



## Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-2024

**Enhance** our engagement with choice and reward

**Empower** customers through ambitious training and development

**Engage** with all of customers via a blend of equitable practices

**Enable** insight into what is important to our customers

We believe that our customers are at the heart of our business and want to ensure we are engaging with them effectively. This strategy sets out our commitment to giving residents a voice throughout Orwell.

This is an exciting opportunity to transform the way we involve customers and develop an approach that is ambitious for Orwell to become leading innovators in engagement.

Customer Engagement means the opportunities that we have to listen to customers, capture their opinions and work with them to shape services. Customer Engagement also means how we talk to customers about Orwell and about the homes and communities in which they live

Engagement is about empowering and enabling customers to influence and improve services. It is about how we communicate, and more importantly - how we *listen*. We know this improves customer trust in the way we manage homes and services.

We commit to giving customers a choice about how they wish to be involved by providing a broad range of opportunities to engage with us. We know that one size does not fit all so we commit effort to creative engagement that delivers equity and accessibility across all tenures and types of accommodation Orwell offer.

It is important that we are capturing all of the feedback from our customers about our services and their local neighbourhoods and that we are valuing this and using it effectively to improve and develop our services.

We know that involvement needs to be seen to effect improvements to attract more widespread contribution. This strategy sets out how we will measure and communicate the

impact of customer engagement. You have told us to shout about it, and we will!

### **People Focused · Ambitious · Collaborative · Effective**

This strategy will be implemented in line with our PACE organisational values.

**People-focused:** By offering a blend of engagement options that reflect the way our customers have told us they want to engage with us we will ensure that our engagement is equitable and accessible for all customers across our accommodation types and will meet diverse communication needs.

**Ambitious:** We aim to establish ourselves as thought leaders and innovators in engagement by embracing high performing digital channels, horizon scanning across and outside of the housing sector to stay at the forefront of customer engagement practice.

**Collaborative** We will work together with our customers and colleagues across the organisation to embed co creation and co design as a way of working.

**Effective** We will work efficiently, and support insight to enable data-led decisions. We will ensure our engagement offer is modern, fit for purpose and delivers value for money. We will develop and support performance monitoring by customers, ensuring information is accessible, timely and clear.

## **Customer Engagement in Context:**

The Regulatory Framework, specifically the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard sets out a number of requirements for us to develop, implement and support and opportunities for customer involvement and empowerment.

The Social Housing white paper and the prominence it places on engaging customers is welcomed by Orwell. The new Charter for Social Housing is fundamentally about empowerment and accountability, setting out several ways of ensuring the voices of customers are heard. This includes a requirement for landlords to make performance monitoring information accessible and clear. This strategy and associated action plan will enable us to do this.

The conclusions of the Hackitt Report into fire safety, and the publication of the Building Safety Bill emphasise the importance of actively engage with customers to ensure that health and safety compliance is fully embedded in what we do, and our customers understand the homes that they live in.

As early adopters of the NHF Together with Tenants Charter, Orwell embraces the greater emphasis on strengthening the relationship with customers. We are committed to ensuring the customer view is sought and valued throughout the organisation and we actively seek creative means to ensure customers feel listened to by Orwell on the issues that matter to them.

Recently there has also been a renewed emphasis on the social purpose of housing associations. We acknowledge and embrace our role within wider neighbourhoods and communities over and above that of landlord. We recognise our role as a source and generator of social value, over the next 12 months we will start to scope social value and community initiatives into a separate

strategy and reporting framework. Customers will be our partners in this work, co creating and outlining our priorities and monitoring our progress.

Conscious of the sector wide evolving approach to more consistent, comparable Environmental, Social and Governance reporting we recognise that adopting an ESG reporting standard as an opportunity to demonstrate our social purpose. A new ESG reporting standard recently endorsed by NHF has also received support from Homes England and the Regulator of Social Housing.

Digital change is accelerating, with many previously digitally excluded groups increasingly accessing a wide range of services online. The Covid19 pandemic quickened this process and across the sector we acknowledge that customer engagement needs to adapt to the rapidly changing ways that residents engage with services. Our customers have told us that they prefer to connect with us online. We will respond to an increasing expectation for us to offer convenient digital engagement as set out in our Digital Strategy 2021-2024 by introducing high-performing digital channels that can be accessed 24hrs a day, 7 days a week.

Customer engagement will continue to see changing regulations and debate. We embrace the need for flexibility, creativity and innovation and are ambitious to be thought leaders in this area. Therefore, our strategy must be a dynamic document with the ability to adapt within this changing environment.

**Throughout this strategy, we'll keep in mind the things customers and staff have told us are important:**

- Involvement should be inclusive and accessible to everyone, meeting the diverse needs of residents with information provided in plain language.
- Involvement should be seen to be enjoyable and rewarding.
- Engagement should result in evidence of improving services.
- We should offer a range of intuitive, simple and interesting digital engagement options to help overcome barriers to engagement, such as travel and lack of time.
- We should talk about it a lot more.
- We should make it easy, instinctive and seamless for staff to connect with the customer voice.
- We should promote clear communication channels for customer suggestions.



## Customer Engagement: how we will achieve our objectives

The Customers and Community strategy includes 6 Drivers. Effective customer engagement underpins our success in meeting our strategic objectives of:

*Providing exceptional customer service - putting customers at the heart of what we do to ensure our decisions are driven by customers' needs and aspirations.*

*Making a positive social impact in our diverse communities- through better understanding of needs and developing services that create social value.*



This Customer Engagement Strategy will support delivery of these objectives in the following ways:

## Customers interacting with us via a range of engagement options and channels

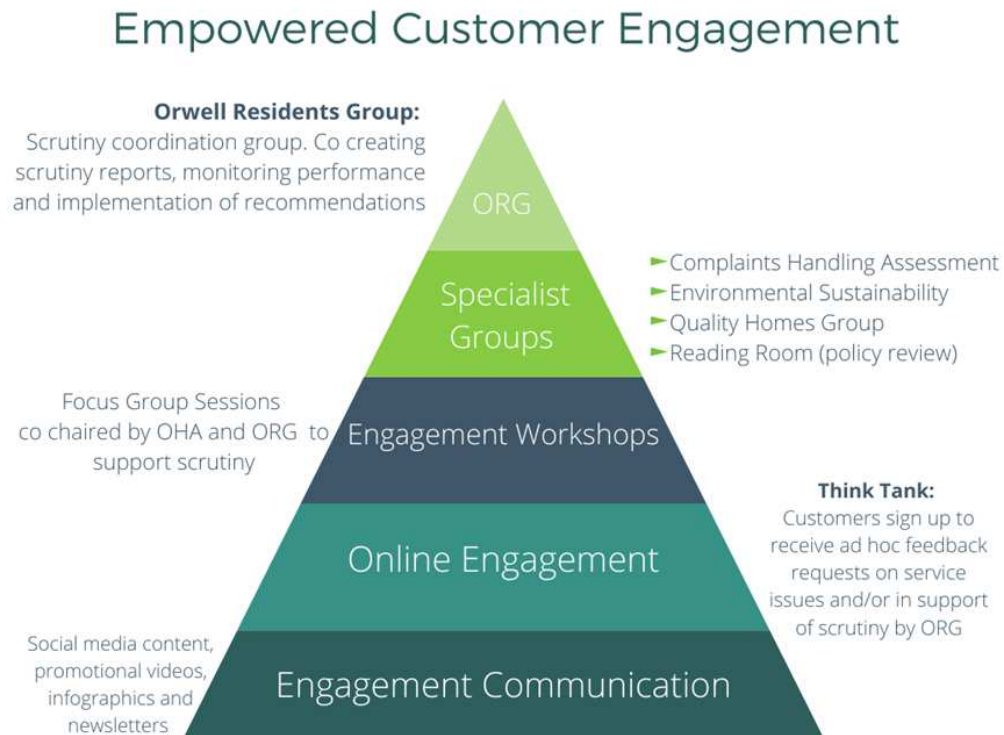
**This will deliver:** Opportunities for every customer to share their views with us in a way that suits them.

**Why do we need it:** We know that some engagement is lightweight and some is in-depth. We value both and everything in between. Having a mix of people with varying levels of engagement is a good thing because being effective at engagement means being able to choose from a blend of methods that deliver agility and responsiveness to the task. Sometimes that's light-touch feedback from lots of people, and sometimes is an in-depth consultation with a few people with a specific lived experience.

We also know that by enabling quick and informal engagement we myth-bust about the commitment involved in participation in the process and organically increase contribution.

**How will we deliver?** Using creative communication that is modern, attractive and accessible we will promote engagement with a broad brush through social media and newsletters with multimedia content. A high-performing digital engagement platform will be appealing and result in timely, credible reporting. Online and offline meetings will be publicised, open to join with minutes published in a clear and accessible format.

Neighbourhood engagement will be purpose driven and deliver value. We will emphasise the impact of all acts of connection, ensuring that we do not correlate commitment levels with importance of engagement objective.



## Develop a system for defining and measuring levels of customer engagement, and embed a process for keeping this under constant review

- This will deliver:** Insight into who is engaging, when how and why. Thematic insight into customer groups that are tending not to engage. Measuring the reach and depth of our engagement enhances Orwell's ability to reflect the community and enhance the diversity of those represented and able to influence.
- Why do we need it:** Insight around engagement uptake will enable data led approaches to future offers that ensure a diverse, representative voice. This supports our diversity objectives and ensures our engagement processes are inclusive, delivering equality of opportunity.
- How will we deliver?:** We will support and develop customer engagement insight using internal and external data sources including CRM and CX. We will develop an equality impact reporting for engagement activities. We will invest in high-performing digital customer and community engagement that facilitates insight and review of levels of engagement alongside the profile of those engaging.

## Consult with customers to gauge satisfaction levels and hear about their needs and aspirations.

- This will deliver:** We know that customers are the experts about our services, we seek insight greater into what is important to our customers, to understand their diverse requirements and expectations.
- Why do we need it:** Confidence that our insight is far reaching and credible will enable us to make informed and inclusive decisions about the services we offer. Moving beyond measuring satisfaction about the services we offer at the point of a transaction with us, or on an annual basis we aim to develop engagement to become a tool that offers meaningful insight. We are ambitious to develop a more refined index incorporating a range of measures around wellbeing, happiness and aspiration.
- How will we deliver?:** We will work to ensure that our customer satisfaction feedback channels are accessible, timely and clear. We will publish customer satisfaction levels, celebrating our successes and being transparent where we need to make improvements. We will undertake a review of how we measure our customers' experience of our services. The results of this will be scrutinised by the ORG and published in the Annual Report to Tenants. ORG scrutiny activities will always utilise high performing surveys and focus groups as a method of gauging satisfaction with service areas.

## Ensure that customers are empowered by involving them in designing and scrutinising at least three service areas each year

<b>This will deliver:</b>	Customer engagement that is aligned to our governance. High quality performance monitoring from a customer perspective. Evidencing regulatory standards have been met to ensure we are confidently viable.
<b>Why do we need it:</b>	We are required to demonstrate that we meet RSH Regulatory Standards to evidence transparency in our performance, governance and decision making processes, and that we provide customers with an opportunity to influence the decision making process. We are ambitious to empower customers to identify service areas for scrutiny, and to enable them to coordinate this scrutiny and report outcomes within our governance framework, and externally to all stakeholders.
<b>How will we deliver?:</b>	By offering ongoing enhanced training to ORG about the expectations of the RSH Regulatory Standards, and how we assess ourselves against them. With further training in understanding performance information and using this to identify areas for customer-led scrutiny. We will support and facilitate scrutiny by promoting the benefits of customer-led scrutiny with all stakeholders, including staff. We will provide independent support where necessary. The ORG will be trained, supported and empowered to co-create visually engaging and informative reports following scrutiny that they will present within our governance framework, and to other stakeholders. This will be promoted online with timely and supportive comms across all channels. ORG will be tasked with ensuring that we deliver on our Customer Engagement commitments. We will look at ways that customers can review progress against the plan and include this as part of the purpose of the group.



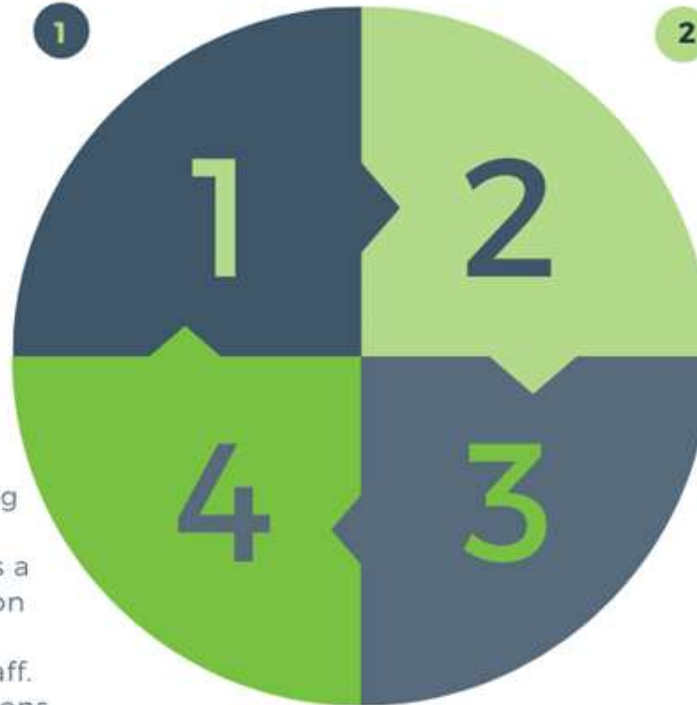
# Empowered Customer Influence

## Board Performance Report

KPIs, transactional surveys, satisfaction outcomes provided to ORG. Board representative meets ORG and/or provides a narrative update on performance

## Present to Board

ORG co create engaging and inclusive scrutiny outcome reports across a blend of communication platforms to Board, customers and OHA staff, making recommendations and monitoring progress of these.



## ORG Meet to Review

Performance report to identify potential areas for further scrutiny and/or monitoring. Planning objectives, scope and methodology of scrutiny project.

## Coordinate Scrutiny

Interviewing OHA staff, conducting surveys, benchmarking, hosting focus groups with tenants and residents, attending training and any activity appropriate to the scrutiny task.

## Improving value for money, services and driving innovation and change

<b>This will deliver:</b>	Increased assurance in the value of customer engagement by , understanding, ESG credentials. Efficiencies with procurement. And to create and deliver an offer of choice to residents, whilst adding value to the organisation.
<b>Why do we need it:</b>	To reinforce the idea that CE is important, we report how it has contributed towards achieving VFM. We want to confidently display our ESG credentials knowing that we are a viable organisation that demonstrably involves our customers in performance monitoring and identifying opportunities to increase efficiencies. Reviewing the effectiveness of engagement methods, with residents and staff, to improve or remove non-cost-effective offers.
<b>How will we deliver?:</b>	Make sure our engagement is providing exceptional VfM through use of high performing methods including digital. Use in house expertise to deliver training and support to engaged customers. Demonstrate successes of customer engagement as a key contributing factor in achieving value for money in service delivery. Provide performance reporting to engaged residents alongside training to enable confidence in translating the data. Make sure that the customer experience is a fundamental consideration in our procurement activities and demonstrate the impact delivered by increased customer satisfaction. Prioritising the use of digital and innovative platforms, to use as customer engagement tools reaching a bigger audience and collecting data in thoughtful ways. This includes a simple, easy to use online involvement area. Pushing boundaries, to explore new ideas:

## Understand what is important to our customers and their communities

<b>This will deliver:</b>	Customer and community engagement facilitates identification of customer and community priorities. It supports our understanding where our customers value our social impact the most, and how we can increase it
<b>Why do we need it:</b>	Better engagement with communities precedes responsive delivery of improved neighbourhoods. This enhances the quality of community life through influence, control and empowerment. We aim to deliver social impact to customer identified areas to maximise support and target resources.
<b>How will we deliver?:</b>	We will commit to community engagement in placemaking projects through high performing digital channels and an investment in customer insight to coordinate quantitative and qualitative data. We will utilise modern methods of insight capture like mapping surveying and reporting tools including participant relationship management, e-newsletters, social platforms, blogs, informational widgets, levels of visibility data insights, data summary reports, demographic breakdown, comment analysis, exportable formats and charts. We will be ambitious to form mutually supportive partnerships and connections with existing assets in our communities

# **Customer Engagement: how will we measure our success?**

**Our targets and aspirations are:**

**Customer satisfaction with housing services at 95%.**

**Level of customer engagement at 30%**

## **Create meaningful customer roles within our business**

Define the role and purpose of the ORG and promote this with great multimedia communications internally and externally.

ORG members will receive corporate induction, access to staff benefits platform, IT hardware and support plus an ongoing training and development package.

Establish a complaint handling assessment group of customers, providing them with training and support to hear and respond to complaint handling.

Establish specialist Quality Homes Group of customers to work with us to deliver engagement and compliance with the customer facing elements of the Building Safety Bill and Fire Safety Bill

## **Ensuring developmental opportunities for those who engage with us**

ORG members to have a full induction programme

Offer access to skills, improvement programmes and learning opportunities

## **Embedding co creation within Orwell Housing**

Demonstrating outcomes and value for money from our co creation with residents

Embed co creation as a way of working with our customers; ensuring we continue to develop efficient and transparent processes for customers to work together with staff to design and deliver services

## **Supporting Orwell customers and staff to enhance the engagement experience**

By shouting about the successes of customer engagement through great communication.

Staff training

## **Taking engagement opportunities to all areas of our community**

Enable residents to engage more online, freeing up staff time to enhance and reshape face to face engagement

Ensure our Communication is inclusive, and put in place customer champions within our local communities to spread the word about engagement benefits and encourage participation

Targeting harder to reach groups of customers through new approaches to engagement and partnership working with external agencies

This strategy will be delivered by an inclusive and dynamic partnership with customers, staff and Board members.

We're proud of the way residents and staff have shaped this strategy. It creates an exciting way forward for customer engagement, within Orwell and the sector.