

**CUSTOMER FOCUS COMMITTEE**

Monday 20 May 2024

16.30

SHG Boardroom, Cornerstone

**PRESENT / IN-ATTENDANCE:****Members (Present):**

- Philip Argument
- Nasrin Fazal (Chair)
- Marie Gilluley
- Carol Jack
- Paula King

**Observers (Present):**

- Anne-Marie Bancroft, Director – Altair
- Bob McGechan, Customer Scrutiny Panel Member (for Item 03)

**Officers (In-attendance)**

- Andrew Broadhurst, Project Manager (Item 12)
- Chris Czyzyk, Customer Experience Manager (Item 04 & 05)
- Sam Donigan, Head of Assurance
- David Foxcroft, Change and Improvement Manager (Item 11)
- Anne-Marie Heil, Assistant Director of SKylight
- Jonny Kelly, Governance and Scrutiny Officer (Minute Taker)
- Alison Leach, Head of Data (Item 09)
- Martin Saunders, Head of Customer Access (Item 06, 07 & 08)
- Yasser Tufail, Head of Technology (Item 10)
- Si Welch, Director of Housing Plus (Lead Officer)

01	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	<b>Action</b>
	The Governance Manager sent her apologies. There were no declarations of interest.	
02a / 02b	<b>MINUTES AND ACTION MONITOR FROM MEETING 19 FEBRUARY 2024</b>	
	The minutes and action monitor from the meeting on 19 February 2024 were noted and approved.	
03	<b>CUSTOMER SCRUTINY PANEL ANNUAL REPORT (DECISION)</b>	
	<p>The Customer Scrutiny Panel Member introduced the report to update and provide assurance to the Customer Focus Committee on the work of the Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) during 2023-24 and to outline plans for the future development of its approach. The discussion included:</p> <p>The Committee noted that the ASPIRE Panel will encourage much wider engagement of customers. It was also noted that the wider pool of customers who applied for ASPIRE panel, but who were not successful, will</p>	

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	<p>be given opportunities to be involved in scrutiny exercises, which should create more opportunities for customers be involved in scrutiny.</p> <p>The Committee noted that a key area of focus for the ASPIRE panel will be to measure and monitor services that customers receive, and they asked whether they will be involved in the co-design and co-production of services. The Governance and Scrutiny Officer highlighted that although their main area of focus will on monitoring services and performance, there will be opportunities to be involved in consultation exercises for the development of services. He added that wider engagement with customers in consultation exercises when services are being designed will continue to be delivered locally within teams and by the Customer Engagement team.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the CSP’s involvement in the consultation exercise surrounding non-obligatory repairs and asked whether changes made to the service following the consultation would be promoted to customers.</p>	<b>JKea</b>
	<b>RESOLVED:</b> The Customer Focus Committee approved the Customer Scrutiny Panel Annual Report prior to publication.	
<b>04</b>	<b>Q4 2023/34 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK REPORT (ASSURANCE)</b>	
	<p>The Customer Experience Manager introduced the report providing the details of feedback received during 2023/24. The discussion included:</p> <p>The Committee noted that there has been an increase into phishing from external companies who are actively seeking customers to encourage them to complain about cases of legal disrepair, with a view of claiming compensation. The Customer Experience Manager explained that while SHG are happy to investigate complaints of any type, there is a need to ensure that they are genuine.</p> <p>The Committee asked how SHG are proposing to minimise the risk of cases of severe maladministration happening in the future. The Customer Experience Manager highlighted the importance of learning from the good practice that is published by the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) and ensure that SHG are compliant with it. He added that SHG are also continuing to carry out service reviews, which will take learnings from various forms of a wide range of customer feedback. The Director of Housing Plus cited an example of the Assets Team restructuring in response to learning and challenges to improve their service to customers, which will counter some significant risks associated with cases of potential severe maladministration.</p>	

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	<b>RESOLVED:</b> Customer Focus Committee noted and commented on the contents of this report.	
<b>05</b>	<b>SELF-ASSESSMENT AGAINST REVISED HOS CODE OF COMPLAINT HANDLING (DECISION)</b>	
	<p>The Customer Experience Manager introduced the report to provide Customer Focus Committee (CFC) with the self-assessment against the HOS Code of Complaint Handling and assurance on compliance with this. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Committee noted that HOS now appear to be some shift with the HOS focusing also on educating landlords and bringing them up to standard rather than disciplining them.</p> <p>The Committee were pleased to hear that HOS have identified SHG's revised Good Neighbour Policy and have asked to use it as a good practice example in a spotlight review article.</p> <p>The Committee noted that there are examples of housing organisations that have experienced severe maladministration being praised for the work that they have carried out to address their issues, rather than being criticised for them. This again potentially signals a shift in the culture of the HOS.</p> <p>The Committee asked what could trigger a revision or update of the Customer Feedback Policy and Procedure outside of a usual cycle. The Customer Experience Manager explained that a range of factors might trigger a review, such as new HOS guidance, issues arising from complaint handling or other feedback mechanisms that indicated system issues to be addressed.</p>	
	<b>RESOLVED:</b> Customer Focus Committee reviewed and commented on the details of the report and the self-assessment and approved the self-assessment ahead of submission to the Housing Ombudsman Service	
<b>06</b>	<b>CUSTOMER FEEDBACK AND COMPENSATION POLICY (ASSURANCE)</b>	
	<p>The Head of Customer Access introduced the report to inform Committee of recent changes to the Customer Feedback Policy and Procedure and the Compensation Policy and Procedure. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Committee noted that compensation budget had increased from £10k to £50k in the last 12 months.</p>	
	<b>RESOLVED:</b> The Customer Focus Committee noted the content of the report	
<b>07</b>	<b>PRESENTATION ON APPROACH TO CUSTOMER VULNERABILITIES (PRESENTATION)</b>	

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	<p>The Head of Customer Access introduced the presentation to explain the importance of data on customer vulnerabilities and the progress of collecting and using this data. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Committee noted that there is a lot of work for SHG to do to be well placed to identify and support customers who have vulnerabilities. They agreed that this should be a priority for SHG.</p> <p>The Committee asked how confident SHG are that they are provided with accurate information, when recording data from customers. The Head of Customer Access highlighted that gathering data in relation to vulnerabilities is fundamentally based on trust from the customer and them being comfortable to share the information. He added that third parties would rarely be used to gather this type of information.</p> <p>The Committee suggested that the term ‘vulnerability’ was not the right term to use going forward, due to the stigma attached to it. The Head of Customer Access confirmed that this was only being used currently as it is the language of HOS and Regulator, and that suitable, acceptable alternatives are being considered for conversations and interactions with customers.</p> <p>The Committee asked for assurances on whether the collection of vulnerability information falls in line with GDPR. The Head of Customer Access confirmed that SHG are legitimately allowed to gather data related to its purpose, consent is requested, and this is referenced in the tenancy agreement..</p> <p>The Committee asked how SHG intend to achieve the recording of vulnerabilities target of 30-35% of households by year-end, and how this fits with the Data Strategy. The Head of Customer Access explained the range of activities planned to achieve the target, including the Customer Roadshow and a census. Additionally, that SHG’s customer insight journey is key to this, as this will provide the infrastructure and opportunities to understand customers and where SHG needs to make changes.</p>	
<b>08</b>	<b>DEMONSTRATION OF CX FEEDBACK IT SYSTEM (PRESENTATION)</b>	
	<p>The Head of Customer Access introduced the presentation to demonstrate to Committee the benefits of the CX Feedback IT system in understanding customer feedback. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Committee asked whether there were any surprising trends evident since implementation of the new system. The Head of Customer Access explained that it was quite surprising to see that the satisfaction is not as high</p>	

	<p>as expected. It was noted that the easier SHG make it for customers to provide feedback, the more likely SHG are to receive negative feedback.</p> <p>The Committee discussed satisfaction surrounding repairs and asked how SHG aim to improve satisfaction in that area. The Head of Customer Access explained that SHG needs to do more to improve the timescales for repairs to be completed. He added that there is a larger cultural piece of work across at SHG that is needed to improve on this.</p> <p>The Committee noted that SHG will contact customers if they have left a comment on the feedback system, which should constitute a complaint but the customer has not recognised that they have not formally raised a complaint.</p> <p>The Head of Customer Access explained that complaints and poor feedback relating to repairs are frequently related to systematic reasons surrounding repairs, rather than the operative or standard of work.</p> <p>The Committee asked whether sharing the dashboard with everyone in the organisation had been considered to create accountability and ownership of performance within the organisation. The Director of Housing Plus highlighted the complications surrounding this, if names of staff members and their performance were easily visible more widely.. He added however that it would be kept under review to see if there may be a feasible way for staff to see their own performance against comparative, anonymised data.</p>	
<b>09</b>	<b>CUSTOMER INSIGHT (REPORT)</b>	
	<p>The Head of Data introduced the report to provide the Customer Focus Committee with an update on customer insight and data available to inform decision making. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Committee asked how SHG are progressing on its journey to becoming more data driven. The Head of Data highlighted that over the last 18 months, SHG's understanding and control of the data has improved considerably, however there is a lot more that can be done in this area.</p> <p>The Committee noted that it is clear to see the benefit of SHG's work surrounding data, based on the information that is presented at this Committee.</p>	
	<b>RESOLVED:</b> Customer Focus Committee noted and commented on the contents of this report	
<b>10</b>	<b>STOCKPORT HOMES TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY 2024-2027 (DECISION)</b>	

	<p>The Head of Technology introduced the report to present the Technology Strategy 2024-2027 to Customer Focus Committee for comment and approval. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Committee discussed the resource implications of the Strategy. The Head of Technology explained that it is hoped that the resources will be provided within the existing IT budget, however, when the scale of the Strategy is better understood, any resource requirements will be clearer.</p> <p>The Committee asked what the most challenging aspect to the delivery of the Strategy would be. The Head of Technology explained that the security and compliance aspects of the Strategy will provide considerable challenges. He highlighted the various legacy systems at SHG and the issues which present themselves when moving away from them. He stressed the importance of SHG being able to provide customers with assurance that their data is secure.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the outcomes from the previous Strategy. The Head of Technology explained that there are still remnants of the previous Strategy being delivered, however as technology changes at such a pace, e.g. with AI, SHG needs to adapt to those changes. He added that the last strategy naturally flows into the new one.</p> <p>The Committee were pleased to see that Enterprise Architecture actions had been captured in the Strategy. They queried and were reassured that those skills were already in place within the IT Team.</p> <p>Clarity was provided on the role of GM One network. The Committee noted the benefits that can be achieved from being part of the network, particularly from data sharing with the partnering authorities.</p> <p>The Committee discussed Objective Two - Support Innovation Through Exploration of Emerging Technologies. They highlighted that they were pleased to see this included in the Strategy, highlighting the importance of keeping pace with technology.</p>	
	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> Customer Focus Committee approved SHG's Technology Strategy 2024-2027 and Action Plan</p>	
<p>11</p>	<p><b>REPAIRS REVIEW UPDATE (PRESENTATION)</b></p>	
	<p>The Change and Improvement Manager introduced the presentation to provide the Customer Focus Committee with an overview of the new Service Review Framework and the output of the review into the Repairs offer. The discussion covered:</p>	

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	<p>The Committee asked whether the findings of the review were in line with what was expected. The Change and Improvement Manager highlighted that SHG went into this process openminded, which was important to avoid any bias. He provided assurance that a lot of what has been identified from the process is expected to be very deliverable and realistic. He confirmed that 77 actions that have been gathered from the process.</p> <p>The Committee highlighted the need to monitor the impact on culture that the recommendations may have. The Change and Improvement Manager explained that the faults with the service are spread across all parts of the business, therefore it is not only one element which can be blamed.</p> <p>The Committee stressed the importance of communication with customers, especially in situations where operatives cannot attend pre-planned appointments or where there are any changes to appointments.</p> <p>The Committee explained that they found the presentation useful and would like to continue with updates on the progress of the review, to maintain oversight of it.</p>	
<b>12</b>	<b>2023/24 CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN REPORT (ASSURANCE)</b>	
	<p>The Project Manager introduced the report to provide a summary of the 2023/24 Capital Programme. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Committee noted the report and thanked the service for the hard work involved with the capital programme.</p>	
	<b>RESOLVED:</b> Customer Focus Committee noted the content of the report	
<b>13</b>	<b>CUSTOMER FOCUS COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT (ASSURANCE)</b>	
	The Committee was invited to consider the report and the report was noted.	
<b>14</b>	<b>FORWARD PLAN</b>	
	The Governance and Scrutiny Officer introduced the forward plan of the expected business for the remainder of the year.	
<b>15</b>	<b>REVIEW OF THE MEETING</b>	
	<p>The Chair invited comments relating to the effectiveness of the meeting. Comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having slides sent to Customer Focus Committee beforehand worked well.</li> <li>• There was a good mixture of formats of items.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The agenda was long and included a lot of substantial items. This should be monitored in future meetings, to ensure that discussion is not restricted.</li> </ul>	
<b>16</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	The Committee noted that this was the final Board meeting for Si Welch, Director of Housing Plus before he retired. They thanked him for his work and wished him well for the future.	