**Appendix 3**

**DCCS Housing – Communications and Engagement Strategy**

# Housing communications principles and guidance

City of London Corporation Housing is responsible for providing clear, timely and effective communication to our residents, while supporting informed, engaged and inclusive communities across our estates.

This guidance explains how we manage Housing communication channels and how decisions are made about what content is shared.

We are committed to ensuring residents are well informed about housing services, building safety, repairs, major works, community initiatives and opportunities to get involved in decisions that affect their homes and neighbourhoods. Our communications aim to be clear, accessible, respectful and consistent, helping to build trust and understanding between residents and City Corporation Housing.

City Corporation Housing manages several formal communication channels. These are curated platforms, and we have a responsibility to ensure they are used appropriately, fairly and in line with our role as landlord and service provider. We recognise that our approach has not always been applied consistently in the past. This guidance aims to provide residents with clarity about what will and will not be included in Housing-managed communications in the future and maintain consistency with our service standards.

## Our communication channels

City Corporation Housing uses a range of communication channels, each with a specific purpose and audience.

While all these channels support communication with residents, some are managed and curated by City Corporation Housing. This means that not all content will be appropriate for all channels.

## Core principles

Our approach to communication is guided by the following principles:

- **Clear and accessible** - information will be written in plain language and follow the City of London Corporation's accessibility and style guidelines
- **Timely and relevant** - residents receive information when it is needed
- **Consistent and fair** - decisions are made using the same criteria for all content
- **Transparent** - we will explain decisions and processes where appropriate
- **Respectful** - communication with and about residents will always be courteous and balanced

- **Resident-focused** - supporting awareness, understanding and opportunities to engage
- **Operationally neutral** - Housing communication channels will not be used to promote or oppose campaigns relating to City of London Corporation decisions
- **Non-promotional** - Housing communication channels will not be used for commercial advertising, marketing activity, business promotion or endorsement of commercial products or services

**Managed communication platforms**

Housing newsletters, resident emails, Housing webpages, engagement platforms and estate noticeboards are managed platforms. The City of London Corporation, as landlord and service provider, determines what content is displayed or circulated through these channels.

These channels are primarily intended for:

- Housing service information and updates
- Repairs, maintenance, building safety and major works information
- Community notices, events, meetings and activities relevant to residents
- Information from other City of London Corporation departments and approved partners
- Resident engagement activity, consultations and opportunities to influence services
- Information that supports residents' wellbeing, safety and tenancy responsibilities

They are not intended to act as platforms for campaigning or advocacy, particularly where this relates to live City of London Corporation decisions.

Content relating to matters of resident concern may be included where it is presented as information about consultation, engagement activity, meetings or service-related processes, rather than as campaigning or advocacy. This ensures residents are informed about opportunities to participate while maintaining City Corporation Housing’s operational neutrality.

**Distinction between information and campaigning**

City Corporation Housing recognises that there has not always been a clear distinction between information and campaigning, which has sometimes led to confusion and inconsistency.

It is important to distinguish between:

- A resident's right to express their views and campaign on issues
- Whether City Corporation will publish or promote that material through its own communication channels

Residents remain free to engage in democratic activity, including supporting petitions, contacting elected Members, attending meetings, participating in consultations and using independent forums and resident groups.

However, Housing-managed channels will not normally be used to promote campaigns that seek to influence City of London Corporation decisions. In some circumstances, issues that are the subject of campaigns may still be referenced where the focus is on providing information, signposting official processes, or highlighting opportunities for residents to participate in consultation or decision-making. In these cases, content will be presented in a neutral and factual way.

**Third-party and commercial content**

City Corporation Housing recognises that communication channels have previously included information about local businesses, services and other third-party initiatives.

To ensure a clear, consistent and fair approach, Housing-managed communication channels will not be used to promote individual businesses or commercial services, or to provide endorsement of third-party offers.

However, City Corporation Housing may share information about cultural, community, educational, charitable or public-interest events and activities, including paid-for events where they are considered relevant to residents and consistent with the purpose of the communication channel.

City Corporation Housing may also share information about events, activities or services that offer a specific and exclusive benefit to residents where there is a clear community or resident benefit.

This approach:

- Ensures consistency in how content is assessed and included
- Maintains operational neutrality
- Avoids any perception of endorsement or preferential treatment

This applies across all Housing-managed communication channels.

**Application to channels**

**Estate noticeboards**

- Used for Housing information, community information and local events
- Materials that have been displayed without prior approval may be removed where they do not align with this guidance

**Housing newsletters and bulletins**

- Used to share Housing service updates, community information, events, meetings and engagement opportunities, and updates from the City Corporation
- Not used to promote campaigns relating to live decision-making processes
- May include information about consultations, meetings and engagement opportunities, where they are presented in a neutral and factual way
- Not used to promote commercial advertising or individual businesses

**Emails, letters and digital updates**

- Used to provide service information, consultations, alerts and formal communication
- Content is controlled and aligned to resident and service needs

**Resident engagement platforms**

- Used to support consultation, engagement and involvement activities
- Managed in accordance with the purpose of the specific engagement activity
- May host feedback, surveys and opportunities for discussion while remaining independent and impartial

**Leaflet distribution**

- Subject to approval and relevant policies
- May include community information or information from approved partners where appropriate

**Transparency and consistency**

We are committed to applying this guidance consistently and explaining decisions where requested.

This guidance will be reviewed periodically with residents and resident representative groups and published to support transparency.

Where similar requests are treated differently, we will seek to explain the reasons clearly, including how decisions relate to this guidance and the circumstances involved.

This guidance is intended to support a fair, transparent and consistent approach for all residents and all requests.

City Corporation Housing reserves the right to amend content submitted for publication where necessary to ensure it complies with this guidance, the City of London Corporation's policies and legal obligations.

**Resident Voice and Resident-Led Groups**

City Corporation Housing recognises the important role that resident-led groups, associations, committees and forums play in representing residents, promoting community involvement and helping to improve housing services.

Nothing in this guidance is intended to restrict residents' rights to express their views, organise collectively, campaign on issues that matter to them, or communicate with one another through independent channels.

Resident groups remain independent of City Corporation Housing and may:

- Publish newsletters, websites, social media content and other communications
- Campaign on issues affecting residents and communities
- Organise petitions, meetings and events
- Engage with elected Members and decision-makers
- Represent the views and interests of their members
- Communicate directly with their own members and supporters

The purpose of this guidance is not to limit these activities. Rather, it sets out how Housing-managed communication channels are used and the standards that apply to content published through those channels.

Where resident groups, associations or campaigns are referred to in Housing-managed communications, this will normally be done in a factual and neutral way. For example, the City Corporation Housing may:

- Publicise meetings, consultations or engagement opportunities organised by recognised resident groups
- Signpost residents to resident-led forums or representative bodies
- Share information about opportunities for residents to become involved in resident groups
- Provide information about issues being discussed by residents where this supports awareness and engagement

However, Housing-managed communication channels will not normally be used to endorse, promote or advocate for a particular campaign position, petition, candidate, or outcome.

We are committed to supporting meaningful resident involvement and constructive challenge. Resident feedback, scrutiny and participation are essential to improving

services and ensuring residents have opportunities to influence decisions that affect their homes and communities.