

**MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
15TH JULY 2008**

Present:

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| Mrs M Horn (Chairman) | Grange Park Residents' Association |
| Mrs C Thornber | Boston Way Tenants' Association |
| Mrs A Stringer | Grange Park Residents Association |
| Mrs C Hardiman | Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association |
| Mrs J Sanderson | Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association |
| Mrs D Wightman | Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association |
| Mr B Rogers | Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association |
| Mrs A Allen | Mereside Tenants' and Residents' Association |
| Mr C Randall | Munsters Residents' Association |
| Mrs G King | Queens Park Residents Association |
| Mrs C Cook | Queens Park Residents Association |
| Mr T Clayton | Washington Court Residents' Association |
| Mrs S Wilson | Mereside Tenants and Residents Association |
| Mr B Allen | Mereside Tenants and Residents Association |

In Attendance:

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| Mr P Jefferson | Blackpool Coastal Housing |
| Ms S Grundy | Blackpool Coastal Housing |
| Mrs J Grimshaw | Blackpool Coastal Housing |
| Mr M Glennon | Blackpool Coastal Housing |
| Mrs D Williams | Blackpool Coastal Housing |
| Mrs L Barlow | Blackpool Coastal Housing |
| Mr I Herbert | Blackpool Coastal Housing |
| Mrs S Weston | Blackpool Coastal Housing |
| Miss G Atkinson | Legal and Democratic Services, Blackpool Council |

Action

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Lee, Councillor Mrs Henderson, Mr and Mrs Christian, Mrs J Feeney, Mrs M Cornall and Mr C Holland.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 13th May 2008

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th May 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

4. HOUSING MATTERS

(a) Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH)

Mr Jefferson informed the Forum that the Decent Homes scheme had now commenced. The initial two-year programme had been agreed by the Blackpool Coastal Housing board and the following three-year programme would be dependant on the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

It was reported that 50 per cent of tenants would receive some

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modification work within the first year of the scheme and all work undertaken would be monitored to ensure that high quality and service was achieved. A Jobs Fair had been held at the Winter Gardens recently to attract and recruit potential employees for the contract works and it was hoped that nearly 80 per cent of employees would be sourced locally. Blackpool and Fylde College would also be working in conjunction with the contractors to provide training and access courses for the employment opportunities.

(b) Sheltered Housing and Community Centres

Mrs Weston reported that the Health Awareness scheme had recently been launched in partnership with the Primary Care Trust. The initial launch had been held at Ibbison Court Community Centre, which would be rolled out across the south and north areas in due course. The scheme provided health related guidance, such as information on diet and fitness. The days were open to all residents and the dates for future events would be publicised in the near future.

The Forum agreed that Sheltered Housing and Community Centres should remain as a standard item on the Agenda to ensure that the Forum was frequently updated.

(c) Performance Indicators

Mr Jefferson circulated a report outlining the performance of Blackpool Coastal Housing in a number of the main sections of its core business. The Forum was provided with an explanation on each of the following performance indicators that had recently caused concern:

- number of repairs appointments.
- % of empty homes available for lettings
- rent arrears.
- % of tenants in arrears served with notice of possession.
- % of black and minority applicants.

It was reported a number of the performance indicators would be simplified and altered to improve the relevance to BCH and provide a more effective indication of performance in the town.

In response to a query raised, the Forum was informed that the percentage of staff turnovers had recently increased due to a number of retirements within the organisation, together with a number of employee returns to the Council.

5. GRASS CUTTING

Mr Herbert provided members with an outline of the grass maintenance contract that had been recently circulated for tender. This process would ensure that BCH would receive value for money and an improved service specification with regard to the maintenance and cutting of grass areas in the asset areas managed by the organisation.

It was reported that the tendering process involved three stages. The initial stage involved the invitation to contractors for further information, who would be selected for the next stage should they be both financially viable and able to provide the services required.

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That stage would consider the tender applications based on a weighting of 60 per cent on quality and 40 per cent on price. Up to three contractors would be selected and invited to the final stage of the tender process, which involved an interview and 'reality check' of previous works undertaken.

In response to a number of questions raised, Mr Herbert advised the members that Green Wardens were included in the Procurement Team and would therefore have an input in the selection of a contractor. The contract would be secured for a five-year period, during which they would be expected to invest in new equipment in order to maintain a high quality standard and service. It was anticipated that the process would be completed by December 2008.

Mr Herbert also provided information with regard to a number of concerns that had been raised in respect of current grass cutting services. He advised the Forum that all complaints received would be reviewed and discussed with the contractors to ensure that their work would not have a detrimental impact on local residents.

It was reported that a 'cut and collect' service, which involved the collection of cut grass, had been requested in the tendering process to consider the costs involved.

Copies of the street plans outlining which grass areas BCH would be responsible for was available to all members and the Forum was advised to contact Mr Herbert should they require a copy or further information.

6. CODE OF CONDUCT

Mr Glennon advised that a draft Code of Conduct had been reviewed at the previous Tenant Liaison Workshop meeting and had subsequently been circulated to each of the members for consideration. The Forum was invited to provide feedback and comment on the draft document.

A number of concerns were raised at the meeting in respect of the content and wording of the document and it was felt that further work needed to be undertaken to reflect the views of the members.

The Forum agreed that the item be reviewed and discussed further at the next Workshop meeting and brought to the next Forum meeting for consideration.

Mike
Glennon

7. SCOTTISH POWER FUNDING

The Forum was advised that it had been previously agreed that the available funding be allocated to the provision of park benches and to improved drying and clothing facilities within the sheltered accommodations.

It was reported that Ian Butterworth had currently explored the possibility of purchasing a number of park benches that would be removed from the promenade under the current regeneration works. It was agreed that a further update on this be brought to the next meeting of the Forum.

Mike
Glennon /
Denise
Williams

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8. FINANCE UPDATE

Mr Glennon informed the Forum that members of the previous Tenant Liaison Workshop meeting had agreed to establish a small Working Group to consider the funding that was available to all Tenants and Residents Associations in the borough.

A lack of agreed guidelines outlining how the money could be spent had caused confusion and frustration among the representatives and it was therefore felt that clarification needed to be achieved and endorsed in a written format.

The Forum felt that the recommendations submitted by the Working Group needed further consideration and queried whether a set of guidelines would restrict them in the future. The believed that the funding should be solely controlled by each Tenant and Resident Association in order to provide services that reflected the needs of the residents and empowered the local communities.

It was felt that all members of the Forum needed to be involved in the initial stages of the review and therefore agreed to consider the item at the next Workshop meeting of the Forum. The Code of Conduct would also be considered at this meeting.

Mike
Glennon

9. HIGHWAYS SERVICES

As there was no representative from the Council's Highways Services in attendance at the meeting, it was agreed that this item be deferred until the next meeting. The Chairman would correspond with Highways Services to request that a representative be available for all future meetings.

Maureen
Horn

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members were informed that the Forum had previously considered including Green Wardens and Mystery Shoppers in the membership of the Forum and was asked whether they still wished to make this amendment to the Constitution. The provision had been included in a draft version of the new Constitution and it was agreed that the document be circulated to all members of the Forum for further consideration and be subsequently discussed at the next meeting.

Mike
Glennon

Mrs Grimshaw outlined three requests that had been received under the Customer Suggestions Scheme. With regard to the request that a garden area be provided at the back of the Community Centre at Bostonway, the Forum was advised that potential funding for the scheme was currently being considered.

In respect of the request for CCTV to be installed at Newby Place to alleviate reported anti-social behaviour, the Forum was advised that the Clifton Community Action Team would be consulted to review the effectiveness of current CCTV provision in the area and that anti-social behaviour 'hotspots' would be identified for targeting resources. Intensive tenancy audits that had been undertaken in the area had also reduced the number of complaints received recently with regard to the issue.

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The request for a rubbish bin to be provided in the Housing Office at Queens Park was outlined to the Forum and it was agreed that the Fire Safety officer would be contacted for further information.

Despite a number of complaints regarding anti-social behaviour at sheltered housing areas, the Forum felt that a number of residents were still failing to use the security lights that were available. It was agreed that further information be circulated to residents to promote the use of the lights.

Denise
Williams

Members were reminded that the closing date for photographs and articles to be included in the next edition of Viewpoint would be at the end of the month and should be posted to Mrs Grundy.

Sandy
Grundy

Mr Glennon informed the Forum that a mediator had been recruited to resolve conflict and anti-social behaviour issues between neighbours. Any member who would like to receive mediation training and be involved in providing this service to residents was advised to contact Mr Glennon for further information.

Mike
Glennon

With regard to the Blackpool Coastal Housing board, it was reported that there was currently two vacant posts for tenant representatives and that the election would be undertaken in the near future. All tenants would receive an invitation to attend a seminar on either 30th July or 6th August 2008 at Blackpool Town Hall to receive further information on the role.

The Green Warden scheme was scheduled for re-launch in the near future, together with the Mystery Shopper exercises.

11. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Tuesday 16th September 2008, commencing at 10.00 a.m. Venue to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 12.10 p.m.

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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