

ORWELL RESIDENTS GROUP MEETING MINUTES

Monday 29th June 2026 6pm - 8pm
Crane Hill Lodge

			Action by
1.0	Attendees	ORG Maggi Miller (MM) - Chair Mary Ager (MA). John Burman (JB) Val George (VG) – on Teams Staff Tony Long (TL) – for item 3.0 Jamie Hopkins (JH) – for item 3.0 Michelle Lunt (ML) Sarah Parramint (SP) Ellie Darling (ED) – TPAS Associate (for item 4.0)	
	Apologies	Claire Townley (CT)	
2.0	Minutes of the previous meeting	The minutes of the meeting held on 18 th May 2026 were agreed.	
3.0	Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs)	TL introduced the item and confirmed that the draft policy had been circulated with the agenda. He explained that STAIRS is similar in principle to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). While FOIA does not apply to housing associations, STAIRS has been introduced to address this gap. It aims to provide tenants with: • More rights to access information from their landlord • More accessible, open and transparent information • Greater insight into services and decision-making The draft STAIRS Policy will be presented to the Board in the coming weeks. Prior to this, it is important to ensure that the policy meets the needs of tenants.	

		TL outlined the three key elements of STAIRS: • Publication Scheme – proactively making information available on the website • Information Requests – enabling tenants to request information from their landlord • Review and Complaints Process – to be introduced next year The Publication Scheme covers areas such as performance, safety, governance and services. Information must be easy to find and understand, and the required arrangements must be in place by October 2026. Examples of information that will be included within the Publication Scheme are: • Governance – organisational structure, executive team and tenant consultation arrangements • Finance – audited accounts and procurement information • Performance – performance information, with more detailed reporting planned in future • Lists and Registers – gas and fire safety, asbestos, legionella, building safety, damp and mould information TL also explained that certain categories of information fall outside the scope of STAIRS, including commercially sensitive information such as HR policies, investment strategies and information relating to non-social housing properties. TL explained that from April 2027 tenants who cannot find the information they require on the website will be able to submit a written information request via email, letter or text message. Orwell will be required to respond within 30 calendar days. Requests must relate to homes and services rather than an individual's personal data. Customers can already request access to their personal information through the Subject Access Request (SAR) process. To ensure that information is shared appropriately and in compliance with relevant legislation, Orwell is recruiting a Data Protection Officer. If the requested information is not available and the tenant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they will be able to make a formal complaint. This will follow the established internal and external complaints processes, including access to the Housing Ombudsman Service. The proposed timeline and next steps are as follows: • Consultation on the policy • Finalisation of publication requirements and supporting documents • Publication of STAIRS information on the website • October 2026 – Publication Scheme goes live	
--	--	--	--

		• April 2027 – Information requests can be submitted • Ongoing review and continuous improvement	
	Website update	JH explained that, to complement the work being undertaken on STAIRS, Orwell has commissioned a local company to design a new website. In addition to supporting STAIRS requirements, it was recognised that users have often found it difficult to locate information on the current website, as it has attempted to serve too many different audiences and purposes. JH advised that the first version of the new website had been received that day and had been presented to the Executive Team earlier in the day. He explained that the photographs currently included are placeholders and will be replaced with Orwell-specific images as the site continues to develop. The website features a series of headings with drop-down menus and has been structured to make it easier for users to access information relevant to them. The ORG agreed that the website appeared more modern and user-friendly. Members asked whether the chatbot functionality would provide live chat support or automated responses. JH explained that the chatbot will initially provide automated responses, with live chat functionality to be introduced once dedicated resources have been agreed. JH advised that there will now be a two-week period of refinement and testing before the new website goes live on 14 July.	
	Policy	ML shared the STAIRS consultation feedback from My Orwell Voice (MOV). STAIRs Policy Consultation – Top 5 Key Themes 1. Policy is generally easy to understand ○ All respondents found the policy either <i>very easy</i> (57%) or <i>easy</i> (43%) to read. ○ Comments described it as clear, straightforward and written in plain language. 2. Information access is mostly clear ○ 100% of respondents felt the policy clearly or mostly explains what information can be accessed and how to find it. ○ A few suggestions were made to include contact details directly within the policy. 3. Support for transparency, but some scepticism remains ○ Most respondents felt the policy is open and honest about information sharing (86% positive). ○ One respondent raised concerns about organisational transparency and whether information requests would be dealt with effectively in practice. 4. Accessibility and practical support could be improved	

		○ Suggested improvements included: ▪ Adding email/contact details for complaints and enquiries. ▪ Providing support for people with disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health conditions. ▪ Recognising that some customers may struggle with online processes and may need advocacy support. 5. Keep it shorter and more concise ○ The most common improvement suggestion was reducing the length of the policy. ○ Comments noted that it was clear but potentially too wordy, with one respondent asking whether it could fit into two pages. Overall Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with respondents finding the policy clear, understandable and easy to use. The main recommendations were to shorten the document, make contact details more visible, and ensure accessibility support is available for customers who may need extra help. Members had no further feedback.	
4.0	TPAS – Scrutiny topic	ED explained that there were five key stages to the ASB scrutiny scoping process: 1. Scoping – defining the scope, objectives and key questions for the review. 2. Desktop Review and Methodology Confirmation – reviewing relevant documentation, performance data and policies, and agreeing the approach to the scrutiny. 3. Reality Checks – gathering evidence through activities such as focus groups and discussions with staff.	
		4. Scrutiny – holding a scrutiny or bootcamp session involving ORG members and tenants who have experienced ASB. This stage may not be necessary if sufficient evidence has already been gathered through the reality-check activities. 5. Report Writing – producing a report setting out the findings and recommendations. ED advised that she could prepare an initial draft report for consideration and feedback from the ORG. The headline question for the scrutiny, agreed at the previous meeting, was: How can the Housing Department communicate more effectively with victims to manage their expectations of the ASB service?	

A number of additional questions had also been identified. ED advised that these had been categorised into supplementary recommendation questions and knowledge questions to help structure the review.

Supplementary recommendation questions:

- How can the policy better support victims rather than perpetrators?
- How can tenant education help reduce perceptions of blame towards Orwell?
- How could community initiatives help divert attention from ASB issues?

Knowledge questions:

- How does Orwell classify ASB? What constitutes nuisance?
- How many cases are received?
- Are there any identifiable patterns?
- How are customer expectations communicated? (Expectation vs reality)
- What do Housing Officers communicate to victims and to perpetrators?
- How much of the policy is explained to victims?
- How many people are affected by individual ASB cases? Could some cases be due to personality clashes or differing tolerance levels?

ED presented the scrutiny scoping template, which included the headline question and the three supplementary questions.

She recommended that future scrutiny reviews maintain a focused approach by limiting the number of questions being explored, helping to ensure that the review remains manageable and produces clear outcomes.

ED asked members to consider whether any areas should be deemed out of scope. Members suggested that perpetrators should be excluded from the review, as they may be less likely to engage and discussions involving them could become highly emotive or defensive.

ED posed a number of questions to help define the intended outcomes of the scrutiny review. Members provided the following feedback.

What outcomes would you expect? What are you trying to change or improve?

- Improve the clarity of expectations for victims accessing the ASB service
- Increase the number of community initiatives aimed at preventing or addressing ASB
- Review and revise the ASB Policy, where appropriate

How will success be measured?

Members discussed the need to identify both quantitative and qualitative measures of success, particularly in relation to assessing whether customer expectations are being communicated more clearly. ED suggested introducing a KPI to monitor progress over an initial three-month period, with a further review after one year to assess longer-term impact.

What's good now that you want to keep?

Members discussed the importance of identifying current strengths within the service that should be retained as part of any future improvements.

What else could change (positive or negative) that you should be aware of?

- An increase in the volume of ASB cases reported
- Perpetrators feeling unfairly targeted or victimised by changes to the service
- Internal factors, including the Customer Insight into Action (CIIA) priorities and the ASB audit.

ED suggested that the following information would provide a good starting point for the desktop review:

- How does Orwell classify ASB? What constitutes nuisance? ASB policy
- How many cases are received? Performance data
- Are there any identifiable patterns? Performance data
- How are customer expectations communicated? (Expectation vs reality) ASB procedure, supporting leaflets, website, standard emails/letters
- What do Housing Officers communicate to victims and to perpetrators? Same as above. Could do a reality check with Housing Officers.

		• How much of the policy is explained to victims? Reality checking with staff and tenants • How many people are affected by individual ASB cases? Could some cases be due to personality clashes or differing tolerance levels? Performance and trends • Audit on ASB in February • CIIA priority • What are the existing Orwell-led/community initiatives? Next Steps It was agreed that the next stage of the scrutiny process would be as follows: ACTION: CT will gather the information identified for the desktop review and provide it to members at least one week in advance of the next ORG meeting on 3 August. Members agreed that the information should be uploaded to MOV rather than circulated by email. Following review of the information, ED and the ORG will agree the scrutiny methodology and identify the individuals and groups they wish to engage with as part of the evidence-gathering process.	CT
5.0	KPIs	The KPI report will be shared with members at a future meeting.	
6.0	Any other business	ML advised that ORG members have been invited to attend the Board meeting in September to discuss a number of proposed new initiatives. Members indicated that they would be able to attend, provided sufficient notice was given. MA advised that she would be able to attend if the meeting was held in the afternoon. ACTION: ML agreed to circulate the meeting date once confirmed. ML also advised that recruitment for two new tenant members of the Customer Insight Committee (CIC) would commence the following day. The opportunity will be advertised on the Orwell website and social media channels and promoted to customers via email and SMS. An Engagement Survey will be undertaken in September to gather customer feedback on how they would like to be involved with Orwell and what would make participation easier and more accessible. ML reminded members about the upcoming customer roadshows in Ipswich and Lowestoft. VG advised that she may require transport assistance but would confirm this nearer the time. ACTION: CT to send invitations to members and provide a briefing on their role at the events.	ML CT

		ML advised that CHAT has been temporarily paused while a review and refresh of the programme is undertaken. She is considering running a themed session during Quarter 4.	
7.0	Date of next ORG meeting	3 rd August 2026 (18:00 at Crane Hill Lodge)	