

**Agenda**  
**New Home Service Improvement Panel**  
**27<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

- Minutes from the last meeting
  
- Matters arising
  - Empty Homes Standard Leaflet
  - Cleaning/Welcome Packs
  - Golden Goodbye Leaflet
  
- Choice Based Lettings & Vulnerable Applicants Strategy
  
- Decorating Allowances
  
- Performance
  - Relet Times
  - Satisfaction Surveys
  
- AOB

DRAFT

**New Home Panel Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011, 2pm**  
**City Learning Centre**

**Present:**

Paul Dillon (PD)  
 Mark Humphries (MH)  
 Danielle Chapman (DC)  
 Tracy Ansell (*minutes*) (TA)  
 Keith Edwards (KE)  
 Elaine Christian (EC)  
 Maurice Christian (MC)  
 Irene Bishop (IB)  
 John Raine (JR)  
 Mary Everett (ME)  
 Viv Critchley (VC)  
 Chris Lovelock (CL)  
 Annette Avis (AA)

**Apologies:**

Dorothy Cameron (DC)  
 Martin Lawless (ML)  
 John Morris (JM)  
 James Jason (JJ)

ITEM		ACTION
1	<p><b><u>Apologies</u></b>                      As above.</p>	
2	<p><b><u>Minutes of the last meeting</u></b>                      Empty Homes Lettings standards page 3 VO2 and VO3 are similar – this is because one is internal and one is external standard.                      All agreed a correct and true record.</p> <p><b><u>Matters Arising</u></b>  <b><u>Empty Homes Standard Leaflet</u></b>                      MH explained that now the inspection is not taking place we can look at re-designing the leaflet and make bespoke to the group, to be discussed at the next meeting.                      A discussion took place on Tenant Inspectors and when properties are inspected, it was mentioned that when properties are let they are not always up to the let table standard, MH explained that properties cannot be left empty due to the void turnaround times. It was noted that Tenant Inspectors may be going into properties too early to inspect but should be inspecting when all the void work has been done, it was noted that on occasions they are told to “imagine what it would look like when finished” this is very difficult to do and is not giving a true record of the standards.                      It was asked if there could be set day for inspections but this is not always feasible as it depends on what properties are ready. PD asked if it could be arranged for Tenant Inspectors to inspect properties when ready as they cannot sign off or handover a property when works haven’t been completed. PD and MH to look at the processes in place at the moment.</p> <p><b><u>Cleaning/Welcome Packs</u></b>                      MH apologies for not bringing a cleaning pack to the meeting today but none were available and went on to explain that properties can be held up by 2-3 weeks just because they are waiting to be cleaned</p>	PD/MH

	<p>so tenants are offered the chance to clean the property themselves in order to speed up the process. The cleaning pack contains the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disinfectant</li> <li>• window cleaner</li> <li>• surface cleaner</li> <li>• cleaning cloths and gloves</li> <li>• toilet cleaner</li> <li>• toilet brush and washing up brush</li> <li>• bin bags</li> </ul> <p>MH explained that the approx cost of a cleaning pack is £10.00. A local cleaning company has been sourced to clean properties to a lettable standard and the tenant will also be left a cleaning pack. PD suggested changing the “welcome pack” to incorporate the cleaning pack and, JR asked if a “handy hints” on cleaning could be included, MH said this could be looked into. KE suggested including a list of the officers you will be dealing with when you are moving i.e. a contact card with the names of the Lettings Officer and Rent Officer, DC to take forward.</p> <p><b>3</b> <u><b>Choice Based Lettings Leaflet</b></u>  DC handed the group the new Choice Based Lettings Leaflet and the only changes made are that the incentive is open to secure tenants only and there is a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the back page. All agreed the changes.</p> <p><u><b>Vulnerable Applicants Strategy</b></u>  PD handed the group a copy of the Vulnerable Applicants Strategy and noted the following changes have been added:  Page 8 (Part 3) Asset Management  Page 10 (Part 3.3) Bands  Page 13 (Part 4.1) Services for Vulnerable Applicants &amp; Tenants  PD explained that the document has gone to the board for approval and passed. Any comments to TA please.</p> <p><b>4</b> <u><b>Decorating Allowances</b></u>  Decorating Allowances and the amount allowed is at the discretion of the Technical Officer and the decision is final. The B &amp; Q vouchers have now been replaced with cards and these have to be activated to get them uploaded before they can be used. This has been introduced as vouchers were not always being used and BCH had to still pay for them where has with the cards we only pay for what is actually being spent. The cards have to be activated within 6 months or they become void but once activated can last for 2 years. It was suggested that rather than using B &amp; Q would it be a possibility of using West Coast Builders? MH to look into.</p> <p><b>5</b> <u><b>Performance</b></u>  Relet times – November 30.44 days against a target of 31 days  December 29.8 days against a target of 31 days</p> <p><u><b>Satisfaction Survey</b></u>  PD handed the group a copy of the Satisfaction Survey results and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 92.9% found it very easy to place bids</li> <li>• 92.9% found our staff very helpful when answering their queries</li> <li>• 57.1% found the bidding process very easy</li> <li>• 89.3% found the appointment time for viewing the property was very convenient</li> </ul>	<p>MH/DC</p> <p>MH</p>
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- 53.6% thought the first impression of the property was very good
- 53.6% had to wait between 0-7 days to get the keys to the property after viewing
- 75% were very satisfied with the overall standard of their home
- 100% said that there were no queries/repairs outstanding
- 88% said that the sign up appointment was very convenient
- 100% said they were given the relevant information to take up their tenancy
- 89.3% were offered Tenancy Support
- 100% said they would recommend Blackpool Coastal Housing as a landlord
- 85.7% rated the service provided by Homestop as very good

**AOB**

**Q.** Should carpets be removed from properties when moving out?

**A.** Yes, unless told otherwise.

**Q.** What happens if the tenant is unable to physically move the carpets themselves?

**A.** The Technical Officer will decide if there will be a rechargeable cost, it will be discretionary dependent upon individual circumstances.

**Q.** Any further information about room sizes and plug sockets

**A.** Sits with Ian Grimshaw but will look into.

**Q.** What is the situation if a vulnerable tenant has no family or friends how would they hand the keys back into the Housing Office?

**A.** They would preferably have some sort of support in place such as an Advocate or Social Worker, but it wouldn't be a problem for the Housing Officer to pick them up or they could be handed to a Scheme Manager as long as we are made aware.

**Q.** Any further information on Sub-Regional - My Home My Choice?

**A.** There is a draft policy but still in negotiation about the running costs

MH advised that BCH Property Services have recently won an award for the best Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) in the country.

60 leaks and boiler problems were reported over the xmas period but dealt with admirably

**Date and time of next meeting**

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2pm CLC

Meeting Closed

**MH**