

About the Panel

In April 2012 members of existing tenant involvement groups were invited to form a scrutiny panel which evolved into the tenant panel. The current members of the panel are:

- Shirley Green - Chair
- Lyn Gadsby - Vice Chair
- Win Buchan
- Heather White
- Patricia Bhurton
- Lesley Buxton

Purpose of the review

This review allows us to improve and make the processes within the Panel more robust. The Panel wants to become more effective and influential in improving services for tenants. The Panel also wants to explore ways to obtain more input from tenants.

What we did

We started this review by conducting an online search for scrutiny panels from other ALMOs. From this search we created a short list of groups and invited them to talk to us. We visited Stockport Homes, whilst Nottingham, Rykneld, Wolverhampton and Northampton Homes came to visit us. We found the meetings useful for understanding our similarities and differences.

Some of the interesting differences were:

- Many groups had their own budget which they could allocate to training and other resources they needed.
- Some of the groups had an organised structure where tenants were able to feedback directly to their scrutiny panel (tenant to tenant).
- Some scrutiny groups had a very visible presence on their ALMOs website.
- All groups had access to individual laptops or tablets and where necessary internet access was provided at home through a dongle.
- The way the technology (mainly laptops and internet access) was setup varied but there were two main themes:

- External: These groups used external systems such as Gmail and drop box for communication and file sharing.
- Internal: These groups were setup on the corporate or internal email system with logins and access to the organisation's intranet.
- Other groups had ongoing training provided by the ALMO and outside organisations/companies.
- One group had a quarterly round table discussion with Senior Management.
- Some groups had more members than we currently have. Other panels had restructured because they didn't have enough members.
- Most of the groups were acting as completely independent Scrutiny groups, with officer support as needed. Two of the groups seemed to have ongoing access to a consultant and staff.

Following our meetings with other ALMOs, we provided a brief update on our progress to Operational Board in April.

In May we met with the Managing Director, Head of Operations, and the Customer Engagement and Community Development Manager to discuss the changes we would like. The Managing Director discussed the Volunteer Celebration and using it as an opportunity to promote changes with customer engagement. At the Volunteer Celebration in June, we had the opportunity to promote the Panel and invited two potential candidates to our next meeting. This then led to one new member joining the Panel.

Our consultation work also included phoning customers to complete a 10 question survey. We made 226 phone calls and completed 36 surveys (16% response rate). The overall results can be found in Appendix A, page 7. Overall we found that customers were not aware of the Tenant Panel and that they preferred the name Customer Voice with the strapline Listening, Scrutinising and Improving. We also collected the details of four potential customers who would like to find out more about the Panel.

Conclusion

Overall we are not surprised by the findings of our survey and we are disappointed that the Tenant Panel still seems to be invisible to customers. We understand that there is a lot of work to be done and would like to move towards more meaningful engagement. Our meetings with other ALMOs have proved to be very beneficial in helping us to formulate our recommendations and understanding what other Panels are doing. We are passionate about helping and engaging customers, as well as improving services within Derby Homes. We hope that this review brings value, transparency and reinvigorates the Panel.

Recommendations

The following bullet points outline the changes we would like. Some of the recommendations will require additional time working with Derby Homes to develop procedures.

Recommendation	Reason
1. Change name to: Customer Voice Strapline: Listening, Scrutinising and Improving	The new name and strapline helps customers to better understand what we do as a panel.
2. Process to be implemented where Operational Board approved recommendations can be tracked and acted upon within a timescale	This will improve accountability and us to measure impact of our work.
3. More direct access to senior management	This will improve transparency and communication between Derby Homes and the Panel.
4. A defined process for where our report goes before it goes to Operational Board	This will improve transparency and communication between Derby Homes and the Panel.
5. More direct access to tenants	This will improve our working relationship with tenants and tenants understanding that we are there to help improve services
6. Increase promotion at events, online and in the community to help increase membership and awareness of what the panel does	Improve our visibility and interest in Tenant Panel

7. Allocated budget	To help develop a plan for training, networking, conferences and any additional needs of the group
8. Training for new members and existing members	This will improve knowledge, effectiveness and confidence of members
9. Access to laptops and internet	This would help with the group being more independent (e.g. taking minutes, typing reports, emailing). It would also assist with completing online training, as Derby Homes training is based online (e-learning) and doing desktop research.
10. A refreshed and defined induction process, updated terms and conditions, as well as more involvement in the recruitment and induction of new members	A refreshed and defined approach will make sure that all members are on the same page and that we are complying with all policies and procedures.
11. Increased networking with other Tenant Panels	Opportunities to invite or visit other panels to develop the panel and increase insight into our individual reviews.
12. Relaunch of Tenant Panel	To help increase the visibility of the Panel and to announce our name change, as well as any additional changes that are made through these recommendations

Manager's comments with regard to recommendations:

Recommendation	Reason	Manager's Comments
1. Change name to: Customer Voice Strapline: Listening, Scrutinising and Improving	The new name and strapline helps customers to better understand what we do as a panel.	Agreed. The name is user-friendly and is in line with our Customer First Strategy.
2. Working with the Customer Engagement Team for a process to be implemented where Operational Board approved recommendations can be tracked and acted upon within a timescale	This will improve accountability and us to measure impact of our work.	Happy to outline this process and track progress with the Customer Voice panel. Actions can be monitored weekly/ fortnightly with the Senior Customer Engagement Officer to feedback and follow up progress. Discussion underway with Governance team on altering current process.
3. More direct access to senior management	This will improve transparency and communication between Derby Homes and the Panel.	The Managing Director and Head of Services have agreed to this. The Customer Engagement team will set up quarterly meetings after Operational Board approval.
4. A defined process for where our report goes before it goes to Operational Board	This will improve transparency and communication between Derby Homes and the Panel.	This process is in place but confirmation of this process and reiterating the journey will be worked on for clarity and publishing.
5. More direct access to tenants	This will improve our working relationship with tenants and tenants understanding that we are there to help improve services	Agreed. The Customer Voice is welcome to access tenants about topics of their choice. An independent tenant review of Derby Homes services is crucial to the Customer First Strategy.
6. Increase promotion at events, online	Improve our visibility and interest in	Agreed. Working with the Customer

and in the community to help increase membership and awareness of what the panel does	Tenant Panel	Engagement and Community Development team and the Communications team to increase visibility and membership for the Customer Voice.
7. Allocated budget	To help develop a plan for training, networking, conferences and any additional needs of the group	Derby Homes is committed to supporting the Customer Voice in their needs for training, networking and conferences. Support can be discussed and issued with agreement from Customer Engagement and Community Development Manager and the Head of Service as identified and required.
8. Training for new members and existing members	This will improve knowledge, effectiveness and confidence of members	Training is implemented through the Governance team. Customer Voice members are welcome to all Derby Homes training and Operational Board training. Other needs are open for discussion following a needs assessment and approval from the Customer Engagement and Community Development Manager and the Head of Service.
9. Access to laptops and internet	This would help with the group being more independent (e.g. taking minutes, typing reports, emailing). It would also assist with completing online training, as Derby Homes training is based online (e-learning) and doing desktop research.	Agreed, this is in progress with IT. This is in line with the Customer First Strategy to enable the Customer Voice to contact tenants directly and for a vision of online consultations and forums.

10. A refreshed and defined induction process, updated terms and conditions, as well as more involvement in the recruitment and induction of new members	A refreshed and defined approach will make sure that all members are on the same page and that we are complying with all policies and procedures.	This can be process mapped and developed with the Senior Customer Engagement Officer to create a template for all new members.
11. Increased networking with other Tenant Panels	Opportunities to invite or visit other panels to develop the panel and increase insight into our individual reviews.	Happy to discuss as required and as needs are assessed. Networking and best practise is important for officers and tenants alike and can be implemented on a case by case basis.
12. Relaunch of the Customer Voice	To help increase the visibility of the Panel and to announce our name change, as well as any additional changes that are made through these recommendations	Agreed and happy to discuss a plan for a launch. The Customer Voice are welcome to develop a marketing strategy to increased involvement for the Customer Voice and we will implement where possible.

Appendix A

**Overall Results from
Tenant Panel Phone Survey**

August 2018

Background

Over two days we conducted a telephone survey that consisted of 10 questions. The Panel rang 226 customers from a randomly generated list and completed 36 surveys, giving a 16% response rate.

Responses

From the surveys, we found that over half of all respondents have never heard of the Tenant Panel.

	Before we spoke today, have you heard of the Tenant Panel?
Yes (go to Q2)	13
No (go to Q3)	23
Total	36

Customers who responded yes, were then asked 'Could you tell us where you have heard about the Tenant Panel?'. Responses included (11 total responses):

- Can't remember (4 responses)
- Governance Board
- On tenant panel in Mackworth for 4 years but tenant panel stopped listening but Derby Homes didn't want to know about any issues.
- Internet
- LRS asking people to join and also from Housing Officer
- Magazine (2 responses)
- Newsletter

Customers were also asked, 'Based on our name and any information you know about Tenant Panel, please tell us what you think the Tenant Panel does'. Responses included (10 total responses):

- Not sure (6 responses)
- Helps tenants
- [name removed] Will be in touch
- No but hopefully helping people
- I think it is a good thing, tenants need their say

As part of our review, we are proposing to change our name. The majority of responses preferred the name Customer Voice with the strapline 'Listening, Scrutinising and Improving'.

	We are thinking about changing our name so it is easier to understand what we do. Which of the following names do you prefer?
Tenant Panel	7
Tenant Scrutiny Panel	1
Customer Voice; Listening, Review and Improving	9
Customer Voice; Listening, Scrutinising and Improv	10
Total	35

Overall customers knew how to contact Derby Homes to report any issues.

	Do you know how to contact Derby Homes to report any issues?
Yes	34
No	2
Total	36

The majority of customers felt that Derby Homes listened to customer feedback and made changes as a result but 10 customers responded no to the question. Customers who responded 'no' to the question were then asked to tell us why they didn't feel that Derby Homes listened to customer feedback.

	Do you feel that Derby Homes listens to customer feedback and makes changes as a result?
Yes (go to Q7)	23
No (go to Q6)	10
Total	33

- I have been reporting my gutter leaking for months but no repair. Otherwise I have no problems.
- Ongoing battle with neighbour as I am terminally ill. Derby Homes don't listen.
- Reported many issues and nothing has been done. Reported ASB and nothing has been done. Asked to be moved and nothing was done. For three weeks a needle was in the street and I reported this to Streetpride but no action was taken.
- Derby Homes are slow at processing issues.

- I keep asking about my gate and it keeps being fixed and then breaking. So instead of replacing it, they just keep repairing it.
- Rainbow colour fences, flower pots and the rest. It's all about the tenant's culture –reply. [Name removed] Housing Officer is a waste of time.
- Not very happy with Derby Homes. She is not on the internet and Derby Homes does not keep their promises. No phone call when promised. No date or time given for repairs – workmen just turn up. Derby Homes help only those on internet.
- Chinese Takeaway makes lots of noise – squeaking doors and disturbing the children. I live in a flat above a Chinese takeaway – doors are opening and closing late at night and disturb the children – can something be done?

On this occasion of surveys, we were not able to feedback negative comments due to the customers wanting to remain anonymous. However, on all surveys that customers are named, we ensure that all feedback is passed on to the relevant department to be dealt with.

Most customers felt that they knew about the support offered by Derby Homes however, a large amount of customers did not know what support could be provided by Derby Homes.

	Do you know how Derby Homes can provide support if you need it?
Yes	21
No	15
Total	36

Customers were also asked, 'Do you have any ideas on how Tenant Panel could help make services better or any suggestions of services we should review?' (19 total responses).

- Listen to tenants and act on their behalf
- Listening (2 responses)
- Make the housing office listen and use common sense
- Meet in room and just listening to me, you don't have to agree but at least listen
- £50 voucher, Decorate = have to pay for it. £5 per month/week? – a room per year only find out that you can't get out of the contract
- Clearer working – especially for the elderly
- Housing Officer need improvement on Customer Service. Did not know who did current H.O.
- How repair appointments are booked as they just turn up. Ask about changes to book repairs.
- How to communicate with non-English speakers
- Monthly Newsletters to keep us in touch
- Parking
- Problems with neighbours – have reported to local office but neighbours are in private accommodation so officer says unable to do anything
- A phone call from Derby Homes to check I'm alive would be nice
- No, not sure (5 responses)

At the end of the survey we asked the customers if they would be interested in joining Tenant Panel, we received 5 potential leads.

	Would you be interested in joining Tenant Panel?
Yes (go to Q11)	5
No	30
Total	35