

Minutes from the:

St Albans City & District Council Tenant and Leaseholder Forum

1. Date / Time:

25 June 2026, 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Location: Boardroom

2. Attendees:

Residents attended from a range of neighbourhoods across the district, including London Colney, How Wood, Masefield Road, Aldwick Court and Thirlestane.

The following officers and representatives were present:

- Resident Engagement Team Leader
- Strategy, Quality and Assurance Manager
- Housing Performance and Data representative
- Neighbourhood Team Leader
- Housing Services representatives
- Lead Councillor for Housing and Homelessness
- Representatives from Age UK

The Resident Engagement Team Leader opened the session, welcomed attendees and introduced new members to the Forum.

An overview was provided of the purpose of the Tenant and Leaseholder Forum, including its role in holding Housing Services to account, ensuring resident and leaseholder voices influence decision-making and supporting continuous improvement across housing services.

Residents were advised that upcoming engagement activity would include Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), development of the Resident Engagement Strategy and a dedicated TSM scrutiny workshop to explore the issues that matter most to residents.

The Forum was also advised that participation in transactional surveys had increased following further development of the Council's CX-Feedback programme.

This will provide additional resident insight to support service monitoring and improvement.

3. Disclosure of Personal and/or Pecuniary Interests:

- No financial or pecuniary interests were declared.

4. Age UK Presentation

Representatives from Age UK provided an overview of their work to support older people to live safely, independently and well within their homes and communities.

The Forum heard about Age UK's approach to engagement and service delivery, including understanding residents' needs, developing appropriate support and reviewing the impact of services.

It was noted that St Albans and Hertfordshire have undertaken work to support age-friendly communities and environments.

Age UK also provided information about the **Good Homes Hub**, which aims to provide a more joined-up route to support for older residents. Support available through the service includes:

- Housing advice and assistance
- Support with home adaptations
- Digital inclusion and digital confidence
- Access to social and community opportunities
- Advice aimed at helping residents remain independent within their homes

Discussion focused particularly on digital inclusion and the potential risk of digital exclusion.

Residents recognised that technology and assistive technology can help people remain safe and independent for longer. However, concerns were raised that some older or vulnerable residents may be uncomfortable using digital services and could become excluded where telephone or face-to-face contact is reduced.

One resident highlighted that some older people actively prefer more traditional ways of accessing services and maintaining community connections.

Residents also discussed difficulties accessing some services by telephone and the impact this can have on those who are unable or unwilling to use online services.

The Strategy, Quality and Assurance Manager noted that assistive technology can provide significant benefits, particularly where it enables people to remain safely and independently in their homes.

The Forum also discussed opportunities for **intergenerational working**, including bringing younger and older residents together to:

- Build stronger community connections
- Improve digital confidence
- Share skills and experience
- Help reduce social isolation

Age UK highlighted the value of Older People's Forums and other resident networks in ensuring the experiences of older residents inform housing, planning and community services.

It was agreed that officers would explore opportunities to arrange a **Walking Audit at Five Acres**.

5. Resident Engagement Strategy

The Resident Engagement Team Leader provided an update on the development of the Council's Resident Engagement Strategy.

It was explained that the strategy will provide a clearer framework for how residents can influence Housing Services and will be supported through annual delivery planning, consultation and opportunities for co-design.

A key area of focus is improving how the Council **"closes the loop"** with residents.

The Forum heard that residents do not always receive clear information explaining what has happened as a result of their feedback. This has also been identified through previous external review and regulatory work.

The strategy will therefore seek to make the relationship between resident feedback, decision-making and service improvement more visible.

Residents responded positively to the Council's existing **"You Said, We Did"** communications and suggested that this approach should continue to be developed.

Discussion also highlighted concerns regarding:

- Communication from Housing Services
- Staff attitude and professionalism
- The tone of some interactions with residents
- Residents having to make formal complaints before receiving a response
- Delays in receiving updates about ongoing issues

Residents commented that these experiences were not viewed as isolated and that communication remained an important area for improvement.

The Forum also discussed access to Council services by telephone. Concerns were raised regarding phone lines closing at 1:00 pm and the impact this can have on residents who work during the day.

The Lead Councillor for Housing and Homelessness agreed to raise the issue with relevant colleagues, including whether service availability could be maintained through alternative staff coverage arrangements.

Further discussion took place regarding communication between residents, the Council and Morgan Sindall.

Residents raised concerns regarding:

- Responsiveness
- Communication between the contractor and Council officers
- Updates to residents
- Coordination of repairs and appointments

It was confirmed that improvements to resident-facing information on the Council website were also being considered, including making it clearer how residents can report repairs, raise complaints and access relevant services.

The possibility of involving residents in testing Housing webpages was discussed positively.

The Resident Engagement Team Leader also outlined a number of engagement initiatives being developed, including:

- Establishing a small Resident Panel to support scrutiny and decision-making
- Providing residents with opportunities to undertake focused review or “homework” activity between meetings
- Developing a Mystery Shopper exercise involving residents and Council officers
- Using mystery shopping to better understand the resident experience across the end-to-end customer journey

These initiatives will form part of the wider approach to strengthening resident influence and scrutiny.

6. Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Regulation

The Strategy, Quality and Assurance Manager provided an update on Tenant Satisfaction Measures and the Council's ongoing regulatory improvement work.

It was confirmed that an Improvement Plan and Performance Scorecard are being developed to strengthen:

- Accountability
- Service monitoring
- Performance transparency
- Oversight of improvement activity

The Forum heard that TSM results will be used alongside complaints data, operational performance and resident feedback to identify areas requiring further improvement.

Residents will be invited to contribute through focus groups, scrutiny activity and other engagement opportunities.

The importance of residents representing experiences from different neighbourhoods and housing types was discussed, together with the need for sustained resident involvement to support meaningful scrutiny.

The Forum was also advised that estate inspections and Walking Audits would continue, including activity at Thirlestane and Five Acres.

Actions identified included:

- Recruiting residents to participate in TSM focus groups and scrutiny activity
- Continuing development of the Resident Panel
- Using resident feedback alongside performance data to inform service improvement

7. Repairs Service – Morgan Sindall Update

An update was provided on the current repairs service and preparations for the Council's future repairs arrangements.

The Forum heard that work is underway to consider the Council's future repairs contract. This includes market engagement and consideration of the potential implications of Local Government Reorganisation.

It was confirmed that resident engagement will form an important part of the procurement process, with residents being given opportunities to help define expectations for the future service.

Areas for resident involvement are expected to include:

- What residents consider to be a good repairs service
- Priorities for the future contract
- Communication expectations
- Contractor behaviour and professionalism
- Quality of completed work
- How performance should be monitored

Residents raised significant concerns regarding their experiences of the existing Morgan Sindall repairs service.

Concerns included:

- Quality and consistency of completed work
- Cleanliness following works
- Communication and appointment updates
- Responsiveness
- Care and professionalism when working in residents' homes

It was acknowledged that some transactional survey responses have shown more positive experiences, but residents attending the Forum emphasised the importance of understanding the reasons behind poor experiences as part of future service improvement and procurement activity.

The Resident Engagement Team Leader confirmed that further resident engagement would be undertaken to establish “**what good looks like**” from a resident perspective and to ensure resident expectations are considered in the development of the future repairs service.

8. Next Steps

Actions arising from the meeting include:

- Explore arrangements for an Age UK / resident Walking Audit at Five Acres
- Continue consultation and co-design activity for the Resident Engagement Strategy
- Strengthen “You Said, We Did” and other approaches to closing the feedback loop

- Raise concerns regarding afternoon telephone access with relevant Council colleagues
- Explore opportunities for residents to test Housing webpages
- Progress development of the Resident Panel
- Develop the proposed Mystery Shopper exercise
- Recruit residents for TSM scrutiny and focus group activity
- Continue Walking Audits and estate-based engagement
- Ensure residents are involved in defining expectations for the future repairs service

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next Tenant and Leaseholder Forum will take place on **27 August 2026**.