

Interim Business Plan

2007-08 to 2008-09

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Amendment Notes

- Documents at draft status are to use letter designations to denote issue status: a,b,c etc.
- Documents at full issue status are to use number designations to denote issue status after full revision: 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, etc.
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- On full issue the draft amendment record should be deleted from the above table.
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1 Introduction

This is the first Business Plan prepared for Blackpool Coastal Housing Limited (BCH). The plan takes account of Customer views expressed at a Tenant Liaison Forum workshop and has been approved by the Board of Management.

This Business Plan covers only the two years from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009, which are the current and the next financial years. Business Plans would usually look at least three to five years ahead and then be updated annually but present circumstances mean that it is only possible to produce an interim plan covering the shorter period. The basis of the plan is the already approved BCH Delivery Plan for 2006-2008 and the currently known levels of funding for major repair and improvement works over that time period.

There are two basic reasons for this:

1. The Government has delayed its decision on "Round 6" bids for extra ALMO funding, in which the Blackpool bid is included, in terms of both the amount of funding for the programme overall and the allocations to individual ALMOs. The outcome will not be known until or even after October 2007.
2. The Audit Commission Inspection of BCH does not take place until the second half of November 2007 and we must win at least a 2 Star "Good" rating to gain access to whatever funding the Government allocates in principle. The outcome of the inspection will not be formally known until January 2008.

Until both outcomes are known BCH cannot be clear about how much extra funding in total the Government will provide or the year upon year pattern of allocations that will be made. At this time, therefore, it is only possible to plan on the basis of current levels of funding and it will not be possible to look and plan further into the future until the first few months of 2008.

Another factor that needs to be taken into account is the intention of Blackpool Council to create a new Community Plan in 2008. Because BCH is committed to working in partnership with the Council it is important that any Business Plan incorporates the implications of the new plan and also that BCH plays its part in helping the Council to create it.

Despite these constraints, however, BCH believes that this Business Plan, despite its interim nature, has value because it draws together various threads of service delivery that are described in a range of other, already published documents.

2 Vision and Values

The constraints within which this first Business Plan is written will not detract from either the Vision or the Values of Blackpool Coastal Housing.

Our primary aim, in recognition of Blackpool Council's housing policy objectives, is to provide the best housing service in the North West and to become an excellent employer.

To Achieve This Aim Blackpool Coastal Housing Will:

- Manage the investment in Blackpool Council's housing stock to ensure it meets the Decent Homes Standard.
- By providing excellent housing services, contribute to the wider regeneration and sustainability of the communities of Blackpool by entering into partnerships with appropriate organisations, by training and, where possible, by employing local people.
- Continually improve services to customers, both tenants and leaseholders.
- Extend the empowerment of tenants in the management of their homes and the services they receive.
- Become one of the "Sunday Times 100" best companies to work for
- Minimise the detrimental effect the organisation has upon the environment.

The Values Of Blackpool Coastal Housing Are As Follows:

- Blackpool Coastal Housing will put people at the heart of everything it does, including providing quality services to its customers and creating an atmosphere in which its staff feel valued.
- Blackpool Coastal Housing will provide excellent housing services, which represent Best Value, to the tenants of Blackpool Council and the wider community.
- In improving and developing its services Blackpool Coastal Housing will aim to balance the aspirations of its customers and the ideas of its staff with value for money and cost effective services.
- Blackpool Coastal Housing will offer fair treatment to all service users and employees regardless of age, race, sex, disability or sexual orientation.
- Blackpool Coastal Housing will involve service users to the level and extent they choose at all stages of the decision-making process.
- Blackpool Coastal Housing will involve staff at all levels in developing and implementing improvement plans.
- When complaints are received, problems occur and mistakes are made, Blackpool Coastal Housing will investigate quickly, put matters right, and learn so that it does not happen again.
- Blackpool Coastal Housing will adopt a spirit of openness when making decisions and delivering services.

3 Blackpool Coastal Housing Limited – Origins and Organisation

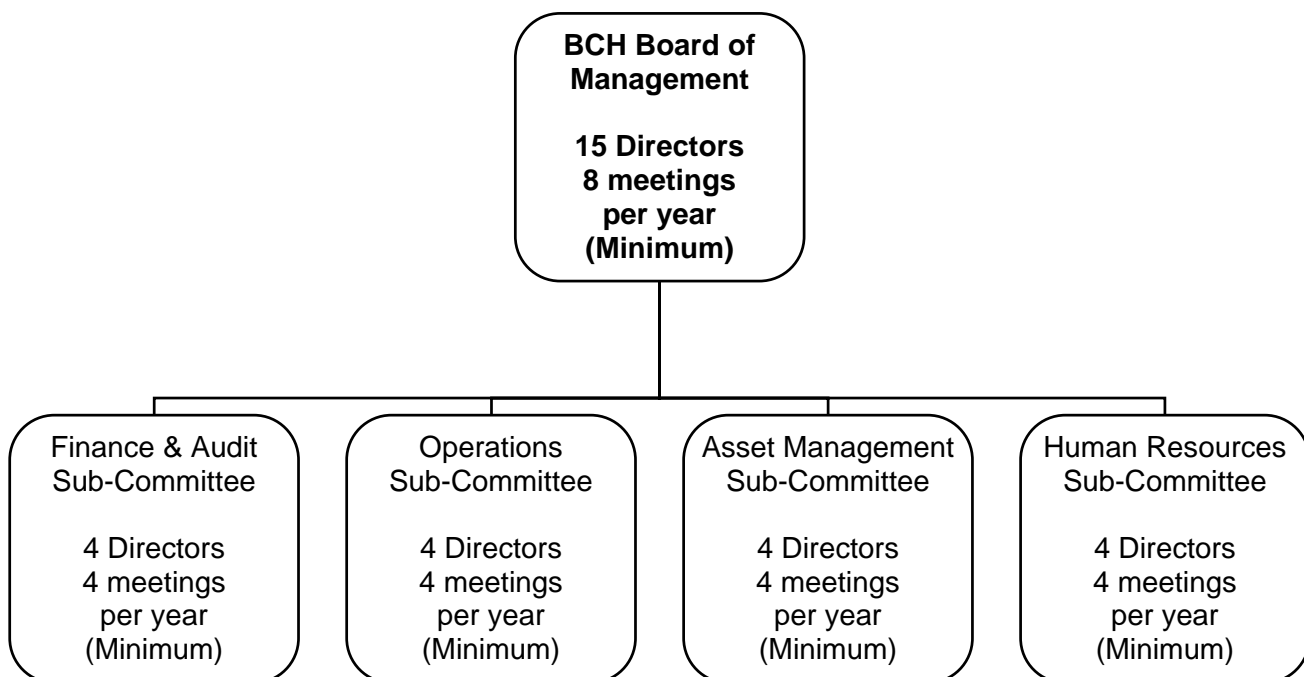
Following the outcome of a thorough, customer centred, Option Appraisal process Blackpool Council decided in February 2006 to consult its Tenants & Leaseholders about the principle of forming an ALMO to manage its housing stock. This was done by means of a Test of Opinion, which produced very positive backing for an ALMO to be created.

Blackpool Coastal Housing Limited (BCH) was formally incorporated and registered at Companies House on 6th July 2006 and the first full meeting of the Shadow Board of Management was held on 12th July 2006. From then until the end of the year the Board met fortnightly to deal with the issues arising during the set-up process and to learn about the various aspects of BCH's activities.

On 29th November 2006 Blackpool Council formally approved the delegation of management & maintenance responsibilities for its housing stock to BCH subject to Government approval, which was granted in December 2006. Finally, on 15th January 2006, Blackpool Coastal Housing Limited entered into a 15 year Management Agreement with Blackpool Council and took on its management and maintenance responsibilities.

Although BCH is wholly owned by Blackpool Council, who also continue to own the stock of tenanted and leased homes, it is legally independent and separate from it. The Council retains responsibility for Blackpool's Housing Strategy, and sets housing allocations and management policy objectives, but BCH has considerable freedom of action to determine how best to implement the policies and achieve their objectives. The Management Agreement defines the detail of the contractual relationship between the Council and BCH and the Council pays a Management Fee for the work that BCH does.

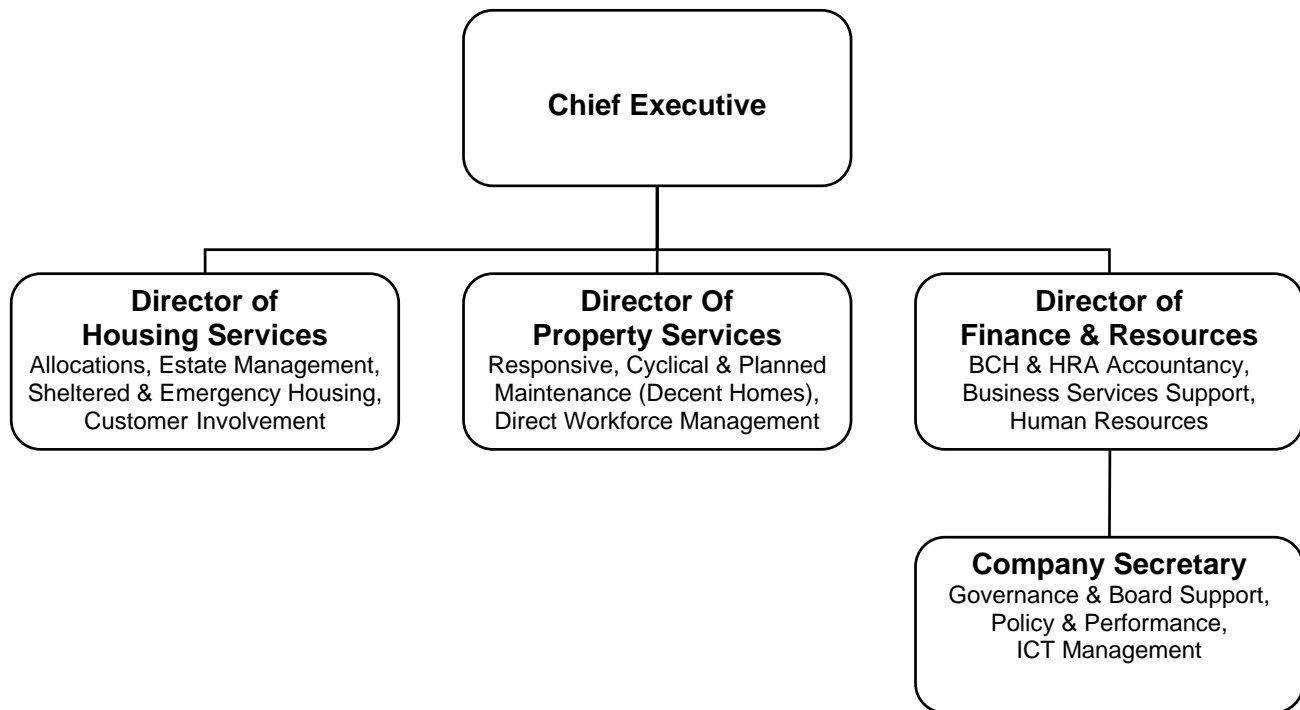
The BCH Board of Management has 15 Non-Executive Director members: five are customers (four Tenants and one Leaseholder), five are nominated by Blackpool Council and five are Independent Directors appointed by the other members of the Board for their knowledge, skills and experience. The Board meets at least eight times a year and is supported by four Sub-Committees that meet at least once per quarter.



The role of the Board of Management is:

- To act in the best interests of Blackpool Coastal Housing and all its customers:
 - Customer Directors do not represent the areas in which they live and the Leaseholder Director does not represent Leaseholders alone
 - Council Nominated Directors do not represent their electoral ward
- To establish and maintain confidence in
 - the conduct of Blackpool Coastal Housing,
 - the performance of the management team,
 - the development of strategy,
 - the adequacy of financial controls and risk management procedures
- To support, constructively challenge and monitor the management team
 - Directors are not involved in the detail of day-to-day management

The BCH Management Team has five members with areas of responsibility as outlined below:



Blackpool Coastal Housing is committed to involving customers in shaping the delivery of services. Tenant representatives have a direct say through the Tenant Liaison Forum (TLF) and various Resident Associations. BCH is a member of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and the Northern Housing Consortium (NHC), both of which are non-profit organisations providing information, advice and training on all aspects of tenant involvement in housing management.

4 The Housing Stock

As Table 1 below shows, BCH currently manages just over 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.

As can be seen, two thirds of the tenanted stock (67%) is made up of flats, the original stock of houses having been significantly depleted as a result of Right to Buy sales. The number and proportion of leasehold dwellings is also high by comparison with councils or ALMOs with similar or even larger sized total housing stocks.

The high proportion of flats is the primary reason for the stock of rented dwellings having over 1,700 homes (32%) that are in low demand, only 15 of them being houses on one particular estate. An analysis of these low demand dwellings is given in Table 2 below. Concerted efforts have been made to reduce the incidence and effect of low demand, which has met with increasing success in recent years. This has been through a combination of management initiatives, partnership redevelopment with locally operating RSLs and the borough-wide implementation of a Choice Based Lettings scheme.

TABLE 1

Blackpool Coastal Housing						
Stock Of Managed HRA Dwellings As At 27th August 2007						
Dwelling Type And Tenure	Management Area			Total Dwellings	Dwelling Type %	
	Grange Park	Mereside	Queens Park			
Tenanted Dwellings						
Bungalows	20	59	1	80	1%	92%
Bedsits	22	76	34	132	2%	
Low & Medium-Rise Flats	810	973	1400	3183	59%	
High-Rise Flats	0	0	383	383	7%	
Houses	489	735	367	1591	29%	
Total	1341	1843	2185	5369		
Hostels						
Dwelling Equivalents	(156 Hostel Room Units)			52	1%	1%
Total Tenanted Dwellings						
	1341	1843	2185	5421	100%	
Leasehold Dwellings						
Flats & Maisonettes	67	113	225	405		7%
Total HRA Dwellings						
	1408	1956	2410	5826		100%

TABLE 2

Blackpool Coastal Housing						
Low Demand Dwellings In The Housing Stock As At 1st April 2007						
Dwelling Type	Bedroom Size	Grange Park	Mereside	Queens Park	All Areas	%
Houses and Bungalows	2 Bedrooms	0	0	12	12	0.7%
Houses and Bungalows	3 Bedrooms	0	0	3	3	0.2%
Flats Low Rise (1-2)	1 Bedrooms	405	122	11	538	31.5%
Flats Low Rise (1-2)	2 Bedrooms	65	6	0	71	4.2%
Flats Low Rise (1-2)	3 Bedrooms	0	0	4	4	0.2%
Flats Medium Rise (3-5)	1 Bedrooms	326	150	71	547	32.0%
Flats Medium Rise (3-5)	2 Bedrooms	23	53	10	86	5.0%
Flats Medium Rise (3-5)	3 Bedrooms	0	0	66	66	3.9%
Flats High Rise (6+)	1 Bedrooms	0	0	257	257	15.0%
Flats High Rise (6+)	2 Bedrooms	0	0	126	126	7.4%
Total Dwellings		819	331	560	1710	100.0%

5 Management And Maintenance Arrangements

BCH has a decentralised approach to Estate Management with Area Offices located on each of the three main estates: Grange Park, Queens Park and Mereside. These offices also manage other homes in proximity to but not actually on the estates themselves.

Although some Estate Management related services such as Responsive Repairs, Allocations & Lettings, Income Management & Debt Prevention and Anti-Social Behaviour Prevention are organised on a more centralised or functional basis, and so can be contacted directly by customers, the Area Offices also act as points of contact for them.

Rents are collected mainly through Post Offices, using the Giro system, but cash payments can be made at the Town Hall. There is an Internet payment facility and telephone payments can also be made, either by speaking to a member of staff or through an automated system.

Other services, including Home Ownership / Leasehold Management, Planned Maintenance, Customer Involvement and various administrative functions are based in the Head office at Progress House. So too is the Supported Housing Service, although also has a very local presence in terms of Sheltered Housing Scheme managers and Hostel based staff.

Although external contractors are employed for Planned Maintenance, Gas Servicing & Repairs and Electrical Maintenance, BCH has an in-house Building Maintenance Workforce for both responsive repairs and repairs to dwellings vacant between tenancies.

6 Blackpool in Context - Setting the Scene

6.1 Population

At the time of the 2001 Census the resident population of Blackpool was 142,283, of which 48 per cent were male and 52 per cent were female.

At that time there were 32,139 people over retirement age (men 65, women 60) making up 22.6% of the Blackpool population. By comparison the North West region figure was only 18.6%.

Based on change between 1998 and 2003, the Office of National Statistics has predicted that the population of Blackpool will increase over the next 20 years and that older people will make up an increasing proportion of this population.

Households containing dependent children currently make up just over 26% of all homes in Blackpool. In 10 years time, the current downward trend in births will be evident as a downward trend in the proportion of people aged 16-24 in the population.

Ethnic minorities make up a very small proportion of Blackpool's residents. Non-white ethnic origins accounted for 1.6% of total population for Blackpool, compared to 5.6% for the North West region and 9.1% for England. In Blackpool, people from BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups are most likely to be of mixed ethnic origin.

People over 65 make up 4.5% of the total population for BME groups, which means that BME groups have a younger age profile than the general population in Blackpool.

6.2 Economy

Tourism, the principal industry in Blackpool, has been in steady decline for several decades, though it is still the most popular resort in the country, with more than 10 million visitors annually. Significant areas of deprivation remain and the town's assets and infrastructure have deteriorated.

Overall, the borough is the 24th most deprived out of 354 in England, and the sixth most deprived in the North West and 27% of Blackpool's population live in the 10% most deprived wards in the country. Relative deprivation has worsened since 2000.

Over a quarter of areas in Blackpool are in the bottom 10% when ranked against small areas throughout all of England. Only 12% of Blackpool areas ranked above halfway.

Seventy per cent of jobs in Blackpool are connected with tourism, a low wage industry, and average annual earnings are the fourth lowest of any local authority area in the UK. The local labour economy is heavily influenced by the seasonal nature of the tourist industry, which also accounts to some extent for the high numbers of people frequently moving into and within the borough.

In August 2006 2880 people in Blackpool were unemployed and claiming Jobseekers Allowance. That equates to 2% of the population. Almost 15% of the population in Blackpool receive Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit, 6% of Blackpool's population receive Income Support and just over 7% of the population receive Pension Credit. Over 16,000 residents of working age have no qualifications.

6.3 Health

Health deprivation and disability is a serious concern for Blackpool. The 2001 Census asked people to describe their health over the preceding 12 months as 'good', 'fairly good' or 'not good'. 13.8% of Census respondents indicated that their health was not good compared to a national average of 9.2%. 25% of people in Blackpool indicated that they have a long term illness that limits their daily activities or the work they can do.

10.8% of people indicated that they look after, or give help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long term physical or mental ill-health or disability, or problems relating to old age.

There are two main benefits associated with health that are paid to people needing help with personal care. Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit paid to people under 65, who are disabled, and need help with personal care, and/or mobility. Attendance Allowance (AA) is paid to people over the age of 65, who are so severely disabled, physically or mentally, that they need supervision or a great deal of help with personal care.

In August 2006 there were 11,830 DLA claimants and 5,700 AA claimants living in Blackpool. This equates to 8.3% and 4% of the total population respectively, which is higher than the Regional and National averages.

Over 40 per cent of the borough's neighbourhoods are in the bottom 10 per cent nationally for health deprivation, and Blackpool has the second lowest life expectancy for men, the highest incidence of alcohol related deaths, the highest suicide rates in the country (at twice the national average) and 42.9% of households have a least one person with a long-term limiting illness.

6.4 Housing

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that there are 63,940 households in Blackpool, containing 137,627 people. The average household size is 2.15 people.

Significantly, in respect of future service provision, all pensioner households numbered 16,978, comprising 26.6% of all Blackpool households, of which a large proportion, 11,145 are one person pensioner households.

In addition to the above, the Census reported 1,203 communal establishments housing 3,210 residents.

At 41 people per hectare the borough 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 4,000 unfit privately owned and/or rented properties, a shortage of larger family accommodation and is over-supplied with barely habitable privately rented accommodation, including approximately 3,000 houses in multiple occupation.

6.5 Blackpool Council

Blackpool is the 14th smallest unitary authority in England and Wales. The Council has 42 councillors, representing 21 wards. The Conservatives have been the controlling party since May 2007 and the current political make-up of the Council is: Conservative – 26, Labour – 13, Liberal Democrat – 3.

There is a one party executive with a leader and five cabinet councillors and a Service Development Management Committee has a remit for overseeing policy development.

The scrutiny function has recently been restructured. Business is supervised by a Policy, Overview and Scrutiny Management committee, which has two sub-committees: Audit and Health. The scrutiny structure is completed by four other committees: Regeneration and Tourism, Adults and Community Safety, Children and Young People, Neighbourhoods and Culture.

The Audit Commission's last CPA inspection of Blackpool Council found that it is improving strongly and demonstrating a 3 star overall performance, with Housing performing well and consistently above minimum requirements.

7 Blackpool Coastal Housing and Blackpool Council – A Working Partnership

7.1 The Community Plan and the Local Strategic Partnership

The Blackpool Community Plan has been created as the vehicle to join up action across organisations and involve everyone in delivering a better quality of life for all Blackpool residents. The Blackpool Local Strategic Partnership combines the expertise of local public, private and voluntary sectors with the specific aim of working together to achieve the goals in the Community Plan. All the partners have agreed a shared vision, shared objectives and shared priorities

BCH is a committed member of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which has published 'Equal Chances' the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy for Blackpool. The strategy aims to close the gaps of disadvantage in the towns' neighbourhoods. This joined up action is underpinned by six themes that aim to ensure that by 2020 all residents of Blackpool will benefit from:

- Quality Education & Training
- Healthy Lives
- Safer Communities
- Quality Homes in Green & Clean Residential Areas
- Strong & Vibrant Communities
- A Prosperous Town

Within all of these six themes there are two cross cutting issues, which underpin their delivery:

- Ensuring a sustainable environment
- Supporting vulnerable people

The six themes are interlinked and have an impact each upon the other. For example, a Prosperous Town will not be possible without investment in Education and Training and in order to have Strong and Vibrant Communities it is necessary for individuals to lead Healthy Lives. The surroundings of where people live can influence safer communities, whether it is the removal of rubbish to reduce arson, the quick removal of graffiti or securing homes. All partners recognise that there will be a need to work on all these areas to have a real impact on the quality of life for the people who live and work in Blackpool.

In driving forward these ambitions, the LSP has negotiated a Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Blackpool. Through the LAA Blackpool wants to:

- Improve service outcomes for local people and maximise the opportunities created through ‘our plans for the New Blackpool’ particularly among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged
- Create a platform of public service change to deliver improved social public service outcomes throughout the 15-year physical regeneration programme

The focus of the Local Area Agreement is in four blocks, each of which will extend, deepen and accelerate the radical change programme to take the tangible benefits of improving public services into neighbourhoods across the town to make Blackpool “an even better place to live”.

- Children and Young People
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Economic Development and Enterprise

7.2 Housing Strategy

Blackpool Council gives considerable emphasis to strong corporate support to housing objectives. It recognises that having a healthy housing market, with decent housing conditions, and accessible to the whole community, is crucial to the well being of Blackpool residents and to the future vitality of the area.

Responsibility within Blackpool Council for developing and delivering the Housing Strategy is through an interdepartmental Housing Strategy Group, with representatives from Housing & Social Services, Planning and Transportation, Environmental Health, Business Services (Finance), Legal and Democratic Services, Blackpool Primary Care Trust and of course Blackpool Coastal Housing.

7.3 Business and Service Delivery Planning

Blackpool Council will continue to prepare the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, although in reality the majority of it will be written by Blackpool Coastal Housing, which has responsibility for managing the Housing Revenue Account on behalf of the Council. The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan sets out the resources available to the Council to manage the Housing Revenue Account functions including the provision of housing services by Blackpool Coastal Housing.

Blackpool Coastal Housing will prepare its own Business Plan, to set out the resources available to enable its Delivery Plan objectives to be achieved. The Delivery Plan is the basis of the delegation of responsibilities between Blackpool Council and Blackpool Coastal Housing, including:

- Setting out all the outputs of Blackpool Coastal Housing, the key performance requirements of the services and the performance standards expected;
- The overall strategy of Blackpool Coastal Housing and how the organisation will deliver the key strategic goals of Blackpool Council and the community that the Council represents;
- Detailing financial and staffing resources required to enable Blackpool Coastal Housing to meet Delivery Plan requirements and perform the Services with diligence, care and skill.

8 Managing and Meeting Service Delivery Targets

BCH plans and strategies will clearly relate to meeting the Council's housing policy objectives and corporate priorities. They must also interlink within BCH itself to create the "golden thread" that allows customer facing staff to see and understand how their day to day activity derives from those plans and strategies and so contributes to BCH achieving its Delivery Plan objectives.

A Statement of Purpose or an Operational Strategy will be prepared for each service area within BCH. The purpose is to describe the service offered, the service standard customers can expect when receiving the service and the outcomes that the service aims to achieve. They provide the context for each service and member of staff to meet the requirements of the BCH Delivery Plan.

Management and planning tools and arrangements are available to assist this process:

8.1 Social Housing Management Tools

Social Housing Management Tools enable housing management service staff to understand the estates they are working on. These tools provide an area-based approach to identifying the future needs of estates and aim to put plans into place to meet those needs. Examples of needs that the Social Housing Management Tools could identify might include:

- The re-development of properties
- Alternative lettings or management practices, different repair or improvement arrangements.

8.2 Asset Management Plan

The Social Housing Management Tools feed into the overall Asset Management Plan for the service, which sets out the level of resource required to go into each property type. Information from the Social Housing Management Tools is combined with stock condition survey information. This captures information about key components within each property type, detailing their lifecycles and identifying failing components that require investment. This allows estimates of the expected date of replacement to be made which, in turn, inform estimates for future capital investment in the stock.

The combination of area based strategies identified through the Social Housing Management Tools, when aligned to the property investment requirements identified through the Asset Management Plan, will ensure that BCH business planning and investment strategies are joined up and founded on a robust evidence base.

8.3 Team Plans

Each team will prepare a Team Plan to provide information about:

- The purpose of the team
- The service that the team provides
- The staffing resources available
- How the team achieves the cross cutting themes of value for money, diversity and access to customer care
- The Key Performance Indicators
- The team's action plan and progress against the action plan on a quarterly basis
- The successes the team has achieved during the period

The Team Plan provides clarity, focus and simplicity to enable members of the team to be clear about the purpose of the team, and also allows people from outside the team to understand the purpose, membership and outputs of the team.

The Team Plan details operationally how the team will achieve the outcomes contained within the Statements of Purpose and Operational Strategies.

8.4 Quarterly Reports

Each quarter the appropriate leader of each team will prepare a quarterly report. The purpose of the quarterly report is to enable a strategic management overview of the performance of the team by understanding why the team is performing in the way it is, identifying any barriers and learning from the experience to improve performance. The quarterly report will contain the following information and headings:

- Specific service information for example, case/file management, referrals to other agencies, preventative work
- Diversity recording
- Monitoring of Service Standards
- Performance information and benchmarking
- Customer Satisfaction Results
- Learning from feedback
- Value for money
- Training Needs
- Any significant issues
- Recommendations for Service Improvement

8.5 Individual Performance Appraisal

Each member of Blackpool Coastal Housing staff will participate in the company's performance appraisal system. Each member of staff will be clear about their individual targets and their training needs, and how these targets feed into the overall team targets, the Delivery Plan targets and the overarching Statements of Purpose and Operational Strategies.

8.6 Performance Management

Performance during the last financial year, 2006-07, is described in Appendix 1 for a mix of both statutory and local performance indicators. Comparisons are made with the 2005-06 performance of the Council's Landlord Services Division, as BCH then still was, and with 2006-07 performance of ALMOs nationally.

Generally speaking performance has been improving steadily over the last five to six years in more or less all areas of BCH's work and, in terms of national indicators, is mainly in the median to upper quartile range. Unfortunately, the Council's implementation of a new Housing Benefit computer system in 2006-07 caused severe disruption and rent collection performance suffered greatly as a result, as can be seen in the rent related performance indicators. Action has been taken to remedy the effects of the implementation and it is anticipated that performance in this area will once more be on an upward trend by the end of the year.

A high level performance indicator summary is provided monthly to the Senior Management Team and quarterly to both the Board of Management and the Council. The Sub-Committees of the Board are also provided with performance information tailored to their individual areas of responsibility. More detailed information is provided for day to day management purposes, some monthly and some weekly.

In 2007-08 BCH is implementing a Balanced Scorecard approach to Performance Management looking at its operations from four different viewpoints: Business Process, Finance, Customers and Organisational Development. The Scorecard was first used when reporting performance in the first quarter of 2006-07 to the Board of Management but further development is currently in hand, which it is expected will be complete in time to report on performance to the half-year point falling at the end of September 2007.

9 Service Development Plans

9.1 2007- 08

General

- Review all services to ensure Value for Money and that they are meeting the aspirations of tenants and service users.
- Review all services to identify Gershon Efficiencies.
- Prepare for Housing Inspection by the Audit Commission in June/July 2007, to achieve at least a 2 Star rating
- Identify opportunities for joint procurement.
- Explore tenant and staff incentive schemes.
- Identify and implement good practice within all areas of housing management, particularly areas that have been identified by customers.

Supported Housing Services:

- In partnership with Blackpool Council and other key partners, develop a strategy for services for older people in Blackpool, including bids for extra care initiatives.
- Secure a five year Supporting People contract.
- Contribute to development of Blackpool Coastal Housing website
- Develop a service standard leaflet for the sheltered service
- Develop a service standard leaflet for the emergency housing service,
- Produce leaflets on individual sheltered schemes
- Develop a charging policy for use of community centres
- Review the sheltered housing service staffing structure
- Complete Option Appraisal of all sheltered housing sites
- Recommend sheltered housing schemes that should be extended into general needs stock, and those which should be de-commissioned
- Explore with Supporting People opportunities for extending the sheltered service outside sheltered scheme boundaries including into non-council accommodation
- Develop support role within the Emergency Housing Service
- Work with Blackpool Council to identify the future needs of homeless households and re-design service to fit these needs
- Develop new support schemes such as a sheltered scheme for over 25 years old etc.
- Develop performance indicators for the service

Customer Involvement:

- Increase the number of active groups.
- Continue development of tenant participation and community empowerment in general.
- Continue to develop opportunities to ensure hard to reach groups play an active part in tenant participation.
- Explore opportunities for alternative funding of tenant projects.
- Publicise and undertake elections for the recruitment of tenant representatives on the Board of Blackpool Coastal Housing
- Monitor and ensure that the actions identified in the new Tenant Compact are being achieved
- Monitor effectiveness of the new "Open Pane"
- Develop the Major Works Compact and Young Persons Compact
- Develop the Youth Board

Tenancy and Estate Management:

- Consider the strategic impact of the Social Housing Management Tool and amend housing management practices to provide maximum support to neighbourhoods

- Strengthen working partnership with the Neighbourhood Renewal and Neighbourhood Management Teams, and the Local Strategic Partnership.
- Improve information on website.
- Continue improvement of performance indicators.
- Develop new IT systems in Anti-Social Behaviour management
- Develop Service Contracts and information sharing protocols with partner agencies.
- Review caretaking and estate cleaning service
- Increase pro-active work in undertaking tenancy audits, estate inspections, block inspections etc.
- Continue to promote the gardening scheme to assist tenants who are unable to maintain their garden adequately.
- Identify new methods of providing support for tenants in maintaining their tenancies, working with the voluntary and charity sector, PCT, social services and supporting people

Repairs

- Commence new contracts for Major Works.
- Procure new Electrical Maintenance Contract
- Monitor and implement relevant Key Performance Indicators for any new work.
- Explore and implement local training initiatives.
- Implement the Asset Management and Procurement Strategies for 2006/07, and beyond.
- Further develop and increase information relating to current stock, including an Independent validation of the Stock Survey.
- Continue the development of a 30-year rolling programme, taking account of information from stock condition surveys.
- Carry out environmental works within approved budgets.
- Review Contract performance.
- Investigate and explore opportunities resulting from the Financial Framework and Freedoms for excellent performing ALMO's
- Increase the level of collaborative working with other ALMO's, the ALMO Technical Officers Group, and other organisations, in order to identify and share good practice, particularly with respect to the Gershon objectives

Lettings

- Consider strategic impact of Social Housing Management Tool in relation to local letting policies and make recommendations to Blackpool Council as appropriate, linking in with any supported housing schemes developed
- Develop Pre-Tenancy Counselling Service with improved information to inform choice and advice on housing and other benefits
- Further develop the website.
- Review staffing structure in the light of the roll out of CBL service
- Include a summary of the Tenancy Agreement, an area profile, and a map identifying services with offers of tenancy.
- Review the Lettings Scheme to ensure compliance with Disability Discrimination Act.
- Review access to Housing Service for people with learning disabilities.
- Consult BME communities on access to Housing Service.

Rent Arrears

- Develop the website, including improved information on ways to pay.
- Publicise the Council Payment Line.
- Develop a self help guide to money management.
- Develop a new poster campaign.

- Target rent arrears and Housing Benefit uptake campaigns based upon profiling information.
- Continue Support for Citizens Advice Bureau through Service Level Agreement.
- Undertake ring-back survey of users of the service.
- Develop customer access to rent account information on-line.
- Identify opportunities for joint procurement of former tenant arrear services.

Risk Management

- Re-tender service and maintenance contractors for fire alarm monitoring, fire alarm service and maintenance, communal heating servicing and maintenance, and emergency lighting testing and maintenance, in order to improve efficiency and introduce terms of contract in line with Company requirements.
- Award contracts for the periodic treatment of shared water supplies in sheltered schemes and blocks of flats, for the removal of high risk asbestos containing materials in communal parts of sheltered schemes and flats, and carry out improvement works to shared water storage facilities in sheltered schemes and blocks of flats.
- Implement IT based Display Screen Assessment, and Employee Protection register.
- Complete the Health and Safety and Risk Management procedures documents.
- Prepare Risk management Policy Statement, and Annual Statement.
- Implement asbestos monitoring programme and carry out inspections of asbestos containing material in communal areas of flats and sheltered schemes.
- Devise risk management audit procedures, and carry out risk management audits.
- Review and improve risk management systems.
- Implement Health and Safety training on new Regulations (Work at Height, Construction, Vibration and Noise), and review Health and Safety induction and refresher training.
- Re-schedule the Portable Appliance Testing Programme.

Human Resources and Development

- Deliver the Annual Staff Conference.
- Work towards Investors in People advanced accreditation in Leadership and Work/Life Balance
- Review Local Performance Indicators.
- Design and deliver a corporate training programme.
- Implement the recommendations of the Single Status Review.
- Develop a Dignity at Work Policy.
- Implement any revisions to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations.
- Review the Consultation Framework to ensure its compliance with the Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2005.
- Ensure procedures and policies comply with the Equal Treatment Directive.

Governance

- Further develop Training Programme for Board Directors including:
 - Tenant Participation / Empowerment
 - Strategic Management, including Best Value
 - Business Planning / ALMO Delivery
 - Housing Management, Policy and Practice
 - Property Management, Repair, Improvement and Procurement
 - The Decent Homes Standard
- Begin Individual Performance Appraisals for Board Directors
- Begin appraisal of overall Board performance and undertake a Governance Audit
- Develop procedures for the retirement and appointment of Board Directors.
- Produce Annual Report and Accounts for the period October 2006 to March 2007.
- Consult with key stakeholders in the development of the Delivery Plan.
- Consider and approve a range of strategies and policies, including:
 - Employment
 - Racial Equality
 - Health & Safety
 - Risk Assessment
 - Diversity, Equalities and Inclusion
 - Freedom of Information
- Progress work on organisational accommodation requirements
- Prepare for Housing Inspection in November 2007 to achieve a minimum of a 2 star rating.
- Review outcomes from Housing Inspection and agree Improvement Plan
- Ensure Service Contracts with Blackpool Council remain comprehensive and cost effective,
- Hold an Annual General Meeting by December 2007

9.2 2008-2009 (and beyond)

- Examine opportunities with the Supporting People Management Board to develop the scope of supported housing provided by Blackpool Coastal Housing.
- Identify and develop good practice within all areas of the Housing Service with the aim of being a top housing provider.
- Evaluate the outcomes of the Reassurance Plus Project at Grange Park managed on behalf of Blackpool Council
- Provide Housing Maintenance Services to other housing providers.
- Undertake annual Health and Safety Property Checks/Services for Leaseholders.
- Investigate a replacement ICT system.
- Achieve inclusion in the Sunday Times “top 100 employers” list
- Up-date annual Training Programme for Board Directors.
- Review the Communication Strategy.
- Undertake Board and Director Performance Appraisals.
- Carry out a further Governance Audit
- Produce Annual Report and Accounts.

10 Financial Resources

10.1 Revenue Expenditure

Revenue expenditure covers the operating costs of BCH and the services it provides. The income to pay for it comes from the Management Fee paid to BCH by Blackpool Council from its Housing Revenue Account. Table 3 below identifies the major elements of the BCH Revenue Budget for the current financial year, 2007-08.

TABLE 3

Budget Element	£'s
General Management & Overheads	1,684,118
Financial & Support Services	847,302
Central Costs	185,070
Housing Operations	1,188,906
Repairs and Maintenance	4,842,950
Services	1,202,488
Supported Living	1,297,166
TOTAL	11,248,000

The 2008-09 budget will be developed in the Autumn of 2007 and will be subject to negotiation with Blackpool Council to agree the Management Fee for that year.

10.2 Capital Expenditure

This is the money that pays for major repairs and improvements to the housing stock and is the main way in which Blackpool moves forward to meet the Decent Homes target. It is this type of expenditure that will dramatically increase when BCH passes its Audit Commission Inspection in November 2007 and receives its share of the Government's "Round 6" ALMO funding bid process. Neither event can be guaranteed at this stage but there is every reason to be optimistic on both counts.

Table 4 below shows the target costs that were included in the original "Round 6" bid for Blackpool and the years in which the money would need to be spent. Year 1 was to have been 2007-08 but this has had to be put back by a year because the Government has delayed making decisions in respect of the overall funding allocation for Round 6 and the individual allocations to the ALMOs within it. .

TABLE 4

YEARS	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Repair Category							
Catch up	67,455	0	0	0	0	0	
Programmed	0	30,877	19,790	18,690	35,439	31,850	
Sub Total	67,455	30,877	19,790	18,690	35,439	31,850	204,101
Commissioning Costs	11,954	5,471	3,506	3,311	6,279	5,643	36,167
Total	79,409	36,348	23,296	22,001	41,718	37,494	240,268

Table 5 shows the latest revised funding pattern for years 1 to 5 (with Year 1 having now moved back to 2008-09) and indicates the expenditure requirements from the Building Cost Model. Should the funding eventually allocated be insufficient to meet the expenditure requirements in future years, a backlog of repairs and maintenance programmes will build up. Homes which fall back into Non-Decency over time may have to remain Non-Decent until such time as sufficient funding does become available.

TABLE 5

Year	Investment Required £	Resources Available £	Investment Gap £	Profile Bid £	Profile Bid with 5% £
2008 to 09	34,858,000	4,205,000	30,653,000	12,900,000	13,421,200
2009 to 10	19,831,000	4,269,000	15,562,000	14,700,000	15,526,200
2010 to 11	20,222,000	4,365,000	15,857,000	14,700,000	15,526,200
2011 to 12	5,662,000	4,314,000	1,348,000	14,700,000	15,526,200
2012 to 13	6,938,000	4,399,000	2,539,000	8,959,000	9,431,200
Total	87,511,000	21,552,000	65,959,000	65,959,000	69,431,000
	5%		3,472,000		
Total Bid			69,431,000		

10.3 Actual Expenditure For 2007- 08

The amount of money available from current resources for capital type work in 2007-08 is £4,041,000 and without the boost from the extra ALMO funding it will remain at that level, with adjustments for inflation, for the foreseeable future, as shown Table 5 above. In 2007-08 the following range of work is being carried out:

- Kitchen & Bathroom Refurbishment 77 Houses and Flats
- Heating & Electrical Installation Upgrades 96 Houses and Flats
- Multi-Storey Flats External Cladding 64 Flats
- Low-Rise Flats External Encapsulation 26 Flats
- Full Refurbishment including Kitchens, Bathrooms and Security Measures 48 Flats
- External Painting & Pre-Paint Repairs 930 Houses and Flats
- Internal Communal Redecoration 64 Flats (1 block)
- Balcony resurfacing 39 Flats

10.4 Proposed Expenditure 2008- 09 and Beyond

The programme for 2008-09 cannot yet be finalised and there are two main reasons for this. The first is that we do not yet know how much money will be available to carry out work in that year because the outcome of both the “Round 6” bid and the Audit Commission Inspection, both of which are needed to unlock the funding, are unlikely to be known until January 2008. Secondly, of course, although BCH has consulted with its customers on the broad shape and content of the programme, the details of its rollout are still to be fully determined..

If the “Round 6” bid is fully successful the programmes can go forward on the basis of consultation already undertaken but, if the allocation is less than that requested, the programmes will have to be reshaped and further consultation will be integral to the decision making process for that. If BCH is totally unsuccessful in its bid, and that possibility has to be faced, a major reappraisal of the needs of both customers and the homes in which they live may well be necessary. In that event, customer consultation will be of major importance in determining the shape of maintenance programmes.

APPENDIX 1 Blackpool Coastal Housing – Performance Indicator (PI) Milestones 2006-07

This report covers the full operational year from April 2006 to March 2007 and gives a quarterly breakdown of performance over a range of statutory and local Performance Indicators (PI's).

Some of the PI's are "spot figures", giving a "snapshot" of performance as at the end of each quarter. The "PI Ref" box for these is highlighted in **BLUE** on the left of the report line. All other PI's give the cumulative position from the start of the year to the end of each of the quarters so that the progression through the year towards the full year figure (Q4) can be seen.

An extra column has been added to the report to show for each PI the 2006-07 Upper Quartile performance level for ALMOs nationally. For a few PIs (BV75a, BV75b and the BCH Local PI for empty dwellings) this comparative information is not available because it is either not recorded or not reported by ALMOs.

The Quarter 4 (Q4) column is colour coded as follows:

A **GREEN** box means that performance is better than the annual target and a **RED** box means that the target has not been reached.

The ALMO National Upper Quartile (ALMO UQ) column is colour coded as follows:

A **GREEN** box means that BCH performance is equal to or above the ALMO National Upper Quartile level and a **RED** box means that it is below the ALMO National Lower Quartile. A **YELLOW** box means that BCH performance lies in between the upper and lower quartile limits for ALMO national performance.

RENT COLLECTION PIs (BV66a; BV66b; Local ex 66b - see Page 1 of the report)

As a result of the Council starting to implement a new Housing Benefit computer system before Christmas 2006 the system was shut down for a total of eight weeks between then and the end of the financial year. As a result, processing times became extended and a backlog of unprocessed claims built up. This had not been cleared by the end of the financial year and has continued into the first quarter of 2007-08.

These processing delays meant that rent income recorded in tenants' rent accounts for 2006-07 is less than it would have been if the backlog had not occurred. It also meant that balances showing on rent accounts were not always fully accurate and this lack of clarity made the task of arrears pursuance much more difficult than normal.

Most but not necessarily all of the rent covered by the outstanding Housing Benefit payments will now be received in the new 2007-08 financial year.

BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING - PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2006 - 2007

RENT COLLECTION AND ARREARS

PI Ref	PI Definition	2005-2006 ACTUAL	2006 - 2007						Comments
			TARGET	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	ALMO UQ	
BV66a	Local authority rent collection and arrears: proportion of rent collected	97.07%	97.5%	91.54%	92.43%	93.73%	96.71%	98.57%	Better than Q1, Q2 and Q3 but worse than 2005-06 and 2006-07 target - HB System problems have generated outstanding HB payments of at least £55,000 due to backlogs with new claims and changes in circumstances. Further work being undertaken to identify full impact of new HB system upon arrears. SP payments have also been significantly affected.
BV66b	Percentage of tenants with more than seven weeks arrears	4.70%	4.50%	4.90%	5.00%	5.20%	5.64%	3.77%	Worse than Q1, Q2, Q3, 2005-06 and 2006-07 target. Affected by HB System problems as noted above
BV66c	Percentage of tenants in arrears served with Notice of Seeking Possession	29.46%	28.00%	4.52%	14.92%	17.52%	17.01%	18.97%	Worse than Q1, Q2, Q3 but better than 2005-06 and 2006-07 target
BV66d	Percentage of tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	1.90%	1.50%	0.01%	0.17%	0.17%	0.23%	0.25%	Worse than Q1, Q2, Q3 but better than 2005-06 and 2006-07 target
Local - ex BV66b	Local authority rent collection and arrears: Rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the authorities rent roll	1.95%	1.95%	2.30%	2.40%	2.70%	3.10%	1.94%	Worse than Q1, Q2, Q3, 2005-06 and 2006-07 target. HB System problems identified above have had a significant adverse effect upon performance
Local - ex BV66c	Local authority rent collection and arrears: Rent written off as not collectable as a proportion of the authorities rent roll.	1.24%	1.24%	0.50%	0.69%	0.80%	0.91%	0.46%	Worse than Q1, Q2 and Q3 but better than 2005-06 and 2006-07 target

BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING - PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2006 - 2007

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

PI Ref	PI Definition	2005-2006 ACTUAL	2006 - 2007						Comments
			TARGET	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	ALMO UQ	
BV63	Energy Efficiency - the average SAP Rating of local authority owned dwellings	70.4	72.0	70.6	70.8	71.0	72.0	71.0	Better than 2005-06 and 2006-07 target
BV184a	The proportion of LA homes which were non-decent at 1 April 2006.	13.22%	11.50%	ANNUAL FIGURE 11.14% AS AT 1 APRIL 2006				19.76%	2006-07 performance is better than target. 1 April 2007 figure of 10.58% is better than 2006-07 but worse than target of 9.5%. Recent live surveys give more accurate information but change in calculation method re SAP level is also relevant.
BV184b	The percentage change in proportion of non-decent LA homes between 1 April 2006 and 1 April 2007	16.72%	14.50%	ANNUAL FIGURE 5.56%				33.03%	Performance below target is result of using more accurate information from recent live surveys and change in calculation method re SAP level
Local - ex BV185	Percentage of responsive (but not emergency) repairs during 2002/03, for which the authority both made and kept an appointment	63.00%	65.00%	59.50%	61.30%	64.10%	60.50%	98.00%	Better than Q1 but worse than Q2,Q3, 2005-06 and 2006-07 target. Scheduling problems identified and corrective action has been taken through the checking of appointments daily and rescheduling where appropriate (eg awaiting parts)
Local - ex BV72	The percentage of urgent repairs completed within Government time limits	97.70%	99.00%	94.90%	95.70%	96.20%	98.81%	97.22%	Better than Q1 , Q2, Q3 and 2005-06 but marginally worse (0.19%) than 2006-07 target. Scheduling problems identified as above, corrective action now taken.
Local - ex BV73	The average time taken to complete non-urgent responsive repairs	10.9 calendar days	10 Calendar Days	4.6 Calendar Days	3.9 Calendar Days	3.6 Calendar Days	4.8 Calendar Days	7.03 Calendar Days	Worse than Q1, Q2 and Q3 but better than 2005-06 and 2006-07 target

BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING - PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2006 - 2007

TENANT SATISFACTION

PI Ref	PI Definition	2005-2006 ACTUAL	2006 - 2007					ALMO UQ	Comments
			TARGET	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
BV74	Satisfaction of tenants of Council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord: with results further broken down by I) black and minority ethnic and II) non-black and minority ethnic tenants	"STATUS" survey last carried out in 2003/04	Statutory survey carried out in Q3 2006/07						Better than 2003/04 survey and 2006-07 target, which has been achieved, is almost at 2006-07 ALMO upper quartile performance level
74a	All Tenants Average	74%	79%	N/A	N/A	79%	79%	81.75%	
74b	Black & Minority Ethnic Tenants	75%	79%	N/A	N/A	78%	78%	78.50%	
74c	Non-Black & Minority Ethnic Tenants	74%	79%	N/A	N/A	79%	79%	82.00%	
BV75	Satisfaction of tenants of Council housing with opportunities for participation in management and decision making in relation to housing services provided by their landlord.	"STATUS" survey last carried out in 2003/04	Statutory survey carried out in Q3 2006/07						Better than 2003/04 survey but worse than 2006-07 target, which is ALMO upper quartile. New compact developed which enables tenants to engage in ways that are suitable to their circumstances, needs and preferences. Status survey identified questionnaires as being a particularly popular form of involvement and participation.
75a	All Tenants Average	60%	69%	N/A	N/A	62%	62%	70.75%	
75b	Black & Minority Ethnic Tenants	56%	69%	N/A	N/A	60%	60%	n/a	
75c	Non-Black & Minority Ethnic Tenants	60%	69%	N/A	N/A	62%	62%	n/a	
164	Does the Authority follow the CRE Code of Practice in Rented Housing?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	Compliance Maintained and Target met

BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING - PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2006 - 2007

MANAGEMENT OF VACANT DWELLINGS

PI Ref	PI Definition	2005-2006 ACTUAL	2006-2007						Comments
			TARGET	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	ALMO UQ	
BV212	Average relet times in calendar days for local authority dwellings let in the financial year	88 Calendar Days	42 Calendar Days	51.3 Calendar Days	46.9 Calendar Days	51 Calendar Days	37 Calendar Days	27.25 Calendar Days	Better than Q1, Q2, Q3, 2005-6 and 2006-07 target
Local- ex BV69	Percentage of rent lost through local authority dwellings becoming vacant	4.30%	4.00%	4.07%	3.85%	4.20%	3.46%	1.13%	Worse than Q2 but better than Q1, Q3, 2005-06 and 2006-07 target
Local	Percentage of dwellings that are empty								
	*Available for letting or awaiting minor repairs	2.20%	1.80%	2.50%	1.10%	1.20%	1.58%	n/a	Better than Q1, worse than Q2 and Q3 but better than 2005-06 and 2006-07 target
	*Others	1.80%	2.50%	1.90%	1.80%	1.70%	1.80%	n/a	Better than Q1, same as Q2, worse than Q3, same as 2005-06 but better than 2006-0-7 target