

Plus Dane Housing Customer Assurance Panel (CAP)

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2023 on Teams

Present – CAP

Mark Sumner – Chair
Shaf Choudhary
Joanna Rushton
Peter Juerges
Rachael Johnston
Amanda Graham
Angela Needham
Ian Francis
Ian Corbishley
Charity Foxton

Present – Plus Dane

Irene Crone
Jennifer Priest
Kate Jungnitz
Danielle Sharp (Comms Team)
Neil Roscoe (Comms Team)
Ann Hoskins (Board member)

CAP 010 Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Apologies - Emma Sneyd

CAP 011 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were agreed.

CAP 012 Key Issues Report

Budget and Business Plan

Peter asked about outstanding long-term loans Plus Dane had and whether there was a link to the recent regulatory regrade.

Kate explained that the regrade is about more than loans – it is related to risk and the capacity of an organisation to withstand general pressures.

Danielle explained that the regrade does not mean that PD is unstable - it just means the risk to the business has increased, which is more or less the case across the sector. However, PD has simplified loans over the last few years and secured long-term borrowing at a good rate – before interest rates rose.

No Contact Customers

Amanda asked if there is a process in place for auditing of the no contacts to take place.

Kate will find out and report back to the CAP.

Action

Kate to find out about the process for auditing no contacts and report back to CAP.

Customer Portal

Shaf expressed concerns about those customers who do not use digital communication. PD should look at ways of encouraging and supporting these customers to become digitally engaged to stop them from being excluded. PD should also look at producing more hard copies – leaflets etc.

Kate explained that because of GDPR, PD have tried to use two different communication routes for all those registering on the portal depending on the contact details held for each customer.

PD are on year two of the Digital Strategy. As well as rolling out the portal in batches to manage possible pressure on the Customer Access Team, community events are being organised across PD which will be attended by multi-disciplinary teams so customers can individually receive support to register.

Peter asked how PD are documenting contacts through the portal and any issues raised. Also, whether customers have access to documented information about them and information if referrals are made.

Kate explained that the portal is linked to the housing management system (Cx) and there is a referral route through Cx so cases can be logged and picked up by staff. Customers can request information PD hold about them under GDPR through a subject access request.

Angela asked if PD know the number of customers who do not have internet access, and whether PD have any plans for community broadband, digital alliances or other schemes.

Kate explained that PD have information from two years ago and with a survey return of 35%, half did not have access. PD need to understand the reasons for this - whether it is the costs of data, kit or wi-fi or because customers choose not to or are unable to access the internet. This will all be considered through the Digital Strategy and the working group.

A one page infographic has been produced to outline the Digital Strategy and Danielle will forward a copy to the CAP.

Action

Danielle to send Digital Strategy infographic to Irene for distribution to CAP.

CAP 013 How PD Communicates with Customers

Danielle explained that PD has developed a Communication Strategy which Peter was involved with developing. PD also set up working groups with customers when working on larger projects such as developing the website, Annual Report, Tone of Voice guidelines etc.

The social media analytics have allowed PD to see how customers are using various platforms. It has shown that Twitter is used mainly by stakeholders, Facebook by tenants, Instagram by homeowners. An employer brand is also developing through LinkedIn.

The Comms Team will use the best medium for engaging with customers depending on what they are trying to achieve. For example, the cost of living leaflet went out with rent letters/emails so everyone received it. Case studies are also used to explain context. It is important to give clear and consistent messages.

Neil explained that PD has the tools available to see what is happening instantly across all eight social media channels. This includes the 3k Facebook, 9k Twitter and 500 Instagram followers. It also includes demographic breakdowns about the audience, for example Facebook followers are 70% female and aged 25 to 54. Twitter followers are 55% female. The analytics also show the best time to send information.

Social media numbers have increased and customers are mainly using phones for access. For example 38% of emails are opened by customers – 25% is considered good.

As well as the segmented roll out of the portal, a 'how to' video has also been produced so customers can download it on their devices. For cohorts 3 and 4 who are less digitally engaged there will be a step by step guide in Unity, flyers and posters as well as support at community events. Over 300 customers have already registered on the portal following the roll out to cohorts 1 and 2 who are more digitally engaged customers.

Comms have been involved with the Cost of Living Campaign – producing leaflets, flyers, a dedicated page on the website and an inter-active warm hubs map.

A video was produced during National Apprentice Week.

Action

Neil to send link to video to Irene so it can be shared with CAP.

Peter congratulated the Team for all they have done and the material produced. However, the information does not appear to be getting out to all customers or registering with them.

Neil acknowledged that PD cannot reach everyone and although in a good place PD is always looking at how to do better.

Danielle explained that it is important not to bombard customers with information but to be selective, so they receive information they are interested in – so it is important to have the good insight.

Ian F asked if PD collect information on attendees at the warm hubs, as he had concerns that they are not very well used.

Irene explained that attendance levels vary but that PD are looking at attending some of the hubs to provide welfare /employment advice and support and also get people signed up to the portal. By providing other activities, it is hoped that more customers will attend the hubs by offering more than just a warm space.

Amanda suggested PD use the side of vans to advertise activities and promote campaigns. Also using supermarket notice boards.

Mark suggested magnetic signs. Also using libraries, public notice boards and other places people access to provide information to customers.

Danielle was concerned that information on vans would date quickly and also that it would be costly. The vans are also leased so there could be restrictions. Danielle to look into this and feed back to CAP. Although PD have carried out work to identify preferred communication channels it might be worthwhile looking at what matters to customers and then targeting the information.

Irene explained that Plus Dane's Engagement Team are now getting out in the neighbourhoods more and attending events such as the Cozy Club in Anfield/Everton.

The CAP felt that a variety of approaches needed to be used.

Rachael commented that the latest information on Tik Tok was posted in July last year and that this is a missed opportunity for PD – especially when targeting younger people. If it is only being used by Homeshub it should clearly show this.

Danielle explained that PD have only just started to use Tik Tok although it has been set up a while and it is used mainly by Homeshub. PD are exploring the use of Tik Tok.

Action

Danielle to look into opportunity to advertise campaigns/provide information on vans and in the wider community.

Angela asked if the number of customers accessing information digitally has increased and whether PD has set targets.

Danielle explained that it has hovered between 35% and 40% which is good. The analytics are able to show hotspots and to see where people are looking and landing. Comms do have a target in their Annual Plan, which is part of the Comms Strategy, to increase engagement and to track sentiment. This is monitored quarterly by the Comms Team who look at the information and what improvements can be made. Danielle is happy to share this information with the Panel if they would find it useful.

Mark felt that the CAP is mainly concerned about being reassured by Comms that they are doing everything they can to reach as many customers as possible.

Amanda suggested using Instagram for more than just new developments. It is a good medium for spreading news and information. 10% of PD of customers in PD properties are following the account but the last thing posted was 10 February.

Action

Danielle to look into further use of Instagram and Tik Tok

Ian C asked whether sentiment was becoming more positive or negative.

Danielle explained that in the main it was more positive. However, this depends on what is happening at the time and the content.

Action

Danielle suggested providing a Comms update and feedback to Kate to include in a future Key Issues Report.

CAP 014 Agreeing the three key issues for Board

Kate reminded the CAP of the last three key issues which have not yet gone to Board because of the timing of meetings. Kate will include the key issues from both meetings in the Chief Executive's report at the next Board meeting.

They included;

- Communication
- Support around Cost of Living
- Corporate Plan - the ability to influence Board on significant issues including the strategic direction of PD. (It was agreed that this will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Ian Reed to be invited to attend as he is responsible for the Corporate Plan.)

Peter commented that as the Comms Team are doing far more than the CAP were aware of that the issue is more about getting the message out and understood. It's therefore not clear what CAP can effectively take to Board.

Amanda suggested comparing effectiveness with engagement across all communications with other Housing Associations as the CAP have nothing to benchmark against. This would make the information more meaningful. Comms could be asked to do a deep dive into the effectiveness.

Irene suggested bringing some benchmarking figures to the next meeting along with other performance information.

Joanna commented on the website and that PD now has the content to communicate – need to remember where PD used to be and where they are now. The website is really easy to use and useful even though PD is still exploring best use of other platforms. PD could try something different each month.

From the discussions Kate suggested taking two issues to Board;

- Carrying out a deep dive and benchmarking around engagement with social media and use of the website.
- Being bolder by trying out different social media channels and monitoring and measuring the engagement with them to see how effective they are.

Amanda also suggested including something about the engagement strategy and reaching hard to reach customers.

Action

Kate to amend the key issues to Board to include the issues agreed at both CAP meetings.

CAP 015 Items for next meeting

Suggestions included:

- The Corporate Plan – agreed at the previous meeting
- Performance Information - the Panel were asked what information they would like
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures - there will be a month's information available by the time of the next meeting as well as the baseline data. Amanda suggested having this data available for each meeting so the CAP can look at trends.

Peter suggested PD's position on carbon zero – future meeting

It was agreed to have the Corporate Plan and carbon zero as the main agenda items for the next two meetings. Kate to speak to those leading on the two topics to see which to have at each meeting based on timings.

Action

Agenda for May’s meeting be agreed at agenda setting meeting with Chair.

CAP 016 Any Other Business

Mark asked for CAP members to let him or Irene know if anyone has any annual leave.

Shaf has had problems printing from his ipad. Irene to contact IT and feedback to Shaf. Irene asked that all IT queries/issues should go through her so she can keep a track of them rather than members contacting IT directly.

Irene has circulated information about the Inside Housing Engagement Conference in London on 6 May. If anyone wants to attend, please let Irene know.

CAP 017 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 31 May at 6pm on Teams

ACTION POINTS

Minute number	Action	Who	Target date	Comments	Status
CAP004	Look at existing provision for young families at sign up and explore if PD could do more	Emma	1/3/23	Emma to report back on progress at next meeting	
CAP004	Provide more information to PJ re partnership working	Emma	1/3/23		Complete
CAP004	Check and review Cost of Living leaflet	Emma	1/3/23		Complete
CAP006	Invite Comms to next meeting on 1 March	Kate	1/2/23		Complete
CAP007	Speak to Board to identify themes where CAP can have an influence	Kate Emma	31/3/23		
CAP007	Corporate Plan to be included on CAP Agenda May 23	Irene	15/3/23	To be agreed at agenda setting meeting with the Chair	

CAP007	Meeting with Chair to agree agenda for next meeting and three items to go to Board	Irene	1/2/23	Three key issues have not been presented to Board yet due to meeting schedules. Key issues from January and March's CAP meeting will be presented at Board meeting on 23/3/23	
CAP012	To find out about the process for auditing no contacts and report back to CAP	Kate	31/5/23		
CAP012	To send Digital Strategy infographic to Irene for distribution to CAP.	Danielle Irene	14/3/23		
CAP013	To send link to video to Irene so it can be shared with CAP.	Neil Irene	14/3/23		Complete
CAP013	To look into opportunities to advertise campaigns/provide information on vans and in the wider community.	Danielle	31/5/23		
CAP013	To look into further use of Instagram and Tik Tok	Danielle	31/5/23		
CAP013	To provide a Comms update and feedback to Kate to include in a future Key Issues Report.	Danielle Kate	30/8/23		
CAP014	To amend the key issues to Board to include the issues agreed at both CAP meetings.	Kate	15/3/23		Complete
CAP015	Agenda for May's meeting be agreed at Agenda setting meeting with Chair.	Irene	15/3/23		