

# Public Document Pack



## BLACKPOOL COUNCIL

Wednesday 1 July 2015

To: The Members of Blackpool Council

Mr Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of **Blackpool Council** to be held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Blackpool on Wednesday, 8 July 2015 commencing at 6.00 pm for the transaction of the business specified below.

Director of Governance and Regulatory Services

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### Business

#### 5 EXECUTIVE REPORTS AND OUTSIDE BODY REPORTS

(Pages 1 - 4)

To receive reports from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and Outside Body representatives and consider matters arising from councillors.

- a) Leader of the Council - Councillor Blackburn
- b) Deputy Leader of the Council (Tourism, Economic Growth and Jobs) - Councillor Campbell
- c) Cabinet Member for Housing, Procurement and Income Generation - Councillor Mrs Wright
- d) Cabinet Member for Municipal Assets - Councillor Jackson
- e) Cabinet Member for Business and Economic Development – Councillor Mark Smith
- f) Cabinet Secretary (Resilient Communities ) - Councillor Cain
- g) Cabinet Member for Reducing Health Inequalities and Adult Safeguarding - Councillor Collett
- h) Cabinet Member School Improvement and Children’s Safeguarding - Councillor Jones
- i) Cabinet Member for Third Sector Engagement and Development – Councillor Kirkland
- j) Cabinet Member without Portfolio – Councillor I Taylor

**Venue information:**

First floor meeting room (lift available), accessible toilets (ground floor), no-smoking building.

**Other information:**

For queries regarding this agenda please contact Yvonne Burnett, Democratic Services Projects Officer, Tel: (01253) 477034, e-mail [yvonne.burnett@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:yvonne.burnett@blackpool.gov.uk)

Copies of agendas and minutes of Council and committee meetings are available on the Council's website at [www.blackpool.gov.uk](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk).

## CABINET MEMBER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO – COUNCILLOR IVAN TAYLOR

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### **Blackpool Housing Company Limited**

The private rented sector has an increasingly important role in meeting Blackpool's housing needs. It is growing rapidly and there are many examples of good quality and well-maintained properties providing safe, warm and secure homes for many people.

Blackpool's coastal legacy however has led to a substantial concentration of small poor quality rental units with guesthouses being converted into flats and Houses in Multiple Occupations. Most accommodation seeks to meet the most basic standards to comply with the Housing Act 2004 requirements, but is not desirable accommodation. These properties offer a low standard of accommodation and are often poorly managed. The result is that it is a housing choice of last resort for people with few housing options available to them.

The proportion of homes in owner occupation in Blackpool dropped from 71% of all homes in 2001 to 62% of all homes in 2011, compared with an England average of 64%. This has been a dramatic shift in tenure whilst the proportion of social rented has remained at just under 11%, compared with a national average of 18%. The proportion of homes in the private rented sector however jumped from 18% in 2001 to over 26% in 2011, compared with an England average of 17%, a rise of nearly 5,500 homes.

Over 80% of homes in the private rented sector are rented to people receiving Housing Benefit, compared with around 30% nationally. There is a concentration of private renting in Blackpool's inner wards, 50% of all households in the defined inner area live in a privately rented home, equivalent to 6,887 households.

The dominance of poor quality private rented accommodation in inner neighbourhoods is the overriding cause of high levels of transience in these areas. Poor quality housing is generally only accessed by households who are unable to access better housing choices and there is continuing demand from people attracted to the town from deprived urban areas in other parts of the UK. This means that many people moving into the area have no real association with the community and are likely to move quickly on again. Analysis of new Housing Benefit claimants has shown that 85% of new claimants come from outside the borough, around 4,500 households each year and that 70% of these move into rented accommodation in the inner wards.

This transient dynamic leads to intense concentrations of deprivation and an environment that fosters poor health and a lack of opportunity for residents. Low life expectancy and mental health problems in these areas are amongst the worst in the country. The poor environment and endemic social problems in the inner town have a serious negative effect on tourism, which continues to be the town's major economic sector. Investment is reduced and skilled individuals who could drive investment in the local economy live elsewhere.

This leads to the Council and other public services having to commit significant resources in responding to social care, health and educational needs and to ensure properties meet basic minimum standards. In spite of this little progress is being made to stem the high levels of social deprivation and poor housing conditions in large parts of the town's inner areas.

There are continuing financial incentives for property owners to use former guesthouses as rented accommodation let to people on Housing Benefit because of continuing long-term decline in demand

for traditional guesthouse accommodation from holidaymakers and the high yields associated with letting rented property to Housing Benefit claimants in Blackpool. The initial returns are greatest for small flats and where investment in the quality of accommodation is minimised

Not only does this economic model deliver unstable communities constantly seeing a change of population it also exerts a massive strain on public services as new residents drawn to the ready supply of accessible accommodation bring with them a range of embedded and enduring problems that get referred to public services already under strain.

Intervening in the housing market to change the current dynamic is essential if the efforts of public services to improve the life chances of residents and to transform our deprived inner areas into thriving neighbourhoods are to be successful. This has been recognised by Central Government through the Growth Deal announcement in July of this year. The Council has been offered financial assistance to intervene directly in the housing market. The details of this offer have however yet to be determined and Treasury approval will be required before this offer can be taken up.

It is proposed that the Company:

- Develops a stake in the private rented market in Blackpool and increases the supply of good quality housing with the view to becoming a private sector landlord of choice.
- Operates in a commercial way to produce a revenue return that requires little or no Council subsidy over time and is ultimately economically attractive to private sector institutional investors.
- Provides supportive management of tenants to ensure they can maintain a tenancy and reduce their need for public sector support over time.
- Secures increased and higher quality private sector investment to accelerate the diversification of the towns housing supply.
- Enables the delivery of future public and private sector housing development programmes such as Queens Park and Foxhall Village.
- Provides a delivery solution for dealing with empty properties.
- Creates social value through creating and encouraging, apprenticeships, training and local employment opportunities through all development initiatives.

The company is now active in the market and has recently appointed a Managing Director Mr David Galvin who is due to take up his role in September.

#### **Relationship with the Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Forum for Local Authorities is a meeting for Council leaders and Community Safety Portfolio holders to discuss any local authority area-related crime, anti-social behaviour and Policing matters.

In practice, not many Council leaders attend them, but usually portfolio holders and/ or Community Safety Partnership managers attend them. Mr Paolo Pertica, who is the Council's Head of Visitor Services and also covers the role of Community Safety Partnership Manager, has been attending these meetings regularly, sometimes together with the Councillor responsible for Community Safety.

The types of issues discussed at these meetings include CCTV provision throughout Lancashire, the future of Neighbourhood Policing following the funding reduction to the Constabulary and funding for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). The Forum also provides an opportunity for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to inform local authorities about issues affecting the Police and changes taking place within the Police, as well as for local authorities elected members to raise concerns about Policing issues with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Community Safety Grant used to be provided directly to local authorities by the Home Office. Following the establishment of PCC's, the Home Secretary decided to transfer this funding to PCC's, although the money was not ring-fenced. PCCs therefore had the ability, if they so wished, to stop providing this funding to local authorities to support Community Safety work and use the money to support the Constabulary.

However, many PCCs, including the Lancashire PCC, decided to continue providing the Community Safety Grant to the local authority as it was recognised that work carried out by the local authorities' Community Safety teams was instrumental in supporting the Police in addressing crime and antisocial behaviour in their communities.

Blackpool receives just over £95,000 per year from the PCC as a Community Safety Grant. Further funding, approximately £50,000, is also provided by the PCC to Blackpool Council for Domestic Abuse, and approximately £100,000 for substance misuse.

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