



BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 2008
AT 6.00PM, PROGRESS HOUSE**

PRESENT:

Irene Bishop
Simon Blackburn
Joan Greenhalgh
Jim Houldsworth
Alison Stringer
Alan Marsh
Tim Cox
Ron Bell
Bill Rogers
Doreen Wightman (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Jefferson
Maggie Cornall
Cyril Holland
Peter Whittaker

Peter Cross – Independent Consultant
Jennifer Jaynes, Assistant Director Integrated Care Services, Blackpool Council

	PART A – OPEN MEETING – 10TH SEPTEMBER 2008
1.	<p>Apologies Diane Bellinger, Carol Hall, Neil Jack</p> <p>Not Present Mick Buchanan</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no items of interest declared.</p>
3.	<p>Minutes of Meeting 30th July 2008</p> <p>Agreed That the minutes be accepted as a true record.</p>
4.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>A. Simon Blackburn asked that the Chair make contact with Mick Buchanan to confirm that he still wishes to remain a Director.</p>



B. Item 9 Housing Corporation Accreditation – Peter Jefferson stated that the draft legal documents had been received from Muir HA and are currently with BCH’s Solicitors. He explained that VAT is payable if BCH manages another provider’s stock but Government are currently reviewing this because it could be stopping housing organisations managing other providers’ stock, which is something that the Government want organisations to do.

C. Item 10 Income & Debt Prevention (IDP) – “Vanguard” Process Re-engineering
As previously requested, Maggie Cornall reported the official DWP statistics in relation to Housing Benefit processing performance for 2007/08.

New Tenant Claims Average Processing Times in Days

Blackpool	44
Blackburn	23
Fylde	32
Lancaster	19
Preston	28
Wyre	23

Percentage Of New Claims Processed Within 14 Days

Blackpool	61%
Blackburn	89%
Fylde	77%
Lancaster	92%
Preston	88%
Wyre	97%

She also reported anecdotal evidence on processing times that had been provided by local social housing organisations.

- New Fylde Housing Association - 6-7 weeks (Fylde Borough Council)
- Preston Community Gateway - up to a 7 weeks (Preston City Council)
- Wyre Housing Association - 4-6 weeks (Wyre Borough Council)

She reported that, in conjunction with BCH’s own IDP Team the Council’s HB Team had recently begun to implement elements of their re-designed processes to create a more customer focused approach. Rent arrears have dropped by over £50k during the last fortnight as processing queries and their resultant backlogs had been cleared.

Jim Houldsworth offered his congratulations on these results to the IDP Team. Maggie Cornall agreed to contact Marie McRoberts of the Council’s HB Team to commend the member of her staff involved in the process for their hard work.



5.	Minutes of Sub-Committees & Matters Arising
A.	<p>Operations Sub-Committee – 19th August 2008</p> <p>In the absence of the Sub-Committee Chair, Alison Stringer reported that the Sheltered and Emergency Housing Team Plan had been presented and was very well received.</p> <p>Agreed That the minutes be accepted.</p>
B.	<p>Asset Management Sub-Committee – 26th August 2008</p> <p>The Sub-Committee Chair, Alan Marsh, reported that Mears had provided an update relating to their schedule of works. Updates had also been provided on the Decent Homes work so far. It had also been agreed that two Estate Management Officer posts be created on a temporary basis for a six month period to assist with providing support to tenants whilst the works are being carried out in their homes.</p> <p>Agreed That the minutes be accepted.</p>
C.	<p>Finance & Audit Sub-Committee – 27th August 2008</p> <p>The Sub-Committee Chair, Simon Blackburn, reported that the issues discussed are clearly set out in the minutes and that he would be happy to answer questions on them. Jim Houldsworth asked whether BCH will keep pace with the Council in completing the pay review. Peter Jefferson stated that, once a consultant has been appointed, we will be in a better position to judge how long it will take but the aim is to work in line with the Council.</p> <p>Agreed That the minutes be accepted.</p>
D.	<p>Human Resources Sub-Committee – 24th July 2008</p> <p>Doreen Wightman stated that the minutes gave a thorough explanation of the matters that had been discussed. Tim Cox asked for a word to be amended on page 3 under item TUPE in the last paragraph, which should read “assured” and not “ensured”. Alan Marsh asked whether various policy documents had been circulated as promised because he had not received any.</p> <p>Agreed That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The minutes be accepted. B. Neil Jack circulate the relevant policy documents to Board Members.



<p>6.</p>	<p>Governance Issues</p> <p>Peter Whittaker presented a report covering a number of issues:</p> <p>A. For Decision Directors' Expenses - Car Mileage Rate and Communications Allowance</p> <p>B. For Information Directors' Performance Appraisal, Training and Development Director Recruitment Annual General Meeting and Rotational Retirement of Directors Election of Chair and Vice-Chair at October Board Meeting</p> <p>Agreed That:</p> <p>A. With effect from 1st April 2008 the Car Mileage rate be set at the maximum allowed by HMRC for tax liability purposes, currently 40p per mile</p> <p>B. Enquiries be made about the need for Directors to have business class insurance if car mileage is being claimed.</p> <p>C. With effect from 1st October 2008 the Communication Allowance be set at £14.00 per month and be fixed at that level for two years until April 2010.</p> <p>D. The information items in the report be noted.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Housing Inspection Update</p> <p>Peter Jefferson presented a progress report setting out the actions taken by BCH to address the four recommendations of the Audit Commission that arose from their inspection of Housing Services in November 2007.</p> <p>Agreed That the report and the actions described within it be noted</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Supported Tenancies</p> <p>Maggie Cornall presented an information report to consider the implications of a Mental Health Supported Living Project. Blackpool Council's Adult Services and Housing Department, through BCH, propose to make available up to 12 one-bedroom properties, adjacent to sheltered schemes, on a nomination agreement basis to the Primary Care Trust over a ten year period. The Richmond fellowship will provide time-limited floating support to the tenants.</p> <p>She explained that the Council has already made an Executive decision to enable properties to be let under the scheme outside of its normal Allocations Policy rules and that the management arrangements for the scheme are within the remit of the Management Agreement between BCH and the Council. In return for their right to nominate tenants the PCT will provide the Council with £120,000 of capital funding for Decent Homes Improvement works and will underwrite any void rent loss arising from the project.</p>



	<p>Ron Bell raised issues with this proposal, particularly the accuracy of judgements about the ability of people to move back into the wider community and asked for more information. Simon Blackburn expressed concern about the appropriateness of the areas in which the properties would be located and the degree of support to be given. Jim Houldsworth stated there had recently been issues at Kipling Court with regard to tenants with mental health issues, which had caused severe problems for other tenants.</p> <p>Maggie Cornall confirmed that support for each case would be considered individually and that, if an individual tenant is having coping difficulties, the PCT and the Richmond Fellowship would take them back at any time. .</p> <p>Agreed That Peter Green from the Richmond Fellowship be invited to a meeting to discuss further and answer any questions.</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>A.</p> <p>B.</p> <p>C.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Customer Involvement Awards Peter Jefferson stated that BCH are holding their first Customer Involvement Awards Ceremony on 23rd October which is being sponsored by BCH contractors. All Directors were invited to attend.</p> <p>Energy Efficiency Certificates Jim Houldsworth noted that from 1st October energy efficiency certificates have to be put on display and asked whether BCH had made these arrangements. Cyril Holland stated that the Project Managers are trained to complete energy performance surveys so that BCH will be compliant.</p> <p>Dunsop Court Peter Jefferson reported that Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service had served a notice on the Council requiring them to improve fire safety at Dunsop Court. Currently there are 18 vulnerable tenants at Dunsop Court and the primary concern is the ability to evacuate them from the building in an emergency. Discussions and investigations have taken place about fitting more advanced smoke alarms and making alterations to the lifts to allow them still to be used in the event of fire. The Fire Service, however, are not happy with these possible improvements.</p> <p>Agreed That investigation of acceptable solutions should continue and that the Board be kept informed of progress.</p>



	PART B – CLOSED MEETING – 10TH SEPTEMBER 2008
1.	<p>Performance Management</p> <p>There was further discussion of the report presented to the Board on 30th July 2008.</p> <p>Agreed That</p> <p>A. Further consideration be given to and recommendations be formulated on i.) The remit and functions of the Sub-Committee ii.) Membership of the Sub-committee and appointment of the Chair of the Sub-Committee.</p> <p>B. Further research be carried out to establish the approach to Performance Management taken by other ALMOs.</p> <p>C. The scheme to commence with effect from 1st April 2008.</p>
2.	<p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 29th October 2008 at 6.00pm in Conference Room 1 at Progress House following the Annual General Meeting.</p>
	The meeting closed at 8.05pm.