

CUSTOMER VOICE (CV)

Minutes of Virtual meeting held on TUESDAY 20 July 2021

via ZOOM from 5.30PM - 7.30PM

1	Welcome, introductions, apologies declarations of Interest
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were given.
1.2	No declarations of interest were made.
2	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising from 18th May meeting
2.1	Minutes of the last meeting were agreed. CV members requested another governance meeting to follow on from the previous one held. Action
2.2	CV members asked for clarity of the term “green belt projects” in the complaints paper. It was explained to be relating to lean six sigma project working to review processes across the business. They use practitioner’s language, which uses judo vocabulary. i.e. green and black belts.
3	Interim CEO update
3.1	Thanked everyone for inviting him and welcomed new members of Customer Voice.
3.2	Interim CEO gave a background of his time at Hyde and experience in the housing sector. Interviews for the permanent CEO will begin in October 2021 and if recruited internally will be in post quickly, if external will be about six months.
3.3	Interim CEO is running business as usual. Hyde have a corporate plan that was designed with residents and that will continue as planned. Hyde have reviewed their stock condition database and have a good assessment of what building safety looks like. Hyde have started to look at zero carbon, which is planned by Government for 2050 and not currently being factored by the large majority of housing providers yet. Hyde are also continuing their objective to build more new homes.
3.4	Interim CEO talked about his passion for customer involvement and gave CV members some personal background about his experience in social housing. It was stated he wants to truly listen to customers and will advocate for the business to do the same; listen to me, empower me and improve my services. An example was given of a lesson learnt during a meeting in a previous organisation when a list of staff key priorities differed immensely from the resident list.
3.5	Housing sector issues at the moment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build new homes. No provider has hit target yet in the sector. • Building safety post Grenfell. Housing providers have large costs associated with safety works. Hyde have spent 70 million to date and costs will continue to rise. The second reading of the Building Safety Bill is tomorrow; the outcomes of which may change the way in which providers deliver building safety services, i.e. Building Safety Fund.
3.6	There are four pillars in Hyde’s corporate strategy:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More homes in right places. It is important places are chosen where we can influence, i.e. local authority. Hyde need to look at our existing stock and whether we should sell, redevelop or recondition. Will the properties be fit for future use in 2050? 2. Customer driven. “Listen to me, empower me and improve my services”. The digital transformation with the use of Salesforce will give Hyde staff a 360° view of a customer, i.e. staff can see the resident rang last week and what the call was regarding. There will also be links to scheduling, operatives with relevant van stock for a job and repairs booked at any time by the resident. Track my Repair service will show residents where their engineer is in real time. Residents will have opportunity to shape the complaints service; what are the trends? How can we improve addressing them? Hyde also want to work on efficiently dealing with multiple issues at the same time when going out to see residents. 3. Safe decent and energy efficient homes. This relates back to building safety; Hyde want a holistic view of all our properties, not just fire, but all compliance areas, such as gas, lifts, asbestos and electrics. Safer Homes Director and the Building Safety Panel will work on how that information is available to everyone, i.e. fire risk assessments. Zero carbon – Interim CEO would like residents involved in the discussions. What should be Hyde’s standards? Hyde need to understand how we make the approaches useful. An example was given of residents not knowing how to use the technology and so only use the “On/Off” button rather than changing settings. Another example was given of brand-new systems being put in place by other organisations that are energy efficient but not wanted by residents, such as artificial fans in ceiling. Decent Homes Two standard is coming out soon, the first one was a minimum standard. Hyde want to discuss with residents - what is the Hyde standard. 4. Efficiency and value for money. Hyde will review everything we do, the things residents want and will use and implement as efficiently as possible.
3.7	<p>There are key objectives in fulfilling the corporate pillars that can be shared with Customer Voice as we move forward. Action</p>
3.8	<p>Interim CEO answered question posed by CV member in advance of the meeting in relation to the pandemic and resourcing post lockdowns. There has been a change made in the new Asset Management Strategy; kitchen and bathroom replacements will be based on a cycle of lifespan (20 years), one year before the lifespan Hyde will inspect and evaluate. If the replacement is not required immediately, due to good condition, another three years will be added and reviewed again at that time. If required, due to deterioration from usage it will be replaced. Previously Hyde were replacing regardless of stock condition. Stock condition has already been built into the financial plan.</p> <p>Hyde are also embarking on a “catch up programme” for cyclical decorations. 4.6 million was spent last year on cyclical decs and 7.1 million planned for this year; all have been programmed into financial plan.</p> <p>During the lockdowns, Hyde envisaged a backlog of works, but this did not materialise until the last two months of lockdowns. These were mainly repairs people didn’t want us to do before due to isolating. However, new repairs have increased by 30%, which is similar across the housing sector. This may continue for a month or two, but Hyde are monitoring the situation carefully.</p> <p>We were previously worried about the impact of Brexit, but this was overtaken by Covid; it was very good that Hyde stockpiled parts and materials in advance. There is now an issue with importing parts, such as timber and fire doors. Fire doors are taking 16-18 weeks to order now from our current contractors and new suppliers are charging more.</p>

3.9	CV Chair specified that they would like to be involved in more consultations and have more customer involvement activities in relation to the development of new properties in future.
4	Digital transformation project update
4.1	Director of Customer Operations & Digital Services and Customer Strategy and Programme Director confirmed the presentation as read by CV members and asked for questions.
4.2	CV members mentioned that there is still a need to consider those who are not digital to ensure they do not get left behind with the imminent changes.
4.3	Director of Customer Operations & Digital Services and Customer Strategy and Programme Director would like to hold a dedicated informal session to look at digital transformation. Digital exclusion and inclusion will be discussed and Hyde Foundation invited to join. Digital will not mean pushing residents into one channel of contact.
4.4	Topics to be covered in the dedicated session are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of channels for different scenarios and contact types, i.e. for emergencies residents would still like to telephone Hyde. • How can Hyde engage other customers to get their views? • Digital inclusion and exclusion with Hyde Foundation • How residents use the digital platforms
4.5	CV members asked about sheltered accommodation residents and those who will need training and IT support packages. Hyde may choose to partner with other organisations to help achieve this, as we currently deliver that in different communities and areas.
4.6	Session to be booked in before the next Group Housing Services Board (GHSB) meeting in September. Customer Involvement Manager to book in. Director of Customer Operations & Digital Services and Customer Strategy and Programme Director would like examples to discuss ahead of the working session. Governance and Compliance Advisor will also post on OAK for CV feedback of experiences with other organisations using digital. Action
4.7	Director of Customer Operations & Digital Services and Customer Strategy and Programme Director would also like to get feedback from CV via the OAK on themes and topics, which will prompt questions for the digital session. They will also arrange a call with CV Chair to discuss the questions in advance. Action
5	Complaints Update
5.1	Director of Customer Experience gave CV members the headlines about complaints. The minutes of the Complaints Board will continue to be shared with CV. Action
5.2	There is currently a continued high level of complaints and MP enquiries. This is across the whole housing sector. The level of Ombudsman contact has increased by 73% and they have boosted their resources to contact landlords for answers during the weekend and in the evenings. It is unclear why the higher levels are continuing but could be a reflection of covid business pressures, or that this level of complaints is the new normal due to changes in customer behaviour. We do let customers know the delays we are managing.
5.3	There are positives happening also. The Complaints Team has embedded a task force approach to repairs complaints; those waiting to be allocated are passed to service areas to get on with resolving; 66 complaints have been closed as a result of being actioned.

	<p>The Complaints Team will this week also recruit an extra two members of staff, which will increase the team's productivity.</p> <p>Hyde complaints now have better reporting and recording tools, which has increased visibility; weekly reports are generated for heads of service and directors. This includes checking the commitments we made to close a complaint have actually happened.</p> <p>Colleagues in certain areas of the business are responding to complaints in an improved way now, i.e. safer homes team is coordinating through one manager</p> <p>Hyde have had six Housing Ombudsman determinations; two maladministration but the ratio should continue to reduce as we receive further decisions.</p> <p>The target of 60% satisfaction with complaint handling has been met and is currently 61%, however the survey sample is small (16).</p>
5.4	<p>There is still far too much chasing being done by the resolution officers to resolve complaints. The Complaints Team are improving visibility by logging all of the chasing and have requested assistance from the Risk and Compliance Team with an audit of informal complaints responses against the procedure requirements. Chief Customer Officer will be working with Director of Customer Experience on how the emphasis on complaints can be changed across the business, providing a report to ELT. Director of Customer Operations & Digital Services team is also working on an initiative to prevent the need for customer repeat contacts, which will fit in well as helping customers better at their first point of contact reduces complaints.</p>
5.5	<p>The spotlight report for the Complaints Board on 23 July will also be shared with CV along with the minutes. This report gives more detail of the backlog. There are 491 unallocated complaints, 200 allocated to resolution officers. Each officer has no more than 30 cases, as more would be unmanageable and would impact on wellbeing and motivation. Residents are aware of the backlog and new staff will focus on this area too.</p> <p>Action</p>
5.6	<p>CV members asked about training for customer services. It was clarified each staff member in customer services has specific training for two weeks before they are able to take calls. We do not currently have a customer service culture change training programme. We have launched a new People and Culture strategy and this, together with the Digital Programme will inform what Hyde may need to do and how we should invest. CV Chair gave an example of poor customer service of calling to report a lift repair. Director of Customer Experience suggested that a combination of systems, scripting, processes, data and training are needed to help to achieve consistency in customer service. The 360° view of customer and property discussed earlier will help, staff are not currently able to provide the highest quality response as they don't have sight of or understand the components of the building. Data systems and training are equally very important.</p>
6	Service charges – discussion following 19 July
6.1	<p>Customer Voice talked about the service charge session. It was agreed there is a willingness from Hyde and CV to get the service charge issues sorted, however, Hyde still seem to have a “them and us” in relation to teams silo working and not taking responsibility of tasks. This needs to change otherwise the service charge issue will not be resolved. It is very frustrating for CV members to try and improve a service with Hyde and see limited action taken and no outcomes. Service charge issues have been on the CV agenda for years and it does not seem to be improving.</p>
6.2	<p>Another meeting will be booked in for 4-6 weeks but the date has not been set as yet. Director of Customer Experience has a follow up with the Revenue Control Director next week and will propose some focused discussions. Action</p>

6.3	Director of Customer Experience found the meeting very useful as residents fed back their priorities in relation to service charges. Residents discussed quality control, value for money and auditing and checking of charges and statements. Those conversations need to happen with the relevant staff in the same room and we need to talk about what will change and when. Resident priority was also clear about statements, communications and the website. Residents go to the landing page and do not delve deeper; this is evidenced from the analytics report. This is clear feedback that the website does not cater to answering the questions residents go to get.
6.4	CV members stated that an issue is residents want to talk about their own service charge as opposed to business-wide improvements. CV are encouraged by the service charge meetings being held, but silo working is happening in finance, specifically in property charges. CV confirmed that they did not think it right property managers would be given all the work to do. It was confirmed this would not be the case.
7	Customer Charter
7.1	It was confirmed the included is a discussion paper. It has been shared internally and with residents of CV. The charter could go in lots of directions in this stage. Hyde have made a promise to strengthen our commitments. How do we respond to the White Paper, how do we develop an agreed charter for our residents? Dialogue needs to take place between residents and the board as to what the customer charter is and how it will be monitored. The White Paper brings a more hands on role for boards than they have ever had before.
7.2	The discussion paper includes links to other organisations and how they have implemented different sorts of charters or agreements.
7.3	How do CV want to take it forward? CV members stated it was a great opportunity to work with GHSB. The charter needs to take into account communication, consistency and clarity. It was suggested Hyde could revisit the service promise and revise it, in readiness for the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. It was agreed the service standard approach could be the starting point before we look at the broader areas.
7.4	CV member stated that everything needs to focus on resident impact. Organisations promote more strategies, policies and procedures but action and more change is needed.
7.5	CV Chair spoke about her recent discussions with the Housing Minister and Regulator. It was asked what questions are most important and the answer was given that they all are in their own right, however, most are still regulated i.e. ASB.
7.6	Meeting to be set up for CV, Resident Inspection Team and Home Owners Panel dedicated to discussing the Customer Charter in more detail before the joint GHSB meeting. Prompting questions to be added to the OAK in the meantime. Action
8	Resident Inspection update
8.1	Chair of Resident Inspection Team (RIT) apologised that full inspection reports are not given to CV, in future full reports will be shared on the OAK. Governance and Compliance Advisor to ensure this happens in future. Action
8.2	CV members would like to see the completed validation from each recommendation, i.e. an update on the work CV have commissioned or completed. Action
8.3	Sinking funds inspection is complete, report is included in the papers; there were no comments from CV.

8.4	Resident Inspection Team are now reviewing decants. The inspection starts on 16 August. CV member is currently in decant and looks forward to sharing her experience at group scoping.
8.5	Validation of completed recommendations will be carried over to the next CV meeting due to low attendance at this meeting. Action
9	Feedback from Group Board (GB) and Group Housing Services Board (GHSB) meetings
9.1	There has been no GHSB or GB meetings since the last CV meeting.
9.2	CV Chair and Vice Chair have been attending “breakfast bitesize” – sessions for board members to understand more of the business. So far there has been one on Risk and Assurance, then Safer Homes, then Portfolio Management. CV members stated that there was confusion as to the roles of the board members as there are no introductions. Interim CEO will send to CV who the Board members are and what they sit on.
10	Customer Involvement projects update
10.1	Governance and Compliance Advisor talked through the Customer Involvement Team performance indicators and the outputs of CI projects in the last quarter.
10.2	The Customer Voice annual review was discussed. Comments are on the OAK and CV Vice Chair has sent in her comments and changes. No further comments from CV. Resident Communications Advisor will action. It was decided that given Customer Involvement Manager’s absence, it could not be signed off in full at this meeting. Action
10.3	CV approve the Residents Tick update and are happy this process is now being promoted.
10.4	CV members are excited for the customer conference. They thought areas like “Issues Park” was especially good. CV would like a customer and staff steering group set up to discuss the detail of the conference. This should also include residents not on formal groups. Action
10.5	CV planning was discussed and it was felt the first best step was a team building day face to face and virtual. Action
11	Rolling Agenda Planner
11.1	Safer Homes Director to be invited to the next meeting to update on the Building Safety Panel. Action
12	AOB
12.1	Congratulations to CV Vice Chair / Chair of RIT on her shortlisting for the final of the Women in Housing Awards.
12.2	Thanks and best wishes were given to Governance and Compliance Advisor for her new role.