

Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement strategy 2026–2028



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Resident involvement

Cambridge City Council is committed to involving residents to ensure we reflect your views and experience in how we deliver your housing services. This strategy was created with input from tenants and leaseholders through a range of involvement activities, including:

- Housing Advisory Board tenant and leaseholder representatives
- Focus groups
- 'Armchair reviewers'
- Wider resident consultation



Foreword

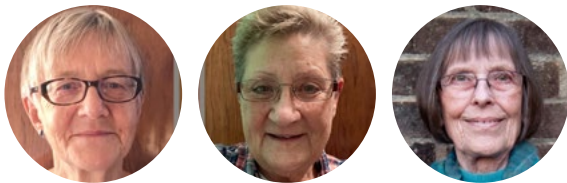


Welcome to the new Cambridge City Council Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement strategy – setting out how tenants and leaseholders can play a part in influencing and improving services for all residents of our council homes.

It's been drawn up by a wide variety of residents who are involved in housing services, and it clarifies how we can make sure our services are responsive, value for money and what we need and deserve in challenging times.

Every four years an election is held for your tenant and leaseholder representatives on the newly established Housing Advisory Board, and our responsibilities are focused on representing the best interests of all council tenants and leaseholders. However, we don't just sit on the Board - throughout the year we are involved in a wide range of activities to monitor services and the issues that impact our homes.

But we're not alone. We have circles of support from other residents who are involved in the range of ways set out in this strategy. We welcome the council's commitment to proper resident involvement and hope that you might consider joining us to ensure that we hold the council to account, our voices are heard and that 'nothing is about us without us'.



Housing Advisory Board elected representatives



Foreword



As Cabinet Member for Housing, I am pleased to support our new Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement strategy.

A strong resident voice and meaningful involvement are essential to being a responsible social landlord. Across the housing sector, there has been a renewed focus on listening to tenants and leaseholders, acting on what they tell us, and being open and accountable for the decisions we make. This strategy reflects our full commitment to that approach.

This strategy has been shaped by feedback from residents, who have told us that they want to see a clearer link between what they say and what changes as a result. Residents want their homes and communities to be safe, well maintained, and managed in a way that treats everyone with fairness and respect.

We recognise that effective involvement is about partnership. Tenants and leaseholders bring lived experience and local knowledge, and by working together we can design better services, raise standards, and build trust. We are committed not only to listening, but to clearly demonstrating how resident feedback influences decisions and leads to real improvements on the ground.

I look forward to seeing this strategy delivered and to the positive difference it will make for tenants, leaseholders and our communities.



Cllr Gerri Bird, Cabinet Member for Housing



Introduction

This strategy sets out how Cambridge City Council will involve tenants and leaseholders in shaping housing services. It explains how we will listen, act, and show the impact of residents' views. It reflects feedback from residents, staff, and councillors, and aims to build a culture of trust, inclusion, and continuous improvement.

When we say 'resident' we mean anyone living in Cambridge City Council-owned homes, this includes tenants, leaseholders and shared owners.

We define resident involvement as: "tenants and leaseholders taking part in the decision-making process and influencing choices which affect the housing services, homes and communities in which they live".

The lived experience our residents offer is invaluable in shaping housing services and ensuring those services meet the needs of our residents, enabling our city to be 'One Cambridge, fair for all'.



Regulatory and legislative requirements

This strategy has been developed to fulfil the updated regulatory requirements of social housing providers, and in accordance with the legislation below. It is also intended to complement any existing legal requirements for resident involvement.

It has been designed to align with best practice in the sector including the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants charter, as well as recommendations for resident involvement set out by the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Tenant Participation Advisory Service.

- Revised Consumer Standards (effective April 2024)
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Building Safety Act 2022 – Section 91
- Housing Act 1985 – Section 105
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 – Section 20

How we shaped this strategy

To make sure this strategy displays what really matters to residents, we developed it with residents through workshops and a wider consultation. More than 50 residents took part, helping us shape the key objectives and actions.

We would like to express a huge thank you to all residents who have been involved in bringing the new strategy to life. This feedback has been central to the strategy, and it will continue to guide how we work with residents going forward.

There is more detail about this in Appendix 1: Overview of Engagement and Feedback.



Regulator of
Social Housing

Our vision

Cambridge City Council wants to make sure every resident feels heard, respected, and involved in shaping the housing services that matter to them. The development of this strategy is grounded in resident feedback, staff insight and sector best practice.

The Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement strategy is about building stronger connections with our residents, so we can better understand diverse perspectives, and empower every voice within our communities.

It aims to create varied and more meaningful opportunities to influence housing services, supporting residents to take part in ways that suit them, and making sure everyone can see the difference their input makes.

We are keen to promote resident involvement that improves community cohesion, environmental outcomes and resident wellbeing, as well as reducing the stigma associated with council housing.

To help us put residents at the centre of what we do, and address the issues raised through engagement, we have set four objectives with accompanying actions towards achieving them. The strategy will also have performance measures to assess impact, and an annual action plan, with timescales, responsibilities and ways to track progress.



Objectives – what we are trying to achieve

1. Embed resident involvement across housing services

Build a culture of trust, transparency and accountability by involving residents in the way housing services operate.

2. Ensure resident involvement is accessible and inclusive

Give all residents opportunities to engage meaningfully, regardless of background or circumstance.

3. Enable an empowered resident voice through involvement

Strengthen the role of residents in shaping decisions and influencing outcomes.

4. Listen, learn and improve

Demonstrate how we use feedback and data to ensure residents are heard, and that we are improving services and meeting standards.



Actions – what we will do

These actions set out to continue the work that we already do with resident involvement, as well as committing to improving through the new actions developed by residents.

1. Embed resident involvement across housing services

Build a culture of trust, transparency and accountability by involving residents in the way housing services operate.

Continued practice:

- The resident involvement team will host 1:1 induction meetings with new members of staff from tenant facing services, so they can identify and promote resident involvement opportunities.
- Maintain the involvement of residents in recruitment panels for relevant senior staff in housing service areas, and on the evaluation panels for procurement of significant contracts.
- Ensure that residents' priorities are recognised when developing involvement opportunities or improving housing services.

New actions:

- Establish a 'resident voice in all policies' principle: to ensure resident input is considered and built into the development and review of housing policy.

2. Ensure resident involvement is accessible and inclusive

Give all residents opportunities to engage meaningfully, regardless of background or circumstance.

Continued practice:

- Build upon our offer of varied involvement options, both online and in-person, in areas and at times that suit residents' needs.
- Further identify and remove barriers to participation (such as digital access, time constraints).

New actions:

- Develop an annual engagement plan including digital content, printed materials, and community outreach.
- Work towards a broad and representative group of involved residents to reflect the diversity of our communities.



Actions – what we will do (continued)

3. Enable an empowered resident voice through involvement

Strengthen the role of residents in shaping decisions and influencing outcomes.

Continued practice:

- Support the elected tenant and leaseholder representatives to hold the council to account through resident-led challenge and make recommendations for improvements.
- Extend the support on offer to build residents' confidence and skills in getting involved so they can be effective in their roles.

New actions:

- Promote an impact tracker showing how different resident input has shaped decisions.
- Introduce working groups for residents to play a role in understanding and improving key service/performance areas (such as repairs, complaints).

4. Listen, learn and improve

Demonstrate how we use feedback and data to ensure residents are heard, and that we are improving services and meeting standards.

Continued practice:

- Widen our use of surveys, forums, and estate walkabouts to gather residents' input on local priorities.
- Enhance our 'you said, we did' communication loop to show how feedback leads to action.

New actions:

- Publish an annual tenant and leaseholder report combining performance data and engagement outcomes.



Resident involvement activities

We want residents to get involved in a way that works best for them, based on time commitments, circumstances and practical needs, such as childcare, travel, or internet access. Residents can choose how and when to get involved, with flexible options to suit different lifestyles and needs.

We will continue our current offering and build upon this to include the following:



Our offer	Activities you can get involved in	Time commitment
Keeping you informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading the Open Door magazine delivered to you • Reading the annual tenant and leaseholder report • Checking updates on our website • Following our social media posts • Signing up to receive email newsletters and involvement opportunities 	Low: less than 30 minutes
Consulting with you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing surveys and statutory consultations • Contributing your views on priorities in neighbourhoods and where regeneration is planned • Making suggestions about housing services or ideas for improvement 	Low: less than 30 minutes
Engaging with you in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining community days in your neighbourhood • Joining estate walkabouts • Participating in the tenant and leaseholder garden competition • Joining neighbourhood volunteering activities 	Medium: one to two hours
Collaborating with you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending an online resident forum (such as repairs and maintenance) • Joining our Open Door editorial panel • Reviewing housing policy through becoming an 'armchair reviewer' • Joining a working group focused on key service/performance areas • Becoming an elected tenant and leaseholder representative on the Housing Advisory Board • Joining a procurement panel to assess relevant contracts 	Medium: one to two hours <hr/> High: more than two hours

Resident involvement activities

What are the advantages of getting involved?

Through engaging in any of the activities on the previous page we want to ensure that residents can:

- meet new people
- give something back to their community and improve their housing service
- develop as an individual and get a reference for a job
- get free training in developing skills and knowledge in IT and housing
- get their travel and care expenses met
- learn how the council works
- enjoy the benefits of 'thank you' events, or incentives like being entered into a prize draw for shopping vouchers
- get access to [membership of TPAS](#)
- get help with digital access, such as Tenant Representatives having a laptop loan

Get involved!

Getting involved is how you, as a Cambridge City Council tenant or leaseholder, can influence the housing services you receive from us. You are the best people to tell us what works well and where we can do better, and your involvement makes a real difference. Throughout the year we run a number of surveys, online meetings and in-person events so you can express your views.

If any of the resident involvement activities interest you - drop us an email on resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk or telephone 01223 458323.

If you want to find out more you can also visit our [resident involvement](#) webpage.

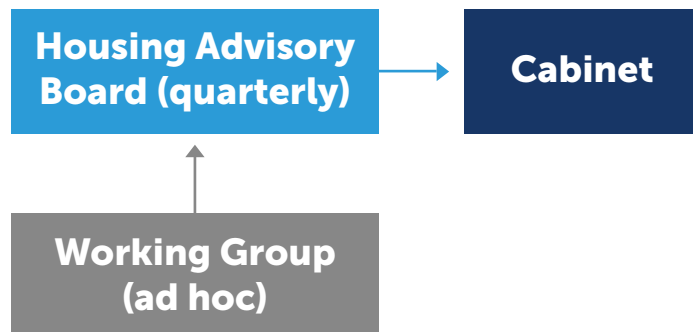


Elected tenant and leaseholder representatives

At Cambridge City Council we have six resident representatives - this includes five tenants and one leaseholder - who sit on the Housing Advisory Board alongside councillors.

Housing Advisory Board provides advice and recommendations to Cabinet, and feedback to help us improve our housing service. It supports the decision-making process and monitors our performance as a landlord.

The Housing Advisory Board can create working groups to carry out deep-dive projects on housing service areas and feed into the decision-making process through recommendations. Working group membership could include members of the Board as well as wider residents or external advisors.



Resident representatives are elected every four years (via an independent electoral process), through a ballot sent to all tenants' and leaseholders' addresses. These representatives help influence how we run our housing service. Their contribution ensures that residents' views and experiences are at the forefront of housing decisions.

Tenant and leaseholder representatives are entitled to a remuneration of up to £1,400 a year depending on how much time they give to the role and are expected to meet the criteria set within the terms of reference for the Board, as well as the Code of Conduct for all tenant and leaseholder representatives.

A few examples of previous work resident representatives have been involved in:

- Assessing bids for the estate cleaning contract and the internal planned maintenance contract.
- Proposed and ensured funding for a new education and engagement officer to help deliver the fire safety in communal areas policy.
- Part of the council's new build consultation group, looking at the detail of consultations and decant issues arising from the council's plans to build a further 1,000 new council homes.



To contact the representatives directly you can email hsc.residents@gmail.com

Impact – how we will measure success

This strategy will be delivered over the next two years, from 2026 to 2028. We have developed performance measures to demonstrate progress in resident involvement.

Each year, we'll also create a clear action plan that sets out what we're aiming to improve, who's responsible for making it happen and when residents can expect to see progress.

Targets will be set in the accompanying action plan to this strategy.



We will monitor progress through:

Primary measures (directly linked to resident involvement activities):

- Number of resident involvement activities offered throughout the year (such as forums, estate walkabouts, surveys).
- Number of residents engaged in involvement activities.
- Number of new residents participating for the first time.
- Diversity of residents participating in involvement activities.
- Number of housing services influenced through resident involvement.
- Resident satisfaction with involvement opportunities.

Secondary measures (linked to wider housing outcomes):

- % satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them (TSM).
- % satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed (TSM).
- % agreement that the landlord treats tenants with fairness and respect (TSM).

Reporting and accountability:

- Create an accompanying action plan to ensure we achieve our objectives.
- Elected tenant and leaseholder representatives involved in shaping the action plan and reviewing progress.
- Annual updates to the Housing Advisory Board.
- Annual tenant and leaseholder report shared with all tenants and leaseholders.

Appendix 1: Overview of engagement and feedback

Focus groups and consultation

Before writing the draft strategy we organised an in-person focus group in August 2025 with our elected resident representatives, and other involved residents. Seven residents attended this, and the aim was to gather thoughts and ideas on their priorities and to co-develop the objectives and actions of the strategy.

We then held a further focus group online with 12 residents in November 2025 to capture additional views on the objectives and actions that had been co-developed, so that we could further refine these.

In December 2025 we consulted with our wider resident base on the draft strategy so far. We created a survey that was publicised in the autumn/winter edition of Open Door magazine with the option to complete online, via phone or post. In total we received 30 responses (18 tenants and 12 leaseholders) that captured structured feedback on the draft strategy content as well as allowing more general feedback about resident involvement.

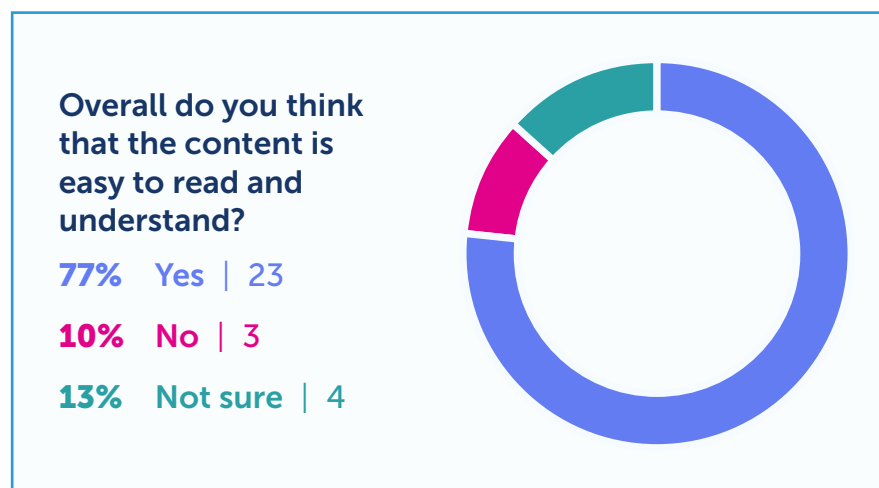
While we believe our approach to co-developing this strategy captured as many resident views as we could in the time we had, there are some demographics that were not represented in the process. It is anticipated that as the new strategy takes shape, we will address the barriers that some groups experience in getting involved so that we can improve this in future.

Summary of feedback from focus groups and consultation

As a result of the feedback we received, we made changes to this draft strategy. This includes:

- removing repetition of topics.
- adjusting some of the language to make it less technical.
- recognising a desire for stronger links between involvement and day to day service delivery, particularly repairs and maintenance.
- recognising the need for embedding multiple communication channels, recognising that digital access and preferences vary.
- ensuring that involvement opportunities clearly lead to residents being able to see impact and outcomes communicated.

A summary of the feedback we received from our focus groups and consultation is below.



Main themes

1. Embed resident involvement across housing services: build a culture of trust, transparency and accountability by involving residents in the way that the council operates.

- **Challenges:**

- Concern about siloed communication between tenant and leaseholder teams. Separate channels reduced shared understanding and collaboration.

- **Suggestions:**

- Improve cross-team collaboration and ensure joint forums where relevant.
- Focus on day to day service quality, especially repairs and maintenance. Several respondents felt involvement should be tightly linked to improving the basics and holding contractors to account. "Concentrate more on the day to day issues, such as repairs and maintenance... Getting the small stuff right would be a start."
- Communicate service changes before they happen (such as keys, storage, estate changes) and give residents practical routes to resolve issues. "I experienced bike storage... key lockers being changed while I was out of the country... I did not receive any communication about this."

2. Ensure inclusivity: give all residents opportunities to engage meaningfully, regardless of background or circumstance.

- **Challenges:**

- Digital-only communication excludes many older residents and those with limited digital access or confidence.
- Many residents have different preferences on how they'd like to be involved, there has to be a range of options available.

- **Suggestions:**

- Recognise literacy barriers and language needs.
- Traditional methods (letters, leaflets, door-knocking) are really valued by many residents. "Face to face and spoken word is still the best way to communicate and engage."
- Important to use traditional methods alongside digital, maintain options for online meetings and surveys for flexibility.
- Offer multiple channels – not digital-only and not face-to-face-only. People want email and online options, but some (especially older or disabled residents) rely on telephone and value in-person contact. "Telephone contact. We oldies find digital contact increasingly difficult to keep up with."

- Schedule meetings outside standard working hours as many can't attend during the working day.
- Provide advance notice and clear scheduling for things like estate walkabouts and community events.
- **Communication preferences (what people asked for most often):**
 - Count from comments: email updates (7), online/virtual meetings (6), face-to-face events (5), telephone contact (4), printed material (1).
- **Barriers to participation (most cited):**
 - Time/work commitments (6); lack of information/awareness (4); distance/travel (1); caring responsibilities (1); digital access/usability (1).

3. Enable an empowered resident voice: strengthen the role of residents in shaping decisions and influencing outcomes.

- **Challenges:**
 - Residents often feel their input 'goes into a black hole' with no visible outcomes. Showing that input leads to action, impact is key.
 - Ensure there are opportunities for residents to get involved at a strategic level.
- **Suggestions:**
 - Strong desire to close the feedback loop and show impact. Residents welcome tools like an impact tracker, provided it is transparent (who it reports to, how it leads to change). "I can see the value of an impact tracker... How is the impact tracker going to work... who is responsible for its assessment?"
 - Early engagement is important to residents, not after decisions are made. "Be open and tell about plans BEFORE they have been finalised so there is a feeling of inclusion."
 - Transparent communication on high-impact topics (for example cladding for leaseholders). "There has been a lot of uncertainty around external cladding... Proactive communication outlining the options would help trust."

4. Listen, learn and improve: use feedback and data to ensure residents are heard, and that we are improving services and meeting standards.

- **Challenges:**

- Residents not always aware of the opportunities available for getting involved.
- Negative experiences with tone of communication from some council teams.
- Feedback is collected but communication of outcomes takes too long.

- **Suggestions:**

- Tie involvement activities to visible service improvements (repairs, communal areas, parking, anti-social behaviour). Setting up dedicated groups that focus on specific issues, like repairs.
- Customer service and culture. Residents want a service-oriented approach, with calls answered and emails returned. "You phone and rarely get to speak to anyone... Email someone and... you rarely get a reply."
- Make human contact easy. There's a strong preference for being able to reach a person (not just self-serve or FAQs) and to get timely replies. "Make it easier for residents to speak to a human being."
- Suggestions for better communicating outcomes included combining high-level stats with personal stories in Open Door magazine.

- **What works well with current resident involvement opportunities?**

- Resident experience that when getting involved voices are valued and a feeling that involvement is democratic.
- In-person events like estate walkabouts are viewed as one of the best ways to engage with residents.
- Online surveys are seen as easy, quick ways to contribute – especially for people short on time. "Surveys like this are really easy to engage with."

- **What barriers to participation have you experienced?**

- Lack of awareness of existing initiatives (such as armchair review for policy feedback).
- Time, and sometimes the scheduling of events being during the working day.

- **What incentives could demonstrate that residents' time is valued?**

- Seeing the impact of resident input is enough in itself for some residents, rather than other rewards.
- Suggestions included vouchers, social events, recognition schemes, and exploring gamified engagement or alternative initiatives to replace time credits.



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