

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED
HELD AT COASTAL HOUSE, ABINGDON STREET, BLACKPOOL
ON WEDNESDAY 30 APRIL 2024 AT 5.00PM**

Present:

Councillor N Brookes, Non-Executive Director (Chair)
Councillor J Hobson, Non-Executive Director
Councillor J Sloman, Non-Executive Director
Mr A Szatkowski, Independent Non-Executive Director
Mr N Herring, Tenant Non-Executive Director
Ms T Johnson, Independent Non-Executive Director

In attendance:

Mr J Donnellon, Chief Executive
Mrs M Cornall, Director of Operations
Mr S Dunstan, Director of Resources
Mr A Walker, Head of Housing
Mr M Towers, Company Secretary
Mrs J Stephenson, Assistant Company Secretary
Ms S Fowler, PA to Chief Executive and Senior Management Team

Mrs V Piper, Head of Housing, Blackpool Council
Ms H Cassidy, Housing Standards and Compliance Manager, Blackpool Council

		Actions
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Mrs M Thompson, Independent Non-Executive Director.</p>	
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2024 AND WRITTEN RESOLUTION APPROVED ON 8 APRIL 2024</p> <p>The Board agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the minutes of the Board meeting held on 6 March 2024, as a true and correct record. 2. To note the Written Resolution approved on 8 April 2024. 	

		Actions
4.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p><u>Item 11 – Director of Operations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Board agreed that it would not be applicable for Board Members to be DBS registered in their role of Non-Executive Director with the Board. <p>The Board noted that all other matters arising had either been complete or covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p>	
5.	<p>AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF MEETING 19 MARCH 2024</p> <p>Mr A Szatkowski, Independent Non-Executive Director and Chair of the BCH Audit Committee gave a brief overview of the meeting held on 19 March 2024.</p> <p>With regards to Item 9 – Health and Safety, the Board discussed the concerns raised following the Fire Risk Assessment undertaken by Pennington’s. Mrs Cornall clarified that the report from Pennington’s had raised a number of apprehensions, in particular with regards to the major increase of priority recommendations raised in their written report.</p> <p>BCH had appointed a third party expert to analyse the content of the report. The expert had identified a number of inconsistencies within the report, and felt that incorrect legislation had been had been utilised with regards to various property types and age. Mrs Cornall confirmed that BCH had challenged the report with Pennington’s and had sought clarification on their assessment. Members were reassured that in the meantime, work would continue to complete the high priority recommendations.</p> <p>Members requested additional assurances that BCH would investigate the potential risks to the company from the current Fire Risk Assessment outstanding priorities, in particular with regards to BCH responsibilities and how the report could affect the validity of the current insurance and risk to the company.</p> <p>Mrs Cornall updated the Board with regards to the overdue Gas Safety Certificates. She reported that following changes in personnel at Housing Enforcement within the Council there had been a positive impact on the long term overdue Gas Safety Certificates. The long standing overdue certificates had since been completed.</p> <p>Board Members highlighted the need for partnership working with support services such as Adult Social Care, the Police and the Environment Team, to</p>	<p>MC</p>

		Actions
<p>6.</p>	<p>raise safeguarding concerns, make referrals where appropriate and to gain access to properties.</p> <p>ASB ACCREDITATION</p> <p>Mr A Walker, Head of Housing BCH attended the Board to provide additional information with regards to ASB Accreditation and the Quality Assessment Framework report from Resolve.</p> <p>It was highlighted that staff turnover had previously been identified nation-wide as a factor with ASB Teams. Members requested that exit interview data be analysed.</p> <p>Board Members explained that they felt ASB presented as a wider issue than challenging tenants. Many resident concerns centred on wanting to feel safe, secure and happy, the appearance of the area they live remained an important factor to them.</p> <p>Mr Walker explained that a more proactive, risk based approach had been developed and an action plan created to assist with the case load. The approach had enabled the team to manage cases more appropriately and close down cases more effectively.</p> <p>The results from the latest Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) were being analysed and would provide BCH with feedback on how the new approach had been perceived by tenants.</p> <p>Mr Walker advised the Board on the proposal to establish a tenant panel to assist with the ASB pathway. The panel would challenge BCH on case management and the process. Board Members were assured that tenant representatives would be trained by Resolve and individual cases would be anonymised to prevent issues with GDPR and confidentiality.</p> <p>Board Members felt that despite the assurances and changes in procedure, the accreditation could still provide a distraction for the work required to improve the outcome of ASB in the town.</p> <p>The Board agreed: To receive an update at the next meeting, to include TSM results if available.</p>	

		Actions
7.	<p>COMPLAINTS</p> <p>Mr J Donnellon, Chief Executive provided the Board with the current position with regards to complaints and what actions had been taken to manage the process following the increase in volume as a result of the greater scrutiny being given to complaints and regulation as a result of the Housing Act.</p> <p>The Board was advised that the Orchard TSM system would need to be enhanced to allow additional data to be included with particular reference to tenant vulnerabilities, BCH would investigate to establish costings. Further details would be presented to the Board in the future.</p> <p>Mr Donnellon advised that Right First Time training had been rolled out to all staff. Members emphasised the need for more empathy and understanding of the individual situation when dealing with complaints. He confirmed that the emphasis of the training and the format and content had also been reviewed by the Board Complaints Champion.</p> <p>The Board agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the contents of the report; 2. To receive additional information with regards to the true costs of complaints to the company. 	
8.	<p>HOUSING ACT AND NEW REGULATION REGIMES</p> <p>Mrs V Piper, Head of Housing, Blackpool Council provided the Board with a presentation on the Housing Act and new regulation regimes.</p> <p>Mrs Piper advised that the service had commence preparation for the implementation of the inspection programme, moving to a more proactive inspection model.</p> <p>With regards to the forthcoming ALMO inspection, Board Members requested additional information with regards to what their role within the inspection process would be. Mrs Piper advised that a series of information sessions would take place over a 2 day period to ensure the Council, Board Members and staff would be fully informed of what their role entailed and what would be expected from them.</p> <p>The Board was informed that Internal Audit had been approached with the view of them providing a mock inspection to all the relevant staff.</p>	

		Actions
9.	<p>The Board discussed the potential governance structure and the need to embed the 'Golden Thread' into day to day work. In addition providing consistent and timely reporting.</p> <p>Mrs Piper notified the Board that a new KPI Suite had been created and would be used going forward.</p> <p>In April 2024 the Complaint Handling Code became statutory, there would be a legal duty placed on the Ombudsman to monitor compliance with the Code. The Council was required to submit the self-assessment by the end of June 2024. Going forward landlords would need to submit their self-assessment annually to the Ombudsman. The Board acknowledged that the timescale fell outside of the Board calendar of meetings and it had been agreed that a Special meeting of the Board would be an appropriate way forward.</p> <p>KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</p> <p>Mr J Donnellon, Chief Executive, updated the Board with the current performance across several key performance indicators and advised that the format of the report would be enhanced with a higher level of detail, the new report would be presented to the next meeting of the Board.</p> <p>The Board agreed: To note the Information contained within the KPI Report.</p>	CoSec/ Chair
10.	<p>CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT</p> <p>Mr J Donnellon, Chief Executive updated the Board on the significant developments that had arisen since the last Board meeting.</p> <p>With regards to Levelling-Up, work continued to develop the detailed master planning alongside funding agreements and cost plans for implementation. The Council's Executive would consider a report on 20 May 2024 which would formally agree all the necessary steps to allow the implementation to commence. In terms of day-to-day BCH business a draft Business Plan agreed by the Board for the interim period had been used by managers and staff to guide delivery. A revised plan would be produced once the Council had fully reviewed how to manage housing activity and regeneration in the future, a further update would be provided to the Board in due course.</p> <p>The Board felt that communication would be key with regards to issues that affect staff, Mr Donnellon assured the Board that members of staff would be fully conversed prior to the information being public available.</p>	

		Actions
11.	<p>The Board agreed: To note the report.</p> <p>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES' REPORT</p> <p>Mr S Dunstan, Director of Resources, presented to the Board the report and provided an update of the staffing issues that had affected the company.</p> <p>Mr Dunstan updated the Board with regards to the Q4 outturn, he explained how the pay award deficit had largely been recovered and that the only £10k remained in deficit. The Chair, Councillor Brookes praised the staff for their hard work of being able to deliver the result in the challenging circumstances.</p> <p>Mr Dunstan advised that BCH had been nominated for the Best Company Health and Wellbeing Initiative in the Housing Heroes Awards, an invite had been extended to Board Members who wished to attend the ceremony.</p> <p>The Board agreed: To note the report.</p>	
12.	<p>DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS' REPORT</p> <p>Mrs M Cornall, Director of Operations provided an update on the significant developments since the last Board meeting.</p> <p>The Board was advised that the Responsive Repairs service would be reviewed by the Performance Team and work would begin over the next month. Staffing levels would be included in the review with the hope of increasing directly employed operatives to reduce the reliance on sub-contractors.</p> <p>A number of scheduled works had been brought forward to be carried out within the void period to reduce the inconvenience to tenants.</p> <p>The Board agreed: To note the report.</p>	
13.	<p>MEMBER RELATIONS</p> <p>Mr M Towers, Secretary to the Board requested that Mrs Piper be invited to Agenda Setting meetings in future.</p> <p>WORK PROGRAMME</p> <p>The Board agreed: To note its rolling work programme for 2024/25.</p>	

		Actions
14.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no other business.</p>	
15.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 10 JULY 2024</p> <p>The Board agreed: To note the date of the next meeting as 10 July 2024, 5.00pm at Coastal House.</p>	

The meeting ended at 18:57pm

Signed by the Chair

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Councillor Neal Brookes