



BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27TH JUNE 2007
AT 6.00pm, PROGRESS HOUSE**

PRESENT:

Non-Executive Directors

Independent Directors

Pat Corless
Alan Marsh
Michael Buchanan

Councillor Nominee Directors

Ron Bell JP
Simon Blackburn
Tim Cox
Joan Greenhalgh

Tenant Directors

Irene Bishop
Gwen King
Bill Rogers
Alison Stringer
Doreen Wightman (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Jefferson	Chief Executive
Maggie Cornall	Director of Housing Services
Cyril Holland	Director of Property Services
Neil Jack	Director of Finance
Peter Whittaker	Company Secretary
Peter Cross	Independent Consultant
Steve Pullan	Executive Director, Adult Social Care & Housing
Paul Clark	Audit Commission
Graeme Bennett	Audit Commission



	PART A – OPEN MEETING – 27TH JUNE 2007
1.	Apologies Iris Oldham, Jim Houldsworth
2.	Declarations of Interest None
3.	<p>Audit Commission Inspections</p> <p>Paul Clark and Graeme Bennett from the Audit Commission gave a presentation on the purpose, process and nature of Inspections. They advised BCH to monitor their website to keep track of changes being made to KLOEs.</p> <p>Following the departure of the Audit Commission representatives Board discussed its level of preparedness for the inspection. The Chief Executive explained that he was conscious of the need for greater Board involvement and that Sub-Committees are looking at ways to achieve that. The first draft of the Self Assessment was on the Agenda in order to make the Board aware of its contents and to seek comment on it.</p> <p>A request was made that the presentation be analysed in detail and detailed training on the issues identified be arranged for the Board. The Board also considered it needed to meet more frequently in the run up to Inspection and felt that it would be beneficial to meet Board members from another ALMO who had been through the inspection process.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>A. An extra Board Meeting to be arranged for Wednesday 18th July 2007 with an agenda focussed on Inspection issues.</p> <p>B. A Board Member from another ALMO to be invited to a future meeting to speak about their experience of Inspection and Inspection preparation.</p>
4.	<p>Election of Chair and Vice-Chair</p> <p>There having been only the one nomination for the position received it was agreed that Doreen Wightman be elected unopposed as Chair of the Board.</p> <p>An equal number of votes were cast for the two nominated candidates for the position of Vice-Chair, Ron Bell and Alan Marsh. This indicated that one vote sent by post had not been received. By a majority it was agreed that a further ballot be held and that, in order not to disenfranchise them, the Company Secretary should write to the two Directors not present to obtain their vote by post. The second ballot votes cast by those present at the meeting were sealed in a box to await the receipt of the two postal votes at which time the count would be held.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>The Company Secretary to write to the absent Directors to explain the situation and provide them each with a new ballot paper to be returned by post.</p>



5.	<p>Minutes of the Board meeting of 16th May 2007</p> <p>An amendment was made to Item 12 relating to the length of the Housing Benefit shutdown prior to Christmas 2006, which should read 8 weeks.</p> <p>Agreed With the inclusion of the amendment to Item 12 the minutes be accepted as a true record.</p>
6.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>Item 11 Board Champions</u> Bill Rogers asked when the Board Champions will be agreed. The Chief Executive stated that this issue will be discussed at the Board meeting in August.</p>
7.	<p>Minutes of the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee of 18th June</p> <p>Agreed That the minutes be accepted as a true record.</p>
8.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>The Director of Finance & Resources stated that concern had been expressed about certain areas and that strategy for the position on long term voids needs to be developed, which can then be linked to the Asset Management Sub-Group. He confirmed that there is continuing action to rectify the problem with the Housing Benefit payments the Board considered that insufficient progress is being made.</p> <p>Agreed That the Director of Finance & Resources make arrangements for himself and Gwen King to meet the Housing Benefit Team to discuss the issues.</p>
9.	<p>Non-Smoking Policy</p> <p>The Director of Finance & Resources presented a report on implementation of various arrangements to allow BCH to comply fully with the legislation. He stated that BCH will have to follow both legislation and Council policy because BCH operates from Council owned buildings. There are some issues that solely affect BCH and staff will be consulted on them to ensure acceptance of BCH policy by all.</p> <p>Agreed That the proposals for action to comply with the non-smoking legislation be accepted.</p>
10.	<p>Governance Issues</p> <p>The Company Secretary presented proposals to increase customer and general public awareness of the Board's activity, decisions, composition and contact information.</p> <p>Agreed That the proposals be accepted with the exception of publication of Directors' BCH email addresses, and that a decision on that issue be deferred until a later meeting when more information can be provided about the wider implications of publication.</p>



11.	<p>Board Skills Analysis</p> <p>The Company Secretary explained that the analysis agreed at the last Board meeting had been completed. Peter Cross stated that three areas of knowledge and experience identified as needing strengthening were Housing Law, Health & Safety and Management of ICT and the Board also felt that Property Management was worthy of inclusion. The Chief Executive stressed the need to ensure that Equality & Diversity requirements were met by making sure that the advertisement for the position reached as wide an audience as possible.</p> <p>Agreed That the identified areas form the key elements of the specification for knowledge and experience of a new Board The Director of Finance & Resources member.</p>
12.	<p>Inspection Self Assessment</p> <p>The Self-Assessment documentation was circulated in advance of detailed consideration at the next meeting.</p>
13.	<p>Succession of External Auditor</p> <p>The Director of Finance & Resources explained that the BCH External Auditors, Baker Tilly, have changed the form in which the company is constituted and have asked that a replacement set of terms of employment be approved by BCH. There is no change to the extent of work covered, nor to the current fees.</p> <p>Agreed That the revised terms be approved</p>
14.	<p>Business Planning Update</p> <p>The Company Secretary outlined the timetable to obtain Board approval of the Business Plan at the August Board meeting.</p> <p>Agreed That the proposed timetable be approved.</p>
15.	<p>Independent Director – Recruitment Update</p> <p>The Company Secretary reported on progress and explained that he would be the contact point for arranging shortlisting and interview dates. A discussion on the composition of shortlisting and interview panels ensued and the Chair, Ron Bell, Alan Marsh, Pat Corless, Irene Bishop, Tim Cox and Michael Buchanan expressed an interest. should there be a problem with diaries. This panel would be</p> <p>Agreed That the panel should comprise five Directors from among those expressing an interest and that it should be formed solely for the current recruitment round and not as a standing recruitment panel.</p>



<p>16.</p> <p>A</p> <p>B</p> <p>C</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Expenses The Director of Finance & Resources confirmed that Board members could claim expenses and circulated the relevant form to be completed.</p> <p>Customer First Gwen King raised concerns relating to accessing Customer First as the phone lines are permanently engaged and complaints are being made.</p> <p>Agreed Gwen King to provide further details to Peter Jefferson to take forward to the council.</p> <p>Age of Tenants living above Sheltered Accommodation Alan Marsh asked about noisy tenants living above sheltered accommodation, as he had recently been made aware of the issue. It was confirmed that one of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees will be considering this as allocation policy is a matter for the Council to determine, not BCH</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>The meeting closed at 9.15pm.</p>
<p>18.</p>	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 18th July 2007 in Progress House at 6.00pm.</p>