



BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16th DECEMBER 2009
AT 6.00 PM, PROGRESS HOUSE**

PRESENT:

Cllr Ron Bell
 Diane Bellinger
 Cllr Simon Blackburn
 Caroline Cook
 Cllr Joan Greenhalgh
 Cllr Jim Houldsworth
 Cllr Tim Cox
 Alan Marsh
 Alison Stringer
 Janet Stirling
 Paul Whitehead
 Doreen Wightman (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

PART A – OPEN SESSION

1.	<p><u>Apologies</u> Carol Hall, Bill Rogers</p>
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u> None</p>
3.	<p><u>Minutes of Board Meeting 4th November 2009</u> Tim Cox apologised for not attending the last meeting</p> <p>Agreed: That the Minutes be approved as a true record.</p>
4.	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>Item 5 Part B Doreen Wightman confirmed that there are no proposals for change to the BCH Board and Committee structure under consideration at present. She explained that these matters need to be considered in the service wide context of an externally validated Governance Review early in 2010-11 and that reports will be brought to future Board Meetings to consider the format and methodology for a review.</p> <p>The forthcoming Learning & Development session on the 2006 Companies Act and its impact upon Directors' duties and responsibilities, and also on the implications of the new TSA regulatory regime, will help to inform the way forward for BCH. Examples of best practice from other ALMO's will be sought and the content of the 360 degree appraisal programme will be adjusted to contribute to the review.</p>



	<p>Agreed</p> <p>That reports be brought to the Board in sufficient time to enable the governance review to be commissioned in April 2010.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>Updated Board and Committee Meeting dates 2010 – 2011</u></p> <p>Peter Whittaker confirmed that the dates had been updated to comply with the amendments requested at the last meeting.</p> <p>In the December 2009 to February 2010 meeting cycle each Committee will review and agree final dates for its meetings in 2010-11 and a final combined Board and Committee meeting schedule will be issues at the February Board Meeting.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>That the updated 2010-11 Board Meeting schedule be noted and approved.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Office Accommodation Progress</u></p> <p>Peter Jefferson reported that the Council is expected to complete the purchase of the Harvey’s building during the next week. He explained that there were still unresolved issues in respect of the Council’s current unwillingness to fully refurbish elements of the building and the potentially onerous repairing obligations that the lease would then impose upon BCH. Detailed Council agreement to its previous offer for car parking arrangements was also still outstanding.</p> <p>Neil Jack confirmed that, in view of the length of time needed for proper refurbishment it could well be September or October 2010 before the building is ready for occupation.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>That the position be noted and that every effort be made to expedite the Council’s agreement to resolve the outstanding issues.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>New Council House Building Update</u></p> <p>Cyril Holland reported that, with one exception, planning applications had been submitted for the sites and that a range of issues were being addressed. These are both technical in nature, such as drainage, but also community based, as in the case of the effect of the programme on a play area. Rehousing of current tenants is almost complete and two contractors have been appointed by the Council. There is as yet no further information available about the Phase 2 funding bid that was made.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>That the position be noted.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>BCH Academy</u></p> <p>Maggie Cornell presented the report, explaining the purpose of the BCH Academy and its origins in the staff training and qualification arrangements developed with Blackpool and the Fylde College. She explained that the work of the Academy will focus on providing information for customers on social housing issues and their impact on the work of BCH in delivering services to its customers.</p>



	<p>The training will be delivered by BCH staff members who have themselves been formally trained as trainers and who deliver the staff courses. A pilot course is now underway and the first customers to “graduate” will be presented with certificates at the Community Involvement Awards Ceremony in January 2010.</p> <p>Peter Whittaker further explained that Directors would be welcome to participate in the Academy sessions as a way of broadening and deepening their own housing knowledge. It would also be possible to use the training materials for specific sessions within the Learning & Development sessions built into the Board Meeting schedule for 2010-11 without the need to prolong normal meetings.</p> <p>It would also be possible to use the materials to develop a Board Handbook as a source of reference that would be of value to both newly appointed and longer standing Directors. It was noted that such a handbook could be produced in electronic form.</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>That</p> <p>A. The training offered by the BCH Academy be offered to Board Members by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attending Academy sessions in company with other groups, including customers or staff members, AND/OR 2. Holding specific training events at Board Meetings. <p>B. A BCH handbook for use by Directors be developed, based upon a combination of Induction Pack and BCH Academy course materials.</p>
<p>9</p> <p>9A</p> <p>9B</p> <p>9C</p>	<p><u>Minutes of Board Committee Meetings and Matters Arising</u></p> <p>Human Resources Committee 10th November 2009 Considered as Appendix to Agenda Item B1</p> <p>Asset Management Committee 24th November 2009 In the absence of Alan Marsh Tim Cox had chaired the meeting and gave an overview of the matters discussed.</p> <p>Agreed That the minutes be accepted</p> <p>Operations Committee Meeting 8th December 2009</p> <p>Item 4 Balanced Scorecard</p> <p>Ref – FIN14 - Peter Jefferson confirmed that the work being done in relation to Former Tenant Arrears is to streamline the process of reviewing the possibility of recovery of these arrears before they are written off as non-collectable. Maggie Cornall explained that a case for write-off of each case has to be made before the Council can approve it. She commented that the amount written off in 2008-09 was lower than normal because of the need to ensure that arrears were not the result of under payment of Housing Benefit arising from previous changes to the Council’s system. As a result it is to be expected that write-offs in 2009-10 will be greater than normal in both numbers and value.</p> <p>Item 6 - This was incorrectly numbered as Item 5 and should read that Alison Stringer is to be re-elected as Chair of the Committee.</p> <p>Agreed</p>



<p>9D</p>	<p>That the minutes be accepted</p> <p>Finance & Audit Committee 15th December 2009</p> <p>Simon Blackburn expressed his thanks for the speed with which the minutes had been produced in view of the fact that the meeting had taken place only the day before.</p> <p>Item 5 – Cost Benchmarking 2008-09</p> <p>In response to a query, Neil Jack explained that the overall high cost of void property repair and management was primarily related to high tenancy turnover rather than the cost of repair to individual dwellings. Investigations in to reasons for high turnover are being made.</p> <p>Simon Blackburn further explained that the benchmarking sample size (18 organisations) was low compared to previous years and may not therefore be fully representative. He stated that the exercise would be run again in the first quarter of 2010, by which time more organisations should have input their data and accuracy would be increased.</p> <p>Item 6 – Housing Management System.</p> <p>Simon Blackburn gave a brief overview of the issues that the Committee had considered when evaluating the tenders received for the proposed new system. In response to questions, both he and Neil Jack clarified a number of points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst it is possible to upgrade the existing system the cost difference between that approach and the provision of a new system is relatively small. • An organisation of the size and complexity of BCH needs robust ICT systems and implementation of a new, modern system is considered the best way to achieve that as it provides cost-effectiveness and value for money. • Given that the life expectancy of the new system is at least five years, the allocated budget of £100,000 for it is at an appropriate level. • As with any system there will also be annual maintenance payments to make but these will be only about half of the current level. <p>Agreed: That Company C (Orchard Housing) be selected as the preferred supplier for the new Housing Management System.</p>
<p>10</p> <p>10A</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Peter Jefferson reported that a joint funding bid with the Council had been made for £100,000 to be awarded to the Springboard Project to extend its work. BCH would refer tenant families to Springboard for assistance, with the intention of reducing the incidence of Anti Social Behaviour.</p> <p>Agreed: That the position be noted.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p><u>Motion to move into part B Closed section</u></p> <p>Agreed: That in view of its confidential nature the remaining item on the agenda be discussed in</p>



	Part B Closed Session and that any members of the press or public currently present be excluded from that part of the Board Meeting.
<u>PART B CLOSED SESSION</u>	
1	<p>EQUAL PAY REVIEW (EPR)</p> <p>Peter Jefferson thanked Neil Jack and Claire Smith for their work and time given to managing the Equal Pay Review process. Diane Bellinger, the Director member of the EPR Steering Group, reinforced his comments and referred to the strong working relationship with the unions that had been developed.</p> <p>Neil Jack presented the report and explained that the HR committee had agreed to all the recommendations made in the detailed report that it had considered and that those recommendations were now being presented for approval by the Board as a whole.</p> <p>Diane Bellinger stressed that Directors should not underestimate the effect that the pay changes may have upon staff, and not purely from a financial point of view. Neil Jack explained how staff will be notified of the outcome for them personally and the support that will be offered to them.</p> <p>A number of detailed questions were raised and answered in the resultant debate and many Directors generally expressed support for the proposals. Doreen Wightman, as Chair of the Board thanked all the staff involved and also Diane Bellinger for her role.</p> <p>Agreed:</p> <p>That</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The new “payline” and revised pay scales be approved. B. The Equal Pay review be implemented with effect from 1st April 2010 C. There will be no backdating of any changes in pay D. Employees who receive an actual cash loss in their pay be offered pay protection for a period of 18 months from the date of implementation, 1st April 2010.
2	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There were no other Part B Agenda Items</p>
	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 10th February 2010 at Progress House at 6.00pm</p>