



## PUTTING OUR CUSTOMERS FIRST

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### PURPOSE

This strategy incorporates our previous Customer Service Strategy, widening the scope to include a stronger commitment across the organisation to put the customer at the heart of everything that we do.

We want to 'walk the walk' of customers, alongside them, listening and learning from their experience. We want to challenge our service delivery, accessibility and transparency. We want to be clear with customers what service standards they should expect, having worked with customers to agree these standards. 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.

Our vision is simple; we want to place customers at the heart of everything we do.

We will continue to develop a culture within our staff of openness, of transparency, a 'can do' attitude, with an expectation that our staff are helpful, knowledgeable and friendly.

### Document Control

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## DERBY HOMES

### PUTTING OUR CUSTOMERS FIRST – 2018 - 2021

- 1 This strategy incorporates our previous Customer Service Strategy, widening the scope to include a stronger commitment across the organisation to put the customer at the heart of everything that we do. We want to ‘walk the walk’ of customers, alongside them, listening and learning from their experience. We want to challenge our service delivery, accessibility and transparency. We want to be clear with customers what service standards they should expect, having worked with customers to agree these standards. 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.
- 2 Our vision is simple; we want to place customers at the heart of everything we do.
- 3 Our commitment to providing great customer service has not changed, but we are now working in an environment of increased demand for services from increasingly diverse and vulnerable customers. Our customers are changing as we take on new services. Customers may be tenants, but may also be people looking for housing, or those who have faced, or are facing homelessness. Changes to the welfare system and reductions in public expenditure mean times are getting tougher for some of our customers and we need to be mindful of this.
- 4 Customer Service trends have demonstrated that customers would like us to:
  - ✓ *Make it easy for them to contact us, providing choice in how they make contact.*
  - ✓ *Make contact with us when it's convenient for them,*
  - ✓ *Be clear on how and when they can expect services to be delivered.*
  - ✓ *Wherever possible, get it right first time.*
  - ✓ *Tell them when we get it wrong, and work with them to put it right.*
  - ✓ *Retain a personal touch.*
  - ✓ *Be empathetic and not judgemental*
  - ✓ *Deliver access more services online.*
- 5 We want the help of our customers to check our understanding of what they want us to do. We will be working with customers, through the collection of feedback, focus groups, a doorstep engagement programme, our youth panel and our established Customer Voice group to develop our clear commitments, and to develop our Policies and procedures with this central focus.
- 6 We will continue to develop our online service offer, encouraging greater self-service for those who are able, more flexibility to report issues at any time of the day or night, and still providing more traditional service access options for our more vulnerable customers or those that continue to prefer those options.

- 7 We will continue to develop a culture within our staff of openness, of transparency, a 'can do' attitude, with an expectation that our staff are helpful, knowledgeable and friendly.
- 8 We are working towards four key outcomes to ensure that we truly put the 'customer first' and to provide cost effective services. These are:
1. *To provide a range of effective and easy to use communication methods in which our customers can contact us*
  2. *Responsive and customer focussed services, demonstrated through positive customer feedback.*
  3. *Mutually agreed service standards – so that customers know what they can expect.*
  4. *An open and transparent complaints process, with evidenced learning from where we got it wrong.*
- 9 We will achieve these outcomes by working with our customers, listening to their views and ideas and designing services which customers want to use. Most importantly when we have done this we will provide feedback to our customers to evidence that views are taken into account.
- 10 We already know that we need to have a range of ways in which customers can contact us. We need to ensure that our services are delivered in the most efficient way, in terms of both cost and quality. On our 2017 door knock survey 80% of our customers told us that the telephone is still the most popular means of contacting us and we will continue to develop our telephone technology but at the same time we will invest in our online services to encourage those customers who want to self-serve to do so. We also want to ensure that when a customer needs to see us in person they can do so. However, providing services face to face is the most expensive way to interact with people and we will need to look at how we best do this based on customer's needs.
- 11 It is important that we put our customers at the forefront of how we work and deliver services. We will do a range of things to make sure that we achieve this. We are committed to reviewing how we involve and work with our customers. We will ensure that all forms of involvement are meaningful and that the outcomes inform the way in which we deliver our services.
- 12 It is essential that we listen to, and learn from our customers when things don't achieve the outcomes that we would desire. We will review our quality assurance systems and also our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.
- 13 We will work with customers to look in-depth at key service areas, and we will be guided by our customers on which areas are most important to them. We will seek to review the customer experience and improve the way we work, eliminating waste and ensuring that the whole process is clear and easy to understand.

- 14 We need to be clear about the standards of service our customers can reasonably expect to receive when they contact us. We will use a variety of methods to monitor our performance in relation to our standards and use this to make improvements where we can.
- 15 We will instil a customer first culture amongst our staff. Senior Managers will provide leadership through example, Managers, supervisors and front line staff will receive regular re-enforcement of our customer first strategy through regular staff briefings, manager networking events, team meetings, supervision and through individual challenge, support and additional training where necessary.
- 16 Due to increasing demand for our services we need to think differently about the way in which we deliver them. This may mean changes, but, when we introduce any changes we will consider how it will affect our customers. We will make any changes in a timely manner and working with our customers we will review them after they have been made to ensure that they are fit for purpose.