



BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING

MINUTES OF THE SHADOW BOARD INFORMAL MEETING WEDNESDAY 14TH JUNE 2006

PRESENT

Council Nominee Directors

Cllr Kathryn Benson
Cllr Michael Carr
Cllr Lily Henderson
Cllr Kath Rowson

Tenant Directors

Mrs Irene Bishop
Miss Gwen King
Mr Bill Rogers
Mrs Alison Stringer

Leaseholder Director

Miss Doreen Wightman

IN ATTENDANCE

Peter Jefferson	General Manager Designate
Maggie Cornall	Head of Housing Services Designate
Cyril Holland	Head of Property Services Designate
Peter Whittaker	Company Secretary Designate
Julie Grimshaw	Customer Involvement Officer
Peter Cross	Independent Consultant

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received.

PART A – OPEN MEETING

1a Welcome and Introductions

Peter Jefferson welcomed Directors to the meeting and all present and in attendance introduced themselves to each other.

Peter gave a brief update on the progress of forming the ALMO, explaining that bids had now been formally invited and were to be submitted by the end of July 2006. He explained that the result of the Test of Opinion just completed showed an extremely positive outcome, the details of which were due to be reported to Council on 21st June 2006. He also stated that the Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee had invited the Directors to meet them in order to clarify the respective roles of the Council and Blackpool Coastal Housing. This meeting was proposed for 29th June 2006.



Peter spoke of the culture of Landlord Services, as the forerunner to Blackpool Coastal Housing, with its belief that without its customers it would have no reason to exist, and its two interlocking elements of excellent customer service being provided by excellent, motivated staff who enjoy their work. The approach adopted is that of staff dealing with customers as they would wish to be dealt with themselves. He further outlined the organisation's ambition to become the best housing provider in the North West, and then the best in the country, whilst at the same time gaining recognition as one of the best employers in the country.

Peter described the use of cross-structural, multi-disciplinary Housing Improvement Teams to develop and enhance service delivery and explained that there was much scope for future Director involvement in these processes. He explained that it was primarily as a result of the work done in such teams that the organisation had gained ISO 9000 and Investors In People accreditation. He finally noted that staff are expected to work hard, to deliver excellent services but also to have fun.

2a Exploring Skills and Abilities

Maggie Cornall introduced this item, which was designed to help Directors to recognise and identify the skills and abilities that they could bring to the organisation. She explained that these may often seem hidden, and that people's knowledge and experience may seem not fully relevant but that it may well in fact have great value.

Using the same scoring matrix as that completed by applicants for the Independent Director positions, Directors worked in small groups to undertake an exercise to assess the skills and abilities of a range of fictional character scenarios. Working alone they subsequently completed the same matrix to identify their own skills and abilities, in order to assist with the later item for consideration concerning recruitment of Independent Directors.

Maggie then circulated to each Director a set of sample personal profiles taken from the website of another ALMO; in fact Derby Homes, a 3 star "excellent" organisation. She asked each Director to provide a profile of themselves with a maximum length of 150 words, explaining that these would be used in a Protocol document that would be brought forward for approval at a future meeting and also on the Blackpool Coastal Housing website that is to be created.

She asked that Directors return their completed profiles to Peter Whittaker by 21st June, either by email or by post in the freepost envelope provided, so that copies of all profiles could be circulated to all Directors with the agenda for the next meeting of the Board.

3a Board Administration and Future Meetings

Peter Whittaker raised a number of issues for Directors' information and consideration.

Director Names

Peter explained that the initial naming of Directors on their table identification cards had been done in a fully formal manner as that seemed most appropriate for an initial meeting. He asked Directors to consider how they wished to be known to each other, to the staff of Blackpool Coastal Housing and to customers and other external contacts and organisations so that a decision could be made at an early future meeting of the Board when the Independent Directors had also had the chance to consider the issue.



Dates of Meetings

Peter explained that he had identified the meeting dates so far proposed by reference to the diary of Council meetings published on the Council's intranet, in which Tuesdays appeared to be a suitably clear day. Cllr Michael Carr commented that there were a number of meetings that took place on Tuesdays that were not entered in the website and that he considered it to be an impractical day for Councillors to attend Board Meetings. A discussion followed and Directors recognised that it would not be possible to choose a day that would always suit everyone and that the view of the majority would have to prevail.

Agreed:

1. That Wednesday was the day of the week that was most generally convenient for Directors to attend meetings, which would be held at Progress House, starting at 6-00pm with refreshments provide beforehand from 5-30pm.
2. That 5th July would probably be a good start date, although it was noted that this would lead to a conflict with the date of the Council meeting to be held in September and some adjustment may be necessary.

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Checks

Peter referred to the need for CRB checks and to the forms and explanatory leaflet that had been circulated to each Director. In response to a question from Cllr Michael Carr, who had already undergone a CRB check in respect of another position that he held, Peter explained that, based on advice received, it was necessary for a check to be made in respect of each relevant position that an individual held.

Agreed:

3. That Directors would bring their completed forms to the next Board Meeting together with the necessary evidence documents, which would be photocopied and immediately returned to them.

Director Recruitment

Peter briefly outlined the process so far undertaken, whereby Tenant Directors had been nominated by the Tenants' ALMO Group, Councillor Directors had been nominated by the Council and the Leaseholder Director had been elected by a secret ballot of tenants and leaseholders, having gained 689 votes as against 401 for the other candidate.

He went on to report progress on recruitment of Independent Directors, which had started with advertisements being placed in the Blackpool Gazette, the Lancashire Evening Post and Inside Housing. A total of 22 initial enquiries had been received, resulting in 11 actual forms being returned, which reflected a broad range of applicants. Shortlisting of applicants for interview had been set for Friday 16th June with the interviews following on 23rd and/or 22nd June depending upon the number of candidates chosen for interview.



Finally, Peter explained that a further Council nomination was awaited so that a second representative of the Conservative Group could be brought on to the Board. Discussion arose and a motion was proposed by Cllr Kathryn Benson and seconded by Miss Gwen King.

Agreed:

4. That whilst it was very grateful for the attendance of Cllr Lily Henderson at the meeting, the Board expressed its concern at the absence of a second nominee from the Conservative Group. The Board also expressed the view that a second nomination should be made without further delay.

4a Independent Director Recruitment

Peter Cross, the consultant who is facilitating the recruitment process as a person independent of the officers of Blackpool Coastal Housing, introduced this item. He described the process to be gone through and referred to the skills and abilities matrix he had produced from the results of the self-assessment carried out by Directors earlier in the meeting. This identified the relative overall strengths currently existing amongst Directors and pointed the way to identifying the skills and abilities that should be sought in the candidates in order to complement them.

Peter asked for volunteers from among the Directors to sit on the recruitment panel and discussion of the appropriate number needed and availability on the relevant days then followed.

Agreed:

1. That finding candidates with the skills and abilities identified as being needed through the self-assessment exercise should form the basis of selection decision by the panel.
2. That the members of the Recruitment Panel should be Mrs Irene Bishop, Miss Gwen King and Cllrs Kathryn Benson, Lily Henderson and Kath Rowson

PART B – CLOSED MEETING

There were no items of business for Part B

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

Meeting Opened 6-00pm

Meeting Closed 8-35pm