

# Customer FOCUS



**At our second Customer Focus session we invited customers to join us to talk about our three-year plan to make the most of the land and property we own.**

Sixteen customers attended the session in Royal Wootton Bassett on 26 June 2018 and joined in discussions with staff from our customer services and neighbourhoods teams. This update gives a summary of what was discussed.



## Customers

**What is the one thing you think we should do to improve the quality of our customers' homes?**

### You said:

- You are mostly happy with the way repairs are being done and with the level of customer service you receive.
- The areas where you thought we could still do more were heating and energy efficiency. You were particularly concerned about the night storage heaters we have in some of our homes.

- You also mentioned that the upkeep of communal areas should be done more regularly and that you wanted additional parking.

### We will:

- Consider these concerns as we move forward and look again at our Strategic Asset Management Strategy, which we intend to review again this year.
- Investigate the possibility of more regular upkeep of communal areas and assess the impact it would have on service charges (where applicable).
- Parking is more challenging as we're often dealing with homes that were designed some years ago when cars were used less. Often there's no space to create more parking and where there is the cost can be high.



## Housing

**Do you think it's reasonable for us to ask customers to move to a property that better suits their needs instead of making changes to their existing property?**

### You said:

- Some think this is a good idea. Others are concerned we'd be asking people who have lived somewhere for many years to leave their home.
- If we do ask people to move to a more appropriate home, we should offer them help to do this; signposting for example, as the moving process can be daunting.

*continues >*



## We will:

- Ask customers to consider moving as they might find a more appropriate home for their needs going forward. And we will continue to ask people to move if their home is not suitable or sensible to adapt.
- Understand that we may still need to adapt any home that people move in to.
- Look at including ways we can support customers with the moving process in our policy.



## Growth

**Selling is one of the ways we can make money to provide more homes for existing or future customers. Looking at the list of reasons we might sell a property, do you think there are any other things we should consider?**

### You said:

- We should consider selling a property because they are:
  - too expensive to maintain (put cost of repairs to better use);
  - hard to let homes;
  - do not fit our need; no demand for certain types of homes;
  - non-mortgageable homes eg our precast reinforced concrete (PRC) homes;
  - in an area where there are few other homes;
  - in areas that need regeneration;
  - big properties with land to build more than one home on; and
  - homes sold as part of our Right to Buy obligation or as part of a stock transfer to another landlord if the homes are in an isolated area.
- Each of the groups we spoke to prioritised these differently, although two of three had cost of maintenance as number one; the other had this third.

## We will:

- Review our potential properties for disposal against this list of reasons and consider these concerns as we move forward and review our asset management plans again later this year.



## Money

**As properties become empty, should we relet them at the lowest 'social' rent or should we charge a higher 'social' rent that gives us more income to reinvest in new homes and improving older properties?**

### You said:

- We should keep a mix of lower and higher rents. We talked about affordability and people's changing circumstances (sometimes people get better jobs as they go through life and earn more and when people retire their income often goes down). You also highlighted that all our rents are still lower than market rents.
- You came up with some suggestions, including splitting 75%/25% the higher and lower rents for new properties. Some of you also said we should stick roughly to what we have now.

## We will:

- Always ensure we keep an agreed level of lower social rent homes. That way we can ensure that we maintain a stock of homes with a range of rent levels.

# Customer FOCUS

**Customer Focus gives customers an opportunity to tell us what they think... and help shape our future services!**

We hold three sessions a year. The sessions are open to all customers and there is no ongoing commitment!

What we discuss at each session will change and be relevant to what's important at the time.

Why take part? Because you'll get the opportunity to:

- make sure we understand what's most important to you;
- help us design and develop the products and services we offer;
- question how we're doing against the standards we set;
- tell us what you think and feel about new ideas we have and share any you have; and
- help us improve every customer's satisfaction with the services we offer and deliver.

**Interested  
in future Customer Focus sessions?**  
Call us on **01249 465465** or email  
**info@greensquaregroup.com**