



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY PROGRESS UPDATE 2022/23

1. Our Community Empowerment Strategy sets out a number of objectives which support the principles of the Gateway Model. This report provides an update on the progress made in delivering this strategy during 2022/23. We have also produced an infographic highlighting some of our key tenant engagement activities throughout 2022/23.

EVOLVING OUR ENGAGEMENT

Strategy Objectives:

- To evolve and increase engagement and involvement activities.
 - To increase the number of active members.
 - To improve our approach to tenant scrutiny to ensure we remain accountable to our tenants.
2. We delivered '**Roadshows**' in each of our Local Community Areas, as well as 'Pop-up' door knocking activities. These allowed us to speak to many tenants:
 - **180** surveys were completed with tenants
 - **144** tenants shared their views from door knocking
 - **77** new tenants joined our involvement opportunities
 3. Our face-to-face engagement activities saw **2,006 tenants** actively engage with us, plus a further 1,579 residents. We have **386 Members** who are actively involved with us.
 4. Our '**Tenant Hub**' offers tenants the opportunity to take part in activities online. This year, **639 new tenants** registered on the Tenant Hub, taking the total to over 1,000. During the year we received **11,600 Hub visits**. We offered 22 involvement opportunities, which resulted in 2,166 interactions by tenants.

5. Each month we issue a **digital tenant engagement newsletter** to over 1,000 tenants who have chosen to receive it. With an average open rate of 84%, these allow us to communicate timely information to tenants.
6. Our **tenant-only Facebook Group** had 430 members at year end, with a total of 4,323 comments and reactions. This has provided us with insight into our local communities and provided tenants with a space to share information and connect with their neighbours and local communities.
7. We also have **digital opportunities** for tenants to get involved. Last year we captured 2,041 views from tenants, obtained over 14 different digital surveys and polls.
8. Over the past twelve months, **ten consultation activities** have resulted in a change in how we do things. A couple of examples include:
 - Changing our communication materials to tenants when they report damp and mould, to make sure they clearly set out what tenants want to know in a language and format that is accessible.
 - Views from tenants at The Courtyards helped to shape their activities timetable.
9. **The Big Conversation** was our largest consultation activity where we gained over **1,200 views from 618 individuals**. This feedback allowed us to better understand tenants' priorities and adapt our services. A couple of examples include:
 - A new telephone system that allows calls to go directly to the right team.
 - Amended our reception opening times.
 - Made our communication materials clear and easy to access.
10. To ensure our tenant committee **Gateway Central** are fully effective we undertook a review of their meetings and provided some training. The committee met nine times during the year and some of the activities they carried out are:

- Ensuring we listened to enough tenant views through 'The Big Conversation'
 - Helped shape our communications to tenants to ensure they are better informed around tenancy responsibilities.
 - Reviewed performance against our Gateway Promises
 - Helped to shape our Damp, Mould and Condensation policy and procedure
11. During the year, we carried out **two scrutiny reviews**, one on our complaints process and one on The Purple Pantry. Tenants led the reviews and made the recommendations for where we need to improve.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

Strategy Objectives:

- To develop and support voluntary and community organisations operating within our communities.
 - To support local charities that positively impact on the wellbeing of our tenants and communities.
 - To enhance our approach to community development and investment.
12. This year we continued to support tenant and resident associations across Preston to operate effectively, whilst working in partnership with them to address local concerns.
13. We delivered a **Day of Action** at Farrington Park, where we worked with local community group, tenants, young people, partners and agencies to tackle dog fouling in the area. As a result of this activity, we saw a 70% reduction in dog foul in the area.
14. We delivered our own **Uniform Bank**, providing 182 items of clothing for children, as well as providing 64 brand new winter coats to those most in need. We also supported two partners to deliver their own Uniform Banks.
15. In response to the cost of living crisis we delivered several activities that aimed to support tenants. These include **cooking on a budget** courses, **Kids in the**

Kitchen and **CGA Bake off**. In total 72 tenants took part in these activities. We also worked with Lancashire Adult Learning to deliver **five wellbeing and family activities** which supported 43 adults and 19 children to take part in exercise, arts and crafts, and cooking courses.

16. We invested **£13,116 from our Community Fund**, supporting 29 different projects across Preston, in total we supported:

- Six projects that aimed to reduce anti-social behaviour
- Six projects that supported tenancy sustainment
- Fourteen projects that aimed to reduce social isolation in older people
- Three mini-bus applications

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS

Strategy Objectives:

- To increase the number of tenants able to digitally engage with us.
- To empower individuals to positively grow and develop, supporting them into employment, education or training.
- To reduce the feeling of social isolation amongst our older customers.

17. Over the last twelve months we supported 90 individuals through our **employment and skills support**, with 46% moving on to either training, education or employment.

18. We worked in partnership with James Hall to launch our '**Workwear Wardrobe**', providing pre-loved work clothing to tenants to help them enter and remain in employment.

19. We worked in partnership with **Shape Lancashire** to access free activities for our older tenants, including mobile cinema sessions, trips out and health walks. 7 activities were delivered, supporting 110 tenants to feel less socially isolated.

20. Our Independent Living Team delivered **35 events and activities** for our older customers as well as producing monthly newsletters, aimed at reducing

social isolation. We were delighted when our extra-care scheme, The Courtyards won '**Supported Housing Scheme of the Year**' at the Northern Housing Awards.

21. Our Tenancy Support Team supported tenants to make **1,514 benefit claims**, provided **107 tenants with benefit advice** and secured **£3.3 million** in extra benefits and backdated claims for tenants.
22. Our **Christmas Toy and Food campaign** provide 51 children with toys, issued 96 shopping vouchers and provided 71 food parcels for those in financial hardship.

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Strategy Objectives:

- To support local partners to deliver services that benefit our tenants and communities.
23. We supported the establishment of '**The Hub**' at **Grange Park** which is used by Let's Grow Preston. One of our contractors re-painted the Centre allowing them to open a community space offering free activities to all ages.
 24. We supported Lancashire Constabulary to secure over £3,000 in funding to deliver a **diversionary youth programme**. We helped them launch a boxing programme whilst ensuring our tenants children were able to access the opportunity.