CUSTOMER FOCUS COMMITTEE
Monday 18 May 2026
16.30
Microsoft Teams

PRESENT / IN-ATTENDANCE:

Members (Present):

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

Observers/guests (Present):

- Bob McGechan, ASPIRE Panel Chair *(Item 3)*

Officers (In-attendance)

- Anne-Marie Heil, Director of Customer Services & Lead Officer
- Paul Worthington, Director of Property *(Item 4)*
- Andrew Broadhurst, Project Manager – Investment *(Item 5)*
- Natalie Connolly, Complaints Manager *(Item 6)*
- Rachel Cossey, Governance Manager
- Emma Crick, Head of Property Management *(Item 8)*
- Christian Hartley, Assistant Director - Customer Excellence
- Leanne Merga, Head of Income and Money Advice *(Item 7)*
- Rebecca Parry, Governance Officer

01	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**	**Action**
	There were apologies from Louise Evans, Customer Engagement Team Leader, with regard to attending for Item 3. There were no declarations of interest.	
02	**MINUTES AND ACTION MONITOR FROM MEETING 16 FEBRUARY 2026**	
	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed Progress on the Action Monitor was noted.	
03	**ASPIRE PANEL UPDATE** (PRESENTATION)	
	The Chair of the ASPIRE Panel provided an update on the meeting held on 29 April 2026. The agenda included sessions on Customer Feedback, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), a Q&A Session with Carmel Chambers, Chief Executive and Nasrin Fazal, Chair of Customer Focus Committee and Member Responsible for Complaints and an update on the Competence and Conduct Standard. The Panel noted the volume of complaints and suggested that resolution at Stage One should be prioritised to reduce the number escalating to Stage Two. The Panel made suggestions for SHG's TSM targets.	

	The Panel felt that the Q&A session with Carmel and Nasrin was extremely positive, they gained a greater insight of their priorities for the organisation and complemented the openness and ease of conversation. They welcome more opportunities for sessions such as this. The Panel noted that they gained a greater understanding of the Competence and Conduct standards and sought assurance that contractors will be held to the same standard as employees. The Committee requested clarification on the Panel's involvement with TSMs. The Chair of ASPIRE confirmed that the Panel have suggested SHG set targets that are higher than national benchmarking targets. The Chair of Customer Focus Committee (CFC) gave thanks for the invite to the last ASPIRE Panel Meeting. Noting the insightful conversation and constructive challenge regarding complaints. Carol Jack requested an invite to attend the next ASPIRE Panel Meeting.	**RP**
	RESOLVED: That the Committee noted and commented on the Aspire Panel Update.	
04	**REPAIRS / DMC / AWAAB'S LAW UPDATE** (ASSURANCE)	
	The Director of Property provided an update on repairs, DMC (damp, mould, and condensation) and Awaab's Law. In the last quarter one emergency repair fell out of the completion deadline and performance remained strong. Non-emergency repairs completions were consistently above target with ambitions of reaching 100% compliance. Analysis was being completed to ensure that resource is distributed appropriately as the average days for completion has risen from around nine days to 10-11 days. The Director of Property explained that following further analysis the Repairs Policy may be updated to reflect a more accurate completion time: this will be returned to ASPIRE and to the Committee for consultation. The Director of Property advised that there have been continued improvements in the number of no accesses, which reflects the improved communications with the customer, ensuring appointments meet needs and follow up appointments are booked while on site with the operative. SHG continue to perform effectively against Awaab's Law requirements, and introduced five new KPIs, and an automation tool to enable timely inspection reports, improve data accuracy, and enhance coordination between internal teams and specialist contractors. It was noted that seasonal pressures impact the volume of emergency hazards reported.	

	Performance for the collection of stock condition data remained strong the percentage of surveyed properties increased to 90.08% in April 2026, with forecast completion of 96% on 18 May 2026. No accesses have been lower than anticipated. The Director of Property suggested that future reports include an update on all areas within the Safety and Quality Standard. The Committee agreed that this would be useful and confirmed should be included in future reports. The Committee requested clarification on the acronym FWT. It was confirmed that this was Fixed Wire Testing. The Director of Property recognised that terminology has been inconsistent in reporting, and this was being standardised. The Chair of the Committee gave thanks for the report; the Committee recognised that their previous feedback had resulted in more insightful reporting. The Committee discussed the positive no access figures and sought clarification on repairs that fell out of target. The Director of Property confirmed that these were more complex repairs, requiring several visits or resources. The Director of Customer Services added that a deep dive investigation was also underway to analyse repairs and property type.	
	RESOLVED: The Committee noted the current performance.	
05	**2025 – 26 CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN REPORT** (ASSURANCE)	
	The Project Manager - Investment reflected on feedback from the Committee on improving accessibility of content in the report. An infographic was developed to highlight progress in 2025/26, including the value invested, customer satisfaction and an increased response to customer surveys. The key priorities for investment centre around Fire Safety, Estate Regeneration, Stock Condition Survey findings and Energy and Sustainability. The Project Manager summarised the report and informed the Committee that the high-rise blocks in Brinnington have been fitted with new digital door entry systems. Significant work has been completed following the findings of Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) surveys. There has been a 10 per cent improvement in response rates to the customer satisfaction surveys shared following completed works. The Committee welcomed the format changes to the report; the information was more accessible and allowed for a greater discussion. The Committee queried whether there are plans to roll out the upgraded door entry systems to the other SHG managed blocks and whether these hold any recording ability. The Project Manager explained that there were no immediate plans to roll	

	out these systems to other blocks but there may be scope in the long-term business plan for other high-rise buildings. The Director of Customer Services added that the CCTV in communal areas is already monitored, and the two systems will work independently of each other. The Committee discussed appendix one and asked about the variance between spend and budget and whether additional risks have been discovered during the project and if the additional risk management was necessary. The Director of Customer Services explained that for the project in question external funding had been received which accounted for the variance. The Committee requested that in future, where appropriate, additional narrative on significant variance between spend and budget is included in the report to provide assurance to the committee. The Committee praised the increase in survey response rates and sought clarification on what had changed. It was explained that the Investment Team are now using CX Feedback a function of Civica CX which allows for surveys to be sent out digitally. The Committee queried how social value is measured and reported on. The Director of Customer Services advised that improvements to the reporting and evidencing were being developed, particularly around contractors and suppliers reporting their social value.	**AB**
	RESOLVED: The Committee noted the content of the report.	
06	**CUSTOMER FEEDBACK QUARTER FOUR 2025-26 & YEAR END REPORT** (ASSURANCE)	
	The Complaints Manager introduced the report and advised that SHG were in a stable service position, with complaint volumes remaining broadly consistent compared with the previous year. There was a reduction in the volume of complaints related to Repairs, however, there was an increase in complaints related to Assets, Allocations and Customer Finance. These reflect sector-wide pressures such as the introduction of Awaab's Law, demand for housing and utilities price increases. A national rise in Housing Ombudsman cases was reflected in SHG figures. The maladministration rate remains favourable compared to national benchmarking figures. The increase in MP and Councillor enquiries was impacted by the introduction of a central reporting and monitoring system. The Committee discussed the local political environment and potential impact on the use of formal complaint channels. The Committee requested deeper analysis on the correlation between areas with high volumes of MP and Councillor enquiries and the number of complaints received in these areas, to understand any trends and identify areas for improvement.	**NC**

	The Committee found the learning from feedback section very useful and welcomed the inclusion of this in the presentation. The Chair praised the increase in the number of compliments received.	
	RESOLVED: That the Committee noted and commented on the report.	
07	**CUSTOMER RELATED DEBTS WRITE OFFS 2025/26** (DECISION)	
	The Head of Income and Money Advice presented the report, which provides transparency in managing irrecoverable customer debts and supports financial governance. There has been improved reporting of these debts which explains the increase in total compared to 2024/25. Debt write offs are categorised as follows: • Former Tenant Arrears • Rechargeable Repairs • Court Costs The Committee requested clarification on the threshold for debt being written off. The Head of Income and Money Advice explained that the following reasons would result in debt write off: • Customer deceased and unable to release from their estate. • Not economical to pursue – the value of the debt is lower than the costs to pursue. • Persistent attempts to recover the debt over a two-year period has failed. The Head of Income and Money Advice confirmed that there is a streamlined system to identify these debts. The Committee asked what success would look like in this area. The Head of Income and Money Advice it was explained that the increased use of automation in identifying this debt will support high cash levels, an external provider has also been consulted to assist in identifying service improvements. The Committee sought clarification on the rechargeable repairs process. The Head of Income and Money Advice confirmed that where possible, repairs are charged up front, and recharges are added in particular circumstances. The Assistant Director - Customer Excellence confirmed that a recharge will never be written off while a customer is a current tenant and SHG were sector leaders in managing arrears.	
	RESOLVED: The Committee noted and approved a total of 790 debts amounting to £402,244.70 for write-off during 2025/2026.	
08	**TENANCY TURNOVER REPORT** (ASSURANCE)	

	The Head of Property Management introduced the report, providing an overview of trends, reasoning for terminations and the financial impact of void properties. During 2025/26 turnover decreased and only 4.1 per cent of stock became available for relet. As of March 2026, there were 9,568 applicants registered with Homechoice. There were no ‘difficult to let’ properties, with flats averaging over 200 bids per advert and houses averaging 350 bids per advert. The Head of Property Management outlined the pressures in homelessness and demand for social housing more broadly. Mutual exchange and rightsizing allow for tenants to move to properties which meet their need. Both services have high customer satisfaction, with rightsizing offering financial support to facilitate the move. The Committee complimented the property teams on their commitment to supporting tenants under challenging circumstances and acknowledged the pressure on services. The Director of Customer Services confirmed that the report formed part of a wider suite of reports on Housing Need and Homelessness which will be taken to SMBC’s Council Leadership Team and the Scrutiny Committee. SHG continue to lobby for funding for development, however, there was currently no easy nor immediate resolution. The Committee recognised the magnitude of the situation and agreed that SHG Board and council officers should be kept advised. The Chair of the Customer Focus Committee confirmed she will raise this as part of her regular feedback item on the CFC to SHL Board at the July Board meeting. The Committee queried whether Right to Buy (RTB) had impacted on stock levels and would SHG consider building houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs) to alleviate the pressures. The Head of Property confirmed there had been an influx of applicants prior to the change in RTB discount, and the team continued to receive applications on a weekly basis. The number of properties sold historically under RTB had already had a significant impact on stock levels. The Head of Property confirmed that there were no plans to build HMOs due to the significant management challenges that this type of stock poses.	
	RESOLVED: That the Committee note the contents of the report	
09	**INSPECTION UPDATE** (VERBAL)	
	The Director of Customer Services reflected on the result following the recent inspection from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH): Stockport Council have been awarded a C1, the highest rating. The efforts of SHG colleagues have been instrumental in achieving this. The Director of Customer Services explained that the Annual Engagement Meeting with the RSH is scheduled for 15 June 2026 and updates on the Stock Condition Surveys and the Fire Risk Assessment actions will be expected.	

	An action plan following the inspection has been developed including 100 per cent completion of Stock Condition Surveys and FRA Actions, system implementations for Compliance and Assets, Awaab's Law compliance and capturing the unfiltered voice of the customer. The Director of Customer Services updated that the Regulation Self-Assessment and a full Regulation Report will be presented to SHG Board in July. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair offered thanks and congratulations.	
10	**CUSTOMER FOCUS COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT** (ASSURANCE)	
	The Director of Customer Services gave an overview of the report, which included regular updates on Customer Voice activity and progress on the Customer Experience Strategy. The Committee noted the breadth of opportunities for customers to get involved. Following a request from the Chair of the Customer Focus Committee, further detail has been provided on the Rent and Service Charge consultation. The outcome of the Rent and Service Charge consultation showed the themes align with the feedback on TSMs. The Director of Customer Services updated on the uptake of the new Customer Portal, and the year-end Customer Finance position was positive, particularly given the challenging environment. The Committee reflected on the positivity of the report and acknowledged the range of updates received and asked whether analysis was being completed on customers who have signed up but still choose to contact SHG using traditional methods. The Assistant Director – Customer Excellence advised that analysis work was scheduled following initial rollout.	
	RESOLVED: That the Committee noted and commented on the contents of this report.	
11	**FORWARD PLAN**	
	The Governance Manager advised that the ASPIRE Annual Report would be presented to the Committee at the next meeting in August.	
12	**REVIEW OF THE MEETING**	

	The Committee shared that the standard and quality of reports was excellent, the accessible formats are much appreciated. This allowed for focussed discussion enabling the committee to draw out key areas to challenge and discuss. It was noted that the use of case studies, where appropriate would assist in providing context in reports. The Committee concluded that this was an engaging and valuable session.	

AUTHOR: Rebecca Parry **DATE: 19/05/2026**
LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF:22/05/26 **CHAIR APPROVED DRAFT: 30/05/2026**