

Meeting minutes

Meeting: Customer Involvement Panel
Date: 06 February 2024
Venue: Wednesfield Board Room
Time: 10:00 – 14:00

In attendance:

Louise Talbot (LT)	-	CIP Tenant member – Chair
Alzie Logan (AL)	-	CIP Tenant member
Gemma Taylor (GT)	-	CIP Tenant member
James Lavelle (JL)	-	CIP Tenant member
Juliett Logan (JL)	-	CIP Tenant member
Richard Hall (RH)	-	CIP Leaseholder member
Sandra Roe (SR)	-	CIP Tenant member
Theresa Phillips (TP)	-	CIP Tenant member

Wolverhampton Homes Staff in attendance:

Angela Barnes (AB)	-	Director of Homes and Communities (item 4)
Julie Haydon (JH)	-	Director of Corporate Services (item 4)
Kay Bourne (KB)	-	Service Manager – Homeless Prevention (item 5)
Nicky Devey (ND)	-	Head of Business Services (item 6)
Andrew Finch (AF)	-	Customer Experience Manager (item 7)
Zac Beech (ZB)	-	Voids Manager (item 8)
Charlotte Palmer-Hollinshead (CPH)	-	Communications Business Partner (item 11)
Jenny Billingsley (JB)	-	Communications Engagement Manager (item 11)
Rob Walton (RW)	-	Systems Development Officer (item 15)
Katie Dugmore (KD)	-	Talent Attraction and Resourcing Specialist (notes)
Louise Ward (LW)	-	Community Development Officer



Observers:



Maureen Campbell	-	Tenant
Councillor Rita Potter	-	Chair of Wolverhampton Homes Board
Matthew Tschubenko	-	Board member

1.0	Introduction and apologies	
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amen Amiebenomo - Keeron Forshaw - Kirsty Mallin - Mark Cooper - Mike Modelsky 	
2.0	Welcome and introductions	
2.1	<p>Introductions to potential new CIP member and observers.</p> <p>Councillor Potter, Chair of Wolverhampton Homes Board, emphasised the importance of customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Julie Haydon acknowledged progress by the CIP and welcomed feedback for continued improvement.</p>	

3.0	Minutes of the previous meeting / Matters Arising	
3.1	IT Access Issues: Rob Walton to address at the end of the meeting.	
3.2	Minutes from December 2024 agreed as a true record.	
4.0	Directorate overview – Angela Barnes and Julie Haydon	
4.1	<p>Brief Directorate overview from Angela Barnes, key points mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing management is people-focused, prioritising tenancy support over enforcement. • Housing need versus availability: 6,500 applicants on the housing register, with around 900 properties available per year. • Specialist services: includes Young Persons' team and Domestic Abuse support, as tenancy failures due to domestic abuse are a key reason for homelessness. • Estate management: Concierge, Caretaking, and ASB teams working to improve community conditions; fly-tipping and graffiti remain challenges. • Income collection: previously enforcement-led, now focused on tenancy sustainment. High collection rates achieved. • Money Smart team: provides financial support to tenants struggling with rent payments. • Telecare, Home Improvement Agency and Homeless Services transitioning back to the council April 2025. • CIP acknowledged the significant behind-the-scenes work and the level of support available to tenants. 	
4.2	<p>Directorate overview from Julie Haydon, key points mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Services, provides in the main, a number of corporate functions to enable the business to run effectively. Responsible for governance and finance, health and safety, systems development, Human Resources, Learning and Development, Communications, community engagement and the front line 24hr Customer Contact and Access Services. • These services provide a staff and customer focus. • Customer-led approach: Our Future programme launched in 2019 – shifted focus for delivery of service and redesign of a number of functions across the business. • Digital improvements, including the launch and ongoing provision of our Customer app (over 44,000 users) for tasks such as appointment rescheduling, improving efficiency. • Customer journey mapping: Identifying service gaps and better ways of working to improve the customer journey. • Talent Attraction: Introduction of bespoke service. Challenges remain with certain niche roles and national skills shortage. • Community Development: more about engagement with customers, supporting satisfaction through the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and the priorities of the Council and WH. • Financial pressures: CWC working to save £36 million over 3 years through the Our Future Council programme (OFC). WH not exempt from that – requiring savings and efficiencies across all WH service areas. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny & Complaints: Encouraging more tenant involvement in review and provision of policy and strategy. • Housing Ombudsman stance: staff employed by the HO to address complaints. • Need clearer differentiation between service requests versus complaints to improve reporting. • Control Room Out of hours service: Key support area - out of hours service, security cameras, and emergency responses including Telecare. • Business Assurance: Governance remains a priority – importance of spending public money. 	
5.0	CIP responsibilities – Julie Haydon	
5.1	Terms of Reference: Revamped after 12 months, good practice to do so and there are a number of new members and changes.	
5.2	Meeting Format: Provision of core group, with other task and finish groups for focused discussions.	
5.3	Idea Cards: LT provided cards for CIP to write ideas throughout the sessions, bring suggestions for the forward plan. Encouraging members to be more involved and open to discussion.	
5.4	Paperless approach: Intention, as for Board and Committee, and generally across all offices, for a paperless approach. Printing of papers will cease unless there is an additional need from an individual. Digital access encouraged.	
5.5	City Scrutiny group: GT to review insights into CIP discussions. These should be agreed by the group prior to updates from GT.	
5.6	Tenant-led discussions: Members encouraged to bring forward issues.	
5.7	CIP's impact: To date – there has been a positive impact from the group. The CIP were Instrumental in developing the Good Neighbourhood charter, alongside other key areas of WH service delivery.	
5.8	Open Board Meetings: CIP members welcome to attend and contribute.	
6.0	Safeguarding Policy – Kay Bourne	
6.1	CIP provided with policy prior to the meeting to review.	
6.2	Safeguarding Policy is due for renewal and update, to include additional guidance and links.	
6.3	<p>CIP discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do WH work with schools, police, and other services? • Involvement in contextual and transitional safeguarding. • WH is an active partner in Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together and Marriot Governance Group. • Referral process: Reports come from various sources, including GPs and social services. • Training: Staff must complete Level 2 safeguarding training annually. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trades must complete mandatory safeguarding checks during home visits. • CIP reminded to review the Safeguarding Policy issued with the pack for this meeting as soon as possible – latest 28 February 2025 	
7.0	Customer Resolution update, complaint trends, unreasonable and persistent customer contact policy – Andrew Finch  Complaints update for CIP - Feb 25.pptx	
7.1	AF provided the panel with the latest update.	
7.2	Discussion took place regarding the company's requirement for more clarity for customers around the complaints process and the need to demonstrate where there are service failures or complaints.	
7.3	Currently, there are areas of work ongoing with a view to improving the complaints process. The Council are leading on workstreams including Improving Complaints, and the second, through engagement with the Customer app.	
7.4	CIP were requested to support the company with a review of the Complaints Process, the definition of a compliant, how the company can encourage customers to complain in the right way etc. This will be set out as a scope of work for CIP.	
7.5	<p>Discussion regarding persistent complainants took place with questions asked regarding tenants recording staff or being assigned a single point of contact.</p> <p>CIP reminded to review the Persistent Customer Contact policy issued with the pack for this meeting as soon as possible – latest 28 February 2025.</p>	
7.5.1	Compliment given from GT that the complaints team are brilliant at coming back within 24hrs.	
8.0	Lettable standard and voids – Zac Beech  Voids CIP Presentation Feb 25.p	
8.1	ZB provided a detailed breakdown of all stages of the Void procedure and the challenges that the team are faced with on a daily basis.	
8.2	A question was raised regarding recharges. This is an area for review with recharges made where possible. Often though, ZB explained that former tenants have already left with no forwarding details known.	
8.3	RH asked whether the clearance of the void was still done by CWC. ZB advised that since the pandemic, this service was provided by a contractor, Orbit.	

8.4	It was asked when void properties were treated for vermin would the neighbouring properties be treated as well. ZB advised that generally, the infestation of vermin is the tenant's responsibility, as per the Tenancy Agreement.	
8.5	MT asked if carpets/flooring were in a good condition would it be left? ZB advised that generally all items were removed, unless formally agreed with WH. This is an area for review considering potential savings and efficiencies going forward.	
8.6	The Voids Standard was discussed. ZB advised that compared to other organisations, WH are rated as good. A member of the CIP felt that in their opinion, properties did not always meet the standard. ZB advised that there were sometimes some snagging issues that are found after the property is let.	
9.0	Board and Committee update – Nicky Devy  WH Governance Structure 2025.pdf	
9.1	ND provided an overarching view of the WH Governance Structure.	
9.2	A panel member felt it that the structure and responsibilities of the CIP do not seem to be linked on the diagram in the slide. ND ensured that this is because the input of the CIP is integral to across many areas of decision-making and can influence all aspects of governance. It ensures tenant voices are heard in helping policy and service improvements.	
10.0	Stock condition surveys (email from Simon Bamfield)	
10.1	Following receipt of an email from SB, it was felt by the panel, that they would benefit from attendance in person. The request, to be actioned, is to invite SB to the next meeting.	
11.0	Tenant Satisfaction Measures update – Charlotte Palmer-Hollinshead  TSM presentation 06.02.25.pptx	
11.1	The TSMs provide an indication, of the customer perception, in how we are performing as an organisation. The data is gathered through Acuity, commissioned by the Council for all managing agents including WH.	
11.2	The presentation included a note in relation to recommendations for improvement including repairs satisfaction, communal areas, complaints handling, contact and communications.	
11.3	GT mentioned that some wards missing from survey data. CPH will pass this onto CWC to speak with Acuity, however it is noted that the surveys are conducted at random.	

11.4	Discussion took place regarding the importance of Community Engagement. The team have completed engagement sessions recently including: Down Your Way sessions which came about as a direct result of the recommendations for improvement (Communal areas).	
11.5	<p>Mystery Shopper update:</p> <p>The company would welcome support from the CIP members to carry out “mystery shopper” activities. For example, the Chief Executive, Shaun Aldis, has been out to properties with repairs operatives and members of the senior management team have made calls to customers to understand their satisfaction regarding service provision.</p> <p>KD asked for those interested, to make contact.</p> <p>CPH explained the role of a mystery shopper and the benefits and learnings that can be gleaned.</p>	
12.0	WH Website – CPH and Jenny Billingsley	
12.1	JB explained that the current redesign of the website was in progress and WH are keen to gain input from CIP. Planning a user-friendly, mobile optimised design.	
12.2	Reviewed best practises from other Housing Associations: JB and CPH provided examples of Solihull Community Housing, Nottingham Community Housing Association, Walsall Council, Walsall Housing Group and Stockport Homes websites.	
12.3	CIP agreed that they liked the look of the tiled layout, SCH layout was the favourite from all examples provided. Expressed that they would like the layout to be as simple as possible.	
12.4	Subgroup formation: 5-6 CIP members to assist with development of the new website.	
12.5	MT suggested the idea of having a tour guide on how to use the website once it is set up. LT proposed the idea of bringing the website up at the Let's Talk and also suggested using the warm spaces such as the library.	
13.0	Customer and Community Engagement – CPH and JB	
13.1	JB talked of the development of a tenant engagement campaign to improve awareness of WH services. An introduction to CIP to our customers would be included which would help with future recruitment to CIP and subgroups.	
13.2	JB explained the purpose of the Customer Offer and updated CIP on the campaign to promote the service standards (as per the Customer offer).	
13.3	JB asked if anyone had looked at the Annual Report and if they had any comments. One member felt it was very long but liked the photo content and preferred pie charts to show detail.	

14.	Any other business No items raised.	
16.	Date of next meeting: 10 April 2025	

*Denotes papers attached to the agenda.

Actions from this meeting

Action	Responsible	By when
Simon Bamfield to attend the next meeting on 10 April 2025 to discuss results of surveys and overview of service area.	KD	10.04.2025
CIP members would like the opportunity to accompany the Voids team on future inspections. KD to arrange suitable dates/times with ZB and offer these out to the CIP.	KD / ZB	12.06.2025
AF to provide a record of customer complaints detailing who has been dealt with at first point of contact, the numbers of customers who are dissatisfied and those complaints upheld.	AF	10.04.2025
Provide data on the number of referrals to the MASH from WH.	KB	28.02.2025
Mike Hough to attend a future meeting to discuss the provision of the CMC.	KD	To be discussed with LT
CIP subgroup to be appointed to support the Website review.	KD / JB	10.04.2025
Mystery shopper areas to be developed and shared with CIP at next meeting.	KD / JB	10.04.2025
Review the Customer Service Standard and provide feedback to JB	CIP	03.04.2025
CIP reminded to review the Persistent Customer Contact policy issued with the pack for this meeting as soon as possible	CIP	28.02.2025
CIP reminded to review the Safeguarding policy issued with the pack for this meeting as soon as possible	CIP	28.02.2025