Brent

Review of Housing Management Options *Report*

October 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the findings of the review of housing management services to Brent's tenants and leaseholders. Cabinet requested the review in their meeting of 27th June 2016.

The Cabinet decision stated:

http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=455&MId=2773&Ver=4

> *"…authorised that a formal review led by the Strategic Director Community Wellbeing be undertaken of the options for the future management of the Council's tenanted and leasehold stock as outlined in this report with associated consultation with tenants and leaseholders and for the results of that review to then be reported to Cabinet."*

In response to the Cabinet decision, Phil Porter – Strategic Director – Community Wellbeing has sponsored a comprehensive review. This report describes the approach taken by the review as well as its findings. We have tried to make the document transparent and accessible. Some jargon is unavoidable so we have provided a Jargon Buster (the contents section will tell you where to find it) to help a wide range of readers understand the issues, findings and recommendations.

The review has been a team effort involving a number of officers and the use of external consultants. We say more about this in the methodology. We would like to say thank you to all the residents and staff (Council and BHP) who have given time and expertise to the review to enable us to produce what we believe to be a thorough in-depth review of the different ways that the housing management service could be delivered.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

1. In June 2016, the Cabinet decided to undertake a formal review of how to deliver housing management services for its housing stock. The review has now been completed. The findings and conclusions are set out in full in the attached Review of Housing Management Options Report. A summary of these is provided in the following sections:
   - Background to the Review
   - Brent Context: The housing stock and its management
   - BHP Performance
   - The Options
   - The Evaluation Criteria, Evaluation of the Options and Implementation
   - Conclusion on the Preferred Option

2. Cabinet decided in June to undertake a review of Housing Management options for its housing stock. This was prompted by two main considerations.
   i. Firstly, the government's Housing and Planning Act (2016) and other measures will have a significant impact on the Council's housing stock including on its future size, financial performance and management over coming years. The prescribed reduction in rents between 2016 and 2020 will significantly reduce rental income to fund services and the government's other reforms are likely to reduce the size of the Council's stock and further reduce income and undermine economies of scale. It was therefore appropriate to consider the implications for housing management services and how these could best be developed and delivered in the context of these challenges.
   ii. The second consideration was the performance of BHP, the Council's existing Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO). The Council entered into a new 10 year Management Agreement with Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) in April 2013 for the management of the Council's housing stock. This required BHP to provide services and achieve performance in accordance with an annually agreed Delivery Plan. In 2015/16 BHP failed to achieve the required outcomes and performance standards in a number of respects. In January 2016 BHP put a recovery plan in place to address the areas of concern over the period by the end of October 2016.
3. In view of both the challenges presented by the government's reforms and the issues of concern in respect of BHP's performance the Cabinet concluded it was necessary to consider afresh the most appropriate arrangements for the management of the Council's sIn June 2016 Cabinet therefore commissioned a formal review of Housing Management Options for the Council's Housing stock, with the options to be considered being:
   - To continue with BHP on a reformed basis
   - To bring the service in-house
   - To enter into partnership with another organisation to provide the service

4. The review has been undertaken over the period from July to October 2016. It has been led by the housing service and been informed by a cross Council group with representation from all Council departments and been guided by the Council's Corporate Management Team. The review has also been supported by external consultants who have provided additional expertise and experience from across the social housing sector. The review process is set out in detail in the Review report which accompanies this document.

Brent Context: The Housing stock and its current Management

5. The Council's Housing Stock comprises almost 11,500 homes, of which approximately 7,700 are tenanted and 3,700 are leasehold, and is concentrated in the South-east of the borough. Homes are primarily flats on small and medium-sized estates but with a significant minority of street properties, mainly converted to flats.
6. Average occupancy for tenanted and leasehold properties is 3.3 and 4.8 persons respectively, with the latter in part reflecting the extent of private letting of leasehold properties, giving a total of around 43,000 residents or over 1 in 8 of Brent's population. Around a third of tenants are over 60 years old. 4% of tenants have a disability and 8% have a vulnerability.
7. The Council is responsible as a landlord under the tenancy and leasehold agreements with each household to provide housing management and maintenance services. The Council's relationship with its tenants and leaseholders is therefore a different one from that with other borough residents as it is primarily a contractual one under which these households pay rent or service charges in exchange for specific services.
8. Since 2002 the Council has delegated responsibility for both management and maintenance services to a wholly-owned arms-length management company, Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) through a Management Agreement. The current management agreement was entered into in April 2013 for a 10 year term.
9. Under the Management Agreement the Council sets the strategic direction and priorities for the service, and the required budgets, and BHP is operationally responsible for the delivery of these services. A delivery plan is agreed annually between the Council and BHP which sets out priorities for service improvement and delivery and corresponding targets.
10. BHP is a separate legal entity as a company and is governed by a Board of 13 directors comprising residents, Councillors and independent persons with an independent chair. Its Managing Director and Executive team are responsible to the Board.
11. BHP provides the full set of landlord services, either directly or by contract management of relevant contractors. The main services are:
    - Tenancy Management – tenancy agreement compliance, lettings, rent collection, resident engagement, dealing with anti-social behaviour; RTB application; and client responsibility for two Tenant Management Organisations and for the management contract for the Travellers site at Lynton Close.
    - Leaseholder Management – All lease issues; service charges and consultation and charging for major works.
    - Property services – Communal cleaning, estates management, grounds maintenance (through the Council's public realm contractor), responsive repairs, health and safety compliance, planned maintenance and major works. Since 2014 repairs and

maintenance have been provided mainly through an Asset Management contractor, Wates.

- Development services – the delivery of a new-build programme on existing estates

12. BHP operates a call-centre handling around 83,000 calls per annum, the majority of which relate to repairs. It is responsible for dealing with Stage 1 complaints and member enquiries and has a small communications team, a finance team, governance and HR resources.
13. The Council provides under SLAs a number of support services to BHP including accommodation at the Civic Centre, IT, payroll and legal support.

BHP Performance

14. In response to a number of performance concerns a Recovery Plan was put in place by BHP to run from January to October 2016. The Recovery Plan set out specific actions and outcomes required in response to the main areas of concern and some key performance targets. A formal notice of breach was also served under the Management Agreement in respect of specific concerns, requiring that they be remedied by the same deadline.
15. Performance and progress over the period has been assessed as part of the Review and the findings are set out in more detail in the Review report. Most actions and outcomes required under the Recovery Plan have been completed and achieved and significant progress has been made in a number of areas.
16. A key concern was the performance of the planned maintenance programme in 2015/16 which was substantially under-delivered, with significant contract management weaknesses identified through an audit investigation. These issues have been addressed and there is a good level of confidence that this year's programme will be delivered to time and budget and advance planning is already underway for next year's programme.
17. The timeliness of response to complaints and member enquiries was another area of concern and this has been addressed with response times being met. A significant proportion of complaints relate to repairs but overall complaint levels are comparable with other housing organisations, though higher than for the best service providers.
18. Customer service response has improved with a very high percentage of calls answered over the last quarter and waiting times significantly reduced though these remain longer than the corporate standard.
19. There remain, however, areas of continuing concern which are reflected in levels of customer satisfaction in particular with repairs, resident involvement and with the service overall.
20. To inform the review, the views of tenants and leaseholders about current service performance and priorities for improvement were sought through a telephone survey of 600 residents and through a set of focus groups. This research identified three areas of greatest concern and priority for improvement: repairs and maintenance, anti-social behaviour and the quality of homes.
21. Over the last 18 months satisfaction with repairs has not improved and remains unacceptably low with a third of tenants and two-thirds of leaseholders not satisfied with the service. The primary concerns are outstanding repair works and the failure to complete repairs on the first visit. Progress in this area depend on the contractor making a number of key service changes, and these are due to be introduced and become effective over the next

two months. It is clear, regardless of the future housing management option chosen, that improvements to the repairs service is both urgent and of the highest priority.

22. The recent survey identified a low level of satisfaction with how anti-social behaviour is managed. Similarly, around half of residents were not satisfied with opportunities for resident involvement.
23. BHP have regularly monitored overall satisfaction levels with the service over the last 18 months. There has been little appreciable increase in satisfaction levels over this period (and no increase at all over the Recovery Plan period). With barely half of leaseholders and two-thirds of tenants being satisfied with the service, BHP ranks well below the strongest providers in the sector, but it is recognised that there is a time lag between the introduction of service improvements and their expression in randomised satisfaction survey results.
24. As part of the review a benchmarking exercise has also been carried out to compare key performance indicators for council housing services, ALMOs and Housing Associations in London, with each other and with BHP over the last 3 years. This found a mixed picture with ALMOs performing relatively well, as do council services (particularly in respect of cost where they perform best) and housing associations relatively strong and weak in different areas. BHP's performance was similarly mixed: good or improving in some areas but in others showing relative decline compared with other comparators.

The Options

25. The options are set out in detail in the accompanying Review report. It should be noted that, whilst there are necessarily differences between the options they each need to respond to the contextual challenges and changes most of which are common to all options.
26. Firstly, each option needs to respond to the areas of evident weakness in the current services and enable a significant improvement in service quality and customer satisfaction and do so while generating significant efficiencies and savings to respond to the financial pressures arising from the government's reforms.
27. Each option also needs to catch-up with wider changes across the social housing sector, which are accelerating in response to common financial challenges. Central to these is harnessing digital technologies to enable customers to interact and transact with services online, and to use data to drive continuing service design and development. The current service is traditional in nature and each of the options needs to enable this transformation.
28. The options also need to respond to Brent's local housing context and Housing Strategy priorities which are:
    - Housing Supply – re-confirming the ambition set out in the original target of 5,000 affordable homes by 2019, refining this focus to ensure we get the right affordable housing, and signalling the need to adopt a wider range of delivery mechanisms if we are to deliver that target
    - Housing and wellbeing (rather than housing and employment) – employment will still have a key role as this will recognise the importance of employment to sustaining housing and wellbeing
    - Private Sector – building on the success of the licensing scheme and the work of the Housing OBR to deepen our relationship with the private sector to ensure that we

are improving standards and doing everything possible to help residents, particularly the most vulnerable residents, find PRS accommodation

- Homelessness – the TA reform plan has been developed since the original housing strategy was written, therefore the revised strategy will update in line with the TA reform plan
- Social Housing Improvement – the focus in the original strategy was improving the Council's stock and this is one of the key areas that BHP has failed in. The revised strategy will re-confirm the objectives in terms of the Council's own stock, while also creating a clearer focus on the working with all social housing providers to not only improve housing quality, but also to deliver wide objectives for place and people.

29. The leadership and management of the new service also needs to change and a positive service culture needs to be inculcated that raises morale and is focussed on customer's experiences.
30. Each option has been designed in order to meet the above requirements and to maximise its potential. Wherever appropriate duplication has been removed to streamline service delivery and, where possible, reduce cost:

   - Public realm – Existing grounds maintenance – there are issues of duplication and demarcation between two contractors which are capable of resolution.
   - Anti-social behaviour – Integration with the Council's corporate community safety service, but working in close liaison with the housing management service.
   - Customer service – repairs reporting could be made directly to the contractor, with the service monitoring performance and resolving problems but this can only materialise if there is confidence that the performance of the contractor at a satisfactory level can be realised and maintained. There may be scope to integrate the rest of the call-centre function with the Council's corporate service under the BHP reformed and in-house options, or with the partner's corporate service as relevant.
   - Financial Inclusion – This should be provided by the corporately commissioned service available to borough residents.
   - Adaptations – this could be provided by a single service, rather than as now by both BHP and the Council but this needs further evaluation.

31. In addition to the common requirements and changes, there are some changes specific to each option.
32. The option to continue with a Reformed BHP is emphatically not maintenance of the status quo. Transformational change in the way in which services are delivered will be needed, as well as the further integration outlined above.
33. Governance will be reformed moving to a smaller skills-based board, and a strengthened client-side function within the Council will be required. Enhanced customer engagement and resident involvement would be needed. A new restructured leadership team will be recruited.
34. An In-house service will provide for full integration with the Council and other services. Governance and accountability will flow through the Council's corporate management to Cabinet. With the loss of the board it will be critical to provide alternative arrangements that provide for oversight and scrutiny by residents and Members, drawing on exemplars in other Councils.

35. While the Reformed BHP and In-house options, and changes required under each, are quite similar, the Partnership option is more different. The approach has been informed by informal discussions with a number of Housing Associations active in Brent with a clear preference for a form of Joint Venture or housing services company, rather than a contract. There is of course more uncertainty about how this option would be structured and operate as it would depend on the partner selected. Broadly it is expected that a number of key functions would be provided by the Partner's wider organisation including support services (instead of the Council as at present) and customer contact services. The frontline service integration with the Council in respect of public realm, ASB, etc. would, however, still apply.
36. Governance would be through a joint board and it is unlikely this would provide for resident representation. A customer oversight and scrutiny function would be required.

Evaluation of the Options

37. The options have been evaluated against criteria drawn from those set out in the June 2016 Cabinet report and assesses the extent to which each option:
    - Assures provision of modern, high-quality and continuously improving housing management services
    - Achieves significant efficiencies and savings to contribute to the financial sustainability of the Council's housing revenue account
    - Maximises the value and performance of the Council's housing stock through active asset management
    - Contributes to improved outcomes for tenants including in respect of people and place outcomes the Council is seeking to achieve
    - Contributes to the delivery of the Council's priorities

38. The evaluation findings are detailed and summarised in the Review report identifying the relative strengths and weaknesses of each option in respect of each criteria.
39. It is apparent that each option has the potential to successfully meet the Council's criteria, but importantly each has relative strengths and weaknesses in different areas. This is to be expected: The numerous examples of highly-performing Council and ALMO housing services (and of weaker performing services of each type) show that the option or model itself is not the main determinant. The Partnership Joint Venture option is itself innovative and there are few if any comparative examples but there are numerous examples of high-performing housing associations who would be the prospective partner under this option.
40. One significant difference is in respect of the potential financial savings arising from the adoption of each option. The financial assessment undertaken through the Review indicates that only modest savings would be realised through the BHP Reformed option but more significant savings could be realised under the In-house and Partnership options.
41. Another key difference relates to the issue of control. This relates both to the degree of control the Council has to direct the changes and improvements required and to the ability to direct the housing service's contribution to the delivery of the Council's priorities more generally. Under the BHP reformed option the Council has strategic control but delegates operational control to the ALMO. Under the Partnership option control is essentially shared. The In-house option provides for direct strategic and operational control.

42. Leadership will be crucial to achieving the full potential of each option. The current BHP leadership team is interim so under each of the options there will be new leadership. Independent recruitment advice, however, is that the Partnership option and to a slightly lesser extent the BHP Reformed option may more readily attract the strongest candidates because of the degree of autonomy such senior managers would enjoy (with responsibility for leading a housing services company of one type of another) whereas the in-house option may be less attractive to some potential candidates as it provides less autonomy within the Council's corporate setting. This may, however, be countered by the opportunity to work across a wider range of housing functions within the Council. All the options have the potential to attract a strong leadership team, as is evidenced in the social housing sector, but under the in-house option the leadership roles would need to be positioned with care to attract the strongest field.

Implementation

43. While each option could work, a central consideration is the confidence which the Council can have that the optimised version of the option can be delivered. This partly relates to the issue of control but also to the degree of difficulty, complexity and risk attendant on implementation, and over what time period this would be achieved.
44. The Reformed ALMO is the most straightforward option to implement. No consultation is required after Cabinet in November, and a new management team could be in place by April 2017. Therefore, by April 2017 the implementation of wider transformation should commence and be well advanced over the first half of 2017-18.
45. The In-House option is the middle ranked option in terms of complexity. There will need to be a consultation (test of opinion) running from December to February before coming back to Cabinet in March. If in light of the consultation, the Council then decides to proceed with this option, there will need to be a process to transfer the service to the Council and the permanent recruitment of a new leadership team by October 2017.
46. The Partnership or Joint Venture option is the most complex option to setup. The first step would be to undertake consultation over 12 weeks on this preferred option and then report to full Council in March 2017. If Cabinet then decided to proceed with this option the process towards selecting a partner and implementing the new JV would follow. There is a degree of uncertainty about whether a suitable high-performing partner can be found and the terms of a partnership negotiated and agreed. Assuming these tests were met the new Partnership company could be established by April 2018.

Conclusion on the Preferred Option

47. Detailed consideration of the issues covered by this review is an important first stage in charting the course to be taken by Brent's housing stock and the 12,000 households who live in the properties over the years to come. In considering the best option, the issues with BHP's performance are less important than the landscape in which the chosen option will have to operate.
48. Each option has been optimised. The question is not how well each option would perform the role fulfilled by BHP now but instead how each option could be configured to best deliver the outcomes required from the housing service for tenants and leaseholders, and

for the Council. Each option is a significant departure and development from current arrangements. In essence this gives three different approaches:

- Reformed ALMO: Strong focus on the housing service.
- In-House: Strong focus on the housing service and the contribution that the housing business unit can make to the Council's wider strategic agenda.
- Joint Venture: Strong focus on the housing service with the added benefit of the expertise of the JV partner.

49. All the options inherit the same starting position, the same buildings, residents and staff (via TUPE). Each of these are significant issues in their own right. Each option has been reviewed against the five individual criteria, including the financial assessment, and in respect of control and implementation or deliverability. No aspect of the evaluation categorically rules out any particular option. All options could work.
50. Every option has a mixture of strengths and weaknesses, so picking the best option is a matter of judgement about the weighting given to issues, benefits and risks.
51. There is a decision to be made about how the housing service fits in with the wider Council. The current position is clear, a standalone housing service, formed to provide a strong focus on housing management. This approach produced good outcomes for a long period, less good outcomes recently. Another approach is to view the housing service as an important sub-set within the wider Council and to seek to maximise the role played by the housing service in improving outcomes for 12,000 households across wellbeing, employment and other issues as well as core housing management. If significant weight is given to this approach then the In-House Option is clearly the strongest option in this regard. This is not without risk. The biggest risk is that the dilution of focus on the housing service causes performance to worsen.
52. Turning next to the financial assessment. In assuring the sustainability of the Council's finances there are many variables that the Council cannot control such as the rate of inflation and government direction on rent increases. There are only a small number of variables that the Council can control such as staffing costs (employ more or less staff) and levels of investment (in the existing stock and in building new stock).
53. The financial model sets out a very tough financial landscape. This is primarily due to three variables: The governments rent policy (currently CPI -1%); the likely impact of the sale of high value void properties to fund the RTB for housing association tenants and the profile of stock investment required to bring homes up to standard. The financial landscape is equally tough for all the options with savings required of circa £3.6m from core management expenditure of £12.5m. The ability of an option to significantly reduce operating costs is a key factor.
54. It is the In-House option that, by a wide margin, best interacts with the requirement to make significant savings. The Council has a track record of successfully delivering large budget reductions whilst carefully managing the impact on services and residents over recent years. These experiences will be directly relevant to, and can be directly applied to, an in-house option. In contrast BHP will find it harder to achieve the savings potentially required due to being 'arms length' with the associated costs this structure carries. The Joint Venture will

take time and money to implement and in any case becomes difficult, if not impossible, to engineer as the cost reduction requirement increases.

55. The financials are the most important factor in reaching the recommendation.
56. Control is another important factor. The In-House option gives the highest level of strategic and operational control. The Reformed ALMO and Joint Venture options offer good levels of strategic control (though the ability to change course operates more slowly) and lower levels of operational control.
57. Leadership is another key consideration. Here the In-House option faces challenges. Of the three options, the In-House option may find it hardest to attract high quality housing expertise. However, the In-House service will have access to the Council's expertise in cost reduction and this is an important consideration. Consideration of the salary and positioning of the senior roles in the In-House Housing Business Unit will be of key importance in maximising the quality of the field of candidates. Although both other options potentially bring better leadership to bear, their inherent weaknesses, particularly in relation to the financial aspects, are more important as matters for comparative consideration.
58. Governance and resident engagement are important issues also. Irrespective of the option chosen the existing Board structure within the ALMO is likely to change due to the strong trend towards skills-based Boards as opposed to Boards with members representing constituencies (e.g. Members and residents). The option which will have to be most imaginative in how it addresses Member and resident engagement is the In-House option. But this issue is not insurmountable and is one other Councils have successfully addressed on bringing the service in-house. For example a Members and residents committee may overcome the loss of the ALMO Board under the In-House option.
59. In conclusion, taking into account the challenging financial landscape, and all other factors outlined above, it is recommended that the In-House option is chosen. Moreover, the In-House option offers the opportunity to re-position the housing service within the Council with the aim of improving a broad range of outcomes for almost 12,000 households. This is not the lift and shift of a self-contained housing service into the Council's structure. This is the engagement of the housing service with the Council's wider agendas in order to secure improved outcomes for residents and to enable the Council's expertise in cost reduction to be brought to bear. However there are two areas for particular consideration within the planning for the In-House option and these are identification and mitigation of the key risks arising from the new position of the housing service within the Council's wider business and providing effective arrangements for resident and Member oversight and scrutiny.

3. OPTIONS REVIEW METHODOLOGY

Who has been directly involved?

The subject of service delivery to over 12,000 customers is clearly a major issue and the approach taken has reflected the importance of the subject. The review has been monitored and managed by a group of people called the Cross Council Group (CCG) the members of CCG are:

- Led by: **Phil Porter – Strategic Director Community Wellbeing**
- Supervised by: **The Cross Council Group** (CCG) who have approved all the key content and decisions. The membership of the CCG is:
  - Phil Porter – Strategic Director Community Wellbeing
  - Jon Lloyd-Owen (JLO) - Operational Director, Housing & Culture
  - Margaret Read (MR) Assistant Director Corporate Customer Services
  - Minesh Patel (MP) – Head of Finance
  - Neil MacDonald (NMD) – Head of Localities
  - Chris Whyte (CW) – Operational Director Environment Services
  - Thomas Cattermole – Head of Executive & Member Services
  - Gerald Davies – Interim Housing Partnerships Manager
- Project managed by: **Gerald Davies – Interim Housing Partnerships Manager**
- Project input from external consultants: **Campbell Tickell** (on housing matters) and **BMG** (on the views of customers)
- Project support from **Serena Hong**

What is the question?

The review is about answering the question:

> ✶ *What is the best way to deliver housing management to the Council's tenants and leaseholders in the years ahead?*

The way the review has addressed the question

The review has some important building blocks. Each of these building blocks has key questions and within this report those questions are addressed.

Essential building block	The questions	How we address the questions
The national context	What is going on in terms of housing policy that the review needs to take in to account	Section on the **National Context**
The buildings and the land	What condition is the housing stock in?	Section on **Brent Context**
	Which option can manage the condition of the stock in years ahead?	Section on the **Evaluation of the Options**
	Which option is best in terms of developing new stock?	Section on the **Evaluation of the Options**
The people who live in the buildings	What do we know about the people who live in the buildings?	Section on **Brent Context**
	What do we know about future demand?	Section on **Brent Context**
	What do we know about what the current residents think about the future direction for housing services?	Section on **Brent Context**

	How will residents be consulted on the decision?	Section on **Implementation**
The Outcome Required	What is the set of outcomes we want to achieve?	Section on **Required Outcomes**
The Options	What are the options that we should evaluate?	Section on **The Options Described**
The Evaluation Model	How do we assess each option to understand how well it can deliver the *Outcome Required?*	Section on **Options Review Methodology**
The Evaluation Findings	What does the *Evaluation Model* tell us about how well each of the *Options* will deliver the *Outcome Required*	Section on the **Evaluation of the Options**
The Recommendation	Looking across the evidence in the *Evaluation Findings* which is the best *Option?*	Section on **Recommended Way Forward**

Taking these building blocks the approach of the review is straightforward:

The *Outcome Required* is shaped by the *Buildings and the Land* and the *People who live in the buildings.*

The *Evaluation Model* sets out how we will work out how well/less well each *Option* will deliver the *Outcome Required*

The *Evaluation Findings* set out what we learned when we applied the *Evaluation Model* to the *Options.*

The *Recommendation* looks across the evidence in the *Evaluation Findings* and makes a recommendation about which option best delivers the *Outcome Required.*

Project Decisions and the Final Decision

The Cross Council Group have made all the key decisions based on work done by the project team.

The Council's Corporate Management Team have been involved at key stages:

- In setting up to CCG as a body to deliver the project
- In considering the options
- In considering the evaluation method
- In considering the evaluation findings
- In considering this final report

This final report will be sent to the following groups for approval:

- Corporate Management Team
- Cabinet

Each option has a different implementation pathway. The implementation pathway sets out the most important issues that will need to be sorted out as the option is implemented. This includes what further approval(s) may be required and the resident engagement/consultation that will be carried out.

Making sure the review takes into account the facts and views that it needs to produce a good outcome

The section above sets out the method used in this review. Just as important as the method is making sure that the review works with the best quality of data and opinions. In the table below we set out where data and views have come from:

The Data or Views	**What we took in to account**
The condition of the Council's housing stock The work required to maintain the stock	Information from BHP about stock condition and future work programmes
The Council's new housing strategy	Discussion with the lead officer for the Council's new housing strategy to ensure that the content and potential outcomes of this review were aligned with the relevant objectives in the Council's new housing strategy which is currently on its passage towards full approval.
Views of other Council departments	Informal discussions with corporate and operational directors Formal discussions at Cross Council Group Formal discussions at Corporate Management Team
Views of Brent Housing Partnership	Informal discussion with BHP senior management Formal discussions with BHP Board Submission of an offer document from BHP about ways in which they could see a reformed ALMO providing greater value to the Council Detailed liaison on matters of operational and financial fact that play a part in the review
Views of Brent Housing Partnership staff	Briefings open to all BHP staff held by Jon Lloyd-Owen and Gerald Davies.
Views of residents	A telephone survey of approx. 600 residents by BMG 5 focus groups with a cross section of residents A number of telephone interviews with vulnerable residents

	A meeting with for all involved residents to which 150 were invited and approximately 35 attended
Views of Members	The cabinet decision that instructed that this review should happen Formal briefings with the leader of the Council, deputy leader of the Council and portfolio holder There were 2 formal briefings held which were open to all members

DCLG Guidance on Options Appraisals

In carrying out the review, we have taken into account the guidance from the DCLG (Review of Arms Length Management Organisations DCLG 2006, and Updated Guidance for Councils Considering the Future of their ALMO Housing Management Services, Dec 2011). The guidance requires that options reviews have regard to the financial sustainability of ALMO, the long term viability of HRA and the strategic direction of Council. All these subjects are addressed in this review.

The guidance also requires that the review should engage the same stakeholder groups as were engaged when the decision was made to establish the ALMO, and that any change of arrangements is subject to no less rigorous a test of opinion than at that time. There is no requirement for a tenant ballot unless there was a ballot when the ALMO was established. The guidance also explicitly expects that the Council will consult tenants when winding up an ALMO or not renewing its contract, but here too states that the method of consultation is a matter for local decision. We have taken this guidance into account within this report.

The link between the review and the Council's housing strategy

We have liaised with the Council's Policy and Strategy Manager to discuss the relationship between this review and the Council's Housing Strategy, which is currently under review. The review is concerned with identifying the option that can best advance issues of stock condition, customer service, development opportunities and operating efficiency. As such the review is in alignment with the strategic aims of the housing strategy to improve the quantity and quality of housing in the borough. We are confident that there is no conflict or inconsistency between the options appraisal and the strategy.

4. NATIONAL CONTEXT

The rise and fall of ALMOs

The serious performance issues of Brent's ALMO (BHP) has led to this options appraisal, and those issues might make adopting an alternative delivery mechanism seem more attractive. However, it is important to reflect briefly on why ALMOs came in to being, and the current state of the housing sector generally.

ALMOs partly came about because of the extent to which, in general, social housing services failed to flourish within the local authority environment. The argument was that by creating a standalone organisation with undiluted focus on delivering a housing service, positioned at a greater distance from broader Council issues, then there was a greater likelihood of success – coupled with this was the position of the government that funding to achieve the Decent Homes Standard would only be available to Councils who established ALMOs providing they met the 2 star quality threshold, which BHP did.

Much has changed in the worlds of housing and local government in the intervening years. Councils generally and Brent specifically have faced massive funding cuts and have needed to transform and modernise their services under the most testing of circumstances. This has created an environment which feels a long way distant from the environment in which the ALMO model came in to existence.

Despite this, the issues that led to the development of the ALMO model are still relevant. The housing service is of great importance to residents, and the Council has a direct contractual relationship with each of its tenants and leaseholders, which distinguishes it from all other services. But the number of households provided for is still relatively small compared to the number of households in the borough and the Council's services to them.

However, in recent years a number of Councils have taken their ALMOs back in-house. Although some were performing poorly, on the whole this has been done for financial and political reasons. It was perceived that there was more potential for rationalisation and cost savings, and that the HRA could be optimised with an in-house service.

The current political environment and housing legislation

The entire social housing sector is currently under political threat in a way it has never been before. It is not clear where the government's new leadership will take housing, nor is it clear that the sector will continue in the same recognisable form for the future.

Amongst a raft of recent legislation and orders, two key pieces of legislation are changing the housing landscape for registered providers, both Councils and housing associations. Brent's current review of housing strategy will work to address these.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016

This legislation required all social housing providers to reduce rents by 1% per annum year on year for 4 years. It is estimated by the Institute for Fiscal Studies that by the end of this period the policy will cost social housing providers £2.3bn in lost income. The government will gain £1.7bn in reduced housing benefits, whilst tenants themselves will benefit little.

The Housing & Planning Act 2016

This contains a number of wide ranging policy changes including -

- Right to Buy extension, and the levy on higher value Council homes in order to replace homes sold
- Pay to Stay, higher rents for tenants above a £40,000 income threshold in London
- Starter Homes, subsidised home ownership which can take the place of affordable rented homes in satisfying the provisions of s106 planning requirements
- The ending of lifetime tenancies
- Curtailing Council ability to make appointments to or exercise voting rights on registered provider (housing association) boards
- A range of other provisions including planning consent, local plans, & tackling rogue landlords

The thrust of this legislation is to encourage home ownership (at the expense of affordable rented homes) and to bring in additional funds to the Exchequer. The impact will reduce the total amount of social housing available and the amount being developed. The levy will have a negative effect on Council funds but as yet the detail of the amount and operation of the levy is not clear.

Our understanding is that the provision relating to restrictions on Council powers in relation to housing association boards was not intended to apply to ALMOs. However, the detail of the regulations has not yet been published and is still under discussion with DCLG.

Change in the wider housing sector

Housing Management services have been going through a period of radical change across the social housing sector - partly in response to the government's reforms but also in response to changed customer expectations and requirements.

The huge increases in house prices have rendered home ownership largely unaffordable in London. According to the website Rightmove, last year most property sales in Brent involved flats, which sold for an average of £391,957. During the last year, property prices in Brent were 10% up on the previous year and 27% up on 2013. Unemployment is higher than average at 7%, and salaries lower than average, with ONS data at the end of 2015 showing that the median salary of a Brent resident is £25,203. The average flat costs more than 15 times the median income. It is not surprising that there is considerable pressure on rented housing.

Hand-in-hand with this is the rise in homeless acceptances and rough sleeping. In Q1 2016 homelessness acceptances increased nationally by 9% on the corresponding quarter in 2015, and in Brent by 10% to 183 households in the quarter. Rough sleepers, last measured (count + estimate) in autumn 2015, increased nationally by 27% from 2014. Brent has the 6th highest count of rough sleepers of all local authorities in England. Addressing homelessness forms a key plank of the work to revise Brent's Housing Strategy.

Until quite recently the housing association sector had not been subject to the same financial pressures as local authorities, but this is changing. The rent reduction and other ongoing financial pressures are leading the sector to restructure and transform itself. One response has been to consolidate and merge, leading to the creation of many large housing associations and groups. In addition, many RPs are cutting back on non-core services in the same way as local authorities.

On a more positive note, advancing digital technology has the potential to reshape service delivery and choice. It is becoming increasingly common and sophisticated in housing providers, Councils and the larger housing associations. Digital transformation enables customers to engage with their landlord by, for example, ordering repairs online or through an app on their smartphone, or by taking photos of issues on estates and submitting them via an app that automatically tags the exact location. Through digital transformation it is possible to improve services, improve accessibility of services and to reduce cost. Our evaluation criteria look specifically at this important topic.

5. BRENT CONTEXT

This section considers the nature of the housing stock and Brent's approach to asset management. It also describes the characteristics of the households who occupy it, and their views on the current service.

Demographics

The Council housing stock

The housing stock currently managed by BHP comprises 11,957 units of which 7,714 are tenanted and 3,699 are leasehold. The remainder are a mixture of miscellaneous units such as shared ownership, and those owned by BHP.

Council homes are primarily flatted estates with 1 or 2 bedrooms. Flats are heavily concentrated in the South East of the borough. Houses tend to be 3 or more bedrooms and are spread more evenly across the borough.

Brent's Asset Management Strategy

The Council's Asset Management Strategy was agreed in 2013. It set out a long-term approach to the maintenance and development of the Council's housing assets in order to best meet its housing objectives, and was subject to wide ranging public consultation. The strategy developed 4 key objectives -

- Stock Investment – to improve and maintain the condition of the existing housing stock
- Stock Reform – to raise the performance and improve the balance of the stock to better align with housing demand
- Development – to provide additional affordable housing to increase the capacity to meet housing need
- Rent Policy – to provide the income required to fund the investment in existing and new Council homes

The strategy set out priorities for a 7-year stock investment programme, which are focused on maintaining the Decent Homes Standard, roof & window renewals, and energy efficiency and fuel poverty works. The indicative cost for the forthcoming 5 years was £86.3m (in 2013), with the annual budget to be agreed by the Executive year on year.

Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) takes lead responsibility for the implementation of many elements of the strategy, in particular the management of the stock investment programme and the initial phase of development on existing HRA estates. The latter is described further under the section 'Current Arrangements'.

BHP's Asset Management Plan sets out arrangements for delivery. Following a detailed procurement exercise, in 2014 Wates Living Space were appointed to deliver the stock improvement programme, with a 5-year contract renewable for a further 5 years. BHP are responsible for monitoring the programme and managing this contract.

In 2014/5 the budgeted investment programme was £10.2m and the outturn was £7.9m. In 2015/6 the budget was £44.8m and the outturn was £29.5m. This year's programme is budgeted at £33.8m and is currently forecast to be on target.

As can be seen from the outturn figures, during the first two years of the contract there were performance concerns as, amongst other matters, not all of the planned work was carried out. Discussions regarding these led to a settlement which aimed to resolve the issues on mutually acceptable terms. This settlement has recently been confirmed and signed off by both parties.

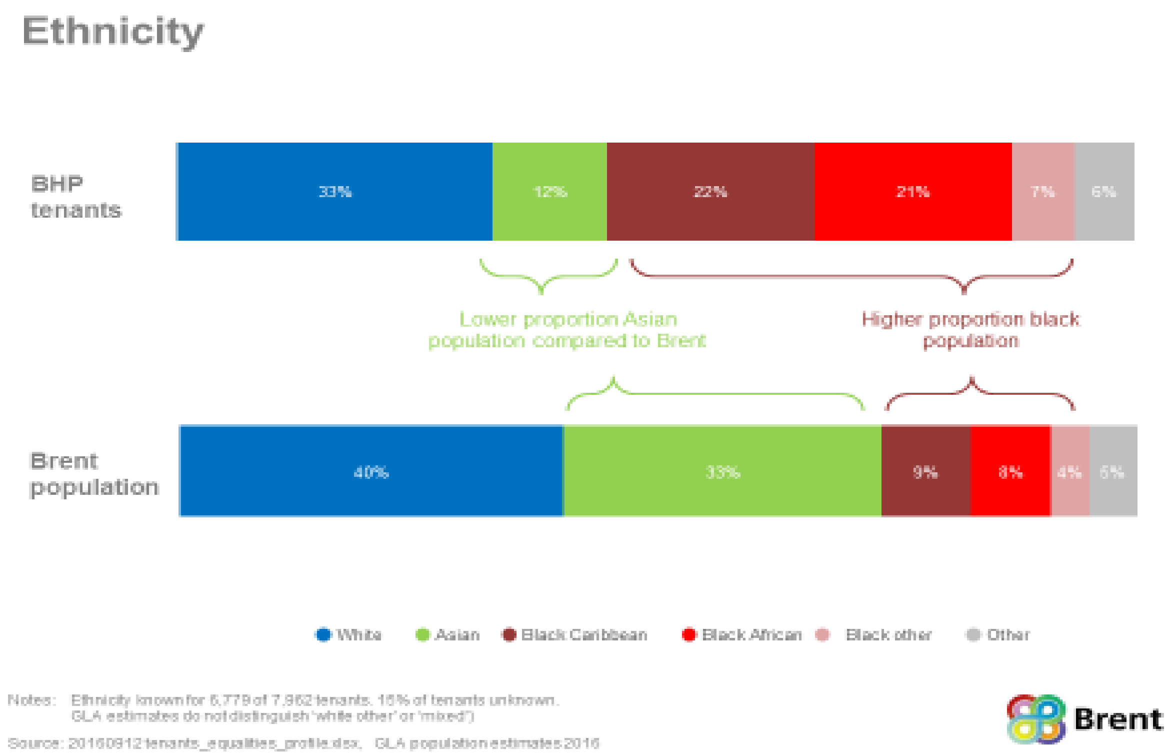
Tenant and Leaseholder Households

An average of 3.3 people live in each tenanted property, and 4.8 people live in each leasehold property. Comparing the number of people per household to the number of bedrooms, there is a small degree of overcrowding in Council tenanted stock (bedrooms minus occupants = -1.3, equating for example to 2.3 people living in a 1 bed unit, or 3.3 people in a 2-bed unit). Using the same method of calculation for leasehold properties shows that leasehold households tend to be considerably more overcrowded (bedrooms minus occupants = -3, equating for example to 4 people living in a 1 bed unit, or 5 in a 2 bed).

The level of overcrowding is slightly surprising given that 52% of tenants and 37% of leaseholders claim Single Person Discount on Council tax. By definition, these people are not overcrowded (bedrooms minus occupants must be zero or a positive figure) which suggests that amongst those who *are* overcrowded, it is considerably more marked than the averages would suggest.

Ethnicity of residents

The chart below shows the ethnicity of BHP tenants, and compares this with the population of Brent as a whole. Amongst tenants, 67% are non-white, which is 7% higher than the Brent population as a whole. There is a significantly higher proportion of black tenants and lower proportion of Asian tenants when compared to Brent's population as a whole.

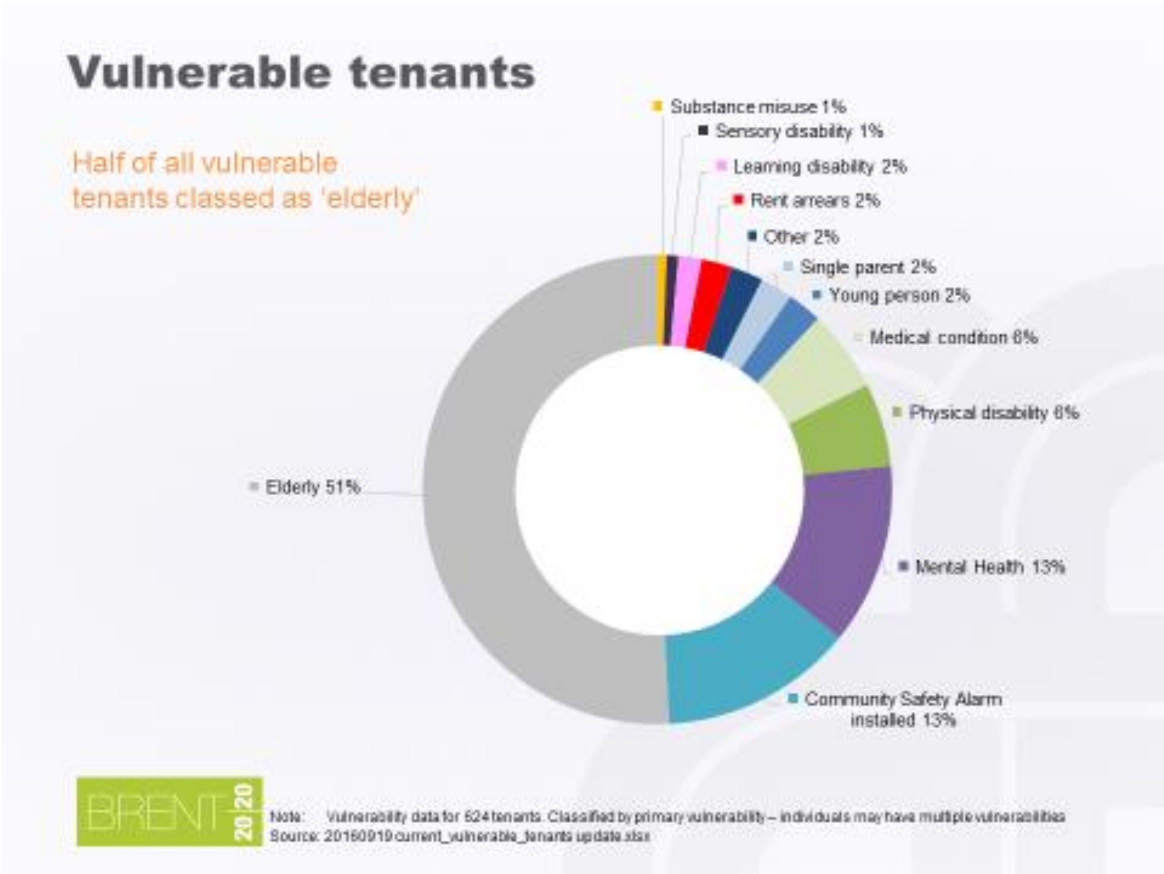


There is considerable diversity of religion amongst the population as a whole. Unsurprisingly, amongst tenants the proportions of different religions (relative to the population as a whole) tends to reflect the ethnicity of tenants, with a higher proportion of Christianity and notably lower proportion of Hinduism. There are slightly more Muslims amongst the tenant base but this is not marked 23% compared to 20% in the general population.

Age and vulnerability

34% of tenants are over 60 years old. Interestingly, although there are slightly more elderly women than men the difference is not marked, whereas in the age groups 30-60 women outnumber men by almost half as many again. This might suggest an increasing preponderance of women tenants in future years, though without analysis of trends in allocations data this is only speculative.

Amongst all tenants, around 4% have a disability. Amongst tenants aged 60, disability is roughly double that rate. Almost 8% of tenants are classified as vulnerable, and this breaks down as shown below. Slightly more than half of all vulnerable tenants are elderly.



Income

Across the borough, unemployment is higher than the national average at 7%, with 10.2% of Brent residents in receipt of out of work benefits.

Salaries are lower than average. 31% of employees living in Brent are low paid, the second highest of any London borough and ten percentage points higher than average. ONS data at the end of 2015 showed that the median salary of a Brent resident is £25,203.

84% of tenants and 43% of leaseholders claim Housing Benefit.

Implications of the resident profile

There are no specific implications for the options appraisal. However, the provider will need to be mindful of profile of the residents and reflect this in their offer.

Additional information regarding equalities issues may be found in the Equalities Impact Assessment.

Residents' opinions of the current service

To gain additional insight as part of the overall review the Council commissioned BMG research to undertake an opinion survey and a qualitative examination of residents' using focus groups and in-depth interviews.

For the survey 600 telephone interviews were conducted in August 2016 using a random sample of BHP residents (526 tenants and 74 leaseholders). There were 5 focus groups, as follows:

- Elderly tenants
- Tenants with a disability
- Tenants who live on estates
- Tenants who do not live on estates
- Leaseholders

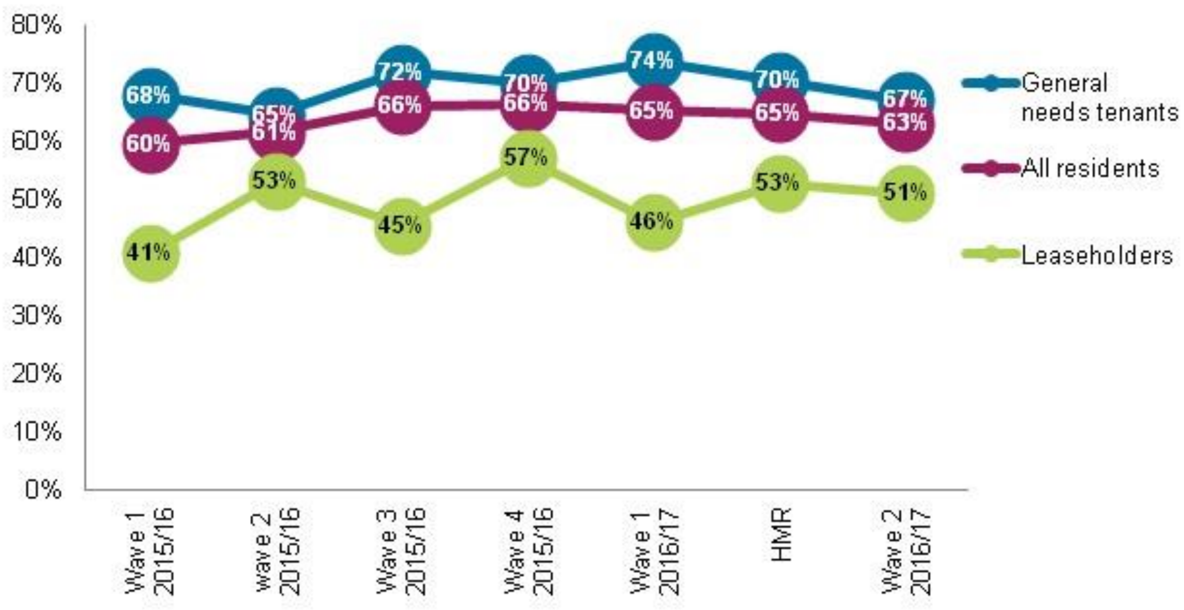
In addition to the above, there were in-depth telephone interviews with younger persons and with persons known to have some form of vulnerability.

Set out below is a summary of the findings of this work – copies of the full report are available.

Overall perceptions

The most important indicator is the level of satisfaction with the service and the figure below taken from the report shows the amount this has changed since these surveys were began.

Overall level of satisfaction with the service



The opinion survey findings show that the top service priority for tenants is the repairs and maintenance service, whilst for leaseholders this is split equally between the repairs service and dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Service improvements

The 3 services indicated by residents as most in need of improvement are:

- Repairs and maintenance
- Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour
- Quality of homes

Similar areas of improvement were indicated in the qualitative activity with repairs and maintenance and quality of home being most frequently mentioned.

Repairs and maintenance service

The opinion survey found that dissatisfaction with this service appears to be driven by residents having outstanding repair work needed or where it has taken multiple attempts to get repairs fixed or where there has been poor communication or where the quality of the work has been poor.

Improvements suggested echo the opinion survey with the majority saying the ease of reporting a repair, the quality of the repair work and keeping residents informed as to the progress of a repair are the areas most needing attention. The qualitative findings also indicated that there is an apparent lack of communication within the contractor resulting in incorrect tradespeople turning up or them arriving with the wrong materials for the work resulting in multiple visits.

Keeping residents informed

The opinion survey has shown that a majority of residents are of the view that BHP do not keep them informed with many saying they receive very little communication about what is going on in their area and that the level of communication has deteriorated over recent years.

A majority have also indicated some frustration at having never received communications from their housing officer.

Involving residents and acting upon their views

Less than half of residents (48%) are satisfied that BHP listen to their views and act upon them with the level for leaseholders alone dropping to 38%. Residents feel it is important to be involved and listened to as residents.

Customer service

Many residents were able to provide examples of good customer service that they had received from BHP whilst those who felt they had received a poor customer service were generally referring to the amount of time they had spent trying to get through to someone on the phone and chasing to progress their queries.

Estate Services

Around six in ten residents were satisfied with the grounds maintenance service (62%), 58% with the overall estate service provided by BHP, and the same level of satisfaction with the cleaning of communal areas and the external communal areas.

Dealing with anti-social behaviour

Around half (51%) of residents who stated that they had reported ASB to BHP in the last 12 months were dissatisfied with the way BHP had handled the case, whilst seven out of ten were dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

Involved residents' event

The Council, as part of the steps necessary to engage with the directly affected stakeholders, held an event aimed at those residents (tenants and leaseholders) who regularly participate in the various engagement arrangements which BHP operates. There were 150 such persons invited to this event and this listing was supplied by the Community Engagement Unit within BHP.

The event took the form of a briefing session on:

- Why the review is taking place
- What are the options the Council is considering
- What the Council is seeking to achieve from the review – particularly the benefits that should accrue to residents

There was also a workshop session which gave the participants the opportunity to articulate their hopes and fears regarding the potential outcomes from each of the three options. The outcomes from this workshop session are set out in Appendix 2.

6. REQUIRED OUTCOMES

Introduction

This section explains the five headline criteria we have used. Each criterion is a statement about one or more aspects of the service and/or outcomes that we want the housing management service to achieve. Looking across all five of the criteria you should have a clear idea of the type of service the Council is looking for in the future.

What did we take in to account when thinking about the criteria?

The five criteria are designed to support and deliver the important issues in:

- The Housing Strategy
(see section ***Responding to the Council's Review of its Housing Strategy*** on pages 19 - 22)

- The Council's housing stock
(see section ***Brent's Asset Management Strategy*** on page 23)

- The people who live in the Council's stock
(see section ***Demographics*** on pages 24 - 26)

- What residents think (see section ***What resident's think*** on pages 27 - 32)

In the sections below we talk more about each criterion.

Assures provision of modern, high-quality and continuously improving housing management services

A ***modern*** service will offer more opportunities to customers to self-serve via the web or smartphone apps. This type of service costs significantly less than telephone or face-to-face service.

A ***high quality*** service will be clear about what the service is and will have processes in place that convert a work request (which could be a call from a resident to request a repair or the service provider needing to deal with unpaid rent) in to activity that completes the work request. The process will be efficient, so waste will have been eliminated.

A service that ***continuously improves*** will have techniques in place to learn from mistakes so that the way the work is done is tweaked when necessary, will review services and will be willing to try and solve difficult service delivery problems.

Achieves significant efficiencies and savings to contribute to the financial sustainability of the Council's housing revenue account

Council and housing budgets are under considerable and ongoing pressure. The ability to operate efficiently and produce savings whilst also delivering the required levels of service is a vital attribute of an option. If an option is weak in respect of this aspect, then the outcome might be that when it is required to produce savings then the service suffers more than if a more effective organisation had had to deliver the same saving.

There are two ways to produce savings. The first is by doing less. In other words by defining a smaller scope of service. An example might be if you offered direct debit (50p per transaction) and standing order (£1.50 per transaction and your most expensive payment method) (these costs are made up simply to provide an example). If you stopped offering customers the choice to pay by standing order then you would be offering a smaller scope of service but your transaction costs would be lower.

The second way to produce savings is by operating more efficiently. For example, lots of customers would like it if they could report a repair online 24 hours a day and be allocated an appointment for the repair to be done. This approach would have much lower transaction costs that receiving repairs requests over the phone. This would produce an efficiency saving. This saving can then either be taken (so you spend less money to achieve the outcome) or reinvested, so you spend the money you have saved to deliver more work and better outcomes from the same budget.

Maximises the value and performance of the Council's housing stock through active asset management and new development.

Active asset management is about looking after the buildings that Brent's Council tenants and leaseholders live in. it is a complicated sequence of events:

- Defining the outcome you want to achieve (Cheap for residents to live in? Easy to maintain? But what about when you can have one but not the other?)
- Deciding how you will spend the limited amount of money to have
- Letting contracts that get day-to-day repairs and improvement works done. Achieving a competitive price for a clearly defined level of quality of product and service
- Managing the contracts to ensure that the specified timescales, cost and quality are achieved.

New development is about building new homes to be able to meet more of the huge demand for affordable housing in Brent. This might mean being imaginative and adding extra floors to an existing building, or converting an undercrofts or it might mean building new homes on land on existing estates.

Contributes to improved outcomes for tenants including in respect of employment and training, health and wellbeing and tenancy sustainment for vulnerable tenants.

The housing service has a strong customer relationship with 12,000 households across the borough. Thinking more widely the Council wants to make a positive impact on the quality of life of everyone who lives and works in the borough. This criterion is about the extent to which an option can reach beyond basic housing management to achieve **improved outcomes for tenants including in respect of employment and training, health and wellbeing.**

There are three main ways in which this might happen. Firstly, the housing service could use its relationship with the 12,000 households to signpost to a range of services provided by other Council departments. Secondly the housing service could be paid by other Council departments to deliver services to its customers on behalf of the other departments. Lastly, the HRA might fund activity by other Council teams for services delivered to tenants and leaseholders.

Contribution to the delivery of the Council's priorities

This criterion makes clear that the extent to which an option can contribute to the **Council's priorities** is an important consideration. It is possible for a housing service to operate with a significant degree of independence from the rest of the Council. This criterion expresses the Council's intention that the housing service should be fully engaged with the Council's wider priorities and should be able to secure improved outcomes for the 12,000 households beyond just housing management. Also of relevance is the degree of flexibility displayed by an option, adaptability in the face of changing Council priorities over time.

7. CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS EXPLAINED AND ANALYSED

The Current Housing Management Service

LB Brent established Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) as an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) in 2002 and agreed a new 10-year management agreement in 2013.

'Arms Length' means that, whilst it is wholly owned by the Council and that the tenants remain Council Tenants with the rents set by the Council, it has its own board of management and is expected to operate within the terms of the management agreement and achieve jointly agreed levels of performance.

The current arrangements and Management Agreement were established in 2013 following an independent review of housing management and stock ownership options. The Council's Executive decided to renew the agreement with BHP but on an 'optimised' basis. This optimisation took account of the planned co-location of BHP in the Civic Centre and required the increased provision of services, primarily support services, by the Council to BHP and these operate through SLAs. These arrangements were also designed to realise efficiency savings and reduce the cost of the service to the Council's HRA. It was also recognised at the time of renewal that there was potential for BHP in future to provide additional services to the Council. The one specific area where this has been realised is in respect of the provision of development services for a programme of new-build schemes.

The 2013 Management Agreement provides for the agreement of an annual Delivery Plan which BHP are required to implement, and for regular performance monitoring and partnership meetings to govern the relationship. Following renewal of the Management Agreement a Client-side function was established within the Council to support the effective operation of the Management Agreement and provide strategic and performance oversight of BHP.

Currently BHP provides housing management services to the Council's 7,714 tenants and 3,699 leaseholders plus to the 332 BHP homes owned by it directly. The nature of these services is described in detail below.

This section is organised into the core areas of work:

- Core Landlord Services (customer services, tenancy management, leaseholder management, property services, resident engagement)
- Services BHP delivers for Brent Council (financial inclusion, clienting of Tenancy Management Organisations (TMOs) and Travellers Sites
- Back office (Customer Services, ITU, finance and HR)
- Additional services (BHP Academy, management of PRS stock, HRA development
- Governance
- Finance

Core Landlord Services

BHP delivers a full set of landlord services on behalf of the Council. Some services are provided directly by BHP and its staff; other services are provided by contractors who are contract managed by BHP and this is indicated where appropriate.

Customer services

4BHP operates a call centre for all customer enquiries, and provides face-to-face services at the Council's contact centre and where appropriate on estates. Around 80% of the telephone enquiries each month concern repairs.

Tenancy Management

These services are all delivered directly by BHP staff:

- Tenancy Conditions– handling all aspects concerning observance of the tenancy agreement – e.g. nuisance/ minor ASB; answering queries; unlawful occupation; etc.
- Voids and Lettings – Processing vacant properties for re-let and the sign-up of new tenants; processing of transfer requests from existing tenants, and dealing with tenancy succession; c.200 new tenancies are let each year.
- Rent collection and recovery – seeking to ensure prompt payment and pursuing cases where there are arrears – giving advice on welfare benefits and debt management. The total income sought is £52.9m of which £28m is paid through Housing Benefit
- Resident engagement – Consultation and involvement of tenants (and leaseholders) to inform service performance and improvement.
- Anti-Social Behaviour – dealing with the more complex and serious cases

Leaseholder Management

- Handling landlord/leaseholder issues for these 3,699 properties including dealing with absentee landlords that have sub-let. This includes:
- Communal services - Provision, charging and collection of service charges for communal services (such as block cleaning, grounds maintenance, communal repairs, etc.)
- Major works - Statutory consultation in respect of planned maintenance and major works and associated billing and collection.

Property Services

- The majority of these services are contracted out but managed by BHP:
- Estates Management – the management of contracts for grounds maintenance (part of the Council contract with Veolia), communal cleaning (contracted out); refuse disposal arrangements (also contracted out); TV aerial systems & CCTV) etc.
- Repairs & Maintenance – the provision of a responsive repairs service communal and tenanted property repairs. BHP processes 35,000 repairs a year – all of which are carried out by Wates

- Void repairs - repairs to empty properties in readiness for their re-letting are undertaken by a small directly employed team but this is under review
- Planned Maintenance and Major works planning, procurement and contract management of a programme of planned maintenance and external decorations works and of major works to homes and estates, which are currently carried out by Wates. Management of other capital works programmes and their respective contractors for lift and heating renewal, electrical testing and upgrading, etc. This year works are programmed to over 1,600 units with a budget of £33m
- Health and Safety Compliance
- Commissioning Gas servicing and checks to all tenanted properties which have gas heating, and commissioning of required communal water, fire safety and other H&S checks and compliance.

Additional Services provided by BHP on behalf of LBB
BHP also delivers a range of other services:

Community Fund and BHP Academy

These are BHP's investment in community development

PRS and property management

This includes two main areas, the refurbishment, letting and management of vacant regeneration properties at South Kilburn (c.100 units currently) and of a reducing number of private leased properties (c.50) which are used as temporary accommodation for homeless households; and Council-owned, acquired and let properties (to families towards whom the Council has a homeless duty). BHP have been providing the refurbishment and void repairs service (all properties) and housing management and responsive repairs service (Brent properties only) under a SLA. The target is 120 of these within the Borough by 2018.

(HRA) Development Agency

There is a small team of 4 which manages the development of new-build homes for the Council. The present programme will deliver c.200 new-build homes by 2018, mainly general needs housing with some NAIL provision.

Further non-core services

These services could be delivered independently of the core Landlord Services, by another organisation including by the Council. However, until this point, the Council has commissioned BHP to do them.

- ***Financial inclusion***
  The provision of advice and assistance to enable tenants to protect their income including welfare rights, this is commissioned by Brent Council Housing independently of the core financial inclusion Council offer

- ***Clienting of Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)***
  There are 2 of these tenant run organisations who provide directly a full range of housing management services to about 500 tenants and leaseholders. These groups have their own management committees made up of residents, who manage the housing services for residents in their area. The TMOs are responsible for the day-to-day running of services such as repairs and collecting rent.
- ***Travellers' site***
  BHP acts for the Council as the client with the site management service being delivered by Oxfordshire County Council
- ***Right to Buy (RTB)***
  Processing RTB applications (about 220 per annum) and sales (about 60 per annum).

Back Office Services
BHP provides the following services for itself internally:

- ***Finance.*** The provision of accountancy, financial planning and payment of suppliers for an organisation with a turnover of £55.6m (this figure excludes the rental income which goes directly into the LBB's bank account)
- ***Performance management.***
- ***Complaints***. BHP currently deals with Stage 1 customer complaints (as do Brent Council departments), and there is close working with the Council's corporate complaint department
- ***Customer contact centre***. The receiving, processing and progressing of 83,220 calls each year, many of which are resolved at that initial point of contact
- ***Communications.*** BHP has a small team, who are responsible for conveying information about the range of services and keeping residents informed on progress and other news – this includes regular newsletters and the BHP annual report
- ***HR.*** The provision of the whole range of HR services for 178 employees

Other Support Services from LBB
Currently BHP buys £1.3m of support services (through specific SLAs):

- Accommodation
- ITU services
- Payroll
- Some Council legal services are provided to BHP (for example for possession proceedings, RTB conveyancing) and
- Internal audit and investigations.

Governance
The Board of Management of BHP is both responsible and accountable for the operation and financial management of BHP to the Council. The current Chair is an independent member and the Vice-Chair is a resident member. The BHP Board consists of 13 directors:

- Three Councillors – appointed by the Council
- Four independent members – appointed by the Board
- Six resident members – elected by residents

The interim Executive Leadership Team, which was restructured as part of the Recovery Plan, currently consists of the:

- Managing Director (interim appointment but holds the substantive post of Director of Finance)
- Director of Transformation (interim appointment)
- Director of Property Services (interim appointment)

Under the Management Agreement the Council and BHP operate a partnership arrangement for general liaison, direction, monitoring and advice. The Council, through its Housing Partnership team performs the client role for BHP. In addition to the Operational Director and Head of Housing Partnerships (who have other responsibilities) there is one dedicated officer to support this function.

Finance

The BHP management fee, funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2016-17 is £7.5m.

Current Management Arrangements – Performance

This section of the report provides an overview of BHP's performance. It explains why the Council intervened and sought to address failings in the delivery of services, and will, when it is complete have a detailed overview of performance for January – October 2016.

When the Management Agreement was reviewed in 2013, BHP's performance was judged to be reasonable, including against benchmark performance measures. The explicit goal of the review, though, was to improve performance (to move from average to upper quartile) and increase value for money (to make BHP one of the strongest performing providers of housing management services).

Following renewal of the Management Agreement and recruitment by BHP of a new Senior Leadership Team in 2013, an extensive and comprehensive restructure of the organisation took place. This was substantially completed by late 2014/15 with an expectation that service improvement would follow. In 2015/16 performance did not improve, indeed, in some areas it worsened and there were particular issues with the management of the stock investment programme and the asset management contract with Wates. This compounded underlying issues of relatively low levels of customer satisfaction and a high level of complaints. This led to the Cabinet report in April and the issuing of a letter from the Council to BHP outlining the breach of the management agreement.

A new interim senior leadership team was established in January 2016 and a Recovery Plan put in place, running initially to June, but now extended to October 2016. A BHP Transformation Board oversees progress against the Recovery Plan. A separate full assessment of progress during the

Recovery Plan period is being undertaken in response to the breach of the management agreement and as part of the Housing Management Options Review. This will include a full assessment of the recent trajectory and future prospects for improvement. (Therefore, this section will need to be reviewed and re-written when this work is completed.)

Target Operating Model 'as is' summary

Alongside the recovery plan, BHP and the Council jointly commissioned Altair to develop a new Target Operating Model (TOM) for BHP would be applicable whichever of the options was implemented. One of the key elements of any TOM is a diagnostic of the current ('as is') position. The work to develop the 'as is' was done with residents, staff and the Board and has been signed off by BHP. This was done in the first 3 months of 2016, and the summary below represents the position at that time:

- A lack of customer focus / understanding of customers' needs, including limited data on customer insight, traditional approach to customer access and Customer Relationship Team not performing and isolated
- Underperformance in core areas, for example, complaints (in terms of response time and quality), voids management (poor performance)
- Recognition that the current service is very traditional in its design and not fit for modern ways of working / service delivery, including:
- A structure which put too much resource in the back office, created silo working and had not been successfully implemented (staff reported an unhelpful focus on the restructure even at the beginning of 2016)
- Utilises inefficient working practices, for example, through limited use of technology, no centralised data, and poor application of processes (not customer focused)
- Key functions missing, for example, contract management, performance, and service improvement
- Poor working relationship between BHP and the Council.

The next section provides more information on performance of the core landlord services. We have set out and commented upon satisfaction with the services in the section 'Brent Context'.

Performance in Core Landlord Services

Customer Service

At the point the recovery plan was initiated there were significant concerns about the quality of customer service. This ranged from front line performance issues such as the fact that in 2015/16 only 88% of calls were answered, and those that were answered had to wait for an average of 2 mins and 5 seconds to speak to someone. However, it also included concern over the time it took to respond to complaints and the nature of the complaints, which were more wide ranging than poor front line customer response and indicated deeper issues about both the focus on the customer and the joined up end to end processes.

This was an early focus of the Recovery Plan (January – February) with the development and implementation of the BHP customer care charter, external customer care training for all front line staff, with some measurable initial improvements, for example, in call response times (down to 1 minute 45) and complaint response times (97% within 20 days). However, progress has been less noticeable in terms of the nature and severity of complaints. This is because many of the complaints relate to repairs, and the issues here are about the end to end process. It is good that the customer service team are now better trained and more responsive, but they still have no access to information about repair delivery (so can't answer questions about progress of repairs) and there are still performance concerns with Wates in delivering repairs on time and to the right standard.

Tenancy Management

Core activities in this area of BHP performed better than other areas, for example:

- ***Rent collection –*** performance was reasonably good despite the pressures arising from welfare reform though this is below the lower quartile position and has not met the agreed target level
- ***Voids Performance*** – the Council set an average performance level of 27 days which was the top quartile standard (it is now 21 days). From April to September 2015/16 performance fell well short of this level at an average of 37 days but the position improved over the second half of the year with an average of 24 days' turnaround from October to March. The recovery in the second half of the year meant a full year out-turn of 31 days achieved. BHP's performance in the year to date is an average of 26.6 days which does not meet the reduced target of 24 days in 2016/17.
- ***Anti-social behaviour*** – after a period where perceptions of ASB performance had plateaued, a recent survey has indicated a sharp decline in satisfaction; though this is from a low base of respondents to the survey on this issue. (99 cases).

There is also a perceived shortcoming in the extent and meaningfulness of resident engagement underpinning tenancy management. This relates to a perception that the restructure of 2014 reduced the number of front line staff (bolstering the back office instead, which was supported by the TOM 'as is' analysis); a perception from residents already noted in Customer Service that the staff that remained were less customer focused; and a perception that the wider resident engagement structures were not working as effectively as before. BHP has already identified that this is an area requiring attention and have had this aspect of the service independently reviewed.

Leaseholder Management

Levels of leaseholder satisfaction have been historically lower than the sector average and are currently below the target set. A peer review of leaseholder services has recently been undertaken for BHP and a residents' panel from members of the BHP Board is considering the outcome. Officers are drawing up a leasehold improvement plan, in consultation with the panel, which will draw upon best practice across the sector, and will also focus upon better information provision and additional engagement opportunities with LBB's leaseholders.

Property Services

It was in this area that the most significant failings in service occurred. In particular, the following areas were identified as requiring remedial action by BHP and are key areas within the Recovery Plan:

- ***Stock Investment*** – in the last financial year the target number of properties requiring these works was 1,700 and, in fact 2,300 units were programmed to receive these. The outturn for 15/16 was very disappointing at only 862 units. The current position is much more positive with all task orders issued, Wates mobilised and everything in place to deliver this year, which means there is an expectation that c.1500 units will be completed in 16/17. The section 'Brent Context' sets out more details of Brent's Asset Management Strategy and stock investment priorities.
- ***New Build Development*** – the Council's expectation was that there would be 30 starts on site by last September and 100 units with planning permission. BHP actually achieved 31 starts within the financial year and planning approval for 60 units. There have been various difficulties and the nature of some of the sites has meant that the giving of planning approval was more problematic than that envisaged. Overall there are issues of critical mass in this size of programme which inevitably militates against the throughput the Council has expected to achieve
- ***Property Services Internal Audit*** – this audit carried out in January 2016 reinforced the findings from the 'as is' section of the TOM highlighting a wide range of shortcomings across property services related to procurement, contract and performance management of key contracts and compliance. Significant work has been done in this area since the Interim Directory of Property Services was appointed, and BHP have committed to ensure that all of the recommendations will have been implemented by 31st October 2016.

Review of the performance of BHP regarding the Recovery Plan

BHP's Business Recovery Plan set out the key areas for performance improvement from the beginning of January 2016 for the next six months. The aim of the plan was to raise BHP's performance to a level that is equal to, or better than, comparable housing management organisations (Councils, ALMOs and housing associations) in London and to meet corporate service standards.

The main Business Recovery Priorities focused on improving:

- Senior Leadership and Governance
- Capital Programme Management and Delivery
- Landlord Services Performance
- Corporate and Financial Compliance
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Support for Staff

Whilst the plan was initially approved to run for 6 months (to end of June 2016), it was extended to the end of October 2016 by mutual agreement.

Responsibility for the achievement of the Plan rested with BHP's Board working through the Interim Managing Director and Senior Leadership Team. The implementation of the plan has been led in most respects by the interim Director of Transformation. A joint BHP and LBB Transformation Board has overseen its implementation.

Senior Leadership and Governance

By the beginning of the Recovery Plan period, the previous Managing Director had left and action was being taken to complete the term of employment of the then Director of Operations. The successful conclusion of this facilitated the creation of the current interim management team consisting of: Managing Director; Director of Transformation; Property Services Director.

It is reasonable to say that this team has made great strides towards the achievement of the Recovery Plan's objectives and targets. Furthermore they have worked upon the development of a new Target Operating Model which once adopted and implemented should mean that:

- customers will be at the heart of the service
- it will enable significant efficiencies to be made
- it will deal with immediate issues but also enable a focus on longer term and strategic planning
- there will be clear alignment with the Council at three key levels (leadership, performance management and service delivery)
- there will be a shift to more pro-active relationships with stakeholders and customers, with services shaped through partnering at a local level
- there will be active use of data and customer intelligence to ensure that central but flexible services are deployed to meet demand
- modern technology will be utilised to drive efficiencies in areas such as customer contact, ways of working, information management etc.

Whilst the development of the TOM has progressed it has been decided that its implementation would be put on hold until the review indicates the option likely to be chosen subject to consultation – for the nature of the TOM will vary to some greater or lesser degree option to option.

Regard should be had in reading this section to Appendix 5 which shows BHPs performance in meeting the individual Recovery Plan targets that were jointly agreed by BHP and the Council.

Governance aspects

The various actions required in the plan have all been achieved including the actioning of all of the audit recommendations and the review of the TMOs.

Capital Programme Management and Delivery

There were significant issues with the BHP clienting of the Asset Management Strategy and the performance of the Planned Maintenance contract. The Council instigated a fact finding review which identified compliance and contract management weaknesses, and an action plan was put in place to address these.

The appointment of the interim Property Services Director has allowed BHP to focus more on this key area. The first task of the Director was to resume the commercial negotiations with the Contractor in line with the contract and appoint a partnering advisor and an independent expert to undertake the open book accounting. This has led to a commercial agreement being reached which has allowed the contractor to achieve the income which they believe they were promised against a series of service kicks aimed primarily at addressing the issues with the responsive side of the contract such as better IT links and improved performance.

In terms of actual performance, the levels set for 2015/16 were not fully realised however, the contractor handed over 864 homes by the end of March 2016. The remaining homes, approximately 340 units, have been added to the 2016/7 programme with the final 61 properties being completed by the end of October 2016.

BHP are beginning to mobilise work to the 1,700 properties identified in Year 4 (2017/8) of the programme, to ensure all the pre-commencement work is completed by January 2017 and site set up installed by March 2017 to enable a full 12 months of productivity.

BHP are now producing the Year 5 (2018/9) property list to enable a critical path document to be produced, which informs the resource planning process to deliver year on year outputs.

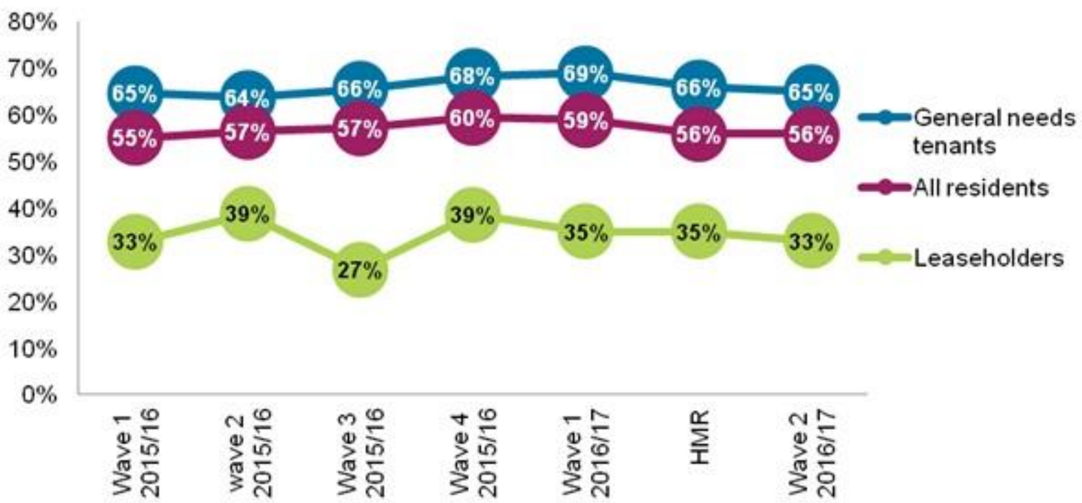
This programme area, which was failing, is now demonstrating that BHP have improved remarkably and if the current plans and programmes are realised, their performance will be at a very satisfactory level.

The issues of contract management as highlighted in the Council's audit report have been addressed. The structure of Property Services has been altered to create a Compliance and Risk Team which monitors all compliance with Health and Safety, contracts and procedures. Monthly statistics are reviewed by senior managers to ensure that corrective action is taken in a timely manner.

Responsive Repairs Service

This is an area of continuing poor levels of customer satisfaction where there has been no discernible improvement as the following graph from the BMG resident satisfaction surveys demonstrates. Indeed, this is the main area of poor performance which is continuing to severely and adversely affect BHP's reputation.

Satisfaction with the repairs & maintenance service



Although repairs only features in the Plan's performance indicators in respect of satisfaction, BHP have stated they are not satisfied with the current level of service delivery. Enhanced monitoring of customer satisfaction with the repairs service, and complaints about poor service delivery have been introduced by BHP and they have started to collect satisfaction data through a third party. The volume of customer satisfaction surveys completed and collected by the contractor is so low that the data is not statistically valid.

Given the complex nature of the Integrated Asset Management Contract of which responsive repairs is a part, BHP are continuing to work within the partnering contract requirements to resolve the performance issues.

Development Agency Services

The Council's expectation was that there would be 30 starts on site by September 2015 and 100 units with planning permission. BHP actually achieved 31 starts within the financial year (i.e. by end March 2016) and planning approval for 60 units. There have been various difficulties and the nature of some of the sites has meant that the giving of planning approval was more problematic than that envisaged. Overall there are issues of critical mass in this size of programme which inevitably militates against the throughput the Council has expected to achieve. The present programme will deliver c.200 new-build homes by 2018.

Complaints Handling & Members Enquiries

In January 2016 Performance on stage 1 complaints and Member's Enquiries was below the targets of responding within 20 and 10 days respectively (74% and 92% against 80% and 95%) with performance varying significantly across teams.

As of 30th September performance on stage 1 complaints and Member's Enquiries is now maintaining the performance on target against the timescale of 20 and 10 days respectively (99% and 100% year to date against 100% targets) with consistent performance across teams.

BHP have benchmarked their 2015/16 complaints performance and volumes against 86 other housing providers which has shown that the volume of complaints they receive is median quartile at 36.92 complaints per 1,000 properties. Of the 12 London based providers who took part in the exercise BHP has the third lowest level of complaints per 1,000 properties with only CityWest Homes and Sutton Housing Partnership having lower complaints levels, and with the London providers having an average of 57.08 complaints per 1,000 properties.

Leaseholder Management

The issues with the planned maintenance contract had a knock on effect to the Leasehold service, with, at one point, 65% of correspondence logged relating to Leasehold Services due to issues with the lack of consultation on works and the level of estimated charges being proposed.

The improvement in the management of the planned maintenance contract had reduced the level of correspondence to only 50% (634 enquiries) of logged correspondence relating to Leasehold Services. All of the statutory consultations have progressed smoothly, with significantly fewer objections raised by leaseholders.

In order to improve the service BHP arranged for a Peer Review to be carried out by another London ALMO and a workshop was held with Board Members on a potential new offer to Leaseholders. The outcomes of the review and the workshop will be reported back to Board.

Voids Management

The turnaround time for standard voids was high at 31.5 days against the upper quartile peer group benchmark of 27 days.

This is an area of significantly improved performance with the average turnaround time now being 26.6 days which is better than the lower quartile HouseMark position of 30 days but still not meeting the target of 24 days set under the Recovery Plan.

Customer Access

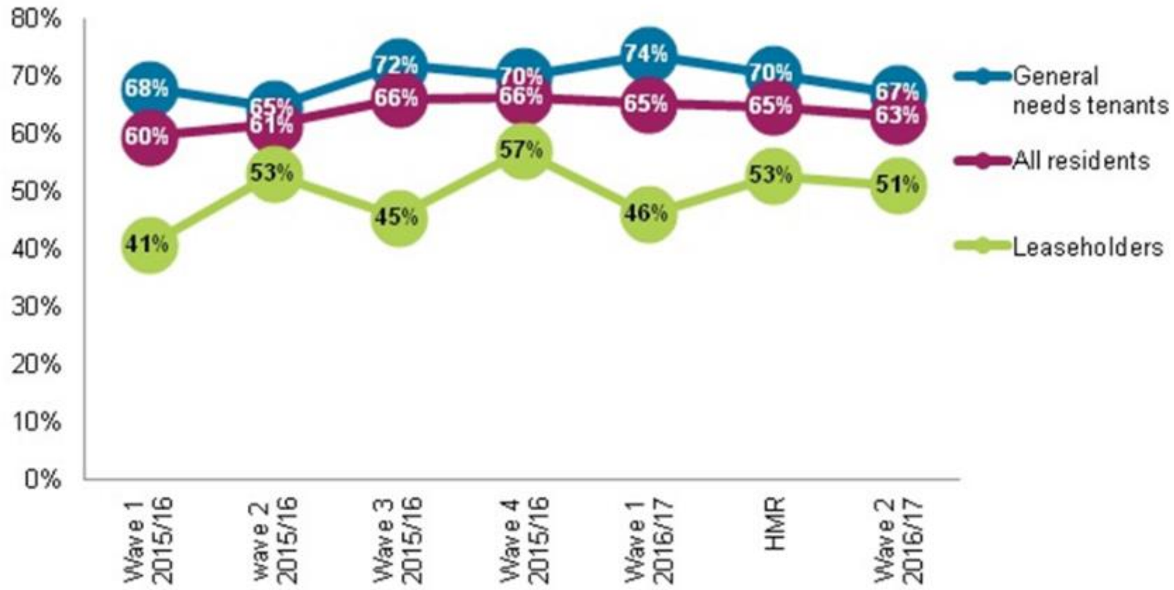
The average time to answer calls in 2015/16 was 125 seconds – well above the target of 75 seconds. The position for 2016 (year to date) is that this has improved to 103 seconds against a new corporate standard of 60 seconds.

In relation the number of calls actually answered – BHP handle just under 50% of all calls which the Councils system handles. Of these around 92% are answered – making them the 3rd best Council service comparing well to the Council-wide average of 84%.

Overall Performance and Benchmarking

Whilst overall the tenant and leaseholder satisfaction with the service has not deteriorated, it has not improved either – the graph below illustrates that, despite signs of an upward trend earlier in the year – the levels of satisfaction are back at the point where the Recovery Plan started.

Satisfaction with the overall service provided by BHP



Overall performance in meeting the Recovery Plan requirements

Whilst there have been some significant improvements in performance – the capital programme and voids being notable examples – the general performance of the service has flat lined. Please see Appendix 5 for the detail of the performance of BHP during the Recovery Plan period as compared to the agreed targets; the HouseMark benchmarks; and the corporate standards. This shows that:

- satisfaction of residents is low
- the time taken to answer telephone calls is to long
- rent collection performance is currently below the lower quartile comparator housing organisations (2 years ago this was top quartile)

Directly below there is an analysis of BHP's performance compared to other housing providers in London and on a national basis.

Comparing the performance of BHP with other organisations

Benchmarking

HouseMark is the leading provider of social housing data and insight, jointly owned by the Chartered Institute of Housing and the National Housing Federation. More than 950 housing organisations are members and regularly contribute performance and cost data, which can then be benchmarked against other organisations, and to show trends over time.

Housing providers are categorised into types – called clubs – such as London ALMOs. Benchmarking can be against the same or different clubs, or against purpose-designed comparator groups. HouseMark ensures that data is comparable across different types of provider, and uses standard definitions for performance metrics.

BHP are members of HouseMark and regularly compare their data with their peers. This can be seen in the section looking at the BHP Recovery Plan, where BHP's performance in relation to a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) is assessed and given a rating compared to median and top quartile performers within the club.

As part of this review HouseMark were commissioned to prepare a bespoke report looking at performance over three years, the years ending March 2014, 2015 and 2016. Data was extracted for BHP and this was compared against

- London ALMOs
- London Councils with in-house housing stock 4(called 'London Councils' in the report and in this section)
- London Housing Associations
- All housing providers nationally (meaning all social housing providers across the country)
- A purpose designed group (called 'peer group' for the remainder of this section) comprising London providers of whatever type, with between 5,000 and 15,000 stock, but excluding BHP itself

The report considers 11 KPIs ranging from tenant satisfaction to total cost per property in management. These KPIs are in common use and were selected to provide a broad view of housing performance generally.

The HouseMark report is attached at Appendix 4, and a more detailed look at BHP's performance can be found in the section on the Recovery Plan. The remainder of this section gives a short commentary on the HouseMark findings on each of the KPIs, commenting briefly on BHP but primarily considering performance as between the various groups.

Percentage of tenants very or fairly satisfied with the service provided

In 2014 BHP's performance was very much comparable with other providers, but by 2016 it has deteriorated to fourth quartile (Q4) with performance 12.4 percentage points worse than its peer group median. Amongst the other comparator groups, London Councils perform worst in all years and national providers perform the best. London Has are consistently good but considerably more expensive.

Percentage of leaseholders very or fairly satisfied with the service provided

BHP has only provided information for 2016 when its performance was lower than all comparator groups. Amongst the other groups, the national providers are easily the best in each year both in terms of median and top quartile performance. ALMO performance is volatile, and the other groups are all fairly consistent both year on year, and as compared to each other.

Rent collected as a percentage of rent due

BHP had an excellent year in 2014 but since then has been well below the median of all other groups. Of the groups, London HAs perform best (both top quartile and median) across all time periods. London Councils performed worst in 2015 and 2016. Other than BHP, all groups show an improvement between 2015 and 2016.

Current rent arrears as a percentage of rent due

BHP's performance has deteriorated over the three years, and so too have London ALMOs and London Councils. London Has, national providers and the peer group have all (broadly speaking) improved over time whereas London Councils and London ALMOs are deteriorating. The generally deteriorating performance across this KPI in London may be explained by the economic situation and higher rents in London, although if so London Has are an outlier. Despite their downward trend London Councils were the best performers in 2014 and 2015 but have now been overtaken; national providers are currently performing best and are on an improving trend.

Void re-let times (standard voids)

BHP's performance is very volatile but is worse than all the groups in 2014 and 2015, and worse than all groups except London Councils in 2016. London Councils perform worst of the groups in the last two years. Their median performance has deteriorated since 2014 whereas all other groups show a steady or improving position.

Rent loss due to voids

Of the comparator groups, London Has perform best by a long way, and London Councils perform the worst. As an example, London Councils' median is more than double the loss of London Has median in the last two years. All groups and BHP show an improvement in the last two years.

Average number of days to complete a repair

In 2016 all groups performed to a broadly similar standard (median). Over the three years, London Has have performed worst although they are on an improving trend and in 2016 their top quartile performance beat all the others. BHP's performance has deteriorated over time from better than median in 2014, and by 2016 was worse than all comparator groups.

Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made

In 2014 and 2015 BHP performed the best by a considerable margin, above all groups both median and top quartile. In 2016 their performance plunged by more than 10 percentage points, to the worst of all comparators. Results for all other groups are variable, with only national providers on a steady or upwards trend.

Repairs completed first time

Across the board performance is very volatile, and there is a significant gap between median and top quartile performance for each group over all periods. It is hard to draw any conclusions from the data. However, BHP's performance has deteriorated in each year.

Dwellings with a gas safety certificate

BHP's performance is 100% in all three periods. All groups achieved 100% in the last two years except for London Councils.

Cost per property for housing management

London HAs perform the worst of all groups, both median and top quartile and across all three periods. London Councils currently perform the best and although this was not the case in 2014 and 2015, when London ALMOs performed better. BHP has shown a significantly improving performance year on year, with its costs in 2016 significantly better than London Has and generally comparable to all other groups including London Councils and London ALMOs.

Conclusions

Although in some areas BHP's performance is good or improving, overall the picture for BHP is not positive. However, a number of the benchmarked KPIs are either directly or indirectly (e.g. tenant satisfaction, and voids turnaround) related to performance in relation to maintenance, and as is described elsewhere in this report, the situation with the maintenance contractor has been poor. This should be borne in mind when considering the overall picture.

London Councils also do not come out of this exercise well as they have performed worst on a number of PIs, except in relation to costs where they are currently best. London Has are quite frequently either the best or the worst of the pack, whereas ALMOs tend to be located more in the middle.

The picture for national providers is good – almost all the KPIs are on an improving trend which is very positive for social housing as a sector.

8. THE OPTIONS DESCRIBED

Introduction
In this section we set out details of:

- Changes and drivers which underpin all the options
- How the options were designed
- Changes that apply equally across all three options

Changes and drivers which underpin all the options

Responding to specific performance concerns in BHP
Each of the options needs to address evident weaknesses in the current service and support a step-change in service quality and customer satisfaction while reducing costs. Some of the specific concerns about BHP's performance are ones that can be addressed within current arrangements and in some cases performance have or are being remedied through the Recovery Plan period, but in most if not all of these areas there is scope for further transformational change, for example:

There has been work to improve the customer focus, but there is significant amount more to be done to re-design processes (joining up teams in BHP and in contractors) around the resident and to ensure that mechanisms for customer choice and feedback continuously inform service design, development and delivery. This has been identified in the TOM review's outcomes and this will now need to be progressed before the finalisation of the review.

The Recovery Plan has created a clearer focus on performance in key areas, but this needs to be embedded across the organisation at all levels, along with the capacity and capability to respond and improve. There also needs to be greater clarity about roles and responsibilities / accountability in each of the options between the delivery organisation and the commissioning organisation (BHP and the Housing Service Partner/Client team as it is now) as this was also a factor in not dealing with the issues earlier

Although work has been done to the structure, reducing the management team, re-aligning a number of teams, building the contract management and compliance functions back up and working to break down silos, there is a lot more to do. A new structure needs to focus resources on the front line, and in building processes around the customer ensure that technology is fully exploited to improve the service, and provide better data and insight

The recovery plan period has at an operational level rebuilt the relationship between BHP and Council, the new BHP management team is working well with the mostly new management in the Council. However, there is more to do to clarify the commissioning and provider relationship whichever option is recommended: from the most strategic (the clear role of political leadership) to the most operational (clarity about the day to day operational relationships which make a difference to the service for residents) level to ensure there is clear and understood accountability in the new model, whichever option is recommended. In the reformed ALMO and Joint Venture options this is likely to lead to a small increase in the cost of the Council's commissioning function.

Responding to the Council's Review of its Housing Strategy

In addition to the performance challenges, the review of housing management options is also being driven by the changes in housing nationally, most importantly the Housing and Planning Act, which has also driven the review of the Council's Housing Strategy. The following therefore need to be considered in the design of each of the options to respond to these:

- ***Housing Supply -*** the need to increase the capacity to plan and release development value and opportunity from the Council's existing property and land assets to maximise housing supply
- ***Housing and wellbeing –*** the need to design services that respond to changing demographic needs, for example, having a clear role in the provision of information, advice and referral to residents in respect of employment and skills and responding to the needs of older tenants
- ***Private Sector –*** the need to work more closely with the private sector as a significant and growing part of the housing market, recognising the need to build more positive relationships and ensure a wider range of supply to meet the needs of the most vulnerable as a key part of the solution to the homelessness challenges
- ***Social Housing –*** the need for service to become an exemplar of best practice over a reasonably short-time as the Council seeks to work more and more with social housing providers to improve the lives of Brent residents. This argues for both extensive initial change and the need for the in-built capacity and dynamics for continuing change
- ***Homelessness –*** responding to the increasingly mixed tenure portfolio of tenanted, owner-occupied and private rented homes within the borough's freehold housing stock, given the Council's ambition to increase its own private rented stock in response to the homelessness pressures, and recognising the wide range of diversified management services that will be required
- ***Economy:*** Reduced income from rent creates a continuing pressure to improve outcomes and to reduce costs (or generate income). Each option offers different opportunities in respect of reducing cost to serve, but the importance of the issue applies evenly to all options. The approach taken to reducing cost to serve will need to reflect the Council's view on the balance between cost reduction and breadth/scale of accessibility.

Catching up with the wider housing sector

Housing Management services have been going through a period of radical change across the social housing sector – partly in response to the government's reforms but also in response to changed customer expectations and requirements, and the potential of technology and data reshape service delivery and choice. The changes required reinforce the points raised in the previous two sections, but for clarity the following changes are needed under each of the options to address current weaknesses and to reflect best practice in the sector:

- ***Digital Transformation*** – enabling customers to engage with their landlord digitally, emulating the Council's work through its Community Access strategy. For example, by ordering repairs online or through an app on their smartphone, or taking photos of issues on estates and submitting them via an app that automatically tags the exact location. Through digital transformation it is possible to improve services, improve accessibility of services and to reduce cost
- ***Leadership and management culture*** – There is a common expectation across all three options that the leadership, management and culture of the new service delivery mechanism will be substantially different from the current and will result in better outcomes

- ***A positive organisational culture*** – and experience for staff that addresses current low morale and provides for workforce involvement and development.

Introduction to the Options

The preceding sections describe shortfalls in BHP performance and sector-wide factors. In this section, the need for change and the changes required in all options are translated into three defined delivery mechanisms ('options'). This section is structured as follows:

- An overview of the way in which the options were designed
- The service changes that are the same for all 3 options
- The three specific options, providing:
  - An overview of the option
  - The detail on how the option differs from the 'as-is'
  - A commentary on the differences between the options

How the options were designed

The arrangement of functions differs from option to option, and have been driven by key design principles:

Maximise potential

The potential of each option should be maximised, for example the reformed ALMO / BHP specifically addresses the problems in the current model to produce an improved option

Duplication is identified and removed

There are opportunities to remove duplication in all 3 options: the 'reformed ALMO' and 'in-house' options both offer opportunities to reduce duplication through aligning with Council functions, and the joint venture offers similar opportunities through aligning with the partner. Each occurrence of duplication needs to assessed on its own merits: Is there duplication? Is it possible to eliminate the duplication? Does eliminating duplication cause unacceptably high levels of risk? (An example of this might be if a successful BHP service could be merged with a Council service that is itself facing issues, or a joint venture services that is less successful)

Development

It is useful to distinguish between different types of development:

- *Active Asset Management:* This describes work, which is intrinsically linked to core asset management, for example, in-fill sites, undercrofts, extra floors on buildings and other such small scale initiatives that arise from effective stewardship of existing assets. (Any work which includes demolition of current dwellings is excluded from this grouping)
- *Large-scale Development and Regeneration:* This describes all work on larger developments and large-scale regeneration, whether these be BHP, Council or external sites.

BHP currently has a small development function focused mainly on in-fill sites, but it has also expanded to delivery of 2 **N**ew **A**ccommodation for **I**ndependent **L**iving (NAIL) sites for the Council. The original intention after the re-launch of BHP in 2013 was for the infill sites which it was expected to cut its teeth on, before moving on to bringing in more development expertise and to provide the

Council with a development partner. However, this has not worked. Therefore, the assumption underpinning the development of the 3 options is that only the 'active asset management' is in scope.

The service changes that are the same for all 3 options

There are certain aspects where the Council will expect to change from current arrangements but the change that is required applies equally across all three options. These items are explored below:

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Management of ASB has traditionally been seen as part of core housing management services. However, it is possible to split it into:

- The more straightforward tenancy aspects of ASB, which it would be difficult to disaggregate from the core landlord services, for example nuisance from a dog barking, and
- The more complex ASB issues which happen across the Borough, across and between housing of different tenures and may have no connection to the housing provider, for example, gang activity

The Council provides ASB related services to all Brent residents, particularly focusing on the complex. Separately BHP provides ASB services to Council tenants and leaseholders funded by the Housing Revenue Account. Each service operates on a different legal basis. The service offered to Council tenants and leaseholders reduces the use by Council tenants and leaseholders of the Council's ASB services.

There has always been a duplication of ASB provision, so the assumption is that the Council will take this opportunity to create a single ASB service that is tenure blind, and manages across the different levels of ASB outlined above. This would mean that whether you are a Council tenant, Council leaseholder, housing association tenant, private-renter or owner-occupier you will approach the Council's corporate ASB team when you have an ASB issue or concern. This will create a level playing field across all tenures.

Because the complex ASB issues are by their very nature resource intensive, it is very unlikely that any prospective JV partner would object to the removal of ASB management from the scope of service required of the JV, and discussions about integrating this service have already happened with BHP.

Public Realm

There is an opportunity to create a single service managing the public realm by building on the joint work that already happens towards managing the public realm contract as a single contract. This will have the benefit to customers of providing an easy to understand approach to the subject and may offer economies of scale to the Council. This should be a relatively low risk change (adding more work to an existing contract that is performing well). Therefore, the recommended approach is to seek to eliminate the duplication regarding this work. Work will be required to align the specifications but the approach offers opportunities to access economies of scale. This service will be for the external public realm areas only as the in-block communal cleaning will remain with the housing service under all options. This change has to be subject to proper procurement and Section 20 (Landlord and Tenant Act 1985) consultation regarding leaseholders rights.

Customer Service

As highlighted in the performance section, there have been improvements in the customer contract team's performance, but intractable issues remain primarily with the end to end repairs process. Repairs represent the largest number of call, and are the single most important contributor to resident satisfaction, but the current process builds in a hand off through the BHP contact centre, which doesn't add value. Therefore, in moving to one of the three options it would be necessary to make two key changes:

- Develop direct contact between residents and the contractor (subject to performance), so that repair calls go directly to them, cutting out the unnecessary hand off. The contact centre role in relation to repairs then becomes a problem solving role, sorting out issues when Wates do not deliver, and
- The rest of the contact centre function would then be integrated either with the Council's contact function in the Reformed ALMO option or in-house, or with the partner's contact function.

Financial Inclusion

Financial inclusion is seen as a key part of tenancy sustainment, and so a specific service has been separately commission by the Council's housing service, which BHP to deliver to its tenants. However, the Council corporately commissions financial inclusion support for all Brent residents. There is clear overlap and duplication, and therefore it is assumed that whichever option is recommended this is eliminated through a Council wide service for all residents, that reflects the particular issues of tenancy sustainment wherever you live.

Travellers Sites

Currently, the Council commissions BHP who commission Oxfordshire County Council to manage the travellers' sites.   This is the result of history in that BHP used to deliver the service directly. As part of delivering any of these options, it would be sensible to deal with this anomaly, and move the responsibility and commissioning back to the Council in either the Community Wellbeing or Regeneration and Environment department.   It is unlikely that an RP partner will have expertise of, or a competitive advantage in Traveller Sites, therefore as in all the options this will transfer back to the Council.

Adaptations

This could be provided by a single service, rather than as now by both BHP and the Council but this needs further evaluation.

The three options

Option 1 – Reformed ALMO

It is important to note that the Reformed ALMO is an optimised option and re-confirms the aims of the current ALMO – improving outcomes and lowering costs to serve. The earlier sections of this paper set out the problems in the current arrangement, and this option highlights a number of changes which would overcome most of these issues.

It is also important to note that the changes outlined in ***Changes and drivers which underpin all the options*** *apply* to all the options, but the two most significant changes to note in this option are:

- A further push to reduce duplication. A number of services are already shared, but further work would be done as outlined above to integrate with the Council (ASB, public realm, customer service, financial inclusion and back office services), and there would need to be an explicit acknowledgement and response to manage the accountability and delivery issues (across BHP and the Council) this would potentially create
- Changes to the governance both within BHP (a move to a smaller, skills based board, and confirmation of the new senior management structure), and across the partnership (with a stronger client function providing clearer strategic direction and closer monitoring of performance, working with BHP to solve issues where appropriate) and across the integrated services (the integrated services support core landlord services effectively).

Core landlord services

The changes across these functions are in large part common across all of the options, and will rely to a large extent on whether the new governance arrangements are able to deliver them. The one key difference is the different focus on resident engagement and customer insight. As the performance section set out, this needs to be improved in all options, but there is structural difference in the Reformed ALMO option, which offers the opportunity to build resident engagement in to all elements of governance right up to the Board although with a smaller skills based board, there is likely to be a reduction in representation.

Services done by BHP for LBB

In this option, clienting the TMOs would stay with the ALMO, financial inclusion would be a single service commissioned by the Council and the clienting of the contractor for Travellers sites would move back to the Council.

Back office service

The reformed ALMO would build on the current integration of back office services, for example, fully integrating the customer contact functions as set out above. However, there would still be slightly less integration than in the In-House function as certain elements of back office functions, for example, finance, would need to remain as the ALMO remains an independent company.

Additional Services

The Council's concerns over performance mean that the focus should not be on additional services; they should be on core landlord services. However, there would not need to be significant change in this area. There would be further clarity and focus of the development role on 'active asset management'. The Reformed ALMO would continue to manage across the range of tenures for the Council and deliver the Community Academy, developing residents (subject to the same financial restrictions as all other options). However, even if the additional services are not the focus, the Reformed ALMO option offers this flexibility for the future.

Reformed ALMO – changes set out in more detail with risk profile

Subject	Reason for the change
Governance – Skills based board	There has been significant movement across the housing sector and the ALMO sector to implement smaller (less than 10, compared to 13 at the moment) skills based Boards. This means that Board members are selected because of their skills rather than their background (e.g. Members, residents). Having a skills based Board does not rule out having Members and residents involved but it changes the focus towards putting in place people with the skills and aptitude to run a multi-million-pound service delivery, asset focussed service.
Governance – Top level structure	The permanent structure has four senior posts in the management team. The interim structure has already reduced this to 3 and this would be confirmed in the new structure in line with wider changes in the sector: a Managing Director, Head of Asset Management post and Head of Operations. Thereby improving accountability and reducing cost
Governance / customer service – resident involvement	This section refers to both: • Resident engagement – direct resident involvement face-to-face and electronically is a mainstay of ALMOs and BHP, and typically includes resident involvement on the Board. However, there are some synergies to sought through the Council's customer engagement team(s) • Customer Insight refers to knowledge about Council tenants and leaseholders derived from data. This data might arise from Council records (for example interrogating tenancy records) or from other data (for example socio-economic data about the boroughs residents as a whole). The Council has corporate resources that work on customer insight issues and have developed a design led approach through its Council's Outcome Based Review methodology) The Reformed ALMO option offers the greatest flexibility in this area to overhaul resident engagement and build resident engagement into the Board as well working with the Council to develop and deliver a design led approach which ensures a clear focus on the customer.

Subject	Reason for the change
Back office services	*Further work is required to detail how the division of work and accountabilities would change*

Option 2 – In-House service
The in-house option would also be focused on the aims set out for the current ALMO – improving outcomes and lowering costs to serve. It offers the opportunity to bring the service back under direct control in the Council, as a means of ensuring that the changes required (set out earlier in this paper) are delivered. It would have to deliver a strong core landlord service, including a focus on active asset management, but residents would be concerned about what they perceive as a loss of focus as this becomes 'another' department in the Council.

Again It is also important to note that the changes outlined in ***Changes and drivers which underpin all the options*** *apply* to all the options, but the two most significant changes to note in this option are:

- Through the full integration of services into the Council, there is a significant opportunity to reduce duplication while maintaining clear accountability. A number of services are already shared, but further work would be done as outlined above to integrate with the Council (ASB, public realm, customer service and financial inclusion)
- Changes to the governance would be required with the removal of the Board, confirmation of the new senior management structure, and the need to commit to a clear focus on resident engagement as well as defining a model for working across Council departments to ensure the integrated services support core landlord services effectively

Core landlord services
The changes across these functions are in large part common across all of the options, and will rely to a large extent on whether the new governance arrangements are able to deliver them. The key challenge in this option will be how should resident engagement be prioritised? The In-House option does mean there can't be resident representation on the Board (Cabinet), but there are significant opportunities to design new resident engagement structures which tackle the issues set out in the performance section which would minimise the impact of not having resident representatives on the Board. However, proving this and why the Council would be better at core landlord services, will be a challenge if this option is recommended.

Services done by BHP for LBB
The clienting of the contractor for Travellers Sites would move back to the Council (as in the Reformed ALMO option) and the clienting of the TMOs would move from the housing service into the Housing Partnerships team, which will be redesigned to focus on the relationship with RPs (changes set out in the Housing Strategy), and the clienting the TMOs.

Back office service

This Option offers the opportunity for more complete alignment of back office services. In effect, the housing management services would become a service like any other in the Council, and there would be no need for any differentiation as there is no independent company.

Additional Services

The Council's concerns over performance mean that the focus should not be on additional services. In this option there would be the same focus on core landlord services. There would be the same focus of the development role on 'active asset management' as in the Reformed ALMO option, and the housing management service would continue to manage across the range of tenures for the Council and deliver the Community Academy, developing residents (subject to the same financial restrictions as all other options). Because the ALMO would cease to exist, the focussed, single purpose vehicle which that structure brings would be lost, and the future opportunities that go with it.

In-house – changes set out in more detail with risk profile

Subject and overview	Detail and reason
Governance – loss of the Board	The change in governance is significant as the ALMO Board would cease to exist, and the expertise on it would be lost to the Council. Responsibility and accountability would flow through the Council's management structure with the Council's Chief Executive delegating strategic responsibility for the housing service to the Strategic Director – Community Wellbeing. For Members, perceived control is more direct as the arms-length nature of the ALMO is gone. However, this would continue to be one of the many functions undertaken by the Council, and the member engagement is lost on the Board – although this might also be lost in the move to a skills based board under the Reformed ALMO option.
Governance / customer service	As set out in the detailed changes for the Reformed ALMO option this section refers to Resident engagement and Customer Insight. Resident engagement – would continue to be best delivered by the housing service provider as part of the core landlord services, but the synergies with the Council's engagement team should be easier to achieve. The presence of residents at the highest levels of governance will be lost and cannot be replicated in this option. However, it would be possible to set up alternative resident involvement mechanisms that respond to the concerns with the current resident engagement mechanisms. Customer Insight refers to knowledge about Council tenants and leaseholders derived from data. This data might arise from Council records (for example

Subject and overview	Detail and reason
	interrogating tenancy records) or from other data (for example socio-economic data about the boroughs residents as a whole). Data is about groups of customers not about individual customers. The Council has corporate resources that work on customer insight issues so this aspect would be dealt with by the Council.
Governance – top level structures	The permanent BHP structure has four senior posts in the management team. The interim structure has already reduced this to 3. Bringing the service in-house provides more opportunities for further reduction but further work is required on spans of control and to understand the realities of the recruitment market in these roles. Cutting senior management resource deeply from the outset will be counter-productive given the significant change agenda that is required under any option. However, the full integration of back office services is likely to free up further management posts at more junior levels as well as being able to re-direct the minimum BHP clienting resource to focus on the wider RP agenda.
Additional Services – Community Fund and BHP Academy	These are services currently provided by BHP as value added services from within the BHP Management Fee. They represent a reinvestment of efficiency savings. With the service back in-house the BHP Academy would no longer be needed in terms of developing potential ALMO Board members (it is focussed improving resident capability in governance). In respect of the Community Fund the Council would need to decide whether it delivers sufficient value to merit continuing with it. In the alternative the services could be terminated reducing the call on the HRA.

Option 3 – Joint Venture

The in-house option would also have to be focused on the aims set out in both of the previous options – improving outcomes and lowering costs to serve. It offers the opportunity to gain access to the expertise of a partner organisation in terms of delivering the core landlord service. This is a key point as the process would need to involve consideration of the offer that the JV partner would bring to the table. In other words, although the Council could set out its core requirements, there would have to be a negotiation as it is a partnership. If this works, then the sum is greater than its parts, but there is a risk that what is important to the Council is not what is important to the Partner.

In terms of the core requirements, the Council would focus on the fact that the JV would have to deliver a strong core landlord service, but the bundle of functions offered has to be structured to be attractive to potential partners. The key to securing the interest of a partner will be the inclusion of some development agency within the service requirement. It is also clear that residents would be concerned about what they would perceive as a loss of focus on Brent housing.

Again it is also important to note that the changes outlined in ***Changes and drivers which underpin all the options*** apply to all the options, but there are four most significant changes to note in this option:

- There are two assumptions about integration / removal of duplication:
  - full integration of back office services and customer contact as this is a key way that the joint venture can deliver the operational efficiencies, for example, the remaining customer contact function would be integrated with the partners not the Councils
  - the front line services already discussed in the other options (ASB, public realm, customer service and financial inclusion) would still be integrated into the Council as well as defining a model for working across Council departments to ensure the integrated services support core landlord services effectively
- The development agency offered, as with all the other options, is the active asset management portfolio currently delivered by the ALMO. It is not the wider Council's development and regeneration potential. This could be a barrier to the development of a partnership as potential partners are keen to maximise their development strengths.
- Changes to the governance would be required, including the removal of the ALMO Board and the creation of a joint venture board. It is very unlikely that there would be resident representation on this new board, so there would be a need to commit to a clear focus on resident engagement through other means.
- Confirmation of the new senior management structure, which would make savings through integration with the partner, but with an expectation that there would be accountability for Brent.

The changes required for the Joint Venture option are clearly more challenging, the key question for the evaluation is whether they bring a commensurate chance of significantly more benefits.

Core Landlord Services

LBB will want to fully exploit the expertise and resources of the JV partner and will therefore include non-repairs contact centre, customer engagement and complaints handling. There would be resident concerns that RPs do not have the same focus on resident engagement.

Services done by BHP for LBB

The Housing Partnerships team would need to be strengthened in line with the Reformed ALMO option to more effectively cline this partnership. However, it will also need to client the TMOs as in the In-House option as it is important that the bundle does not include issues that do not play to the strengths of the joint-venture partner, for example, clienting of TMOs and management of traveller sites. Including them would increase cost without adding value as the JV partner will not have expertise or economies of scale to bring to the table.

Back office services

The service requirement needs to include back office services to provide complete alignment with the partner and the opportunity to deliver savings.   It is also likely that potential partners would have serious concerns about relying on the Council's back office.

Additional Services

The Council's concerns over performance mean that the focus should not be on additional services. There would be the same focus of the development role on 'active asset management' as in the other options, and the extent to which this undermines this option or builds tensions into the option would need to be tested. The exact list of functions to be delivered by the JV will depend on the JV partner. If the JV partner has a high performing public sector leasing (PSL) business unit it will make sense to include in the JV LBB's PSL management requirement. If not then the PSL function will remain with the Council. Given its focus on developing resident capability in governance the BHP Academy would be likely to close or be reformed in line with the Council's priorities and the Partners expertise and focus.

Joint Venture – changes set out in more detail with risk profile

Subject	Reason for the change
Governance – changing Board	The existing ALMO Board would cease to exist, and a JV Board would be formed. A skills based approach would be preferable, which would have the same challenges as the suggested reformed ALMO Board in terms of representation, including a loss of formal resident roles in governance. Responsibility and accountability would sit with the Board, but also the Council client (not unlike the reformed ALMO option). As it is a partnership there would be a reduction in Council and Member control as all decisions would need to be agreed and be in the interests of both parties.
Governance – customer service	As set out in the detailed changes for the Reformed ALMO option this section refers to Resident Engagement and Customer Insight. Resident engagement – would continue to be best delivered by the housing service joint venture as part of the core landlord services, but synergies with the Council's engagement team and wider engagement should be sought. The presence of residents at the highest levels of governance will be lost and are unlikely to be replicated in this option as it is not a common feature of RP governance. However, it would be possible to set up alternative resident involvement mechanisms that respond to the concerns with the current resident engagement mechanisms.

	The Council will want to take advantage of the JV Partners expertise in housing Customer Insights. However, it would be necessary to work with the benefit of the data available to the Council.
Governance – top level structure	The trend amongst registered providers has been towards smaller senior management teams. The likely outcome is a Managing Director for Brent with two Head of Service posts reporting in (Assets and Operations). The wider benefits of integrating back office functions in terms of reducing management would need to be explored as part of Joint Venture delivery, and would likely be of a scale similar to the In-House option.
Complaints – locate complaints handling within the JV	The JV will be an independent body and will therefore deal entirely with complaints.
Services BHP provide to the Council	It is unlikely that a core requirement of the partner would be expertise in or a competitive advantage in clienting of TMOs Management or management of PSL. Therefore, if this option is chosen, and the JV Partner has no expertise in a subject area then it may be unacceptably risky to include that task in the JV scope of service, and an alternative in-house, or commissioned solution would need to be identified.
Additional services – Community Fund and BHP Academy	It would be usual in these types of deals that the JV partner would bring to the table an offer on how they could add extra value to the proposition. This might be by including access to social value-adding initiatives that they run. The BHP Academy serves the strong focus on resident engagement. If this changed then it would be sensible to review the BHP Academy and whether it needed to exist. Work would be required to determine whether BHP's Community Fund would continue and to determine what other value-add propositions the JV partner will bring to the table.

The difference between the options

This section provides an overview of the key differences between the options against the list of functions used throughout this paper. Qualitative issues such as the implications of each option for control and the risk profile of each option will be dealt with fully in the evaluation.

It is important to reiterate that the work to develop the options all three options has sought to optimise each one, and therefore, all respond to the current performance challenges, the national and local strategic environment and the wider changes in housing.

The ***core landlord services*** are common to all the options, with the variation only manifesting in the different ways of delivering resident engagement/customer insight and the specific detail of how the contact centre function would be delivered (the contact centre function would be in the Council for the Reformed ALMO and In-House options, and with the Partner in the JV) as the overarching model would be the same. The differences between the options on these functions will be more apparent in the evaluation where issues such as control, likelihood of success and risk factors will be considered.

The ***Services done by BHP for LBB*** are also similar across the 3 options with Financial Inclusion and the Travellers Sites coming back to the Council in all options, with the only variation being where the TMOs should be managed.

There is some differentiation in terms of ***Back office services*** because although all 3 options will deliver more integration, the In-House option and the Joint Venture will allow more complete integration, while the independent Reformed ALMO will need to retain a small back office function working with the Council back office services.

There is still a degree of uncertainty around the ***Additional Services*** in all 3 options, this uncertainty relates to the need to make savings, and not knowing who the partner is and what their expertise may be. However, it is likely that the Reformed ALMO option will lead to the least change, and in the other options you would expect to see BHP Academy and Community Fund integrated into the Council community engagement and development work or the Partners wider CSR work.

It is in ***governance*** that we see the biggest differences. They differ chiefly in terms of control (more direct in-house) and governance (structural accountability in-house, via a Board in the ALMO or joint venture), and in terms of the clienting. Each option infers different burdens of clienting activity in the Council. The Reformed ALMO and the JV will require additional levels of clienting work (compared to the current position) to ensure that the separate body continues to deliver and deliver on the agreed Council priorities. In all 3 models, further work will need to be done to ensure that the integration of core services (ASB, public realm, financial inclusion and the contact centre) continue to deliver for the core landlord services.

9. EVALUATION OF THE OPTIONS

In this chapter we consider how each of the three options described in the chapter 8 interact with the evaluation criteria described in chapter 6.

The approach taken is straightforward. We have evaluated each option against the 5 criteria and sub-criteria (the outcomes) and set out the positives and negatives of that interaction. In thinking about positives we have considered strengths, opportunities, benefits, synergies and deliverability while in thinking about negatives we have considered weaknesses and risk, including in the areas of synergies and deliverability.

For each criterion we provide a narrative setting out the headlines of our findings. We also set out a brief summary of the key points for each option. Before doing that we describe some of the commonalities of the options.

The similarities between the options and the challenges of delivery

The majority of the evaluation is concerned with the differences and relative strengths and weaknesses of one option as compared to the other options. It is important, however, to note than in many ways the options are more similar than they are different.

A common starting position

All options start from the same position, for example:

- Under all the options the tenant and leaseholders are the same, and more importantly in terms of resident satisfaction, so too are the properties and the condition of them
- The majority of the staff (with the exception of the senior team and potentially the Board) will continue to work on the service as at present, or being transferred as appropriate under the TUPE regulations if another body takes over delivery of the services
- The maintenance contractor would remain the same for at least the next 2 years. This arrangement is currently in year 3 of a 5-year contract. Maintenance, and more specifically repairs, is probably the area of greatest under-performance at present, and has a major impact on overall tenant satisfaction
- All of this combined reflects BHP's current performance position. The detail of this position is set out in the BHP Performance Recovery Plan, but the point remains, each option will have to either build on the strengths or tackle the weaknesses.

Optimised options – more similar than different

The options have been purposefully been described in such a way as to maximise the benefit they could deliver – a perfect world scenario for each option. Consequently, the division of responsibilities across the options are more similar than different. This is particularly true for the Reformed ALMO and In-house options, which both focus on greater integration and alignment with the Council. The JV option differs to a greater extent, but only in the sense that the alignment and integration is with the JV partner, and there are still similarities such as the way the options propose dealing with the public realm services. Therefore, when evaluating against the core (5) criteria, the differences are smaller than some might expect. At the highest level, the evaluation finds that all of the options could be successful in terms of delivering the outcomes set out at in the core criteria.

Confidence in delivery of the optimised model (and therefore the potential benefits)

Therefore, this evaluation focuses not only the core criteria, but also on the additional factors, which underpin successful delivery, and which differentiate the models to a greater extent. Those other factors have been defined as follows:

- **Control** – the nature of the control mechanism under each option and the impact that the control mechanism has on deliverability
- **Leadership -** the senior team and other senior leaders and their impact on deliverability
- **Implementation** – the practical steps that would need to move from the current position to the new option, how long they would take, how difficult they would be and what they would cost.

We comment on these issues by option but also by looking across the options in relative terms.

CONTROL

This refers to achieving clarity of control over the strategic direction of the organisation and operational day to day delivery as a fundamental driver for achieving the potential in each option. It reflects the need for a tight grip, but the need for an appropriate level of autonomy to deliver a set of defined outcomes. Getting this balance right will be an important component in creating a successful delivery mechanism.

The client (the Council)/contractor split is an example which is relevant to both the ALMO option and the JV option. If the client seeks too much involvement in day to day matters then the contractor will become frustrated, become disempowered and the relationship will become sour. Client/contractor splits that work well will be characterised by clearly specified outcomes, good resource levels and effective monitoring mechanisms.

The control mechanisms for each of the options are as follows:

Reformed ALMO

The Reformed ALMO, like the current ALMO, has only one shareholder, the Council. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council, and as a result of this the Council has the ultimate control – the most draconian control measure is the right of the Council to close down the ALMO. However, an ALMO has a Board of its own, which has responsibility for the day to day delivery by the organisation. Operationally, the senior staff are responsible to the Board for making decisions about priorities and allocation of resources etc. The ALMO organisation employs the senior team (although the Council may be involved in certain appointments) and they are accountable to the Board.

The Council is clearly a major influence, but the ALMO is a legally separate company, and so also has specific responsibilities in this regard, therefore, it is possible for the Council and the ALMO to have divergent views, and differences must be discussed and negotiated. Short of invoking the ultimate sanction, the Council does not have (and by its nature is not intended to have) day to day operational control over the ALMO.

At a level below the ultimate sanction, the Council's key strategic control mechanism is the negotiation of the annual ALMO Delivery Plan (providing control over the performance and strategic direction of the ALMO) and ownership of the Housing Revenue Account, which encompasses the level of funding to the ALMO, the services to be provided and the outcomes required. We view this annual cycle as a positive factor because it provides the ALMO with a degree of autonomy that makes the delivery of required outcomes more likely, whilst providing the Council with a very high level of strategic control.

Below this level, the client function in the Council will have in place meetings and mechanisms to monitor the performance of the ALMO. A key success factor in this approach is the way in which the Council fulfils its client role in terms of how it fully exploits the annual cycle, and how it delivers operational and strategic clienting during the year.

If this works well, then there should be benefits from the combined expertise in the Reformed ALMO (board, staff and residents) and the Council However, there is a structural tension at the heart of the relationship between the Council and the ALMO, which can lead to reduced control (conflicting positions), which could undermine delivery.

In-house

An In-house service offers greater levels of close control. The main strategic control mechanism will be the Council's business planning mechanism which will set the objectives for the housing service for a year ahead. During each year corporate and housing related operational issues and pressures will arise, and how these in-year issues are handled will have a significant impact on the housing service. However, the Council in its corporate sense does have the authority to make changes as it sees fit, even if these may fall outside the formal planning processes and timetables.

On a day to day and operational basis, the In-house option provides a greater degree of control through the line management structure. This includes not just what individual staff and teams do and how they do it, but the level, balance and deployment of resources, and the operational priorities. Whilst this is also true of the ALMO or JV option, the difference is that the senior staff are employed by, and accountable to, the Council and not by an arm's length body.

If these mechanisms, by which the rest of the Council are run, are effective across a diverse range of business streams then that provides an evidence base for asserting that those same mechanisms will be capable of supporting the delivery of a good housing service. The counter-argument is that the housing service will become a small cog in a bigger engine as part of the Council and that the service will come under pressure from a wider range of Council issues. These very pressures, and their outcomes in terms of poor housing services, played into the creation of the ALMO model.

The In-house option provides the greatest level and clarity of control.

Joint Venture

Control is a big differentiator for the joint venture, where there is significantly less ongoing control for the Council.

Initially the Council has complete control over the format of the joint venture in terms of the service specification, the terms of the agreement with the partner and the choice of partner. But beyond that point the Council will be one of two key shareholders and stakeholders in the joint venture and the Council's views will have to be weighed with the views of the partner organisation. The reality of any partnership is that the negotiations to form the partnership will mean that it is very likely that there will be changes to the original service specification and terms of agreement.

The JV would have a Board with (presumably) equal representation by both partners. As with the ALMO, there is the potential for the Council and the Board not to share the same opinion. On most matters that would be dealt with as in the case of the ALMO, by negotiation and agreement.

If the Board were chaired by a Council representative and the Chair had a casting vote, then this would in practice give the Council ultimate control. However, it is also worth noting that, as with the ALMO Board members, the Directors on the JV Board have a legal duty to act in the best interests of the JV, so if there was a significant and genuine divergence of interests between the JV and the Council, then all the Directors would be obliged to act in the best interests of the JV. Though this is unlikely, it is not inconceivable.

The day to day operational control would be exercised by the senior management team, but similarly to the ALMO, they are employed by the JV organisation and are accountable to the Board. Given that the Board is 50% Council, this is debatably a higher level of control than under the ALMO option but definitely less than In-house.

Overall for this criteria, the In-house options is the strongest because it offers both strategic and operational clarity of control.

LEADERSHIP

The focus on leadership reflects how important good leadership will be in achieving the potential outlined in the optimised options. The leadership team in particular, but also the Board, are the ones who set the tone for, and develop the culture of, the organisation. They are the ones who can empower (or disempower) the staff to deliver their potential and drive change through all levels of the organisation to improve the service. Although, as mentioned above, the staff team on the whole remains largely unaltered, the current leadership team at BHP consists of two interims and one person who is acting up. Therefore, whichever option is selected, there will be the opportunity to recruit a new (or substantially new) management team to drive the change.

Each of the options proposes a slightly different management structure, based on the current management interim structure of the most senior post plus two operational senior managers reporting to them. There may also be differences in the ability to recruit to those management structures. Campbell Tickell is one of the largest senior recruitment specialists in the sector, and their experience suggests there is often a hierarchy of preference of housing candidates for the nature of their employer:

- Large RPs tend to be top of this chain, offering posts with a lot of autonomy and with career prospects, maybe in organisations which are perceived as cutting edge

- ALMOs tend to be second, offering some of the autonomy and independence but little opportunity for advancement
- Local authorities tend to be least favoured because the roles offered have less authority and autonomy for a given salary level, and any available progression tends to be outside the sphere of housing.

Reformed ALMO

The leadership expertise required is specialist housing expertise. That expertise exists in the commercial, not-for-profit, ALMO and local government sectors. Not all of the talent is willing to work in every segment. Generalising, the stronger specialist housing talent will be found in the registered provider sector (and can therefore be accessed via the joint venture), some of that talent will be prepared to work in the ALMO sector. So in terms of staffing the strongest option is the joint venture, the ALMO option is moderately strong and the In-house option faces the most challenges.

The most senior post (Managing Director) in a Reformed ALMO would be a joint appointment made by the Council and the ALMO Board, and the next tier would be made by BHP. Campbell Tickell's (CT) social housing recruitment arm advises that the ALMO recruitment market is currently busy and buoyant and has a reasonable pool of good quality candidates in it. They also advise that structuring the team as a Managing Director plus 2 Directors (and paying accordingly) will attract higher calibre candidates than an MD plus 2 Heads of Service. The closer relationship between the Council and the ALMO set out in the Reformed ALMO option has been factored into this analysis and recruitment to new senior roles could be done in such a way that the expectations of close working and the tight relationship are implicit from the very beginning.

In-house

The local government sector ranks below the ALMO sector and further below the housing association sector in its ability to attract and retain high quality housing staff.

The most senior post in this structure the Operational Director with responsibility for the housing management service would be a Member appointment, and the other two posts (Heads of Service) would be officer appointments. CT's recruitment arm advises that the number of Council director posts currently being filled is having the effect of shrinking the pool of talent on the market for the level of Operational Director. Moreover, the candidates for that post will have questions about the level of autonomy and authority that the post commands, given that it will be a third tier post. The role will need to be carefully positioned to ensure that the strongest field is attracted. To pitch it at a level to attract suitable calibre candidates may cause imbalance with other parts of the Council's operations. The same concerns would apply to the two senior posts at the next level.

Joint Venture

Appointment to the most senior post would be made by the JV Board (or shadow Board), which would be 50% Council. However, it is likely that an RP partner might wish to bring in (at least) one of its own senior team to head up the operation in the short to medium term. We discuss this further under implementation. We would not expect this to carry an additional cost (above the ALMO premium), since the charge made to the JV should not exceed the market level for the post, even if the post holder seconded from the RP was actually paid more. In other words, the partner would bear the additional cost. As and when the JV recruited externally to these posts, our experience leads us to believe that the posts would readily attract suitable, well-qualified candidates. Therefore, the JV option would be the strongest option in terms of recruiting the senior team, but like the ALMO this would incur a relatively small additional cost.

IMPLEMENTATION

The focus on implementation in this section is the initial implementation of the option – moving from the current position to setting up the new option. This section is not focused on the full delivery of optimised option: the challenges of full delivery have already been covered above in terms of the common starting position, and the control and leadership of the new delivery organisation (ALMO, in-house service or JV), and the benefits of full delivery in each options are set out in the following sections.

This section evaluates the work required to move to the new option (test of opinion, setting up new organisations) and the risks to service during that transition (focus on creating a new organisation, rather than on service delivery), in order that we can understand whether the additional work, cost and risk is worth it given the benefits delivered by each option.

Reformed ALMO

Implementing a Reformed ALMO option is the option involving least change. There will be changes to the Board (moving to a skills based board), recruiting a new senior team and setting up the new client and the new relationship with the Council, but all of this would be complete by April 2017, and because there are no wider structural changes the Council, the Board, interim management team and residents could get on with co-designing and planning implementation of the wider and more fundamental service changes from December 2016.

This option involves the least structural change. It is the simplest, cheapest and least risky to implement. For example, for staff, the location, the employer and the terms of employment all remain the same. However, for this reason it also creates a different and specific risk to the other two options: because there is no significant visible structural change, it is more difficult to create the momentum behind change as the perception could be "same old, same old" and this would be a barrier to the culture shift necessary to bring about the longer term improvements. This would be a key challenge for the new leadership.

In-house

The In-house House option creates fairly significant change. There would need to be a consultation with residents – a 'test of opinion' on the proposed changes, and the definition of a new relationship between the Council and residents although this should mean relatively minimal change. For BHP staff it will not mean a change in location, but it will mean a change of employer, which brings a range of contractual issues, but also cultural issues as well. The current Council Housing Partnerships Team would also need to be realigned as they would no longer need to client the ALMO.

This means that the permanent senior team would be in later, probably October 2017, and between the initial cabinet decision, there would be two periods: November to April (when the test of opinion takes place) and April to October while the implementation of the new Council delivery unit is implemented. This will create a period of instability and there is a risk of loss of focus and dip in performance. Mitigating this risk would require strong partnership working between the BHP Board, the interim senior management team and the Council. The recovery period provides evidence that this type of partnership working is possible.

Of the three options the implementation of the In-house option is a close second after the ALMO in terms of reduced disruption and the ability to manage this disruption. There would be a period of consultation and delayed recruitment of a new permanent senior management team, this would make implementing further changes more complicated, but as the recovery period proves, this doesn't have to impact negatively on performance.

Joint venture

The implementation d the JV requires the greatest amount of structural change, and therefore disruption. There are a significant number of unknowns, which will need to be worked through in implementing:

- The terms of the service requirement
- The terms of the agreement with the partner
- The expertise of the partner
- The new senior management team
- The partner's organisational culture

Working through these will require a consultation with residents (test of opinion on the recommended option from November 2016 Cabinet), and the negotiations with potential partners, which means the new structure and management team will not be in place until April 2018.

The changes will be greater than in the other two options for staff – a new employer in (probably) a new location, and the perceived threat of job losses and change of terms & conditions, irrespective of whether this perception is justified. It will also produce a greater challenge in terms of maintaining the focus on service performance over a longer period of change than the in-house option. The option also requires the redesign of the Housing Partnerships service, not only to provide effective scrutiny of the joint venture, to ensure the Council's and the residents' priorities remain a focus, but also to ensure that the work the team does with other Housing Associations (other than the chosen partner are not affected.

This option is clearly the most complex in terms of set-up because of the number of new arrangements required. It is therefore also the most expensive. However, the size of Brent's stock mean that it would be possible to find a joint venture partner that can bring very useful expertise to the table, therefore, increasing the chances of a complex and expensive journey, but ultimately a successful outcome. The key question, which the rest of this document focuses on is whether these additional difficulties and costs are worth it in the long term.

Overall for this criteria the Reformed ALMO option is the simplest, whilst the In-House option provides a balance between simplicity and change.

OUTCOMES

The three options have been evaluated based on how they interact with 5 headline criteria, each clarified by a small number of sub-criteria. (discussed further in chapter 6) Here we present the key findings of the evaluation not covered in the previous sections.

1. *Assures provision of modern, high-quality and continuously improving housing management services*

What good looks like

- Focus on the housing service
- Improving the accessibility of services through enhanced digital opportunities and other IT related issues. Supports customers to self-solve and self-serve
- Delivers repairs and maintenance to specified quality and price
- Supports continuous improvement

Reformed ALMO

The focus taken on the housing service is, nominally, strong. Like the joint venture the Reformed ALMO is solely focussed on the housing service, relatively free from pressures from across the Council. However, the opportunity to focus on the housing service has not led the ALMO to deliver an acceptable level of service in recent times.

A reformed ALMO is (marginally) in the weakest position in relation to digital transformation. This is because gains in this area need to be achieved via the Council's systems and the ALMO is half a step further removed from influence over those channels than an In-house business unit.

Given that the existing contractual framework within which repairs are delivered applies equally to all options this is about the ability of an option to deliver high quality contract management. The operating environment for social housing repairs contracts is busy, competitive and characterised by relatively low margins. It is easy to create a combination of circumstances where performance on a contract is unsatisfactory. Improving performance on an underperforming contract requires building a relationship with the contractor that allows challenging issues to be raised and resolved. The role of a strong contract client is crucial. If the contract client is weak then the contractor will often exploit that weakness. The Reformed ALMO option outperforms the In-house option in this regard because it has the potential to attract better staff at senior levels and at the contract management level.

Moving beyond contract management there are the broader issues of stock condition, financing, work programming and procurement. It is reported to us that the stock condition data held by BHP is outdated and inadequate. Compiling sufficiently strong stock condition data will be a pre-requisite of finessing work programmes to optimise the financial impact of making required improvements.

Again, these skills will most readily be available in the JV environments, with the Reformed ALMO ranking second.

The poor track record of the ALMO in achieving continuous improvement means that this option starts at a disadvantage to the other options in this regard. The likelihood of turning the situation around is enhanced by the ability of this option to attract good staff. The ALMO has reduced costs but is still currently carrying an establishment that costs more than is covered by the management fee though this was a clear decision of the Board to maintain this level of expenditure during the Recovery Period.

In-house

The risk of the In-house option is that the focus on the housing service is diluted by becoming a sub-set of a wider Council department. Whilst integration will bring access to the Council's approach to running a business generally (some of which may be beneficial) some dilution of focus on the housing service is inevitable and therefore this is the joint weakest option in that regard.

An In-house service is marginally stronger than the ALMO option in respect of digital transformation. There exists the opportunity to piggy back on the Council approach. Clear internal Service Level Agreements and strong internal clienting will be important. Issues such as digital transformation are not sector specific so it is possible that wider Council initiatives can add value to an In-house service.

Given that the existing contractual framework within which repairs are delivered applies equally to all options this is about the ability of an option to deliver high quality contract management. On the one hand the In-house option is the weakest in terms of its ability to attract quality specialist housing senior management expertise. However, it is also true that the Council more broadly has significant expertise and track record of successful service management in other disciplines. So the challenge for the In-House service will be to mitigate the risk of weaker housing contract management expertise by the application of learning from other Council business streams. Striking a balance between the recruitment challenge and the wider Council expertise we rank the In-House option as level with the Reformed ALMO option.

The Council will have its own programmes and methodologies that seek to modernise services and it is possible that the housing service will be able to benefit from these work streams. The Council has a strong track record in taking cost out of service provision which will serve an In-house option well. This is joint strongest (with the Joint Venture) in this regard.

Joint Venture

Our views on the JV option are measured against a generic partner organisation. Whilst on the one hand the Council can specify the qualities it is looking for in a partner there will still be a line of best fit to be found and the selected partner will not have the highest possible strength in respect of every single issue. An additional benefit that accrues is access gained to expertise in the partner's operation. This being in addition to the staff within the JV.

The JV is the strongest option in terms of the focus on the housing service. This would be a new organisation, focused on delivering the service specified in its agreement with the Council. It has a better opportunity than the ALMO to turn around the current service.

The JV has a good opportunity to take forward digital transformation. The ability of the JV partner to bring forward expertise in this regard place the JV on a par with the In-house option in terms of taking the issue forwards.

The JV is the option within the strongest offer in terms of repairs and maintenance. Not only is the JV better able to attract good staff it also can call on specialist expertise within the JV partner.

The JV very much has the opportunity to make a fresh start on the issues such as continuous improvement and can bring to bear the experience and expertise of the JV partner. It is the strongest option in regard to his issue.

The JV is likely to perform best in respect of this criteria whilst the In-House and Reformed ALMO options are equal.

2. *Achieves significant efficiencies and savings to contribute to the financial sustainability of the Council's housing revenue account*

What good looks like

- The ability to make an initial saving through the initial implementation of the new option
- A track record in producing operational savings and a focus on cost reduction
- Flexibility in order to fully exploit opportunities

Financial modelling of the impact of the government's Housing and related reforms on the Council's housing finances and the sustainability of the Housing revenue account has been undertaken. (Further detail on the findings from this will be set out in detail in a section of the final review report.). The main impact arises from the prescribed 1% rent cut each year from 2016-2020. In 2020 this will reduce the rental income to the Council by £7.5m compared with that due on the basis of the Council's previous rent policy.

It is not known what the government's rent policy or direction will be beyond 2020. Two positions have been assumed and modelled: firstly, that the policy reverts to the former position with annual increases of CPI plus 1%; secondly that increases are limited to CPI only. Currently the view in the sector is that the latter is more likely. There is another potential scenario of further annual rent reductions in cash terms and if this was sustained for a significant period social housing finances would become simply unsustainable.

The financial impact of the government's other reforms – in particular the requirement to pay a government levy to fund the extension of the RTB to housing association tenants – is harder to assess because regulations including the formula to be used have not yet been published by government. A number of scenarios have been modelled and these will be set out in the financial section of the report.

On the basis of the known rent reductions to 2020 and on the standard sector assumption of CPI only increases thereafter it is calculated that a reduction in costs (or increased income) of £3.6m needs to be realised over three years. This will enable the HRA to maintain minimum revenue balances over the medium to long-term and implement the planned stock investment programme. Total core management costs equate to £12.5m and this would represent a 29% saving if all taken in this area. There may be potential to realise savings in other areas of revenue expenditure to reduce the required savings in core management costs but a significant contribution will nevertheless be required. Cost reduction on this scale represents a massive challenge for any/all of the options. We comment further below on the interaction of each option to this requirement.

For each option an initial piece of financial analysis has been done, which focuses on the current core management fee to BHP, which is £7.5m. This expenditure relates primarily to staffing costs (including associated on-costs), and an assessment has been made in respect of each option, which establishment posts can be reduced, amended or deleted in each of the options. For example, in the BHP reformed option the senior leadership team comprises a Managing Director and two Directors for Operations and Asset Management (a deletion of 1 post from the status quo); for the in-house option an Operational Director and 2 heads of service are assumed; for the JV option the structure of Managing Director and 2 directors is spread across management of the Council and partner's Brent stock and costed proportionately.

It must be emphasised that this is an initial saving from implementing each option driven by changes in governance, economies of scale, and optimum integration with Council or partner services. There will be one-off redundancy and associated costs which are not covered here.

Beyond the savings arising from introduction of each option significant additional savings will need to be realised by 2020 – the difference between the initial saving achieved and the £3.6m target. These savings will need to be generated through changes to service delivery and efficiency, service scope, by income generation or other means. The implementation of modern service delivery arrangements using digital technologies through online self-service and mobile working will be central to this. A key issue therefore is the prospects for achieving such savings under each option.

Reformed ALMO

It is estimated that a saving of £350K would be realised on implementation of this option. This is considerably less than the prospective savings realised under the other options and reflects the additional governance, senior leadership and management costs inherent in the operation of separate company.   These savings could be achieved from April 2017.

Therefore, it is likely that the Reformed ALMO would need to identify and deliver a further £3.25 savings over the next three years. BHP has experience of making efficiency savings over the last 4 years. There exists the opportunity to enforce cost reduction on the ALMO via the annual management fee settlement.   However, this does not change the fact that the larger medium term savings target would represent a significant challenge for the new senior management team.

A further downside of the ALMO's focus on the housing service is that it may not be focused on maximising the potential financial benefits of working flexibly with the wider HRA and GRF activity. The opportunity to make this happen formally will work to the annual business planning cycle. The Reformed ALMO option does however outperform the JV option in this regard.

In-house

It is estimated that a saving of £1m would be realised on implementation of this option. This is highest potential saving of all the options, and is realised through the full integration of the ALMO back into the Council, thereby cutting out the most duplication in an already existing organisation. These savings could be achieved from October 2017.

Therefore, it is likely that the In-house option would need to identify and deliver a further £2.6m savings over the next three years. The Council has a track record of re-defining and maintaining service delivery in the face of significant funding cuts. This track record and experience will be of great use to an In-house service. However the level of cuts required will present a huge challenge for the service's new managers.

The In-house option is also the strongest option in regard to fully exploiting the opportunities to work flexibly across the HRA and GRF to the maximum benefit of the public purse.

Therefore, the In-house option is the strongest option in terms financial sustainability because it achieves the largest initial saving, has the strongest prospects for achieving further savings and has greater flexibility.

Joint Venture

It is estimated that the adoption of this option will generate savings of £800k. The initial saving will not be realised until April 2018 because of the longer lead-in to establish the Joint Venture.

Therefore, it is likely that the JV option would need to identify and deliver a further £2.8m savings over the next three years. Compared to the local government sector the housing association sector does not have a strong track record in producing efficiency savings. The JV will focus on the issues that it is tasked to focus on within its scope of service. It will be possible to mandate budget reductions and to incentivise the generation of efficiency savings. However, savings will not all pass to the Council, some will pass to the JV partner. It is the weakest option in this respect. The need to integrate service delivery arrangements and IT and other supporting infrastructure (moving from a degree of integration with the Council at this point in time) may require additional investment beyond that implied by modernisation and this will need to be recouped and savings may arise somewhat later.

The JV is the least flexible in its relationship to the HRA and General Fund. Such flexibility that there is will need to be expressed through annual negotiations.

Overall for this criteria, the in-house option provides the largest initial saving, the greatest potential to deliver more (based primarily on track record) and has the greatest flexibility to deliver financial sustainability.

3. Maximises the value and performance of the Council's housing stock through active asset management and new development.

What good looks like

- Major works delivered on time, to required quality including quality of customer care as expressed through customer satisfaction.
- Development opportunities maximised and proceeding to completion at fastest rate that funding will allow.

There are two key issues that arise in property management, the stewardship of buildings and the services provided to residents. Arguably of the two the stewardship of the buildings is the more fundamental. Properties last longer than residents, each building will serve multiple generations of the same or a variety of households. The gulf between the best and the worst asset management is vast. Great asset management, through the quality of improvements, by reducing cost in use for residents, by exploiting opportunities for infill development, by keeping properties on good repair, can make significant impact on the health and well-being of residents. Moreover, asset management is crucial in influencing the perception of an area by residents and others, for example through the external condition of buildings and the design choices with regard to issues such as rat-runs and community facilities. For these reasons this is a key criterion.

It is important to reflect also that asset management is an issue on which the Council will, under any option, continue to have a view and a degree of involvement. Under all the options the Council retains ownership of the buildings and will have views on what is done to the buildings and surrounding land and how work is financed and programmed. Under any option work will be required to define the Council's role and the role of the delivery agent. A lack of clarity on these roles has played a part in the shortfalls that exist in current BHP asset management for example in the absence of adequate stock condition data.

Reformed ALMO

Achieving the timely delivery of major works to specified quality within an agreed price is a question about the ability of each option to put in place good quality contract management people and mechanisms. In this regard the reformed ALMO is the middle ranking option for the reasons discussed elsewhere about its ability to attract candidates.

With either the Reformed ALMO or In-house options, there is a team in place which has some experience and has local knowledge. The team has had some success but in general developments have taken longer than anticipated and there have been delays in meeting targets, particularly for obtaining planning permission. The team is necessarily small, and it is difficult for a small team to have the full range of expertise required. The size of the programme is unlikely to ever be enough to gain the critical mass necessary to expand the team and acquire all the skills. Unlike the In-house and Joint Venture options the Reformed ALMO option cannot hope to pair these responsibilities with others in order to apply greater levels of expertise.

In-house

The In-house option is the weakest in terms of recruiting specialist housing staff. This makes the task of recruiting the required quality of contract management expertise tougher. However, it is also true that the Council more broadly has significant expertise and track record of successful contract management in other disciplines. So the challenge for the In-House service will be to mitigate the risk of weaker housing contract management expertise by the application of learning from other Council business streams. Striking a balance between the recruitment challenge and the wider Council expertise we rank the In-House option as level with the Reformed ALMO option. However, it is the riskiest option.

As a self-contained business stream small scale regeneration would face the same problems In-house as in a Reformed ALMO. However, the Council would have the opportunity to potentially pair the small scale regeneration work with the larger scale regeneration work and this would offer the opportunity to access greater levels of expertise. This is not without risk however, the risk that smaller scale regeneration would not receive sufficient attention from a team also working on large schemes.

Joint Venture

A Joint Venture partner would have more scope to make changes or bring in additional resources at middle management level. It is often the case that large RPs have strong combined asset management and development teams with greater experience in managing asset-related contract than Councils, and the introduction of an experienced and robust contract manager in particular could make a considerable difference.

It is also the case that the larger RPs tend to have software and other models which might permit them to plan and programme more efficiently, with resultant cost savings. There might also be options for them to add Brent stock to their existing programmes and contractor arrangements, again with potential savings through economies of scale. However, the likely cost savings cannot be determined at this stage and are unlikely to be very large – this should not be overestimated. Taking these factors into account this is the strongest option in this regard.

The Council would make the development capability of the joint venture partner an important aspect of the selection and negotiation process. There exists the potential to draw on the wider development expertise of the joint venture partner. This makes this the strongest option in his regard.

There is the risk that the JV partner might be *too* focused on development to the detriment of the core services. The Council would need to assure itself that the partner was able and willing to fully engage with provision of core services and that the potential development opportunities were not its sole objective, and would need to ensure that focus was maintained on the core services throughout the contract period.

An additional risk is that the JV partner will be picked based on a range of selection criteria of which development will be only one. Dependent upon the weight given to development expertise in the selection criteria the selected JV partner may or may not have sufficiently a strong development offering.

The JV is likely to perform best in respect of this criteria whilst the In-House and Reformed ALMO options are equal.

4a. Contributes to improved outcomes for tenants including in respect of employment and training, health and wellbeing and tenancy sustainment for vulnerable tenants.

What good looks like

- Advances LBB's strategic intent in respect of People and Place through the delivery of specially commissioned projects including in respect of employment and training, health and wellbeing and tenancy sustainment for vulnerable tenants. For example, adding Council funding to an existing Housing Association programme where they have expertise like tenancy sustainment
- Advances LBB's strategic intent in respect of People and Place through the forging of closer links with existing programmes of work (expected to be primarily Council commissioned) on issues such as employment and training, health and wellbeing and tenancy sustainment in order to maximise the value to Council tenants and leaseholders, for example, realigning the Council's financial inclusion project to encompass the needs of BHP tenants
- Involves resident in governance and maximises the impact of customer insight on the operations of the business

Housing management practise in respect of these issues is an evolving situation. Historically (and generally, rather than just in Brent) housing managers have had a role in tenancy sustainment and in signposting to other agencies whether that be adult social care, detailed debt advice or employment/training initiatives. What started as a side-line to Housing Officer activity got formalised in the shape of tenancy sustainment teams. However, as budgets are squeezed so the focus homes in on core housing management activity and time spent/cost incurred on these peripheral activities comes under ever increasing scrutiny. With £3.6m to be saved it seems certain that the headroom (by which we mean the cost of staff having time to do it) will disappear. The revenue outlook for the General Fund means also that the likelihood of new work on these issues being commissioned is also much reduced. Initiatives to the benefit of all residents look more likely than initiatives to the benefit of only Council tenants and leaseholders. So our view is that realistically this is about how well an option can signpost to Council and other services.

There is a separate but related issue, that of eliminating duplication whilst promoting tenure blindness. The Council will want to extract maximum value from every HRA and GF pound. One way in which this can be achieved is for there to be an increase in tenure blind service offerings (for example a financial inclusion offer that applies irrespective of tenure). Prospectively the HRA could be sharing the cost of the tenure blind service offering with the General Fund.

Reformed ALMO

BHP currently provides a number of services that are aligned to the first criteria. It delivers financial inclusion services (which are commissioned by the Council) and also delivers the Community Fund and BHP Academy. It therefore has a limited track record of contributing to improved outcomes on some of these criteria, but it is not a core activity and so expertise is limited. In addition, there is a risk in bolting on aspects of this type of work to the work of a relatively small number of housing specialists.

The Reformed ALMO is reasonably positioned to work closely with and signpost to the work of Council departments and local partners on wider range of issues. In other sections we have regarded positively the focus on a housing service caused by being arm's-length. In this regard being arm's-length is more of a mixed blessing. While arm's-length does not weaken the case for a Reformed ALMO to win commissions it does weaken the case for the (arguably more likely) position of the ALMO as a signpost to wider Council services. It is the middle ranked option in this regard.

Therefore, this is the weakest option for this criteria as it doesn't have the scale or experience in delivering wider benefits, and there is one further degree of separation from Council services although this issue could be minimised through a different way of working.

In-house

One of the key objectives of the Council is to improve the health and wellbeing of the residents of Brent. The In-house option offers the opportunity to more fully integrate housing management work with the Council's wider work.

The housing management service has in-depth relationships with an important sub-set of the Council's customers. Achieving outcomes outside of the housing agenda (for example a successful employment or training outcome) can have beneficial outcomes for the housing agenda (rent paid, tenancy sustained, void loss avoided) and for the Council's wider agendas (increased levels of economic activity etc.). Creating an In-House service is a great opportunity to redesign the corporate jigsaw and figure out afresh the opportunities that arise from having the housing business unit under direct Council control. We foresee a range of opportunities such as:

- Specifying a tenure blind service to be delivered by a non-housing department with some financial support from the HRA.
- A thoroughly joined up approach to signposting of Council services by housing managers

In respect of all of the above the In-House option is, by far, the strongest option.

Joint Venture

Many potential RP partners have very extensive experience and already well established teams and projects focused on delivering wider outcomes for residents, for example, some will have apprenticeship schemes or trade training academies or health initiatives. Some – particularly those with a wider charitable remit – will have whole departments devoted to community development and social regeneration projects. The partner might well offer access to these initiatives either free or at marginal cost. Even a 'free' service is, most likely, reflected in the range of recharges passed to the JV by the partner. The Council would have less choice or influence over these services than under other options.

The Joint Venture is the option which is most distant from the Council. This makes signposting more complex, but arguably no more complex than for a Reformed ALMO.

In order to gain access to greatest value the JV will need to piggyback on the wider work of the JV partner on these issues. Any enhancement to Brent agendas of Place and People will be coincidental rather than causal. This is not to say that local benefit will not be achieved. But inevitably it will not be as closely related to Brent's agendas as is possible under the In-House Option

Therefore, the JV offers significant potential opportunities, making it the middle ranking option in this regard.

Overall for this criteria, the In-house option is, by a wide margin, the best performing option with the JV ranking second and the Reformed ALMO ranking weakest.

4b. Resident engagement

This criterion is focused on two things:

- Residents being able to actively participate in the governance mechanisms of an option with a meaningful influence on decision-making, which is an area where there are very distinct differences between the options, but also
- A broader and possibly more important point: successful organisations in any sector have a common theme – they know, understand and respond to their current and future customers. This doesn't have to be through formal decision making,

Either way, resident involvement and scrutiny should be based on the specific principle that the priorities and views of residents should be at the heart of a housing organisation's framework for directing, monitoring, assessing and modifying its own activities. And all options face the same challenge, given the budget pressures, of how to deliver effective resident engagement at the lowest cost, so changes will be required through all options.

The history of resident engagement is (for the most part) a history of a relatively small number of people providing insight that is then applied to some or all residents. There is no criticism here of that approach and it has been fortunate to benefit from input from some amazingly dedicated customers. There will always be a place for these types of interactions but increasingly technology offers new opportunities to bring people together virtually, including ways to find out customer views without them needing to leave home. But there are also significant opportunities to improve services using customer insight. This might be data that BHP already hold, it might be data that the Council already hold or it might be data about the population of Brent held by other organisations. This type of data is the very opposite of the views of a small number of involved residents. Some of the data will be about all people in Brent (not focused on tenants and leaseholders). Neither of these methods hold all the answers and the best way forward will include a mix of both approaches. As budget pressures increase the cost and value derived from formal engagement structures will come under intensifying scrutiny. Customer insight costs less and as such will have an increasing profile.

Reformed ALMO

Under a Reformed ALMO our assumption is that, in line with sector good practice, there will be a move towards a smaller Board recruited on the basis of skills rather than constituencies. A skills-based approach does not rule out residents from sitting on the Board but increases the importance of the ability to make a contribution driven from a particular skill/expertise. It is important to note here because it is likely resident involvement on the Board would reduce though.

Which is why it is more important to note that, that even with residents on the Board there is the need to be able to meaningfully engage with residents beyond carrying out surveys. To meet this necessity many RPs have created strong advisory panels of residents who are able to help formulate policy and to review the progress of the organisation. It is a regulatory requirement for social housing organisations to put in place scrutiny panels.

BHP also has a strong track record of capacity building through the BHP Academy. This was recognised as best practice, and BHP was invited to address a National Federation of ALMOs best practice briefing and also to address MPs in Westminster about its resident engagement. BHP also has a Customer Scrutiny Group and, following a recent review, there are proposals to build on this with the creation of more scrutiny groups tasked with examining specific service areas.

The track record and future prospects for resident engagement are a strong suit for a Reformed ALMO. However, the situation with regard to customer insight is somewhat different. Most housing organisations are in the early stages of accessing and adding value using customer insight data. Moving forwards it is likely that the Council and a JV partner will both have more to offer in this regard than the Reformed ALMO which may struggle to deliver the In-house capacity and capability to deliver the more strategic customer analysis and intelligence function.

Building a strong customer focus in to the culture of the organisation is crucial from front line to dedicated capacity and capability to analyse data is crucial. If the Reformed ALMO delivers a structure which is focused on front line engagement then it should be strong to this degree, but it

In-house

Under the In-house option the existing formal governance structures would come to an end. The question then becomes what would/could come in their place? It will not be possible to offer the same level of direct formal involvement represented in the current approach by residents having a seat on the Board. However, there does exist the opportunity to take this loss as a starting point, take a blank piece of paper and to design a new approach that provides a pathway for resident views to influence the thoughts of those running the service. The In-house team would work to develop mechanisms for resident engagement and involvement in a variety of ways, and given BHP's current expertise in this area, we would anticipate that the In-house team would make a good showing at this and provide a new range of modern options for engagement and involvement.

Nevertheless, it is a different structure. Having a strongly resident focused Board was one of the key reasons for the development of ALMOs, with the objective of providing a degree of resident focus on housing services which no Council would ever be able to directly mirror. This is the weakest option in this regard.

In respect of customer insight, the In-House offer is stronger. Across the Council there exists masses of information. Some of this is about tenants and leaseholders, some about all residents. The Council will be seeking to improve its use of customer insight data and to generate meaningful impacts on policy and practise. An integrated housing business unit has the opportunity to gain value from the Council's improved use of customer insight.

Joint Venture

A JV would be different again. Historically, RPs have had a strong track record of resident involvement in governance structures, including resident membership of the main Board. However, in recent years this has changed as there has been increased pressure for highly skilled boards with extensive professional expertise. Since the introduction of rent reductions in 2015, and the resultant need for extensive restructuring and efficiencies, this change has been accelerated.

Although a few of the larger RPs do retain some resident membership, this is usually on the basis of skills based recruitment where resident members are expected to display the same levels of knowledge and skills which independent members are expected to have, in order to run large and complex businesses. This has tended to reduce the number of resident members. In Rochdale the mutual created by the Council has a wholly skills based board behind which there is a strong representative body of residents and employees on which the Council also has representation. Its role is to work with the board to develop policy and review performance.

It would be reasonable to expect that any JV would provide a range of modern options for engagement. For example, many RPs have excellent Tenant Scrutiny arrangements. However, we think it unlikely that an RP would willingly embrace resident membership on the JV Board. Of course, the Council might be able to insist on that as part of the terms of the JV, and we are not suggesting that RP partners would necessarily consider it a deal-breaker. Nevertheless, we flag it up as being a potential area of disagreement on principles.

In respect of customer insight, it is hard to predict the strength of a JV partner's offer. The housing association sector is also in the early stages of its work on big data and its role in customer insight. It is an issue that is unlikely to make or break the case for a JV partner and therefore there is both opportunity and risk.

Overall for this criteria, striking a balance of the strengths/weaknesses between resident engagement on one hand and customer insight on the other we find that the Reformed ALMO and In-House option are level in strength (although with each option having different strengths to its offer) with the JV slightly behind (chiefly because of the uncertainty about the JV partner).

5. Contribution to the delivery of the Council's priorities

What good looks like

- A direct read across from the Council's strategic policies into the strategic and operational plans of the service delivery organisation
- Flexibility such that the plans of the service delivery organisation can adapt to changes in Council strategy outside of the annual business planning cycle.

This section looks at the degree to which the options are capable of being in tune with the Council's specific priorities and the extent to which the various options might be reactive to changes in priorities.

Reformed ALMO

The Council will wish to ensure that the ALMO recognises its position as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council with only one shareholder, the Council. Once both parties take robust ownership of this position then the flexibility of the ALMO to the Council's strategic issues increases.

However, the Council will be reliant upon the ALMO board to interpret and apply the Council's strategic priorities. There is the possibility of accidental misinterpretation. In addition, changes may be required which do not fit in with the ALMO's annual planning cycle, which is the Council's primary opportunity to input into planning strategic priorities and allocation of resources. Although the cycles will be co-ordinated, if the timing of change did not coincide with the cycles, then despite partnership working this might lead to a lag in the ability for the Council to influence events.

In-house

Looking at the In-house option, the Council would have complete control over this. Any changes in priorities and resources would be entirely the Council's decision. Clearly any change of direction takes some time to implement, but it would be quicker under this option than any other.

It would also be the option with the cheapest cost of change, partly because of the relative speed of change but also because there would not be any costs associated with contractual change.

There is a risk with this option that over time the Council's focus on housing could be diminished. One of the reasons for setting up ALMOs was to ensure that in a busy and fast moving environment where housing forms only a relatively small part of the Council's overall business, housing maintained its priority and did not get side-lined. The In-house option creates anew the potential for a lack of focus on the housing service to accrue.

Joint Venture

As a joint venture is by definition an organisation in which the Council holds a half share, a JV should be responsive to changing priorities. But the same comments apply here as to an ALMO, there is a risk that changed priorities do not accord with the JV's priorities and/or that changes have implications which the JV is unable or unwilling to meet and/or there is a time lag and/or Council strategic changes may be misinterpreted by the JV.

We do not see this as an insuperable problem. When the venture is joint, the partners should be able to reach an accommodation and this may in fact be easier with a JV than with an ALMO because the issues regarding an annual planning cycle do not apply in quite the same way. Nevertheless, resultant changes would be both slower and more remote than under the In-house option. As with the Reformed ALMO option, there might be contractual cost implications of change.

Overall the in-house option has the greatest strengths in relation to this criterion.

Summary

This table sets out and compares the key points for each of the options, derived from the narrative above.

Criterion	Reformed ALMO	In-house	Joint Venture
Contributing to Council priorities	Single shareholder, so high level of ongoing strategic control (through annual delivery plan), but less day to day operational control. Mitigation is the single focus and the housing expertise of the Board.	Highest levels of strategic and day to day operational control as the service would be directly line managed by the council.	This is a partnership, so significant strategic control, but still the lowest of the 3 options because strategic direction would need to be negotiated. Less day to day control. Mitigation would be expertise of partner.
Leadership	Appointment to the most senior post would be made jointly by the ALMO and the Council. Other posts appointed by the ALMO. Recruitment to the senior team likely to attract strong candidates.	All appointments made by the council. Operational Director would be a Member appointment; the others posts officer appointments. Recruitment to the senior team (and middle management) could be more challenging as it is not a standalone housing management service with the autonomy that brings, and flexibility over terms and conditions.	Appointment to the most senior post would be made by the JV Board, including the Council representatives. Other appointments made by the JV. In the first instance, the senior team could be seconded from the partner; if so, likely to the best option for a high calibre team. External recruitment to the senior team is likely to attract the strongest candidates.
Implementation	Immediate clarity about the long term structure, would provide a simpler basis for change to start immediately in December. However, the new senior team (April 2017) would be the key driver for change in service delivery medium term. A barrier	Period of consultation for the 'test of opinion' would make the basis for immediate change more complicated, but would still be achievable. New permanent senior team not in place until October 2017. Medium term CT have raised concerns about attractiveness of posts, but	Period of consultation for the 'test of opinion' and then identifying the partner and setting up the JV would make the basis for immediate change more uncertain. The new senior team and the terms of the JV would be strong drivers for change, but would not be in place until April 2018. There would be a clear signal to staff and

Criterion	Reformed ALMO	In-house	Joint Venture
	would be the possible perception amongst staff that 'nothing has changed'.	would benefit from Council's change expertise. There would be a clear signal to all staff from April 2017 that this is a new service.	the JV partner would bring all their expertise to drive change quickly after implementation. Change of employer brings the greatest sense of uncertainty for staff, with both positive and negative connotations.
Provision of housing management services	Single focus and opportunity to recruit the right leadership team should underpin success. BHP and council needing to work together on digital transformation could create delays. New leadership team would need to move to a new customer focused transformation model, which is not currently in place to tackle cross cutting issues such as repairs. Would have the housing expertise, but relies on Council contract management procurement support to deliver change with Wates, which is fundamental to improving repairs performance.	This option would tie the Housing Management Service directly into the Councils digital and customer focused transformation methodology, and provide direct access to the capacity and capability to support change. This would be of direct relevance to the fundamental challenge of repairs for example. There would need to be a sustained focus on delivering change with Wates equal to the challenge for the Reformed ALMO.	Single focus, ability to recruit and bring across staff and expertise in all areas would be of benefit if the ideal partner could be found. The service could benefit from their digital and transformation expertise as well if the right partner was chosen, and they would bring leverage in the wider market in terms of repairs and planned maintenance contractors. In theory this presents the best opportunity, but there is a significant risk for this option – not knowing who the partner is at this point, and therefore evaluating it on the basis of the perfect partner, that does not exist.
Achieves efficiencies & savings	Initial saving on implementation: c£350k Potential for delivering the additional savings required: unproven track record on this scale and likely to be the least able to achieve savings.	Initial saving on implementation: c£1m Potential for delivering the additional savings required: the Council has a good track record in addressing funding pressures while maintaining services.	Initial saving on implementation: c£800k Potential for delivering the additional savings required: generally, producing cost savings are not a great strength of the RP sector. Savings could be contractually mandated and might be more achievable

Criterion	Reformed ALMO	In-house	Joint Venture
			than for an ALMO, but not all of the savings would accrue to the Council and the HRA.
Asset management and development	There is a team in place which has experience and local knowledge. The team has had some success but in general developments have taken longer than anticipated and there have been delays in meeting targets, particularly for obtaining planning permission. The team is necessarily small, and it is difficult for a small team to have the full range of expertise required. The development team would necessarily remain small in this option, so no opportunity for structural improvements.	The in house option will also have the challenges set out for the reformed ALMO, but it is also true that the council more broadly has significant expertise and track record of successful contract management in other disciplines. Therefore, if the risk of less housing expertise could be mitigated and the benefits of the wider expertise exploited, there is a good chance of improved performance. There is also the opportunity to join the BHP development team with the Council's regeneration team, which could also bring additional benefits.	It is often the case that large RPs have strong combined asset management and development teams with greater experience in managing asset-related contract than Councils, and the introduction of an experienced and robust contract manager in particular could make a difference. Access to well-resourced development teams, expertise and opportunities for development which are not available to either of the other options. This is the strongest option for both asset management and for delivering more and better development. However, the risk identified above for provision of housing management is equally true for this option.
Contributes to improved outcomes for tenants	If the Council seeks project delivery (the council commissioning new services for BHP tenants), this is the weakest option. If it seeks project signposting (improving access to existing services).	Whether the Council seeks project delivery or project signposting, this is the strongest option because of the links with, and potential for close interaction with other and partner Council initiatives.	A JV may offer the widest range of delivery projects carried across from its own activities, but the Council would have less influence over them Signposting would be similar as with the Reformed ALMO option.

Criterion	Reformed ALMO	In-house	Joint Venture
Resident involvement in governance	The tenant membership inherent in an ALMO Board, and a strong track record in resident engagement.	The Council would not be able to replicate the Board level representation, but could replicate everything else.	There is unlikely to be resident involvement in the formal governance (board) structure. Most RPs already have a track record in other forms of resident engagement, but this has been reducing as budgets tighten

10. Financial Evaluation of Options

The financial evaluation of the options is an important part of the exercise being undertaken by Brent Council, but it is only one of the tools that the Council will use in its decision-making process.

The purpose of this financial evaluation is to create a map of the financial landscape and show how that map changes over time. The financial evaluation shows the size of the challenge and shows one way in which the financial challenge can be met. It is <u>not</u> the role of the financial evaluation to offer opinion on the likelihood of any option achieving the savings required. The issues of probability are dealt with in the narrative evaluation at chapter 9 above.

Brent Council monitors the financial resources it has available to be able to manage, maintain and invest in its housing stock to keep it at a lettable standard using a 30-year business plan for the HRA. The business planning tool that it uses is an industry-standard product supplied by Capita. There are clear targets that the HRA business plan must legally achieve, these being:

- The HRA reserve balance cannot be negative (working capital);
- The housing debt does not exceed the debt cap of £199.3 million

Whilst there is no requirement to be debt free after 30 years, a prudent business plan would also show that there are sufficient HRA reserves to repay any outstanding debt at year 30 if required. In reality, the Council may have loans that are not due for repayment within the next 30 years but it should be capable of paying them if required at the time they fall due. Within our evaluation we have shown the HRA position with and without the requirement to be able to repay HRA debt at year 30. As you would expect if your debt horizon is longer than 30 years then the savings required to make the HRA viable are lower.

In addition, to the legal requirement to avoid a negative balance on the HRA reserves, Brent Council also has an internal policy of maintaining HRA reserves above the equivalent of £200 per unit of housing stock (this figure increases with inflation annually). In 2016/17 this is around £1.57 million.

This financial evaluation is based on testing each option to see whether it meets the target criteria for a viable business plan as described above. Where the option does not meet the criteria, we consider the level of mitigation that would be required to bring the HRA back into balance.

The design of each of the options – Reformed ALMO, In-House and Joint-Venture (JV) partner, have resulted in the identification of potential savings. These savings arise mainly from posts that would be no longer required as a result of reorganisation, through combining services and also from economies of scale. We have called these the first pass savings. The first pass at savings have been factored into the modelling. Where the models indicate there are further mitigating actions required, the results are not telling you how to make the savings, but are giving an indication of the level required, so that this can be used to decide and plan what to change.

Summary of the Outcomes

Each of the options assumes that the current standard of service continues to be provided to tenants, so that options are evaluated on the basis of cost compared to the existing HRA budget.

Firstly, from the work undertaken, it is not the case that one option produces the forecast savings requirement whilst other options do not. None of the options as described delivers a viable HRA over 30 years. All of the options require further mitigation to achieve a viable HRA.

The savings requirement weighs heavily across all the options. For this reason, our view is that a decision cannot be taken based on current financial data. Further work on financial matters, set out below, will be required to support decision making on the detailed business plan of the chosen option.

Secondly, when we work through the numbers and the level of savings required in future to maintain a viable HRA, the savings required look massively challenging. To give an example: For the In-House Option the estimated level of savings required is £3.6m.

However, it is important to note that there are significant variables within the models as they stand now. Whilst the current models are sufficiently robust to support choosing an option further work will be required to improve the model of the chosen option prior to the approval of the detailed business case. The view of our expert independent financial advisor is:

- The models make the case that significant savings are required moving forwards
- Having selected an option there will be further work to be done on the financial model to improve confidence around key variables
- As confidence around key variables increases so will confidence in the level of saving required
- Once greater assurance exists on the savings required it will then be appropriate to plan how the savings will be made.

Key Variables

Without additional mitigating actions, the HRA business plan hits problems for its HRA revenue balances and would need to breach its debt cap. There are a number of reasons for this:

Stock condition data: The 30-year profile of investment required in the stock is taken from the Council's asset management systems. The Finance Team and BHP have indicated that this data has not been subject to survey in recent years and may not adequately reflect the needs of the stock. It may be higher than forecast, it may be lower. The timing of investment is crucial to determining the Council's need to borrow.

Sale of high value voids: The plans within the Housing & Planning Act 2016 to introduce a requirement for Councils to sell off its higher value void properties has been included in the base HRA models. This is likely to require a levy to be paid to the Government, but the mechanism for delivering the policy is not yet available. The Council has assumed that it will sell homes over a 5-year period from 2017/18, and pay over a levy but the decisions on replacing the stock are dependent on the actual requirements and regulations which are yet to be published. The assumption of replacing homes increases borrowing significantly and uses up the headroom available in the plan.

The current base HRA business plan shows that in order to accommodate in the shortest and earliest time possible, the assumption that rents will only rise by Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) post 2020 (rather than return to CPI+1%) and the profile of sales of high value voids, the Council would need to make real savings of 9.5% per annum on its housing management costs (in addition to savings required from stock reductions due to sales) for each of the next three years = 26% cut in total.

The point to note is that none of the options inherently generates the required level of savings on its own, so to achieve a balanced HRA business plan would require significant additional savings.

The evaluation of the options has involved a rigorous review of existing housing management budgets and identified those posts / costs that could be saved under each delivery vehicle without changing the service or maintenance standards. This means that finding additional savings to fill the gaps will need to look more closely at the value for money delivered by the assets.

As additional mitigating actions are required regardless of the option chosen, we would recommend that time is taken to get clarity on as many assumptions as can reasonably be achieved. These would include:

- the survey of the housing stock is undertaken soon to properly inform the business plan;
- the provisions of the Housing & Planning Act are monitored closely and reflected accordingly in the plan;
- committed development schemes are included in the base plan.

Basis of the Financial Modelling

A Council's HRA business plan details the income and expenditure cashflows that it believes will arise from owning and managing the housing stock and related assets over the next 30 years. The starting point for year 1 (2016/17) is the Council's agreed HRA budget and capital programme for the year. Assumptions about how these cashflows change over time are made on the basis of that which is known, for example, Government legislation to decrease rents by 1% per annum for the next 3 years or a recent stock condition survey; and otherwise, best endeavours based on historical trends or economic factors and estimated sales from Right to Buy. New policy (national and local government) provisions affecting Councils are also factored in based on what is known at the time of preparation. Plans for development of new homes are also included based on schemes that are likely to occur.

Defining a viable HRA business plan

Having prepared the business plan with the forecasts and assumptions, to be deemed financially viable the business plan will need to show that it can:

- Maintain a positive HRA reserve balance (and be above the local level set);
- Achieve the capital investment required without breaching the debt
- Repay its debts as they fall due
- Ideally, have sufficient resources to cover debt outstanding at year 30

Where the plan does not achieve these targets, the Council will need to take mitigating actions to bring it back into balance. The Council is limited in what it can do. For example, it cannot increase rents for social tenants above those set by reference to the Government's rent policy; it cannot charge any more for additional services to tenants and leaseholders than those services cost; it must maintain its homes to at least the Decent Homes Standard to ensure that they remain lettable; management/ restructuring of loans depends on the penalties for early redemption. Typically, if a Council is satisfied that its stock investment profile is accurate, then its day-to-day repairs ought to be minimised and therefore <u>housing management costs</u> and decisions over <u>development plans</u> are the only variables left within their management control.

Models Used In Evaluation

An explanation of how each option has been modelled is set out below.

Improved ALMO option

The financial models for this option include the same assumptions as base HRA business plan for all except the real savings of 9.5% assumed in years 2 – 4. For these we have substituted the profile of savings in salaries and other costs estimated to be achievable if the ALMO is retained but with restructured management and service delivery.

The savings generated by this proposal total £350k and would save 7 posts within BHP's staffing structure.

In-house Management Option

The financial models for this option assume the same assumptions as base HRA business plan for all except the real savings of 9.5% assumed in years 2 – 4. Instead, we have substituted the profile of savings in salaries and other costs that are assumed to be achievable if the ALMO no longer manages the Council's stock, and its staff transfer back to the Council. BHP owns a number of properties in its own right which it also manages and earns income from. No account of these will be made in the Housing Revenue Account. We are told that these may be dealt with by means of an investment company within the General Fund.

Details of the savings estimated total £1,000,000 and would save 17 full time equivalent posts, of which 12 are full posts, within BHP's staffing structure. These arise from senior management posts that would be duplicated in the Council, together with economies of scale arising from combining teams that carry out similar roles. Working together, it is assumed that some posts will be removed without a reduction in the level of service. Savings would also be made in governance costs as there will no longer be a board of management.

Joint Venture (JV) Partner Option

The financial models for this option assume the same assumptions as base HRA business plan for all except the real savings of 9.5% assumed in years 2 – 4. Instead, we have substituted in the profile of savings in salaries and other costs that are assumed can be made if the ALMO no longer manages the Council's stock as BHP but instead the management service would be provided by an alternative Registered Provider that already owns and manages its own housing stock. The partner organisation would both need and be expected to take on some of the BHP staff to deliver the service for Brent. Others may also transfer back to the Council to take on monitoring roles.

Details of the savings estimated total £800k and would save 29.75 full time equivalent posts of which 15 are full posts, within BHP's staffing structure. These arise from senior management posts that would be duplicated in the Council or the JV partner, together with economies of scale arising from combining teams that carry out similar roles. Working together, it is assumed that some posts will be removed without a reduction in the level of service. This option also assumes some savings for example in the infrastructure, for example IT costs, from combining housing management within the JV partner's existing systems.

Evaluating the Outcomes

The detailed financial evaluation undertaken clearly shows that there is no clear winner amongst the options. It also shows how there are factors beyond the Council's control that can have a significant impact, but that impact affects all options equally. The area within the Council's control is operational costs and hence the appraisal concentrates on that aspect. Initial, more obvious savings, have been identified but further more detailed financial work will be required once the Council has agreed the option the gives it the best chance of achieving a balanced HRA.

11. RECOMMENDED WAY FORWARD

Detailed consideration of the issues covered by this review is a rare event and as such an important first stage in charting the course to be taken by Brent's housing stock and the 12,000 households who live in the properties over the years to come.

The reason for staging the review, in this case the poor performance of BHP in several regards, principally in their management of the Wates contract, is less important than the landscape in which the chosen option will have to operate.

Each option has been optimised. In other words, we have not answered the question 'How well or poorly would option X perform exactly the role fulfilled by BHP now?' Instead we have answered the question 'What is the way of configuring option X that will best deliver the outcomes we require from the housing service?' So each option is a tweaked version of current operations. In essence this gives three different approaches:

- Reformed ALMO: Strong focus on the housing service.

- In-House: Strong focus on the housing service and the contribution that the housing business unit can make to the Council's wider strategic agenda.
- Joint Venture: Strong focus on the housing service with the added benefit of the expertise of the JV partner.

All the options inherit the same starting position, the same buildings, residents and staff (via TUPE). Each of these are significant issues in their own right. Looking across the piece we have reviewed each option against:

- Control
- Leadership
- Implementation
- Financials
- Provision of housing management services
- Asset Management and Development
- Contributes to improved outcomes for tenants
- Contributes to Council priorities

Amongst our key findings:

- No aspect of our evaluation categorically rules out any particular option. All options could work.
- It is in the financial evaluation that the most challenging findings arise
- Every option has a mixture of strengths and weaknesses, so picking the best option is a matter of judgement about the weighting given to issues and risks

There is a decision to be made about how the housing service fits in with the wider Council. The current position is clear, a standalone housing service, formed to provide a strong focus on housing management. This approach produced good outcomes for a long period, less good outcomes recently. Another approach is to view the housing service as an important sub-set within the wider Council and to seek to maximise the role played by the housing service in improving outcomes for 12,000 households across well-being, employment and other issues as well as core housing management. If you give weight to this approach, then the In-House Option is clearly the strongest option in this regard. This is not without risk. The biggest risk is that the dilution of focus on the housing service causes performance to worsen.

Turning next to the **financial issues**. LBB use a nationally recognised piece of software to run a 30-year model of the Housing Revenue Account. The model allows entry of a wide range of financial information and interprets how a change in a variable (for example stock numbers going up or down, inflation going up or down) affects the HRA over a 30-year time span. There are many variables that the Council cannot control such as the rate of inflation and government set rules about rent increases. There are only a small number of variables that the Council can control such as staffing costs (employ more or less staff) and levels of investment (in the existing stock and to build new stock).

The financial model sets out a very tough financial landscape. This is primarily due to three variables: The governments rent policy (currently CPI -1%); the interpretation applied of the likely impact of the sale of high value void properties (required under the Housing and Planning Act) and the profile of stock investment. The financial landscape is equally tough for all the options with savings required in the range of 20% to 55%. Even with these savings the HRA does not contain enough money to fund investment in new dwellings beyond 1-for-1 replacement of high value voids sold.

It is important to state that the financial model needs further work in two areas. Firstly, it is not yet known what regulations the government will set relating to the sale of high value voids and the use of the finds arising. LBB have made prudent assumptions about this and these assumptions have impacted on the financial model. Secondly LBB and BHP are currently relying on 6-year-old stock condition data and have relatively low confidence in the current data and the programming/costs of major work that flow from it. It is possible that a better long-term position may arise when these variables are refined. However, it is also the case that currently the model does not have headroom to fund development. It is clear that reducing operating costs will be of key importance to the creation of headroom to build new homes.

The view we have taken is that the financial model as it stands makes clear that the ability of an option to significantly reduce operating costs is a key factor. Because the model impacts all three options equally we do not see the uncertainty about aspects of the model as a reason to hold back a decision to choose an option. But we do recommend that as part of the process to approve the detailed business case for the chosen option the financial model is refined to address the areas outlined above.

It is the In-House option that, by a wide margin, best interacts with the requirement to make significant savings. The Council has a track record of successfully delivering large budget reductions whilst carefully managing the impact on services over recent years. These experiences will be directly relevant to, and can be directly applied to, an in-house option. In contrast BHP do not have a track record of making cost reductions over the same period. The Joint Venture will take time and money to implement and in any case becomes difficult, if not impossible, to engineer as the cost reduction requirement increases.

The financials are a major factor in reaching our recommendation.

Control is another important factor. The In-House option gives the highest level of strategic and operational control. The Reformed ALMO and Joint Venture options offer good levels of strategic control (though the ability to change course operates more slowly) and lower levels of operational control.

Leadership is another key consideration. Here the In-House option faces challenges. Of the three options, the In-House option finds it hardest to attract high quality housing expertise. However, the In-House service will have access to the Council's expertise in cost reduction and this is an important consideration. Consideration of the salary and positioning of the senior roles in the In-House Housing Business Unit (how they are described to candidates etc.) will be of key importance in maximising the quality of the field of candidates. Although both other options bring better leadership to bear their inherent weaknesses in relation to the financial aspects is more important.

Governance and **resident engagement** are important issues also. Irrespective of the option chosen the existing Board structure within the ALMO is likely to change due to the strong trend towards skills based Boards as opposed to Boards with members representing constituencies (e.g. Members and residents). The option which will have to be most imaginative in how it addresses Member and resident engagement is the In-House option. But we do not see the issue as being insurmountable. For example, a Members Scrutiny Committee with co-opted resident members may overcome the loss of the ALMO Board under the In-House option.

In conclusion, taking into account the challenging financial landscape we are recommending that the In-House option is chosen. Moreover, the In-House option offers the opportunity to re-position the housing service within the Council with the aim of improving a broad range of outcomes for 12,000 households. This is not the lift and shift of a self-contained housing service into the Council's structure. This is the engagement of the housing service with the Council's wider agendas in order to secure improved outcomes for residents and to enable the Council's expertise in cost reduction to be brought to bear. However, there are two areas for particular consideration within the detailed business case for the In-House option and these are refining the financial model to provide a greater degree of confidence regarding the accuracy of the long-term HRA forecast and the identification and mitigation of the key risks arising from the new position of the housing service within the Council's wider business.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Jargon Buster

Jargon	Long version	Meaning
ALMO	Arms Length Management Organisation	An organisation, set up a Council, to run a Council service. An ALMO is owned by the Council.
Asset Management	Asset Management	Work that is to do with buildings and land. In this case the Council's housing stock and housing land.
Back Office	Back Office	The range of services needed to run an organisation but which do not have face to face contact with customers. So things like, finance and human resources.
BHP	Brent Housing Partnership	The organisation currently managing the Council's housing stock. BHP is an ALMO.
BMG	BMG	A consultancy provider specialising in market research
Cabinet	Cabinet	The group of Councillors who hold the most important positions within the Council. This group has delegated power to make some decisions.
Campbell Tickell	Campbell Tickell	A consultancy provider specialising in housing.
CCG	Cross Council Group	The group of senior Council officers responsible for supervising the project.
Client	Client	As used in this report it means the organisation issuing a contract.
Corporate Management Team	Corporate Management Team	The group of the most senior Council officers, lead by the Chief Executive of the Council with the Council's Strategic Directors
Council's housing stock	See 'Stock'	
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government	The central government department responsible for managing local government.

Jargon	Long version	Meaning
Demographics	Demographics	Statistical data relating to the population and particular groups within it.
Digital Technology	Digital Technology	Computers, software, the internet, mobile phones, apps, storing data electronically rather than on paper.
Ethnicity	Ethnicity	Belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.
General Fund	General Fund	The account which manages income (grants and Council tax and other income) and spending (the cost of services such as adult social care and education) on services provided by the Council.
Governance	Governance	Corporate governance is the way an organisation polices itself. So the policies and rules and groups (such as a Board or
Grounds Maintenance	Grounds Maintenance	Looking after open spaces which may mean cutting the grass, maintaining a flower bed, or tree management for example.
Household	Household	Everyone who lives in a self-contained flat, maisonette or house. There will be lots of single person households as well as lots of households with two or more people living in the same property.
Housing Stock	Housing Stock	See 'stock'.
HRA	Housing Revenue Account	The account which manages income (grants and rent and service charges) and spending (the cost of maintaining the stock and the cost of delivering the housing service) on services to the stock owned by the Council.
In-house	In-house	As used in this report 'In-house' means a housing service delivered by a Council department (rather than by a separate organisation as it is currently)
JV	Joint Venture	As used in this report 'Joint Venture' means a new, independent organisation formed as a partnership between the Council and a housing association to

Jargon	Long version	Meaning
		deliver housing management services to the Council's housing stock.
Lettings	Lettings	The process to choose a household to move in to an empty Council property.
Levy	Levy	An amount of money, such as a tax, that you have to pay to a government or organisation. In this case this refers to the Council having to pay a sum of money to the government based on an assumption that the Council has sold a number of high value empty properties.
Major Works	Major Works	A name given to replacement works that happen not very often. For example kitchen, bathroom, boiler, roof replacement.
Management Agreement	Management Agreement	The main contract between the Council and BHP that sets out the terms of the relationship between the two.
Median	Median	The middle value in a range of values
NAIL	New Accommodation for Independent Living	A project to work with the care and housing markets to develop more local Extra Care and supported living accommodation.
ONS	Office for National Statistics	The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the executive office of the UK Statistics Authority, a non-ministerial department which reports directly to the UK Parliament. It is an organisation that collects lots of information and works out lots of statistics about the people and economy of the UK.
Procurement	Procurement	Buying something. In these terms it might mean reaching agreement with a contractor to deliver a specified amount of work for an agreed sum of money.
Public Realm	Public Realm	The open spaces owned by the Council including verges, pavements, open spaces on estates, public parks etc. Some public realm is looked after paid from the General Fund (Council tax payers) and some public realm is looked after paid from the

Jargon	Long version	Meaning
		Housing Revenue Account (tenants and leaseholders)6
Repairs and Maintenance	Repairs and Maintenance	Work to keep a building in working order. If you fix an existing tap that is a repair. If you replace a worn out tap with a similar tap that is a repair. If you replace a worn out tap with a much better tap that is an improvement.
Reformed ALMO	Reformed ALMO	As used in this report 'Reformed ALMO' means an ALMO that continues to exist but which is changed to make the service better and lower cost in ways described in the report.
RPs	Registered Providers	Housing associations who are registered with the regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency.
Service Charges	Service Charges	Charges to a tenant or leaseholder for a share of the cost of delivering services to the block and surrounding area. Leasehold service charges are defined by each lease.
Stakeholders	Stakeholders	People who have a direct interest in an issue. For example Council tenants and leaseholders and elected Councillors all have a stake in the subject of this report.
Stock	Stock	The blocks, flats, houses and estate land in which the Council's 12,000 tenants and leaseholders live.
TMO	Tenant Management Organisation	A organisation that is controlled by tenants that provides the housing management service to as defined group of Council owned properties
Voids	Voids	Empty Council properties

Appendix 2 - Resident workshop session – hopes and fears of residents

Option 1: Reformed BHP	
Hopes	
Services • that the use of digital systems will be advanced • there will be improved contract management • that services for vulnerable groups will be improved • that there will be more opportunities for residents	**Continuity** • that services that work well are supported • that communicating with residents via text and email is working well • good relationships between BHP officers and residents can continue
Organisational Culture • the quality and visibility of staff will improve • that there will be more accountability and transparency • an adaptable culture that is responsive to change will be created • the incorporation of feedback from residents will be standard practice	**Strategy and Leadership** • Setting objectives & implementing good reforms • Setting long term goals • LBB allows BHP to do its job
Fears	
Financial • there will be budget cuts • the assets of the HRA will be stripped	**Management** • will not be responsive to feedback • there will be falling staff morale • that there are no changes & no improvements
Resources • Insufficient resources will be allocated • that the issues with the services continue • the ASB issues remain unresolved	**LBB** • LBB's concerns in relation to BHP continue • that the interests LBB are serving are not clear • LBB’s long term strategy for social housing is unexplained

Option 2: LBB brings Housing Management In-House	
Hopes	
Financial • LBB can make efficiencies • • - that assets are protected	**Community** • there will be apprenticeships for young people • more one stop shops will be set-up • RTB is continued to be offered to residents
Services • LBB will be able to offer more services • LBB has the infrastructure and the experience to deliver • - there will be limited subcontracting	**Strategy and Leadership** • LBB can learn from the BHP experience • LBB will take on resident feedback
Fears	
Financial • the bringing in-house will result in privatisation of social housing	**Community** • that Residents Associations loose influence • that LBB fails to communicate or interact with residents (past experience pre BHP) • Residents simply become an LBB statistic • Non-progression: inability to learn from the past
Services • there is no improvement in services • that services are centralised • that digitisation results in inaccessible services	**LBB** • LBB will not take on resident feedback • LBB will not prioritise social housing as attention is given to other issues • LBB will be unable to understand resident's views and needs

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Option 3: In Partnership through a Joint Venture (JV)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Hopes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Financial
that services can be provided at a lower cost</td><td>Community
that residents will be involved in the decision making process</td></tr>
<tr><td>Services
that services can be improved</td><td>the Partner
can bring valuable expertise</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Fears</td></tr>
<tr><td>Financial
Residents will be affected by increased rents
there will be asset stripping
4</td><td>Community
there will be:
- limited visibility in the community
- will be little say for residents to have in making this decision
No resident engagement or influence
No security of tenancy
Limited Tenant Rights, no RTB</td></tr>
<tr><td>Services
Dilution in the quality of services will result
No investment in repairs and maintenance
Limited knowledge will be from non-local contractors
there will be no investment in stock
The Partner's autonomy will be questionable</td><td>the Partner
Brent residents will not be a priority to it
it will focus on finances and balance sheets
there will be no accountability
it will be non-responsive to resident feedback</td></tr>
</table>

Appendix 3 – Residents Opinion Research Report by BMG

See overleaf

Housing Management Review

Prepared for: Brent Council

Prepared by: BMG Research

Housing Management Review

Prepared for: Brent Council

Prepared by: BMG Research

Date: August 2016

Produced by BMG Research

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Brent Council is a stock-owning authority with over 8,000 tenanted and 4,000 leasehold units in its ownership. Since 2002 the management of the Council's housing stock has been delegated to an arms-length management organisation, Brent Housing Partnership (BHP).

Brent Council is undertaking a review of options for the provision of housing management services to its tenanted and leasehold homes in order to identify the best option to achieve the Council's housing and service objectives.

Three options for future housing management arrangements will be under consideration through the review:

- To continue with BHP on a reformed basis;
- To bring the service in-house and directly provide housing management services;
- To enter into a partnership with another organisation to provide these services – this could be partnership between the Council and a third party or BHP could be converted to a partnership organisation.

As part of this housing management review, Brent Council wish to engage with tenants and leaseholders to establish their views and how they value the current services provided and their priorities for future service provision. To gain the additional insight required, Brent Council commissioned BMG Research to further the work they have previously done for BHP[1] and undertake a quantitative opinion survey with residents along with focus groups and in-depth interviews.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Quantitative opinion survey

On 5th August – 18th August 2016, 600 telephone interviews were conducted with a random sample of BHP residents. Quotas were set in field by tenure (general needs / leaseholders) and for general needs tenants only by number of bedrooms, and area. This was to ensure the findings between tenure are as statistically robust as possible, whilst ensuring the results for general needs tenants are as representative as possible.

The table overleaf outlines the number of interviews conducted for each tenure and the resulting confidence intervals (at the 95% confidence level). Based on a population of 12,018, a sample of 600 is subject to a maximum confidence interval of ±3.9% at the 95% confidence level on an observed statistic of 50%. This means that we are 95% confident that if all residents

[1] Since April 2015, BMG Research have been commissioned by BHP to undertake a quarterly customer satisfaction telephone survey with 600 residents.

completed a survey a figure of 50% in this report would have actually be between 46.1% and 53.9%.

Where possible, the results in this report have been compared with previous waves of BHP's customer satisfaction survey. The confidence intervals for these waves are also shown below.

Table 1: Statistical robustness by tenure

Tenure	Stock size
General needs tenants	7950
Leaseholders	3,754
All residents	**12,018***

Survey	Tenure	Number of surveys	Confidence interval
Housing management review	General needs tenants	526	+/-4.13%
	Leaseholders	74	+/-11.28%
	All residents	**600**	**+/-3.9%**
Wave 1 2016/17	General needs tenants	420	+/-4.65%
	Leaseholders	150	+/-7.84%
	All residents	**600***	**+/-3.9%**
Wave 4 2015/16	General needs tenants	475	+/-4.36%
	Leaseholders	93	+/-10.04%
	All residents	**600***	**+/-3.9%**
Wave 3 2015/16	General needs tenants	425	+/-4.63%
	Leaseholders	130	+/-8.45%
	All residents	**601***	**+/-3.9%**
Wave 2 2015/16	General needs tenants	372	+/-4.96%
	Leaseholders	183	+/-7.07%
	All residents	**600***	**+/-3.9%**
Wave 1 2015/16	General needs tenants	366	+/-5%
	Leaseholders	189	+/-6.95%
	All residents	**600***	**+/-3.9%**

*Please note these totals also include BHP Homes residents which due to the low number of contacts available were not included in the housing management review sample

The questionnaire used was developed by Brent Council and BMG Research with the majority of questions having featured in the previous customer satisfaction surveys undertaken for BHP.

In order to ensure that the survey results reflect the views of residents, the overall results have been weighted by tenure.

1.2.2 *Qualitative activity*

For the qualitative activity five focus groups were conducted with five resident groups: Elderly tenants, tenants who live on an estate, leaesholders, tenants from the disabled forum, and tenants who do not live on an estate. Additionally in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with younger and vulnerable residents.

1.2.2.1 *Focus groups*

Using contacts provided by BHP, the recruitment of participants took place using a telephone recruitment method. During recruitment, the recruiter provided potential participants with an outline of the purpose of the discussion and an overview of the topics to be covered and a BMG contact in case they had any queries regarding the research. To reimburse attendance to the groups, participants were provided with £30 Love2shop as a thank you for their time.

Each group was led by an independent researcher from BMG Research and lasted approximately 90 minutes in length. Fieldwork took place on the 11th and 17th August 2016 at community venues located in Brent. At the beginning of each focus group, participants were informed about confidentiality and assured that responses would remain anonymous and any quotes used in report writing are not attributed back to named individuals. They were also told that the discussion would be audio-recorded (unless there were any objections) and the file would be stored securely at BMG Research and not made available to anyone outside of the company. Finally, participants were informed that BMG Research abide by the Market Research Society code of conduct which reiterated participant confidentiality. Where verbatim comments are included in this report they are reported in italics.

The table below outlines the date, time, location, type of respondent, and number of attendees for each of the focus groups conducted.

Table 2: Focus groups for qualitative activity

Group	Date	Type of respondent	Time	Location	Attendees
Group 1	Thursday 11th August	Elderly tenants	12pm – 1:30pm	Brent Civic Centre	7
Group 2	Thursday 11th August	Tenants who live on estate	3pm – 4:30pm	Brent Civic Centre	6
Group 3	Thursday 11th August	Leaseholders	6:30pm – 8pm	Brent Civic Centre	8
Group 4	Wednesday 17th August	Tenants with a disability	2pm – 3:30pm	Willesden Green Library	7
Group 5	Wednesday 17th August	Tenants who do not live on estate	6pm – 7:30pm	Willesden Green Library	8

1.2.3 Younger persons telephone in-depth interviews

Initially, 12 younger tenants were recruited to participant in an online focus group. These participants were recruited over the phone, with recruiters outlining the purpose of the discussion and an overview of the topics to be covered. To reimburse attendance an incentive of £20 Love2Shop vouchers were offered as a thank you for their time. All 12 participants received a joining email to take part in the online discussion followed by a confirmation email with their individual link to the platform a few days before the scheduled group. A day before the group telephone calls were made to ensure individuals were still able to take part in the discussion and on the day of the group, all participants were sent a text message as a polite reminder. Unfortunately, the online focus group had 0 attendees, therefore it was decided the best approach, given the timescales of the project, was to conduct in-depth telephone interviews using a slightly tailored topic guide from the focus groups.

In total, 6 in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with younger tenants with the discussions being led by an independent researcher from BMG Research.

1.2.4 Vulnerable persons telephone in-depth interviews

For the interviews with vulnerable residents, Brent Council and BHP provided a list of known residents who either:

- have or have had mental illness;
- have been victims of domestic violence or anti-social behaviour;
- have communication difficulties through physical disability or learning difficulties;
- who are, or have been alcoholics or who are, or have been subject to substance misuse.

Given the timescales of the project, in-depth telephone interviews were conducted using a slightly tailored topic guide from the focus groups. In total, 4 in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with vulnerable tenants with the discussions being led by an independent researcher from BMG Research.

1.3 Reporting conventions

The data used in this report is rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage. It is for this reason that, on occasions, tables or charts may add up to 99% or 101%. Where tables and graphics do not match exactly the text in the report this occurs due to the way in which figures are rounded up (or down) when responses are combined. Results that do differ in this way should not have a variance which is any larger that 1%.

Throughout the report the abbreviation 'cf.' is used as shorthand for 'compared to' when examining the data, especially among different sample groupings.

In addition to this written report, data tabulations have also been produced which present the data as a whole.

2 Summary

2.1 Overall perceptions

As is typically the case in resident satisfaction surveys, general needs tenants hold a more positive view of the overall service provided by BHP than leaseholders; 70% of general needs tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided compared to 53% of leaseholders. There have been limited changes in these overall perceptions since the wave 3 2015/16.

Within the qualitative findings residents express a mixture of views regarding the overall performance of BHP; some residents had negative experiences to share in relation to communication issues whilst some residents were generally satisfied with the service. This myriad of views is echoed in the word association exercise with the most prominent words / phrases associated with BHP being: hard to reach, approachable, listens, fair, friendly, distant, and behind the times.

2.2 Service priorities

The quantitative survey findings show that the top service priority for general needs tenants is the repairs and maintenance service, whilst for leaseholders this is split equally between the repairs and maintenance service and dealing with anti-social behaviour. This finding is reiterated in the qualitative findings, although participants in this aspect were much more likely to state listening to views and acting upon them as a service priority than as indicated in the quantitative survey.

2.3 Service improvements

The quantitative survey findings show that the services indicated by residents in the most need of improvements are the repairs and maintenance service, dealing with anti-social behaviour, and the quality of homes, although the later is most likely to be related to the repairs and maintenance service. Notably, with a mean score variation on all services rated between 5.31 and 4.43 the findings indicate that all aspects are in need of some improvements.

Similar service areas for improvements were indicated in the qualitative activity with the most frequently cited service aspects for improvements being the repairs and maintenance service and the quality of home.

2.4 Repairs and maintenance service

The quantitative survey finds that dissatisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service appears to be driven either by residents stating that they have outstanding repair work needed or when having had repair work carried out it has taken multiple attempts to get the repair fixed, there has been poor communication surrounding the repair or the quality of work has been poor. Improvements stated within the quantitative survey by residents echo this with the majority suggesting improvements to either the ease of reporting a repair, the quality of the repair work, or keeping residents informed on the progress of a repair.

Findings from the qualitative activity reiterate that dissatisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service is born out of repairs needing multiple attempts before they are fixed and frustration with the lack of communication about the progress of a repair when this occurs. Some suggest there is also a lack of communication within BHP about what repair work is needed resulting in incorrect tradespersons turning up or tradespersons with incorrect materials resulting in multiple visits.

2.5 Quality of home

As found with most resident satisfaction surveys, general needs and leaseholders indicate similar levels of satisfaction with the quality of their home (65% - 70%). Improvements suggested by residents were very specific to the issues found within each individuals home. Although, the majority of participants in the elderly group stated that they needed adaptations to their properties however were unsure how, or were unable, to get these.

2.6 Keeping residents informed

The majority of residents indicate that BHP do not keep residents informed with residents stating they receive very little communication about what is going on in their area, with this level of communication deteriorating over recent years. Residents feel that the newsletter is not an effective form of communication as it is not sent frequently enough and the information provided is too general, suggesting it should be sent monthly and update residents on activities or things taking place in the area they live. Leaseholders also state that there should be a tailored newsletter for them.

The majority of residents also indicate frustration at having never received communications from their housing officer, suggesting that more contact in the future is needed which could act as a platform to convey any issues.

2.7 Involving residents and acting upon their views

The quantitative findings show that less than half of residents are satisfied that BHP listen to views and act upon them (48%), with satisfaction dropping to 38% for leaseholders. A similar proportion indicate satisfaction with the opportunities for resident involvement activities provided by BHP. Within the quantitative survey residents suggest there needs to either be more frequent resident meetings or more information about when the meetings take place, whilst as found elsewhere, others suggest an improvement to communication from housing officers.

The qualitative findings support what is found in the quantitative findings with many suggesting that they do not feel involved and listened to as residents. Residents feel it is important to be involved in decisions regarding their homes and some have shown willingness to being involved in meetings however have received limited communication from BHP about these. Residents were asked how they would like to be more involved with decisions made regarding their home or area. A number of suggestions were made which are summarised as:

- Being part of a community or resident group
- Having regular meetings which are easily accessible for residents

- Being a member of or having some involvement in the BHP board
- Bringing back community forums

2.8 Customer service

Within the qualitative activity there was a mixture of views across the groups of whether they had received good or poor customer service. Many residents were able to provide examples of good customer service that they have received from BHP when answering their queries, whilst those who felt they had received poor customer service were generally referring to the amount of time they spend trying to get through to someone on the phone and chasing individuals about their queries.

Improvements suggested related to BHP keeping a log of incoming calls so they can be referred back to when / if they call back to avoid further delays. Some also recommended that BHP assigns one point of contact to each query that is raised by residents to avoid being put through to several different contacts.

2.9 Estate services

Around six in ten residents state that they are satisfied with the grounds maintenance service (62%), the overall estate service provided by BHP (58%), and the cleaning of internal (58%) and external communal areas (58%). In all instances general needs tenants are significantly more satisfied than leaseholders. Trend analysis shows there has been a recent decline in satisfaction with the grounds maintenance and estate service. Improvements suggested within the quantitative survey for the grounds maintenance service related to the frequency of when the grass is cut and the clearing up of grass afterwards, whilst for the cleaning service comments related to an improvement to either the quality or frequency of cleaning.

The qualitative activity found that residents hold negative perceptions of the current estate services provided. In relation to the communal areas, most participants are dissatisfied with the cleaning service provided and suggest this does not meet their needs, others stated dissatisfaction with a range of issues including draining problems outside of blocks, overflowing dustbins and concerns with the conditions of stairways and lifts. Residents also suggest they see very little maintenance being carried out or the maintenance undertaken is not completed to a satisfactory level.

2.10 Dealing with anti-social behaviour

Around half (51%) of residents who state that they have reported ASB to BHP in the last 12 months were dissatisfied with the way BHP handled the case, whilst seven in ten were dissatisfied with the final outcome of this complaint. For those who reported ASB, suggestions were made that BHP need to improve the support / helpfulness / advice provided by officers during cases. Thinking more generally, a high proportion of comments from residents in the quantitative survey in relation to what improvements need to be made related to the prevention of ASB occurring by having a higher visible presence of either BHP officers or police.

Similar findings were found in the qualitative activity with residents who had reported ASB stating it is a long and drawn out process with the general feeling being that residents are not informed of the progress of their complaints and that ASB needs to be taken more seriously.

2.11 Advice and support

Where residents stated improvements in the quantitative survey in relation to advice and support it was in relation to an improvement in the communication and information provided by BHP about the advice and support available. Indeed, within the qualitative activity residents could only recall information about support being on the back of an annual letter about rent or Council tax. One participant stated that BHP has a lot of services available for residents however they need to do more to promote and raise awareness of these facilities.

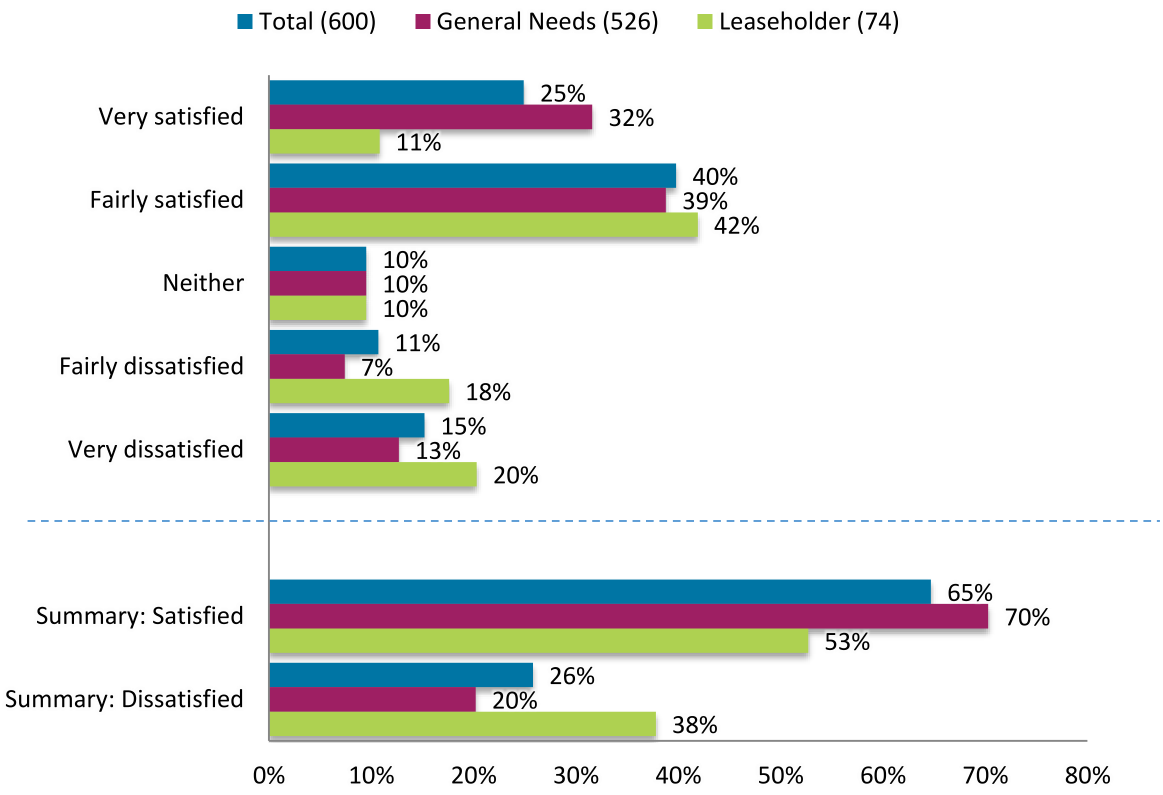
Thinking about specific support needed. Elderly residents suggest BHP need to provide more support by making adaptations to their home and supporting them so they can undertake their daily activities. Whilst others suggest that BHP should offer regular skills workshops or employment workshops around apprenticeships for young people.

3 Overall perceptions

3.1 Quantitative opinion survey

For the quantitative survey, all respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the service provided by BHP, as indicated below, approaching two thirds of residents (65%) indicate some level of satisfaction with the service provided by BHP, whilst by contrast, around one in four indicate some degree of dissatisfaction. Analysis by tenure shows, as is typically the case in resident satisfaction surveys, leaseholders are significantly less satisfied (70% cf. 53%) and significantly more dissatisfied (38% cf. 20%) with the overall service provided than general needs tenants.

Figure 1: Q1. Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Brent Housing Partnership?

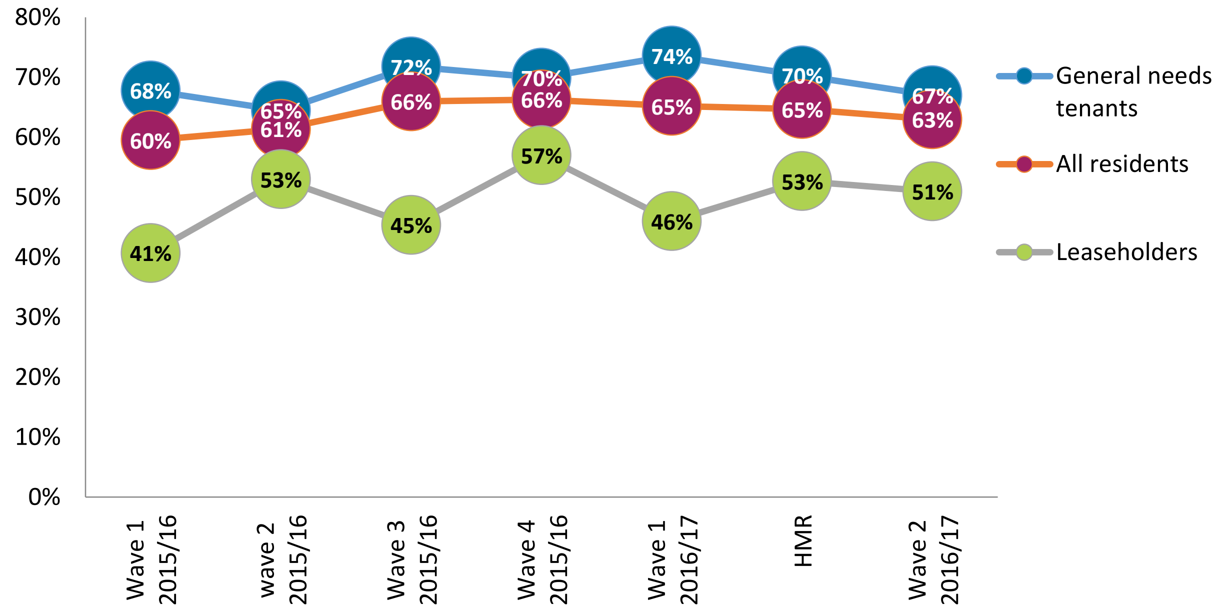


Unweighted base in parentheses

3.1.1 *Trend analysis*

The chart below illustrates the levels of satisfaction indicated by all residents, general needs tenants, and leaseholders, in wave 1 – 4 2015/16, wave 1 2016/17 and this wave of the customer satisfaction survey. For all residents there is an indication that satisfaction levels increased between wave 1 2015/16 and wave 3 2015/16 and then has remained similar since that period, this is mainly due to the levels of satisfaction indicated by general needs tenants between wave 2 and wave 3 2015/16 increasingly significantly. For leaseholders the only significant difference found in satisfaction levels is between wave 1 and wave 2 2015/16, it should also be noted that there is a lot more variation in the leaseholder results due to the low sample sizes.

Figure 2: Satisfaction with the overall service provided by fieldwork period



Unweighted sample base shown in introduction

3.2 Qualitative activity

Residents have mixed views on the overall service provided by BHP, with some having had negative experiences and others being generally satisfied with the service.

> *"The service is good. I find them okay. They're doing their best."* Resident from disability forum

> *"We don't have much debris in the street. Generally if I call in for something, then within a few days or normal within a day they can come. They come and fix whatever it is that I need fixed."* Resident from disability forum

> *"I moved from a housing association to a Brent property and it was a massive difference, a massive improvement. I don't know, I've never had any of those issues. Just from dealing with the housing association I was with, and going to Brent Council BHP, it was much better."* Resident not living on estate

Other residents feel there are both positive and negative aspects of the service provided by BHP, with some highlighting that it depends on the individual you speak to when you phone up about an issue. A few residents emphasized their frustration of having to explain their situation repeatedly to different members of staff until you are speaking to the relevant department. This also occurs when the issue takes a long time to be resolved and so residents have to pursue BHP to take action.

> *"The thing I find about BHP, is BHP has good points and bad points, and the positives, for me, is once you have somebody who has dealt with you before, at least you have a point of contact. I find sometimes there's no consistency, so you may get somebody who'll say, 'I'll deal with this,' and it'll get done, sometimes you'll speak with somebody and they don't know what's going on. There's repetition, it's a case of why are you asking me for this information over and over again?"* Resident not living on estate

Similarly, one vulnerable resident indicated frustration at the lack of continuity within teams. In this circumstance the person who she had been dealing with, for whom she was very complimentary of, had gone on annual leave and when she called to find out some information about her situation it took multiple calls to multiple officers in the team to get an update.

> *"Nothing really happened until she got back despite my situation being critical. In the 3 weeks I managed to speak to many people from the same ASB team but no one knew what was going on. It was a domestic violence situation. They know they have a vulnerable person they are dealing with. Don't tell them you're going to do something, and say we'll ring tomorrow and give you an update cause in my position I'm sitting there waiting for an update. If you say you're going to give an update at least a quick email to say really sorry we can't update you but we'll be calling you another day.The teams don't seem to work well together. When you'll dealing with a vulnerable person there should be something in place to say okay I'm going on leave and this is the situation can you keep an eye for anything that comes in regarding her."* Vulnerable resident

Some residents only had negative experiences to share about BHP. Some residents drew attention to the lack of communication; when they report an issue to BHP they are not informed of progress and at times no action is taken. A few estate residents have complaints about how often the grass gets cut and how often the bins get emptied. One resident had to contact BHP because the grass was so long it reached their knee and they had to send pictures of the rubbish bin overflowing before BHP would come and empty it.

> *"When they come to empty the food bin, they leave it open and the fox will come and turn it over and the next morning there will be food scattered everywhere. With the big bins, when it's overflowing, when they come and empty them, they leave what is on the ground, they don't put the bins back in the chute. They leave what is in the chute and the ground and leave the bin blocking our backdoor."* Resident from disability forum

> *"Not good. If the disabled shower breaks down you have to wait two weeks to get it repaired. Then the person they send can't repair it. Right now me and Brent have got problems. This place I live in, I moved there about nine years ago. From nine years ago until now, they still can't get anything right. Upstairs she got floorboards down. When you've got five children upstairs and they're banging on the floor you can't sleep, then your head starts hurting. Brent haven't done anything about it."* Resident from disability forum

Residents were handed a sheet with various words and phrases (see Appendix A) and were asked to circle the ones they would use to describe BHP. Those chosen are shown below; the larger the word the more frequently a word has been selected by participants.

Old-fashioned: *"They're not moving with modern times. They're not dealing with the things and they're still backwards with all the relevant things that need to be done. They don't use their computers. 'Oh, we've got no notes,' but they've got their computers. Are they just jotting it on a piece of paper? I believe they're still old fashioned and hard to reach."* Resident living on an estate

Hard to reach: "*Every time I phone, I have to phone up, go through different options, and there's nobody on the line, or a person who I can't speak to, or they get back to you."* Leaseholder

Behind the times: "*A lot of the problems we have could be solved via technology. If they're meant to be doing a grounds maintenance at a certain month of the year, whoever's doing it should be taking photos on a smartphone online app, sending it to the manager of that block. I've got a service, I've been paid to do this job, I've done it. Why are residents having to phone up to say, 'The job hasn't been done'? That's down to tendering of the subcontracts. It seems to be really poorly tended. They've got old-fashioned ways of managing contractors. It doesn't have to be high cost. It can be built into the contract. It would probably reduce the cost for us, and we'd get better service."* Leaseholder

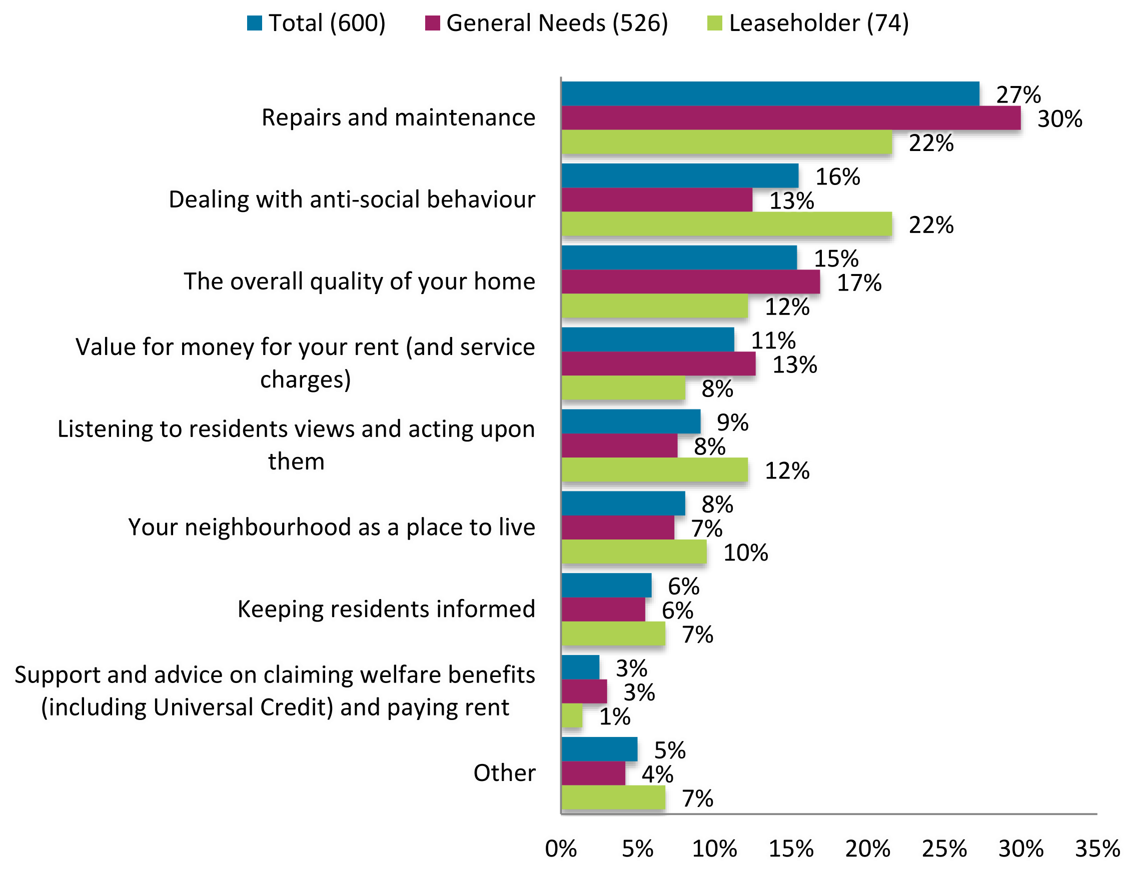
Residents did not volunteer much of an explanation with regard to positive descriptions, for example fair, helpful, approachable, and valued. This is most likely to be because they are happy with the service and haven't had a bad experience; hence they do not feel the need to explain why they feel this way.

4 Service priorities

4.1 Quantitative opinion survey

All quantitative survey respondents were asked to select, out of a list eight service aspects, which they considered to be their top service priority. As illustrated below, with 30% selecting it as their top service priority, the priority for general needs tenants is the repairs and maintenance service, whilst for leaseholders this is split equally between the repairs and maintenance service (22%) and dealing with anti-social behaviour (22%). Interestingly, the repairs and maintenance service has previously been the stand alone service priority for both tenants and leaseholders, whilst now dealing with anti-social behaviour is significantly more likely to be mentioned by a leaseholders than a general needs tenant as their top service priority. Dealing with anti-social behaviour is also significantly more likely to be the top service priority for residents who live on an estate compared to residents who do not (19% cf. 5%).

Figure 3: Q22. I will now read out a list of services, can you please tell me which of the following you consider to be your top service priority?



Unweighted base in parentheses

4.2 Qualitative activity

Residents were provided with a list of services that BHP provide (see Appendix B) and were asked to select which one they consider to be their top service priority. As found with the quantitative findings, the most frequently cited service priority was repairs and maintenance, followed by listening to residents' views and acting upon them.

> *"Ground maintenance such as cutting the grass and all that. Especially for those of us who are elderly or live alone, we need the grass cut."* Resident from disability forum

> *"They've had scaffolding up since February, there is no work done. They asked about the colour of the door, I can tell you how many times they said they'd be back again. Up to now there is no door change. We didn't use the garden, the grass needs to be cut but can't be because of the scaffolding."* Resident living on an estate

> *"I've ticked, 'Listen to the residents and act upon what they're saying.' That would cure a lot of the other problems if they did that."* Resident from disability forum

Some residents selected the overall quality of their home or value for money for your rent (and service charges) as their top priority. A few residents regard keeping residents informed, dealing with anti-social behaviour, or their neighbourhood as a place to live as their main priority. Notably, vulnerable residents were more likely to state dealing with anti-social behaviour as their service priority.

> *"You've got people who are tenants, renting, decide to fiddle with a screwdriver on the intercom system, and the intercom system breaks down. Then you get a service charge. They might throw junk on the lawn. There's so much anti-social behaviour damaging the property, throwing rubbish on the floor, all these types of things. Even if the cleaner comes and cleans it nicely, within two days somebody has chucked apples on there, or some teenager's milkshake has thrown it there."* Leaseholder

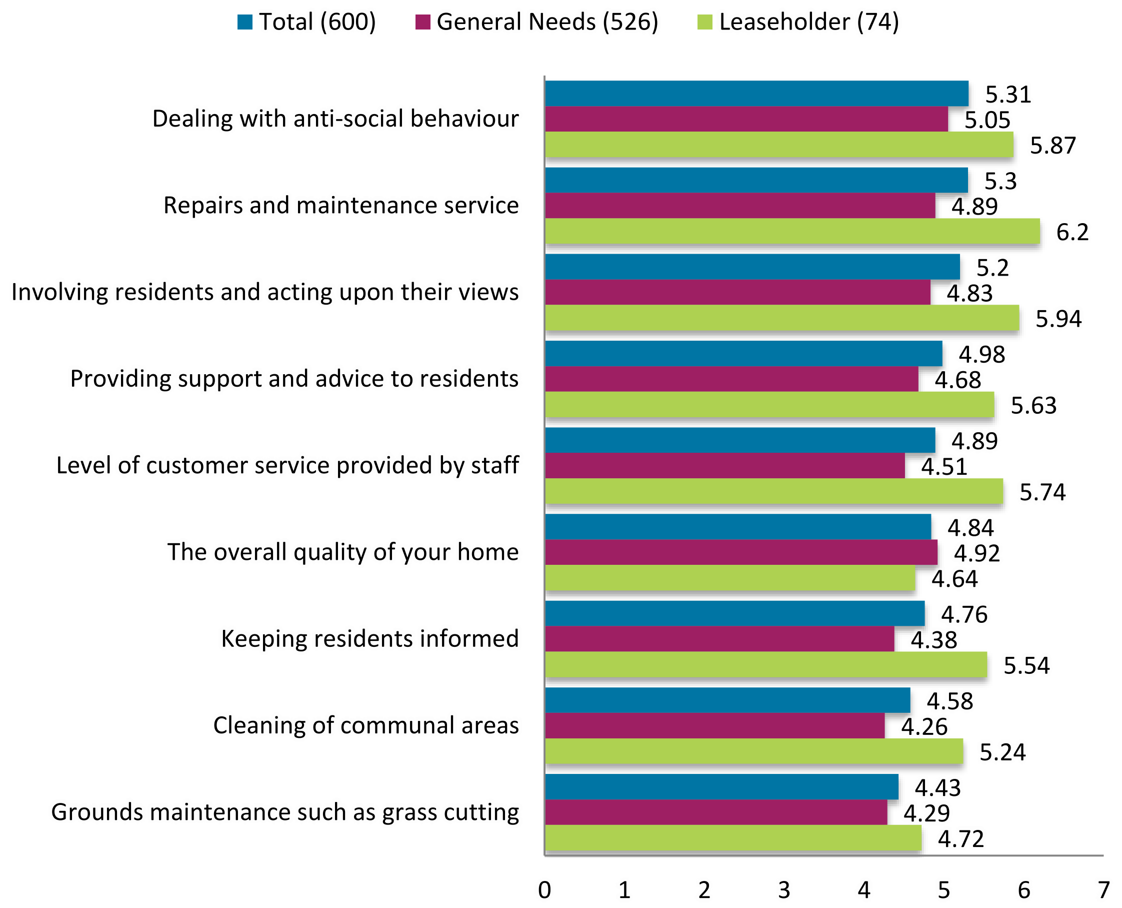
5 Service improvements

5.1 Quantitative opinion survey

In the quantitative survey respondents were provided with a list of nine different service areas and were asked to rate, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is no improvement needed and 10 is considerable improvement needed, to what extent those service areas need improving. The mean scores, after removing the non-applicable responses, for each aspect are shown below. These findings show that both leaseholders and general needs tenants indicate that the way BHP deal with anti-social behaviour, the repairs and maintenance service and the way BHP involve residents and act upon their views, are the service areas in most need of improvements. Although given the limited variation in the scores for all aspects there is an indication that all aspects are in need of improvements to some degree.

Interestingly, leaseholders appear to be more critical in terms of the level of improvement needed for each service aspect compared to general needs tenants.

Figure 4: QS1. Can you please indicate to what extent you feel this service area needs improving?... Mean valid scores

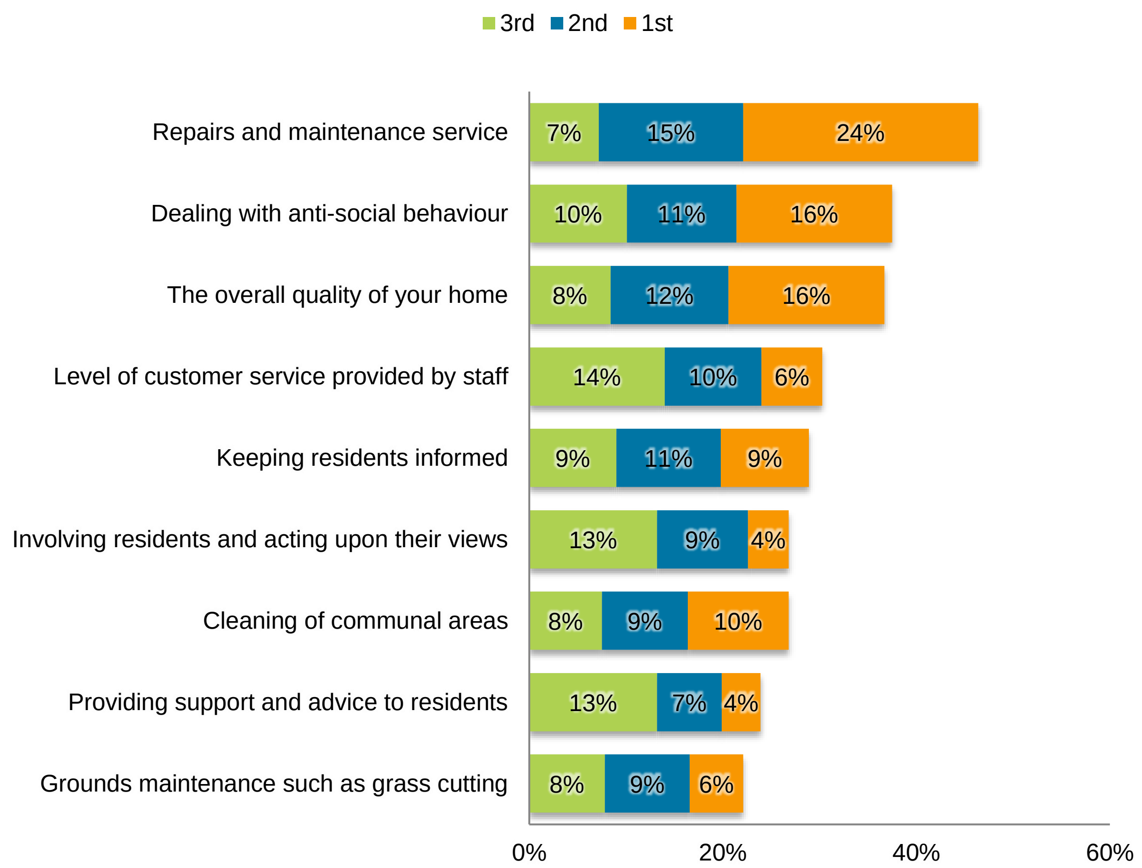


Unweighted base in parentheses

Respondents were then provided with the three service aspects from the previous question which they gave highest score to, and were asked to rank their top three priorities for improvements in order of which service needs the most improvement. Please note if more than three aspects had equally high scores all those service aspects were provided to respondents so they could rank their top three out of the list provided.

As indicated below, with almost one in four stating that it to be the top priority for improvement (24%), and almost half indicating it to be a priority for improvement (46%), the repairs and maintenance service is the aspect residents indicate is in the most need of improvement, this is followed by dealing with anti-social behaviour and the overall quality of the home.

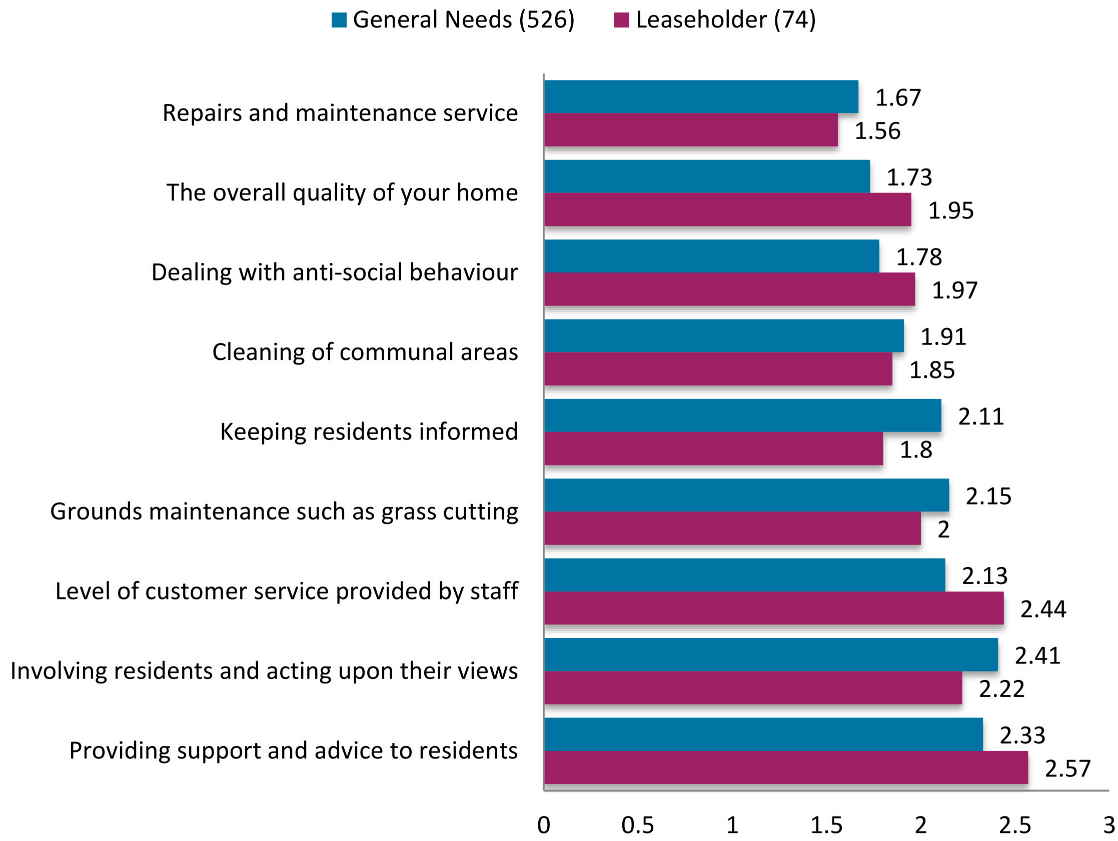
Figure 5: Can you now please rank, your top three priorities for improvements, in order of which service you feel needs the most improvement? All residents



Unweighted base = 600

Looking at the mean scores for the ranking of service improvements by tenure shows that the order of prioritization for service improvements is slightly different for leaseholders with keeping residents informed and the cleaning of communal areas featuring higher in the order than general needs tenants. Please note as a score of 1 was given to the first priority, 2 to the second priority, and 3 to the third priority, the lower the mean score the higher of a priority for improvement it is.

Figure 6: Can you now please rank, your top three priorities for improvements, in order of which service you feel needs the most improvement? Mean score



5.2 Qualitative activity

Residents were subsequently asked to rank BHP services in terms of which services they believe need the most improvement. Overall quality of their home and repairs and maintenance were most frequently cited as needing the most improvement. A few residents also highlighted the following service areas as needing the most improvement:

- Keeping residents informed
- Grounds maintenance such as grass cutting
- Cleaning of communal areas
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour
- Providing support and advice to residents

A couple of residents highlighted the level of customer service provided by staff, and involving residents and acting upon their views as needing the most improvement.

Residents were asked to consider if there are any other services not currently provided that they would value being provided, for example, employment advice, health care advice, and IT training. Residents living on an estate did not seem keen on this idea, branding it unnecessary. One resident highlights that Brent Council provides these types of service anyway. However, retired residents seems keen on the idea of providing such services, claiming they would access them. They feel that health care advice and first aid training are important in case they have an accident. Retired residents were also enthusiastic about IT training;

> *"It is necessary now. Everything you do now you do online."* Resident from disability forum

A few residents are aware that Brent Council offer IT training and one resident's children have taken part in skills workshops provided by BHP which they have been able to put on their CV which has subsequently helped them get into college and get a job. However, they explained that BHP are having the funding stopped for that. They suggested that BHP should offer young people apprenticeships or skills training for CV enhancement.

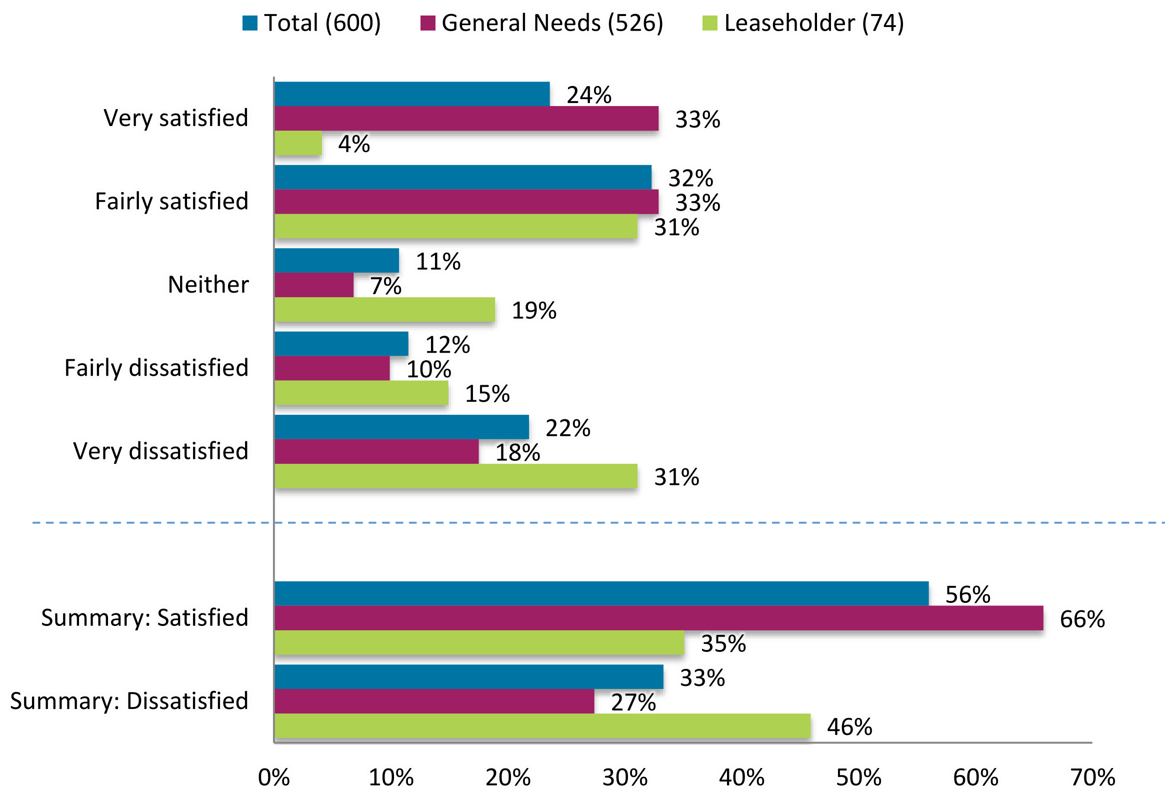
6 Repairs and maintenance

6.1 Quantitative opinion survey

6.1.1 General satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service

Respondents in the quantitative survey were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the repairs and maintenance service. Overall, just over half of residents (56%) are satisfied with the way BHP deals with repairs and maintenance with one in four very satisfied (24%). As might be expected due to the differing level of responsive repairs service received, general needs tenants are significantly more satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service than leaseholders (66%).

Figure 7: Q6. Generally, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Brent Housing Partnership deals with repairs and maintenance?

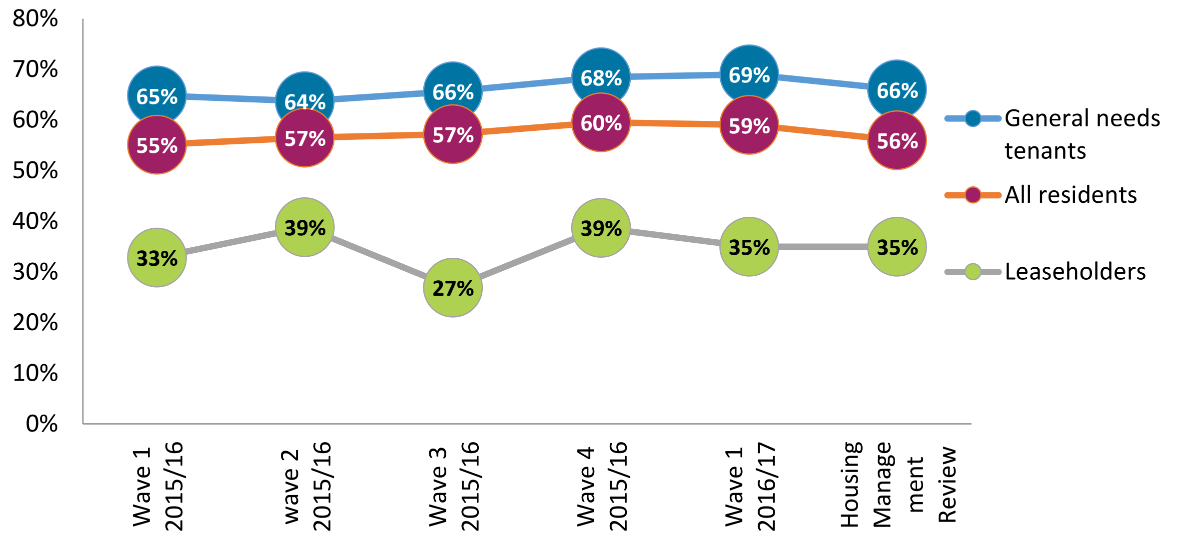


Unweighted base in parentheses

6.1.1.1 *Trend analysis*

The trend analysis illustrated below shows that the levels of satisfaction indicated in this wave of data collection are similar to the levels of satisfaction indicated by residents previously.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service by fieldwork period

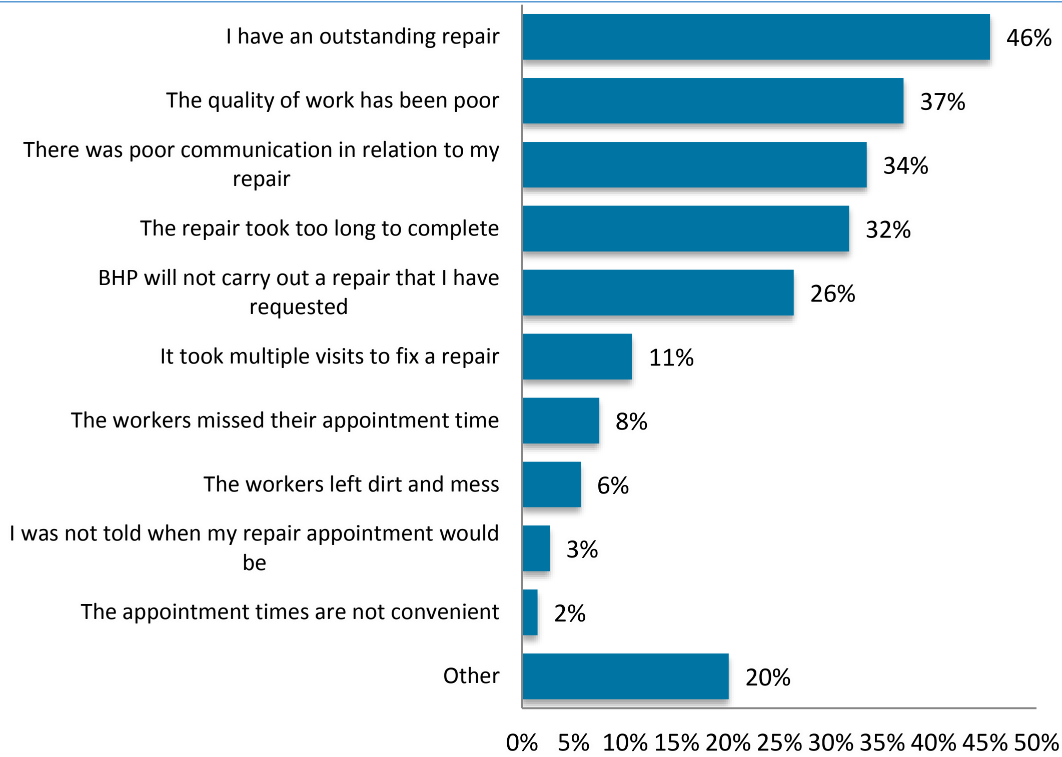


Sample bases in introduction

6.1.1.2 *Reasons for dissatisfaction*

All respondents who were dissatisfied with the repairs and maintenance service were asked to indicate why. These responses were coded into a code frame by interviewers, with the chance to write in an other option if the reason was not found in the code frame. As illustrated overleaf, the most prominent reason for dissatisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service is still having an outstanding repair, with approaching half of those dissatisfied stating this is the reason why (46%). This has been the most prominent response indicated by residents in all previous waves of fieldwork. Around four in ten residents are dissatisfied as they feel the quality of work has been poor (37%), which indicates a clear area for improvement. Additionally further areas for improvements are indicated by a third of residents stating they are dissatisfied as there has either been poor communication or they feel the repair has taken too long to complete; keeping residents informed about the progress of a repair and improving the awareness of how long each repair should take to be completed should improve these residents opinions of the repairs and maintenance service.

Figure 9: Q7. Why are you dissatisfied with the repairs and maintenance service?

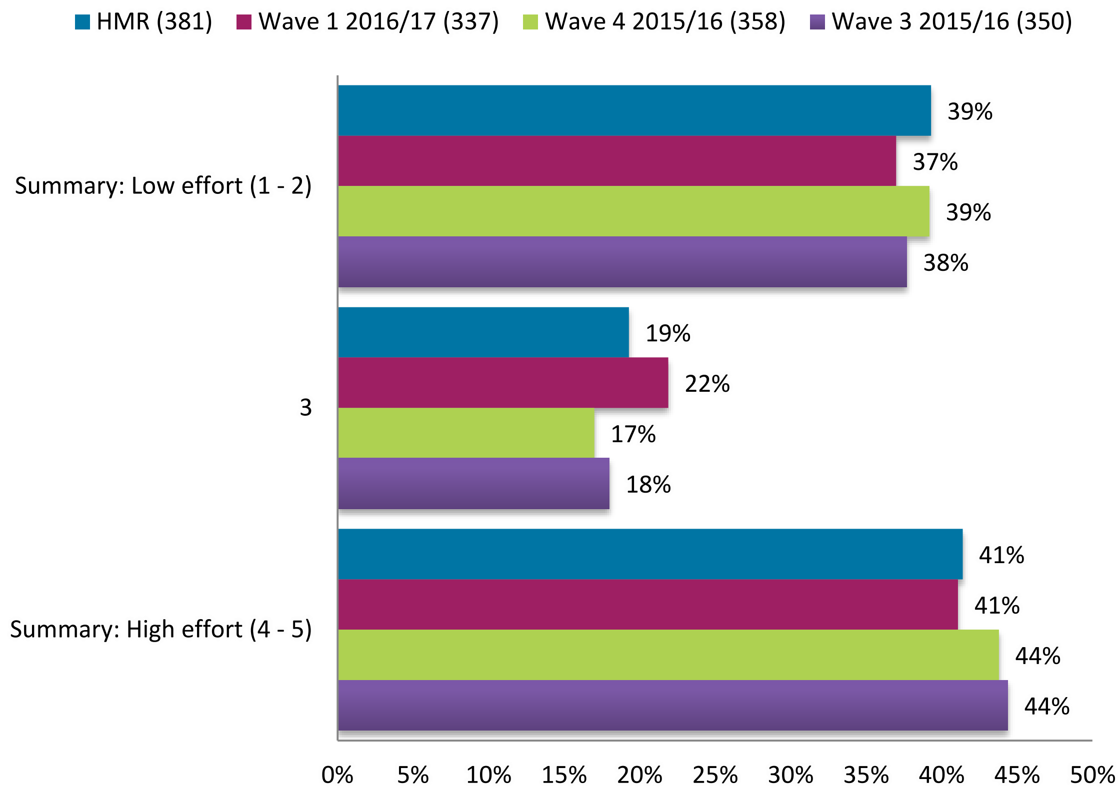


Unweighted base = 178

6.1.2 Customer effort of getting a repair completed

All respondents who indicated that they reported a repair to BHP in the last 6 months were asked to indicate how much effort they personally had to make to get the repair completed. As shown overleaf, a large proportion of residents (41%) who reported a repair in the last 6 months indicate that they had to personally make a high amount of effort to get the repair completed, this is similar to previous findings. Please note this question was added to the customer satisfaction survey in wave 3 2015/16.

Figure 10: Q9. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very low effort and 5 being very high effort, how much effort did you personally have to make to get this repair completed?



Unweighted base in parentheses

Those respondents who stated it took a high amount of effort were then asked to explain why. The majority of responses relate to frustration in having to contact BHP multiple times to get the repair fixed:

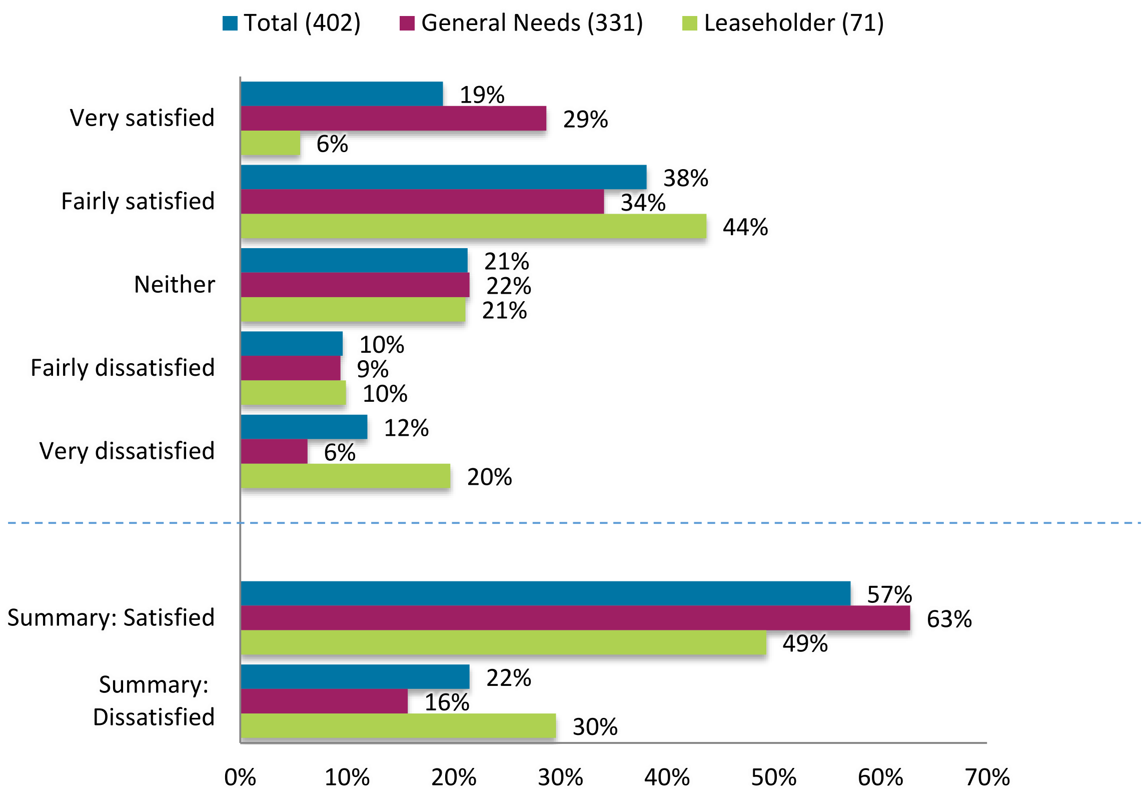
> *"I called them three or four times; each time I called, someone had to come out. The whole process took about six weeks, when it shouldn't have taken that long. I was living with mice; they should have got to the heart of the problem straight away."*

> *"I have to keep phoning them up again and again, but nothing has been done about it. They keep saying every week either there is no contractor or the door is being ordered and has not arrived."*

6.1.3 Communal repairs

Respondents who live on an estate were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are that communal repairs to the block / estate are being carried out. Approaching six in ten estate residents are satisfied that block / estate repairs are being carried out (27%), whilst one in five indicate some degree of dissatisfaction. General needs tenants are significantly more satisfied and significantly less dissatisfied than leaseholders.

Figure 11: Q19. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that repairs in the communal areas of your block / estate are being carried out?

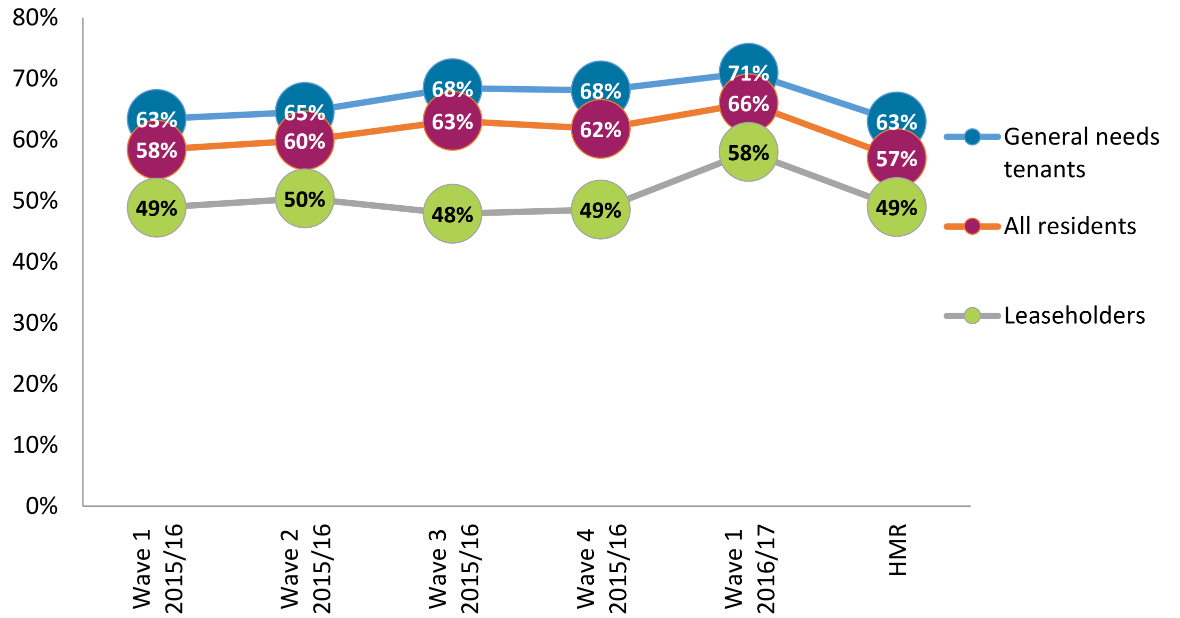


Unweighted base in parentheses

6.1.3.1 Trend analysis

As illustrated overleaf, there have been significant decreases in the level of satisfaction indicated by residents when compared to the level of satisfaction indicated in wave 1 2016/17, although it should be noted the levels of satisfaction indicated in this wave are in line with those indicated in wave 1 & 2 2015/16.

Figure 12: Satisfaction that communal repairs are carried out by fieldwork period



Unweighted sample basses found in introduction

6.1.4 *Improvements stated in the quantitative opinion survey*

All respondents who stated the repairs and maintenance service as a priority for improvement were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback as to what needs to be improved. As found previously, the majority of responses relate to an improvement in communication in terms of the ease of reporting a repair and keeping residents informed on the progress of a repair:

"We should not have to go through the long-winded procedure. When someone does come, I don't hear from them and then chase them for a long time. When I finally contact them, they say that nothing can be done about the repair. They sent out four different people, all saying they were the main people; however, when chasing them up, I realise they are not. They should be more organised and get one person to sort out everything I order, for them to keep up-to-date with what is occurring."

"When I called them, they came out and checked, then I had no reply - nothing - not even a phone call or letter. When I called back, they told me that it was really bad and that I need to fix it myself. They should have told me that during the first visit, instead of waiting for me to contact them again."

Some respondents also mention an improvement to the quality of the repair work:

"Get the job done. Some of the jobs are not finished yet; they have the products but not the right people to do the job. When they do get people, they are cheap and do a rubbish job, which results in them completing the job again."

"I feel they're using cheap labour and the job is not being done properly. I feel they don't know how to do their job. It has to stop; they should hire professionals. These are not professional, because if they were, my job would have been done by now; I'm having to make all the calls, as no one else gets back to me."

6.2 Qualitative activity

For those participants who had a repair in the last 12 months, most feel that it is relatively easy to report the repair, however, the subsequent action taken and being kept informed is in some cases less than satisfactory. A few residents emphasised the inconvenience of being given such a broad timeframe in which the repair will be carried out, meaning they have to stay at home for most of the day.

"Some people who work for them have this mentality that people who have social housing don't work. They will say, 'We'll give you an appointment between 8:00 and 12:00.' Do I tell my boss I'll be in after that time? I lose half a day. They need to give you allotted times. Even if it's a two hour slot but 8:00 to 12:00, it's crazy. Nobody turns up at 8:00, it's bordering 12:00 and then they turn up." Resident living on an estate

Residents reported mixed experiences on the length of time it takes for a repair to be completed, from within 24 hours to around 6 months, and others explaining they are still waiting for their issue to be resolved.

"If the disabled shower breaks down you have to wait two weeks to get it repaired. Then the person they send can't repair it." Resident from disability forum

"For me they came and measured the kitchen and bathroom. They said they would do double-glazing for the windows. They said it would take three months. They took one day to do the kitchen and one day to the bathroom." Resident from disability forum

A few residents stressed their dissatisfaction with the quality of the work carried out. One resident explained that when their washing machine is on water fills their sink. BHP came to fix it and claimed the problem had been solved, however, water continues to fill the sink whenever they use the washing machine.

"They are doing the repairs but they don't do them properly. We have to call them back. So, they need to do proper work." Resident not living on an estate

Following this some participants suggest that when they report a repair which takes a long time to complete they are then not kept informed about the progress of the repairs from BHP.

"The man came and did my toilet; let me know I need another plumber and then a chippy to do the boxing, housing part. I haven't heard a damn thing". Resident living on estate

"I had a plumber who said the drain pipe was old. I got a new washing machine, and a new pipe but the drain was still blocked. It's communal, it's conduit pipes where we live. I called them up and nobody comes because the pipe runs from a box but they have to rip out the whole kitchen in order to do the job. The thing is they don't want to do the job. They'll just come with a plunger." Resident living on estate

Two of younger residents interviewed were particularly dissatisfied with the repairs and maintenance service provided by BHP, particularly the length of time it has taken for a member of BHP to contact them and their repair still being unresolved. One of them provided an example a flooding incident they contacted BHP about and express they are frustrated that nothing has been done about it.

"I logged in a number of repairs, had people come in to my house and do inspections but nothing has been done. I had a flood about 2 months ago, they were supposed to paint the cupboards in the bathroom, no-one has come back to do anything about this. They have taken pictures but done nothing. I have panels and cupboards in the bathroom, it started from the roof and the damp has travelled all the way down, it's disgusting. I don't understand why they are taken so long, they patched it up temporarily, turned my electrics off for a while and then turned it back on. That is it." Younger resident

When residents were asked how well the workers communicated with them (including their attitude), there were some differences in response.

"They don't speak English, darling. They don't speak English. Their boss does, but he is also from abroad. They are very nice. They are very good." Resident from disability forum

"The work men when they come in, they leave the workplace filthy." Resident living on an estate

"They are polite." Resident from disability forum

One of the vulnerable resident however, mentioned that communication surrounding the repairs service has improved recently with it now being easier to report a repair.

"If you call them there is now not a long queue, if you want a repair or something like that it's now a different number there's no queue before when there was one number the queue was very long, before it was harder now it's easier." Vulnerable resident

Discussions around maintenance improvements carried out on properties finds residents have mixed views dependent on the type of maintenance improvement works carried out. In particular, residents who recently received new doors indicate frustration at the consultation received; having been given the opportunity to choose the colour of the door all residents received the same white door.

Residents mention a number of ways in which BHP could improve the repairs and maintenance service provided to them. Some suggest BHP need to remove their contractors or stop changing them so frequently. There is the perception that BHP try to source the cheapest contractors to get the repairs done which impacts on the quality of work carried out.

One participant outlines the individuals come to carry out their repairs but do not complete the job as arrive without the appropriate tools. Therefore it is suggested that BHP ensures all contractors who are sent to carry our repairs and maintenance work ensure they carry the right tools as this reduces frustration and the amount of time to complete the job.

> *"There's one more thing I'd like to say. When they know what the job is, why do they come and look again? Then they go out, get the materials for two hours and leave you waiting. If somebody is coming in the morning following someone being out, why don't they have all the equipment? You should have it before you come. It's stupid, it's ridiculous."* Resident living on an estate

Another resident mentioned the quality of the types of individuals that are sent out to carry out repairs needs to be improved. They make specific reference to an electrician that came out to inspect their property and felt they were not thorough enough when making the relevant checks.

> *"I think you need to look at the electricians that come out to inspect the properties, because when I received the letter and the electrician came, for me he wasn't thorough enough. The only space I have is the cupboard under the stairs, where I store everything, and he didn't even have access to it. When the gas engineer came he asked me to empty everything before, so he could go into the cupboard, but the electrician didn't, and everything's there. He was very quick and I wasn't impressed. Literally a ticked box. When the gas engineer came he went into the cupboard and he checked."* Resident not living on an estate

Further to this a younger resident provides an example of a maintenance individual who had come to make a repair not being able to carry out the task. They explain they faced difficulty bringing equipment to their floor therefore had to seek support from a friend.

> *"The guy was a bit too old, he could not bring the equipment up the stairs, I had to get my friend to come and help him do the work. He then put the hose in my sink and flooded my home all over again."* Younger resident

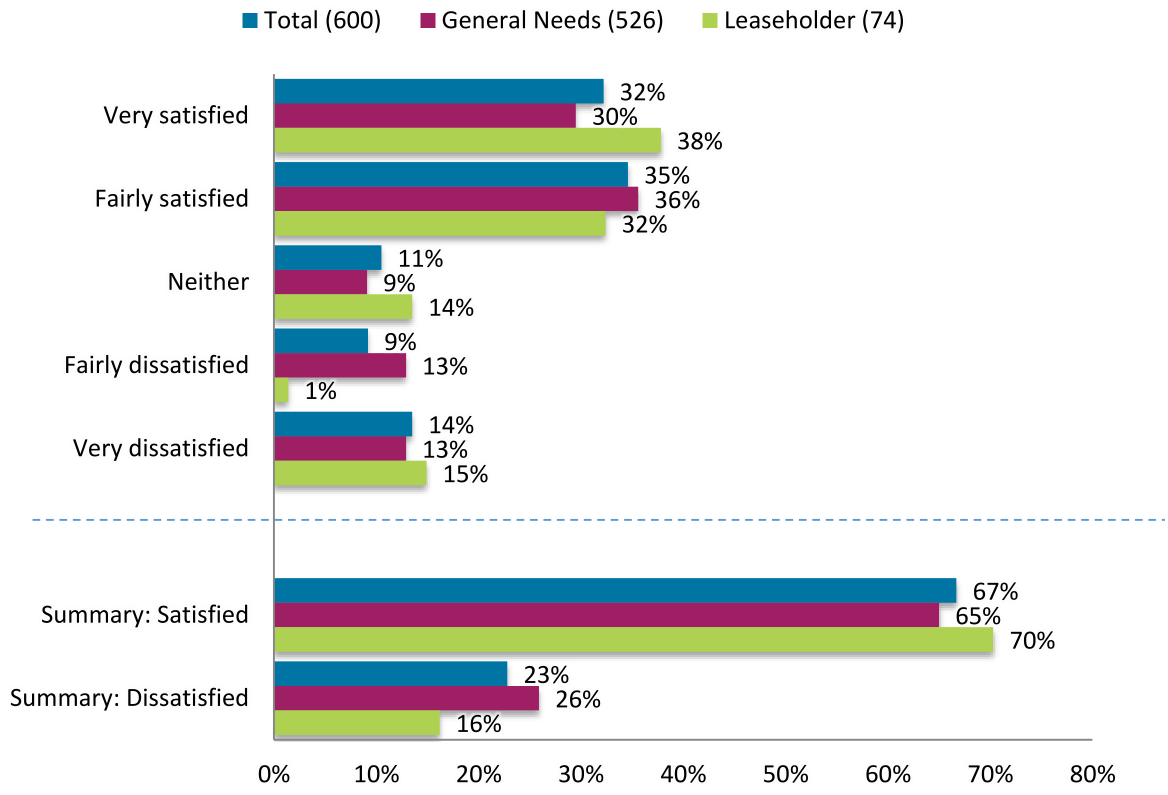
In terms of improvements, most participants suggest that they are kept better informed about the process of their repairs e.g. if they are informed someone will be coming to make a repair in the morning, they are provided with some guidance on times. In addition to this, the quality of the repairs is a concern for some therefore it is suggested that BHP focus their attention on ensuring contractors or individuals that carry out the repair are able to communicate well with residents and provide a satisfactory level of support to residents.

7 Quality of home

7.1 Quantitative opinion survey

All respondents were asked, how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the quality of their home. Two in three residents are satisfied with the overall quality of their home (67%), with three in ten very satisfied (32%). There is a slight indication that leaseholders are more satisfied with the quality of their home than general needs tenants, although this difference is not statistically significant (70% cf. 65%).

Figure 13: Q2. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall quality of your home?

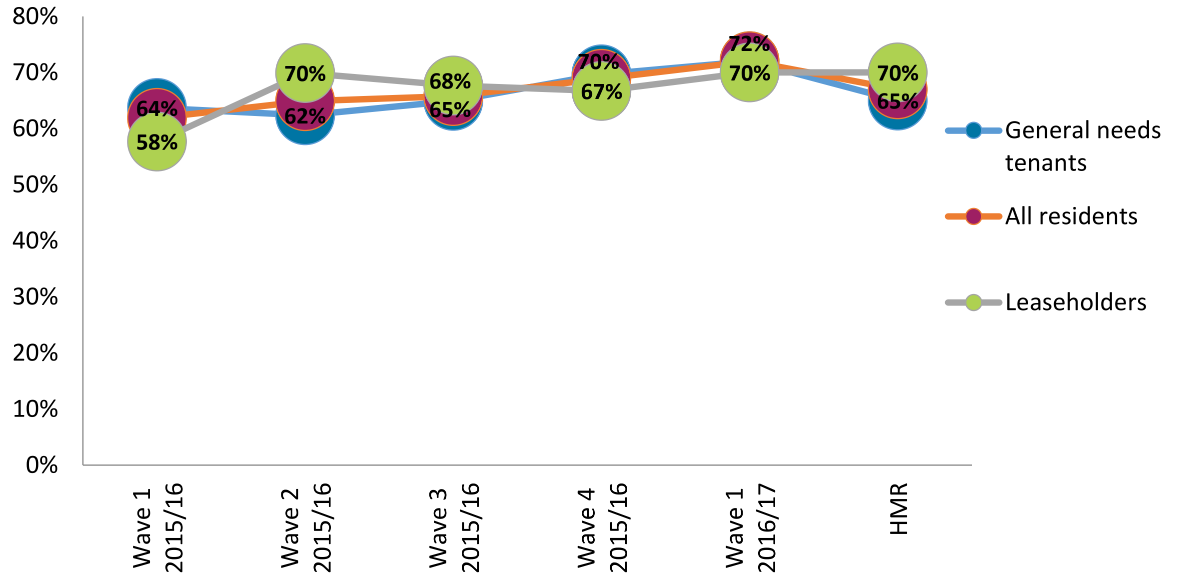


Unweighted base in parentheses

7.1.1 Trend analysis

As illustrated overleaf, when comparing the results for general needs tenants with previous findings, satisfaction has dropped significantly compared to wave 1 2016/17 (72% cf. 65%), although has returned to the level of satisfaction indicated for the quality of home in waves 1 – 3 2015/16. The only significant increase found for leaseholders is between the satisfaction indicated in wave 1 & 2 2015/16 (58% cf. 70%).

Figure 14: Satisfaction with the quality of home by fieldwork period



Unweighted sample base shown in introduction

7.1.2 Improvements stated in the quantitative opinion survey

All respondents who stated the quality of their home as a priority for improvement were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback as to what needs to be improved. As would be expected, responses to this question varied considerable, some mentioned numerous repairs that needed to be fixed within their homes whilst other mentions issues relating to damp or an improvement needed to either their kitchen or bathroom:

"I have been living in this house for ten years. The floorboards are coming up, the walls have damp and my curtains are just dangling on a metal piece of wire. I have been waiting since April for my walls to be plastered. Work has been incomplete, which was supposed to be completed, last week and I have really bad damp. I want them to come and do their job, so I feel like I'm living properly. I pay my rent, I feel really stressed and water comes in when it's raining and I'm scared when it rains. I am having to phone up constantly."

7.2 Qualitative activity

As found in the quantitative survey, most participants who took part in the focus groups and the telephone interviews are generally satisfied with the quality of their home. However, some residents made suggestions on ways to further improve not only the quality of their home but also the surrounding areas.

"They just finished painting and changing the roof, when you step outside it's just disgusting, but once you're inside I love my home, I wouldn't change it for the world."
Resident not living on estate

Some participants in the elderly group suggested due to mobility issues their homes needed vital adaptations such as walk-in showers and hand rails on their stairs. Participants in this group were unsure if BHP provided these, or how these could be obtained.

> *"I did phone up once to ask them to put a walk-in shower in my bathroom. That was over a year ago"* Retired resident

One participant not living on an estate suggests a grant or some form of allowance should be provided to repair damaged items in their home.

> *"I'd like a grant. My cupboard in my bedroom is falling apart. The shelves are falling apart."* Resident not living on an estate

Another participant outlines the quality of their home is maintained by themselves as they receive very little support from BHP.

> *"At the end of the day, we maintain our properties. They haven't paid for anything. They only think the Council pays for it. The quality of my home is maintained by myself. They don't buy anything for me, I maintain it."* Resident living on an estate

One vulnerable resident cited that her home had become very dusty giving her asthma problems whilst also stating that she had vermin issues, where a rat had bitten her causing her to have a rash which had led to some frustration.

> *"I have a lot of illness it's a dusty place and troubles my asthma, I'm getting upset and frustrated, the rats have given me a disease on my hand, its bit me, I've got rat poison in my blood."* Vulnerable resident

The key finding around the quality of residents' home is that generally, most participants are satisfied however the main concerns are around the quality of repairs and maintenance that are carried out which impact the appearance and condition of their home.

8 Keeping residents informed

8.1 Improvements stated in the quantitative opinion survey

All respondents who stated keeping residents informed as a priority for improvement were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback as to what needs to be improved. The majority of comments provided by respondents related to an improvement to the frequency in which information was relayed to residents either via newsletters or email:

> *“More information should be provided to tenants through letters and newsletters, to keep us up-to-date with current events, instead of sending yearly magazines which aren't up-to-date.”*

> *“Have regular mail-outs; email soft copies to residents, as paperwork can take longer and could get lost in the post.”*

> *“I would like to receive newsletters and posters. Some other Councils have an Internet community, so they should have that.”*

8.2 Qualitative activity

Most participants suggest BHP do not keep residents informed and receive very little communication about what is going on in their area. Many outline the level of communication has deteriorated over the years and BHP has reduced the different forms of communications that were previously provided.

> *“It's the lack of communication. That’s the first thing. It's gone from really bad, to getting slightly better, to going downhill. You send an email or text, or write a letter and they don't follow through. From 1 April they've had to do a wall in my house. No one knew the wall had asbestos. Three operatives turned up and no one would touch it because no one's got the email saying we were safe. Communication is nonsense. Up to today the wall still isn't fixed. I've got the email saying its okay, still no communication as to when they're coming to fix it”.* Resident from disability forum

One participant highlights that they used to receive regular communication from their contact at BHP and were regularly informed about activities in their area, however, they currently feel they no longer have a point of reference at BHP therefore have little information at hand.

> *“Now the residents haven't got any point of reference to refer to because we don't know what's going on anymore.” Resident not living on an estate*

Some participants mention housing talk back which they have previously used to contact BHP. This service is provided for tenants and leaseholders to come together and share their views on improving the services available to them. One participant states their dissatisfaction with this service and explains they do not attend these meetings as they do not feel improvements are being made by BHP.

> *"I don't go to that and the reason I don't go is at this moment in time they don't give a service. If things change, they listen to the tenants and make changes, then I would like to be actively involved. I'm not being involved with a ship that's going down. We are the tenants. It has to get better because they're serving us. As much as it's been pretty negative towards BHP, okay? I'd like to say here that I want some improvements. That's the only reason why I've taken the time out of my day, because I'm on leave. I've come to make sure you're told that it's about improvements now. We want it to be better because we deserve better. Our rent goes up every single year. Our Council tax is going up, that's all to do with the services."* Resident living on an estate

> *"The last thing that was happening was a talkback. When they used to have a talkback they used to have all the different departments first, from 6:30 to 7:00, then you would have repairs, rent arrears, they've got everything there. You could go and see the person you wanted to see and report it. That's gone."* Resident from disability forum

One vulnerable resident did however state they receive a monthly booklet and text updates about community forums, and were pleased with the information provided.

> *"They send a booklet every month so I guess everyone gets that booklet and I do get texts and about forums and stuff so I do get texts and magazines. For communications they are okay"* Vulnerable resident

Residents were asked what channels of communication their landlord uses with them to keep them informed. Although participants suggest they receive little communication, the information they do receive is provided mainly by email or telephone. Many also mention receiving a newsletter however the perception is that this is not effective as it is not sent frequently enough and the information provided is too general.

> *"It doesn't inform you of any activities. People like us need to get out now and again. If we know of activities going on not too far from where we are, then we would be happy to participate."* Retired resident

One resident states a housing officer comes to visit them on a weekly basis where they are able to share and inform them of any issues but this was not apparent amongst other residents across the focus groups. However the majority of participants indicated frustration that they had never received communications from their housing officer.

There is also the perception that the only time individuals are provided with information is when there are works taking place in the area. Some resident explain this is provided in the newsletter/ magazine however as mentioned, many recall they have not received this recently. Some suggest they are aware they can find this information online but not all residents have access to a computer or the internet.

"The only time they kept us all informed was when they were doing all the work on the A406. When the polling station is coming they ask you to keep your cars out the way. They don't normally tell you about this or that going on." Resident living on an estate

"The magazine used to come out every month. One day I thought, hold on, I haven't seen that magazine for ages." Resident living on an estate

Residents were asked what their landlord could do to better inform them about their services and decisions or any suggestions for improvements to involve residents. Most residents agree that BHP should consider providing a newsletter more frequently e.g. once a month to update them on activities or things taking place in their area.

"At the moment we don't get anything. If we get something, whether it be once a month or once in so many months, make sure that it is there. Right now, we have nothing. The magazine will come sometimes. You can't expect it any particular time or any set time, but it comes now and then or whenever it comes, but it doesn't have any information in it." Retired resident

"There is no information about what they are doing. There is nothing about tenants, photographs of all the ones that are working in the office. There is no information at all. The pages are much less than there used to be. There are about four pages in the magazine." Retired resident

Participants in the leaseholder group also suggested that there should be a frequent tailored leaseholder newsletter as the current newsletter seems irrelevant to them.

Other residents advise having more contact with their housing officer, most have not heard from or been introduced to their housing officer since moving in to their property and this is perceived as an effective approach to convey any issues or concerns they wish to raise with BHP.

"I'd like some contact maybe with a housing officer. A phone call. 'Good morning, [respondent name]. Is everything okay?' If they've got 60 tenants they could do 10 a week. They don't check on their residents." Resident living on an estate

"The occasional phone call would be good as sometimes all you feel is that the only communication you have is with your rent so you have no human interaction. Until I had this situation I didn't have any interaction, I didn't know I had a housing officer. It would be nice to get a letter to say your housing officer is xxxx this is what they do because I don't know what they do. No one in my block knew that we had a housing officer for the block. We don't know what they're there for we don't the roles or who is doing what. Even in my situation with domestic violence I didn't know they had anti-social behaviour officers who I could have gone to for help and advice and support things like that it would be nice to be made aware of all the things they do or can do". Vulnerable resident

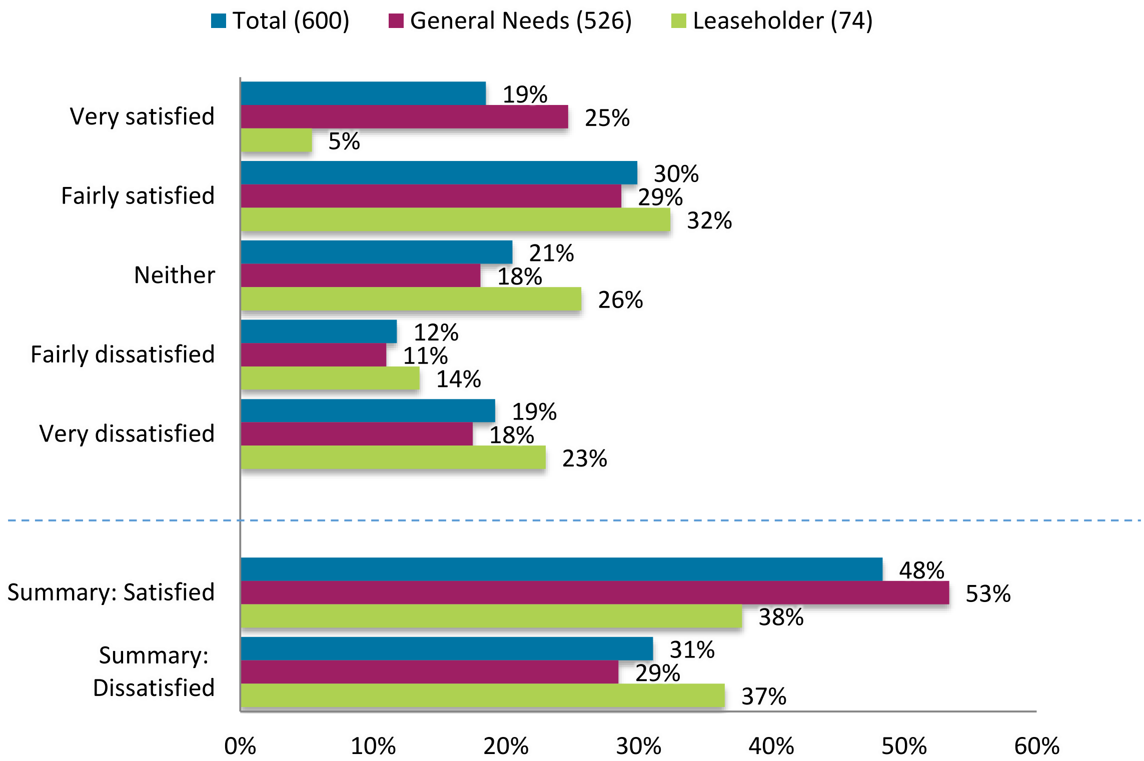
9 Involving residents and acting upon their views

9.1 Quantitative opinion survey

9.1.1 Listening to views and acting upon them

Less than half of residents are satisfied that BHP listen to their views and act upon them (48%), whilst three in ten (31%) indicate some degree of dissatisfaction. General needs tenants are significantly more satisfied that BHP listen to views and act upon them (53% cf. 38%), although it should be noted there are no significant differences in the level of dissatisfaction indicated by residents.

Figure 15: Q11. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Brent Housing Partnership listens to your views and acts upon them?

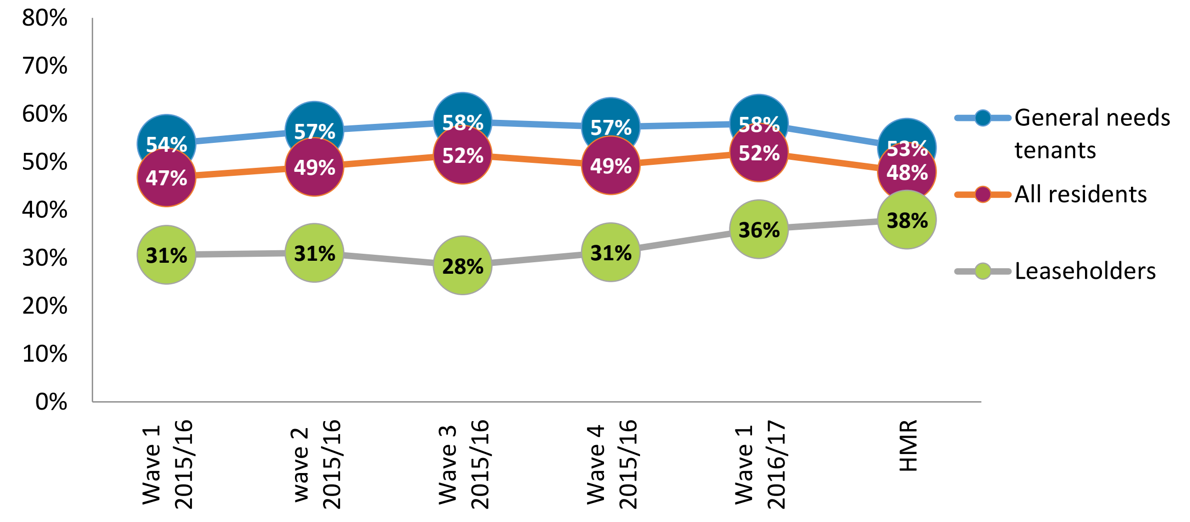


Unweighted base in parentheses

9.1.1.1 Trend analysis

As illustrated overleaf, the findings from the housing management review are in line with the previous waves of the customer satisfaction survey with no significant differences found in the level of satisfaction indicated, although it should be noted that there is indication that leaseholder satisfaction is improving since 2015/16 for this measure.

Figure 16: Satisfaction that Brent Housing Partnership listens to views and act upon them

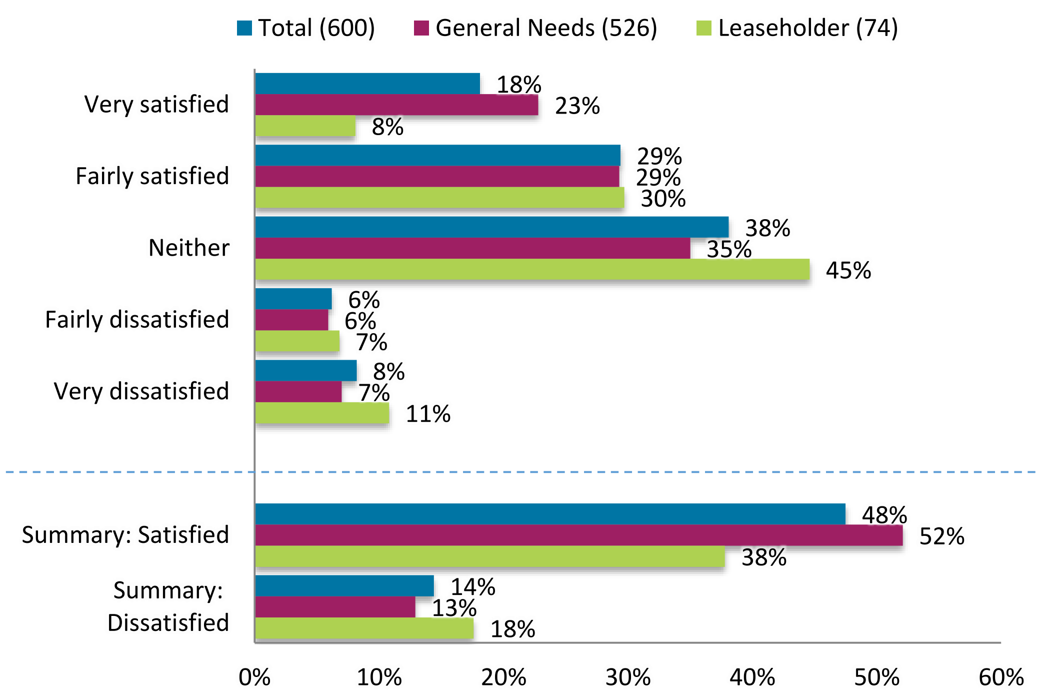


Unweighted sample base in introduction

9.1.2 Resident involvement

Similar to the previous finding, less than half of residents are satisfied with the opportunities for resident involvement activities offered by BHP (48%), whilst one in seven (14%) indicate some degree of dissatisfaction. For this measure there is a higher than average proportion of residents who state they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (38%), suggesting that these residents are unaware of what activities exist for resident involvement.

Figure 17: Q12. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunities for resident involvement activities offered by Brent Housing Partnership?

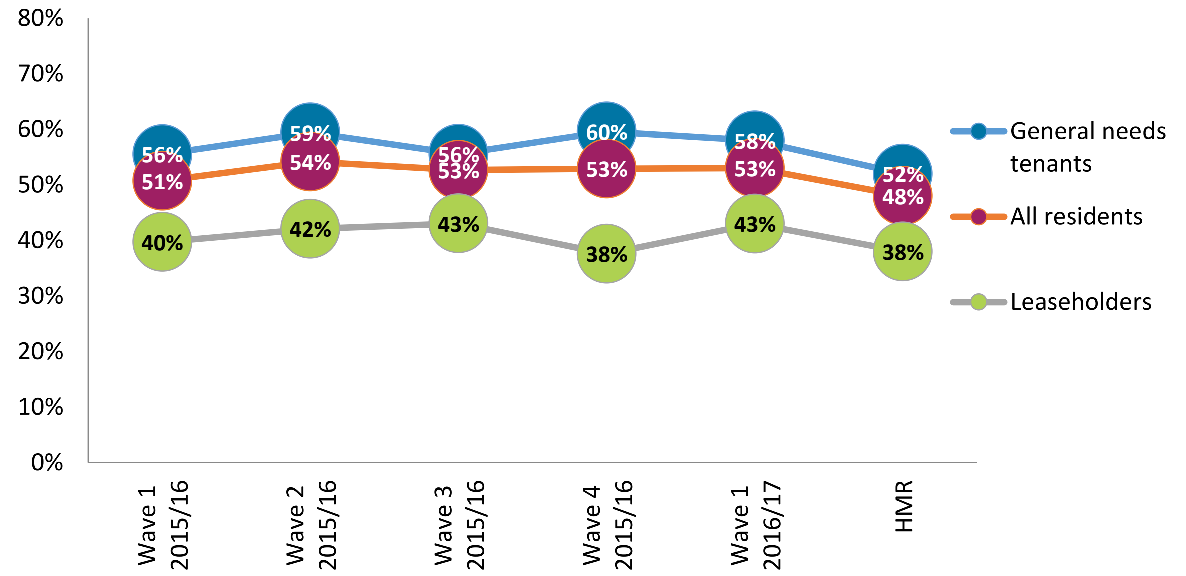


Unweighted base in parentheses

9.1.2.1 Trend analysis

The proportion of general needs tenants satisfied with the opportunities for resident involvement activities offered by BHP has dropped significantly compared to the level of satisfaction indicated in wave 2 & 4 2015/16 (52% cf. 59% & 60%), although it should be noted the level of dissatisfaction has remained similar (13% cf. 12% & 11%).

Figure 18: Satisfaction with the opportunities for resident involvement activities offered by Brent Housing Partnership



Unweighted sample base in introduction Improvements stated in the quantitative opinion survey

All respondents who stated involving residents and acting upon their views as a priority for improvement were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback as to what needs to be improved. Comments from respondents varied with some suggesting there needs to either be more frequent residents meetings or more information about when the meetings take place, whilst other respondents suggested that they should have more interaction with their housing officer:

> *"Have more meetings; put in newsletters about meetings. Have community involvement."*

> *"We never see any officers; if and when we do, and we want to talk to them, they ignore us. It would be nice to get a knock on the door to introduce themselves."*

> *"The housing officer should come around to the residents houses and ask for their opinion."*

A handful of respondents also suggested that when BHP consulted residents their views were never taken into consideration inferring that decisions were already made prior to any consultation:

"They have a history of consultations that have already been decided. They should actually be more active by speaking to people and finding out their views before making decisions."

"I don't bother attending meetings since its a waste of time since they don't listen and once they've made their mind they're doing that, our opinions are not taken into consideration."

9.2 Qualitative activity

As found in the quantitative surveys, most participants who took part in the focus groups suggest they generally do not feel involved and listened to as residents.

Leaseholders suggest that BHP listens to them but take no action on resolving any issues or problems that arise in their area.

"They listen to you, but no action taken. Little action in most things. They're very good with listening to you, because everything is logged in. When you call, phone calls are logged. They are recording you. They're very polite to you, very, kind of, professional. They actually don't know what the result for us as leaseholders, when you make an issue of something, or you report something." Leaseholder

Similar to leaseholders, a few residents suggest they are listened to by BHP however their views and feedback is not acted on. One retired resident provides an example of contacting BHP about damp in their home which is yet to be resolved.

"There was an issue in my bathroom many months ago. They took the details about what needs to be done. It is still damp. That needs to be done as soon as possible." Retired resident

Further to this, residents were asked how involved they are with decisions made regarding their home. There were mixed views around this with some suggesting they are involved but many feel unless they make direct contact with BHP themselves they are not involved in any decisions.

"I am not involved in any decisions. I think it is only if we want something done. Other than that, you are not involved." Retired resident

Residents are in agreement that being involved in decisions regarding their home is important to them and they have made attempts to do so by signing up to campaigns and showing interest in being involved in meetings. The concern here is that have demonstrated willingness to be involved, there is lack of communication and information received from BHP.

"I filled in a form about a residents' campaign a few months ago but got no response back. I said I would like to be involved in an association, but I haven't had anything yet from them." Retired resident

One tenant living on an estate made reference to a residents association which they were previously involved in. When sharing this information with other participants, it was clear there was lack of awareness or knowledge of this service being available by BHP.

> *"I used to be the chair for our housing resident's association. Time moved on, other people took the chair and so forth. Four, five months ago there was an election. New chair, etc. I've heard nothing from the residents association. BHP control it. I've emailed BHP to say, 'Can you let me know what's happening with regards to the residents association? When are the meetings?' I'd like to put some stuff on the agenda sometimes. I've heard nothing. They said they'll make contact with them and be in touch, that was about two months ago."* Resident living on an estate

Further to this, a member of the disability forum outlines they were involved in a committee where they carried out inspections for BHP. There was also the mention of having block champions where residents could report any issues or areas of improvement they wished to feed back.

> *"We used to have a committee where we did inspections for BHP. We would walk about and report back to them things that needed doing. All that is gone. We used to have a block champion. If you live in a block of flats you would report to BHP all the things that needed doing there. My block champion was using her phone to report things, they promised to give her a phone and they didn't, so she stopped. We have over 20 awards since BHP started. We had a whole big cabinet of awards. Since Don Brenner came, we haven't had one."* Resident from disability forum

Some residents state they were previously involved in forums which were made up of a number of tenants. These forums gave tenants the opportunity to have direct involvement with BHP but are no longer available. One resident in particular raised the question as to whether this is something that would be useful for tenants to be involved in with some showing they would be interested.

> *"They used to have forums which were made up of tenants, and those forums disappeared, why I don't know, but that gave the opportunity for direct involvement, to look at issues. So, the fact that they don't exist, is that something that doesn't worry you or is it something you think would be useful?" Resident not living on an estate*

By contrast however, one vulnerable resident stated that they receive text messages and information about forums however due to time constraints do not attend them.

> *"They are always sending me stuff to say they have this group and they have a meeting and residents groups, I'm very busy and my time is taken up it's something I would be interested in, I know the opportunity is there I just haven't taken it up,. I don't know what happens at these forums but they do make us fully aware of all these forums / meetings."* Vulnerable resident

Following these discussions it is clear that BHP had a range of services available for residents to be involved in however are no longer available thus participants feel they have no involvement in BHP's decision making process. Residents were asked how they would like to be more involved with decisions made regarding their home or area. A number of suggestions have been made which can be summarised as:

- Being part of a community or resident group
- Having regular meetings which are easily accessible for residents
- Being a member of or having some involvement in the BHP board
- Bringing back community forums

Some residents suggest forming a community group where individuals attend and share information on areas they feel need improving in the area. Currently residents feel their voice is not being heard by BHP therefore it is felt if residents come together and share this information, they could collectively act on resolving any issues residents have.

> *"I think its resident power. So, resident groups which could then vote to say we don't want our parking like that, or we want our collection like that. So, there needs to maybe be a push to have those resident groups, then you've got a voice and you can get things changed."* Resident not living on an estate

> *"Basically they need the voice of the residents. You know, without our voices they can't do anything. They're just doing what they think should be done. Our voice is the voice which is going to make them go forward, otherwise they won't be able to go forward."* Resident living on an estate

> *"In the magazine they've got this scheme where they've got a board, and leaseholders can go on the board. That touches on a very small number of people. What I'd like, where I am, I'd like a small tenant association. It's a real palaver, and it's difficult to do. Why don't they facilitate that? I can't get one off the ground."* Leaseholder

There is a perception that the majority of meetings that individuals are invited to take place at the Civic Centre. This location is not perceived to be easily accessible by all therefore it has been suggested meetings chaired by BHP take place in locations with easy transport links or hold meetings at different venues so a wider range of residents are more willing and able to attend.

Some residents show an interest in having some involvement with the BHP board. The purpose of this is to gain knowledge from them directly about what plans are in place for their area and feed this back to the community. Some leaseholders also mention someone from BHP or the Council chairing regular meetings to facilitate better community engagement.

> *"I would like to be involved in the BHP board. I'd like to know what's going on. It's not just about them sitting in their nice little boardrooms. They have to do that to conduct business but you need tenants."* Resident living on an estate

> *"You've got to get a certain number of people in the block engaged to do it. The issue is, lots of the flats are bought by leaseholders, and lots of the leaseholders rent them out. You don't have community engagement, because you've got this turnover of*

people. I think that's a red herring, they should just remove that. It would be useful if you had someone from BHP or the Council who chaired the meeting once every two months, how often it is, facilitated it, and removed the barriers to it happening." Leaseholder

Finally, one resident demonstrates the need of introducing forums to encourage residents to be involved in what happens in their community.

"I think the introduction of more forums and the encouragement of residents to be involved, and resident associations, they champion other people to put forward, like you're working and you can't go, then your tenant representative will attend that forum, that kind of communication going on. I think that needs to be encouraged from the Council but also from the tenants themselves." Resident not living on an estate

10 Customer service

10.1 Improvements stated in the quantitative opinion survey

All respondents who stated the level of customer service should be a priority for improvement were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback as to what needs to be improved. Most comments related to an improvement in the time it takes to get either get their phone calls answer, get through to correct person to speak to, or to have a query answered. A handful of respondents also suggested there needs to be an improvement on how polite or helpful operatives are, although these comments were limited in numbers.

> *"The customer service in Brent is appalling. When you have a problem it takes a lot of time for it to be resolved. There is no communication."*

> *"They should answer phones quicker when residents are reporting something and pass them onto the correct department."*

> *"Listen to customers complain and log it in the system. The waiting time is too long to speak to a staff member."*

> *"Phone staff do not put you to the correct service. Sometimes the people on the phone are rude."*

10.2 Qualitative activity

Residents were asked to rate the level of customer service provided to them by their landlord. Overall, there are mixed views across the groups with some suggesting the customer service is good however most individuals state the service is average or poor.

Those who mention the customer service provided by BHP is good are particularly positive about experiences they have had with BHP staff and efficiency of dealing with their queries. One resident suggests the customer service received from BHP is a lot more positive compared with their previous landlord and describes BHP as caring and approachable.

> *"I think compared to where I was, it was chalk and cheese, and I can't fault them, not coming from where I came from, to then have BHP as my landlord. They're very caring, approachable; you can get involved, they take onboard your opinion. That's what makes a good neighbourhood, you know? To have that kind of involvement. It's a two-way street."* Resident not living on an estate

One vulnerable resident also cited a situation where a member of BHP staff had been exceptionally helpful in the support that they were providing.

> *"I did have some positives with staff. The lady who dealt with me she put me in a bed and breakfast , I was a bit concerned and she said she'd keep her phone on till 8pm which was above and beyond she kept it on and I had some concerns so I text her*

and she said she'll leave her phone on all night if I have any problems ring and first thing in the morning at 7 she text me" Vulnerable resident

Some residents are slightly more ambivalent in their perceptions of the customer service they receive and rate it as average. These are typically those who have experienced both good and poor service from BHP in the past.

> *"For electrical, they're pretty good, because they're very hot on that. If you report a light bulb that needs replacing, they are pretty quick on that, because that's quite serious, classified as an emergency or urgent. If you report a fence that's broken, that might take days, and then you have to follow it up again and again. Drains for example, I think they don't want to know. They listen to you, they make note of it, there's a blockage, but then it gets lost in the system. Nobody will ring you, nobody will inform you, and so you're left in the dark".* Leaseholder

Another resident who describes BHP's customer service as average states that when they have a bad experience it has a further negative effect on them as they are spending time and money chasing contacts at BHP.

> *"I had one person when I had damp in my house and I reported it. He set it up and he pursued it. Others didn't. Not only they didn't, but they did something which was not necessary to be done. I wanted the damp to be dealt with. They sent somebody to paint over the damp. I had to go back to the person I had started off with and he was surprised at what had happened. I told him I wanted the damp dealt with. It took a good three months to get the damp done. When it was done, it was done well but it took a long time. Either they have too much work or they are just damn lazy. The person who registers your call has to pass that call onto somebody else to do whatever is needed to be done. The people they pass it on to are not always competent or able to get on with the job. You may have to keep ringing up. You don't have money to be holding on for long time on telephone calls."* Retired resident

Those who rate BHP's customer service as poor generally refer to the amount of time they spend trying to get through to someone on the phone and chasing individuals to follow up on their queries, mainly around repairs and maintenance or issues with the cleaning services. Most participants suggest they contact the BHP customer service line to report repairs therefore expect this to be resolved efficiently.

> *"When you deal with customer services, you expect to get a reference number, you expect the work will be done at a certain time, if not, they'll get back to you. That loop, it just doesn't seem to occur. We're doing the chasing."* Leaseholder

> *"It can take 45 minutes just to get through to a department. Any department. You just have to wait."* Resident living on an estate

> *"Sometimes when you're trying to express yourself they're not even listening, or the pass you onto the next number."* Resident living on an estate

"Every time I phone, I have to phone up, go through different options, and there's nobody on the line, or a person who I can't speak to, or they get back to you." Leaseholder

One participant provided an example of poor customer service when receiving a letter from BHP and being unable to get through to the named contact which led to their query not being resolved.

"When I got a letter, there was a name of the person at the bottom. When we rang them, I said, 'I want to speak to this person.' 'Oh, she is not in, I'll pass the message. She'll ring you.' She never rang us. Never." Leaseholder

Two younger residents are more negative in their rating towards BHP suggesting they are dissatisfied with the level of customer service provided. Both relate this to the lack of communication they receive from BHP. One younger resident in particular, who moved into their home 4 months ago expresses they have had no contact with their housing officer and makes it apparent they took part in this consultation to convey the lack of communication they have received thus far.

"I want it to be known that I have never met my housing officer, she has emailed me once but that is it. It's not a bad service but then it's not a good service, it's nonexistent. The only people I have regular contact with is the gas providers to do the checks." Younger resident

Nobody has actually made an effort to get back to me on things that need addressing. I have not had any follow up on that. I contacted BHP to see if I could use the communal area for my son's birthday, I messaged BHP through their online forum, I emailed the housing officer, I tried to phone her but the number didn't work. I didn't hear anything from them about that. Younger resident

In terms of improving services in the future residents suggest BHP keeps a log of the calls that are incoming so they can be referred back to when/if they call back to avoid further delays or having to further explain the reason for the call.

"I think the most important thing is that they need to log everything by each tenant, and know which person actually has spoken to this tenant and know everything what's going on in the progress. When you call up the next time they'll speak to somebody else and say they can't see anything on the notes." Resident living on an estate

"You need to turn around and tell them that it's stated before you speak to anybody that every conversation is logged. They should go back and listen to that. If I have to phone them it's because it's an emergency. I do everything by email. That way I have a running record of everything." Resident living on an estate

It is also recommended that BHP assigns one point of contact to each query that is raised by residents to avoid being put through to several different contacts. One resident highlights that there is a need for BHP to ensure their staff are fully trained as they are under the impression that some staff they have spoken to come across as being less knowledgeable about how to deal with their queries.

> *"The staff are very friendly, they're really approachable, but I think some of them need some training. I don't know if some have been there for a long time, so they know what to say and do, but I can see that they are all approachable, but not all of them know what they're supposed to be doing."* Resident not living on an estate

Residents were asked how they would prefer to contact services in the future. Most suggest telephone is the best way to contact BHP providing they are able to get through to a member of staff.

> *"I think phoning is easiest, as I feel I can explain things more clearly on the phone." Tenant living on estate*

A few residents prefer to contact BHP by email as they feel having this form of communication enables them to keep a track record of the conversations they have with BHP.

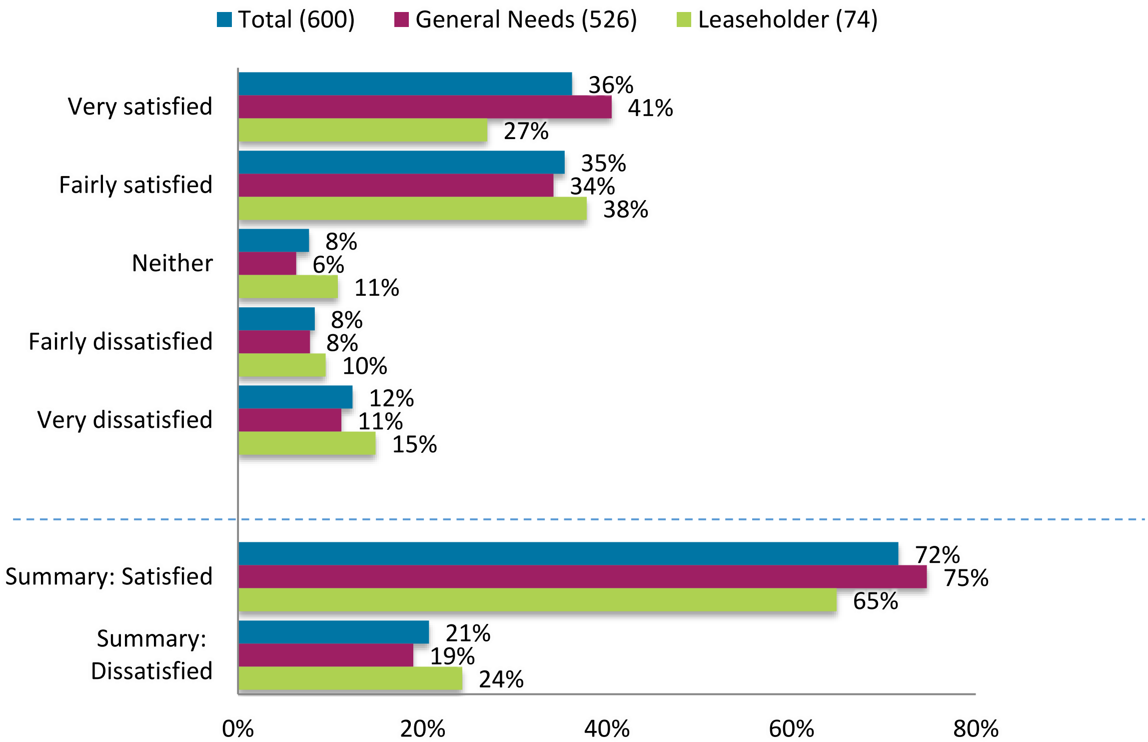
11 Estate services

11.1 Quantitative opinion survey

11.1.1 Neighbourhood as a place to live

Seven in ten residents (72%) are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live. One in five indicate some degree of dissatisfaction (21%). General needs tenants are slightly more satisfied than leaseholders with their neighbourhood as a place to live (75% cf. 65%).

Figure 19: Q3. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live?

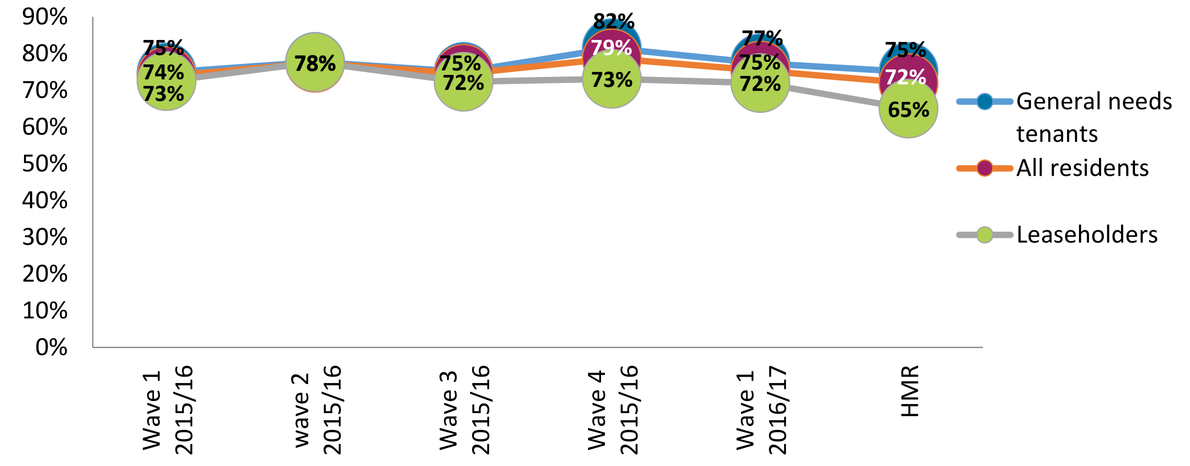


Unweighted base in parentheses

11.1.2 Trend analysis

As illustrated overleaf, satisfaction indicated by general needs tenants is similar to all other previous waves of data collection apart from wave 4 2015/16 which may be seen as the outlier. Interestingly, over time, leaseholders appear to be becoming less pleased with their neighbourhood as a place to live compared to general needs tenants.

Figure 20: Satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live

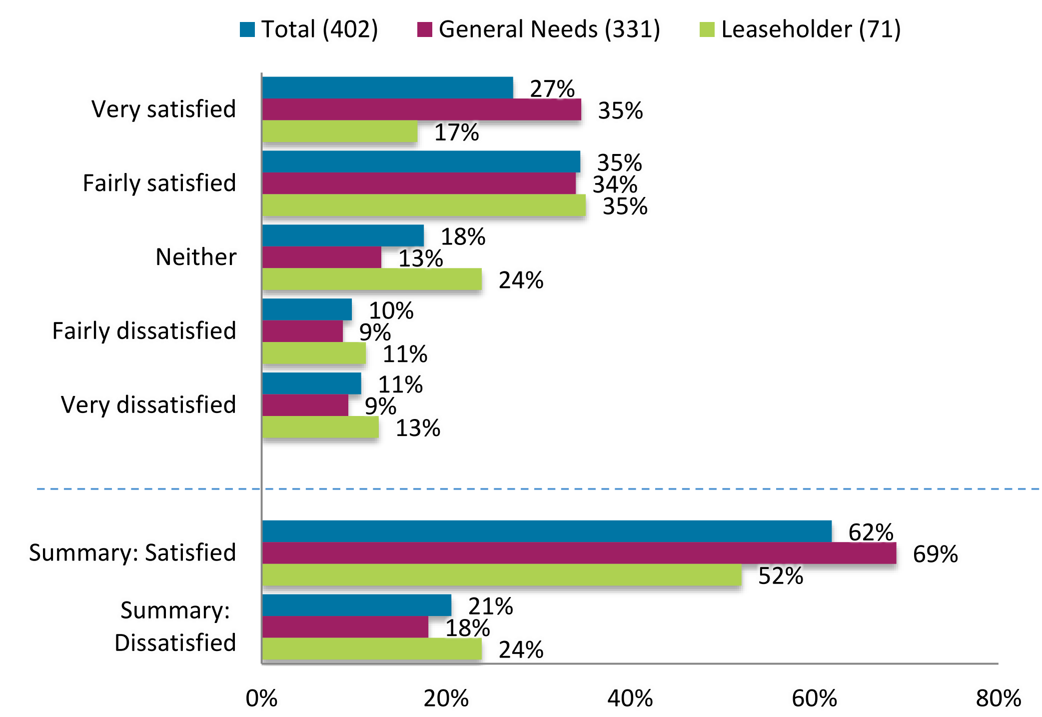


Unweighted sample base

11.1.3 Grounds maintenance

Six in ten residents who live on an estate (62%) are satisfied with the grounds maintenance service. By contrast, two in ten indicate some degree of dissatisfaction (21%). General needs tenants are significantly more satisfied than leaseholders with the grounds maintenance service (69% cf. 52%), although the levels of dissatisfaction indicated by the two tenures are similar.

Figure 21: Q18. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the grounds maintenance, such as grass cutting, in your area?

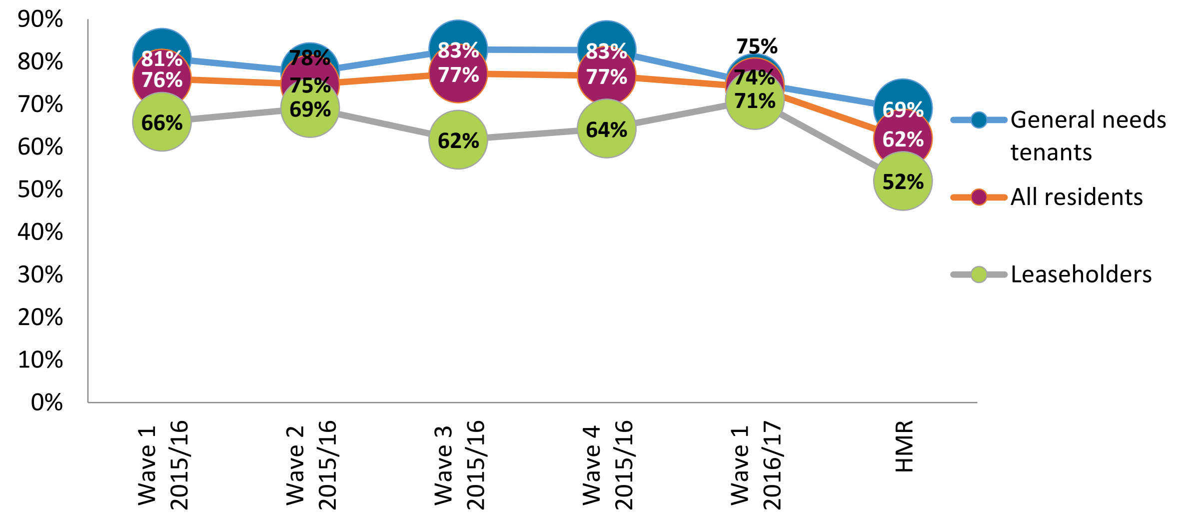


Unweighted base in parentheses

11.1.4 *Trend analysis*

As illustrated below, compared to the previous findings there has been a significant decline in the level of satisfaction indicated by both general needs and leaseholders for the grounds maintenance service compared to the level indicated in wave 1 2016/17, although for general needs tenants it should also be noted that a similar decline was found between wave 4 2015/16 and wave 1 2016/17.

Figure 22: Satisfaction with the grounds maintenance service



Unweighted sample base

11.1.4.1 *Improvements stated in the quantitative opinion survey*

All respondents who stated the grounds maintenance service should be a priority for improvement were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback as to what needs to be improved. The majority of comments provided related to an improvement to the frequency of when the grass is cut and the clearing up of grass after:

> *"They say they're going to come, but they don't come. When they do, they come late; they'll give me a time and they don't show up."*

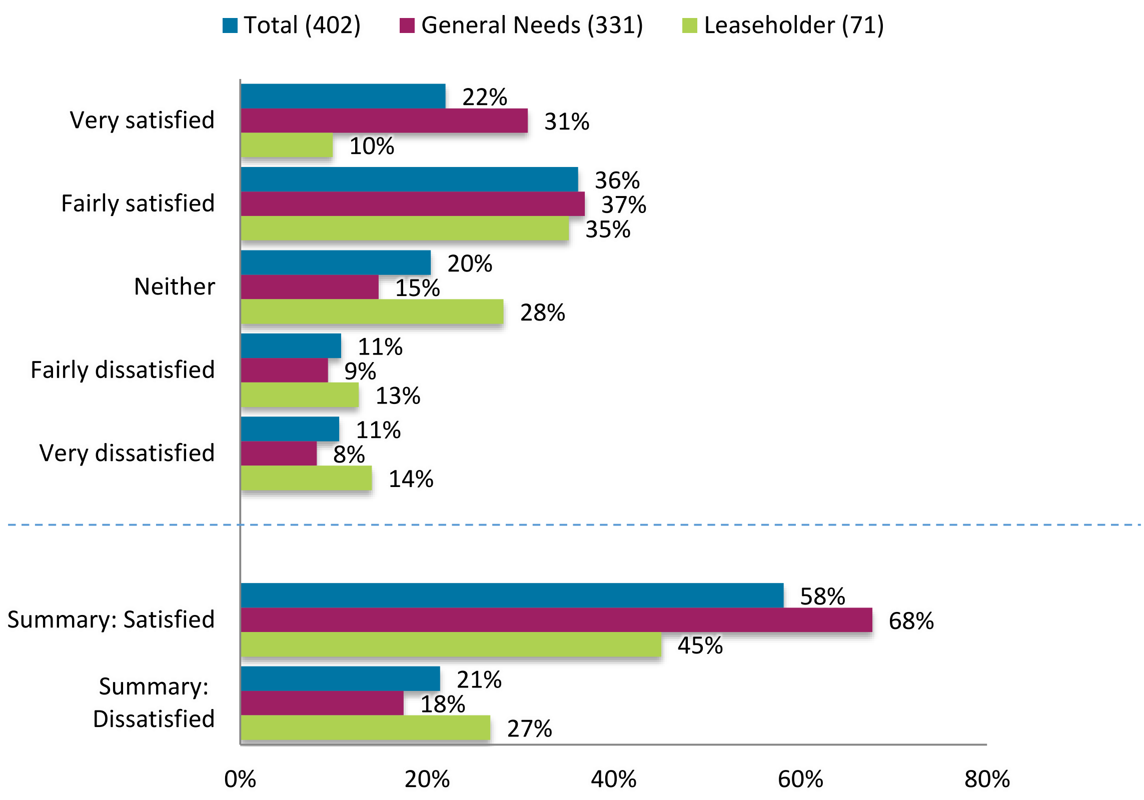
> *"They should pick all the grass up after cutting it, instead of leaving it on the ground."*

> *"Grass cutting can be improved if they come more often; they don't seem to do a good job when they do come. Every time and each year, they are getting money for that; they are not providing us with good service. However, the last contractor was good."*

11.1.5 Overall estate service provided

As illustrated below, just under six in ten residents who live on an estate indicate satisfaction with the overall estate service provided by BHP (58%), whilst two in ten are dissatisfied (21%). As found with the previous finding, general needs tenants are more likely than leaseholders to be satisfied with the overall estate services (68% compared to 45%).

Figure 23: Q20. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall estate services provided by Brent Housing Partnership?

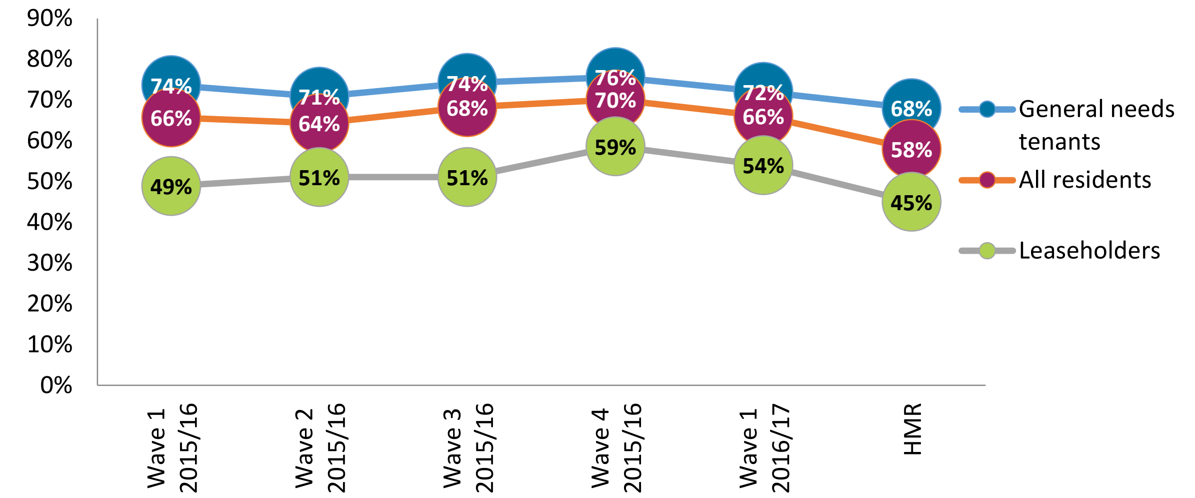


Unweighted base in parentheses

11.1.5.1 Trend analysis

Compared to the previous findings there has been a significant decrease in the level of satisfaction indicated by general needs tenants compared to the level of satisfaction indicated in wave 4 2015/16. For leaseholders there is a similar indication in a decline in satisfaction although this is not significant.

Figure 24: Satisfaction with the overall estate service provided by Brent Housing Partnership

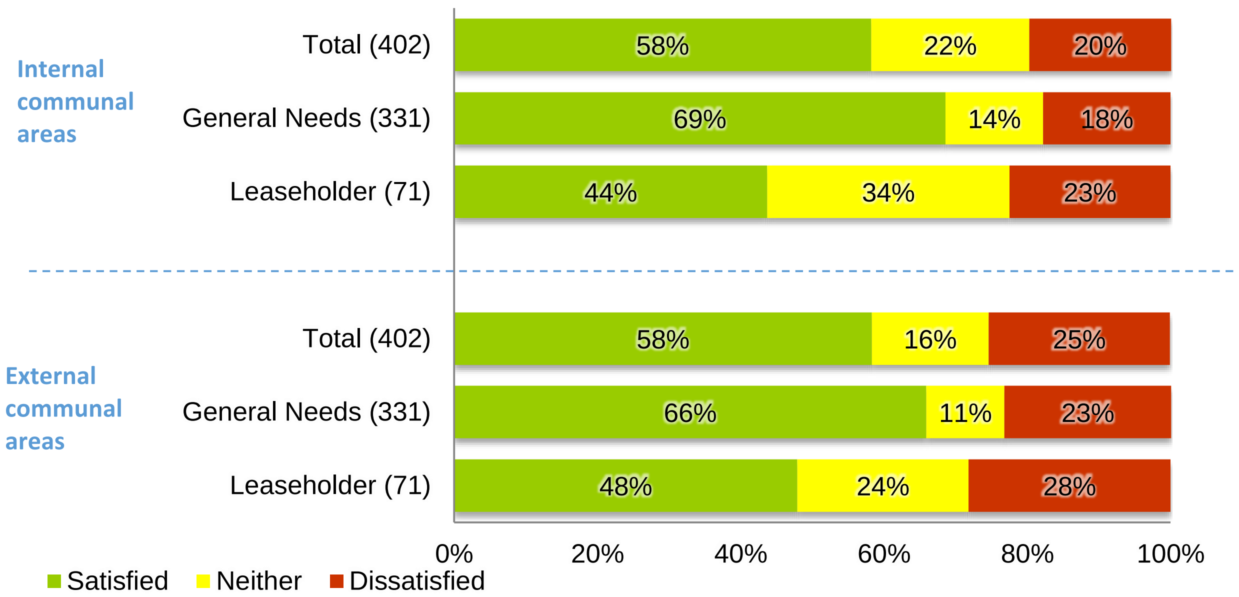


Unweighted sample base in the introduction

11.1.6 Cleaning service

All residents who live on an estate were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the cleaning of internal and external areas. As shown below, approaching six in ten residents indicate satisfaction with the cleaning of internal and external communal areas. General needs tenants indicate higher levels of satisfaction than leaseholders, although this is mainly due to higher proportions of leaseholders stating they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Figure 25: Q17. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the cleaning of the following

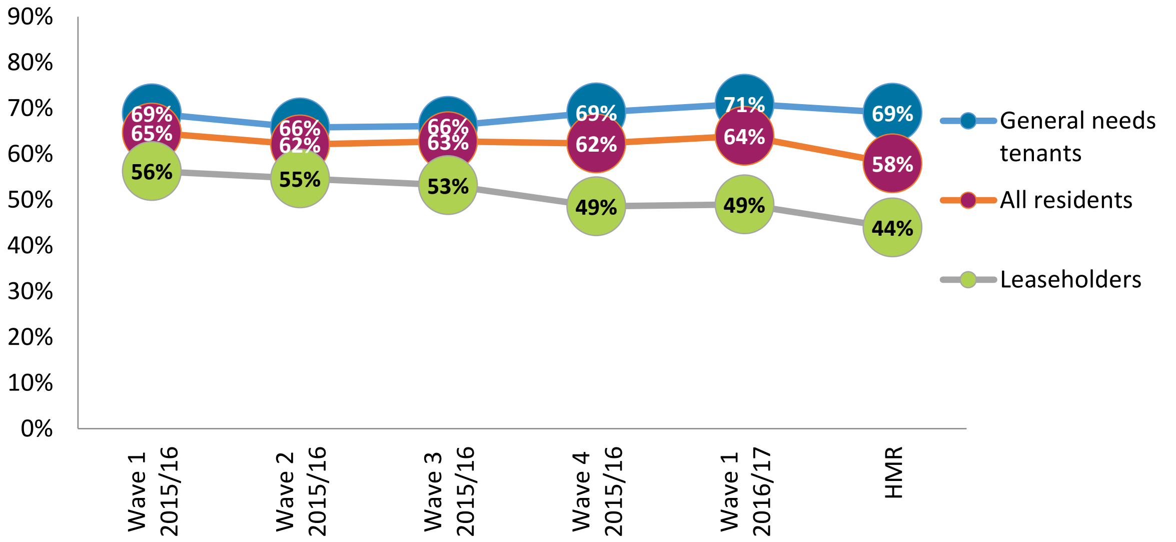


Unweighted base in parentehses

11.1.6.1 *Trend analysis internal cleaning service*

When compared to previous findings, satisfaction indicated by general needs tenants for the internal cleaning service has remained similar, however for leaseholders there is an indication that satisfaction is declining over time.

Figure 26: Satisfaction with the internal cleaning service

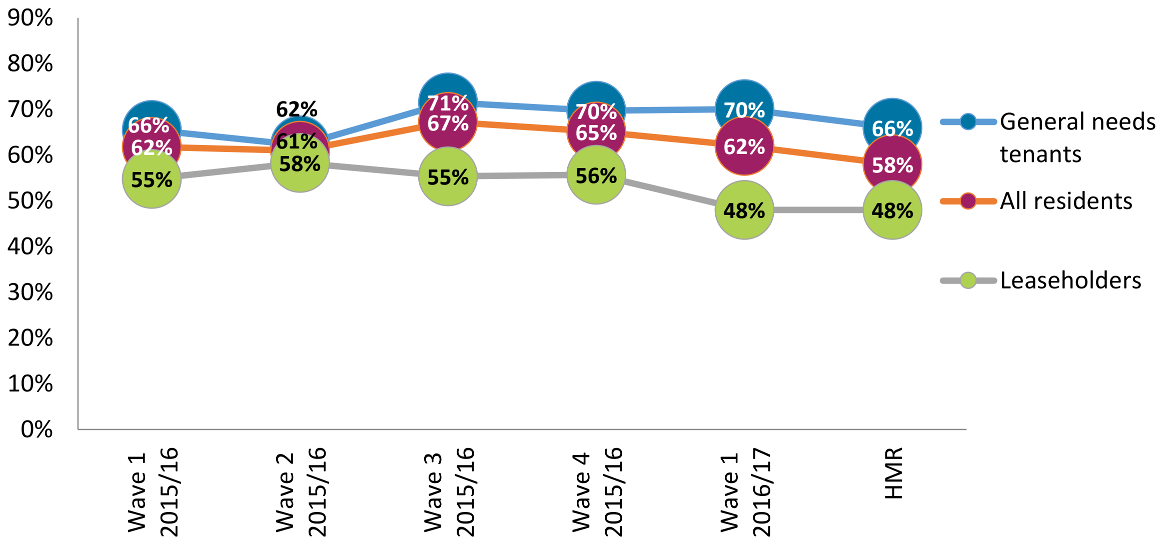


Unweighted sample base in the introduction

11.1.6.2 *Trend analysis external cleaning service*

Comparison against the previous findings shows satisfaction indicated by general needs tenants for the internal cleaning service has remained similar. Whilst for leaseholders there is an indication of satisfaction has decreased since wave 4 2015/16.

Figure 27: Satisfaction with the external cleaning service



Unweighted sample base in the introduction

11.1.6.3 Improvements stated in the quantitative opinion survey

All respondents who stated the cleaning service should be a priority for improvement were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback as to what needs to be improved. As would be expected the majority of comments related to an improvement to either the quality or frequency of cleaning:

> *"It can be improved by the cleaner actually cleaning the stairs properly. He needs to wash the stairs and backyard properly. He needs to use detergent."*

> *"Need to work out exactly what needs to be done and have a proper schedule and make sure it is regular and maintained regularly."*

> *"They could have products to clean and disinfect. They could clean the light switches and use hot water to wash the floor, rather than a dirty mop and cold water. They could sweep and clean the communal windows and doors."*

A handful of residents also suggested that there needs to be further checks put in place to ensure the cleaning happens.

> *"This should be improved by a lot more stop-checks; cleaning needs to be done from top to bottom more regularly."*

11.2 Qualitative activity

When comparing with the quantitative findings, residents and leaseholders who took part in the focus groups are more negative in their views regarding the cleaning of communal areas and ground maintenance.

Turning to communal areas in particular, most participants are dissatisfied with the cleaning service provided and suggest this does not meet their needs. Residents provide examples of a range of issues including drainage problems outside their blocks, cleaners failing to clean to a satisfactory level, overflowing dustbins and concerns with the conditions of stairways and lifts. Examples of each have been provided below:

> **Drainage problems**: "*The drains and the cleaning service is not a unified service. Some places it happens. Some it doesn't. I think it would be good to have a unified service for checking the drains, after a certain time, whether once a month or whenever, because that way, you know, everybody will get a service. Where I live, it's not a block of flats. It's not an estate. t is just a small street. Sometimes you can smell the drains coming through your bathroom window. I have to pour stuff down the bath to clear it."* Retired resident

> **Frustration with the limited or lack of cleaning service**: *"We have no cleaners, nothing. We've requested for cleaning, and gardening. Brent Council sent letters to six people. They said, 'It's less than 50%,' so they cannot do it. Six flats, five leaseholders, one Council tenant. Three leaseholders, they're renting the place, so the place is like shit. Nobody cares for cleaning. There's a cat doing her job everywhere. When you go*

to the main entrance for the main door, it's stinking. The people who come all the time, they leave rubbish there. Nobody comes and cleans it." Leaseholders

Overflowing dustbins: *A lot of the residents where I live, the overflowing dustbins, the dirt in the corridor doesn't bother them. They don't think twice about it. This is my home, I don't see it as a block of Council flats. I see that as a place where I live. It's my home. I want it spotless. I want to be able to invite my family to come over.* Resident from disability forum

Concerns with the conditions of stairways and lifts: *"You shouldn't be paying a service charge and you're walking in your corridor and your shoes are sticking on the ground. That should not happen. They're supposed to clean the lift everyday and in front of the lift and in the corridor. They don't clean the lift at all now. I went shopping one Monday morning and the lift and in front of the lift was covered in blood. I went back inside and rang them. He asked me if I knew where the blood came from. I said no and he said he'd send someone over. They didn't send anyone until Thursday. Some of the residents tried to clean it up themselves and made it worse."* Tenant not living on an estate

In some cases the issues identified with the estate services are the responsibility of Brent Council however residents are associating them BHP. Further communication / clarification to residents may be needed to allow them to distinguish between the services provided by BHP and Brent Council.

Similar comments are made in relation to the grounds maintenance service. Residents suggest they see very little maintenance being carried out on the grounds and when it is carried out it is not completed to a satisfactory standard.

One retired participant provided an example of reporting an issue with overgrowing trees in their area but their area officer failed to resolve it. This again refers back to the comments made about BHP listening to resident's views but not acting on them.

"Our area officer comes around and she's promised she'll do the trees and she hasn't touched them. You know. Because the trees are all growing down, down, down, at the back of our flats. She approached a young mother who has four children. They never touched a tree since February. So as for helpful, I couldn't tell you. They just write it down they are going to do it and they never do it." Retired resident

Residents living on an estate raise their concerns around the litter found in communal gardens. They describe their area as being quiet and a pleasant place to live with generations of families living in the area however, feel this has deteriorated over the years due to the lack of grounds maintenance service by BHP.

"I don't think Brent are doing anything. We have three communal dustbins. People come in and throw their rubbish in there. It's up to the brim or it's pouring out. Rats come through. It's horrible, it's disgusting. Brent need to do something about how they're maintaining the area. Why is all the litter going over here? I'm pretty sure those who are coming to clean have had it up to here as well." Resident living on an estate

> *"I live on a nice estate. The estate is really, really nice. Quiet and everything. Upkeep of the grounds was nice when I first moved in. Over the last three years it's, like, you can see, you know when they say the budget's come into effect and you can see the lack of maintenance in the place. They don't come as often as they did. We are still getting charged and they've increased our charges."* Resident living on an estate

Leaseholders make reference to the grounds maintenance service being sub-contracted and this having a knock-on-effect on the quality of the service received. It is stated that as the work is not being checked by BHP, it is not being completed to a high standard.

> *"An example would be grounds maintenance in terms of hedges, weeds, etc. The contractors came, cut the hedges, and they only did half a job. When I complained about this, I was told that, 'The hedges are cut back to the shape that they were inherited in.' You've got a load of hedges that are overgrown and in a mess. They will trim them back to that overgrown shape. Why isn't the job done properly? Why aren't the contractors asked to do the job properly? You're benchmarked from a correct position, and then they've got to maintain that position. Why am I phoning them up, the Council up, and telling them the job hasn't been completed? Why isn't there checks in place, that means Brent Council is monitoring their contractors? That's an issue I have." Leaseholder*

Overall residents and leaseholders are generally dissatisfied with the cleaning of communal areas and ground maintenance service they receive from BHP. The main concern is these services are not carried out frequently enough and when carried the quality of work is not to a high standard. Further to this residents are particularly dissatisfied that after these works are carried out they have to contact BHP to either inform them about the poor quality of the work or make a complaint.

As found with the results of the quantitative survey, there appears to have been a recent decline in the quality of the grounds maintenance service.

> *"Upkeep of the grounds was nice when I first however in over the last three years it's deteriorated and you can see that the budget's come into effect and you can see the lack of maintenance in the place. They don't come as often as they did. We are still getting charged and they've increased our charges".* Residents living on an estate

In terms of improving this service going forward, the key suggestion, particularly by leaseholders is to ensure quality checks are carried out for any services that have been sub-contracted. The benefit of this would be the maintenance work would be carried out to a better standard and fewer complaints made by residents.

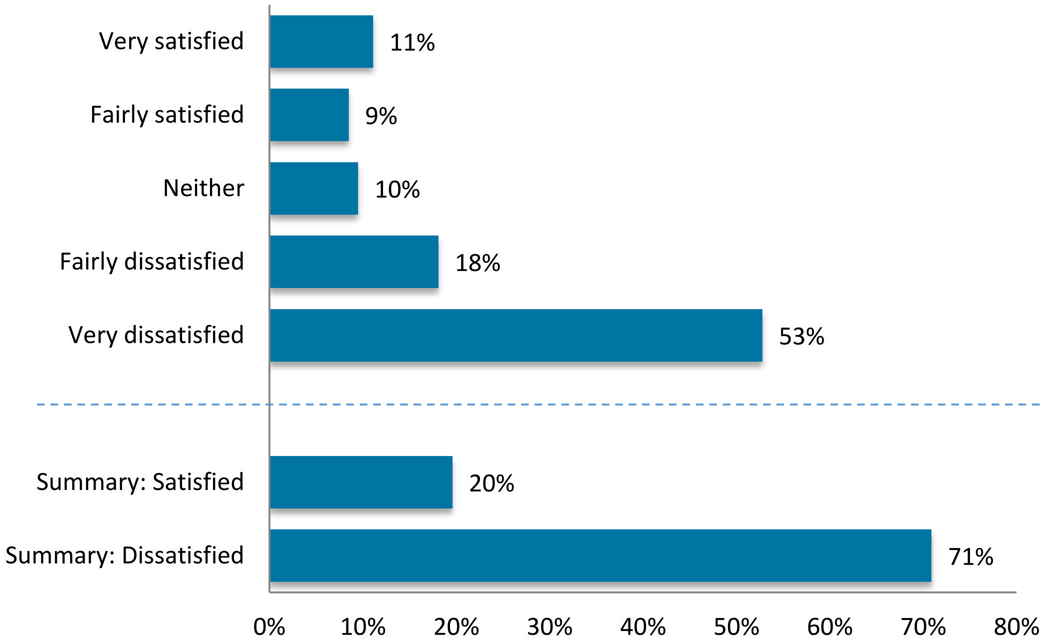
12 Dealing with anti-social behaviour

12.1 Quantitative opinion survey

12.1.1 Final outcome of anti-social behaviour complaints

Respondents in the quantitative opinion survey who stated that they reported anti-social behaviour (ASB) to BHP in the past 12 months (17%) were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the final outcome of their ASB complaint. Just one in five residents who stated they reported ASB in the past 12 months were satisfied with the outcome of the complaint. By contrast seven in ten (71%) indicated some degree of dissatisfaction, with half (53%) stating they are very dissatisfied.

Figure 28: Q14. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the final outcome of your anti-social behaviour complaint?

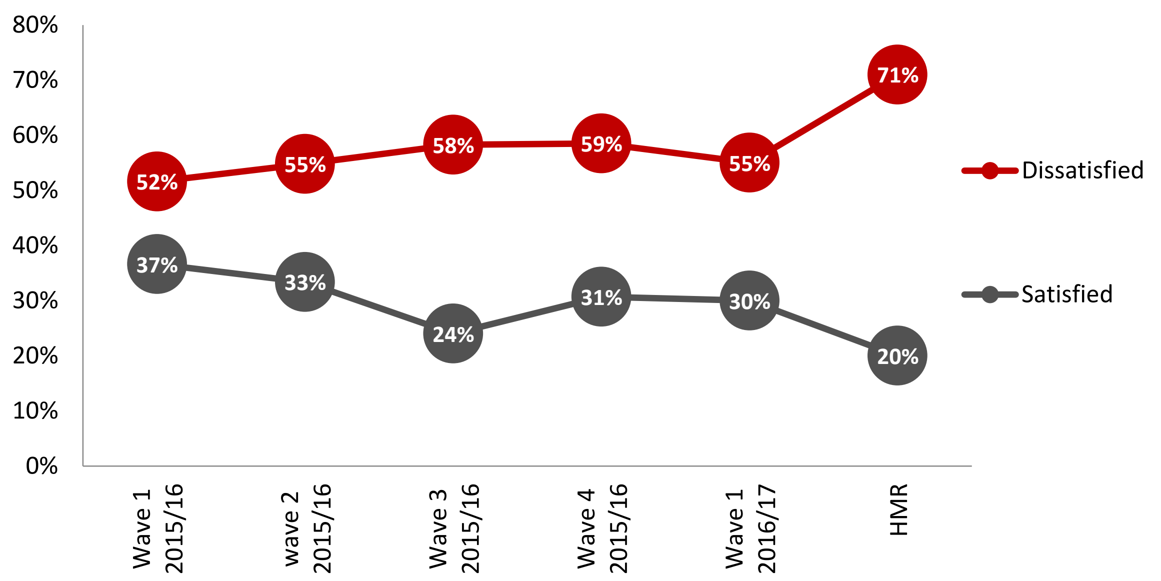


Unweighted base = 99

12.1.1.1 Trend analysis

Although due to the relatively low proportion of residents reporting ASB this trend data should be treated as indicative only, the findings overleaf indicate that opinions on the final outcomes of the ASB complaints indicated in this wave are worse than as found previously.

Figure 29: Final outcome of the anti-social behaviour complaint

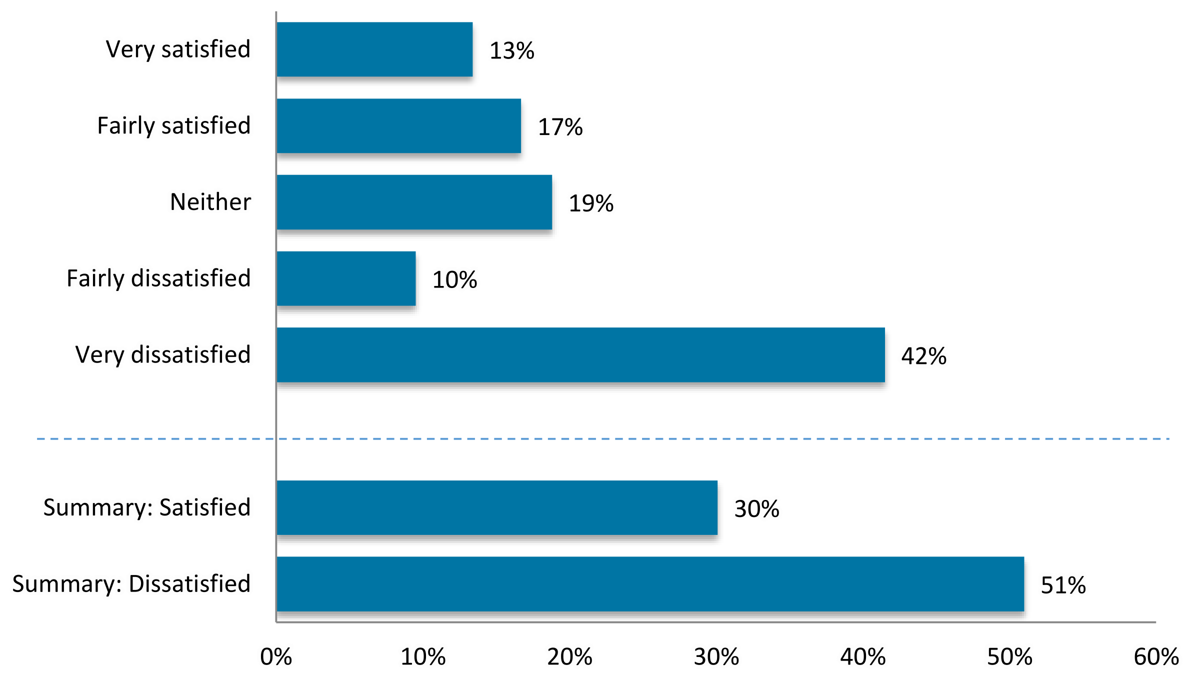


Unweighted sample bases: 2015/16 = 351; wave 1 2016/17 = 81; wave 4 2015/16 = 71; wave 3 2015/16 = 84, wave 2 2015/16 = 91; wave 1 2015/16 = 105

12.1.2 The way the anti-social behaviour complaint is dealt with

Respondents who reported ASB to BHP in the past 12 months were also asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the way the ASB complaint was dealt with. Although slightly more positive than the previous measure, just three in ten residents who reported ASB (30%) indicated they were satisfied with the way their complaint was dealt, whilst half (51%) stated that they were dissatisfied.

Figure 30: Q15. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your anti-social behaviour complaint was dealt with?

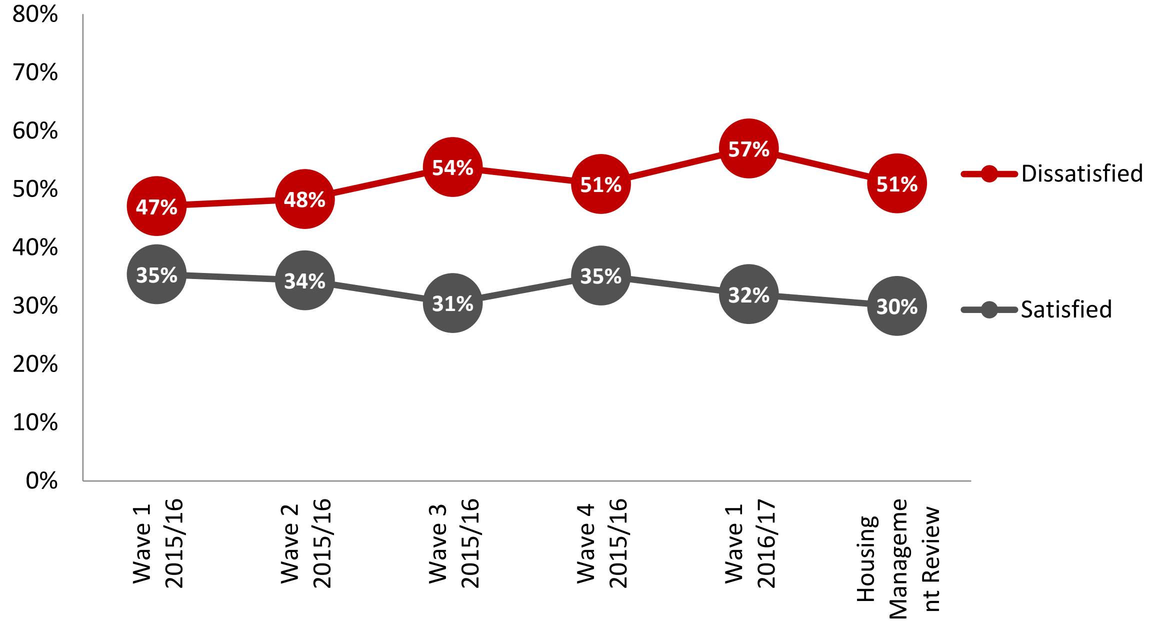


Unweighted base = 99

12.1.2.1 *Trend analysis*

Comparison with previous findings suggests that opinions on the way ASB complaints are dealt with by BHP have remained unaltered.

Figure 31: Satisfaction with the way the anti-social behaviour complaint was dealt with



Unweighted sample bases: 2015/16 = 351; wave 1 2016/17 = 81; wave 4 2015/16 = 71; wave 3 2015/16 = 84, wave 2 2015/16 = 91; wave 1 2015/16 = 105

12.1.3 Improvements stated in the quantitative opinion survey

All respondents who stated the dealing with ASB should be a priority for improvement were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback as to what needs to be improved. A high proportion of comments from respondents related to the prevention of ASB occurring by having a higher visible presence of either BHP officers or the police, whilst others suggested the increased use of CCTV could help to improve the evidence collected on perpetrators:

> *"Wardens and police need to be around; teenagers are putting music on late in the night. They are screaming and shouting most nights."*

> *"They should have people check the streets at different times and set up a camera on the streets to find out who's doing what. Camera recording could capture antisocial behaviour from people from the pub."*

> *"There should be CCTV cameras or a guard to watch around the estate, to see if anyone who does not live here is trying to hang around or get up to things they shouldn't be doing."*

Where respondents mentioned they had previously contacted BHP in relation to ASB, the comments made suggest there needs to be an improvement in the support / helpfulness / advice provided by officers:

> *"For the past three years, it has been ongoing. I rang Brent, but Brent sent noise forms, which I completed and sent back to them. I was told I will be updated, that they will get in touch with me every fortnight and Brent will be speaking with the other tenant. However, they didn't do anything and there was non-stop noise. I called 101 and they gave the number of the local police; they said either put up with it or move out."*

> *"When we call to complain to the wardens, we are told to go and see how many people are causing the disturbances. I should not have been put in that dangerous position."*

> *"I think that there should be strict, clear rules and penalties on loud noises, music, shouting, etc., especially after a certain time. I did complain, and was expected to explore the sounds myself, which is not a safe option. There should be rules on smoking. They should stop people from smoking out of their windows and in their balcony, due to the smoke travelling up to my flat."*

12.2 Qualitative activity

Residents were asked whether they have reported anti-social behaviour in their area in the last 12 months, and it became clear that some of them have. Residents noted issues such as noise pollution, fly tipping and vandalism.

> *"They were playing football on our road at about two o'clock in the morning. I think I called 1234 and they said somebody was going to come."* Tenant not living on an estate

> *"I had a neighbour that was so disgusting he had prostitution in his house. 20 or 30 of them came and blocked me in my flat by my patio by leaving a bicycle against it. I came out and threw them in the road. I called the police twice. Woke up 3:00am there were 27 people in my garden... The third time at 3:00am I went out there and they were out there and I lost my temper. I'm 74. I walked into my garden and said to them, 'Do me a favour, I've called the police twice already and I don't want to do it again, it's 3:00am and I want to sleep.' Five of them started to rush me. I had my table leg behind me and I went out to meet them. Then the police came. They thought I was having a heart attack because I couldn't stop shaking, they had to call an ambulance. The reason I was so aggravated, from April to July I got fourteen nights' sleep."* Resident from disability forum

> *"My problem is about my next-door neighbour and antisocial behaviour. She is a bipolar patient. She has episodes where she goes into a manic state and depressive state. When she slips into a manic state it's terrible. It's a nuisance to the neighbours*

around her and she can be quite dangerous, to herself and the people around her. Last year she pulled a knife on me. This problem is ongoing and I'm trying to address it correctly to the antisocial team. My understanding is that they're not doing much about it. She needs to be taken care of, or hospitalised. Basically she's not fit to live with the community." Resident from disability forum

"You've got a lot of people who are not leaseholders, who are tenants, who just come along and throw junk on the floor. The cleaner has cleaned it, he has done a great job, they come and throw rubbish on the floor. You've got people who are tenants, renting, decide to fiddle with a screwdriver on the intercom system, and the intercom system breaks down. Then you get a service charge." Leaseholder

Residents contacted BHP's Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Team and/or the police to report the issues they had in their area. Although residents did not draw attention to any difficulties in reporting the problem, some did highlight the lack of response and action taken.

"They'll say they'll try and do something about it, but they don't bother. They won't call. I think they have something called 'Neighbourhood Watch', guys who go around in uniform. If there's any trouble, these guys will be too scared, and they'll run off." Leaseholder

"They have these people in place, in post, they get paid. They come in the pub, we watch them, not just me, a lot of the residents. You see the car coming, go into the small car park, they sit there on their mobile phone fifteen, twenty minutes, and then they drive off. They don't do any walk about, for example, up the stairs if there's anyone smoking, things like that. They are not effective. They are there, but they don't do the job they're supposed to do. Who's monitoring them? What report do they have to write?" Leaseholder

"Say somebody's playing loud music now, they don't come when the loud music is blaring and giving you a problem, they come another time. Some of these people who do make a noise, they're very clever at it. You find that it's a long time before anything can happen, because they don't really hear what you're dealing with." Resident from disability forum

Generally, residents that have experienced issues with anti-social behaviour feel it is a long and drawn out process, and stress that a quicker response is needed. The general feel is that residents are not informed of the progress of their complaint and that anti-social behaviour needs to be taken more seriously.

"They do act on it, but I think that it could be quicker. Sometimes we leave things to get worse, or for something worse to happen, before action is taken." Tenant not living on an estate

"Nobody has contacted me after I made the complaint. Since last August." Tenant not living on an estate

"We did have a bit of an incident and then there was some people who had some noise disturbance, but it's a long drawn out thing that really happens and it causes a lot of friction between neighbours and things like that. I just think they could manage it a bit better." Resident from disability forum

One vulnerable resident had become very distressed by the ASB issues that they had been through, although acknowledging that BHP were looking into the situation for her, there was still a feeling that she didn't know what was going on which had left her frustrated.

"The trouble makers come here and they make trouble, I can't be in peace they bang through the window when I'm asleep. I've got evidence and proof, they're doing nothing about that I'm unhappy with that". Vulnerable resident

One resident explained that it is often people dwelling in the properties for short periods of time that cause the offence, and as such there should be a clause within the lease that you cannot rent out the property.

"In the block I'm in, an awful lot of the people that bought their flat now rent them out. That causes problems in that you don't have a stable community. These people are there for a short period of time, and if you're not a member of the community, you're not going to particularly look after the area you're in, or particularly care about the neighbours. It's less likely to happen. If BHP could have more of a comeback on leaseholders who are renting out their flats, I think it would be very useful." Leaseholder

13 Advice and support

13.1 Improvements stated in the quantitative opinion survey

All respondents who stated that the advice and support provided by BHP should be a priority for improvement were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback as to what needs to be improved. Very few respondents mentioned specific advice and support that they would like from BHP, with the majority of residents stating that there needs to be improved communication and information provided by BHP about the advice and support available:

"We need to know what is going on with the community: to be alerted on courses and social events available."

13.2 Qualitative activity

Participants were asked to provide information on what support and advice they currently receive from their landlords and whether this meets their needs. The only type of information participant's recall is receiving an annual letter about their rent or a letter to pay their Council tax. A few residents mention there is information about support and advice on the back of these letters but this is not apparent amongst others.

Participants were then asked in what ways they think the support and advice available to them could be improved.

Retired residents suggest BHP need to provide more support by making adaptations to their home so it is more easily accessible and supporting them with getting around e.g. food shopping. There is a concern that some elderly residents are not as mobile therefore they need more support in and outside their home.

"I think they have to look after the elderly. When you are on your own and there is something to be done and they are expecting you to do it, no, you can't do it. They should send someone from the housing department to see what needs to be done. It is support that needs to be given to the elderly. When you live on your own and they know you are living on your own, they need to support you." Retired resident

Retired residents also feel it is important for BHP to provide a service that is specific to individual needs. One participant in particular raised their concerns with having little time with their carer.

"They need to look to see what your needs are. There is no point in sending a carer for half an hour. Fifteen minutes of that is spent in travelling. What can anybody do in fifteen minutes? Make you a cup of tea? Some of us don't want a bloody cup of tea. We want something else. We want other things but there is not enough time for the carer to do it so you are left without it because they can't do it in the time, and sometimes they don't get a carer at all. I think they should look at providing us with walk-in showers. We need a bath. We have to have a bath. I'm struggling to get into the bath." Retired resident

When prompted, none of the vulnerable residents believed that they needed any further support other than the support that they are provided by social workers.

Residents were asked if they would be interested in employment or healthcare advice from BHP in the future. Most of those living on an estate suggest they already have a service where they can go for advice on jobs, and if not there, they have access to their local job centre.

> *"Brent provides that anyway. They employ somebody to go onto the estates and they've got the boiler house. Where I am they had the Boiler House, it's now called the Living Room."* Resident living on an estate

It has been recommended, to improve the advice and support available to residents, BHP should offer regular skills workshops or employment workshops around apprenticeships for young people. It is noted by some that information is available online but there is not anything specific from BHP.

> *"I know they do IT training and they offer regular skills workshops. It would be nice to do some kind of link up with apprenticeships for the youth. So, you see the residents themselves, the younger ones that are not going to college or university, to have the option to get some sort of skills training. That would be nice."* Resident not living on an estate

Another suggestion is to have regular newsletters with information and support available to residents or encourage individuals to visit their local library. One participant mentions BHP has a lot of services available for residents however they need to do more to promote and raise awareness of these facilities.

> *"I think it's good that they get people to come into the library, once again it's that information, because sometimes if you're going through the library you realise Brent Community Centre are here, all in one, but it's not on the website."* Resident not living on an estate

Appendix A: Focus group stimulus material 1

Polite Valued Approachable Relevant

Important Inclusive Decisive Caring

Fair Respectful Helpful Distant

Honest Old-fashioned Friendly

Listens Behind the times

Irrelevant Hard to reach Elitist Supportive

Welcoming Engaging Informative

Appendix B: Focus group stimulus material 2

Service	Priority
Keeping residents informed	
The overall quality of your home	
Listening to residents views and acting upon them	
Repairs and maintenance	
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	
Your neighbourhood as a place to live	
Value for money for your rent (and service charges)	

Appendix C: Focus group stimulus material 3

Service offered to Council tenants / Leaseholders	Rank
Keeping residents informed	
Involving residents and acting upon their views	
Level of customer service provided by staff	
The overall quality of your home	
Repairs and maintenance service	
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	
Providing support and advice to residents	
Cleaning of communal areas	
Grounds maintenance such as grass cutting	

Appendix D: Statement of Terms

Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2008) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management ISO 27001:2013.

Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

With more than 25 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

Innovation and development is very much at the heart of our business, and considerable attention is paid to the utilisation of the most up to date technologies and information systems to ensure that market and customer intelligence is widely shared.

Appendix 4 - HouseMark Benchmarking Report

See overleaf

Brent Housing Partnership

Bespoke Report

2014-2016

October 2016

Carol Hyatt

HouseMark

Contents

1. Introduction

This report has been produced by HouseMark on behalf of Bent Housing Partnership. It compares BHP performance across 11 headline indicators with five different peer groups

The report provides comparisons for three financial years: 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16.

The 11 indicators covered in this report are:

Percentage of respondents very or fairly satisfied with the service provided (GN & HfOP

- Percentage of respondents very or fairly satisfied with the service provided (Leasehold)
- Rent collected from current and former tenants as a percentage of the rent due (excluding arrears brought forward)
- Current tenant rent arrears at the end of the year as a percentage of rent due (excluding voids)
- Average re-let time in days (standard re-lets)
- Rent loss due to empty properties (voids) as a percentage of rent due
- Average number of calendar days taken to complete repairs
- Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made
- Percentage of repairs completed at the first visit
- Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate
- Total cost per property of housing management

BHP's actual figures and medians for the five peer groups used for comparative purposes are colour-coded throughout the report as follows:

Colour	Peer group	Sample
	BHP actual data	1
	London ALMOs	11
	London Councils	12
	London HAs	38
	National Providers	406
	Bespoke group	21

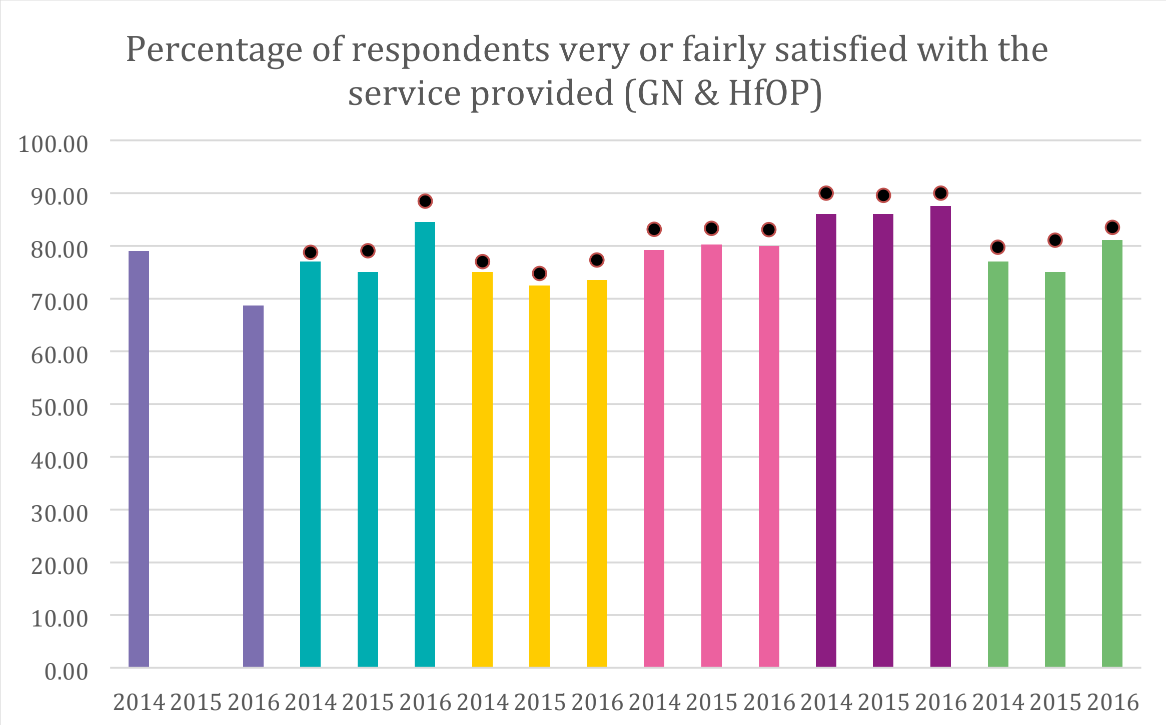
The data is displayed in bar chart format. Peer group bars represent the median performance for the peer group. Peer group upper quartiles are also displayed on each chart by a dot.

Each chart is accompanied by a data table, which also shows BHPs quartile when compared to each peer group.

Previous year's cost figures have not been uplifted in line with inflation, and reflect the actual cost for that year. However, for organisations in London and the South East we apply an area cost adjustment to reflect the generally higher costs experienced in these regions.

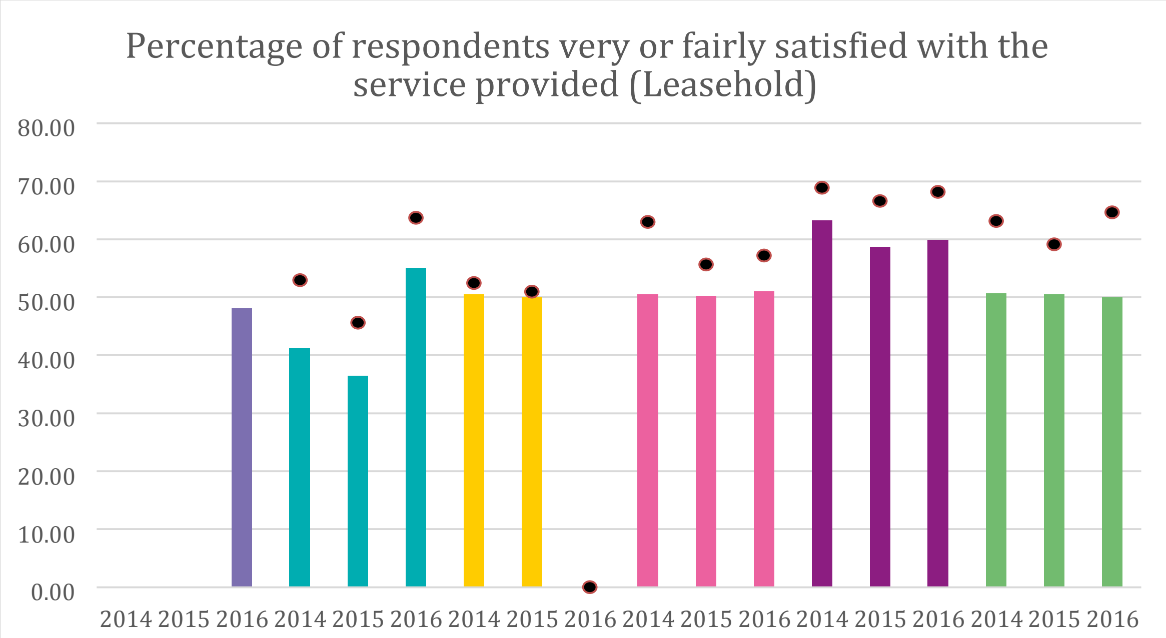
Comparisons can be made with or without inflation and / or area cost adjustment by using our online reporting tool.

2. Percentage of respondents very or fairly satisfied with the service provided (GN & HfOP)



Dataset	BHP/M	UQ Peer	BHP Quartile
BHP 2013-14	79.00		
BHP 2014-15	-		
BHP 2015-16	68.70		
London ALMOs 2013-14	77.00	78.75	Q1
London ALMOs 2014-15	75.00	79.05	-
London ALMOs 2015-16	84.55	88.50	Q4
London Councils 2013-14	75.00	77.00	Q1
London Councils 2014-15	72.50	74.75	-
London Councils 2015-16	73.50	77.30	Q4
London HAs 2013-14	79.20	83.10	Q3
London HAs 2014-15	80.20	83.33	-
London HAs 2015-16	80.00	83.10	Q4
National Providers 2013-14	86.00	90.00	Q4
National Providers 2014-15	86.00	89.58	-
National Providers 2015-16	87.50	90.00	Q4
Bespoke group 2013-14	77.00	79.75	Q2
Bespoke group 2014-15	75.00	81.10	-
Bespoke group 2015-16	81.10	83.50	Q4

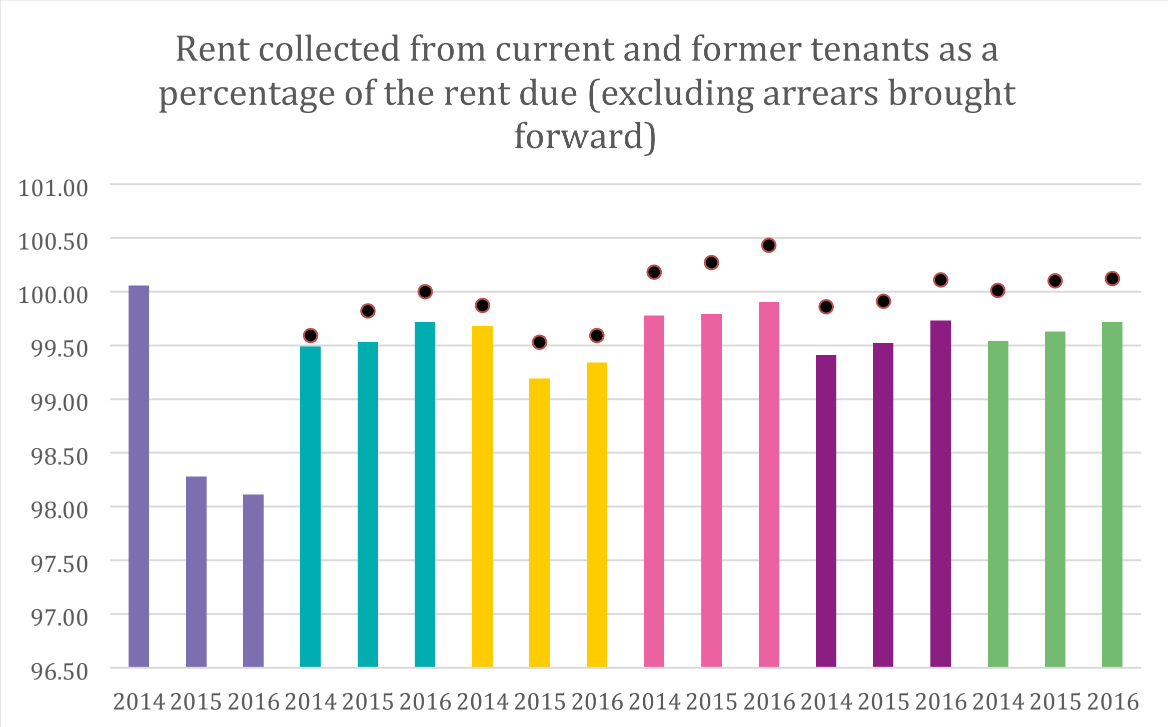
3. Percentage of respondents very or fairly satisfied with the service provided (Leasehold)



Dataset	BHP/M	UQ Peer	BHP Quartile
BHP 2013-14	-		
BHP 2014-15	-		
BHP 2015-16	48.10		
London ALMOs 2013-14	41.20	52.98	-
London ALMOs 2014-15	36.50	45.63	-
London ALMOs 2015-16	55.10	63.70	Q3
London Councils 2013-14	50.50	52.50	-
London Councils 2014-15	50.00	51.00	-
London Councils 2015-16 *	N/A	N/A	N/A
London HAs 2013-14	50.50	63.00	-
London HAs 2014-15	50.25	55.70	-
London HAs 2015-16	51.05	57.18	Q3
National Providers 2013-14	63.30	68.90	-
National Providers 2014-15	58.75	66.63	-
National Providers 2015-16	59.90	68.18	Q4
Bespoke group 2013-14	50.75	63.15	-
Bespoke group 2014-15	50.50	59.12	-
Bespoke group 2015-16	50.00	64.67	Q3

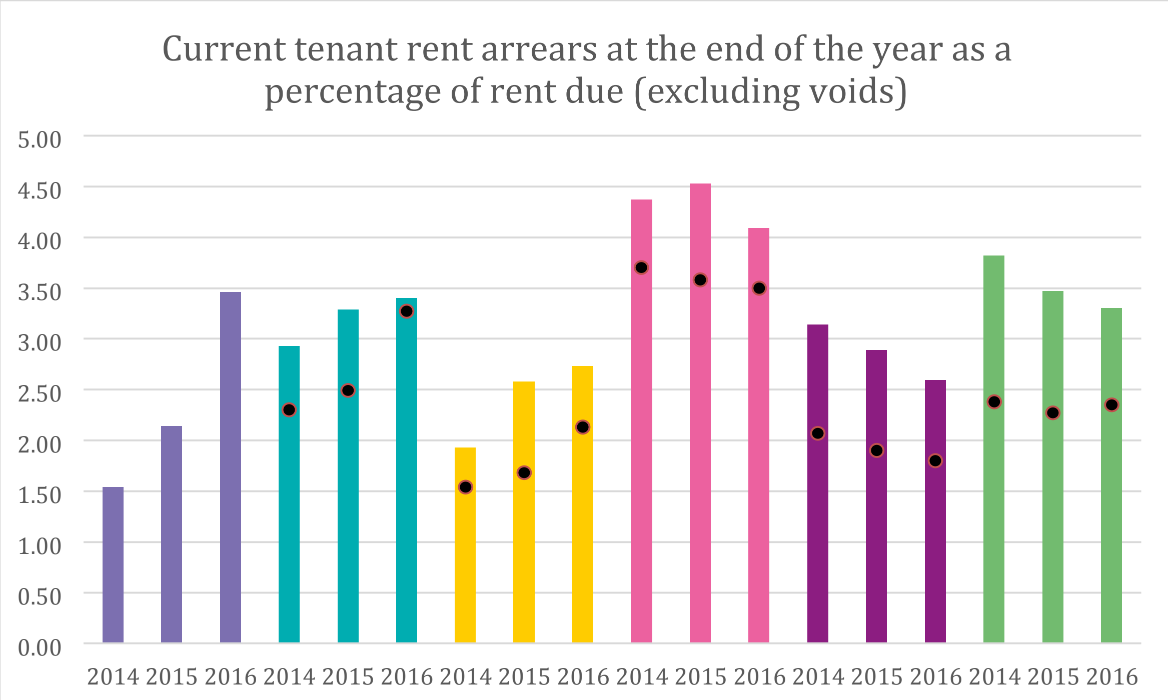
* Please note, only two organisations within this peer group have provided data for this measure therefore quartiles cannot be calculated

4. Rent collected from current and former tenants as a percentage of the rent due (excluding arrears brought forward)



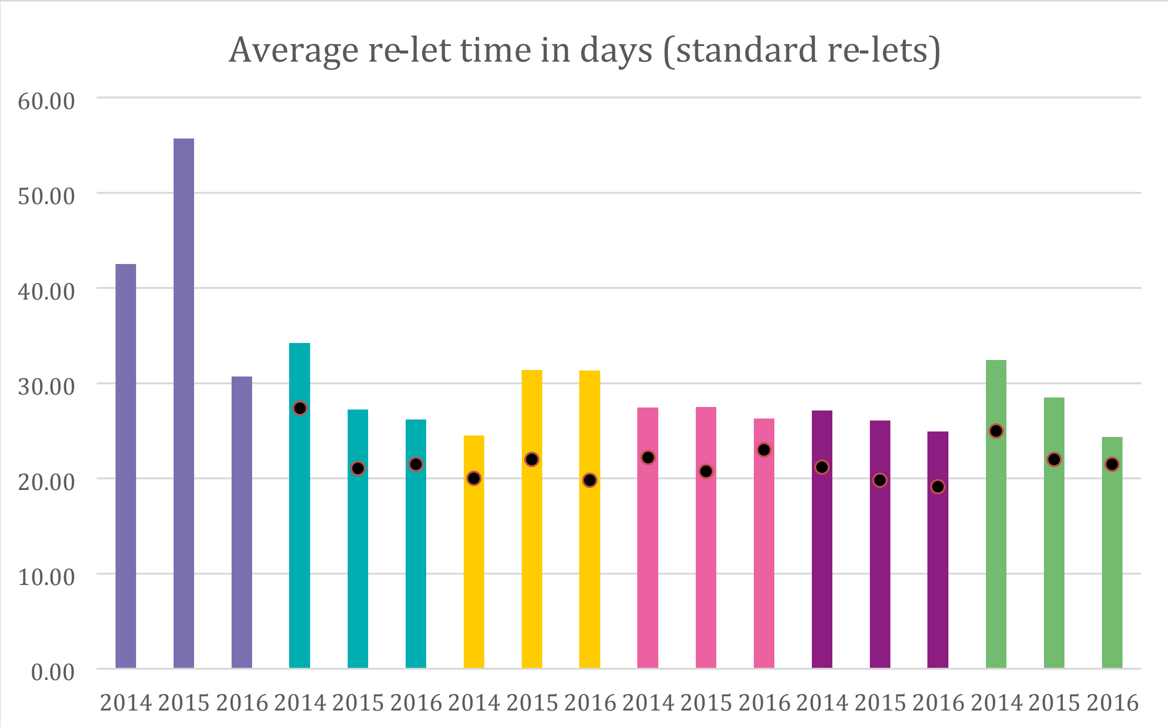
Dataset	BHP/M	UQ Peer	BHP Quartile
BHP 2013-14	100.06		
BHP 2014-15	98.28		
BHP 2015-16	98.11		
London ALMOs 2013-14	99.49	99.59	Q1
London ALMOs 2014-15	99.53	99.82	Q4
London ALMOs 2015-16	99.72	100.00	Q4
London Councils 2013-14	99.68	99.87	Q1
London Councils 2014-15	99.19	99.53	Q4
London Councils 2015-16	99.34	99.59	Q4
London HAs 2013-14	99.78	100.18	Q2
London HAs 2014-15	99.79	100.27	Q4
London HAs 2015-16	99.90	100.43	Q4
National Providers 2013-14	99.41	99.86	Q1
National Providers 2014-15	99.52	99.91	Q4
National Providers 2015-16	99.73	100.11	Q4
Bespoke group 2013-14	99.54	100.01	Q1
Bespoke group 2014-15	99.63	100.10	Q4
Bespoke group 2015-16	99.72	100.12	Q4

5. Current tenant rent arrears at the end of the year as a percentage of rent due (excluding voids)



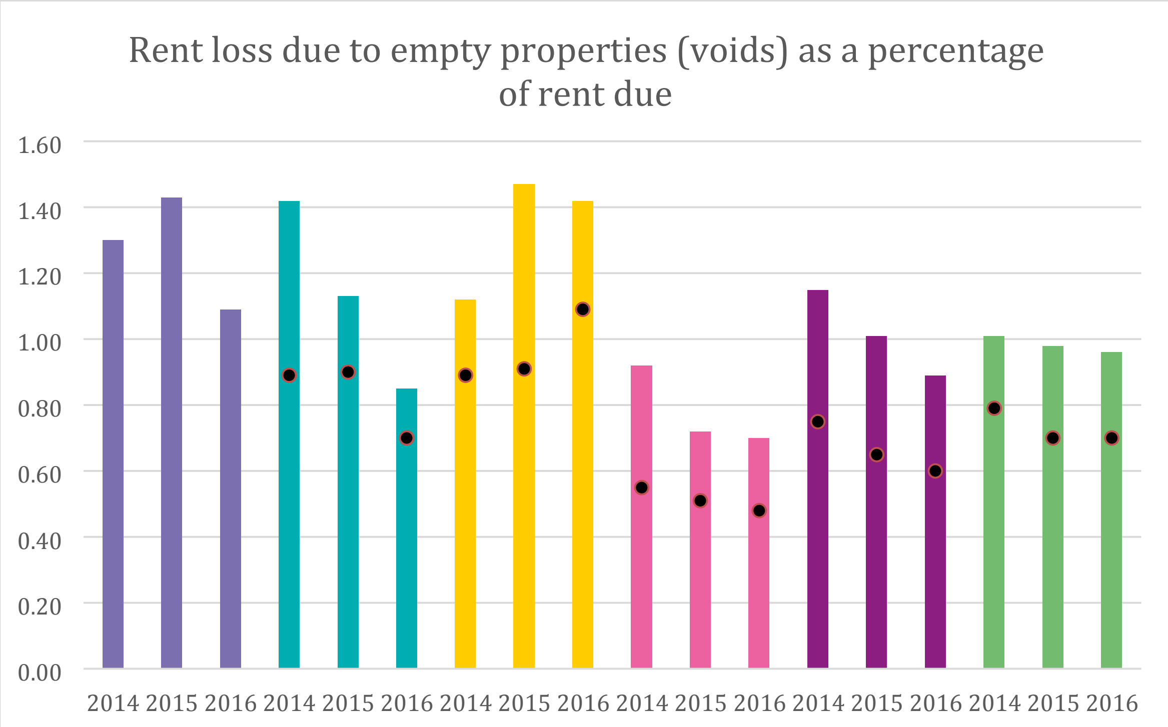
Dataset	BHP/M	UQ Peer	BHP Quartile
BHP 2013-14	1.54		
BHP 2014-15	2.14		
BHP 2015-16	3.46		
London ALMOs 2013-14	2.93	2.30	Q1
London ALMOs 2014-15	3.29	2.49	Q1
London ALMOs 2015-16	3.40	3.27	Q4
London Councils 2013-14	1.93	1.54	Q1
London Councils 2014-15	2.58	1.68	Q2
London Councils 2015-16	2.73	2.13	Q3
London HAs 2013-14	4.37	3.70	Q1
London HAs 2014-15	4.53	3.58	Q1
London HAs 2015-16	4.09	3.50	Q1
National Providers 2013-14	3.14	2.07	Q1
National Providers 2014-15	2.89	1.90	Q2
National Providers 2015-16	2.59	1.80	Q3
Bespoke group 2013-14	3.82	2.38	Q1
Bespoke group 2014-15	3.47	2.27	Q1
Bespoke group 2015-16	3.30	2.35	Q3

6. Average re-let time in days (standard re-lets)



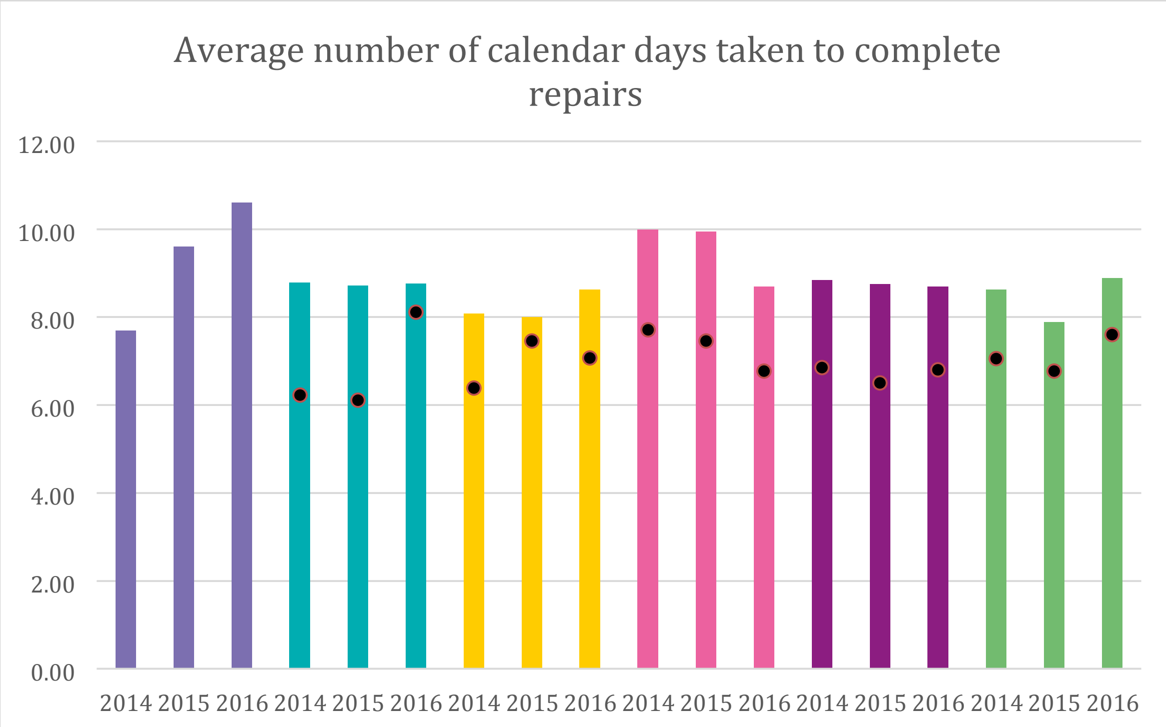
Dataset	BHP/M	UQ Peer	BHP Quartile
BHP 2013-14	42.50		
BHP 2014-15	55.70		
BHP 2015-16	30.70		
London ALMOs 2013-14	34.19	27.38	Q3
London ALMOs 2014-15	27.23	21.05	Q4
London ALMOs 2015-16	26.20	21.48	Q4
London Councils 2013-14	24.53	20.00	Q4
London Councils 2014-15	31.37	22.00	Q4
London Councils 2015-16	31.35	19.81	Q2
London HAs 2013-14	27.43	22.20	Q4
London HAs 2014-15	27.49	20.74	Q4
London HAs 2015-16	26.30	23.00	Q3
National Providers 2013-14	27.13	21.20	Q4
National Providers 2014-15	26.10	19.80	Q4
National Providers 2015-16	24.95	19.13	Q3
Bespoke group 2013-14	32.43	25.00	Q4
Bespoke group 2014-15	28.50	22.00	Q4
Bespoke group 2015-16	24.36	21.48	Q4

7. Rent loss due to empty properties (voids) as a percentage of rent due



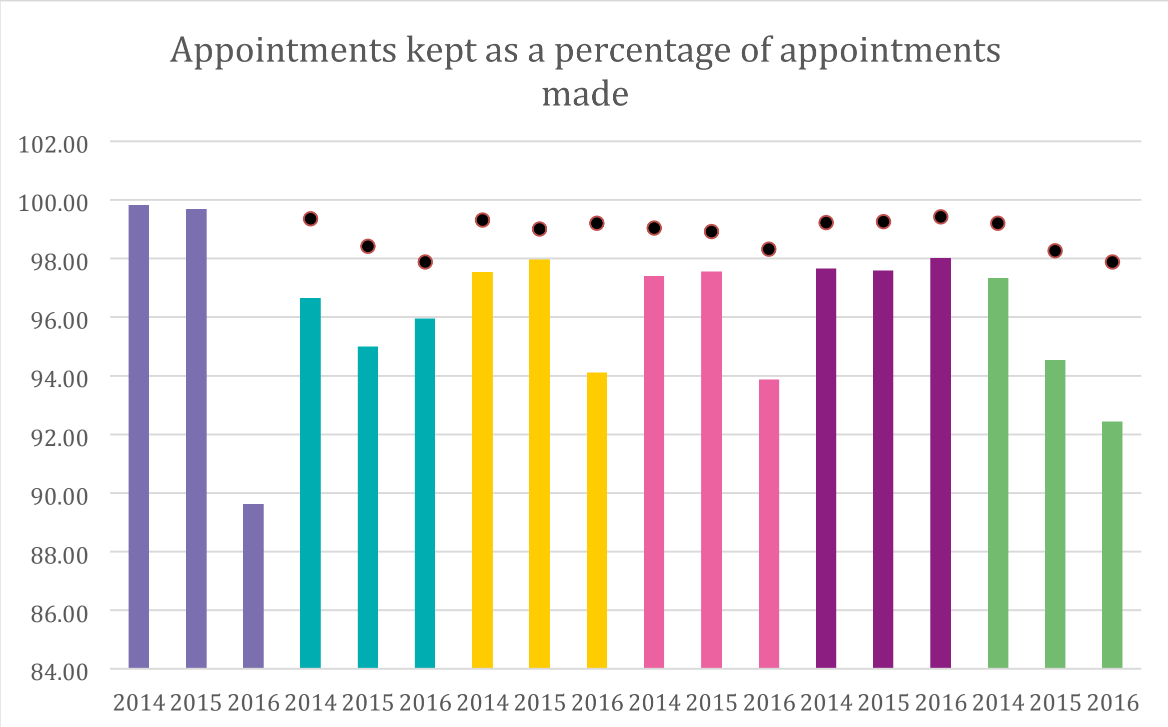
Dataset	BHP/M	UQ Peer	BHP Quartile
BHP 2013-14	1.30		
BHP 2014-15	1.43		
BHP 2015-16	1.09		
London ALMOs 2013-14	1.42	0.89	Q2
London ALMOs 2014-15	1.13	0.90	Q3
London ALMOs 2015-16	0.85	0.70	Q4
London Councils 2013-14	1.12	0.89	Q3
London Councils 2014-15	1.47	0.91	Q2
London Councils 2015-16	1.42	1.09	Q1
London HAs 2013-14	0.92	0.55	Q4
London HAs 2014-15	0.72	0.51	Q4
London HAs 2015-16	0.70	0.48	Q4
National Providers 2013-14	1.15	0.75	Q3
National Providers 2014-15	1.01	0.65	Q3
National Providers 2015-16	0.89	0.60	Q3
Bespoke group 2013-14	1.01	0.79	Q3
Bespoke group 2014-15	0.98	0.70	Q3
Bespoke group 2015-16	0.96	0.70	Q3

8. Average number of calendar days taken to complete repairs



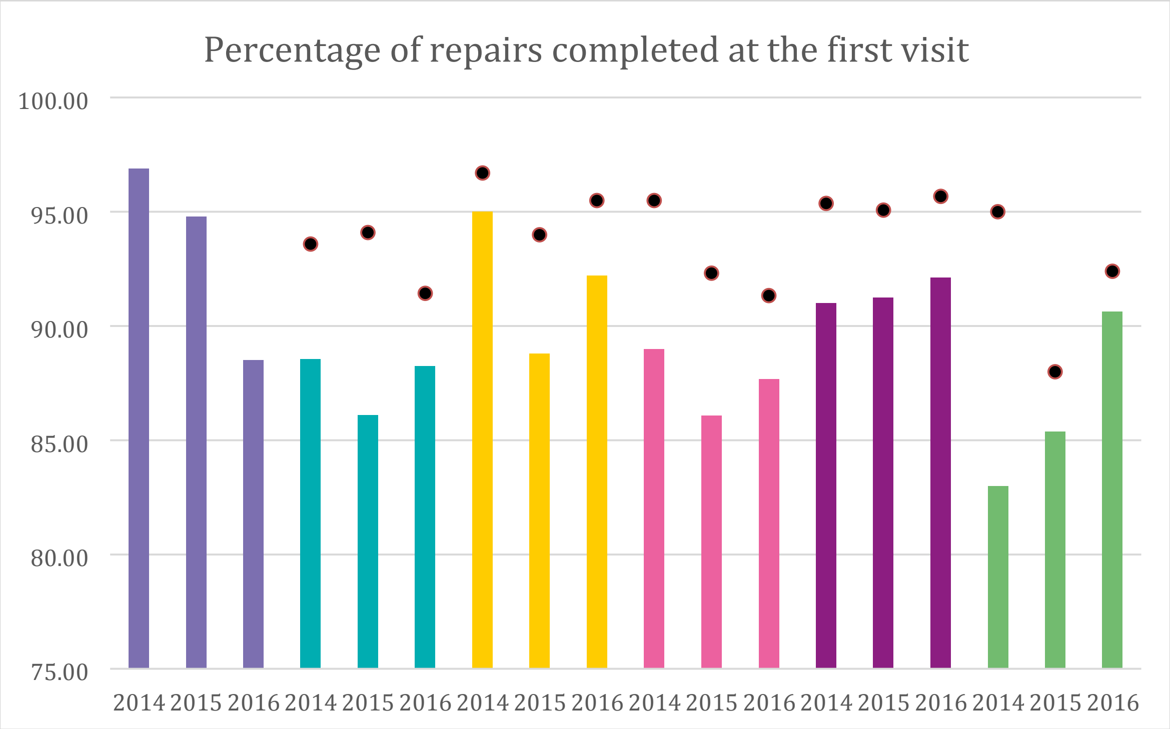
Dataset	BHP/M	UQ Peer	BHP Quartile
BHP 2013-14	7.70		
BHP 2014-15	9.61		
BHP 2015-16	10.60		
London ALMOs 2013-14	8.79	6.23	Q2
London ALMOs 2014-15	8.72	6.11	Q3
London ALMOs 2015-16	8.77	8.11	Q3
London Councils 2013-14	8.08	6.39	Q2
London Councils 2014-15	8.00	7.46	Q3
London Councils 2015-16	8.63	7.07	Q4
London HAs 2013-14	10.00	7.71	Q1
London HAs 2014-15	9.95	7.46	Q2
London HAs 2015-16	8.70	6.77	Q3
National Providers 2013-14	8.84	6.85	Q2
National Providers 2014-15	8.75	6.50	Q3
National Providers 2015-16	8.70	6.80	Q3
Bespoke group 2013-14	8.63	7.06	Q2
Bespoke group 2014-15	7.89	6.77	Q4
Bespoke group 2015-16	8.89	7.60	Q3

9. Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made



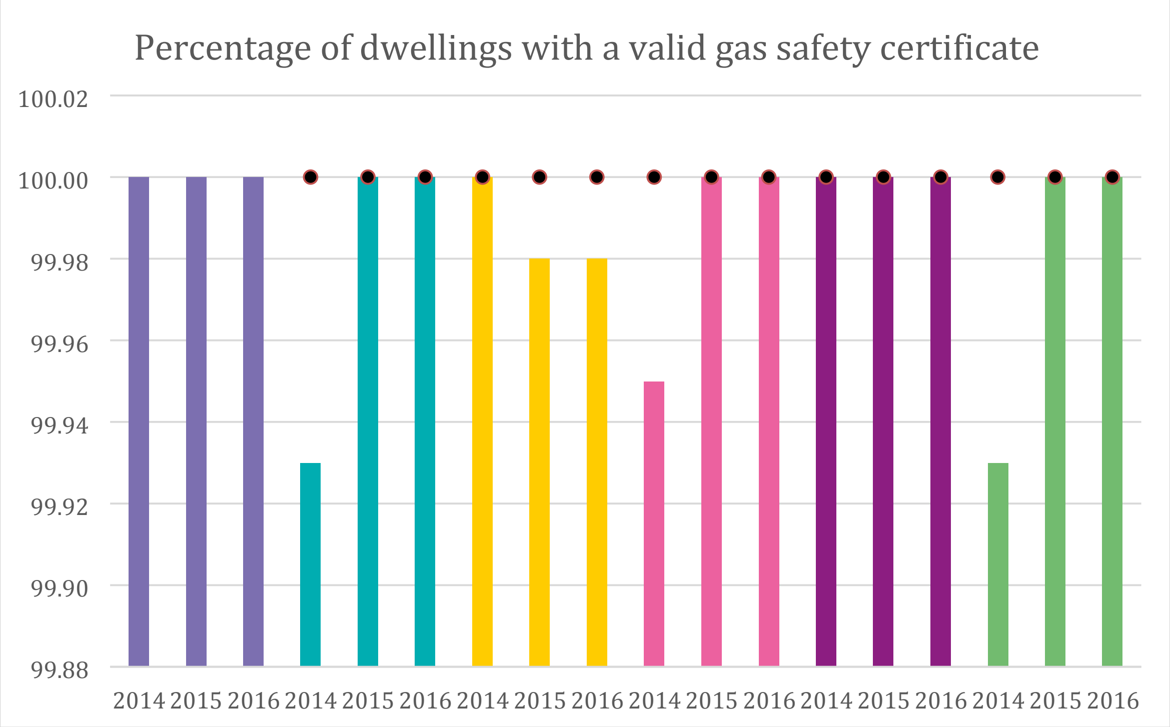
Dataset	BHP/M	UQ Peer	BHP Quartile
BHP 2013-14	99.83		
BHP 2014-15	99.70		
BHP 2015-16	89.62		
London ALMOs 2013-14	96.65	99.36	Q1
London ALMOs 2014-15	95.00	98.42	Q1
London ALMOs 2015-16	95.96	97.88	Q4
London Councils 2013-14	97.54	99.31	Q1
London Councils 2014-15	97.97	99.01	Q1
London Councils 2015-16	94.12	99.21	Q3
London HAs 2013-14	97.40	99.04	Q1
London HAs 2014-15	97.56	98.92	Q1
London HAs 2015-16	93.87	98.32	Q3
National Providers 2013-14	97.66	99.23	Q1
National Providers 2014-15	97.60	99.26	Q1
National Providers 2015-16	98.02	99.42	Q4
Bespoke group 2013-14	97.34	99.20	Q1
Bespoke group 2014-15	94.54	98.27	Q1
Bespoke group 2015-16	92.43	97.88	Q3

10. Percentage of repairs completed at the first visit



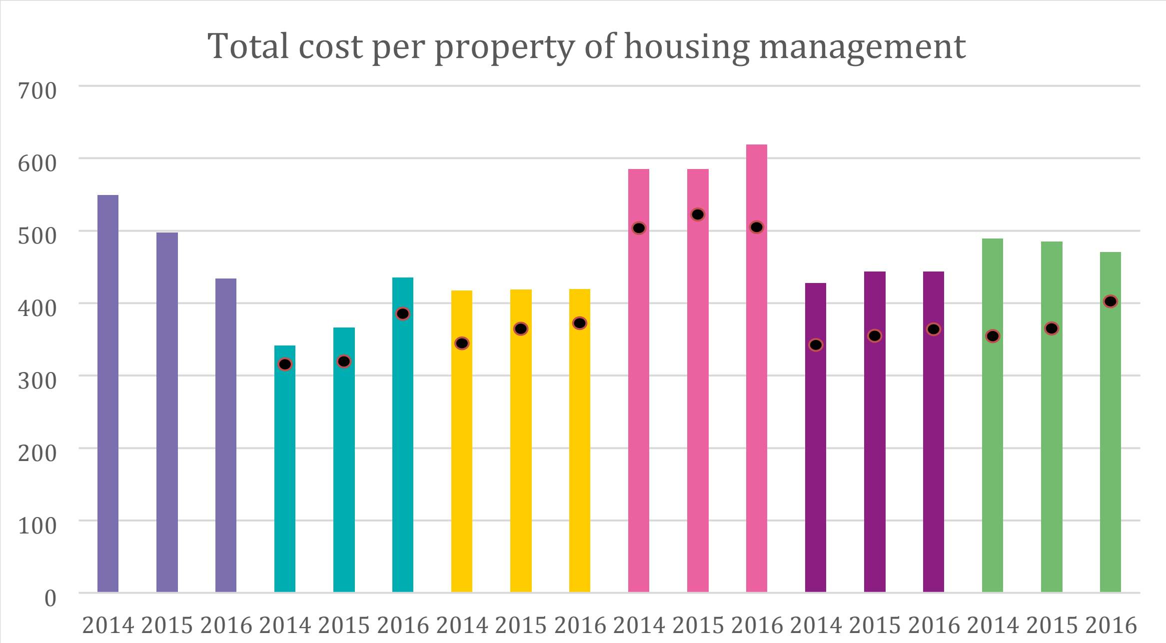
Dataset	BHP/M	UQ Peer	BHP Quartile
BHP 2013-14	96.90		
BHP 2014-15	94.80		
BHP 2015-16	88.50		
London ALMOs 2013-14	88.55	93.59	Q1
London ALMOs 2014-15	86.11	94.09	Q1
London ALMOs 2015-16	88.25	91.43	Q2
London Councils 2013-14	95.00	96.70	Q1
London Councils 2014-15	88.80	94.00	Q1
London Councils 2015-16	92.20	95.50	Q4
London HAs 2013-14	89.00	95.50	Q1
London HAs 2014-15	86.10	92.32	Q1
London HAs 2015-16	87.70	91.33	Q2
National Providers 2013-14	91.00	95.37	Q1
National Providers 2014-15	91.25	95.08	Q2
National Providers 2015-16	92.12	95.68	Q3
Bespoke group 2013-14	83.00	95.00	Q1
Bespoke group 2014-15	85.40	88.00	Q1
Bespoke group 2015-16	90.63	92.40	Q3

11. Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate



Dataset	BHP/M	UQ Peer	BHP Quartile
BHP 2013-14	100.00		
BHP 2014-15	100.00		
BHP 2015-16	100.00		
London ALMOs 2013-14	99.93	100.00	Q1
London ALMOs 2014-15	100.00	100.00	Q1
London ALMOs 2015-16	100.00	100.00	Q1
London Councils 2013-14	100.00	100.00	Q1
London Councils 2014-15	99.98	100.00	Q1
London Councils 2015-16	99.98	100.00	Q1
London HAs 2013-14	99.95	100.00	Q1
London HAs 2014-15	100.00	100.00	Q1
London HAs 2015-16	100.00	100.00	Q1
National Providers 2013-14	100.00	100.00	Q1
National Providers 2014-15	100.00	100.00	Q1
National Providers 2015-16	100.00	100.00	Q1
Bespoke group 2013-14	99.93	100.00	Q1
Bespoke group 2014-15	100.00	100.00	Q1
Bespoke group 2015-16	100.00	100.00	Q1

12. Total cost per property of housing management



Dataset	BHP/M	UQ Peer	BHP Quartile
BHP 2013-14	549.57		
BHP 2014-15	497.23		
BHP 2015-16	434.17		
London ALMOs 2013-14	341.18	315.71	Q4
London ALMOs 2014-15	366.48	319.78	Q4
London ALMOs 2015-16	435.41	385.55	Q2
London Councils 2013-14	417.58	344.95	Q4
London Councils 2014-15	418.48	364.97	Q4
London Councils 2015-16	419.81	372.78	Q3
London HAs 2013-14	585.05	503.49	Q2
London HAs 2014-15	585.37	522.4	Q1
London HAs 2015-16	619.31	505.36	Q1
National Providers 2013-14	427.54	342.63	Q4
National Providers 2014-15	443.29	355	Q3
National Providers 2015-16	443.37	364.06	Q2
Bespoke group 2013-14	489.47	354.65	Q3
Bespoke group 2014-15	484.74	365.33	Q3
Bespoke group 2015-16	470.77	402.29	Q2

NATIONAL HOUSING FEDERATION

pfh PROCUREMENT FOR HOUSING

PARTNER

MORGAN SINDALL

PROPERTY SERVICES

Appendix 5 – Recovery Plan Target Outcomes

BHP Business Recovery Plan - July to September 2016

Key and notes overleaf

Ref	Business Recovery Priority	Indicator	End of Year 2013/14 Position	End of Year 2014/15 Position	End of Year 2015/16 Position	2015/16 Target	June 2016 position	July 2016 Position	August 2016 Position	Sept 2016 Position	2016 YTD Position	Sept 2016 Target	LBB	HouseMark Benchmark 15/16* (HouseMark quartiles have been used to define the thresholds of each quarter)				Outcome
													Corp Standard	Q1 (High Performing)	Q2	Q3	Q4 (Low Performing)	
BP R2	Capital Programme Management and Delivery	Tenant Satisfaction with the way in which we manage Repairs and Maintenance	/	New for 15/16	65.8%	no target set	69%	Measur -ed quarterl y	68%	64%	67%	73%	n/a	>71%	70-67%	66-65%	<64%	To increase tenant satisfaction and reduce complaints and members enquiries
		Leasehold Satisfaction with the way in which we manage Repairs and Maintenance	/	New for 15/16	34.3%	no target set	35%	Measur -ed quarterl y	35%	33%	34%	40%	40%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
BR P3	Landlord Service Performance	Tenant satisfaction with overall service	/	New for 15/16	69%	no target set	74%	Measur -ed quarterl y	70%	67%	70%	73%	n/a	>81%	80-75%	74-71%	<70%	Increased levels of satisfaction
		Leaseholder satisfaction with overall service	/	New for 15/16	48%	no target set	46%	Measur -ed quarterl y	53%	51%	49%	50%	50%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Average time taken to answer a call	New for 14/15	123 secs	125 secs	no target set	130 secs	80 secs	45 secs	108 secs	103 secs	60 secs	60 secs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	To increase tenant satisfaction and reduce complaints and members enquiries
		Stage 1 complaints responded to within 20 days	85%	56%	80%	93%	97%	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%	93%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
		Members Enquiries Answered within 10 Days	85%	69%	98%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
BP R5	Efficiency and Effectiveness	Turnaround time for Standard Voids	New for 14/15	55.7	30.7 days	27 days	24 days	26.4	34.6	24.9	26.6 days	24 days	n/a	<21	22-24	25-30	>31	To Support the Financial Viability of the HRA
		Turnaround time for Major Voids	New for 14/15	73.9	59.4 days	75 days	48 days	42	48.2	53.2	48.4 days	61 days	n/a	<53	54-86	87-102	>103	
		Rent Collection	99.2%	98.5%	98.50%	100%	99%	98%	99%	97.80%	98.7%	99.50%	n/a	>100.10 %	100.09-99.64%	99.63-99.30%	<99.29%	
		Audit Recommendation s Completed	/	New for 15/16	100%	100%	100%	Measur -ed quarterl y	Measur -ed quarterl y	100%	100%	100%	100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	To Strengthen the Control Environment

Note:

* HouseMark benchmarking figures are based on BHP's selected peer group of London Housing Associations, ALMOs and London Boroughs with stock size between 5000 - 15000. The peer group is made up of 18 organisations not including BHP.

Appendix 5 Key	
Indicator is meeting or above target	
Indicator is within 5% tolerance	
Indicator is not meeting target	
This colour denotes where BHP has met that level of benchmarking or corporate standard	