



**Minutes of Customer Committee Meeting held on
Tuesday 03 September 2024 via Microsoft Teams**

MEMBERS:	Charlotte Haines (Chair) Karen Hamilton-Hulse (KH) Cynthia (Bethel) Alloyda (CA) Keri Muldoon (KM) Jason Marland (JM) Rashidah Owoseni (RO) Gareth Evans (GE) Ahmed Abdulmalek (AA) Jack Buckley (JBU) John Beatie (JBe)
OFFICERS:	Sue Sutton, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sian Grant, Executive Director of Customers and Communities (EDCC) Warren Carlon, Director of Communities (DC) Lorraine Butler, Customer Service and Engagement Manager (CSEM) Laura Flint, Complaints Manager (CM) Claire Taylor, Community Safety Manager (CSM) Keri Parr, Housing Manager - High Rise and Sheltered (HMHRS) Kate Burns, Housing Manager - South (HMS) Zeenet Quraishi, Governance Manager (GM) (minutes)
OBSERVERS:	Jim Battle (JB)
APOLOGIES:	Marta Diaz (MD)

The meeting commenced at 18:02.

ITEM	
1.	Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from MD. There were no Declarations of Interest.
2.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 02 July 2024
	The Committee approved the minutes from the last meeting held on 02 July 2024.
3.	Matters Arising and Action Tracker
	The Committee noted the changes to the Action Tracker.
4.	Chair's Update
	Chair provided an update to the members and noted the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to our new members JBU and JBe.

- JB, Chair of the Board will be stepping down this month. The Chair expressed their thanks to JB for being the Committee’s supporter and noted she was grateful for the encouragement and wished JB the best on his next endeavours.
- Salix Board Meeting took place in July and Salix Homes will become Patrons for Salford Youth Zone, the Board are supportive of this and asked to be kept updated on progress.
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures were presented to Board and officers received similar questions to the ones committee put forward.
- The Annual Customer Voice Report was also presented to Board to note and for discussion as it had been previously approved. Refinements were made previously following feedback received.
- The Chair thanked the members for their role and contribution during the inspection and noted that officers may have had the more challenging element of the inspection, however collectively Salix have been able to demonstrate to the regulator how well they are performing.
- The Chair noted that the CEO will be attending the meeting shortly and will be recirculating the Annual Review for member comments and feedback. The Chair also noted that the CEO also expressed their thanks to the members for their contribution during the regulatory inspection.
- The Chair noted on behalf of the CEO that the Salix Celebratory Event on the 20 September 2024 at the Lowry has now been cancelled due to low uptake.
- The Chair asked JBe and JBu to introduce themselves to the Committee.
- JBe has been a Salix customer for over 12 years and employed by Salford City Council for 18 years and noted he is looking forward to joining the Committee.
- JBu has been a Salix customer for over 3 years and has a background in environmental and sustainability areas and is currently employed as an Environmental Advisor.

JB congratulated the committee on their work and noted that the Regulator had tracked their actions from Committee through to Board and implementation into becoming Salix activities. JB noted that Salix Homes are the first in Greater Manchester to obtain a C1 regulatory rating. JB reflected that the development of the Customer Committee has been key to the success at Salix Homes and Jim expressed pride and thanked the committee for listening to its community and engaging effectively. JB took this opportunity to express his thanks and wished the committee well as he steps down from his position as Chair of the Board at the end of September. JB noted that Martin Warhurst will be succeeding his position, and members will have the opportunity get to know him during the Strategy Day on 19 October.

JB left the meeting at 18.17

The Committee noted the Chair’s update.

5.	Tenancy Management Policy Consultation Results
	The HMHRS provided a summary of the progress of the Tenancy Management Policy Consultation and the results of the consultation as detailed within the report.

The HMHRS welcomed questions from members and the following was noted during discussions:

- JM noted that car parking bays may require repainting for the policy to work effectively. The HMHRS will look to progress this at the proper time.
- RO queried if there was flexibility regarding registering vehicles by 02 September as some customers may have been on leave or away over the summer the HMHRS confirmed that there is some flexibility and registering vehicles will still be possible after 02 September.
- JM, JBe, CA, KM raised queries regarding updating the tenancy agreements to reflect the policy presented, how Salix Homes will communicate the change of policy and issues regarding nuisance pets. The HMHRS responded that the policy will have a soft launch which will strengthen the current position of Salix Homes with the majority of issues being picked up as part of the Tenancy Management Policy. HMHRS also noted that it will be made clear to customers going forward that the policies are being replaced.
- JM stated he thought the process for dogs in high rise was that people had to register their pets and he asked if registration would be continuing under the new policy. EDCC explained that a number of years ago we had a policy of registering all dogs as part of an amnesty on dogs already in high rise buildings with the aim that once the registered dogs passed away, they could not be replaced. The new scheme would allow all pets and they would not need to be registered. Action would be taken against customers where their pets were causing a nuisance. JM stated that in his block there was a fixed sign stating dogs must be registered so this was confusing. The EDCC agreed and stated we would remove all such signs from high rise blocks.
- CA noted that feedback from this meeting could mean that we need to delay the roll out of the policy and review it based on the feedback raised. The EDCC responded that discussions during this meeting have not impacted the current stance on the policy itself and but that we would use the feedback received to enhance the planned roll out. The HMHRS is currently working with the Marketing Team on a leaflet which will be shared with members in due course.
- The Chair noted that the in-person option to provide documents would be helpful and inclusive for all customers and thanked the Team for this addition.

The Committee approved the Tenancy Management Policy Consultation Results.

Actions:

- **Car parking bays may require repainting to assist in supporting the policy.**
- **Review of the fixed notices on high rise blocks regarding pets.**
- **HMHRS to share the leaflet with members for comment prior to circulation.**

6. Draft Good Neighbourhood Management Policy (Noise Policy)

The CSM provided a summary of the draft good neighbourhood management policy for the members. The CSM also noted that a consultation exercise had been carried out with this Committee, the Apartment Living Forum and that all customers who had reported noise had been sent a survey asking for their views to allow for customer engagement and influence.

	<p>The CSM welcomed feedback and questions from members and the following was noted during discussions:</p> <p>JM queried the time limitations in place regarding DIY having recently received a letter regarding this. GE observed that some customers may work from home therefore the preference to undertake DIY could be for the weekends instead of during the week. CSM has requested for JM to share the letter via email so this can be addressed outside the meeting. CSM also noted that a certain level of tolerance and understanding is required regarding noise, hence why this blends into good neighbourhood management. The CSM highlighted that if the behaviour becomes a frequent pattern of behaviour causing issues and disturbances this is when the customers concerned would be contacted.</p> <p>RO noted that working with multi-agency partners will be beneficial as some individuals choose not to share health information and it also allows referrals to be made for additional support to be accessed.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the noise performance measure target is yet to be set and following suggestion from the EDCC the Committee agreed for the target to be set at a minimum of 80% as this aligns with ASB satisfaction targets.</p> <p>The Chair observed that disadvantages faced by those from different socio-economic backgrounds is an area of growing interest and may require careful consideration and scrutiny. The CSM responded that this is not within the Equality Act however it has been adopted by Salix Homes as part of our equality impact assessments. The EDCC informed members that we do not collect information on income or other data that would allow us to assess the socio disadvantage of our customers. The EDCC stated we had commission Brendan Nevan to do a piece of work for us looking at the demographics and makeup of Salford and that this work includes information on socio disadvantage. It was suggested that this could be shared with the committee and form part of the discussions of the Customer Committee Strategy day in October.</p> <p>The Committee noted the progress made and approved the timeline for delivery.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO to provide the Governance Team/EDCC with the Brendan Nevan report to assist Strategy Day discussions in October.
7.	<p>Customer Scrutiny Report</p>
	<p>The CM updated the members that her role has been split into two separate roles following changes to the complaints team structure, and she is now the Complaints Manager. A new Customer Engagement Manager has been appointed and is due to join Salix in Autumn.</p> <p>The CM provided a summary of the report, and drew members' attention to the recommendations, particularly those that may require removal or further review/discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 3 – Cost comparisons for service charges provided by Salix Homes and other registered providers to enable customers to confirm the value for money of the services.

- **Recommendation 4** - Re-evaluate the job role profile and salary scale for caretakers and cleaners.
- **Recommendation 9** - Annual personal safety and conflict management refresher training for caretakers and cleaners.

The CM welcomed questions from members and the following was noted during discussion:

The Chair praised the work undertaken by the Scrutineers and welcomed the idea of the potential of a formal qualification for caretakers as part of Recommendation 7.

JM and RO noted that the caretakers are appreciated for the role they do, as they are presented as an ambassador of Salix Homes and its useful to know they felt valued and appreciated and what would be the likelihood of this being reflected within their remuneration. The CEO responded that Salix Homes have in place a robust job evaluation scheme and this is subjected to benchmarking which is undertaken via a specialist company.

JBe suggested it would be worthwhile to engage/ask those staff who lone work in tower blocks about whether they would prefer face to face conflict management training and how frequently they would like this to help make them feel safe in their role. The EDCC and DC confirmed this would be progressed.

The CSEM provided a summary of the equality, diversity and inclusion scrutiny scope and welcomed questions and queries. The committee confirmed they were happy with the scope as it was presented.

The CM provided a brief overview of the scrutiny action tracker and welcomed questions from members. AA queried the dates in red on the tracker and the EDCC responded that the original completion dates had been shifted forward and were deleted in error.

The Committee resolved to:

- **Approve the recommendations in the Environmental Services scrutiny report with the removal of recommendation 4 and the changes agreed to recommendation 9.**
- **Approve the proposed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion scrutiny scope.**
- **Approve the Scrutiny Action Tracker.**

The CSEM thanked the CM for their work and support with customer committee in their role as Customer Engagement Manager and noted that they will continue to be involved with committee regarding complaints going forward.

8. Customer Committee Succession Planning

The GM provided a brief overview of the Committee Succession planning principles, proposals and noted that the contents of the report are subject to personal circumstances, individual preferences and appraisal conversations which are planned for September 2024.

The Governance Manager welcomed questions from the members and the following was noted during discussions:

	<p>JM noted that a refresh of the Committee membership would be positive and queried the dates for recruitment during April to July, and the potential for extension if the maximum tenure completes in January of the same year. The GM responded that the proposals suggested for extension of membership from January to September as indicated by Appendix 2, and the recruitment period during April to July would assist the re-election and re-appointment cycle for to align with Board appointments and the September AGM.</p> <p>JM queried the training and time for new members to settle into the role, the EDCC responded that due to the Committee now being well established this will allow for experienced members to support the new members and also the potential to buddy up.</p> <p>KH queried the red text and asterisks presented on Appendix 2. The GM clarified that those indicated in red text with an asterisk is where a proposed extension is being suggested as original members were recruited in January, therefore though their tenure would complete in January, we are proposing they are extended until September. The GM made clear that these proposals are subject to discussions at appraisal conversations in September 2024 and that appendix 2 demonstrates a snapshot. The EDCC clarified that the dates used in the report and appendices were from members' indications during their 2023 appraisal conversations and are subject to further discussions that will take place during appraisals this year to smooth the current cliff edge.</p> <p>The Chair noted that she had indicated during her appraisal to stand down in September 2025, however expressed concern regarding the succession of a new Chair of the Committee. The EDCC confirmed this would be discussed during member appraisals to see if any committee member is interested in the role and if there is not an appetite to succeed to this role within the current members, recruitment to the role of Chair of Customer Committee would be undertaken.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the Committee succession planning principles. • Approve the Committee succession planning proposals, subject to appraisal conversation discussions due to take place in September 2024. • Approve the Customer Committee Attributes.
9.	<p>Salix Homes Annual Review 2023/24</p>
	<p>The CEO provided a summary of the Annual Review which was presented to committee for comment following refinements requested by board members. No further comments have been received from the Customer Committee.</p> <p>The Committee noted the Salix Homes Annual Review 2023/24.</p>
10.	<p>Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) Update</p>
	<p>The HMS provided a summary for the Committee of the history and role of the Tenancy Management Organisation, New Barracks including its management agreement and governance structure. It was noted that the TMO provides Salix Homes information on its performance regarding ASB, repairs, income collection and complaints enabling us to ensure that the TMO performs its role well. They also provide a copy of their annual accounts each year. It was also noted that the TMO has the same two stage complaints process as Salix Homes and that no complaints had been made during 2023/24.</p> <p>The HMS welcomed questions from members and the following was noted during discussions:</p>

	<p>AA noted that the results at section 5.2 of did not total to 100%, HMS responded they will check this for accuracy. AA queried if New Barracks complaints are reported to Salix Homes and the HMS explained the TMO follows the same complaints process as Salix Homes and due to the proximity of the office to the location it serves customers of the TMO can often raise any concerns in person at the office, which means issues are often swiftly resolved without having to resort to the formality of issuing a complaint. The CEO explained that any complaints that are escalated to Salix Homes would be reviewed and analysed for trends and frequency.</p> <p>The CEO responded to a query by JM regarding regulatory overview of TSMs and complaints for the TMO. The CEO clarified that originally there were two TMOs which transferred over from the Council, one of which was dissolved, and there is a clear management agreement in place between New Barracks and Salix Homes which clearly outlines the responsibilities for both. The CEO also noted that the HMS attends the TMO Board meetings which allows for clear oversight by Salix Homes to escalate any issues and provide assurance.</p> <p>AA queried the amount for cyclical works and the HMS responded that when undertaking improvement works, they would require permission from Salix Homes and this follows a set process.</p> <p>Members agreed to EDCC suggestion of a visit to the TMO New Barracks and noted that the office is local, accessible, and highly responsive to the community they serve.</p> <p>The Committee noted the TMO update.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDCC/HMS to arrange suitable date for a site visit to New Barracks.
11.	<p>Neighbourhood Action Plan Update</p>
	<p>The DC provided the Committee with a summary of the neighbourhood action plan update and noted that the campaign was launched on the 28 August and will continue over autumn. Progress and success of the Neighbourhood Action Plans will be monitored and reported back to the Committee later in the year.</p> <p>The DC welcomed questions from members and thanks were noted by the Committee. Chair observed that the postcode search tool does not specify their specific area only the wider area of where they live, the DC confirmed that he will look to have this addressed with the Communication Team.</p> <p>The Committee noted the progress made and timeline for delivery.</p>
12.	<p>First Response Review</p>
	<p>The DC provided the Committee with a summary of the progress undertaken on the First Response Review. The DC welcomed questions from members and the following was noted during discussions:</p> <p>JBe queried about those customers/tenants who may be digitally excluded in instances where they may not have a smartphone or where the battery is low/dead. The DC responded that tenants would still be able to fob themselves into the block and that a contingent option for the digitally excluded would be available via a handheld handset.</p> <p>AA reflected that during decision making, if we remove the particular elements of the First Response service, it would be useful to measure adverse impact this may have on ASB,</p>

	<p>complaints which could mean that more investment via service charges is required, this was echoed by JM. The DC responded that an increase in service charges is not envisaged, for example the mobile patrol's key purpose is to be a third-party witness for ASB incident. The new ASB system will be App based to allow users to record noise which could result in value for money. AA noted there could be benefits that we are not yet aware of until it has been implemented.</p> <p>The Committee noted the progress made and timeline for delivery.</p>
13.	Any Other Business
	<p>The following was noted during any other business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday 19 October (Strategy Day) – the EDCC noted this would be taking place during the morning offsite at the Copthorne Hotel and ending with lunch. In response to previous feedback from the Committee, invites will be extended to members of the Sub-Groups and scrutineers. Apologies for the Strategy Day have been received from Chair (CH) and CA due to prior commitments. • Decision Time – members have requested training sessions for Decision Time and this will be progressed by CSEM, Governance Team and with support from ICT. • ICT Issues – Members have been requested to email the EDCC/CSEM regarding any IT equipment concerns and these will be addressed.
14.	Date of Next Meeting
	<p>Saturday 19 October (Strategy Day) – Copthorne Hotel Tuesday 05 November - Virtual</p>
<p>The meeting closed at 20:11</p>	