



**Minutes of Customer Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd March
2026 via Microsoft Teams**

MEMBERS:	Charlotte Haines (Chair) Ahmed Abdulmalek (AA) Keri Muldoon (KM) Jack Buckley (JBu) Gareth Evans (GE) John Beattie (JBe) Marta Diaz (MD) Helen Wallworth (HW) Victoria Burrows-Boon (VB) Gerald Arhin (GA)
OFFICERS:	Gemma Parlby, Executive Director Customers and Landlord Services (EDCLS) Sarah Henderson, Executive Director Business Services & Improvement (EDBSI) Lorraine Giddings, Director of Customer Experience (DCE) Christiana O'Brien, Customer Engagement Manager (CEM) Nichola Shepard, Director of Governance, Risk & Assurance (DGRA) Jeanette Green, Director of Property (DP) Jamie Cockerham, Governance and Policy Officer (GPO) - Minutes
ATTENDEES:	None
APOLOGIES:	Ed Sidley, Performance and Business Intelligence Manager (PBIM)
The meeting commenced at 18:00	
ITEM	
1.	Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from the PBIM. There were no declarations of interest.
2.	Minutes of the Customer Committee Meeting held on 13th January 2026
	The Committee approved the minutes from the last meeting held on Tuesday 13th January 2026.
3.	Matters Arising and Action Tracker
	VB queried the date for the upcoming committee Strategy Day. The DGRA confirmed that the Customer Committee Strategy Day would take place on Friday 17 th April, as per members' original calendar invitation. The DGRA noted that discussions are ongoing around opportunities to merge one of the

	<p>the Board and Customer Committee Strategy Days. It is likely that this would be the event later in the year subject to the relevance of the agenda items for discussion.</p> <p>The Committee noted the changes to the Action Tracker.</p>
4.	Chair's Update
	<p>The Chair noted the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The annual rent increase was discussed and approved by the Board in January, including the implementation of rent convergence from 2027/28. Members confirmed that they had begun to receive their rent increase information letters. • Confirmed that Cynthia Alloyda had now stepped down from the Committee having served her full term on the Committee. The Chair noted that it was unfortunate that Cynthia had been unable to attend her last meeting in January and confirmed that a card and flowers had been sent to her. The Chair thanked Cynthia on behalf of members for her contributions during her time on the Committee – noting that she had been an asset to the Committee and would be missed. • Thanked and congratulated JBe and HW for volunteering and being appointed as the Chairs of Salix Homes' customer sub-committees, as per the CEM Update item. <p>The Committee noted the Chair's update.</p>
5.	CEM Update
	<p>The CEM provided members with an update on customer engagement activities - including progress relating to the scrutiny action tracker and an update on the activities of other customer oversight groups.</p> <p>The following was noted during discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair queried whether the CEM had yet received any contact from interested customers, based on the customer engagement leaflet sent with the rent increase letters. The CEM noted that she had not received contact yet, but that it was early days as letters had only recently begun to be posted out. • JBe noted that he had not received his rent letter yet. GP confirmed that this may be as the letters are posted in batches so customers may not all receive them at the same time. The DGRA added that Post Office delays may also impact the speed of delivery. • JBe queried whether digital rent letters could be considered to reduce printing costs. The CEM confirmed that it is a legal requirement that rent increase letters are sent via post rather than electronically, however, it was noted that costs have been reduced by circulating other information with the letter that would otherwise have been posted separately. • The CEM noted the scrutiny action tracker updates and confirmed that she would continue to provide updates in relation to the progress on actions identified through the Customer Communications in Investment scrutiny piece. <p>The Committee noted the Customer Engagement Manager's Update.</p>
6.	Customer Scrutiny Proposals 2026/27
	<p>The CEM presented members with information relating to key service areas including current performance, audit schedules, TSM data and other matters to facilitate discussion and planning for Customer Scrutiny in 2026/27.</p> <p>The following was noted during discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair noted previous discussion by members around Repairs scrutiny and the

potential for this to complement internal audit work. She noted that no access could be looked at as part of this work. In response, the EDCLS noted that Salix has recently put together a working group to look at no access issues across the organisation and develop an action plan to present to Assets & Sustainability Committee, which could also be presented to Customer Committee. Therefore, she suggested that scrutiny of this area be delayed until the action plan is developed and embedded.

- KM queried whether scrutiny review could support Salix Homes' ambition for HouseMark accreditation in relation to ASB. The DCE noted that this may depend on the angle and scope of the scrutiny, as HouseMark accreditation is based on specific criteria which may also cover elements not in the scope of customer scrutiny.
- GA queried the reasoning behind only 2 scrutiny topics being chosen by members. The CEM noted that members had previously agreed to reduce from 3 to 2 scrutiny pieces per year to enable a deeper and better-quality piece of work each time, with scope to suggest a further topic by exception. GA thanked the CEM for the update and agreed with the approach to quality over quantity in relation to scrutiny.
- JBe proposed Tenancy Management as a scrutiny topic, with a focus on how Salix ensures the right customers are allocated to the right homes as part of the sign-up process. The CEM noted that this ties into current scrutiny work looking at Income Management, wherein there has been a focus on ensuring a 'right first time' approach. The EDCLS noted the suggestion to pair allocations with tenancy management instead of with voids, to assess sign-ups as part of the scrutiny scope.
- HW highlighted ASB as a key issue which impacts many customers along with building and electrical safety. To provide assurance to members, the EDCLS noted that improvements are ongoing in relation to electrical safety, with Salix currently compliant with 10-year safety certificate targets and moving towards new 5-year targets. The DGRA confirmed that electrical safety is also scheduled for internal audit review and therefore, may not be necessary for customer scrutiny at this time. The DGRA noted that ASB is scheduled for an imminent Business Critical Controls (BCC) audit test but noted that this is not as in-depth as a full audit so should not influence customer scrutiny decisions.
- The Chair noted Repairs, Tenancy Management and ASB as the most popular suggestions for scrutiny topics and suggested that ASB be delayed based on the ongoing BCC test in this area. The EDCLS further noted that delaying ASB scrutiny until after the HouseMark accreditation process may allow for the further triangulation of key areas where further scrutiny is required.
- AA queried whether ASB could be incorporated as an aspect of an overall Tenancy Management scrutiny piece, as ASB issues relate to decision-making around allocations. The DCE noted that this could be considered as part of scrutiny scoping as there is flexibility to look across different areas.
- MD commented that management of voids is also a key aspect of Tenancy Management as it is crucial to ensure properties are in good condition before customers move in to reduce the likelihood of ongoing issues.
- Based on the discussion, the Chair noted that members had proposed Repairs and Tenancy Management as the two service areas for customer scrutiny review in 2026/27. The CEM welcomed members to contact her outside of the meeting with suggestions to refine the draft scrutiny scope in these areas.

The Committee noted the report and agreed the following two service areas to comprise the Customer Scrutiny Programme for 2026/27:

- **Repairs**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy Management
7.	Performance Framework – Customer PI and TSMs Proposals
	<p>The DGRA presented the proposed Performance Indicators (PIs) for Customer Committee monitoring and oversight during 2026/27. She noted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the proposed PIs for Customer Committee for the next 12 months focus on those areas where there is a link to the remit of this Committee in terms of customer facing services or activities. • Performance in relation to the PIs will be presented to committee at least every 6 months - with scope for Committee to request further information on any areas of concern on an ad-hoc basis. • The PIs include the TSM perception measures, some of the operational TSM measures as well as customer-service and transactional satisfaction related indicators. • If approved by committee, the PIs will form part of the full Performance Framework which will be presented to Board for approval in March. <p>Overall, members supported the approval of the PIs as presented. The DGRA noted that oversight of the PIs would also be provided by SLT and Board.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to agree the proposed Customer Committee PIs for 2026/27.</p>
8.	Customer Committee Terms of Reference Review
	<p>The DGRA provided members with the proposed updated Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Customer Committee. She highlighted the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted that TORs are reviewed for Board and all committees on an annual basis. • The majority of changes reflect comments or suggestions made during the External Governance Review undertaken by DTP in 2025. • Most changes are not material but provide clarification or remove the duplication of information that was previously included in the TORs. <p>The following was noted during discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JBe welcomed the change to reference ‘lived experience’ within section 1.9, commenting that this is important in reflecting the diversity of experience across Salix Homes’ customer base rather than recruiting to the committee based on skill sets alone. • HW agreed with this comment and noted that the amended TORs are much easier to read. KM echoed this view and highlighted the need to remove jargon from key documents. • AA raised a query around point 2.2 of the TORs and whether the wording could be amended in case of a scenario in which the Chair was no longer a customer but could remain on the Board and as the Chair of Customer Committee on a co-opted basis. The DGRA noted this point for further consideration and commented that she would share the updated wording with AA for comment. AA thanked the DGRA for this and noted that it could be taken as feedback for consideration in the next annual review of the TORs. • GA raised a query in relation to 1.14 of the TORs and queried whether decisions made by the Chair through their delegated authority would be reported to the next meeting for ratification, or just for notification. The DGRA thanked GA for this point and noted that this could be looked at across all committee TORs to confirm that it would be for notification. • The Chair welcomed the updates and thanked the DGRA for the clear presentation

	<p>of the changes. She commented that committee has previously focused on using clear communication using plain English, so it is good to see this reflected in Salix’s work.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to recommend the approval of the proposed Customer Committee Terms of Reference to the Board.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DGRA to consider suggestions made in relation to points 1.14 and 2.2 of the TORs prior to finalisation.
<p>9.</p>	<p>Corporate Plan – Year 1 Priorities</p>
	<p>The EDBSI provided members with the proposed priorities for Year 1 of Salix Homes’ new Corporate Plan ‘The Salix Way’. She highlighted the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The priorities seek to provide clarity around the ‘golden thread’ through the organisation which aligns our corporate objectives and themes with colleagues’ day-to-day activities. • Noted that a significant amount of regulatory and legislative requirement changes are planned for 2026/27, which will take up a significant amount of Salix Homes’ resource capacity and this had been recognised in the priorities of the Plan. • Noted that an additional ‘Commitments’ column has been added to the Year 1 Priorities document to ensure that actions are also tied to Salix Homes’ EDI and VfM commitments where applicable. <p>The following was noted during discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair commented that it was positive to see that people, both colleagues and customers, are a strong theme in the priorities plan. • HW agreed with this view and commented that by looking after colleagues as a starting point, colleagues will in turn look after and provide optimal services for our customers. She stated that colleagues are the biggest asset for any organisation, so it is positive to see colleague wellbeing and development being prioritised. • MD welcomed the detail around Salix Homes’ ambitions for safe communities, noting that this is a key concern for customers. • In relation to additional training requirements due to the Competence and Conduct Standard, JBe queried whether Salix Homes would receive additional funding to cover this. The EDBSI commented that no additional funding has been made available for this, although it was noted that Salix would seek to maximise the use of the Apprenticeship Levy towards funding these additional requirements where possible, as the organisation will already need to pay this Levy. JBe supported this approach, highlighting the need to avoid additional costs being incurred indirectly by customers. • The EDBSI thanked members for the positive feedback and noted that the priorities would be further discussed at upcoming Leading Salix and Team Salix events before being finalised. <p>The Committee noted the Corporate Plan Year 1 Priorities.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Awaab’s Law Update</p>
	<p>The DP presented an update in relation to Salix Homes’ ongoing compliance with Awaab’s Law, since its implementation in October 2025. She highlighted the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted information included in the presentation around hazard priority levels and data around the proportion of cases in each classification. She noted that only 3

cases (0.25% of overall cases) have been classified as 'Emergency Hazard Repairs' in the year to date.

- Phase 2 of Awaab's Law implementation is due later in 2026. The additional hazards included within this implementation have already been set-up within Salix's repairs system as part of Phase 1 actions.
- To prepare for Phase 2, the Phase 1 action plan will be mirrored which will include additional colleague training, external and internal comms and a proposed trial period to assess demand and performance in relation to the additional hazards ahead of formal implementation.
- Performance in relation to repairs compliance has been put forward for the Internal Audit Plan during 2026 - to provide additional assurance in this area.
- The Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy is currently being reviewed and it is proposed that this is expanded to cover all hazards relating to Healthy Homes.
- Technology such as visual assistance technology is also being used to triage cases more easily via remote surveys in order to continue to maintain and improve performance.
- Compliance performance for Damp, Mould and Condensation is positive overall, and Salix is currently chairing the GMHP Repairs Forum in relation to this.

The following was noted during discussions:

- In response to a query from VB, the DP confirmed that YTD data since the implementation of Awaab's Law in October 2025.
- The Chair welcomed the update and thanked the DP for the additional assurance in this area. She commended Salix's proactive approach to preparing for legislative changes.
- KM agreed with this view. She queried whether colleagues receive specialist training to work on hazard repair cases. The DP confirmed that colleagues do require training for specialist activities such as surveying. She noted, for instance, that she has recently undertaken a 4-day chartered surveying course and that training in this area is offered to colleagues across our Healthy Homes, Repairs and Voids Teams.
- KM further queried whether visual assistance technology would be used to assess additional hazards, beyond the current use for damp, mould and condensation. The DP confirmed that this would also be used for other cases where initial visual assessment can be used to triage cases more effectively. She noted that this has further benefits such as addressing customer concerns more quickly and identifying customer vulnerabilities and also that there is scope for expanded use in future, such as in relation to out-of-hours emergencies.
- AA welcomed the report and commended the use of visual assistance technology. He suggested that this could also be used in future for educational purposes with customers, such as supporting with the use of boilers. He requested that committee receive a demonstration of how the technology works. The DP agreed with the potential further usage of the technology in future and noted that she would be happy to provide a demonstration for members.
- JBe noted that he has recently spoken to colleagues in the Contact Centre on a number of occasions, and that they have asked about damp and mould in the home or residential evacuation plans on each occasion. He welcomed this and stated it was good to see that Salix staff are aware of the importance of this.
- JBu noted the comments from JBe although cautioned that repetitive questions may be unnecessary when there are repeated phone calls in quick succession and that the questioning may become too lengthy when additional hazards also need to be assessed with Phase 2. The DP acknowledged this and highlighted the need to strike a balance between repairs compliance and avoiding unnecessary

inconvenience for customers.

- The CEM noted that different customers may respond in different ways to the questioning - so agreed with the importance of a balanced approach to communication. VB also noted that she personally finds contact from Salix around vulnerable customers in the home to be reassuring and links back to the need to look after our people as a corporate priority discussed under Item 9.
- JBe suggested that hold music for the contact centre could be replaced with information around repairs and hazards with referral to the correct contact points for these. The DCE noted this point for further investigation.
- The EDCLS noted that she would work with the DP and DCE to put together a plan for communications around the Phase 2 implementation to ensure a balanced approach is taken. The DP noted that this would also tie in to work around repairs 'MOTs' that is underway to ensure regular reviews of property compliance are undertaken.

The Committee noted the Awaab's Law Update.

Actions:

- **DP to provide a demonstration of visual assistance repairs technology for members.**
- **DCE to review telephony system for potential inclusion of repairs information/triage.**

11. Tenancy Support – A Funded Model

The EDCLS provided members with a verbal update in relation to her ongoing work to secure intensive housing management funding for Salix Homes' Tenancy Support team. She noted the following:

- Salix currently has a Tenancy Support Team in place but does not receive additional funding for this.
- Provision for additional funding for homes receiving intensive tenancy support applies to individual homes as well as to those included within wider schemes.
- Funding is applied through the application of a service charge to the property which is 100% benefitable and therefore free to the end customer. This service charge and funding would then be withdrawn should the customer enter work or otherwise no longer require intensive tenancy support.
- The EDCLS has submitted a business case and is in ongoing discussions with Salford City Council's Revenues and Benefits Team around arranging for the additional drawdown of funding to protect the Tenancy Support Team and potentially to further develop the team to meet the growing need in future.
- The EDCLS will continue to update Committee as these discussions progress.

The following was noted during discussions:

- HW queried whether the additional service charge would be fully covered by the housing element of Universal Credit for benefits recipients. In response, the EDCLS commented that the costs would be fully covered through housing benefit. She noted that the additional funding would only apply while a customer requires intensive tenancy support in addition to the regular service provided by Salix colleagues, on a case-by-case basis.
- HW queried whether the funding could be received for customers who are in work. The EDCLS commented that most customers for whom the additional funding applied would not typically be in work and would normally have the additional service charge removed should they subsequently enter work.
- JBe commented that the additional support would be worthwhile. He queried the

	<p>level of support that would be offered by Salix for customers who required the intensive support. The EDCLS commented that Salix would seek to offer a comprehensive tenancy support service and not just act as a referral mechanism. She did, however, note that some customers would continue to require further external specialist support, such as mental health services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KM queried whether the additional funding would lead to increased charges for customers who are not in receipt of the additional support. The EDCLS confirmed that the additional service charge would only apply to properties in which the additional funding applied, and that this would be covered by the recipients benefits. • KM further queried whether Salix would employ specific support workers to cover the properties requiring additional support. The EDCLS confirmed that 4 support workers are already in place at Salix, but the additional funding could be used to protect or grow this service in future. She noted that the services offered would go beyond standard tenancy management work and overall require much more dedicated, specific and time-consuming support. • Overall, the EDCLS noted that, should Salix receive additional funding in future towards tenancy support services, officers would need to be clear with customers around the type of support that can be offered. She commented that the overall objective of such support would be to sustain tenancies and encourage the independence of our customers through temporary intensive support measures. • The Chair welcomed the update and commented that the additional funding would be positive for Salix and our customers. She noted that committee would receive further updates in due course. <p>The Committee noted the discussion around Tenancy Support.</p>
12.	Any Other Business
	No items of further business were discussed.
13.	Meeting Reflection
	<p>The Chair requested any feedback from members regarding to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair reflected on the discussion relating to item 6 and members discussion leading to the decision around identifying scrutiny areas for 2026/27 as being a positive outcome from the meeting. She further noted that timekeeping in relation to officers presenting the reports as another positive from the meeting – allowing time for focused discussion around key items.</p>
	Date of Next Meeting
	<p>Strategy Day – Friday 17th April 2026 (Diamond House) Committee Meeting – Tuesday 5th May 2026 (Diamond House)</p>
<p>The meeting closed at 19:42.</p>	