



# COMMUNITY INVESTMENT STRATEGY

2024-2027



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Community Gateway Association (CGA) is a mutual organisation formed for the benefit of the community and founded on the 'Gateway Model' principles of mutuality, accountability, and engagement.
- 1.2 Investing in communities is at the heart of our social purpose and we are committed to work in partnership to support, develop and empower our local communities to thrive.
- 1.3 As a PlaceShaper we have a clear commitment to regeneration with a focus on physical and social regeneration through our community investment activities.
- 1.4 The Centre for Excellence in Community Investment (CECI) states 'Community Investment is the work social housing organisations do alongside people and communities to help them thrive.' In 2020 we signed the CECI Charter setting out our commitment to 'owning, investing in, and celebrating our community investment work.' Through this approach we will ensure that tenants are at the heart of community investment by co-creating neighbourhood plans and involving them in scrutiny and review, in keeping with the Gateway Model.
- 1.5 This strategy contributes to the Corporate Plan priority '*we will make a difference in our communities*' which seeks to achieve the following outcome '*Our tenants live in well-kept neighbourhoods and are actively involved in making their communities better places to live*'.
- 1.6 The Charter for Social Housing Residents sets out what tenants should expect from their landlords. The charter details how tenants and residents should have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, where they feel proud to live.
- 1.7 The recently introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures ask tenants how satisfied they are that CGA makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood, as well

as asking how safe and secure they feel in their community. Delivery against the strategy aims to help increase satisfaction in both these areas.

## **2.0 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY**

- 2.1 The purpose of the strategy is to set out our approach to Community Investment. It details how we will work with tenants, residents, and partners to develop thriving communities where people are proud to live. It focuses on how we will utilise insight information to work in partnership to deliver community-led, sustainable change that makes a real difference to our communities.
- 2.2 CGA is already an active partner within our communities and this strategy sets out how we will strengthen the work we do and formalise our approach. We have previously delivered localised community development activities through our Community Empowerment Strategy and we have seen the difference partnership working can make for our tenants, residents and neighbourhoods. We will build on our solid foundations in a focussed and purposeful way to maximise the impact we have in making our communities great places to live.
- 2.3 The key aims of this strategy:
- To make a positive contribution to our neighbourhoods helping create places where our tenants can feel proud to live.
  - To deliver targeted community investment activities which tackle local issues and support cleaner, greener and safer communities, utilising a wide range of customer data and insight to inform plans.
  - To work in partnership with tenants, residents and partners to co-create neighbourhood plans and maximise our impact in delivering community-led solutions to local issues.
  - To measure the impact of our activities by continually reviewing customer data and insight as well as gaining feedback from those living in the area.

## **3.0 SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY**

- 3.1 This strategy outlines our approach to delivering community investment activities across all our local communities. It applies to all Community Gateway employees, tenants, residents, and partners living and working within our neighbourhoods.
- 3.2 The Engagement and Communications Team will lead on this strategy however colleagues from teams across the organisation will be responsible for delivery.

#### **4.0 THE STRATEGY**

- 4.1 This strategy contains four themes which set out the principles of our approach.

##### **Theme 1 – Using intelligence to drive change.**

- 4.2 We will utilise existing tenant data and insight information to inform our community investment activities, as well as intelligence provided by local partners. We will supplement this data through targeted tenant consultation activities to further investigate local issues. This will ensure that our investment and resource decisions are data driven and evidence-based.
- 4.3 We will work together as one team to review and analyse this information to identify the priority areas where we need to target our resources. Where possible we will work strategically with other local partners to maximise the impact of our activities.

##### **Theme 2 – Tenants and communities at the heart of all we do**

- 4.4 We understand that those living and working in our communities are best placed to know what their communities need. We will ensure that we seek their views through formal consultation throughout all community investment activities.

- 4.5 We will include tenants, residents and partners in our activities working in partnership to co-produce neighbourhood plans, creating community-led solutions to local issues.
- 4.6 We will continue to seek the tenant voice through our Engagement Framework, feeding it into our internal intelligence to help us continue to be tenant-led in our approach, shaping our activities to meet tenant needs.

### **Theme 3 – Making a difference in our communities.**

- 4.7 We will put the community at the heart of our community investment activities so they can shape developments in the area in which they live, allowing us to ensure activities are community-led.
- 4.8 We will adopt an Asset Based Community Development approach, where we look to build on the positive elements within our communities, whilst working in partnership to tackle local issues. This approach aims to focus on the existing strengths of a community and identify changes to make it stronger, helping to build sustainable communities. We will work with the community to highlight the positive element of their communities and work together to agree the best way to enhance their local area.
- 4.9 Using the feedback from tenant consultation activities and our data, we will develop localised neighbourhood plans as we understand each area is unique. We will work collaboratively to identify local priorities that are achievable within our available resources and levels of influence.
- 4.10 We will work in partnership to deliver positive change; we recognise that change will only happen with the right stakeholders on board. We will work collaboratively to maximise the impact of our work, utilising external resources including external funding to effectively deliver projects.

- 4.11 We will utilise the neighbourhood plans to direct our work and investment, ensuring we are spending our money on the things that will make a difference to our tenants, increasing tenant satisfaction levels. We will also work with our contractors to maximise their social value investment into our communities.
- 4.12 In addition to neighbourhood plans, we will also deliver a programme of Green Days to tidy up our estates and improve the appearance of the area. This will involve tackling local issues such as; fly tipping, litter, dog fouling, untidy gardens, as well as tidying up grassed areas, pruning shrubs, additional planting, and more, to improve the look and feel of neighbourhoods. In addition, we will have a focus on safety issues too, such as raising awareness of fire risks in the home and communal areas. This will involve empowering communities to get involved and work with us to help create cleaner, greener and safer neighbourhoods.
- 4.13 Impact measurement will be key to assessing our success. We will continually review the supporting data, as well as gaining feedback from those living with the area, utilising qualitative and quantitative data to evidence our success. We will communicate our work with tenants throughout and ensure they are well informed on any improvements that are taking place, whilst highlight the positive contribution we are making to communities.

**Theme 4 –Supporting partners and communities to thrive.**

- 4.14 We will empower our communities through our activities, building community resilience and pride. We will work with local partners to support them to deliver their services in our communities, based on tenants needs.
- 4.15 We will develop our Community Fund to align to the priorities in this strategy, providing funding and support to those partners operating in our local communities delivering complimentary activities and services.

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