

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 two and up to early November 2022.

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 Summer Events

The team have been able to participate in more summer events this year, as community events made a recovery from the pandemic. Derby Homes were present at several events including Osmaston Park Funday, Alvaston Park Community Funday, Superhero Picnic in the Park, Chaddesden Big One and Normanton Park's 113th Birthday.

Derby Homes also teamed up with Community Action Derby to support the Volunteer Awards for Derby. Volunteers Week is an annual opportunity in June to recognise and thank volunteers. During an exceptionally difficult couple of years, people from all walks of life have taken the time to volunteer and make a huge difference to their communities – just as they do every year. The night kicked off with a video about the history of Derby, leading all the way up to the COVID-19 pandemic and the amazing community response. The 5 panel of judges has to pick winners from over 200 applications, resulting in 15 awards given on the night. In these difficult times it was a much-needed tonic and a reminder that however bad things seem, there are always people working and fighting and volunteering their time to make things better.

During August, the team lead on the opening at the War Memorial Village as part of the 20th Birthday celebrations and more importantly to witness the official opening of the new bungalows and community garden at the village. It was a lovely occasion and an opportunity to mingle with the residents, their families, colleagues and partners.



4.3 **Back to the Floor**

Our Senior Management Team (SMT) have been participating in a project called 'Back to the Floor' over the summer to celebrate 20 years of Derby Homes. The project also gave SMT an opportunity to look at the customer service from the front line and take the opportunity to understand daily struggles that customers may face and how Derby Homes can support with a Customer First approach.

Visits included Maria Murphy following Estate Officer Paul Bamford, Ian Yeomans visiting some of our live construction sites, Jim Joyce following the Intensive Housing Management Team and Clare Mehrbani following a Patch Manager.

SMT were able to feedback their observations from the day and have made a commitment to continue to shadow teams in order to commit to the ongoing development of services for Derby Homes customers.

4.4 **Tenant Satisfaction Measures**

During quarter 2, the government released its Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) following national consultation. The TSM's outline 22 measures, 12 of these measures are drawn from the on-going perception survey, the Customer Survey. The team are working hard to ensure that Derby Homes can measure performance as outlined in the new standards, and training will be developed to highlight its importance to other teams in the organisation who collate the survey. The new questions will be added to the Customer Survey for 2023/24.

4.2 Customer Voice

Three members of the Customer Voice have attended the TPAS Tenants' Conference. They heard about the latest policies being launched by Government that will affect housing legislation, examined practical solutions to solve common tenant engagement problems, and explored how new ways digital technology is enabling tenants to have greater influence on the way services are delivered by their landlord organisation.

Workshops from the conference included the Social Housing Stigma Campaign, Building Safety, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Learning from Complaints. Director of Consumer Regulation, Kate Dodsworth, gave delegates an update on the consumer regulation reforms within the Social Housing White Paper, and Housing Ombudsman Richard Blakeway spoke about how the Housing Ombudsman Service is investigating the issues that matter to tenants.

The group met with the Customer Services team to discuss the work Derby Homes are doing to ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Area Housing Manager Tracy O'Connor was also invited to discuss improvements to the White Goods and Furniture Pack scheme.

Now equipped with new laptops to carry out their work, Customer Voice are scoping their next scrutiny project – the Charter for Social Housing Residents, and how Derby Homes plans to implement the new TSMs. The group is also focusing on how to attract new members, including launching a 'Meet the Customer Voice' roadshow in the New Year.

4.3 Derby Association of Community Partners (DACP)

The DACP is on track to spend its £20,000 annual grant, with more than £7,000 allocated so far this financial year to 5 projects. These include:

- Toggs clothes bank scheme,
- Derwent Scout Group,
- Rykneld Bowling Club,
- St Anne's Church and
- Project Derby.

They are exploring how to recruit new members and are planning on visits to previous projects they have supported, to see the impact on communities.

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. As mentioned above, changes will need to be made to incorporate the new TSM's for the next financial year.

The next phase of the software is underway, with developing specific pages on consultations, Customer Voice and Mystery Shopping pages and how to get involved with Derby Homes.

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 Mystery Shopping – Pilot project

Nine Virtual Panel members have signed up to take part in our first Mystery Shopping pilot project. The Customer Engagement team have been working with Customer Services to look at Complaints as the first service area for the pilot and will be delivering a training session to volunteers before they conduct their Mystery Shops later this year (December). The results will be collated and analysed with the Customer Services team to identify any areas for improvement, and the project will then be rolled out to other service areas and available to all customers.

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 moved 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.

The team are currently planning a move to communicate in a more timely way with more customers through this channel.

4.7 Newsletter

Derby Homes News (Summer Edition) was delivered at the start of September 2022. It continued to include information on help available during the cost-of-living crisis and featured our Annual Report 21/22 for customers. A subtler article on our 20th year celebrations showed senior managers engaging in back-to-the-floor activities to learn about operational work first hand.

The Autumn/Winter edition is currently being produced and should be at print/mailing stage at the time of this meeting.

4.8 Website

We are continuing to work with all teams to ensure the website is up to date with the most relevant information as possible for our customers. Many sections have already been updated and are published. Pages will be reviewed over an annual programme based on webpage analytics, customer need and compliance priorities.

As pages are published with new content, we are also considering how the information can be shared with those without access to the internet.

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 won at the MJ Awards in the Community Hero category.

Meanwhile, the Safe Space Partnership made finalist in both ceremonies, but sadly didn't win.

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

The Communications Team have worked with partners to enter the Multi-Agency Rough Sleeper Hub (MARSH) into the UK Housing Awards. This entry has made the final and we'll find out if we win on 25 November.

The successful work of the MARSH partnership has also been entered into the Resolve ASB Awards. Entries close 31 October and there is no date for a ceremony yet.

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	29/11/22
Head of Finance and Income	Helen Samuel	29/11/2022
Company Solicitor	Taran Lalria	29/11/2022
Head of Service	Lorraine Testro	08/11/22