

Appendix B

Summary of Tenant Consultation - HRA Business Plan Priorities

Introduction

We recently carried out a consultation with tenants and leaseholders, asking them about our council housing spending priorities for 2025-2026. These spending priorities are included in our Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and provide important background to our business plan.

Objectives

The objectives of this consultation were:

- To gain a better understanding of tenant’s views of our council housing spending priorities
- To understand which priorities rank highly, indicating what our tenants are most concerned about
- To understand why tenants are most concerned with some priorities

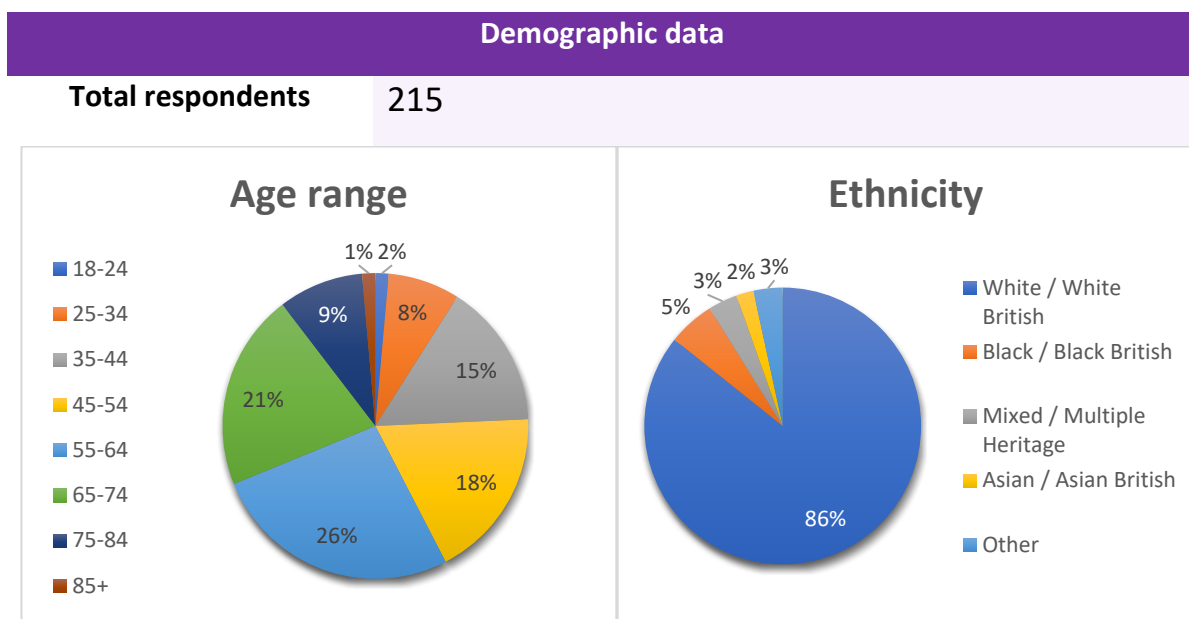
Survey method

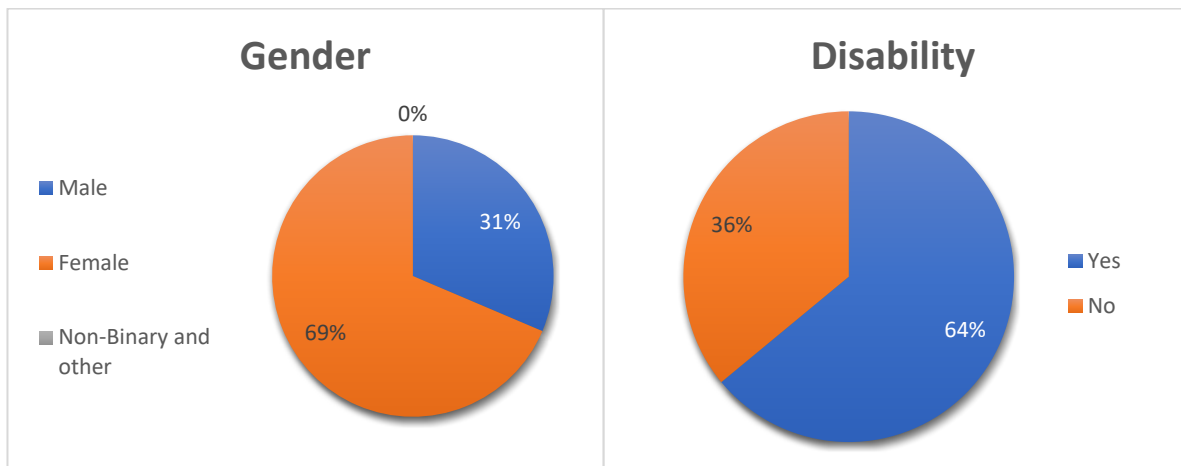
The consultation was carried out online on the Council’s ‘Have Your Say’ engagement platform. The introduction to the survey outlined all our council housing spending priorities for 2025-2026. Respondents were then asked to consider and respond to the following:

1. Select up to 4 priorities that you think are most important (compulsory)
2. What were the main reasons you chose these priorities? (optional)

Demographic Information

We collected some demographic information from our respondents. This helps us to understand how representative of our overall tenant base the respondents were. The demographic information is as below:

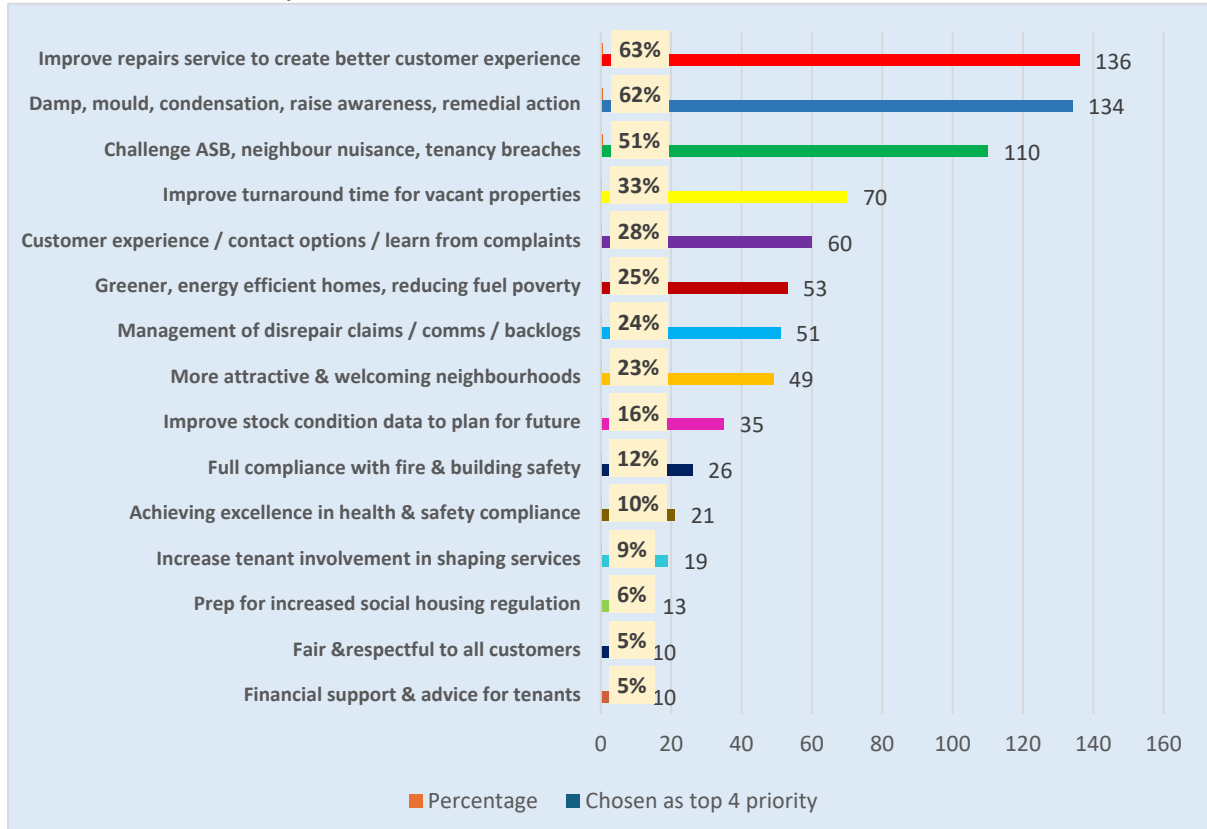




We know that approximately 26% of our tenants have a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. 14% of respondents to the consultation were from a BAME background, indicating this group was underrepresented in this consultation. This is something that we will look to improve in future consultations. Another underrepresented group was male tenants. Approximately 43% of our tenants are male, with 31% of respondents to the consultation were male. We had a good response from tenants aged over 55 with 10% of respondents aged 34 or under. 64% of respondents were from tenants who had a disability which overrepresents our tenant profile which is around 29%.

Survey Results

There were 215 responses to the consultation



Analysis

- There was substantial support for the priority to improve the repairs service, with 63% of respondents ranking it amongst their top priorities.
- In the follow up question “What were the main reasons you chose these priorities?” there were some clear themes around repairs.
- Many respondents took the time to describe personal experiences with repairs that had affected them negatively. One of the most frequent issues described was with contacting the call centre to report a repair, many outlined their frustrations with waiting for long periods to get through to a call handler.
- This response tells us that tenants feel strongly about seeing improvements to the way they can report their repairs.
- Another frequently described issue was with delays in getting repairs completed, many respondents reported long gaps between reporting a repair and having it resolved.
- Other issues included repairs being completed to an unsatisfactory standard, and issues with workpeople not turning up to appointments.
- The response around this priority tells us that tenants feel strongly about improving our repairs service. This reaffirms the need for us to focus significant efforts and resources on our repairs service with a view to making necessary improvements in the year ahead. The feedback given in the follow up question is helpful in helping us to better understand what tenants see as the main issues with our repairs service.
- Damp and mould was the next most supported priority, with 63% of respondents ranking it amongst their top priorities.
- There was a significant rise in the number of respondents ranking this as one of their top priorities compared to last year’s survey (8% more). This perhaps reflects the growing awareness and concern for damp and mould issues amongst our tenants.
- In the follow up question, many respondents described personal experiences with this issue, and that they’d like to see some improvements to we deliver remediation action.
- Many also suggested that better insulated and maintained homes would help to reduce the prevalence of damp, mould and condensation.
- There was also significant support for our priority of proactive neighbourhood management of ASB, neighbour nuisance, and tenancy breaches with 51% of respondents including this in their top four priorities. However, this is a 9% reduction on the previous year.
- Many respondents who selected the proactive neighbourhood management priority answered the follow up question with personal accounts of how anti-social behaviour has affected them negatively.
- One common theme in these accounts was respondents feeling like the Council couldn’t take firm enough action, and therefore feeling like issues were going unresolved.
- Many also described frustrations with long waiting times when calling to report ASB, or having to keep a paper diary instead of being able to quickly report an issue. This is the same root issue of call centre waiting times and ease of communication that other respondents described in relation to repairs.

- Respondents felt that overall Council estates are in desperate need of modernisation and repair as a matter of priority, and some said that this is something which would considerably improve attitudes if addressed.
- More than a third of respondents are concerned by the turnaround of vacant properties, moving this priority up two places from last year.
- In the follow up question, a lot of respondents described seeing properties in their areas being left vacant for months, also suggesting that vacant properties attract more vandalism. Many also pointed out that with a desperate need for more affordable housing, it's disappointing to see properties left vacant for long periods.
- Fire and building safety as a top priority rose from 3% last year to 12% this year, suggesting that it is of growing importance to our tenants.

Conclusion

- This consultation has helped us in gaining a better understanding of tenant's views of our council housing spending priorities.
- The priorities which ranked lower were described by some respondents as things which should not be options, such as health and safety, regulations and fire and building safety.
- The top priorities mainly involved disappointment and frustration with the standard of living conditions in and around Council properties.
- There was a general feeling that the standard of council services has declined in recent years.
- Feedback from the consultation will be shared with teams across the Housing Service so this can be considered as part of ongoing improvement plans in these areas