



**BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED**

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009  
AT 6.00 PM, PROGRESS HOUSE**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr Ron Bell  
Diane Bellinger  
Cllr Simon Blackburn  
Caroline Cook  
Cllr Tim Cox  
Cllr Joan Greenhalgh  
Carol Hall  
Cllr Jim Houldsworth  
Alan Marsh  
Judith Mills  
Bill Rogers  
Janet Stirling  
Paul Whitehead  
Doreen Wightman (Chair)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Maggie Cornall (Director of Housing Services)  
Peter Whittaker (Company Secretary)  
Steve Pullan (Blackpool Council Representative)

**PART A – OPEN SESSION**

<b>1.</b>	<p><b><u>Apologies</u></b></p> <p>Alison Stringer Peter Jefferson (Chief Executive) Cyril Holland (Director of Property Services) Neil Jack (Director of Finance &amp; Resources)</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b><u>Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board</u></b></p> <p><b>Agreed that:</b></p> <p>A. Doreen Wightman be elected unopposed as Chair of the Board to serve until the first meeting of the Board following the next Annual General Meeting in 2010.</p> <p>B. In view of the difficulties encountered with the receipt of postal votes for election of the Vice-Chair of the Board a new ballot be held and the election be therefore deferred to the next meeting of the Board on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2009</p> <p>C. In any future election, for either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board, postal votes will only be deemed valid and counted if returned in a manner that complies fully with the Board approved election procedures in being at the time of the election.</p>



<p>4.</p>	<p><b><u>Membership and Operation of Sub-Committees</u></b></p> <p>Peter Whittaker explained that, as there had been no changes in membership of the Board, there was no need to make changes in Sub-Committee membership unless Directors wished to do so. He also outlined a proposal to change the sequence of meetings within each Board meeting cycle designed to improve governance operation.</p> <p><b>Agreed that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Sub-Committee membership to remain unchanged until the first Board meeting following the Annual General Meeting in 2010, at which time it will be reviewed.</li> <li>B. The proposed Board Meeting Cycle revision be approved and implemented with effect from the Meeting Cycle beginning in December 2009.</li> <li>C. Proposed meeting dates for the Board and Sub-Committees for December 2009 to March 2011 will be considered at the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2009 Board Meeting.</li> </ul>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b><u>Minutes of Board Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009</u></b></p> <p>Tim Cox questioned the accuracy of the minutes in two respects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. With regard to Item 3 it was his opinion that the minutes of the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009 should not have been accepted by the Board as a true record because they did not record in detail a question raised by Simon Blackburn at the meeting about a discrepancy between the performance figures for Repair Satisfaction reported in, respectively, the STATUS Survey and the Balanced Scorecard.</li> </ul> <p>It was, however, noted that the question to which he referred had been further raised by him under Matters Arising at the meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009 and had been answered, as recorded in the minutes of that meeting at Item 4 (A3 &amp; A9). However, he considered that minute was still not sufficiently detailed to make the point clear.</p> <p>The Company Secretary offered to redraft the minute and consult with Tim Cox upon its wording. It is now proposed that that item 3 of the Minutes of 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009 should have read as follows (amendments and additions are underlined):</p> <p><b><i>“ STATUS 2008 and Balanced Scorecard</i></b>  <i>Tim Cox asked if the issue raised at the previous meeting by Simon Blackburn, about discrepancies between quoted figures for Repair Satisfaction, had been resolved. <u>He was concerned to ensure that Simon’s point about the need for accuracy, consistency and the avoidance of “cherrypicking” data had been fully accepted and would be followed when performance reports are provided to the Board or other organisations.</u></i></p> <p><i>Peter Whittaker explained that BCH is not allowed to change the questions in the STATUS Survey to make them equate to its own performance reporting approach. The BCH figure is the more accurate of the two because Sheltered Dwellings are excluded from STATUS whereas the BCH survey covers all tenants receiving repairs. Furthermore the BCH survey method records satisfaction with repairs carried out in the current year rather than in previous years and therefore better reflects the present position.</i></p>



	<p><i>Both survey methods need to be used because STATUS is a statutory survey, but for general performance reporting and benchmarking purposes the BCH method, <u>which follows the various formulae set down by the independent benchmarking organisations, or by the Government</u>, produces the more accurate (and <u>often favourable</u>) figures and is the one to rely on and report with.”</i></p> <p>B. At Item 5(A) the first paragraph did not properly reflect the discussion that had taken place and it would be better to use the words “modified “ or “re-badged”, rather than “amended”, to describe changes made to the documents in question.</p> <p>It was, however, noted that a number of other Directors took the view that the discussion was accurately reflected in the minutes of the meeting.</p> <p>Alan Marsh was of the opinion that Item 13(B) did not fully reflect the fact that the Board had been discussing the mentoring issue without resolution since March 2009.</p> <p>It was noted that Board Training &amp; Mentoring were to be dealt with at Item 12 of this Agenda.</p> <p>A debate then arose about the purpose and format of minutes. Simon Blackburn proposed that, if a Director wishes a particular statement or comment to be recorded in the minutes, they should make a specific request for that to be done. Such an approach, he believed, would enable the minutes to be restricted to recording the main elements of the subject under debate and the resulting decisions taken about it.</p> <p><b>Agreed that:</b></p> <p>A. The Company Secretary will seek comment from Tim Cox on the accuracy of the draft minute of this part of the current meeting in respect of Items 3 and 4 (A3 &amp; A9) on the minutes of 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009 before they are approved by the Chair for distribution to other Directors with the agenda for the November meeting.</p> <p>B. In the absence of Neil Jack, Tim Cox’s point in respect of Item 5(A) be referred to the Finance &amp; Audit Sub-Committee for clarification.</p> <p>C. Minutes of the Board and its Sub-Committees should normally reflect only the main elements of matters under debate and the decisions taken about them. When it is formally requested by a Director or Directors that they should do so, the Minutes may also include specific comments or statements made in debate.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b><u>Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p>In respect of Item 6 it was confirmed that Blackpool Council have now received an allocation of £2.3 million for new build council housing development.</p>
<p>7.</p> <p><b>A</b></p>	<p><b><u>Minutes of Sub-Committees &amp; Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p><b>Finance &amp; Audit Sub-Committee - 19<sup>th</sup> August 2009</b> Simon Blackburn presented the minutes and Maggie Cornall provided additional information about the proposed Tenant Project Fund.</p> <p><b>Agreed that:</b></p> <p>A. The minutes be accepted.</p> <p>B. The recommendations in respect of acquisition of a new Housing Management Computer System and the Tenant Project Fund be approved.</p>



<p><b>B</b></p>	<p><b>Operations Sub-Committee - 25<sup>th</sup> August 2009</b></p> <p><b>Agreed:</b> That the minutes be accepted.</p>
<p><b>C</b></p>	<p><b>Human Resources Sub-Committee - 27<sup>th</sup> August 2009</b> Carol Hall presented the minutes. She confirmed that the Equal Pay Review had been the primary matter under consideration and that positive feedback on the process, including from the unions involved, had been received.</p> <p><b>Agreed that:</b></p> <p>A. The minutes be accepted</p> <p>B. The Sub-Committee's recommendations in respect of the following be approved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Equal Pay Policy.</li> <li>2. The Equal Pay Appeals Policy.</li> <li>3. Providing market supplement information on the HR Balanced Scorecard</li> </ol>
<p><b>D</b></p>	<p><b>Asset Management Sub-Committee</b> The originally planned meeting had been cancelled as a result of its being inquorate and it had not been possible to re-schedule it within the Board Meeting Cycle.</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Sub-Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme (SRCBL)</u></b></p> <p>Maggie Cornall outlined the background to this matter and reminded Directors that it had first been raised with the Board in July 2008 when a Government grant of £100,000 to assist with implementation costs had been awarded. The Board had then agreed that BCH officers could participate in a feasibility study with Blackpool Council and the other housing organisations involved. The feasibility study had been completed, operational principles established and indicative set-up and running costs identified.</p> <p>Steve Pullan, speaking for the Council as the custodian of lettings policies for Blackpool, confirmed the target date of 2010 for setting up a CBL system as currently in place in Blackpool, and that the Government was keen for such schemes to be rolled out regionally. He explained that a similar report would be presented to all organisations involved, including the three local authorities covered by the scheme: Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde.</p> <p>He further stated that, whilst costs appear to fall disproportionately upon the Council and BCH that is essentially a reflection of the size of Blackpool's housing stock in relation to those of the other scheme participants.</p> <p>In debate it was noted that the scheme costs, particularly the running costs, are mainly made up of staff time, although it will not be necessary to employ extra staff. The set-up costs, however, do involve actual capital expenditure. An administration cost element of the running cost analysis was noted as missing in the report but the apportioned total was confirmed as correct. It was also confirmed that, in Blackpool, HomeStop will continue as the focus for operation of the scheme and organisations within it, such as Blackpool Council, will still be able to set their own local lettings policies.</p>



	<p><b>Agreed that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. BCH will commit itself to the detailed development of the SRCBL scheme based on the principles outlined in the report.</li> <li>B. The apportionment of costs as outlined in the report be approved.</li> <li>C. The adoption of a consistent assessment policy be supported.</li> <li>D. The final Council approved SRCBL scheme and associated assessment policy be brought back to the Board for information before it is introduced.</li> </ul>
<p>9.</p>	<p><b><u>Board Strategy &amp; Business Planning Event Arrangements</u></b></p> <p>Peter Whittaker outlined the event format and confirmed that documentation, including a location map, other details for the venue plus papers and reports to assist debate, will be sent out to Directors prior to the event. A request to keep presentations in each session to the necessary minimum in order to maximize the opportunity for debate was noted.</p> <p>He reminded Directors that they had been asked to send to him a note of any topics that they wished particularly to discuss and he urged them to do so by no later than the Friday following the Board meeting to allow time for adjustments to be made to the agenda. It was noted that the Scheme of Delegation was one such issue. It was requested that the current Scheme of Delegation be provided to the Board alongside the revised Scheme presented to the Finance &amp; Audit Sub-Committee</p> <p><b>Agreed that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Arrangements for the Strategy and Business Planning Event be noted</li> <li>B. Copies of the current and proposed revised Scheme of Delegation be provided at the event.</li> <li>C. Directors indicate, in the manner outlined in the report, any specific topics that they wish to see addressed at the event.</li> </ul>
<p>10.</p>	<p><b><u>Office Accommodation Progress Report</u></b></p> <p>Maggie Cornall reported that meetings with the Council were continuing, as were the Council's efforts to resolve the problem of the current mixed, leasehold and freehold ownership of the building. If that can be done quickly, to enable the Council to buy the building, it is possible that a move to the new office could be made in May 2010. It was confirmed that there is currently no strict date by when BCH must move out of Progress House.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <p>That the position be noted</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p><b><u>Institute of Money Advisors National Debt Advice Partnership 2009 Award</u></b></p> <p>Maggie Cornall explained that the BCH Income Recovery &amp; Debt Prevention Team (now known as the Rents Team) had recently won a national award in partnership with the Council's Revenues Team and Advice Link.</p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <p>That the award be noted and all involved be congratulated on their efforts and success</p>



<b>12.</b>	<p><b><u>Board Training and Mentoring – Review Panel Report</u></b></p> <p><b>Agreed:</b></p> <p>That, in view of the commercial sensitivity and confidentiality of the pricing information in this report, it be considered in the Part B Closed section of the agenda.</p>
<b>13.</b>	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>There were no items of business.</p>
<b>14.</b>	<p><b><u>Motion to Move Into Part B Closed Session</u></b></p> <p><b>Agreed that:</b></p> <p>A. In view of their confidential and commercially sensitive nature, and the fact that the information they contain must not be disclosed to any other parties, the remaining items on the agenda be discussed in Part B Closed Session and that any members of the press or public currently present be excluded from that part of the Board Meeting.</p> <p>B. Steve Pullan, the Blackpool Council Representative, be permitted to remain in the meeting for Part B and to speak in the debate if relevant and necessary</p>

**PART B CLOSED SESSION**

<b>1.</b>	<p><b><u>Board Training and Mentoring – Review Panel Report</u></b></p> <p>Peter Whittaker presented a report on the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Board Performance Appraisal &amp; Mentoring Review Panel held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2009.</p> <p><b>Agreed that:</b></p> <p>A. A comprehensive Induction Process for new Directors be developed.</p> <p>B. Mentoring, including telephone and/or email support in working hours, will be provided at the maximum rate of ten (10) one-hour sessions per month for those Directors who wish to participate in it and that places on the programme be allocated on a first come, first served basis.</p> <p>C. Regular reports on mentoring uptake be provided to the Board.</p> <p>D. The resignation of Simon Blackburn from the Review Panel and the appointment of Tim Cox to it be accepted.</p> <p>E. The Review Panel will oversee the procurement and make tender acceptance recommendations to the Board in respect of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A mentoring service in accordance with resolution B above.</li> <li>2. An annual, two cohort 360 degree appraisal survey, taking into account the advisability and potential for such a survey to be carried out by an organisation other than the mentoring service provider</li> </ol> <p>F. A report on the potential to create a Governance Officer post within existing budget limits be prepared for consideration by the HR Sub-Committee to enable it to make recommendations to the Board on feasibility and future action.</p>
-----------	--



<b>2.</b>	<b>Performance Management</b>  Simon Blackburn, Chair of the Sub-Committee, gave a verbal report from the meeting held on 8 June 2009.  <b>Agreed:</b>  That the report be accepted and the review arrangements described be approved
<b>3.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>  There were no other items of business
	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>  Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> November 2009 in Conference Room 1 at Progress House at 6.00pm
	<b>The Meeting closed at 8-20pm</b>