



Customer Strategy 2023-2026

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03332 31 32 33

connexus-group.co.uk

hello@connexus-group.co.uk

[@weareconnexus](https://www.instagram.com/weareconnexus)

Introduction

1. Purpose

- 1.1 We are clear about the reason we exist as a business and that our purpose is to create places where people can reach their potential. We will achieve this by being a dynamic, customer-focused organisation, looking to the future to meet the evolving needs of the customer.
- 1.2 This strategy sets out how Connexus will shape our business around the customer over the next three years supporting the delivery of our Corporate Plan and our “North Star” vision of providing “Good quality affordable homes for all”.
- 1.3 We want to build sustainable communities where people want to make their home, with the right customer in the right home, in the right condition and where we hear the “voice of the customer” and use that voice to influence the provision of homes and services.
- 1.4 This Customer Strategy needs to be read in conjunction with the Homes Strategy. Both documents are underpinned by our PRIDE values, a consistent Connexus way of doing business, the Voice of the Customer delivery framework and a Make it Count approach to ensure all interactions across our business with colleagues and customers, as well as external stakeholders, are meaningful and deliver a positive outcome.
- 1.5 This Strategy applies to the whole of Connexus, and although its aims will largely be co-delivered by the Operations and Property Directorates, that delivery will be *enabled* by the People and Resources Directorates and all Connexus colleagues will have a role in ensuring the strategy successfully achieves its objectives. The key shift in culture for Connexus during the life of this Strategy will be a move from a governance and finance-led organisation to being one driven by the customer.
- 1.6 This Strategy is split into three themes, with four interlinked strands in each theme. Strategic objectives flow out of these themes and strands. There are specific actions which arise from the themes, strands and strategic objectives and these are all included in the Team Plan for the Operations Directorate as well as the Annual Plan for the relevant year of the Strategy.
- 1.7 This Strategy also enables Connexus’ delivery against the prevailing Standards set by the Regulator for Social Housing (**RSH**), the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Service (**HOS**), legislation, including the Social Housing White Paper, (**L&SHWP**), the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (**TSM’s**). In all areas Connexus aims to demonstrate the meeting or exceeding of good practice (**GP**), as well as the principles of the Better Social Housing Review (**BSHR**). Appendix A sets out how each element of the strategy contributes to these.

2. Strategy, Themes, Strands and Objectives

2.1 Theme 1: Customer

2.1.1 This theme applies to both the internal and the external customer. The four **strands** are:

- The Voice of the Customer (VOC)
- Customer offers, for all our current and future customers
- Operating local, patch-based services - our “locality model”
- Ways of working delivered through a “Make It Count” approach

2.1.2 The strategic objectives for this theme are to:

1. Provide good quality, tailored and segmented offers based on locality and / or customer need.
2. Listen to and empower all our customers to engage with us, scrutinise and influence our services.

2.1.3 The outcomes from these objectives, to be delivered over the lifetime of this Strategy, are:

1.1 By the end of 23/24 we will have implemented a new customer contact solution that will provide colleagues in CST with a single platform and customers with a wider range of channels to be able to contact us. Systems and processes will be reviewed to ensure they contribute to and do not restrict this approach meaning that greater trust is placed in the front line. This will include aligning the repairs scheduling function.

1.2 By the end of 24/25 we will have developed and published, with our customers and colleagues, and using our data, a set of client-specific offers. This will include offers for young people, older people, families as well as to support those who, whatever their demographic, have complex personal circumstances.

1.3 By the end of 25/26, in conjunction with the full roll out of our locality model and Voice of Customer across the Connexus geography, we will have implemented patch-specific KPIs to demonstrate local accountability to customers.

2.1 By the end of 23/24 we will be fully compliant with the HOS Complaint Handling code and be able to show demonstrable learning from feedback and data-driven insights with decision-making placed as close to the customer as possible.

2.2 By the end of 24/25 we will have fully rolled out the Voice of the Customer programme and be able to demonstrate the impact and outcomes arising from the “Get Ins” and our CIA – Customer Improved and Approved – methodology.

2.3 By the end of 25/26 we will have in place a series of local and “special interest” customer groups in place as well as customer input into the Customer Services Committee and the Board.

2.2 Theme 2: Home

2.2.1 This theme applies to both the physical bricks and mortar of the home and the environment it sits in as well as wider issues of sustainability and affordable in all senses of the word. The four **strands** are:

- An improved voids and lettings process
- Sustainable and affordable tenancies and effective tenancy management
- Effective and efficient repairs, assets, compliance and voids service
- High quality estate and grounds management, cleaning services with proactive management of open space

2.2.2 The strategic objectives for this theme are to:

1. Support the delivery of robust repair, asset management, investment and compliance functions through the operation of a holistic, good quality, locality model for all our customers.
2. Enable the provision of safe, well-maintained, affordable and easy to let homes which are in places with good infrastructure, communal spaces and access to transport, schools, shops etc, and which are attractive to customers and add value to local communities.

2.2.3 The outcomes from these objectives, to be delivered over the lifetime of this Strategy, are:

- 1.1 By the end of 23/24 we will have developed and implemented a holistic “case management” approach to dealing with complex cases such those involving damp, mould and condensation.
- 1.2 By the end of 24/25 the Operations Directorate will have piloted a locality operating model with our repairs and maintenance colleagues using a 4 P’s methodology: Problems, Priorities, Performance and Planning.
- 1.3 By the end of 25/26 the Operations Directorate will be co-delivering a full locality operating model with the Property Directorate.
- 2.1 By the end of 23/24 we will have reviewed our approach to service charges and open-space management ensuring our customers receive good quality affordable services which are delivered timely. This will be supported by relevant customer scrutiny.
- 2.2 By the end of 24/25 we will have assessed the success of the changes we have made to our voids and lettings processes and have in place a “balanced scorecard” for measuring all aspects of a successful tenancy.
- 2.3 By the end of 25/26, using a series of local and high-level metrics such as the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), we will be able to demonstrate that Connexus is valued landlord and provider of homes and services.

2.3 Theme 3: Community

2.3.1 We will not have a strict definition of “community”, but instead will have a matrix of those wider services, across all or parts of our geography, which we will either deliver inhouse, deliver through active partnerships, or signpost to other bodies and organisations to ensure inclusive services for all our customers. The four **strands** are:

- Digital Inclusion
- Financial Inclusion
- Jobs, skills and training
- Health and wellbeing

2.3.2 The strategic objectives for this theme are to:

1. Ensure that our investment in community activity supports our customers with the impact of the “rural premium” and helps to enable the effective creation and retention of resilient and successful communities where people want to make their home.
2. Develop and provide support services where these enhance our community offering, contribute to making a positive social impact and enhance our partnership working and reputation with stakeholders.

2.3.3 The outcomes from these objectives, to be delivered over the lifetime of this Strategy, are:

- 1.1 By the end of 23/24 we will have reviewed our partnership with Marches Energy Agency and made recommendations for our future approach to partnerships across the four strands of the Community theme. This will be shaped by our own as well as external data.
 - 1.2 By the end of 24/25 we will have implemented a series of active partnership using our community investment fund and / or external grants.
 - 1.3 By the end of 25/26 we will have implemented a “balanced scorecard” of success factors for community resilience. We will use this in conjunction with our locality model to demonstrate local accountability.
- 2.1 By the end of 23/24 we will have developed a stakeholder engagement plan.
 - 2.2 By the end of 24/25 we will have developed our approach to measuring and reporting on our ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) impact.
 - 2.3 By the end of 25/26 we will have in place a new model for delivering support services which is holistic and aligns with our locality model.

3. Method/s

- 3.1 We will deliver against this strategy using a number of methods, via: Projects which sit within our Project Management Office (PMO); through the Voice of the Customer Delivery Framework; using Business as Usual (BAU) mechanisms: utilising partnership and stakeholder relationships; exploring new ideas, concepts and working practices through pilots, the creation of business cases and making use of the “new business” approval model. We will use the data gathered via the Business Intelligence team as well as via other methods to understand and inform our ongoing approach as well as testing efficacy.
- 3.2 The responsibility for delivering this Strategy sits with the Director of Operations, supported by EMT and SMT colleagues and we will engage colleagues across the business to support our ambitions. Integral to us delivering this Customer Strategy will be the need to have a clear IT Strategy to both support the digitisation of services to customers as well as providing the correct tools and operating environment for colleagues.

4. Measurement

- 4.1 Performance against this Strategy will be measured via: -
- Completion of Team Plans, Annual Plans and Corporate Plan objectives;
 - PMO project outcomes, successes and lessons learnt;
 - BAU KPIs as well as a range of more specialist KPIs; and
 - Self-Assessment with Regulatory Standards, the Complaint Handling Code, the Social Housing White Paper and the principles of the Better Social Housing Review

Appendix 1 – How this Strategy contributes to meeting requirements

How this Strategy contributes to meeting requirements:

WHAT	RSH	HOS	L&SHWP	TSM's	GP	BSHR
The Voice of the Customer	Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard	√	√	√	√	√
Customer offers, for all our current and future customers	Tenancy Standard		√	√	√	√
Operating local, patch-based services - our "locality model"	Neighbourhood and Community Standard		√	√	√	√
Ways of working delivered through a "Make It Count" approach		√	√		√	√
An improved voids and lettings process	Rent, Home and Tenancy Standards		√	√	√	√
Sustainable and affordable tenancies and effective tenancy management	Rent, Tenancy and Neighbourhood and Community Standards,		√	√	√	√
Effective and efficient repairs, assets, compliance and voids service	Home Standard	√	√	√	√	√
Digital Inclusion	Tenant Involvement and Empowerment and Neighbourhood and Community Standards,			√	√	√
Financial Inclusion	Rent, Tenant Involvement and Empowerment and Neighbourhood and Community Standards			√	√	√

Jobs, skills and training	Rent, Tenant Involvement and Empowerment and Neighbourhood and Community Standards			√	√	√
Health and wellbeing	Rent, Tenant Involvement and Empowerment and Neighbourhood and Community Standards			√	√	√