

Community Investment Strategy

2023 - 2026

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1	May 2023	Three year strategy to outline our approach to Community Investment from 2023 – 2026.

1. Executive Summary

Delivering Positive Social Impact by Investing in our Communities sits at the heart of our purpose and is a key theme in our Corporate Plan.

Livv stands for an unwavering commitment to serving local communities. We are here for the long term to help people live happy, successful and fulfilled lives in diverse, welcoming places where they want to stay. Our mission is to provide opportunities for everyone – young or old, family, couple or single person.

Investing in our communities and the people who live them connects people to place and recognises that we are more than just a great landlord. It builds on and contributes to our long-term financial strength and capacity and demonstrates our commitment to our customers. We look to make a difference every day and do this by investing in our people and communities and by working alongside our partners to create great outcomes that enable people to thrive.

Our objective is to create a fairer society by building capacity and resilience and supporting the people who live in the places where we operate to improve their prospects and be the best version of themselves.

Over the past 3 years, we have transformed the way we work alongside our customers and grown the impact of the investment we make by working alongside communities. As a business dedicated to achieving positive social impact through flourishing communities, we will lead an ambitious programme based on new and existing creative local partnerships.

In the next three years we will also place a renewed emphasis on investing in social businesses where they can compliment and bring value to the work that we do to support customers and communities, both within Livv and alongside our partners.

We certainly don't have all the answers, so we choose to work with others to unlock all of the talent available to us. This strategy demonstrates our group-wide commitment to Community Investment. Livv Housing Group will continue to be a positive force for change, investing in our homes, investing in our communities, and with our customers being our main focus.

2. Introduction

Connecting people and place sits at the core of our vision. We want to create more places for people to thrive, alongside delivering an unwavering commitment to our customers and communities by delivering positive social impact.

Livv is a social business that's anchored in its communities with a reputation and strong track record for delivering social value. Alongside our core role as a provider of quality homes, this role of building capacity and resilience in people and communities has always been a central aspect of our work.

Our Community Investment Strategy outlines how we work with our customers, communities and partners to identify, develop and deliver programmes of support. It describes how we will deliver commissioned social impact programmes and align them with our day to day engagement with customers and communities. We also set out an ambition to invest in social businesses to grow capacity that is aligned to our core purpose and the priorities that need to be addressed in our communities. This integration of all activities, focused on creating social value, will ensure we are responding to the issues and opportunities as they emerge. Early intervention is key and we are proud that our work on prevention continues to make a positive difference.

Alongside the development of our Corporate Plan, we have reviewed our social objectives to ensure that our activities are aligned with the priorities of our customers and their local communities. The world is changing fast and we will continue to keep our objectives under review to ensure that we continue to respond quickly and develop meaningful programmes that create the right impact, at the right time, in the right place.

We will continue to focus our impact in the neighbourhoods where our customers live and, as part of our wider customer engagement strategy, we will work alongside them to identify what we can create together. We know we cannot do it all, and neither should we. So, empowering people and communities will be a focus to help our neighbourhoods to be welcoming, vibrant and safe. We will work alongside our customers and continue to be a positive force for change across the places where we work, investing in our homes, investing in our communities, and investing in the creation of social businesses to create capacity that we can draw on to deliver impact.

3. Strategy Vision

We will deliver social impact that helps people of all ages to feel confident to achieve their full potential and we are committed to ensuring that our customers will have access to the support and resources they may need when life feels most difficult.

We work to address the issues that we recognise can get in the way of people and families being able to thrive. Our priorities include a focus on financial and digital inclusion, supporting people into employment and support with their health and wellbeing, which has suffered as a result of the impact of the pandemic. Safety in our homes and communities is key and we continue to have an unwavering commitment to addressing harm and domestic violence and ridding our communities of anti-social behaviour. Focusing on the next

generation who will be Livv's customers of the future is also a priority by removing barriers to young people being able to achieve their full potential.

Our Corporate Plan details 'Impact' as one of our six strategic themes for the coming three years. It sets how we will invest in and work with community-based businesses to target the right people, places and activities to create positive impact.

We'll achieve this through creating programmes of support and activity that are driven by data and shaped by the people, business and communities that want and need them. We will work with relevant partners that can help to bring our vision to life, and together we'll create a positive impact. We'll do this with our own investment as well as securing funding from other sources. We'll continue to support social enterprises and charities so that they can do more to help our communities flourish.

4. National Agenda

We are living in unstable and uncertain times. The Covid-19 pandemic had severe and far-reaching repercussions on health, social and economic inequalities.

The post-pandemic environment coupled with wider global unrest including the war in Ukraine is placing pressures in the economy not seen since the 1970s. High inflation affecting the affordability of goods and services has led to a cost of living crisis in the UK, where in October 2022 inflation reached a 41-year high of 11.1%. This has further exacerbated poverty and inequality in the region, as those on low incomes struggle to make ends meet.

Cost of living crisis

The MRI Resident Voice Index (Nov 2022) found that of the social housing customers surveyed:

- 7 in 10 (69%) reported that they were worse off financially than they were 6 months ago.
- Nearly 8 in 10 (78%) were worried all or most of the time about meeting monthly living expenses, a 10% increase on spring 2022.
- 8 in 10 reported being in debt, with a third not managing their debt.
- Almost one quarter (24%) of respondents were already in energy bill arrears and 15% reported in rent arrears.

Not being able to afford the essentials, such as food, rent, heating or transport, doesn't only impact people economically, it also has wide-ranging negative impacts on mental and physical health and well-being.

Welfare Reform

The UK has also undergone a series of welfare reforms in recent years, with the introduction of Universal Credit being one of the most significant changes.

While the intention behind these reforms was to simplify the benefits system and incentivise work, they have also led to increased financial hardship for many vulnerable households, with many experiencing delays and reductions in payments.

Levelling-up

The government's levelling-up agenda aims to address regional disparities and promote economic growth across the UK, however, there are concerns about the pace of progress and the extent to which it will truly benefit the North West and other regions, which historically have been underfunded in areas such as infrastructure, education, and housing. It remains to be seen how the levelling-up agenda will address these longstanding issues in a meaningful way.

In the face of these challenges, housing providers play a crucial role in supporting communities and addressing poverty and inequality. Across the sector, organisations are working to provide affordable, high-quality social housing, as well as a range of services aimed at promoting economic inclusion, health and wellbeing, and community cohesion. By working in partnership with local authorities, businesses, and VCFSE organisations, we can help to address the root causes of poverty and inequality, and contribute to the region's long-term social and economic development.

The pace of change in policy making and the backdrop of political uncertainty means that it's essential that our approach remains flexible and agile, to enable us to respond to our customers' emerging needs or priorities as and when these arise.

5. Local Context and Challenges

We currently have around 13,000 homes and 28,000 customers. Our roots are in Knowsley where 18% of Knowsley's 155,000 residents are our customers, but we are growing across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) and neighbouring boroughs. We are much more than just a local employer or landlord. We are a social business that is anchored in our communities. We have a long-standing relationship with our customers and a responsibility to create positive impact in the places where our customers live.

Economic, Social and Health Inequality

The LCR comprises six local authorities: Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens, Wirral, and Halton. It is home to approximately 1.6 million residents and has a diverse economy, with key sectors including advanced manufacturing, life sciences, digital and creative industries, and tourism. While most people in the city region live happy, healthy and fulfilled lives, it continues to face significant challenges in terms of socio-economic disparities, with 47.3% of people in LCR living in the most deprived 20% of areas in England (IMD 2019 data). The region has higher than national average levels

of unemployment, poverty and health inequalities. 21% of people in Liverpool City Region have no qualifications compared with 18% across England, 4.6% are claiming unemployment benefits (UC and JSA) compared with 3.8% across England, and 22% have a limiting long-term illness in compared with 17% across England.

Inequalities in Knowsley are even more pronounced. 26% have no qualifications, 5% are claiming unemployment benefits and 23% have a limiting long-term illness. Consequently a higher proportion face greater challenges and inequality throughout their lives than in other areas. There is a strong correlation between household income and healthy life expectancy, with all of these factors therefore impacting upon people's health and wellbeing (JSNA 2022).

Growth and Opportunity

Despite this inequality, Knowsley is a borough that is undergoing a positive transformation, creating new opportunities for those who live here. In recent years there has been significant regeneration of Knowsley's town centres, including new retail developments, the opening of Shakespeare North Playhouse, public realm improvements and the adoption of a Huyton Masterplan (forecast to create 1,500 jobs as a result of investment, and add a total economic benefit of £62m). The population of Knowsley has grown by an estimated 5.9% in the last 10 years, following years of population decline, with more people both choosing to stay in the Borough and also moving into the Borough. Since 2017, Knowsley's economy has grown by 6%, including a 15% growth in the number of businesses located in the Borough, compared with 11% nationally. As a result, in 2022 Knowsley's employment rate of 75.2% exceeded the national rate (74.4%) for the first time since the Borough was created in 1974. Greater access to employment and wider opportunities can play an important role in reducing the economic, social and health inequalities faced in the borough. The area also benefits from strong community networks and a committed voluntary sector, which can play a crucial role in supporting residents and driving positive change.

As we start to radiate growth into other areas of the City Region and beyond, we value the partnerships we have forged with Local Authority partners and other local stakeholders in the areas we work. We will continue to build these relationships as our ambition to do more to create strong cohesive places grows. We will align to their strategies whilst delivering our own.

6. Strategy Objectives

Community investment is defined as the work that housing organisations do alongside people and communities to help them thrive (Centre for Excellence in Community Investment).

At Livv, we do much more than building and managing homes. We are a social business, dedicated to supporting our customers and our communities.

The vision for our Community Investment Strategy is to support people to live healthy, fulfilling lives and achieve their full potential. As outlined in our Corporate Plan, we will achieve this through focussing our activities and investment on the delivery of five ‘social objectives’. These objectives and the target number of outcomes we will achieve by 2026 are:

Objective	Target
1) Customers supported to improve their financial wellbeing and resilience	10,000
2) Customers accessing employment, skills and training	1,000
3) Customers supported to improve their physical and mental wellbeing	4,000
4) Customers supported to be more socially included and digitally connected, to improve access to wider opportunities	6,265
5) Young people supported to realise their aspiration and achieve their full potential	3,000

These social objectives directly respond to the identified challenges and priorities faced by our customers and their local communities, providing support to overcome the economic, social and health inequalities that exist. On top of responding to challenge, there are some real opportunities to create some brilliant outcomes for people that they wouldn’t have access to without our investment, things that for some will be life changing.

Research carried out by Local Trust and OCSI (2020) identifies that *“individuals living in communities with a strong foundation of social infrastructure – even those facing long-term deprivation – have greater employment opportunities, better health outcomes and higher educational attainment across every age group.”* In delivering our social objectives, we will invest in and support the growth and sustainability of social infrastructure in the places where our customers live – leading to more cohesive and healthier communities.

7. Strategic Approach

We will continue with our blended approach to delivery, including direct delivery through our customer facing teams and colleagues, commissioning external services, investing to support the growth and sustainability of social businesses, and working with our suppliers and partners to maximise social impact.

Over the past three years we have developed a three-tier approach to delivery, consisting of three core offers: Our Universal Offer, Locality Offer and Locality Plus Offer. Across all three tiers, where the support required

goes beyond our core housing role, we will always signpost into the appropriate support services. We will never aim to replicate or replace statutory services with our work.

	Direct / in-house delivery	Signposting to external services	Commissioned external projects	Social Investment	Partner resources and investment	Maximising impact of LIVV operating model
Universal offer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Locality offer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Locality+ offer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Our Universal Offer

Our Universal Offer is for all our customers, no matter where they live. We will work with our customers and partners to identify the challenges and opportunities faced by our customers irrespective of geography, then develop and deliver services which provide support in relation to these.

Our Advisory Services Team delivers in-house, bespoke advice and support for customers in relation to: welfare and benefits; employment and life skills; mental health and wellbeing, and; anti-social behaviour. We work closely with external partners to signpost customers to relevant services, ensuring that each customer has access to a tailored package of support to meet their individual requirements.

Where there are gaps in existing services or support, we will work with our partners to design and commission new services. This includes programmes of support in relation to all five of our social objectives – such as training and qualifications to access employment, mental and physical wellbeing activities, emergency support for customers facing financial hardship, and activities to support young people to achieve their full potential.

As we develop our digital platforms, we will provide support to make sure that engaging with us digitally is something that everyone can do. We will develop a comprehensive digital inclusion programme that targets support at those that need it most, whether this be to access Livv services or to enable customers to achieve wider social benefits such as accessing employment, reducing household costs or being more socially connected.

We will also use social investment to invest in the growth and sustainability of social businesses that support our customers in achieving our social objectives. Working with external funding partners, we will identify charities and social enterprises who have the potential to deliver greater impact, providing access to small-scale capital and support which might otherwise not be available, increasing their financial resilience and enabling them to better serve their communities.

Our Locality Offer

We are a trusted partner working alongside our communities and local partners in the areas where our customers live. Where we have Universal Offers, access to these can be a barrier if they are only delivered in one location. We therefore support our customers to access these services through a locality-based delivery approach, providing outreach and engagement opportunities along with localised delivery of activities and support wherever possible.

We also know there are differing challenges and opportunities in different places. We will work alongside our customers to better understand the varying priorities and opportunities in each locality, combining their insight with data to co-create future ideas for investment and support. This will be a dynamic process, we want to learn alongside others about what works best, being open to new ideas, innovation and challenge about what will make a difference.

Identifying priorities, harnessing ideas, co-creating solutions and leveraging in the wider resources and expertise of the Group, our suppliers and partners, will be at the core of our approach. We will work with our communities to secure the resources they need to unleash their potential.

Our Locality Plus Offer

Sometimes we need to take a different approach in our localities. There are many opportunities for regeneration and renewal across our communities and we want to make sure that we play a key role. To do this we will deliver our Locality Plus Offer. This will complement our Locality Offer and bring additional focus and resources around specific, targeted and time-limited opportunities and issues.

We will work in collaboration with our partners to explore what tailored offers are needed around specific opportunities, developments and issues (for example, renewal plans for local areas or town centres where our customers live), ensuring that physical regeneration is planned alongside a social regeneration approach. Our Locality Plus Offer will ensure we work with our partners to maximise our collective resources and expertise, creating truly transformational places and opportunities for our customers.

Our Locality Plus Offer will also help our communities solve some of the ‘trickier’ issues, responding to local challenges that may need increased resources and focus than might otherwise be available. This could be to tackle issues around anti-social behaviour, gang crime and contested space, and other issues where our community investment and engagement expertise can make the difference.

These resources are blended as needed to deliver activities across each of the three tiers of delivery (Universal, Locality and Locality Plus), ensuring we maximise the use of our resources and impact for our customers.

8. **Monitoring Success**

The Customer Services Committee, on behalf of the Board, will monitor the delivery of the Strategy and its delivery plan. The Executive Director for Customer Insight will be the Senior Responsible Officer for the delivery of the Strategy.

We will continually review the effectiveness and outcomes that our community investment activities are delivering. We’ll use this to understand the impact of different programmes of support and identify opportunities to increase our impact for our customers.

Our approach is integrated throughout our business, with activities and impact delivered across a number of teams and departments. These activities will all be monitored through our Social Impact Framework and reported collectively against delivery of the following KPIs:

KPI	Methodology and frequency
Customers supported to improve their financial wellbeing and resilience	Quantitative data collection (quarterly)
Customers supported to access employment and training	Quantitative data collection (quarterly)
Customers supported to improve physical and mental wellbeing	Quantitative data collection (quarterly)
Customers supported to improve social inclusion and access wider opportunities	Quantitative data collection (quarterly)

Young people supported to realise their aspirations and achieve their full potential	Quantitative data collection (quarterly)
£ Social Value created	HACT Wellbeing Toolkit (annual)
External funding secured to support delivery of the strategy	Financial information - receipted external income (monthly) Financial information – non-receipted external income (monthly)

Progress will be monitored through quarterly reporting to EDT and Customer Services Committee. An Annual Review of Social Impact Performance will also be submitted to Customer Services Committee following the end of each financial year.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Under the strategy a range of individuals, teams or groups will have a role to play or some form of a responsibility. Individual responsibilities are detailed in the table below.

Common Board	Oversight of the strategy and delivery of social impact KPIs
Customer Services Committee (CSC)	Responsibility for final sign off and continually monitoring performance against social impact KPIs.
Executive Director's Team (EDT)	Responsibility to review the strategy before it is submitted to CSC. Responsibility for continually monitoring delivery. Responsibility for approval of all grant funded Community Investment projects.
Director of Community & Business Planning	Leadership and accountability for Community Investment Strategy
Neighbourhood Planning and Community Investment Manager	Lead the delivery of the strategy and associated activities. Identifying and securing external funding to support delivery of Livv community investment activities.
Neighbourhood Planning and Community Investment Team	Development, delivery and monitoring of community investment activities – incl. development of strategic partnerships within our communities.

Advisory Services Manager	Development, delivery and management of Advisory Services activities (in-house delivery).
Individual Teams	Embed community investment across the business, including Contract management of social value commitments provided by suppliers.

10. Risk

The Group's Risk Management & Assurance Framework supports the efficient identification, assessment, management and monitoring of strategic, operational and project risk in alignment with governance, leadership, compliance and service delivery activity. The strategic risk register is presented to the Board and the Audit & Risk Committee on a regular basis. The operational risk register is monitored at Directorate level within the organisation.

We will continue to monitor and manage the risks associated with the Community Investment approach on the operational risk maps and escalate any that impact on the strategic risk register as required.

Specific risks relating to the delivery of this strategy include:

Risk	Mitigation
Insufficient capacity and expertise to deliver the ambitions of the strategy leading to delays in achieving the required social impacts	Dedicated Neighbourhood Planning & Community Investment Team, leading the social impact agenda across the organisation. Dedicated Advisory Services Team, responsible for in-house delivery of one-to-one support for customers. EDT commitment to delivery of the strategy, including establishing a consistent approach to Social Value in procurement.
Insufficient customer demand for services or activities, leading to difficulty achieving social impacts and increased spend per outcome.	Programmes and activities based on data, customer insight and evidence of need, incl. working with internal teams and external partners to identify gaps in existing provision. Clear referral pathways and networks established for each service or activity. Communications Plan to promote Community Investment activities to customers.

Demand for support and activity outweighs available resources	Stakeholder management to clarify the scope of the Community Investment offer. Partnership working to maximise access for customers to existing external service provision. Leveraging external funding and resources to extend our activity and deliver greater impact.
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11. Value for Money

This strategy supports the achievement of value for money and takes account of the impact and outputs achieved as well as input costs. We will invest core funds in the delivery of this strategy each year, whilst aligning our investment decisions across all core housing management functions and the overall financial capacity of the business.

In line with our overarching Value for Money strategy we will assess all investment decisions on a case by case basis using a rigorous Business Case assessment approach, including a value for money assessment of the impact achieved versus the investment required. This will be informed by both our previous experience as to costs associated with different types of community investment activities (which can be complex and diverse in nature), alongside a Social Return On Investment (SROI) assessment utilising the HACT Wellbeing Valuation methodology to place values against a defined list of social outcomes, where relevant.

Working with external partners, we will grow our income by leveraging match funding for projects where appropriate. We will also leverage support and resources from our supply chain through their social value commitments. Working together, we can use our collective resources to deliver greater impact for our customers and achieve greater value for money.

We will produce and report on the social impact that we create through our community investment and other activities as part of our annual Social Accounts.

12. Equality and Diversity

In order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, an equality analysis (EA) was completed as part of the strategy review. Upon completing the EA it was found that the implementation of the strategy would support and encourage the aims of the public sector duty. The equality analysis was completed and approved in March 2023.