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Introduction

This is our first 5 year strategy for Customer Insight and Involvement.

It sets out how customer insight and involvement will work together to make sure we deliver cost effective services that work.

The strategy is aligned to our housing strategy and is key to delivering our core purpose – investing in homes, services and people to make a positive impact on the communities in the North East.

Context

In the development of this strategy we have considered:

- The challenges in our operating environment
- What our customers have told us
- What our staff have told us
- Our business needs.

The strategy is also influenced by the expectations of our regulator, the Regulator of Social Housing. These expectations are that we will work with our residents to make sure their priorities shape our service and that they have the opportunity to scrutinise our service delivery, monitor how well we perform and make sure we carry out improvements where we need to.

Developing our strategy

We manage over 13,500 rented properties across an area stretching from Berwick to Darlington and provide a wide range of services to tenants and communities. 2017 was a period of consolidation and integration and our involved tenants and leaseholders from across our stock came together to oversee this and to help us plan for the future. The views expressed have influenced our new housing strategy and corporate plan.

The next step was to develop an insight and involvement strategy that works with our integrated business structure and fulfils the expectations of our customers and staff. We worked with tenants and staff to review the way involvement had been carried out to date and identify how we can build on the progress we have made to improve involvement in the future.

Our vision for customer insight and involvement is:

What our customers tell us will influence our priorities and services and we'll all see the difference this is making

In achieving this vision we agreed that our approach to involvement should continue to be scrutiny based. However this needed to be streamlined to reduce repetition, accommodate our new organisational structure and create more opportunities for on-line involvement. Our approach is underpinned by a commitment to providing excellent channels of communication through which we will inform, listen and learn. We will also continue to support community activity in the areas we operate in, focusing on where we can make the biggest impact.

We have identified some core principles and activities linked to our vision and the 4 key drivers of our housing strategy:

Our four key drivers:

Clarity

Being clear about the purpose of insight and involvement and what we are aiming to achieve.

Effortless

It is easy for people to get involved and that people get support to make the most of the involvement opportunities.

Efficiency

We will make sure our involvement provides value for money and has a positive impact on our tenants and our business.

Success

We know what success looks like and can measure it.

Clarity

We have defined the purpose of insight and involvement as being to make sure we make the right decisions in tough times.

We know that using customer insight to inform our involvement work will give us a greater understanding of our current and potential customers and help ensure customer views are shaping our services.

We understand that supporting community activity in the areas we operate in will help develop resilience and sustain our investment.

Through this insight and involvement strategy we are aiming to achieve:



What we will do:

Publish and communicate the purpose of involvement and the outcomes we hope to achieve.

Plan our involvement activities to enable tenants to have a real influence over our services.

Publish the outcomes of involvement activities on our website and in our customer communications.

Define the insight information we will collect and how we are going to use it.

Review the outcomes from involvement activities annually with all involved customers and implement any improvements.

Review and develop our community activities in areas where we can make the biggest impact.

Effortless

We want to ensure that a wide range of tenants are empowered to help us develop and improve our services.

We know that many of our tenants have busy lives and do not have the opportunity to commit to attending regular meetings and events.

Our current profile of who is involved with us shows that we need to do more to make sure our younger tenants have the opportunity to give their views.

What we will do:

We will continue to provide a range of opportunities for people to get involved and influence our services.

We will provide relevant information and training to enable tenants to make the most of their involvement opportunities.

We will explore new digital ways to encourage involvement online and widen the profile of customers who engage with us about our services.

Efficiency

We are a customer focused organisation. This means we want to ensure that customers' needs are at the heart of our thinking and decision-making and that we are accountable to our customers for the services we provide. We want to provide services that meet customers' needs and are right first time. Customer insight and involvement is the key means by which we will make sure this happens.

We get a huge amount of information through complaints, compliments, comments, satisfaction surveys alongside performance and profiling information that can give us an insight into the impact our services are having on our customers.

We need to make sure that we are maximising the use of this insight (Appendix 1) and are accountable to our involved tenants about the way that we use this insight to improve what we do (Appendix 2).

We also need to be able to measure the social impact of our community investment and work with our involved tenants to ensure we are achieving the best possible outcomes for our communities and tenants (Appendix 3).

What we will do:

We will review our approach to transactional surveys to ensure we are gaining meaningful and timely feedback from a wide range of service users.

We will review the profiling information we want to hold on our tenants and plan to fill in the gaps.

We will make every contact count and not waste the information we get.

We will work with our involved tenants to interpret this insight and identify the need for any improvements.

We will provide regular opportunities for customers to scrutinise our performance and hold us to account for the services we provide.

We will ensure that customers have the opportunity to influence strategy and policy development.

We will commit the appropriate resources to support the work outlined in this strategy.

We will involve customers in developing our approach to community investment.

We will introduce a method of measuring the social impact of our community investment.

Success

We have identified the following success factors to measure and track our progress against this strategy:

Customer satisfaction levels

Customers will feel like we listen and act on their views

We will be able to clearly evidence how customer insight and involvement has influenced service delivery

We will be able to measure the value of our community investment

We will take the first year to set our baseline for these measures and set targets in the following year (2019/20)

Implementing, monitoring and reviewing our strategy

Implementation

We will develop a plan to implement the key actions within this strategy. This will include tasks and timescales for each action.

Monitoring

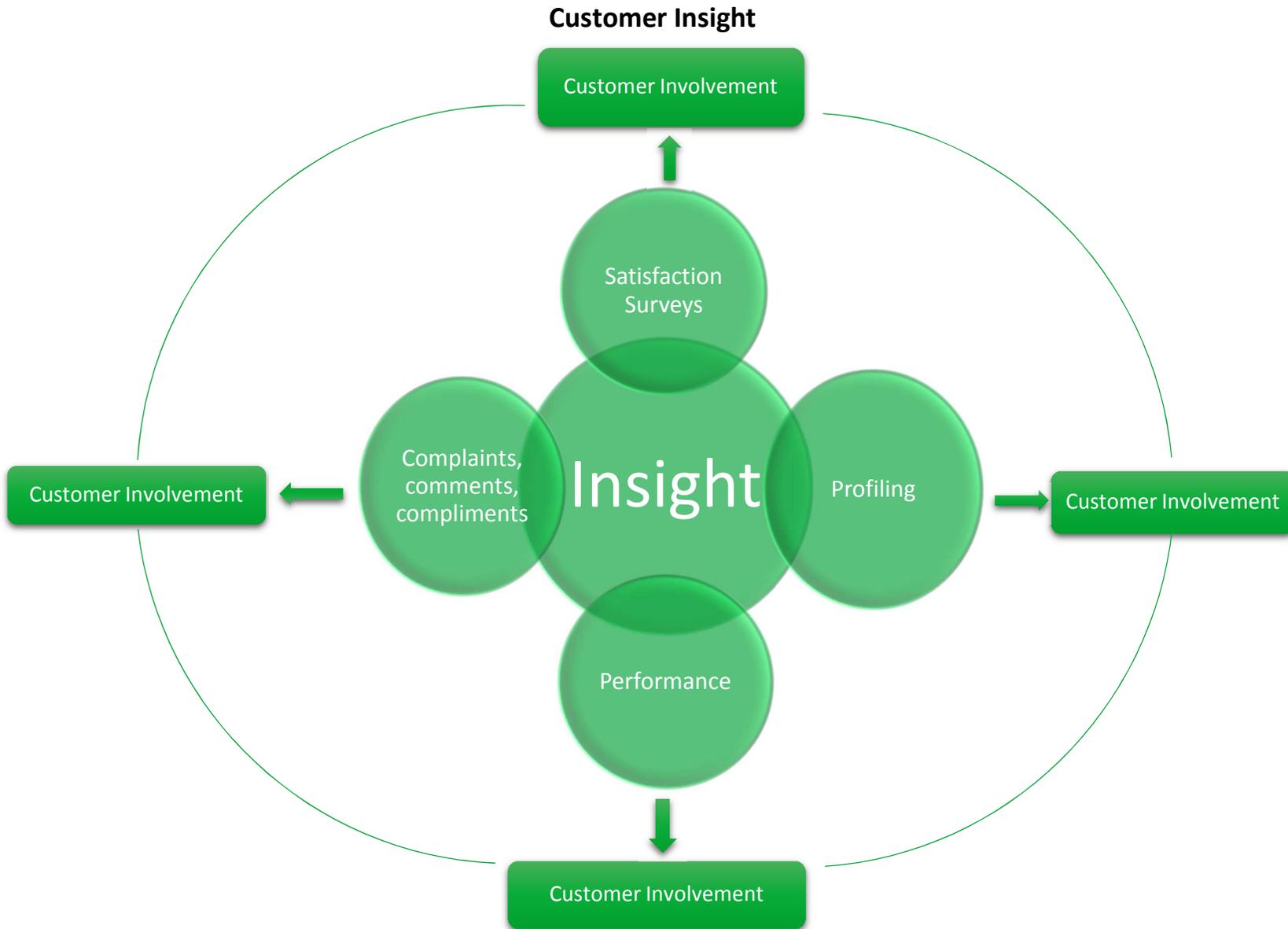
Our Head of Customer Services will have overall responsibility for monitoring the delivery of this strategy

Our involved customers will monitor our progress against the implementation plan. Regular progress reports will be produced and will be published on our website.

Review

Our strategy covers a 5 year period.

A full review will be carried out in year 3 to ensure the strategy keeps pace with change in the external environment and our customers' priorities and expectations.



Satisfaction surveys

Transactional surveys:

- Giving timely feedback about key services e.g. repairs, new tenants, improvement work
- Analysed to understand reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction
- Issues followed up with individual
- Trends identified and compared with other feedback

STAR survey:

- Independent survey of a representative sample of tenants
- Provides snapshot of impact of a range of services at a particular point in time
- Enables benchmarking with other organisations
- Enables us to track progress since previous survey
- Provides opportunity to gain other information e.g. extent of digital inclusion/exclusion

Profiling

- The collection analysing and grouping of customer information to provide a detailed picture of their characteristics, including demographics, needs and behaviours, attitudes, lifestyles and aspirations.
- Can be used to help understand service take-up and targeting or tailoring service delivery

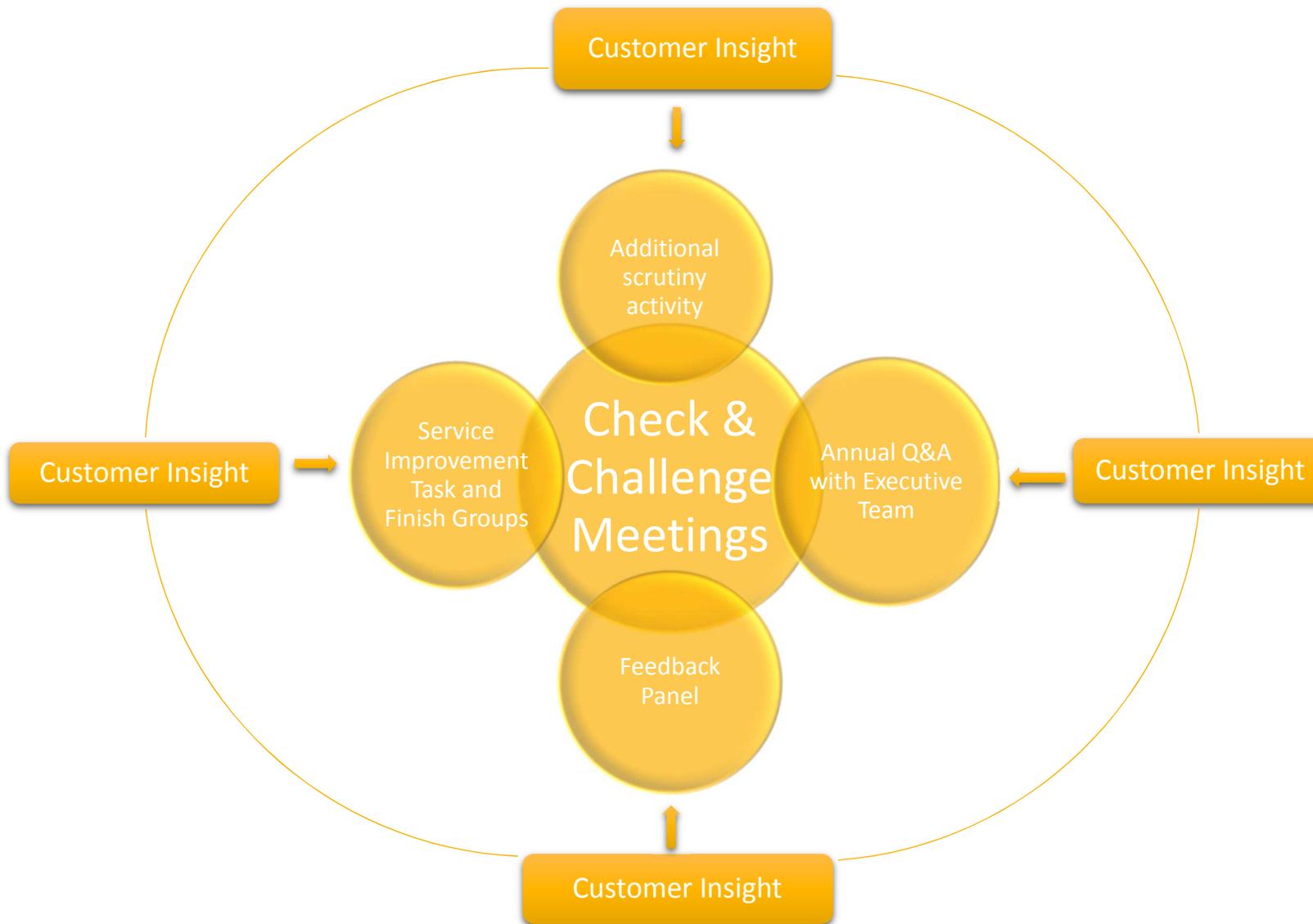
Performance

- The measurement of housing performance against key performance indicators and targets

Complaints, comments and compliments

- Information about issues raised, our response, trends and lessons learned

Core Involvement Structure



Check & Challenge Meetings

Quarterly Scrutiny meetings held in the north and south

- To agree key performance indicators (KPIs)
- To scrutinise performance against KPIs and other insight and make recommendations about improvements to service delivery
- To identify topics for further scrutiny as appropriate
- To discuss and agree service offers and service standards
- To assist in the development of policies and procedures
- To receive updates from board and discuss progress against high level plans

Additional Scrutiny Activity

Additional scrutiny activity arising out of the quarterly meetings will be carried out by customer inspectors supported by independent auditors as required

Service Improvement Task & Finish Groups

Time limited work to develop specific service improvements arising out of quarterly Scrutiny Panel meetings

Annual Q&A with Executive Team

To discuss performance against high level plans and priorities for year ahead

Feedback Panel

To discuss trends arising out of complaints, satisfaction and other feedback and how learning is being applied

Community Investment



Community Investment

- Investment that will support the core services we provide as a landlord and give something back to the communities we operate in

Financial wellbeing

- Activities that help improve financial capability, ability to pay rents and break dependency on benefits
- Examples include financial and budgeting and energy advice

Supporting employability

- Initiatives that provide access to services that help people to gain employment such as cv advice, job search, online training
- Providing apprenticeships

Social wellbeing

- Activities that help people stay in their homes for longer such as health and wellbeing activities for older people
- Initiatives that tackle social isolation, encourage pride in areas and positive behaviour

Community Grants

- Grants to community and voluntary organisations to carry out activities that support community development and improve quality of life

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