



Draft Community Investment Strategy 2020-2023

1 Strategy Background

The Southway Futures Strategy 2020-2025 has the long term vision to create “**Thriving Communities**”

A key objective is for us to “use our skills and resources to address inequality, reduce poverty and improve lives in our diverse communities. We support, advise and enable people to achieve their potential and live well”.

Our Community Investment Strategy builds on the priorities that were set within our Futures Strategy and outlines the ways in which we will deliver against these.

2 Strategy Aim

- The **Aim** of our Community Investment Strategy is to reduce poverty within Southway communities.

3 Strategy Objectives

- All of our activities, projects and investment should support our aim to reduce poverty.
- We will invest at least £1m each year in community and social investment services and projects

4 Strategy Priorities

We have adopted five priorities, each of which will have a series of outcomes and projects that contribute to our Strategy Aim.

1. Financial Inclusion:

We will provide access to financial advice and inclusion services. Our offer will directly reduce the poverty premium faced by our tenants who are living on low incomes.

2. Food Poverty:

We will work with community partners to tackle hunger, invest in our Quids In food clubs and develop sustainable food models including community food growing.

3. Employment and Training:

We will provide opportunities for our tenants to develop skills and confidence and move into sustainable employment, and support those who are furthest from the employment market.

4. Volunteering and Community Capacity Building:

We want our communities to be strong and resilient. We will encourage and support opportunities for people to volunteer and for groups and individuals to connect and support each other

5. Partnerships and Place

We will work with our community partners build on the strengths and assets in our communities, and to deliver the right services at the right time. We will also develop our partnerships with other agencies to deliver place based integrated services, achieving more successful outcomes than we could alone.

5 Strategy Approach

Southway will use a strengths based approach and work in co-production with local people and the community, recognising that people living in our homes and working in our communities have a wealth of skills, knowledge and experience.

Where Southway is best placed to deliver work in the community we will, however, where others are better placed then we will support them to carry out their work. As examples, Southway will lead on providing benefits, debt management and advocacy work whilst pre-employment skills training will be delivered by our community partners.

Our work will be underpinned by a commitment to partnerships, co-production and innovation and we will actively seek new and better ways of working.

6 Strategy Delivery

The actions we will take will be reviewed annually to make sure we are having the greatest impact that we can, as we listen, learn and find other ways to achieve our objectives.

The main commitments and activities that we have already identified, and that will be the focus for the first year in support of this strategy are:

1. Financial Inclusion - We Will

- Provide budgeting, money and debt management support so that people can make more informed choices around spending
- Promote the use of South Manchester Credit Union, low cost loans and affordable banking to reduce the use of doorstep lenders.
- Provide energy efficiency advice including supplier switching to help people save money and reduce fuel bills
- Look to develop a low cost furniture and white goods offer, working in partnership with a local charity or not for profit enterprise

- Provide digital access support to our tenants including low cost computers, lap top loans and broadband including MyFi
- Provide an effective benefits advice service
- Retain our Real Living Wage accreditation and actively promote this with other local businesses.

2. Food Poverty – We Will:

- Support at least 250 households each week through our five Quids In food clubs
- Develop broader partnerships for the provision of food through local mutual aid and charitable organisations and working with partner RP's and GM Poverty Action Group.
- Work closely with local Foodbank providers and refer our tenants for support
- Work with our community partners to provide food over school holidays including breakfast clubs
- Provide on line cooking on a budget and “how to” sessions

In the longer term providing food through charitable means is not the answer. We are committed to developing solutions that deal more with the underlying causes of food poverty:

1. Low cost bulk buy and distribution of food.
2. Promoting community food growing projects so that people can become more self-sufficient and have access to fresh fruit and vegetables.

3. Employment and Skills – We Will

- Collect and analyse economic and affordability data in our communities and use this to target interventions at those who most need it.
- Provide people with work and skills training
- Support people into sustainable work
- Develop our Manchester South Employers Network getting local business involved to directly match local people to career opportunities
- Promote our own apprenticeship and work experience placements to Southway tenants and their families
- Maximise employment and training opportunities through our procurements and our supply arrangements
- Develop partnerships with other RP's and agencies to maximise what we deliver; for example, with MCC Work and Skills, Be Well, Motiv8 and Athena

4 Volunteering and Community Capacity Building- We Will

- Support, train and work with volunteers to support stronger more resilient communities
- Develop and invest in accredited training
- Say thank you to our volunteers through an annual celebration event
- Give grant funding of at least £25k each year through our Beautiful South fund
- Support new not for profit groups within our communities to capacity build

5. Partnerships and Place – We Will

- Work with our community partners to deliver place based community investment
- Work with our strategic partners; other RP's, Manchester City Council, charitable organisations and third and business sectors to extend the reach of our resources.
- Develop more joint working around food, employment and skills and healthy living.
- Develop our neighbourhood based work with MCC, Health and the Police through Teams around the Neighbourhoods and Bringing Services Together. using this as a platform to develop joint services and to improve outcomes for people living in our homes.
- Provide support when it is needed to our community partners so that they can continue to work with members of our communities to deliver a wide range of services

7 Measuring Our Success

The main way in which we will measure our success is through an annual return on social and community investment. Our target is that we will achieve a minimum annual return of £3.1M for every £1M invested.

We will measure and benchmark our performance through the Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP) Social Value working group using the agreed measures and indicators that are in place

We will work with GM Poverty Action Group to develop an indicator that shows how our work positively reduces poverty.

On an annual basis, we will report to our People and Places Committee and confirm what we have achieved through:

- Financial gains achieved for our tenants
- Food support provided to tenants and residents
- Getting people into work
- Supporting people through training advice and guidance
- Volunteering and working in our communities

- Providing Case Studies showing the impact our work has had on individuals and groups
- Any impacts on groups with protected characteristics in line with our Single Equalities Scheme

8 Related Strategies

- Futures Strategy 2020 to 2025
- Customer Voice Strategy
- Age Friendly Strategy
- Digital Inclusion Strategy
- Single Equality Scheme
- Value for Money Strategy
- Our Manchester, The Manchester Strategy (MCC)