



**Minutes of the Customer Committee Meeting held on
Tuesday 7th July 2026 via Microsoft Teams**

MEMBERS:	Charlotte Haines (Chair) Ahmed Abdulmalek (AA) Keri Muldoon (KM) Marta Diaz (MD) Gareth Evans (GE) Jack Buckley (JBu) John Beattie (JBe) Helen Wallworth (HW) Victoria Burrows-Boon (VB) Gerald Arhin (GA)
OFFICERS:	Gemma Parlbby, Executive Director Customers and Landlord Services (EDCLS) Lorraine Giddings, Director of Customer Experience (DCE) Christiana O'Brien, Customer Engagement Manager (CEM) Laura Flint, Complaints Manager (CM) Jeanette Green, Director of Property (DP) Rebecca Airey, Governance and Policy Officer (GPO) - Minutes
OBSERVERS:	None
APOLOGIES:	None
The meeting commenced at 18:05	
ITEM	
1.	Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. No apologies were received. HW sought clarification as to whether her involvement with the Food Club constituted a conflict of interest. The CEM confirmed that Salix Homes continues to fund Food Club membership for its customers, however, this does not constitute a conflict of interest. There were no declarations of interest.
2.	Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 5th May 2026
	The Committee approved the minutes from the last meeting held on Tuesday 5th May 2026.
3.	Matters Arising and Action Tracker
	In relation to reported road defects, the EDCLS asked if there were any specific road names to be checked against the records. MD confirmed that the road in question was Carmel Close. It was noted that the safeguarding data has been requested from the Performance Team

	and will be reviewed ahead of the SLT meeting on 29 July 2026. The Committee noted the changes to the Action Tracker.
4.	Chair Recruitment Update
	The EDCLS informed members that following interviews, John Beattie had been unanimously appointed as Chair of the Customer Committee. This appointment also means he has become a full Board member. JBe thanked members for their confidence, stating that he looks forward to the role and hopes to do it justice. The Chair congratulated JBe on his appointment, noting the positive feedback received and wishing him every success in the role. <i>VB joined the meeting at 18:11.</i> Members congratulated JBe on his appointment. The Committee noted the Chair recruitment update.
5.	Chair's Update
	The Chair provided an update from the Board meeting held on 23 June 2026. Members noted that the Board had approved a number of key items, including: • The 40-year Financial Business Plan, providing that it was stress-tested ahead of submission; • The shortlisting of potential lenders to progress detailed negotiations and credit approval; • Salix Homes' self-assessment against the Regulatory Standards; • Salix Homes' annual review of compliance with the adopted Code of Governance; • The Risk Appetite Statement and risk register; • The Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy; • The Customer and Communities Engagement Strategy 2026-29; • The Colleague Strategy 2026-29; • Salix Homes' EDI Commitments; • Diamond House Lease draft Heads of Terms; • The appointment of Andrew Rafferty as a member of the Board; and • The appointment of John Beattie as the Chair of the Customer Committee, and full member of the Board. The Chair also noted that a newer Board member had been directed to the Customer Committee's minutes and the detailed safeguarding report available on OneAdvanced, and had encouraged Board members to observe Customer Committee meetings to maintain a strong relationship between the two groups. The EDCLS provided an update on the Intensive Housing Management (IHM) Funding Model. It was noted that Salford City Council had approved Salix Homes' business case to

	access the fund, which supports vulnerable customers who may otherwise struggle to sustain their tenancy. The funding will cover up to 80% of the service costs, reducing the reliance on rental income, and provides greater stability for the team with potential for future growth. The Chair noted that JBu was stepping down from the Customer Committee and thanked him for his significant contribution over the last year. Members expressed their appreciation and wished him well. JBu thanked members for their support and warm welcome during his time on the Committee. The Committee noted the Chair's Update.
6.	CEM Update
	The CEM provided members with an update on customer engagement activities at Salix Homes, including progress relating to the scrutiny action tracker and subgroups minutes. The following was noted during discussions: • Noting the strong response rate to the Building Safety Customer Engagement Survey, GA queried how the survey had been distributed to customers and whether any trends had emerged from the responses. • The CEM informed members that the survey had been distributed through CX. She explained that the system draws information from the CRM system and, where Salix Homes held an email address for a customer, a survey link was sent via email. Where no email address was available, customers were contacted via text message with a link to the survey. The CEM noted that email was the preferred method of contact as the survey required customers to read a number of documents, and there can be a positive impact from completing this type of activity on a larger screen. • In relation to the Home Safety Guide, JBe queried whether customers had been given the opportunity to indicate a preference for receiving documents electronically, to help ensure Salix Homes is not printing materials unnecessarily. • The CEM informed members that there has recently been a focus on understanding customers' communication preferences. However, in this particular case, the document must be provided in printed format due to building safety regulatory requirements. The CEM added that, more generally, with the new system being introduced Salix Homes can better understand how customers wish to be contacted, reducing unnecessary postal communications, and improving how the organisation aligns communication methods with customer preferences. • JBe noted that there could be potential savings to be made through reducing printing costs where electronic communication can be used. • The DCE clarified that 'CX' mentioned above is the Engagement Plus Module of CX Feedback, previously referred to as the 'online customer engagement tool'. She

	noted that the Committee had played an influential role in shaping the approach of how we used the tool and that this was one example where customer feedback and influence had supported improvements. • In relation to the anticipated completion dates of the recommendations, the Chair queried whether they were realistic. The CEM confirmed that, based on current activity levels, the completion dates are considered realistic. She acknowledged that some ICT-related actions may take longer than anticipated but emphasised the importance of ensuring new systems are fully capable of delivering the required outcomes. The DCE added that ICT-related actions can be impacted by factors outside of Salix Homes' direct control, particularly when implementing new systems, which can limit the ability to manage timescales. • The CEM asked the Chairs of the subgroups if they wished to share any feedback on their experience chairing their first subgroup meetings so far. - HW commented that the first meeting had gone well and hoped that future sessions would continue positively. - VB noted that she had found the experience insightful and appreciated the opportunity to meet other members. She highlighted that learning more about how complaints are handled, including the different stages involved, had been particularly useful. VB commented positively on the team's commitment and energy in resolving complaints and felt that it was a positive group to be part of. • The CEM welcomed the feedback and commented that this demonstrated the purpose of the groups, which is to work together to improve services and outcomes for everyone. The Committee noted the CEM update.
7.	Income Management Scrutiny Recommendations
	The CEM informed members that, as part of the agreed scrutiny programme for 2025/26, the scrutiny panel had completed a review of the Income Management Service. The review found that, overall, Salix Homes' Income Management Team provides a consistent and robust service, with a good balance between rent recovery and supporting customers. The CEM highlighted that the scrutiny panel concluded that implementing the agreed recommendations would further improve the experience of customers having difficulties with rent payments or benefit matters. It was noted that the Income Management Team already works hard to maintain a 'Rent First' approach and often goes above and beyond to support customers, with the recommendations aimed at building on this good practice. The CEM confirmed that there were 12 recommendations arising from the scrutiny review. <i>The DP joined the meeting at 18:37.</i> The following was noted during discussions: • In relation to the benchmarking exercise, KM queried who had chosen the organisations included in the comparison.

- The CEM explained that the organisations selected for comparison were chosen by the scrutiny panel and that Salix Homes did not direct the panel on where to benchmark. Scrutineers were recommended to compare two or three organisations and that comparisons should focus on housing associations within Greater Manchester.
- KM noted the report reads very well and that including local comparisons makes it more engaging.
- JBe commented that the report was a really good read and that those who took part in the scrutiny review should be congratulated.
- MD queried what happens if customers do not engage with the support offered and asked whether there is a 'Plan B'. She asked how many opportunities customers have to agree affordable payment arrangements with Salix Homes, access external support, and how long this process can take.
- The EDCLS explained that there is no one-size-fits-all approach and that Salix Homes works with customers to understand their individual circumstances and agree what is affordable for them. She advised that support includes helping customers access any benefits they are entitled to, which can take time to resolve. The EDCLS emphasised that court action is always a last resort and that Salix Homes will continue to work with customers for as long as needed to achieve a positive outcome for both the customer and the organisation.
- In response to a query from MD regarding Breathing Space, the CEM informed members that this is a UK Government scheme and is not something Salix Homes has control over. JBe explained that Breathing Space provides people experiencing debt with temporary legal protection from creditor action while they seek debt advice and work towards a solution. The EDCLS added that the scheme does not write off debt but provides a pause on recovery activity, with interest and fees frozen during the protection period.
- HW queried the application of Breathing Space for customers experiencing mental health issues, and asked whether this could become indefinite and, in theory, allow a customer to remain in a property without clearing arrears.
- The EDCLS explained that where someone is permanently unable to manage their tenancy due to a lack of capacity alternative routes would be considered, such as medical support or supported housing rather than an independent tenancy without the ability to sustain payments. She advised that there are other mechanisms and support routes available and that she was not aware of any cases where Breathing Space had been applied indefinitely.
- In relation to recommendation 10 to 'clarify role boundaries and escalation pathways between Income Officers and Housing Officers', VB emphasised that both roles should work collaboratively to support customers.
- The CEM explained that feedback from staff interviews undertaken by the scrutiny panel identified some blurring of responsibilities between the Income Officer and Housing Officer roles. While joint working is positive, this can sometimes lead to

	duplication or roles extending beyond their intended remit. The CEM advised that the recommendation includes establishing more regular and formal communication between the teams to improve understanding of a customer's circumstances and ensure appropriate support is provided. She added that responsibilities would be reinforced with staff to ensure clarity around each role. • VB noted that customers may assume Housing Officers are also responsible for income and rent matters and suggested that clearer communication with customers about the distinction between the roles would be beneficial. • In relation to recommendation 1 to 'establish links with appropriate organisations providing immigration/asylum support aimed at limiting the impact of these matters on arrears', MD queried whether the recommendation would also apply to customers with Indefinite Leave to Remain, given the current political landscape and uncertainty around potential changes. • The CEM explained that the recommendations had intentionally been kept broad. She noted that Salix Homes does not have a statutory responsibility for customers' immigration status, however, where immigration matters may impact a customer's ability to sustain their tenancy or maintain rent payments, this then becomes relevant. She advised that the recommendation is focused on understanding the changing landscape, building links with relevant local organisations, and ensuring customers can be signposted to appropriate support. The CEM added that this does not mean Salix Homes will employ immigration specialists but rather ensure the organisation remains informed of developments and works with existing specialist services where required. • GA queried the implementation deadlines for the recommendations and asked why some were marked as TBC, requesting further insight into the timescales. • The CEM explained that all recommendations will be transferred into the existing scrutiny action tracker, which is used to monitor progress against previous scrutiny reviews. Progress updates will be reported through this tracker at future meetings. She advised that some implementation dates had not yet been assigned ahead of this meeting, but these would be established as part of the action tracking process. The Committee approved the recommendations arising out of the income management scrutiny review.
8.	Repairs and Maintenance Service Improvement and Customer Engagement Report The DP provided members of the Committee with an update on the revised Repairs and Maintenance Policy and new Healthy Homes Policy. Members were informed that: • The policy review has been undertaken to ensure compliance with emerging legislative requirements, including Awaab's Law, and the RSH Consumer Standards; • The revised policies strengthen service standards, provide greater clarity regarding customer and landlord responsibilities, and enhance Salix Homes' approach to identifying and managing housing health risks; • Alongside the policy review, a dedicated No Access Improvement Programme and customer communications campaign have been developed to improve understanding, strengthen engagement, remove barriers to access and support positive customer behaviours; • Customer feedback, complaints analysis and operational insight indicate that

customers do not always receive clear and consistent information about repairs services, access requirements, responsibilities and the support available to them. This can lead to confusion, missed appointments and a poorer customer experience;

- To address these challenges, a customer communications campaign has been developed to improve understanding, strengthen engagement and support positive customer behaviours. The campaign combines clear messaging, improved customer information, enhanced support for vulnerable customers and proactive communication throughout the repairs journey; and
- The combined policy and communications approach is expected to improve customer experience, reduce no-access appointments, strengthen compliance performance and deliver better value for money.

The CM joined the meeting at 19:10.

The following was noted during discussions:

- MD welcomed the Customer Communication Campaign Plan 2026 and noted that it is beneficial to have customers' responsibilities following repairs clearly set out. In relation to missed appointments, MD queried how Salix Homes calculates the cost.
- The DP explained that the calculation is based on the National Housing Federation (NHF) methodology, using a nationally recognised benchmark for the cost of a missed repairs appointment. This takes into account the time lost when an operative is unable to complete a scheduled repair due to a missed appointment, including travel time, labour, vehicle and overhead costs, and the resulting loss of productivity. Based on this methodology, the estimated cost is approximately £70–£75 per missed appointment.
- The DP added that it is not Salix Homes' preference to charge customers for missed appointments. Instead, the intention is to make customers aware of the cost and wider impact of missed appointments on the repairs service. The DP emphasised that the focus is more on ensuring operatives can gain access to properties so that repairs can be completed efficiently.
- MD expressed support for recharging customers for missed appointments, noting that it may encourage customers to be more mindful when booking and keeping repairs appointments. The DP informed members that this option had been considered during the development of the proposals but was ultimately removed, as Salix Homes does not wish to place any additional financial pressures on customers.
- JBe queried what constituted a reasonable adjustment appointment, noting that, in his experience, he had only ever been offered AM or PM appointment slots for repairs which would require anyone working full-time to take half a day's leave. JBe felt that the repairs timescales lacked clarity and recommended including clear bullet points outlining response times for different repair categories, including examples such as emergency repairs relating to heating and hot water.
- The DP acknowledged the points raised and advised that these would be addressed as part of the ongoing review of the repairs service. This includes considering how repairs calls are handled to improve the customer journey, with the aim of enabling

the Repairs Team to book appointments with customers at the point of contact, wherever possible, rather than requiring follow-up arrangements.

- JBu queried the timescale for appointable routine repairs, asking whether the target was up to 45 working days or 45 calendar days. He noted that 45 working days appeared to be a lengthy target and asked how this timescale had been determined.
- The DP confirmed that the target is 45 working days, which had been reduced from 60 working days earlier in the year. She advised that the service's aspiration is to reduce this further to 30 working days by the end of the year. The DP explained that the Repairs Team has worked hard to reduce waiting times and improve the way repairs are categorised and scheduled, with further work underway to map and refine these processes. She added that, in practice, customers should not generally be waiting longer than around three weeks for routine repairs, with the exception of some electrical works. The DP agreed that the customer handbook would be updated to provide greater clarity on repair timescales and help manage customer expectations.
- JBu commented that when reporting an issue through MySalix, customers are currently presented with only three categories to choose from, despite there being a wider range of potential repair issues. He queried whether additional options could be added to improve the self-service journey, enabling customers to report issues more accurately and potentially book appointments directly rather than needing to contact the service by telephone.
- The DP confirmed that this would be picked up separately, as some of these improvements are already being considered as part of ongoing work.
- VBB noted that she had never been offered a more specific appointment slot other than morning or afternoon (AM/PM). She queried how appointments are managed for customers with vulnerabilities, particularly during winter periods where issues such as loss of heating could have a greater impact. VBB asked whether Salix Homes takes vulnerabilities into account when prioritising repairs and whether vulnerable customers receive a quicker response where appropriate.
- The DP confirmed that customer vulnerabilities are considered as part of the repairs prioritisation process and may result in a repair being moved to a higher priority where appropriate. She added that appointment arrangements can also take individual circumstances into account, such as avoiding school run times where possible. The DP acknowledged the feedback that AM/PM appointment slots may not always provide the best customer experience and confirmed that this would be reviewed.
- AA noted that charging customers for missed appointments and making customers aware of this could be considered, but if Salix Homes introduced such an approach it would need to be applied consistently. He noted that customers may expect the same level of accountability from Salix Homes if an operative fails to attend an appointment, including consideration of compensation where appropriate. AA suggested that there may be a need to provide evidence of repeated missed appointments or no access issues, and that where there is a history of multiple failed visits, this could be taken into account and potentially offset against any instances where Salix Homes does not attend.

- The DP noted that within the area of compliance area there had been around 48% no access rate and highlighted that she had personally written to and spoken with affected customers to understand the barriers and support access arrangements. A core group of around 50 customers had been identified and advised that recharges would apply where access continued to be unavailable. The DP explained that she had personally worked with these customers to arrange appointments around their availability, which resulted in Salix Homes gaining access to 48 out of the 50 properties.
- The DP added that this approach had influenced how Salix Homes manages appointments for compliance-related works. The two customers where access was still not achieved were recharged the same amount that Salix Homes had been charged by contractors for the failed visits. The DP emphasised the importance of finding the right balance, ensuring that costs are recovered where appropriate while avoiding placing customers under additional financial pressure.
- AA noted that, in the long term, managing repeated no access issues through a recharge approach could be more cost-effective than pursuing court action.
- The Chair noted that she was supportive of recharging customers where appropriate but stressed the importance of ensuring contractors are meeting the standards expected by Salix Homes. She noted that customers will be unhappy receiving a missed appointment notification and being charged for it where there had been no prior warning or communication.
- The EDCLS informed members that the No Access Working Group had highlighted a number of insights from the data. She noted that Salix Homes is not always using the available data to its full potential and that there are currently inconsistencies in processes across teams and contractors. Work is underway to review the customer journey, processes and communications to ensure a more consistent approach. The EDCLS added that this is a significant piece of work, with the policy being one element that may need to be reviewed and adapted as part of wider improvements.
- The Chair expressed that she did not support the proposal to change Salix Homes' emergency repair response time from 8 hours to 24 hours to align with Awaab's Law. She felt that this could create an opportunity for Salix Homes to become less responsive, although she acknowledged this was not the intention. Given that the wording relates to immediate danger, she felt that Salix Homes should continue to maintain the higher standard of an 8-hour response time. GE agreed that Salix Homes should not change the 8 hours response target for emergency repairs.
- GE highlighted that some customers have multiple repair jobs outstanding, but reminder texts do not specify which repair appointment the message relates to.
- The DP confirmed that this is being looked into as part of ongoing improvements.

The Committee resolved to:

- **Note the changes within the Repairs and Maintenance Policy.**
- **Note the new Healthy Homes Policy.**
- **Agree Salix Homes' approach to inform customers via an external communications campaign.**

	<i>The DP left the meeting at 19:33.</i>
9.	Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report (incl. self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code)
	The Committee received the report detailing the analysis of complaints received by Salix Homes during 2025/26. Members noted the assurance provided that Salix Homes is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Service's Complaint Handling Code. The report was taken as read. The following was noted during discussions: • In relation to service improvements and building relationships with Housing Officers, JBe shared their experience of not receiving a response from their Housing Officer despite making contact over a month earlier and sought clarification on expected response times. The CM explained that arrangements are in place to ensure cover is provided during periods of leave and that this should not occur. The CM advised JBe could raise the matter as a formal complaint – it would be investigated and any shortcomings in the resilience and cover arrangements could be identified. The EDCLS apologised for JBe's experience, acknowledged that the level of service was unacceptable, and confirmed that the matter would be addressed. • In response to a query from AA regarding whether future reporting would separately identify Healthy Homes complaints following the implementation of Phase 2 of Awaab's Law, with damp and mould reported separately from excessive cold and heat, for example, the CM advised that there are no plans to report in this way. However, a more detailed breakdown and analysis would be provided in the interim reports and analysis where any increases are identified following the implementation of Phase 2. • AA noted that almost one-third of complaints had been escalated to Stage 2 and that this appeared to be a high proportion. AA asked how many requests for escalation had been received outside the escalation period and subsequently refused. The CM advised that the escalation period is 10 days, however, Salix Homes would rarely refuse a request to escalate provided it was made within 12 months. • AA queried whether the timescales communicated to customers should be aligned with the Housing Ombudsman Service, noting that complaints can be investigated up to 12 months after the issue occurred. As Salix Homes would not decline a complaint on this basis, AA questioned why the website still referred to a 10-day timeframe. The CM acknowledged that this was a valid point and confirmed it would be reviewed. • The CEM noted that while Salix Homes had historically received very few Stage 2 complaints, volumes had increased significantly in recent years. It was important that information provided to customers accurately reflects the organisation's approach. Where possible, Salix Homes would seek to resolve complaints without escalation, explaining any delays or changes in circumstances to customers. • The CM advised that feedback from a more detailed survey resulting from complaint TSM scores, had identified that some customers reported not receiving acknowledgement or response letters, despite these having been sent. To address this, a new process was introduced whereby the CM sends a text message to

	customers following the issue of a Stage 1 or Stage 2 response, asking them to make contact if they have not received it. This is likely to have contributed to an increase in Stage 2 as customers fed back the text had reminded them about it in a negative way. • HW noted that repairs remained the most common cause of complaints and expressed the hope that the Repairs and Maintenance Service Improvement work would help reduce complaint volumes. The Committee resolved to: • Note the analysis of complaints and feedback during 2025/26. • Approve the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report along with the HOS Self-Assessment against the Complaints Handling Code. <i>The CM left the meeting at 19:49.</i>
10.	ICS Survey Results
	The DCE provided members with an update on the outcomes of the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) customer and employee surveys 2026. In the interest of time, members were asked to submit any questions to the DCE following the meeting as the report and accompanying presentation were taken as read. The Committee noted the 2026 ICS survey results.
11.	Springboard Update
	The CEM provided members with an update on community activities supported through the Springboard Fund during 2025/26. Members noted that the update is a great read, and it is really positive to see Salix Homes giving back to the community and the impact this has on people's lives. The Committee noted the update and the impact of Springboard funding.
12.	Any Other Business
	No other business was discussed.
13.	Meeting Reflection
	The Chair reflected that it had been an intensive meeting, noting that repairs and complaints consistently require significant discussion time. She thanked members for their contributions throughout the meeting and observed that a number of items had been approved. Members expressed their enthusiasm for the recommendations that had been made. The EDCLS asked members whether they would find it beneficial to hold a workshop to discuss key topics, such as repairs and complaints, to allow more time for detailed consideration and ensure members did not feel rushed during formal meetings. The EDCLS added that this would not necessarily need to involve the full Committee, noting that at other organisations some members volunteer to work with Directors on specific pieces of work. The Chair agreed that this approach would be particularly beneficial for repairs, as

	members never have sufficient time during Committee meetings to explore the topic in depth. Members agreed with this proposal. The Committee said a final goodbye to JBu, noting that he would be missed and thanking him for his time, commitment and contribution over the past year.
14.	Date of Next Meeting
	Tuesday 1 st September 2026 (Diamond House).
The meeting closed at 19:59	