



Derby Homes

Customer Communication Strategy

2016 – 2019

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INTRODUCTION

WHY A STRATEGY?

A new Customer Communication Strategy for Derby Homes replaces the previous Communications and Marketing Strategy (2008). In the period following this, there have been changes within the organisation, along with significant changes locally and nationally as well as a huge shift in the quality and cost of communications technology available to us and our customers.

An up to date strategy and related action plan will ensure key corporate aims and messages are reaching relevant stakeholders. It will also mean communication is proactively managed across the organisation, ensuring quality and consistency of our messages.

A clear goal is to reach a wider range of people with key messages delivered in formats that are relevant, engaging, informative, uncomplicated and clear. All of our communications should offer value for money, consider the needs and preferences of the audience, but also the related costs and relative impact/benefit of each message.

Internally, it will mean staff have a greater awareness of current activities and initiatives within the organisation, but also that they are clearer as to what is expected when carrying out their own, localised communication with customers.

The Communication Strategy will work towards our strategic objectives and embrace the organisation's core values, which should be evident in all of our work. It will implement new policies and procedures to strengthen and create efficiency savings in both internal and external communication.

The main focus of work will fall within Derby Homes' strategic objectives three and four (Great Customer Service and Great Value), but as a team that typically works with internal customers to deliver services, Customer Communications will engage with the majority of service areas to varying degrees.

KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

Customer Communication is directly linked to all areas of the business. It should be relevant and timely and reflect the nature of our business, whether in relation to strategic plans or day-to-day operational delivery.

Although this strategy looks across the next three years, it needs to consider the aims of other key organisational strategies and these may change annually or more frequently. As a result of this strategy, there will also be a series of related plans, policies and procedures that will enable the goals to be put into action.

- [Delivery Plan 2016/17](#)
- [Customer Services Strategy 2016](#)
- [Customer Engagement and Community Development Strategy](#)

GENERAL APPROACH

We aim to provide a more proactive service. This should account for the majority of needs across different teams and minimise unplanned work requests. Day-to-day work requests will be handled efficiently and effectively. It is vital that our work supports other key strategies, for example, the Customer Services and Income Management Strategies will involve a range of important campaigns or changes to key areas of service, such as the functionality of our website.

Our communications work should offer good value by making use of existing resources and exploring new technologies available to us. We will work with other teams to use customer data to strengthen our messages, making them more relevant and personalised.

KEY AIMS

1. **Proactive Communication** – Work towards a position where the majority of core work is planned
2. **A source of quality information** - Provide a wide range of stakeholders with engaging, relevant and timely information, delivered in a variety of formats across key media channels
3. **Knowledge of Derby Homes** - Increase awareness of Derby Homes as an excellent, Arm's Length Management Organisation, by strengthening our branding and corporate voice across all service areas
4. **Effectively managed services requests** – Provide an open, professional service for internal requests
5. **Promote efficient methods of contact** - Support channel shift by raising awareness about methods of self-service such as web forms and bespoke web services or apps
6. **Provide value for money** - Seek opportunities for cost savings that can be made through effective communication

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The Customer Communications Team sits within the Customer Engagement and Community Development Team. Its role is to provide an effective, internal service that manages and communicates centralised and coordinated information to customers, staff and other stakeholders. Key work includes updating web content, producing the customer newsletter and annual report, managing social media, working on specific campaigns and dealing with various internal communications requests.

Two functions of communication are managed within Derby City Council. These are a design service and a centralised press/media team who coordinate all enquiries and releases for both Derby Homes and Derby City Council.

KEY AUDIENCES/MARKETS

Our main audiences can be seen as our customers, but there are others, including staff, the general public and our peers. Whilst no specific segmentation of these customer groups exist, it may be beneficial to categorise audiences where it would improve the quality of communication or provide opportunities to make efficiencies. Actual segmentation of customer groups will be dependent on the quality and accuracy of data held within the Housing Management and Maintenance System and is likely to take place for specific, targeted campaigns or where messages would benefit from personalisation.

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Customer engagement is at the heart of our services. We listen to and learn from our customers. This service should be no different.

We will openly invite feedback across all of our main channels and in all of our publications. Where necessary, we will carry out consultations or satisfaction surveys about our service to collect opinions and to learn more about the needs and preferences of our customers in relation to communications.

Any customer engagement will be in accordance with the current [Customer Engagement and Community Development Strategy](#).

CONSULTATION AND REPORTING

This strategy will be approved first by Senior Management Team in September 2016 and will then go for comment and approval to Derby Homes Operational Board in October 2016.

The strategy has also has input to various degrees from the Derby Association of Community Partners, Youth Board¹ and Tenant Panel.

The Customer Communication Team will provide updates every two months to Senior Management Team and the Operational Board on the progress of this strategy along with any related documents that are created.

¹ The Youth Board provided honest feedback on a recent edition of Derby Homes News. This can be found in Appendix 3, although much of this will inform more operational levels of work and our approach to making content more appealing to this particular customer segment.