

# Resident Voice and Influence Strategy 2022- 2025

Defining connection and relationships.

A strategic approach to authentic listening which brings the voice of residents and customers to the heart of Connect.

Delivering co-production of customer-related strategy, policy and decision making in partnership.

'Listen with curiosity, speak with honesty, act with integrity'

Roy T. Bennett



## What is this document about?

This document explains how Connect will interact with residents and customers. It takes the vision of the Corporate Strategy and translates that into a focused plan, with clear objectives and actions. It sits very closely with the Customer Care Strategy, sharing common values, aims and objectives. This strategy builds on the learning from connection with residents and customers, and their feedback on how this has been working for them.

## Connect Corporate Vision

**‘When we picture the future, we want to see a sustainable and just society where good homes, neighbourhoods and opportunities help people enjoy happy, health lives’**

Connect’s corporate strategic objectives ([Corporate Strategy 2021-2024](#)) include ‘supporting neighbourly places’, and the Corporate Change Plan (2022/23) includes actions to:

- Help build the strength and capability of communities through forging positive relationships.
- Encourage participation from a diverse range of residents so that the residents’ voice shapes strategy and service design.

The Resident Voice and Influence Strategy embodies these values and actions. It sets out how the voices of residents and customers are heard and how they influence strategy and decision making.

## What is in a name?

This document sees a deliberate break away from using the term ‘Tenant Engagement’. This is a conscious act to reset the approach within Connect to focus on connection and relationships, rather than traditional methods of consultation where the agenda is set by Connect. This is in common with the

approach set out in the Neighbourly Places Strategy, which is underpinned by the Civil Society Futures PACT – Power, Accountability, Connection and Trust<sup>1</sup>.

The strategy is focused on using co-production as a key mindset and methodology for ensuring the voice of residents and customers is heard at the very heart of Connect. It ensures that decisions, strategy, policies, and service improvements are informed and developed in partnership with those with lived experience of their impact – residents and customers.

## What do connection and relationships look like now?

There are several ways that residents connect and relate to Connect currently e.g.

- Service Improvement Forum
- One-off focus groups
- Scrutiny reviews
- Policy reviews
- Board member opportunities

Feedback from residents, customers and colleagues is that they want these to continue in their current format. Some of these activities also relate to regulatory requirements set out in the consumer standards, so this strategy does not propose to change any of these channels. However, the residents involved in these activities do not reflect the diversity of Connect's neighbourhoods, so there is work to be done to address this.

As well as continuing with these traditional engagement channels, Connect will continue to capture insight and feedback in a variety of ways to inform decision-making; making every contact count and making it easy for customers to engage with us.

Another key area of work is to measure perception of where Connect is in relation to Power, Accountability, Connection and Trust. This is also a critical element of the Neighbourly Places Strategy which focuses on these four areas as barometers of how Connect is moving towards the vision for neighbourly places - **'a neighbourhood-based decision-making organisation that has a genuine partnership with our residents and customers'**

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix A

### **What residents are telling us is important to them:**

In a recent survey residents told us the following issues were important to them

To be included, involved, listened to, treated with kindness, and respected. To feel part of Connect, for Connect to be reliable, act on information it receives and to do it quickly.

That repairs are done effectively, and homes are secure and well maintained.

Outside space and that communal areas inside and out are clean, safe, and well maintained.

Affordability and value for money.

Other factors that have influenced the strategy are:

### **Regulation and Best Practice**

Connect has tested this strategy against current regulatory requirements, as set out in the consumer standards, in particular the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. This standard requires that tenants are provided with different ways to be involved in policy setting, business plan priorities, setting service standards, performance reviews and improvements, repairs, and local offers.

However, there are new developments to be aware of around regulation:

- New Tenant Satisfaction Measures – these will allow benchmarking across all housing associations. The perception of residents and customers is being brought to the centre of regulation.
- Social Housing Regulation Bill – this is set to increase the power of the Social Housing Regulator and allow no notice inspections.
- Government White Paper – resident and customer voice is a key element of the proposed new legislation.

Best practice has been formalised by the National Housing Federation with the 'Together with Tenants Charter' and the 'Code of Governance', both of which Connect has adopted.

## **The three key strands of the Resident Voice and Influence Strategy**

Feedback from the multiple stakeholders confirmed and cemented the content of the Resident Voice and Influence Strategy and the pace of the action plan. By ensuring that the strategy was co-designed, Connect can be assured that it aligns with the views and values of residents and customers.

The Resident Voice and Influence Strategy will focus on the following three key areas:

**Recruitment** – over the next three years there will be focused activity to recruit residents and customers. Connect will go to where underrepresented groups are so that relationships are built, and connections forged.

Community Housing Officers and the Tenant Engagement team will work together using asset maps and neighbourhood plans to build connections with active people and groups already in place. Coaching and training will be used, where needed, to help grow the skills and confidence of residents and customers, so they feel comfortable working with Connect colleagues at all levels.

Complaints and compliments will be seen as an opportunity to recruit to formal connection avenues within Connect. Colleagues will be coached and trained to be able to do this effectively.

**Representation** – Building on recruitment activities, there will be focused activity to ensure that there is representation that mirrors the demographics of the communities that Connect works with. There will be transparency about progress in this area and an approach where people are seen as having unique experiences, stories and identities that bring richness and robustness to operational and strategic decision making in Connect.

**Recognition** – There will be a focus on recognising the contribution that residents and customers make to decision making in Connect. This will include a formalised incentive scheme that recognises the time, effort, and energy that people give when working in a voluntary capacity with Connect. Alongside this will be a proactive campaign to promote the impact that resident and customer involvement has had at Connect.

The action plan delivers these themes and is structured to show how they will deliver against the underpinning PACT framework.

This strategy and action plan has been developed using input from residents and colleagues. A variety of approaches have been used to capture views and opinions. Digital methods have been an effective tool, Customer Sure for residents and myPlace Pulse surveys for colleagues. To add richness to this there

has been one-on-one conversations with residents and colleagues focused on what's important to them, and what good looks like in three years' time. For the first time Community Housing Officers have also supported in the co-design of a strategy by accessing the local Facebook groups they are part of and sharing a digital survey.

We would like to thank everyone for their time, energy, and effort.

## Resident Voice and Influence – a strategic approach to authentic listening 2022/2025 \*

\*please note that this strategy will be extended to residents and customers in directly managed supported accommodation in the Action Plan for years 2 & 3.

<b>Power</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>What good looks like</b>	<b>How we will monitor progress</b>
<b>Asset Mapping and Neighbourhood plans will inform connection, relationships, and co-production activities</b>	Four asset maps and four neighbourhood plans are used to plan future activities.	Resident Voice and Influence action plan for Years 2 and 3 based on resident's priorities emerging from the asset maps and neighbourhood plans.	Annual review the Resident Voice and Influence Strategy. Action plan contains key activities flowing from the asset maps and neighbourhood plans.
<b>Co-production toolkit supports connection and relationships</b>	Co-production is the mindset and methodology for all connection and relationships.	Tenant Engagement Officers fully trained, confident, competent, and championing co-production and the toolkit.	Design and review of projects to ensure they embody the principles of co-production.
<b>Co-production activities delivered</b>	Connect Commitments Review delivered Q1 Aids and Adaptations Q2 Void Standard Q3 Gardening/Cleaning pilot Q3	Projects delivered to time and to a high standard. Iterative learning from each project.	Evaluation of the process and experience for colleagues and customers.

	Income Collection and Financial Wellbeing Strategy Q4		
<b>Explore how to use Connects resources to support resident led activities</b>	Use of existing Tenant Engagement budgets to support the seed funding approach being used by the Community Housing Officers.	Residents identifying where resources should be directed and leading to a growth in what is strong in their neighbourhood.	Budget tracking and reporting.
<b>Strategy and Policy development</b>	Review of Strategy and Policies due for review over 2023/24 – and co-design built into the programme.	Strategies and policies of interest are developed in partnership with residents and customers.	Monitoring of strategy and policy creation.



<b>Accountability</b>			
<b>Service Improvement Forum (SIF)</b>	Grow membership of SIF by five people. (Maximum membership is 12, seven people already members).	Five extra members of the SIF who are contributing at a strategic level, holding Connect to account and participating in strategic decision making.	Increase in membership of the SIF. Quality of discussions and output from SIF.
<b>Development of a measurement of Power Accountability Connection and Trust</b>	Tool in place to measure where Connect is on its journey against the Civil Society Futures framework.	Clear picture of how Connect is perceived against the PACT framework.	Use of quantitative and qualitative data to give a clear picture of where Connect sits in relation to the framework, to inform activity Years 2 and 3 of the action plan and to identify areas of cross over with the Customer Care Strategy.
<b>Scrutiny</b>	One Scrutiny activity delivered.	Robust scrutiny activity delivered with outputs.	Output from scrutiny activity.
<b>Review</b>	Strategy and progress against action plan reviewed by residents and customers.	Residents and customers acting as equal partners in the review and creation of subsequent years actions.	Make up of review group and production of subsequent action plans.

<b>Connection</b>			
<b>Recruitment</b>	Recruitment campaign to increase the number of residents and customers contributing to decision making.	10 new residents and customers recruited.	Numbers contributing.
<b>Flexibility and inclusion</b>	Flexible ways of connecting with people.	Proactively building relationships with under-represented groups and people. Identifying and using existing communication channels. Going outside our comfort zone and working hours to build connection and relationships.	Check-ins across Community Housing Officer and Tenant Engagement team. Demographics of the people and groups we are networked into.
<b>Relationships</b>	Recognising the value of social contact and relationships.	Enabling social events to build relationships between colleagues, residents, and customers. Strong relationships that deliver meaningful conversations, discussions and joint decision making.	Number and quality of social events – monitored using HACT Social Value calculator. Increased input from social events into decision making and people being recruited from these events getting involved in formal connection avenues e.g. focus groups, SIF, Board etc.

<b>Trust</b>			
<b>Establish how much residents and customers trust Connect</b>	Research good practice and tools and implement by September 2022.	Benchmark established to allow distance of travel to be measured.	Clear measure in place.
<b>Recognition</b>	Clear incentive scheme in place by September 2022. Activities and impact of residents and customers publicised.	Colleagues, residents, and customers clear on the incentive scheme.  Impact widely publicised externally and internally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey</li> <li>• Review of website</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> <li>• You Said We Did campaign</li> </ul>
<b>Coaching and champion scheme</b>	Research, design and pilot a coaching and mentoring scheme.	Residents and customers grow in confidence and competency during the lifetime of their involvement.	Qualitative feedback from participants i.e., mentor and mentees.