



**Minutes of Salix Homes Customer Committee Meeting  
held on Wednesday 22 March 2023 via Zoom**

<b>MEMBERS:</b>	Charlotte Haines (Chair) Karen Hamilton-Hulse (KH) Cynthia (Bethel) Alloyda (CA) Marta Diaz (MD) Keri Muldoon (KM) Jason Marland (JM) Rashidah Owoseni (RO) Charlie Williamson (CW) Gareth Evans (GE) Ahmed Abdulmalek (AA)
<b>OFFICERS:</b>	Sian Grant, Executive Director of Operations (EDO) Susan Wilkinson, Customer Engagement Manager (CEM) Nichola Shepard, Director of Governance, Risk & Assurance (DGRA) Ed Sidley, Performance and Business Intelligence Manager (PBIM) Liam Turner, Director of Property Services (DPS) Lorraine Butler, Customer Service Manager (CSM) Warren Carlon, Director of Communities (DOC) Becky Airey, Governance and Policy Officer (GPO) (minutes)
<b>OBSERVERS:</b>	
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Vicki Gallagher (VG)
The meeting commenced at 18:00	
<b>ITEM</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest</b>
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.  Apologies were received from VG.  There were no Declarations of Interest.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 January 2023</b>
	<b>The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2023.</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters Arising and Action Tracker</b>
	<b>The Committee noted the changes to the Action Tracker.</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Chair's Update</b>
	The Chair gave an update on the items that were discussed at the Board meeting on 31 January 2023. She informed members that the Board approved the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent and services charges for 2023/24;</li> <li>• To increase the Customer Support Fund to £50,000 for one year;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Works Payment Policy;</li> <li>• Rent Setting Policy;</li> <li>• Service Charge Policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Committee noted the Chair’s Update.</b></p>
5.	<p><b>Our Future Together – Change Proposals</b></p>
	<p>The EDO gave an overview of the proposed changes to the way Salix Homes’ services are structured and delivered. She emphasised that these changes were to ensure a greater focus on Salix’s customers and on the leadership and management of the business’ core services.</p> <p>The EDO added that the core drivers for the changes were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure Salix’s existing homes are safe, well maintained and fit for the future;</li> <li>• That Salix’s services focus on what matters to customers;</li> <li>• To provide affordable new homes for local people.</li> </ul> <p>Members were asked to discuss and approve the Our Future Together change proposals.</p> <p>KM queried how Salix would increase the visibility of Housing Officers as events such as coffee mornings had not worked in the past. She added that Housing Officers may have to spend more than three days a week in the office to learn their new patches and to make them more visible to tenants should they visit Diamond House.</p> <p>The EDO informed members that no one single approach to increasing the visibility of the Housing Officers worked effectively so Salix would look to encompass a variety of approaches to ensure visibility was increased. She added that Housing Officers often had a lot of administrative work to complete as part of their roles so they will need time for this which could be done working from home.</p> <p>JM asked what metrics had been considered to monitor the effectiveness of the restructure. The EDO informed members that Salix would undertake regular reviews from July to September to ensure the changes were effective and that this would include conversations with staff to ensure that they are comfortable with the changes and with customers.</p> <p>CA noted that it was good that Salix was addressing its structures and systems but expressed concern regarding the ‘people’ aspect of the proposal. She informed members that Salix needed to ensure that it managed potential risks regarding its staff and that they had the people skills to implement these changes. The EDO agreed.</p> <p>CA asked if there was a ‘plan B’ if the consultation did not go according to plan. The EDO informed members that the consultation would last four weeks so that they could work with staff through the change process. She added that if colleagues produced an alternative proposal, then they would go back and reconsult on the change proposal.</p> <p>AA welcomed the proposals but expressed concern regarding the allocation of patches. He noted that some areas may have higher cases of ASB so it would be an unfair and time sensitive commitment.</p> <p>The EDO assured members that they were currently analysing the workload of Salix</p>

	<p>Homes properties and tenancies and noted that patch sizes would vary depending on how challenging an area was to ensure workloads were fair.</p> <p>MD asked whether the number of call centre staff would increase or if there would be a section on the website that listed the contact details of Housing Officers. The EDO informed members that the call centre would remain as it stands and point of contact information would be sent out to customers and the website updated to include information about who your housing officer is.</p> <p>The Chair expressed concern about hiring a market research company as tenants may be reluctant to engage with a third party. She also queried how much it would cost and if the money would be better spent internally.</p> <p>The EDO informed the committee that the initial idea was to conduct the research internally through an online survey but that this would only reach customers who were digital. She added that, by paying a market research company, they would be able to reach a certain number of people and that they could be certain they would be getting value for money.</p> <p>KM asked whether Salix could station people in areas such as shopping centres or at the reception of Diamond House to increase the response rate of the surveys. She noted that these would be more effective as it was more interactive than a phone call or letter. The EDO confirmed that it was an idea that would be explored.</p> <p>CA agreed with KA and noted that other areas of Salford could also be included, such as libraries, schools, and markets. She added that this would increase Salix's presence and would entice tenants to engage with the research.</p> <p>JM informed members that a market research company would evaluate the data on behalf of Salix and present organised results that would save the business both time and money.</p> <p>The EDO informed members that she would take their comments into account and feedback on the progression of the change proposals in May.</p> <p><b>The Committee resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Note the Our Future Together change proposals.</b></li> <li>• <b>Approve the proposals for customer consultation.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The GPO to add Our Future Together Update to the next committee meeting agenda.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Performance Management Framework (Customer PIs)</b></p>
	<p>The PBIM gave an overview of the Performance Management Framework and summarised the key decisions and changes for 2023/24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of performance indicators to increase from 45 to 60 due to the introduction of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs);</li> <li>• TSMs to be incorporated in the Performance Framework as new individual indicators for the first time;</li> <li>• Existing operational indicators to remain 'as is' with current targets;</li> <li>• A suite of indicators, which are currently used operationally, to be added to help manage our understanding and response to damp and mould.</li> </ul>

	<p>Members were asked to discuss and note the Performance Management Framework.</p> <p>CA and KR noted that the reporting monthly seemed daunting and queried whether quarterly feedback may be more sustainable.</p> <p>The PBIM informed members that Salix was taking a risk adverse approach by reporting monthly and that Salix would be able to assure stakeholders, customers, and the Regulator that the business was making effective changes to improve performance. He added that the Regulator had been quite prescriptive on what measures needed to be reported on.</p> <p>CA asked what objective they were trying to achieve with monthly compliance reporting as she would expect quarterly data to show more significant changes. The PBIM gave an example of building safety, noting that if a property did not have a gas certificate and it was not discovered until the end of the quarter then it would be a significant issue. He added that he would continue to monitor the data and if the data remained stable, then they could reduce the reporting frequency to quarterly.</p> <p>JM asked if the Regulator had the power to make changes mid-year. The PBIM informed the committee that he was not sure as the guidance that they had produced did not have enough details but noted that Salix would be able to pick up any changes by reporting monthly. The DGRA also added that it was unlikely that the Regulator would make any changes during the first year as they were also going to reviewing and consulting on new Consumer Standards and would be focusing on pro-active consumer regulation and IDAs.</p> <p><b>The Committee discussed and noted the Performance Management Framework.</b></p>
7.	<p><b>Transactional Surveys – Proposals to Link with TSMs</b></p>
	<p>The PBIM gave an overview of the Transactional Surveys and summarised the key changes for 2023/24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several existing satisfaction indicators will be replaced by their TSM equivalent to avoid duplication;</li> <li>• The new TSMs will be taken at a point in time and on a randomised selection of participants;</li> <li>• Transactional surveys will continue but they will be used primarily to prove/compliment the new TSMs.</li> </ul> <p>Members were asked to discuss and note the transactional surveys update.</p> <p>RO queried whether there were any cost implications with linking the transactional surveys with TSMs. The PBIM informed members that there was a cost implication in procuring Kwest for the satisfaction surveys but that this had been budgeted for. He added that Salix could conduct the surveys internally but that it would require a lot of planning and recourses that they did not have available for the first year.</p> <p><b>The Committee discussed and noted the transactional surveys update.</b></p>
8.	<p><b>Internal Audit Plan 2023-25</b></p>
	<p>The DGRA gave an overview of the 2023/24 and 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan and noted that the number of audits to be completed each year had been reduced so that they could be more in depth to provide a greater level of assurance for members and officers.</p>

	<p>Members were asked to discuss and note the Internal Audit Plan 2023-25.</p> <p>In response to a query about whether the audits were listed chronologically, the DGRA informed members that the next scheduled audits were contract management and void management. She added that, in general, two audits would be completed each quarter.</p> <p>MD asked if the schedule could change if a critical area came up. The DGRA confirmed to members that they had to be reactive to things that were happening in the sector and so that plan could be changed, although any changes needed the approval of the Audit Committee before the internal audit plan could be amended. She added that when changing a plan, we needed to be mindful of which areas present a lesser risk if that areas was not to be reviewed.</p> <p><b>The Committee discussed and noted the Internal Audit Plan 2023-25.</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The GPO to forward the Internal Audit Plan to Committee members.</b></li> </ul>
9.	<p><b>Q3 Customer Feedback and Complaints</b></p> <p>The CSM gave an overview of customer feedback (both formal and informal), MP and Ombudsman enquiries and compliments received during the Q3 period 1 October – 31 December 2022.</p> <p>She highlighted that formal complaints decreased to 81%, and 46% of complaint elements were upheld or partially upheld. The CSM added that de-escalated complaints increased slightly to 27 and expressions of dissatisfaction increased to 175 in Q3, but both were still at a low level.</p> <p>Members were asked to discuss and note the Q3 Customer Feedback and Complaints.</p> <p>AA asked whether the data in the table at 2.4.1 included active complaints at the time of writing. The CSM informed members that open cases were not included in the data.</p> <p>CA noted that the number of complaints relating to lack of communication seemed to have increased from Q1 22/23 to Q3 22/23 according to table 6.1.2, suggesting that Salix needs to focus on how to better serve their customers. She added that this was an internal factor that could be addressed by improving our services, so Salix needed to take a proactive approach.</p> <p>The CSM informed committee members that Salix was going to re-evaluate Salix’s internal processes as part of Back to Basics. She noted that this would include improving customer service interactions such as keeping customers fully informed, calling customers back within a given time limit, training staff on monitoring and reporting cases etc.</p> <p>KH questioned how some complaints got onto the system as they appeared to be a police issue rather than a Salix issue, such as “a van and car being dumped on one of our properties.”</p> <p>The CSM informed members that it depended on the channel that the complaint was submitted as those directly submitted via the portal are self-raised complaints and automatically appear on Salix’s system.</p>

	<p>MD expressed concern regarding the complaints relating to lack of communication and asked what the current process was for following up on reported incidences.</p> <p>The CSM informed members that a note is made on the system, triaged, and then assigned to the appropriate team's dashboard. She added that incidences that required a call back were prioritised in line with Salix's Customer Charter and the manager would monitor, process and report on the outcome.</p> <p><b>Members discussed and noted the Q3 Customer Feedback and Complaints.</b></p>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Scrutiny Plan 2023/24</b>
	<p><b>The Committee resolved to reschedule the Scrutiny Plan 2023/24.</b></p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The GPO to reschedule the Scrutiny Plan 2023/24 for the next Customer Committee meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Review of SHCC Terms of Reference (TOR)</b>
	<p>The EDO informed members that the Governance Team would be reviewing the Customer Committee's Terms of Reference in July and would feedback to the Committee and the Board in due course.</p> <p>In response to JM's query about whether the report produced by DTP would inform the Committee's Terms of Reference, the EDO confirmed that it would. She added that the TOR would increase the delegated responsibility of the Customer Committee and strengthen its relationship with the Board.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the SHCC Terms of Reference update.</b></p>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Scrutiny – Tracking Actions</b>
	<p>The CEM gave an overview of the scrutiny action tracker and asked members to discuss and note the contents of the report.</p> <p>The EDO suggested that the CEM should colour-code the status of the actions going forward as it would allow members to see which actions were still outstanding.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the Scrutiny Action Tracker.</b></p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The CEM to colour-code the Scrutiny Action Tracker.</b></li> </ul>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Sub-Group Minutes - ALF</b>
	<b>The Committee reviewed and noted the minutes from the ALF Sub-Group.</b>
<b>14.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	No other business was discussed.
<b>15.</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	Away Day Thursday 20 April 2023 at Diamond House.
The meeting closed at 19:58	