

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
11th May 2010

Present:

Mrs M Horn (Chairman)	Grange Park Residents Association
Mrs C Thornber	Boston Way Tenants Association
Mrs M Everett	Boston Way Tenants Association
Mrs J Sanderson	Edmonton and Linden Tenants and Residents Association
Mr B Rogers	Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association
Mr M Christian	Ingthorpe Tenants and Residents Association
Mrs E Christian	Ingthorpe Tenants and Residents Association
Mr R Masson	All Hallows Residents Association
Mrs B Ratcliffe	All hallows Residents Association
Mrs S Underwood	Grange Park Residents Association

In Attendance:

Mr P Jefferson	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs M Cornall	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs S Tomlinson	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms J Ellis	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms S Grundy	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr M Glennon	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr P Whittaker	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms T Ansell	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms P Whitworth	Assessment, Prevention and Support, Blackpool Council
Ms H Master	Assessment, Prevention and Support, Blackpool Council
Miss G Atkinson	Democratic Services, Blackpool Council

Action

1. WELCOME

Miss Atkinson reported that the Queen's Park Residents Association (QPRA) had submitted a letter to Blackpool Council to confirm that it had formally withdrawn its affiliation with the Tenant Liaison Forum. In light of this, the Forum was asked to submit nominations for the position of Chairman for this meeting only. Following a show of hands, Mrs Horn was appointed as Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed those in attendance and asked the Forum to hold a minute silence to pay respect to Mrs Carol Hardiman of Edmonton, Linden and Washington Residents Association, who had recently passed away.

A discussion took place with regard to the resignation of the QPRA from the Forum and members felt that it was essential that tenants of the Queen's Park estate continue to be involved and represented. It was therefore agreed that a letter be submitted, from the Tenant Liaison Forum, to the tenants of the Queen's Park estate and to the QPRA Committee, to offer them alternative options with regard to tenant participation and involvement.

The Forum was advised that Mrs King had written a letter, as a representative of QPRA and in her capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Tenant Liaison Forum, to express her concern regarding Blackpool Coastal Housing's tenant participation. The letter had been submitted to a consultant who had been appointed by BCH to review the

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organisation's Anti-Social Behaviour service, as part of an accreditation process. The consultant had also received a similar letter from Mrs Allen, as a representative of Mereside Tenants and Residents Association.

The Forum expressed its concern that the letter from QPRA had referred to the Tenant Liaison Forum, which could imply that the Forum had been consulted on the matter and approved of the letter being sent. The members confirmed that they had no prior knowledge of the letter. It was agreed that a letter, from the Tenant Liaison Forum, be addressed to the consultant to advise him that the Forum had no knowledge of the letter from QPRA.

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A discussion took place with regard to the audit of the grant that had been awarded to QPRA for 2009/10. Despite its withdrawal from the Forum, QPRA would still be required to produce invoices and it was agreed that the Tenant Liaison Forum submit a letter to QPRA to request that the relevant documentation be supplied. It was requested that all letters to be sent from the Forum be submitted to the Council's Legal Services for clearance prior to distribution.

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Mr Jefferson advised that BCH and the Council did not have an issue with being affiliated to the charity and TARA strand to QPRA; however, as QPRA was a limited company with a catchment area beyond the Queen's Park estate, both BCH and Blackpool Council felt that this was inappropriate in terms of affiliation.

The Forum felt that it was essential for an Elected Member to be present at the next meeting, in light of the issues raised.

Georgina
Atkinson

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Lee, Councillor Mrs Henderson, Mr C Holland, Mrs D Wightman, Mrs D Williams, Mrs B Giles, Mr T Kemp, Mrs S Buckley and Mr and Mrs Pilborough.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 9th March 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

4. ADVICE LINK

The Forum was advised that the representative from Advice Link was unable to attend and therefore it was agreed that the item be deferred until the next meeting.

5. DRAFT BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN

Mr Whittaker referred to the draft Blackpool Coastal Housing Business Plan 2010 which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He advised that the document had been circulated to the Forum and to the Council for consultation and that any comments received would be submitted alongside the Plan to the BCH Board in June 2010. Following the restructure of the Council's directorate in April 2010, BCH now reported to the Places Directorate.

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An overview of each of the key areas within the Business Plan was provided to the Forum. In addition, a consultation on the management of housing finances was being undertaken and members would be invited to submit their views at a special Workshop meeting in June 2010.

Mr Whittaker invited members to submit their views on the draft Business Plan by the end of May 2010.

TLF

6. TENANT LIAISON FORUM CONSTITUTION ISSUES

Mrs Cornall referred to the report from Legal Services, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, regarding the involvement of non-affiliated groups on TLF. The report confirmed that according to the TLF Constitution, observers could attend the meeting at the discretion of the Chairman; however, they would not be permitted to participate in Forum discussions.

The Forum expressed its concern that it was the Chairman who held the discretion to allow observers to attend and felt that to safeguard any future issues, the decision should be extended to the full Forum. As this would require an amendment to the TLF Constitution, it was agreed that this would be considered at the next Workshop meeting, prior to being presented for approval at the next Forum meeting.

Maggie
Cornall

7. HOUSING MATTERS

(a) Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH)

A brief summary of the activities undertaken within Blackpool Coastal Housing was provided to the Forum.

Mr Jefferson provided details on a number of awards that BCH had recently been nominated for, including Client of the Year and an Apprentice of the Year award for one of the organisation's employees.

Mrs Cornall reported that a pre-inspection review by the Audit Commission in March 2010 had been a success and had identified a number of areas for service improvement. A further voluntary inspection had also been arranged for the Anti-Social Behaviour service and it was anticipated that the outcome would be submitted to BCH in the near future.

It was anticipated that the relocation of BCH to the Harvey's building in the Town Centre would commence in September 2010 and Mr Jefferson confirmed that Decent Homes funding had not been spent on the new building. The building was owned by the Council and therefore BCH rented the premises. An article to advise tenants would be published in the next edition of Viewpoint. The first installation phase of a new Housing Management IT system was due for completion by October 2010. The Forum was also advised that the new premises would include areas for affiliated groups to use.

The Forum was complimented on the success of the last Workshop meeting. A consultation exercise was being undertaken to request the availability of members for future Workshop meetings and once the responses had been submitted, the day/time that was convenient to the majority of Workshop members would be selected.

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(b) Sheltered Housing

A brief summary of the activities undertaken within Sheltered Housing was provided to the Forum, as follows:

- A Weekend Scheme Manager had recently been appointed for Dunsop Court;
- The furniture at Cherry Tree Community Centre had been replaced following a consultation exercise; and
- The Council had commenced a review of the Sheltered Housing service, which would include consultation with the tenants.

Mrs Cornall presented the Forum with an overview of the results of the Satisfaction Survey, which had been circulated to all Sheltered Housing tenants on 1st January 2010. The results demonstrated that 92.3 per cent of Sheltered Housing tenants were satisfied with the overall service provided by BCH.

8. TENANT PROJECT FUND

Mrs Cornall reported that the BCH Board had agreed that an independent third party body be appointed to undertake the management of the Tenant Project Fund. BCH had invited four organisations to tender for the contract and to date, two submissions had been received. Interviews with the organisations would be scheduled for the end of May, following which the preferred partner would be selected. It was agreed that Mr Rogers, as a member of both the Tenant Liaison Forum and the BCH Board, sit on the interview panel.

9. CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT

Mr Glennon advised the Forum that a bird table with a small remembrance plaque would be installed at Lowmoor Gardens in memory of Mrs Carol Hardiman and as a token of appreciation from BCH and the Forum for her assistance with tenant involvement. A small ceremony would be scheduled, to which members would be invited.

Mike Glennon

It was reported that Mrs Tomlinson would be on maternity leave from 12th May 2010 and would be temporarily replaced by Ms Ansell from BCH's Business Support service. As a result, there would be a number of changes to officer support for the tenants groups and all members would be notified in due course.

Mike Glennon

Mr Glennon presented an overview of a recently completed project to record customer involvement. It was reported that each time a tenant had been participated in a customer involvement activity was recorded as one 'involvement unit' and in total over 1,400 had been recorded for 2009/10. This did not include the activity by Tenants and Residents Associations or responses to surveys. Over 150 service improvements and policy decisions had been implemented as a result of the customer involvement activity and 250 tenants had been regularly involved in participation activity over the last six months. The data would be used to create an annual Customer Involvement Impact Statement and evaluate the impact and value for money of arranged activities. Tenants would be invited to a half-day workshop to undertake the evaluation exercise.

Mike Glennon

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It was reported that the Tenant Conference had been scheduled for 1st September 2010 and would be held at the Winter Gardens. BCH wanted to provide tenants with the opportunity to be more actively involved in the Conference and arrangements would be discussed at future Workshop meetings.

With regard to the BCH Academy, Mr Glennon advised that the Chartered Institute of Housing had issued its formal support for course. As a result, BCH hoped to develop an Academy 2, which would focus on skills development to prepare tenants for an active scrutiny role. It was reported that 45 tenants were currently enrolled on the course and that a recent evaluation exercise had demonstrated very positive feedback.

A previously referred to in Item 5, 'Draft Coastal Housing Business Plan', a consultation workshop to consider the Housing Revenue Account had been scheduled for 25th May 2010, commencing at 5.30 p.m. The venue was yet to be confirmed.

Mike Glennon

Ms Ellis advised members that the Disability Forum had recently undertaken its first Annual General Meeting and that Mrs Christian had been appointed as Chairman. A copy of the Forum's Constitution was circulated at the meeting. The Constitution was formally ratified by the Forum and members congratulated Mrs Christian on her recent appointment.

10. TENANT COMPACT AND INVOLVEMENT STRUCTURE REVIEW

Mrs Cornall reported that each of the eight Tenant Improvement Panels had now been established with Terms of Reference and had commenced their first cycle of meetings.

In addition, a community-focused network panel would also meet four to six times per year to share best practise ideas on community improvement and development projects. Members agreed that this would formally replace the Tenant Liaison Forum once the previous structure had been disbanded. The new network panel would not have any decision-making powers and the Forum considered whether the current TLF criteria for affiliation to the group could be relaxed. A discussion took place regarding the '51 per cent tenants' rule that the TLF currently stipulated for its affiliated groups and it was agreed that this be considered at a future Workshop meeting, together with a Code of Practice for tenant members.

The Forum requested that the tenants of Queen's Park and Mereside, who had previously participated in customer involvement activities, be invited to attend a future meeting of the Tenant Liaison Forum.

Mike Glennon

The Forum raised a concern regarding the comments that had been published on the Blackpool Gazette web site relating to a number of news stories. A number of the comments had been made in the individual's capacity as a member of the Tenant Liaison Forum and it was felt that comments to the media should be considered by the full Forum prior to publication.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Christian advised that the Housing Service Improvement Panel would

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be co-ordinating 'MOTs' for properties and the Forum was invited to submit alternative suggestions for an appropriate name.

It was reported that following the meeting, Mrs Christian would step down as representative of INTRA on the Forum and would instead be attending as a representative of the Disability Forum. In light of this, a new member of INTRA would be joining TLF in the near future.

A discussion took place with regard to the approval of actions that had been agreed at Workshop meetings. The Forum agreed that if the Workshop meetings were quorate, it would be authorised to make decisions on straightforward actions without the approval of the Forum. Mr Glennon advised that more complex and significant matters would continue to be submitted to the full Forum for approval. The Forum requested that this clause be included in the Constitution.

Mike Glennon

With regard to Public Liability Insurance, members were advised that the TARAs would be covered for standard low-risk activities undertaken within the community centres by BCH's insurance. However, groups would need to obtain separate insurance for other activities, or those that were undertaken outside of the community centres.

Mrs Horn advised the Forum that Grange Park was in the process of scheduling a number of 'Big Lunch' events and encouraged other TARAs and community groups to be involved. A copy of dates would be circulated to members.

Maureen Horn

Mrs Horn also requested that the new governance arrangements include a 'buddy scheme' to enable individual tenants to flag up issues confidentially.

12. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Tuesday 13th July 2010, commencing at 10.00 a.m. in Committee Room A, Blackpool Town Hall.

Georgina
Atkinson

The meeting ended at 11.55 a.m.

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
Georgina Atkinson, Senior Democratic Services Adviser
Tel: (01253) 477164, e-mail: georgina.atkinson@blackpool.gov.uk