



BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4th FEBRUARY 2009
AT 6.00 PM, PROGRESS HOUSE**

PRESENT:

Diane Bellinger
 Caroline Cook
 Cllr Ron Bell
 Cllr Joan Greenhalgh
 Cllr Jim Houldsworth
 Alan Marsh
 Bill Rogers
 Alison Stringer
 Paul Whitehead
 Judith Mills
 Janet Stirling
 Doreen Wightman (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

Peter Cross (Independent Consultant)
 Andy Foot (Fylde Coast Housing Strategy Manager)

	PART A – OPEN MEETING – 4TH FEBRUARY 2009
1.	Apologies Cllr Tim Cox, Cllr Simon Blackburn, Carol Hall, Maggie Cornall
2.	Declarations of Interest There were no items of interest declared.
3.	Minutes of Meeting 10th December 2008 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 – 20th January 2009

Paul Whitehead, in the absence of the Sub-Committee Chair, confirmed that a report had been provided by Internal Audit in relation to the Communal Cleaning, Waste Collection and Security Services. Other items discussed were covered under the main agenda.

Neil Jack confirmed that the Council was due to make its decision on the rent increase for 2009-10 at the Executive Meeting on 11th February, which will be considered for ratification at full Council on 27th February. The increase options lay in a range between 2% and 6.5%, all of which can be afforded in the budget, but it was expected that any increase is more likely to be at the lower end of the range.

Agreed

That the minutes be accepted.

B. Human Resources Sub-Committee – 22nd January 2009

Diane Bellinger, in the absence of the Sub-Committee Chair, confirmed that a revised set of minutes had been tabled to incorporate a greater sense of the discussion that had taken place about Job Evaluation. Diane stated that the main concern was about the cost of the evaluation process and the Sub-Committee had felt strongly that BCH should look for a better deal on the price. It had been agreed that it would be better to use a single company for all evaluations and further discussion on that issue will take place at the next Sub-Committee meeting.

Joan Greenhalgh asked how it would affect staff, as some staff in the Council have been affected quite heavily. Peter Jefferson confirmed that BCH would not be using the same approach as the Council as we are much smaller. During the recent organisational restructures the grades of posts had been looked at very carefully to ensure minimal disruption and BCH do not expect the same level of concerns as the Council have had.

Bill Rogers asked how many job titles there are in BCH and Neil Jack stated that there are between 50 and 60. Caroline Cook asked whether staff losing out would be able to ask for reasons. Peter Jefferson confirmed that all staff will be consulted with on a regular basis and there will also be an appeals procedure.

Agreed

That the minutes be accepted.

C. Asset Management Sub-Committee – 27th January 2009

The Sub-Committee Chair, Alan Marsh, stated that a report updating on progress made against the 2008-09 Decent Homes Programme had been presented.

Jim Houldsworth asked whether any of the properties completed had not been up to standard. Cyril Holland confirmed that the skill factor is not the performance issue with some of the contractors, but rather the length of time taken by some individuals to carry out their work. Cyril confirmed that no job is signed off if it is not up to the standard required and the current level of customer satisfaction is at the 98% level.



<p>D.</p>	<p>Joan Greenhalgh commented that, from her own experience of speaking to Mereside residents, the length of time the work has taken rather than the quality was the issue about which they had most concern. Cyril confirmed that all tenants are left with washing and toilet facilities each night and that “comfort zones” including kitchens had been set up to allow tenants to get away from their property whilst the work was being done in it.</p> <p>Ron Bell asked whether the use of Blackpool Build Up had reflected any additional costs to BCH. Cyril confirmed that there were no additional costs as the contractors have nurtured these employees. There have been no effects on quality or cost, just a little additional time for completions, although the programme is still on target. Ron Bell asked whether a tour of decent homes work could be arranged.</p> <p>Agreed That the minutes be accepted.</p> <p>Operations Sub-Committee – 27th January 2009</p> <p>The Sub-Committee Chair, Alison Stringer, reported that the Income & Debt Prevention Service Team Plan was presented and had been well received. A report of a review of the Income & Debt Prevention service had also been presented which demonstrated that the recommendations from the Audit Commission inspection had been achieved and that the service was now much more positive and customer focussed.</p> <p>Bill Rogers asked how long it would be before the new ICT system would be in place. Peter Jefferson confirmed that it will be in the region 18 months as the procurement of a new system is time consuming.</p> <p>Agreed That the minutes be accepted.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Fylde Coast Housing Strategy</p> <p>A presentation on the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy was given by Andy Foot, Fylde Coast Housing Strategy Manager. He explained the reasons behind the strategy and what it will deliver. A core strategy will identify where housing should be located and there will be discussion across Fylde local authority boundaries; the key point being that Blackpool cannot stand aside and do nothing. Diane Bellinger asked how BCH can link into the action plans and Peter Jefferson confirmed that BCH have a representative on the Local Strategic Partnership group.</p> <p>Agreed That the strategy proposals be noted and that BCH play its full part with the Council and other partners to finalise and implement it.</p>



<p>7.</p>	<p>2008-09 Q3 Operational Performance Balanced Scorecard</p> <p>Peter Jefferson presented the Balanced Scorecard and commented on particular items of interest or concern</p> <p>BUS01 – There are 47 properties without a current Landlord’s Gas Service Record (LGSR). All these properties had been visited 3 times by our gas contractor and their tenants are now due in court so that injunctions may be obtained to gain access.</p> <p>BUS02 – There had been a slight dip in repairs completed on time due to the shortage of joiners. Following a recent advertisement, over 100 applications have been received.</p> <p>FIN05 & FIN06 – The I&DP team are working very hard on rent arrears recovery and are now more proactive in their approach to the issues. The report from the recent inspection will be brought to the next meeting. Ron Bell asked how many properties the £430k arrears figure represents and Peter Jefferson agreed to provide the information. Jim Houldsworth reminded the Board that BCH have a contract with Advice Link which and tenants are referred to them if the I&DP team establish that tenants have general debt issues to deal with as well as their rent arrears. Peter Jefferson also confirmed that we are benchmarking with other organisations that are doing well with arrears recovery to identify and share best practice..</p> <p>FIN15 – Turnover in two of the tower blocks had increased over the last few months and the reasons for this are being explored.</p> <p>FIN14 – A smaller amount of former tenant arrears had been written off this year by the Council. BCH use 2 debt collection agencies but the direct use of BCH staff is now being considered.</p> <p>CUS07, 08 & 09 – BCH are currently working with the Council to produce more informative reports on these aspects of customer contact.</p> <p>Agreed That the 2008-09 Quarter Three Operational Performance position be noted</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>2008-09 Q3 BCH Budget Monitoring Report</p> <p>Neil Jack stated that at the end of December 2008, the third quarter of 2008-09, it is projected that BCH will have a surplus of £297,000 at the financial year end, compared with the budgeted level of £100,000. This would increase balances to £519,000.</p> <p>Agreed The 2008-09 Quarter Three financial position be noted.</p>



<p>9.</p>	<p>2008-09 Q3 HRA Budget Monitoring Report</p> <p>Neil Jack stated that at the end of December 2008, the third quarter of 2008-09, it is projected that there will be a surplus on the HRA of £278,000 at the financial year end, compared with the budgeted level of £120,000. HRA balances are now projected to be £1,396,000 at the end of the year.</p> <p>Agreed That the 2008-09 Quarter Three financial position be noted.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>2009-10 BCH Board Forward Plan</p> <p>Peter Whittaker presented a report which is aimed at providing the Board with a plan of agenda items for its future meetings in the period January 2009 to March 2010. He explained that it would be updated as the year progresses and revised versions distributed to Directors. Doreen Wightman confirmed that this would be useful.</p> <p>Agreed That the 2009 -10 Board Forward Plan be approved.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Board & Board Member Training and Development</p> <p>Peter Whittaker presented a report considering the method of reviewing and re-tendering the Mentoring Programme and related Board and Board Member training and development requirements.</p> <p>Agreed That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed tendering method, including the formation of the review and evaluation panel be approved. 2. The panel submit its recommendations to the Board at the March 2009 meeting.
<p>12.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><u>CIH North West Annual Conference</u> Doreen Wightman asked anyone who is interested in attending this conference, which is being held on 18th March 2009, to let Sam Fowler know.</p>



	PART B – CLOSED MEETING – 4TH FEBRUARY 2009
1.	<p>2009-10 BCH Budget Setting Overview</p> <p>Neil Jack presented a Budget Overview Report for 2009-10.</p> <p>Doreen Wightman had concerns that of the proposed budget uplift of £15k for Board & Democracy nearly half of that amount had been spent in 2008-09 on Director recruitment, particularly the elections for Customer Directors. Neil Jack stated that this figure can be re-visited once the training plan has been produced and its cost implications identified.</p> <p>Agreed That the budget setting overview, its proposals and underlying assumptions be approved as the basis for development of finalised 2009-10 budget proposals to be presented for full approval at the March 2009 Board Meeting.</p>
2.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There were no other items of business</p>
3.	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 25th March 2009 at 6.00pm in Conference Room 1 at Progress House.</p>
	The meeting closed at 8.50pm.