

Meeting minutes

Meeting: Customer Involvement Panel Meeting
Date: Monday 29 January 2024
Venue: Wednesfield Boardroom
Time: 09:00 – 11:00


CIP members in attendance

Louise Talbot (LT)	-	Tenant Member (Chair)
Mathew Tschubenko (MT)	-	Tenant Member (Chair) – via Teams
Alzie Logan (AL)	-	Tenant Member
Gemma Taylor (GT)	-	Tenant Member
Ivor Richards (IR)	-	Tenant Member
Juliet Logan (JL)	-	Tenant Member

Wolverhampton Homes staff in attendance

Julie Haydon (JH)	-	Director Corporate Services, Wolverhampton Homes
Sophie Morris (SM)	-	Head of Tenancies and Communities Wolverhampton Homes
Mandy Woolley (MW)	-	Customer Involvement and Community Engagement Business Partner, Wolverhampton Homes
Evelyn Brown (EB)	-	Community Development Officer, Wolverhampton Homes
Stephen Perry (SP)	-	Anti-social behaviour Team Leader, Wolverhampton Homes
Jackie Wilkinson (JW)	-	Executive Assistant, Wolverhampton Homes (note taker)

1.0	Apologies	
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irene Cheshire - Tenant Member 	
2.0	Introduction	
2.1	JH welcomed the group to the first formal CIP meeting and handed over to the joint chairs LT and MT. Agenda item 7 – introduction to SP and SM to present on the Good Neighbourhood Policy.	
3.0	Ratification of Terms of Reference (TOR) – Louise Talbot (Chair) / Mathew Tschubenko (Chair)	
3.1	IR raised comments in relation to the TOR for the group and it was agreed to carry this forward to the next meeting for review / amendments to be discussed.	
3.1.1	Action – TOR to be carried forward for review / ratification to next meeting. JW added to agenda forward planner.	JW

3.2	GT advised they had not signed a copy of the Code of Conduct.	GT
3.2.1	Action – GT to sign copy of Code of Conduct prior to next meeting.	
4.0	Identify service areas for introduction for Customer Involvement Panel (CIP)	
4.1	JH requested group members confirm what service areas they would like to be reviewed at future meetings with Mandy Woolley to ensure that invitations to officers are sent as required.	
5.0	Meeting Schedule and Discussion items	MT/LT
5.1	Frequency of meetings was discussed. Members suggested that the group should meet monthly until the start of the new financial year, then revert to quarterly meetings.	
5.2	To accommodate members work / personal arrangements, it was agreed that meetings would be held early Monday / Tuesday evenings (at 18:00) for the monthly meetings, then adjusted to daytime meetings starting at 10am from 01 April 2024. It was agreed that evening meetings prior to April 2024 could be held on Teams where required.	
5.2.1	Agreed – CIP to meet monthly until the 01 April 2024, then quarterly. Dates for each monthly meeting to be agreed by the group and confirmed by the co-chair.	
6.0	Provision of information – Spotlight on noise complaints – Housing Ombudsman – Sophie Morris, Head of Tenancies and Communities.	
6.1	Good Neighbour Agreement – Sophie Morris  Good%20Neighbour %20Agreement%20-%	
6.2	SM shared information with the Panel and sought the opinion of group regarding the benefit of WH introducing a Good Neighbourhood agreement. The recent Housing Ombudsman (HO) report details that many noise complaints brought to their attention are related to domestic noise complaints and not ASB. A recommendation of this report was that housing providers should consider a separate policy to deal with these complaints outside of the ASB policy including making recommendations relating to noise transference and preventative measures, i.e. provision of mats under washing machines.	

6.3	SP explained that WH have found that where the ASB team become involved too early in the process it can breakdown trust and exacerbate issues, therefore in some instances, WH do encourage customers to speak to their neighbours in the first instance.	
6.4	IR queried neighbour complaints from none WH residents. SM confirmed that WH have some jurisdiction with non-WH tenants, as the legislation governs all individuals and WH provide a tenure neutral service across the city. Many cases can be resolved through dialogue and speaking to landlords, the WH ASB team work with both private and WH residents. Where the noise relates only to private residents, these are dealt with by CWC environmental crime team.	
6.5	The HO reported that a Good Neighbour Agreement (GNA) could provide guidance to tenants to reduce noise complaints and foster good relations. It is noted that this would not be legally enforceable where residents do not adhere, and no legal action could be pursued.	
6.6	GT suggested that this could therefore be a campaign rather than a policy or an agreement.	
6.7	An example of a GNA (noise) from a Housing Trust was presented (see PowerPoint) for information. Members agreed that the issues highlighted were common sense.	
6.8	Examples of what WH currently do for noise complaints were provided. WH have a dedicated ASB team, skilled in the management of ASB, nuisance and noise. Mediation is offered and a noise App is available for customers to help demonstrate the noise alongside using monitoring equipment. WH can issue injunctions where cases are serious, and as a last resort possession can be sought. Most noise complaints received relate to domestic living noise where enforcement action may not be appropriate. WH offer both introductory and secure tenancy agreements, and where there are ongoing issues, if a tenant has an introductory tenancy, these can be extended. Trying to resolve domestic living noise using ASB powers, i.e. children crying is not possible as it is not ASB.	
6.9	MT suggested that a GNA policy would support anything that is not classed as ASB but would not be a solution to the problem. Query on whether there could be a fund to help customers purchase vibration mats or insulation between buildings. SM confirmed that prevention is one element of the spotlight report and WH is able to assist with purchasing vibration mats for example, if it resolves a noise nuisance and encourages good neighbourhood relations. This may also be VfM in that it supports the challenge at source, without the need for intervention.	
6.10	MT requested a report identifying how often insulation is installed and how successful it is. SM advised that WH do not insulate properties	

	due to domestic noise and this would more likely be supported through intervention less than property insulation. MT suggested this could form part of a wider environmentally friendly policy, supporting reduced noise and making homes more eco-friendly and warmer.	
6.11	WH have a legally binding Tenancy Agreement, which is contractual, and signed by all tenants of WH. Where tenants people breach the Tenancy Agreement in terms of noise and ASB, WH can act. All customers have a Tenancy Agreement, but these differ slightly for introductory tenancies and secure tenancies. With this level of the agreement in place SM asked the panel to consider whether a good neighbour agreement would be of assistance. Copies can be provided.	
6.11.1	Action – MW to provide a copy of the secure and intro Tenancy Agreement to the CIP.	MW
6.12	LT asked whether a report could be provided to give CIP an indication of the success rate of mitigating actions taken to prevent noise, i.e. mats, and detailing the outcomes of low-level noise complaints received.	
6.13	IR suggested WH could use newsletters to promote these resolutions i.e. vibration mats. JB agreed that communications with customers is key to this. LT suggested this could also be added to the website, alongside other advice in terms of property maintenance expectations for customers. LT highlighted that although gas safe checks are completed boiler servicing is not. It was agreed this would be a discussion item to be considered at a future meeting.	
6.13.1	Action – Co-chair to consider gas safe checks and boiler servicing to be discussed and an item added to a future agenda. Further details would be required as to the reason and potential outcome to achieve.	LT / MT
6.14	WH have an ASB policy that outlines WH responsibilities and highlights how it is managed, this policy clearly states what is considered as ASB, and reasonable domestic noise is not. The policy also details what WH expect customers to do, i.e. talking to neighbours.	
6.15	SM summarised and asked CIP to consider whether WH should introduce a GNA, taking into account the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WH have a tenancy agreement in place that clearly defines expectations of WH and the tenant. • The tenancy agreement is due for renew – currently undergoing discussion with CWC. • There is an ongoing ASB policy. • A good neighbourhood policy is suggested by the HO Spotlight report. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good neighbourhood policy is not legally enforceable and would be available alongside the Tenancy Agreement and ASB policy. • Are the expectations of the tenancy agreement clear to tenants? • Would comms help to clarify expectations for tenants and WH? 	
6.16	LT asked whether additional staff would be required to administer a GNA. SP confirmed the current ASB team would continue to lead. MT questioned whether a GNA could save money avoiding customers going through the current ASB process.	
6.17	MT, AL, LT and JL agreed to further consider the need for a GNA but asked for additional information in relation to domestic noise nuisance complaints. IR agreed but queried how it would be communicated. MR requested evidence of any potential VfM savings, and information of any cases that do not fit into the ASB category, i.e., average number of noise nuisance complaints received in a six-month period that would not be categorised as ASB. SP advised the data is not held in this format, and it was agreed that WH would provide a sample of ten anonymised cases for the panel to review, along with the outcomes i.e., whether noise reduction mats had been supplied.	
6.17.1	Action – WH to provide a sample of ten anonymised domestic noise nuisance cases to CIP to review, along with the outcomes of each case, i.e. whether noise reductions mats had been supplied.	
6.18	GT suggested that rather than a GNA, a campaign may be more appropriate, alongside a slogan to be communicated to customers which would be more cost effective and could be supported by the panel. EB advised that there used to be quarterly tenant meetings with themes, which could be reinstated to support this. They were open to all residents.	
6.19.1	Action – add “Review Estate Meetings” to next meeting agenda.	
6.19.2	Action – Following receipt of data requested, CIP to draft a report detailing discussion of GNA, including recommendations made to be presented to a future Communities and Service Delivery Committee by CIP.	
7.0	A.O.B.	
7.1	None raised. Meeting closed 10:50 am	

8.0	Date of the next meeting	
8.1	TBC.	