

Meeting minutes

Meeting: Customer Involvement Panel (CIP)
Date: 18 September 2025
Venue: Wednesfield Board Room
Time: 10:00 – 14:00

In attendance:

Louise Talbot (LT)	CIP Tenant Member – Chair
Gemma Taylor (GT)	CIP Tenant Member
Joseph Jenner (JJ)	CWC Tenant Influence and Accountability Officer
Mike Modelsky (MM)	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 – Homes & Communities (Item 3)
Andrew Finch (AF)	Customer Experience Manager (Item 5)
Jackie Wilkinson (JW)	Executive Assistant
Julie Haydon (JH)	Director – Corporate Services (Item 4)
Katie Dugmore (KD)	CIP Support
Simon Bamfield (SB)	Head of Assets and Stock Investment (Item 3)

1.0	Apologies and Introductions - Alzie Logan - Amen Amiebenomo - Mark Cooper - Irene Chesire - Juliett Logan - Nicky Devey	
1.1	Joseph Jenner attended the meeting as a representative from the City Housing Oversight Panel (CHOP). JJ shared that he will be leaving the council next month. JJ emphasised the importance of continued collaboration between WH Customer Involvement Panel (CIP) and CHOP. It was highlighted that the need for both panels to remain aligned in their conversations and forward planning to ensure consistency and shared understanding across tenant engagement activities.	
1.1.1	Action: Jenny Billingsley to pick up with Lynda Eyton to ensure planning is completed on a regular basis.	JB

2.0	Minutes of the previous meeting – July 10, 2025	
2.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.	
3.0	Angela Barnes – Director of Homes and Communities	
3.1	Refer to the presentation.	
3.2	Key points discussed as follows: AB provided an introduction and an overview of the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policy review. A presentation was shared, and key points discussed including: • November 2025 – the draft ASB policy will be presented and will be shared with CIP members beforehand for feedback. • The policy is shaped by five years of learning and focuses on early intervention and harm reduction. • Wolverhampton Homes has limited powers, so partnership working is essential. • The Ombudsman’s guidance has significantly influenced the policy development. • The approach is tailored to reflect different community tolerances and individual experiences of ASB. • Safeguarding is a key priority, with a proactive stance taken. • A city-wide survey informed the policy. Although not all respondents answered every question, the feedback was rich and insightful. • Interestingly, the highest number of survey responses came from WV10, but this doesn’t necessarily align with complaint volumes. • The survey highlighted that many lead tenants are female, raising questions about how safe women feel in their communities. • Engagement with young people aged 16-21 was particularly encouraging and provided valuable insights.	
3.1.1	Action: AB to attend November meeting to revisit the policy, alongside the new ASB Manager, Claire Gwynne	KD
4.0	Julie Haydon – Director of Corporate Services Refer to presentation	
4.1	JH provided an overview of Wolverhampton Homes’ strategic direction and financial cost improvement work. Key points discussed outside of the presentation included:	

4.2	Background and Strategic Context - Wolverhampton Homes is an ALMO (Arms-Length Management Organisation) established 20 years ago to meet the Decent Homes Standard. - The Social Housing Regulation Act (2023) introduced a more proactive role for landlords. WH delivers services on behalf of the City Council, which remains ultimately responsible. - The current management agreement ends in 2028 with future arrangements, including potential changes to the ALMO model under discussion. - The Council's "Our Future Council" programme is focused on efficiencies and service delivery.	
4.3	Governance and Principles - A shareholder board meeting has taken place to discuss future models. - WH has developed its own set of principles for future service delivery.	
4.3.1	Action: JH to share the principles document and presentation slides with CIP members. Feedback from CIP members is welcomed.	JH
4.3.2	Action: CIP members to review the principles and provide feedback.	CIP
4.4	Cost Improvement Plan - WH has worked on the Our Future programme since this was introduced in 2019. - There are a number of ongoing financial pressures – particularly in the area of repairs and maintenance. For example, costs have risen significantly from around £9m to around £17m and continue to increase. - GT asked if the increase was due to damp and mould. Julie confirmed this was a factor, but rising material costs and ageing housing stock are also contributing.	
4.5	Communication and Engagement - Communication is key to ensuring tenants understand changes. - This is across all areas, including staff, customers, board and CIP. A Board Strategy Away Day was held on 10 September 2025 with attendance from the council to ensure Board are kept abreast of emerging pressures.. - Other areas such as community engagement and satisfaction measures (TSMs) are being reviewed. The data that is collected is spread across different areas of the business and this is a priority in terms of pulling this together. Data from TSMs is collected through a third party on behalf of the landlord – the	

	City Council with results provided to managing agents including WH. WH have been creating depth to the data by triangulating the information by speaking directly to customers in the community. One area that was noted, Bushbury North, has been highlighted, with the approval of the ward councillor and the TRA to review, as this indicator was quite low. A project is being developed to better understand the data in these areas, to improve engagement in Bushbury North and was signed off at SMT.	
4.5.1	Action: The overarching project plan will be brought to CIP for awareness with feedback as to how this work may fit for communities across the city.	JH
4.6	Cost Improvement Plan • In support of the city's overarching Our Future Council programme, WH is reviewing all areas of the business across all directorates. • Some efficiencies have already been realised, for example, the stationery budget which has been significantly reduced. • Customer App usage is being monitored – where appropriate, WH continues to nudge customers towards the digital route and via the app. This provides resources to support other tenants who may not be able to use digital technology.	JH
4.7	Staff and Service Delivery • MM asked whether frontline staff and trades operatives are included in service improvement plans. JH confirmed they are. • WH is committed to listening to staff and improving internal communication and much work has been done in this regard.	JH
4.8	Board and Committee update • Board and committee governance arrangements detailed. • Open Board meetings are accessible to the public – and documents will be shared with CIP and are available via the WH website. Confidential items may be summarised into themes. • WH is currently recruiting for a Tenant Board Member.	JH
4.8.1	Action: Recruitment process for Tenant Board Member to be shared with CIP. • GT asked who resigned from the Board – it was confirmed as Chris Lou. • WH is working with TPAS to increase training and engagement with CIP. • JH encouraged CIP members to share feedback and ideas.	KD

4.8.2	Action: CIP members to send any questions /feedback to KD, who will forward them.	
5.0	Andrew Finch - Customer Experience Manager Refer to presentation	
5.1	Update on customer feedback and complaints, following on from the panel's previous review and scrutiny on our Stage 1 Complaints. CIP "You Said, We Did" update provided based on previous feedback.	
5.2	Key Discussion Points • AF acknowledged the valuable feedback from CIP and explained how it has shaped recent service improvements. • Complaints sits as a standing item on the agenda with plans to return to a future meeting to share before-and-after examples of changes made.	
5.2.1	Action: Andrew to return to CIP with examples of changes made. • Managing customer expectations remains a priority, especially around complaints handling and communication. • CIP is supporting the development of a video to help explain what a complaint is, and how it should be communicated to tenants. CIP to continue involvement in the complaint's explainer video and complaints, along with TSMs will remain as standing items.	
5.3	Communication and Acknowledgement • MM raised a concern about the lack of acknowledgement when complaints are submitted. • AF confirmed that an automated email reply is sent when a complaint is received, and that WH aims to respond within five working days. • JH added that WH is looking at how other housing management agents / associations handle complaints, which may offer useful ideas. • WH will continue to explore best practice for complaints handling.	
6.0	Simon Banfield – Head of Assets and Stock Investment	
6.1	Refer to Presentation	
6.2	Simon provided a presentation on the new Decent Homes Standard.	
6.3	Key Discussion Points	

	• WH is conducting surveys to ensure homes are safe - assessing property conditions and identifying any risks. • Clear communication with tenants is essential, especially around safety and compliance. • The legal framework is a key driver for WH, including preparation for Decent Homes Standard 2 (DHS2), expected by 2035–2037. • LT asked if additional funding would be available to support DHS2. SB confirmed no additional funding is currently available. • RH noted that the private sector faces similar challenges. • WH is working to balance spending across areas, doing as much as possible with limited resources. • Tenant protection is a priority, particularly around damp and mould.	
6.4	Tenant Behaviour and Repeat Issues • LT raised concerns about tenants causing repeat issues due to lifestyle rather than property condition. • SB explained that older homes are harder to heat and more prone to damp. WH is focusing on tenant education around heating and ventilation. • WH staff to continue providing in-home education to tenants on heating and ventilation. • LT asked about the cost of repeated callouts for unresolved issues. SB said WH uses the tenancy agreement to address recurring problems. • JH added that all staff have been trained under Awaab's Law to understand their role in identifying and addressing damp and mould.	
6.5	Communal Areas and Survey Access • SR asked if SCS apply to communal areas. SB confirmed block surveys are not currently being done due to data restructuring. WH should begin block surveys from April 2026 following system updates. • MM asked when surveys started. SB confirmed they began in March 2023 and are ongoing. • Currently there are 15% of properties where WH have been unable to gain access. • LT expressed concern and suggested offering evening and weekend appointments to improve access. • WH will look to explore offering surveys during evenings / weekends to reduce no-access rates. • JH reassured the panel that WH does not treat SCS as a tick-box exercise; all data is reviewed thoroughly, and SB confirmed that there were some SCS reviews that the company had rejected as they were not to standard.	

7.0	Scrutiny Task – Stock Condition Survey Letter and Role Play Exercise  Stock con survey 1st letter - Updated June	
7.1	Review of Stock Condition Survey Letter The panel reviewed the first letter sent to tenants regarding the Stock Condition Survey (SCS). The group worked through the letter paragraph by paragraph and identified areas for improvement to make the communication clearer and more tenant friendly.	
7.2	Key feedback and suggestions: - Remove or reword phrases that may imply false promises, such as “ensuring improvements are needed.” - Clarify that surveyors will require reasonable access to all areas of the home, and tenants may need to move furniture or clean spaces in advance.	
7.2.1	Action: Update letter to include guidance on preparing the home for surveyor access. Improve flexibility of appointment times.	SB
7.2.2	Action: WH to explore offering evening and weekend survey appointments. Clearly state the form of communication tenants can expect (e.g. “We will call you 1 hour before”).	SB
7.2.3	Action: Add communication expectations to the letter. Include a line such as “Please contact us if you cannot be available during the scheduled time.”	SB
7.2.4	Action: Add contact guidance for rescheduling or access issues. - Remove unnecessary paragraphs that make the letter overly long or overwhelming. - Simplify language for clarity. For example, replace “bona fide” with “genuine.” - Reword “photographs of main, key elements will need to be taken” to “photographs will be taken of the building” for clearer expectations.	SB
7.2.5	Action: Revise photo-related wording in the letter for clarity.	SB

7.3	Role Play Exercise – Communication Scenarios Following the letter review, CIP members participated in a role play exercise using the tenant and staff guidance sheets. Tenant Perspective (Sheet 1): • Explored frustrations around delays to kitchen/bathroom upgrades. • Discussed expectations around notice periods, stock availability, and supplier communication. • Emphasised the importance of clear and timely updates. Staff Perspective (Sheet 2): • Practised empathetic and professional responses to tenant concerns. • Focused on the importance of tone of voice, avoiding patronising language, and not overpromising. • Highlighted the importance of a single point of contact for tenants. Shared Takeaways: • Tenants and WH both play a role in effective communication. • Disability and mental health considerations are crucial in tailoring communication. • Suggested having a flag system for tenants with specific needs.	
7.3.1	Action: WH to explore flagging system for tenants with disabilities or mental health needs. • Consistency in staff training is essential. • MM noted tenants often want to share their full story before hearing solutions. Staff should allow space for this. • Recommended that phone calls be followed up with emails summarising key points and next steps.	JH
7.3.2	Action: Look into implementing follow-up email process after phone calls to tenants.	JH
7.0	Date of the next meeting	
7.1	Thursday 13 November at 10:00am Wednesfield Office Board Room	

Actions	Responsible	By when
Share draft ASB policy with CIP members for review	KD	Before November CIP meeting
Allocate time in November CIP meeting for ASB policy discussion with new ASB Manager	KD	November 2025
Jenny Billingsley to contact Lynda Eaton to discuss forward plan for CHOP and CIP	JB	October 2025
Share principles document and presentation slides with CIP members	JH	October 2025
Bring Bushbury North engagement project back to CIP for review	JH	Future CIP meeting
Share Tenant Board Member recruitment dates with CIP	KD	October 2025
CIP members to send questions for Julie Haydon via Katie Dugmore	CIP Panel	Ongoing
Return to CIP with before-and-after examples of Complaints Stage 1 Letters	AF	Future CIP meeting
Explore offering evening/weekend survey appointments (Scrutiny Task)	SB	December 2025
Update SCS letter to include guidance on preparing the home (Scrutiny Task)	SB and comms	October 2025
Add communication expectations and rescheduling guidance to SCS letter (Scrutiny Task)	SB and comms	October 2025
Revise photo-related wording in SCS letter for clarity (Scrutiny Task)	SB and comms	October 2025
Explore flagging system for tenants with disabilities or mental health needs (Scrutiny Task)	Systems and Development	2026

Actions	Responsible	By when
Continue staff training to improve communication and empathy (Scrutiny Task)	L&OD	Ongoing
Implement follow-up email process after phone calls to tenants (Scrutiny Task)	SB and comms	2026

