

# Stakeholder survey 2025: Summary report



## About the survey

At Cottsway, we see our work as a partnership between customers, staff, and key stakeholders. Delivering our services effectively depends on strong collaboration, which is central to our purpose. We regularly gather customer and staff feedback, and we also value input from the organisations we work with.

Between June-August 2025, we ran an online survey to gather stakeholder feedback. We invited 155 representatives from organisations Cottsway works closely with to take part - including local authorities, elected officials, developers, contractors, funders, lenders, and legal/advisory services. Respondents were given the opportunity to answer anonymously.

This report, published in December 2025, sets out the questions we asked and a summary of the results.

### Survey focus

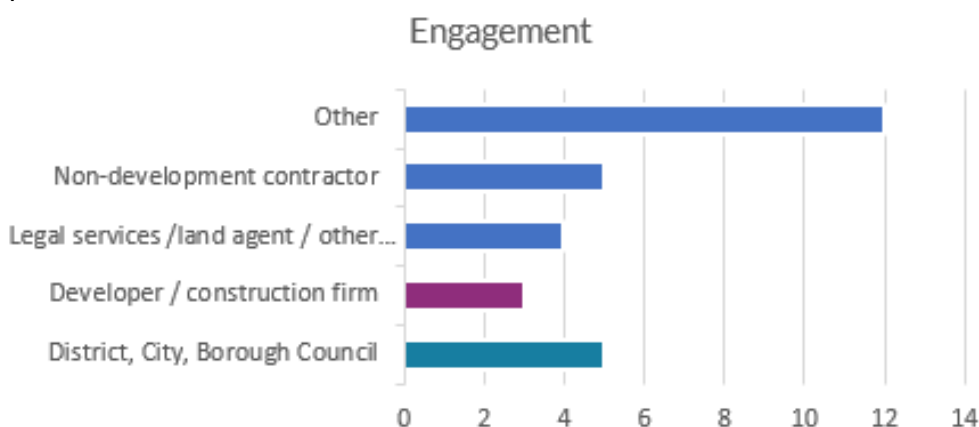
We asked stakeholders about:

- How well we deliver on our purpose and values
- Our strengths and areas for improvement
- How well we understand their organisation and respond to their needs
- How we can support their future priorities or challenges
- Our effectiveness as a partner and the quality of our communication

### Engagement

We received 29 survey responses. These came from development and non-development contractors (28%), local authorities (17%) and advisory services (14%). The remaining responses were from a range of other partners.

We asked participants to rate how much they agreed with a range of statements and also gave them space to share comments.



# Impression of Cottsway

## **?** We asked stakeholders: Do you agree we deliver on our purpose?

'Together we are turning houses into homes, growing and building stronger communities and making a positive difference to people's lives.'

**86%** agreed we deliver on our purpose

(14% didn't know)

## **?** We asked stakeholders: Do you agree we deliver on our core values?

**87%** agreed we deliver on our core values

(10% didn't know, 3% (one respondent\*) disagreed we deliver on some our core values)

Our core values are:

- We are open and transparent about how we do business
- We are here for the long term
- We see Cottsway as a partnership between customers and staff and key stakeholders
- We will do all we can to provide our customers with decent homes from which they can enhance their lives
- We are part of, and value, the communities in which we work.



Cottsway have demonstrated just how committed they are to their core values in everything they do. Our council has found Cottsway to be a really key partner in delivering high-quality homes and building communities.

\* One respondent did not feel we always deliver on our core values. Their feedback highlighted:

- Transparency: Roles in housing management can feel unclear, leading to delays and confusion.
- Partnership: Some improvements noted (e.g., skip provision), but concerns remain around gaps in support, inconsistent expectations with volunteer-led work, and variable work quality.
- Community engagement: They felt we are not visibly active in the local community.



## We asked stakeholders: What would you say our main strengths are?

Cottsway was praised for having professional, approachable staff who deliver on promises and live by strong values. Partners appreciate the open communication, transparency, and consistent processes that build trust and support smooth collaboration.

Stakeholders felt that Cottsway stands out for its quick decision-making and practical, solutions-focused approach. We're seen as a trusted partner by developers, councils, and community groups, with a clear social purpose - building quality homes, supporting regeneration, and working with local charities and agencies.

Specialist teams - from housing assistants to gas engineers, income officers, and IT staff - are recognised for being responsive, reliable, and focused on tenant needs. Strong leadership was recognised, and stakeholders felt that there's a strong team spirit that drives innovation, safety, and service quality.

One stakeholder noted the partnership with us is still new, but they're open to future feedback as it develops.

### Comments about our strengths included:

"As a developer, dealing with Cottsway has been so easy. The staff are very professional and knowledgeable."

"As providers of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) services, we find that the organisation is willing to invest in its officers to ensure that the best quality of service can be delivered to residents. A number of our team have delivered training to officers in the organisation and always find them passionate about reducing ASB and supporting victims."

"Partnership is a real standout value which Cottsway are particularly strong on. We have worked together on various projects including temporary accommodation, new developments, planning permissions, infrastructure works etc. We know that Cottsway hold the same values as us and will work together towards a solution."

"The support they provide us as a partner is excellent, all of the staff we come across are a credit to Cottsway and they really do care and that comes across."



## **We asked stakeholders: What would you say our main weaknesses are?**

While many partners report no significant weaknesses in their dealings with Cottsway, a few noted a desire for a larger development programme and greater delivery of new homes, and earlier engagement in procurement processes. Some felt that we are more cautious than peers.

Operationally, occasional communication gaps were mentioned, with delays in work orders and inconsistent technical details noted.

A small number of partners highlighted process and administration inefficiencies, such as duplicate checks. There were comments around the need to chase for updates / timelines which it was felt slowed down the move-in process for some customers. Repair timescales were also occasionally raised as an area for improvement.

### **Comments about our weaknesses included:**

“It would be good to see more delivery of additional homes with Cottsway and a larger development programme.”

“Compared to some of our other housing association clients, Cottsway does appear a little risk adverse.”

“None that really stand out. I appreciate that you are always willing to enter into a dialogue and see things from our authority's perspective.”

“We feel Cottsway could be more helpful with the information they provide in regard to repairs, for example advising us of the fault code displayed on the boiler, this would give us more of an understanding of the issues occurring. On occasion we have had to ask Cottsway to confirm the contact details as they are not always checked before a work order is raised to us.”

“Timeframes for processing household information into a Pre-Tenancy Agreement could be improved to help us deliver a more streamlined and smooth entry to the service.”

## Cottsway as a partner



**We asked stakeholders: What do you think of overall dealings with us as a partner?**

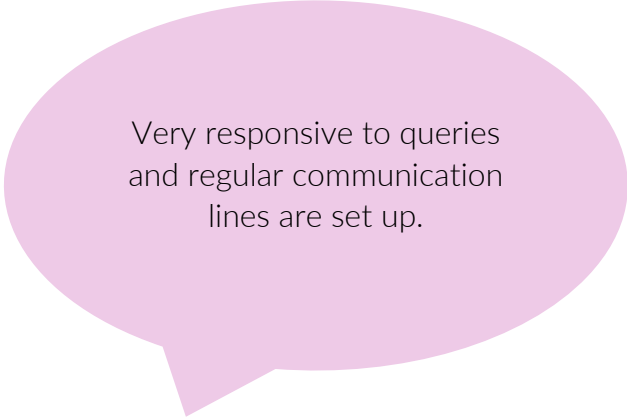
**93%** agree we have a good understanding of their organisation and priorities

**90%** feel we keep them informed about our work and any issues that may affect our relationship


**93%** agree we respond promptly to issues that matter to them and makes decisions quickly

**93%** trust that we will do what we say

**93%** would recommend us to others as a good partner to do business with



Very responsive to queries and regular communication lines are set up.



I would certainly highlight Cottsway as a good example of how a Registered Provider should engage and work with local authorities.

Cottsway is seen as a strong example of an engaging organisation, with responsive communication and a structure that increasingly supports partner priorities. One respondent disagreed with the first 3 of the 5 above statements and their comments were specific to their individual organisation.

**? We asked stakeholders: What priorities and issues will you be focusing on in the months ahead and what, if anything, could we do to help you with these?**

Stakeholders want to continue close collaboration with Cottsway, particularly in planning, delivering, and identifying opportunities for new housing schemes - including affordable, fully affordable, and social rented homes, as well as emergency accommodation and housing for vulnerable adults. They value maintaining and building on existing good working relationships, supporting local growth, and exploring future mutual business opportunities.

Specific priorities include:

- Supporting regeneration and placemaking to enhance community wellbeing.
- Sharing best practice in areas like Anti-Social Behaviour management.
- Establishing clearer contractual frameworks (e.g. framework agreements, formal terms and conditions).
- Improving accommodation standards with recognition of bespoke project needs (higher turnover and wear-and-tear).
- Continuing joint problem-solving and promoting correct solutions.
- Collaboration on specific services and operations (waste management, operative van stocks, Disabled Facilities Grants, insurance support).
- Supporting advice services for tenants, training caseworkers, and ensuring joined-up service delivery.

**? We asked stakeholders: How satisfied are you that we are an effective partnership organisation?**

**97%** agree we are an effective partnership organisation

**(3% - 1 respondent - didn't know)**

Cottsway is viewed as a highly effective and rewarding partner, with strong engagement across all levels of the organisation. We demonstrate high health and safety competence, foster long-standing, positive relationships, and provide generous practical support to enable partner services to run and develop.

**Positive feedback included:**

“Cottsway are considered to be one of our most rewarding clients to work for; we very much enjoy our ongoing relationship with you.”

“There is good engagement from all parts of the organisation, so partnership works well at all levels.”

“There is a high level of H&S competence at management level.”

“We have been fortunate to partner with Cottsway for many years, and they have been generous in providing us with office space as our services expanded. We are very happy.”

## **?** We asked stakeholders: What would make us a better partner in future?

Stakeholders generally see Cottsway as a good partner, with several comments saying that we already do a “good job” with no need for any change. Where there are suggestions for improvements, these include:

- Greater clarity and transparency on medium to long-term development plans, roles and responsibilities, and the outcome of internal capacity reviews.
- Cottsway leading more of its own development programmes and increasing delivery of affordable housing.
- More proactive communication on upcoming business opportunities and annual best-practice reviews.

Operationally, there are calls for faster data updates, quicker closure of completed jobs, and continued competence development in management roles.

If we can continue to work together as we do now, I believe we have a strong partnership that benefits the tenants and both of our organisations. We couldn't ask for more.

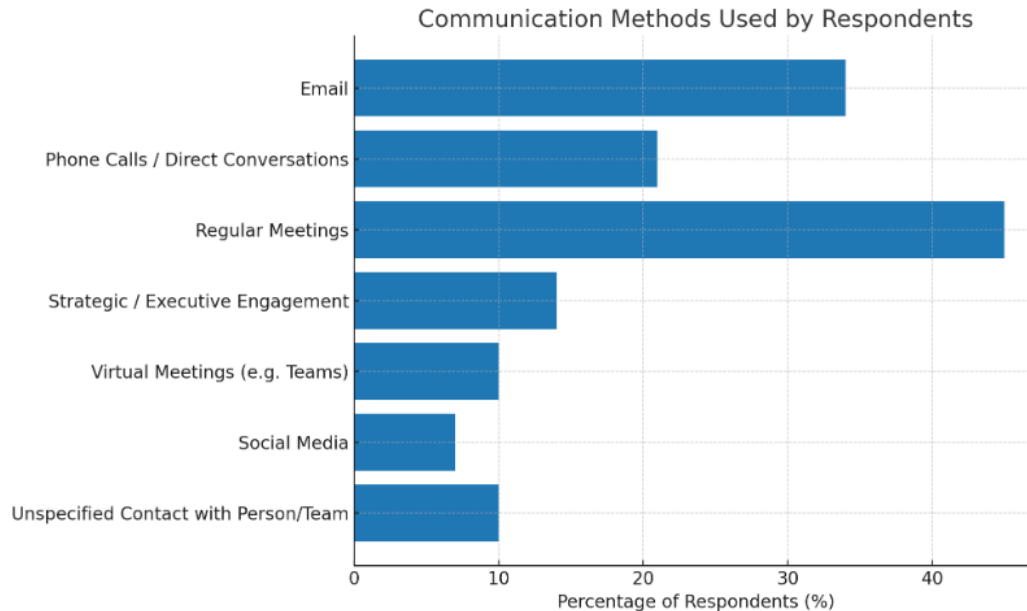
I don't think anymore is required from them to be a better partner.

Being able to provide more affordable homes for the communities we serve.

## How Cottsway engages with partners

**? We asked stakeholders: How do we stay in touch and where do you get most information about Cottsway from?**

We engage with stakeholders through a range of methods, with many receiving communications through multiple channels. In summary:



**? We asked stakeholders: What's the best way for us to stay connected and understand your needs?**

**55%** (16) said regular meetings with many emphasising the value of regular, structured meetings

**34%** (10) said email was as an effective and preferred method of communication, either on its own or alongside meetings

**28%** (8) said the existing communication methods were sufficient, and no changes were needed

Stakeholders largely want to maintain current communication methods, favouring a mix of regular, structured meetings (monthly, quarterly, or as needed), with some emphasising that these are key to maintaining understanding and collaboration. Some suggest annual or periodic review meetings between senior representatives, open forums with specific service providers, and frequent dialogue during key projects. Consistent, direct, and relationship-based communication is preferred over purely written updates.

**?** **We asked stakeholders: Is there any specific information you are currently not receiving from us that you feel you should be?**

**83%** chose not to comment - suggesting that we provide them with all the information they need

However, a few suggestions were provided to enhance communication and transparency:

- More accurate and detailed information on work orders, including contact details and specific fault codes
- Improved visibility of Cottsway's benchmarking of services, development plans and medium to long-term objectives
- Greater insight into services and initiatives being delivered in other Cottsway-managed homes
- Regular performance updates for councillors

**?** **We asked stakeholders: Is there anything else you'd like to share about our services, our partnership, or our community work?**

Nearly a quarter of respondents answered this question with one stakeholder wanting our feedback on their own service, including whether it met expectations and any areas for improvement. Another was interested in any additional information or potential opportunities to collaborate on social value initiatives.

**We mainly received positive comments:**

"Every member of staff that I have dealt with has been polite and professional."

"It is good to see that Cottsway is based in the local community. I've had a look at the website several times and keep abreast of latest news. I am impressed by what I see. There is a sense that Cottsway does care about the people living in its homes and it is good to see this level of customer care and presence in local communities."

"Keep up the great work."

"Having worked with Cottsway for over 10 years, we have developed a great working relationship with many people in the organisation."

"We have a strong working relationship with Cottsway and look forward to working with them in the years to come."

## Words used to describe Cottsway

**? We asked stakeholders: to provide two or three words to describe Cottsway overall**

This was our final question in the survey. The word cloud shown here is based on the three words our stakeholders most commonly used to describe us - the larger the word, the more often it was used.



### List of two to three words used to describe Cottsway

- Local, loyal, friendly
- Local affordable housing
- Efficient, informed, open
- Communicative, responsive and professional
- Great working relationship
- Good social housing
- Honest and accessible
- An excellent community-based business
- Approachable, necessary, innovative
- A supportive organisation
- Efficient, engaging, integrity
- Community builder
- Caring, committed, passionate
- Professional trustworthy
- Honest, local
- Valued, well managed and informed client
- Dedicated, trustworthy, honest
- Dynamic, nimble, honest
- Reliable, strong, friendly
- Ethical, supportive, fair
- Doing their best
- Delivers on promises
- Professional, reliable, cares for customers
- Effective, reliable, calm
- Highly valued partner
- High quality and efficient

## Conclusion

Overall, stakeholders view Cottsway as a trustworthy, efficient, and friendly partner. They appreciate our professional approach and connection to the communities we serve, and they understand our purpose and values well.

These results, along with all feedback provided in survey, have been considered by our Executive and Corporate Leadership Teams and, where improvements are suggested, these have been shared directly with the relevant teams here at Cottsway to progress.

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