

Document Name:	Community Empowerment Strategy
Document Type:	Strategy

Version Date:	September 2019	Review Date:	March 2024
Department:	Community Engagement	Document Author:	Community Engagement Manager

Code for Approval Route:	Board
Approval Date:	
Who has been consulted:	Tenants, Residents, Partners, Managers, CET, SMT, ELT
Equality Assessment Completed:	3 Sept 2019
Version:	TBC

Document Information
<p>Scope: The Community Empowerment Strategy applies to all residents living within Community Gateway Association (CGA)'s Local Community Areas (LCA).</p>
<p>Key Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver the requirement in CGA's rules that the organisation will have a Community Empowerment Strategy (CES). • To support the delivery of CGA's corporate objectives by setting the strategic direction for engagement and empowerment activities at CGA. • To implement our new approach to engagement following the Lets Talk Engagement review. • Define priority areas for colleagues and outline the ways in which we will achieve our goals. • To maximise the social value achieved through activities whilst ensuring clearly evidenced outcomes are communicated.
Links to Regulatory Framework for Social Housing

- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard 2017
- Governance and Financial Viability Standard 2015

Links to Strategic Objectives/CG Values:

INVEST: We will help to achieve the corporate priorities that aim to improve the appearance and appeal of neighbourhoods, by working with communities to instil pride and create cohesive communities where people want to live.

SUPPORT: We will support individuals and communities through engagement and empowerment activities, working with local partners to maximise the impact.

EVOLVE: We will evolve our approach to allow us to engage with a more diverse range of individuals, providing new innovative opportunities that appeal to a wider audience in a format that is accessible.

The corporate values covered within the strategy include:

- We do what we say
- We are open and honest
- We put our diverse communities at the heart of all we do
- We promote empowerment
- We passionately promote Gateway
- We value and support all our people

Outcomes for Customers:

- More choice – customers will be able to engage with us in a range of different ways at a time and in ways which suits them, including digitally
- A stronger tenant voice with more accountability
- Better informed about the opportunities to get involved
- Access to training and development opportunities
- Stronger, more enriched communities through localised development activities and neighbourhood studies
- Increased social inclusion

Retention Schedule:**Legal Basis for collection:**



Community Empowerment Strategy 2019-2024

'Inspire People, Inspired Communities'

INTRODUCTION

1. Community Gateway Association (CGA) is a mutual organisation formed for the benefit of the community and founded on the 'Community Gateway Model' principles of mutuality, accountability and engagement. CGA is owned by the tenant and leaseholder members living in its Local Community Areas (LCAs).
2. CGA was formed for the benefit of the community and is governed by a number of rules. These rules require us to provide support and opportunities to our members and local communities to enable them to fully participate in both their community as well as the internal affairs of the association. In order to achieve this we are required to have a Community Empowerment Strategy which sets out how we will secure the widest possible community involvement.
3. Promoting empowerment whilst putting our diverse communities at the heart of all we do through successful engagement is key to the work of CGA. As such we have recently commissioned a full review of our work in this area – Let's Talk Engagement (LTE).
4. The review was commissioned due to low participation in tenant involvement activities and a lack of diversity within our involved tenant group. This coincided with a reduction in tenant satisfaction with the opportunities to get involved and questions over the impact of tenant Action Groups. The purpose of the review was to allow us to gain the views of a broader, more diverse range of tenants to ensure that the engagement opportunities we offer meet their needs.
5. We want to offer clear avenues for tenants to raise concerns and influence service delivery, ensuring we remain a well run organisation. The review successfully allowed us

to engage with 582 individuals through various methods, allowing a fully representative view to be achieved. The findings from the review have provided us with a number of key areas of focus to take forward to better involve, inform and support our residents in the work CGA carries out.

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

6. The purpose of the strategy is to inform tenants, residents and colleagues of our approach to community engagement and empowerment, implementing the recommendations from the LTE review whilst taking our engagement activities to the next level.
7. It sets out our aims and objectives over the next five years and will support the Community Gateway 2019-24 Corporate Plan, with a focus on how we will support individuals and communities whilst we evolve our approach to engagement to ensure all tenants have a voice in shaping our services and the communities in which they live.
8. The strategy provides a clear focus on community development, responding to the insights gained through LTE. We want to shape our offer to allow us to deliver engagement activities at a grassroots level. By working with colleagues internally we will target our engagement activity dependent on specific community needs, providing tailored services that aim to address local issues. This will allow us to engage with a wider range of diverse tenants and residents whilst increasing customer satisfaction with the opportunities to get involved as well as with the services they receive. Our aim is to create more cohesive and sustainable communities where people want to live.
9. Internally the strategy will provide clarity for colleagues on the role of the Community Empowerment Team, clearly setting out the support on offer to them alongside the opportunities to work collaboratively, helping teams to achieve their own objectives as well as the overarching ones within the Corporate Plan.

SCOPE

10. This strategy applies to tenants, residents and colleagues. It also outlines our approach to working with partners and community organisations operating in our communities.

11. We will work to understand the needs of our customers better by using our internal data along with their feedback to tailor engagement opportunities that deliver targeted outcomes. Utilising customer insight information and segmentation data to better understand the needs of our communities.
12. We will continue to offer support to individuals wishing to engage with us, providing training and mentoring to equip them with the skills they need to effectively get involved with us, resulting in more meaningful engagement that has a real impact.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THIS STRATEGY

13. Over the last two years the political and social landscape for housing has changed and as such these factors have been taken into consideration in shaping this strategy.
14. Following the Grenfell Fire in 2017 the Green Paper, 'A new deal for social housing', was produced in August 2018, which resulted in key recommendations being made which aim to address a range of issues affecting housing associations around safety, supply and the stigma of social housing. It highlights the need to rebalance the relationship between social housing tenants and their landlords, ensuring transparency, accountability and the opportunity for tenants to really influence service delivery by having a strong 'Tenants' Voice' both nationally and locally.
15. In response to this we have become an early adopter of the National Housing Federation 'Together with Tenants' Charter which aims to strengthen the relationship between tenants, residents and housing associations. By increasing accountability and ensuring tenants know exactly what they should be receiving aims to build trust and collaboration. By signing up to the Charter we will ensure that we are able to clearly demonstrate and evidence our performance against the commitments set out within it, providing quality services that our tenants are happy with. We want tenants to have confidence in our involvement opportunities and be satisfied their views are being listened to and considered. We want to ensure that the strength of the tenants' voice is maintained right through to strategic level and championed in the Boardroom.

KEY THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

16. The strategy aims to support delivery of the Corporate Plan with a specific focus on a number of key themes that link to the aims set out within it.

Theme	Priorities
<i>1. Evolving our Engagement...</i> to ensure all tenants have a voice in shaping our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To improve the quality and accessibility of our tenant engagement and involvement activities ✓ Increase the number of active members ✓ To improve our approach to tenant scrutiny to ensure we remain accountable to our tenants
<i>2. Supporting Communities...</i> to become great places to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To play an active role in the development and support of a range of voluntary and community organisations that individually and collectively contribute to making our communities more desirable places to live ✓ To support a range of local charities that positively impact on the wellbeing of our tenants and the communities they live in ✓ To enhance our approach to community development and investment by focusing on activities which improve community cohesion, resilience and pride
<i>3. Supporting Individuals...</i> to live successfully in their homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To increase the number of customers able to digitally engage with CGA ✓ To improve our customers' financial wellbeing ✓ To empower individuals to positively grow and develop, supporting them into employment, education or training (including through Preston Vocational Centre (PVC), our subsidiary training company) ✓ To reduce the feeling of isolation amongst our older customers
<i>4. Supporting Partners...</i> to deliver services that benefit our tenants and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To support our local strategic partners to deliver their strategic objectives, with specific focus on crime and anti-social behaviour; reducing homelessness; and domestic violence

THEME ONE – EVOLVING OUR ENGAGEMENT

17. We will offer a wide range of high quality engagement and involvement opportunities to tenants and residents that enables them to shape CGA services both in the community and the business.

- 18. By evolving our approach we will introduce new and innovative ways to engage with tenants and residents, removing barriers to make it accessible for all, which in turn will allow us to engage with a more diverse range of individuals, whilst increasing customer satisfaction with the opportunities to get involved. Our approach will be more flexible and easier to access, providing bite-sized opportunities for people to get involved in a way and at a time that suits them.

- 19. We will work to a new engagement framework that will allow us to effectively engage with tenants and members both in the business and the community. Our approach will be to:

Inform	Sharing information with tenants and members effectively.
Involve	Creating a range of opportunities for tenants and members to be involved.
Support	Supporting people to get involved with us and community groups to thrive.

- 20. Throughout our approach we will instill some key values into our engagement and empowerment activities to ensure it is meaningful and inclusive, these are our principles of good engagement that ensure the work we deliver is:
 - **Fair and Inclusive** – responds to the needs of diverse groups, removes barriers to participation, ensures all views are equal and is respectful of everyone’s views.
 - **Ambitious** – has clear aims and a purpose which is meaningful for those involved.
 - **Achievable** – establishes desired outcomes at the beginning. Ensures resources are available to support change.
 - **Genuine** – effective communication, openness and transparency builds trust.
 - **Shared** – working collaboratively with others to deliver outcomes.
 - **Timely** – ensures that tenants and communities are engaged early enough to influence a decision or idea.

- **Supportive** – shares knowledge and expertise to enable informed choices and decisions.
 - **Positive** – actively promotes engagement activities that have made a positive difference.
21. We will continue to develop how we communicate with our tenants and residents to ensure they are fully informed, promoting openness and transparency by sharing information in an easy to read format on a platform that is accessible to all.
22. We will use social media and the website to share timely information whilst developing our approach online to allow us to ask questions and gather feedback from customers, creating new ways for tenants' views to be heard. Text messaging will also be used along with e-mails to gain as many views as possible. We will introduce live streaming and video content to increase the impact and effectiveness of our digital engagement activities, allowing us to connect with more people and raise the profile of organisation and the opportunities available.
23. We aim to increase the number of active members by refreshing the benefits of membership to attract a more diverse membership, providing support and training to ensure effective involvement at all levels. By empowering members we will enable them to hold the Board to account through their membership and be involved at a strategic level.
24. We aim to improve our approach to Tenant Scrutiny to ensure we remain accountable to our tenants, supporting them to effectively scrutinise services and implementing recommendations to improve the services our tenants receive.

Objective	Outcome	How we will achieve this	Measure
To evolve and increase engagement and involvement	Delivery of a wide range of high quality engagement activities that are open and accessible	✓ Introduce new and innovative effective engagement opportunities - including digital engagement	At least 80% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities we provide to get

opportunities.	to all. To have active, involved tenants that are representative of all our communities and activities that make an impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tailor opportunities to meet the needs of customers and communities ✓ Utilise a wide range of communication methods ✓ Regularly evaluate the outcomes and impact of our engagement and community development activities to ensure they are effective 	involved. % of individuals who have a positive step forward on their outcome star reading.
Increase the number of active members.	A more diverse, active membership group who have clear influence within the business and their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review our benefits package to members ✓ Regular communication to promote the opportunities to influence and be involved ✓ Support members to engage – providing training and mentoring if required 	Double the level active full tenant members who engage with us.
To improve our approach to tenant scrutiny to ensure we remain accountable to our tenants.	An active Scrutiny Group who ensure effective delivery of services, making recommendations for service improvements through a tenant-centred approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review our current approach to Tenant Scrutiny ✓ Recruit new members from diverse backgrounds ✓ Provide training and support to all Scrutiny members ✓ Deliver a range of mystery shopping activities 	100% of accepted recommendations that are implemented within the agreed timescale.

THEME TWO – SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

25. We will continue to play an active role in the development and support of voluntary and community organisations including residents' groups operating within our neighborhoods to make them more desirable places to live.

26. In keeping with our social purpose we have always had a strong charitable focus, we want to focus the strategy and refresh our approach to further develop our links with a number of local charities that have a positive impact in the communities that we work in.
27. Under CGA's 'Gateway in the Community' initiative we will support our communities to develop, thrive and grow, working directly with them at a grassroots level to better connect with them so that we can understand their needs.
28. This will allow us to work in partnership with our communities to deliver targeted community development activities that will support them to become more cohesive, sustainable, resilient and vibrant – ultimately creating pride and making neighborhoods desirable places to live.

Objective	Outcome	How we will achieve this	Measure
To develop and support voluntary and community organisations operating within our communities.	Active, thriving community groups who operate independently to deliver a range of activities which engage with all residents and deliver local improvements for the benefit of our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue to support voluntary and community organisations operating with our communities. ✓ Support the development of new groups. ✓ Provide skills' training that enables individuals to participate in groups to run independently, supporting the sustainability of organisations and their activities. ✓ Support community events taking place in the heart of our communities. 	Number of community groups actively operating within our communities.
To support local charities that positively	Active charities providing localised support and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Proactively develop close links with local charities. ✓ Continue to deliver our 	Number of charities operating within our communities.

<p>impact on the wellbeing of our tenants and communities.</p>	<p>and wellbeing improvements for our tenants and communities.</p>	<p>Community Fund (open to applications from community and voluntary organisations as well as not for profit social enterprises operating in our communities).</p>	<p>Amount of money awarded through the community fund and impact it has.</p>
<p>To enhance our approach to community development and investment.</p>	<p>Effective delivery of community activities that build community cohesion, resilience and pride.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Utilise customer insight to target community development activities. ✓ Work collaboratively with colleagues across the organisation. ✓ Deliver a range of activities that aim to empower local communities to grow and develop. ✓ Deliver a range of targeted consultation. ✓ Create neighbourhood plans. ✓ Develop a youth led project group. ✓ Regularly evaluate and report on the impact of community projects and activities to ensure they are effective. 	<p>89% of our customers who tell us they are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.</p> <p>Reduction in the number of tenants who give up their home due to dissatisfaction with their community / neighbourhood (no more the 5%)</p> <p>% of individuals who have a positive step forward on their outcome star reading.</p>

THEME THREE – SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS

29. We will evolve our digital offer, embracing new technologies to enable those customers, who choose to do so, to engage with CGA on-line by providing a digital component

where possible to all engagement activities. We will offer bite sized, accessible opportunities that can be accessed by customers at a time that suits them. In order to do this we will help tenants to positively use our digital services, providing digital training to upskill individuals and reviewing the access available in each LCA.

30. We will support individuals to successfully live in their homes, helping them to increase their income and skills through our 'Gateway 2 Employment' initiative. Working with individuals on a one-to-one basis we will support them to achieve outcomes in employment, education or training, helping them to remove barriers and improve their wellbeing.
31. We will also look to deliver skills training to larger groups and work closely with our vocational training charity PVC to access training and secure outcomes. Individuals will be supported to remove barriers whilst being empowered to make positive steps to increase their income, skills and overall wellbeing.
32. We will look to increase social inclusion, with an ageing population we want to help reduce loneliness amongst our older customers. We recognise the impact engagement can have on decreasing social isolation whilst bringing health and wellbeing improvements.

Objective	Outcome	How we will achieve this	Measure(s)
To increase the number of tenants able to digitally engage with us.	Customers and communities who are more digitally included, accessing services and support as well as engagement opportunities digitally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop a programme of digital skills training. ✓ Review and improve access to digital technologies in our LCA's. ✓ Work with local partners to maximise digital learning opportunities across the City. ✓ Provide digital engagement activities. 	<p>Numbers engaging with digital training.</p> <p>% of individuals who have a positive step forward on their outcome star reading as a result of digital.</p> <p>Increase in % of</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide digital support at places and times where people will need it – such as when applying for Universal Credit. 	<p>tenants who engage with us digitally.</p> <p>90% tenants satisfied with online services.</p>
To empower individuals to positively grow and develop, supporting them into employment, education or training.	Improved financial wellbeing for customers as well as an increase in confidence as they develop new skills and become closer to the job market, ultimately securing employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Expand our Gateway 2 Employment offer. ✓ Deliver employment and skills support on an individual basis. ✓ Deliver local job clubs. ✓ Organise community based training courses. ✓ Develop our volunteering programme and offer. ✓ Utilise PVC to access training opportunities for tenants. 	<p>50% of supported customers are helped into employment, training or gain a qualification, apprenticeship or placement of 4+ weeks.</p> <p>% of individuals who have a positive step forward on their outcome star reading.</p> <p>Number of active volunteers.</p>
To reduce the feeling of isolation amongst our older customers.	Customers feel less lonely and more socially included, resulting in improvements to their overall health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Deliver targeted digital training in our sheltered housing schemes, providing the opportunity to connect with others online. ✓ Deliver localised community activities and engagement opportunities. 	<p>10% reduction in older customers who feel socially isolated.</p> <p>% of individuals who have a positive step forward on their outcome star</p>

		✓ Support health and wellbeing activities within the local community.	reading. Number of activities delivered.
--	--	---	---

THEME FOUR – SUPPORTING PARTNERS

33. CGA has limited resources that need to be carefully prioritised, focussing on delivery of our specialisms. We understand the need to draw on the strengths of others and actively work in partnership with organisations across the City for the benefit of our tenants and communities.

Objective	Outcome	What we will deliver	Measure
To support local partners to deliver services that benefits our tenants and communities.	Active partnerships with a range of local services that are accessed by tenants and bring about improvements to individuals as well as communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support / seek to influence partners to deliver services that benefit our tenants and communities. ✓ Promote local services to customers. ✓ Create a community directory that lists all partners operating within our areas, detailing the services they deliver to enable more joined up working. ✓ Maintain strong working relationships with all local partners. 	Number of partners delivering services within our communities.

MEASURING THE IMPACT

34. It is important that we reflect the value added through empowerment and engagement activities, focusing on more than just numbers. In order to do this, we will introduce

new measurement tools that allow us to measure qualitative outcomes achieved through the activities delivered.

35. By focusing on the impact activities have had on tenants, residents, communities and CGA as a whole, we will be able to better evidence the social value and outcomes achieved by CGA activities.
36. We will continue to monitor the demographics of our members to ensure we are reaching a diverse range of our customers. Operationally we will introduce a wellbeing measurement tool that allows us to report upon the impact engagement and empowerment activities have on individuals and communities.
37. The delivery and impact of the strategy along with performance against the measures will be reported to Gateway Central on a quarterly basis. A mid point review of the strategy will be scheduled to allow us to evolve the strategy if required.

CONCLUSION

38. This strategy sets out our direction going forward, detailing how we will evolve our offer and approach to engagement to allow us to gain the views of our diverse communities whilst remaining at the forefront of tenant engagement.
39. By supporting individuals, communities and partners we aim to adopt a partnership approach to create more sustainable, cohesive neighbourhoods and improve customer satisfaction in the services we deliver.
40. We will work collaboratively with colleagues and members to ensure that collectively we meet the corporate objectives of CGA whilst inspiring people and communities.