

**To:** Cabinet

**Date:** 10 December 2025

**Report of:** Director of Housing

**Title of Report:** Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy – 2025/28

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Decision being taken:</b>	Report to Cabinet and recommend to Council to approve the new Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy – 2025/28
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes.
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Linda Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Good affordable homes
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Approve</b> the draft Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy (2025 – 2028) and action plan attached to the strategy which outlines how the priorities for resident involvement and engagement will be taken forward</li> <li><b>Recommend</b> to Council to approve and adopt the new Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028</li> <li><b>Delegate authority</b> to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for housing and Communities, on approval of the strategy, to put in place the necessary governance and monitoring arrangements to oversee the implementation and delivery of the strategy as well as to make any minor amendments reflective of legislative changes or best practice.</li> </ol>

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy – 2025/28	No
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Equality Impact Assessment	No

Appendix 3	Risk Register	No
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## Introduction and Background

1. Following the Grenfell tragedy, the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 sought to strengthen the voice of tenants by setting out clearer expectations of social landlords. The *Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard Consumer Standards 1 April 2024* (“the *Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard*”) requires the landlord to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that they can access services, raise concerns, when necessary, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.
2. This is essentially a call for a change to a two-way conversation between tenant and landlord – where there is a need to give tenants their voice by providing meaningful engagement opportunities to enable them to influence and scrutinise the Council’s strategies, policies and services, and where the landlord in turn is able to engage and communicate clearly with tenants.
3. In December 2024, Cabinet considered and approved a proposed change of resident engagement approach in principle, subject to consultation with residents. In taking this forward, a series of engagement events were held during the spring and summer of 2025 where residents were consulted on the proposed engagement changes. Overall, the proposed changes were supported by over 400 residents who participated and this in turn has enabled the development of a new Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy for the next three years and is attached in **Appendix 1**.
4. The Resident Involvement and Engagement Strategy 2025/28 and related action plan sets out how the Council will look to improve resident engagement and meet its landlord obligations required by *Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard*. The strategy recognises the changing landscape and need for stepping up efforts to improve resident engagement ensuring that residents voice forms part of service delivery and that meaningful engagement platforms and support are in place. This approach will enable residents to have better opportunities to influence, help shape and scrutinise the quality and delivery of services they receive. The strategy also signals a clear approach and cohesive direction of travel on resetting resident engagement through an improved resident involvement and engagement offer which involves formal and informal engagement structures. It sets out the plans for pursuing the *knowing our tenants* programme and using this data to increase resident involvement and engagement and deliver better services that better meets the needs of residents.
5. The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) considers resident engagement a core part of its regulatory requirements under the new *Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard*. It expects social landlords to demonstrate how they are working with residents on issues that matter to them, allowing participation at all levels and stages. It also expects that Landlords should be able to show how they are communicating and working with residents throughout the engagement process. This strategy seeks to support Oxford City Council in meeting those requirements.

6. Cabinet approval and recommendation to Council is therefore now sought for the new strategy that will enable the continuation of communication and engagement with residents to jointly take forward the strategic priorities and action plan contained within the strategy.

### **Transforming resident engagement and involvement**

6. OCC is a landlord managing a substantial social housing portfolio, comprising over 8,000 properties. These homes provide accommodation to approximately 24,000 residents across the city. Within this, it is facing major radical changes arising from stricter government regulation and enforcement to improve safety, transparency, and standards for residents. To ensure compliance a new Social Housing Regulator (SHR) has been established with powers to proactively inspect landlords, through a set of four Consumer Standards (*1. Safety and Quality, 2. Tenancy, 3. Neighbourhood and Community and 4. Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard*) together these make up a mandatory framework for landlords to comply.
7. These new requirements alongside the feedback received from a series of engagement events that took place during spring and summer of this year together they have provided a clear acknowledgment that improvements must be made in how OCC engages with its residents. There is also a recognition that there is a need to modernise engagement approaches to ensure that social housing residents who directly experience delivery of housing services—are genuinely involved in shaping how those services are provided. The proposals and action plan outlined in the strategy form part of a wider comprehensive suite of transformation changes taking place throughout the landlord service. Collectively, these changes will enable the housing service to be better structured and placed to deliver better outcomes for residents.
8. Central to the proposals set out in the strategy is also the alignment of OCC's strategic priorities for housing which also seek to ensure the provision of good landlord services and that it ensures residents have more say in the way their homes and communities are managed, embracing diversity and delivering active community involvement. Together, this means that through this strategy there is meaningful commitment to developing the right engagement platforms, the right tools and the right information, offering the support and training necessary for tenants and leaseholders to feel empowered and enabling them to participate fully fostering more effective and meaningful involvement and engagement.

### **A new resident engagement and involvement strategy**

9. The series of engagement events and feedback from residents that took place during the spring and summer of 2025 has been fundamental in preparing the proposals within this strategy. Feedback recognised at the core that improvements were needed on building trust, being heard and building a better relationship between tenants and the Council as a landlord. This has led to acknowledging that relationship with tenants needed to go beyond bricks and mortar – residents want to be heard, feel informed and be involved in improving the quality of services they receive. Taking this into consideration the strategy has been developed on the following four principles;
  - Reset engagement and resident relationships
  - Actively listen to our residents
  - Respond to residents' priorities and their concerns
  - Embed meaningful and effective involvement and engagement structures

## ***Knowing residents, understanding their needs and priorities***

10. Meaningful engagement that truly reflects the diverse voices including those who are silent or under presented requires a good understanding of residents and their needs. Recognising this, the strategy sets out how it will pursue the continuation of the ***Knowing our residents*** programme which is helping to gather data about residents and their needs including their vulnerabilities. This intelligence will help shape improvement plans and engagement activity around what we know about resident's needs – for eg; better balance online and in-person events, tailor approach and reach out to those with mobility or language barriers and be more visibly present in the community and evidence our commitment change and engagement
11. The feedback from residents also provided a better understanding of their top ten priorities and their expectations from OCC as a landlord. These are summarised as follows;

1.	Building safety	6.	A landlord service offer
2.	Better resident involvement and engagement	7.	Visible and accessible services
3.	Better communication	8.	Consistent delivery of services
4.	Better handling of complaints	9.	Accessible policies and procedures
5.	Better handling of repairs	10.	Training and support

12. Understanding residents' needs and their priorities forms a fundamental part of this strategy and this has also guided the development of the strategic proposals, vision and priorities for residents.

### ***Proposals for resetting resident engagement – A resident involvement and engagement offer***

13. This strategy proposes an outline of a new more structured resident involvement and engagement offer - which has been jointly developed with residents throughout the design process. The core aim has been to provide a variety of platforms that can cater to the diverse needs and preferences of our residents.
14. This approach encompasses both 'formal' Council-wide structures and more 'informal' local, one-off opportunities. We expect that the formal mechanisms will enable residents to participate in structured, ongoing involvement at a Council-wide level, ensuring their voices contribute to major decisions and policy development. In contrast, informal opportunities are set out to be more accessible and flexible, allowing residents to engage on an ad hoc basis within their local communities when it suits them best. By offering a range of engagement options, our approach ensures that all residents—regardless of their level of interest or availability—have meaningful opportunities to have their say and influence the services they receive. This dual approach underpins our commitment to fostering a genuinely inclusive and responsive resident engagement culture.

### ***A vision for resident involvement and engagement***

15. Taking in consideration the feedback from residents, the challenges they face, their expectations from OCC as a landlord has enabled the creation of our vision for residents and reflected in the strategy:

***“We will work to enable every opportunity for residents to engage with us in ways that suit them, delivering meaningful and outcome-focused resident involvement where they can influence, scrutinise and shape the delivery of the services they receive”***

16. In setting out the vision, this has naturally led to developing our five strategic priorities that we will seek to deliver through this strategy over the next two years – 2025/28

Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5
Establish and embed the right foundations and culture for meaningful resident engagement and involvement	Establish meaningful resident engagement platforms that are representative and inclusive of our resident community	Develop our knowledge about our residents to deliver services that better meets their needs	Review and strengthen our communication with residents to foster respectful engagement that is inclusive and in ways that meets residents needs	Deliver high quality landlord services to tenants ensuring these exhibit the right behaviours and outcomes for residents

## **Delivering our strategic priorities and action plan**

### ***Empowering residents and supporting staff to deliver***

17. Throughout the strategy, we recognise that, to ensure meaningful and effective resident involvement and engagement, we will need to provide residents with appropriate support. This includes offering training opportunities specifically designed to equip them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their representative and scrutiny roles effectively. We are confident that by providing this support, we will empower our residents to participate confidently, ensuring that their contributions have a real impact on the decisions and improvements that affect their homes and local areas.
18. To deliver this strategy, we must also ensure that the right internal resources are in place. The dedicated Resident Involvement and Engagement Team will support the co-ordination of engagement activities and support service teams with practical support. We will also ensure that the team is supported and provided with the right training and support to carry out their roles effectively. The team will also be responsible for working with resident groups to assess the success of this strategy. Where appropriate, the council will also consider the provision of other resources such as financial and all other associated costs to secure delivery of objectives.

### **Monitoring delivery**

19. To assess the positive outcomes of this resident engagement strategy, we will regularly monitor and report the outcomes of engagement activities against our strategic objectives, identifying areas where resident feedback has directly contributed to tangible improvements. We will also track participation rates, monitor the diversity of those involved and measure the extent to which resident input has influenced service delivery and decision-making processes.
20. In line with RSH requirements, we will also provide and publish the outcomes that this strategy is achieving to our residents on a regular basis. We will also expect to be able to demonstrate to them the positive changes in service quality, resident satisfaction, and trust as a direct result of our engagement efforts – including the difference it is making to ensure engagement and representation from our vulnerable and diverse resident groups has been successfully captured.

## Financial implications

21. The proposals within this strategy are intended to be cost neutral and can be delivered using existing approved budgets for resident engagement. Any additional financial implications arising from implementation will be maintained within the wider HRA housing service budgets and subject to relevant financial governance processes.

## Legal issues

22. This strategy will contribute and support the Council's requirement and compliance with the Social Housing Act 2023 and the Regulator for Social Housing associated Consumer Standards – in particular the *Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard Consumer Standards 1 April 2024*.
23. The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code recommends consultation with a relevant resident panel on complaints policies and procedures and that a relevant resident panel receive reports on feedback, learning, and improvements arising from the complaints process.

## Level of risk

24. The risks of not meeting social housing regulator requirements include regulatory action, such as performance improvement plans or the potential for financial penalties. This can lead to a loss of public trust, damage the Council's reputation, and a negative impact on building good working relations with residents and meeting the strategic vision and action plan.

## Equality impact

27. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached as **Appendix 2**.

## Carbon and Environmental Considerations

28. The adoption of this strategy may go towards helping reduce carbon emissions by ensuring housing services are available locally. The inclusion of digital engagement channels will also help reduce the carbon footprint.

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