

2023-2025

Customer Engagement and Empowerment Plan

Bromford.

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At Bromford, our purpose is clear: to invest in homes and relationships so people can thrive.

For us, our purpose goes further than simply providing a home though, because we also genuinely care about the people who live in them. We want each person to be able to achieve their ambitions. We want people to thrive.

We want to ensure we have the voice of the customers at the very heart of what we do.

We want to empower and enable our customers to get involved in an easy way that suits them. That’s why we’ve agreed a new approach to customer engagement and empowerment.

As part of this new approach, we’re committed being inclusive, and to removing any barriers to customers getting involved.

We recognise that every single customer and community has unique strengths and challenges and we are determined to have an approach tailored and designed to the needs of each community.

A one-size-fits-all plan just won’t work and I’m excited that through this Customer Engagement and Empowerment Plan we can work in together with customers on how we can create homes and communities people can be proud to live in.

Paul Coates
Chief customer officer

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Customers have a huge part to play in helping improve our services of today, and creating services that work for future generations.

We know our customers have first hand experience of living in our homes and communities. It is important that we hear their voices.

With the focus on place based working in the Bromford strategy, it is vital that we collaborate with customers at every level, to further strengthen our partnership.

I am excited to see that the principles and objectives of this approach are designed to put the customer’s voice at the heart of what we do and that it seeks to include every home and community.

Sandra Horley
Board member and Customer and Communities Influence Network chair

Recognising challenges and opportunities

We know that customers are highly likely to be affected by many challenging external factors, both now, and in the coming years. There have been some key events in recent years that have highlighted how some customers feel voiceless:

- The aftermath of the Grenfell tower fire
- the Social Housing White Paper
- spotlight on condensation, damp mould and disrepair in the housing sector

Customers are rightly demanding better and stronger regulation. Our adoption of the new tenant satisfaction measures and consumer standards will play its part in ensuring they get it.

Our customers also expect to use convenient, personalised and responsive services in their daily lives. We know we need to meet these expectations. We believe customer engagement and empowerment is a fundamental way to ensure we keep conversations real and respond to our customers' changing needs and aspirations.



Our vision

To shape how customers thrive through unique relationships driven by insight and the ambition to empower.

By...

Having 46,000 1:1 conversations with neighbourhood coaches conducting an annual review giving every household the opportunity to thrive

Shifting to place based working bringing a range of ways to empower customers

Overseeing our engagement activities and services with the Customer and Communities Influence Network

Finding new ways to engage, influence and co-design through innovation and technology

Truly understanding the voice of the customer with our combined insight on customer interactions

Principles for engaging with customers

This is a fully customer-focused approach so we've worked with customers to create six principles we must work to:

Tailored: Our engagement work will be tailored to the individual customer needs and the communities in which they live.

Diverse: We will have a wide population of involved customers, representative of everyone who lives in our homes. They will be able to contribute in different ways to provide us with a diverse range of opinions.

Inclusive: We will ensure that our engagement approaches can be adapted to meet the specific needs of customers and communities and eliminate any barriers to people's participation.

Respect: Customers will feel respected, and that what matters to them is given priority.

Measurable: Our approach will be reviewed and evaluated regularly to improve outcomes for customers.

Impactful: We will feed back to involved customers how their engagement has impacted services for other customers and communities.

Objectives

We want:

Stronger relationships that involve even more customers.

Increased ways for customers to get involved that work for them.

Customer-led oversight and scrutiny to provide service improvements and better engagement.

Empowered customers who can create better places to live and giving them more control over local outcomes.

To support our customers to become engaged with training where they require it.

An approach to place and communities that is co-designed with customers, which is better tailored towards the needs and aspiration of the communities in which we work.



Our approach

Our customers are all individuals who have their own preferences for how they want to be involved with us.

We get that customers have different passions and interests, and that these might change over time. We also understand that each community is unique, so we want to tailor our approach accordingly. Our volunteer opportunities will be flexible and varied, depending on the topic and the time customers can give.

The approach will:

- provide places where customers feel empowered; with options to change the way services are delivered to them at community or neighbourhood level
- demonstrate a strong customer influence in things like our governance arrangements. We particularly want customer perspective in testing how our strategy is used to shape the services we deliver
- create a range of service improvements, future options and product development driven by what we know customers value; we call this acting on the voice of the customer

Most of all though our approach will place customers at the heart of our strategy in more diverse ways than ever.

Our engagement focuses

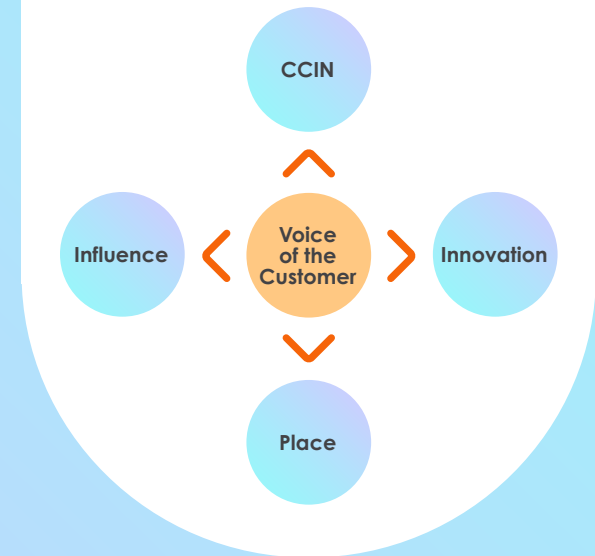
Influence

As part of an annual review conversation with our neighbourhood coaches, we will invite every single household every year to understand their aspirations and hopes for the future as well as their experience and views on our services.

What makes this element of our Customer Engagement and Empowerment Plan unique is that we will understand the needs of our customers of the future as well as existing customers. The conversation will be around the needs and aspirations of the whole household and not just the tenant.

We will be working on growing a network of customers who can get involved in lots of ways to provide us with an honest view of their world and what's important to them, to help us shape improvements. We will aim to better understand the needs of customers who live in our homes to make sure we have the right interests and mix of customer partners to have the right conversations.

All our combined insight will be brought together in a quarterly Voice of the Customer (VoC) report. Leaders from across the business, and the Customer and Communities Influence Network (CCIN), will use the VoC reports to identify what is of most value to customers and enable us to draw conclusions about where our resources and service reviews should be prioritised.



Customer and Communities Influence Network (CCIN)

We will enhance our customer-led CCIN group. As part of our offer to customers involved in this group, the group will have access to independent professional support and training from organisations such as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (Tpas) and the Housing Ombudsman. The group will consist of colleagues with portfolios around complaints handling, safety and customer experience. CCIN will use insight from our Voice of the Customer report to identify areas for further scrutiny and recommend appropriate engagement activities. CCIN is an independent, positive, constructive, and purposeful group that has a clear route to our boardroom as part of our governance framework.

Place

The places in which we live and work are what build relationships. A shared sense of place can unite us and make us stronger as a community. We'll be forming our approach during the discovery phase of the strategy to ensure we tailor our local engagement opportunities to what is important to each community. A consultation to inform our approach is underway with our Local Influence Networks (LINs) before being rolled out to wider customers. At a local level, we will ensure customers living in high-rise buildings are informed and engaged on issues such as building safety and fire safety in accordance with our 'customer engagement building safety strategy'.

Innovation

We know that customers have amazing ideas about how we can change services in the future. Our engagement activity in this space will be more than just speculative conversations. There will be research with customers linked to future strategic possibilities to look at up and coming technology, such as homes of the future, reimagining existing services and exploring new services we do not currently provide.

When we are testing new customer experiences we will ask for and listen to feedback to make sure they work for them.

How we will hear the customer voice

Our intention is to have the widest and most diverse opportunities available and includes:

Conversation with a dedicated neighbourhood coach

Every customer will be invited to an annual review each year. We'll be led by what's important to each individual in those conversations and what can help them thrive.

Formal meetings

CCIN is an example of a customer-led strategic meeting.

Service inspections

A deep dive into a particular service which could involve shadowing colleagues delivering the service conducted by CCIN.

Service reviews

Helping us to map out an end-to-end journey to look for waste and improvement. They'll also keep abreast of any changes to customer facing policies to ensure they meet customers' needs.

Digital workshops

This may be a deeper conversation to share understanding and co-create solutions from customers that have a particular interest – for example giving a view on a new policy. It could be one workshop or a series of workshops.

Webinars

If customers have registered an interest in a particular subject, they may be invited to listen to a presentation and give their views. This may be something we're considering redesigning – for example a specific service.

Feedback via our You Matter programme

A chance to give direct and honest feedback over the phone about a service a customer has just received to a colleague working in our feedback team.

Digital polls

We may need a very quick view of something and may send out a pulse survey to get customer input. For example, do we need to extend the operating hours of our repair service?

Task and finish groups

Helping us define problems and explore solutions to particular service issues or suggesting tweaks to our customer facing policies.

Digital services tester

If we are looking to improve our online services we want to work with customers to develop and test the changes before we launch them.

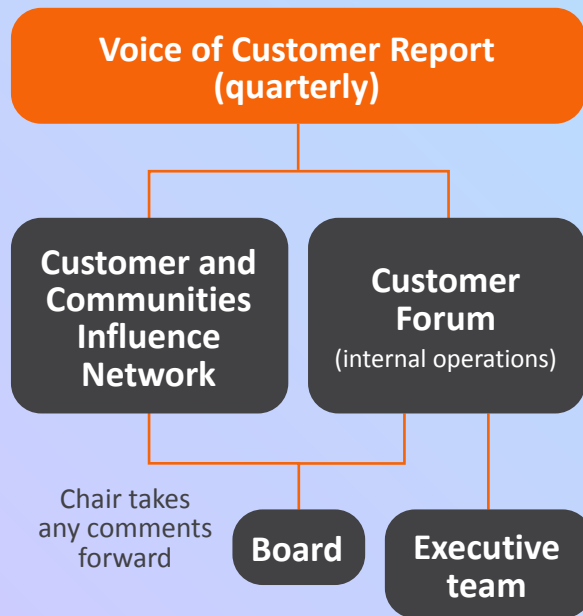
Tests and pilots

Customers will help us test the home of the future such as sensors and the smart home.

An inclusive approach

We will also aim to reach out to our traditionally silent customers, those people who rarely engage with traditional methods.

Governance



Voice of the Customer Report

The Voice of the Customer report will be produced four times a year to show what our wider customer base is experiencing in terms of service standards and impact. The insight will include:

- customer satisfaction data and qualitative commentary
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- repairs work in progress
- call answer times
- complaints trends and lessons learned
- feedback from customer-led locality groups (currently our Local Influence Networks)
- trends from our annual reviews with customers
- word on the street from colleagues working in our communities

Customer Forum

The Customer Forum is part of our governance framework. The forum oversees and drives action to ensure the delivery of change and improvements.

Customer and Communities Influence Network

CCIN has its own terms of reference explaining the group's place in the governance structure. CCIN will oversee an annual plan and impact assessment and has the power to conduct up to three service inspections per year.

They will test the expected business and value-for-money outcomes of service reviews and will check whether outcomes are delivered after the reviews have been completed. This will help us prioritize future service developments or reviews.

The group will also contribute ideas and responses to the emerging consumer standards developed by the Regulator of Social Housing, with Bromford seen as an innovator and thought leader for modern customer-influenced services.

CCIN members will also look for:

Equality and diversity outcomes – how any service has improved outcomes or opportunities for all customers or potential customers.

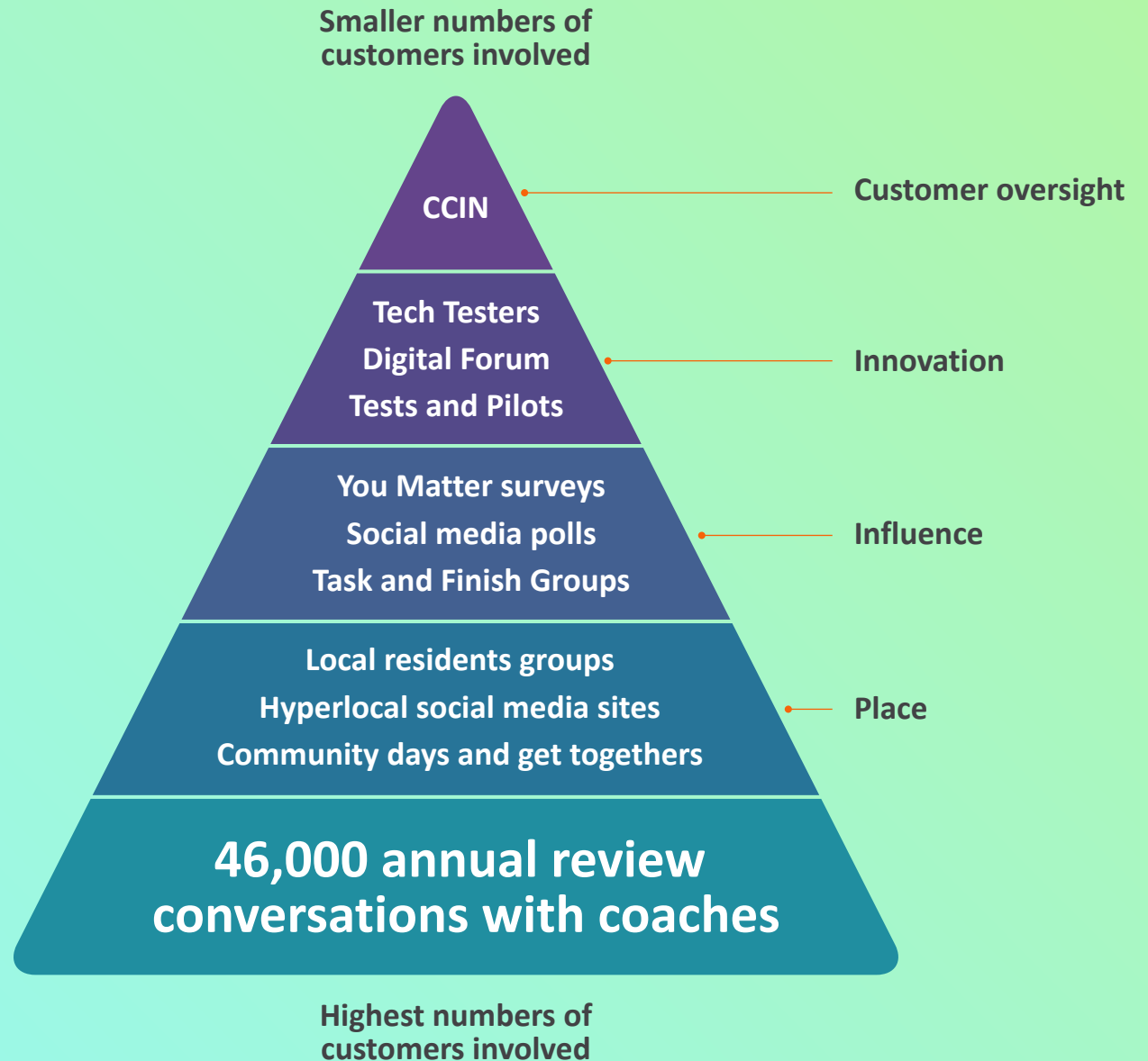
Value for money outcomes – how any service review has driven a better deal for the customer.

Growing our reach

We want to harness the value and power of our customer voices and to do that we need to increase the number of customers who can work in partnership to help us improve, innovate and shape the communities in which we live.

Our first year of the strategy has ambitious and sector-leading objectives in terms of growing the number of customers engaged in these activities.

Our Customer Engagement and Empowerment Plan requires the right number and the right type of customers, and we envisage the volume of customers partnering with us in different activities – weighted in the following way.



Measures of success

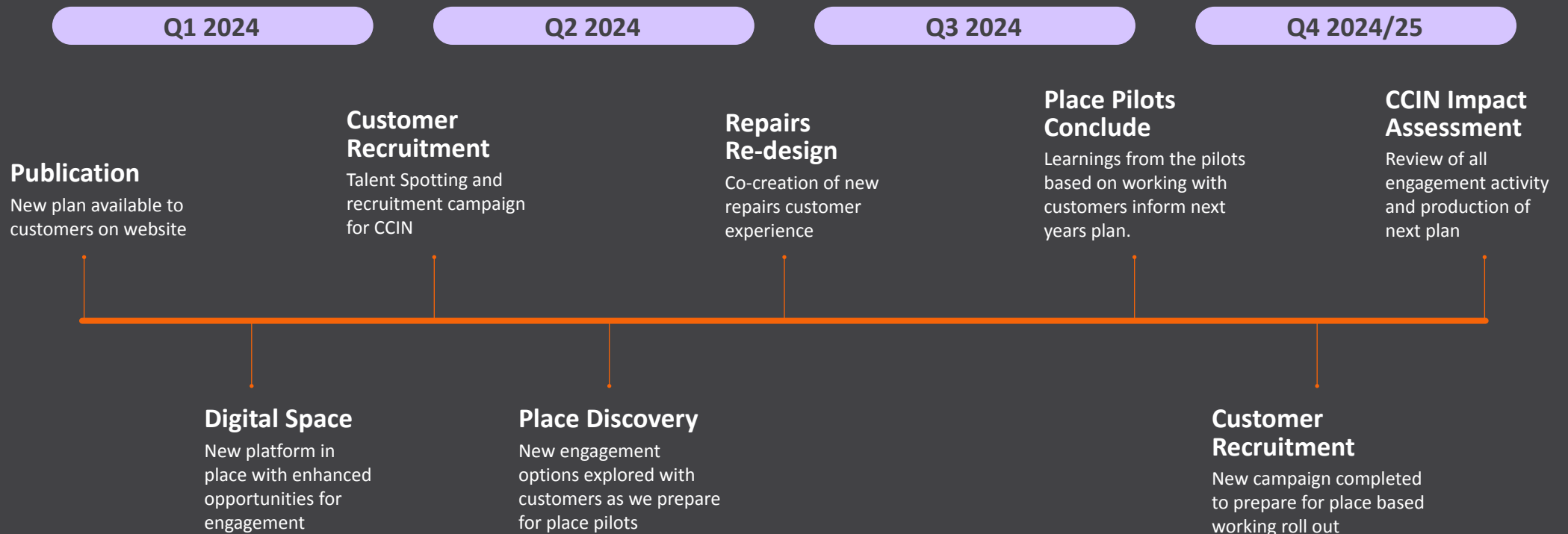
The most important aspect to our Customer Engagement and Empowerment Plan is the outcomes both customers and Bromford can achieve. We will measure its impact in the following ways:

- more customers will recommend us to a friend (we call this customer advocacy)
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures will demonstrate improved customer satisfaction
- more engaged customers. We will track the number of customers involved to ensure we reach all our households and customers engage when and how they want to
- whether more customers are thriving

Summary

This evolving Customer Engagement and Empowerment Plan is an enabler for colleagues and customers alike to improve and enhance services for both our existing and future customers. It provides a framework and vehicle to ensure the customers voice is at the heart of what we do.

Year 1 Plan (2023-2024)



To find out more contact our customer involvement officer
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Bromford.