



	Community Investment - Anchor Neighbourhood Action Plans
Start / End Date:	February – March and reconvened virtually in June 2020
Board:	Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2020
Judgement:	Fair

## 1. Introduction

Insight is a collective volunteer group of customers who are keen to help improve services delivered to Great Places customers. Our group carry out scrutiny reviews taking account of feedback from the wider customer base, colleagues and performance information. It's our role, acting as a critical friend, to objectively scrutinise service areas then report findings and recommendations from a customer perspective to Great Places Board.

An objective of Insight remains to make certain membership best reflects Great Places' wider customer profile. We believe this is important particularly when scoping reviews to make sure our research considers the priorities of Great Places diverse customers. We're continuing to explore ways customers could contribute digitally enabling contribution without the need to attend meetings.

As a result of Government guidance and restrictions of lockdown, we have held virtual meetings using Star Leaf. This experience gave us a chance to explore how digital methods might be offered as a more flexible way for customers' to contribute to scrutiny reviews. We've found so far virtual meetings have been an effective alternative to face-to-face meetings, which enabled us to continue with our scrutiny review. Going forward we'd like to consider whether or not this would be a viable option, it's felt the greater flexibility for participation may attract new members. We're also aware of potential opportunities integration with Equity may offer to help us meet this goal and we feel encouraged by the partnership. Insight and Equity scrutiny group held our first catch up in early July to discuss how we can start to work collaboratively. It must be emphasised that virtual working has allowed us to continue with reviews, although using this method has slowed the process down, therefore we'd like to highlight to Board we will now only be able to complete two rather than three pieces of work during 2020. We are currently scheduled to report to Board in October and December, but it looks likely that the completion of a second piece of work may slip into early 2021.

We plan with support from the Communications team to raise our profile with Great Places colleagues to outline the importance of customer scrutiny, its value offering a customer perspective as well as the requirement to have customer scrutiny in place to ensure compliance with regulatory standards. It's our intention that if colleagues better understand customer scrutiny this will encourage a mutually beneficial working relationship to support scrutiny reviews.

## 2. Review Service Area

For this review, we agreed to explore the service delivered by the community investment team focusing on consultation with customers about the development of anchor neighbourhood plans. The plans are a coherent vision for each anchor neighbourhood in a master-plan style document drafted using customer views of the area where they live, key elements of plans produced by neighbourhood teams, combined with external strategies, customer profiling data and external data such as Office for National Statistics, ONS. As a continuation of our last review which looked at customer voice, we were keen to learn how customers could comment on draft neighbourhood plans and the intentions to keep customers informed of progress made against the objectives.

Great Places define ‘community investment’ as resources committed to achieving the reduction of poverty, sustaining tenancies and improve neighbourhoods through economic resilience. Equity Foundation in the Equity Region and the Integration Programme Plan schedules a more co-ordinated approach being delivered by September 2020. The strategy outlines the community investment service is an expression of Great Places ‘profit for purpose ethos, providing a social value framework to be reflected in all policies and procedures to put social impact at the heart of the service offer.

We were interested to explore Great Places plans to bring the promises to life through the objectives of the neighbourhood action plans. We plan to review the development of plans in partnership with customers, collecting feedback which demonstrates customers’ perspective of the process. Our review will focus on consultation with customers living in 3 of 5 Great Places’ anchor neighbourhoods – Manchester, Knutsford and Seedley & Langworthy in Salford.

### **3. Aim and Scope of our review**

We agreed the aim of our review would be to explore the development of the anchor neighbourhood community investment plans in consultation with customers and the intentions to keep customers informed. We set a clear scope to gather data to achieve the following objectives;

- consider data used to inform and design the anchor neighbourhood plans,
- explore customer consultation in relation to the draft plans, and
- examine customer views of the plans and the consultation process

### **4. Our Approach**

We sought information from Great Places colleagues to inform our review, listed below;

**Community Investment Strategy** - we invited the Head of Community Investment to summarise the service offer, whilst providing a background of anchor neighbourhood action plans. We received an update in June 2020, after feedback had been collected from three anchor neighbourhoods, which set out the impact of Covid19 and current status of the plans.

**Consultation process** – to learn about Great Places’ intentions to consult with customers, we asked the Customer Involvement Co-ordinator involved to outline plans for engagement with customers

**Delivery of the Anchor Neighbourhood Action Plans** – we met with one of the team of Community & Partnerships Managers, who summarised how the objectives of neighbourhood plans will be achieved operationally and plans to keep customers informed of changes

**Observations at Consultation Events** – we attended a consultation event in order to observe customers’ involvement in the development of the action plans

**Webinar** – a member of Insight attended a webinar presented by Leeds City Council about neighbourhood planning

**Desktop Review** - we completed a desktop review of customer views collected via the door knocking exercise, detail given in presentations, customer comments from consultation events and on-line survey, comments from the neighbourhood teams and customer feedback to our survey.

### **5. Review of good practice and findings**

We’ve summarised areas of good practice and findings collected during our review in this section.

#### **Outline of Community Investment Strategy**

The community investment service offer focuses on poverty reduction, employment and skills as well as sustainable neighbourhoods. The new plans will set out 4 objectives for the area identified from customer views, data from neighbourhood teams alongside external research data.

#### **Areas of good practice**

The Service Excellence Group, SEG for community investment oversees the strategy for sustainable neighbourhoods, which sets out how anchor neighbourhoods should be managed to help protect the value of assets, meet regulatory requirements and maximise social value return.

In turn it helps resources to be directed to communities where most impact can be made to create thriving and successful communities' the aims of the strategy become a functioning reality through the plans. The SEG commissioned the new neighbourhood plans to replace those currently on the website. In accordance with the regulatory framework, to ensure compliance revised plans setting out Great Places commitment to that neighbourhood will be published on the website following consultation. The work of the community investment, SEG is determined in-line with the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard from the Regulator of Social Housing.

It's worth noting further iterations of plans may be required to take account of revised processes in line with Great Places' recovery plans post COVID-19. In addition, the integration of neighbourhoods with the new Equity region would benefit from a wider review of the anchor neighbourhoods to identify where resources and influence can be best focussed.

The plans are a vision for neighbourhoods that identify opportunities and challenges based on consultation with customers, neighbourhood teams and combined with external strategies, to create responses in the form of objectives and commitments against each theme of place, people, partnerships and home. The timeline to deliver the objectives of the plans is 2-3 years.

Plans contain similar actions, although each has its own accent as follows;

- Northmoor focuses on local economic development,
- Knutsford focuses on the digital agenda, and
- Seedley & Langworthy focuses on creating and maintaining strong partnerships.

Stock in Coppice is part of the Oldham PFI area, so guidelines will have to be considered prior to consultation with customers. It's the intention to use the experience of consultation in the other neighbourhoods to agree an approach which will suit Oldham and the requirements of the council.

### **Summary of findings**

Neighbourhood planning references a) external data, b) sustainable neighbourhood plans and c) the community investment strategy. Area Service Managers, ASM create reactive plans using reporting toolkits and other related data to pick up on trends and performance to develop strategies. Neighbourhood Service Managers, NSM own patch plans that help link the service delivery framework to a strategic approach to the CI neighbourhood plans - data collectively guides neighbourhood plans to translate issues into solutions.

It's the intention that digital distribution of the neighbourhood plans will be the default. However to ensure access for all customers hard copies will be distributed to local community centres and neighbourhood teams will share with customers.

### **Consultation process**

Development of new anchor neighbourhood plans was commissioned by the Community Investment Service Excellence Group to replace those currently on Great Places website. Initial consultation with customers was carried out with a door-knocking exercise by NSMs and other colleagues in each anchor neighbourhood, who collected 178 responses. Customers were asked 'what is important about the area in which they live.' Feedback, local neighbourhood data and external research informed initial draft plans to be owned by the community investment team.

### **Areas of good practice**

Consultation events were held locally in each anchor neighbourhood to offer customers the opportunity to speak with key members of staff whilst commenting on the plans; this was supported with a digital campaign to maximise the reach to customers.

All efforts were made to make the face-to-face consultation events accessible and attractive to customers, including a basic booking system to enable interest to be gauged ahead of the events. Although, it became clear up-take would be low, a decision was made to continue and hold the events in case there were customers who had decided to attend without booking, which proved to be the case in Longridge.

Survey questions were designed using customer comments from the door-knock consultation, whilst adopting a standard customer research methodology used by the Customer Involvement Team. All customers living in anchor neighbourhoods were invited to comment on the relevant draft plan. An e-newsletter was sent by email and text inviting customers to read a draft neighbourhood plan and comment at a local consultation event or online survey, accessed via a link. Customers were able to view the neighbourhood plans via a link embedded in the invite, which outlined the purpose of the plans and how initial customer views had been used to influence the plans.

The draft plans were posted on hidden pages on Great Places website and promoted along with consultation in local community centres to allow customers a chance to view the plan for their neighbourhood before offering comment at a consultation event or digitally on-line.

Neighbourhood teams were briefed about the plans and asked to subsequently inform customers whilst working out in communities, to promote consultation with customers, in particular with those whose digital contact details aren't held on Axis, to encourage wider customer response and the option to feedback online. The consultation was advertised on social media, posters were displayed at local community spaces and flyers were circulated to NSMs, local 3<sup>rd</sup> party agencies and interested parties, to promote the events highlighting detail and the option to feedback online.

The consultation events focused on;

- Why plans are required
- What's in the plan
- Key commitments – does the plan contain issues that matter most or are there gaps
- How Great Places report back to customers on progress of the plans

Customers during consultation were asked how they would like to be kept informed of progress of the neighbourhood plans, which would be built into a communications plan and would demonstrate a commitment to plans and that the views given had been heard and actions agreed.

### **Summary of findings**

Digital and face-to-face consultations were carried out across the neighbourhoods however despite the various ways used to advertise the consultation engagement levels were very low across both methods, which were well below the usual expected rate of 10%. A number of factors could be considered to explain the low rate of response including the broad nature of consultation, which prevented a more targeted approach to specific customer groups.

Of the responses received from the consultation a greater preference to provide feedback digitally was shown by customers. The community with the best face-to-face turnout was Longridge, which may be due to the more concentrated stock in the neighbourhood, the close proximity of the Welcome community centre and its established status within the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood teams were also asked to provide feedback on the draft neighbourhood plans.

### **Delivery of the Anchor Neighbourhood Action Plans**

We invited one of the team of Community & Partnership Managers, CPM to outline the role to help us understand how neighbourhood plans are turned into workable solutions to deliver on the promises.

### **Areas of good practice**

The Community Investment strategy offer focuses on three areas; i) employment and skills, ii) poverty reduction and iii) creating thriving communities, which feeds into the Corporate Plan to help achieve the ambition to create Great Communities. The team comprises of a head of service, 2 community investment managers, 4 regionally based community & partnership managers, a community investment officer, a funding specialist and 2 employability coaches.

The CPM role has been established to create opportunities and support customers in line with the service offer. The community investment officer co-ordinates a database of services for sign posting and triages any enquiries from customers, this function helps support NSMs to advise and offer advice to customers.

The funding specialist investigates funding opportunities and advises in relation to evidence required for bids to demonstrate need, offers training to NSMs and offers assistance groups' constitution.

Based on priorities and evidence of need work is commissioned by neighbourhood teams primarily in anchor neighbourhoods where community centres are valued, partners equipped to offer key service provision and resource. CPMs can support projects in non-anchor neighbourhoods led by NSMs or customers.

### **Summary of findings**

Several changes were put in place following business transformation review; i) social value moved over into the procurement team supporting the link with contractors, ii) community investment centres on regeneration and place-focused services and interventions to help create sustainable communities, iii) community development sits in neighbourhood teams, who understand the needs of areas in which they work and have greater capacity as a result of the revised service delivery framework, and iv) widening the service offer to include poverty reduction.

CPM's role is to understand neighbourhoods and the services already available via community centres and to support a collaborative approach to project delivery. There's a recognition the team can't be everything for everyone, it's therefore essential to link in with specialist service providers, who may be better placed to support customers to make referrals for relevant support. An example given by CPM of work carried out in Longridge outlined The Welcome Cafe is central serving as 'the hub' of the community; it's an independent charity and a connected community centre linked to the local authority. The Connected Communities newsletters are informative electronic newsletters distributed throughout a network of partners containing updates of Connected Communities Centres, Neighbourhood Partnerships and Care Communities, plus information on commissioned services, conferences, events and consultations.

CPM's work closely with local authorities to identify shared priorities to support and maximise opportunities, for example in Cheshire East digital connectivity is important for the area, to negate poverty premium, upskill to increase job prospects and create greater opportunities for work.

Profile information is used to identify demographics, key needs and priorities for neighbourhoods, which helps to target work. Cheshire East LA priorities are in-line with Great Places neighbourhood plan objectives. CPMs report regularly to their line manager on priorities set out in an internal action plan. The activities in each action plan support the achievement of objectives in the neighbourhood plans. The success of the service offer will be measured as customers become more aware, and engage with the service, as well as an increase in demand for the services of the community investment officer.

### **Observations at Consultation Events**

We observed a consultation event held in Longridge. We were supported to feel part of the event, given an update of the consultation, a draft neighbourhood plan and the survey questions. The customers were welcomed with a brief outline of the aim of the consultation, the contribution of the customers' comments and an introduction to the team. Neighbourhood teams were present to answer any specific questions. We found customers were thoroughly supported; teams actively listened making notes of concerns about the area, which would inform the plans. The relevant plan for the event highlighted a focus on online facilities, customers' priorities centred on local transport and employment. It transpires the issues are co-dependent and equally important and whilst useful debate ensued, it maybe should have happened prior to drafting the plan.

Customers were asked how they would like to be kept informed by Great Places of the progress made with neighbourhood plans which would suit their level of capacity to commit. The local consultation events were mainly scheduled for early evening, one was held during the afternoon and refreshments were provided to ensure sessions were accessible for customers. It was felt great effort had been made to ensure the consultation events were appealing and easily accessible for customers, which regrettably, on this occasion wasn't reflected in the number of attendees.

The COVID19 pandemic was emerging as consultation was conducted, which may have been a factor, which influenced customers’ choosing whether to attend an event.

### Webinar – Neighbourhood Planning

A member of Insight attended a webinar hosted by Leeds City Council talking about Neighbourhood Planning. A key point discussed during the webinar related to the essence of partnership working with residents living in an area, community groups and 3<sup>rd</sup> parties agencies for example specialist service providers, local supportive charities, schools, police, as well as local businesses who each have a vested interest in the area. Great Places’ Community Investment Service Delivery Framework reflects this approach focussing heavily on community partnerships, which was described during a presentation earlier in our review. It was clear the team takes the role of an anchor institution extremely seriously with Community Partnership Managers working with, developing and funding community organisations in our neighbourhoods to help create thriving, sustainable places. The face-to-face element of the consultation was delivered from community centres in the heart of our neighbourhoods and those centres supported to engage customers with the consultation in the lead-up to the events. We are keen to see this work continue and grow working with residents, community groups, partner agencies, charities and neighbourhood teams whilst communicating differences made in anchor neighbourhoods raising the teams’ profile, proactively inspiring greater buy-in from communities.

### Desktop Review

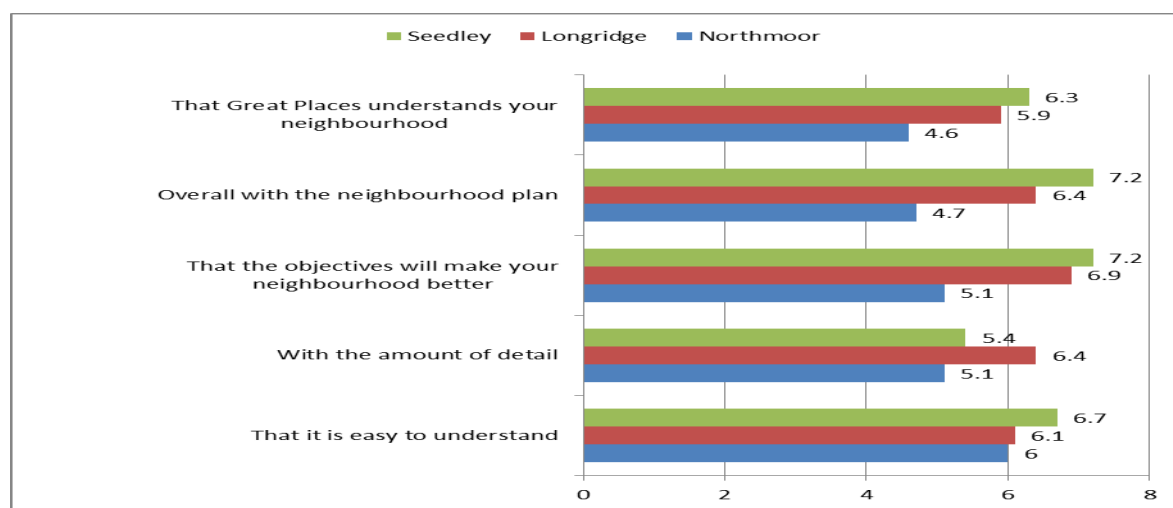
We started our desktop review looking at the 178 responses collected during the door knock exercise during Customer Service week; key themes customer raised were as follows;

- General safety in the area – lack of police presence and street lighting
- Safe green spaces for children
- Activities – community spirit and cohesion
- Infrastructure – bus service, local shops and amenities
- Environmental issues – fly tipping, litter and upkeep of area including alleyways and parking

Issues largely focussed on neighbourhood management not entirely, if at all within Great Places’ control, which would require consideration in wider neighbourhood plans and work with partners.

### Outcomes of Neighbourhood Plan consultation

Next, we looked at comments to examine customers’ views of the plans, if it was felt the plan’s reflected priorities and if the plans were easy to understand. Customers were sent invites by email, text, by word of mouth and advertising in the local community, although it is fair to say numbers were disappointing with around 25 responses in total. The chart shows satisfaction in regards to neighbourhood plans, using a 1 to 10 scale, where 10 is satisfied. Satisfaction was greatest overall in Seedley, Northmoor scored lowest for all 5 criteria.



Customers gave comments to support their scores, a sample are listed below;

- Seems very positive and proactive, although I didn't see much detail just a general overview
- Shows investment in community and people which is fantastic, it's a great way to do things
- No mention of anti-social behaviour and the drug use or dealing in the area
- Too much jargon - it reads like a corporate document
- I feel valued as a tenant and a person
- There's acknowledgement of the 'challenges'; though real day-to-day challenges for some are ignored / omitted

A key part of the consultation was to ensure communication with customers around progress against the objectives set out in the plans. Customers reported feeling as though they are often asked for feedback but rarely learned back following consultation.

So on-going communications are being planned for the next 24 months to give customers a sense of ownership of the plans; for example on Longridge customers wanted a steering group to ensure successful delivery of the plan. When asked, a majority of customers confirmed a preference to hearing of progress by email via a newsletter. Other suggested methods were Great Places website, text and social media platforms. The operational delivery of the plans will be overseen by the Community Investment SEG who will measure progress of the plans and communicate this to customers.

When asked 'what Great Places did well' customers said the following;

- Community involvement and small project funding, the community centre and launderette
- The Welcome Cafe seems to always have things on which is fantastic, and
- GP is more than just a social housing provider, they invest in the local area

When customers were asked 'what Great Places could do better' comments focussed on services other than community investment, for example responding to ASB, estate inspections and parking.

Neighbourhood teams who work directly with customers, partner agencies and community partnership managers were also asked to contribute feedback about the draft plans.

We had planned in our review scope to meet with the head of community investment late March 2020 to hear a summary of key findings of the consultation. However we weren't able to due to COVID-19 pandemic, when work was temporarily paused. As an alternative a summary was drafted, whilst we were supported to engage digitally to enable us to continue with the review. The summary outlined feedback had been less specific to the plans than had been hoped, a focus had been on issues customers perceive in neighbourhoods such as safety and cleanliness, which isn't unusual for this type of consultation, especially with digital engagement, as plans were viewed with little context in advance.

Feedback gathered during consultation was used to review the neighbourhood plans, which can be viewed on the following unpublished links; [Seedley and Langworthy](#), [Northmoor](#), [Longridge](#) and [Wybourn](#). It's intended digital distribution of plans will be the default whilst hard copies will be given to neighbourhood teams and community centres ensuring access for all customers. Plans will be posted on GP website, which will be advertised on social media.

### **Customer feedback gathered by Insight**

We find with each review that it is customers' feedback that helps join the dots of our review to support identifications of the recommendations. We sent survey to customers who'd been invited to share their views about the draft neighbourhood plans. Our survey was sent to customers by email and text, highlighting we're a volunteer customer group and that feedback would help inform our review. We assured customers our final review report would be posted on Great Places' website from summer, if they were interested to see outcomes of the review.



We sent approximately 1300 surveys asking customer if they'd like to feedback about their experience of consultation of the draft Community Investment plans for anchor neighbourhoods. A total of 116 customers answered the 1st survey question that asked the customer to confirm where they live giving a return rate of 9%, which is typical.

However, the number of customers who continued with the survey reduced to just 63; a reduction of 43%. We don't have detail to explain why so many customers chose not to comment further, however we found this reduction unusual as the purpose of the survey had been outlined clearly in the introductory email. The 2<sup>nd</sup> survey question asked customers to say 'how they'd heard about the consultation', it could be hypothesised customers perhaps weren't aware of the consultation therefore didn't have feedback to give to continue with the survey. If the decrease in completed surveys is taken into account, the final response rate is 5%, which is considerably lower than the usually expected 10% rate - the table shows the number of Insight survey responses.

	Northmoor	Longridge	Seedley
No. of responses to survey = 62	22	14	26
% of overall responses	35%	23%	42%
Total no. of surveys sent out = 1291	468	323	500
Overall % responses = 4.9%	4.7%	4.3%	5.2%

What the customers told us;		No. of responses
76 %	confirmed hearing of the consultation following receipt of an email from GP	45 / 59
47 %	scored 7 or above on a scale of 1 to 10, when asked how <u>satisfied</u> they felt that promotional material had explained the purpose of the consultation	29 / 62
52 %	quality of promotional material would influence whether to give feedback	32 / 61

Customer comments given to support the scores	
• I'll only give feedback if it involves helping me and my family	
• I would give feedback regardless of the promotional material	
• Always happy to help	
• Quality of material was good, it caught my interest giving me confidence to look into it more	
• I didn't receive any promotional information	

What the customers told us;		No. of responses
87 %	scored 7 or above on a scale of 1 to 10, when asked how <u>important</u> it was Great Places consults with customers about neighbourhoods	45 / 52
54 %	scored 7 or above on a scale of 1 to 10, when asked to rate <u>satisfaction</u> with ability to raise matters about neighbourhoods at any time with Great Places	28 / 52

Of 50 customers who responded when asked if they were aware community investment works with partners to help improve employment and skills, reduce poverty and sustain tenancies and neighbourhoods just 50% answered, yes. We asked if customers had given feedback; we found 24 of 49 responses had made comment during the consultation. The chart below shows customers' responses when asked 'why they didn't give feedback' and 'what might encourage them'



Why didn't you feedback	What might encourage you to feedback
Waste of time	Action
I feel like my opinion won't even get a look in	Guaranteed change for good
Not got a good understanding	Easy access
I didn't receive the information	If it is important to me
I don't know about the plans	Make sure everyone understands the subject

Of 21 customers who gave feedback online 20 responses confirmed finding the process easy, giving an average satisfaction score of 8.35 when asked to rate that online feedback had been offered. This set of customers gave an average score of 8 on a scale of 1 to 10 in relation to feeling their views would be listened to by Great Places. The following comments were offered by customers when asked to support the scores;

- Great Places offer lots of ways to get involved - I feel they are customer focused
- It is made easy for customers to feedback - we are always kept informed
- It's all mapped out, we're always consulted and the option to discuss issues online is excellent

Customers were asked if they felt confident neighbourhood plans will help make a positive impact in neighbourhoods - 15 responses of 19, answered yes, which is 79%. The following comments were offered by customers when asked to support the scores;

- I've lived here all my life and feel Great Places consult in regards to change in the area
- Any improvements have positive impact
- More ideas the better
- It's clear there's investment and improvements; a newsletter would be good to stay in-touch

Finally, customers rated satisfaction as 75% for the consultation process with 15 respondents scoring 7 or above on a scale of 1 to 10. The response rate of customers who engaged in consultation was low, which is reflected in the number of replies to this survey question.

### **Insight - Review Summary**

In this next section, we'd like to summarise themes we noted during our review, which take account of our review objectives, outlined below;

- consider data used to inform and design the anchor neighbourhood plans,
- explore customer consultation in relation to the draft plans, and
- examine customer views of the plans and the consultation process

It's clear much work was involved in developing the new draft neighbourhood plans; previous plans it appears were out of date and in need of revision. A comprehensive approach was taken to research and capture essential data including customer comments to inform the new plans. We saw evidence of a significant understanding of the needs of the anchor neighbourhood with information gathered from neighbourhood teams, partner agencies and external data sources. A standard corporate design for each plan was created, which showed recognition of the importance of plain English. Some comments from customers said the plans had a glossy feel not like a customer document and that more detail of actions relating to achieving the objectives would have been useful to see in the plan.

Overall we found a great deal of effort had been made in regards to the consultation to promote and engage with customers, despite the level of engagement on this occasion being extremely low. We saw that exhaustive methods had been adopted with very little return, it was felt the level of customer activity in no way relates to the extensive effort deployed by Great Places colleagues.

At the outset of consultation it was known attendance at events would be low, at the time the team agreed to continue in case there were customers who turned up who hadn't booked. A suggestion could be to include a declaration in invites, outlining events wouldn't take place; if numbers were low, including details for customers to check prior to the event - this would allow resources to be better used elsewhere.

However, we did observe an interesting group dialogue at the Knutsford event, which saw customers raise some initial objections which turned into a more focussed exchange once a proposal was agreed to form a steering group. The customers seemed more engaged after this proposal, which only occurred because the customers were present at the event, a foundation to build upon.

We learnt a great deal about investment and strides the team make in neighbourhoods to help provide and facilitate opportunities and offer support for communities and individuals to build on strengths. We'd like to see this continue to grow particularly given the current climate. Its felt raising the profile of the team and of the service offer in neighbourhoods would contribute to this growth whilst helping to build honest, open and trusting relationships with customers.

An essential part of the consultation we were keen to learn about was the ways progress against the objectives set out in the plans would be communicated to customers particularly as it is often reported by customers, they are asked for feedback but rarely learned outcomes following consultation. We are interested to hear customers' views in relation to being kept informed, which is felt, will by nature support and encourage future engagement.

The low response from customers to the consultation we felt although did provide feedback, it couldn't reliably be used as a representative perspective of customers views who live in anchor neighbourhoods. It's felt to improve the level of engagement with customers Great Places may need to explore both on-going and a more proactive approach, to build on key customer relationships within neighbourhoods such as the Knutsford example that will service to support one-off consultation projects. In addition, research opportunities such as bitesize consultation customers maybe able to access more easily, for example asking customers a key question during conversation whilst in customers' homes, on the telephone or within self service on the website ensuring feedback is given to customers.

## **7. Recommendations**

Based on the review findings, we'd like to propose the following recommendations to contribute and help support delivery of quality customer service, which meets customers' needs and priorities. We were mindful of the principle of the service delivery framework; 'doing with, not for' when formulating our recommendations.

1. Allow lead-in time for customers to comprehend the purpose of consultation setting out the community investment service offer and how it supports neighbourhoods, the rationale of the plans and how customers' views will support the development of plans. For example run a marketing campaign to introduce the consultation and the research that captured customer views, which can be reinforced with promotional material prior to customers being invited to give comments on the plans.
2. Establish a method for customers to raise other housing related issues and communicate to maximise focus on consultation whilst reinforcing the ways for customers to raise issues.
3. Design plans with customers in mind - keep neighbourhood plans concise, use plain language to outline the objectives, plans to attain the objectives, the potential benefits and wider implications for the neighbourhood.
4. Develop links to work with community groups in neighbourhoods enabling a joined up approach, to build trust subsequently people may be more likely to believe messages and get behind plans.
5. Digital can be more than a stand-alone survey with data, try to replicate qualities of face-to-face consultation, for example use videos to communicate, host digital focus groups, allow customers to feedback by vlog and web-chat.
6. Be proactive; offer a bitesize consultation option, which people can handle. For example a campaign used by the NHS is 'ask, advice, action' to engage with patients to inform. A doctor makes an enquiry, offers advice and information, which the patient can use to take action.

A similar approach could be used by neighbourhood teams and The Hub to promote and raise customers' awareness of the consultation.

7. Establish and agree with customers methods to receive updates, comment on progress, which allow customers to continue to contribute and be involved with the neighbourhood plans

## 8. Overall Judgement

We agreed to determine a final judgement we would score the 3 objectives set out at the start of the review using the evidence collected. We gave a score for each of the objectives using a rating scale of 'poor, fair, good or excellent' The table sets out the collective scores for each of the 3 categories;

Overall Judgement	
Comprehensive approach to collection and use of data to develop draft plans	Good
Overall methodology of neighbourhood plan consultation	Good
Customers views of plans and their response to the consultation	Poor

We collectively agreed the category 'customer views of plans and response to the consultation' was an area of weakness, hence it was scored poor. We would like to emphasise that the score by no means reflects the efforts; we observed a range of methods for customers to engage in consultation. However, the low level of involvement from customers sadly indicates there was a poor appetite to engage with the consultation of the plans yet we'd like it to be noted that our survey questioning clearly demonstrated customers do value being consulted and regard it as important.

It is felt this may possibly be an indication of other aspects influencing customers' readiness to engage with Great Places. We mentioned in our recent review of the Customer Voice the importance of feedback to customers following consultation. Great Places are aware this is an area for improvement and that there are potential risks associated with the not feeding back to customers, which the data gathered from our customer survey and the low response endorses. Work has already commenced to make improvements in the area to keep customers informed which was highlighted in our last review.

As outlined in our last review the Customer Voice strategy is imminent and we hope findings from our review can garner support to focus on specific areas. We would also like to wish the Community Investment team immense success in future ventures; their efforts were so thorough and hopeful emanating such positivity.

**Using a collective of the 3 scored criteria after consideration our overall judgement for the review of the consultation process would be 'Fair.'**

We are very keen and look forward to receiving an update in due course of progress of the actions developed, as a result of our recommendations for improvement.

We would like to recognise the contribution and thank colleagues who have contributed to this review.