



## CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024 – 2027

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# 1. Foreword | *Jsan Shepherd*



- 1.1. Customers are at the heart of everything we do at Derby Homes, and we recognise the importance of working with them, and Derby City Council, to provide high-quality services for the city.
- 1.2. Over the last two decades, we have continued to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction and performance, winning numerous industry awards, gaining recognition in areas such as public finance and health and safety, and being listed in the top ten social landlords in the UK.
- 1.3. We enjoy a healthy relationship with the council, with strong partnerships at strategic and operational levels delivering a coordinated plan for Derby and joined up services with many other partners in the city.

## **A new regulation**

- 1.4. We are being measured against the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and from April 2024, we will be working to an updated set of Consumer Standards.
- 1.5. Key themes of the regulation quite rightly focus on how we engage with customers and empower them to scrutinise our performance and hold us to account. Many of the outcomes and expectations of the standards relate to things such as: listening to and acting upon customer feedback; keeping customers informed; accessibility and how we consider diverse needs in our approach to creating engagement opportunities.
- 1.6. This strategy is companywide and represents our overarching aims. Through embedding transparency and accountability that is meaningful to customers we are cementing the importance of customer engagement in high-quality services. However, excellent customer engagement is everyone's responsibility, and what we will be measured against and scrutinised upon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jsan Shepherd'.

Chair of Derby Homes

## 2. Purpose

2.1. Customer engagement is about listening to feedback from customers and using it to inform, influence and drive service delivery improvements.

Empowering customers to challenge our performance and hold us to account through a range of accessible and tailored engagement opportunities will result in better services and increased satisfaction.

2.2. This strategy sets out our overall approach to corporate customer engagement and defines our strategic aims for all areas of the business.

2.3. The purpose of this strategy is to combine the delivery of Derby Homes' strategic objectives to meet the required outcomes of the regulatory standards.

2.4. Other key documents that are aligned with this strategy include:

- Knowledge and Information management strategy
- Inclusion Strategy
- Local Priority areas
- Customer Communications Strategy
- Complaints Policy

## 3. Corporate engagement aims

For the corporate customer engagement strategy to be successful, the following regulation and best practise has been considered when reviewing the strategy:

- Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards reports,
- Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- Tpas tenant engagement experts
- Housemark leading data and insight company for the housing sector

**We will:**

3.1. Meet all related regulatory outcomes and specific expectations in the Consumer Standards.

3.2. Ensure customers have access to clear and timely information about our services and performance, demonstrating a culture of fairness and respect, and supporting them to hold us to account.

- 3.3. Ensure our engagement opportunities are accessible, flexible and provide value, so customers can choose how and when they would like to get involved in ways that suit their needs.
- 3.4. Celebrate success and share how we are achieving our vision, values and objectives to build a culture and reputation of ambition and excellence in engagement.
- 3.5. Inspire and enable teams to improve the way they engage and consult with customers.
- 3.6. Advertise opportunities for engagement through all our channels of communication.
- 3.7. Engage with any organisational learning and best practice from national benchmarking groups such as Housemark and TPAS.

## **4. How we deliver engagement**

There are a wide range of ways that customers can get involved with us. As a customer, we value your contribution to Derby Homes by shaping how we deliver services. Depending on how much time you have, we have a 3-tier approach for ways you can give us your views and get involved.

### **Scrutiny**

- 4.1. At Operational Board level, there is opportunity to influence and scrutinise Derby Homes' strategies, policies and services. The Operational Board is a committee of the main Derby Homes board. It has a majority of six tenant members who meet with other members, making important decisions that ensure we deliver services of the highest possible standard to our tenants and leaseholders. This includes oversight of the Consumer Regulation, Tenant Satisfaction Measures performance, and approval of changes to strategies that affect customers.
- 4.2. Tenant scrutiny is a key part of ensuring we're delivering fair, tenant-focused services. Derby Homes have supported tenants to scrutinise our services since April 2012 when the Tenant Panel was formed. We try to ensure customers are able to be directly involved in evaluating how we work. Our tenant-led scrutiny group, the Customer Voice, is a group of volunteers, made up of tenants, who work with us by reviewing services. They report their findings to the Operational Board.

## **Consultations**

- 4.3. Our consultations give you the opportunity to help shape our services. This helps to ensure they are fair, accessible, and put you first.
- 4.4. We publish all open consultations on our Let's Talk Derby Homes website. You can respond to any public consultations. We may sometimes need to target specific groups of people to ensure we include the voices of those groups or those who receive certain services.

## **Surveys and Feedback**

- 4.5. Surveys are the easiest way you can give us feedback and your insight on our services and policies.
- 4.6. **Customer survey**  
The Customer Survey is how we measure what you think about our services. From 1 April 2023 all registered providers of social housing must collect and publish a range of comparable information on areas such as repairs, safety checks and complaints. These are known as Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The TSMs allow you to scrutinise our performance. They also give us insight about where we can improve. Because all landlords report them to the Regulator of Social Housing, they also provide a source of intelligence about whether we're meeting regulatory standards.
- 4.7. **Your feedback**  
We also collect your feedback on specific services when you have received them. For example, this could be if you have reported anti-social behaviour, or received money advice. This feedback is often a mix of questions that ask you to rate the service and give us any specific comments on it.
- 4.8. We have a page on the website dedicated to complaints and compliments, where our customers can easily get in touch about things that matter to them.
- 4.9. **Improving your estate**  
You know more about the area you live in than we do. We welcome any feedback, ideas or reports of issues about your estate. We carry out estate inspections around all of our properties regularly to deal with any issues that arise. We also manage funding that is given to us annually from Derby City Council to improve areas.

## **5. Priority action areas**

### **5.1. Regulation and Consumer Standards**

We will assess our services in relation to the outcomes and specific expectations within the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard to ensure we know our strengths and weaknesses and have a plan for any areas of improvement.

We will review our self-assessment against the consumer standards annually to ensure we remain aligned to the specific expectations from the Regulator of Social Housing.

### **5.2. Accountability and transparency**

It is important that our customers know how we are performing and what decisions we are making, so that they can challenge us and hold us to account when things are not working as they should.

We will regularly publish information on how we are performing against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, complaints, and lessons that we have learned. This will be done through a variety of channels to ensure all customers have access to this information.

### **5.3. Easier and more accessible engagement**

We recognise that one size does not fit all when it comes to engagement and will work with our customers to develop a wide range of meaningful opportunities to ensure their views are heard and that they can influence and help shape our strategies, policies and services.

We will empower individuals of all demographics to be involved in decisions that have a direct and positive impact on the services we provide by ensuring that our engagement activities are accessible and attractive and reflect the specific needs and interests of our customers. We will ensure our engagement is accessible for everyone who wants to get involved and make adjustments based on customers' needs.

We will work with customers to regularly consider ways to improve and tailor our approach to delivering our services, including engagement.

### **5.4. Service-level engagement with customers**

All staff have individual responsibility for ensuring their direct communication and interaction with customers and partners adhere to our principles and regulatory standards. Service managers will aim to improve their engagement with customers by encouraging and

engaging with learning from customer feedback and best practice.

### **5.5. Engage with customers on issues that directly affect them**

We will routinely collect and analyse feedback from our customers for all our services to identify areas for improvement through our overarching perception survey, transactional surveys, complaints, feedback and compliments, and through strategy and policy consultations.

We will collate information in a timely manner, using more than one method of feedback to gain better insights into customers' concerns. We will give customers more opportunities to tell us about their experiences. We will increase and improve the levels of feedback we give to our customers, using a 'you said, we did' approach.

### **5.6. Engage with 'hard to reach' customers**

Hard to reach groups tend to be those that are invisible to boards or underrepresented, that use public services but are difficult to engage in public discussion – so their needs aren't heard.

Understanding what prevents customers from engaging with us, and having a clearer understanding of their needs, will help us to break down barriers, tailor our approach and provide accessible support.

By delivering engagement in new innovative ways, we will increase the range of customers that are engaging with us, including marginalised, under-represented and/or disadvantaged groups.

This is also supplemented by our perception survey methodology of gaining insight from customers through random sampling. This will strengthen our understanding of our customer profile and the needs of these groups, so our engagement is more representative of the wider customer base.

### **5.7. Ensure customer engagement opportunities offer value for money**

Both Derby Homes and our customers want value for money from all our services and corporate customer engagement is no exception. It is vital, in respect of our customer engagement activities, to be able to measure what is being achieved.

We will share the results with customers, allowing joint decisions to be made on the value for money of scrutiny and consultations. Through utilising customer feedback, service improvements can be made which result in efficient and effective services for our



customers and our employees.

## **6. Principles of good customer engagement**

We will embody the following principles in all our engagement to create meaningful and impactful outcomes for our customers:

- 6.1 Provide value by keeping customers informed about things that matter to them.
- 6.2 Ensures accessibility.
- 6.3 Fair and respectful engagement.
- 6.4 Clear, responsive, and timely.
- 6.5 Appropriate to and representative of diverse needs and groups.
- 6.6 Transparent with customer findings
- 6.7 Collaborative approach ensuring we listen and learn from what customers are telling us.

## **7. Outcomes**

The Corporate Engagement Strategy will help us to deliver the following outcomes:

- 7.1. Informed and respected customers, who are aware of both Derby Homes' and their own responsibilities and how they can fairly access services, information, help and advice if they need it, to ensure their tenancy is successful and sustainable.
- 7.2. Stakeholders and staff who are aware of the services that Derby Homes provide, their roles, our aims and objectives, performance and the benefits the ALMO brings to the city.
- 7.3. Reduced demand on frontline services by enabling access to quality, digital information, and services for customers when it suits them.
- 7.4. Timely delivery of messages to people when needed.

## **8. Monitoring**

To ensure we remain focused on achieving the aims of this strategy, we will track and measure our progress by:

- 8.1 Developing a related action plan to identify key actions and monitor our progress against them.

- 8.2 Recording and acting on qualitative feedback from customers, whether relating to services, collected from surveys and through other methods of engagement.
- 8.3 Monitoring related figures from our perception survey, our transactional surveys and other performance data, where relevant.
- 8.4 Monitoring will be taken to the Operational Board as part of our performance monitoring framework.
- 8.5 We will also benchmark ourselves against Tpas and Housemark to ensure we are working towards national standards of engagement and learning from best practise.

## **9. Value for money**

- 9.1 With a clear focus on the customer, true value should be evident in relevant satisfaction scores and successful improvement outcomes.
- 9.2 We will achieve financial value through reviewing the ways we currently work and utilising effective and efficient methods of engagement where they offer improvements.

## **10. Ownership and responsibility**

- 10.1 The Corporate Engagement Strategy will be reviewed at least every three years to ensure it is meeting the needs of our customers.
- 10.2 The related action plan and methods of engagement will be reviewed annually and reviewed at Operational Board.
- 10.3 The Head of Quality and Consumer Regulation is responsible for the Corporate Engagement Strategy, including the dissemination and promotion of the strategy, monitoring compliance and coordinating regular review and revision.