



BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17th NOVEMBER 2010 AT 6.00PM
IN THE BOARD ROOM AT COASTAL HOUSE**

PRESENT:

Diane Bellinger
Cllr Simon Blackburn
Cllr Tim Cox
Cllr Jim Houldsworth
Cllr Fred Jackson
Alan Marsh
Judith Mills
Bill Rogers
Janet Stirling
Alison Stringer
Doreen Wightman (Chair)

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

PART A – OPEN SESSION

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| 1. | <u>Apologies</u> Cllr Ron Bell, Carol Hall, Paul Whitehead, Habiba Adam |
| 2. | <u>Declarations of Interest</u> None |
| 3. | <u>Minutes of Board Meeting 21st September 2010</u> <u>Agreed:</u> That the minutes be approved as a true record. |
| 4. | <u>Matters Arising</u> None |



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| <p>5.</p> <p>5A</p> <p>5B</p> | <p><u>Governance Issues</u></p> <p><u>Minutes of the Annual Strategy Meeting 16th October 2010 including Governance Review Outcomes and Decisions</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Annual Strategy Meeting including the recommendations made in respect of implementing the Governance Review proposals were given thorough consideration.</p> <p><u>Agreed that:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The Minutes be approved as a correct record. B. With regard to those matters that require its approval for change to the Memorandum & Articles of Association of BCH, discussions with the Council be held and the position further reviewed to allow any agreed implementation of changes to be initiated at or in time for the Annual General meeting in 2011. <p><u>360 Appraisal Report and Training Plan</u></p> <p>Peter Whittaker gave an overview of the outcome of the 360 appraisal process and the recommendations in the Brynoka report. In discussion a number of points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although there is no doubt of the Board's commitment to the principles of Equality and Diversity it was recognized that there are barriers to be overcome in terms of the fact that there are limited opportunities within the recruitment processes to increase diversity. • The forthcoming review of Customer Director recruitment should provide an opportunity to deal with at least some of those issues. • Online Equality & Diversity training for Directors is now being arranged. • There is a need to consider the effect of the Board's working practices. • The way forward should be decided in the light of a combined assessment of individual Director and overall Board training and development needs. <p><u>Agreed that:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The Senior Management Team should draw up a training and development plan and submit it to the Board for approval. B. Wherever practical, training and development activity should be undertaken as part of normal Board Meeting business. |
| <p>6.</p> | <p><u>Value for Money (VFM) Strategy</u></p> <p>Neil Jack presented the revised Value for Money Strategy. The current strategy was originally approved in 2007 and had now been revised to take into account changes within BCH and in regulatory requirements over the last three years. The draft report had been reviewed in detail by the Finance & Audit Committee.</p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p>That the Value for Money Strategy be approved.</p> |
| <p>7.</p> | <p><u>Comprehensive Spending Review</u></p> <p>Neil Jack presented a report outlining the potential impact on BCH of the Comprehensive Spending Review. He explained that relatively few details had so far emerged and that it was very difficult to make future plans on the basis of what was so far known.</p> |



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| | <p>The key issues to consider were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) regime. • Existing Social Housing stock condition • Social Housing Supply • Care and Support <p>Peter Jefferson further explained that the Government had also released a consultation document on the future funding of the national Decent Homes Programme. A total of 47 councils were named as being eligible to bid for a share of the reduced funding that would be available but Blackpool was not included on the list.</p> <p>He confirmed that BCH and the Council would jointly argue the case for Blackpool to be put back on the list and a meeting with the Homes and Communities Agency had been arranged for the following week. The consultation was due to end in early December and it was hoped that the outcome would be known by mid December.</p> <p>A number of points were raised in subsequent discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackpool may well be one of the worst affected towns in the country in relation to the impact of Housing Benefit changes on tenants in private sector shared accommodation. This could have a major impact on the demand for one bedroom flats managed by BCH. • It is important to make BCH customers aware as quickly as possible of the likely impact upon them and to explain that it is a result of national, not local, decision making. • There needs to be a speedy investigation of what measures can be put in place to deal with urgent outstanding work within the Decent Homes programme. • A report should be made to the next meeting of the Board to identify the practical implications, such as the number of homes that will not now receive new kitchens and bathrooms. • It was noted that if no further funding is received, a total of 2400 properties will not fully meet the Decent Homes Standard. • Unless further funding is obtained there will be about £4 million per year available, made up of basic rent funded revenue and the Major Repairs Allowance to carry out all housing maintenance work, including the Decent Homes Programme. However, this would be subject to the outcome of HRA reform and its impact upon the possibility of borrowing to fund the work. • The Government had set a Guideline for rent increases of 6% and Blackpool will lose money if it does not follow that guideline. However, any surplus created as a result must be returned to the Government as the current HRA system is essentially one of redistribution rather than subsidy. <p><u>Agreed</u> That the position be noted and further information be brought to the next meeting.</p> |
| <p>8.</p> <p>8A</p> | <p><u>Financial Performance</u></p> <p><u>Q2 2010-11 BCH Budget Monitoring</u></p> <p>Neil Jack presented a report on Blackpool Coastal Housing's financial position as at 30 September 2010, the half-way point of the financial year.</p> |



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| <p>8B</p> | <p>It was estimated that BCH will generate a surplus of £47,000 in the year, as compared with the deficit of £149,000 for which budget provision had originally been made. Balances are now projected to be £1,381,000 at the financial year end on 31st March 2011.</p> <p><u>Agreed that:</u></p> <p>A. The BCH budget position be noted B. Transfer of £53,000 from contingencies to the Head Office budget be approved.</p> <p><u>Q2 2010-11 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring</u></p> <p>Neil Jack presented a report on the financial position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as at 30 September 2010, the half-way point of the financial year.</p> <p>It was estimated that by the end of 2010/11 the HRA will suffer a deficit of £27,000 by comparison with an originally budgeted surplus of £77,000. HRA balances are projected to be £1,323,000 at the financial year end on 31st March 2011.</p> <p><u>Agreed</u> That the HRA budget position be noted</p> |
| <p>9.</p> <p>9A</p> <p>9B</p> | <p><u>Operational Performance</u></p> <p><u>Q2 2010-11 Balanced Scorecard</u></p> <p>Peter Jefferson presented the Balanced Scorecard.</p> <p>With regards to item FIN13 (Former Tenant Arrears) Maggie Cornall commented on the action being taken to write some of these off. She explained that, following Council approval now received, it was anticipated that £110,000 of Former Tenant arrears will have been written off by the end of Quarter 3 2010-11.</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u> That performance reported in the Balanced Scorecard be noted.</p> <p><u>Q2 2010-11 Decent Homes Programme</u></p> <p>Cyril Holland provided an update on the 2010-11 Decent Homes Programme progress up to the 30 September 2010. He explained that the problems caused by Connaught going into Administration had been overcome and the programme was on target.</p> <p>In response to a question he confirmed that approximately 150 staff are directly employed by BCH Contractors working on the Decent Homes Programme.</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u> That performance be noted</p> |
| <p>10.</p> | <p><u>New Council House Building – Progress Report</u></p> <p>Cyril Holland reported that the first batch of properties is due to be handed over to the Council during week commencing 29th November. The next phase will then commence in the New Year with the properties currently being decanted ready for demolition.</p> |



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| | <p><u>Agreed:</u> That the position be noted.</p> |
| 11. | <p><u>Minutes of Committees and Matters Arising</u></p> |
| 11A | <p><u>Asset Management</u></p> <p>Alan Marsh presented the minutes.</p> <p><u>Agreed</u> That the Minutes be accepted.</p> |
| 11B | <p><u>Operations</u></p> <p>Alison Stringer presented the minutes.</p> <p>There was a brief discussion regarding Board Champions and it was noted that this could be explored further once the new Board structure had been established.</p> <p><u>Agreed that:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The Minutes be accepted. B. A report on the potential for and implications of creating a range of Board Champions be brought to a future meeting of the Board |
| 11C | <p><u>Finance & Audit</u></p> <p>Simon Blackburn presented the minutes.</p> <p><u>Agreed</u> That the Minutes be accepted.</p> |
| 12. | <p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>There were no other items of business raised.</p> |
| 13. | <p><u>Date and Time of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 15th December 2010 at Coastal House.</p> |
| | <p><u>The Meeting Closed at 7.40pm.</u></p> |