

Customer involvement and communities team report: 2024-2025

The I&C team's work continues to evolve as the work it delivers is key to Selwood Housing meeting the requirements of the Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard introduced by the Regulator for Social Housing in April of this year. Our key aim is to bring clear customers' voices and views into service design through inclusive, efficient, and effective methods whilst flexibly responding to the needs of the business. This has been a strong year, building on our foundations as a team in 2023. We have renewed our team's strategy which we are taking to Board in July. We have involved customers during the recent revision.

This report highlights some of the major achievements and details how we are meeting our regulatory requirements.

Scrutiny:

The Marketing and Communications team have now acted on all actions taken forward from the scrutiny team's review into operational communications. The results include:

- a communications guidance document for staff.
- a set of 23 new templates for the most important and sensitive customer letters we send out.
- 'communications champions' within the business with continued training for them.

Their follow-up review into Damp & Mould services was approved by board in July 2024. The scrutiny team then carried out a review to inform the new Asset Management Strategy and focused on Planned Programme prioritisation. The team reported their findings to Board in March 2025. The recommendations focused more on how we communicate to customers throughout the process. All seven recommendations were agreed by management, six have been completed and the final one has been scheduled. They have just started their new review into General Needs Caretaking.

Four new members have joined during 2023-2024 and have all undergone induction and mandatory training. The team have continued to develop their knowledge and skills through TPAS membership and courses and sent delegates to 8 three the regional & national Tenant Engagement Conferences in May, July and October, giving them an opportunity to network with other scrutiny members from across the country.

Working with the business performance & insight team we produce an information pack to share with the scrutiny team ahead of quarterly business meetings, so that they have the key information on 'Rant & Rave' customer surveys, Tenant Satisfaction Measure data and finance & performance ahead of the meeting presentations.

(please see appendix 1).

Together with Tenants:

Selwood Housing adopted the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants Charter in 2022. In April 2024 we agreed a new action plan with the scrutiny team and managers across the business as to how we meet the charter's commitments. We have added actions against the new 7th commitment of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. Ahead of each quarterly business meeting the I&C team provide our scrutiny team with written updates on the progress of each action within the plan. This allows them time to reflect, discuss and bring questions/challenges to the quarterly business meeting. Each member takes ownership of monitoring one or two commitments.

(please see appendix 2).

Customer involvement:

We now ensure that all creations or rewrites of customer-facing policies and strategies incorporate customer voice. We have developed strong working relationships with heads of service and are increasing the understanding of what we do and the importance of hearing and considering the needs and views of those who live in our housing.

Over 2024-2025 we have worked on one strategy, ten policies and four customer experiences plus a code of conduct and fire safety assessment. Customers have also helped us revise our company values. These have been delivered through a mixture of in-person and online focus groups, community pop-ups, digital questionnaires, surveys and opinion polls.

(please see appendix 3).

Communications - 'Warm List' and newsletter:

Our Customer Involvement newsletter is sent to the I&C 'warm list' which is a list of customers who have signed up to hear more about involvement. It contains details of all forthcoming involvement opportunities plus updates on recent projects which we call our 'you said, we did' reporting. This maintains regular engagement, interest and recognises the value of our volunteers and the importance Selwood Housing puts on hearing their customers' voices. We have started trialling a quarterly postal newsletter to 227 customers and monthly electronic newsletters to 1440 customers with open rate of above 50%.

Customer Conversation 2024:

This is our household survey that is carried out every three years, aimed at understanding our customers priorities and responses to a series of questions, the results of which are then used to shape our thinking and influence our services and policies. We sent out 8593 copies of the survey: one to each individual tenant (including joint tenants) and to all shared

ownership customers. We received 1,192 responses (789 online and 403 postal returns).

The survey asked for feedback on our main service areas, and we had a response rate of 14% providing a solid level of representation. The margin of error, using a confidence level of 95% and based on 1192 responses received out of a population of 8593 surveys sent out, is +/- 2.63%. Most respondents (over 80%) were aware of customer involvement opportunities, with nearly 10% of the remainder keen to know more. We are currently monitoring an action plan based on customers' responses.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion:

We have started collecting EDI information anonymously from involved customers who are willing to share their details. This helps us benchmark the diversity of those we are reaching, so that we can improve engagement in demographics not attending. We are part of the new EDI project and recently used the Customer Conversation 2024 to collect new & updated data so that we can better understand their needs and direct our services in line with new consumer standards.

Complaints Forum:

The complaints' staffing team has grown and taken on full ownership of the customer forum. The forum was established in 2022-2023 following a recommendation from a scrutiny review. The I&C team worked with the complaints manager to create the forum and its processes. We continue to help with advice, promotion and the recruitment of new customers. There are six members that meet quarterly to review five recently closed complaints and score how they were managed against set criteria.

Sheltered Forum:

We also helped the initiation and set-up of a new Sheltered Housing Forum, as with the complaints' forum, the sheltered staffing team have taken on facilitation of this.

Decarbonisation project – resident engagement:

We supported the bid writing for Wave 3 of the Decarbonisation project.

Warminster Rehousing:

We supported the customer consultation stage with advice, drop-ins, 121 visits and managing phone & email correspondence.

Communities:

We supported the legacy project from the Warminster Priority Neighbourhoods' project of 2023-2024. We led on applying for grants and secured £15,000.00 from the Area Board, the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Town Council. These monies have funded a joint project with

Wiltshire Police to install & manage CCTV in one of our neighbourhoods with high criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.

We have renewed our funding commitment to local charity, Trowbridge Futures, for another three years at the same amount. This £30,000 contract helps fund a neighbourhood connector who is working across our three main housing estates in Trowbridge. They facilitate and promote a kindness cafe, veterans' group, cookery sessions and a community fridge which feeds 180 people a week on one of our larger estates. They have been hosting pop up health clinics with the NHS, helping to reach those who struggle to access public services for a variety of reasons such as social isolation and mobility issues. Visitors to the pop-up clinics have received vaccinations, blood pressure readings and general health advice including diet and nutrition. The team have been working with Wiltshire Council to host accessible and manageable fitness sessions and the demand from local residents has been high.

Stronger Communities Funding:

During 2024-2025 we distributed £30,325.51 from our Stronger Communities Fund to enable 20 community projects across 8 towns & villages where we have our housing stock. We have recently held a customer focus group to inform the renewal of the Stronger Communities Funding Policy which is revised every 3 years.

We have worked with the procurement team to reinstall the social value clause in appropriate high value contracts of over £1 million. Contract Managers and Procurement now have a process in place to engage with the I&C team pre-award; payments will be made on an annual basis, on the anniversary of the contract's commencement. This decision will guarantee ongoing funding to boost the Stronger Community Fund and allow us to continue supporting our communities. We have joined a local funding network to further promote the fund to a wider area of our housing stock.

As part of our application process, we continue to request details of total project cost, breakdown of all costs and how much of the project is self-funded. We also ask if they're applying to other grant funders and what amount they've requested. In most cases, being approved for one grant will often unlock access to another grant, therefore helping secure more funding for the community. We only pay out once any necessary match-funding is confirmed so that we know the project is viable. We can then calculate how much money has been brought into our communities in total. Accumulatively these 20 projects secured an additional £233,596.74 in addition to the money donated from us, that was spent in our communities.

(please see appendix 4)

Appendix 1: Scrutiny:[Review #15 Operational Communications](#)[Review #16: Damp & Mould Services](#)[Review #17: Planned Programmes](#)**Appendix 2: Together with Tenants:**[Together with Tenants Charter & Action Plan](#)**Appendix 3: Customer involvement opportunities:**

Quarter	Subject	Involvement type	Number of participants
Q1 FY25	Domestic Abuse Policy	Questionnaire	7
Q1 FY25	Platinum Court new development	Focus group	3
Q1 FY25	New Build moving in experience	Survey	13
Q2 FY25	Fencing & Boundaries Policy	Focus group	8
Q2 FY25	Fencing & Boundaries Policy	Survey	20
Q2 FY25	Tenancy Fraud Policy	Focus group	5
Q2 FY25	Fire Risk Assessment changes	Focus group	6
Q2 FY25	Development Strategy	Online focus group	2
Q2 FY25	People Strategy (Values)	Community pop-up	13
Q2 FY25	People Strategy (Values)	Opinion poll	29
Q3 FY25	People Strategy (Values)	Focus group	6
Q3 FY25	Contractors' Code of Conduct	Questionnaire	15
Q3 FY25	Alterations Policy	Focus group	9
Q3 FY25	Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	Focus group	9
Q4 FY25	Licensing Policy	Focus group	8
Q4 FY25	Aids & Adaptations Policy	Focus group	9
Q4 FY25	Decent Homes Letters	Desktop review	7
Q4 FY25	Succession Policy	Focus group	9
Q4 FY25	Shared Ownership	Online focus group	4
Q4 FY25	Awards & Incentives	Focus group	13
Total			195

Appendix 4: Stronger Communities' Fund:

	Q1 FY25	Q2 FY25	Q3 FY25	Q4 FY25
Monies received into SCF budget from procurement	£6,892	£3,825.04	£0.00	£1093.42
Number of SCF grant applications received	9	5	5	5
Number of SCF grants given	7	4	5	4
Total amount given out in grants	£7,635.51	£6,687.00	£9,003.00	£7,000.00
Total amount of match funding from partners	£27,359.55	£500.00	£109,436.19	£96,301.00
Total funding invested by grant givers in our communities (SCF and match funding)	£34,995.06	£7,187.00	£118,439.19	£103,301.00