



GROSVENOR

Positive *Space*

OUR COMMUNITY CHARTER [→](#)



*Introduction*

This is a charter written for employees of Grosvenor Britain & Ireland and shared with the partners and communities with whom we work. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to date, including more than 20 community representatives and practitioners who shared their perspective and experience.

We are all part of the same ecosystem: residents, business, council and developer. Many others play a part too. And yet, despite our different starting points, we all have a common interest in making places that are safe, prosperous and fair.

The problem is we often struggle to work together well. Levels of trust are low and people feel disconnected from how the places where we live and work are managed and evolve.

There is no magic answer. But we also don't believe it needs a magician to fix it. Much of what Grosvenor is committing to here is about doing the basics better, about being human, treating people with respect, and seeing residents as experts not recipients.

READ OVER →



Introduction

“

Many people think development makes things worse. But the way that places change can make things so much better and improve all our lives.

And the results of development are all around us. It creates the homes we live in, the schools, parks and public transport which support and connect us. It can protect nature and help tackle climate change too.

So communities need good development. But development needs communities too.

”

We are aiming for more than that though. We want a much more open relationship between tenants, business and communities, where the trade-offs involved in change are debated and more voices heard than ever before. And we want to celebrate examples of where this is happening, in and outside of our business.

Good estate management is rooted in a long-term understanding of how to curate and develop neighbourhoods. It's a different skill from working on individual buildings. It's about seeing a complex tapestry and appreciating all the things that interlink and are impacted by our work.

It also depends on everyone being willing to work productively together. So alongside the commitments that we make, you will see this charter also makes a few requests of communities in return, and we hope that both sets of commitments will strengthen further over time.

As a company, our purpose is to deliver lasting commercial and social benefit. Evolving neighbourhoods together is central to this. We want to make it easier for communities to hold us to account on this promise and help set a new standard for public engagement in our own business and across the wider industry. Because ultimately that is surely how we all help more places to thrive.

**James Raynor,**

Chief Executive Officer,
Grosvenor Britain & Ireland



*We will...***1.**

Listen first

We recognise that communities know their neighbourhoods in ways that we don't, and that we can learn something new from everyone.

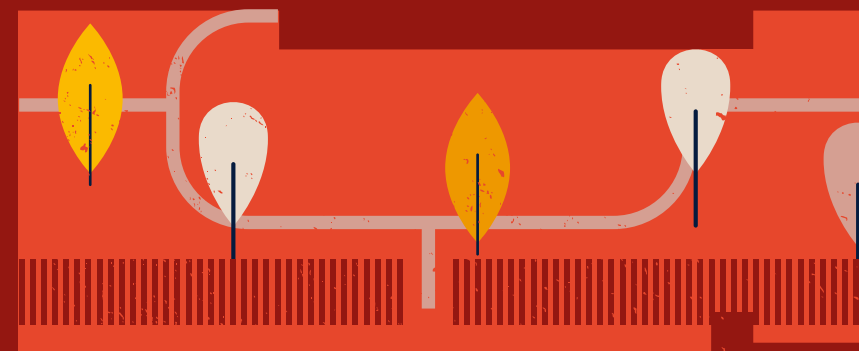
As a business we aim to anticipate future needs as well as the things that people need and want today. We will never meet all of these but our starting point should always be to listen and learn first; to understand how a space or place is used day-to-day by different people, and to identify shared aims for how it can better meet their needs tomorrow.

Listen to learn. Learn to Listen.



Did you know?

Young people make up 25% of the population yet are the age group least represented in planning and who most development is ultimately for.

25%

A joint commitment

In practice, listening first *means that we will:*

- Establish multiple channels for regular, constructive dialogue with our tenants, residents and others who play a part in day-to-day neighbourhood life: from businesses and institutions to community organisations and amenity societies.
- Publish a list of organisations that we aim to work with in each neighbourhood, so any gaps can easily be spotted.
- Co-produce a 'Community Priorities List' with residents which they can use to assess any future proposals against.
- Invest time in building the skills and capacity of community organisations, if they wish, supporting them to achieve their objectives and helping us to learn more.
- Identify local partners who can help guide our efforts to tackle the climate emergency in each neighbourhood.
- Actively ensure that young people, who are the least represented in planning, have a meaningful opportunity to understand and influence change in their neighbourhood.
- Commission research on people's wellbeing and quality of life to help ensure we have a comprehensive understanding of local life and sentiment.



In return we ask *communities to:*

- Show us your neighbourhood and help us learn.
- Keep an open mind, regardless of what might have happened in the past.
- Seek to represent and involve the whole community, recognising there will always be different points of view.



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Case Study

Close X

→ Peckham Vision: *Starting with the facts*

Peckham Vision is a resident-led citizens' association that is connected to over 12,000 individuals who live or work in or near Peckham, south-east London.

In response to over a decade of challenging experiences with planned demolition on three major development sites, Peckham Vision now advocates for agreed fact-based audits.

Peckham Vision set out on such fact-finding to raise awareness about the sites and their potential without demolition. They did this by working with the owners, occupiers and users, getting to know them and understanding their views of the future.

Eileen Conn, founder of Peckham Vision, explains that "We could see that it was essential that such facts should be established at the beginning of any proposed redevelopment, and came up with our idea of fact-based audits.

Such audits establish a sound understanding of the land and buildings, their uses, context and potential, and ensure that local experience is understood, and influences ideas from the beginning."

By listening first, and establishing the facts, local knowledge and ideas help to nurture the evolution of 'inside out' development. The successes of these three sites have been pivotal in Peckham town centre being rated 11th coolest neighbourhood in the world and 1st in the UK by Time Out in the last two years.

Peckham Vision is now working, along with others, to systemise a methodology for fact-based audits.
Watch this space!



<http://www.peckhamvision.org>

   @peckhamvision

next case study →

Case Study

Close X

→ Young Westminster Foundation: *Getting to grips with what matters to young people*

The Young Westminster Foundation is a cross-sector partnership shaping opportunities and services for children and young people in the City of Westminster. Its four priority areas are crime & safety; the local environment; health & wellbeing; and accessing opportunities.

Understanding the experiences of young people is integral to what the foundation does and its aim to be the voice of the children and young people's sector in Westminster.

It has created a Young Ambassadors programme comprising a team of young people living or studying in Westminster who help the foundation and its member organisations stay on top of what matters to young people.

In 2018 the foundation also published a needs analysis to help understand how the experiences of young people in Westminster compared to those across London, and to learn more about the extent to which the 71,000+ young people perceived Westminster as a place where they could realise their potential.

Knowing that young people themselves would have the best chance of reaching and hearing from other young people, the research was designed and undertaken with 17 youth peer researchers. These researchers were trained in a variety of methods including surveys, focus groups and interviews, then supported to collect the views of more than 250 young people and 30 stakeholders.

This extensive listening exercise provided the Young Westminster Foundation with a basis to prioritise its own project work, including how best to collaborate with its partners for the design and delivery of services for young people in Westminster.



<http://www.ywfoundation.com/>

We will...

2.

Open up

Grosvenor Britain & Ireland is a business with commercial objectives. We are also genuine about wanting to behave with integrity and deliver social benefit.

We recognise that most people don't think this is true of their landlords, or the property industry at large, and that building trust requires us all to communicate more transparently. So we want to try and bridge the gulf that communities may feel when dealing with a business like ours.

Genuinely Clear. Clearly Genuine.



A joint commitment

In practice, opening up *means that we will:*

- Be clear about the future plans for an area so there is widespread understanding of our intentions.
- Explain our social, commercial and environmental objectives.
- Share individual names and details for our leadership team, so that the community has direct contacts who are easily accessible.
- Establish ways of communicating with communities that ensure an ongoing dialogue and a two-way conversation.
- Offer genuine choices when change is proposed, for example regarding the mix of social infrastructure in development proposals, or regarding the nature of landscaping when public spaces are upgraded - and when a choice is not possible, always explain why.
- Openly report feedback from residents, tenants, visitors and workers and our response to this.



In return we ask *communities to:*

- Give us opportunity to address your concerns and explain our view.
- Recognise that we are a commercial business and every proposal has to balance public benefit with the costs of delivery.
- Accept that commercially sensitive information will remain confidential.
- Understand that we will not have all the answers available on day one.



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Case Study

Close X

→ Camden Neighbourhood Assembly: bringing citizens closer to decision making

Citizen Assemblies have been making a come-back as local authorities look for ways to bring citizens into decision making. Demographically representative groups are given a clear mandate to inform decision-making through a process of education, then deliberation.

The London Borough of Camden borrowed the principles of Citizen Assemblies to try something a bit different, a [Neighbourhood Assembly](#) focused on developing plans for improving local health and wellbeing.

Eva O'Brien from FUTUREGOV, the organisation which designed this approach with Camden, explains: "Our approach blended education and deliberation with co-design approaches. The assembly was comprised of 12 to 15 residents per session, meeting bi-weekly where practitioners and members from the voluntary sector would give evidence and share insight on issues around health and wellbeing. Lived experiences were shared during workshops, where deliberation and co-design also took place."

In between these sessions, assembly members conducted independent research in their peer networks. The project team supplemented this with additional engagement of local groups.

By taking local people on a deep dive into an important issue, insights and ideas are generated which may not have surfaced through more centralised decision making.

In Camden's case, the ideas build on what's already happening locally and will be delivered in partnership thereby creating a shared stake in their success.



<https://www.wearefuturegov.com>

We will...

3.

Make it easier

Everyone leads busy lives, how we interact with each other is continually changing, and communities understandably tire of being consulted with.

But everyone should still have the opportunity to understand and help shape proposals for their neighbourhood, whenever and however is convenient to them, and in an engaging and easy way.

Engaging all. Always engaging.

Did you know?

Use of digital engagement platforms has been found to result in respondents **under the age of 40 making up three quarters of respondents**; a group rarely seen in public meetings and exhibitions.

75%



Did you know?

22% of London's population and 8% of the UK's population do not have English as their main language.

22%

A joint commitment

In practice, making it easier to participate means that we will:

- Run a 'get to know planning' programme at the start of each large development project to help give more people the ability to participate. Some people are already experts but others might have never got involved before.
- Co-ordinate news and updates for the neighbourhoods wherever possible.
- Offer regular face-to-face access to our teams at different times and locations.
- Always use plain English, avoiding jargon and technical language, and offering translations of key materials into other languages.
- Always offer both digital and print access to information and engagement.
- Invest in technologies that help bring proposals to life for communities and which can help us grow the conversation both deeper and wider.
- Commission research on the barriers to participation for groups that don't usually get involved.
- Work with community organisations to train the people in our business who manage property and assets and lead development projects, so that we keep getting better at public engagement.



In return we ask communities to:

- Share practical ideas for how we can make it easier for you and your neighbours to participate.
- Help us grow the conversation by letting your friends, family and networks know what's going on.



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Case Study

Close X



Your.VU.CITY: *Tech that is championing transparency*

VU.CITY is a 3D interactive digital platform that covers London and a number of other UK and international cities.

In recognition of the role that greater technology can play in building transparency and trust, it has recently developed a tool called Your.VU.CITY which aims to make it easier for communities to understand and feedback on proposals.

This tool enables the public to freely access 3D models through a regular web browser and see what change is planned and proposed in their neighbourhood.

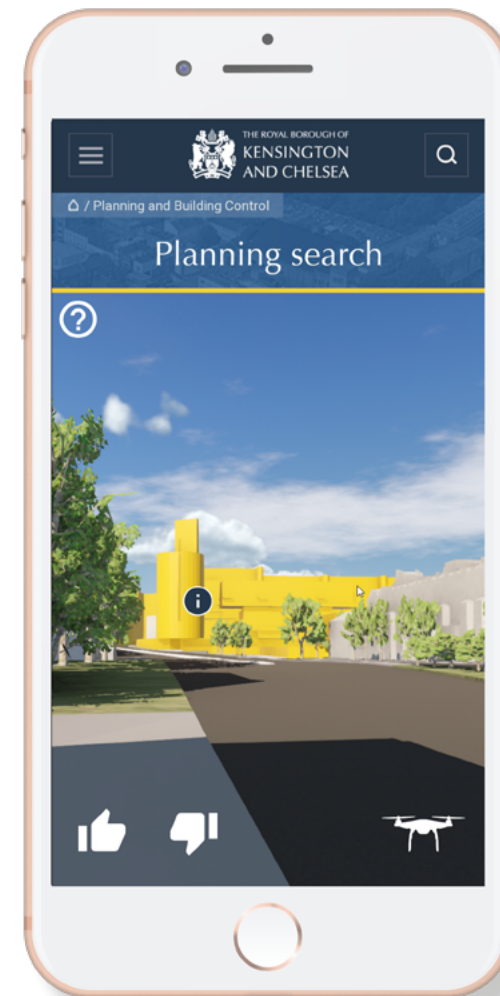
Using familiar navigation, similar to Google StreetView, the public is able to go on virtual site visits, taking eye level or aerial views of newly proposed developments. It helps communities see and engage

with proposals and consents that will affect their homes, streets and open spaces.

Paul Oesten-Creasey of VU.CITY explains that by “providing the public with the freedom to literally ‘take a view’ we are using transparency to unlock trust.” Local authorities using VU.CITY have confirmed that by enabling residents to explore proposed schemes within the 3D context there has been less opposition to height and massing.

Your.VU.CITY is being tested in both borough wide pilots and on specific development sites across London, Bristol and Belfast.

<https://vu.city/your-vu>



4.

We will...

Be accountable

The challenge from communities is to do what we say and deliver what we promise. This Charter creates a standard for engagement against which people can hold us to account.

It commits Grosvenor to reporting on clear and measurable outcomes, inviting critique on whether these standards have been upheld, and to exploring a greater role for communities in the governance and management of neighbourhoods. This in turn will help re-build trust in planning and offer people more power and responsibility for what goes on where they live.

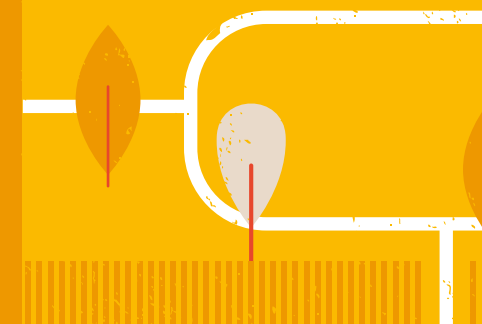
Answer the question. Question the answer.



Did you know?

In Grosvenor's survey of 2,000 members of the public, lack of accountability **was one of the main reasons they didn't trust private developers or local authorities.**

2,000



A joint commitment

In practice, being more accountable *means that we will:*

- Ask whether communities believe we have upheld the commitments in this Charter.
- Set and report on clear aims and outcomes for neighbourhoods which respond to local needs (as identified in the 'Community Priorities List').
- Invest time and resource enabling broad-based community organisations to play an active and involved role in the long-term management of a place.
- Trial a Young People's Council to hold us to account on meeting the needs of young people, starting in Westminster.



In return we ask *communities to:*

- Hold yourselves accountable for your role in shaping the future of your neighbourhood.
- Work with us to set aims and outcomes that mean something to you and are deliverable by us.
- Accept that some outcomes will be beyond our control.



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Case Study

Close X



Creation Trust: *Embedding accountability*

Creation Trust was a charity set up in 2007 to support residents of the Aylesbury Estate in south London. Whilst only funded for 5 years, it became a sustainable charity operating for over 12 years.

The Creation Trust aimed to ensure that residents benefited directly from 20 years' of regeneration in the local area. Specifically, to involve them, to improve health and wellbeing, increase educational attainment and reduce worklessness.

These principles were outlined in the Aylesbury Area Action Plan, which formed a commitment to the neighbourhood that the local council oversaw throughout the development.

At the heart of Creation Trust was resident representation. From the very beginning, it made sure that 50% of its Board were people who lived on the estate, giving residents a real opportunity to influence ideas about the future of

the area and hold decision-makers to account. The remainder of the board was for statutory bodies; schools, the police, and the council which also chaired the Board of Trustees.

Tony Taitte, resident Board Member 1996-2016, explains that "for me, being on the board was the opportunity to be really heard. Before that, it was all just lip service."

Creation Trust was the successor organisation to the Aylesbury New Deal for Communities (NDC), a 10 year government-funded programme which completed in March 2010. In 2019 it ended operating, but is continuing programmes that remain relevant to the Estate's future.



<http://www.creationtrust.org/>

Positive *Space*

Grosvenor Britain & Ireland creates great places where communities, business and nature thrive.

We are part of a global property business that has been developing and managing land and property for over 340 years.

Our heartland is in London's West End, where we support 9,000 residents, c1000 businesses and 50,000 workers every day. We also create and manage sustainable new neighbourhoods in London and across the South of England. We think long-term and give equal weight to the social and commercial impact of everything that we do.

grosvenor.com



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