

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED
HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
ON WEDNESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2021 AT 6.00PM**

Present: Councillor N Brookes, Non-Executive Director (Chair)
Councillor J Hobson, Non-Executive Director
Councillor D Robertson, 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: Mr J Donnellon, Chief Executive
Mrs M Cornall, Director of Operations
Mr S Dunstan, Director of Resources
Mr M Towers, Company Secretary
Mrs S Chadwick, Assistant Company Secretary

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| 1. | <p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</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 OF THE BOARD HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2021</p> <p>The Board agreed: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2021 as a true and correct record.</p> | |
| 4. | <p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>Mr Mark Towers, Company Secretary, updated the Board on progress with the recruitment of two new Non-Executive Directors. The Tenant Director vacancy had been advertised and applications were currently under review. A further Independent Non-Executive Director was to be appointed to sit jointly on the Boards of Blackpool Coasting Housing and Blackpool Housing Company and that position was currently being advertised with a closing date of 5 January 2022.</p> <p>All other matters arising from the previous minutes had been completed or were covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p> | |

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| 5. | <p>KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</p> <p>Mr John Donnellon, Chief Executive, presented the latest performance indicators report and advised the Board that there were no new or outstanding issues that had not previously been reported.</p> <p>The Chair referred to the current percentage of rent loss due to empty properties of 3.81% and asked for clarification of how much that translated to in monetary value. Mr Donnellon agreed to add in the financial cost for the next report to the Board which would include a breakdown of cost per percentage point. Mrs Maggie Cornall, Director of Operations, added that the cost of unlet properties had also been highlighted to staff who managed the Voids and Lettings Service in order that they understood the financial consequence to the company.</p> <p>Mrs Marie Thompson, Independent Non-Executive Director, drew attention to the staff turnover rate of 13.98% which had increased from 10.78% on the previous report and queried the reasons why it was over the target of 9%. In response Mr Donnellon explained that, whilst there had been some staff turnover, BCH had experienced difficulty in attracting and recruiting suitable candidates for some vacant positions. He reported that the recruitment process was currently under review and agreed that the figure needed to be monitored.</p> <p>In response to a question from Mr Andrei Szatkowski, Independent Non-Executive Director, regarding the percentage of completed gas safety inspections, Mr Donnellon agreed to include the actual number of properties that the figure related to on the next report. He indicated that the small percentage of inspections that had failed to be completed on target equated to three properties which had been largely due to contractors being refused access by tenants.</p> <p>Mr Szatkowski further highlighted the responsive repairs figures which were currently slightly below target. He asked that the reasons for missed repairs and details of customer feedback were provided in future reports in order that the Board could see that those comments had been considered and corrective action taken. Mrs Cornall explained that a lack of staff and shortage of building materials nationally as a result of the pandemic had largely been the cause of delays and Mr Donnellon agreed to provide a more detailed narrative around the responsive repairs figures to the Board at its next meeting.</p> <p>The Board agreed: To note the report.</p> | <p></p> <p>JD</p> <p>JD</p> <p>JD</p> |

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| 6. | <p>CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT</p> <p>Mr John Donnellon, Chief Executive, updated the Board on the significant developments that had arisen since the last Board meeting and reported that performance levels continued to be good.</p> <p>The annual Benchmarking Report which compared performance against similar sized housing providers had recently been completed by Housemark and the findings were currently being analysed. Mr Donnellon offered to invite Housemark to a future Board meeting to present a brief overview of their findings which members agreed would be useful to identify areas for improvement.</p> <p>The Board was advised that following the away day on 26 November the Business Plan would be drafted and circulated to members by the end of the calendar year in advance of it being presented for consideration by the Shareholder Committee. Discussions with the Council were currently ongoing in regards to budget setting with final details to be shared with members in advance of the next Board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair requested that in future, reports and policies were shared with the Board as and when they were produced so that members had more time to consider the contents in detail prior to receiving meeting agendas. In order to facilitate this the assistant company secretary agreed to create a SharePoint group where documents could be added and viewed by all members.</p> <p>Mrs Marie Thompson, Independent Non-Executive Director, enquired what percentage of the workforce had been vaccinated against Covid-19 as the Board wanted assurance that all eligible staff had received or were encouraged to have their vaccination and booster in light of the new variant in circulation. Mr Donnellon explained that staff had been asked to share their vaccination status and the most recent figure from within the last few weeks showed that 74% of staff had been vaccinated. This was now likely to have increased and he agreed to contact HR for the latest figures to circulate to members. Staff would continue to be encouraged to take up their vaccination and booster as well as the flu jab which was widely available.</p> <p>The latest Government guidance to work from home where possible was not expected to impact on performance with many office staff already working from home. Operational staff would be able to continue with the repairs programme, working in accordance with the Covid-safe risk assessment, unless guidance changed further.</p> | <p>JD</p> <p>JD</p> <p>Ass. Co Sec</p> <p>JD</p> |

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| <p>The Board agreed: To note the report.</p> <p>7. DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES' REPORT</p> <p>Mr Stephen Dunstan, Director of Resources, highlighted the key points from his report and advised members that BCH remained on course to meet its budget forecast. The company had recently had its annual rents reaccreditation assessment and the report was very positive with only a small number of improvement actions identified.</p> <p>Two policies were presented to the Board for its consideration and approval. The Climate Change Strategy was based on the action plan from the Officer Climate Change Group but had been substantially updated with a number of new actions added. The Policy's initial lifespan had been set at three years due to the fast moving nature of technology and attitudes towards climate change and the document would be reviewed again in 2024 and 2027 with the intention of being carbon neutral by 2030. Mr Dunstan reported that consultation would take place with the Carbon Trust to set realistic and challenging targets to help reduce the company's carbon footprint.</p> <p>The Rent Arrears Recovery Policy had recently been completed and merged the current and former Tenants' Arrears policies. Mr Dunstan acknowledged that the proposed policy was repetitive in places due to the merging of the two documents and he confirmed he would remove any duplication before the policy was published and implemented, subject to Board approval. Consultation with tenants had not yet taken place but was due to be completed in the near future.</p> <p>In regards to the Key Themes of the Climate Change Strategy Councillor Jim Hobson, Non-Executive Director, questioned why the energy efficiency target for housing stock was SAP rating B and not A. He further asked for more detail as to why the trial of electric vehicles had been aborted and what lessons had been learned.</p> <p>In response, Mr Dunstan explained that the Head of Asset Management had advised that some older properties were not capable of reaching SAP rating A regardless of any level of investment and that overall BCH had an higher than average SAP rating across its housing stock compared to other providers. Mr Donnellon agreed to circulate further information to members on how ratings were calculated and the different requirements of each SAP level prior to the next Board meeting.</p> <p>The electric vehicle trial from a number of years ago had found that the town's</p> | <p></p> <p>SD</p> <p>JD</p> |

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| <p>clarification that all those recommendations had been incorporated into the Policy or whether additional work was required to ensure compliance. In addition, he suggested that a period of consultation should take place with residents before the policy was approved. In response, Mrs Cornall agreed to consult with residents and advised that she believed that all the recommendations had been incorporated but would check again before the policy was published. The Chair referred to the work that had been completed on Garstang Road and praised it as an example of how refurbishment had transformed the properties and provided warm and damp-free homes for tenants.</p> <p>A period of consultation had recently been completed on a restructure of the Operations, Assets and Services teams to prepare for the compliance arrangements associated with the Housing White Paper and the Climate Change Strategy. The conclusions from the staff consultation were positive with some minor suggestions put forward which would be incorporated into the revised structure.</p> <p>The first Task and Finish Group meeting had taken place in November with the next meeting scheduled for January. Mrs Cornall highlighted the key findings from that meeting as outlined in her report which included exploring benchmarking opportunities with other social housing providers outside the HQN process. Since that meeting a benchmarking exercise had taken place with East Midlands Homes which had identified an alternative way of managing the voids system and BCH would look to incorporate that system into its own voids service.</p> <p>Mrs Cornall reminded members of the work of The Boathouse Youth (BHY) which was a charitable organisation that aimed to provide positive activities for children and young people in the town. BCH began working with The BHY around three years ago on Grange Park and had successfully addressed anti-social behaviour issues with young people in the area as the profile of tenants had moved towards family housing. The BHY operated from the Horsebridge Community Centre which it leased from the Council and as a result of its success hoped to extend that lease and had received planning permission for an extension to the building. BCH had been asked to project manage that expansion with a view to using the Council's VAT shelter to provide a cost saving to The BHY which Blackpool Council was aware and supportive of. Additionally, a funding gap of approximately £50,000 was required to make up a shortfall for the improvement works which BCH had made provision for within the environmental budget. Although Board approval was not required, Mrs Cornall wanted to ensure members were aware of the intention to supplement The BHY's funding gap with the required £50,000 to ensure transparency.</p> | <p>MC</p> |

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| <p>The Board agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To note the report To approve the Damp and Mould Policy subject to the removal of the paragraphs agreed and following a period of resident consultation. <p>9. AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>Mr Mark Towers, Company Secretary, asked the Board to consider the membership of the Audit Committee following the expiry of the terms of office for Mrs O’Shea and Mrs Upton.</p> <p>The current membership of the Audit Committee was Mr Andrei Szatkowski, Mr Neil Herring and Councillor Derek Robertson. Mr Towers suggested that the membership remained at three until the recruitment of new Board members had been concluded, provided that the current members were able to attend the next Audit Committee scheduled for 19 January to ensure that meeting was quorate. Alternatively, if a current Board member wished to join the Audit Committee, the Board could approve that appointment.</p> <p>The current members of the Audit Committee confirmed their availability for its next meeting. The Board therefore agreed that the membership remained at three in the short term until the new directors were recruited as it was hoped that process would present a suitable candidate for nomination to the Committee.</p> <p>The Board agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> That the membership of the Audit Committee remained as Mr Andrei Szatkowski, Mr Neil Herring and Councillor Derek Robertson in the short term. That the membership of the Audit Committee would be considered again at a future meeting following the appointment of new Directors to the Board. | |
| <p>10. MEMBER RELATIONS</p> <p>Mr Mark Towers, Company Secretary, presented the updated Terms of Reference of the Shareholder Committee and highlighted the significant changes to the Board.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference had recently been reviewed by the Executive in line with guidance commissioned by the Secretary of State and issued by an organisation called Local Partnerships following failings associated with some Local Authority wholly-owned companies around the country. The key learnings from that exercise had been added to the Shareholder Committee</p> | |

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| <p>11.</p> <p>12.</p> | <p>Terms of Reference. These being in particular that each company's Business Plan was now required to be submitted to the Shareholder Committee for approval and that the Shareholder Committee would periodically review each company to ensure the objectives of the organisation remained appropriate to its original purpose.</p> <p>Mr Towers advised members that the Housing Quality Network report had provided assurance to the Council as to BCH's purpose and therefore there was no cause for concern to the company in that regard. The Business Plan would be presented to the Shareholder Committee at a special meeting to coincide with the start of the new financial year.</p> <p>Mr John Donnellon, Chief Executive, updated members on BCH's attendance at the last Shareholder Committee meeting on 26 November which formally reviewed the work undertaken by the company in the previous six months. The Committee was generally pleased with the performance of BCH and had requested an update on the progression of shared services with Blackpool Housing Company in the new year.</p> <p>The Chair reported that the Committee had discussed the issue of sheltered accommodation in detail, noting the importance of high quality housing stock and the provision of support to tenants including from health care services. Mr Donnellon reminded members of the existing Sheltered Housing Policy and explained that a review had been commissioned into residents' support and the housing stock to ensure that it was fit for purpose. BCH, along with the Council and other partners, planned to invest in its sheltered housing accommodation and Mr Donnellon offered to distribute further details of the review to members in advance of the next meeting. Mrs Maggie Cornall, Director of Operations, further advised members of the Sheltered Star survey which had taken place to capture tenants' opinions and which would be fed into the review.</p> <p>The Board agreed: That the Shareholder Committee's updated terms of reference and the minutes of the 26 November 2021 meeting of the Shareholder Committee be noted.</p> <p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no other business.</p> <p>MEETING DATES 2022</p> <p>The Board considered proposed dates for its meetings and those of the Audit</p> | <p>JD</p> |

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| <p>Committee in 2022.</p> <p>It was noted that meetings would be scheduled initially via Microsoft Teams with the option of returning to in-person meetings as soon as the pandemic allowed.</p> <p>The Board agreed: The schedule for Board and Audit Committee Meetings as follows:</p> <p>Board: 2 February 2022, 6pm 4 May 2022, 6pm 20 July 2022, 6pm (Accounts) 19 October 2022, 6pm 7 December 2022, 6pm</p> <p>Audit Committee: 19 January 2022, 6pm 30 March 2022, 6pm 6 July 2022, 6pm (Accounts) 14 September 2022, 6pm</p> | |

The meeting ended at 7.09pm

Signed by the Chair

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Councillor Neal Brookes