

together

2019-2024

Our strategy for modern, effective engagement

Together is Origin Housing's strategy to engage and work with its residents, communities and other partners. It sets out how we listen, learn and respond to people's views, to change the ways we think, communicate and act. The strategy is based on [inputs from our staff, board members, key contractor and more than 500 residents.](#)

Our vision

Together helps us achieve [our vision](#) for:

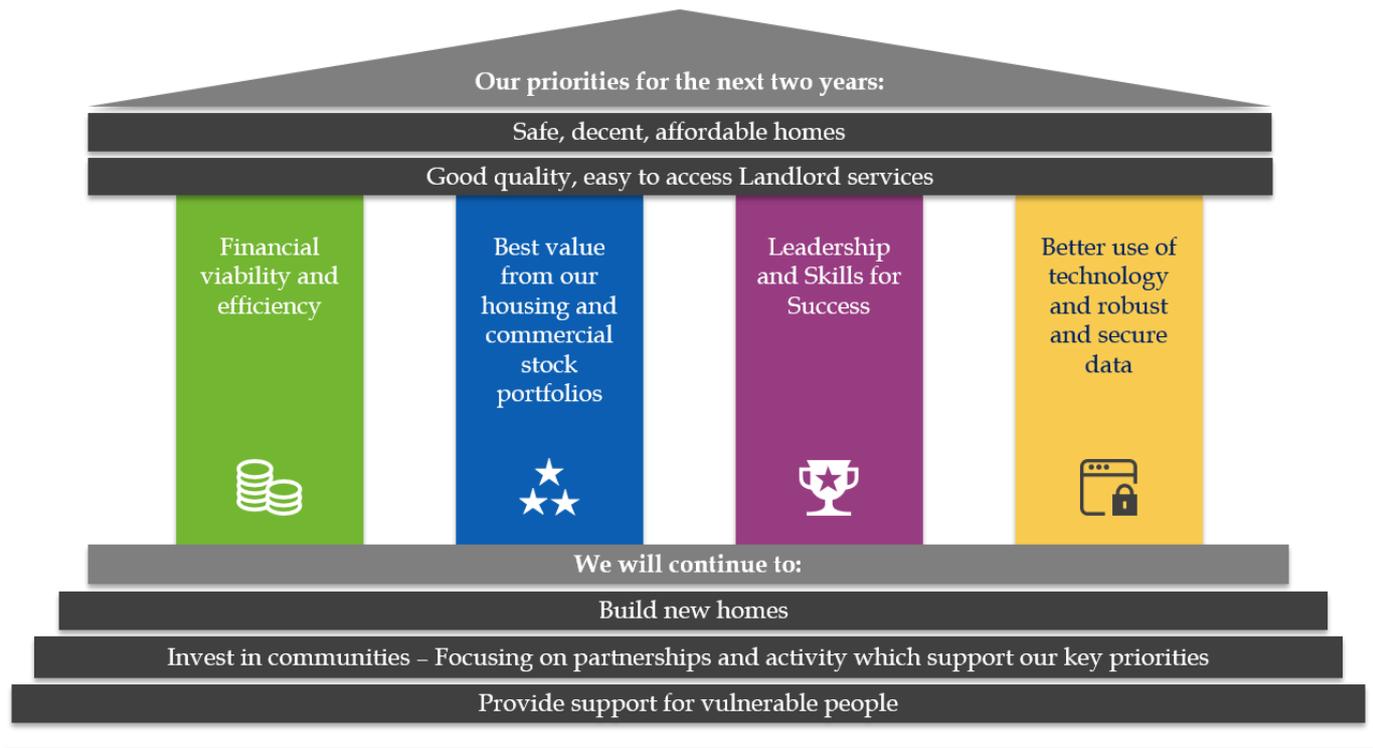
- Great homes
- Positive people
- Strong communities.

Leading towards the centenary of our organisation in 2024, the strategy sets us the challenge to live up to the spirit and energy of our founders, who recognised that '*housing is not enough.*' It makes our relationships with residents the centrepiece of how we improve services, support neighbourhoods and grow as a social business.

Our approach

- Working in partnership with residents and communities to address issues that matter
- Driving better services and increased satisfaction
- Regular and open communication reaching a wider audience by using digital channels
- Something for everyone to ensure flexibility and wider range of involvement
- Involves every staff and board member
- Reviving the spirit of our founders and rediscovering the passion

Our strategy is underpinned by Origin 2020 four pillars:



Three ways of working

Together commits every Origin staff and board member to three simple, powerful and constant ways of working:

1. Involvement and scrutiny:

Asking residents and partners how they feel about what we do, and for their ideas to help us to do things differently and better. Acknowledging, responding to and acting on this feedback to achieve positive change. Learning from the insight, inspiration and talents of residents and partners to challenge the way we work; shaping service standards, culture change and our use of technology.

Examples of involvement and scrutiny

- Local inspections and reports
- Checking and testing performance, compliance and satisfaction
- Consulting on proposals and decisions
- Residents' input to Origin's governance, strategy and business transformation

2. Investing in communities:

Devoting time, effort and resources to learn and involve ourselves in what matters most to residents and local communities. Reaching out to offer support, unlock possibilities and create opportunities to help build safe, strong and stable neighbourhoods that last.

Examples of investing in communities:

- ‘Together time’ community involvement and activities
- Community development and investment projects
- Open communication about real-life impact and social value from engagement
- Collaborative working with Origin’s partners

3. Trying new ways and learning from others:

Being open to innovation, willing to experiment and able to tailor what we do for different individuals, groups and communities. To ensure we lead and learn from best practice, **together** commits Origin to arranging or hosting at least two study visits with other housing providers and relevant organisations each year. Open to residents, staff, board members and partners, these visits bring people together outside of the day-to-day service and governance settings, to build trust, ambition and capacity.

Examples of trying new ways and learn from others:

- ‘Study’ visits to other organisations

This three-pronged approach meets the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator’s [Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard](#), and anticipates [likely future changes to the law, co-regulation and best practice](#).

Together time – and money

To achieve a lasting and high-impact step-change in the way we work, **Together** releases every Origin staff member to devote some of **their working days each year** to spend time in communities; working alongside residents and service users to support local priorities.

This ‘together time’ is on top of colleagues’ other general input to resident and community engagement. It’s a practical and clear statement of our long-term commitment to relationships, neighbourhoods and partnerships.

Staff are free to choose how, where and when they invest their time (for example, in a single week/place or over a series of days, locations and events). They are just

accountable for making it happen in a fair way, and showing what difference it makes to them, the business and the people/places/issues they support.

Together time comes with a ring-fenced **community fund** each year to pay for extra, 'service-plus' improvements. It's distributed quarterly by a joint panel of residents and staff. We seek donations and contributions from our partners towards this fund, for which staff and residents can submit bids at any time.

Engaging everyone

Together offers every resident and service user an equal opportunity to share their views and use their influence in whatever ways suit them best. It covers tried and tested, traditional methods like joint estate inspections, face-to-face focus groups and work shadowing, as well as more modern digital tools such as video/picture messaging and online/[app-based consultation and decision-making](#). Tenants, leaseholders, shared owners, older people, younger people or families of people receiving care and support: we welcome everyone's contribution.

Measuring success

We measure the success of **Together** through four, simple indicators:

- *Input* – how fully we [deliver the together time, drive time and community fund](#)
- *Outcome* – what impact everyone sees, hears and feels from working together
- *Value* – what [return and social value](#) we achieve from our investment
- *Benchmark* – how our approach and activity measure up to the best organisations

Communicate, communicate, communicate

Above all, success depends on how and how well Origin communicates with residents – from our very first contact with people as applicants and new customers, to the ongoing everyday service experience, publicising results from our four strategy indicators and making everyone feel part of what we do.

Together uses the full range of channels to inform, assist and listen to residents and partners – keeping everyone up to date, inviting opinions and showing how positive engagement makes a difference to the lives of people and communities. Whenever possible, we aim to use residents' preferred method(s) of communication, be it face-to-face, email, web, text, phone, post or social media.

Good communication and services in turn depend on collecting, maintaining and using accurate, up-to-date information about residents, homes and localities. So gathering, checking and extending the details we hold about residents and neighbourhoods is part of every service contact.

Meeting expectations

Origin residents expect some basic things – to:

- live in safe, suitable and well-maintained homes
- be part of sustainable communities where they're happy to live stay
- get a high quality of help and response to enquiries and requests
- be treated with courtesy, respect and sensitivity to personal differences
- get and see good value for money for the rents and charges they pay
- have a chance to shape the way Origin works and spends their money
- be listened to and able to work with Origin's staff, board and partners as equals
- be kept informed and up to date about everything to do with their relationship with Origin.

When we consistently achieve these things, we can work together to agree and deliver more advanced, reasonable expectations – identifying what we can and cannot offer, and what makes most difference to people's lives.

Happy 100th

The cumulative effect of **Together** will be to make Origin a better, bolder business – living up to the vision of our founders to deliver more homes, better services, greater satisfaction and happier communities.

Our centenary year in 2024 will include a joint review and celebration of how **Together** has changed the way Origin thinks, works and acts over the preceding five years.

Effective engagement is everyone's job and never ends.



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