

## **Central Home Owners Panel (CHOP) Meeting**

Held Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February, 6pm – 8pm

Board Room, Park Street

### **1. Welcome, introductions, apologies & declaration of interest**

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting.
- 1.2. Apologies were received, and one member has resigned.
- 1.3. There were no declarations of interest.

### **2. Notes from meeting held 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019 and matters arising**

- 2.1. Minutes were agreed.
- 2.2. 3.5 – Director of Property Services to update at next meeting.
- 2.3. 4.2 More detail on follow up from Fire Safety Taskforce requested to confirm this took place.
- 2.4. 4.5 and 4.6 – Compliance & Home Ownership Manager explained that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had announced a revised advice note into building safety which Hyde are reviewing alongside the rest of the G15 housing association members. Update to be provided.
- 2.5. 5.2 – current response time for service charge query is 80 days. Action: Hyde to consider communicating with residents in general about the current delay to manage expectations and in individual cases even if there is no update and to consider updating service level agreement. CHOP highlighted the importance of communication.
- 2.6. 6.6. Homeowner Pack/Welcome Letter to be re-uploaded to CHOP area of OAK.

### **3. Introduction to Group Company Secretary**

- 3.1. Group Company Secretary heads up team of four qualified company secretaries whose role includes:
  - 3.1.1. Advising the Hyde Board on governance issues
  - 3.1.2. Responsible for legal structure of business - statutory filing (including signing and sealing 3,000 legal documents a year), looking after AGM and calendar of Board meetings (60 a year)

3.1.3. Responsible for Hyde's Group Board (recruitment, induction, appraisal, meetings) as well as Group Housing Services Board, Group Audit Committee, Remuneration & Appointments Committee, Investment Committee and Treasury Committee.

3.1.4. Now involved with investment and project approval for Hyde New Homes

3.2. An in-depth assessment from the regulator on Governance and Viability is taking place on 3 and 4 March. Regulator will be looking for documentary evidence that the board is in control and managing strategy, structure, financial resilience, risk and governance, will have results by May and will return to CHOP to share.

3.3. Hyde is also setting up new legal structure to manage joint ventures, special purpose vehicles and development, this will ensure commercial activities will not impact on social housing assets.

#### **4. Customer Strategy 2020-2024 research summary**

4.1. Director of Customer Experience introduced himself and explained standing in for the Customer Strategy and Programme Director tonight.

4.2. An enormous amount of research for the 2020-2024 Customer Strategy has taken place over the last year. The Customer Strategy is now approved and being launched in Spring.

4.3. The research started off with employee consultation, then looking at existing data sources, followed up by customer telephone interviews and workshops/focus groups (8-13 people), mix of homeowners and renters, spread across a geographic basis.

4.4. The research identified common themes against four key areas – service charges, customer support, repairs and maintenance, and estate and property management.

4.5. Is there an element of getting the basics right? Yes, this is a key driver.

4.6. An independent company, Commotion, carried out the research against key demographics.

4.7. Hyde received a rating of 1.8 out of 5 for how 'customer-driven' it was, a 5 = Amazon, but our ambition is to shift to a 3 or 3.5.

4.8. Have you done any benchmarking of the above in terms of housing associations? No as they haven't gone through this process, though our assessment is that very few would be better - from talking to them, they are all struggling with similar themes to us.

4.9. Our customer data analysis allowed us to identify three key dimensions around which the majority of Hyde's customer base could be plotted - length of tenancy, tenancy type and arrears.

- 4.10. Home owners represent 21% of Hyde customers and were included in research sessions.
- 4.11. The main difference between owners and renters was income. There were no discernible differences between attitudes and behaviours of renters and owners. The key issues for both were speed of service delivery and communication.
- 4.12. Were you surprised value for money was not a headline? It was identified as a key driver from the information we had already.
- 4.13. Repairs is biggest issue for tenants. Why is service charge not an issue for them? The rent reduction regime over last few years might have influenced this as any service charge increase would have been offset by a rent decrease – this may change now.
- 4.14. Customer Strategy objectives are:
- To broaden our customer voice – more customers are heard
  - Customer-led decision making
  - Improve our customer offer
  - Improve performance while reducing customer effort
- 4.15. Customer strategy themes are:
- Listen to me
  - Empower me
  - Improve my services
- 4.16. Ambition for each are:
- Listen to me: We will engage all of our customers in ways that fit into their lives, giving them opportunities to be heard across a range of channels. As champions of the customer voice, we work with them to shape the development and delivery of our services, and to influence social housing and welfare policy
  - Empower me: We will have relationships of mutual trust with our customers, treating them as equals. They will have the tools they need to manage their tenancies, through a channel of their choice and will be involved in the continuous improvement of those platforms. We will ensure they are fully informed about decisions that influence their home, neighbourhood and community.
  - Improve my services: We will be a modern, digital organisation with a range of online and offline service solutions that are intuitive, seamless and entirely customer-driven. Our colleagues will be equipped and empowered to tailor the user experience to suit the individual needs of each customer, helping them to manage their tenancies their way.

- 4.17. We are deep into the planning phase at present and have identified five workstreams for 2020/21 to advance the delivery of our objectives and the outcomes our customers seek:
- Digital services – including MyAccount Portal testing
  - Customer contact – how we manage service requests, finding info and resolutions, takes time and brings in multiple people – complicated, moving info and skills to frontline
  - Voice of the customer – insight, Resident Engagement Strategy
  - Customer-driven culture – internal change, learning and development
  - Resident services offering – what, how and being clear
- 4.18. Customer contact, it is very challenging to be pushed to Mears and back to Hyde – can we have option to talk to Hyde Customer Services please? This falls within the whole examination of customer contact, there is logic around IVR directing to contractor. But what if not about repair? A Hyde number should not go to contractor, residents may also feel detached from Hyde. This will be looked at as part of exploration of customer contact. KB agreed to test IVR system.
- 4.19. Hyde have been focused on tackling customer pain points and have introduced a text message within 90 minutes to check on repairs, if not happy, residents receive a call back within 1 day. Successful in reducing dissatisfaction and complaints.
- 4.20. Tone of voice work relating to communication for complaints and customer services has changed letters and mindset. This work has led to simple but impactful changes to complaints communication such as, active not passive language, important info at top, more conversational, not referring to Hyde in 3<sup>rd</sup> person and being more accessible. This will be extended to other teams.
- 4.21. How do workstreams filter into KPIs etc? They will do, we are working with Deloitte on Information and Governance to review KPIs. The Customer Strategy has high support from Exec, Board and Group Housing Services Board this very senior emphasis will hopefully lead to meaningful change.
- 4.22. Can Hyde work out how CHOP can input into the changes being implemented with the customer strategy and be updated with timescales etc. Yes – action.

## **5. RE Strategy update and consultation**

- 5.1. There is a regulatory requirement for Hyde to have a resident engagement strategy.
- 5.2. One of the key findings from the consultation (survey and local events) is that residents would like more local engagement

### 5.3. How is CHOP working?

5.3.1. Would be useful to have papers in advance so have time to formulate a response

5.3.2. Important to have a good balance between wider strategic update and detailed reviews of elements of service/documents such as statements, complaints letters, introduction of MyAccount (which is probably the most useful).

5.3.3. CHOP don't want to stray too much into HRE and Hydewide Residents Voice's (HRV) role and probably don't need as much detail.

5.3.4. CHOP need to get better at sharing outcomes etc. with other residents - add list of outcomes to alongside actions on minutes

5.3.5. Use OAK more (Hyde's online resident engagement hub) – Resident Engagement Team to email if new posts are uploaded for CHOP consideration

5.4. RE Strategy going to Hydewide Residents Voice on 11 March then Group Housing Services Board in May. RE Team to share draft RE Strategy on OAK with CHOP so can feedback

5.5. RE Team will also be looking at acronyms. Suggestion from CHOP that maybe we just stop shortening everything to acronyms and revamp the comms (including website).

## **6. Hydewide Residents Eye (HRE) inspections update – communal repairs and complaints**

6.1. HRE have just completed Communal Repairs inspection which is awaiting sign off. Full info will be shared with CHOP once finalised. CHOP highlighted importance of making sure call handlers take down the full information for repairs as the wrong contractors are being sent out.

6.2. The next inspection will be on the Complaints service. A survey is going out to 1,000 residents, CHOP asked to be added to survey list. Can CHOP share with other residents, yes if they have used the service within that time frame. There will also be an option on the survey for a call back. There will also be focus groups with staff being held to look at the complaints process. Inspection starts 11 Feb and will take place over 2 weeks. Data mining is also carried out our CRM system and social media.

6.3. Can we invite Chair of HRE to come to CHOP to share on HRE and look at recommendations from past, especially service charges? Will invite and also send link to summary on website. If can't attend, Resident Engagement Team to provide update on changes.

6.4. Resident Engagement Manager shared that HRE will be choosing inspection areas for next year. CHOP members are welcome to take part if available.

## **7. CHOP planning for 2020 – forward planner**

7.1. Priorities for next year: Customer service, service charges and communications

7.2. Identify areas within Customer Strategy that CHOP can dig into

7.3. The life cycle of a home owner was discussed as being a good starting point for CHOP's review – elements to be prioritised at next meeting/on OAK e.g.

- The on boarding process for new build and resell - new homeowner gets keys to home and new pack, it was recommended that CHOP look at the onboarding process – Hyde used to offer 30 minute call to go through things but very low take up, website has some info but all leases are different
- Staircasing process
- Alteration fees and rights and responsibilities – action to look at with Home Ownership Team
- Defects/snagging, product quality, warranties, guarantees
- Repairs
- Service charges (review page on website, also current invoice pack is not satisfying customer's needs so Hyde will be looking at this, CHOP to get involved)
- Communication
- Complaints handling
- Resident engagement (limited opportunities)
- Property Managers
- Selling
- Extending lease – improve section of website to make signposting to cost calculators clearer

7.4. Leasehold Reform is underway at present – Compliance & Home Ownership Manager to share info

7.5. Other feedback from CHOP members on OAK about suggested items for coming year:

7.5.1. Service charges including update on what Hyde are changing following HRE recommendations, estimate statements, actual statements, what constitutes invoice/ proof of cost, apportionment, responsibility for meter readings and why estimates used instead of actual readings when increasing charges

7.5.2. Process for dealing with queries for service charge budget statements

7.5.3. Customer service - What changes are the customer service teams of Hyde, Mears, T Brown, etc making to put the customer first?

7.5.4. Update on Customer Services - i.e. if homeowner calls in to request Invoice Pack - standard wait time is supposed to be 20 days however, this does not appear to be working.

7.5.5. How communal repairs are booked, i.e. if one homeowner calls in to report something and the repair is booked, then another calls in not realising the other has, that's potentially two bookings for the same job and two call outs - meaning double charges on service charges. How Do Hyde's teams look at this and ensure that if multiple homeowners call in about the same thing (albeit different days), does it just get duplicated or is there a system to ensure that this does not happen.

7.6. Keep standing item for communication and complaints samples. Ideally want to see new things before they go out, one to four each time.

## **8. AOB**

8.1. Send CHOP link to MyAccount testing, plus some screen shots.

### **CHOP dates for 2020:**

- 19 May
- 1 September
- 1 December

6pm-8pm, on a Tuesday in the Board Room at Park Street.

### **CHOP Outcomes so far**

1. Championed customer portal for a long time – now being launched
2. Changed template for statements
3. Website improvements
4. Additions to welcome letter/home owner pack