

**MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
15th March 2011**

Present:

Mr M Christian	Ingthorpe Tenants' and Residents' Association (Chairman)
Mr J Scholey	Sheltered Housing Forum (Vice Chairman)
Mrs C Thornber	Bostonway Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mr D Greenwood	Friends of Horsebridge
Ms E Welsh	Friends of Horsebridge
Mr A Pilborough	Munster Avenue Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mrs C Pilborough	Munster Avenue Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mr K Myers	Sheltered Housing Forum
Mrs E Christian	Disability Forum
Mrs I Bishop	Disability Forum
Mr B Rogers	Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Tenants Association
Mrs J Stirling	Blackpool Coastal Housing Board

In Attendance:

Councillor Mrs Henderson	Blackpool Council
Councillor Lee	Blackpool Council
Mr M Glennon	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs S Grundy	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs M Cornall	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms S Tomlinson	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Miss J Ellis	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms H Master	Social Housing and Development Worker, Housing Client Team
Miss S Baxter	Democratic Services Adviser, Democratic Services

Action

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed members of the Forum to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Lee and Councillor Mrs Henderson MBE, Mr P Jefferson, Mr C Holland, Ms D Williams and Ms B Halpin.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 11th January 2011

Page 4, Item 7. Blackpool Coastal Housing

Mrs Cornall reported that the review of community centres would be completed by September 2011.

Page 6, Item 12 Any other Business

In response to information regarding mobility sheds, Mrs Cornall advised the Forum that a tenant would need to contact Blackpool Coastal Housing for permission to use a vacated shed. An application would be made to the housing office for the specific area and each application would be decided on its own merit.

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The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

4. BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING (BCH)

Mrs Cornall provided an update on funding available through the Decent Homes programme which included the amount and duration of funding granted to BCH. It was reported that the estimated funding of £20.6 million would be provided over a four year period. Funding for the first two years had been confirmed with the remaining two years provisionally confirmed.

With regard to Sheltered Housing, Mrs Cornall confirmed that the Council had reduced the Supporting People Grant by 50%, in the new financial year, 2011-12. The Council had agreed a new model to provide the service within the reduced funding arrangements. The sheltered service would be based on a needs assessed basis. The consultation regarding staffing was being undertaken and therefore a final staffing structure would be confirmed in April 2011.

Mrs Cornall provided the Forum with information as to the procurement of a grounds maintenance contractor. She stated that potential contractors were in the process of being interviewed and a contractor would be identified in due course.

The Forum was informed that the Council was in the process of reviewing rent and service charges to reflect Government guidance which involved the separation of service charges from rent. Mrs Cornall advised that high rise and three storey properties were likely to be the most affected by the review but there would be a transitional period of five years.

With regards to the provision of CCTV, Mrs Cornall reported that discussions had taken place with the provider to ascertain whether the service could be provided at a cheaper rate. Discussions had taken place with the smoke alarm provider at Queens Park regarding the cost with a view to mitigating the service charges.

The Forum received information regarding the reduction of the Blackpool Coastal Housing budget and the proposed efficiency saving of 3.5% that was required for the next financial year, and it was likely that similar levels of efficiency savings would be necessary the following year. A consultation with tenants would be undertaken over the following months to determine service needs. In response to a question, Mrs Cornall responded that the efficiency savings would be sustainable but not for an indefinite period.

The Forum was referred to the performance indicators which were distributed prior to the meeting. It was noted that a fluctuation in arrears regarding rent income had been reported which was the result of a number of factors relating to the replacement of both the housing management and housing benefits IT systems, and the change in service provider of the rent payment cards.

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5. TENANT PROJECT FUND

Mr Glennon reported that Tenants Project Fund Panel had a second meeting on Friday 11th March 2011 to assess seven deferred applications and six new applications. Information regarding the organisation, amount requested, details of the project, the decision and any conditions attached were circulated to the Forum.

He reported that three of the applications received approval, two with conditions, which left the Tenant Project Fund with a balance of £51,622.00. The Panel was scheduled to meet in May 2011 for the final meeting with the deadline for applications reported as being Thursday 31st March 2011.

In response to questions, Mr Glennon confirmed that discussions had taken place with the Care and Repair service regarding the cost of cold alarms, excluding installation and management costs. The provision of bins would be prioritised to areas where a need had been identified. Tenants were advised to liaise with Blackpool Coastal Housing.

TLF
members

6. CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT

Mr Glennon informed the Forum that Ms Tomlinson, Blackpool Coastal Housing, had returned from maternity leave and would be supporting Horsebridge and Grange Park Community Groups.

With regards to the forthcoming Local Election, Mr Glennon explained the Purdah period to the Forum and the affect it had on the involvement of Blackpool Coastal Housing with community group meetings. He advised that they would attend to facilitate elections at community group annual general meetings but would not be apart of the actual meeting.

The Forum discussed the feedback and success of the Community Involvement Awards 2011 which were held on 10th February 2011 at the Empress Ballroom. Coverage of the Awards was reported in the evening Gazette and would also feature in Viewpoint. Viewpoint would be published 17th – 18th March 2011 and would include a Reader survey and a comprehensive overview of the services provided by Blackpool Coastal Housing.

Mr Glennon informed the Forum of the composition and purpose of the Complaints Review Panel.

7. PROPOSED NEW CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT AND SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

The Forum was provided with two flow charts that illustrated the proposed involvement structure of Blackpool Coastal Housing. A discussion ensued regarding the recruitment of individuals to the Blackpool Tenants and Leaseholders Assembly in particular removing the prerequisite that the individual would need to be on the Service Improvement Panel. Training would be provided for those appointed to the Panel.

The Forum was referred to the handout and asked to consider whether the Tenants Liaison Forum would like to continue under a different name as a networking forum for affiliated community groups. After a brief discussion, the Forum agreed that the proposed structure was good and

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it was clarified that the revised version of the TLF would not have any decision making powers.

Further details regarding the new structure and recruitment process for the BTLA would be considered at the next Tenant Liaison Forum workshop.

The Forum was referred to the provided revised structure for the Blackpool Tenants and Leaseholders Assembly and the relationships it would have with other groups. It was clarified that the scrutiny role would be undertaken by the Panel with the support of a designated Scrutiny Officer and the next Forum workshop would consider the depth of scrutiny work which would be undertaken by the panel.

In response to questions, Mrs Cornall stated that a recruitment strategy would be formulated to ensure that people on the Panel have the required skills to undertake the role and the Scrutiny Officer could potentially be someone from the Councils' Client team, however this was still yet to be agreed.

With regards to a timetable for key dates of progression, they would be provided at the next Tenant Liaison Forum workshop.

Mike
Glennon

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Attendees were asked to promote the participation of the Census 2011, which would take place on 27th March 2011, to their community groups. It was suggested that some people may need assistance and an event would be held at Age Concern Offices, 89 Abingdon Street, Blackpool 10am – 4pm on Wednesday 23rd March 2011. Information regarding the event was distributed around the Forum.

A Grant guidelines document from the Community Foundation for Lancashire was distributed to the Forum where it was reported that funding for community groups and related projects was still available. There was approximately £50,000 available funding via the Grass Roots programme. Groups were asked to refer to the document for further information, together with the application process.

A member of the Forum requested that the contact details for community groups be amended to reflect current membership. Mr Glennon clarified that group contact details would be amended but personal details would not be published.

Mike
Glennon

Members of the Forum raised concerns regarding Blackpool Coastal Housing vehicles which were parked on the grass areas around Munster Avenue when attending the building to carry out renovation work. The Forum raised concern about the damage the vehicles were causing to the green space. Mrs Cornall agreed to investigate the concerns at the next property services meeting.

Maggie
Cornall

A concern was also raised by the Forum regarding footpaths outside properties 3 – 31 on Horsebridge Road due to heavy load vehicles parking on the pavement.

Maggie
Cornall

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9. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Tuesday 10th May 2011, commencing at 10.00 a.m. in the Boardroom, Coastal House.

Georgina
Atkinson

The meeting ended at 11.20 a.m.

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact Sally Baxter, Democratic Services Adviser (Scrutiny) Tel: (01253) 477164, e-mail: sally.baxter@blackpool.gov.uk.