

**MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM**  
**14<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

**Present:**

Mrs C Thornber	Boston Way Tenants' Association
Mrs M Everett	Boston Way Tenants' Association
Mrs C Hardiman	Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association
Mrs J Sanderson	Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association
Mr T Clayton	Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association
Miss D Wightman	Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association
Mr B Rogers	Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association
Mrs A Stringer	Grange Park Residents Association
Mr J Newton	Queens Park Residents Association
Mrs G King	Queens Park Residents Association
Mr M Christian	Ingthorpe Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mrs E Christian	Ingthorpe Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mr P Waugh	Mereside Tenant' and Residents' Association
Mr R Allen	Mereside Tenant' and Residents' Association

**In Attendance:**

Councillor Mrs Henderson	Blackpool Council
Councillor Lee	Blackpool Council
Mr P Jefferson	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs M Cornall	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr M Glennon	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms J Ellis	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs S Grundy	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr D Watson	Connaught
Mrs L Latham	Legal and Democratic Services, Blackpool Council

**Action**

**1. WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed those in attendance.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mr C Holland, Mrs M Horn and Mrs S Buckley.

**3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2009**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

In relation to Item 5 – Highways and Streetscene Services, it was agreed that Streetscene would be invited to attend the Forum meeting in September to give a presentation regarding the service.

It was agreed that an officer from B and G Research would be invited to attend a future meeting of the Forum.

**4. CONNAUGHT ENVIRONMENTAL**

Mr D Watson, Connaught Environmental, showed the Forum a DVD about the history of Connaught Environmental and the company values.

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He provided a brief overview of the grounds maintenance contract which the company had been awarded within Blackpool and the work which would be undertaken.

The Forum was informed that despite some initial handover difficulties and staffing issues, the company had progressed with the schedule of work and many positive comments had been received from the community. He explained that due to the contract commencing part way through the year, the greatest visual impact regarding the planted areas would be seen during summer 2010. It was clarified that staff would be moving into a local depot on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

A question was raised regarding the main cut grass which was left on a lawned area and not removed by Connaught. Mr Watson clarified that it was often better for the environment to leave the grass in situ and should it be removed there would be an additional cost for the tenants. He explained that the work would be undertaken as part of a ten day schedule and the more frequent cuts should result in less grass being left. This issue would be reviewed on an ongoing basis by Blackpool Coastal Housing and Connaught.

A number of members of the Forum reported positive comments from residents regarding the standard and frequency of work.

A question was raised regarding the Rehabilitation Scheme for prisoners on Mereside which had included some grounds maintenance work. Mr Watson explained that three staff had transferred from the scheme to Connaught.

The Forum thanked Mr Watson for his presentation.

#### **5. HOUSING MATTERS**

##### **(a) Blackpool Coastal Housing**

Mr P Jefferson, Blackpool Coastal Housing explained that an additional £2 million of decent homes funding had been brought forward into the current financial year. This would enable a higher number of property renovations to take place. He clarified that tenant satisfaction with the completed renovations was high although information for tenants regarding the disruption incurred during the renovations could be improved.

It was clarified that the target for local employment on behalf of contractors undertaking the work was 80%.

He explained that Green Wardens had been appointed to monitor the work of Connaught in undertaking the Grounds Maintenance contract. Overgrown areas impinging on the highways would be dealt with by Blackpool Council.

A member of the Forum explained that the improvements programme had created community pride in the properties and wider local area.

##### **(b) Sheltered Housing and Community Centres**

Mrs M Cornall, Blackpool Coastal Housing reported that appointments of Chairman and Vice-Chairman had been made in respect of the Sheltered

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Housing Forum. She provided an update for the Forum regarding staffing and highlighted that following two recent appointments, all eleven Scheme Manager posts had been filled.

It was noted that work was underway at the site of the Low Moor Community Garden and the opening ceremony for Boston Way Community Garden had been scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> August 2009. A gated community garden including provision of basic exercise equipment was being created at Argosy Avenue.

#### **(c) Performance Indicators**

Mr P Jefferson, Blackpool Coastal Housing, circulated a copy of the annual Performance Indicator information to the Forum and highlighted a number of key areas. He explained that the arrears recovery service was undergoing a re-design and a new Housing Management IT Service was currently being procured.

A particular area for improvement was the time taken to access court hearing dates. This issue had been raised with the courts directly.

Concern was expressed by the Forum at the rate and level of service responses to repairs and subsequent follow up calls. He explained that an element of this issue related to managing tenant expectations.

A question was raised regarding the findings of the Status Survey. He explained that tenant satisfaction in Queens Park was lower than other areas of the town. This concurred with the fact that properties within the area were more difficult to let. Mrs M Cornall, Blackpool Coastal Housing explained that work was being undertaken with the Local Authority regarding the future of Queens Park.

## **6. RATIFICATION OF NEW TENANT AND RESIDENT ASSOCIATIONS**

The Forum considered a proposal to ratify the newly established Tenants and Residents Associations at All Hallows and Munster Avenue. Mr M Glennon, Blackpool Coastal Housing, clarified that the properties were communal flat blocks which were all tenanted. The boundary of the Associations would be the block buildings themselves.

A number of grammatical amendments were proposed to the constitutions of the Associations.

The Forum ratified the new Tenant and Resident Associations at All Hallows and Munster Avenue.

## **7. CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT**

Mr M Glennon, Blackpool Coastal Housing, provided the Forum with an update on preparations for the Annual Tenants Conference which was due to take place on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2009 at the Wintergardens between 1pm – 7pm. He enquired whether the Forum would want a display stand at the event. Information regarding the event had been disseminated to tenants across the borough.

Included at the event would be interactive voting sessions based on the

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service standards and priorities for the Blackpool Coastal Housing business plan. A number of agencies would be represented at the event.

A discussion took place regarding the customer involvement activity information provided to the Forum. It was noted that all individuals taking part in any activity were asked to complete an impact assessment form and the figures were collated on a quarterly basis. A significant improvement had been recorded in the quarter April to June 2009.

He explained that particular tenant groups such as the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual Transgender Group had been recently established.

#### **8. TENANT TRAINING**

Mr M Glennon, Blackpool Coastal Housing, reported on the progress of three bespoke social housing modules which were being developed by the Community Learning Department at Blackpool Council. Once finalised the modules would be available to all members of the Tenant Liaison Forum. He explained that once further detail had been established a more detailed report would be brought to the Forum for consideration.

The Forum was informed that through the customer involvement links with "Great Places" it was anticipated that a number of local training opportunities may be provided at a shared cost.

#### **9. TENANT COMPACT REVIEW**

The Forum was informed that two meetings of the Tenant Compact Review Working Group had taken place and the third had been cancelled due to poor attendance. Mr M Glennon, Blackpool Coastal Housing, explained that the document was of paramount importance to the future of the Forum and governance of tenants and residents issues.

He noted that the Working Group had arrived at a point with the document where approvals would be required and it was felt that consultation through the wider Forum would be appropriate. The wider tenant population would be consulted through a survey included within the Viewpoint publication and through the annual tenants conference.

Copies of the National Framework would be redistributed to members of the Forum and there would be the opportunity for comments to be discussed in detail at the next meeting of the Forum.

#### **10. TLF CONSTITUTION**

Mr M Glennon, Blackpool Coastal Housing, requested that the constitution of the Tenant Liaison Forum be amended to allow other formally constituted tenant groups such as the Sheltered Housing Forum to affiliate to the Forum.

It was noted that the Sheltered Housing Forum represented over 800 tenants across Blackpool and was operating well. He clarified that the geographic boundary of the Forum was Blackpool and all of the

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individuals concerned with sheltered tenants.

The TLF agreed to add the following clause to Section 3.1 of the current 'Terms of Reference': 'Two council tenants or leaseholders may represent their specialist tenant group upon ratification of a groups' constitution by the TLF.

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A member of the Forum enquired about the Pledge of Truth which had featured in a recent newspaper article. Mr P Jefferson, Blackpool Coastal Housing, explained that a similar system had worked in other areas of the country and reduced the level of criminal damage to council properties. The scheme would be undertaken in conjunction with Lancashire Constabulary.

It was clarified that Blackpool Coastal Housing were required to make annual savings of 3% inline with Local Authorities.

An issue was raised regarding the cost effectiveness of undertaking temporary repairs to properties on a continuous basis.

**12. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009, commencing at 10am at the City Learning Centre.

The meeting ended at 10.26am

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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