



Delivering Social Value: Community Engagement Hacked



With thanks to the Social Value Programme Partners:



Introduction

A survey published last year found that 98% of the general public don't trust developers and 93% don't have faith in local authorities when it comes to planning for large-scale development.¹

These results reflect the lack of public trust in all institutions, but also the ongoing failure of the new development and existing buildings to respond to the needs of the communities they serve. In our Guide to Social Value in New Development UKGBC demonstrated that the more genuinely and effectively the community are involved in decision-making, the greater the likelihood of maximising social value through development.

Depth of involvement



¹ www.grosvenor.com/news-and-insight/all-articles/grosvenor-britain-ireland-addresses-lack-of-trust-

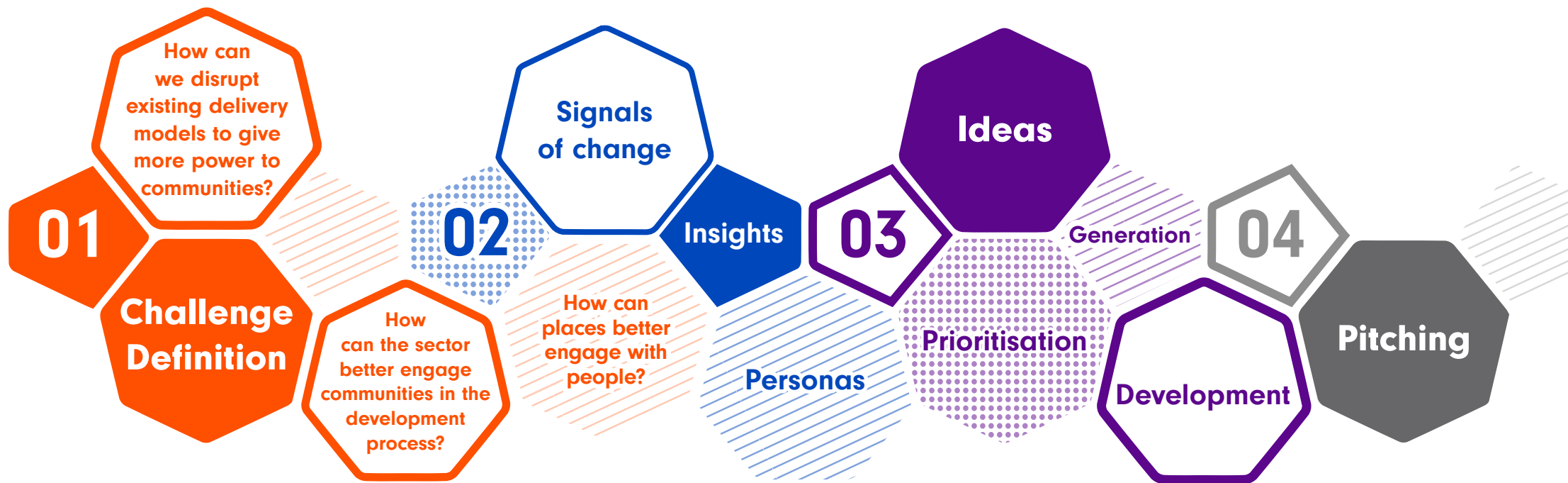
Yet the built environment sector still struggles to engage communities and hand over control in the decision-making process

*"The imbalance of power between those leading regeneration and the communities it affects [...] results in a failure to recognise not only the real value of communities where neighbourhood change is concerned, but also the value of community anchor institutions in helping bridge the gap between residents, planners and developers"*²

² Developing Potential: Lessons from Community experiences of regeneration. Local Trust and Blue Chula, January 2020



Photo © BuroHappold



The Innovation Process

How can we give more power to communities?

This was the question UKGBC posed to the built environment sector in a series of activities as part of the [Social Value Programme](#). UKGBC led participants through a step-by-step process on how to identify and define a challenge, then to think innovatively about a response. As part of an initial industry workshop, three distinct challenges emerged.

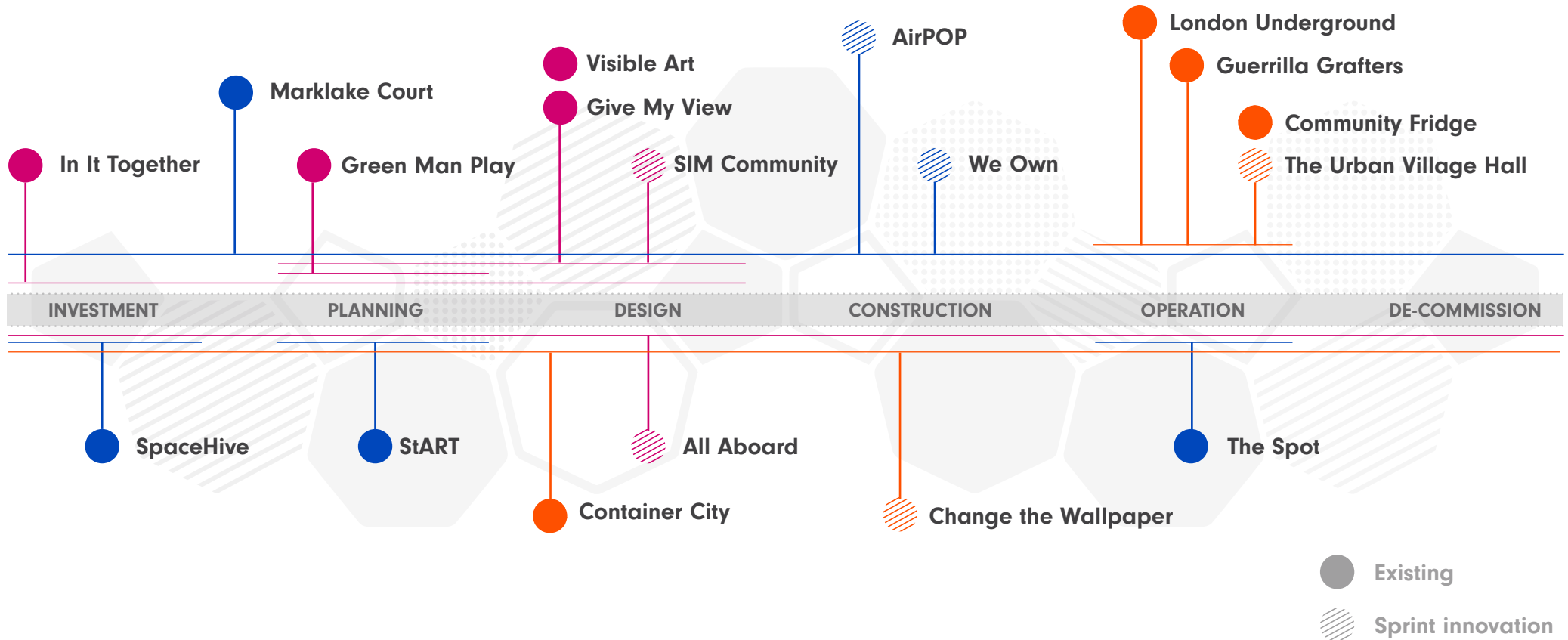
Once defined, these challenges provided the focus for a 12-hour 'innovation sprint' in which participants were divided into groups and led through a process that enabled them to generate new and innovate solutions. This involved the use of personas to help the groups consider the challenges from different perspectives and 'shots-of-inspiration' where the groups came together throughout the day to hear from unconventional leaders in the field of community engagement.

At the end of the innovation sprint the groups presented their concepts to a panel of judges and the six best ideas are included within this report. We have also included a number of existing innovations which we sourced via research and our network of members. The hope is for these case studies to act as a source of inspiration for the sector, and to help all of us think more creatively about how we work with communities.

To find out more about the UKGBC step-by-step innovation process, and the help it provides, please refer to the [Sustainable Innovation Manual](#).

The Community Empowerment Innovation Map

The Community Empowerment Innovation Map provides a snapshot of how the new products, services, and business models highlighted in this report might be applied to give more power to communities throughout the built environment lifecycle: from investment, planning and design, to construction and operation.



Challenge

01 Engaging People

Challenge

02 Delivery Models

Challenge

03 Engaging Places

Challenge 01

Engaging People

How can the sector better engage communities in the development process?

Throughout the planning and design process, how can built environment professionals and individuals from local communities communicate more effectively with each other?

Challenge insights:

- Developers and local authorities often struggle to understand the needs of communities
- Communities can be hard to reach, especially marginalised or disadvantaged groups
- Communities have a lack of information on how they can influence the development process

Existing Innovations



Give My View: the platform that allows communities to respond to development proposals

Give My View is an online platform, owned by prop-tech start-up Built-ID, that allows the local community to 'give their view' on new developments in their area. The platform leverages game design, dynamic polling and social incentives in order to maximise local engagement, and so allows developers to engage with a far wider demographic than are usually reachable via traditional methods. As the platform shows that their votes have a demonstrable impact on proposals, the community feel their voice is being heard.



The 'in it together' Game: a board game where residents collaborate to tackle rising sea levels

AECOM were commissioned to improve the climate resilience of the San Leandro Bay Area, which is under threat from rising sea levels and ground water flooding. One of the key stakeholders to the success of the project was an African American community who, from years of segregation and neglect, harboured distrust in the authorities. In response, the project team created a game called 'in it together' that allowed the community to explore possible resilience actions and weigh up the trade-offs.



The Green Man Play: a play that got the community thinking about the future needs of the area

West Ealing's Neighbourhood Forum took a creative approach to engaging the community in development of their Neighbourhood Plan. They put on a play about the past, present and future of West Ealing, and after each performance they distributed a questionnaire to the audience. Similarly, Tattenhall Parish Council, hoping to get greater input from local young people, hosted a 'rave' as part of their community engagement, with those who attended required to fill in a questionnaire prior to entry.



Viability Art: using art to make viability modelling better understood by communities

Community Led Housing London are working with an artist to create visualisations of viability calculations. These visualisations will then be used to help local communities understand what the viability of a scheme actually means, and the balance that has to be made between the aspects of the development that cost money and the amount of financial value that the scheme generates. The idea is that this will help communities understand any compromises that are made and keep expectations of delivery realistic.

Sprint innovation: SIM Community



Virtual reality game for communities to understand development trade-offs

What is it?

An interactive virtual reality game that allows community members to experience the consequences of various development options. Residents can access the game at home via a mobile app or digital TV, or they can visit the local drop-in centre to use VR equipment.

How does it address the challenge?

Developers can use the responses to the game as insights to local preferences, whereas playing the game helps the local community to understand the trade-offs that are inevitably made in development decision-making. Players will also be able to compare their decisions with others in the community which could help align community needs and build a collective consciousness.

Sustainability considerations:

The game has different time settings which allows people to interact with the immediate consequences of various decisions, the longer-term consequences of the development design and even more futuristic considerations. This long-term perspective will naturally make sustainable decision-making more attractive and could even change current behaviours of individuals within the community.

Sprint innovation: All Aboard



Employing members of the community as part of the project delivery board

What is it?

Following the introduction of The Social Value Act, many developers and contractors have an obligation to provide skills and jobs to the local community. This provides an opportunity for local people to be actively involved in the delivery of the scheme as paid employees. These employees could then sit alongside other members of the community on the project delivery board to ensure the community is fully integrated into the ongoing governance of the development.

How does it address the challenge?

The sector struggles to engage with members of the community who have busy lives or can't afford to give up their valuable time to inform proposals. This approach allows members of the communities to be paid for their time and expertise and helps private sector organisations deliver on their social value requirements. As communities are amorphous in nature, identifying key points of contact allows for more effective communication between the two sides.

Sustainability considerations:

After the scheme is delivered, members of the delivery board can take on the responsibility of ongoing governance of the site, dealing with key issues such as maintenance. Ideally, members of the board from the private sector would also continue to be involved in ongoing governance.

Challenge 02

Delivery Models

How can we disrupt existing delivery models to give more power to communities?

What new business models, development partnerships or processes could create more equitable relationships between developers and communities?

Challenge insights:

- The source of investment for development usually comes from outside the community, and communities rarely have a financial stake in new development
- The existing development process is cumbersome and frustrating for all parties
- Financial constraints often mean developers feel unable to deliver what the community needs

Existing Innovations



SpaceHive: a crowdfunding platform for community assets

SpaceHive is a crowdfunding website to help communities raise money for projects that bring civic or community spaces back to life. They have developed a network of partner councils, companies and foundations that have access to millions of pounds in funding. Anyone can nominate a local project and the funding progress is made transparent through the grantmaker app. In 2019 SpaceHive raised £50,000 to turn the disused Hackney Old Bath Community House into a community centre.



Marklake Court: a community-led social housing development

A board of elected estate residents in Leathermarket, who have responsibility for around 1,500 socially rented homes on behalf of the council, established a Community Benefit Society (CBS) to provide affordable homes for the community. Southwark Council transferred a disused garage site to the CBS on a long lease, allowing the community to develop the site and manage the completed building. Community Right to Build funded the project until the planning stage and the Council met the construction costs.



The Spot: a public skate-park built by those who use it

Lying in one of London's disused, Victorian settling tanks, 'The Spot' is a self-made, freestyle BMX park, envisaged and built entirely by those who ride it and made mostly from cement stolen from local building sites. Its conception arose from a tight-knit group of riders in response to the lack of adequate locations being provided by the public sector at the time. Although illegally built, seven years on the riders have full support from both English Heritage and Haringey Borough Council.



StART: a Community Land Trust fighting for local affordable homes

St Ann's Redevelopment Trust (StART) is a community-led organisation set up by residents of Haringey who wanted to see a local hospital redeveloped for the good of the local community. Originally two-thirds of the St Ann's Hospital site was to be sold for private housing development, with only 14% of the homes classed as "affordable". So far, they have persuaded the GLA to designate 50 homes for a community-led development and increase the percentage of genuinely affordable homes from 0% to at least 50%.

Sprint innovation: We Own



Community shareholder model for development

What is it?

A new financial model for development delivery that sees 5-10% of investment coming from members of the community in return for a share in development profits. This requirement could come through planning, or it could be a way for developers to deliver a scheme which has buy-in from the existing community. The value of the shares should be low enough that they are accessible to everyone in the community, and models could even consider ways for the community to access shares by contributing non-financial value, such as skills or time.

How does it address the challenge?

As shareholders, the community members naturally become part of the governance structure, which gives them a meaningful say throughout the entire development process. The financial stake that they hold in the development creates a fiduciary duty towards the community as investors, so the developers are answerable to their demands, and the power dynamic is shifted.

Sustainability considerations:

Allowing the existing community to directly benefit financially from development can help secure their support for the scheme and connect them with the new residents.

Sprint innovation: AirPOP



Community run high street

What is it?

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) have proven successful at ensuring underutilised public buildings remain vibrant and continue to deliver value to the community. With many retail units on high streets suffering a similar fate, AirPOP proposes that local authorities encourage vacant units to be transferred to a CLT, who then manage the units using an app that would allow for the spaces to be used on-demand on a short term basis by local residents and businesses.

How does it address the challenge?

Vacant retail units create a visual scar on the high street and compromise the vibrancy and safety of a key meeting space for the community. As the trend towards online shopping is only increasing, communities need to find a way to future-proof their high streets. AirPOP allows them to take control of their local environment and resilience by allowing for greater diversity of building uses.

Sustainability considerations:

Enabling the units to be used by local businesses without hefty rent overheads will provide a boost to the local economy. The rents collected by the CLT can be used to enhance the local area, ensuring that the financial success of the high street is felt by the local community.

Challenge 03

Engaging Places

How can places better engage with people?

How can our buildings and shared spaces, once built, encourage communities to interact with their built environment and feel ownership of their surroundings?

Challenge insights:

- Ongoing maintenance of 'shared spaces' often presents a financial burden
- Design features of the built environment can block out people, i.e. lack of entrances at street level
- Large commercial buildings often employ disparate people that live far away

Existing Innovations



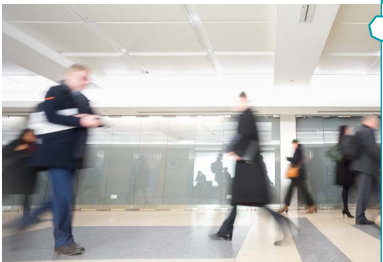
Community Fridge: a fridge that distributes food within a community

In a bid to tackle food waste, Hubbub, a UK-based environmental NGO, created a “community fridge” in Derbyshire to redistribute unwanted food from big retailers. The fridge provided a drop off and storage space for supermarkets who had an excess supply of foods that were close to their best before date, and a place where members of the community could access free food. Since then, community fridges have popped up across the UK helping thousands of people access nutritious food and save money.



Guerrilla Grafters: turning the urban environment into an edible wilderness

In 2010 a group of artists, horticulturalists and technologists in San Francisco decided to take direct action to improve the ecology and productivity of their urban environment. They had the idea to graft fruit bearing branches onto non-fruit bearing, ornamental urban fruit trees. Over time, the trees provide a source of fresh fruit to local residents. Their work is an example of where communities take control of the maintenance of their environment, a practice known as “informal urbanism”.



London Underground: reducing crime with classical music

TfL has made pianos available at three London Underground stations for customers to play as they pass through. They believed that making a connection between commuters and their environment and introducing the calming melodies of classical music would help to reduce crime on the transport network. Earlier trials found that within a space of 18 months robberies were cut by 33%, assaults on staff by 25% and vandalism by 37%.



Container City: meanwhile use of disused urban land for community benefit

Wanting to reduce crime and improve the appearance of a long plot of land adjacent to a railway, the City of Copenhagen leased the site to a cultural collective on a temporary basis. The collective were able to use the space for free on the condition that they create a cultural space for the local community. The site became a thriving mix of community gardens and workplaces for artists and social enterprises. As the collective only had temporary access to the land, they used moveable shipping containers as buildings.

Sprint innovation: The Urban Village Hall



A public space that adapts to local needs

What is it?

A set of adaptable public buildings, or 'pods' that provide space for community activities. At varying times of the day, a pod can serve different uses, for example, one pod could act as a café or workspace in the morning and change to an event space or classroom in the evening. The pods are designed to be flexible to varying requirements and can be booked via an app.

How does it address the challenge?

In an urban context, communities are often transient and diverse, and one facility often can't meet everybody's needs. This leads to public buildings such as community centres or libraries which are underutilised and not fit for purpose. An adaptable set of buildings, whose utility can be maximised through digital on demand access could provide the solution.

Sustainability considerations:

To ensure the community feel ownership of the space, funding for the pods could be sought from local residents and businesses, who could form a community interest company to provide governance for the site. The architects could also seek to co-design the pods with the community.

Sprint innovation: Change the wallpaper



Reclaiming spaces and surfaces for public discourse

What is it?

Reserving areas and surfaces in public spaces for art and installation as a way for communities to explore key local issues. For example, allocating a prominent wall on a high street or other public space as an 'art wall' upon which local residents are invited to draw or write their responses to a particular question or idea. The wall would then periodically be painted over to ensure that it remains fresh and relevant.

How does it address the challenge?

Art installations can interrupt the day-to-day routine in playful ways and provoke a reaction in people, getting them to take notice of their surroundings. Co-created public art acts as an expression of the community and can stimulate discussion about wider ideas, for example the future needs of the area. Local authorities, developers and community stakeholders could also use these to communicate with the community and find out what people are thinking about controversial issues.

Sustainability considerations:

Public art can create a neutral space for non-threatening discussion between opposing groups. Co-creating public art can often help people see the bigger picture and think long term; both of which are essential for sustainable decision-making.




From insight to action

UKGBC hopes that these concepts and innovations inspire further action to provide communities with the power to inform, engage with, and help deliver their built environment.

What you can do to advance innovation on community engagement and other sustainability challenges:

- Show this document to colleagues, clients and suppliers, as a snapshot of innovation today.
- Contact the innovators to implement trials of the products and services.
- Set up a process for your organisation to conduct open innovation, including working with external innovators to develop solutions.
- Tell us about other innovations so that we can share them with the rest of the built environment industry.

Tomorrow's ideas and innovations are up to you. Consult the [Sustainable Innovation Manual](#), work through the framework and contribute to a sustainable future.



About the Social Value Programme

In 2018, UKGBC published a well-received [social value guide](#) for policy-makers and development teams and in 2019 produced a [detailed resource](#) on social value policy for local authorities.

The Social Value Programme builds on this work and aims to use the concept of social value to enable the built environment sector to deliver better outcomes for communities. Overcoming some of the key barriers to delivering that has formed the objectives of the programme:

1. Supporting the built environment sector to feel more confident measuring social value
2. Inspiring the built environment sector to better engage with communities
3. Strengthening the social value requirements of real estate investors
4. Strengthening the social value requirements that come from planning

Our continued work in this area is made possible thanks to the generous support of our partners:





Insights on community engagement

"As well as the innovative ideas generated by the process, the sprint provided valuable insights into the challenges of engaging communities. We hope that by sharing these learnings we can support the cultural shift necessary to give more power to communities."

Trevor Keeling, BuroHappold

- Communities have huge untapped resources of knowledge, skills and willpower that can support the success of projects. Likewise communities need the expertise of development teams to realise their own goals.
- As the success of a scheme rests attracting new home buyers, the needs of the existing communities are often not the priority.
- Conversations between development teams and communities can get stuck on specific interventions rather than the broader impact of a scheme. Agreeing development outcomes between the two parties can help avoid that frustration.
- A lack of skills and knowledge of the development process can prevent communities from effectively engaging with decision-making. Developers and contractors can help address this through their local skills development programmes.
- Cooperatives and residents' associations can cost effectively provide services such as ongoing site management and maintenance. Participation in these groups can be empowering for members of the community.



**UKGBC offers
no commercial endorsement
of individual solutions
mentioned.**

The selected examples are
provided as a source of
inspiration, and we do hope
that you follow up with the
innovators to find out more.

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