



**Minutes of Customer Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 11 March  
2025 via Microsoft Teams**

<b>MEMBERS:</b>	Charlotte Haines (Chair) Ahmed Abdulmalek (AA) Cynthia (Bethel) Alloyda (CA) Gareth Evans (GE) John Beattie (JBe) Jack Buckley (JBu) Keri Muldoon (KM) Marta Diaz (MD)
<b>OFFICERS:</b>	Sue Sutton, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Lorraine Giddings, Customer Service and Engagement Manager (CSEM) Christiana O'Brien, Customer Engagement Manager (CEM) Jen Green, Director of Property (DP) Glenn Martin, Director of Investment, Development and Sustainability (DIDS) Ed Sidley, Performance and Business Intelligence Manager (PBIM) Jamie Cockerham, Governance and Policy Officer (GPO) - Minutes
<b>OBSERVERS:</b>	Martin Warhurst (MW)
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Rashidah Owoseni (RO)

The meeting commenced at 18:01.

ITEM	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest</b>
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.  Apologies were received from RO.  There were no Declarations of Interest.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b>
	<b>The Committee approved the minutes from the meetings held on:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025</li> <li>• Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025</li> </ul>
<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 provided members with the following updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair noted that Martin Warhurst, Chair of the Salix Homes Board, was in attendance and welcomed him to the meeting. Martin Warhurst thanked the Chair</li> </ul>

	<p>and introduced himself to members. He noted that it was important for him to attend Committee meetings to observe discussions first hand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair noted that no Board meetings had taken place since the last Committee meeting, therefore no update in this regard.</li> <li>• The Chair however noted that an E-Vote had been undertaken by Board members in relation to an ongoing Brownfield Homes Grant Funding Agreement in relation to Arrow Street and Kara Street.</li> <li>• The Chair thanked members for their attendance at the ad-hoc Committee meeting held on 26 February. In particular, the Chair thanked members for their valuable contributions and suggestions for engagement with customers.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Committee noted the Chair's Update.</b></p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Review of the Approach to Customer Scrutiny</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scrutiny Plan 2025/26</b></li> </ul>
	<p><i>The DIDS entered the meeting at 18:10.</i></p> <p>The CEM provided a summary of the review of Salix Homes' approach to customer scrutiny. The CEM and CSEM noted the following key points for members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CEM and Chair had appeared on Salford City Radio to promote customer engagement and scrutiny opportunities in the local area and would share the recording with members when it was available.</li> <li>• Committee had agreed to reduce the number of scrutiny pieces per year to 2, with the possibility for a further piece by exception.</li> <li>• Work is ongoing to review the current pool of customer scrutineers and identify their skillsets.</li> <li>• Proposed scrutiny training by external providers may be delayed from the planned March start to combine training with the ongoing recruitment process for the Committee. The CEM noted that unsuccessful applicants for the Customer Committee may instead enter the pool of customer scrutineers.</li> <li>• A specific recruitment campaign for the scrutiny pool will be looked at following the conclusion of recruitment for the Committee.</li> <li>• The CEM requested that members discuss and propose two service areas for scrutiny in 2025/26. The first piece of scrutiny will then be undertaken, with the intention to report back to the Committee on this in July.</li> </ul> <p>The following was noted during discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MD queried whether unsuccessful applicants from the previous round of Committee recruitment had been contacted about the opportunity to get involved in the customer scrutiny pool. The CSEM noted that they had been contacted, and that some of these individuals had subsequently been involved in the most recent piece of customer scrutiny. She noted that a similar approach would be taken with the ongoing round of Committee recruitment.</li> <li>• KM commented that there may be an opportunity to merge Committee and scrutiny pool recruitment campaigns. The CEM agreed with this and noted that the delay in providing scrutiny training was to ensure that all applicants for both roles could be involved in this.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KM noted that strategic risk score included in the Draft Scrutiny Plan were helpful in assessing the importance of areas for review. The CEM commented that these scores were based on a range of data but noted that high risk scores do not mean that risk management assurance is not being provided in other ways for those areas.</li> <li>• It was noted that a proposed scrutiny piece in regard to customer support had been delayed in 2024/25 to allow time for the new team to embed.</li> <li>• The Chair requested that members suggest their two preferred areas for scrutiny. AA noted that, as a co-optee to the Committee, he was happy to be guided by the views of members on this.</li> <li>• Following discussions, members agreed that customer support be proposed as the first service area and repairs and disrepair as the second service area for scrutiny in 2025/26.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Committee resolved to propose the following two service areas for scrutiny in 2025/26:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Customer Support and Tenancy Sustainment including Safeguarding</b></li> <li>• <b>Repairs and Disrepair</b></li> </ul>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Asset Management Strategy Update</b>
	<p>The DIDS provided a summary of Salix Homes' Asset Management Strategy and noted the following key updates for members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The frequency of stock condition surveys has moved from a 5-year to a 3-year cycle. Salix is on track to undertake the stock condition surveys in line with targets, with the data then used to provide robust stock information and plan investment programmes accordingly.</li> <li>• Delivery of building safety and energy efficiency programmes has faced significant delays due to extensive delays in the Building Safety approval process nationally. For instance, the delivery of Salix's sprinkler programme for fire safety had been prevented entirely, but the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) has now approved works to begin on 3 blocks.</li> <li>• Delivery of the sustainable ground-source heating system for Grey &amp; White Friar Court has been delayed during 2024/25 pending BSR approval. Salix expects to receive a decision by the end of March.</li> <li>• Salix is moving towards de-carbonising our fleet vehicles, with the commencement of use of electric vehicles intended to be rolled out across our small vans and lower-load vehicles.</li> <li>• Significant improvements have been made to responsive maintenance, to be covered in more depth by the DP under Item 7.</li> </ul> <p>The following was noted during discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair noted that Salix colleagues had photographed her property and questioned whether this would have been done as part of a stock condition survey. The DIDS noted that, generally, customers should be contacted in advance of stock condition surveys to arrange a suitable time to visit, and surveyors are expected to explain the reasons for their work to customers.</li> </ul>

- The Chair queried whether stock condition surveys are required to be undertaken by specifically trained Salix colleagues. The DIDS noted that the surveys do require specialised qualified colleagues to assess certain areas. He noted that other colleagues, such as housing officers, could make referrals for obvious issues with properties following their visits.
- JBe questioned whether any properties were planned for sale as part of Salix's investment programme. The DIDS commented that there are no current plans for properties to be sold. However, he noted that the stock condition surveys and investment programmes need to be used to balance whether properties are contributing to the business, for instance where there are high costs to retrofit properties for energy efficiency. He further noted that work is currently being undertaken to develop a disposals policy to ensure the best financial performance of Salix's housing stock.
- JBe followed up to ask whether re-homing of customers would be looked at within the disposals policy. The DIDS commented that the customer would be the focus of any decision to sell a property, but that sale would likely only ever take place of properties that were already void. AA noted that this question had also been raised at Assets & Sustainability Committee, as well as the importance of ensuring that due thought is given to the importance of properties remaining available as social housing whenever they are considered for disposal.
- MD questioned whether Salix is aiming to conduct improvement works in-between tenancies while properties are empty. The DIDS noted that this is part of the standard voids process, as the voids team will identify any works that need to be done prior to a new tenancy. For example, work is currently being undertaken to install air-source heat pumps in 3 void properties to ensure improved energy efficiency and less disturbance for future tenants.
- MD queried how smart devices are being used to manage properties and whether customers can request installation of these. The DIDS noted that smart thermostats have been installed across a range of properties to allow remote tracking of temperature and humidity to assess fuel poverty and risk of damp, mould and condensation. He noted that this has been done as part of the investment programme rather than at customer request, with future works to potentially include smart smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- JBe questioned whether smart devices were spread evenly across Salix's housing stock. The DIDS commented that the devices were installed across a range of properties, including new-build homes, based on assessing the risk of damp, mould and condensation.
- KM queried what the timescales are for replacement of fleet vehicles and noted that customers had expressed concern about money being invested in new vehicles. The DIDS noted that the fleet replacement had been done as a result of the natural end of the previous contract and as part of a range of measures to improve energy efficiency. He noted that all social landlords have been set a target to meet EPC level C for all properties by 2030, and Salix aim to achieve Net Zero by 2038 for business activities.
- KM queried why development on Arrow Street was to provide over-55 housing. The DIDS commented that Arrow Street had previously been looked at as an

	<p>extra-care scheme but that this was revised following the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that the scheme was intended to meet demand within Salford based on requests for adaptations, and to set the standard for Salix for this type of housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JBu questioned whether environmental factors such as flood risk and long-term viability of properties had been incorporated into the decision making on investment programmes. The DIDS commented that this had not been factored into decision-making but was due to be discussed at Assets &amp; Sustainability Committee. He noted that environmental factors may be incorporated more proactively in future and were already impacting Salix, for instance with increased insurance tender premiums due to flood risk.</li> </ul> <p><i>The DIDS left the meeting at 18:58.</i></p> <p><b>The Committee noted the Asset Management Strategy Update.</b></p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Repairs Update</b>
	<p><i>The DP entered the meeting at 18:58.</i></p> <p>The DP provided an update to members on the Repairs Review, and highlighted the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the repairs and maintenance service area was undertaken as a result of Committee and customer feedback in 2023. Salix conducted an all-customer survey which received over 500 responses, with feedback focusing on areas such as: long wait times; lack of communication and flexibility; poor quality of works and non-user-friendly tools and systems. Throughout the review we carried out a number of test and learn pilot projects, such as offering evening and weekend appointments which later fed into the new repairs' delivery model.</li> <li>• Board agreed to significant investment in the service area to address the concerns that had been raised.</li> <li>• Service Improvement Phase 1, soft launch of the new service delivery model, was implemented in November 2024. The launch included: improving customer communications, such as by introducing reminder calls to customers the day prior to their scheduled appointment, operatives calling customers ahead of appointments to advise they were on route; purchasing of visual assistance software to conduct remote inspections; recruitment of new management and strengthening of the operative team from 32 to 49 operatives; reviewing all processes to identify efficiencies and take Awaab's law implementation into account.</li> <li>• Service Improvement Phase 2 has been conducted in December and January and included: launching new operational hours which included evening and weekend appointments which offered more flexibility to customers; replacing the trade vehicle fleet; looking at new technology to improve services (e.g. drones, AI support); process mapping to understand customer journeys; relocating electricians to the Compliance team; passing a health and safety audit; implementing a new Performance Management Framework to enhance targets and improve customer experience.</li> <li>• The Service Improvement process has been difficult due to a number of factors such as: a shortage of labour across the area; staff absence and inflated costs of repair materials.</li> <li>• Improvements have been recorded as a result of the Service Improvement process, such as: a reduction in the number of open repairs jobs by around 2,000;</li> </ul>

achieving 99.96% of the emergency repairs target; a reduction of the follow-on works required figure to around 6%; averaging repairs completion within 39 days from a target of 60 days; improvements to customer satisfaction and TSM scores.

- Salix has made commitments to further improve the service area such as: reducing no-follow-on work targets; ensuring operatives contact managers before leaving properties; publishing performance information.
- The DP will return to Committee in 6 months to provide a further update on progress to members.

The following was noted during discussions:

- MD commended the Repairs team for making the improvements that had been outlined. She highlighted the importance of getting works right first time and ensuring that customers and surveyors were listened to when raising concerns. The DP agreed with this and noted that there was now a dedicated colleague to focus on complex repairs which require the coordination of more than one tradesperson.
- KM commended the team for taking customer feedback on board and improving the communication between operatives and managers.
- JBe suggested using bulk-texts to inform customers when repairs were taking place in shared-buildings, to reduce the number of queries being received by the contact centre. The DP noted that this was already being looked at in relation to high-rise buildings as Salix does have the facility to send bulk-texts.
- The DP thanked Committee for their instrumental role in the Repairs Review.

*The DP left the meeting at 19:30.*

**The Committee noted the Repairs Update.**

## **8. Performance Management Framework 2025/26**

*The PBIM entered the meeting at 19:30.*

The PBIM provided a presentation to members on updates to the Performance Management Framework for 2025/26 and highlighted the following key points:

- The Performance Management Framework sets out how Salix will monitor performance over the next year, including: detail of Performance Indicators (PIs); setting where data is reported to and aligning the business plan with strategic risks.
- PIs have been evaluated with managers and executives and some minor changes for 2025/26 have been suggested, including: a reduction in the overall number to 45 PIs to streamline the framework; addition of a PI on the percentage of properties with a stock condition survey; the removal of a PI on the percentage of 10 year domestic electrical safety certificates in place as we are moving to a 5 year cycle.
- Reviews against the Performance Management Framework may not always reflect latest data, as they cover the whole year. For instance, the improvements in repairs data outlined by the DP under item 7 may not be reflected in performance against PIs across the whole year.
- Registered Providers across Manchester and nationally have experienced an increase in the number of complaints received, which Salix has also experienced.
- The Performance Management Framework will go to Board on 25<sup>th</sup> March for approval.
- The Framework will be reviewed for effectiveness over the course of the year, and

	<p>work will be undertaken with managers to review any changes in legislation which may need to be reflected in the Framework.</p> <p>The following was noted during discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KM noted the report was complex and thanked the PBIM for providing a detailed explanation.</li> <li>• AA noted that he attends quarterly meetings with other Register Providers and had also found that the number of complaints being received was increasing across the sector. He commented that this may be as a result of rule changes which allow customers to escalate their complaints without providing a reason, and for increased advertising by the Housing Ombudsman. KM agreed with AA and noted she was aware that customers had shared this information about the complaints process.</li> <li>• The PBIM noted that the Committee would have sight of the Performance Scorecard on a quarterly basis.</li> </ul> <p><i>The PBIM left the meeting at 19:48.</i></p> <p><b>The Committee noted the Performance Management Framework 2025/26.</b></p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Scrutiny Action Tracker</b>
	<p>The CEM noted the following updates in relation to the Scrutiny Action Tracker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environmental service action on 24-hour callbacks had been completed since Committee papers were circulated. Calls are not closed if they are not resolved, and the cases are tracked in CRM.</li> <li>• Discussions are ongoing in relation to the environmental service action on reintroduction of grounds maintenance satisfaction surveys. The completion date for this action will be moved in line with discussions on how best to complete this, given that grounds' maintenance does not have post-transactional contact as with other customer service areas.</li> <li>• Actions resulting from the EDI scrutiny piece will be added to the tracker.</li> </ul> <p>At the CEM's request, the Chair agreed for the Scrutiny Action Tracker item to be moved to earlier in the agenda at future meetings, so as to be discussed in line with the Committee Action Tracker and other scrutiny items of business.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the updates to the Scrutiny Action Tracker.</b></p>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	No other business was discussed.
<b>11.</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>Strategy Day – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025 (Diamond House)</p> <p>Customer Committee Meeting – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (Virtual)</p>
The meeting closed at 19:57.	