

## **CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2021-2024**

Report of the Head of Housing Management

### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Derby Homes (DH) revised Customer Engagement & Community Development (CECD) strategy replaces the previous 2016-2019 CECD strategy, revisiting our purpose, objectives and goals for the future.
- 1.2 This strategy outlines DH's vision in the way we engage and involve customers. We will build upon our current methods of engagement, provide our customers with strengthened opportunities to provide feedback about the services they receive, enable them to challenge our decisions and influence meaningful change.
- 1.3 The strategy also builds on the recent work we carried out in partnership with Derby City Council and the Community and voluntary sector to deliver an integrated approach to supporting the most vulnerable during the lockdown period. We are continuing to work with partners to develop a community recovery plan that brings resources together with a focus on better problem solving and building stronger more resilient communities.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To approve the new Customer Engagement and Community Development Strategy 2020-2023

### **3. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 This strategy is produced to ensure our engagement and development structures improve community resilience and provide customers with genuine opportunities that bring about improvements in the services they receive.

### **4. MATTER(S) FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 4.1 Carrying out a review of this strategy has resulted in some amendments being made from the 2013 – 2019 CECD Strategy. The amendments incorporate the feedback from the consultation as well as ensuring that the strategy aligns to other relevant strategies. In addition, it captures new ways of working that have been developed as a result of the pandemic (appendix one).
- 4.2 We will continue to develop authentic relationships with our customers by establishing clear channels of communication between customers and those delivering our housing services.

- 4.3 We will build upon our current methods of engagement, providing customers with strengthened opportunities to scrutinise our performance and provide feedback about the services we deliver. We will encourage them to challenge our decisions and enable them to influence change.
- 4.4 During the writing of this strategy, we are in the middle of a worldwide pandemic that is impacting on the way the organisation, customers and partners operate. Communicating effectively and understanding how we better engage with our customers has never been more important.
- 4.5 During the initial lockdown we embarked on a substantial programme of welfare calls to tenants with known vulnerabilities. Around 4000 calls were made, with advice given on how to access the Derby Covid Response Community Hub programme, run by Voluntary Action Derby, for those requiring ongoing support and assistance during that period. We received a lot of positive feedback from customers about how they valued our help and support during this period of time.
- 4.6 To give our customers the opportunity to help shape the new strategy, we carried out a consultation from July 2020 – September 2020. The consultation was carried out using a variety of methods and distributed to as many customers as possible.
- 4.7 We asked over 9,000 customers to take part in our consultation. We asked them to tell us what was important to them, how they prefer to talk to us and how they like to receive feedback. We also asked what would encourage them to be more involved in shaping our services. Methods of consultation included:
- Telephone Consultations
  - My Account members
  - The Virtual Panel
  - Community room groups
  - Parkland View residents
  - Operational Board
  - Customer Voice
  - Derby Association of Community Partners
  - Ignite and Connect
  - Equality and Diversity Network, Derby City Council
  - Voices in Action, Derby City Council
- 4.8 A summary of our findings from the consultation are as follows :
- 97% of customers agreed it is important that customers are involved in our services
  - Customers wish to be involved through more surveys, phone calls, website, email and texts (69%)
  - Only 4% of customers wanted to see more door to door/face to face consultations
  - It was agreed that targeting groups such as using emails and online forums would help obtain views from customers of all ages and cultural backgrounds

- Customers want feedback to feel their views are listened to and valued (47%)
- 41% of customers thought we were good at keeping them informed about how we make changes in services as a result of their feedback
- Customers love the newsletter but find it is out of date by the time it arrives
- Customers would like more information on core services such as maintenance (38%), Service updates (19%), events in their community (20%), Rent (12%) and Repairs (12%).
- 58% of people use their email 'always' and 'often'
- 45% of people use the website 'always' or 'often'
- 43% of people use social media 'always' or 'often'
- The most popular method to give feedback to Derby Homes is either an online survey, over the phone or through a survey
- 58% of people would look for information on Derby Homes services on a website first.

4.9 Following the release of HouseMark's 2019 research into how landlords capture the customer voice, Derby Homes were also able to incorporate the findings from the 8,000 customers they spoke to (which included Derby Homes tenants) in order to further inform the strategy.

4.10 The top five customer insights were outlined by HouseMark as:

- Residents want their voices heard and want landlords to be transparent around what they do with the feedback provided.
- Different residents prefer to be surveyed in different ways, and landlords are keen to get representative views by using a multi-channel approach. However, landlords are also keen to understand the impact of using different survey methods, such as online surveys.
- Residents want surveys to be kept short and focussed on what matters to them
- Residents are particularly keen to see how their own landlord is improving over time.
- Residents want to quickly and simply see results in an accessible format

4.11 We recognise that customer engagement and community development can lead to more positive outcomes such as better understanding of customers' needs, improved services, increased customer satisfaction, a benchmarking tool with other housing providers, improved value for money and more resilient communities.

## **5. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 None.

## **6. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 To carry out this strategy review, we embarked on a large scale customer consultation which is outlined in paragraph 4.5-4.8.

## **7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 As part of the consultation, Derby City Council's Equality and Diversity Network were approached and asked for their input on the strategy. This has been included as part of the consultation results.

## **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Failure to implement the strategy would mean that customers are not able to feed back their views and influence service delivery and our services may not meet customer needs.

## **9. POLICY REVIEW IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 This is a key policy of Derby Homes and is included in the Key Policy Review Schedule. In accordance with Derby Homes Board Minute 10/51 this policy will be reviewed no later than 3 years from the date of this meeting.

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

Financial and Business Plan  
Legal and Confidentiality  
Council  
Personnel  
Environmental  
Health & Safety  
Risk

For more information please contact:

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Background information: None

List of appendices Appendix 1 – Customer Engagement and Community Development Strategy 2020-2023

This report has been approved by the following

Managing Director	Maria Murphy	11/11/20
Head of Finance & Income	Michael Kirk	04/11/20
Head of Service	Lorraine Testro	04/11/20