

Report – July - September 25 – Updated quarterly

St Albans City & District Council
Cotlandswick

July – September 2025



Housing Officer

TBC

Neighbourhood
Resident Engagement Manager

Dan Eyre

Cotlandswick,

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Introduction:

This Neighbourhood Improvement Plan is a dynamic, 'living' document developed with input from local residents. Its purpose is to tackle identified issues, improve community spaces, and enhance the quality of life for people living in Cotlandswick.




Council Officers began work on this plan following discussions with Councillor Jacqui Taylor, who was the Lead Councillor for Housing at the time. Letters were sent to all tenants and leaseholders inviting them to take part in shaping the plan and to join a steering group. Building on this, the Council will now establish a tenant and leaseholder steering group, drawing on resident feedback collected through surveys, complaints, and day-to-day contact with housing services.

The steering group will act as a formal channel for residents to influence decisions, hold the Council to account, and ensure that progress on local improvements is reported back openly and consistently. This approach strengthens transparency, gives residents a direct voice, and demonstrates that the Council is committed to acting on local priorities.




Local Issues Identified:

Issue / Location	Next Steps	Target completion date	Progress	Officer responsible	RAG rating
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<p>External cleaning: Excessive rubbish, PVC doors and windows unclean, pathways covered in leaves.</p> 	<p>Review scheduled works, assess management information, and gather tenant views. Monitor future plans for 2025/26.</p>	<p>End of May 2025</p>	<p>Completed first two weeks of May. Awaiting pictures/details of completed work</p>	<p>Andrew Ilott</p>	
<p>Walls between blocks: Broken and fenced off for over a year.</p> 	<p>Determine planned repairs, resolve impediments, and update residents.</p>	<p>Fact-finding by Dec 2024; resolution by March 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruction at 191–205 Cotlandswick has been completed completed. 	<p>Gareth Heavey</p>	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruction at 175–189 Cotlandswick was completed. 	<p>Gareth Heavey</p>	

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<p>Sheds in poor repair</p> 	<p>Investigate planned repairs, resolve delays, and update residents.</p>	<p>Fact-finding by June 2025; resolution by September 2025</p>	<p>Viability report undertaken on 19/06/2025 - awaiting decision</p>	<p>Gareth Heavey</p>	
<p>Garages & Community Centre cordoned off.</p> 	<p>Clarify ownership and planned use, address obstacles, and communicate updates.</p>	<p>Fact-finding by June 2025; resolution by August 2025</p>	<p>The middle garage site (119-132) to be assessed for development (along with other local garage sites at Five Acres 22-28 and 46-60) by the end of June 25.</p>	<p>Simon Burgess/Gareth Heavey</p>	
<p>Large cleared parcel of land: Future plans unknown.</p> 	<p>Verify Council ownership and intentions, resolve barriers, and inform residents.</p>	<p>Fact-finding by Jan 2025; updates by August 2025</p>	<p>21/08/2025 - awaiting options appraisal to be completed</p>	<p>Jason Grace</p>	

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Bollards of varying sizes and shapes: Visually detracting. 	Identify ownership, assess plans, and resolve discrepancies. Communicate progress.	Fact-finding by Dec 2024; resolution or position statement by August 2026	Responsibility for the bollards lies with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). Contact will be made with HCC to confirm ownership responsibilities and to scope the viability and potential cost of works. This will determine what options are available and what action can realistically be taken.	Gareth Heavey	
Understanding what has been started. 	Assess requirements, compare to existing provision, and implement improvements	Fact-finding by Jan 2025; review by 2025	Completed: The Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) identified that bins must be relocated from their current position to the paved area to meet safety requirements. The Council will arrange for MDB to carry out the physical move. Residents will then be expected to ensure that bins remain in the new location so the FRA standards continue to be met.	Matthew Barnes	
Disabled Bays: Inconsistent signage and markings.	Assess requirements, compare to existing provision, and implement improvements.	Fact-finding by Jan 2025; review by March 2025		Dagna Sienkiewicz	

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Good News Story – Describe here any outcomes or successes that have happened in this area following the delivery of milestones and / or completion of an action.

- **Wall Repairs Completed:** The long-awaited wall repairs at Cotlandswick are now complete, with works finished outside block 191–205 and materials delivered for the next section at 175–189. This responds directly to resident concerns raised in late 2024 about unsafe and unsightly boundaries between blocks.
- **Action on Garages and Community Centre:** In response to persistent fly-tipping and safety risks, the Council took emergency action to fence off the garages and former community centre in late 2024. All garages remain void due to their condition, but planning is now underway to determine the site's long-term future.
- **Engaging with Residents:** The Resident Engagement team has launched a new focus group and sent letters to over 80 households to ensure local voices shape upcoming improvements. Cotlandswick is now being used as a pilot for better consultation and clearer communication around long-neglected sites.
- **Setting the Foundation for Estate Renewal:** While no feasibility study is confirmed yet, the site has drawn officer attention and may be considered for redevelopment, contractor use, or demolition – with updates to follow.
- **Model for the District:** Cotlandswick's progress is helping inform the Council's approach to other fenced-off garage sites across the district, supporting long-term estate improvement and community trust.

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Residents Feedback – To collate feedback and next steps with the Steering Group

- We are preparing to launch a resident focus group in September 2025 to help shape the next phase of the Neighbourhood Improvement Plan and guide the work of the Steering Group.
- To support this, we will also be using a new platform called *CX Feedback*. This is a system that brings together information from surveys, complaints, service requests, and day-to-day contact with the Council. It helps us to see trends in what residents are telling us, highlight common concerns, and ensure that feedback directly influences local decision-making.
- Next steps will include:
 - Using Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey returns for Cotlandswick.
 - Exploring further methods of engagement (such as door-knocking, digital surveys, and targeted invitations).
 - Reviewing resident concerns raised so far (for example, walls, garages, and communal areas).
 - Prioritising actions with residents who come forward.
 - Establishing a clear and consistent communication plan.

Residents Comms – List here updates given residents of Cotlandswick (links to newsletters / updates sent)

- **Residents Communications**
- **February 2025** – A letter was sent to all tenants and leaseholders inviting them to join the new Cotlandswick Steering Group.
- **March 2025** – A flyer was posted to all residents, also advertised on social media and displayed in a local shop window, promoting opportunities to get involved in estate improvements.
- **3 April 2025** – Residents were invited to take part in a community litter-picking event, which was also used to raise awareness of the Neighbourhood Improvement Plan.
- **April 2025** – A letter was sent to all tenants and leaseholders with details of the forthcoming Community Day in Cotlandswick.

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- Looking ahead, we will begin using *CX Feedback* as a new way to communicate with residents. This system brings together information from surveys, complaints, and service requests, and will allow us to provide updates more consistently. It will also help us close the loop by showing residents how their feedback has been used to influence decisions and improvements in Cotlandswick.

Damp & Mould – an update / overview of aggregated cases in this neighbourhood

- **Four cases reported between December and February.**
- **Three resolved; one remains under investigation.**

At a Glance - headlines on complaints, rent arrears, repairs performance and cleaning standards for the neighbourhood

Performance Overview

Data on complaints, rent arrears, repairs and cleaning performance is currently being compiled and will be included in the next quarterly update.

TSM data specifically for London Colney is [HERE](#).

Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3 –

The Council has successfully bid for funding under the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3. The funding along with considerable financial input from St Albans City and District Council will be used to improve the thermal comfort and reduce carbon emissions to 353 council homes. Flats in Cotlandswick that are eligible have been earmarked for energy saving measures such as external wall insulation, ventilation and cavity wall insulation. The first phase of the project will be directed at blocks of flats in Cotlandswick that meet the funding requirements. Further information will be provided in the coming weeks with resident consultations and regular newsletters. The first consultation took place on **Thursday, 14 August 2025**

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