



IPSWICH
BOROUGH COUNCIL



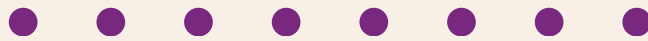
TENANT ENGAGEMENT PANEL

**Achievements, Development, and
Key Activities**

October 2025-May 2026

REPORT OVERVIEW

This report explains the work and progress of the Tenant Engagement Panel (TEP) from October 2025 to May 2026. It shows the effort and commitment of panel members, the changes made to the panel, and the main activities they have taken part in. The report also shows how tenant feedback has helped improve engagement, support better services, and build stronger working relationships between tenants and Ipswich Borough Council.



ACHIEVEMENTS

The Choices for Voices programme is now well established, and the Tenant Engagement Panel has continued to work together with strong commitment. During this period, panel members have made important contributions that show how valuable tenant involvement is. Together, they have achieved many positive results, helped shape key areas of work, and strengthened the tenant voice in improving services.



Highlights of the Tenant Engagement Panel's
Achievements

- **Language and Terminology Guide.**

Created together with tenants, this guide has now been officially approved and is being shared across Ipswich Borough Council. The guide helps make sure all staff use clear, respectful, and consistent language when speaking or writing to tenants, including in conversations, letters, and formal messages.



- **Choices for Voices Logo**

The Vice Chair of the Tenant Engagement Panel developed an official logo for the Choices for Voices programme. The logo will act as a clear symbol of tenant involvement and will be used to show when work has been shaped and approved by tenants.



- **Code of Conduct**

The Tenant Engagement Panel worked closely with Tenant Engagement Officers to review and approve the Code of Conduct. This helps make sure everyone understands the rules and behaves in a respectful and positive way when working together as a panel.

- **Terms of Reference**

The Tenant Engagement Panel worked closely with Tenant Engagement Officers to review and approve the Terms of Reference. This helps everyone understand their roles, responsibilities, and how the panel is run, so it can work in a clear and accountable way.



- **Consultation of Internal and External Policies**

The Tenant Engagement Panel is regularly asked to give feedback on new and updated policies that may affect tenants. This includes important areas such as Awaab's Law and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

Since the Tenant Readers group was set up, the Panel no longer carries out detailed checks of individual policies or tenant letters. Instead, the Panel oversees this work by reviewing the Tenant Readers group's feedback and approving their recommendations. This helps make sure tenant views continue to shape policies and communications.

- **Tenant Engagement Action Plan**

After advice from Tpas, the Tenant Engagement Action Plan was reviewed and updated. The Scrutiny Panel checked the new plan and suggested changes, which were added. The updated plan has now been officially approved by the Tenant Engagement Panel.



- **Co-creation with the Newly Established Scrutiny and Complaints Panel**

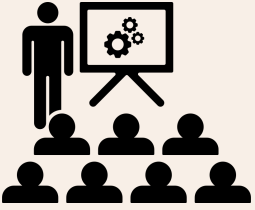
In the past, the Tenant Engagement Panel was taking on extra work because there was no Scrutiny Panel in place. To improve this, a new Scrutiny Panel has now been set up. It works separately from the Tenant Engagement Panel and has its own role.

The Scrutiny Panel now reports its work to the Tenant Engagement Panel. This helps make roles clearer and makes sure everyone is responsible for their part. Since the Scrutiny Panel started, the two panels have begun working well together. This has helped improve tenant involvement and the checking of services.



- **Tpas Chair and Scrutiny Training**

Members of the Tenant Engagement Panel, along with members from the Scrutiny and Complaints Panel, took part in training run by Tpas. The training helped panel members learn how to chair meetings and carry out effective scrutiny. It also helped build confidence, improve skills, and support strong leadership across all panels.

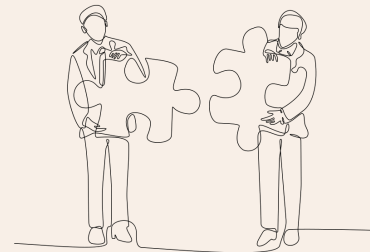


- **Tenant Engagement Panels First Ever Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

In March 2026, the Tenant Engagement Panel held its first Annual General Meeting (AGM). The meeting was open to everyone and was well attended by housing staff. It was seen as a successful event and gave people time to look back at what had been achieved and to talk about future plans. During the meeting, a new Chair and Vice Chair were chosen to lead the Panel moving forward.



- **New Chair and Vice Chair voted in.**



DEVELOPMENT

This section explains the ongoing work and commitments of the Tenant Engagement Panel (TEP). It highlights what the Panel is currently working on, as well as the longer-term priorities they continue to focus on.



- **Online Repairs Portal**



The Tenant Engagement Panel has been involved in reviewing and helping improve the online repairs portal. After the changes were made, the Panel asked for a working group to be set up. This will allow more tenants to test the updated portal and share their views and feedback.

- **Ask Digby - AI Digital Assistant**

The Tenant Engagement Panel continues to work closely with the Customer Service team at Ipswich Borough Council to review the AI digital assistant, Ask Digby. Together, they are looking at ways to improve the system before it goes live. This work helps make sure Ask Digby meets tenant needs and gives users a good and positive experience.



- **Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) Working Group.**

A working group was set up to look at fire risk checks in shared buildings and communal areas. Tenants who live in these buildings were involved in reviewing how things are currently done. The group worked together to look at ways to keep shared spaces clear and reduce fire risks. Their findings and ideas were written down and shared with the Tenant Engagement Panel to provide further guidance.



- **Ready Steady Rent**

Two members of the Tenant Engagement Panel have already accessed support through the Ready Steady Rent service and are actively helping to promote the service to other tenants.

- **Stop Social Housing Stigma Campaign.**

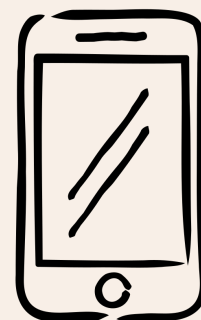
Ipswich Borough Council is committed to challenging negative views about social housing, in line with the Stop Social Housing Stigma campaign. The Tenant Engagement Panel has played an important role in shaping this work. Panel members have taken part in workshops and shared their knowledge alongside other tenants.

By working closely with Tenant Engagement Officers, the Panel is helping to create an internal training video for housing staff. This video will put tenant experiences at the centre, helping staff better understand tenants' lives and supporting positive change in attitudes and culture.



- **Digital Media Creation**

The Tenant Engagement Panel has played an important role in encouraging the use of digital media to improve how tenants are involved. Because of this work, funding was approved by the Area Housing Panel to buy a camera. The camera is now being used to share tenant engagement activities and to help create training materials for staff, including content that helps challenge negative views about social housing.



- **Caretaker Review**

Two members of the Tenant Engagement Panel are taking part in the ongoing review of the caretaker service. They share helpful ideas and feedback to improve the service. By attending review meetings and spending time with caretakers at work, they help make sure the service reflects what tenants need and care about.

KEY ACTIVITIES

The Tenant Engagement Panel has attended many events, including Walkabouts and Talkabouts, to make sure tenants are visible and involved. They are also involved in organising the Chantry Park Community Day on the 21st of August 2026. These events show that tenants talking with other tenants is one of the best ways to encourage involvement and build trust. The Panel hopes to attend even more events in 2026, increasing their presence in the community and continuing to strengthen tenant engagement across the borough.

