

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TEAM AND COMMUNICATIONS TEAM UPDATE

Report of the Head of Housing Management

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates the Operational Board on the progress of the Customer Engagement Programme through the Customer Engagement and Community Development team for quarter 4. This report also updates the progress of the Customer Communications Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 To note the report as an update.

3. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure Operational Board Members are updated on the progress and delivery of the Customer Communications, Customer Engagement and Community Development Programme.

4. MATTER(S) FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Customer Voice

During December 2020 and January 21 the Customer Voice consulted with customers to help inform them what their next area of scrutiny should be. During the consultation, they advertised positions on the panel and asked for new volunteers. The Customer Voice have been successful in recruiting 4 new members to their scrutiny group as a result of the consultation, bringing the total number of members to 11.

The results for the consultation has been analysed and the group will be reviewing the 'Homefinder' allocations system as their next topic, work has already started with the Housing Options Team.

Other topics considered included reviewing the Customer Service Team and the Antisocial Behaviour Service, but due to working remotely, it was felt Homefinder would be the better service area for remote access. The panel however have asked that an article about ASB is included in the next newsletter so that customers are given a better understanding about what it is and what role Derby Homes play in tackling it.

4.2 **Virtual Panel**

The Virtual Panel continue to be an asset to Derby Homes. During the Quarter, we have communicated with the panel to gain insight on topics such as The Customer Voice Scrutiny Topics, Derby Homes' Annual Report and to gain their views on the Rent Calendar. Following the feedback received, we changed the service by replacing the printed rent calendar with a downloadable PDF version.

There are over 120 members of the Virtual Panel and we continue to value their feedback.

4.3 **Ignite and Connect (Youth Panel)**

We have been working with the Corporate Support team to identify ways that we can support the young people that volunteer with us to gain training and employment opportunities.

It has been agreed that Youth Panel members that wish to apply for an apprenticeship with Derby Homes will automatically qualify for an interview. We are really excited about this new project and will work with the Youth Panel to develop it further. We will support the panel to gain relevant skills and experience for the future. We are in the process of creating marketing material to enable us to advertise and expand this opportunity wider to help other young people living in our properties.

4.4 **DACP**

DACP have been holding virtual meetings during the quarter. The Memorandum & Articles' have been agreed by the new volunteers, and the Terms of Reference for the group is close to being finalised. There are volunteers in place for 4 director positions and 2 secretaries. Roles will be formalised at the next meeting, which are taking place monthly and we are excited to see the DACP continuing to develop.

4.5 **Resources in the team**

Over the last two quarters, there have been a few alterations to the team structure.

During October 2020, it was decided that the Customer Communications Team would officially sit under the Customer Engagement and Community Development Manager, to allow the two teams to work together more closely.

Stevie Wild, the Customer Engagement Officer (Youth) has been successful in gaining a part-time Neighbourhood Partnership Officer post and is moving over to Derby City Council.

Sophie Reynolds has been successful in gaining an external recruitment opportunity as a Marketing and Communications Officer for a Nottingham Charity, Inspire. We will be looking to recruit to these positions in the future and wish them both the best in their new ventures.

The team's workload has been impacted by the coronavirus due to usual activities being on hold and the Community Rooms remaining closed. The team have been focussing their efforts to facilitate online engagement as much as possible. Sam Taylor and Holly Johnson have been reassigned one day a week to help with the COVID Community Hub. Working with Community Action Derby and Derby City Council, this hub has been integral to support those in need during a difficult year.

4.6 **Customer Communications update**

The Communications Team have been working on the successful launch of the new Derby Homes website, which happened on Tuesday 23 March. The team have completely rebuilt the website with a new structure, and updated and copied the existing content across.

Further work will be done to continue developing and improving the website..

Derby Homes have entered the Public Finance Awards 2021. The award submission recognised the hard work and publicity of the 100 years of Council Housing History book and the accompanying Annual Report, designed to replicate the same historical format. As usual with these publications, the aim was to try to appeal to a wider range of customers, increase the reach of the report, demonstrate the changing nature of our business and highlight the value Derby Homes bring to Derby as an arms-length company of the council and a key partner in the city.

5. **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 None.

IMPLICATIONS

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Consultation
Financial and Business Plan
Legal and Confidentiality
Council
Personnel
Environmental
Equalities Impact Assessment
Health & Safety
Risk
Policy Review

For more information please contact:

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Background information: None

List of appendices: None

This report has been approved by the following

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| Managing Director | Maria Murphy | 30.04.2021 |
| Finance Director/Derby Homes Accountant | David Enticott or Michael Kirk | 19.04.2021 |
| Company Solicitor | Taran Lalria | 19.04.2021 |
| Head of Service | Lorraine Testro | 06.04.2021 |