



**Minutes of Customer Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>  
September 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) Helen Wallworth (HW) Victoria Burrows-Boon (VB) Gerald Arhin (GA)
<b>OFFICERS:</b>	Sue Sutton, Interim Executive Director of Customer and Landlord Services (EDCLS) Eric Tamanis, Executive Director of Finance and Growth (EDFG) Jeanette Green, Director of Property (DP) Alan Stockton, Senior Repairs Manager (SRM) Rick Swift, Senior Healthy Homes Manager (SHHM) Lorraine Giddings, Customer Service and Engagement Manager (CSEM) Ed Sidley, Performance and BI Manager (PBIM) Jamie Cockerham, Governance and Policy Officer (GPO) - Minutes
<b>ATTENDEES:</b>	Diane Carney, DTP (DC) - <i>Virtual</i>
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Sarah Henderson, Executive Director of Business Services and Improvement (EDBSI) Christiana O'Brien, Customer Engagement Manager (CEM) Rashidah Owoseni (RO)

The meeting commenced at 18:10.

<b>ITEM</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest</b>  The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and noted that DC was in attendance to observe the meeting as part of an ongoing external governance review being undertaken by DTP. Introductions from GA, VB and HW.  Apologies were received from the EDBSI and CEM.  There were no declarations of interest.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Customer Committee Meetings held on 1st July 2025</b>  The Committee approved the minutes from the last meeting held on Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2025.

<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters Arising and Action Tracker</b>
	<p>In reference to the circulation of meeting dates for 2026 and given the previous decision to hold meetings on a bi-monthly basis, members agreed that future meetings should alternate between being held virtually and being held in-person at Diamond House.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the changes to the Action Tracker.</b></p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Meeting invitations to be updated to reflect alternating in-person and virtual attendance.</b></li> </ul>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Chair's Update</b>
	<p>The Chair provided members with the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcomed HW, GA and VB to the committee.</li> <li>• Thanked members for their engagement with the recent appraisals process. Appraisal meetings have now been completed with all members and individual PDPs (personal development plans) will be agreed with members based on any learning and development needs that were identified.</li> <li>• Confirmed that Gemma Parlby has been recruited to the permanent EDCLS position, and thanked members who participated in panels during the interview process.</li> <li>• Noted that apologies had been sent from the EDBSI, and therefore it was suggested that Item 6 could be deferred until the October Committee Strategy Day meeting.</li> <li>• On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked both RO and the interim EDCLS for their positive contributions and support of the committee throughout their time at Salix Homes and wished them both all the best for the future.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Committee noted the Chair's update.</b></p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Scrutiny &amp; Repairs Update</b>
	<p>The CSEM noted the removal of completed items from the Scrutiny Action Tracker, with further actions completed since the last meeting. She noted the ongoing items in relation to the development of Customer Service Standards and the exploration of a live chat/virtual assistant function in relation to the EDI scrutiny piece. The Chair noted that she was pleased to see progress against the actions in the tracker.</p> <p>The DP, SRM and SHHM presented a Repairs Update to members, including updates in relation to repairs service improvements, an overview of current performance, the implementation of Awaab's Law and Salix Homes' usage of Switchee devices. The following points were noted in relation to the Repairs Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair questioned whether the implementation of Awaab's Law would impact upon Salix's plans to reduce repairs targets from 60 to 45 days. The SHMM commented that the Healthy Homes team would focus specifically on the damp and mould cases to minimise the impact of the new timescales on the overall repairs service. The DP further commented that resource has been increased to cope with the new requirements and processes have been updated, such as</li> </ul>

painters attending damp and mould cases with surveyors to address issues first time, to ease the burden on the repairs service.

- MD questioned whether the timescales set out in Awaab's Law begin upon first contact with the customer. The SHMM confirmed that targets would be to resolve emergency cases within 24 hours, with work on significant cases targeted to be undertaken within 5 working days. He further noted that Salix is currently exploring options such as virtual surveys to ensure that these targets can be met.
- CA queried whether plans are in place for specific communication with customers around the implementation of Awaab's Law. In response, the DP commented that specific communication is not planned with customers as customer experience will not change directly as a result of the legislation – if anything customers should experience a speedier repairs service in relation to damp and mould.
- CA further queried the timescales anticipated to reduce open repair jobs down to a business-as-usual number. The DP commented that the aim is to reduce the number of open jobs and further decrease the target for the completion of non-urgent repairs to 30 days by the end of 2025/26.
- AA queried whether a reduction in target timescales would be achievable. The DP responded that performance is expected to improve as the backlog of jobs that have extended beyond target timescales are completed. The SRM noted that the percentage of jobs completed within current target timescales increases to around 81% if the older jobs is discounted.
- AA noted that the new repairs service system has facilitated increased 'free' time for operatives and queried how this additional time availability is being used. In response, the SRM noted that it is generally a 50/50 split between operatives being able to attend additional jobs and having additional time to attend wider training and development opportunities. The DP commented that she is currently in the process of meeting with all of Salix's operatives individually to discuss and provide feedback on the performance of the updated Repairs Service operations and the new ways of working. .
- JBe questioned how Salix prioritises properties for the installation of Switchee devices. In response, the SHMM confirmed that Salix had initially based installation on previous cases of damp and mould and other disrepair cases. The DP added that, following support through funding for the initial installation, Salix is now assessing whether to roll out the devices across the rest of our housing stock.
- KM queried whether customers have expressed concerns around privacy and data collection in relation to the Switchee devices. VB noted that she has had a Switchee device installed in her home but had not previously been aware of the purpose of the device and the type of data being collected. In response, the DP noted that concerns raised by customers so far have been limited to the interaction between Switchee devices and their heating systems, rather than around data privacy. However, she commented that improving customer awareness of the benefits of the devices would be key in any potential further roll-out.
- The EDCLS noted that the initial roll-out of Switchee devices had happened quickly in order to take advantage of funding that was available in a limited timeframe. She commented that customers in properties where devices had been installed could be contacted for feedback prior to a wider roll-out.

- The Chair agreed with the importance of continuing to listen to and inform customers around the purpose of the devices. CA commented that device data may be useful in informing customers on this, for example if it shows that energy costs can be reduced through use of the devices.
- GE questioned whether the cost of Switchee devices is a one-off or requires a recurring subscription. The DP confirmed that it is a one-off cost per device.
- CA questioned how use of Switchee devices plays into Salix's wider sustainability commitments. The SHHM noted that Salix is an early adopter of the devices and is in the process of working with the developer to verify and determine how Switchee data can be used as part of wider sustainability reporting.
- MD queried whether customers are able to request the installation of Switchee devices in their properties. The DP responded that Salix has installed the initial circa. 2000 devices that were purchased and is currently exploring options for installation across the rest of its housing stock.
- Overall, members voiced their satisfaction with the improvements that have been reported in relation to repairs service performance and highlighted the importance of continuing to learn from customers to further develop the service. The DP noted that the next steps for the Repairs Teams are to continue to prepare for Awaab's Law, explore options for an expansion of the Switchee device installation, and to review the newly implemented out of hours repairs provision.

The CSEM noted that the Repairs Update related to the development of a scope for the upcoming scrutiny piece into Salix's repairs service. The following was discussed in relation to Repairs Scrutiny:

- The CSEM noted that the last repairs scrutiny piece had been undertaken in September 2021 and related to communication with customers around repairs. She requested that members identify the focus of a new scrutiny piece, including the aims, objectives, targets for success and areas that should not be considered within the scope.
- The Chair suggested that one potential area for scrutiny could be the customer experience throughout their interaction with Salix's repairs service. She noted that a case-study approach in relation to this could allow scrutineers to identify where problems for the customer may arise and potential improvements to recommend to Salix. The EDCLS commented that this approach could compare examples from either different types or different severities of repairs.
- KM queried whether officers had any recommendations for scrutiny areas based on known areas of concern. In response, the CSEM commented that no specific areas were recommended due to the improvements that had been seen in recent times in relation to repairs, as outlined in the Repairs Update. The DP noted that the scrutiny piece would be key in assessing whether improved performance has translated into an improved experience for customers.
- AA noted that customer experience is regularly reviewed by the Repairs Team. He suggested potential alternative areas for customer scrutiny, such as in relation to annual gas safety check appointments and cases wherein customers' appointments are cancelled by Salix.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CA suggested that one area that should not be included in the scrutiny scope should be safeguarding issues identified during repairs, as this does not fall within the general repairs remit.</li> <li>• The EDFG noted that work could be done to further embed customer scrutiny within Salix Homes' internal audit plan, to consolidate knowledge-sharing and avoid the reproduction of previous work. He noted that this could be discussed further under Item 10.</li> <li>• The Chair requested that the scrutiny scope be discussed further as part of the next Committee Strategy Day, to allow time for a thorough discussion. CSEM confirmed that this could be done and agreed with the importance of setting out a clear scope. MD commented that she would share her thoughts directly with officers as she would not be able to attend the next Strategy Day.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Committee resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Note the updates to the Scrutiny Action Tracker.</b></li> <li>• <b>Note the Repairs Update.</b></li> <li>• <b>Defer a decision on the Repairs Scrutiny Scope until October strategy day.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Repairs Scrutiny Scope to be discussed further at the October Customer Committee Strategy Day.</b></li> </ul>
6.	<p><b>Inclusion Update and 2025/26 Commitments</b></p> <p>Members agreed that Item 6 be deferred until the October Customer Committee Strategy Day, due to the absence of the EDBSI.</p>
7.	<p><b>Draft Annual Review (incl. Customer Voice)</b></p> <p>The EDCLS provided members with an overview of the draft Annual Review document and invited feedback from members in relation to any additional details for inclusion, before the document is put to the Board meeting on 23 September 2025 for final approval. She noted key areas that had been included, such as performance against the corporate plan, sustainability impacts and the centrality of customer voice to all work undertaken by Salix Homes.</p> <p>The Chair commented that she had enjoyed reading the document, and in particular praised the layout as allowing both a scan of key headline information as well as further reading into the specific work done by Salix in each area.</p> <p>CA and KM agreed with this view, commenting that the document is both informative and engaging, and commending the Comms team for their work on it. AA noted that he was happy to see that previous feedback from the Committee in relation to the inclusion of customer voice information had been taken on board in this years' annual review.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the Draft Annual Review.</b></p>
8.	<p><b>Customer Service and Engagement Strategies Update</b></p> <p>The CSEM provided members with an update in relation to Salix Homes' Customer Service and Engagement Strategies, with Salix currently in the second year of both strategies being in place. She highlighted the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted performance in relation to both strategies, with all identified actions due</li> </ul>

Year 2 due to be completed on time.

- In relation to Customer Service, the CSEM highlighted work done in relation to Customer Insight data gathering, developing learning in relation to complaints, exploration of a potential online customer engagement tool and reviewing training in relation to the use of customer vulnerability information. She noted that the online engagement tool and development of Customer Service Standards would be discussed with the Committee further at the October Strategy Day.
- In relation to Customer Engagement, the CSEM highlighted that work is ongoing to develop positive relationships with customer and community groups, such as through the Springboard fund and engagement with Salford Youth Zone. She further noted that information provided through the Salix website has been developed to include things like building safety information for each block, and that a scrutiny piece in relation to customer communications on investment works is due to be reported to the Committee in the Autumn.

The following was noted during discussions:

- AA noted that, while performance in relation to 'satisfaction with the landlords' approach to handling complaints' stands at 49.2%, this is favourable in comparison to the Housemark data average as noted under Item 9. He highlighted that this data may be impacted disproportionately by negative framing of complaints and a lack of understanding amongst tenants, for example in relation to the difference between formal complaints and service requests. The CSEM agreed with this view but noted that Salix will continue to work to understand the source of customer dissatisfaction in this regard.
- The CSEM noted that training has been undertaken with Customer Service colleagues to help customers to understand the differences between service requests and formal complaints, as outlined in the Complaints Policy.
- GE queried whether customers who report dissatisfaction with the complaints procedure are asked follow-up questions to gather feedback on this service. The CSEM confirmed that supplementary questions have been added to gather information on this, but so far little substantial information has been reported. AA noted that customers may have a negative sentiment towards complaints feedback, by virtue of having made a complaint in the first place, which may impact on the provision of constructive comments.

**The Committee noted the Customer Service and Engagement Strategies Update.**

#### **9. TSM's – Benchmarking Report**

The PBIM outlined a report to provide members with benchmarking data in relation to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). He noted the following key points:

- Housemark has provided a snapshot of performance in relation to the TSMs sourced from around 200 organisations, which Salix uses to benchmark our performance against other organisations across the sector.
- Comparison across the sector shows Salix as below average in relation to just one of the TSMs – 'satisfaction with time taken to complete the most recent repair'. The PBIM noted that Salix's performance against this benchmarking data has improved over time, and that improvement may be relatively slow as the question assesses performance over the last 12 months rather than in a single snapshot.
- Salix's performance against the Housemark benchmarking data shows significantly higher scoring in relation to some TSMs – such as 'agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect' and 'satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods'.

	<p>CA requested that the full benchmarking report to the Committee include comparison with Salix's performance from previous years, including confirmation of any increases or decreases in performance data. The PBIM confirmed that this data could be included in future reporting, noting that only 2 years of data exist currently since the introduction of the TSMs.</p> <p>Overall, members expressed satisfaction with Salix's current performance in relation to benchmarking data from across the sector and noted that plans to improve services are in place in those areas where performance is slightly lower.</p> <p><b>The Committee noted the TSMs Benchmarking Report.</b></p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future benchmarking reports to include comparison with previous years' performance data and percentage change in data.</li> </ul>
10.	<p><b>Internal Audit Update</b></p> <p>The EDFG presented an update in relation to Salix Homes' Annual Audit Plan 2025/26. He noted the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided context of the role of Salix Homes' Internal Auditors in providing a 3<sup>rd</sup> line of assurance for the Board by providing a different perspective on Salix's internal reporting and bringing experience of working with a range of housing providers.</li> <li>• Outlined areas in which auditor's recommendations had been implemented so as to improve service delivery, such as in relation to regular ongoing audits of cyber security through the implementation of CrowdStrike cyber security software.</li> <li>• Noted that, following the appointment of Salix Homes' new internal auditors, further work could be done to link customer scrutiny pieces with the internal audit plan – such as in relation to training scrutineers and identifying the scopes for both audits and scrutiny pieces.</li> <li>• The EDFG requested that the potential for customer scrutiny to be linked more closely with the Internal Audit plan be discussed further at the Customer Committee Strategy Day in October, following the appointment of Salix Homes' new internal auditors.</li> </ul> <p>The following was noted during discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chair queried whether areas of ongoing concern, such as the potential for a cyber-attack, led to some service areas being reviewed on a more regular basis. The EDFG confirmed that audits of areas such as treasury management and cyber security are repeated regularly to provide ongoing assurance to Board that Salix has appropriate measures in place to manage risk.</li> <li>• JBe noted that he would welcome further training in relation to scrutiny and audit, such as training in identifying scopes. The EDFG noted that the possibility of sharing expertise in this regard would be raised with Salix's new internal auditors upon their appointment.</li> <li>• The Chair commented that further work on audit and scrutiny skills would benefit the Committee over the course of the next year as new members join. The EDCLS suggested that members of the customer scrutiny pool could also be included within further discussions or training to widen the impact of this work.</li> <li>• The EDFG noted that honesty and transparency in relation to customer outcomes and experience are central to enable successful audits to take place, and that the Customer Committee can have a key role in ensuring that this focus is maintained. He further noted that example internal audit reports could be shared with members for their information and skill development.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>The Committee noted the Annual Internal Audit Plan presentation.</b></p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Audit and relation to customer scrutiny to be discussed further at Customer Committee Strategy Day in October.</li> <li>• Example Internal Audit reports to be shared with members via the One Advanced resources area.</li> </ul>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	No further business was discussed.
	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> October – Strategy Day (Diamond House)	
The meeting closed at 20:17.	