

SWANSEA MATTERS — CRITIQUE MEMORANDUM
Bousfields Survey — Why the Results Cannot Be Relied Upon
21 Windermere Avenue (Swansea Mews Revitalization) — March 2026

Document under review	TCHC Community Survey instrument distributed in connection with the Swansea Mews revitalization consultation process
Responses received	86
Date of review	March 2026
Classification	Survey Methodology and Representativeness Assessment

FINDING

The TCHC community survey will produce directional input on stated priorities but cannot generate statistically accurate, unbiased, or representative results. It conflates distinct affected populations, embeds acquiescence bias in its framing, and is structurally incapable of capturing trade-off preferences or the views of equity-seeking groups most affected by the redevelopment. With 86 responses, the margin of error is approximately $\pm 9\text{--}11\%$ — too wide for any planning-grade claim about community preferences. The survey's results should not be presented to Council or to the community as evidence of what 'the community' wants.

1. The Survey Cannot Produce Reliable Statistical Results

For a survey to produce planning-grade statistical results — that is, results from which defensible claims about community preferences can be drawn — it requires a probability-based sample, a sufficient number of responses, and a design that does not systematically bias responses. This survey fails on all three counts.

1.1 Sample Size — 86 Responses is Insufficient

The affected population includes former Swansea Mews tenants (approximately 108 households, perhaps 300–400 individuals), nearby homeowners and renters, and the broader Ward 4 community. Even for the narrowest definition — former tenants only — a sample of 86 produces results with a margin of error of approximately $\pm 9\text{--}11\%$ at the 95% confidence level. That means a reported preference of 60% could plausibly represent anywhere from 49% to 71% in the full population.

To achieve planning-grade precision of $\pm 5\%$ at 95% confidence, approximately 250–400 completed responses would be required from a representative sample — roughly three to four times the number received. The 86 responses are insufficient for any claim that the results represent 'the Swansea community.'

1.2 Non-Random Sample — Self-Selection Bias

The survey was distributed online and responses were voluntary. This produces a self-selected sample: people who are more engaged, more internet-connected, and more motivated to respond will be over-represented. People who are less internet-connected, who require translation or other language support, or who are displaced and have lost connection to the community network, will be under-represented. Former Swansea Mews tenants — the most directly affected population — are the group most likely to be under-represented.

2. Design Deficiencies

2.1 Mixing Experience and Preference Questions Without Clear Scales

The survey mixes retrospective experience questions ('Prior to 2022, how safe did you feel?') with future priority-ranking questions ('Rank the following design features'). Response scales for the experience questions are not defined in the instrument — 'How satisfied' and 'How safe' are presented without anchor labels. This produces inconsistent interpretation across respondents and data that cannot be meaningfully quantified.

2.2 Open-Ended Questions Without Structure

Questions 5, 7, 9, and 10 are open-ended without prompts or coding structure. This makes responses difficult to analyse consistently and introduces analyst bias when themes are identified and weighted. In a self-selected sample with 86 responses, thematic coding of unstructured open-ended responses is particularly susceptible to selective emphasis.

2.3 Ranking Questions With a Predetermined Answer

Question 3 asks respondents to rank five design features. The survey instrument states explicitly that 'TCHC will be delivering all 5 of these design features.' The ranking exercise therefore measures relative preference within a set of outcomes already committed to — not community input on whether those features are the right priorities. This is not consultation. It is preference-ordering within a predetermined menu.

2.4 No Trade-Off Questions

The survey does not ask respondents to make any trade-off choices — for example, 'Would you accept less open space for more affordable units?' or 'Would you prefer a smaller development with more green space or a larger development with more affordable homes?' These are the real choices embedded in the planning decision. A survey that does not surface them cannot be used to claim that community input informed those choices.

2.5 Recall Bias on Pre-2022 Conditions

Questions asking respondents to recall conditions 'prior to 2022' rely on memory of conditions before the buildings were vacated — conditions that preceded the structural failure, the displacement, years of temporary accommodation, and the entire consultation process. Memory

under these circumstances is systematically distorted by subsequent experience. Results from these questions cannot be treated as reliable baseline data.

3. Bias and Representativeness

3.1 The Screening Question Does Not Distinguish Affected Populations

The opening screening question classifies respondents as either ‘a neighbour (Windermere, Coe Hill, or Queensway)’ or responding to ‘wider community questions.’ This does not distinguish between: former Swansea Mews tenants (right-to-return holders); nearby homeowners; nearby renters; general Ward 4 residents; and city-wide respondents. Each group has materially different stakes. Treating their responses as a single undifferentiated ‘community’ masks the preferences of the population most directly affected.

3.2 Promotional Framing Creates Acquiescence Bias

The survey framing — ‘TCHC is excited to share...’, ‘revitalization vision...’ — signals institutional enthusiasm for the proposal and communicates that the plan is substantially decided. Respondents who might otherwise register opposition to the scale or form of the development are subtly cued that the purpose of the survey is to refine a plan, not to challenge it. This acquiescence bias systematically suppresses critical feedback.

3.3 Equity-Seeking Groups Are Structurally Under-Represented

An online-only survey, available in English only, with no supported access for respondents who require translation, in-person assistance, or accessibility accommodations, will structurally under-represent lower-income former tenants, non-English-speaking residents, and people with disabilities — the populations who bear the greatest impact from this redevelopment. The demographics section of the survey acknowledges diversity as a goal but states no plan for what happens if key groups are under-represented.

4. What the Survey Can and Cannot Support

The survey can legitimately support one claim: that among the 86 self-selected respondents who completed it, certain design features were ranked higher than others. It can suggest directional priorities for further investigation.

It cannot legitimately support any of the following claims:

- That ‘the community’ prefers any particular design feature, built form, or density outcome
- That the consultation process generated representative community input on the planning decision
- That the results reflect the preferences of former Swansea Mews tenants specifically
- That any statistical confidence can be placed in percentage figures derived from 86 self-selected responses

If TCHC, City Planning, or Councillor Perks cited the survey results before the Planning and Housing Committee on February 26, 2026, or in the Decision Report of February 10, 2026, as evidence that the community supported the proposed built form or density, those citations should be assessed against this methodology critique.

CONCLUSION

The TCHC community survey does not produce statistically reliable evidence of community preferences. Its 86 responses represent a self-selected, potentially unrepresentative sample with a margin of error too wide for planning-grade claims. Its design embeds acquiescence bias, fails to distinguish the affected populations with the greatest stake in the outcome, and does not ask the trade-off questions at the heart of the planning decision. The survey results should not be cited as community endorsement of any aspect of the proposed development.