

Central Home Owners Panel (CHOP) MEETING

Held Tuesday 2nd October, 6.00pm-8.00pm

Board Room, Park Street

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1. The meeting opened at 6pm. Apologies were given and the interim Chair welcomed a potential new member to observe the meeting.

2. Declaration of interest - None

3. Notes from the last meeting

3.1. The interim Chair explained that that the last meeting was a more informal meeting about how CHOP could work better in the future, including making meetings more informal and engaging with other home owners more, e.g. via email. (See item 6 for more info.)

4. Update on 2017/18 service charge actuals

4.1. It was noted that the information usually provided about how to obtain copies of invoices (referring to Section 22) had not been provided this time.

4.2. Property Managers providing a sense check should help next year. There are still services being included which obviously shouldn't be, e.g. those which have been flagged and refunded previously.

4.3. CHOP challenged that where mistakes have been identified following queries from individual residents, Hyde should be proactive and make sure all residents receive a refund instead of waiting for each individual to contact them.

4.4. On a positive note, it was noted by CHOP that all the actuals are out and the format is better.

4.5. It was queried whether next year's estimates will be in the new format as well and whether Hyde could base next year's estimates on this year's actuals.

4.6. The Home Ownership Manager shared that there have been more people involved in service charges this year than ever before and she is hopeful any issues can be rectified quickly. It was confirmed that teams are working to ensure that our service delivery matches resident lease agreements and where these do not match, working with residents to ensure buildings and estates can be managed for the benefit of all.

4.7. It was suggested that there is a need for more communication about blocks – something should go out to every block with the service charges to explain it and this would pre-empt a lot of queries. In Stockwell previously there was

a map available in the office which explained this. It would be good for Property Managers to play a role in explaining this information to residents or displaying it on noticeboards to help people understand.

4.8. The question was raised as to whether tenants pay service charge and the answer is yes – the only things they don't pay service charge for are repairs and building insurance. There is a common misconception that tenants don't pay service charge.

4.9. There was also feedback that the relationship between Hyde and home owners often feels quite unequal in terms of expectations – home owners have to wait a long time for Hyde to respond to queries yet expect home owners to respond straight away to any requests from them. There needs to be give and take.

Action for RE Team to share all feedback with Service Charge Team

5. Update on Hydewide Residents Eye (HRE) inspection of service charges

5.1. The inspection was completed in July and HRE have come up with a set of recommendations; they are currently in negotiation with Hyde about these.

6. The future of CHOP

6.1. CHOP members agreed that they want to make meetings more informal and engage with other home owners more, e.g. via email.

6.2. The group discussed recruitment of new members. It was agreed that we would do a two week social media campaign as well as an OAK campaign to promote CHOP. We will also use direct email to reach other residents; this has worked well in the past. It was also suggested that we try using a banner on the Hyde website to promote CHOP. **Action for RE Team.**

6.3. Dialling in will be an option for people unable to get to meetings, but the group will also look at how they can involve people without the need for travel, e.g. having CHOP as a core group which reviews feedback from other home owners collected by other means.

6.4. The possibility of sending out a regular e-mail out to home owners was discussed which could include an update on what CHOP is doing as well as a survey to get feedback from home owners.

6.5. There was discussion around having regional CHOP representatives dialling. It was agreed we would contact all the tenants and residents associations (TRAs) that include home owners to ask for a rep to attend/feedback to CHOP. **Action for RE Team**

6.6. The Resident Engagement (RE) Team will also promote CHOP on the OAK Property Manager Pilot areas which include home owners. **Action for RE Team**

6.7. The RE Team will also ask Property Managers if they can put up CHOP info/posters on noticeboards in any home owner blocks during estate inspections. **Action for RE Team**

6.8. CHOP will also look to use The OAK more for general communication about and promotion of CHOP's activities, e.g. by posting some bullet points after each meeting giving an overview of what happened and including this in the news section. **Action for RE Team /CHOP**

6.9. CHOP notes/minutes (web version) will continue to be shared on the Hyde website. **Action for RE Team**

6.10. Representatives from CHOP will continue to attend Hydewide Residents Voice so that CHOP can link into the governance structure in a more formal way; they will also attend the joint meeting with Group Housing Services Board.

6.11. CHOP members request that the CHOP terms of reference be sent to members by email for review, along with the link to the CHOP info on the Hyde website to check members are happy with it. **Action for RE Team**

6.12. Standard CHOP agenda items going forward will include:

- Upcoming consultation documents
- A selection of complaints
- A selection of communications (both pre and post) – members would prefer to see things in advance where possible - either in meeting or by email, e.g. example of updated statement of accounts

7. AOB

7.1. Leasehold matters

7.1.1. To get copies of their rent accounts, residents can either sign up to an egress account (GDPR-compliant) or request hard copies. Customer Services should also be able to provide these when you phone up. It was highlighted that residents aren't aware that they can get these at any time.

7.1.2. Members asked how they can obtain a copy of their leases - home owners can request this email at LME@hyde-housing.co.uk, via the website form or via Customer Services.

7.1.3. The question was raised as to who sets fees (for administrative services) – it was explained that Hyde benchmarks with other social housing providers - they all submit their prices and then they go with the average. The Home Ownership Manager offered to circulate this info. Hyde is likely to be leading on this process this year.

7.1.4. There was some discussion around subletting and how Airbnb is not allowed as is against the terms of lease. Tenancy Officers have been carrying out door knocking to check who is living there to ensure fire safety etc.

7.1.5. The Home Ownership Manager shared about the current government consultation on leasehold reform:
<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/leasehold-enfranchisement/>. The deadline for giving feedback is 20 November. Members were encouraged to feedback. The RE Team also agreed to promote this via OAK and direct email to communicate this more widely to all leaseholders. **Actions for RE Team**

7.1.6. The Home Ownership Manager shared that there is currently discussion at [G15](#) about better informing prospective home owners and that she would welcome the input of CHOP into those discussions.
Action for Home Ownership Manager

7.2. Next Hydewide Residents Eye inspection

7.2.1. HRE's next inspection is communication; the planning meeting is in 2 weeks and there is an opportunity for CHOP to feed into this (before 17 October). **Action for RE Team:** Post on OAK to invite any further input.

7.2.2. Initial feedback from CHOP for HRE is to look at volume of communication and specifically paper, as well as coordination – different teams send out letters within a week of each other. Home owners don't want to be constantly be reminded that they have a landlord. The Home Ownership Manager shared that we have to use paper for a lot of consultations and communications at present because of our contracts (with home owners). Estimates and actuals also have to be issued on paper at the moment until legislation changes. **Action for RE Team to share feedback with HRE.**

7.3. Next Hydewide Residents Focus campaign

7.3.1. Feedback will be sought from CHOP via The OAK before the next meeting on any feedback CHOP would like to get from home owners.

Action for RE Team: Post on OAK to invite any feedback

7.4. Local engagement

7.4.1. The potential CHOP member observing shared that there was a need for some local Hyde engagement on her estate. There is a TRA however this focuses more on community events rather than Hyde services.

8. Date and content of next meeting

8.1. The next meeting will take place as planned on 20 November and CHOP will look at the following:

- Home ownership section of website (will look through together on screen); members are also encouraged to look at other organisations' websites.
- Fire safety consultation communication – although members may need to look at some this via The OAK before the meeting due to timescales.
Action for Home Ownership Manager: Post on CHOP area of OAK for consultation
- A selection of complaints and communications. **Action for Home Ownership Manager:** Bring to next meeting
- Hyde's work plan for the coming year (Resident Engagement Team to request a report on projects/consultations coming up. The planned review of the Hyde app was mentioned as something CHOP should feed into. **Action for RE Team.**

Meeting closed at 7.30pm