

Resident Involvement Strategy 2017-2020

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Introduction

Cambridge City Council is proud to involve tenants and leaseholders in the delivery and management of the housing services they receive.

Involved tenant and leaseholder inspectors, panel and committee members have direct input and scrutiny of key decisions around their housing. The wider tenant community also participates via surveys, tenant newsletters/magazines, social media channels and local residents' groups/associations.

But with scarcer resources in the housing service, Resident Involvement must provide a targeted service that responds to the needs of tenants, the priorities of the housing service and satisfies regulatory requirements.

This Resident Involvement Strategy offers a clear outcome-based method of ensuring that Resident Involvement continues to provide an effective, value-for-money service that answers the needs of today's social housing climate.

Councillor Kevin Price

Executive Councillor for Housing

1. Housing service priorities

Linking Resident Involvement directly to business plan objectives

Involvement priorities must link to business plan objectives. In turn, tenants must be empowered and enabled to influence business plans. This circular connection is fundamental to the success of both resident involvement and housing services.

1.1 Ensure that tenant and leaseholder priorities are recognised when developing involvement projects or improving housing services:

Tenant and Leaseholder top three priorities for housing services*

1. Building new council homes
2. Repairing council homes
3. Tackling anti-social behaviour

1.2 Link involvement directly to the organisation's management structure. Priorities highlighted through involvement are reflected in business plans, strategies and operational plans for customer facing services.

1.3 Get agreement between staff, residents and councillors as to the reasons for planned tenant, leaseholder involvement across the organisation.

1.4 Make sure that involvement is planned, monitored and reviewed regularly with tenants and leaseholders. Involvement methods should reflect the profile of residents, communities and housing types.

1.5 Successful and effective resident involvement is recognised and valued by staff, councillors and other stakeholders.

**Sources - 2014 tenant/leaseholder satisfaction survey, 2017 RI Survey*

2. Resources

Identifying support for effective Resident Involvement

We will identifying the right support to put in place to enable effective involvement of tenants and leaseholders. Where appropriate, we will 'invest to gain', to provide long-term, sustainable involvement outcomes.

- 2.1** Allocate sufficient resources for Resident Involvement, reviewing annually to ensure it is effective in delivering planned outcomes.
- 2.2** Train and develop staff across the housing service, equipping them with the skills needed to promote resident involvement opportunities
- 2.3** Provide appropriate levels of support for involved tenants and leaseholders so they can be effective in their roles.
- 2.4** Promote opportunities for tenant and leaseholder involvement opportunities, using a variety of media channels, including print, web, social media and events.
- 2.5** Monitor and measure the success of projects in becoming sustainable and in increasing take up of involvement opportunities.

3. Communication & Insight

Providing information to residents in ways they choose and gathering/using customer insight effectively

To ensure resident involvement is fully maximised, we will provide information to residents in ways they choose, gather their views and use them to inform the direction of their services.

3.1 Use a range of appropriate involvement methods to communicate with residents and gather their opinions, needs and wants.

3.2 Use new technologies (web, Email lists, social media, text sms, mobile apps etc.) to increase access to information and to allow feedback, ideas and information to be shared.

3.3 Information gathered through involvement is used to gain insight and influence services so that they reflects tenant, leaseholder and community profiles and preferences.

3.4 Work with involved tenants, leaseholders and communities to look outward, benchmark, learn and gain inspiration from others.

3.5 Evaluate and promote the changes brought about through Resident Involvement and share them with staff, tenants, leaseholders, communities and stakeholder organisations.

3.6 Understand resident's preferred channels of engagement and link their priorities to a digital inclusion strategy.

Tenant and Leaseholder preferred methods for receiving information

1. Open Door magazine
2. Letters
3. Email
4. Residents' meetings
5. Social Media

4. Influence & Scrutiny

Ensuring residents and communities can influence services appropriately

We will always seek to enable tenant and leaseholder scrutiny and influence at both a strategic and operational level. This ensures that residents have real power in holding the council to account for decisions, performance and conduct - and that residents also hold an accountable role in their landlord's decisions, performance and conduct.

4.1 Allow tenants and leaseholders to have direct influence over housing strategy, policy, standards, approaches and performance targets.

4.2 Give all council tenants and leaseholders the opportunity to stand as and vote for representatives on the Housing Scrutiny Committee, with elections happening every 4 years.

4.3 Ensure that tenants and leaseholders are involved in performance monitoring, learning from performance information and improving performance through effective challenge.

4.4 Provide a framework that allows residents to hold the organisation to account through collaborative yet independent resident-led scrutiny.

4.5 Have a robust method for allowing residents to play a role in understanding, resolving and learning from complaints.

4.6 Ensure clarity about the role of tenant and leaseholder influence and scrutiny within the organisation amongst councilors, staff and senior management.

5. Community Engagement

Using a range of methods for effective wider community engagement

Our principles for working with communities rely on understanding their priorities and finding solutions within the community itself for long term sustainability. Our goal is to empower and support communities to develop their capacity and address their issues.

5.1 Ensure that community engagement is planned, monitored and measured to achieve social, environmental and economic outcomes and clearly links to the organisations business plan objectives.

5.2 Work with local stakeholders to deliver community engagement projects that are designed to meet jointly identified needs.

5.3 Develop and utilise the strengths and resources of communities / community members by developing confidence, skills and knowledge.

5.4 Promote financial, social and digital inclusion amongst communities and provide appropriate access to council resources to enable this.

5.5 Support and work in partnership with other agencies to deliver community initiatives

6. Value for money

Measuring the effects of Resident Involvement to add value for stakeholders, communities and individuals

We will always seek to demonstrate the value of Resident Involvement so we can arrive at cost-effective solutions and ensure that communities continue to support our future work.

6.1 Ensure that involvement is planned, monitored and measured and has clear aims, objectives and outcomes.

6.2 Monitor progress and measures of success with stakeholders throughout and in advance of projects commencing.

6.3 Report the value and successes of Resident Involvement across the organisation, ensuring that any changes for the benefit of the organisation are well publicised to all key stakeholders.

6.4 Review involvement approaches regularly, using information on the value created through that involvement . Reviews consider methods of involvement , types of projects and whether successful outcomes have resulted.

6.5 Learn from reviews and share results with tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders to improve effectiveness of involvement .

<u>Outcome Table</u>	
Heading	Outcome at annual review
1. Housing service priorities	
Residents' priorities recognised when developing projects or services	
Involvement objectives link directly to management structure	
Agreement between staff, residents and councillors as to the reasons for RI	
Involvement is planned, monitored and reviewed with resident reps	
Successful involvement is recognised and valued by key stakeholders	
2. Resources	
Allocate sufficient resources for RI (reviewing annually)	
Train and develop staff to promote RI opportunities	
Provide support for involved tenants and leaseholders	
Promote RI opportunities using a variety of media	
Monitor and measure the success of RI projects	
3. Communication & Insight	
Use a range of appropriate involvement methods	
Use new technology to increase access to information and feedback	
Gain insight and influence services using Information gathered	

Benchmark, learn and gain inspiration from others	
Evaluate and promote the changes brought about through involvement	
Link resident's preferred engagement priorities to a digital inclusion strategy	
4. Influence & Scrutiny	
Run Housing Scrutiny Committee resident elections every 4 years.	
Ensure that residents are involved in performance monitoring.	
Provide a framework for collaborative yet independent resident-led scrutiny.	
Residents involved in understanding, resolving, learning from complaints.	
Ensure clarity about residents' influence/scrutiny within organisation.	
5. Community Engagement	
Ensure that community engagement is planned, monitored and measured.	
Engagement projects must meet jointly identified community needs.	
Develop resources, confidence, skills and knowledge in communities	
Promote financial, social and digital inclusion in communities	
Provide access to financial, social and digital inclusion resources	
Work in partnership with other agencies in the community	
6. Value for money	
Ensure that involvement is planned,	

monitored and measured with clear aims, objectives and outcomes.	
Monitor progress and measures of success with stakeholders.	
Publicise the value and successes of Involvement across the organisation.	
Review involvement approaches regularly	
Learn from reviews and share results with stakeholders	