

MINUTES OF TENANT LIAISON FORUM MEETING – 8th MAY 2007

Present:

Chairman – Mrs M Horn, Grange Park Residents' Association
Mrs J Feeney, Boston Way Tenants' Association
Mrs K Rowson and Mr M Christian, Ingthorpe North Tenants and Residents' Association
Mrs C Hardiman, Linden & Edmonton Residents' Association
Mrs D Wightman and Mr B Rogers, Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association
Ms S Wilson and Mrs A Allen, Mereside Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mr C Randall, Munsters Residents' Association
Mr C Baker and Mrs Caroline Cook, Queens Park Residents' Association
Mr T Clayton, Washington Court Residents' Association
Mr M Atar, Housing and Diversity Services Ltd

In Attendance: Mr P Jefferson, Mr T Fitzgerald, Mr P Davies, Ms D Williams, Ms S Grundy and Mrs J Grimshaw, Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms I Bishop, Arms Length Management Organisation
Mrs N Kilgallon, Social Services and Housing Department
Mr P Taylor, Mr J Cunliffe, Mr J Evans, Mr T Street, Streetscene
Mrs B Jarvis, Legal and Democratic Services

Action

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs A Stringer, Grange Park Residents' Association and Mrs L Dean, Ingthorpe North Tenants and Residents' Association.

Apologies were also received from Mr C Holland and Ms M Cornall, Blackpool Council.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – 13th MARCH 2007

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Tenant Liaison Forum held on 13th March 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

4. HOUSING MATTERS

(a) Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH)

Mr Jefferson, Blackpool Coastal Housing, reported that the main focus for the organisation was preparing for the forthcoming inspection and that progress with this was on track.

(b) Preparing for Inspection

Mr Jefferson outlined the work that was being undertaken in preparation for the inspection later this year. He circulated a questionnaire and explained that the document was a first draft and had been developed as part of the Housing Equalities and Diversity strategy. It was intended that the questionnaire would be forwarded to all tenants to complete and it was hoped that the response rate for completion of the forms would be 80% by November 2007.

(c) Assessing Tenant Involvement

Mr Fitzgerald, Blackpool Coastal Housing, explained that he was intending to organise workshops to discuss ways in which the tenants

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could become more proactively involved in preparation for the inspection. Another purpose of the workshop would be to review how funding of the various associations should be allocated.

It was agreed that nominated members of the Tenants Liaison Forum would be invited to a workshop due to take place on 23rd May 2007 to discuss increased tenant involvement in preparation for the inspection and funding allocation for the various associations.

Sandy Grundy

(d) Racial Equality Scheme

Mr Atar, Housing and Diversity Services Ltd, explained that every public body was required to have equality schemes to ensure that there were adequate systems in place to prevent discrimination. He added that, working in conjunction with Blackpool Coastal Housing, an action plan had been developed to ensure that all actions undertaken were in line with legislation and any gaps identified were being addressed.

He reported that the equality and diversity strategy had been presented to the Equality and Diversity Board and a disability equality scheme and a gender equality scheme were also in the process of being developed. Invitations to be involved on the Equality and Diversity Board were extended to representatives of the Tenants Liaison Forum and Mrs Horn agreed to participate.

(e) Streetscene Presentation

Mr Taylor and Mr Cunliffe, Streetscene, updated the Forum on changes which had taken place within Streetscene. They highlighted the positive actions which had been taken to provide an improved and more efficient service.

Several members of the Forum raised concerns relating to grass cutting and waste collection. It was agreed that the Tenants Liaison Forum would nominate representatives to attend regular meetings with officers from Streetscene to identify priority areas for tenants.

All

Mr Fitzgerald, Blackpool Coastal Housing, reported that he was in the process of recruiting people to a Green Warden Initiative with the intention of having a group in place before the end of June 2007. This group would be monitoring the grass cutting and waste management services in addition to the work being carried out by Streetscene.

Tony Fitzgerald

It was agreed that the grassed area on Devonshire Road, which was currently being used by vehicles as a cut-through to Munster Avenue, would be investigated.

Paul Taylor

Several members of the Forum extended their appreciation to Streetscene and the Neighbourhood Environmental and Action Team for the noticeable improvements which had taken place in the last few months.

(f) Tenant Friendly Logo

A sample of the new logo was circulated to members of the Forum and they were informed that all future documents submitted to the reading panel would display this logo.

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(g) Group Incentives/Funding

It was agreed that the workshop due to take place on 23rd May 2007 would incorporate discussions relating to funding allocation for the various associations.

(h) Sheltered Housing and Community Centres

Ms Williams, Blackpool Coastal Housing, updated the Forum on progress made in relation to sheltered housing and community centres.

She reported that meetings had been arranged for tenants of sheltered housing to obtain their views on the community centres and that the information obtained from the meetings was in the process of being collated.

A tenants' satisfaction survey had also been undertaken to establish wider group opinion. Suggestions put forward were in relation to areas such as the development of health services, provision of district nurses, chiropody and flu vaccinations and these would be taken to Social Services and Primary Care Trust for consideration.

The Forum was informed that once the consultation had been completed, an impact assessment would need to be conducted to assess the impact of potential changes on other non-local groups who used the community centres.

Work was also being undertaken to bring the community centres up to the standards required by the Disability Discrimination Act.

(i) Performance Indicators

Mr Jefferson presented a report detailing the performance of Blackpool Coastal Housing against key targets. He highlighted several areas of concern and outlined the actions which were being taken in relation to these.

Performance in the area of rent arrears continued to be adversely affected due to the new Housing Benefits system. Pressure was continuing to be put on Housing Benefits section to rectify the situation and a meeting was due to be held in the next couple of weeks to discuss the matter further.

It was reported that currently appointments were only made where access to the property was required and this had adversely impacted on the performance figure for non-emergency repairs. It was agreed to trial a system whereby appointments would be booked for all repairs, irrespective of whether access to the property was required and it was expected that this would improve the performance figures for non-emergency repairs.

Mr Fitzgerald distributed a six-monthly report to the Tenant Liaison Forum. He outlined the work which had been undertaken by the Customer Involvement Team during the last six months. He also reported that benchmarking with other local authorities had been undertaken and that this would continue.

Peter
Jefferson

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He highlighted the performance indicators for the Customer Involvement Team and progress against these targets. He emphasized the number of hours that the staff had spent on tenants groups. He also explained that the actual spend was lower than the budget allocation but this was in large part due to the cost of the publication of Viewpoint being less than expected. However, it was anticipated that Viewpoint would utilise more of the budget in the next financial year.

(j) Customer Suggestion Scheme

Mrs Grimshaw reported that the customer suggestion scheme would be a regular item on the Tenants Liaison Forum agenda. She informed the meeting that all the suggestion cards she had received were from Edmonton Place. The comments from the suggestion cards were read out and the following actions were agreed:-

1. Investigations would be made into improving the safety and general tidiness of the pond at Edmonton Place.
2. The requests for the provision of dog bins at Edmonton Place and flowers and benches at the Community Centre would be taken to the meeting being arranged with Streetscene.

Julie
Grimshaw

Julie
Grimshaw

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) The Chairman informed the meeting that the minimum age for the governing body for Blackpool Fylde and Wyre Foundation Trust Hospital would be reduced to 16 years and that two young people of that age from Grange Park had put their name forward to join the Board.
- (b) In response to a question regarding the impact that the elections which took place on 3rd May 2007 would have on the Arms Length Management Organisation, the Forum was informed that no changes were expected other than the political make-up of the Board.

6. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be the Annual General Meeting and would take place on Tuesday 10th July 2007 at 10.00am in Committee Room B, Town Hall, Blackpool.

(The meeting ended at 12.06pm)

For any queries regarding these minutes please contact;
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