

### MINUTES

Date/Time: Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 12.00pm to 13.30pm

Venue: Virtual, MS Teams

**Chair:** Callie Lancaster (CL), Customer Engagement Manager

**Customers Present:** Helen Hutchinson (HH)  
Derek Horn (DH)  
Piotr Szymankiewicz (PS)

**Accent Colleagues** Alan Percival, Housing Manager  
Claire Nolan, Building Services Manager  
Helen Buckingham, Community Development Partner  
Lynne Riddock, Head of Complaints and Service Improvement  
Sally Ringrose, Housing Manager

**Apologies** Angela Bramwell (AB)  
Christine Dickinson (CD)  
Danielle Lambe (DL)  
Julian Peberdy (JP)  
Kat Odrzywolska (KO)  
Magret Gogo (MG)  
Ray Boden (RB)

**Minutes:** Callie Lancaster (CL), Customer Engagement Manager

### Action

#### 1. AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME AND APPOLOGIES

CL opened the meeting, welcomed members, and confirmed what was on the agenda. She explained that her hope is this group becomes more customer-led including customers choosing the topics and speakers. Housekeeping was outlined, including muting microphones, raising hands, and the meeting being recorded for minute-taking.

#### 2. AGENDA ITEM 2 – UPDATE ON ACTIONS

CL gave an update on open actions:

1. LR will be presenting a more detailed complaints update in this meeting, as requested by the group
2. CJ rang PS to discuss personal concerns 'offline' and this was resolved.
3. LR will be presenting to the group what Accent are doing to learn from complaints
4. CN will be providing a Repairs & Maintenance update in this meeting

### **3. AGENDA ITEM 3 – NATIONAL CUSTOMER GROUP UPDATE**

CL began with a summary of the recent National Customer Group (NCG) meeting. She explained that the NCG is becoming more customer-led, with members setting their own deep-dive topics and challenging Accent more confidently. Stacy, the customer chair of the NCG, had shared updates from the Customer Experience Committee, particularly focusing on Accent's new Customer Influence Framework and how customer views are feeding into decisions, policies, and communications.

The group heard that a Customer Influence Summit would take place at the end of March to showcase nine months of customer feedback and the improvements that followed. Callie also spoke about a recent NCG deep dive into colleague-related complaints, where customers wanted to understand why inconsistent advice and communication delays occur. Repairs were another major discussion point at the NCG, including insight from sentiment analysis that showed customers are mostly satisfied with the repairs themselves but frustrated by waiting times and follow-up communication. A further repairs workshop is planned for late April, which customers will be invited to join. No questions were raised at this stage.

### **4. AGENDA ITEM 4 – HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE**

AP provided an update on housing services in the East. He talked through the latest anti-social behaviour data, highlighting that noise remains the most common ASB type, followed by verbal harassment, intimidation, and drug-related concerns. He explained that hotspots typically reflect building types rather than particular towns; for example, blocks of flats can experience more noise issues, and older buildings sometimes lack modern soundproofing.

He also shared the level of investment made in planned works such as new bathrooms, kitchens, boilers, heating systems, and windows and doors. The East region alone saw £4.86 million spent on property improvements last year, with plans to increase this to £5.1 million in the upcoming financial year.

AP also spoke passionately about the inclusion budget, which supports vulnerable tenants through initiatives such as hoarding clearances, providing essential furniture, and helping customers access grants through organisations like Lightning Reach. He invited customers to suggest future housing-related topics they would like the group to explore, such as mutual exchanges, assignments, tenant sustainability, or rent-related support.

HH then shared a wide-ranging update on community development work across the East. She highlighted national campaigns, such as Get Online Week, where Accent and its suppliers donated digital devices to help customers connect to services, study, or manage their rent. Locally, her team has been delivering exercise classes within Independent Living schemes, running green-skills workshops, supporting families through gardening projects, and organising activities with developers, including a street-naming competition for new homes in March. Customers learned about community fun days, litter-picking events, ASB Awareness Week activities, hamper deliveries at Christmas, and various digital inclusion sessions. HH explained that information about these activities is shared through social media and an updated "Get Involved" section on Accent's website.

HH/SR

Customers expressed a strong desire for more visibility of these positive stories, as many customers currently do not see or hear about them. PS raised that community events could help neighbours connect more, as he feels people where he lives would benefit from getting to know each other; HH and SR both welcomed the idea and agreed to explore options with him directly.

## **5. AGENDA ITEM 5 – REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE UPDATE**

CN followed with a detailed update on repairs and maintenance. She reported encouraging progress in reducing overdue repairs, particularly following a challenging winter period when poor weather caused higher demand. She outlined the number of repairs completed, explained how seasonal trends affect workload, and shared that the repairs partnership with Ian Williams has strengthened through new management and improved processes.

CN also gave an overview of disrepair cases in the East, noting that numbers remain low and that most outstanding works are close to completion. She introduced her team of surveyors and invited customers to suggest which repairs-related topics they would like to explore in future meetings.

Customers showed interest in understanding disrepair in more detail, including the possibility of seeing anonymised case studies or sample schedules of work. There was also interest in learning more about repairs satisfaction results and the new use of video diagnostics technology.

CN

## **6. AGENDA ITEM 6 – COMPLAINTS UPDATE**

LR presented the latest information on complaints. She explained the structure of Accent's centralised complaints team and shared data showing that repairs remain the highest source of complaints, followed by colleague-related issues such as communication gaps or missed appointments.

Damp and mould complaints are comparatively low in the East due to proactive processes and the newer condition of many homes. She also outlined significant improvements being delivered across Accent, including mandatory complaints training for all staff, behavioural training around accountability and communication, stronger processes for logging individual customer needs, a new customer charter, and new tracking methods to ensure promised follow-up actions are completed.

LR invited customers to shape how they would like to be involved in complaints oversight, whether through reviewing anonymised cases, focusing on specific service areas, or offering high-level insight. DH shared that similar work had been successful in the past, and CL noted that customers in other regions had also expressed interest.

LR

## **7. AGENDA ITEM 7 – FOCUS FOR NEXT QUARTER**

The meeting closed with a discussion about priorities for upcoming sessions. Customers said they were particularly interested in community development, face-to-face engagement, and improving communication with customers, including making Accent's positive work more visible.

PS and DH both highlighted the importance of meeting people in person rather than relying solely on digital communication, and they felt that community events could play a key role in building trust and involving more

customers. Repairs and complaints were identified as topics to revisit in future, but the next meeting will focus mainly on community activity and communication.

**8. AGENDA ITEM 8 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Finally, the group discussed suitable dates for the next meeting. Customers noted they are flexible, and CL proposed Tuesday 9 June at lunchtime, subject to wider customer feedback. She closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their time and contributions, noting that the discussion had been extremely valuable.

CL

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Date: Tuesday 9 June 2026 at 12.00pm

Venue: Virtual, MS Teams