

# **CUSTOMER VOICE STRATEGY**

**2019 – 2024**



# Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to support this Customer Voice Strategy as it sets out our commitment to putting customers at the heart of what we do.

As the Chair of whg's Board, I will continue to ensure the Board listens closely to what our customers are saying about their homes and services they receive.

Our first priority is to respond to any concerns that are raised, especially about safety, but we also want to hear feedback from a diverse range of customers so we fully understand the things they value most about whg, what we need to do to improve and the impact of the decisions we make.

I am pleased to see many of the commitments and actions in this strategy are already underway and build on existing work with involved customers. Others are further in the future.

***Danielle Oum***  
***Chair, whg Board***

I welcome this Strategy as it commits whg to not only hearing the voices of customers but also acting upon them.

It's good to see whg putting resources behind this Strategy as well as it recognising that customer bring their resources of a different kind – their experiences, their energy and collective spirit. Together, we all share the ambition of creating successful people and places along with homes that are safe, comfortable and where customers and communities will thrive.

The Customer Experience Committee will help ensure whg delivers this Strategy and continues to put customers at the heart of everything it does. This is the best way to continue to improve the landlord/ customer relationship and foster more interest in involvement.

***Linda Cole***  
***Chair, whg's Customer Experience Committee***

# Strategic context

We set out in our CORPORATE PLAN 2017-24 how we are ‘dedicated to the success of our people and our places’.

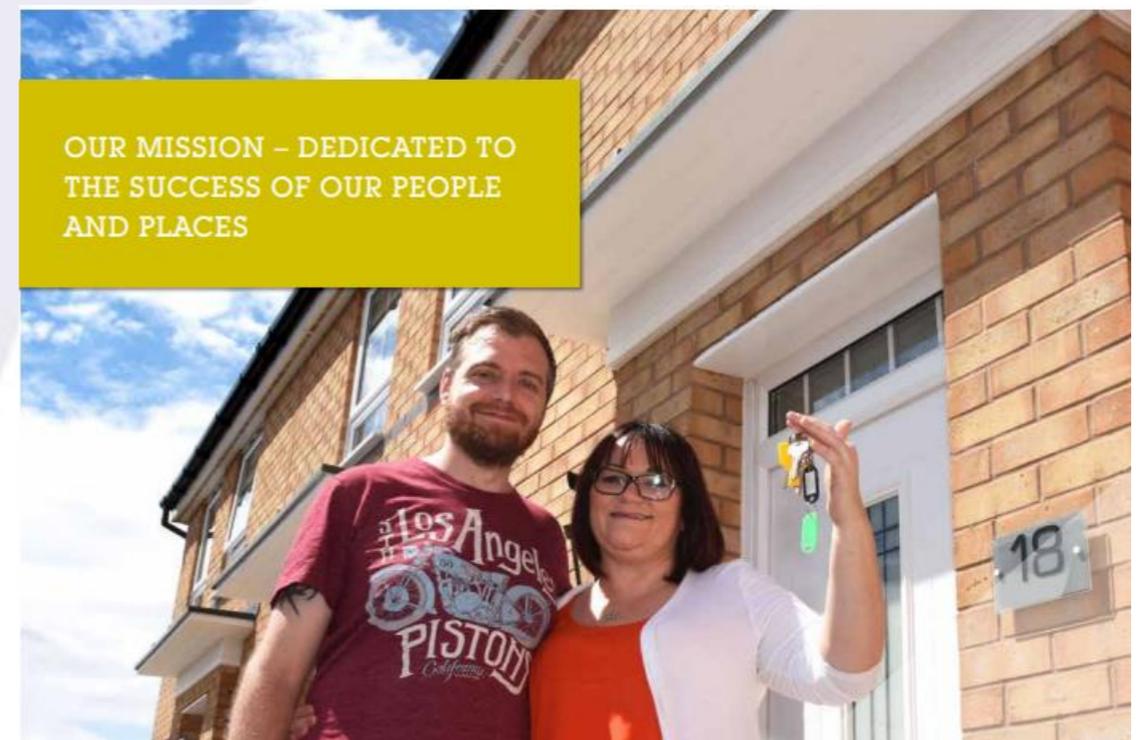
We are proud of our reputation as ‘much more than a landlord’ and we have a clear social purpose that goes beyond bricks and mortar. Central to this is a strong customer voice that informs our governance arrangements, influences our decisions and impacts on the way we deliver our services is essential. This is supported by opportunities for customers to engage with us in a way that best suits them.

Effective customer engagement is fundamental to a positive relationship with our customers and meets the requirements for co-regulation and co-design of services, set out by our Regulator in its Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and the Neighbourhood and Community Standard.

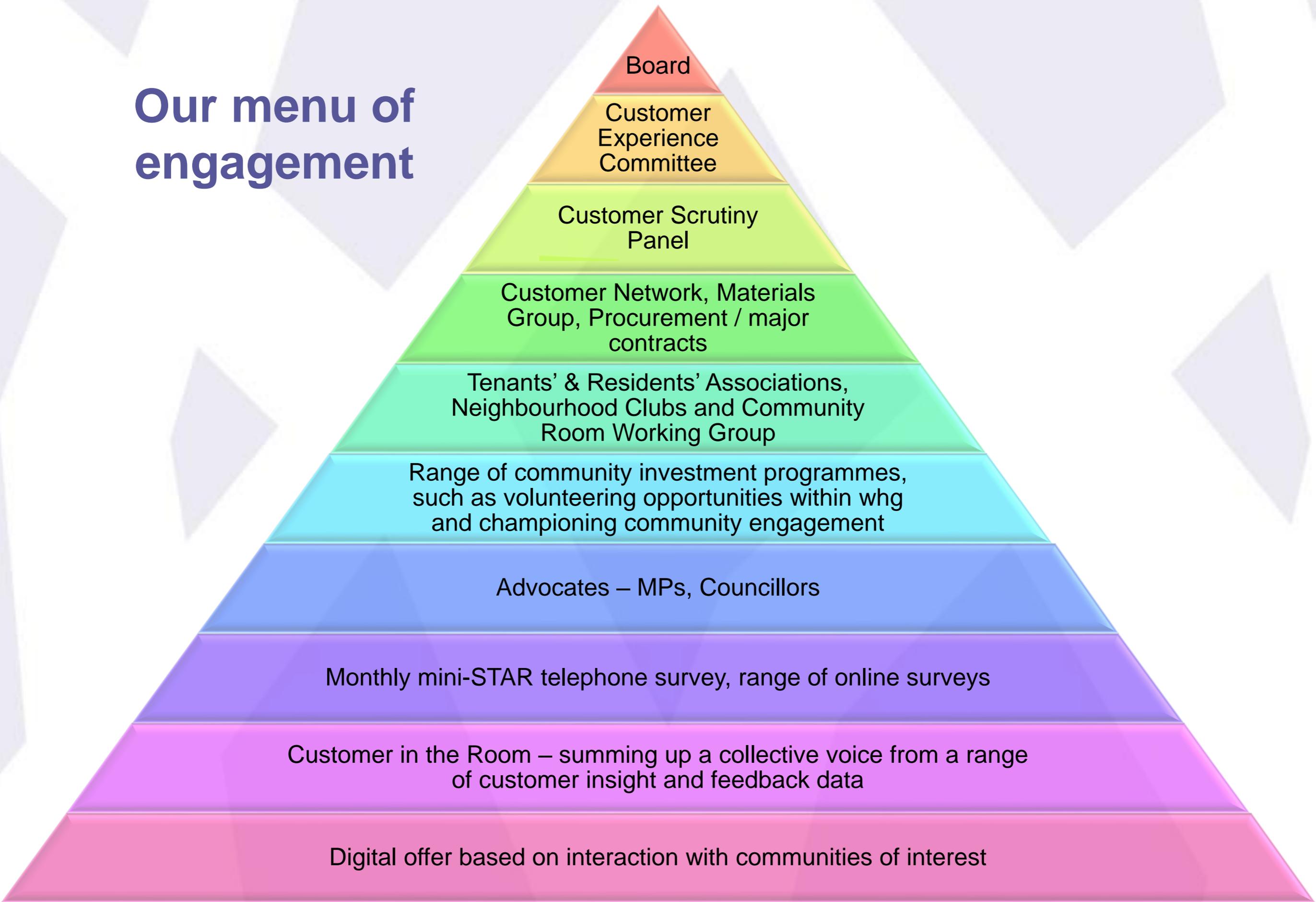
This Strategy focuses on:

- 1. An influential customer voice**
- 2. Engagement with a purpose**
- 3. A modern offer**

This Strategy is aligned with our key business strategies, such as our Digital First Strategy, Housing Strategy and Community Investment Strategy.

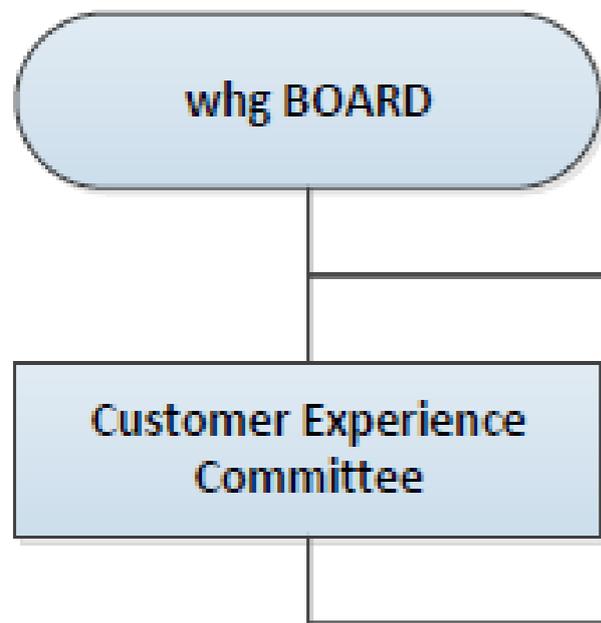


# Our menu of engagement

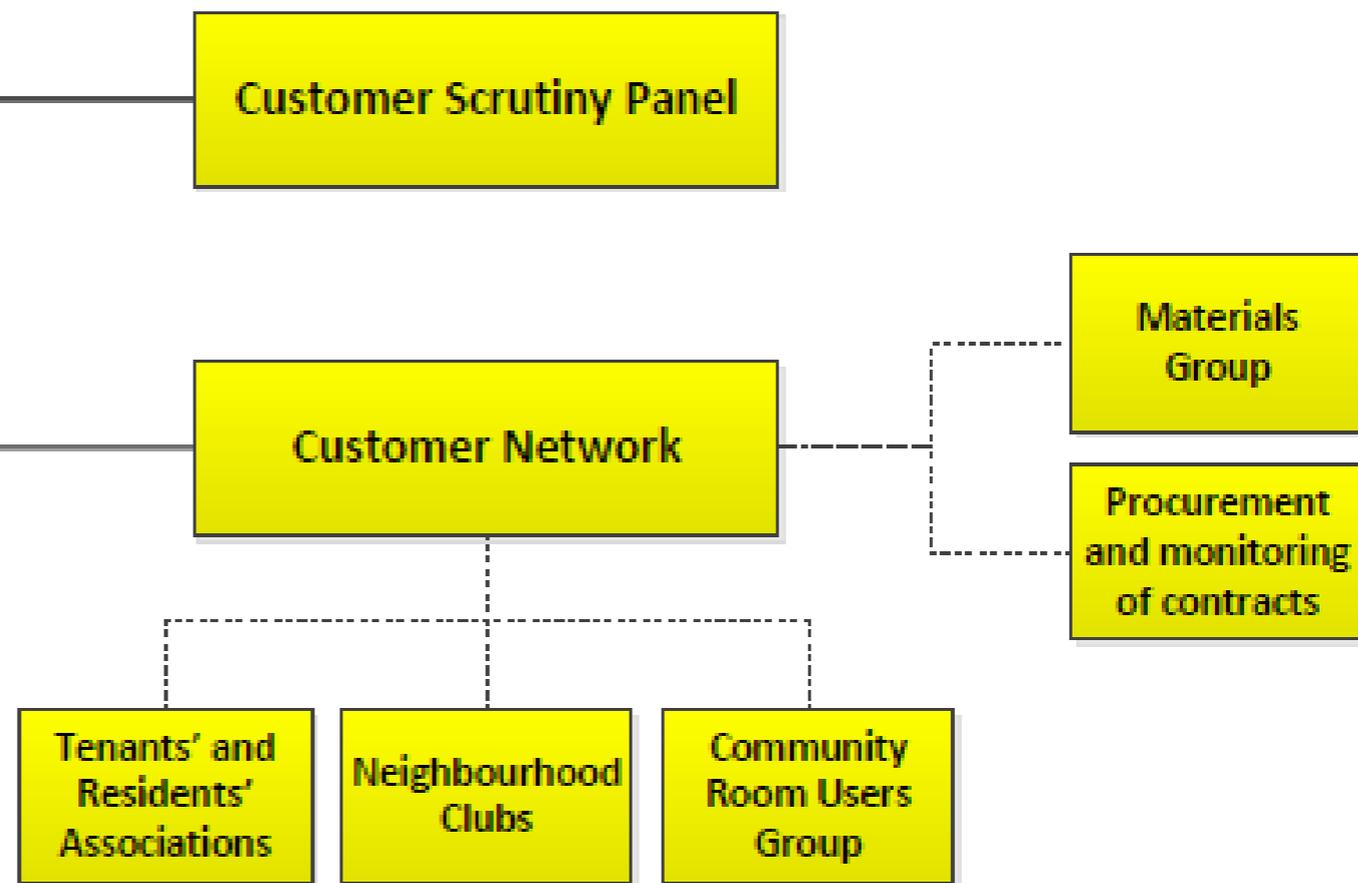


# Governance arrangements

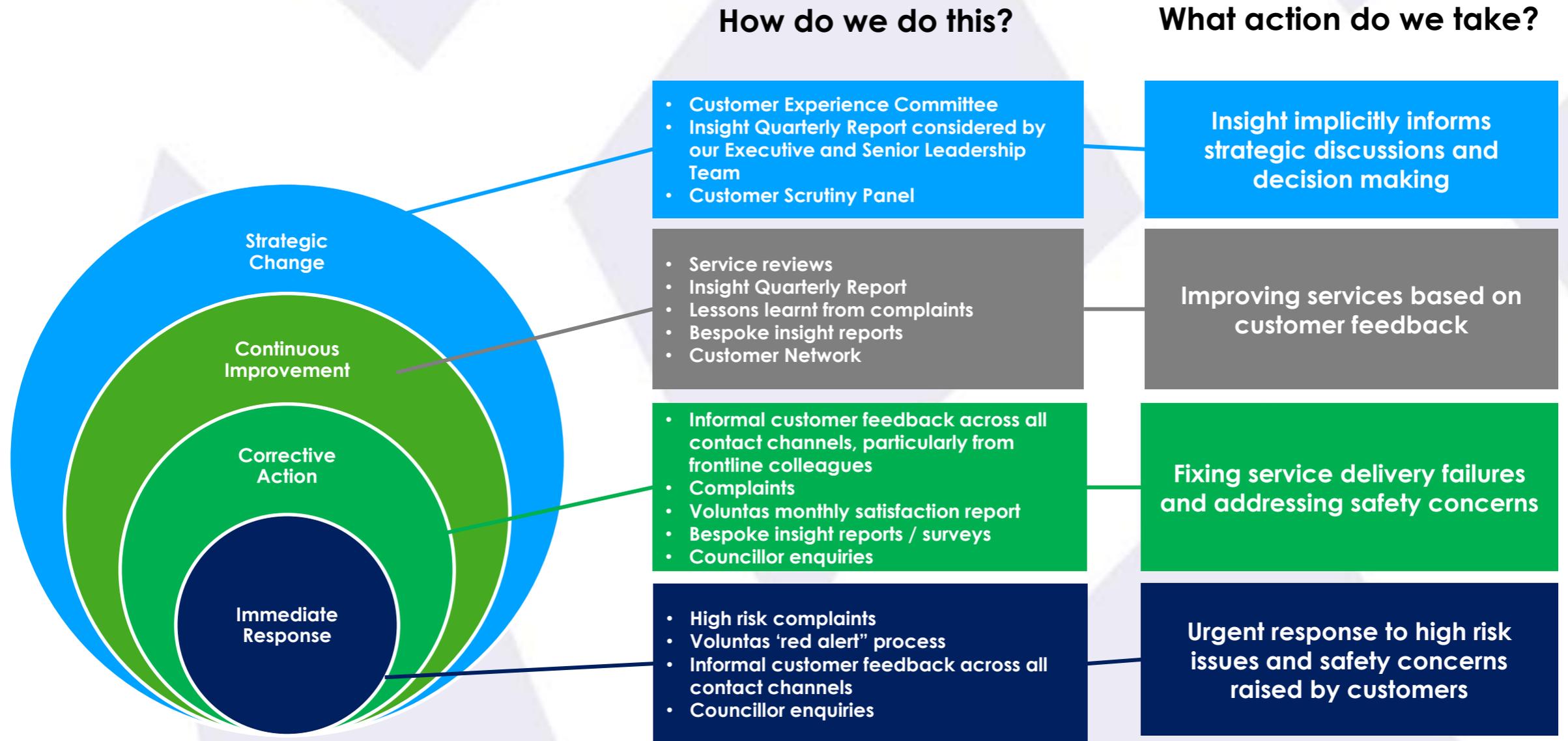
**Part of whg's FORMAL  
governance arrangements**



**INDEPENDENT of whg's formal  
governance arrangements**



# Customer insight drives action



# Aim 1. An influential customer voice

By 2020: Data science and customer insight will drive our service design

By 2024: 90% of customers would recommend us



- **Customers have a voice** – we have a genuine commitment to giving customers a voice and offer a range of ways for customers to feedback their views and influence the services we provide
- **Communities have a voice** – we offer a range of ways for communities to feedback their views, this includes tenants’ and residents’ associations, politicians, community leaders and other people advocating for their community
- **We listen** – we ensure customer feedback gets reported to our decision makers through our governance arrangements, including to our Board
- **It makes a difference** – customer feedback is an essential element of our service design and improvement, we involve customers in scrutinising our performance, challenging us to be the best and helping us co-design our services
- **Access to information** – we will ensure customers have access to the information they need to make informed decisions and hold us to account.
- **We act** – on customer feedback, especially ‘early alerts’ to any safety concerns, and feedback to customers what we did
- **Line of sight** – we report regularly to our Executive Team, building on a number of customer voice channels, through a Quarterly Insight Report
- **Customers have redress** – we act promptly when customers complain, these are reported into our governance arrangements and we take on board any lessons learnt
- **We will incorporate learning from the Grenfell Tower fire and the Hackitt Review**, including strengthening the link between communities and our governance arrangements regarding safety concerns
- **Board Meetings** – we will continually seek and record customer stories and make sure Board Members are aware of the impact we make on customers, learning from both negative and positive views

# Aim 2. Engagement with a purpose

Emma Beck is a whg customer. After attending whg by the Sea event in 2014, she met Connie Jennings, our Social Inclusion Manager - it is what Emma calls her 'light bulb' moment. Deep down she wanted to return to work but as a single mum of three children with little confidence and believed there to be a million obstacles in my way and it was 'mission impossible'. She felt she was destined to a life on benefits.

Her meeting with Connie truly changed not only her life but those of her children too. Connie convinced her to enrol on the volunteer programme, which she did. As her confidence grew she volunteered as a member of the Customer Scrutiny Panel and worked in the Customer Services Team at whg as that was a field she had worked in prior to having children. Emma believes that by seeing the potential in her and having opportunities to volunteer and become involved, she would never have seen myself as being capable of achieving more.

She was funded by whg to obtain a housing qualification and became a Community Champion.

In January 2017 she became a paid trainee Housing Officer with WATMOS and within six months was promoted to Housing Officer, managing her own patch.

Following another role with Tamworth Council, Emma is now employed as a Community Safety Adviser with whg.

- **We engage with a clear purpose** – we use feedback to improve the customer experience and shape the design of customer centric services, this includes keeping people safe
- **We offer a menu of opportunities for engagement** – so customers can engage in ways that best suits them and their circumstances. We will ensure there are ways to recognise the impact of getting involved, such as the ROCCS awards.
- **Our menu is accessible** – we regularly review our menu of engagement against our profile of customers to check that everyone has an engagement route into the business and it meets the diverse needs of our customers
- **Our menu is inclusive** – we ensure access to engagement is open to our diverse customer base and communities, especially traditionally hard to engage customer groups and customers living beyond Walsall
- **We keep customers informed** - we mainly do this online via our website or, social media, but also through leaflets and 'Round Your Way'
- **We will communicate the ways customer can get involved** – we will tell customers what's on offer so they can choice to get involved in a way that suits them
- **We offer volunteering opportunities** – we ensure our engaged customers and volunteers are supported by our employment and training services
- **Engagement is mainstreamed throughout whg** – we will strengthen our menu with opportunities for engagement at touchpoints throughout the services we run
- **Customer expectations** – we make clear what customers can expect from our services
- **Adopt a customer outlook** – we will see our service through the eyes of our customers

# Aim 3. A modern offer

By 2024: 70% of our routine customer contact will be delivered through self-service channels

**A community of interest** is a group of people who share a common interest, exchange ideas and thoughts about their shared interests. They may know little about each other outside of these interactions.

- **We see digital as a connector** - we will offer modern ways of engagement, exploiting opportunities for modern online engagement that is personalised
- **We engage as many customers as possible** – across a diverse range of demographics and locations, we will use online methods to communicate with customer groups that are less inclined to engage with us, such as young people, people who work, families and those who live away from Walsall
- **We will make the most of our existing methods** - such as our website and customer portal
- **We will have a conversation with customers through their communities of interest** – by tapping into existing groups online and exploring a range of views, such as on social media and in online community-led neighbourhood forums
- **We will use theory and data science to better target engagement activity** – such as, algorithms, behavioural science and generational theory
- **Our offer will be aligned to improvements we are making through our Digital First and Housing Customer First initiatives** - so our services and engagement are delivered efficiently and cost effectively while enhancing the customer experience
- **No one will miss out** – our modern offer will be linked to the Black Country Click Start initiative and our Customer Engagement Project, both increasing customers digital skills and proactively engage with digitally excluded customers
- **Our offer will keep pace with our growth aim** - we will align our mobile working with engagement opportunities so customers can give us feedback whenever they meet or transact with a whg colleague
- **We will refine our traditional engagement methods** - so they remain relevant, purposeful and fun
- **We will engage with customers at key touch points** – we will exploit mobile technology so frontline colleagues are empowered and equipped to actively engage with customers and capture their voice

# Delivery Plan (1)

AIM	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	WHEN	LEAD TEAM
<b>1. A STRONG AND INFLUENTIAL CUSTOMER VOICE</b>	Board and Committee Members have a direct line of sight to any safety concerns raised by customers	Review Board and Committee Members 'line of sight' to customer feedback and complaints, reflecting the recommendations of the Hackitt Review, and ensure that the customer voice is implicit and highlighted where it drives decision making	December 2019	Insight and Performance Team (IPT)
	Skills based Board and Committee Membership which supports/develops inclusion of customers	Recruitment campaign carried out for new Members	March 2020	Governance Team
	Keeping customers safe	Develop block specific engagement approaches, including communicating safety messages	December 2019	Customer Voice Mgr (CV Mgr)
	Engagement is inclusive and accessible to all	Analyse customer insight and profiling data to using behaviour science and generational theory to ensure opportunities for engagement are targeted to particular customer segments	January 2020	IPT
	Services are effectively scrutinised	Review the approach to scrutiny and recruit more customers to the Customer Scrutiny Panel	December 2019	IPT
	Engagement is aligned to what we do	Develop a work plan for the Customer Network that's linked to business priorities	November 2019	CV Mgr/IPT
	Customer feedback makes a difference	Regularly report to customers on where we acted on their feedback and how it influenced the services they receive	December 2019	CV Virtual Group
	The customer voice is heard at the highest level	Review how the customer voice is heard through operational structures up to Board level	March 2020	CV Virtual Team
	Decision makers have a line of sight to customers and informed about the customer experience	Integrate customer stories into Board meetings	October 2019	CV Virtual team
	Customer engagement is mainstreamed	Train up 'Voice of the Customer' champions across the business	January 2020	IPT
	Targeted engagement with a diverse range of customers	Investigate the use of data science to drive engagement	November 2019	CV Mgr
	Colleagues actively engage with customers	Deliver training to all front line colleagues on the menu of engagement and how to capture and escalate feedback and safety concerns from customers	December 2019	Community Investment Team
Customers shape the services they receive	Strengthen the approach to co-designing services with customers	December 2019	IPT	

# Delivery Plan (2)

AIM	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	WHEN	LEAD TEAM
<b>2. ENGAGEMENT WITH A PURPOSE</b>	There is capacity to deliver the strategy	Review the resources required to deliver this Strategy and make a budget available for the Customer Scrutiny Panel to seek independent advice..	November 2019	IPT
	Engagement is inclusive and accessible to all	Link engagement to equality & diversity work on promoting inclusion and community integration and meet the needs of new and emerging communities	December 2019	Equalities and Diversity Manager
	Engagement improves the prospects of involved customers	Continue to integrate volunteering opportunities into the approach to customer engagement	July 2019	Social Inclusion Manager (SI Mgr)
	Customers are clear what we will deliver	Ongoing reviews of communication to customers so it clarifies our service offer	July 2019	IPT
	Customers are incentivised to engage	Review the use of customer incentives to encourage and reward those who engage	November 2019	CV Steering Group
<b>3. A MODERN OFFER</b>	Customers are aware of engagement opportunities	Raise the profile of the Strategy through a dedicated section on the whg website, utilise social emdia and traditional channels such as Round Your Way to promote opportunities	March 2020	IPT
	Engagement is customer-led not led by us	Develop the approach to digital engagement, using the communities of interest and community-led neighbourhood tools that exploits existing digital connectors, including use of algorithms and paid social media influencers to better target and encourage engagement	March 2020	IPT
	Targeted engagement with a diverse range of customers	Investigate the use of data science to drive engagement	December 2019	IPT
	Colleagues actively engage with customers	Review the recommendations from Voluntas' research into the Customer Voice and implement them where necessary	October 2019	IPT
	Our approach reflects the latest research into our customers voices	Deliver upgrades to the customer portal and website, as stated in the Digital First Strategy, including improving the 'get involved' webpage	March 2020	IPT

# Version Control

Version Number	1
Approved by	whg Board 12 September 2019
Strategy owners	Corporate Director, Business Strategy and Assets Corporate Director, Operations
Strategy author	Strategy and External Affairs Manager