

PROGRESS ON CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY

Report of the Director of Housing Management and Customer Service

1. SUMMARY

This report explains progress on implementation of Derby Homes Customer Services strategy

2. RECOMMENDATION

For noting and to agree to receive future progress reports

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Derby Homes Customer Service strategy aims to provide a more efficient and value for money service to benefit both Derby Homes and customers. Key to this is the managed migration from traditional service delivery channels to a greater emphasis on self service and automated systems where possible.
- 3.2 The City Board received a report on this on 22 December 2011. The report is attached as an Appendix and advised that further update reports would be brought to the City Board.
- 3.3 By December 2011, it was clear that progress in migrating traffic to the website had been much faster than was anticipated in the customer services strategy. This progress has continued. The following table shows progress against the main targets in the strategy and gives a comparison between the positions at November 2011 and 31 March 2012.

	Initial Strategy Position (%)	Strategy Target April 2012 (%)	Strategy Target April 2015 (%)	Progress at November 2011 (%)	Progress at 31 March 2012 (%)
Telephone Contact Enquiry Centre	60	65	60	67.11	56.45
Letter	1	1	1	0.34	0.37
SMS	0	5	10	0.73	1.27
Visits to Offices	35	20	10	7.87	7.61
Website Self-Service	1.5	5	13	23.96	34.30

3.4 The strategy anticipated that there would be two stages to the process

- An initial reduction in footfall at Local Housing Offices with a corresponding increase in the proportion of customer contact by telephone and an increase in internet traffic
- A levelling out of footfall at local offices but a continued increase in internet traffic leading to a gradual reduction in telephone contacts

3.5 The statistics since November 2011 appear to show this is happening already, but I would urge caution until we have a longer period for comparison. In addition, there is ongoing work being carried out with our website provider to ensure that internet access by customers is correctly measured. At the moment, we rely on 'Google analytics'. This provides the best possible data source but it may be the case that we are able to report internet traffic in a different way in the future.

3.6 The new Derby Homes website and tenants dashboard continues to be very successful. On 22 December we reported to the City Board that we had 734 tenants signed up to the dashboard. As of 15 May 2012 we had 1022. There are a range of incentives in place for tenants to register and all opportunities such as sign up for new tenancies are used to try to 'sell' the dashboard to tenants.

3.7 The following table gives a detailed analysis of how tenants are accessing services across the key service channels.

	December		January		February		March	
	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out
Telephone Contact Enquiry Centre	12,890		21,443		17,474		17,519	
Letter	135	4,487	79	8,243	124	4,642	114	6,611
SMS	132	6,810	206	9,188	188	9,825	395	11,576
Visits to Offices	1,239		1,829		2,771		2,362	
Website – General visits	6,608		11,016		9,097		9,345	
Website – My Derby Homes' logins	597		757		664		1,093	
Contact Centre visits	157		214		236		205	
Social Media – Twitter (cumulative quarterly)								242
Social Media – Facebook		15		8		12		17
Total Number of Contacts	21,758	11,312	35,544	17,439	30,554	14,479	31,033	18,446

3.8 The table shows communications into Derby Homes such as calls to the Enquiry Centre and communications out such as letters and SMS text messages we have sent for the last three months. There are a number of things to point out

- We do not capture the number of telephone calls into the organisation that are not routed via the Enquiry Centre. We have recently changed our approach to tenants who want to speak to a specific member of staff such as a housing or income officer. We now publicise direct line numbers for these staff on the website
- Whilst the overall proportion of calls to the Enquiry Centre has fallen, the actual numbers have increased. If we discount December which included the Christmas and New Year period, then there were 45,468 calls during September, October and November but 56,436 for January, February and March. This is a 25% increase
- Customer contacts overall have increased considerably for the same reference periods 70,789 and 97,131 respectively, a 37% increase. This is almost entirely accounted for by a very large increase in visits to our website, though as explained, we are still in the process of looking at how website traffic is measured, so some caution needs to be given to this
- We have not seen any reduction in footfall at Local Offices despite reducing hours in January. The evidence so far suggests that this has 'compressed' footfall to the available opening hours. We are keeping this under review and have adjusted staffing levels to ensure that a good level of service can be maintained during opening hours.

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

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

If Board members or others would like to discuss this report ahead of the meeting please contact the author, or Phil Davies, Chief Executive, phil.davies@derbyhomes.org – Phone: 01332 888528

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Background Information: None

Supporting Information: Derby Homes Customer Services Strategy

REVIEW OF CUSTOMER ACCESS

Report of the Director of Housing and Customer Service

1. SUMMARY

This report explains progress on implementation of Derby Homes Customer Services strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

For noting and to agree to receive future progress reports.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Derby Homes Customer Service says that we will:

'provide accessible services that our customers can utilise at a time and in a way that suits them' and that we will 'invest in efficient and effective processes and technology that will enable us to provide excellent customer services.'

3.2 This report updates City Board members on progress made to date.

3.3 Progress in migrating traffic to the website has been much faster than we anticipated in the customer services strategy. The following table shows progress against the main targets in the strategy:

	Initial Strategy Position (%)	Strategy Target April 2012 (%)	Strategy Target April 2015 (%)	Progress at November 2011 (%)
Telephone Contact Enquiry Centre	60	65	60	67.11
Letter	1	1	1	0.34
SMS	0	5	10	0.73
Visits to Offices	35	20	10	7.87
Website Self-Service	1.5	5	13	23.96

3.4 The new Derby Homes website and tenants dashboard have been very successful. We now have 734 tenants signed up to the dashboard which is over 5% of all tenancies. Those tenants are now able to access a range of core services from Derby Homes without having to contact us.

- 3.5 The following table gives a detailed analysis of how tenants are accessing services across the key service channels. Some of these, such as the use of social media are new and developing means of communication which had not been anticipated in the customer services strategy.

	September		October		November	
	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out
Telephone Contact Enquiry Centre	15,411		15,758		14,299	
Letter	75	4,857	116	4,898	73	4,566
SMS	119	6,033	167	8,773	155	8,871
Visits to Offices	3,735		2,533		1,678	
Website – General visits	5,065		5,577		4,574	
Website – My Derby Homes' logins	331		344		389	
Contact Centre visits	127		123		140	
Social Media – Twitter (cumulative quarterly)						110
Social Media – Facebook		20		52		11
Total Number of Contacts	24,863	10,910	24,618	13,723	21,308	13,558

- 3.6 The table shows communications into Derby Homes such as calls to the Enquiry Centre and communications out such as letters and SMS text messages we have sent for the last three months. There are a number of things to point out:

- The number of calls into the Enquiry Centre has grown by around 50% over the last 18 months
- The number of letters we send out remains static and is the next area we intend to tackle as an efficiency saving
- We have sent around 40,000 SMS text messages since June 2011. These are mostly repair appointment notices. This has not yet corresponded with a reduction in letters sent but we will be doing this. The text messages we have sent are an addition to the previous service
- We have achieved a considerable reduction in the footfall at Local Housing Offices during the last three months. This will increase further in January 2012 when other offices reduce their opening hours
- The customer service strategy anticipated that customers would increasingly choose to send texts to Derby Homes. We have not experienced that yet. We do expect this to be a growth area, but not to the extent originally forecast in the strategy
- The use of Social media is an important growth area for private and public sector organisations to communicate with their customers, partners and peers. Derby Homes resident involvement team have been developing the use of Facebook and Twitter to send out information about our services and events.

- 3.7 Measuring 'self service' through the website is difficult. However the measures shown in the table are:

- General visits – these are people logging onto our website excluding employees or external IT professionals. This figure will include a small number of people who are not tenants. We are satisfied this is a measure of general self service as otherwise these people might have telephoned us or called into a local office to request information.
- My Derby Homes Login's – these are people who are registered with the dashboard logging onto their account. This is very clear and specific self service
- Contact Centre visits – these are people logging onto the part of the website where tenants can request service, send us a message or take part in a consultation exercise. Again this is very specific self service.

3.8 We have also recently opened an office presence at the City Council's Albion Street Customer Service Centre. This has proved popular with tenants. We will be exploring the possibility of opening a second booth to cope with increased demand. Discussions with the City Council about Derby Homes' involvement in the planned Customer Service Centre in the Council House are ongoing. It is likely that we will have an even greater presence when that opens as many tenants find it convenient to call in while shopping in the city centre.

Week Comm.	Morning	Afternoon	Total
3/10	38	24	62
10/10	57	27	84
17/10	62	39	101
24/10	61	35	96
31/10	76	45	121
7/11	64	34	98
14/11	78	44	122
21/11	48	35	83

3.9 We will be promoting this new facility in the New Year.

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

- Financial and Business Plan
- Personnel
- Equalities Impact Assessment
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Supporting Information: Derby Homes Customer Services Strategy