

# TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026- 2030

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# Introduction.

## Foreword- Cllr Andy Frampton (Cabinet Member for Housing Operations)

We are committed to improving our service, putting you, our tenants, leaseholders and shared owners, at the heart of everything we do. This strategy reflects a commitment to strengthen engagement, communication, and participation with you. Empowering you to scrutinise and shape the housing service to ensure continuous improvement.

We acknowledge that, in the past, you have not been involved in decision making in a meaningful way or been able to challenge decisions effectively. The 2024 Housing Regulatory Judgement highlighted key areas for improvement. We accept these findings. We are truly sorry for where we have fallen short, and we are committed to making things right. While the C3 rating was a stark reminder of our shortcomings, it has also driven meaningful change. We are taking decisive action to raise standards, deliver high-quality services, and rebuild your trust.

## Scope

This strategy is for residents- which includes tenants, shared owners and leaseholders. The strategy will create an environment where we can work in partnership with communities to address key challenges. It will provide a framework through which we can demonstrate our commitment to meaningful resident engagement and the delivery of tangible service improvements. While delivering an outstanding service is the motivation for this strategy, it will also help meet the requirements set out by the Regulator for Social Housing's (RSH) Consumer Standards.

The purpose of this strategy is to:

- Define a clear purpose for tenant engagement
- Meet regulatory requirements
- Reflect Southampton City Council's (SCC) organisational objectives
- Support good governance
- Support a strong tenant involvement and engagement culture across the council

## What is tenant engagement

Tenant Engagement is about working with you to make a real difference to services. Effective engagement sees you taking part in the decision-making process and influencing choices which affect your services, homes and communities. It is an evolving two-way process of communication. Tenant engagement plays a key role in ensuring that you have the opportunity to have a say on how housing services are run.

There are all sorts of ways you can get involved and we understand that not everyone wants to / is able to be part of a formal tenant group. As such, we will create opportunities to suit you.

## **Resident testimonial**

*“Tenant Engagement means knowing that our contribution is taken seriously. It’s about having the opportunity to influence how the council spends our rent money and to help make improvements to the services we receive. It’s making sure the council hear our voices and they never forget that these are our homes”*

(Vicky and Lynda)

## **Vision**

Our vision is for Housing and resident engagement to deliver an outstanding service, good quality homes, safe, thriving communities and respectful staff. Creating environments where all individuals feel valued, respected, and have equal opportunities to participate fully. We recognise that as a resident, you are central to everything we do. Your collaboration in co-creating, scrutinising, and improving services is essential if we are to tailor, strengthen and improve.

We currently hold limited and outdated resident information. Insight into your needs is poor and this impacts service delivery. Developing an improved understanding of your needs, analysing and apply information (‘Customer Insight’) is a core part of our vision. We will not just collect data but use it to shape services, policies, and engagement in ways that are meaningful and effective.

Your involvement and experience of our services will help us to prioritise what is important. Your involvement will influence our business plans, ensure value for money and excellence in services.

We will ensure that you are at the heart of decision making about the services that affect you. We will be transparent, enabling you to hold us to account and in turn build trust.

We are committed to ensuring that you feel listened to, giving you opportunities to learn and gain new skills. We will empower you to influence decisions and services.

We need to listen to you, understand your views, learn from them, and act on them. Your input is the most effective way to bring positive, planned, and proactive improvements to our services.

We recognise that words mean little, and that action is far more revealing of our attitude to engagement. As such, this strategy sets out clear aims and measures of success. We will work with you to keep these under constant review and look forward to delivering transformational outcomes. We invite scrutiny and welcome being judged by our actions.

## **Legislative Context**

The introduction of the Social Housing Act 2023 saw a huge change in the regulatory environment around tenant engagement. The Act was introduced as an acknowledgement that social housing regulation had failed for many years to ensure social landlords listened to their residents, not just about building safety. The Act clarifies the importance of ensuring social housing residents are listened to and empowered to get involved, setting out how landlords will deliver against the commitments. The Act outlines that every social housing resident should be able to expect:

1) To be safe in your home 2) To know how your landlord is performing 3) To be treated with respect 4) To have your voice heard by your landlord 5) To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in 6) To be supported to take your first step into ownership.

Under this new environment there are increased expectations of the RSH, Housing Ombudsman, as well as the Building Safety Regulator.

The RSH regulates how we operate to ensure we provide a viable, efficient, and well-governed service, able to deliver and maintain homes of appropriate quality that meet a range of needs. To evaluate how well we are doing, the Regulator assesses us against:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures: to assess how well we are performing in providing good quality homes and services
- Consumer Standards: The Regulator conducts inspections to make sure that you get quality accommodation, have choice and protection, and can hold us to account
- The Ombudsman's complaints handling code: This ensures your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
- Building safety regulations: This ensures your homes are safe

## Strategic Objectives.

Together with residents, we have developed three priority areas which also incorporates feedback from our 2024 Regulator Judgment <sup>1</sup>

### **Priority 1: Residents will play an integral role in decision making**

Your participation and decision making are fundamental to the governance structures of Housing Services, ensuring that your contributions are meaningfully considered. This approach not only empowers you but also enhances our overall effectiveness and responsiveness. By actively involving you in decision-making processes, we can ensure that the services provided are more aligned with your needs and expectations.

Creating a culture that recognises and values tenant engagement is crucial. It fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among both residents and staff, leading to more sustainable and impactful outcomes. To do this, we will train our staff and place you at the heart of service delivery.

Trust is a core council value. We are committed to building trust with you by embedding Tenant Engagement throughout Housing Services. This commitment is reflected in our strategies and actions aimed at ensuring you have a real voice in shaping the services you receive. By doing so, we will create a more transparent, accountable, and inclusive housing service. We will achieve this by:

<b>Priority 1: Residents will play an integral role in decision making</b>	
What does Success look like?	<p>Improved tenant satisfaction measure (TSM) results in relation to “listen and acts”</p> <p>Increased number of engaged residents from a broader range of residents</p> <p>Tenant engagement embedded into the culture of all divisions throughout Housing Services</p> <p>Understand residents, what matters to them and embedding this in Housing decisions</p>
What are our Priorities?	<p>Resident contributions are meaningfully considered</p> <p>Create a culture that recognises and values tenant engagement: engaging tenants and putting them at the heart of service</p>
How are we going to do it?	<p>Establish Housing Advisory board with meaningful resident representation; the ‘terms of reference’ establishing clear roles / responsibilities.</p>

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<sup>1</sup> [Southampton City Council \(00MS\) - Regulatory Judgement: 27 November 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

	<p>Review and update internal processes to ensure resident investigations / panel recommendations are logged and actions tracked.</p> <p>Community Investment activities outside will support partnership working and provide opportunities to increase understanding of resident and community priorities</p> <p>Survey staff on their attitudes and understanding of tenant engagement, responding accordingly.</p> <p>Develop resident skills, knowledge and experience to maximise contribution</p> <p>Staff to receive Tenant Engagement training</p> <p>Create and implement a Tenant Charter, setting out ways staff will work to involve residents in decision-making</p> <p>Staff to complete mandatory staff training on Social Housing Stigma</p>
What difference will this make?	<p>Services will be shaped by resident voices to meet their needs</p> <p>The level of trust residents have in SCC will increase</p>

## **Priority 2: Effective scrutiny**

Scrutiny is a valuable opportunity for tenants to contribute to the improvement of services and standards. Scrutiny activities are separate from governance, management, and mainstream tenant participation structures. Effective scrutiny goes beyond involvement and consultation; it is the rigorous and critical examination of how we provide your services- putting them under the microscope

We will value scrutiny as a ‘critical friend’ and provide you with formal opportunities to challenge our performance and decision-making. This means that you will have structured and meaningful ways to review and influence services. By doing so, we will ensure that your voices are not only heard but also acted upon in a way that drives real change. We will provide you with the opportunity to hold us to account and confidence in our compliance with the Regulator’s Consumer Standards.

Customer Insight will highlight under-represented voices and we will respond by tailoring our scrutiny opportunities, making them more accessible. In particular for people whose disabilities make contributions more difficult or identifying people’s preferred communication methods.

Effective complaint handling represents opportunities to examine and improve services and as such, complaints are an important part effective of scrutiny. Complaints will be used as a valuable mechanism to identify areas where we can enhance our services and better address your concerns. We will treat complaints as opportunities for learning and improvement, using them to prevent service failures from being repeated and to enhance our overall performance.

We will give you an active stake in the running of Housing Services rather than just being recipients of services which will lead to better outcomes and standards for all residents. We will achieve this by:

Priority 2: Effective Scrutiny	
What does success look like?	<p>Housing Services are open to scrutiny, valuing scrutiny as a critical friend</p> <p>Good quality, up-to-date performance data available and accessible to residents. Including targets so that residents can see how we are performing.</p> <p>A clear line of responsibility for resident recommendations – from proposal to implementation</p> <p>The scrutiny and complaints processes are accessible to all residents</p> <p>Increased Tenant Satisfaction: Improved TSM results in relation to “listen and acts”</p>
What are our Priorities?	Demonstrate that we act upon your views and recommendations



	<p>Resident and staff training on scrutiny</p> <p>Focus on examining issues, identifying areas for improvement, and making recommendations</p>
How are we going to do it?	<p>Develop a scrutiny model with clear routes into the governance and service delivery operations</p> <p>Collect, analyse and use ‘customer insight’ - develop a deep understanding of resident needs, characteristics, experiences and expectations. Checking the <u>quality</u> of services against expectations and experience. Listening to real-world <u>feedback</u> to improve.</p> <p>Complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making sure our complaint process is widely publicised through delivery of a complaint’s communication plan</li> <li>• Recording and communicating the lessons learnt from complaints</li> <li>• All housing staff to undertake complaint training</li> <li>• The Scrutiny Panel will have a routine and formal role in examining upheld complaints</li> </ul> <p>Encourage involvement in tenant engagement / scrutiny opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote reimbursement support such as travel and childcare costs</li> <li>• Provide a variety of meeting times and venues to suit residents</li> <li>• Establish an Equality, Diversity and inclusion panel</li> </ul>
What difference will this make?	<p>Residents will have an active stake in the running of Housing Services</p> <p>Residents will have more power in holding us to account for decisions, performance, and conduct</p> <p>Residents will produce evidence-based recommendations which improve services</p>

### **Priority 3: To improve communication and interaction**

Our communication with you will reflect [our values](#). We are committed to taking time to listen and understand what matters most to you. We will act on your feedback, making clear not only when this leads to improved services, but also any reasons why your feedback is not implemented. We will identify the best ways to engage on important issues and build stronger, more trusting relationships that benefit everyone involved.

By tailoring our communication methods, we will engage with a broader representation of residents. Improved customer insight will highlight under-represented voices and we will make it easier for them to get involved. In particular, we will make it easier for younger people/people busy with families.

We will ensure our communication with you is timely, transparent, tailored and that it has the right tone.

Timely: We will ensure prompt communication to address issues effectively and provide assurance.

Transparent: We will maintain open communication to provide clarity and avoid confusion.

Tailored: We will adapt services and communication to your individual circumstances, building trust

Tone: We will use an empathetic and positive tone to ensure you feel heard, respected, and that your concerns are addressed.

By using these principles and a variety of methods, including face-to-face meetings, digital and written communication, we will ensure that you have appropriate access to the information and news that affects you. Embedding these practices into our strategy will create a service that is transparent, accountable, and responsive to your needs. We will achieve this by:

Priority 3: To improve communication and interaction	
What does Success look like?	Improved TSM results in relation to “keep informed”, “listen and acts and “fairness and respect”  Enquiries handled in a timely and effective manner. Calls to the Service Centre are answered within target  Effective resident meetings, engagement beyond individual issues and actions progressed between meetings  Increased Tenant Satisfaction: Improved TSM results in relation to “keep informed”
What are our Priorities?	Trained, knowledgeable and empathetic staff  Know our residents so that we can deliver targeted communication, offering a range of engagement opportunities. Complimenting digital with face to face and written communication
How are we going to do it?	Identify the barriers that prevent residents from engaging and create new opportunities that encourage more tenants to get involved

	<p>Strengthen digital solutions to improve access to services and increase engagement. Maximising the use of social media and digital platforms</p> <p>Use plain English in all resident communications</p> <p>Produce clear, timely and transparent updates about Housing Services, informing residents about the action taken as a result of their feedback.</p> <p>Staff to complete Customer Service training</p> <p>Deliver Tenant housing conference/s</p> <p>Use the Junior Neighbourhood Warden scheme to establish a youth panel- ensuring the voices of young people are heard and acted upon.</p> <p>Consultation process and feedback agreed – for both formal and informal consultations.</p>
What difference will this make?	<p>Enhanced Service Delivery: More effective and responsive services by addressing tenant needs</p> <p>Stronger Relationships: Fosters community and strengthens landlord-tenant relationships</p> <p>Better Decision making: Resident feedback will inform policies and practices for better outcomes</p>

## Delivering the strategy

Our approach to delivering this strategy is built on the understanding that its work benefits everyone, successful implementation will lead to better decisions, improved services, increased value for money and stronger communities.

Resident Engagement is a vital part of our commitment to ‘Customer Insight’- understanding customer needs, characteristics, experiences and expectations. We will develop a formal cross cutting project to build this insight and set out the importance of resident engagement.

We will work closely with you and other council departments to ensure there is the information and opportunity to hold us to account, influence decisions, strategies and services.

Our Housing Improvement Board, will play a vital role in monitoring progress, driving service enhancements, and working with Housing Regulators to address current challenges. This governance will provide essential oversight, ensuring that our housing services remain transparent, effective, and aligned with national standards

To maintain transparency and accountability, we will publish regular reports detailing progress against the strategy’s commitments ensuring continued oversight and commitment to delivery.

We greatly value the time and effort that residents put into becoming involved and making a difference. Thank you.

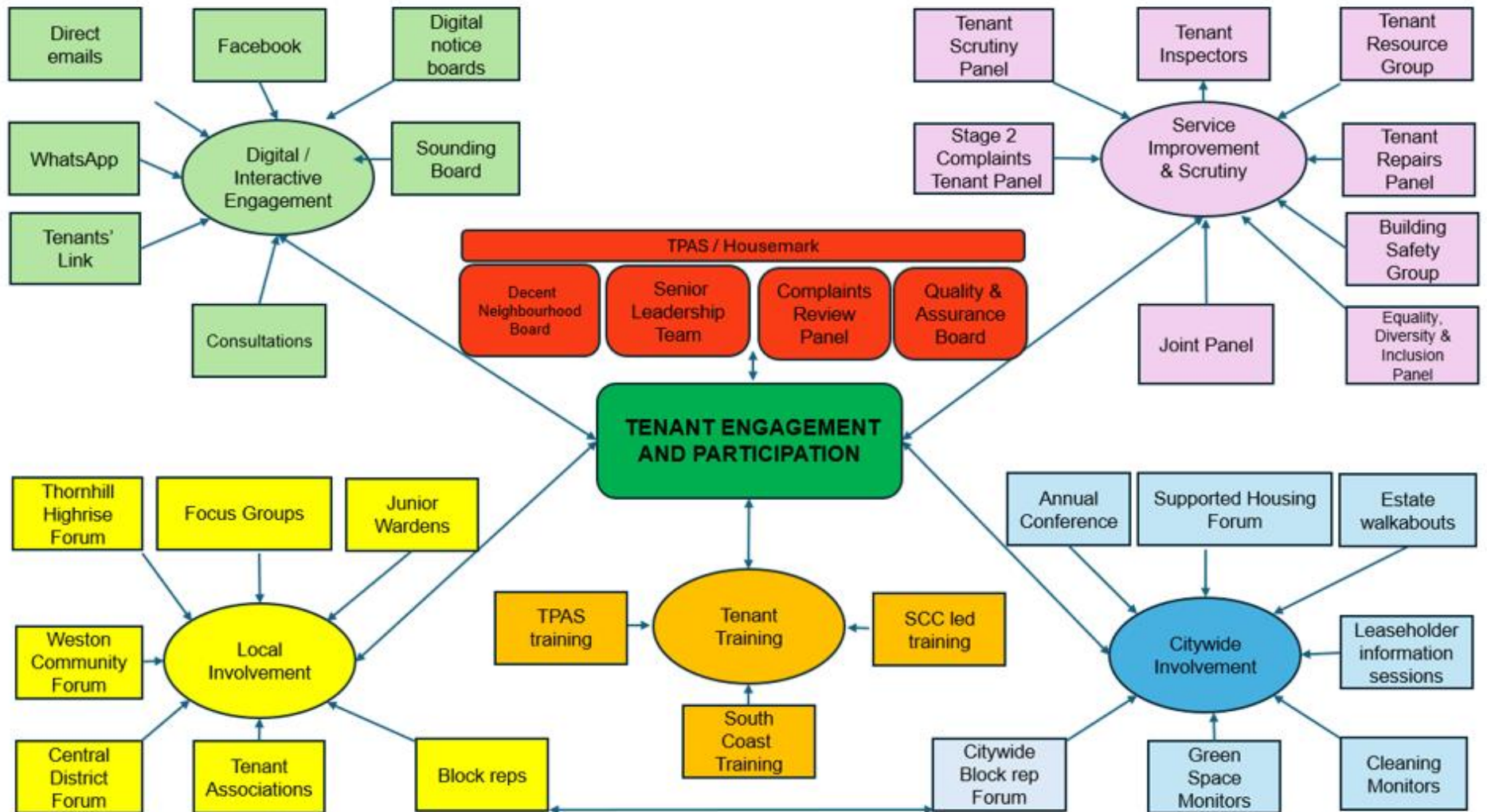
## How Can you Become involved?

### **Engagement Offer/ How you can become involved (tenant involvement structures)**

There are many ways to get involved and help us improve services. You can join a local group, attend meetings, or provide feedback at events. If you want to have a say in your housing service, we have [options for you](#):-

Information	Consultation	Engagement	Empowerment
<p>Website</p> <p>Social media and WhatsApp</p> <p>Emails</p> <p>Notice boards/electronic boards</p> <p>Leaflets</p> <p>Letters</p> <p>Tenants Link</p> <p>Monthly calendar of tenant engagement activities</p> <p>Quarterly Reports</p> <p>Annual Report with TSM</p> <p>Complaints reports</p> <p>Performance information available online</p> <p>Face to face/hybrid meetings</p> <p>Housing conference</p> <p>Walkabouts</p> <p>Dashboard performance information</p>	<p>Website and social media consultations</p> <p>Quarterly TSM surveys</p> <p>Bi-annual TE satisfaction survey (TE team)</p> <p>Online surveys</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Working groups</p> <p>At tenant panel/forum meetings</p> <p>At housing conference</p> <p>National consultations</p>	<p>Tenants' panels, forums and boards' meetings</p> <p>Events</p> <p>Via social media/WhatsApp</p> <p>Performance available online</p> <p>Face to face/hybrid meetings</p> <p>Annual conference</p> <p>Neighbourhood Walkabouts</p> <p>Housing officers' events/impact days</p> <p>Block Representatives</p> <p>Cleaning and greenspace monitors</p> <p>Junior Wardens</p>	<p>Housing advisory board</p> <p>Decent Neighbourhood Board</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team</p> <p>Complaints Review panel</p> <p>Tenants' Associations</p> <p>Gardening Clubs</p> <p>Training</p>

## Appendix 1- Tenant Engagement structure



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