



# COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY

2024-2027



## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Community Gateway Association (CGA) is a mutual organisation formed for the benefit of the community and founded on the Gateway Model principles of mutuality, accountability and engagement.
- 1.2 CGA is governed by a number of rules which commit us to provide support and opportunities to our members and local communities to enable them to fully participate in both their community as well as the internal affairs of the association. In order to achieve this, we have a Community Empowerment Strategy which sets out how we will secure the widest possible involvement in the association.
- 1.3 We currently offer a wide range of opportunities for tenants to have their voice heard and influence how we deliver our housing services and our investment in communities. Over recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of individuals actively engaging with CGA, as well as more diverse voices.
- 1.4 This strategy seeks to strengthen our strong performance and build on our successes. By working with tenants, we aim to build relationships that are open and transparent, with interactions that make tenants feel they have been treated fairly and with respect.
- 1.5 Effective delivery against the strategy will help us to contribute to the Corporate Plan priority '*to provide great customer service*'. By understanding tenants' priorities, we will be able to shape our services to better meet their needs. One of our Corporate Values is '*to put tenants at the heart of all we do*' and this strategy supports this by placing tenants at the heart of our decision making.
- 1.6 As an adopter of the Together with Tenants Charter we will continue to strengthen our relationship with our tenants, ensuring tenants views are sought

and valued. We want every tenant to feel listened to on the issues that matter the most to them.

- 1.7 The new agenda for social housing regulation aims to increase transparency and accountability across the sector, setting out tenant's rights to have their voice heard by their landlord and to know how we are performing so they can hold us to account.
- 1.8 More recently the launch of the new Consumer Standards clearly sets out expectations on landlords around the tenant voice through its Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard. These standards set out expectations of landlords to:
- Give tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise our strategies, policies and services.
  - Assist tenants who wish to implement tenant-led activities to influence and scrutinise policies and services.
  - Provide accessible support that meets the diverse needs of tenants so they can engage with opportunities.
  - Work with tenants to regularly consider ways to improve and tailor their approach to delivering housing services including tenant engagement.
  - Take tenants' views into account in decision-making about how housing services are delivered and communicate how tenants' views have been considered.
- 1.9 This strategy will ensure we are able to deliver against these regulatory expectations as well as raising tenant satisfaction that CGA listens to views and acts on them.

## **2.0 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY**

- 2.1 The purpose of the strategy is to set out our approach to tenant engagement and empowerment. It details how we will strengthen the tenant voice and ensure that all tenants can have their voice heard, through effective

engagement. This strategy closely links to our Community Investment Strategy which sets out how we will work with tenants and residents to identify where we need to invest in our communities to deliver sustainable change and create cleaner, greener and safer neighbourhoods.

2.2 This strategy builds on the success of previous Community Empowerment Strategies. A few of our recent successes over the last 12 months include:

- Strong digital engagement performance with over 1,100 tenants registered and active on our Tenant Hub and over 550 tenants actively involved on our Tenant-Only Facebook Group, where they can complete surveys, give us their feedback and more.
- We carried out 11 tenant consultation activities which led to a positive change or service improvement.
- Gateway Central, our strategic tenant committee, met seven times and were involved in shaping our new Corporate Plan and Vision, influencing our Service Transformation Strategy, agreeing our approach to managing Damp and Mould, helped us to shape our new Corporate Values, and much more.
- We carried out three scrutiny reviews and tenants were supported by an independent consultant to ensure they were able to be fully effective.
- Our Gateway2You sessions saw us take our tenant involvement activities out into the heart of our communities and our pop-up door knocking activities allowed us to engage with those tenants who would not normally get involve with us and have their voice heard.

2.3 The key aims of this strategy are:

- To amplify the tenant voice so it is clearly heard throughout the organisation with greater influence in our housing strategies, policies and services, and share the impact the tenant voice has had.
- To ensure we continue to listen to diverse tenant voices and provide support to those who want to get involved but need some help.

- To continue to support tenant-led decision making and influence through robust scrutiny arrangements and in-depth service reviews.
- To ensure our communications remain fully accessible so all tenants are fully informed about how we are delivering our services so they are able to hold us to account.
- To continue to support our strategic tenant committee, Gateway Central, strengthening its links with the Board to provide greater assurance of tenant influence.
- To ensure we exceed the expectations of regulatory requirements, deliver against our community empowerment rules, and ultimately deliver a great customer service for our tenants.

### **3.0 SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY**

- 3.1 This strategy outlines our approach to working with tenants, residents, and community partners. It sets out how we will deliver our engagement activities to amplify the tenant voice across the association.
- 3.2 It ensures tenants are well informed so they can hold us to account, whilst utilising both formal and informal feedback to develop our services. Ultimately, providing assurance to our Board that tenants views are being sought, listened to, and acted upon.
- 3.3 It applies to all Community Gateway employees, tenants, residents, and partners living within Community Gateway neighbourhoods.
- 3.4 Whilst the Engagement and Communications Team will take the lead in delivering the objectives of this strategy, there is a responsibility on managers for ensuring tenants have meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise their strategies, policies, and services. All CGA colleagues are expected to champion and promote tenant involvement, supporting our value of *'putting tenants at the heart of all we do'*.

## **4.0 THE STRATEGY**

4.1 This strategy contains four themes each with a number of actions we will take ensure we achieve the aims.

### **Theme 1 – Amplifying the tenant voice – increased influence and accountability.**

4.2 We will create a louder tenant voice that is heard throughout the organisation through an effective tenant engagement framework which provides genuine opportunities for tenants to influence services. We will ensure all feedback is received and listened to, and report on how we are learning from it.

4.3 We will ensure we communicate with tenants the impact the tenant voice has across the organisation. By sharing the impact, we will be able to evidence the value added, reassuring those who have participated that they have been listened to. It will also encourage more tenants to participate in future opportunities where they can have genuine influence.

4.4 We will continue to develop relationships with tenants that are open and transparent. By providing opportunities for tenants to have their voice heard, we will build trust and make sure they are treated fairly and with respect through every interaction.

4.5 We will deliver consultation activities with tenants, allowing us to proactively gain tenants views on specific services and proposed changes. Consultation activities allow us to gain an in-depth understanding on focussed service areas and utilise insight information to ensure we are hearing from different voices.

4.6 As a Community Gateway Model our members are key, they hold us to account at the highest level and ensure we are operating effectively. We will continue to promote Membership and engagement opportunities to all tenants and ensure we acknowledge and value those who get involved and make a contribution.

4.7 We will continue to develop our strategic committee, Gateway Central, as they are key to monitoring our performance in this area. We will ensure they are well informed through the information we provide, allowing them to effectively hold us to account. We want to strengthen the relationship between Gateway Central and Board, allowing us to ensure the Tenant Voice has prominence at the highest level, whilst providing assurance to the Board we are listening to tenants.

4.8 The actions we will take to achieve this aim are:

4.8.1 Carry out a review of our tenant engagement framework to ensure it supports the new consumer regulations expectations.

4.8.2 Carry out in-depth tenant consultation reviews of all tenant-facing services.

4.8.3 Re-launch our new approach to promoting Membership of the Association.

4.8.4 Strengthen the relationship between Gateway Central and Board through face-to-face engagement opportunities.

### **Theme 2 – Accessible Engagement – supporting tenants to engage.**

4.9 We will deliver a menu of tenant engagement opportunities, providing tenants with a wide variety of ways to get involved with us, ensuring our opportunities are accessible to all tenants who wish to take part.

4.10 We will continue to offer both in-person and digital engagement opportunities, providing tenants with the opportunity to have their voice heard at a time and place which suits them. Every voice will be valued, regardless of the time given. We will maintain a record of all formal and informal engagement activities to allow us to effectively monitor the feedback.

- 4.11 The Tenant Voice will only be truly effective if it represents the diversity of our tenant base, taking into account individual needs and characteristics. We will utilise tenant profiling information to better understand our tenants and measure diverse representation in tenant engagement activities. We will offer a wide range of opportunities that are accessible to all, providing tailored support to all tenants who want to engage with us.
- 4.12 We will continue to work with local community partners who represent our diverse communities, utilising their knowledge and relationships to help us to better engage with our most hard to reach tenants and understand how best to remove any barriers.
- 4.13 We will provide training and support for tenants to get involved. Empowering tenants to take a lead in localised opportunities and working with them to develop the services they receive.
- 4.14 It is important we ensure that those tenants who are involved in our governance arrangements have the skills needed to effectively hold us to account. We will offer bespoke training to members of our strategic tenant committee to enable them to deliver their roles effectively.
- 4.15 The actions we will take to achieve this aim are:
- 4.15.1 Analyse the diversity information of our involved tenants and tailor activities to encourage under-represented groups to get involved with us.
  - 4.15.2 Utilise our tenant profiling information to ensure we get a diverse range of tenants to get involved with targeted consultation activities.
  - 4.15.3 Develop a training programme for Gateway Central members.
  - 4.15.4 Annually report on the diversity information of those tenants who have been involved with us.



**Theme 3 – Tenant-Led Activities – to influence and scrutinise strategies, policies and services.**

- 4.16 We will provide a range of consultation activities to enable tenants to influence and scrutinise strategies, policies and services. We aim to strengthen tenant influence across the association by offering genuine activities where tenants can have influence, resulting in tenant-led decisions and service improvements.
- 4.17 We will work in partnership with tenants to independently scrutinise our services which impact the quality of their homes and services. We will have an open scrutiny group that allows tenants to take part in reviewing the services that they are interested in. We will ensure the group are well informed and have access to the information they need to hold us to account and make recommendations. We will share the impact of activities with tenants through tenant friendly scrutiny reports, as well coverage on our social media channels, website, and in our tenant newsletter, Gateway News.
- 4.18 We want to encourage more tenants who have received services from us to share their experiences, views and feedback through our tenant engagement activities. We will utilise our data to target tenants who have received services to participate in specific consultation activities.
- 4.19 Gateway Central and Board will provide overall oversight to tenant engagement activities to ensure the tenant voice is being heard, listened to and used to inform decision making. We will provide quarterly Tenant Voice reports to Gateway Central to provide assurance we are delivering against this strategy, as well as annual progress reports to Board and to our Members at our Annual General Meeting.
- 4.20 The actions we will take to achieve this aim are:

4.20.1 Carry out at least 3 scrutiny reviews each year.

4.20.2 Produce tenant friendly scrutiny reports and publish these on our website.

4.20.3 Provide quarterly reports on our tenant engagement activities to Gateway Central.

4.20.4 Provide annual reports on our tenant engagement activities to Board.

4.20.5 Produce quarterly 'You Said – We Did' reports and publish on our website.

#### **Theme 4 –Keeping you informed of things that matter the most to you**

4.21 We will ensure we are open and honest in all our interactions with tenants to build trust. We will regularly share information on our performance and services with tenants to keep them informed about the subjects that matter most to them.

4.22 We will continue to work with tenants to create accessible communications that are clear and easy to understand, clearly setting out what tenants can expect from us.

4.23 We understand our tenants access information in different ways. We will utilise our tenant profiling information and individual communication preferences to tailor our approach and ensure the information we share is accessible.

4.24 Successful delivery of this strategy will allow us to establish two-way relationships where tenants feel engaged, informed, listened to and respected.

4.25 The actions we will take to achieve this aim are:

4.25.1 Carry out a review in partnership with tenants, of the performance information we share on our website and ensure it is accessible and easy to understand.

4.25.2 Carry out a review in partnership with tenants, of the service information we share on our website to ensure it is accessible and easy to understand.

4.25.3 Continue to report our Insight Information to Gateway Central and Board and work with tenants to address any performance concerns.

## 5.0 Measures of Success

5.1 We will report on our progress in delivery of this strategy and the actions on an annual basis to Gateway Central, Board and to our Members at our Annual General Meeting. The key measures we will use to monitor our performance are:

<b>Measure</b>	<b>As at 31/03/24</b>	<b>Target Year 1</b>	<b>Target Year 2</b>	<b>Target Year 3</b>
Number of tenant views obtained through consultation	1,019	1,100	1,200	1,300
Number of actively involved tenants	950	1,000	1,100	1,200
Number of active tenant Members	392	400	420	440
Number of scrutiny reviews completed	3	3	3	3
% of tenants satisfied that CGA listen to views and acts upon them	66.07%	68.00%	70.00%	72.00%
% of tenants satisfied that CGA keeps them informed about things that matter the most to them	74.59%	76.00%	78.00%	80.00%
Annually report on the diversity of tenant involvement	-	-	-	-

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