



**BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED**

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING  
HELD ON THURSDAY 31<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2007  
AT 6.00pm, PROGRESS HOUSE**

**PRESENT:**

Irene Bishop  
 Tim Cox  
 Joan Greenhalgh  
 Philip Helm  
 Jim Houldsworth  
 Gwen King  
 Alan Marsh  
 Bill Rogers  
 Alison Stringer  
 Doreen Wightman (Chair)

**NOT PRESENT:**

Simon Blackburn

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Peter Jefferson  
 Maggie Cornall  
 Cyril Holland  
 Neil Jack  
 Peter Whittaker

Peter Cross - Consultant  
 Elaine Vickers – Audit Commission  
 Rachel Coaker - Baker Tilly LLP

	<b>PART A – OPEN MEETING – 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2007</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies</b>  Ron Bell (Vice-Chair), Diane Bellinger, Michael Buchanan, Carol Hall
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  There were no items of interest declared.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> September 2007</b>  <b>Agreed</b> That the minutes be accepted as a true record.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>  Noted that the membership of each Sub-Committee has now been increased to five to remove or at least reduce the possibility of in-quate meetings taking place.



<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of Sub-Committees</b></p>
<p><b>A&amp;E</b></p>	<p><b>Operations Sub-Committees – (A ) 26<sup>th</sup> September 2007 &amp; (B) 29<sup>th</sup> October 2007</b></p> <p>The minutes of these Sub-Committee meetings were withdrawn from consideration as the meetings had been inquorate. The matters contained within them will be dealt with at the next Operations Sub-Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007 and will then be put to the Board for ratification on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007.</p>
<p><b>B</b></p>	<p><b>Human Resources Sub-Committee – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2007</b></p> <p><b>Item 6</b> - The Sub-Committee Chair, Philip Helm, outlined the HR Team Plan and stated that he considered it to be an excellent document. It did not require Board approval but had been submitted to the Sub-Committee for information</p> <p><b>Agreed</b> That the Team Plan be attached to these minutes for the information of all Directors.</p> <p><b>Item 7-</b> The Director of Finance and Resources stated that a new contract of employment was needed because employees who had transferred from Blackpool Council were still employed on their original contract, which must now be changed. The new BCH contract is very similar to the original Council one and only new employees who have been recruited directly by BCH will need to sign the contract when they receive it for the first time.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b> That the minutes be approved.</p>
<p><b>C</b></p>	<p><b>Asset Management Sub-Committee – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2007</b></p> <p>The Sub-Committee Chair, Bill Roger, stated that the draft Asset Management Strategy had been approved but that some amendments were still to be made.</p> <p><b>Item 7-</b> In response to a question from Irene Bishop the Chair confirmed that the Gas Central Heating and Rewiring programme at Bispham is taking place in the Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart areas.</p> <p><b>Item 8-</b> In response to a question from Gwen King the Chair confirmed that the procurement process for the new Grounds Maintenance contract is progressing. Returned questionnaires are currently being examined and short-listing should now take place very soon.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b> That the minutes be approved.</p>
<p><b>D</b></p>	<p><b>Finance &amp; Audit Sub-Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2007</b></p> <p>The Sub-Committee Chair, Gwen King, stated that the BCH auditors, Baker Tilly LLP, were satisfied with the accounts that had been produced, although it was noted that they covered only a short period from 15<sup>th</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007.</p> <p>In response to a question from Irene Bishop the Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that it is the second smallest hostel at Buchanan Street that is closed.</p>



	<p><b>Agreed</b> That the minutes be approved.</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Annual Accounts 2006-07</b></p> <p>The Director of Finance and Resources presented the Accounts and explained that, as there had been only two and half months of BCH activity in the 2006-07 financial year, not a lot of money had passed through the accounts by comparison with a full year of operation. The small loss noted is due entirely to a technical accounting adjustment in respect of BCH employers' contributions to the pension fund that had not been anticipated at the time that the BCH Management Fee for the period had been set.</p> <p>The Baker Tilly representative confirmed that in their opinion the accounts and Directors' statements as presented gave a true view of BCH activity and that their Audit Report in consequence gave clear and unqualified approval to them.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b> That the Accounts for the period 15<sup>th</sup> January 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 be approved and the Audit Report of Baker Tilly LLP be accepted.</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p> <p><b>A</b></p> <p><b>B</b></p>	<p><b>Financial Management Reports 2007-08</b></p> <p><b>BCH Half Year Report (01-04-07 to 30-09-07)</b></p> <p>The Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that expenditure is essentially within budget and no major variations are expected for the current financial year.</p> <p><b>HRA Half Year Report (01-04-07 to 30-09-07)</b></p> <p>The Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that, due to the unusually low occupancy of hostels, one is temporarily closed and consideration of the short term and long term future of hostels is in hand. The overall position is otherwise satisfactory.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b> That the reports be noted</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Performance Management 2007-08</b></p> <p>The Company Secretary explained that the Balanced Scorecard had been refined in the light of previous Director comments about presentation and ease of reading. The Chief Executive then presented the report, highlighting both strong and weak performance aspects and providing explanations for them.</p> <p>With regard to Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery Performance it was noted that - significant progress has been made in resolving the Housing Benefits issues and the system is working effectively now. There is clear movement back towards the levels of collection performance seen before implementation of the new HB system began.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b> That the report be noted</p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Access to Services and Customer Care Strategy</b></p> <p>In the absence of Carol Hall, the Board Champion for Access to Services, who had been</p>



	<p>prevented from attending the meeting for unexpected personal reasons, the Director of Housing Services presented this report. Particular points noted were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was confirmed that surveys carried out since extended opening hours for the Repairs Hotline were introduced showed that most people prefer to call rather than use the website to report repairs.</li> <li>• There has not been major expenditure on the interpreting service, because leaflets have not been directly translated but are available in various languages upon request through 'Language Line'. However, posters advertising the availability of BCH housing accommodation are now displayed in Polish.</li> <li>• Anti-Social Behaviour reporting arrangements have been successful and are linked to both Environmental Protection and the Police. Witness support has improved to encourage reporting by using 'Blue Line', an organisation which provides professional witnesses, and the new Buddy service has also proved very successful.</li> <li>• Subject to Board approval of the strategy, development of the 'Knowing Your Community Toolkit' will be started.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed</b> That the Strategy be approved.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p><b>Procurement Process Update</b></p> <p>The Director of Property Services reported that a broad mix of contractors, in terms of both size and local or national operation, have expressed interest in working for BCH, many of whom have worked for other ALMOs and are well aware of Decent Homes work. Initial sifting has now reduced the number of possible contractors from 60 to 15</p> <p>Reality Checks will be taking place to sites that contractors have provided for reference and by Christmas it should be possible to short-list further. Once the Inspection star rating is known it should be possible to appoint a contractor to start in April 2008.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b> That the report be noted and that future progress updates be made.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p><b>Board Strategy and Training Event September 2007</b></p> <p>The Chair of the Board, Doreen Whiteman, presented her report and thanked everyone who gave their time to arrange and to attend the event. She considered that it had been a valuable experience that had enhance knowledge, vision and cohesion for the Board.</p> <p>The Chair was solidly and unanimously supported in this view by the Board and Jim Houldsworth expressed the view that it had been one of the best things for the development of itself and the future of BCH that the Board had done and that it should take place at least annually.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b> That the Strategy and Training Event had been an important element in the development of the Board and BCH and similar events should take place at least annually.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p><b>New Office Accommodation</b></p> <p>The Director of Finance and Resources stated that there is very little available on the</p>



	<p>office property market in Blackpool to fulfil all of the BCH requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Affordability</li> <li>- Size</li> <li>- Transport links</li> <li>- Car parking</li> <li>- Potential for expansion</li> <li>- To be used as a front line base as well as Head Office</li> <li>- The possibility of storing the 28 Trade Vehicles, currently at Layton Depot</li> </ul> <p>Four options are currently being considered, two for existing buildings and two for new-build sites, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. By the time of the next Board Meeting it was expected that costings should be sufficiently complete to allow decisions to be made.</p> <p><b>Agreed</b> That the position be noted and a further report be brought to the December2007 meeting.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>Joan Greenhalgh stated how interesting and informative she had found the Equality and Diversity training session in October to be. All who attended had enjoyed the day and learnt a great deal.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p><b>Date &amp; Time of next meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007 at 6.00pm in Conference Room 1 at Progress House.</p>
	<p><b>The meeting closed at 7:35pm.</b></p>