



**BUILDING
THE CASE
FOR A
CONNECTED
BRITAIN**



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"277 Business Connectors and over £45.4 million leveraged."

BITC, 2017

CONNECTED BRITAIN

Connecting
business
& societies
throughout
Britain.

Foreword



**NATIONAL
LOTTERY FUNDED**



For over 35 years Business in the Community (BITC) has been at the heart of communities. Our work has been at a grass roots level with UK businesses to create a healthy and prosperous landscape for Britain. The difference we make is embedded in the collective strength of business people and responsible business, working side by side with civil society and the public sector. This approach is at the core of all the programmes that we deliver in communities across the country; our school and business partnerships, supporting those hard to reach back into work and our Healthy High Streets activity.

“There is a fracture in society: a breakdown in the trust between business and society.”

An example of our success has been our Business Connector programme; the thinking behind which came from our member companies. In 2010 they identified that the most valuable contribution we could make to help them engage locally was to provide someone to act, as the name suggests, as a connector between their businesses and the local community. In 2011, during a ‘Prince’s Seeing is Believing’ visit to Redcar, Teeside, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales asked businesses to provide a talented local business person to ensure follow through on the actions from the visit. Business Connectors were created.

These forward thinking leaders highlighted the challenges that we face as a country. As industry and business has evolved, and technology has advanced, many local communities are being left behind, resulting in the widening gap between business and society. The Big Lottery Fund understood the huge potential of this approach and underpinned the infrastructure of this work for six years. Their funding has been seminal, and we are profoundly grateful.

We need to move the dial forward again and accelerate our work in communities. The findings within the Connected Britain report are drawn from a three-year longitudinal study of the Business Connector programme, the outcomes from our successful Healthy High Streets programme, as well as other BITC initiatives across the UK. In sharing proven principles, we aim to empower more businesses to participate in improving social outcomes and connecting Britain.

I am thrilled to be able to embrace the opportunities that this work has highlighted. The Business Connector programme has shown us that most voluntary and community organisations in the UK lack confidence in how to approach working with the business sector. In addition, many have a negative perception about corporate organisations' level of respect for their work. This has resulted in an inequitable power dynamic between the private and community sector. That this should still be the case in the 21st century has to be addressed, and demands a refreshed approach. We are calling on all our members to join us in a quest to make a more connected Britain.

Amanda Mackenzie OBE

Business in the Community CEO

December 2017



Sainsbury's

Gwyn Burr, former Customer Service & Colleague Director at Sainsbury's, and then Chair of BITC's Community Leadership Team, announced Sainsbury's commitment to second Business Connectors at BITC's 2010 AGM, saying: "Charities and community organisations are facing significant challenges, so support from businesses will become increasingly important. Businesses across the country are already engaging with voluntary organisations to the benefit of both parties, and it's important to build on that heritage. We believe that Business Connectors have the potential to be a powerful and positive force for good, and we're convinced we can achieve a real step change by having individuals in place to act as a local broker."

Our opportunity

We are standing at a pivotal point in Britain's history. The world around us is changing every day. Out of control capitalism and a 'growth at all costs' approach has led to an unequal society which is not working for all.

Currently 45% of wealth in Britain is concentrated within the top 10% of households. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Adding to this imbalance is a disparity of wealth, social mobility and investment: London versus the regions; the North / South divide; rural and urban. This is in turn driving a lack of trust in government, traditional institutions and business in general.

Overall, our economy is struggling to support society and this is only being exacerbated by Brexit and the uncertainty around it. All of which is directly impacting on the communities that are critical markets for our businesses.

There is an opportunity in front of us. Some businesses are already demonstrating that they can play a leadership role in re-connecting communities during times of wealth inequality, complexity and fragmentation. This can be viewed as an alternative growth movement. With a focus on social sustainability, businesses can positively impact their own future growth, value and profits. We believe that others both want to and can champion change to be a force for good. The approach outlined in this document offers a methodology to achieve this in greater numbers.



In the spirit of some of the most successful movements of the 21st century, this will not be led by the old order or traditional institutions – it will need to be led from the ground up. Driven by collaboration between businesses, communities, the non-profit sector, the public sector and government working together, we can create shared value for society. Responsible business leadership can accelerate and benefit from this new approach.

BITC is at the heart of communities across the UK and has access to some of the most dynamic, innovative businesses in Britain. This access, coupled with the current climate, positions BITC as a key partner in the reconnection with communities to ensure that organisations are future proofed for tomorrow. We live in the most exciting time of advancement in connectivity and technology in human history. It is forging social and cultural change. In light of this we have an unprecedented opportunity to connect societies throughout Britain.



In late 2016, Stephanie Flanders, the Chair of the Inclusive Growth Commission stated “if we are to achieve inclusive growth, a new model is needed” and that investing in “social infrastructure” will likely be at the heart of how to address the “wider failure to connect not just economic and social policy but inner and outer cities, the surrounding countryside, the south and north”. In no simple terms, such a model will be “one that starts to bridge those divides in order to build a more connected country”. Inclusion and connectedness are the core of collaboration and partnerships, to better address healthier skills distribution, inequalities and statutory provision gaps in the current system.



**NATIONAL
LOTTERY FUNDED**

BITC has leveraged
over £10 for every
£1 of Big Lottery
Fund investment.

53 private &
public sector
organisations
have seconded
Business
Connectors.

Almost 4500
community
organisations
have received support
from Business
Connectors.

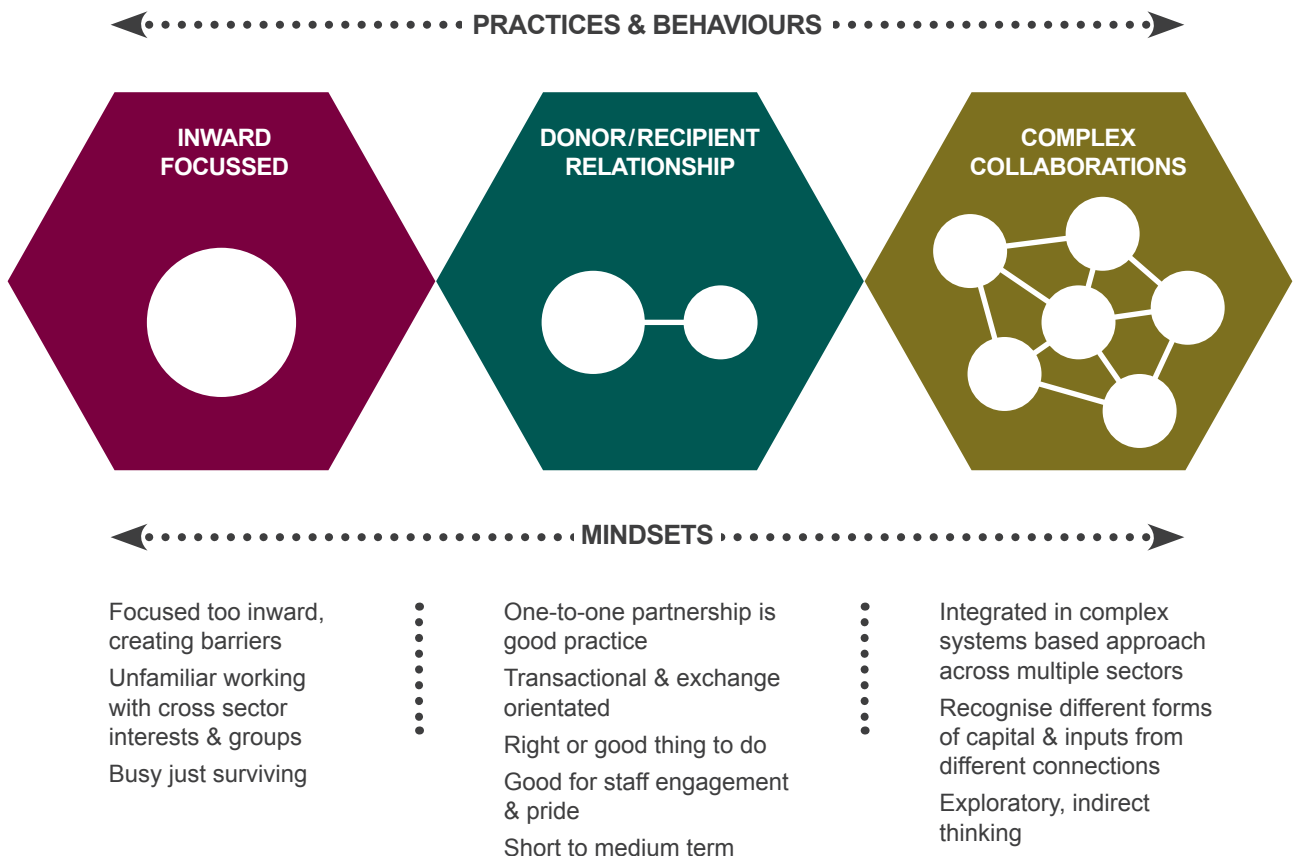
We understand that talking to people, working together and sharing stories is the key to future success. We also know that there is a science that underpins this ground up approach. Working directly with local communities as co-designers and collaborators has provided the evidence. The longitudinal study, conducted by Envoy Partnership, has revealed a spectrum of proven practices, behaviours and mindsets about connecting across sectors, geographies and communities towards inclusive growth. This is realised through three key stages:

- Inward focussed
- One-to-one “Donor/Recipient” relationships
- Complex collaborations for shared value

“Now there’s a cluster of support groups here at the park – working in proper partnerships, collaborating & mentoring each other. These symbiotic relationships have really been as a result of Connectors.”

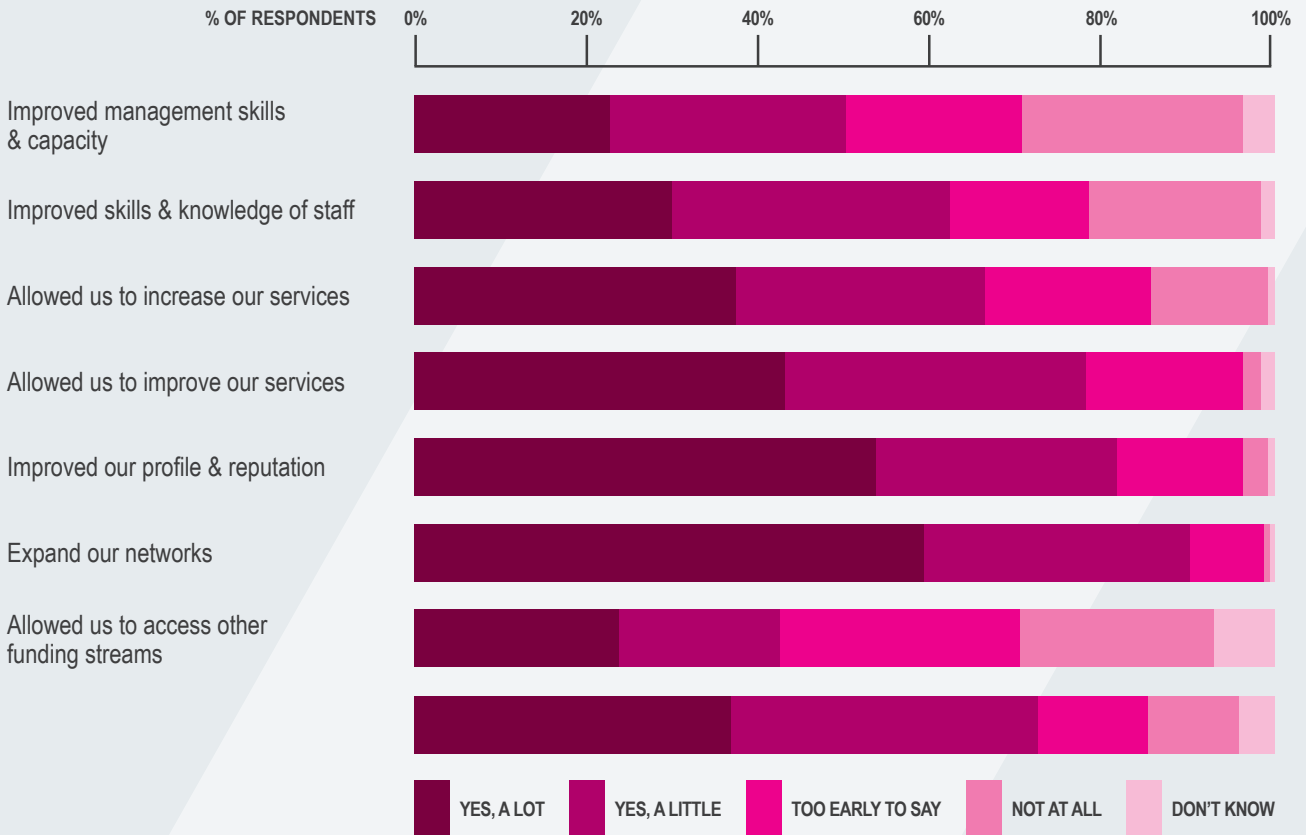
Community Organisation Director/Founder, Preston

Moving from being inward focussed, to a one-to-one donor/recipient relationship, to one where all sectors in a community are collaboratively engaged in creating shared value is proven to work. We will use all our access, influence and experience to work with businesses to drive change.

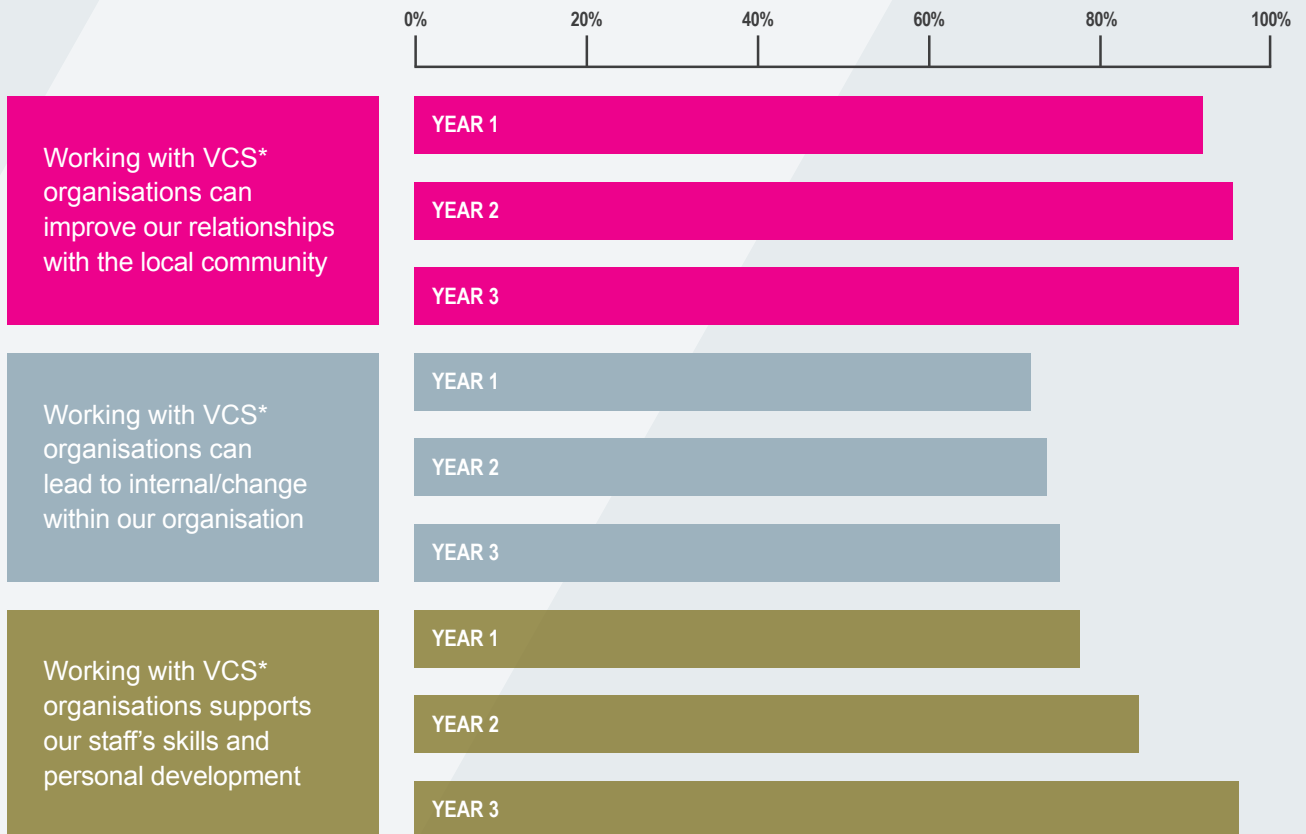


LEARNING FROM THE BUSINESS CONNECTOR PROGRAMME

HAVE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS BENEFITTED FROM SUPPORT RECEIVED?



BUSINESS BENEFITS OF CROSS SECTOR COLLABORATION



*Voluntary and Community Sector

Partnership for the future

Through joining together we can ensure that everyone thrives, from businesses to communities. We also believe that by looking to the past we are able to better define an identity for the future. Looking at Britain's heritage, we've identified four key traits that help to define us for the challenges ahead:

“The impact that social factors have on our health mean that even those charities that aren't explicitly pursuing a health-focused mission ‘non-health charities’, as we call them, are helping to support people's health.”

New Philanthropy Capital, 'Keeping us well: How non-health charities address the social determinants of health', November 2017, Page 5

ENTREPRENEURIALISM AND THE SPREAD OF ENTERPRISE

Britain is built on great enterprise, innovation and the creation of wealth across different and diverse regions – ranging from Birmingham's manufacturing heartland to Manchester's cotton spinning and from Stoke's ceramics to Bristol's engineering heritage. This engendered expressions of pride in place and identity; who they were and where they were from. It's this enterprising spirit that has historically led to the creation of sustainable wealth at a local level.

CIVIC DUTY AND PRIDE

This needs to be more than simple altruism and rather an avenue for better, more responsible business. There are clear examples of alternative growth, that values-led business positively impacts communities as well as the bottom line of a company's accounts. The Co-operative and the John Lewis Partnership, both based on partner models jointly owned and democratically controlled, are two examples of how this approach defines a clear path to profit for businesses.

DECENCY AND FAIRNESS

Dealing with people fairly and responsibly are the fundamental cornerstones of British public life, and of Britain's role in the world. By acknowledging this, businesses are able to operate with greater integrity, and with increased profits, overall delivering more than just a feel good factor.

DIVERSITY WITHIN SOCIETY

To deliver better business we believe it's critical to better appreciate, understand and respect the diversity that forms our society. The strength of our businesses is underpinned by the diversity of the people we employ and serve. By understanding the diversity of our communities we will be able to understand their needs and motivations and how we maximise our combined impact.

West Cumbria together

Our Business Connectors regularly host networking events in their locations. An example was in Workington when 130 cross-sector representatives from 80 of West Cumbria's business, voluntary and public sectors came together for West Cumbria Connect, an example of complex collaboration.

“Businesses and communities working together, adopting a cooperative approach to create a better society, for our future.”

Hosted by Jane Wilson, the Business Connector for Whitehaven and Workington seconded from United Utilities, at the University of Cumbria, the day-long skills event focused on the bringing together of local businesses and the voluntary sector to forge stronger community links. The event aimed to identify ways to tackle long term deprivation issues in the area. It was an overwhelming success, resulting in over 60 commitments made between business and community organisations. These commitments ranged from the sharing of information, to accessing skills, to the provision of work placements for the long-term unemployed. On-going commitments made on the day included:

- Trainee accountants to provide accountancy advice to charitable organisations
- Increasing volunteering in the National Park and improving the links with West Cumbria
- Raising alcohol abuse and treatment awareness in a large engineering company
- Raising awareness of mental health and bereavement support in workplaces
- Increasing volunteering for current and retiring volunteers
- Channelling multi-organisation support to the Salterbeck area
- Project management support to a skills improvement charity



Getting Swindon connected

Ian Browne was the Business Connector for Swindon from July 2015 to July 2016, seconded from Lloyds Banking Group where he held a senior strategic role in format development. During this time, Ian engaged over 100 businesses to support local community organisations, leveraging over 2,500 hours in skilled volunteering and £250,000 in goods, services & advice.

Since his return to Lloyds Banking Group, Ian has focussed on applying the insights and learning from his time as a Connector to his work, particularly in relation to the design of branch formats, ensuring that the Bank's branches are open and engaging to local communities. He has also launched a local partnership with Lloyds and Premium Partners, looking at the career development for three schools in South Gloucestershire. Lloyds now host monthly student career days, exploring a range of topics such as the skills required for different roles, CV techniques and interview skills.

“When I go back into Lloyds I’ll have an instinct for understanding how things that you can dream up in Head Office will really translate on the ground.”

Ian's role has influenced him personally, and he continues to connect people, both inside and outside of Lloyds. Exercising his skills to volunteer and connect with purpose, post secondment, he is the vice-chair for a charity in Bristol; set up the first neighbourhood crowdfunding event in Downend and more recently, launched a local partnership with Lloyds and Premium Partners.



MARKS & SPENCER: PLAN A 2025 COMMITMENT

“Over the last 3 years we have been working with Business in the Community (BITC) to support their Healthy High Street programme, which brings together retailers, councils and community groups to work in partnership to improve 100 high streets across the British Isles.

This work opened our eyes to the depth of social and environmental challenges that many communities face, but also showed us the potential for concerted business action to support them. We want all our stores to be a force for good in their local community, playing a key role in helping to transform them for the better. We cannot solve all the world’s ills but we believe that by taking a more systematic approach to utilising our resources, skills and networks we can play a much more transformative role in the neighbourhoods we serve.

Our initial focus is on the UK, and we have used the Legatum Prosperity Index to identify communities that we can support and mapped them against our store estate. We have identified ten communities (Birmingham, Bradford, Derry-Londonderry, Glasgow, Liverpool, London Borough of Newham, Merthyr Tydfil, Middlesbrough, Norwich and Rochdale) where we are going to undertake an extensive trial on how we can act in this transformative way.

Working with local groups we’re going to create a baseline for each community, identifying its current social and environmental challenges and then trial activities over the next two years to see which make the most measurable difference and which are most relevant to us.

These activities will focus on thriving local economies, socially connected communities and healthy environments for people to enjoy. We’ll then use these insights to plan how we’ll help transform a further 100 communities and share the learning with the wider 1000 communities we serve around the world to help them to transform too.”

Marks & Spencer,
Plan A 2025 Commitments, Page 10



Better for business

This Connected Britain approach will lead to new opportunities to profit through consideration and create a restorative approach to products, people, skills and investment. It will also help:

- Build value through purpose
- Assist market development
- Develop leadership at every level
- Create a restorative economy

BUILDING VALUE THROUGH PURPOSE

Evidence shows that purpose driven businesses who seek to contribute to a healthier society, experience faster market growth and better meet customer and employee needs:

- Enhancing brand reputation and value
- Ensuring market growth and enhanced community prosperity through investment in the incubation of ventures and start ups
- Opening up alternative sources of investment markets and funds



ACTIVE MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Going out into communities, understanding their needs, enables business people to bring back creative ideas for future products and ways of doing business by:

- Maximising social enterprise for market development
- Opening up new markets, product and service opportunities in local communities
- Driving insight, innovation and co-creation of products and services
- Supporting the stabilisation and growth of existing markets
- Creating wealthier and happier communities, resulting in business growth

Having the skills and experience brought by the national businesses as partners has proved to be invaluable.



The Healthy High Streets programme has supported over 100 towns across the UK, from Kirkwall to Penzance. Backed by corporate partners, who collaborate with local town teams to develop and implement activities, the initiative addresses issues around empty properties, creating high profile events to drive footfall, supporting start ups and providing expert help to market and celebrate the high street. Figures to date show that over three years there's been an 18% reduction in the number of empty units, 10.8 million extra visits from members of the public and towns have reported the creation of 12,000 jobs. Over £70 million has been invested by the corporate partners and more than 500 local business champions actively engaged in town centre activities.

LEADERSHIP AT EVERY LEVEL

We define a responsible business as one that demonstrates purposeful leadership and responsible management across all areas of its business in the pursuit of environmental sustainability and building healthy, fair communities by:

- Accessing big picture thinking through our network of business leaders
- Embracing networking, diversity and collaboration
- Developing and training the leaders of the future through engagement with local communities, for example through the Business Connector programme
- Utilising the talent and skills of business people alongside local expertise and experience to make a difference to communities
- Using the knowledge from employees going out into the community, as 'reconnaissance teams', to better understand communities and improve business practice
- Creating a legacy of leadership at all levels

The Fujitsu logo is displayed in red text on a white hexagonal background. The logo consists of the word "FUJITSU" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a stylized infinity symbol above the letter 'J'.

Zoe Gill, former Business Connector for Runcorn, is a true role model for the success of Fujitsu's investment in the Connector programme. Following her secondment, where she demonstrated superb business skills in bringing community organisations and businesses together, the former Service Delivery Manager was promoted into a senior level global commercial role. Zoe reflected on her secondment time, saying "I have the new role due to my Business Connectors experience. I learnt how to influence without authority and to work with people who knew more than me. You learn a real tenacity and a resilience to go with that. I am now 'connecting' within Fujitsu."

CREATING A RESTORATIVE ECONOMY

Each of our organisations should look beyond their own immediate interests and address issues that will fuel the country's long-term future, assuring a licence to operate through their own practices and those of their supply chain by:

- Adding value through adapting to changing consumer needs
- Ensuring sustainability through supply chain strength and development
- Establishing the stability of materials and resources for businesses
- Helping smaller businesses to grow through their investment in social enterprise
- Improving quality and value of materials and resources through 'thinking locally'
- Creating new products, markets and jobs

Customers are looking to have more meaningful relationships with the brands they fill their lives with.

love every drop
anglianwater



Anglian believes that it's gained a new perception about working directly with communities, through the success of their Connector's programme. By working with key strategic groups, the local MP, planning groups and driving community engagement, they're more understanding of grass root needs. They say about their involvement, "Having the resources and the experience to give practical support, we feel as if we're the ones who can unlock private sector engagement, funding and cross-sector collaboration. We've brought in and committed all our supply chain to work with community groups in Wisbech, where confidence and improvement is gathering momentum. As a result we've committed our long-term engagement at C-suite level. For us it shows real commitment to our Connectors but also to the stakeholders in that community. The core lesson we have learnt is that a longer term involvement, from one Connector to the next, is crucial."



CONNECTED BRITAIN

Shifting
the power
relationship
between
business
& society.

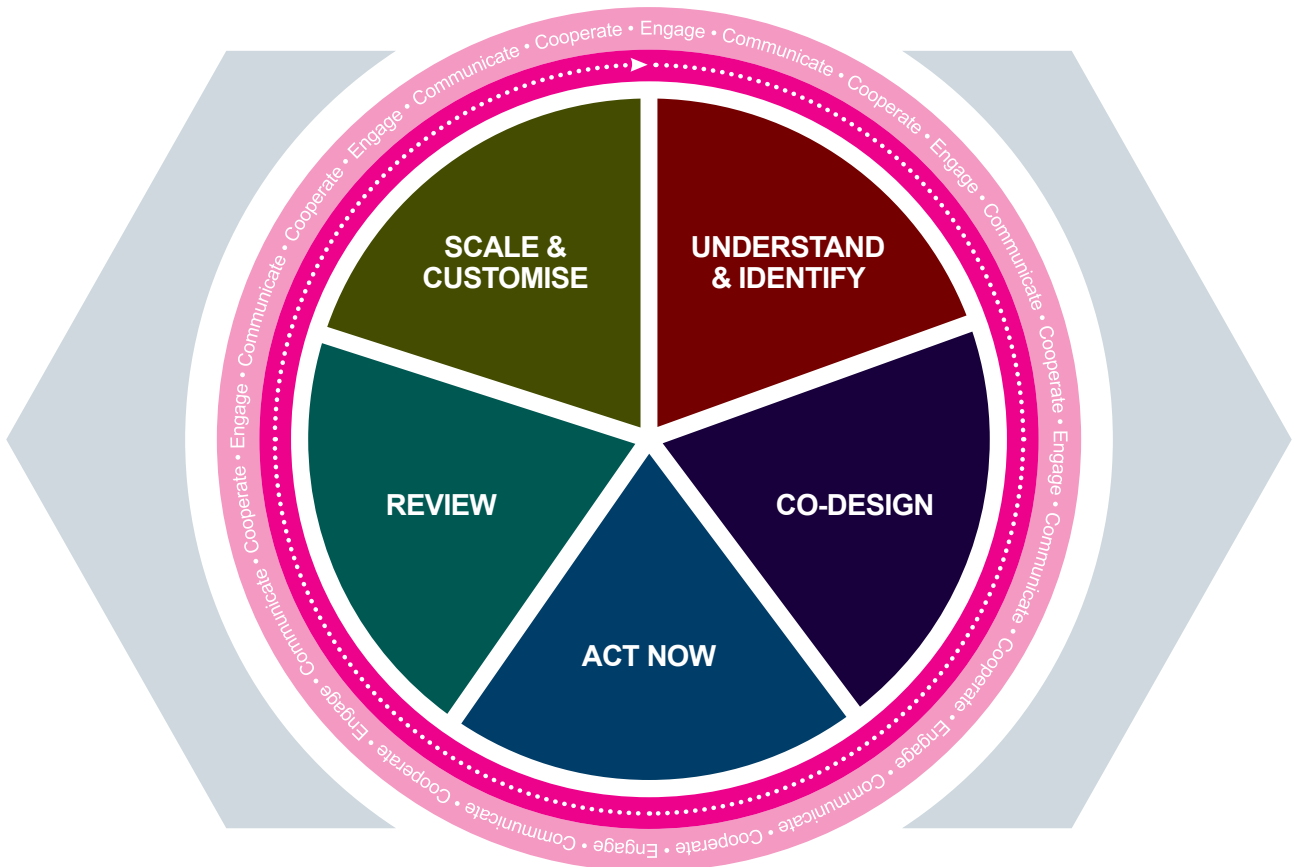
“84% of executives believe that shared purpose will be more successful in efforts to transform.”

*Harvard Business Review,
The Business Case For Purpose*

Building healthy communities

Building on our experience and what we have learnt from our work, we have developed a model for connecting communities. We encourage all businesses to make this their approach.

BITC'S MODEL FOR BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



UNDERSTAND & IDENTIFY

Understanding and identifying your business 'purpose', footprint and engagement objectives and the needs and strengths of your communities are key. Identifying the strategic needs of the business and aligning them with the most critical community needs and opportunities requires collaboration across community organisations, local government and other businesses:

- Assess the needs of a community, align these with business requirements and validate the businesses' impact on a community, using tools such as the Community Footprint
- Identify opportunities for innovation and growth which can come from employees, leadership groups as well as front-line business operations and supply chain partners
- Engage, collaborate and co-create with communities through community conversations, Business Connectors and access to the time and skills of leading business people

CO-DESIGN

Work with community stakeholders to co-design actions and activities that align with your business objectives and the community needs. Draw on a proven process that identifies engagement for growth opportunities through existing programmes (including BITC's own), to develop working prototypes and new business models:

- Focus on the real problem being solved, both within the business and the community
- Support the work with sufficient resource and targeted contributions to deliver the best results
- Create cross functional teams and ensure effective involvement of external stakeholders as a core feature to ensure sustainable implementation

ACT NOW

Engage in communities and connect with the people that you want to impact. Step outside of the 'business as usual' approach:

- Engage with community organisations, sharing the skills of your employees
- Second key individuals at all levels to provide short, medium and long-term resource
- Join high intensity programmes that have a history of positive impact

REVIEW

Learning and evaluation processes are central to the engagement approach. A pre-agreed structure for tracking and evaluation is essential, as well as a willingness to re-think assumptions, evolve the approach and adapt the direction:

- Experiment and test a series of new ideas in small segments. Through regular assessment and evaluation the activity can be scaled up or replicated as outcomes become clear
- Ensure that the lessons learnt are captured and transferred back into the company structure as efficiently and effectively as possible
- Measure performance and community impact against clearly defined KPIs and actions that have been agreed in partnership with the communities

SCALE & CUSTOMISE

Finally, there is not a one size fits all solution. Each scenario will have its own unique challenges. The specific needs, the existing local landscape and the people will all be different and will require a "personalised" response. This is often where opportunities can get stuck and the value of the community engagement initiatives fail to transfer or materialise:

- Engage with demonstrably successful activity, ensuring that it is customised for local delivery
- Have a process to support the transfer of learnings back into the business
- Use learnings to identify further connections and business / community opportunities



CONNECTED BRITAIN

Together
we can
build a
stronger,
fairer
society.

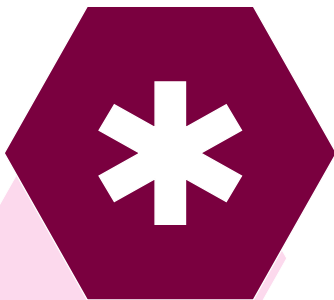
*“57% of managers
feel that skills gained
from volunteering can
help fill gaps in the
workplace.”*
YOUGOV

Our call to action for business

Our ambition and actions will be driven by our understanding of the national landscape, coloured by local need and knowledge. This requires a strong business-led response: taking ownership of these problems and acting responsibly.

Combining our skills and the resources of the responsible business movement, convened and co-ordinated by BITC, we can help build vibrant, prosperous and inclusive communities across the UK. Together, in partnership, we can combat some of the current challenges that are preventing a fairer society and ignite a strong movement for change.

Our aim is to be able to realise an “alternative growth” strategy for a fairer, sustainable society and recognise this growth, diversity and innovation at a community level. Three actions to realise our collective ambition are central to achieving this vision:



We want you to add the power of your business to the collective strength of the network. Work with BITC to be part of our movement; in cities and in local communities. We provide support through our programmes and initiatives across the country, working with communities to create long-term and sustainable social, economic and environmental impact.



Reflect internally on your business, by sense checking how you influence and impact a community through your policies and work practices. For example, look at how you are embracing diversity, understanding your environmental impact, investing in the growth of your future workforce and developing sustainable products.



Adopt our BITC Building Healthy Communities approach yourself and make a difference in the communities in which you operate – by getting involved, being part of the local scene, listening to the needs of people at grass roots level and implementing mutually beneficial programmes.

Be a force for good and invest in building a better society.

Additional resources

Business in the Community has a range of resources and programmes available to businesses and other partners that enable them to create long-term and sustainable social, environmental and economic impact. Further information on all of these can be found at www.bitc.org.uk

PRIDE OF PLACE

Pride of Place is a new approach to the way we ask businesses to engage in communities. It brings together the skills and resources of business to help some of our communities in greatest need thrive again. It is a strategic and long-term approach based on over 35 years of experience of Business in the Community. Our aim is to build healthy communities with successful business at their heart. Pride of Place requires collaboration between the local council, community leaders and businesses with real vision, tenacity and leadership to make change happen. Based on what we have learnt, in the first instance we need to understand local needs so that together we can create a strategy to achieve success place by place. Success will be measured by economic impact as well as by critical qualitative insights tailored locally but using national indices.

BITC SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Responsible Business Week is an annual campaign from Business in the Community, championing and illustrating what being a responsible business means and celebrating those businesses actively making a difference, improving society and changing lives, 365 days a year. Throughout the week, a series of structured Community Conversations will take place across the UK, bringing together representatives from the public, private and community sectors to understand local issues and opportunities.

BITC members can access a range of tools, guides and training programmes to support their work in communities. These include the Community Footprint, that enables an organisation to understand their local social and economic impacts, and guides on:

- How to develop a community investment strategy
- How to set up an employee volunteering programme
- How to link employee volunteering with learning & development
- How to develop good cross sector partnerships

BITC PROGRAMMES

By working with BITC on high intensity programmes with a history of positive impact to address key social issues, businesses can make an immediate difference in communities. BITC runs programmes that focus on the following issues:

- **Business Emergency Resilience:** Enabling larger organisations to assist small to medium-sized businesses and communities affected by crises by matching their resources with local needs
- **Community Engagement:** Working with businesses to support local communities by helping them to understand key issues, creating local networks and brokering relationships with community organisations; developing the internal capacity to deliver themselves
- **Diversity:** Ensuring that aspects such as age, gender, race and health do not limit an employee's engagement and success in the workplace
- **Education:** Preventing social background predicting a young person's success at school & beyond
- **Employment:** Helping people to overcome disadvantages by increasing their access to good, sustainable employment
- **Enterprise:** Creating jobs and vibrant communities by supporting small local businesses
- **Environment:** Business can maximise opportunities and minimise risks to themselves and the environment by ensuring that future value growth is 'smart.' That means making effective use of resources, valuing and nurturing ecosystems and tackling climate change

KEY SUPPORTERS OF THE BUSINESS CONNECTOR PROGRAMME



SUPPORTERS OF BITC'S COMMUNITY INVESTMENT WORK

Special thanks go to Dame Julia Cleverdon, Sir Tony Hawkhead, Duncan Tait from Fujitsu, António Horta Osório from Lloyds Banking Group, and the Big Lottery Fund, whose support has been invaluable.

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