

Neighbourly Places Strategy



**Connect
housing**

The why...

The Neighbourly Places Strategy captures how we will be working alongside residents and customers in their communities and across all areas of the organisation. The Strategy outlines the 'why' behind this approach, explains what we will be doing, where we will be doing it, who will be involved and when things will happen.

Central to the Strategy is the vision and values of Connect. It is a core strand of the Corporate Strategy that places are neighbourly. This means that we will be:

- **Helping to build the strength and capability of communities through forging positive relationships;**
- **Encouraging civic participation* from a diverse range of residents and customers so that these voices shape strategy and the design of services**
- **Being well connected and working in partnership to achieve maximum impact**

These key corporate objectives are interwoven with the Neighbourly Places Strategy.

At Connect we believe in a sustainable and just society, where good homes, neighbourhoods and opportunities help people enjoy happy, healthy lives. We have a strong purpose to tackle inequality and create opportunities for fulfilled, healthy lives. This starts with a good home in a neighbourly community. The Neighbourly Places Strategy explains the role Connect will play in translating these beliefs into action and fulfilling our purpose.

Connect's Values are also integral to how we will be delivering against the Strategy:

- **Put People First**
- **Love making a difference**
- **Actively listen and learn**
- **Collaborate collectively**
- **Earn trust through our actions**

There is an overarching vision that informs the Neighbourly Places Strategy is...

By 2030 we will be a neighbourhood decision making organisation that has a genuine partnership with our residents and customers

Underpinning this vision is a framework based on the Civil Society Futures PACT (which stands for Power, Accountability, Connection and Trust).

This framework will be central to how we ensure we have the mind-set, behaviours and relationships with others that will allow us to succeed in shifting power so that people are leading the way in directing what they do, and what we do, in the neighbourhoods where they live.

Responses to the recent COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated the resilience, support and strength that lies as potential within communities. Post pandemic Connect will seek to build on what has emerged within communities to create lasting connections and resources.

Connect believes that lasting change is not achieved by interventions that are imposed, but by identifying what is important to people and joining with them in their journey to achieve things they themselves have decided to work towards.

There are also very clear links between the Neighbourly Places Strategy and Connect's Sustainability Strategy. The Neighbourly Places Strategy will help us deliver on the following Sustainable Development Goals:



By increasing our conversations with our communities, we will be able to work with them to achieve change at a local level to positively impact on the environment and address the climate emergency. Some projects already identified are:

- Local biodiversity projects in communal grounds in communities
- Local energy efficiency projects

This Strategy also links with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which is a high priority for the organisation and is fundamental to Connect's purpose, vision and strategic objectives.

This Strategy seeks to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion by using co-production and strength based approaches so that everyone – resident, customer and colleague has a voice of equal value and equal access to decision making that affects them.



The what...

Neighbourhood plans

- We will be finding out what people living in our Neighbourhoods want us to focus on and what their priorities are.
- Alongside this we will be building a full range of characteristics / indicators at a Neighbourhood level – for example property turnover, property abandonments, evictions, general satisfaction data, complaints, rent arrears, ASB, feedback via Customer Sure surveys (and what we have done in response), other organisations involved in the area as well as other demographic information.
- This will help us really understand the Neighbourhoods our residents live in and to track any changes to these characteristics and indicators.
- These plans will be shared locally in the community, included in the sign up pack, publicised on our website – so that they are living documents. The long term plan is to move towards co-designing how these look, what they report on and how they are used with the residents in that neighbourhood.

Asset mapping*

- We will be speaking to people in our Neighbourhoods to find out what they value in their community, and by mapping these 'assets' we will be connecting more people to these resources that already exist in their area;
- We do this to shift from a 'deficit model' of viewing how we engage with people. Asset maps support harnessing a community's resources and building people's resilience and power to bring about positive change.

Measuring impact

- We will do this using the HACT Social Value calculator (focusing on Local Environment and Health indicators) as well as Connect specific measures based on the PACT model

Creating strategic partnerships

- We will seek out who we can work well with to support people living in Neighbourhoods. This is so we can work with people to achieve what they think it is important to them;
- We will also learn from others on the same journey in the housing association sector and beyond;
- We will seek to establish a 'task force' with clear terms of reference to hold us to account on the Strategy and Action Plan. The task force will also be a source of external expertise, a support to the Community Housing Officers and a 'Sounding Board' for the creation of innovative approaches to using strengths based approaches as we work with our customers and residents.

Evaluating power, accountability, connection and trust across the organisation

- We will do this so that we can grow our understanding of where we are on our journey. Through this we will identify the part each individual in their role can play in helping us realise the vision to be a neighbourhood decision making organisation that has a genuine partnership with our residents and customers;
- We will give people real clarity about what we 'must' do as a landlord – due to legislation and regulation and be clear where there is flexibility to do things differently.

Raising awareness of and skills in co-production*

- We will do this by running a series of co-production workshops, creating a cohort of co-production champions and a 'Community of Practice'* supported by the Senior Manager Neighbourly Places;
- This will ensure that an asset based, strengths focused approach using co-production as a framework is embedded across the organisation.

Identifying some 'quick wins'

- We will be looking for some areas to pilot moving decisions closer to our communities and sharing the learning from these experiences – possibilities already identified are Estate Services and the Void standard for 2021/22;
- We will also be actively engaging with people on local biodiversity projects;
- We will continue to ensure there are close links between our Tenant Engagement team and the Community Housing Officers and work on shared projects – for example the co-design of a pet policy and early asset mapping that is taking place at Walsden.

Learning as we go

- We will be listening to our residents and customers. We will be reflecting on what has worked well and why. We will be learning from challenges and set backs on the way;
- If we are to be true to being led by what is important to those in our communities we can only plan so much at this stage – so there will be a review of the Neighbourly Places Strategy with our residents and customers to inform a refresh and to shape the 2022 – 2023 Action Plan.



Key terms...



Civic participation*

This is where a community working together or an individual working alone gets involved in both political or non-political actions to protect public values or make a change in a community.



Asset mapping*

'This is a way of identifying all the resources within a community, with the intention to then use these existing resources to mobilise and sustain positive change. It is a complete contrast to more traditional approaches which focus on a communities' needs or deficits. With asset mapping you can harness the resources within the community to foster transformation and growth. Integral to this approach is that the people within the community define the priorities for growth and transformation themselves.'



Co-production*

'Co-production is an approach where professionals and citizens share power to design, plan, assess and deliver services and support together. It recognises that everyone has a vital contribution to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities.'

Community of practice*

'A group of people who share a common concern a set of problems, or an interest in a topic and who come together to fulfil both individual and group goals.'





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