

ORWELL RESIDENTS GROUP MEETING MINUTES

Monday 3rd August 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 Rob Longfoot (RL) Michelle Lunt (ML) Sarah Parramint (SP) Claire Townley (CT) Ellie Darling (ED) – TPAS Associate (for item 4.0)	
	Apologies	There were none.	
2.0	Minutes of the previous meeting	The minutes of the meeting held on 29 th June 2026 were agreed.	
3.0	Competence and Conduct Standard	TL provided an overview of the Competence and Conduct Standard and explained the reasons for its introduction. He advised that the standard forms part of the new regulatory framework for social housing in England and is intended to strengthen professional standards across the sector and promote greater respect for customers. The standard has been influenced by key sector developments, including the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Social Housing Green Paper and the death of Awaab Ishak. TL also explained that the Regulator of Social Housing has been given powers to establish and oversee the new standard, which will come into effect on 1 October 2026.	

What is the Standard?

TL explained that the Competence and Conduct Standard focuses on ensuring that housing professionals have the appropriate skills, knowledge and behaviours to deliver high-quality services to tenants.

He outlined the key elements of the standard as follows:

- **Competence** – ensuring staff have the appropriate qualifications, skills and knowledge to perform their roles effectively.
- **Conduct** – promoting professional behaviours, standards and a positive organisational culture.
- **Qualification requirements** – applying to individuals in a substantive role responsible for managing the delivery of housing management services and/or overseeing services provided to social housing tenants.
- **Customer involvement** – encouraging tenants to play a role in shaping expectations of housing professionals and services.
- **Eliminating poor practice** – focusing on reducing stigma, bias and poor practice, and promoting a culture of respect and accountability.

Who is in scope?

TL explained that the Competence and Conduct Standard applies to different groups of employees depending on whether the focus is competence or conduct.

Competence

- Senior staff with responsibility for service delivery and organisational culture
- Managers and leaders responsible for housing services

Conduct

- Frontline, tenant-facing colleagues across customer services, housing, property, repairs, estates and compliance services

Orwell's Approach to Competence

TL outlined Orwell's approach to meeting the requirements of the standard.

- Roles have been assessed based on the level of responsibility and impact on customers
- Twelve roles have been identified as being within scope of the standard
- Nine of these roles require either a relevant qualification or additional top-up learning
- Support will be provided through learning opportunities, mentoring and ongoing development

Qualification Requirements

TL advised that the qualification requirements vary depending on the level of responsibility within the organisation.

- Senior Housing Managers are required to hold a Level 4 qualification
- Senior Housing Executives are required to hold a Level 5 qualification
- Three employees already hold the required qualification
- One employee is required to complete top-up modules
- At least 50% of relevant employees must be registered on an appropriate qualification programme by October 2027
- All relevant employees must be fully qualified by October 2029

TL noted that the estimated cost of delivering the qualification requirements is approximately £25,000.

Orwell's Approach to Conduct

TL explained that Orwell's approach to the Conduct element of the standard will build on existing policies and practices, while ensuring alignment with the new regulatory requirements.

Key elements of the approach include:

- Updating Orwell's existing Code of Conduct to reflect the expectations of the Competence and Conduct Standard
- Building on the organisation's current framework, which is aligned to National Housing Federation principles
- Continuing to embed professionalism, accountability, respect, fairness and a strong customer focus throughout the organisation
- Aligning conduct expectations with learning and development, performance management and appraisal processes

TL noted that the intention is to strengthen and formalise behaviours that are already expected within the organisation, ensuring that colleagues consistently demonstrate professional standards in their interactions with customers and each other.

Customer Consultation and Influence

TL explained that customer involvement is a key requirement of the Competence and Conduct Standard and that customers must have a meaningful role in helping to shape conduct expectations across the organisation.

He outlined the proposed approach to customer consultation and influence, which includes:

		• Discussions with the Orwell Residents' Group (ORG) • Ongoing review and feedback through the Customer Insight Committee (CIC) • Regular updates provided through customer e-newsletters • A formal review with customers after 12 months to assess the impact of the standard and any changes introduced as a result TL emphasised that customer feedback will play an important role in ensuring that conduct expectations reflect the experiences and priorities of tenants, and in evaluating whether the standard is delivering the intended improvements. What This Means for Customers TL explained that the Competence and Conduct Standard is intended to deliver positive outcomes for customers by ensuring that housing services are delivered by suitably qualified, skilled and professional staff. The expected benefits for customers include: • Better quality and more consistent services • Greater professionalism and accountability from staff • Improved understanding of customer needs and individual circumstances • A stronger focus on respect, inclusion and treating customers fairly TL advised that, by strengthening both competence and conduct across the organisation, the standard aims to improve the overall customer experience and increase confidence in the services provided by Orwell. Next Steps and Recommendations TL outlined the proposed next steps for implementing the Competence and Conduct Standard and sought feedback on the recommended approach. The recommendations were as follows: • Approve Orwell's proposed approach to identifying roles that fall within the scope of the standard • Approve the integration of the Competence and Conduct Standard into Orwell's Code of Conduct • Approve the proposed approach to customer consultation and engagement • Commence qualification registrations for relevant employees and continue ongoing customer scrutiny and involvement throughout implementation	
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		TL advised that these steps will help ensure Orwell is well positioned to meet the requirements of the standard within the required timescales, while maintaining customer involvement in the process. VG expressed concern that staff may be required to complete specific training programmes, which could present challenges for colleagues with dyslexia. RL provided reassurance that Orwell is working with a range of training providers and courses, allowing flexibility to meet different learning needs and support colleagues in achieving the required qualifications.	
4.0	ASB Scrutiny	MM welcomed ED to the meeting. ED reminded the ORG of the work completed at the previous session and confirmed that members had since received the desktop review information. ED outlined the objectives for the meeting as follows: • Discuss the findings from the desktop review • Revisit the scoping document and consider any amendments required • Agree the approach and methodology for conducting the scrutiny review • Identify the individuals and groups to be invited to participate in the scrutiny process Desktop Review Findings and Revisiting the Scope ED asked members whether they had any clarifying questions for staff regarding the desktop review information. As two members had been unable to access the documents, ED provided an overview of the information that had been shared: • Information available on the website, including how to report ASB, relevant policies and procedures, guidance on being a good neighbour, definitions of ASB, neighbour nuisance, harassment and hate incidents, drug misuse, and domestic abuse • Examples of ASB correspondence, including acknowledgement letters, explanations of the next steps in the process, and incident logging forms • ASB performance data, including case numbers and categories such as neighbour nuisance • The ASB Audit (March 2026), which provided assurance that Orwell is operating in accordance with its policies and procedures • Customer Insight into Action (CIIA) priorities, including customer feedback and comments relevant to the review	

		The two members who had accessed the desktop review information commented that they found the volume of information difficult to navigate and understand. ED acknowledged this feedback and explained that not all of the information would necessarily need to be considered as part of the scrutiny. For example, the audit primarily provided assurance that Orwell was following its policies and procedures and may not directly inform the scrutiny's key lines of enquiry. ED encouraged members to focus on the information most relevant to answering the agreed scrutiny question and identifying areas for further investigation. ED asked members whether any of the agreed scrutiny questions should be added to, amended or removed following their review of the desktop review information. Members agreed that the overarching scrutiny question remained relevant: How can the Housing Department communicate more effectively with victims to manage their expectations of the ASB service? Members also discussed the importance of understanding customers' expectations at the point they first report ASB. It was suggested that a key question for customers should be: What were your expectations when you reported ASB? The supplementary question relating to the ASB policy was reviewed. Members felt that the focus should be on understanding how effectively the existing policy supports victims. It was therefore agreed that the question should be amended to: How well does the policy support victims? The discussion also considered the role of community initiatives in preventing ASB and promoting community cohesion. Members suggested that Orwell could have a greater role in supporting local communities through events and activities. ED agreed to reword the existing question to better reflect this objective and explore what contribution Orwell could make within communities and neighbourhoods. Members also highlighted the importance of giving customers confidence that ASB reports will be dealt with effectively. It was agreed that clear and timely communication plays a significant role in building trust and managing expectations throughout the ASB process.	
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Methodology

ED led a discussion on the proposed methodology for the scrutiny review, asking members to consider:

- How the scrutiny should be approached in light of the agreed scope and key questions
- Whether any "reality check" activities should be undertaken
- Whether the review should follow a bootcamp approach or a task-and-finish model
- Which tenants should be invited to participate
- Which staff members should be involved in the process

Reality Checks

ED explained that reality-checking activities could help validate findings and provide additional evidence to support the scrutiny. Members were asked to consider:

- What, if anything, needed to be reality checked
- How the activity would help answer the agreed scrutiny questions
- Which research methods would be most appropriate

Possible methods identified included:

- Observing
- Shadowing
- Interviewing
- Inspecting
- Surveys
- Meetings
- Focus groups
- Case studies
- Mystery shopping

ED also highlighted the importance of selecting the most appropriate participants for each activity.

Tenant Engagement

Members agreed that it would be beneficial to gather feedback from tenants whose ASB cases had been closed within the previous 12 months.

A focus group was identified as the preferred approach, with the following considerations discussed:

- A session of up to two hours in duration

	• Consideration of whether the session should be held in person (for example, in Ipswich) or online to maximise participation across Orwell's geographical area • A participant incentive of £30 for attendance at a two-hour session • An anticipated dropout rate of around 50% • A target of approximately 10 to 12 participants, recognising that the exercise is intended to provide qualitative insights rather than large-scale feedback • Invitations to be issued to a wider group of customers, with the expectation that around 10 participants would ultimately attend • A minimum notice period of two weeks for attendees ACTION: ED to draft the focus group discussion guide and customer invitation. Staff Engagement Members agreed that feedback from staff involved in handling ASB cases would also be important. Potential participants include: • Housing Officers • Customer Services/Housing Admin colleagues It was acknowledged that bringing all relevant staff together in one session may be difficult. Members discussed a range of approaches, including: • A staff survey, to obtain feedback from a larger number of colleagues • Face-to-face interviews, potentially linked to the Housing Management meeting scheduled for 2 September 2026 ORG members confirmed that they would be happy to conduct staff interviews as part of the evidence-gathering process. ACTION: ED to draft the staff interview questions. Next Steps It was agreed that Orwell will begin identifying suitable tenants to participate in the scrutiny review and will confirm the availability of relevant staff, venues and proposed dates for the engagement activities. TPAS will commence preparations for the evidence-gathering sessions, including the development of discussion guides and supporting materials.	ED ED
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		The agreed engagement activities are: • A two-hour focus group with tenants who have experienced ASB and whose cases have been closed within the last 12 months • Interviews with relevant staff involved in the management and handling of ASB cases It was also agreed that a further ORG meeting will be required to review the findings. Relevant documents will be shared with members in advance of the meeting. A provisional date at the end of August will be arranged. ACTION: CT to co-ordinate the scrutiny next steps and arrange the additional meeting.	CT
5.0	CIIA Priorities	RL presented the proposed Customer Insight into Action (CIIA) Priorities, which have been developed in response to customer feedback received during 2025. He explained that the priorities are intended to demonstrate what customers have told Orwell matters most to them, and to set out the actions being taken in response. The five priorities are: • Priority 1: Improve communication across all services • Priority 2: Improve repair speed and reliability • Priority 3: Improve repair quality and contractor oversight • Priority 4: Improve how residents experience ASB case management • Priority 5: Improve pre-let and move-in readiness RL advised that progress against the priorities will be monitored and reported internally on a quarterly basis. Updates will provide a summary of activity, progress made and assurance that improvements are being delivered. Members were advised that, if they wished to explore any of the priorities in more detail, they could request further information or review the supporting documentation. The relevant priority owners would be invited to attend a meeting to provide an overview and answer any questions. RL also confirmed that the Customer Insight Committee (CIC) will receive a similar version of the update to provide ongoing assurance and oversight of progress against the priorities.	

6.0	Any other business	Roadshows CT reminded members of the upcoming customer roadshows and confirmed ORG member attendance as follows: • Lone Barn Court/Sapphire Close – 25 August – MM and MA • Herivan Gardens/Close – 17 September – VG Member remuneration ML provided an update on member remuneration. It was proposed that the current rate be retained but with a more structured approach. A rate of £15 per hour was suggested. ML advised that a further update would be provided in September. Meeting arrangements ML shared a discussion that had taken place regarding opportunities for additional engagement between meetings. MM suggested that a 15-minute pre-meeting could be beneficial, or alternatively that a short online meeting could be held between agenda-setting periods to allow members to discuss issues and raise any questions in advance of formal meetings. Members discussed the suggestion and agreed that additional opportunities for engagement could help support participation and preparation for meetings.	
7.0	Date of next ORG meeting	21 st September 2026 (18:00 at Crane Hill Lodge)	