

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
13TH MAY 2008

Present:

Mrs M Horn	Grange Park Residents' Association (Chairman)
Mrs C Thornber	Bostonway Residents' Association
Mrs J Feeney	Bostonway Residents' Association
Mrs A Stringer	Grange Park Residents' Association
Mr M Christian	Ingthorpe North Tenants' and Residents Association
Mrs C Hardiman	Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association
Mrs J Sanderson	Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association
Mr C Randall	Munster Avenue Tenants' Associations
Mrs G King	Queens Park Residents' Association
Mr A Matlock	Queens Park Residents' Association
Mr T Clayton	Washington Court Residents' Association
Mr B Rogers	Melbourne, Brisbane & Hobart Tenants' Association

Councillor Mrs Henderson Blackpool Council

In attendance:

Ms M Cornall	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms S Grundy	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms J Grimshaw	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr M Glennon	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs S Pickford	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr C Holland	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs D Williams	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs S Weston	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Miss J Ellis	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr J Kelly	Streetscene and Property, Blackpool Council
Miss G Atkinson	Legal and Democratic Services, Blackpool Council

Action

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on the behalf of Peter Jefferson, Natalie Kilgallon, Elaine Christian, Doreen Wightman and Councillor Lee.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 11th March 2008

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th March 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

4. THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT AND PROJECTS MANAGER

The Forum was advised that Mike Glennon had recently been appointed to Blackpool Coastal Housing as the Customer Involvement and Projects Manager. It was anticipated that Mike would commence employment in two weeks time.

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The Forum thanked Julie Grimshaw for covering the workload of that role during the vacancy period.

5. Housing Matters

(a) Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH)

The Forum was informed that BCH had been developing the spend programmes for the Decent Homes funding that had been recently awarded. The first year programme had recently gained approval by BCH's board and the second year programme had been scheduled for presentation to the next Asset Management Sub-Committee of the Board in the near future.

The pre-construction Health and Safety assessments had been undertaken with those contractors who had been appointed to carry out refurbishments works. The improvement programme, including works to bathrooms and kitchens were due to commence in early June 2008 with the existing two contractors Connaughts and Read and Errington. The further three contractors who had been appointed to undertake other improvements works would commence at the end of June 2008. It was felt that it was crucial that work was completed to a high standard.

It was reported that a restructure in Housing Services had created an additional post for a Sheltered Housing Team Leader. This would provide more support and additional resources for the service.

The Forum commended the work undertaken by Martin Reed in creating the hanging baskets across the Grange Park estate.

(b) Sheltered Housing and Community Centres

Ms Williams provided responses to a number of queries that had been raised previously in relation to the following:

- Lack of consultation regarding the Community Centre's locking system
- Pictures being removed
- Carpet at Cherry Tree
- Moving of furniture over the new carpets
- Kincaig Community Centre

Discussions took place with regard to the issues raised.

In response to queries raised regarding the removal of pictures at Ibbison Court Community Centre, the Forum was advised that these had been temporarily removed during the re-decoration of the centre and had now been replaced.

With regard to the boiler at Bostonway Community Centre, it was reported that this had been ordered and it was hoped that the centre would be able to re-open on Monday 19th May 2008.

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(c) Performance Indicators

Ms Cornall circulated a report outlining the performance of Blackpool Coastal Housing in a number of the main sections of its core business. A number of targets were outlined at the meeting with an explanation on whether the target had been achieved or not.

With regard to the financial performance indicators, the Forum was advised that the accounts for 2007/08 were currently being finalised and therefore these would be reported at the next meeting.

In response to queries raised regarding the Rent Arrears service, members were informed that in response to the recommendations outlined by the Audit Commission, BCH was reviewing the current Income and debt prevention service and had reviewed the current housing benefit systems and procedures and was considering best practice ideas from other housing organisations. This area of work was ongoing and progress would be reported back at a future meeting.

Maggie
Cornall

(d) Audit Commission Inspection of the Housing Service

It was reported that all of the recommendations raised through the Audit Commission inspection had been added to the BCH Business Plan for implementation and monitoring. Two areas that were of primary focus for the service would be improvements to the Income and Deprivation service and the development of a new computer system.

The Forum agreed that this item be removed from the Agenda as a standard item.

6. TENANT TRAINING

The Forum discussed the feasibility and budget availability for the provision of training courses made available to representatives of Resident's and Tenants' Association. It was agreed that this item would be considered at the next Tenant Liaison Workshop meeting.

Julie
Grimshaw

It was reported that a pilot scheme had been undertaken in other local authorities by which representatives of Resident's and Tenants' Association would receive credits for their work and experience in housing and tenant matters, which could be accrued to achieve an accredited qualification. Further clarification on this would be provided at the next Workshop meeting.

Mike
Glennon

7. REPAIRS HOTLINE

Mrs Pickford explained to the Forum that while a mock demonstration of the repairs hotline could not be provided at the meeting, an outline of the system could be provided and arrangements could be made to allow members to undertake a site visit to the Repairs Section.

In response to the results of the Customer Satisfaction Survey and a recommendation from the previous Audit Commission, the new Repairs Hotline was installed in November 2006. The system allowed calls to be evenly distributed between operators, as well as a queue facility which could hold up to two callers in a queue if all operators were busy.

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It was reported that a display board provided daily performance information to the team regarding measurements such as number of callers waiting in the queue and number of calls answered or abandoned.

The Forum was informed that prior to the installation of the Repairs Hotline, there was a reported 8 per cent customer dissatisfaction rate with access to the Repairs Section which had now reduced to 2.7 per cent.

In response to questions raised by members of the Forum, Ms Pickford advised that when developing the Repairs Hotline, the service was advised to restrict the number of calls waiting in a queue to a maximum of two, in order to reduce waiting times for callers. The section would also promote non-peak contact times in Viewpoint to encourage callers to make contact at periods when waiting times were at a minimum.

8. HIGHWAYS SERVICES

Mr Kelly, Street Scene Inspection and Enforcement Manager, provided the Forum with an outline of the services provided by Streetscene relating to the maintenance of highways and pavements. This included repairing minor works, such as potholes and cracked flags, but not major development works. The service also dealt with issues with wheeled bins, fly tipping and grounds maintenance.

The Forum was advised that Streetscene was not responsible for any issues on land managed by Blackpool Coastal Housing or any areas that were unadopted. It was felt that residents needed to be sufficiently advised of any unadopted land so that they were fully aware of their rights and responsibilities for that land.

A number of issues were raised with regard to the recycling bins at Ibbison Court and it was agreed that a meeting be organised between Streetscene and Sheltered Housing to ascertain a feasible solution.

Denise
Williams /
James Kelly

In response to concerns raised regarding a reported lack of consultation and the installation of recycling bins at Grange Park, the Forum was advised that the matter would be clarified and reported back to a future meeting.

James Kelly

The Forum was advised that Streetscene always responded to any reported incidents such as cracked flags and pavements and repairs would be assessed and prioritised in accordance with health and safety. All incidents could be reported through Customer First contact telephone number on 477477.

The Forum agreed that a representative from Streetscene attend each meeting of the Tenant Liaison Forum in order to answer queries and feedback on issues previously raised.

James Kelly

9. AREA WALKABOUTS

Ms Williams provided the Forum with an overview of the Area Walkabouts that had been undertaken since August 2007, which had been established to ensure that each Housing Office had managed all

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tenancies effectively. Representatives from Environmental Protection, Streetscene, Lancashire Fire and Rescue, Lancashire Constabulary, Dog Wardens, Tenants and Residents Associations and Blackpool Coastal Housing visited areas to identify specific issues and refer those back to the relevant department for resolution.

In response to a number of questions raised, Ms Williams advised the Forum that the scheme was still in its infancy and was currently being reviewed in order to achieve a more effective level of consistency when reporting and referring incidents.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was reported that the Sheltered Housing service had organised a number of Health Clinics with the Primary Care Trust to advise tenants on healthy eating and fitness. This had been scheduled for launch on 3rd July 2008 at Ibbison Court. Further training would be provided for the Sheltered Housing Scheme Managers in order to allow them to provide similar sessions and guidance at community centres.

The Forum was advised that the Scheme Managers regularly advised tenants on issues such as winter heating or summer heatwaves in order to assist their health and well-being during those periods.

11. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Tuesday 15th July 2008, commencing at 10.00 a.m. in the City Learning Centre.

The meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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