

Appendix 2 - Private Sector Housing Strategy – Consultation Feedback Summary

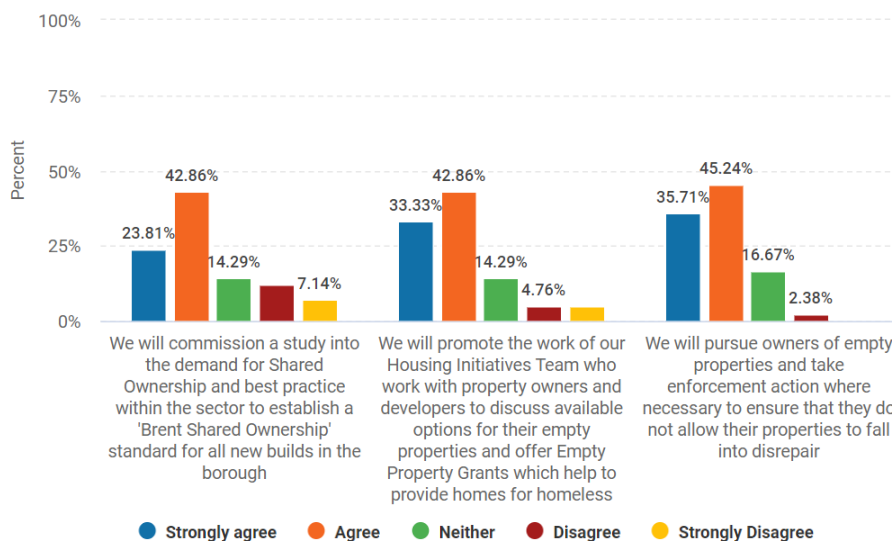
1.0 Format of the consultation

- 1.1 A draft of the Private Sector Housing Strategy was taken to PCG in November 2023 where approval to go out for formal consultation was given.
- 1.2 The consultation period took place over 10 weeks, between 5 January and 18 March 2024.
- 1.3 Activities carried out as part of this consultation were:
 - Social media promotion of the proposed strategy and routes to provide feedback;
 - An online 'have your say' page where the draft strategy was shared alongside a feedback survey;
 - Engagement at a Private Sector Tenants Fair attended by 500 Brent residents;
 - Focus groups with key external partners including: Advice for Renters, Crisis, London Renters Union and Justice 4 Tenants.
 - A drop-in session for Brent staff;
 - Internal promotion of the consultation through Viva Engage and the weekly Chief Executives Message; and
 - Promotion of the consultation in the Members Bulletin and direct consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

2.0 Feedback received

Commitment 1

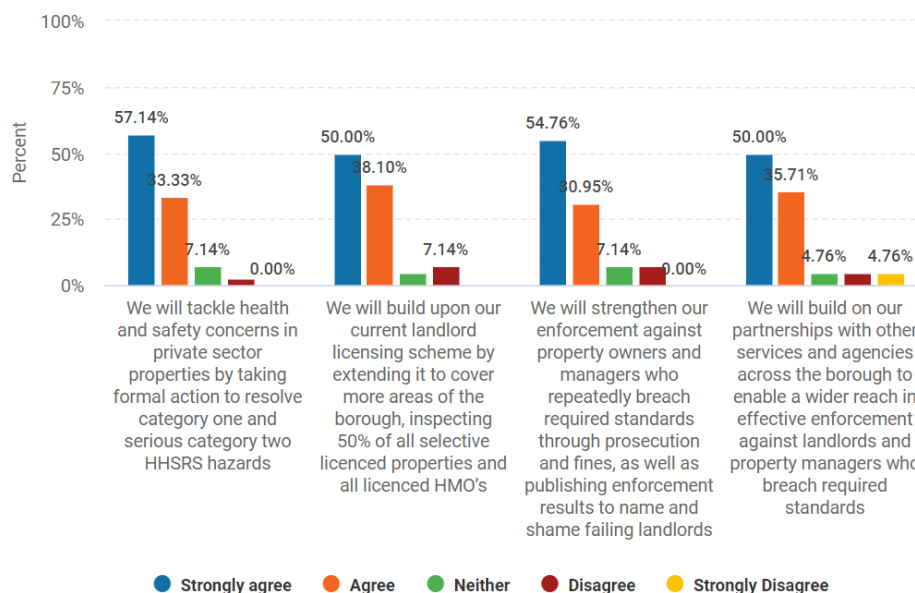
- 2.1 76% of respondents agreed that Commitment 1 (“we will work to increase the supply of private sector homes available in Brent so it is an accessible housing option for residents”) should be a priority included in the strategy.
- 2.2 The below table shows how far respondents felt that the proposed actions under the commitment would achieve the desired outcome.



- 2.3 Points 2.4 – 2.6 cover the qualitative feedback received for Commitment 1 through the in-person engagement activities.
- 2.4 Shared ownership is not an option for low-income households and also need to consider that increasing shared ownership in the borough doesn't mean more homes for Brent residents, often this means non-Brent resident moving into the borough.
- 2.5 Empty Dwelling Orders are less effective than Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) when it comes to tackling empty properties in the borough. Can we use CPO's more effectively?
- 2.6 Can the Council do more to push back on S106?

Commitment 2

- 2.7 90% of respondents agreed that Commitment 2 (*“We will effectively tackle poor property conditions across the Private Sector in Brent”*) should be a priority included in the strategy with over 80% also agreeing that all three proposed actions would support achieving this commitment.
- 2.8 The below table shows how far respondents felt that the proposed actions under the commitment would achieve the desired outcome.

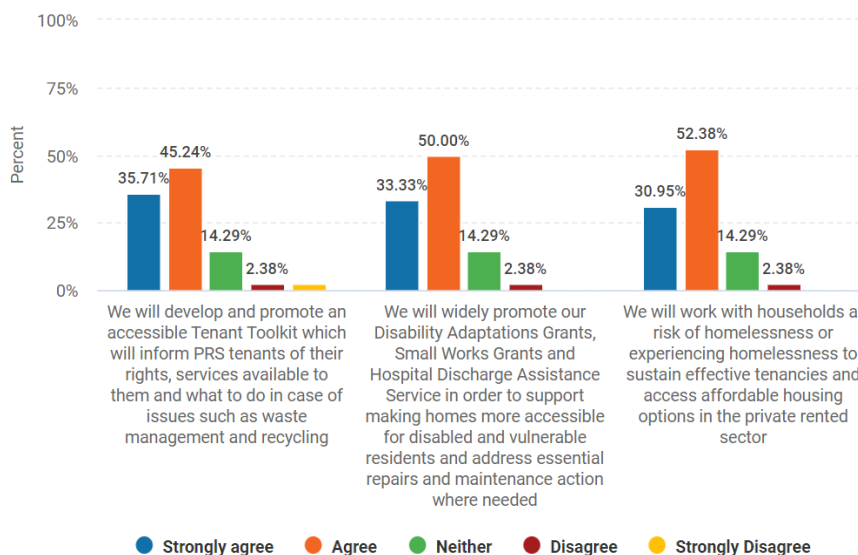


- 2.9 Points 2.10 – 2.15 cover the qualitative feedback received for Commitment 2 through the in-person engagement activities.
- 2.10 Positive engagement with landlords is vital, could the strategy include this? Particularly in relation to reducing stigma and supporting them with advice and guidance on their responsibilities, implications of new legislation etc.
- 2.11 Could the licensing scheme have reduced licenses in place for landlords where issues have been identified?
- 2.12 How will the Council ensure that the increased costs to landlords re. the licensing scheme isn't passed on to tenants?

- 2.13 Clearer definition needed on what we mean by ‘formal action’. Pre-action doesn’t protect from retaliatory eviction and doesn’t allow for a fine later down the line. There should be stronger commitment to use of Improvement Notices.
- 2.14 What happens to landlords who haven’t made a license application before 1 April 2024 and what is the Councils plan for these landlords?
- 2.15 Consider removing the word “repeatedly” from proposed action 3, it shouldn’t need to be repeated breaches that trigger action, it should be any breach.

Commitment 3

- 2.16 83% of respondents agreed that Commitment 3 (“We will prioritise supporting residents to access and stay in their private-sector home, living safe and comfortable lives”) should be a priority included in the strategy, with over 80% also agreeing that all three proposed actions would support achieving this commitment.
- 2.17 The below table shows how far respondents felt that the proposed actions under the commitment would achieve the desired outcome.



- 2.18 Points 2.19 – 2.21 cover the qualitative feedback received for Commitment 3 through the in-person engagement activities.
- 2.19 The Tenants Toolkit should come from an agency other than the Council, to avoid negative stigma associated with the Council. The toolkit development should consider how tenants can be encouraged to act on their rights, its one thing to know what they are, another to have the confidence to act on them as needed.
- 2.20 Key external partners should be engaged with re. development of the Tenants Toolkit content.
- 2.21 How is the Council keeping tenants informed on the Renters Reform Bill? There should be very clear comms about the implications of this and changes to their rights and how they can challenge appropriately.

3.0 Further general feedback

- 3.1 Some of the strategies proposed actions are just repeating the statutory duties that the Council already has – can it be strengthened?
- 3.2 Concerns raised around the barriers put in place by Letting Agents including ‘no children’ rules on family homes, income thresholds, credit score checks etc. and highlighted that Letting Agents had not been considered in the draft strategy.
- 3.3 Improve links with Trading Standards to ensure effective signposting processes are in place.
- 3.4 When an Officer leaves in Housing Needs – this should be communicated to the individuals whose cases they are managing, with details of their new case officer.
- 3.5 PHP’s could be more robust in communicating what the Officer is doing on behalf of the tenant.