

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED  
HELD AT COASTAL HOUSE, ABINGDON STREET  
ON WEDNESDAY 26 JULY 2023 AT 5.00PM**

**Present:** Councillor N Brookes, Non-Executive Director (Chair)  
Councillor J Hobson, Non-Executive Director  
Councillor J Sloman, Non-Executive Director  
Mr N Herring, Tenant Non-Executive Director  
Mrs M Thompson, Independent Non-Executive Director  
Mr A Szatkowski, Independent Non-Executive Director

**In attendance:** Mrs M Cornall, Director of Operations  
Mr S Dunstan, Director of Resources  
Mr M Towers, Company Secretary  
Mrs J Stephenson, Assistant Company Secretary

		<b>Actions</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>APPOINTMENT OF NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b></p> <p>The Board noted the appointment of Councillor Julie Sloman to the Blackpool Coastal Housing Company Board and welcomed her to the meeting.</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Donnellon, Chief Executive and Ms T Johnson, Independent Non-Executive Director.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.</p>	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 29 MARCH 2023</b></p> <p><b>The Board agreed:</b> To approve the minutes of the Board meeting held on 29 March 2023, as a true and correct record.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>All matters arising from the previous minutes had been completed or were covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 JULY 2023</b></p> <p>Mr A Szatkowski, Independent Non-Executive Director and Chair of the BCH</p>	

		Actions
7.	<p>Audit Committee gave a brief overview of the meeting held on 12 July 2023.</p> <p>He thanked the finance team for their hard work during the Annual Audit and noted that the external Auditors praised the quality of the accounts and professionalism shown by the team during that period.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed:</b> To note the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 12 July 2023 as a true and correct record.</p> <p><b>COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP</b></p> <p>The Board considered the membership of its committees, in light of recent changes to its composition.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To appoint Councillor Julie Sloman as a member of the BCH Audit Committee</li> <li>2. To appoint Councillor Jim Hobson as a member of the Employment Committee.</li> </ol>	
8.	<p><b>ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023</b></p> <p>The Board was presented with the financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023, noting that the Audit Committee had considered them in full and recommended them for approval at its meeting on 12 July 2023, which had been attended by Mr M Cousins from the company's external auditors Xeinadin Audit Limited.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. With the judgement of the auditors, Xeinadin Audit Limited and senior management, that the Company should continue as a going concern.</li> <li>2. To approve that the accounts gave a true and fair view of the Company's assets, liabilities, financial position and profit and loss,.</li> <li>3. To approve the Statutory Accounts made up to 31 March 2023 as submitted and duly authorised the Chair to sign the balance sheet and Directors' report on behalf of the Company.</li> <li>4. That the accounts, once signed, be filed with the Registrar of Companies.</li> <li>5. The Letter of Representation as submitted and authorised the Chair to sign the letter on behalf of the Board.</li> </ol>	
9.	<p><b>KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</b></p> <p>Mr S Dunstan, Director of Resources, presented the Key Performance Indicator</p>	

	Actions
<p>(KPI) report.</p> <p>Concern was raised regarding the KPI for rent collection, he advised that the cost of living crisis and changes in benefit had added additional pressure. He explained that the Rent Team would be working hard to achieve the target.</p> <p>Mrs M Cornall, Director of Operations, informed the Board that the increase in repairs figures were undoubtedly affected due to the increase in mould and damp inspections. The team would investigate further to confirm this.</p> <p>With regards to electrical testing, it was noted that the company did not have the same legal powers as that of the gas testing and that a change in legislation would combat the issues arising in the future.</p> <p>The Board raised concerns regarding the void property KPI, Mrs Cornall explained that the figures had dramatically reduced over the last year. A change in void standard previously discussed with the Board had slowed down the void works process. However, she was confident that the number of long-term void properties reducing considerably as had the number of minor works voids in the system and were now with the lettings service. The Board were reminded that void numbers could go back up depending on the number of tenancy terminations received in the future, although as it currently stands these voids would be let in the near future reducing the empty properties KPI further.</p> <p>It was noted that the staff turnover KPI was consistently at the 15% mark, and advised that the area of work surrounding the anti-social behaviour (ASB) had played a major part. The Board was informed that the ASB role was a very challenging and this was a theme nationally. The company's Human Resources were reviewing recruitment, succession planning and retention approaches to reduce staff turnover in the future.</p> <p>In addition, BCH were investigating the possibility of graduate and apprenticeship schemes for the future.</p> <p>The Board complimented the positive improvements within the number of complaints and the reduction in ASB cases KPI's.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To reduce the KPI for Decent Homes Standard from 0.4% to 0%.</li> <li>2. To invite Mr Richard Jones, Performance Manager to attend the next meeting to update the Board upon future work on the STAR survey.</li> </ol>	<p><b>MC</b></p> <p><b>SD</b></p>

		Actions
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>LEVELLING UP REPORT</b></p> <p>Mrs M Cornall, Director of Operations gave an update on the Blackpool’s designation as a Levelling Up Pilot and the implications for housing.</p> <p>She advised that a further bid for government funds would be submitted in July with regards to the regeneration of an inner ward of Blackpool, likely to be the Revoe area. It was anticipated that the Council would receive a response to the bid by the autumn.</p> <p>Mrs Cornall stated the Council was confident that the bid would be successful given the level of support from civil servants and ministers from the DLUHC and Homes England.</p> <p>Consultation with the community had already taken place as part of the master plan process undertaken approximately two years ago, and that would form part of the future intelligence gathering.</p> <p>Funding had been allocated to elongate the More Positive Together (MPT) service as part of the Enforcement Pilot aimed at raising standards in the private sector and assessing properties against standards that will form part of new legislation for the private rented sector. Two members of staff from MPT had been seconded to this project. In addition it was anticipated that a further 5 members of staff would be designated to the Revoe area to commence intelligence gathering about the community ahead of any Levelling Up regeneration funding.</p> <p>Board members empathised the need for partnership working and consistency to make the project a success.</p>	
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT</b></p> <p>Mr S Dunstan, Director of Resources, presented to the Board the Chief Executive’s report in the absence of Mr J Donnellon.</p> <p>A full review of how the companies currently meet the tenant satisfaction and compliance measures had been carried out, this reflected that BCH were in a strong position.</p> <p>A review of the replacement funding for the More Positive Together (MPT) team had started. The MPT programme had been pivotal in support to tenants over the past few very testing years in particular in areas regarding providing support to maximising household income and crucially for BCH maintaining the rent collection.</p>	

		Actions
12.	<p>With regards to a common performance scorecard across the housing provision, he advised that this was at development stage and would be presented in a way that Board members could actively engage with performance monitoring and not be flooded by the data.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed to:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To support the approval of the principle of transferring the cost of the Financial Support Officers (formally MPT) to the BCH fee subject to discussions with the Council.</li> <li>2. That the Scorecard on performance be provided to the Board at the next meeting</li> </ol> <p><b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES' REPORT</b></p> <p>Mr S Dunstan, Director of Resources, presented to the Board his report and provided an update of the staffing issues affecting the company.</p> <p>With regards to the Secondment of Mrs L Murphy, Head of Finance, to Blackpool Housing Company for an initial period of three months, the Board was assured that the company was adequately staffed with two experienced and qualified accountants picking up the work in the short-term.</p> <p>The Board was advised that the White Paper Compliance was in the final stages of completion with one remaining area 'comprehensive service standards' to be finalised. The service standards would be circulated to the Board on completion.</p>	SD
13.	<p><b>DIRECTOR OF OPERATION'S REPORT</b></p> <p>Mrs M Cornall, Director of Operations provided an update on the significant developments since the last Board meeting.</p> <p>A draft summary HQN Accreditation Report was distributed to members following the full inspection. The full report from HQN would be available the following week and would be distributed to Board members outside of the meeting.</p> <p>The Board was advised that BCH was currently preparing for Ofsted registration for the Bispham House, (semi-independent service), and Argosy House (looked after young person, homeless unit). The Ofsted registration was a Government requirement and had not originally been anticipated or included in the budget. BCH had requested additional funding from Children's Services to cover the financial implications.</p>	MC

		Actions
	<p>The Board was informed that the work for the furnished tenancies had been finalised and procurement work had started. It was hoped that the first tenancy would commence early November.</p> <p>The Board members were invited to a site visit of the new housing development on Grange Park, prior to the next meeting of the Board, 4pm on 18 October 2023.</p> <p><b>The Board noted:</b> that the meeting 18 October 2023 be held at The Grange building, on Grange Park.</p>	
14	<p><b>CONTINUOUS SERVICE REPORT</b></p> <p>Mr M Towers, Company Secretary gave the Board an update up on the Continuous Service Report. He advised the report had been agreed at the Shareholder Committee, and had been reported at each wholly owned company Board meetings.</p> <p><b>That the Board agreed:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To recognise employee service between and across all wholly owned companies and the Council, with any employee who commences or recommences employment with the company.</li> <li>2. That the company put in place a system to verify any requests for previous continuous service. Any backdated requests for continuous service would be considered on a case by case basis by the company.</li> </ol>	
15.	<p><b>MEMBER RELATIONS</b></p> <p>Mr Szatkowski advised the Board that the Annual Audit Chairman report was not yet ready and asked the Board if it could be approved by written resolution prior to the Shareholder Committee on 5 September 2023. Mr Towers also suggested that the same process be applied for the Company Annual report which had to be agreed before the Shareholder Committee.</p> <p><b>The Board agreed:</b> To agree to consider the Annual Audit Chairman report and the Company Annual report by way of a written resolution.</p>	AS / JD
16.	<p><b>WORK PROGRAMME</b></p> <p>The Board noted the work programme and was advised that the dates for 2024 would be added to the programme ahead of the next meeting.</p>	Ass. Co. Sec.

		Actions
<b>17.</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>The Board was informed that the Away Day would be arranged for the new year when the picture was clearer around the Levelling Up regeneration project.</p> <p>The Board was informed that Mr David Shakespeare was stepping down from the Tower Scrutiny Panel after many years of service. The Board expressed its gratitude for all the work, time and support given by Mr Shakespeare to be the voice of tenants in Blackpool and at a national level.</p>	
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING 18 OCTOBER 2023</b></p> <p><b>The Board noted:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That a site visit to the new housing development on Grange Park had been arranged for 4pm 18 October 2023, prior to the next Board meeting.</li> <li>2. The Board meeting would commence at 5pm @theGrange as opposed to Coastal House.</li> </ol>	

The meeting ended at 7.05pm

**Signed by the Chair**

.....  
**Councillor Neal Brookes**