

Scrutiny Review Report: BCH Website Accessibility and Content

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Prepared by: TOWER Scrutiny Panel

Reviewed for: BCH Board / Communications Team



1. Introduction

The Scrutiny Panel was asked to conduct a review of the Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) website, with a particular focus on how well it supports tenants in finding key information in six specific service areas.

2. Scope of the Review

The review was based around six guiding questions applied to each of the following sections:

1. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
2. Safety in the Home (Compliance)
3. Corporate Information
4. Neighbourhoods
5. Lettings
6. Planned Maintenance

Each section was assessed for clarity, accessibility, and ease of navigation.

3. Key Finding: Device Access Matters

One of the most important findings emerged early in the process:

We think that the majority of BCH tenants access the BCH website using mobile phones, not desktop computers.

This became a critical part of our evaluation. We therefore reviewed each section of the website on both desktop and mobile devices.

4. Observations

• Mobile vs Desktop Differences:

Several inconsistencies were found between the desktop and mobile versions. In many cases, information was easier to access or better laid out on the desktop version, while the mobile experience was more limited or confusing.

- **Navigation Issues on Mobile:**

Key links were sometimes hidden behind menus or not visible without scrolling. This made it harder for tenants to find urgent or important content—particularly relating to ASB and safety.

- **Visual Layout and Usability:**

Fonts, spacing, and buttons often displayed differently on mobile, reducing the site's accessibility for users with visual impairments or dexterity issues.

5. Recommendations

To ensure the website fully supports all BCH tenants:

- **Prioritise Mobile Usability:**

Improve mobile layout and ensure key information is accessible without excessive clicking or scrolling.

- **Consistent Content Across Platforms:**

Ensure that all important content appears and functions the same way across desktop and mobile versions.

- **Quick Links on Home Page:**

Add clear, prominent links on the homepage for urgent tenant issues like reporting ASB, repairs, and safety concerns.

A detailed list of the website issues and recommendations can be found in the appendix

6. Conclusion

This review has shown that while the BCH website contains valuable information, improvements are needed—especially to ensure mobile phone users can access that information quickly and easily.

This is an opportunity to make the website more inclusive, tenant-friendly, and aligned with how people access digital services in 2025.

Appendix: Detailed Findings from BCH Website Scrutiny Review

1. Introduction

This appendix provides a detailed breakdown of the findings from our in-depth review of the BCH website. The review was focused on six key service areas and evaluated the website on both desktop and mobile platforms. Our primary goal was to assess how easily tenants—especially those using mobile phones—can access important information and services through the BCH website.

2. Service Areas Reviewed

The following six areas were scrutinised:

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- Safety in the Home (Compliance)
- Corporate Information
- Neighbourhoods
- Lettings
- Planned Maintenance

3. Detailed Observations

3.1 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

On the desktop site, while there is no direct link from the homepage to the ASB section, users can easily find the ASB report form. However, the form appears before any explanatory content. Users should be directed first to information about what qualifies as ASB, including examples and guidance, before accessing the report form.

Key information such as tenant responsibilities, response timescales, and the ASB policy are not easily found. The ASB team's contact information exists but is buried, and could be overlooked.

On mobile, the experience worsens. Searching for 'ASB reporting' results in 56 pages of search results, making it nearly impossible to find the correct page without prior knowledge. Navigation through the mobile menu ('hamburger' menu) is the only feasible route, and even then, the report form is prioritised over helpful context.

3.2 Safety in the Home (Compliance)

The Safety in the Home section is well-structured and includes clear information about fire, gas, and electrical safety checks. An external link allows tenants to book a fire safety inspection. Tenant responsibilities around granting access are explained.

However, the section does not mention how tenants with disabilities can prepare or receive support, which is a major oversight. The mobile version largely mirrors the desktop version in terms of clarity, although contact information was harder to find.

Notably, scrutiny members raised concerns over inconsistent application of electrical safety checks, with some long-term tenants never having received one, while others in newer homes had multiple checks in just a few years.

3.3 Corporate Information

A link to the corporate section is present on the homepage. It includes details on board members and senior staff, but this information is not easily located. Service standards and financial data exist but require excessive navigation. Contact details for key individuals are missing. While many policies are linked, they are outdated or misplaced under unclear headings such as 'About Us' rather than a centralised 'Policies' section.

3.4 Lettings

There is no clearly defined 'Lettings' section on the homepage. Users must click icons or search keywords to reach housing application tools like My Home Choice. Information about tenancies is scattered across various subpages, and there are no online forms to support the application process. A particularly confusing section refers to former tenants' arrears, which may mislead new tenants into thinking they are responsible for unpaid balances.

On mobile, there is no direct route to lettings information from the homepage. Searching brings up multiple pages that must be sifted through manually. Critical content on applying for housing, ending a tenancy, or understanding tenant responsibilities is present but hard to locate.

3.5 Planned Maintenance

There is no direct link from the homepage to Planned Maintenance. Users must navigate through 'My Home' and into the 'News' section to find relevant content. Once located, the information is generally useful and explains what work will be done, how tenants will be informed, and what to expect. Despite being well-written, it is too hidden to be effective.

3.6 Neighbourhoods

The main site has a clearly visible link to this section. It is generally easy to navigate for experienced users. However, important documents like the Neighbourhood Policy are

missing. Details like tenant responsibilities are vague, and garden inspections are oddly placed under a generic 'Inspections' label.

Reporting fly-tipping and other local issues is possible through online forms, but these are currently housed under the ASB section. There's an opportunity to give this section a more personal feel by adding photos of local housing officers and including action plans for each neighbourhood.

4. Recommendations

Service Area	Priority	Recommended Action
Anti-Social Behaviour	High	Add direct link to ASB section from homepage.
Anti-Social Behaviour	High	Restructure flow: When clicking the Report button on the home page the Report Anti-Social Behaviour button should link to the info page not the reporting form
Anti-Social Behaviour	Medium	Clarify definitions of ASB, response times, and tenant responsibilities.
Anti-Social Behaviour	Medium	Improve visibility of team contact details by adding to the top of each service page instead of at the bottom.
Safety in the Home	High	Add a link to external disability specific safety guidance website such as RoSPA.
Safety in the Home	Medium	Audit and standardize electrical safety checks.
Safety in the Home	Low	Improve mobile accessibility for contact details.
Corporate	Medium	Simplify access to financial/service standards.
Corporate	Medium	Update policies and consolidate in one section.
Corporate	Low	Add contact details for board/senior management.
Lettings	High	Create a dedicated lettings section on the homepage.
Lettings	High	Clarify/remove confusing "former tenants' arrears" wording.
Lettings	Medium	Add online application forms.
Lettings	Low	Improve mobile search functionality.
Planned Maintenance	Medium	Add direct homepage link (avoid My Home > News path).
Neighborhood	Medium	Move fly-tipping/neighbour reports to Neighborhood section (not ASB).
Neighborhood	Low	Define abbreviations (e.g., RTB = Right to Buy).
Neighborhood	Low	Add photos of housing offices for personalization.
General	High	Optimize mobile navigation (reduce reliance on search).
General	Medium	Standardize policy locations and update content.
General	Low	Ensure all external links are working and relevant.