

Meeting	Customer Services Sub Committee
Date	Wednesday 26 February 2025
Time	10.00am – 12.00pm
Location	Teams



Core Members:

Paul Hayward (PH)	Co-optee Board Member & Chair
James Wood (JW)	Operations Director
Jo Grivell (JG)	Executive Assistant & Minute Taker
Mitch Allan (MA)	Assistant Director of Homes
Ros Jones (RJ)	Corporate Director
Jenny Daisley (JD)	Strategic Housing and Commissioning Manager (Shropshire Council)
Lynn Fonseca (LF)	Tenant Board Member
Rachel Connolly (RC)	Shropshire Council Board Member
Nicky Richardson (NR)	Scrutiny Panel Chair
Emma Jones (EJ)	Customer Engagement Manager
Ruth Phillips (RP)	Assistant Director of Customers and Communities

Apologies:

Richard Amos (RA)	Tenant Board Member
-------------------	---------------------

Presenters:

Item No.		Who	When
<u>1.</u>	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u> PH welcomed everyone to the meeting and declared the meeting quorate. Attendees introduced themselves as there were a few new members to the committee.		
<u>2.</u>	<u>Declaration of Interest</u> No declarations of interest		
<u>3.</u>	<u>Minutes of Last Meeting & Matters Arising</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of the last meeting were approved as being a good reflection of the meeting. Action 11: Update 26 Feb. As there are few responses to the ASB surveys, the results can be skewed. There were no responses in the performance report this month, so it is difficult element to report. Included as an appendix some graphs that show percentage resolved successfully and unsuccessfully and there are quite a few that people feel is ASB and it isn't because there is no evidence of the ASB. It tends to be a more negative response. Action Closed. Action 12: Update 26 Feb. This was about the concern of the increase in damp and mould metrics and the call handling abandonment. More information has been provided on both areas in the papers. MA stated he now has responsibility for damp and mould. D&M is not significant levels but would prefer to come 		

	<p>back with more data. PH said that the committee feels a bit unsighted as to the situation and would like details to go to March Board with more reassurance around damp and mould. Action Ongoing</p>		
4	<p><u>Operational Performance Review</u></p> <p>Report for Period 9 presented by Ros Jones.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is suite of management agreement KPIs that must be achieved as part of the contract with the Council. These are reported to this committee and other meetings. There are 39 KPIs and they are reported on a red, amber, green basis. • The report shows an improving performance. There are some hotspots in repairs and compliance. The reports show up to period 10 (the end of January) and then the forecast of where we think we will be at the end of the year. • Everyone is expecting to either finish within tolerance or hit target which is really positive. <p><u>Questions/Comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RC asked for an explanation of B1V the number of customers registered to access services online. RJ advised this relates to the number of tenants that have signed up to the tenant portal. It isn't a fantastic tool and as part of the IT transformation we have procured a new tenant portal which goes live in June, and which brings much more functionality. As we are switching to the new portal in June there has not been any promotion to use the old portal as would prefer to get people to sign up to the new one. • It was discussed that there are still people that don't use or have the internet, but it was confirmed that they can still get access to the same services through a different method. The digital plan is to get as many residents as possible to do it themselves via self-service. • PH said he likes the new forecast column as it shows the direction of travel. • PH said it was good to see the improvement of performance on Stage 1 and Stage 2 response to complaints. PH still believes that there needs to be an increase on the target from 80% for next year as it is saying that 1 in 5 complaints won't be dealt with in the stated time frame. RJ clarified the target has been increased for next year. Stage 1 will be 97.3% and 100% for Stage 2. • Action 17: PH highlighted the major adaptations completed on time is still under 50% of target. What are problems and what is being done to improve that. MA stated that it now falls under his area so he will investigate further. 		
		MA	17 Mar 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PH raised an issue with the Complaints commentary for complaints per thousand properties. The comments state STAR is 4th quartile because residents know how to complain now. This metric shows that there are people complaining but we are not recording them as complaints. RJ stated that recently had an audit of Complaints carried out by Beever and Struthers and asked them to review this area. They reviewed data from the Acuity reports, and they felt that because of the increase in volume of complaints that it showed we are capturing significantly more than we have than in the past. There will be a Communication exercise with our housing officers who are speaking to frustrated people, to ensure that they try to establish whether it is a complaint or whether it is a service request. This is an ongoing activity. PH highlighted that Call abandonment has gone in the wrong direction. MA stated that we received a significant number of calls in one day when Storm Darrah came through and the contact centre was overwhelmed. There were a lot of dropped calls, because staff were on calls already. There is an action plan in place to train more people whose core duty is not answering the phone so there is more resilience for these unique situations. Action 18: PH asked if there is any analysis to understand how long the resident is on the line before they abandon the call. MA said have looked at analysis and there is a proportion of drop calls, where they call and if there is no-one on the end straight away, they hang up. The concerning area is where it is over 15 seconds and under 30 seconds. If someone has been on the line for longer the system tells us who it is, and we call them back. PH asked if there could be an agenda item at the next meeting as it is the second time over 200 abandoned calls have been reported. The new report should show how many are 15 sec or less, above 15 seconds and over that and what is being done to address it. Action 19: PH stated the operations metrics are really helpful and it would be useful to add targets for those, including the abandonment calls. NR stated she doesn't think the tenants know there is a tenant portal there, she didn't know about it until joining the Scrutiny Panel group. There are people out there that have the internet but don't know you have got the service. RJ restated have debated to do too much publicity to promote the old tenant portal with its limitations, and plan to do a big publicity push to 	MA	9 June 2025
		RJ	9 June 2025

	<p>advise there is new tenant portal coming and tenants will be involved to help shape the portal and say what they want from it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 20: EJ stated this was raised at the scrutiny panel and it became apparent that could do more to make STAR staff aware of the portal capabilities. It would be good to do some staff awareness. PH stated that it would also alleviate issues with abandoned calls too if people have an alternative route to service. 	EJ/RJ	9 June 2025
5	<u>Customer Insight & Engagement Update</u>		
	<p>RP gave the following overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TSM results were good. There is a plan in place to do a Big Door Knock as part of the customer profiling project. Will be doing this in July because the tenant portal is going live in June and can show customers and check data quality. It is a good opportunity to get in front of our customers, and hopefully help people to log onto the portal. Watford stated they get around 40-50% answering the door. There are policy reviews being done and will be consulting with residents on those. The plan is also to have a Tenant Procurement Panel so tenants can get involved in Procurements. 	RP	9 June 2025

Questions/ Comments

- RC stated the information on the Big Door Knock is really welcome. She offered to share any information and is more than happy to come and help in her area.
- PH stated he had seen the Big Door Knock in other areas. He stated to be mindful of the amount of vulnerability and diversity information it will produce.
- Action 21: There were a couple of policies that PH thought should come through the CSC before going to Board for example the Damp and Mould and No Access policy. He asked when the consultation has happened with customers to bring it back to this committee to get sign off.**
- PH raised that there were 85 residents as part of Wave 2.2 survey that are quite happy to get involved in the work of STAR. It is a rich source of resident engagement. EJ confirmed that she has already targeted them to be part of the Procurement Panel.
- PH said he thought the Influence register form was a really good way of demonstrating lessons learned. You said, we did.
- NR asked why not have community drop ins, so people come to STAR rather than have staff knocking the doors. EJ has developed

	<p>the customer engagement framework and our offer and look to engage in different ways. We have a project around our data quality and how accurate it is, and the big door knock was the initiative to address those people who don't engage. We are going to look at data on customers who have not heard from in the last 12-18 months the customers. If they are not engaging with us the chances are very slim, they will come to a community event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 22: PH asked if there have been any complaints related to the Housing Ombudsmen, and to include details of what stage they are at with the Housing Ombudsmen and where we are waiting for outcomes on it. 	RP	9 June 2025
<u>6.</u>	<u>Update on TSMs</u>		
6.1	<p>Report presented by Ros Jones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regulator has stipulated that there are 22 questions which they judge as tenant customer satisfaction measures, and there are 12 questions which relate to tenant perception, and which are asked directly to the customer. • Acuity is a professional firm that does this survey. We are required to collect the tenant perception data and find doing it by phone is most effective. We have to make sure we get the correct sample, a good cross section so the information we get back is statistically relevant and seen as a true sentiment across all of our tenants. • We survey over 500 people in the year. We did one big survey in 2023-24, but have split that in 2024-25, one survey in May and one has just been done. • Headline figures from the recent survey - everyone is asked how satisfied they are. Last year we were at 82%, in May it was 84% and the latest is 85% which is a great trajectory and stands well in the upper quartile and therefore good compared to the national position. These results will be combined with the May data and reported to the regulator. • Repairs – the results for how well maintained do you feel your home is etc., have all increased. Acuity makes recommendations of how we can make improvements. • Maintaining building safety has gone up to 90%. • Neighbourhood management, communal areas and our approach to ASB. Communal areas came out as a weak spot in May so put in some actions to address them and the uptick is potentially a direct result of the changes. Approach to ASB has gone down and is something we need to keep an eye on. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful and helpful engagement – there is an increase in most measures. Listens and acts have dipped so again will be looked at to understand more. Effective handling of complaints – this is typically low satisfaction as people are unhappy already in order to make a complaint. However, we want to understand that we are handling a complaint well. There is a huge uplift in those results and is testament to the work that is being done by the business on complaints handling improvements. We ask additional questions and this year we have been testing where the dissatisfaction comes from on complaints. What we see is a disconnect between people thinking they have made a complaint to a Housing Officer, and it hasn't been recognised or raised as a complaint. In some instances, it may just be a service request. We have trained all staff on complaints handling and will ensure all staff are asked again if anyone is expressing dissatisfaction to raise it as a complaint. Net Promoter score 43 – 60% promoters minus 17% detractors. It is a good result. The results demonstrate the majority sits in the upper quartile. We are doing the right things but will not be complacent. An action plan will be put together to address the feedback. Communication is a big theme, keeping in touch with them, recording of customer contacts and there is another recommendation on repairs handling and how we keep them informed through the process. 	RP/RJ	17 Mar 25
---	-------	-----------

	<p>it is a mix stock type and by geographical areas. We can go back to Acuity and ask them to do a briefing on how they generate the survey sample. EJ said she is meeting with them in the next few days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RC highlighted that very few of the respondents to the survey didn't have access to internet. Is there a way to capture the number of people who do not engage online. PH stated that it was 83% with internet so is knocking the myth that people don't have the internet. PH asked have we changed our collection methods from last time. RJ said no, they are all by telephone. The contact preferences questions also show that there is a strong preference for telephone. Sometimes a face-to-face survey can create bias. NR said that people may not answer a call from an unknown number. RJ stated that they publish a number to make tenants aware that the number is from STAR, and there is an option to have a call back. PH asked where STAR is in comparison to other organisations. RJ stated that there is a quarterly report from Acuity that shows where STARs sits nationally but it would not include this survey. The annual position will be sometime will be in June. EJ said will get a year-end report in the next few weeks and it does include some benchmarking. This can be shared in due course. 	
<u>7.</u>	<u>Operational Risk Register</u>	
7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RJ explained that the only proposed changes to the Strategic risk register relate to emerging challenges around compliance and temporary accommodation, where there are conversations of a possible hybrid model. At an operational level there is a risk around policies and procedures, and we have tasked SMT leads over the next 12 months to ensure that all are updated, and any short falls are written and submitted for approval. <p><u>Questions/comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PH highlighted the electrical and gas safety. There were some differences in the performance indicators and the emerging risk. MA stated it is around timing. The performance report will have been at the end of January, and the properties would not have been out of compliance at that point. RJ said that there is a proposal to put compliance property safety at an increased level. It was raised at FAR and will go through to the Board. A plan is underway to address all the compliance issues. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RJ said what this has highlighted is there are gaps in the systems data and the pipeline work where the contractor has not issued the certificate. There is sometimes a delay of the information whilst they review the information, but the test will have been done. • PH supported that compliance be escalated up as a risk. 		
<u>8.</u>	<u>Neighbourhood Management Report</u>		
	<p>Report presented by MA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited for 2 manager posts. Kasim Riaz appointed as Income and Sustainability Manager. Have made an offer to a Neighbourhood Service manager who is likely to start in early May. • There will be a reorganisation and looking to centralise the teams as well as being out on the patch. There has been two people that have left who had 30 years' service in Bridgnorth. Jez Morris and Mandy Cheatham. • Canternbrook office is proposed to be closed, and we briefed staff today. Castle View has been requested to move offices, and we are having conversations around that. • Neighbourhoods – there was an arson attack over Christmas. It is the second at this property. The tenant's ex-partner was part of a gang and there is an intergang feud. Our tenant has done nothing wrong; she is the victim, and we have done what we can and offered an alternative property, but she has declined. It has been raised with the Serious Crime unit at Bridgnorth police. We are struggling to resolve the problem. The neighbourhood is not happy. • ASB - have added charts which show the ASB information types of ASB and numbers. • Income collection over the Christmas period improved significantly and now is better than this time last year. • Cleaning services - we use Council cleaning company Shire Services. There is a significant increase in the cost (by 100%) to clean our community rooms, and we are looking at what we can do as it does not present value for money for our customers. • Shire Services are going to exit at the end of March 2026. We will need to procure cleaning services (section 20 process). 		

Questions/ Comments:

- RC thought that Canternbrook was a temporary closure. MA said that it is not certain, a proposal came through yesterday that might give us an option to stay there but have put in place a back-up plan and will make a decision based around the costs.
- RC said that there are a few changes in Bridgnorth regarding the buildings and the staff. She is pleased to hear that staff are at the job centre and food bank every week and engaging with the community.
- RC said there seems to be a bit of theme that there are more complicated cases that take more time and collecting rent is becoming more difficult because of external things. MA agreed there are a lot more complicated cases, there are also changes the

	<p>Council have put in place which gives us issues around income data. At one point it took 7 days for data to come in, so when chased people believed to have missed payments, we found they had already paid. The incomes team have worked with the Council to reduce those issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PH highlighted that there not a budget for hoarding. MA explained didn't have a budget for hoarding skips but have created some capacity to provide some skips for the Neighbourhoods team to help the tenants deal with the hoarding. • PH also asked what we are looking to do to address the cleaning services issue. MA explained the Hostels and Sheltered corridor costs have not increased so the proposal is we continue with Shire Services. The issue is with the community centres, and we are formulating a plan for them. It will be more appropriate to come back to committee and give an update. • The fact that Shire Services is withdrawing from the cleaning services means we will have to undertake a tender exercise and do a consultation with all of our blocks and do a formal process so we can charge for the service. That will happen during 25/26 ready for 26/27. 		
<u>9.</u>	<u>Strategy Delivery Programme Update</u>		
	<p>Report presented by RP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Tipton, programme support officer has been in place a month. He has made significant progress and reviewed the projects, removed duplicates and clarified exactly what the project will deliver. There are now 65 projects in the programme which is far more deliverable. BT has met with all the SMT leads to clarify realistic time scales. • Have rolled out the framework, and it gives staff everything they need to be using, the templates and risk registers branded as for STAR. • The next priority is to look at the 10 projects that have completed and will look at measuring the impact of those projects and understand if we achieved what we set out to. • JW added that he had an introductory session with BT, to understand the position and can provide assurance that it is a really solid piece of work, and the rigour is there to make sure our project management is right. Think it will have a wider benefit as we work to with our management team to get on top of contract management and health and safety, and we now have a real foundation to work with. <p><u>Questions/ Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 24. PH stated that the reference to being in a state of flux, raised alarm bells for him. What is not clear is what the 68 projects are, and he would like an update at the next meeting to see and understand what the projects are and what they hope to achieve. • PH also highlighted that 5 projects are off track. He asked for a bit of context. RP stated that the programme has moved on significantly since the report was written. It was written when BT 	RP	9 June 2025

	<p>was still doing fact finding. We are in a much better position now. There have been a few people that have left the business, and we did not have the status. Leela Cottey is responsible for a lot of projects relating to assets and we are in transition between handing projects over to staff. We are now in a more informed position on what projects we can afford to pause, where there might be capacity issues.</p>		
<u>10.</u>	<u>Policies Update</u>		
	There were none to be discussed by the committee on this occasion.		
<u>11.</u>	<u>Forward Plan Review</u> It has been agreed that will produce the forward plan for this committee and circulate that to members so if there is anything missing it can be added to the agenda for the next meeting. It has already been agreed to include abandoned calls and call handling, plus the damp and mould to be added to the agenda. Action 25: JM to circulate the forward plan for the next meeting to the committee members.	JM	9 June 2025
<u>12.</u>	<u>AOB</u>		
	None.		

Action Tracker:

Below is a snapshot of the new CSS action tracker. It will be updated and provided as part of the meeting papers. Any closed items will be filtered out once minutes are signed off but are still available on the main action tracker if required.

Action#	Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Status	Action Owner	Action Due By	Updates
1	06-Jun-24		First set of new measures focussing on operational / customer issues to be developed and added to the overall performance management framework.	Ongoing	RJ		Update 13/11: Discussed and advised action is ongoing
7	13-Nov-24	Welcome	RJ to include items on the agenda that require decisions where possible.	Closed	RJ	26-Feb-25	The Meeting of 26/02/2025 will receive information regarding policies which will come through this meeting in future and the sentiment is acknowledged. A forward plan is also being worked on which will cover what's required.
8	13-Nov-24	Operational Performance	PH asked if exception information could be included within all the areas reported, and to include what the plan is to resolve them. All to include details when reporting exceptions with plans to tackle them.	Closed	All	26-Feb-25	Advice noted and will follow that rule going forwards

9	13-Nov-24	Operational Performance	PH asked what the reasons are for failure on property standards and energy efficiency exceptions. DM advised would ask for more detail on the failures to be reported in future by the business analyst.	Closed	DM	26-Feb-25	These details are now being fed through to SMT via the monthly performance report starting at period 10. This info will filter through to CSC for the Q4 report.
10	13-Nov-24	Operational Performance	TF suggested to have another look at the energy efficiency targets to measure the programmes of work and the level of properties that need to be addressed to achieve the government target.	Closed	RP/DM	26-Feb-25	New Energy Efficiency targets have been set for 25/26 that no longer focus of SAP scores but making sure all properties meet EPC band C by 2030. This metric will start to filter through to CSC in Q1 25/26. The sustainability manager is managing the programme to achieve this.
11	13-Nov-24	Operational Performance	MA agreed to provide a commentary on ASB dissatisfaction and reasons behind it going forward.	Closed	MA	26-Feb-25	Update 26 Feb. As there are few responses to the ASB surveys, the results can be skewed. There were no responses in the performance report this month, so it is difficult element to report. Included as an appendix some graphs that show percentage resolved successfully and unsuccessfully and there are quite a few that people feel is ASB and it isn't because there is no evidence of the ASB. It tends to be a more negative response.

12	13-Nov-24	Operational Performance	PH flagged concern on the increasing metrics related to damp and mould and asked for more information in the next report, and more information regarding call handling and the number of abandoned calls. What is happening and the reason for the abandonments. MA to provide for the next meeting.	New	MA	26-Feb-25	Update 26 Feb. This was about the concern of the increase in damp and mould metrics and the call handling abandonment. More information has been provided on both areas in the papers. MA stated he now has responsibility for damp and mould. D&M is not significant levels but would prefer to come back with more data. PH said that the committee feels a bit unsighted as to the situation and would like details to go to March Board with more reassurance around damp and mould. Action Ongoing
13	13-Nov-24	Voice of the Customer	PH asked if LF was happy with the scrutiny action plan and progress being reported. LF advised that there is a 6-month interim update due in December. RJ to arrange for this report to be issued.	Closed	RJ	09-Dec-24	This has been shared with the subcommittee.
14	13-Nov-24	Voice of the Customer	PH queried actions being delayed due to the IT system for example communication of repair to the tenant. PH asked that the action plan is reviewed, and it was made clear what impact the delay to IT system might have.	Closed	RJ	26-Feb-25	The Tenant portal is scheduled for June and will be kept aligned to ensure the 'Big Door Knock' event and any other key exercises are not put at risk due to delays in roll out.

15	13-Nov-24	Voice of the Customer	PH asked if STAR is considering using a mystery shopper. This was agreed to be a good recommendation and will be worked through.	Closed	RJ	26-Feb-25	This has been added to the Customer Engagement Framework as an additional engagement tool and will be pursued.
16	13-Nov-24	Voice of the Customer	PH suggested that it would be good to include some diversity and protected characteristics insights in the complaints reporting.	Ongoing	RJ	9 June 2025	This is being worked on and we will report the findings in the year end Complaints performance report.
17	26-Feb-25	Operational Performance	PH raised on the major adaptations completed on time still under 50% of target. What are problems and what is being done to improve that. MA stated that it now falls under his area so he will investigate further.	New	MA	17-Mar-25	
18	26-Feb-25	Operational Performance	PH highlighted that Calls abandonment has gone in the wrong direction. PH asked if there could be an agenda item on its own at the next meeting as it is the second time over 200 abandoned calls have been reported. The new report should show how many are 15 sec or less, above 15 seconds and over that and what is being done to address it.	New	MA	09-Jun-25	
19	26-Feb-25	Operational Performance	PH stated the operations metrics are really helpful and it would be useful to add targets for those, including the abandonment calls.	New	RJ	09-Jun-25	This is currently being developed. Current statistics have been integrated and a project to review the phone system to ensure that accurate reporting is being produced. In line with this we plan to

							implement operational targets. In order to hold staff to account against KPI's we have to be confident that the data is correct which is not currently the case.
20	26-Feb-25	Operational Performance	EJ stated this was raised at the scrutiny panel and it became apparent that could do more to make STAR staff aware of the portal capabilities. It would be good to do some staff awareness. PH stated that it would alleviate issues with abandoned calls too if people have an alternative route to service.	New	EJ/RJ	09-Jun-25	This training is booked in and all staff will be trained as part of preparations for the Big Check-In.
21	26-Feb-25	Customer Insight	There were a couple of policies that PH thought should come through the CSC before going to Board. The damp and mould and no access policy, so when the consultation has happened with customers to bring it back to this committee to get sign off.	New	RP	09-Jun-25	Damp and mould will be ready to go to the next CSC as customer consultation is complete so resulting amends are complete. The majority of the policy is compliance driven and outside of our control, but customers had views on communication which has been updated. The No Access Policy is still in development in consultation with the Scrutiny Panel but can come to CSC once complete.
22	26-Feb-25	Customer Insight	PH asked if there have been any complaints related to the Housing Ombudsmen, and to include details of what stage they are at	New	RP	09-Jun-25	This can be included in the complaints element of the Voice of the Customer report. We will

			with the Housing Ombudsmen and where we are waiting for outcomes on it.				ensure that this is included for all future meetings.
23	26-Feb-25	TSM Survey	RC asked about the who responded to the survey. Do they get sampling from North and South areas. RJ explained that it is a mix stock type and by geographical areas. We can go back to Acuity and ask them to do a briefing on how they generate the survey sample.	New	RP/RJ	17-Mar-25	We believe this was covered as part of the presentation at the Board Away Day - if not we can ask them for an overview.
24	26-Feb-25	Strategy Delivery Programme	PH stated that the reference to being in a state of flux, raise alarm bells for him. What is not clear is what the 68 projects are and would like an update at the next meeting to see and understand what the projects are and hope to achieve.	New	RP	09-Jun-25	Programme Update included in board papers I believe.
25	26-Feb-25	Forward Plan	<p>It has been agreed that will produce the forward plan for this committee and circulate that to members so if there is anything missing it can be added to the agenda for the next meeting.</p> <p>It has already been agreed to include abandoned calls and call handling, plus the damp and mould to be added to the agenda.</p> <p>Action 25: JM to circulate the forward plan for the next meeting to the committee members.</p>	New	JM	09-Jun-25	Forward plan provided for upcoming CSS meetings and distributed to members. Going forwards this will also include known future approvals for items such as policies when known.