

Involving You, Improving Services

## Resident Involvement Strategy 2025-29

City of London Corporation

Department of Community & Children's Services

Housing Service

## **Part One**

### **1. Welcome to the Resident Involvement Strategy**

This strategy is about how the Housing Service will work more closely with you, our tenants and leaseholders, to listen, learn, and act on what matters most to you.

One of the key priorities in our Housing Strategy for 2024–2029 is to “**engage and listen to residents.**” We know we haven’t always got this right, and we’re committed to rebuilding trust and improving how we communicate and work with you.

We believe that the best way to improve our housing services is by working together. You know your homes, your estates, and your communities better than anyone, and your views should help shape the decisions we make.

This strategy sets out how we’ll:

- Offer more ways for you to get involved, in ways that suit you.
- Make it easier for everyone to have a voice, including those who haven’t felt heard before.
- Turn your feedback into real action and visible improvements.

Our goal is simple: to make sure your experiences and ideas help us deliver better services, stronger communities, and a housing service you can have confidence in.

### **2. How This Strategy Supports Our Shared Goals**

This Resident Involvement Strategy is part of a wider commitment to improving housing and community life for everyone living in the homes we manage. It supports the ambitions set out in both the City of London Corporation’s Corporate Plan 2024–2029 and our Housing Strategy 2024–2029.

#### **Corporate Plan 2024–2029**

Two of the Corporate Plan’s key outcomes are especially relevant to this strategy:

- **Diverse, Engaged Communities** – We want every resident to feel included, heard, and empowered to shape their neighbourhood.
- **Providing Excellent Services** – Your feedback helps us improve the services you rely on every day.

#### **Housing Strategy 2024–2029**

This strategy also supports the five priorities in our Housing Strategy, which aim to make a real difference to your homes and communities:

- **Improving the quality of housing services** – by listening to your experiences and acting on what you tell us.
- **Improving housing quality** – ensuring homes are safe, comfortable, and well-maintained.

- Engaging and listening to residents – making sure your voice is at the heart of everything we do.
- Improving building safety – working with you to keep your homes safe and secure.
- Increasing the supply of housing – helping more people access good-quality, affordable homes.

Together, these goals reflect our belief that residents are not just customers of our services, but valued partners in shaping future services.

### **3. Our Vision: Putting Residents at the Heart of What We Do**

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*“Every resident is listened to and has an opportunity to influence and to work with us to create great services, homes and places”*

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We want to make sure every resident feels heard, respected, and involved in shaping the services that matter to them. This strategy is about building stronger connections with you, our tenants and leaseholders, so we can better understand your views, your neighbourhoods, and your experiences.

By 2029, our goal is for every resident to have the chance to get involved in a way that works for them, whether that’s giving feedback, joining a group, or simply staying informed. We want your involvement to be meaningful, with real opportunities to influence how we run and improve our housing and estate services.

Your voice matters. The insights and experiences you share help us make better decisions and deliver services that truly meet your needs. That’s why we’re committed to offering the right opportunities, at the right time, in ways that are accessible and inclusive for everyone.

We’ll also keep reviewing how we involve residents to make sure it’s working well and reaching a wide range of people. We’ll also make sure your influence is built into how we plan, deliver, and improve our services, so that together we can create homes and communities we’re all proud of.

### **4. How We Shaped This Strategy Together**

To make sure this strategy reflects what really matters to you, we built on feedback from previous consultations with residents, staff, and elected Members. Rather than repeating the same questions, we focused on gathering fresh insights, avoiding consultation fatigue and making the most of your time and input.

We reviewed earlier feedback, including what residents told us during the Pennington Choices review of customer services and repairs. This gave us a strong foundation to build on.

We then held a series of new workshops, run by the independent Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), to hear directly from residents about how we can work better together. These sessions focused on how we can improve involvement and make sure your voice helps shape the future of our housing and estate services.

Your feedback has been central to this strategy, and it will continue to guide how we work with you going forward.

TPAS held three workshops to gather feedback and examples from:

- The Housing Division's senior management team
- Staff across a full range of service areas within Housing
- Residents

We also consulted residents on this Strategy through our online 'Have Your Say' forum, on the Commonplace platform.

## **5. What Residents Have Told Us**

Clear themes emerged from the consultations we held with residents, both as part of the TPAS review and the consultation on this Strategy document.

### **1. Trust and Making Good on Promises**

- Residents feel that we do not always deliver on promises.
- There is a perception that feedback is collected but not acted upon; consultation feels like a "tick-box exercise."
- Reports and surveys are produced but don't influence decisions, leading to a sense of futility
- There is a desire for greater transparency in how decisions are made and how resident input is used

### **2. Communication and Engagement**

- Communication is described as siloed, inconsistent, and unresponsive, especially outside of high-profile estates
- Residents report having to chase responses or escalate issues to be heard.
- Engagement varies significantly across estates, creating a sense of inequality.
- Communication methods must be inclusive, recognising that not all residents use digital channels.
- Traditional methods (e.g. letters) should remain part of the engagement toolkit to ensure no one is left out.

### **3. Resident Involvement Structures**

- Resident groups feel do not always feel supported and empowered.

- Past successful collaboration has deteriorated due to staff turnover and lack of continuity.
- Some residents feel there is little recognition of their skills or contributions.

#### **4. Procurement and Contractors**

- Frustration with repeated use of underperforming contractors despite complaints.
- Lack of transparency in tendering processes, perceived monopolies and absence of genuine competition.

#### **5. Inequity Between Tenants and Leaseholders**

- Tenants feel overlooked compared to leaseholders, who are perceived to receive more attention and respect.
- There is a call for equal treatment and recognition of all residents' voices.

#### **6. Desire for Meaningful Influence**

- Residents want to be involved in a way that genuinely shapes outcomes.
- There is a strong desire for collaborative, respectful partnerships rather than combative or dismissive interactions.
- Skills and experience within the resident community (e.g. legal, civil service) are underutilised.

#### **7. Culture Change**

- Residents welcome the values outlined in the strategy but stress that real change requires leadership and cultural shift, not just policy.
- Change must be modelled from the top and embedded across all levels of the organisation.

#### **8. Positive Practice and Potential**

- Some areas of good practice were noted (e.g. antisocial behaviour handling, collaboration with individual local staff or teams).
- Residents still express hope and willingness to contribute, if involvement becomes more meaningful and respectful.

### **6. Measuring Progress and Making Improvements**

We want to make sure that the way we involve and communicate with residents is both meaningful and effective. That's why we're developing a stronger set of performance measures to help us track how well we're doing, including how we involve you and respond to your feedback.

As part of national requirements, we also report each year on how residents feel about our services. These are called Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and some of them focus specifically on how well we listen, communicate, and involve residents.

This strategy is designed to help us improve in those areas, so that more residents feel heard, respected, and confident that their views make a difference.

Looking at our performance over the last two years, many residents have told us they're satisfied with how we communicate and how they're treated. But we also know there's more to do, especially when it comes to showing that we're listening and acting on what you tell us.

We're committed to working with residents to make these improvements.

	<b>2023/4</b>	<b>2024/5</b>	<b>London Councils Median 2023/4</b>
<b>Listening to and acting upon tenants' views</b>	53.2%	55.4%	51.4%
<b>Keeping tenants informed about things that matter to them</b>	74.0%	74.3%	66.7%
<b>Treating tenants fairly and with respect</b>	71.6%	74.8%	70.1%
<b>Making a positive contribution to neighbourhoods</b>	69.6%	67.8%	62.5%

*Table showing percentage of tenants satisfied for each measure*

Through the delivery of this strategy, and our wider Housing Strategy, we aim to improve the resident experience of our services and improve their satisfaction across all areas.

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## Part Two

### Our Five Objectives for Resident Involvement and Communications

To help us achieve our vision, and address the issues raised by residents, we have set five objectives, with milestones towards achieving them.

Our five objectives are:

1. Inclusive and Accessible Engagement
2. Empower Residents to Get Involved
3. Consistent and Timely Communication
4. Strengthen Resident Influence
5. Build a resident involvement culture

#### **Objective One: Inclusive and Accessible Engagement**

*Ensuring that everyone has a chance to be involved and heard*

We recognise the value of residents engaging with us in different ways and that one size does not fit all when it comes to communicating. With our residents, we want to develop a wide range of opportunities to ensure that a representative range of views are heard and that they influence and help shape our services.

We want to provide more involvement opportunities that offer flexibility so residents can be involved to the level and degree they choose.

We will:

- Create a range of involvement opportunities to suit different needs, interests and levels of commitment, ensuring that residents can participate in a way that suits them
- Improve our understanding of our residents' profile, languages spoken and needs of those living with disabilities to ensure they are not excluded in our communication and engagement
- Ensure all resident engagement activities are accessible by providing interpreters, translated materials, and alternative formats (e.g. large print, audio, Easy Read), and by using inclusive digital tools to support participation across diverse communities.
- Continue to consider what may prevent or discourage residents from becoming involved and how these barriers can be overcome, to increase representation for marginalised or seldom-heard voices

- Improve our digital offering to widen our audience, while maintaining more traditional methods of engagement for those who prefer them
- Develop more proactive and specific engagement with residents on matters of local concern using innovative and non-traditional methods.
- Staff who engage with residents to be trained in customer service and engagement skills to ensure residents sharing their views feel respected and listened to

## **Objective Two: Empower Residents to Get Involved**

*Supporting residents, investing resources and making it worthwhile*

Supporting and enabling residents to get involved in decision-making and scrutiny will lead to more responsive, efficient and effective housing management. We want to increase the ability of residents to hold us to account for our performance, and ensure that resident involvement is worthwhile, benefiting both the City Corporation and the residents who give up their time to participate.

This will require us to dedicated appropriate staff and financial resources to resident involvement activity.

We will:

- Commit to delivering on engagement promises by ensuring that feedback is acted upon, agreed actions are followed through, and residents are kept informed of progress in a timely and transparent way.
- Work with residents to design and provide appropriate training to develop their skills and capacity to be involved
- Work with residents to review how we reward and incentivise their involvement, ensuring we have dedicated budgets to meet costs in this area
- Work with residents to help them access technology and offer support to improve their digital skills
- Proactively involve residents in monitoring the performance of services where they live

## **Objective Three: Consistent and Timely Communication**

*Communicating in the right way, at the right time, to the right people*

Communication is a top priority, and it is important that we know who residents are, how they want to be involved, informed, and contacted. As part of this strategy, we



want to review and develop how we keep residents informed and ensure we make it easy for them to tell us when things are not going well.

We will:

- Use data and insights to understand the ways residents want us to communicate with them.
- Implement a 'you said, we did' approach to feedback, sharing this regularly on our website and in our newsletters and other publications like the Annual Report to Tenants.
- We will involve residents in the creation and development of our publications to ensure they are clear, easy to understand and meet the needs of our residents.
- We will utilise and develop our digital platforms including our website and social media to provide effective communication with residents.
- We will ensure all communication materials are accessible, culturally sensitive and available in multiple languages

#### **Objective Four: Strengthen and Champion Resident Influence**

*Ensuring we embed the resident voice in our decision-making*

We are accountable to residents who live in the homes we manage. They play a key role in ensuring we provide safe and well-maintained homes, and services which meet their needs. We want to empower them to scrutinise our services and influence decisions that affect them.

We will:

- Develop a mechanism to ensure resident scrutiny and influence over performance at the strategic level, across all key resident services, to ensure performance is meeting the relevant standards for residents. Ensure there is accountability to residents as well as Committee from responsible senior staff.
- Co-design a range of new resident influence opportunities in a way that is accessible and attractive to a diverse resident group
- Ensure that residents can influence, scrutinise and inform services and decisions in a way that suits them, at the right time
- Involve residents in procurement of key services such as repairs, including specifying contract requirements, short-listing companies from tenders

received, conducting interviews and site visits, and appointing the successful contractor

- Involve residents in setting service standards and targets and reporting on both good and bad performance
- Demonstrate the value of resident involvement by consistently communicating the results and outcomes of engagement activity

### **Objective Five: Build a Resident Involvement Culture**

*Ensuring that resident involvement is an integral and natural part of our work, across all teams and services*

We want a culture where genuine consideration of residents' views is at the heart of all our decision-making about the delivery of housing services. It is vital that we join resources and thinking to reap the benefits of resident experience across our services and ensure we are compliant with regulatory and statutory expectations.

Senior leaders and elected Members will reinforce a sense of direction and purpose to routinely incorporate all sources of insight into organisational plans and delivery, including challenging incomplete information on resident experience and voices in decision-making.

We will:

- Ensure that senior leaders promote the value of listening to and acting on residents' voices, and enable their teams to support resident involvement activity in their service areas
- Deliver training or awareness sessions for housing staff to ensure all have a good understanding of effective resident involvement, keep up to date with best practice
- Create a culture where residents are actively encouraged to be involved in scrutinising, shaping and feeding back on services, helping to improve customer satisfaction
- Make improvements to ensure that our resident involvement activity meets the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing
- Ensure we have the staff resources to deliver meaningful resident involvement activity across all our housing services, through an enhanced Resident Involvement Team

- Create mechanisms to ensure resident influence is integral to our service planning and governance processes
- Include in future recruitment and in everyone's job descriptions the requirement to actively seek out and hear residents' voices
- Set the expectation that staff across the Housing Division must actively support opportunities for residents to influence services, whether their role is resident-facing or not
- Develop relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the input and outcomes of our resident involvement work, to clearly demonstrate the impact it is having

### **Turning This Strategy into Action**

This strategy will be delivered over the next four years, from 2025 to 2029. In the first year, we'll focus on building strong foundations, making sure we have the right tools, support, and opportunities in place to help resident involvement grow and thrive.

Each year, we'll create a clear action plan that sets out:

- What we're aiming to improve
- Who's responsible for making it happen
- When you can expect to see progress

We'll start with the 2025/26 action plan and share it with residents, so you can see what's happening and how to get involved.

We'll also explain how we'll track our progress and measure the impact of what we're doing, so you can see how your involvement is helping to shape better services and stronger communities.

### ***Measuring Success***

We will develop performance measures and targets for resident involvement, which will include demonstrable improvements to resident satisfaction in key areas.

During the life of this strategy, we will demonstrate:

- effective resident scrutiny of our performance as a social landlord
- increased opportunities and support for residents' voices to be heard
- more involved residents who are representative of the communities we serve, influencing service improvements

- evidence of increased resident satisfaction in relation to listening and acting upon views (TSM), communications and neighbourhood contribution
- involved residents feeling that their involvement is meaningful and making a difference
- housing staff actively seeking resident involvement on any decision that impacts residents
- clear outcomes demonstrating the impact of resident involvement activities

### ***Communicating Progress***

We will keep residents, staff and Members updated on our delivery of this strategy by:

- regular communication to residents through our @home magazine, newsletters and other communications
- frequent internal communication to staff and Members
- six monthly reports on progress to Committee
- including involvement outcomes in our Annual Report for Tenants, demonstrating accountability to residents
- progress updates on the Resident Involvement webpage

### ***Investing in Resident Involvement***

To make sure we deliver on the promises in this strategy, we know we need to invest in the right people, tools, and support. Resident involvement isn't something that happens on the side; it's a vital part of how we deliver better services and build stronger communities.

We will:

- Provide the right support to help tenants and leaseholders get involved in ways that work for them, whether that's through training, accessible information, or one-to-one support.
- Ensure we have enough dedicated staff to lead and support resident involvement across all our estates.
- Make resident involvement part of staff performance objectives, so that everyone working in housing understands its importance and plays a role in making it happen.
- Offer training and development for staff and residents, to build confidence, skills, and shared understanding.
- Invest in digital and non-digital tools to make it easier for more people to take part, whether online, in person, or by post.
- Create a dedicated budget for resident involvement activities, so we can support events, workshops, and other opportunities for residents to shape services.

By putting the right resources in place, we can make sure resident involvement is not only meaningful but also sustainable and inclusive for the long term.