homes.

**Walkabout Volunteers** – Help to improve your neighbourhood by coming on a local walkabout to highlight any problems or concerns such as rubbish dumped, repairs needed to the outside of homes and communal areas, broken paving etc.

**Reading Panel** – Before we publish any new documents we will send them to the Reading Panel to find out what you think about their content and how we can change them to make them more understandable.

## Planned Maintenance Scheme Local Representative

– During an improvement scheme we would like a tenant to volunteer to help liaise between residents and contractor partners.

**Annual Tenant Conference** – Come and join in at our annual tenant conference. The venue and date will be published in advance.

**Annual Leaseholder Conference** – Come and join in if you are a leaseholder. The venue and date will be published in advance.

**Compact Review Group** – Help us to review our Tenant Compact at local workshops.

**Sheltered Housing Forum** – If you are a sheltered housing customer we will invite you to have your say about the service you receive at one of our local forums.

**Newsletter Contribution** – Viewpoint, our tenant newsletter, is published every quarter. If you have an interesting article why not send it to us to consider for publication.

**Open Forum** - These are opportunities to meet the Customer involvement Team and discuss ways you can get involved in the housing service.

## Get In Touch

If you would like to join one or more groups or want more information please contact the Customer Involvement Team by writing to

Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd  
Customer Involvement Team  
Progress House  
Clifton Road  
Blackpool  
FY4 4US

Or telephone 477947

or email [customerinvolvement@bch.co.uk](mailto:customerinvolvement@bch.co.uk)

# Diversity

## Our Commitments

Blackpool Coastal Housing is committed to equality and access for all. As a provider of services and a large employer, we recognise our important role in improving the quality of life for everyone in Blackpool.

We are committed to working to promote equality of opportunity, to combating discrimination and promoting good community relations within our organisation and across Blackpool.

We operate within a Comprehensive Equality Policy that sets out Blackpool Coastal Housing's vision and commitment to ensure equality of access and opportunities for all. This policy has been developed to demonstrate our commitment to providing and improving quality services to all our community.

We value the diversity of Blackpool and recognise that this is one of the many things that make the town special. Our commitment extends beyond what we promise to do and can be identified in our policies, working practices and behaviours.

We have established policies, procedures, staff training and monitoring arrangements to ensure that people are treated fairly, regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation and that they can access what they need.

We are committed to:

- Making sure our services and how they are delivered meet the diverse needs of local people
- Making sure our buildings are as accessible as possible
- Providing information about our services in accessible formats such as large print, Braille, on audio cassette or computer disk and providing information in languages other than English, or translators, including British Sign Language interpreters where they are needed
- Promoting inclusive communities that have a shared sense of belonging and challenging unfairness and discrimination
- Engaging with the diverse communities of Blackpool to ensure their needs are identified and met
- Valuing the important contribution the community and voluntary sector makes to the town
- Working in partnership to share good practice and promote a consistent approach
- Valuing and training our staff to deliver services fairly, efficiently and effectively
- Actively seeking feedback to continually develop and improve our approach

## Local Facts

2.76% of BCH customers are aged 15 to 24, 56.18% were aged 25 to 64 and 41.05% were 65+.

2.03% of BCH customers are from ethnic groups other than White British or White Irish compared to 1.6% for the Blackpool population.

70.26% of BCH customers have a long term illness or disability.

14.16% of BCH customer household include someone who uses a wheelchair.

97.57% of customer household incomes are below the national average of £20,800.

4.86% of BCH customers are LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender).

# Value For Money

The current efficiency agenda was introduced as part of the Government's Spending Review of 2003. A report was commissioned from Sir Peter Gershon to review efficiency in the public sector.

The review focused on the objective to release major resources out of activities which can be undertaken more efficiently into front line services that meet the public's highest priorities.

The following main potential areas for savings were identified:

- Back Office Functions
- Transactional Services
- Productive Time
- Procurement

The Government has adopted the recommendations of the review and has set a series of efficiency targets for local government, which covers ALMOs. Achieving these targets has become one of the main measures of performance by the Audit Commission.

Value for money needs to be a priority for BCH and the organisation's efficiency strategy outlines the key areas where activity will be prioritised:

- Reducing inputs for the same outputs, releasing money that can be reused elsewhere
- Obtaining reduced prices for the same outputs
- Obtaining greater outputs or improved quality for the same inputs
- Obtaining greater outputs or improved quality in return for a proportionately smaller increase in resources.

For BCH, providing value for money is not about making cuts, but about doing more for the same by increasing effectiveness and operating efficiency. It is about developing more efficient and effective ways of delivering the same or better outcomes for tenants and for communities.

Our Efficiency Strategy lists the following BCH

service areas for value for money review during the next five years.

- Responsive Repairs
- Void Repairs
- Gas Maintenance
- Electrical Maintenance
- Repairs Management & Administration
- Planned Maintenance
- ICT
- Right To Buy Administration
- General Administration
- Accountancy
- HR And Training
- Board Support & Governance
- Policy & Performance
- Payment Methods
- Estate Management
- Sheltered Services
- Emergency Housing
- Concierge & CCTV

The Efficiency Strategy lists the following contracts for value for money review during the next five years.

- Legal services
- ICT
- Customer First & Cashiers
- Concierge & CCTV
- Vitaline
- Care & Repair
- Fuel Depot
- Procurement Advice
- Public Relations
- Environmental Health

## Local Facts

At 41 people per hectare Blackpool has the highest population density in the North West and one of the densest urban communities outside London.

Only a small proportion (8 per cent) live in property owned by the local authority, compared to a national average of 13 per cent.

Blackpool has over 4,700 unfit private sector properties, a shortage of larger family accommodation and is over-supplied with poor rental accommodation, including approximately 3,000 units in multiple occupation.

# The Future

ALMOs like BCH across the country are developing in a number of ways including:

## **Delivering New Services For The Council.**

What new Council services BCH can provide will depend on the company's Memorandum of Association and our Management Agreement with the Council. There should be considerable scope to provide new services.

## **Providing Services For Other Organisations.**

Providing services for other organisations raises similar considerations to the provision of new services to the Council. If this element becomes significant BCH might need to consider setting up a subsidiary company to minimise the risk of any need to reconsider the terms of the Management Agreement.

## **Property Ownership & New Build.**

An ALMO can acquire a legal interest in properties either through direct management or a leasing agreement with another landlord. Any tenancies granted would be assured or assured shorthold tenancies.

## **Wider Regeneration Activity.**

The key issues for BCH with regeneration are likely to be around deciding what these activities should be. Activities could include providing services, but could also involve owning property.

## **Housing Regulation & Finance**

Regulation is changing. The Government's Communities and Local Government department has given the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) a picture of the future role it sees for Social Housing but has left the detail of how regulation should drive change exclusively to the TSA. The TSA is slowly bringing the regulatory frameworks of Housing Associations and ALMOs together and is changing the focus of what excellence should be. In future, excellence may include greater emphasis on:

- Tenant empowerment.
- Excellent services beyond core housing functions.
- Housing related community and neighbourhood functions.
- Place shaping.
- Financial viability.
- Robust Governance.

In addition, the financial environment in which ALMOs exist is also changing, particularly with regard to the proposed dismantling of the Housing Revenue Account system. The changes could mean:

- That Councils may be able to keep rent revenue rather than have it redistributed.
- An increase to the Major Repairs Allowance by up to 43%.
- Prudential borrowing against rental income may become possible.
- That Council resumption of direct management could be even less likely.
- Longer term agreements on management fees may be possible.
- Restrictions on ALMO's ability to build may be relaxed.

## **Realistic Options for BCH**

The changing Social Housing environment will present BCH with challenges but will also present some very real opportunities to make improvements to services that will benefit existing customers and the wider community alike.

Particularly exciting opportunities for BCH include the possibility of the following:

- Expansion of Reassurance Plus schemes either through extension of existing services in other areas of Blackpool, or managing services that the Council currently runs.
- Housing Management and Repairs and Maintenance Management of private sector housing.
- Management of Social Housing owned by other organisations.
- Extension of current accident prevention work funded by NHS Blackpool.
- Repairs and Maintenance Management of Council schools and other properties.
- A greater role in the physical and social regeneration of our estates and of Blackpool overall.
- Involvement as a partner in new build and leasing of social housing.

# Contact Us

## **Planned Maintenance**

Blackpool Coastal Housing  
Progress House  
Clifton Road  
Blackpool  
FY4 4US

Tel 0800 073 0184  
Email [repairs@bch.co.uk](mailto:repairs@bch.co.uk)

## **Income and Debt Prevention Team**

Progress House  
Clifton Road  
Blackpool  
FY4 4US

Tel (01253) 477942  
Email [rent@bch.co.uk](mailto:rent@bch.co.uk)

## **Your Tenancy**

Blackpool Coastal Housing  
25-27 Laycock Gate  
Queens Park  
Blackpool  
FY3 8AT

Tel (01253) 477971  
Email [yourtenancy@bch.co.uk](mailto:yourtenancy@bch.co.uk)

## **Sheltered Housing**

Blackpool Coastal Housing  
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Email [shelteredhousing@bch.co.uk](mailto:shelteredhousing@bch.co.uk)

## **Repairs**

Blackpool Coastal Housing  
Progress House  
Clifton Road  
Blackpool  
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## **Homestop Property Shop**

57 Chepstow Road  
Blackpool  
FY3 7PH

Tel (01253) 477047  
Email [homestop@bch.co.uk](mailto:homestop@bch.co.uk)

## **Customer Involvement Team**

Blackpool Coastal Housing  
Progress House  
Clifton Road  
Blackpool  
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Tel (01253) 477947, 477472 or 477975  
Email [customerinvolvement@bch.co.uk](mailto:customerinvolvement@bch.co.uk)

## **Anti-social Behaviour**

Blackpool Coastal Housing  
Progress House  
Clifton Road  
Blackpool  
FY4 4US

Tel (01253) 477968 or 0800 073 0184 (Out of Hours Service)  
Email [asb@bch.co.uk](mailto:asb@bch.co.uk)

## **Homeownership**

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Clifton Road  
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Tel (01253) 477984  
Email [homeownership@bch.co.uk](mailto:homeownership@bch.co.uk)

## **Customer Care Team**

Blackpool Coastal Housing  
The Stadium  
Seasiders Way  
Blackpool  
FY1 6JY

Tel (01253) 651950  
Email [comments@bch.co.uk](mailto:comments@bch.co.uk)

## **BCH Directors**

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