

Building community at Stanmore Place

In a nutshell

Berkeley began building this development in east Harrow in 2010. Since then, a strong, mixed community has emerged remarkably quickly. An influential Residents' Association is well established and an ambitious events programme is now run by local volunteers. Neighbours know each other, socialise and take real pride in being part of a proactive and close-knit community.



This case study explores the factors behind the success of Stanmore Place and the practical steps that can encourage civic leadership and help new communities find their feet.

The masterplan for Stanmore Place created a network of green open spaces, garden squares, tree lined streets and natural habitats.

A few key facts

Former use: 15 acre fenced-off Government site with no access

Location: Harrow, close to Canons Park Underground Station

Housing: 764 homes including private, social rent and shared ownership

Businesses: nursery | affordable start-up space for SMEs | shops

Features: playground | garden squares | walking & cycling routes | lake | community club room | green space & natural habitats



The building blocks

On every major site, Berkeley uses a set of 13 criteria (image below) to help make each place socially sustainable. Academic research tells us these are the building blocks of a strong community. We prioritise the factors which are most important for this site in the local context and create plans to deliver against them. The following factors were important at Stanmore Place:

1. Creating beautiful and functional **Community Space**
2. Facilitating **Links With Neighbours**
3. Giving residents the **Ability To Influence** what goes on



Community space

The masterplan for Stanmore Place created a network of green open spaces, garden squares, tree lined streets and natural habitats. Crucially, the landscape was designed to be usable, not just beautiful. Walking and cycle routes connect the various open spaces, the playground is a focal point for local families and the public squares are the venues for regular community celebrations.

A dedicated community room was also created which hosts regular committee meetings, clubs and arts and craft sessions. The on-site nursery is another natural meeting place for young families and the beautiful lake attracts both people and wildlife.

But what brings these community spaces to life is the work of the Residents' Association and estate management team.

They ensure each space is used to its full potential as the venue for meetings, kids clubs, photography competitions, ornithology days and much more.

This was the first step towards creating the energetic Stanmore Place Residents' Association which is now the cornerstone of community life.

Links with neighbours

Berkeley worked with the residents of Stanmore Place to develop a Community Plan for the estate. A modest budget for events was provided and the on-site estate management team was tasked with driving the process and encouraging residents to get involved.

Over time a few friendly clubs formed, suggestions for events were acted on, and participation grew. Neighbours got to know each other and we held larger resident parties which became new local traditions that brought everyone together.

A real breakthrough came with the formation of a Social Committee to coordinate the growing events programme. This was the first step towards creating the energetic Stanmore Place Residents' Association which is now the cornerstone of community life.

“In the early stages you need a plan and real passion. Not everything works so you also need some grit. The Stanmore Place Community Plan gave us clear objectives we could measure and report to Berkeley. Now most events are run by residents and local businesses provide the funding. It's completely sustainable.”

Marc Gomes,
Estate Manager,
Rendall & Rittner

Ability to influence

A key Community Plan objective was for residents to have collective control over how things are run. But it took time to tease out and engage natural leaders from within the community. At Stanmore Place, Berkeley offered residents control over the events budget and programme as the initial incentive to get involved.

This helped us form the Social Committee and it wasn't long before the agenda expanded beyond events and more people took an interest. A leadership team emerged and the Stanmore Place Residents' Association was officially formed. It now influences parking, service charge spending, street lighting and much more. They have also secured sponsorship so community events are no longer dependant on funding from Berkeley.

“Our social events bring people together and we've made progress on lots of local issues. It's these small changes which have an incremental effect. Around 50 people now regularly attend our meetings and around 100 contribute and follow our work in different ways. That gives us real influence and a very busy inbox!”

David Martin, Chairman,
Stanmore Place Residents
Association

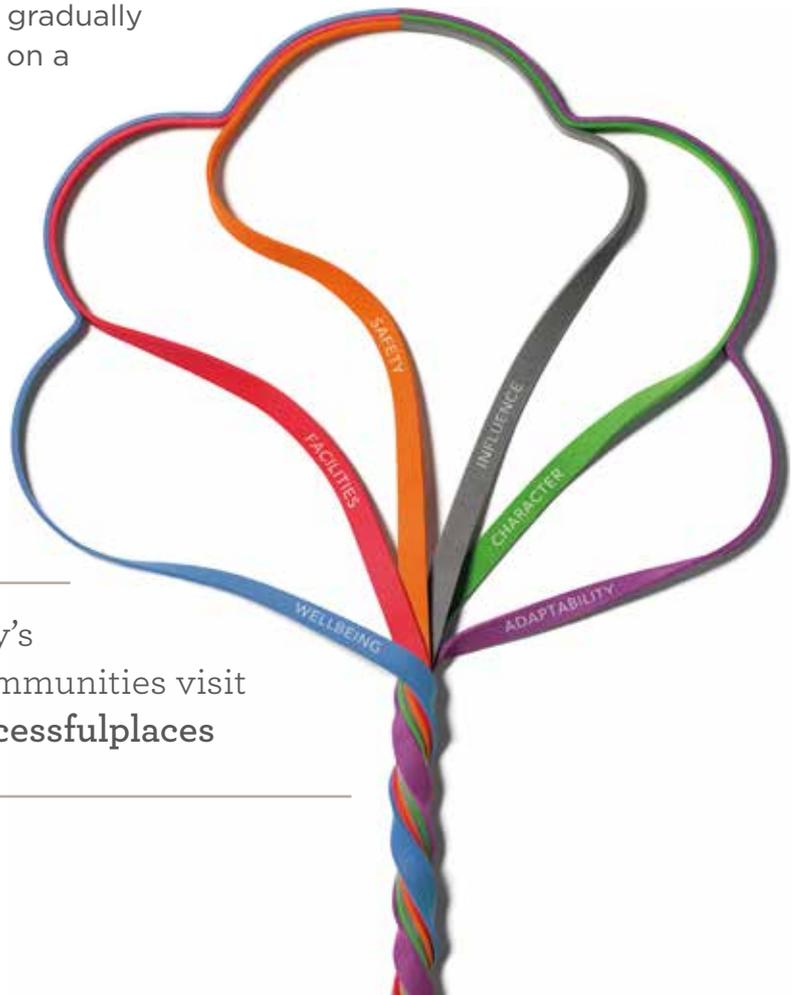




Key learning: simple steps, in the right order

At Stanmore Place the community's development followed a natural sequence seen in other growing places:

- First, you have to create inviting, useful and convenient places where people can mix and meet.
- When residents arrive, let them advise you on the events and activities that would draw people into these spaces. Big annual events are important, but so are smaller get-togethers.
- Once people start getting involved look out for the natural leaders who might gradually take over and put the community on a sustainable footing.
- To achieve all this you need an attractive, relevant plan so that everyone involved understands what they are working towards.
- Prepare for the odd setback. Community building is not an exact science but perseverance will pay off.



To find out more about Berkeley's approach to building strong communities visit www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/successfulplaces