

**BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2010  
AT 6.00PM IN CONFERENCE ROOM 1 AT PROGRESS HOUSE**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr Simon Blackburn  
 Caroline Cook  
 Cllr Tim Cox  
 Cllr Joan Greenhalgh  
 Carol Hall  
 Cllr Jim Houldsworth  
 Alan Marsh  
 Judith Mills  
 Bill Rogers  
 Janet Stirling  
 Alison Stringer  
 Doreen Wightman (Chair)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Peter Jefferson (Chief Executive)  
 Cyril Holland (Director of Property Services)  
 Neil Jack (Director of Finance)  
 Peter Whittaker (Company Secretary)

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<b><u>Apologies</u></b> Cllr Ron Bell, Diane Bellinger, Paul Whitehead, Maggie Cornall, Pam Whitworth	
2.	<b><u>Declarations of interest</u></b> None	
3.	<b><u>Minutes Of The Board Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010</u></b>  <b>Agreed:</b> That the minutes be approved as a true record.	
4.	<b><u>Matters Arising</u></b> Doreen Wightman confirmed that the meeting to finalise the detail planning of the 360 Degree Appraisal process had taken place. It will be co-ordinated with the Governance Review to avoid overlap and match timescales so far as possible. At the May Board meeting there will be a presentation regarding the principles of the appraisal and the process used to carry it out.	

## AGENDA ITEM 3

5.	<p><b><u>2010 – 2011 BCH Budget Detail Report</u></b></p> <p>Neil Jack presented the budget report, confirming that it reflected the underlying assumptions about, income, expenditure and service development accepted by the Board at its previous meeting.</p> <p>He explained that, although the Council had agreed a 1.9% inflation related increase in the Management Fee, BCH also had to make savings of 4% to contribute to the Council's overall savings target.</p> <p>The resultant net decrease of 2.1% in the fee was £238,000. Taking into account an increase in the fee for managing capital expenditure on the Council's housing stock and changes in some other elements of income, net income reduction for 2010/11 amounted to £179,000.</p> <p>Price increases, service commitments and developments and other adjustments generated extra costs but cost savings and efficiencies had also been identified. These reduced the net deficit for the year to £22,000, which could be accommodated within the overall level of balances.</p> <p>A question was raised about the nature of identified staff cost savings and it was explained that these arise from the time gap between a post falling vacant and a replacement employee coming into post. It was confirmed that posts will not be deliberately held vacant.</p> <p>It was also noted that there is a proposal to meet an increase in demand for furniture packages but this is only small, amounting to about £6,000. It was explained that, although the Council receives the service charge income from use of these packages the cost of their provision is borne by BCH.</p> <p><b><u>Agreed :</u></b></p> <p><b>That</b> the Blackpool Coastal Housing Budget for 2010/11 be approved</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Housing Revenue Account Rent Report (HRA) 2010-2011</u></b></p> <p>This report, covering a matter that is the responsibility of Blackpool Council, was presented for information. Neil Jack confirmed that the Council considered a report at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010 and gave approval to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The draft Housing Revenue Account Budget as set out in Annex 1 of the report</li><li>2. The level of rent increase to be applied in 2010/ 2011, of 2.3%</li><li>3. Housing Revenue Account balances being protected in order to fund future rental income loss due to the Council's proposed housing stock redevelopments.</li><li>4. A rate increase of 2.5% for Service Charges</li></ol>	

### AGENDA ITEM 3

	<p>5. The proposals set out in paragraph 6 of the report to the Executive regarding non housing revenue account properties, namely an increase of 2.3% for those properties and an increase as outlined in Annex 3 of the report relating to the Travellers site.</p> <p>6. The rent calculation parameters set out in Annex 2 of the report.</p> <p>Simon Blackburn reminded the Board that the rent increase implications of the HRA budget had been previously reviewed by the BCH Finance &amp; Audit committee. It had been the Committee's view that a rent freeze was desirable and affordable and carried only a minor financial risk by comparison with imposing an increase.</p> <p>He requested that his disappointment that the Council had chosen not to accept that view be recorded in the Minutes.</p> <p><b><u>Agreed :</u></b></p> <p><b>That</b> the Council's decisions in respect of the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2010/11 be noted</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Governance Review update</u></b></p> <p>Peter Whittaker presented the report and explained that, as a result of a meeting with the HQN associate consultant, the scope of the review had been agreed with the Chair. HQN had also finalised their costs, which were in line with the estimate previously reported to the Board</p> <p>It was noted that the review will start in early April with a postal questionnaire for Directors to complete with a two week timescale. The consultant will observe both Board and Committee Meetings and conduct individual and group interviews with Directors and staff. The final outcome of the review will be presented to the Board in July.</p> <p><b>Agreed That:</b></p> <p>A. The previous in-principle agreement to carry out a review of BCH governance arrangements be fully confirmed.</p> <p>B. Housing Quality Network be appointed to carry out the review at a cost of £9,200 plus transport and subsistence expenses, which are to be capped at a maximum of 10% of the contract value.</p> <p>C. The scope, method and timescale of the review as outlined in the report be approved</p>	

## AGENDA ITEM 3

8.	<p><b><u>New Council Organisation Structure</u></b></p> <p>Peter Jefferson informed the Board that the Council have been through a major senior management restructuring exercise. He confirmed that the individuals noted in the structure chart are officers of the Council and not portfolio holders.</p> <p>He further explained that the Client Function for management of the BCH contract will sit in the “Places” area of the new structure, headed by Helen France. It was, however, noted that Jon Donnellon, the Assistant Director Built Environment, will attend future board when necessary on behalf of Blackpool Council.</p> <p>It was also noted that the portfolio holders will remain unchanged but may have a different director reporting to them.</p> <p><b><u>Agreed</u></b></p> <p><b>That</b> the revised Council’s senior management structure be noted</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Office Accommodation – Progress Report</u></b></p> <p>Peter Jefferson gave a verbal progress report on arrangements for the move to the new building. The potential for a conflicting use of the part of the building not to be occupied by BCH had been removed and the Council had agreed to consult BCH about possible and acceptable uses for that space at an earlier stage than previously.</p> <p>He confirmed that this development should clear the way for the lease is to be signed at a later date and that the move itself was expected to take place in September.</p> <p><b><u>Agreed:</u></b></p> <p><b>That</b> the position be noted</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>New Council Housing Building</u></b></p> <p>Cyril Holland presented the report and reported that, since it had been prepared, plans to redevelop a play area at Gateside Drive affected by the building programme have been finalised following consultation. He confirmed that work on the new developments will begin on 29<sup>th</sup> March and the project is due for overall completion in March 2011.</p> <p>Designs of the new housing had been displayed at the board meeting for members to view and a general discussion about the schemes ensued. Both Simon Blackburn and Tim Cox commented on the play area design and expressed their satisfaction with it. Janet Stirling said that she had been present at the consultation meeting when tenants opposed to the original proposals had endorsed the new ones</p>	

## AGENDA ITEM 3

	<p>and that the meeting had been well attended. Cyril Holland explained that during the 12 month development period there will not be a specific percentage of work available for local people but the percentage of local people employed will be monitored. He confirmed that he will look at engaging with Blackpool Build Up to try to maximise local employment.</p> <p><b><u>Agreed:</u></b></p> <p><b>That</b> the position be noted</p>	
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Board Forward Plan 2010 – 2011</u></b></p> <p>Peter Whittaker presented the Forward Plan and explained that an updated version would be issued later in the year. In view of the fact that the General Election now seems certain to be called for 6<sup>th</sup> May it was suggested that the Board Meeting scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> May should be postponed by one week to 12<sup>th</sup> May. This would not affect the timing of the June meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that Carol Hall was shortly due to discuss with Neil Jack the likely future range of business that the Human Resources (HR) Committee would have to consider and that it's next meeting could now be held on 5<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p><b><u>Agreed that:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The next Board meeting be held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2010</li> <li>2. The May Board Meeting be chaired by Bill Rogers</li> <li>3. The next HR Committee meeting be held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2010.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>12.</b></p> <p><b>12A</b></p>	<p><b><u>Minutes of Committees and Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p><b>Finance &amp; Audit Committee Meeting - 17<sup>th</sup> February 2010</b></p> <p>Simon Blackburn, as Chair, gave an overview of the Minutes.</p> <p>With regards to the question of access for gas servicing it was noted that BCH employ a number of different approaches to obtain voluntary access. It was, however, noted that if tenants do not cooperate BCH has a legal duty to gain access, using court procedures as necessary. Cyril Holland confirmed that such procedures are needed in only a small number of cases and that a range of actions are available prior to that eventuality.</p> <p>It had been agreed to use an experienced external organisation to administer the Tenant Project Fund and additional funding is to be made available to ensure that the value of the fund itself is not reduced. An advantage to using an external company is that it could lead to additional "match funding" being obtained.</p>	

**AGENDA ITEM 3**

<p><b>12B</b></p>	<p><b><u>Agreed</u></b>  <b>That</b> the minutes be accepted</p> <p><b>Operations Committee Meeting - 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010</b></p> <p>Alison Stringer, as Chair, presented the Minutes</p> <p><b><u>Agreed</u></b>  <b>That</b> the minutes be accepted</p>	
<p><b>12C</b></p>	<p><b>Asset Management Committee Meeting - 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2010</b></p> <p>Alan Marsh, as Chair, presented the Minutes</p> <p>Simon Blackburn confirmed that he had provided comment to the local paper with regard to asbestos related issues. He had dismissed the claims that had been reported and gave credit to Ian Butterworth of BCH for providing an accurate report very quickly and efficiently. Alan Marsh supported the view taken by Simon Blackburn.</p> <p>Cyril Holland explained that about 12 to 18 months previously a leaflet was issued to tenants regarding asbestos in properties. He confirmed that BCH have comprehensive records and closely follow all relevant regulations and Health &amp; Safety procedures. If asbestos has to be removed tenants are made fully aware of the correct process and supported through any period when they need to temporarily vacate their home to enable the work to be carried out.</p> <p><b><u>Agreed</u></b>  <b>That</b> the minutes be accepted</p>	
<p><b>13.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p>	
<p><b>13A</b></p>	<p>Peter Jefferson reported that the proposals for reform of the Housing Revenue Account revenue were due to be published the day after the meeting. Reports on the implications will be brought to the Board.</p>	
<p><b>13B</b></p>	<p>Simon Blackburn, who had been elected Leader of the Labour Group on Blackpool Council explained that there were to be changes in their representation on outside bodies, such as BCH, taking effect from the start of the new municipal year on 10<sup>th</sup> May. He further explained that he was asking Joan Greenhalgh to undertake other important work and that she would therefore be stepping down from the BCH Board.</p>	

### AGENDA ITEM 3

<b>13C</b>	<p>Doreen Wightman, on behalf of all directors, thanked Joan Greenalgh for all her contributions and work as a BCH Board Director. The Board also congratulated Simon Blackburn on his election.</p> <p><b><u>Agreed That:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Cllr Joan Greenhalgh be thanked for her service to BCH</li><li>2. Cllr Simon Blackburn be congratulated on his election as leader of the Labour Group of Blackpool Council</li></ol>	
<b>13D</b>	<p>It was noted that Steve Pullan, the Council's Executive Director of Adult Social care &amp; Housing, was leaving the Council as a result of the restructuring referred to earlier in the meeting (Item 8). He had been the Council's Client Representative at meetings with the Board and the Board thanked him for all the work he had done in liaison with BCH and the support he had offered in that time.</p> <p><b><u>Agreed</u></b></p> <p><b>That</b> Steve Pullan be thanked for his contribution to the work of BCH</p>	
<b>14</b>	<b><u>The meeting Closed at 7-20pm</u></b>	
<b>15</b>	<b><u>Date &amp; Time Of Next Meeting</u></b>  Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2010 at 6-00pm	