Scrutiny Review of the Year 3 Delivery of the ForHousing Strategy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Following a Scrutiny exercise looking at the year 1 delivery of the ForHousing Strategy, Scrutiny recommended a review be undertaken each year. Having completed the review of year 2 strategy delivery, Scrutiny agreed to review the year 3.

1.2 The focus of the exercise was on the strategic roadmap and aims to provide assurance to the ForHousing Board and Executive Management Team that:

- Actions from the previous review 'Year 2 of ForHousing Strategy Delivery' have been delivered or are in progress
- Delivery of the strategic roadmap can be demonstrated through clear activities and projects and that there is effective oversight
- That there are clear links to the Strategic Impact Portfolio and strong reporting and accountability frameworks
- That customer influence is at the heart of decision making both at a strategic and operational level
- Performance reporting demonstrates accountability for delivery of the strategy

2. Scope of the Exercise

2.1 Scrutiny Partners had:

- an overview of the work carried out to date to deliver the strategy and supporting strategies
- a deeper dive into the delivery of three key projects:
  - Customer Strategy – Elevate 360, State of the Nation, Playback and design/ solution
  - Homes Strategy – Analyse external property repair frequencies and issues to enable the effective targeting of external cyclical maintenance programmes
  - Resource Strategy - Implement CE+ cyber security standards

3. Methodology

3.1 Desktop work was carried out which examined the following information:

- ForHousing Strategy
- Homes Strategy
- Customer Strategy
- Resources Strategy
- ForHousing Strategy Roadmap
- Customer Strategy Year 3 Closure report
- Homes Strategy Year 3 Closure report
- Resource Strategy Year 3 Closure report

3.2 To assess the successful delivery of the strategies, Scrutiny picked one project from the strategic roadmap for each strategy and carried out focus groups with:

- Elevate 360 – Rebecca Whittle, Regional Director and Michelle Warwick, Design and Improvement Lead
- Analyse External Property Repairs – Jonathan Wintle, Investment Manager

- Implement CE+ cyber security standard – Danny Codling, ICT Director

4. Findings

4.1 Actions from the Previous Review

Scrutiny had made 3 recommendations which were either delivered or in progress:

1. Scrutiny to have a demonstration of the new allocations app to understand the process – in progress
2. Scrutiny to receive updated performance against the strategic measures – received as part of this exercise
3. Scrutiny to carry out a further review at the end of year 3 delivery of the Strategy – completed with this exercise

4.2 Delivery of Strategic Roadmap

Scrutiny were pleased with the progress of delivery of the strategic roadmap and highlight the below against each of the strategies.

4.2.1 Customer Strategy

- Scrutiny have requested Repairs SEG have a demonstration of self-appointing on the app.

- Strategic Measure 1 - Tenant Satisfaction (TSM) -Scrutiny have noted that this target is performing in tolerance and that it has seen a downturn in performance this year.

- Satisfaction with repairs (TSM) – Scrutiny have noted that the stabilisation plan had a positive impact.

- Satisfaction with the time taken to complete most recent repair (TSM) - Scrutiny were interested in the complaints and tenant feedback theme meetings with Wates and ask that actions identified from the review in May of 'length of time to complete repairs' is shared with the Complaints Panel.

- Satisfaction with landlords approach to handling complaints (TSM) - Scrutiny have asked that the Complaints Panel receive an update on the CIP for communication in complaints to provide assurance of delivery.

- Transactional survey satisfaction (Gas) – Scrutiny were concerned about the satisfaction level for gas but will await the outcome of the Scrutiny exercise on gas servicing and repairs.

- Customer Strategy Milestones – Year Four – Scrutiny look forward to customer involvement in the next phase of Elevate 360.

4.2.2 Homes Strategy

- Scrutiny were satisfied with the reasoning behind the target changes and the explanations where targets had not been met.

- Stock condition surveys as a percent of homes – Scrutiny would like assurance around the process for attempting to gain access.

4.2.3 Resources Strategy

- Develop AI Adoption Roadmap – Scrutiny appreciate the caution and thorough approach to this action.
- Operating margin – Disrepair would potentially be an area for Scrutiny in the future.

4.3 Delivery of the strategic roadmap can be demonstrated through clear activities and projects and that there is effective oversight of this

- Scrutiny felt that the projects and activities contained within the strategic roadmap were clear and demonstrated how the strategy was being delivered. Progress reporting was clear and Scrutiny were satisfied that there was effective oversight of delivery.

- Upon review of the closure reports Scrutiny were clear about the accountability for delivery and the reporting mechanisms.

4.4 Elevate 360

- Scrutiny were impressed with the Elevate 360 programme and were satisfied that there is clear evidence that customer influence is at the heart of the project, appreciating that ForHousing are responding to the complex needs of customers.

- There has been effective use of insight to understand pain points and what matters to customers, including feedback from complaints. Scrutiny Partners were provided with an overview of the programme at the involved tenant away day in 2026.

- Scrutiny were pleased that ForHousing are intending to involve tenants in the future delivery of the project and welcome the opportunity to work with ForHousing to agree the best way to approach to this level of involvement.

- Scrutiny are clear that the delivery of Elevate 360 will provide tangible improvements for tenants.

- Scrutiny were satisfied that there was adequate monitoring of the delivery of the project with regular reports to relevant committees, including Customer Committee

- There is a clear link to the strategic and lead measures, as well as TSMs.

- Whilst communication has been shared with internal teams, Scrutiny agree that communication with tenants may be premature and that future tenant communication should be service specific. This will mean that tenants can be told

what is going to change and how they will experience things when the services changes are being implemented.

- Scrutiny understand that some transformation has been delivered, specifically in the Customer Connect Hub, Tenancy Support Services, Extra Care Service and with the delivery of the interim Neighbourhoods Operating Model.

4.5 Analyse external property repair frequencies and issues to enable the effective targeting of external cyclical maintenance programmes

- Scrutiny gained an understanding of the cyclical maintenance programme and what elements are involved. They were made aware of the system that holds property information to enable ForHousing to programme the cyclical works.

- Scrutiny were pleased that other information is taken into consideration such as stock validation surveys and that an external agency had been appointed to enable these to be carried out effectively.

- Previously, the programme was very data driven but information such as complaints feedback will now also be used to support prioritising the programme which Scrutiny felt was a good use of feedback.

- Scrutiny were pleased with the structure for delivering the programme and agreed that it made sense to have continuity to allow a rolling programme.

- Whilst Scrutiny agree that data is the key driver for programme development, they were pleased that customer insight from complaints and satisfaction surveys informs the programme where there are spikes and trends.

- There is robust monitoring of the programme with early opportunities to highlight issues. Of particular interest to Scrutiny was the use of 'My Project' which means information relating to the property and the tenant is available to anybody who needs to see it. This includes information from the pre-entry survey to take account of tenant's individual needs.

- There is a clear impact for tenants in ensuring people have a decent home which gives a better tenant experience. Scrutiny welcomed the possible introduction of a leaflet with a QR code to enable tenants to give immediate feedback.

- There is a clear link to the strategic and lead measures, as well as TSMs.

4.6 Implement CE+ cyber security standards

- Scrutiny were very impressed by the level of security that is put in place by ForHousing. Whilst ForHousing have to have Cyber Essentials, they have exceeded this by adopting CE Plus.

- Scrutiny were impressed with ForHousing's score and target of 95/96% for the Microsoft security scan against an average score of 51% and the fact that we are one of the highest scoring Housing Associations.

- There are clear lines of reporting both internally and through peer networking groups.

- Scrutiny appreciates this is not an area suitable for customer involvement. There is only an impact to tenants if it goes wrong. There was a significant impact during the cyber-attack, but this was for a short amount of time and ForHousing not having to recover any systems is testimony to the hard work that goes on in the background. Scrutiny felt that their data was in safe hands.

- The work of ICT enables all teams to meet the strategic measures.

5. Summary of Findings

5.1 Scrutiny were satisfied that the actions from the previous action plan had been delivered or were in progress.

5.2 It is clear from the roadmap, the year-end reports and the focus groups that customer satisfaction and the impact to customers remain the main drivers for the delivery of the strategy.

5.3 Scrutiny were concerned that not all the strategic measures had not met their target and have detailed areas of particular concern within the report.

5.4 Scrutiny were extremely pleased with the level of work being put into Elevate 360 and the positive impact that this will have on customers.

5.5 The process of using customer insight and data to inform the programme of cyclical works is a positive move and should help to improve tenant satisfaction.

5.6 Scrutiny were extremely impressed with the work that goes into keeping our ICT systems safe in the CE+ cyber security standards and are confident that their information is in safe hands.

6. Recommendations

- Repairs SEG to have a demonstration of self-appointing a repair on the app at the next meeting in August.
- Actions identified from the review of complaints with Wates in May relating to 'length of time to complete repairs' to be shared with the Complaints and Feedback Panel at the next meeting in August.
- Complaints Panel to receive an update on the CIP for communication in complaints to offer assurance this is being delivered at the Complaints and Feedback Panel in October
- Scrutiny to receive assurance around the process for improving access for stock conditions surveys. This will be discussed at the Repairs SEG in October.
- Scrutiny to consider adding Disrepair to their programme in the future, depending on capacity within the programme.