

CHS Tenant Committee Draft Minutes
Wednesday 29 April 10.30am – 12.30pm
Meadows Community Centre, Arbury Road, Cambridge and on Zoom

In Attendance	
Tenants	In Person: Trish Laver (TL), Chair, Lesley Barham (LD), Sally Crawley (SC), David Cracknell (DC), Louise Downham (LD), Ruth Driver (RD) Sue Mayo (SM) Online: Sarah Taylor (ST)
Guests	Silvia Piva (SP), CHS Board member (online) Matt Brooks, CHS Housing Officer Phyl Chigome (PC), Housing with Care Service Manager Charlotte Daleworth (CD) Senior Housing Manager Yanne Loveday (YL) Performance and Quality Manager MB, VB, S, WB and MM, tenants
CHS Directors and Colleagues	Chris Harris, Chief Executive (CH) Andrew Church, Director of Communities (AC) Helen Tonks, Director of Customers (HT) Tina Warren, Director of Homes (TW) Laura Papanikolaou (LP) (Minutes)

Item	Subject	Action
1	Welcome, Housekeeping, Meeting Etiquette & Apologies Trish Laver, Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from TB, NB, PC, UC, RD, JE, JF, CG, MH, MP, PR, SR, MS, CS, PS, CB, PD and HW.	
2	Board Members and Staff introduced themselves SP joined online from 11.30am to 12 and she explained that she has been a member of the Audit and Risk Committee for a year.	
3	Draft Minutes The minutes of the last meeting held on 22.1.26 were agreed subject to a correction to Item 5: LD didn't ask for the standard to be delayed until her team had finished their Scrutiny – agreed to remove it. Matters Arising: TW gave an update on the streetlights in Friar Way/Fawnlea: at least one still needs to be repaired, and it is with a surveyor. CD is leading the review of the ASB policy, tenants HT and FW have agreed to help with it, if anyone is interested in getting involved, speak to CD. The policy will come to the July meeting.	

	<p>HT said a question has been added to the tenant satisfaction measures (TSM) survey for tenants to opt in to be contacted by the Scrutiny Team.</p> <p>TW gave an update on the Building Safety Forum; it wasn't well attended, so we could look at a workshop in future and widen it out from people who live in blocks, to any safety issue.</p> <p>Action: LP to make the above correction to the January minutes.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>CEO Introduction</p> <p>CH has been in post for 6 months, and he is very happy to come and support the Tenant Committee meeting. He thanked the Scrutiny Team and the group of tenants who met with the Regulator on 2nd April. He is waiting for a call from the Regulator to say that the process is concluded. The Regulator should tell us what our rating is e.g. C1 or C2 at the end of May.</p> <p>A new strategy for the organisation is needed because the current strategy runs out in 2027, so we will soon start discussions with tenants about the vision for the future.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Customer Service Standards</p> <p>HT said this document is a revised version of the one presented at the last meeting.</p> <p>JT asked where the scope and costs of the grounds maintenance work is shared.</p> <p>HT replied the scope is shared on the CHS website with plans of each site. The costs are shared in the annual service charge statement.</p> <p>JT asked how do we see what's going on? [what has been delivered]</p> <p>TW said on the website we have a link to a Mark Warker portal that shows when they attend. Customer feedback is received from satisfaction surveys and estate inspections, and it's taken to the contractor meetings.</p> <p>HT suggested we include a reminder in the newsletter about where to find the information about each scheme and how to get in touch directly with the contractor.</p> <p>JT thought CHS could share more information ahead of STAIRS.</p> <p>HT explained that STAIRS is Social Tenants Access to Information Requirements. The first phase in October is to publish existing performance information. The second phase is an obligation to disclose information that is requested.</p> <p>CH suggested and it was agreed that the main phone number be included.</p> <p>LD queried the point about contractors showing ID 'when asked'</p> <p>HT said this was discussed in January and it was agreed that all contractors should carry ID, and it would be realistic to say they will show it when asked.</p> <p>LD would like to see timescales included in the point about complaints rather than 'we will try to resolve this with you quickly and effectively', as quickly is open to interpretation.</p> <p>HT suggested and it was agreed to add 'within Housing Ombudsman's timescales'.</p> <p>LD felt that the point about taking a lodger was not clear.</p>	

HT clarified that the responsibility is to let CHS know about a lodger, it is in the tenancy agreement – so this wording can be tweaked.

Actions:

- Add CHS's phone number
- Add 'within Housing Ombudsman's timescales' to the complaints bullet point
- An article will be included in the tenant newsletter about where to find the grounds maintenance information for each scheme and how to get in touch directly with Mark Walker Grounds Maintenance.
- Clarify that it is tenant responsibility to let us know of any lodger.

Decision: The Customer Service Standard was passed with these amendments

6 Compensation Policy

TW introduced the compensation policy: it has been considered by the Senior Leadership Team and the Complaints Panel. It is aligned with the Housing Ombudsman's guidelines, now it will be easier for complaint handlers to apply logic to the compensation process. The Complaints Panel were happy with it, they only asked for the legislation section to be moved to the end, which has been done.

LB shared her experience of being left without a working toilet over the weekend. She wasn't offered any alternatives, and she didn't know that she could request compensation.

ST highlighted that Fortem/CHS were in breach of section 11 of the landlord and tenant act, that says you need access to adequate sanitation, such as a toilet. If Fortem couldn't complete the works, they should have fed back to CHS, so CHS could offer the tenant alternatives.

TW agreed CHS should provide an alternative if there is no toilet. She said new staff need to be educated so that staff and contractors can guide tenants through the process. The Compensation policy needs to be more visible so we will share it through the newsletter. CHS hold our contractors to account and ask them to compensate tenants for their service failure. We will ensure that internal teams are aware of the policy and are picking up on hazards to make sure you've got the facilities that you are paying for.

LD asked TW why these problems aren't being picked up by CHS?
TW said we have identified performance issues and we are acting on them to get things back on track.

SM described an accident she had in her home and reported to CHS.
TW suggested this is discussed outside of the meeting as it is personal.
TW said that we need tell tenants about the formal reporting process, there's a section on the website about understanding your rights and our obligations. There are building safety forums where we can talk about health and safety of repairs and estates and not just communal areas.

RD described a positive repair experience she had with a kind operative who worked late to get her toilet fixed.
MB described a negative repair experience he had; it took him 7 years to get a fence replaced; he went through the complaints process and was awarded compensation, but he thought he should have received a higher compensation amount, given the length of delay.

LD felt that the compensation policy is not tenant-friendly. She thought that the amounts for a room should be based on a square meter. LD suggested that we should have a tenant policy discussion group to allow for longer discussions and re-writing the policies.

TL said the monetary values that are offered are in line with the Housing Ombudsman guidelines.

JT asked regarding 10.3 'after the 30 days the offer of compensation will be withdrawn': is the tenant told that they've got 30 days and is there a reminder?

TW said yes, we make sure that it is noted in the offer, as well as what the next stage would be, such as escalating to stage 2 or the Ombudsman.

TL reminded members that if they have any comments on a policy they can email or phone them in ahead of the meeting, because we don't always have time for such a long discussion.

Decision: The Compensation policy was passed.

7 Scrutiny Update

LD said the Tenants Handbook report has been finalised by the team and it will go to the Board in June. An article will be included in the newsletter.

Recent project ideas:

- Gardening services
- Communication
- Repairs satisfaction surveys

Gardening was not chosen because there was not time for a thorough investigation before the contract procurement. The team voted to look at CHS's communication with tenants and the repairs satisfaction surveys that tenants receive shortly after a repair is completed. They will take on board what has been said today that CHS needs to share policies. They will look at MyCHS. LD and TL had a meeting with Julie Chivers about Supported Housing, which was very interesting and they will try to engage with those tenants in the future.

MB asked when a tenant would contact the Scrutiny Team.

LD explained they examine services that affect all tenants, rather than individual complaints.

MB asked how to get in touch with the Scrutiny Team.

LD offered to share her email address and LP said there is a page on the website called 'Tell us what you think' which has details of all the panels and how to contact us. The Scrutiny Team would welcome new members.

	<u>Upcoming meeting:</u> Thursday 14 May 6.30pm online	
8	<p>Complaints Update</p> <p>RD said they had a really good April meeting because they had a meaty complaint to review and they suggested some improvements to the way it was handled. They used a checklist from the Housing Ombudsman to review it and there were good discussions. RD explained to MB that the Complaints Panel no longer handle live cases. They will try to avoid booking meetings during school holidays in future.</p> <p><u>Upcoming meeting:</u> Friday 26th June, 10.30am, hybrid in the office and online</p>	
9	<p>Housing with Care Schemes</p> <p>PC joined CHS in November 2025, he is responsible for the Housing with Care Schemes: Dunstan Court, Moorlands Court and Richard Newcombe Court. He met with TL and LD and he has attended the tenants meetings and he has been listening. There is a partner that we work with called Radis who provide Care to some of our residents and he is strengthening the relationship with Cambridgeshire County Council.</p>	
10	<p>Workshop on Reasonable Adjustments</p> <p>HT explained that reasonable adjustments are practical changes to help people with disabilities access services on an equal basis.</p> <p>Meeting participants split into groups to discuss questions about reasonable adjustments. The highlights were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be fair and transparent, follow the equality act, consider requests on a case-by-case basis, everyone has their own needs and barriers. • Not everyone's going to get what they ask for, it must be reasonable. • People who don't have digital literacy and cannot access the website, should have the option to have printed rent statements or policies. • If CHS doesn't agree to a reasonable adjustment, they should say how they came to the decision and the complaint process should be shared. <p>Actions: The notes will contribute to the policy on Reasonable Adjustments that will be brought to the July Tenant Committee</p>	
11	<p>AOB</p> <p>TL thanked HT and LP for the improved cover note to the TSMs.</p> <p><u>Next meeting:</u> Wednesday 8 July at the Hive Leisure Centre in Ely. There will be an afternoon workshop and an evening meeting. The expected start time is 2.30pm, tbc.</p>	
12	<p>Staff left the room for a tenant debrief.</p> <p>Trish closed the meeting.</p>	