



Chair: David Light  
 Vice Chair: David Chafe  
 Communications: Monica Gill

**TACT (Tenants and Council Together)**  
**Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 20 January 2022, 10.30am**  
**The Walton Room/MS Teams**

**Attendance:**

David Light (Chair)	Stanmore
David Chafe (Vice Chair)	Stanmore
Monica Gill (Communications)	Central
Lin Mellish	Kings Worthy
Chris Bone	Abbotts Barton
Gillian Gutteridge	Hyde
Julian Perkins	Hyde
Linda Blyth	Stanmore
David Blyth	Stanmore
Valerie Adcock	Stanmore
Sue Green	Stanmore
Jackie Jones	Stanmore
Ted Shepherd	Denmead
Deanne Adams	Denmead
Doug Dobson	Winnall
Sandra Salter	Winnall

**Guests:**

Dee Jenkins	Housing Project & Performance Manager
Alexander Burns	Housing Options Officer (Allocations Lead)
Steven White	Responsive Maintenance Manager
Amber Russell	Service Lead – Housing Operations & Community Safety
Gilly Knight	Corporate Head of Housing
Lucy Spence	Tenant Involvement Officer
Cllr. Kelsie Learney	
Cllr. Caroline Horrill	

		<b>Actions</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome, introductions and apologies</b>  Apologies; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ John Bond</li> <li>▪ Sheila Burns</li> <li>▪ Carole Bull</li> <li>▪ June Glass</li> <li>▪ Christopher Barton-Briddon</li> </ul>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of meeting on 24 November 2021</b>	

<p><b>2.1</b></p>	<p><b>Corrections</b> None.</p>	
<p><b>2.2</b></p>	<p><b>True record</b> Minutes proposed as being a true and accurate record of the meeting agreed by all present.</p>	
<p><b>2.3</b></p>	<p><b>Matters arising - actions from previous meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chesil lodge was raised as an action from a previous meeting - the tenant who raised the query had not received an update. The previous query related to the ventilation and heat in the building.</li> </ul> <p><b>UPDATE</b></p> <p>Automatic opening vents were installed at the build stage to automatically open in the event of fire. Following the concerns around the heat in communal areas these were retrofitted with a temperature control which means that when the temperature within these areas hits a certain level they will open automatically providing necessary ventilation.</p> <p>The communal dining room and lounge have opening windows/doors to provide necessary ventilation in hot weather. Every flat has a balcony which allows residents to get fresh air, they can also leave the door open to provide ventilation if needed. We will continue to monitor Chesil Lodge for overheating risk.</p>	<p>Gilly Knight</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Housing complaints procedure – Dee Jenkins, Housing Projects &amp; Performance Manager</b></p> <p><i>Presentation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code was undertaken in 2020, and highlighted the need for an effective, transparent and easily accessible complaints process to be developed in consultation with a tenant-led focus group.</li> <li>The focus group identified the need for a series of standard response templates, clear online information about how to complain as well as online performance data and regular “<i>you said, we did</i>” updates.</li> <li>The focus group also helped to develop a survey of customers who had made a complaint within the preceding 18 months. Of the 40 respondents, 74% said they were either fairly or very dissatisfied with the way the council dealt with complaints.</li> <li>The survey identified the following priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness of how to complain – via social media, the tenants’ handbook, Housing e-newsletter and local notice boards where available</li> <li>Better communication with customers who make a complaint – keeping them updated throughout the process from timely acknowledgement to an end of complaint survey.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The corporate complaints policy has also been reviewed and staff training has been provided. Responsibility for complaints has passed to the Customer Service Centre.</li> <li>▪ Next steps will include the publication of a further self-assessment, the introduction of the end of complaint survey and the development of a compensation policy.</li> </ul> <p><i>TACT comments and questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will the standard response templates be personalised? Dee Jenkins confirmed that since complaints are all individual, the guideline templates provide for a personal response.</li> <li>▪ Will complaints via the green cards be picked up by the new process? Dee Jenkins advised that they would.</li> <li>▪ Following the communications scrutiny report, a dedicated email and telephone number for complaints was expected. Gilly Knight explained that complaints are received through various channels – e.g. social media, TACT, direct to officers etc. and so it is important that they are accounted for by customer service staff initially. They are then passed to the relevant service for immediate investigation and response. The Housing service has two officers who are responsible for ensuring that complaints are handled in accordance with published policy – Dee Jenkins, and Mark Cawley.</li> <li>▪ A TACT member noted that a contractor had called earlier than scheduled for a routine heating inspection. She contacted the contractor who rescheduled the inspection and she used the green card to record this example of good service. Dee Jenkins confirmed that compliments are also monitored, and that <u>she will ask Property Services to ensure that compliments received via the green cards are also recorded as compliments.</u></li> <li>▪ A TACT member who had been given an all day time slot for some work to be done had to contact the contractor when no-one attended. She had planned to go out. The contractor apologised.</li> <li>▪ A TACT member reported that anonymised customer feedback via the green cards is shared by Osborne with their staff.</li> <li>▪ In terms of complaints made via councillors, <u>Cllr. Horrill asked that feedback also be provided to the relevant councillor as well as the complainant, so that they could be kept up to date on how the complaint was being addressed.</u></li> <li>▪ A TACT member raised a query concerning letters from the council being addressed to her husband in response to matters she had raised. As joint tenants, should correspondence not be addressed to both? <u>Gilly Knight confirmed that this was correct and will investigate.</u></li> <li>▪ A TACT member asked whether it would be possible to add a tick box to the green cards so that customers could indicate whether they would be interested in discussing their feedback in more detail. Gilly Knight thanked</li> </ul>	<p>Dee Jenkins</p> <p>Gilly Knight</p> <p>Gilly Knight</p>
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	<p>the group for their feedback in response to Dee’s presentation and said these points would be followed up.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Housing allocations procedure – Alexander Burns, Housing Options Officer (Allocations Lead)</b></p> <p><i>Presentation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alexander Burns explained that the purpose of his presentation was to outline how the housing register works, and how the council works with partners to ensure that vacant social housing is allocated to those with the greatest need.</li> <li>▪ The council is part of Hampshire Home Choice, along with East Hampshire, Havant, Test Valley and Eastleigh councils.</li> <li>▪ All households who apply to Hampshire Home Choice must have a local connection with one of the participating councils. For example – already resident in the area or close family who are resident. There must also be a housing need that is not met by their current accommodation.</li> <li>▪ There are currently some 1200 households registered for housing in the Winchester district, which is much lower than it has been in the past. Turnover in the existing stock as well as significant new-build development has seen a greater number of vacant homes become available which has reduced the average waiting times for a three-bedroom home from 3-4 years, to around one year.</li> <li>▪ Many applicants live in unsuitable housing in the private rented sector which offers little security of tenure and is therefore unsuitable in the long-term. Private rented accommodation in the Winchester district is also unaffordable for many households with some rents almost double the cost of an equivalent sized council or housing association property.</li> <li>▪ Overcrowding is a common reason for needing alternative accommodation, and living in unsanitary conditions.</li> <li>▪ Applicants are placed in one of four bands, with the majority in Band 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Band 1 – exceptional housing need</li> <li>▪ Band 2 – high priority</li> <li>▪ Band 3 – medium priority</li> <li>▪ Band 4 – low priority.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Whilst the council is the main provider of social housing in the Winchester district, housing associations also use Hampshire Home Choice to advertise their vacancies, for which the council has nominations rights.</li> <li>▪ Weekly advertising runs between Wednesdays and Sundays and applicants can bid for any property they are eligible for. On Mondays the system calculates the highest priority households for each vacancy and nominations are made to the landlords who undertake pre-tenancy checks and where appropriate, offer viewings. Once housed, the household is removed from the register.</li> </ul> <p><i>TACT comments and questions</i></p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why do some households move more frequently than others? An example was given of a tenant moving from a one-bedroom bungalow to a two-bedroom bungalow. Alexander Burns explained that there could be many reasons for this including a health and welfare need or it may involve an age restricted property which often carry fewer restrictions. This means that sometimes a household who needs one bedroom can access a two-bedroom property. Alexander reminded the group that any household who thinks they may need to move but haven't been assessed, should make an application.</li> <li>▪ A TACT member said they had been told they were adequately housed when they requested a move to smaller accommodation on the death of their husband. Alexander Burns asked that they contact him outside the meeting for further discussion.</li> <li>▪ Can we apply to move to a property that is larger than we need? Alexander outlined the criteria for mutual exchanges, which provide for greater flexibility than the housing register.</li> <li>▪ What is the minimum age for making an application to Hampshire Home Choice? 18 or younger with a guarantor.</li> <li>▪ What property size is in most demand? 70% of those registered want a one-bedroom property. Most are in Band 4 and are adequately housed but are considering how their needs may change in the future. Many are over 60. Others are aged 18-30 and are unable to afford anything other than a social rent.</li> <li>▪ How long are properties generally void? A TACT member gave an example of a property at The Valley that had been empty since before Christmas. <u>Amber Russell stated she would look into this individual case.</u> UDPATE Amber Russell stated that this property was vacant for a longer time that we would usually accept. This was because we were working with the applicant during this time regarding suitability of the property for their needs. This did take some time due to a number of factors, some of which were not in our control.</li> <li>▪ Are housing applications assessed by computer? Alexander explained that although the majority of applications are made electronically, the assessment is undertaken by a fully trained member of staff in accordance with the Hampshire Home Choice allocations framework.</li> <li>▪ Have you made any provision for an upturn in the number of people needing to move for reasons such as rising utility costs? Alexander confirmed that the team anticipate being able to respond to fluctuating demand.</li> <li>▪ How do households who are not tech-savvy cope with applying for housing? The housing application form can be completed as part of a face-to-face meeting or over the phone. There is also a paper-based application form that can be provided if preferred. Assistance with bidding is also offered.</li> </ul>	<p>Amber Russell</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Service structure: emergency repairs – Steven White, Responsive Maintenance Manager</b></p>	

	<p><i>TACT comments and questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A TACT member reported an issue that had occurred over a weekend involving water penetration and loss of power. A call to report the problem had been held for 38 minutes and then transferred to the call centre. Why was there no opportunity for a call back? Steven White explained that out of hours calls are always directed to the call centre, which is located in Blackpool, but that he is looking at whether call backs will be possible. <u>He also undertook to look further into the circumstances of this specific instance, if further details could be provided.</u></li> <li>▪ A TACT member gave an example of a new household who had been without heating or hot water over Christmas, and had been told by the contractor that there was a delay with the replacement parts. Steven White confirmed that nationally the supply of parts is an issue, as is manpower due to the pandemic. This particular case has since been resolved, and the tenant has been compensated by the contractor who acknowledged that that issues on their part had contributed to the delay. Gilly Knight expressed concern that the tenants had not contacted the council at the time, and noted the need to ensure that new tenants are made aware of how to report emergency repairs. Councillor Horrill reiterated the need to ensure that tenants have the correct information.</li> <li>▪ A question was raised regarding how jobs are scheduled, the example given that White Wings are still waiting for the doors to be painted. <u>Steve explained that this would be planned maintenance but said he could take the query forward.</u></li> <li>▪ Are boilers checked before the start of a new tenancy? Steven White explained that the supply is capped at the start of the void period, and reconnected for a full service just before the tenant moves in.</li> <li>▪ Do Customer Service Centre staff know which callers are older and/or vulnerable? Yes, they ask about vulnerabilities so that work can be prioritised.</li> <li>▪ A TACT member reported a delay in having a problem with their heating resolved. <u>Steven White asked if they could provide him with some further detail so he could investigate.</u></li> </ul>	<p>Steven White</p> <p>Steven White</p> <p>Steven White</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Service Delivery Group updates - Lin Mellish (Vice Chair of the Repairs and Maintenance Service Delivery Group)</b></p> <p>From the last meeting in early December 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The two SDGs continue to be combined due to reduced numbers.</li> <li>▪ The Hardship Fund – staff are expected in post in the early New Year.</li> <li>▪ Allocations policy review – to be presented at a future TACT meeting.</li> <li>▪ Garage lettings – now being processed again.</li> <li>▪ The Retrofit Co-ordinator is now in post.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There was a lot of discussion about new contractor CCS, with mixed feedback from the combined SDG. The service seems to be impacted by supply issues affecting manpower and parts.</li> <li>▪ The date of the next meeting is 18 March 2022. TACT members are welcome to attend.</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>TACT Committee – future vacancy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monica Gill will be stepping down as Communications Officer. If any member of TACT is interested in this position they should contact Tenant Involvement Officer Lucy Spence who will be pleased to provide a copy of the specification for this role.</li> </ul>	
8.	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The cleaners at Hyde Gate and Godson House are using the common rooms to prepare their lunches, which is discouraging tenants from using them. <u>Amber Russell will raise this issue with Fiona Churcher who oversees the cleaning contract.</u></li> <li>▪ Cleaning at Simmonds Court was raised as there seems to be an absence of hoovering. <u>Amber Russell will also raise this with Fiona Churcher.</u></li> <li>▪ Household waste and recycling centre – a member of TACT confirmed that after some confusion, it has been confirmed that customers can access the recycling centres on foot or by bicycle. A pedestrian access pilot commenced in July 2021, but had only limited publicity. Councillor Horrill confirmed that she would pass this feedback on the Hampshire County Council as the service provider.</li> <li>▪ Pathway from the Valley to Mildmay and Battery Hill – rough surface makes use by mobility scooters and pushchairs problematic. Why has the pathway not been extended? <u>Gilly Knight agreed to investigate.</u></li> <li>▪ New flats at Winnall – reduced parking and garage availability is making parking for local residents difficult in the evenings. The removal of some trees has also caused frustration and residents are concerned by the height of the new student flats which will overlook adjacent council properties. Gilly will take this comment back to the projects board.</li> <li>▪ A comment was made by residents of The Valley that the signage for the new development is still not in place. This was initially raised at the September 2021 meeting. <u>Gilly Knight will feedback that this is still not in place.</u></li> </ul>	<p>Amber Russell</p> <p>Amber Russell</p> <p>Gilly Knight</p> <p>Gilly Knight</p>
9.	<p><b>Forthcoming meetings</b></p> <p>Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 10.30am – 12.30pm Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 10.30am – 12.30pm</p>	



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