

## **CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS TEAM UPDATE**

Report of the Head of Housing Management

### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates the Operational Board on the last 6 months of progress for the Customer Engagement Programme and the Customer Communications Programme. It covers the period of Quarter four 2021/22 and Quarter one 2022/23.

### **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 Below is a summary of the main workstreams from the Team.

#### **4.2 TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service)**

To make sure Derby Homes are giving customers and employees the best support they can, we have signed up for a year's membership with TPAS from February 2022. With this package, we will be able to have access to advice, guidance, and relevant resources to make sure we are aligned to the new consumer standards and government white paper. We have specifically asked for TPAS to tailor a package for the Customer Voice to look at how they can help with any new regulation.

#### **4.3 Customer Voice**

The Customer Voice have taken part in several consultations since the beginning of the year. This includes:

- Rent Increase proposal 2022-23
- Lettable Standards Policy Review
- White Goods and Furniture Pack procedure
- Domestic Abuse Policy.

Their feedback has been constructive and led to changes being made to the policies, which are then presented to Operational Board for approval.

The group have been revising and updating their Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Agreement to make sure they are operating effectively on behalf of other Derby Homes Customers. In addition to this, they have been getting involved in more training, and have signed-up to several packages offered by Community Action Derby. One of the first training sessions they have completed has been minute-taking.

As part of their training, the group have met with Louise Thompson from TPAS to discuss the benefits and training available to customers and community groups. The Customer Voice is now scoping their next scrutiny review on the regulatory requirements included in the Charter for Social Housing Residents (Housing White Paper), which they are working with TPAS to complete.

The group are always looking to work with more customers and recruit new members. They held an open event on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February at Humber Close Community Room. This was advertised on Facebook and in the Derby Homes Newsletter. A few customers attended, and they are now successfully working with a new recruit.

#### **4.4 Tintagel Community Garden and Allotment Event**

The allotment next to Tintagel Community Centre has been transformed from an unused and tired old playground to a beautiful garden space for residents to maintain and enjoy. The new space has been created in partnership with Disability Direct and officially launched on Friday, 8 April. The Mayor of Derby, Councillor Robin Wood, opened the event, and there were live performances from 4Strings Ukulele, Voluntary Voices and Rock of All Ages Choir. The allotment will be part of an inclusive 'Plot to plate' project, which is aimed to be accessible for all abilities. For example, the allotment includes ramps and wheelchair level planters to allow disabled and older people to grow their own fruit and vegetables as part of a community project.

#### **4.4 Engagement HQ**

The implementation of Engagement HQ is developing, with the priority to focus on surveys. The survey module is now up and running with all the core surveys (such as the perception and transactional surveys) in place for 2022-2023.

All teams who carry out surveys have received training from the Customer Engagement team. The training included the context of why we carry out surveys, the importance of customer feedback and how to input surveys. The team also created a video presentation and demonstration on the staff intranet, which staff can access and refer to at any time.

The next phase of the software is to review the reporting module in more detail, in addition to developing specific pages on consultations, Customer Voice pages and how to get involved with Derby Homes. One of the first consultations being trialled is with the Virtual Panel (about Domestic Abuse Policy) and Boyer Street Community Garden.

The final stages of the software will be to launch Community Rooms pages, where customers can access all the information they need about the rooms. They will be able to see videos that show the room layout and what events take place there.

#### **4.5 Community Rooms**

Since the reopening of the community rooms in November 2021, confidence has increased, and we are seeing more groups returning to deliver activities as they did pre-pandemic. There are also new organisations and charities asking to use the rooms which is great to see, as well as some private bookings (such as birthday parties).

There are some active residents' groups within rooms such as Streatham Road, Tintagel Close, Whitecross House and Watermeadow Road. These groups are very invested in the community rooms and their surrounding area and are keen on developing activities that benefit local people.

The refurbishment of the rooms is in their final stages, and we have recently received the last of the new furniture. In addition to this upgrade, all rooms are no longer operated by key access, we have moved to fob access. This provides better security and monitoring of rooms and can help us if customers need to access rooms quickly.

We are excited to be working with the community room groups on planning the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, with around 8 rooms putting on their own parties thanks to support from Derby Association of Community Partners.

#### **4.6 DotDigital e-mail software**

DotDigital has proved to be a hugely efficient and useful tool since it was implemented in the new year. Internally, we have managed to ensure our fortnightly staff updates are presented in a more professional manner and increase our communication as we move to hybrid working.

It has enabled us to send more timely and relevant information to customers. During the last month we have been able to support customers by sending emails to registered My Account users signposting them to government schemes that can help during the cost-of-living crisis. The statistics for opening the email and interacting with its content show that it was very positively received.

We have also used the software to help the Registrations Team complete their quarterly rolling review. Customers have been contacted to help with the process of bidding for a property, which has helped Derby Homes keep our records accurate and up to date.

#### **4.7 Newsletter**

The DH News (Spring Edition) is expected to be with customers by the end of April 2022. The 16-page edition will give customers up to date information such as the cost-of-living crisis, as well as plenty of community news. The edition also introduces our 20<sup>th</sup> year celebrations and promotes our scrutiny activities, as well

as encouraging people to nominate local volunteers for our annual Volunteer Celebration in June.

#### **4.8 Website**

We are currently working with all departments to ensure their webpages are up to date with the most relevant information possible for our customers. The review is nearly complete, but the website pages will be reviewed over an annual programme based on webpage analytics and compliance priorities. There is also a brand-new News section on the website, and we have just uploaded our first story.

#### **4.9 Awards**

Derby Home entered multiple submissions to the MJ and LGC awards (in conjunction with Derby City Council) and have been shortlisted as finalists in both.

SafeSpace Community Paramedic Tracy Cunningham has been shortlisted in the MJ Awards Community Hero category.

Meanwhile, the Safe Space Partnership has been shortlisted for the Housing category.

The Communications Team are now working hard to ensure videos are ready for both of the upcoming judging days, they have been interviewing key stakeholders as part of this process.

We were given 'Commended' for another entry, regarding the War Memorial Village, in the Best Social Housing category of The MJ Awards.

We were also thrilled to have three photos shortlisted in the annual NFA Photography Competition. The community photos really showcased how well our residents have pulled together during a very difficult year. We hope to have some good news later this Spring when the results are revealed.

### **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

Managing Director	Maria Murphy	27/05/2022
Finance Director/ Company Secretary	Helen Samuel	11/05/2022
Company Solicitor	Taran Lalria	24/05/2022
Head of Service	LorraineTestro	22/04/2022