

CUSTOMER FIRST STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Report of the Managing Director

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress made since the approval of the Customer First Strategy in June 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To approve amending the Customer Service Team telephone opening hours for general enquires from 9.00am to 3.00pm.
- 2.2 To approve implementing an emergency repair only telephone service between 8.00am and 9.00am and 3.00pm and 5.00pm.
- 2.3 To note the actions taken and progress to date, in line with the Customer First Strategy and Action Plan.(Appendix 2)

3. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Operational Board requested detail to be presented to evidence current call statistics in particular numbers of emergency repair calls received between 8.00am – 9.00am and 3.00pm – 5.00pm.
- 3.2 We are now receiving an increasing amount of on-line enquiries and need to realign our resources to ensure that we deliver an efficient service to customers contacting us in this way.
- 3.3 To ensure an efficient service is maintained for emergency repair requests.

4. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Customer Service Team – Call Handling Opening Hours

In June 2018 the Operational Board received a proposal to reduce the opening times for taking telephone calls through the Customer Service Team.

- 4.2 Currently Derby Homes Customer Service team currently operates 8.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday for all service enquiries. Outside of Derby Homes opening times, Carelink deal with any emergency calls, and then arrange a trades person to make the repair safe. There is also an on call Out of Hours Manager available to deal with any complex queries or situations.

The Operational Board requested detail to be presented to evidence current call statistics in particular numbers received between 8.00 am – 9.00 am and 3.00pm – 5.00pm. This information is shown at Appendix 1.

- 4.3 The information shows us that a high number of emergency repairs are reported either early in the morning or towards the end of the working day. We feel that it is important to maintain a level of service which gives customers confidence and delivers a high level of service, therefore we propose to maintain our current opening hours for emergency repair calls.
- 4.4 For general enquiries we are proposing to reduce the opening times and align them with the service offer from the Council. Derby Direct operate general enquiry call handling between the hours of 9.00am and 3.00pm. This will still provide a good service offer but will allow us to better resource the handling of on-line transactions before 9.00am and after 3.00pm.
- 4.5 We did successfully trial only accepting emergency repairs in October 2017 when we were without IT systems for a week. This arrangement did not attract any negative feedback from customers.

4.6 **Customer First Action Plan**

The Customer First Action plan was first presented to Operational Board in June 2018. As with the introduction of any new strategy the action plan needs to be fluid to accommodate changes in direction as will be determined by feedback from our customers.

- 4.7 The Action Plan is attached at Appendix 2 and commentary has been updated to reflect progress that has been made over the last few months.
- 4.8 In the strategy we gave a commitment to ‘walk the walk’ of customers, listening and learning from their experience. Since the strategy was approved in June we have:
- Held events to consult with customer on the themes contained within the Housing Green Paper
 - Consulted with customers on a number of key policy changes
 - Surveyed the winners of the 24 / 7 campaign, about our online services
 - Met with the Customer Voice, DACP and Youth Panel with regards this strategy
- 4.9 In the strategy we were committed to being clear on service standards. To date we are close to finalising Derby Homes service standards. We have worked with Derby City Council in creating their service standards in 2018, with the aim to align. We have involved the Customer Voice and DACP taking their views on board. We now intend to bring proposals for the new standards to Operational Board in February 2019.
- 4.10 When we get it wrong, we want to understand the impact this causes, and be clear about how we are going to put it right. In October 2018 our new complaints, comments and compliments policy was approved. We wanted to align the Policy to the Customer First Strategy and the Green Paper theme – Effective resolution of Complaints. The aim was to make the policy easier to understand for everyone and to make it simpler to navigate through.

- 4.11 We are now working in an environment of increased demand for services from an increasingly diverse and vulnerable customer base. We need to ensure that the services we provide meet our customer's needs. One of the things we have established is a cross departmental sub group to look at a procedure to provide repairs in a method which meets our vulnerable, supported living customer base. This came about as a result of a complaint.
- 4.12 We are continually working on developments to increase and improve the ways in which customers can contact us. We are looking at a number of developments to 'My Account' to increase the functionality of the on line portal, so customers can access more services on line. Feedback from the 24 /7 tablet winners told us that they find 'My Account' easy to use and suggested a number of development areas, such as bookable appointments for repairs, which we are looking into.
- 4.13 We will continue to develop a culture of openness and transparency and a 'can do' attitude with an expectation that our staff are helpful, knowledgeable and friendly. The principles of the Customer First strategy were presented at staff and managers briefings and remain at the forefront of discussion within teams at Derby Homes.
- 4.14 We have challenged teams to think differently about the way they deliver services using a modern customer friendly approach. Can we email or text customers, rather than writing? We have also realigned customer facing teams in order to provide a joined up and coordinated approach.

IMPLICATIONS

5. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

- 5 The Customer First strategy puts consultation at the heart of everything that we do. More detail on individual consultations is contained within the main body of this report.

8 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1
- Does this report affect the delivery of a service Yes / No
 - Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed ~~Yes /~~ No (please attach as appendix)
 - If no Equality Impact Assessment has been completed please provide a summary of the equalities implications. There are no foreseeable equalities implications associated with the changes to opening times for receiving general telephone enquiries.

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

Health & Safety
Personnel
Council
Risk
Legal
Finance
Environmental

If Board Members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact:

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Background Information: None

Supporting Information: None