



BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25th MARCH 2009
AT 6.00 PM, PROGRESS HOUSE**

PRESENT:

Diane Bellinger
 Cllr Simon Blackburn
 Caroline Cook
 Cllr Tim Cox
 Alan Marsh
 Judith Mills
 Bill Rogers
 Janet Stirling
 Alison Stringer
 Paul Whitehead
 Doreen Wightman (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Jefferson (Chief Executive)
 Maggie Cornall (Director of Housing Services)
 Cyril Holland (Director of Property Services)
 Neil Jack (Director of Finance & Resources)
 Peter Whittaker (Company Secretary)

Peter Cross (Independent Consultant)
 Steve Pullan (Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Housing)

	PART A – OPEN MEETING – 25TH MARCH 2009
1.	Apologies Cllr Ron Bell, Cllr Joan Greenhalgh, Carol Hall, Cllr Jim Houldsworth
2.	Declarations of Interest Peter Cross declared an interest in Item 10
3.	Minutes of Meeting 4th February 2009 Agreed That the minutes be accepted as a true record.
4.	Matters Arising There were no matters arising



5. Minutes of Sub-Committees & Matters Arising

A. Finance & Audit Sub-Committee – 11th March 2009

The Sub-Committee Chair, Simon Blackburn, stated that all items discussed are covered under the main agenda.

With regard to Item 7 Tim Cox asked whether a decision had yet been made on the award of the Grounds Maintenance contract. Neil Jack confirmed that a decision had been made since the Board papers were dispatched.

Agreed

That the minutes be accepted.

B. Operations Sub-Committee – 17th March 2009

The Sub-Committee Chair, Alison Stringer, stated that the Terms of Reference had been reviewed and agreed with two amendments. Cyril Holland gave an update on the forthcoming regulatory change from Corgi to the new Gas Safety Register which comes into effect from 1st April 2009. A presentation was also given on the Gas Services Team Plan, which was well received.

There was a discussion of the Sub-Committee's resolution to hold a scoping meeting relating to scrutiny of the Customer Involvement Team Plan. The view was expressed by two Directors that it was not the Board's role to scrutinise Team Plans in detail because that responsibility lies with SMT. It was also noted that the Team Plan in question had previously been reviewed by the Operations Sub-Committee and that consideration of scrutiny principles and methodologies for BCH should be wider than the context in which the issue had now been raised.

Agreed

That:

1. There should be some investigation of how scrutiny processes operate in other ALMOs in order to help inform initial consideration of all relevant issues by the Operations Sub-Committee at a special meeting to be convened for that purpose.
2. Other than in relation to the issue of scrutiny (as noted at Minute 5B1 above) the minutes be accepted.

C. Asset Management Sub-Committee – 17th March 2009

The Sub-Committee Chair, Alan Marsh, reported that Connaught had provided an update relating to their schedule of works. An update was given on the Decent Homes programme and it was confirmed that we are on target to complete the Year 1 programme by 31st March and within budget. Alan stated that work has been awarded to the contractors for the forthcoming year based on their performance in the first year.

Agreed

That the minutes be accepted.



<p>D.</p>	<p>Human Resources Sub-Committee – 19th March 2009</p> <p>Diane Bellinger, in the absence of the Sub-Committee Chair, reported that an in-depth discussion had taken place with regard to the Job Evaluation process and a full report will be brought to the next Board meeting. She explained that the Sub-Committee had recommended using the Hay Group on a short timescale to commence on 1st June.</p> <p>Diane also stated that the Sub-Committee had decided that any backdating of pay should be to a maximum of 15th January 2007, the date upon which BCH entered into its Management Agreement with Blackpool Council. It was also decided that pay protection be offered to all posts which are reduced in grade as a result of the review for a maximum period of 2 years on the basis of annual earnings at the time of pay reduction..</p> <p>Simon stated that it would be helpful to know what other ALMOs are doing in relation to the length of the protection period because under ACAS guidelines the maximum is given as two years. Simon also stated that he was unsure whether the Unions would be in a position to give assistance. Neil Jack stated that two years is common amongst other ALMOs but agreed to look at other North West organisations to ascertain what they do.</p> <p>Agreed That the minutes be accepted.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>2009-10 HRA Rent Review and Budget Report</p> <p>Neil Jack presented the report which explains the Rent Review Report 2009/10, which has been approved by Blackpool Council for. The report also looks at the Housing Revenue Account budget 2009-10 and working balances as at 31st March 2009.</p> <p>In response to a question from Tim Cox, Neil Jack explained that detail allocation of the £340,000 of HRA funds to specific projects, which the Council has asked BCH to manage, will be made jointly by BCH and the Council.</p> <p>Agreed That the report be noted.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>2009-10 BCH Budget Report</p> <p>Neil Jack presented the report setting out the proposed BCH Management Fee and Budget for 2009-10. The report had already been considered by the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee and was very similar in content to the Budget Outline report presented to the Board at its previous meeting. The main changes related to the increase of £60,000 in the Management Fee and the additional income derived from BCH management of the Travellers' Site. The site manager's services are now directly contracted by BCH, rather than through the Council as previously and the Management Fee has been increased to cover this extra cost. Neil Jack also stated that sections on the issues of risk management and the appropriate level of working balances had been added.</p> <p>Agreed That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The draft budget be approved. 2. BCH hold a minimum level of working balances of £500,000.



<p>8.</p>	<p>BCH Business Plan 2009 to 2014</p> <p>Peter Whittaker presented the report in order to identify progress in reviewing and refreshing the current BCH Business Plan. He explained that the revised Business Plan and Visioning Document will be taken to all Sub-Committees ahead of consideration by the full Board at its meeting on 20th May 2009.</p> <p>Agreed That progress on updating the Business Plan be noted and the full report be awaited.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>2009-10 Board Training Plan</p> <p>Peter Whittaker introduced the report prepared by Peter Cross of 3E Management, which sets out proposals to meet identified Board Training and Development Needs.</p> <p>Peter Cross presented his report setting out both a Training Strategy up to 2012 and a Training Plan for 2009-10. The elements of the Training Plan resulted from Directors' views expressed through the 360 surveys and consultation with SMT through which priorities, delivery mechanisms and resources were identified for inclusion in the plan. Diane Bellinger asked whether there will be feedback to individual Directors following the 360 survey and Doreen Wightman stated that she will be arranging meetings for that purpose. She also stated that if any costs are identified that would result in expenditure above approved budget levels the proposals must be put to the Board for consideration.</p> <p>Agreed That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Training & Development Strategy for 2009-12 be approved. 2. The elements and priorities of the Training Plan 2009-10 be approved in principle. 3. The extent to which the Training Plan can be delivered, and the speed of delivery, will depend upon the type and quantity of resources, financial and human, required and identified as available when compared with other demands upon the Board's budget. 4. When sufficient resource information is available the final form of the Training Plan be considered by the HR Sub-Committee with a view to resolving any conflicts of content or priority.
<p>10.</p>	<p>Board and Board Member Training & Development</p> <p>In view of his previously declared interest in this item Peter Cross of 3E Management left the meeting at this point.</p> <p>Peter Whittaker reminded the Board that at its last meeting it had approved the formation of an ad-hoc Panel to review the Mentoring Programme, related Board and Board Member training and development and appropriate procurement methods. The Panel members were Doreen Wightman, Simon Blackburn and Alan Marsh, representing each of the three elements of the Board, two of whom had taken part in the Mentoring Programme and one of whom had not.</p>



	<p>The report presented set out the results of the Panel’s consideration of these issues together with their recommendations for future action.</p> <p>In the ensuing discussion a number of points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When BCH was a newly formed organisation, the need for mentoring was obviously greater and its costs could be justified, but the existing knowledge and experience of current Directors could and should now be shared with new colleagues. A small number of Directors did, however, express some concern about the effectiveness of this Peer Mentoring approach. • Several Directors commented that mentoring had been very helpful, that they had developed and improved their skills and effectiveness as a result of it and could now build on what they had learnt through a process of self-development. • Mentoring in its current form would continue to be offered to newly appointed Directors for an initial period of seven sessions and, if still required after that time, would be provided through Peer Mentoring with other Directors or appropriate officers. • As well as mentoring in the first period of tenure, new Directors require relevant information and training to develop their effectiveness. <p>Diane Bellinger commented that the report was a good statement of the position and had made her realise what a good service BCH had provided to its Board. She was of the opinion that the recommendations are reasonable and proposed that they be approved as set out in the report. This was seconded by Paul Whitehead. The motion was put to the vote and carried, with 7 votes for and 3 against.</p> <p>Agreed That the recommendations of the Review Panel as set out in the report in respect of the provision of services for Board and Board Member Performance Appraisal & Development, Director Mentoring and the method of their procurement be approved.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Income & Debt Prevention Service Review</p> <p>Maggie Cornall presented a report on the outcome of the recent voluntary inspection of the Income and Debt Prevention Service together with a suggestion to recommend to the Council a proposal for investing in debt prevention for Council Tenants.</p> <p>Agreed That the additional £60,000 of BCH income provided by the Council, and intended for debt prevention as per their Director of Finance and Audit’s Budget Report, be spent on additional staffing within the Income and Debt Prevention Team and in the provision of promotional and training opportunities for tenants.</p>



<p>12.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Inside Housing – Peter Whittaker asked if Directors were now receiving weekly copies of Inside Housing and received confirmation from all Directors present.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Motion to Move Into Part B Closed Session</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>That in view of its confidential and commercially sensitive nature it is proposed that the remaining item on the agenda be discussed in Part B Closed Session and that any members of the press or public currently present be excluded from that part of the Board Meeting.</p>
<p>PART B – CLOSED MEETING – 25TH MARCH 2009</p>	
<p>1.</p>	<p>Office Accommodation Options Review</p> <p>Peter Jefferson presented a report reviewing current office accommodation for BCH and considering options for the future.</p> <p>Steve Pullan, as the Client Representative, set out the Council’s position on this matter. He referred to the four goals of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Blackpool and confirmed that BCH had played an important part in helping to achieve a number of them. He asked the Board to recognise how well BCH had already supported the strategy and how it could continue to do so by giving strong consideration to the option of a town centre office in view of the regeneration benefits that such a move would bring.</p> <p>In discussion a number of points were raised or noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was felt that the report gave a comprehensive explanation of the options with sufficient depth of financial and other detail to enable a clear conclusion to be drawn that the option of the former Harvey’s building in the town centre was the most suitable location. • If moving to the Town Centre will assist in regenerating the area, whilst at the same time not creating major inconvenience in terms of access for both customers and staff, then it must be considered a viable option. • It was confirmed that the proposal is for the Council to buy and refurbish the property with BCH leasing it for a period that would at least cover the initial term of the BCH Management Agreement with the Council. • Steve Pullan confirmed that BCH accommodation would be kept quite separate from the Council’s Talbot Gateway office development and commented that, in any event, the timescales for the Talbot Gateway would not fit in with BCH needs.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was confirmed that, whilst it is an issue currently still under negotiation, staff would receive free parking but in as yet unspecified locations. • It was confirmed that rest room facilities would be available, although not in the form of a canteen as such and that refurbishment and fitting out would be done to a standard that would fully meet BCH requirements. <p>It was proposed by Simon Blackburn and seconded by Caroline Cook that the option of the former Harvey's building be chosen.</p> <p>Agreed That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Queens Park Contact Centre should be used when empty to extend the current Queens Park Estate Office for use by the Income & Debt Prevention Service. 2. Homestop should be based in Blackpool town centre and a suitable location should be identified. 3. The former Harvey's building be the preferred relocation option for BCH subject to the satisfactory outcome of negotiations with the Council. 4. The officers of BCH be empowered to negotiate with the Council and make other preparations for relocation. 5. The Chair of the Board, acting in consultation with the Chief Executive, be empowered to approve the final negotiated arrangements and sign any necessary documentation subject to any significant variations from the position now reported being submitted to the full Board for approval. 6. In light of the decisions recorded at 3, 4 and 5 above the proposal to set up a project group to review options further be not pursued.
<p>2.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no other business</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 20th May 2009 at 6.00pm in Conference Room 1 at Progress House.</p>
	<p>The meeting closed at 8.10pm.</p>