



Minutes of Customer Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 17 December 2024 virtually via Microsoft Teams.

MEMBERS:	Charlotte Haines (Chair) Ahmed Abdulmalek (AA) Cynthia (Bethel) Alloyda (CA) John Beattie (JBe) Jack Buckley (JBu) Marta Diaz (MD)
OFFICERS:	Sian Grant, Executive Director of Customers and Communities (EDCC) Campbell McCulloch, Director of Finance (DF) Warren Carlon, Director of Communities (DC) Jen Green, Director of Properties (DP) Darren Ashworth, Repairs and Maintenance Manager (RMM) Lorraine Giddings, Customer Service and Engagement Manager (CSEM) Christiana O'Brien, Customer Engagement Manager (CEM) Pete Modral, Customer Communications Manager (CCM) Zeenet Quraishi, Governance Manager (GM) (minutes)
OBSERVERS:	N/A
APOLOGIES:	Jason Marland (JM) Gareth Evans (GE) Rashidah Owoseni (RO) Keri Muldoon (KM)

The meeting commenced at 18:09.

ITEM	
1.	Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Jason Marland, Gareth Evans, Keri Muldoon and Rashidah Owoseni. There were no declarations of interest.
2.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 05 November 2024
	The Committee approved the minutes from the last meeting held on Tuesday 05 November 2024.
3.	Matters Arising and Action Tracker
	The Committee noted the changes to the Action Tracker. Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GM to circulate to members the Sustainability leaflet presented by Mark Beyer at the Committee meeting on the 05 November 2025. • CSEM still progressing issues regarding Decision Time/One Advanced.

4.	Chair's Update
	<p>Chair provided members with the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen Hamilton-Hulse has resigned from her position on the Customer Committee, Chair expressed thanks for Karen's contribution to Salix Homes during her tenure. • Liam Turner the current Executive Director of Assets, Growth and Sustainability has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer for Salix Homes. Sue Sutton has kindly agreed to extend her time until summer 2025 to ensure a smoother transition as we move forward. This extension will allow for a seamless handover to Liam Turner as CEO, and ensure the stability of the leadership team during this important time. • Board Strategy Days took place on 13 and 14 December and discussions included the Corporate Plan Priorities, risk and key areas of work as we moved forward into the new year. <p>AA provided the Committee with an overview of the last Board meeting which took place on 03 December 2024 with highlights including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In depth discussions took place regarding additional development costs of a scheme, Board discussed the risks and consequences and approved the additional costs requested by contractors. It is understood there will be no further additional costs required regarding this development. • Board reviewed and approved the Bad Debts Policy. • Governance update included a review of governance documents which were approved by the Board • Asset Management Strategy was approved by the Board. • Knowing Our Customer Update provided by the EDCC was noted by the Board • Salix Homes Management Accounts for Q2 were discussed and approved by Board. • Operational Performance Update was provided • Board discussed the data received from Switchee Smart Devices and how we would use this data in the future. • Progress update was provided against the EDI Annual Commitments for Q2. • Committee Chairs provided updates from their respective areas. <p>The Committee noted the Chair and AA respective updates.</p>
5.	Draft 2025/2026 Rent and Service Charge Letters
	<p>DF summarised the draft 2025/26 rent and service charge letters, which have been circulated to members for feedback. The DF and CCM noted the following key points for members which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rent letters demonstrated a rent increase by 2.7% which is in line with Government rent settings. Salix Homes is the second cheapest landlord in Salford and strive to provide value for money to our customers. • There has been an improvement in the repairs service. • Salix continues to invest in the customer leaflets and rent letters to allow customers to feel supported. • Following a review of the rent letters in 2023, feedback from members was

	<p>considered including those elements relating to language and accessibility.</p> <p>The following was noted during discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD queried the letter format in terms of colours used and noted the duplicated Spanish language and queried if the letters were personalised. CCM responded that there are 9 formats of letters which have been tailored to the varying types of tenancies customers hold with Salix. CCM will look to address the oversight regarding the Spanish language and review of the colour contrast on the rent letters. • JBe noted the accuracy of the address on the advice and support services and CCM confirmed this will be picked up prior to leaflets being finalised. <p>Chair noted the format of the letters and thanked DF and CCM. CCM has requested for all feedback from members to be received by 24 December 2024.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to approve the draft 2025/26 Rent and Service Charge Letters / subject to the following amendments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplication of Spanish language to be rectified • Review on the access of the colour contrast on the rent letters • Address for advice and support services to be checked for accuracy
6.	<p>Tenancy Management Policy</p>
	<p>DC provided a summary of the revised Tenancy Management Policy to members which amalgamated the previous Tenancy Management Policy, Pet Management Policy and Vehicle Registration and Car Park Policy. The DC highlighted to members the areas covered within the revised policy, and following approval being sought from Committee, the Tenancy Management Policy will be provided to Salix Leadership Team for final approval in January with the aligned Tenancy Management Procedure. CA thanked DC for the policy and commented on the clarity of the policy, no further points were noted.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to approve the Draft Tenancy Management Policy.</p>
7.	<p>Succession Plan</p>
	<p>The EDCC provided an overview of the Customer Committee Succession Plan report and the supporting appendix for members and the following was noted during discussions: CA queried the rationale for which members would be leaving in September 2025 and those being extended to September 2026. EDCC responded that following appraisal conversations in 2024, these considered members' preferences to help inform the succession plan for Customer Committee. The questions during appraisal conversations were to assess the varying flexibility of members regarding their second 3-year term. EDCC and Chair agreed to discuss this with CA outside this meeting. EDCC noted there is time to have these discussions however decision will have to be reached soon as it feeds into the wider succession planning of the Board.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the changes to the revised succession plan and Appendix 1 in principle. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDCC and Chair to meet with CA to clarify the rationale behind the choices made regarding extensions. • Clarification during 2025 on which tenures have been agreed for each member to assist a fair process.

8.	<p>Forward plan for 2025</p> <p>The EDCC presented the Customer Committee Forward Plan including a review of 2024 meetings comprised of virtual and in person meetings. In anticipation of the determining the 2025 meeting cycle, members were asked to consider and discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on meeting frequency on whether 8 meetings a year is sufficient or if there are alternative suggestions. • Meeting format and whether the Customer Committee is happy to continue to alternate between virtual and in person meetings, if not alternate suggestions are welcomed. • Feedback regarding meeting agendas and papers and any suggestions for improvement. • Committee Strategy Days to remain at twice a year and the potential to revert back these to be held on a weekday. <p>Suggestions were noted on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting frequency – following discussion amongst members it was agreed that the number of meetings was sufficient. • Customer Committee Strategy Days – following discussion members agreed for Strategy Days to revert back to being held on a weekday • Meeting format/location – members discussed the benefits and drawbacks of virtual and hybrid meetings versus in person meetings. • Meeting papers and agenda – members commented on the improvement in this area, and this has been assisted with the increased meeting frequency. Members noted the ease of use of One Advanced, however it was noted that due to conducting meeting on the tablet not possible to have the papers present on the portal simultaneously especially when comments and queries have been raised on the portal. The EDCC responded that it is being proposed for members to have Salix issued laptops to help assist with access to the meeting and papers. Marta commented on the organisation of the documentation. <p>EDCC queried with members whether meeting timings would affect availability and preference. Following discussions members noted that the timing of 6pm to 8pm for in person meetings would be preferred option, and for virtual meetings, 5pm to 7pm would be preferred. AA noted that this could potentially reduce confusion regarding meeting format.</p> <p>Chair requested that due to absence of some members a vote would be required to take place to capture all member preferences on the areas noted above.</p> <p>The EDCC noted that feedback from members will assist to inform the forward plan for 2025. This will be included and aligned with the wider Board and Committee meeting schedule to be worked on by Director of Governance Risk and Assurance. Following the results of the vote, which will assist to inform the forward plan, final approval for this will be sought at the meeting in February.</p> <p>The Committee following discussion, noted the forward plan for 2025 and has requested for the following options to be circulated to all members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee meeting location/format options • Meeting start time options • Committee Strategy Day start time options
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9.	<p>Repairs Review Update</p>
	<p>DP presented the Repairs Review to members via a presentation including background information to the review, drivers for change, feedback received and the timeline. RMM provided a detailed summary of the areas of work within Service Improvement Phase 1 and Service Improvement Phase 2. RMM noted to members that recruitment has been challenging with most colleagues in place except for joiners, and once the recruitment is complete the service will be staffed appropriately.</p> <p>The following queries were noted during discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA thanked the DP and RMM for the detailed presentation and queried if this would result in the reduction of complaints being received. The RMM responded that Salix are beginning to see a reduction in complaints already as repairs appointments have increased. • MD thanked officers on the presentation and looking forward to seeing the outcomes from this, RMM noted data will be available once the call ahead to customers has been embedded. • JBe queried the review on the open jobs data and queried if there will be more communications on the progress of those repairs. The DP responded that feedback from customers noted the wait time as being too long, therefore when looking at the service action plans need to ensure we have in place realistic step targets to allow us to complete repairs within 28 days. • AA queried the follow-on works for complex repairs and the DP responded that operatives would call their manager to discuss alternative options and works for completion. She also noted there are now additional planners in place to assist with complex repairs. The aim is to complete the repair right first time and we are striving for this in the service offered to customers. • The DP noted that calling ahead prior to a visit has reduced the number of no access cases by 1%. It was also noted that Salix proactively decided to challenge the service and reduce the target of follow-on work to 15% to allow for an improved offer to customers. • MD queried what drone technology would be used for and RMM responded that it would assist in assessing roofing conditions of Salix and neighbouring properties without physically having operatives to be out on site to assess the roofing conditions. <p>DP agreed to provide an update in early 2025 to be included on the forward schedule.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to note the Repairs Review update.</p>
10.	<p>EDI Scrutiny Report</p>
	<p>CEM provided an overview of the EDI scrutiny report, with the following key points to note from the recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GTKY data was input into the CRM system to allow a fuller understanding of the customer. • Continuing to be proactive in our customer contact with those who do not engage with the organisation. • Promote the use of assistance such as language line. • Allow colleague demographics sat outside the scrutiny scope, the scrutineers recommended for colleague and customer demographics to be aligned. <p>Chair agreed with the recommendations and noted that once the GTKY data is completed this scrutiny piece will require revisiting and that it needed to be given more time. The Chair</p>

	<p>also noted that the Salix website requires the inclusion of EDI. The EDCC agreed that the EDI scrutiny would require revisiting and could provide an opportunity to make amendments for future improvement. MD noted that language line was useful in assisting those with barriers.</p> <p>The EDCC also commented that a report would be brought back to the committee in the new year reviewing our approach to scrutiny as it was felt that 4 scrutiny pieces a year did not give enough time for the scrutiny work to go into enough depth.</p> <p>AA queried if live chat could be considered as an opportunity for young people within higher education to provide a career path into housing. The CESM responded that we need to explore the viability of live chat over the current self-serve model we have in place and what potential benefits could be gained against the costs of implementing a live chat system.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to approve the recommendations from the EDI scrutiny report and noted that the EDI scrutiny will require revisiting once the GTKY data is at a more complete stage.</p>
11.	<p>Customer Support and Tenancy Sustainment Scrutiny Scope</p>
	<p>CEM provided an overview of the scrutiny scope which is due to commence in January 2025 and to be brought back to Committee in March. The Chair queried whether sufficient time has been allocated to allow for a thorough scrutiny piece to be undertaken to which CEM agreed they are comfortable regarding delivery of outcomes.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to approve the proposed scope for the Customer Support and Tenancy Sustainment scrutiny review.</p>
12.	<p>Scrutiny Action Tracker</p>
	<p>CEM noted that there has been progress regarding the environmental recommendations following the meeting in November. The Chair thanked CEM and no further points were noted.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to note the scrutiny action tracker.</p>
13.	<p>Neighbourhood Action Plan Update</p>
	<p>DC provided a summary to members on progress with the delivery of Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs). The NAP's will be updated annually, and customers will continue to be consulted on their content and priorities. The DC noted the next steps as continuing to work on the priority areas identified in each neighbourhood/Housing Officer patch, monitoring customer access and impact and to review in July - August 2025 NAP priorities for each area following which an update will be brought back to this committee.</p> <p>CA thanked DC and noted that if customer data collection was improved to understand the customer better it may help to provide insight as to why some customers do not raise any complaints. DC responded that customer engagement and understanding improves with door knocking and thanked CA for her observation.</p> <p>MD queried if drone technology could be utilised to check garden and yard maintenance. The DC responded that housing officers undertake estates walkabouts which allows them direct sight of neighbourhood matters and increases our visibility on the estates.</p> <p>The EDCC noted that complaints and customer dissatisfaction is part of a certain area and will be brought back to Committee as such.</p>

	The Committee noted the Neighbourhood Action Plan Update.
14.	Customer Support Fund Update
	<p>The EDCC noted to members that detail regarding Customer Support Fund (CSF) during 2024 to the end of November has been included within the report. The CSF is a vital resource that Salix use to support our most financially disadvantaged customers. We will bring a year-end report back to the Customer Committee after March 2025.</p> <p>The Committee noted the Customer Support Fund Update</p>
15.	Any Other Business
	<p>EDCC shared they will be leaving Salix Homes to take on an exciting new opportunity as Director of Housing at Bury Council.</p> <p>The Chair and members expressed thanks to the EDCC for her direction and leadership.</p> <p>No further business was discussed.</p>
16.	Date of Next Meeting
	Tuesday 04 February 2025
The meeting closed at 20:12.	