

thirteen

Managing and building homes

Development Strategy
Customer Involvement Report
Customer Stream Lead – Bev Mathers

Introduction

Thirteens Development Team are producing a new Development Strategy to provide a framework for how, where and what new homes are built.

The Customer Involvement team were approached to carry out consultation with customers to provide their input to ensure Thirteen deliver great homes of the right quality and type for them. The team asked for a wide demographic so that the strategy will provide new homes for all.

The aim of the consultation was to find out what customers want from a new home, what features are important to them and what potential future customers want from a new home with Thirteen.

The customer consultation was to commence mid-May with all responses collated by mid-June with the completed Strategy being taken to Board in July 2023.

Consultation

The initial part of the consultation was with a group of involved customers. This was a hybrid meeting with customers joining in person and online. A total of nine customers attended the meeting along with the Director of Strategic Partnerships, Head of New Business and Growth, a Customer Involvement Coordinator and the CEO for part of the meeting.

During the meeting a presentation was delivered to the customers explaining the background to the strategy and the input that is required from the Involved Customers.

There was a discussion with the customers around the following 10 questions:

1. What do we do well with our new build homes?
2. What could we do better with our new build homes?
3. How important is space? E.g overall size, storage space, garden, balcony, work/office space.
4. What supported/specialist housing do we need?
5. What do you think about accessible homes?
6. What other types of homes do you think our customers want? Eg town centre living, bungalows, apartments, shared ownership etc
7. How important is it for us to develop in regeneration areas?

8. What do you think about our 'bulk purchase' homes where we buy a small number of properties off private builders like Taylor Wimpey?
9. How important is it to build carbon zero homes?
10. How should we consult with our current and future customers for this strategy?

See Appendix 1 for notes from the meeting

Following this meeting a survey was added to Microsoft Forms for customers to score how important certain features were to them. We also asked for the age range of the customers and who they currently live with to ensure we got a wide range of responses.

An incentive of an entry into a prize draw for a £20 shopping voucher was offered for every customer who voted.

Responses

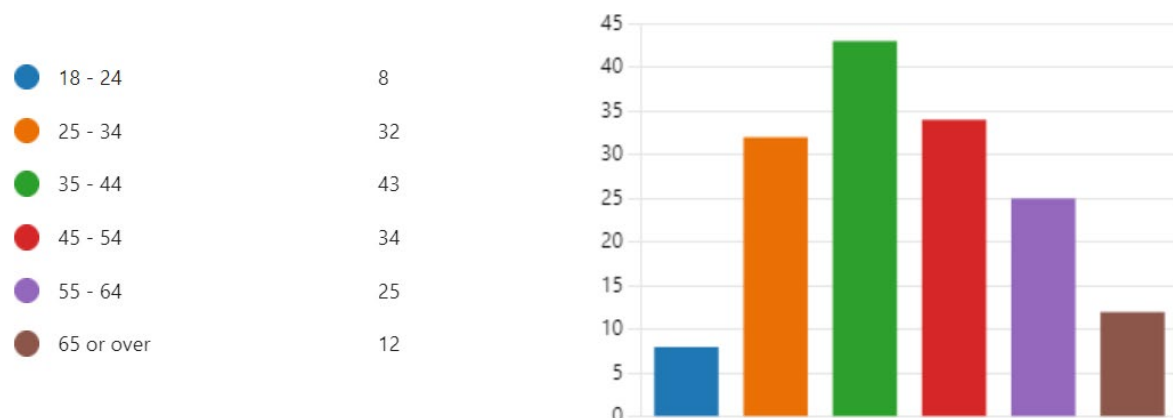
The survey was shared via email with the Customer Involvement database, on Channel for customers who work for Thirteen to complete and on Thirteens social media pages.

A total of 154 responses were received.

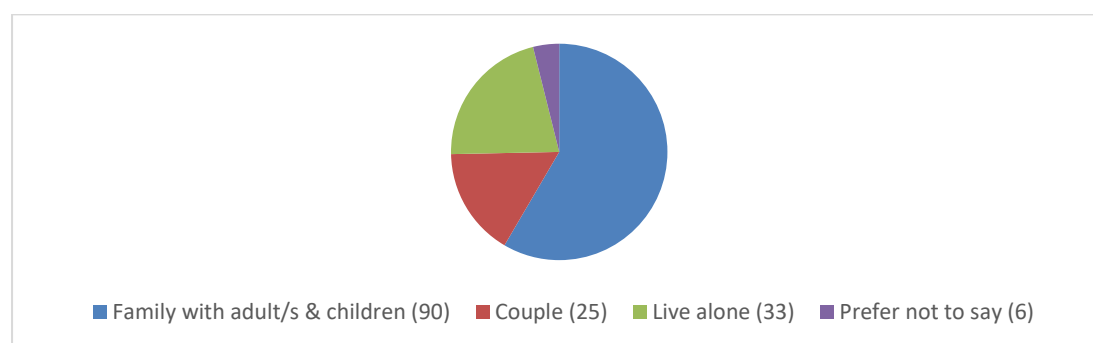
Findings

The customers were first asked for their age ranges and who they currently share their home with.

What is your age group?



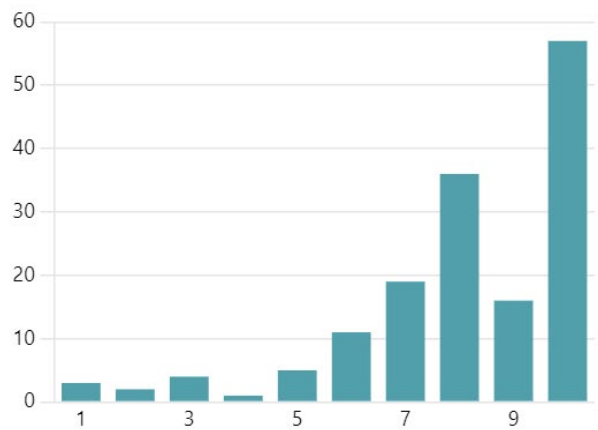
Who do you currently live with?



The customers were then asked to rate a number of features on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being least important and 10 being most important.

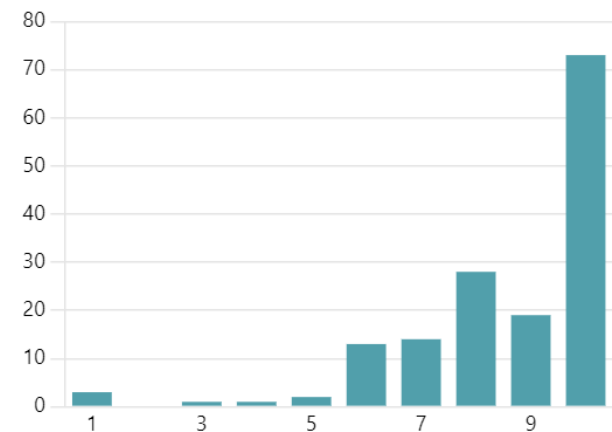
1. The size of the home

8.11
Average Rating



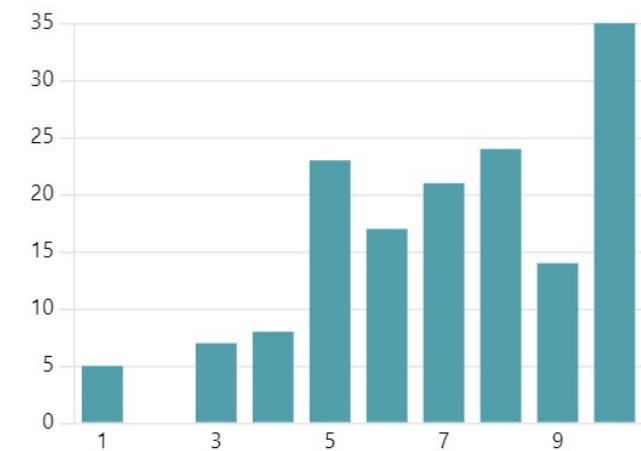
2. The location of the home

8.58
Average Rating



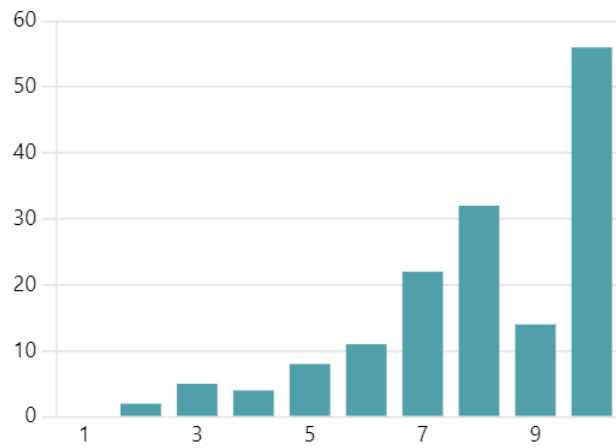
3. How close amenities such as bus stops and shops are

7.08
Average Rating



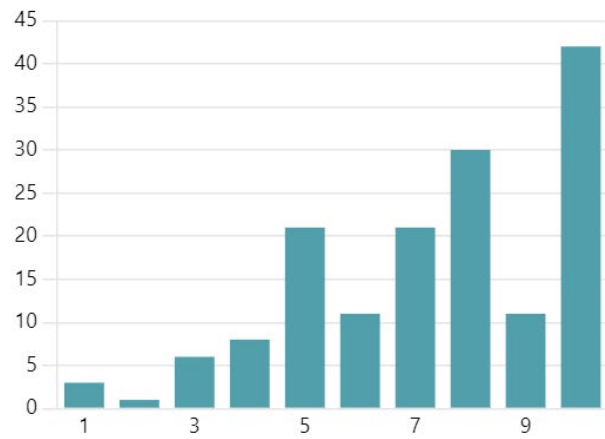
4. The storage space available

8.03
Average Rating



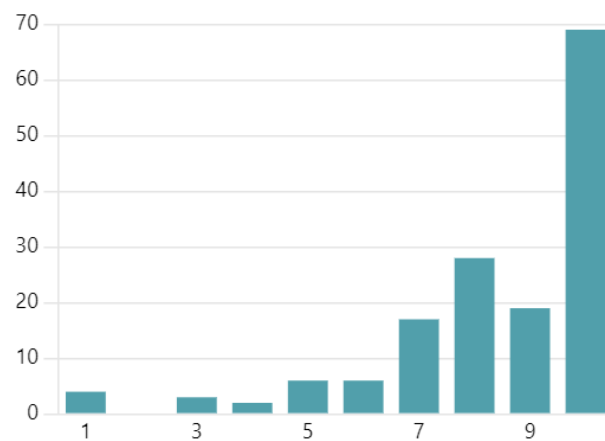
5. If the home is environmentally friendly

7.35
Average Rating



6. The cost of fuel bills

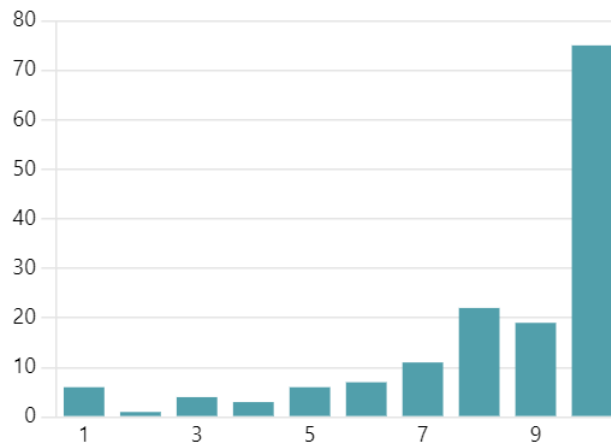
8.38
Average Rating



7. If the home has a garden

8.30

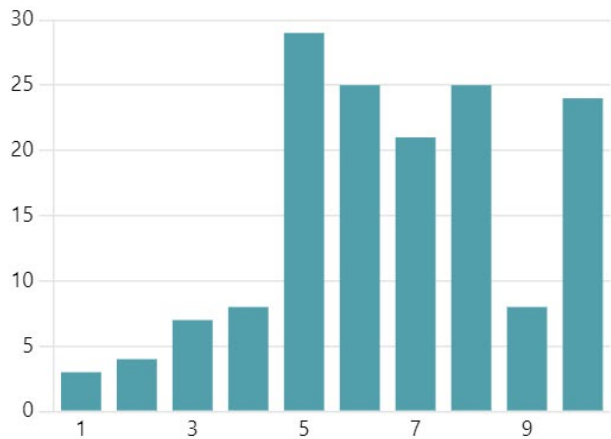
Average Rating



8. If the home is near to open space

6.61

Average Rating



We also received a lot of comments on the social media post which are recorded below

- New build layouts tend to be quite small with no storage. Thirteen need to take into account how people live and provide plenty of storage
- More bungalows are needed
- More 3 bed houses
- More 4 bed houses
- Bungalows with 2 bedrooms to allow for overnight carers.
- Bungalows with 2/3/4 bedrooms to allow families with disabled adults or children to live comfortably with plenty of storage
- Fences around front gardens – not open plan
- Parking
- Electric Vehicle charging point
- Soundproofing in flats
- More adapted houses
- One bedroom houses for single people who still want a garden
- Houses that have lots of daylight
- Solid walls
- Downstairs toilet
- Ensure that local people are given the properties

Conclusion:

The responses received were from a variety of age groups and people who have different living arrangements.

The most important features to our customers are the size of the home the location, storage space, a garden and low energy bills. The other features mentioned in the survey are also important however the scores are more evenly spread across the 1 to 10 scale. The least important feature was 'near to open space' with some comments stating that if the home has a garden then they would not need the open space.

The most comments received indicate that family sized bungalows are a high priority for customers with customers viewing the current bungalows as only suitable for elderly single people or elderly couples.

Appendix 1 – Meeting notes

Development Strategy

DATE: 22nd May 2023

Time: 14:00 – 15:00

Hybrid – Room 3 and Microsoft Teams

NOTES and ACTION LOG

Present: Val Scollen, Bob Holland, Tony Neale, Jacqui Sunley, Bev Mathers, Rob Mathers, Denise Ross, Matt Forrest, Sharon Thomas, Angela Brockbank and Sarah Bage

1	Apologies for Absence: Jim Scollen and Pauline French	
	<p>Sharon explained that they are requesting help from customers to revise Thirteens Development Strategy. Thirteen currently build between 400 and 500 properties every year. The strategy is the framework to decide what is built, what type of properties, the quality, what supported/specialist housing would be built etc.</p> <p>Sharon asked the group if anyone lived in a new build property and if they were the first person who had moved in. There were 2 customers who had done this. They were asked how their experience was and they explained what had happened when they moved in and the positive experience they had.</p> <p>Sharon explained that all new builds now go off Thirteens plan which has been designed by Thirteen with consultation from customers. Some of the customers present had been involved in this process.</p> <p>Q – are customers told where properties are being built? A – customers are consulted on with the design and then the properties available for rent are publicised via the lettings system and a marketing campaign is established for shared ownership properties. This is on a scheme by scheme basis depending on demand.</p> <p>Sharon explained that she is happy for customers to look at the design of each house types in the future and get their thoughts on those.</p> <p>Sharon delivered a presentation explaining that Thirteen are revising their development strategy and want customer input to ensure they deliver great homes at the right quality and type for customers. The new strategy will be going to Thirteen Board in July.</p> <p>Q – how many homes in Brambles Farm where the high rise blocks were built will be for rent? A – all of them. There are 107 properties in total being built on the 2 sites.</p>	

Sharon explained that there is a nationally defined space standard. House builders eg Persimmon have offered properties for sale to Thirteen that might not be 100% national space standard however are a brilliant design and have enough space for furniture etc and asked for customers thoughts on this. The customers expressed that having enough space is really important to them.

The customers asked for all gardens to be left level if possible. This is not only to help the customers to be able to look after their gardens but also for drainage reasons. There has also been issues with wire meshing being put across the gardens with grass on top. Sharon explained that these are the sort of things that need to be picked up with contractors.

The customers were asked if they thought balconies were important. The customers think it is good for people who don't have any outside space as this is very important however some balconies are just filled with rubbish and make the area look awful. If balconies are on properties then there needs to be some conditions in place which are managed by housing services. Sharon advised that Housing Services have already stated that the sides of balconies should not be see through to stop this.

Sharon asked what specialist housing is needed. It was explained that every scheme is individual and a lot of the specialist schemes would be 1 bedroom properties. A customer advised that shared ownership in supported housing does not work as families often struggle to sell on properties if the owner passes away.

The group discussed that there is not enough places for people with dementia, adults with disabilities, young mums etc.

A customer suggested that the properties could be built so that they can be easily adapted in the future if needed so that a customer can stay in their home for longer. This would also mean that the costs would be reduced when it comes to adapting properties. Also important for space to keep/charge mobility scooters.

It is important to have an appropriate amount of electric sockets at a higher level to make them more accessible.

The group were asked about town centre living. The group discussed the importance of having green spaces that people can enjoy especially if they don't have their own garden space.

A customer described a development in Sowerby which has been designed around a community lifestyle, close to the town centre of Thirsk and think that sort of development would be an ideal place to live.

Car parking is important to customers. No matter what the development is, there needs to be adequate parking. If possible 2 per bungalow. This also allows for visitors, carers etc. Driveways are important not just street

	<p>parking so that people can be guaranteed a space outside their home. It is also important to have charging points for electric vehicles.</p> <p>The group were asked what they thought of developments where Thirteen buy a small number of properties from a builder on one of their developments. A customer stated as long as Thirteen are not buying properties that they have not been able to sell and are low demand. Sharon explained that the builders often have strict targets to meet regarding how many they sell and it often is not because of low demand.</p> <p>Customers think that new build should have solar panels to help reduce bills. The customers who have solar panels installed on their home can see a big difference in their bills.</p> <p>The air source heat pumps have to be situated outside of the properties and some customers were worried that this could make them susceptible to being stolen. Angela will see if there are any figures available on if any have ever been stolen. One customer on the group has air source heat pumps and thinks they are a lot better than night storage heaters. It needs to be checked how often they need to be serviced.</p> <p>The group discussed some questions:</p> <p>What do we do well with our new build homes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of gardens are good • Layout <p>What could we do better with our new build homes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough bungalows built • Family sized bungalows • Don't put windows over kitchen sink as not everyone can reach them • Offer artificial grass as an option • Offer solar panels as an option • Outside taps • Clear glass in external rear doors <p>Could we provide support to people who may struggle with maintaining their gardens?</p> <p>How important is space? Eg overall size, storage space, garden, balcony, work/office space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage is very important. • Make sure gardens are level and not full of rubble from the house build. • Build high planters in bungalow gardens so more people can enjoy their garden • Balconies – often full of rubbish and make the area look terrible. If balconies are put in then there needs to be conditions in place which are managed by housing services. Design issue has been raised to ensure that balcony walls are not clear so people cannot see what is on the balcony • Communal gardens – can be very nice to have • Outside space is very important <p>What supported/specialist housing do we need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to think about the aging population 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homes for people with dementia will be important <p>What do you think about accessible homes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very important do that allows people to stay in their homes for longer if their circumstances change • Lots of sockets at an accessible level • Low level doors outside with no step <p>What other types of homes do you think our customers want? Eg town centre living, bungalows, apartments, shared ownership etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared ownership in supported housing is not always a good idea as people struggle to sell them on. <p>How important is it for us to develop in regeneration areas?</p> <p>What do you think about our bulk purchase homes where we buy a small number of properties off private builders like Taylor Wimpy?</p> <p>How important is it to build carbon zero homes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything to help reduce customers bills • Garden space allows people to grow their own food • Insulation is important • Very supportive of this <p>How should we consult wider with our current and future customers for this strategy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop in sessions in areas where homes are being built • Speak to people in colleges • Social media • Survey people on the waiting list 	
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