

CHAG Meeting – Detailed Minutes

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Location: Basement Office, Lancaster Town Hall

Attendees: Caroline – Chair, Jo, Jim, Sharon, David, Paula Shakespeare, Martin, Gully.

Date: Thursday 29 January 2026

1. Welcome, Attendance & Apologies

- Meeting opened with confirmation of in-person and online attendees.
- Apologies were noted for Barbara, James, and others unable to attend.
- Introductions included Gully from Citizens Advice, Paula Shakespeare from Housing Management and Martin (Cabinet Member) joining online.

2. Declaration of Interests

- No pecuniary interests declared requiring withdrawal.

3. Previous Minutes & Updates

- Previous minutes reviewed and agreed.
- Following the last meeting where Sharon had requested improvements to the Service charge letters, Sharon and Ella had met to discuss this and updates were pending on improved documentation.

4. Neighbourhood Management – Q3 Performance

- Paula presented an overview of the Neighbourhood Management service and recent performance and activity.

4.1 New Tenant Visits

- 83% attempted; 69% completed within target (within first 6 weeks of tenancy starting), this increases to 77% completions outside of target.
- The Team have challenges completing these – mainly in residents providing access. Residents enquired how we could seek to improve performance in this area, it was noted that hopefully once implemented the new housing system would be expected to automate reminders.

4.2 Neighbourhood Walkabouts

- A small number have been completed across estates in the last quarter; the team have seen low engagement. It was agreed that Councillors would receive advance scheduling.

The Housing Team is also considering other options for ensuring resident views are captured.

- A key issue identified on recent estate walkabouts was illegal bonfires in the run up to bonfire night.

- Information on walkabouts can be found on our website alongside estate walkabout plans which have just started to go online – these will be increased over the course of the next 12 months as the estate walkabouts continue. Information can be found at www.lancaster.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/my-neighbourhood/tenants-voice/whats-going-on-in-your-community

4.3 Tenancy Audits

- Target of 120 to be completed by the end of the year has already been exceeded by December; visits focus on condition, occupancy, safety. These are undertaken for those who have had a tenancy for more than five years but other tenancies have also been prioritised.

4.4 Case Management

- The Estate Management Team are currently dealing with: High-need cases: 26 messy gardens, 23 poor property conditions, 4 hoarding. Multi-agency work ongoing with these residents.

4.5 Abuse Toward Staff

Paula highlighted a couple of incidents which have recently occurred. The Team have had to deal with two major incidents requiring police involvement. Those in attendance confirmed that this type of behaviour was unacceptable and Paula confirmed that in those instances actions included injunctions, tenancy demotion processes, staff support.

4.6 Enforcement Cases

Residents were keen to know what enforcement action is taken against residents who don't adhere to the tenancy agreement conditions. Paula confirmed that we have recently regained possession of a property in a Tenancy Fraud case. The team are also enforcing court requirements in relation to the removal of a caravan and rubbish.

4.7 Block Cleaning Contract

As part of the work with the Building Cleaning scrutiny group – the new block cleaning contract has gone out to tender, tenants voice have been involved in this. The team are awaiting information back on this.

4.8 Mainway Regeneration

As part of the ongoing regeneration of the Mainway estate and the closure of Bridge House, over the past quarter the team have completed the successful decant of 20 households. A lessons learned document is being prepared and will be shared to help see how the service can improve.

4.9 Complaints

In the last quarter the Housing Team have received 2 x complaints around neighbourhood management these related to a messy garden and ASB complaint which was upheld, whilst a second complaint was categorised as a service request as we had not been advised of the situation before.

5. Tenant Voice Update

- Tenancy agreement review sessions have been well attended; line-by-line feedback has been provided. Tenants advised that they have felt they have been able to participate well in this review.

- Caroline confirmed that the discussion from the previous meeting and subsequent correspondence from tenants about how they view our estates in terms of the grassland management approach has significantly influenced Cabinet's decision to allocate more funding in this area. This is a strong position from our residents and residents should be thanked. Discussed inviting Chief Officer - Will Griffith to a future tenant meeting to talk through next steps.

- Concerns were raised about the effectiveness of the Mainway Steering Group and ensuring that it gets its voice heard at the Board. Caroline has committed to attending Mainway Tenant Steering Group.

6. HRA Budget 2026/27

Jo presented the proposed budget which includes:

- 4.8% rent increase (CPI + 1%).

- New tenants may be charged formula rent + 5%/10% flex.

- RTB sales: 40 in 9 months → £241k annual rental loss.

- £6m capital programme includes boilers, refurbishments, fire safety, voids for the year ahead.

- This information was to be presented at Tenant Voice meeting this evening with residents consulted.

7. Tenant Satisfaction Measures

David presented the TSM scores for the year. The Council was disappointed to see that whilst good improvements in satisfaction have been seen across most areas overall satisfaction was down 1%.

- Issues highlighted: home condition perception, neighbourhood appearance, repair timeliness. The team will focus on an action plan focussing on these areas for improvement.

- To be presented at Tenant Voice meeting this evening.

8. Risk Register

Jo provided an overview of key risks this focussed on financial viability, stock quality – this was in relation to the council having an aging stock and the amount of investment required, ICT systems being replaced, staff shortages in certain areas including repairs management service and staff being seconded to support with the ICT system implementation and arrears on void properties.

9. AOB

- Tenant Scrutiny have reported positive feedback on void standards.
- Discussion on whether apprenticeships could be used to address trade shortages.

11. Close

- Meeting closed with thanks; Tenant Voice meeting scheduled later.