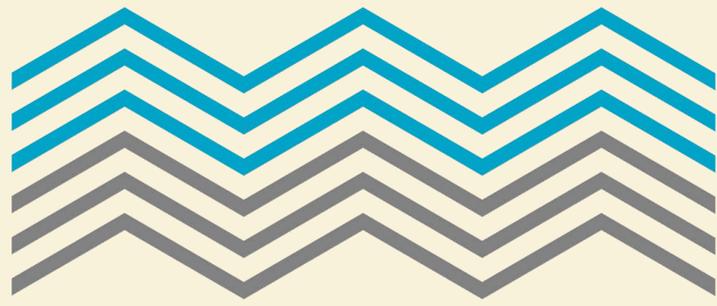


2019
2020



Blackpool Coastal
Housing

BCH

BOARD MINUTES

5 . 02 . 2020



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED
HELD AT COASTAL HOUSE, ABINGDON STREET, BLACKPOOL
ON WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 6.00PM**

Present: Councillor L Williams, Non-Executive Director (Chairman)
Councillor J Hobson, Non-Executive Director
Councillor D Robertson BEM, Non-Executive Director
Ms L Derby, Tenant Non-Executive Director
Mr N Herring, Tenant Non-Executive Director
Mrs V O'Shea, Tenant Non-Executive Director
Mr A Disley, Independent Non-Executive Director
Mr Szatkowski, Independent Non-Executive Director

In attendance: Mrs M Cornall, Director of Operations
Mr J Donnellon, Chief Executive
Mr S Dunstan, Director of Resources
Mrs S Fowler, Chief Executive's PA
Mr D Shakespeare, TOWER member (Item 6 only)
Ms Caroline Lamprey, Involvement and Communications Manager
(Item 6 only)
Mr M Towers, Company Secretary
Mrs E Ireland, Company Secretary Support

Mr Peter Walters, HQN consultant to observe the meeting

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Non-Executive Directors Ms Upton and Mrs Thompson.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 4 DECEMBER 2019

The Board agreed: To approve the minutes of the Board meeting held on 4 December 2019 as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4 December 2019 Board Meeting

Minute 7

Mr Donnellon, Chief Executive confirmed that he would circulate the previously requested detailed analysis indicating which repair categories generated the highest costs and the information on the 'family group' requested by the Board.

Minute 12

Mr Dunstan, Director of Resources advised that the requested information on complaints and the anti-social behaviour plans would be made available prior to the next Board meeting.

Minute 15

Following discussion the Board agreed that evaluation of the proposed changes to the reporting methods would be beneficial once the new reporting styles had been implemented. Further discussion of the issue occurred under Item 7.

5 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2020

Mr Szatkowski, Chair of the Audit Committee introduced the minutes and gave thanks to the Committee members for their contributions at the meeting. He informed the Board that the 'deep dive' reviews had been working well, with two more reviews having been completed.

The Board heard that a detailed discussion had taken place over the importance of adhering to audit recommendation deadlines wherever possible and that any failure to meet the deadlines should be closely monitored.

An invitation was extended to any interested Board members to attend the next meeting of the Audit Committee on Wednesday 18 March 2020 at 6pm. Prior to the next Audit Committee a briefing on the role and remit of the Committee was to be arranged.

The Board agreed: To note the minutes of the Audit Committee of 22 January 2020.

6 TOWER SCRUTINY - REVIEW OF ASSET MANAGEMENT

The Board received a presentation from Mr Shakespeare, TOWER member on the TOWER Scrutiny of Asset Management. Mr Shakespeare outlined the key findings of the review along with details of the resulting recommendations.

Mrs Cornall, Director of Operations explained that the Scrutiny had been a beneficial process and that as a result of the findings communication across the teams had improved.

In relation to Recommendation 1 'All departments to have better communication with each other,' Cllr Hobson queried the management response of 'This has been noted and

teams are working to improve this,' suggesting that further detail on how communication would be improved should be provided. Mrs Cornall explained that following the introduction of joint meetings and a number of resulting improvements to the operation of the services, she considered that this recommendation had been satisfactorily actioned.

Mr Herring questioned the proposed compliance dates for a number of high risk recommendations and suggested that December 2020 was too generous a target date for completion. Mrs Cornall agreed that a number of the recommendations should be revisited to amend their completion dates. Ms Lamprey, Involvement and Communications Manager clarified that a number of the longer term dates reflected the intention to continue to monitor compliance once completed.

The Board expressed thanks to Mr Shakespeare for the hard work and valuable contribution of TOWER in undertaking the review.

[Mr Shakespeare and Ms Lamprey left the meeting on conclusion of this item.]

7 OPERATION OF BOARD MEETINGS

Cllr Williams, as Chairman of the Board proposed a change to the format of Board meetings. She suggested that for future agendas time could be allocated for the investigation of a specific topic in greater detail. The length of agenda reports was also discussed, with thought given as to how the necessary information could be better communicated to Board members. Cllr Williams stressed the importance of the expertise and knowledge of the Board being put to good use and utilised in the most effective way possible.

The following areas were suggested by Board members as potential areas for greater exploration at future meetings:

- Housing Development Plan – 'Building Better, Building Beautiful' government proposals.
- Potential improvement programme to allow tenants to improve the external appearance of their properties.
- 'See the Person' campaign, examining how to improve the perception of Council owned housing areas.
- Supported Housing projects with a superior quality of housing options.
- Council Housing Investment Plan (CHIP).

In response to the length of reports included within Board agendas, Cllr Williams asked whether there was a more useful way in which to distribute the information, with Mr Szatkowski suggesting that a summarised version of reports would be useful. Further discussion continued around this topic, with Mr Donnellon identifying that the

information was all valuable and necessary and so would need to be accessed by Board members in order to inform Board discussions and decisions. When questioned about the possibility of an information portal, Mr Towers, Company Secretary informed the Board that such a feature could be developed via the Modern.Gov facility and he agreed to provide further information at the next meeting of the Board.

Mr Disley made the suggestion that a critical friend approach could be taken in order to seek examples of good practice from the Council's other Wholly Owned Companies. Mr Towers welcomed this idea and informed the Board of a proposed Companies Day being facilitated by Mr Lockley and which could involve presentations and then training opportunities. The event was described as a networking and information-sharing opportunity and Mr Towers agreed to feedback the Board's positive support for the proposed event to the Council.

The Board agreed:

1. That an annual programme of key topics for deeper discussion be developed for approval;
2. To further consider the most appropriate reporting format for information.

8 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Mr Dunstan, Director of Resources presented the Quarter Three performance indicator scorecard and the Performance Team workplan for the current year. Mr Dunstan identified that the percentage of rent collected figure had increased over the short term from 98.97% to 99.26% but that the Quarter Three target had not been achieved, although he expected it to have been achieved by year end.

With regards to Voids performance, Mr Dunstan acknowledged that despite an improvement in the short term re-let time, performance remained behind target by nine days. Mrs Cornall stated that this particular indicator was a lag indicator, and issues had been identified and reported to the Board last summer. The improvement in the performance being seen now was a direct result of the actions put in place over the summer. She confirmed that it was expected that performance improvement would continue, coming closer to the target by year end.

The presentation of performance data was questioned, with the suggestion made that the Dashboard approach utilised by Blackpool Housing Company may be a useful tool to review for implementation by Blackpool Coastal Housing. Mr Dunstan agreed to review the suitability of the Dashboard and requested that Board members informed him of any specific data they would wish to be included.

Mr Szatkowski agreed that a refresh of performance data would be welcomed, with a balance to be achieved of relevant and necessary data reporting. The suggestion was made that Health and Safety data would be a useful addition, along with more indicators

that measured customer experience and satisfaction. Mr Szatkowski acknowledged that reported KPIs should be kept to a maximum of around ten indicators per report.

The Board agreed: To note the performance report.

9 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Mr Donnellon introduced his report and identified that there were two key report items for consideration:

- The Council's approval of the HRA Rent report and five year rent policy
- The Council Housing Investment Programme (CHIP)

Board members were reminded that BCH finance officers were responsible for the management of the HRA on behalf of the Council. They had been working with the Council's finance team to prepare the annual rent report which sought to balance HRA expenditure and income and set rent levels for the forthcoming year. The rent report was considered by the Council's Executive on Monday 20 January 2020 and all recommendations had been approved to be submitted to full Council for a decision in February 2020. This would allow rent letters to be issued in time for the new rent year. Mr Donnellon highlighted the key headlines from the report as being:

An in-year contribution of £210k to HRA balances which was an improvement on the projected position of a deficit.

HRA balances projected at year end to be £5915k.

The 2020/2021 BCH fee would be frozen at current levels but with an additional £70k for emergency housing staffing funded from increased income.

A 2.7% increase in rents and fees and charges now that the nationally imposed rent freeze had ended. This increase was part of a five year strategy to increase the amount of social rented stock in the town.

A recognition that the HRA had some potential to invest in new and improved social housing now that the debt cap had been removed, although Mr Donnellon informed the Board that this would be kept under review.

Mr Donnellon identified that the CHIP report would require more in-depth consideration by the Board, but highlighted the following key issues:

A target of 250 homes to be acquired, refurbished and let as social housing over the next 5 years.

A target of 300 new build Council properties including the 75 already underway at Troutbeck.

A commitment to maintain the decent homes standard across all existing stock while maintaining safety and meeting new standards.

A commitment to invest in the external environments to create improved neighbourhoods.

A commitment to deliver the CHIP with an objective of meeting the Council's and the Board's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.

In response to a question from Mr Herring regarding how realistic the target of becoming carbon neutral was, Mr Donnellon agreed that 2030 was a stretching target. He advised that once the baseline data had been received then realistic plans to work towards the target could be created and implemented. Discussion was held around the importance of considering future environmentally-friendly adaptations at the design stage of new properties, as well as the pursuit of any available funding streams.

In response to the Rent report, Mr Szatkowski identified that there was no evident link between the proposed rent increase and any resulting investment in the housing stock. Mr Donnellon confirmed that the corresponding investment plan had yet to be provided by the Council but that the Board would be given the opportunity to input into the proposals once received.

Mr Donnellon informed Board members that the National ALMO Conference was taking place in April and sought volunteers to fill the final available place. Mr Szatkowski expressed an interest in attending and Mr Donnellon agreed to make the necessary arrangements.

The Board agreed:

1. To note the Chief Executive's report;
2. To include the CHIP report as a discussion topic at a future Board meeting.

10 DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES' REPORT

Mr Dunstan, Director of Resources introduced his report. The Board noted that within its 2020/2021 budget, the Council had confirmed that BCH's management fee would remain unchanged for the financial year, other than £70k for additional support posts which had already been committed to. Mr Dunstan advised that in light of known pressures, including pay awards and increased employer pension contributions, the allocations to services would be worked through and the draft budget then taken to the Audit Committee on 18 March 2020 for Board input prior to the start of the financial year.

The Board was informed that the migration to new laptops and the Windows 10

operating system had been completed and that the move to Orchard Assets from ECMK had been continuing without issue. Mr Dunstan advised that the updated IT Strategy would be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

The site visit to finalise TPAS accreditation had taken place, with initial feedback suggesting that accreditation was probable.

Mr Dunstan informed the Board that the Time to Change event would be taking place the following day and invited any interested members along to participate from 12.30pm.

The Board agreed: To note the Director of Resources' report.

11 DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS' REPORT

Mrs Cornall, Director of Operations introduced her report. The Board was pleased to hear that the eagerly anticipated accreditation of the Repairs Service had been formally confirmed and members offered congratulations to the staff involved.

Mrs Cornall informed the Board that phase one of the More Positive Together scheme had ceased with effect from 31 January 2020 and no formal written notification of additional funding had yet been received.

Progress in relation to the development at Troutbeck Crescent was questioned, with assurance provided that the project was on track for the completion target date.

The Board agreed: To note the Director of Operations' report.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Disley raised a question on the progression of the potential joint working with Blackpool Housing Company (BHC). Mr Donnellon advised that the Registered Provider application from BHC was progressing. Following the completion of the ALMO review, anticipated for late March 2020, Mr Donnellon agreed to contact Board members with an update on the joint working position. He advised that further information should be available by late summer.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 22 APRIL 2020

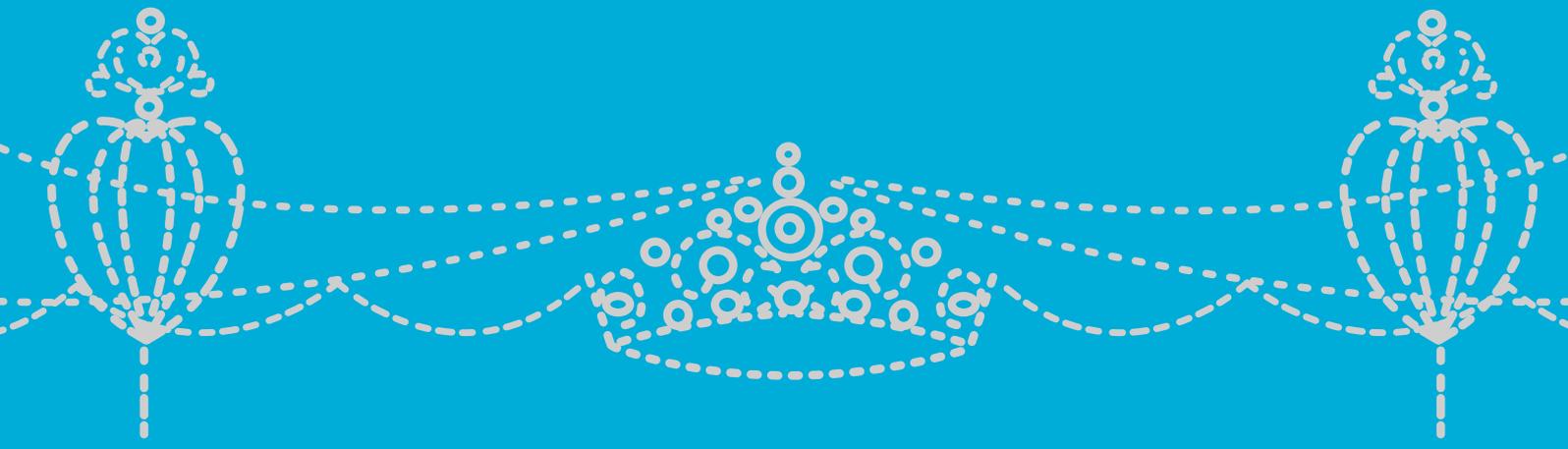
The Board agreed: To note the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 22 April 2020.



The meeting ended at 7.30pm

Signed by the Chairman

.....
Councillor L Williams, 22 April 2020



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