BOROUGH OF TAMWORTH

CABINET

14 October 2015

A meeting of the CABINET will be held on Thursday, 22nd October, 2015, 6.00 pm in Committee Room 1 Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth

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A G E N D A

NON CONFIDENTIAL

1 **Apologies for Absence**

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 1 - 4)

3 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of Members' interests (pecuniary and non-pecuniary) in any matters which are to be considered at this meeting.

When Members are declaring a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in respect of which they have dispensation, they should specify the nature of such interest. Members should leave the room if they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in respect of which they do not have a dispensation.

4 **Question Time:**

To answer questions from members of the public pursuant to Executive Procedure Rule No. 13

5 **Matters Referred to the Cabinet in Accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules**

None

6 **Budget Consultation 2016/17** (Pages 5 - 36)

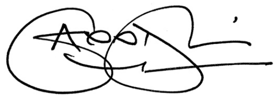
(The Report of the Leader of the Council)

7 **Tenants Annual Report 2014/15** (Pages 37 - 174)

(The Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Waste Management)

8 **Tenants Rental Exchange Scheme** (Pages 175 - 192)
(The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Waste Management)

Yours faithfully



Chief Executive

People who have a disability and who would like to attend the meeting should contact Democratic Services on 01827 709264 or e-mail committees@tamworth.gov.uk preferably 24 hours prior to the meeting. We can then endeavour to ensure that any particular requirements you may have are catered for.

To Councillors: D Cook, R Pritchard, S Claymore, S Doyle, and M Thurgood.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CABINET
HELD ON 1st OCTOBER 2015

PRESENT: Councillor D Cook (Chair), Councillors S Claymore, S Doyle and M Thurgood

The following officers were present: Anthony E Goodwin (Chief Executive), Rob Barnes (Director - Housing and Health), Andrew Barratt (Director - Assets and Environment), Tina Mustafa (Head of Landlord Services), Joanne Sands (Neighbourhood Services Manager) and Elanor Hazlehurst (Arts and Events Manager)

49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Pritchard

50 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2015 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor S Claymore and seconded by Councillor D Cook)

51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

52 QUESTION TIME

None

53 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES

None

54 ARTS AND EVENTS PROGRAMME 2016-17

The Report of the Portfolio Holder for Operations and Assets updating members on arts and events team figures and feedback of additional funding and also seeking the approval for the proposed Arts and Events programme in 2016/17 and seeking the approval to submit a bid to Arts Council England and spend the additional funding should the bid be successful

RESOLVED:	That Cabinet
1.	endorsed the update given on the 2015/16 programme;
2.	approved the 2016/17 programme; and
3.	approved the application to the Arts Council for a grant to further enhance activities in the 2016/17 programme and authorised spend of the additional grant funding should the application be successful

(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor S Claymore)

55 ASB, CRIME AND POLICING ACT - PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER CONSIDERATION

The Report of the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Public Health with regards to proposals for Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) in Tamworth was considered

RESOLVED:	That Cabinet
1.	approved the progression to public consultation and submission to Scrutiny Committee, thereafter for a PSPO at: • Access Road to Dosthill Hall, Dosthill Park; and
2.	approved pending further monitoring of these sites, reject the proposals for suggested PSPO's at: • The whole of the Borough of Tamworth (mini motos) • Durham Close, Fazeley • Wilnecote Lane/Nymet, Belgrave • Chiltern Road, Wilnecote considered the evidence associated to each case prior to determining each area.

(Moved by Councillor S Doyle and seconded by Councillor D Cook)

56 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That members of the press and public be now excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that the business involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor S Claymore)

57 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - ACQUISITIONS POLICY

The Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Waste Management reported the progress on the council housing acquisition pilot approved by Cabinet on the 19^{th} February 2015. Also the Portfolio Holder set out the arrangements for continuation of funding for the scheme into 2016/17 pending a detailed review of the HRA business plan following the Governments Summer budget statement

RESOLVED:	That the recommendations as contained in the report be approved

(Moved by Councillor M Thurgood and seconded by Councillor S Doyle)

Leader

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CABINET

THURSDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2015

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2016/17

EXEMPT INFORMATION
There is no exempt information.

PURPOSE
To inform Cabinet of the outcomes arising from consultation undertaken with residents, businesses and the voluntary sector in accordance with the corporate budget setting process.

RECOMMENDATIONS
That Cabinet endorse the report and take account of the findings along with other sources of information when setting the 2016/17 Budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The vision

Tamworth Borough Council's vision to 'aspire and prosper' and to be 'healthier and safer' is strongly endorsed by Tamworth's residents, businesses and voluntary and community organisations.

All priorities under 'Aspire and Prosper' were given a high importance rating by the majority of respondents with the most important priorities considered to be 'working with businesses to create more employment locally' and 'creating opportunities for business growth. 'Creating the technology and physical infrastructure' and 'raising aspiration and attainment levels of young people' were also considered to be of particular importance to those respondents who were from the business community.

The priorities under 'Healthier and Safer' were also endorsed by respondents and the most important priority was considered to be 'tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.' This was closely followed by 'protecting those most vulnerable in the local communities' and 'tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour.' Community and Voluntary Organisations also prioritised 'improving the health of older people' and 'tackling poor health in children'.

Spend on services

Respondents expressed a high level of support for maintaining current levels of spend. This was the case in 11 out of the 12 major cost areas and respondents most wanted to maintain spend on refuse collection and recycling. 79% of respondents indicated that this was their preference. The only exception to this was for spend on 'improved access to information/customer services.' Respondents would most prefer to see less spend on this and it was also identified as one of the top two services which the Council should look at if it had to make savings.

Other services which respondents identified for less spend were on 'events' and on 'commissioning services from voluntary organisations'. Community and Voluntary Organisations themselves however had their own views and their main priority for increased spend was for ‘commissioning services from voluntary organisations’.

Respondents overall were least likely to indicate that they wanted to spend more on services and this was the case for 9 out of the 12 cost centres. The most notable exception to this was for spend on anti-social behaviour with 44% of respondents still liking to see more spent in this area.

If the Council were to consider changes to the charges it places upon its services, increasing charges for leisure and other activities and for public spaces would be met with least resistance. The majority of respondents would support increased charges for these services.

Conversely, decreasing charges for car parking would be a popular move. 82% of respondents overall said that they would like to see these decreased and it would be a popular initiative amongst residents, businesses and community and voluntary sector organisations alike.

What makes Tamworth a better place to live and prosper?

Low levels of crime, good health services and good job prospects were considered by residents to be highly important in making somewhere a good place to live. All three of these were high priorities for improvement, in making Tamworth a better place to live. For businesses, the cost of business rates was the main request for improvement.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
There are no resource implications arising from this report.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND
It is a statutory duty to consult before the development of the budget. Budget consultation ensures our compliance with this.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS
There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
As part of an annual process Tamworth Borough Council reviews its Council Tax and Charges strategy for the development of the budget. This process ensures that funding is put into areas of highest priority. An important element of this process is to understand the views of residents, businesses, and local voluntary groups on what these priorities are.

REPORT AUTHOR
John Day

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
None

APPENDICES
Budget consultation 2016/17 – Full report

Tamworth
Borough Council

tamworthlistens
your town ▪ your life ▪ your say

Budget Consultation Report 2015

For the 2016/17 Budget

Produced by Staffordshire County Council

On behalf of Tamworth Borough Council

DOCUMENT DETAILS

This document has been produced on behalf of Tamworth Borough Council by the Staffordshire County Council Insight Team

Title	Budget Consultation Summary Report
Date created	September 2015
Description	The purpose of this document is to provide Tamworth Borough Council with the consultation results which illustrate residents, businesses and community and voluntary organisations budget priorities for the year ahead.
Produced by	Heather Collier, Research Co-ordinator, Insight, Planning and Performance Team, Staffordshire County Council Tel: 01785 277450 Email: heather.collier@staffordshire.gov.uk
Geographical coverage	Tamworth Borough
Format	Publisher and Pdf
Status	Final (Version 1)
Usage statement	This product is the property of Tamworth Borough Council. If you wish to reproduce this document either in whole, or in part, please acknowledge the source and the author(s).
Disclaimer	Staffordshire County Council, while believing the information in this publication to be correct, does not guarantee its accuracy nor does the County Council accept any liability for any direct or indirect loss or damage or other consequences, however arising from the use of such information supplied.

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 The vision

Tamworth Borough Council's vision to 'aspire and prosper' and to be 'healthier and safer' is strongly endorsed by Tamworth's residents, businesses and voluntary and community organisations.

All priorities under 'Aspire and Prosper' were given a high importance rating by the majority of respondents with the most important priorities considered to be 'working with businesses to create more employment locally' and 'creating opportunities for business growth.' 'Creating the technology and physical infrastructure' and 'raising aspiration and attainment levels of young people' were also considered to be of particular importance to those respondents who were from the business community.

The priorities under 'Healthier and Safer' were also endorsed by respondents and the most important priority was considered to be 'tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.' This was closely followed by 'protecting those most vulnerable in the local communities' and 'tackling youth crime and antisocial behaviour.' Community and Voluntary Organisations also prioritised 'improving the health of older people' and 'tackling poor health in children'.

Respondents supported the vision, commenting that *"it's about right"* and *"I believe you are on the right track."* Some did have reservations, questioning whether it could *"be achieved"* and wanted to see evidence of *"progress"* made towards achieving the vision *"during the last two years"*.

1.2 Spend on services

Respondents expressed a high level of support for maintaining current levels of spend. This was the case in 11 out of the 12 major cost areas and respondents most wanted to maintain spend on refuse collection and recycling. 79% of respondents indicated that this was their preference. The only exception to this was for spend on 'improved access to information/customer services.' Respondents would most prefer to see less spend on this and it was also identified as one of the top two services which the Council should look at if it had to make savings.

Spending less was residents second overall priority for spend. Other services which respondents identified for less spend were on 'events' and on 'commissioning services from voluntary organisations'. Community and Voluntary Organisations themselves however had their own views and their main priority for increased spend was for 'commissioning services from voluntary organisations.'

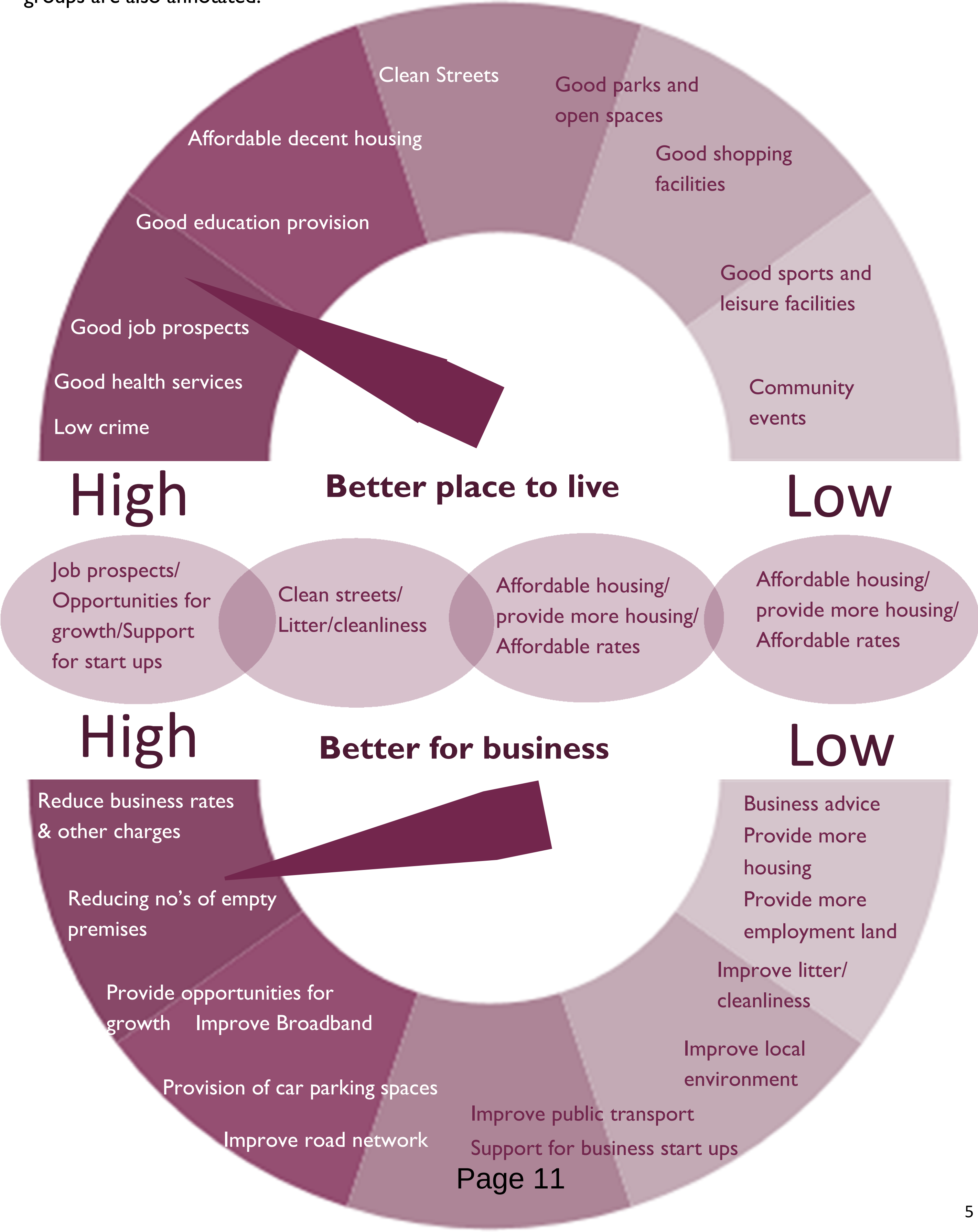
Respondents overall were least likely to indicate that they wanted to spend more on services and this was the case for 9 out of the 12 cost centres. The most notable exception to this was for spend on anti-social behaviour. 44% of respondents would still like to see more spent in this area.

If the Council were to consider changes to the charges it places upon it's services, increasing charges for leisure and other activities and for public spaces would be met with least resistance. The majority of respondents would support increased charges for these services.

Conversely, decreasing charges for car parking would be a popular move. 82% of respondents overall said that they would like to see these decreased and it would be a popular initiative amongst residents, businesses and community and voluntary sector organisations alike.

1.3 What makes Tamworth a better place to live and prosper?

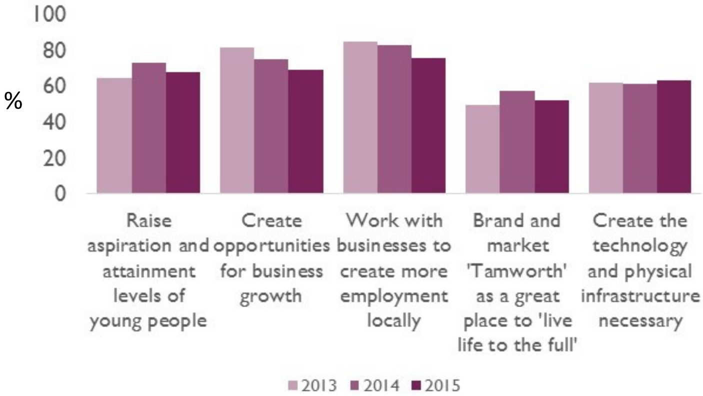
Low levels of crime, good health services and good job prospects were considered by residents to be highly important in making somewhere a good place to live. All three of these were high priorities for improvement, in making Tamworth a better place to live. For businesses, the cost of business rates was the main request for improvement. What makes Tamworth a better place to live and better for business are highlighted from high (H) to low (L) in the graphic below. Common synergies between the two groups are also annotated.



1.4 What has changed over time?

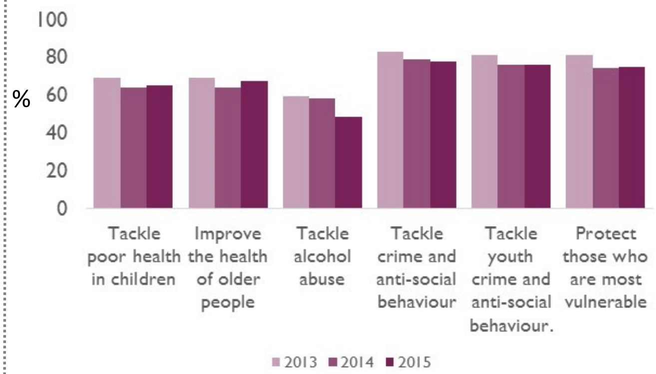
Views on Aspire and Prosper over time

The ranked order of importance of all five priorities has remained unchanged since last year. Slightly fewer respondents ranked 4 out of the 5 priorities as important this year compared to last year. ‘Creating the technology and physical infrastructure necessary’ was rated marginally higher this year when compared to last years results.



Views on Healthier and Safer over time

The ranking order of the majority of the healthier and safer priorities has remained unchanged in the last year. There has been one minor shift; ‘protect those most vulnerable in our local communities’ now ranks in second rather than third place and ‘tackling youth crime and antisocial behaviour’ now ranks in third place (it ranked in second place last year).

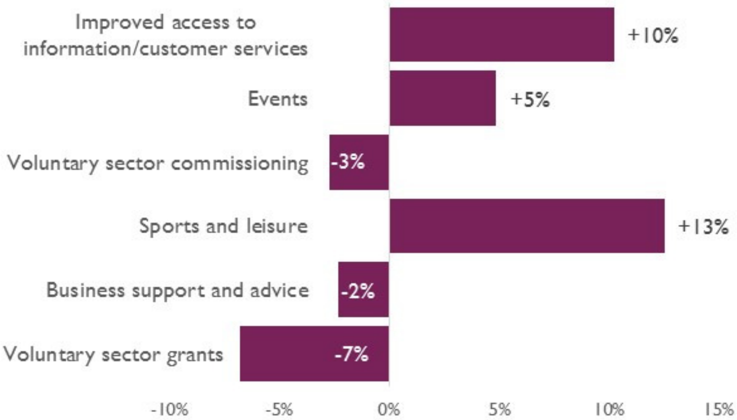


Views on spend over time

This year, as with last year, it was most common for respondents overall to say that they wanted to see the level of spend remain the same across the majority of service areas. This years results also mirrored last years in terms of respondents wanting to maintain the same level of spending on refuse and recycling services. There has been a noticeable shift in perceptions regarding reducing spend between this year and last year. Last year respondents expressed a preference for either maintaining spending or for spending more. However this year their desire to maintain spend was followed by a recognition that there should be less spending on some services.

Priorities for savings

+/- % change in views between 2014-2015



Improved access to information/customer services was considered less of a priority for savings last year (ranking 5 out of 13), It ranked 1 out of 12 in this years results. Also, this year, 10% more would like to see this as a priority for savings when compared to last years results. This year and last year, events were identified as the second most popular service to make savings, and 5% more than last year would like to see savings made in this area.

13% more would also like to make savings in in sports and leisure services this year when compared to last years results

Views on better place to live over time

Low levels of crime, good health services and good job prospects remain those aspects which were most likely to make somewhere a good place to live. This year, slightly more prominence has also been placed on the importance of a good education in making somewhere a good place to live. The level of crime, job prospects and health services remained the top priorities for improvement having also been identified by residents as the top priorities in last years and previous consecutive years consultation responses.

2. 1 INTRODUCTION

Tamworth Borough Council reviews it's council tax and charges on an annual basis and this helps to develop the Council's budget and ensures funding is put into areas which are of priority.

Residents, businesses and the voluntary sector are always an important part of this process. Therefore this year as in previous years, all these groups were invited to share their views on priorities for the year ahead.

This report presents the analysis of the combined results from all three respondent groups and emphasises where there are differences in opinions between the different groups. Comparisons with the results of the consultation from last year have also been made in order to identify commonality or differences in opinions over time.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The consultation for the 2016/17 budget ran from 1st August 2015 to 14th September 2015 and the three key groups (residents, businesses and the voluntary sector) were encouraged to share their views through tailored paper and online surveys.

These surveys were developed by Tamworth Borough Council in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council's Insight, Planning and Performance Team and were largely based on the surveys used to collect views on the budget in previous years.

All three surveys were promoted via a range of communications channels. These included press releases in the local newspaper (The Tamworth Herald), on the Tamworth Borough Council website and through social media including Twitter, Facebook and the Tamworth Borough Council blog.

Specific groups were also targeted to take part in the consultation:

⇒ Members of the Tamworth Borough Council Citizens' Panel and Tamworth Borough Council Housing Tenants received a direct letter or email encouraging them to participate in the Residents Survey.

⇒ Businesses received an email encouraging them to participate in the Business Survey. This was also widely promoted by the Economic Development Team.

⇒ Voluntary Sector Organisations were also emailed to encourage their involvement. Their involvement was also supported and promoted by Support Staffordshire and Tamworth Borough Council's Community Development Team.

2.3 RESPONSES

A total of 276 responses were received to the consultation and these consisted of:

- 243 residents
- 18 businesses; 50% were based on an industrial estate, 28% were in a town centre location, 11% in a local neighbourhood and 11% were based at home.
- 15 community and voluntary organisations; 57% of these were a registered charity, 21% were a company limited by guarantee, 14% were a community interest group and 7% a voluntary group.

For the purpose of analysis, responses from all three groups have been combined. Where differences were apparent by respondent type, these have been highlighted graphically or through a textual summary.

Some caution should be applied when interpreting the results, particularly in relation to those Businesses and Voluntary Organisation responses. Responses from these groups were relatively low and therefore these responses should not be viewed as representative of the overall communities which they represent.

2.4 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS FOR THE RESIDENTS SURVEY

In total, there were 243 responses to the Tamworth residents survey. This equates to 0.4% of the adult population of Tamworth[1] and is a marked 33% increase in responses when compared to the residents survey responses from last year.

In statistical terms, the 95% confidence level has been applied to the residents survey results. This means that if the survey was repeated, in 95 out of 100 cases, the same response would be achieved.

Residents responses have an overall confidence interval of +/-6% meaning that the percentage responses they have given to any questions could fall in the range of 6% higher or 6% lower than their actual response. A confidence interval of +/-3-4% is fairly typical for a statistically robust survey[2].

When considering key demographics, responses were representative of some key characteristics but were less so of others:

⇒ The Residents Survey is representative by gender; 52% of respondents were male and 48% were female.

⇒ It was more common for older residents to participate in the residents survey and therefore the results are generally over representative of those respondents aged 55 and above and under representative of those residents aged 44 and below.

⇒ By disability, the survey results are slightly over representative of those respondents who had a disability. 32% of respondents said they had a disability compared to 18% in the overall population.

⇒ Responses are representative of the most commonly occurring ethnicities of White British and White Other. In their survey responses, 95.2% described themselves as White British and 3% as White Other.

[1] The adult population of Tamworth includes those residents who are aged 18 and above

[2] To achieve a +/-4% confidence interval for the residents survey, 500 responses would need to be achieved from Tamworth Borough Residents and to achieve a +/-3% confidence interval, 800 responses would need to be returned.

3. VIEWS ON THE CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The Council vision is for "One Tamworth, Perfectly Placed" with a focus upon working with partners to:

Aspire and prosper in Tamworth – to create and sustain a thriving local economy and make Tamworth a more aspirational and competitive place to do business.

Be healthier and safer in Tamworth - to create a safe environment in which local people can reach their full potential and live longer, healthier lives.

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the importance of a range of priorities which sit beneath the visionary themes of 'Aspire and Prosper in Tamworth' and 'Be Healthier and Safer in Tamworth.' Respondents were asked to rate how important each of the priorities were on a scale of 1-5 with one being the most important and five being the least important.

3.1 Aspire and prosper

⇒ All priorities under 'Aspire and Prosper' were given an importance rating of one or two by half of respondents or more.

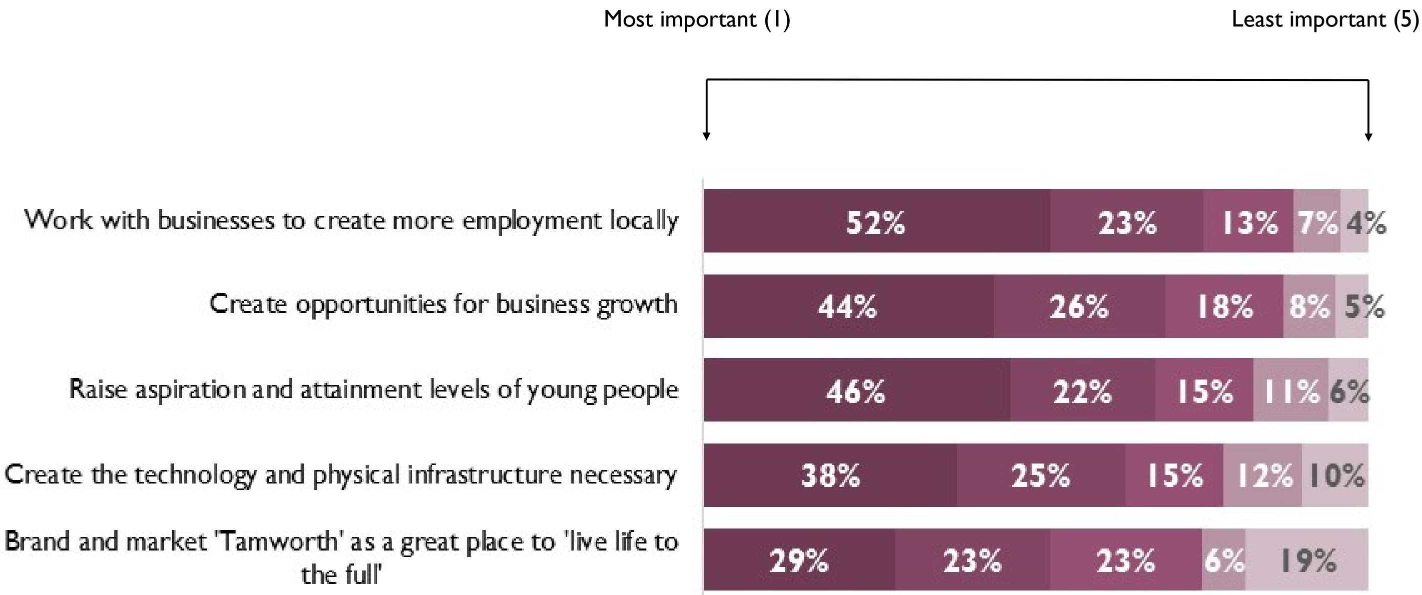
⇒ The most important priority was to 'work with businesses to create more employment locally'. This was closely followed by 'create opportunities for business growth'.

⇒ Considered least important was 'brand and market Tamworth as a great place to live life to the full.' However, 52% still gave this an importance rating of one or two.

⇒ The ranked order of importance of all five priorities has remained unchanged since last year.

⇒ Respondents overall views are documented in the figure below.

Figure 3.1: Please tell us how important our priorities under 'Aspire and Prosper' are to you/your business/organisation, with 1 being most important and 5 being the least important (%)



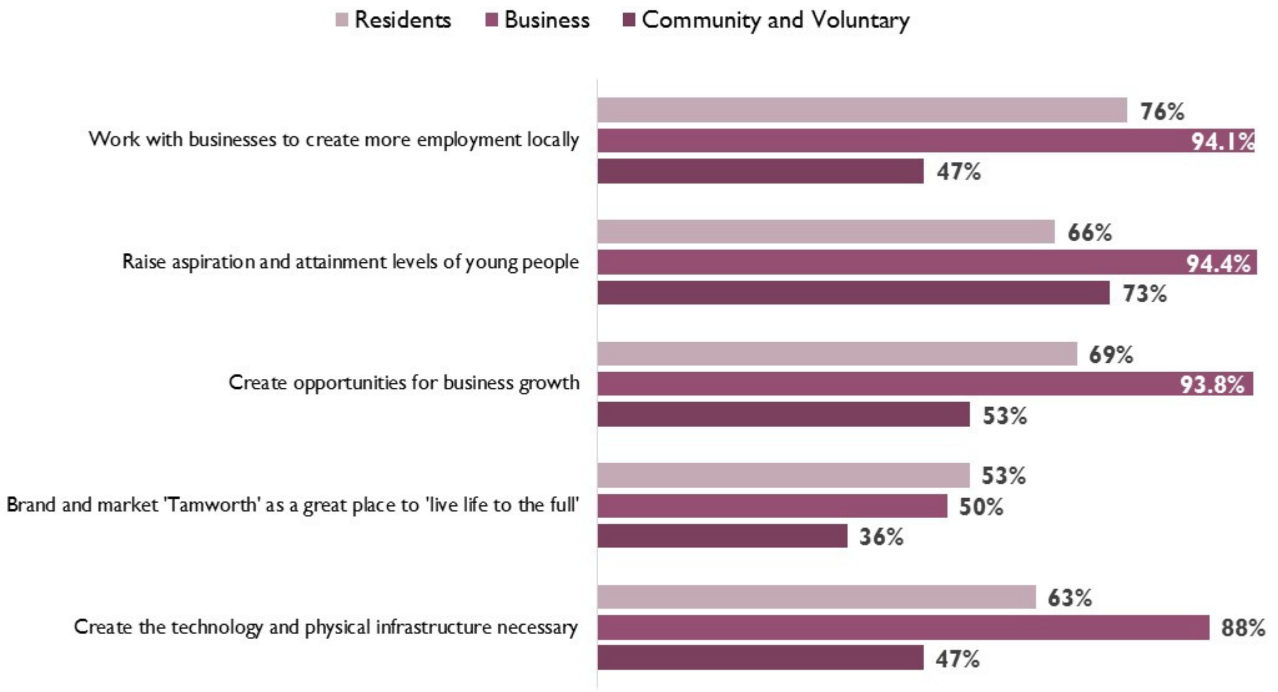
3.2 Comparing results by respondent group

The graph below illustrates the breakdown of responses for each priority by respondent group type. The results shown are the proportion of each group who felt that each of the priorities were of high importance (i.e. respondents provided an importance rating of one or two).

There were some differences by respondent group. The most important priority overall, 'working with businesses to create more employment locally' was considered a greater priority for businesses (94% gave it an importance rating of one or two), than it was by residents (76% gave it an importance rating of one or two) and community and voluntary groups (47% gave it an importance rating of one or two).

Residents ranked 'working with businesses to create more employment opportunities locally' as their highest priority whilst businesses and community and voluntary organisations ranked 'raising aspirations and attainment levels of young people' as their highest priority.

Figure 3.2: The importance of priorities under 'Aspire and Prosper' by respondent group (%)



Broadly speaking, the top three priorities of 'working with businesses to create more employment locally', 'creating opportunities for business growth' and 'raising aspiration and attainment levels of young people are mirrored across all three groups.

However, it is clear that 'creating the technology and physical infrastructure' is considered to be of far greater importance to businesses than it is to residents and the community and voluntary sector. This was also of greater importance to businesses in last years results.

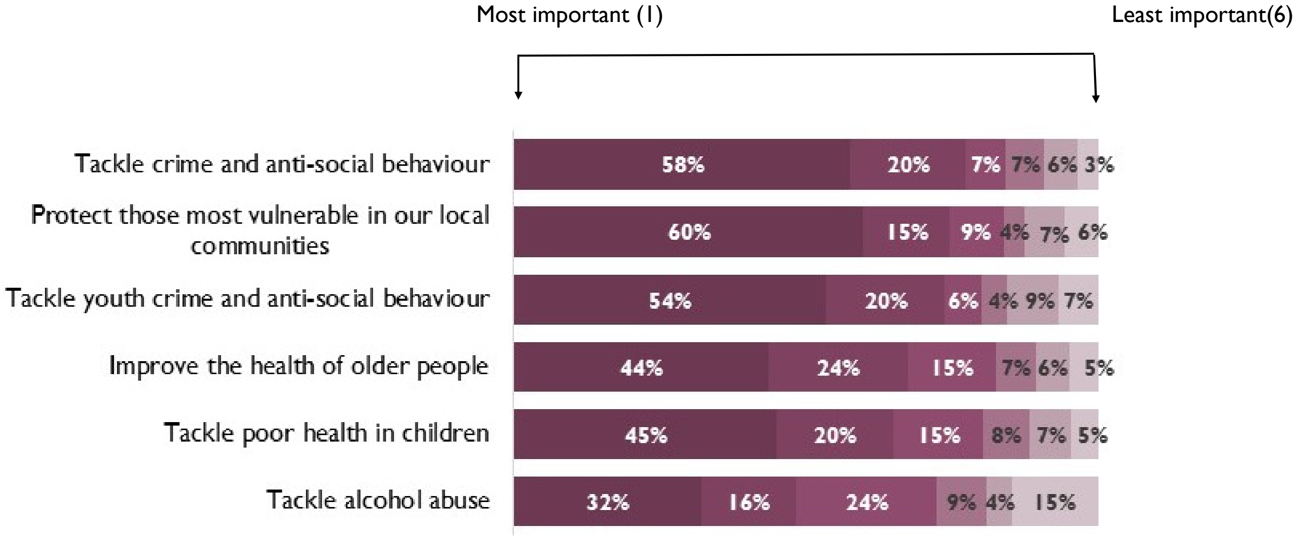
When drawing conclusions from these responses, it is important to remember that the business respondent group and the community and voluntary organisation responses are considerably smaller than the residents response group, therefore results may not be representative of their overall group type.

3.3 Be healthier and safer

The majority of priorities under be healthier and safer were considered important by two thirds of respondents or more. The exception to this was 'tackling alcohol abuse'. Still, nearly half (48%) said this was an important priority to them.

The most important priority under 'be healthier and safer' was to 'tackle crime and anti-social behaviour'. This was followed by 'protecting those most vulnerable in our local communities' and 'tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour.' Respondents overall views are documented in the figure below.

Figure 3.3: Please tell us how important our priorities under 'be healthy and safer in Tamworth' are to you/your business/organisation, with 1 being most important and 6 being the least important (%)



There has been one minor shift; 'protect those most vulnerable in our local communities' now ranks in second rather than third place and 'tackling youth crime and antisocial behaviour' now ranks in third place (it ranked in second place last year).

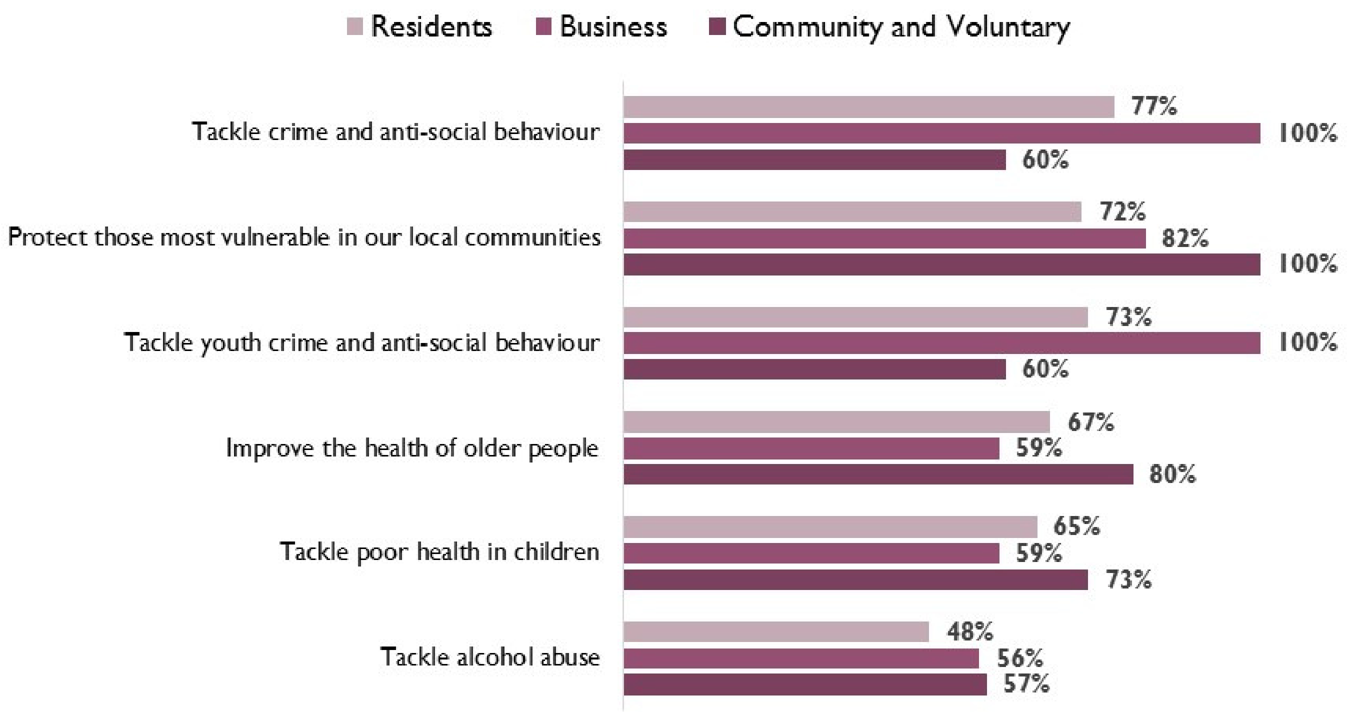
3.4 Comparing results by respondent group

The graph below illustrates the breakdown of responses against each priority by respondent group type. The results shown are the proportion of each group who felt that each of the priorities were of high importance to address.

There was some commonality in the responses by group type. The top three priorities for both residents and businesses were the same. These were 'tackling crime and anti-social behaviour', 'tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour' and 'protecting the most vulnerable in our local community'.

Whilst community and voluntary groups also ranked 'protecting those most vulnerable in our community' in their top three priorities, they ranked this more highly, in first place. Their second and third priorities also differed. Their second most important priority was to improve the health of older people and they ranked 'tackling poor health in children' as their third most important priority.

Figure 3.4: The importance of priorities under 'Be healthier and safer' by respondent group (%)



Residents top three priorities have remained unchanged since last year. Whilst businesses have also consistently prioritised 'tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and 'tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour', last year they gave a higher priority to 'tackling' alcohol abuse' than they have done this year.

When drawing conclusions from these responses, it is important to remember that the business respondent group and the community and voluntary organisational responses are considerably smaller than the residents response group and therefore results may not be representative of their overall group type.

3.5 Comments on the 'vision' and 'priorities'

Vision

This year, as with last year, the general consensus was very much in support of both the vision and the priorities which lie beneath it. Comments on the vision included, *"I applaud your vision," "the vision as quoted sounds just about right"*, and "*I believe you are on the right track showcasing Tamworth's lovely heritage."* Whilst respondents clearly expressed their support, this was not without it's reservation. Concerns about *"how the vision could be achieved"* were evident from some whilst others felt they *"had not witnessed much progress during the last two years."*

Respondents from community and voluntary organisations were supportive of the vision whilst recognising that there was room to enhance it. *"We feel that part of the vision for Tamworth should include promoting this positive culture of a mutually supportive community, We help each other, share resources and collaborate on events and activities. There is much to celebrate about our community and the great benefits we bring. This needs to be included as part of the vision."*

Priorities

Respondents commented on the priorities, providing suggestions on practical actions which they felt would help to ensure the priorities could be achieved. Underneath the priority to 'Aspire and Prosper,' respondents felt that the following improvements would help Tamworth to meet it's economic priority:

⇒ Create opportunities for business growth: Under this priority, respondents commented that the Council could find ways to improve the quality of jobs. Whilst *"warehouse jobs have helped create more employment, we now need to grow wealth and drive quality of life."* Also, *"do something to increase tourist spend."*

⇒ Create the technology and physical infrastructure necessary: It was considered that improvements to infrastructure and technology were needed. In particular it was recognised that *"broadband access needs to be improved."* This would encourage businesses to locate in and remain in Tamworth.

⇒ Raise aspiration and attainment levels of young people: It was felt that young people needed help to enable them to find jobs. "*Provide school leavers with a better chance of getting an apprenticeship or a way to obtain a paid job."*

Respondents were also keen to comment on the priority for a 'Healthier and Safer Tamworth', providing their suggestions and comments on the priority aim.

⇒ Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour would be beneficial: This was a view which was consistently shared across respondent groups. *"For businesses this would mean less chance of being vandalised/ burgled - which is obviously good!"*

⇒ Tackling poor health in children and improving the health of older people: Respondents provided support for both these priorities but some did question how they would be achieved. Others highlighted issues they had noticed in the local area and suggested solutions. Some respondents for example generally considered that there were *"too many overweight parents and kids, feeling that more could be done to tackle obesity"*. It was generally considered that there were *"too many bakeries and cafes in the town centre." "More restaurants could provide healthier alternatives." Cooking lessons at school, could also provide the opportunity to teach young people how to make food from scratch."*

⇒ Tackling alcohol abuse: Voluntary and community organisations expressed a preference for softer terminology in the wording of this priority—for example consider *"offering intervention and support to those with alcohol dependency"* as an alternative.

4. SPENDING ON SERVICES

Respondents were provided with planned spend on major cost areas for 2015/16 and were asked whether they felt the Council should increase, decrease or keep spending the same. Their collective responses are illustrated in the graph below:

Figure 4.1: Spend for 2015/16 on major cost areas (%)

4.1 Maintain levels of spending

It was most common for respondents across the majority of service areas to say that they would prefer the level of spending to remain the same. This was particularly apparent regarding spend on refuse and recycling with 79% wanting to maintain the same level of spending on this service. Over half of all respondents also wanted to maintain the same level of spending on parks, open spaces, street cleaning (58%) and sports and leisure (52%).

This year, as with last year, it was most common for respondents overall to say that they wanted to see the level of spend remain the same across the majority of service areas. This years results also mirrored last years in terms of respondents wanting to maintain the same level of spending on refuse and recycling services.

This year, there was some similarity but also some difference in views by respondent type. Whilst residents views generally mirrored those of the overall results (as they were the largest group), businesses and community and voluntary groups did have some different ideas about which services should retain the same amount of spend.

Businesses, like all respondents, did want to maintain levels of spending on refuse collection and recycling (69%). However, they also wanted to maintain the same level of spending on sports and leisure (75%) and business support and advice (71%).

Those respondents from the community and voluntary sector, mirrored the overall results by wanting to maintain levels of spending on refuse collection and recycling (86%) and parks, open spaces and street cleaning (80%). However, a much higher proportion of these respondents wanted to maintain the same level of spend on tackling anti-social behaviour (79%).

4.2 Reduce levels of spending

The sentiment for maintaining levels of spend was generally followed by a desire to spend less. Respondents were most likely to say that they wanted less spend on improving access to information/ customer services. Nearly half of all respondents (48%) would like to see less spent on this cost area. Respondents overall were also most likely to want to see spend reduced on events (39%) and commissioning services from voluntary organisations and charities (39%).

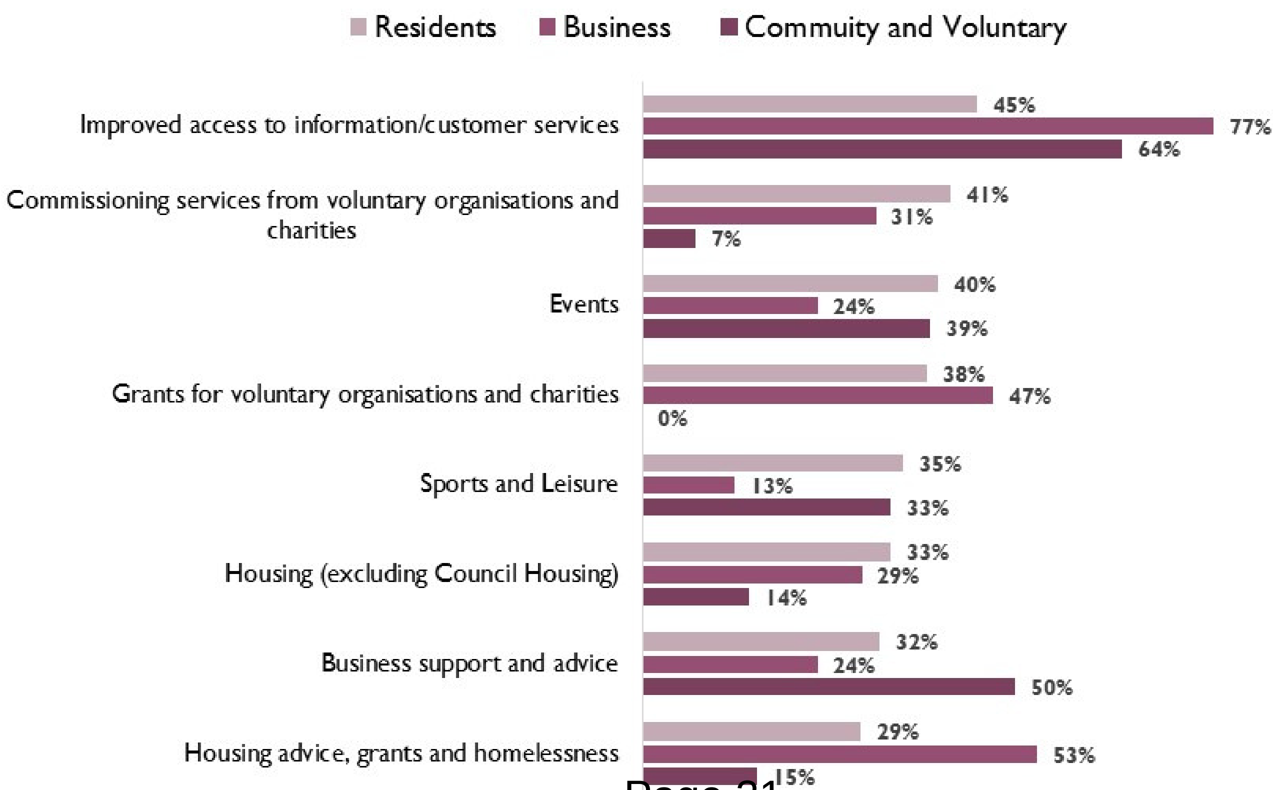
There has been a noticeable shift in perceptions regarding reducing spend between this year and last year. Last year respondents expressed a preference for either maintaining spending or for spending more. However this year their desire to maintain spend was followed by a recognition that there should be less spending on some services. Spending less was the second most popular preference in relation to 7 of the 12 cost areas.

This years results reflect that there were some similarities but also some differences in views by respondent type regarding reducing levels of spend. Whilst residents views generally mirrored those of the overall results (as they were the largest group), there were some differences expressed by both businesses and community and voluntary organisations.

Businesses did mirror the overall preference for less spend on improving access to information/customer services albeit with a higher strength of feeling with 77% wanting to see less spend on this. However their second and third preferences for reduced spend were different. They were most likely to want to see reduced spend on housing advice, grants and homelessness (53%) and grants for voluntary organisations and charities (47%).

Community and voluntary organisations also mirrored the overall results, most wanting to see a reduction in spend on improved access to information/customer services (64%) and events (39%). However half of these respondents (50%) also expressed a preference for seeing a reduction in spend on business support and advice.

Figure 4.2: Reduce levels of spend for 2015/16 on major cost areas (%)



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4.3 Increase levels of spending

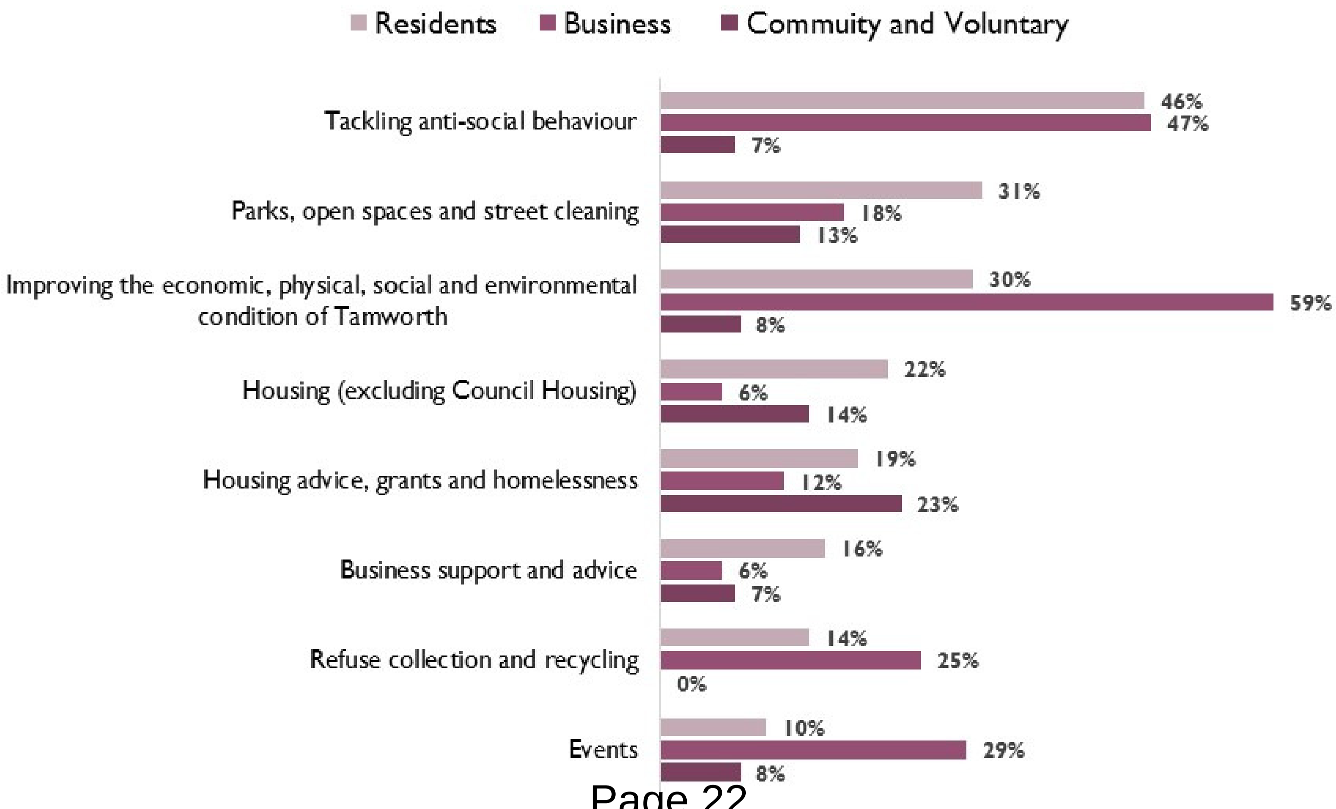
Respondents were generally least likely to say that they wanted to spend more on services and this was the case in 9 out of the 12 cost areas. The most notable exception to this was for spend on anti-social behaviour. 44% of respondents still said they would like to see more spend on this cost area (tackling anti-social behaviour was also the most popular area for spend last year). The second most popular area for increased spend with under a third was improving the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of Tamworth (31%). The third was parks, open spaces and street cleaning with 29% expressing an interest in increased levels of spending on this cost area.

With increased levels of spending, there was some similarity but also some difference in views by respondent type. Once again, residents preferences generally mirrored those of the overall results (as they were the largest group), but there were some differences in viewpoints from businesses and community and voluntary organisations.

Businesses did mirror the overall results in some of their preferences for increased spending. Two of their top three priorities for increased levels of spending were the same as the overall, albeit with a varying strength of feeling from the overall responses. These were improving the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of Tamworth (59%) and tackling anti-social behaviour (47%). Their third priority for increased level of spend was for events with 29% of businesses wanting to see increased spending in this cost area.

The top three priorities for spend from community and voluntary organisations were different from the overall. The top priority for these respondents was grants for voluntary organisations and charities with 73% expressing that this was the cost area where they would most like to see increased spend[4]. 71% also wanted to see increased spend on commissioning services from voluntary organisations and charities[5] with the third most popular option for spend (with nearly one quarter of this group, 23%) being for housing advice, grants and homelessness.

Figure 4.3: Increase levels of spend for 2015/16 on major cost areas (%)



[4] This is not shown in the figure above as it was a low priority for spend by respondents overall

[5] This is not shown in the figure above as it was a low priority for spend by respondents overall

4.4 Comments on spend

There was a general consensus amongst residents that value for money should be a key component of all decisions on spend. This was evidenced by one respondent who commented that it was important to *"ensure that the council spends monies wisely and gets the best value for money."* To ensure value for money, it was generally considered important to *"reduce areas of waste", "to drive up efficiency"* and to *"monitor work carried out by other agencies."*

There were mixed views on whether private contractors could provide this value for money. Those in support agreed that *"most private companies put their contracts out to tender to get the best value without compromising on quality. There is no reason why the council can't do the same."* Those not in support were more likely to agree that *"some prices paid to outside companies do not seem value for money, they just seem to be a cash cow for these type of companies."*

All types of respondents generally agreed that tackling the roots causes of problems will most likely reduce the need to spend. For example, *"many truants and young people in trouble turn out to have undiagnosed SEN. It's the root cause of troubles that need to be tackled, which may then ease the financial burden of dealing with the outcomes".*

In terms of spend on specific services, businesses identified that they would like to see more money spent on road repairs. One business also sought clarification on what the £168,000 for business support and advice was for as they hadn't received any business support or advice themselves.

There was a general reluctance to identify areas of reduced spend. This was identified in respondents comments and was also reflected by the fact that relatively few comments were received to this question. Those comments which were received were very much individual in their nature and therefore not generally representative of respondents views.

4.5 Savings and reducing costs

Respondents were provided with a list of services and asked to indicate up to three where they either felt savings could be made or costs could be reduced. It was most common for respondents to indicate that they would like to see savings or reduced costs made in the following two service areas; improved access to information/customer services and events.

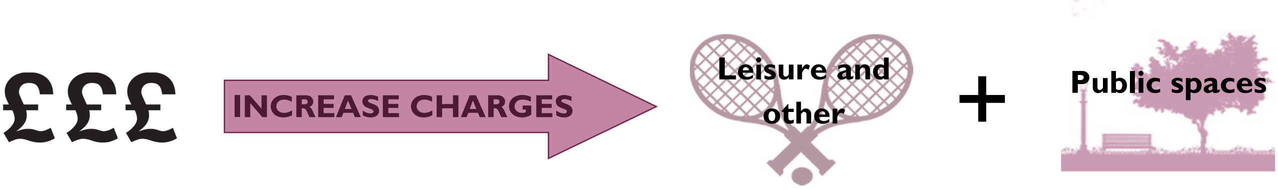
In both cases, 46% of respondents overall would like to see savings or reduced costs made. Events was also identified as the second most popular service to make savings or reduce costs to in last years results. At this time, improved access to information/customer services was considered less of a priority for savings or reduced costs (ranking 5 out of 13) compared to ranking 1 out of 12 in this years results.

Figure 4.4: Which THREE services should the Council look at if they had to make savings or reduce costs? (%)

Both residents and businesses responses mirrored the overall top priorities for savings or reduced costs. Community and voluntary organisations also mirrored these in terms of most wanting to see savings or reduced costs for improving access to information/customer services. Their other top priorities for savings/reduced costs were however different. 60% of them wanted savings/reductions in costs to business support and advice and 47% wanted these for sports and leisure services.

Which TWO of the below income areas do you think the Council could/should increase and decrease charges for?

It was most common for respondents to stress the need to increase public charges for leisure and other activities (66%) or public spaces (60%).



However, respondents comments reflected a genuine reluctance for increases in charges to any of the four identified areas of spend. For example *"although I appreciate the council need extra revenue I don't think any of the above can be increased"* and *"none of the above, they are all important to the people of Tamworth!!!!"*

Not charging any more for car parking in the town centre was a common comment— *"look at the effect it has already had"*. Some businesses did suggest *"charging for car parking at Ventura to encourage more people into the town centre."*

Respondents were most likely to say that they would like to see decreased charges for car parking, 82% of respondents overall indicated that they would like to see these decreased.

Car parking featured prominently in respondents comments. These should be *"eliminated!!"* or *"car parking charges should be reduced in the town by a pound all day to help increase sales for the shops in the town Thursday Friday Saturday"* or *"drop the parking by 5% - 10% and more people would be able to afford to use them as a result income would increase not decrease."*

The figure below illustrates the responses by group type. On the whole there was most commonality in responses between residents and businesses. Community and voluntary organisations, did however express some different viewpoints for example they indicated more of a preference for increased charges for waste management services and decreased charges for public open spaces.

Figure 4.5: Which TWO of the below income areas do you think the Council should increase charges for (%)

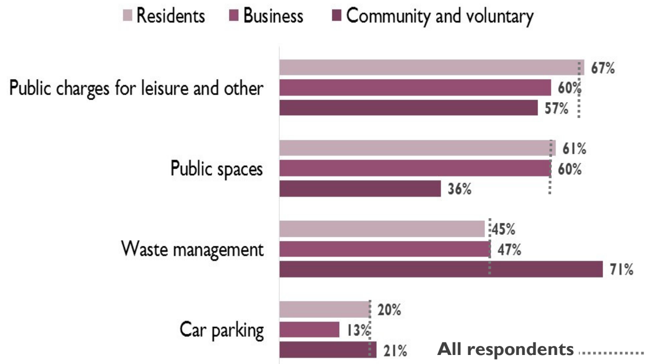
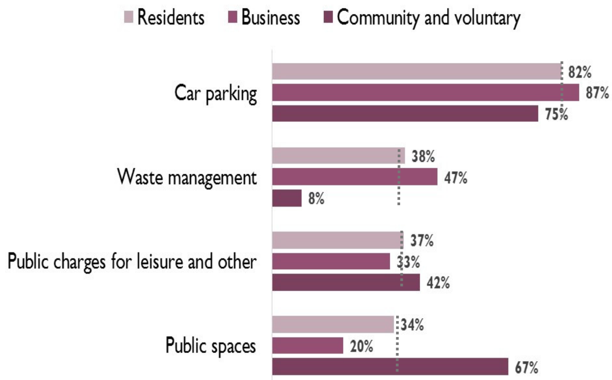


Figure 4.6: Which TWO of the below income areas do you think the Council should decrease charges for (%)



5. MAKING TAMWORTH A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE

The following questions were posed to those respondents who were participating in the consultation as a local resident.

5.1 What makes somewhere a good place to live?

The word cloud below depicts the answers selected by residents, the size of the font reflects the number of times that each element was selected. It is clear to see that low levels of crime, good health services, good job prospects and good educational provision were considered to be those aspects which were most likely to make somewhere a good place to live. The first three of these were also highlighted in last years consultation as being most important in making somewhere a good place to live. This year, slightly more prominence has also been placed on the importance of a good education in making somewhere a good place to live.

Figure 5.1: What makes somewhere a good place to live? (%)

5.2 What would make Tamworth a better place to live?

The word cloud below illustrates that the level of crime, job prospects and health services are the top three priorities for improvement in Tamworth. They remain the top priorities for improvement having been identified in last years and previous consecutive years consultation responses from residents. These three priorities were closely followed by cleanliness of streets and affordable decent housing. These were also the fourth and fifth priorities for improvement in last years consultation responses. Therefore the five main priorities for improvement in Tamworth remain the same.

Figure 5.2: What would make Tamworth a better place to live? (%)

5.3 What would make Tamworth a better place to live

Residents of Tamworth were invited to suggest improvements which they felt would make Tamworth a better place to live. Respondents were keen to comment providing suggestions across a range of themes including the town centre, parking and leisure services. Their comments are documented below.

Shopping facilities

Investing in the town centre (and not in Ventura) was a key suggestion which would be warmly welcomed by Tamworth residents. This theme was exemplified by one resident who agreed: *"we need better shops in Tamworth town centre - no more charity, card or cafes please! How about some up-market shops to encourage people."* Another who similarly agreed felt it would be better for Tamworth to *"invest in the town but not in one off events which left no lasting legacy"*.

Sports and leisure facilities

A common theme amongst residents was the lack of affordable leisure facilities in the town. Respondents commented that Tamworth Borough Council make *"no provision for their citizens to access affordable gym/ leisure facilities."* It could massively benefit the local population to lose weight and to become healthier if provision were made for these.

Parking

Whilst parking was not considered one of the key criteria of what makes somewhere a good place to live, it was clearly of importance to residents of Tamworth. Comments on parking were plentiful and these ranged from the cost of parking in Tamworth town centre to parking in locations which were considered inappropriate. Regarding car parking charges in the town centre, residents generally agreed that these should be *"free"* or at least *"more affordable, this would help!"*

The parking of vehicles on *"pavements, grass verges and near junctions"* were raised as an issue in some localised areas. One resident for example who lives in Lakeside commented that *"there are regularly vehicles parked half on the pavement in front of my house, which is on a corner. It's the same on the other side of the road. Anybody with an invalid carriage or even a pushchair has to go in the road! Access for emergency vehicles would be severely restricted."*

Cleanliness of streets

Residents were unanimously in support of encouraging local people to *"take pride"* in their local area. *"Litter dropping and dog fouling"* were acknowledged to be problems in the local areas and encouraging people to take pride in their local area was viewed as a key mechanism to encourage future improvements. For example, *"litter, cans, bottles and fast food wrappers litter our streets. More needs to be done with keeping Tamworth clean and litter free, schools should be encouraged to take pride in where they live"*. Cleanliness and tidiness was also considered to be an issue in parks and open spaces and therefore encouraging people to *"take pride"* in these would also encourage improvements to their appearance.

Health services

Provision of health services was recognised to be *"a national problem and not just a local one." However,* despite this recognition, some respondents were unhappy that they had to travel out of the town to access a hospital and accident and emergency services: "*An A & E Department would be a first, we used to have two proper hospitals, we now have a minor injuries unit."* Others also felt that there was a need for *"more doctors surgeries."* This town is *"growing and we need to grow with it!."*

Education provision

The subject of education was mentioned by a minority of participants. Those that did so generally made some commentary on academies. One felt there should be at least *"two state run schools within the town—one should be on the North side and one should be on the south side and then one school could be academy run."* Others were less supportive of academies for example, *"one sixth form college dished out to private academy was a disgrace and please realise that it's good teachers that make good schools, NOT academy status."*

Parks and open spaces

A handful of comments were received on parks and open spaces. One commented that Tamworth has *"lovely parks and open spaces and these are well maintained"*. Others however did provide the suggestions for improvements which were being sought. Amongst those commenting it was considered key to keep parks and open spaces clear of *"litter"* and *"dog fouling."*

Affordable decent housing

Whilst this was generally regarded as an important issue which needs improving, it was not a thematic issue which residents generally chose to comment on. Of the few that did comment, *"building new council homes was considered vital—not so they can be sold but so they can be used to help people get on the ladder. These could be for a maximum four year tenancy."*

Events

Events were another of the themes not commonly referred to in residents comments. Those residents who did comment reflected diverse and individual viewpoints. One respondent felt that *"investment into the town centre"* would be better than *"spending money on one off events which left no lasting legacy for the town"*. Another felt that Tamworth would benefit from *"community events"*. These could reflect the needs of people living in these local areas. These for example could be held *"on estates, for the people who live there"* and they could be anything from *"street cleans to fun days out for the kids"*.

Good job prospects

Whilst job prospects were not a common theme amongst those residents who were commenting, one respondent did suggest a potential improvement whereby advisers could go into schools and offer children a variety of options, all of which could eventually lead to good job prospects. For example *"my son did not want to go to university much to the disappointment of his teachers and me, he did not know what he wants to do and was drifting but I signed him up to an AAT course at college (evening classes) and now he is a part qualified accountant!"*

5.4 What would you consider to be an acceptable Council Tax increase for the 2016/17 budget?

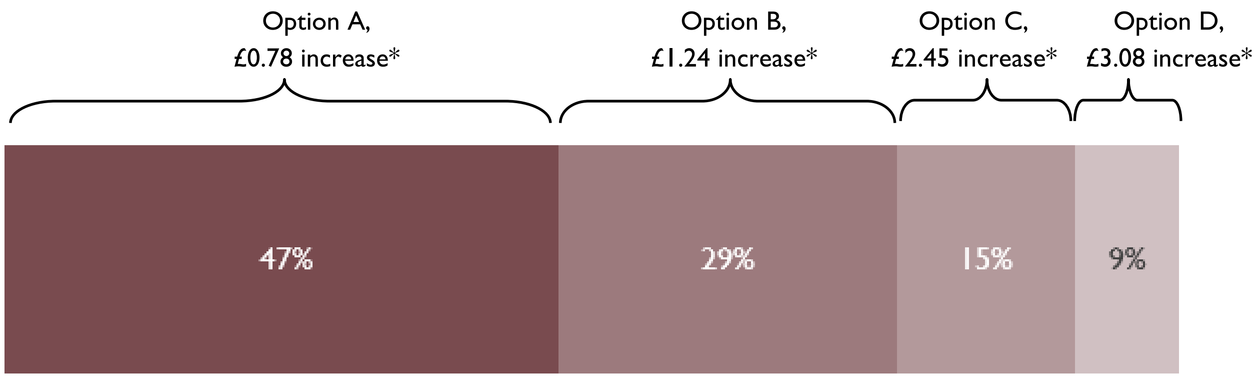
The largest proportion of respondents would prefer the lowest level of increase offered with nearly half of all respondents (47%) selecting option A as their preferred choice.

Generally speaking, the higher the level of the increase, the less attractive it was as an option for residents.

Whilst this trend is not dissimilar from those responses expressed by residents last year, it is noticeable this year that a higher proportion of residents selected the lowest level of increase available (£0.78).

This level of increase (£0.78) is similar to the average level of increase witnessed for all authorities in the West Midlands of (£0.80) according to CIPFA's latest annual council tax survey.

Figure 5.3: What would you consider to be an acceptable Council Tax increase for the 2016/17 budget?



*All increases shown are for a Band B property

6. MAKING TAMWORTH BETTER FOR BUSINESS

Respondents who completed the questionnaire from the perspective of a local business were asked to provide their opinions and comment on a number of business related questions in order to gather a picture of how Tamworth can be made better for businesses.

A total of 18 businesses responded to the survey (a 29% increase since last year, with four more businesses participating in this years survey compared to last years). This section will explore the questions businesses were asked and the responses that they gave.

6.1 Business type and location

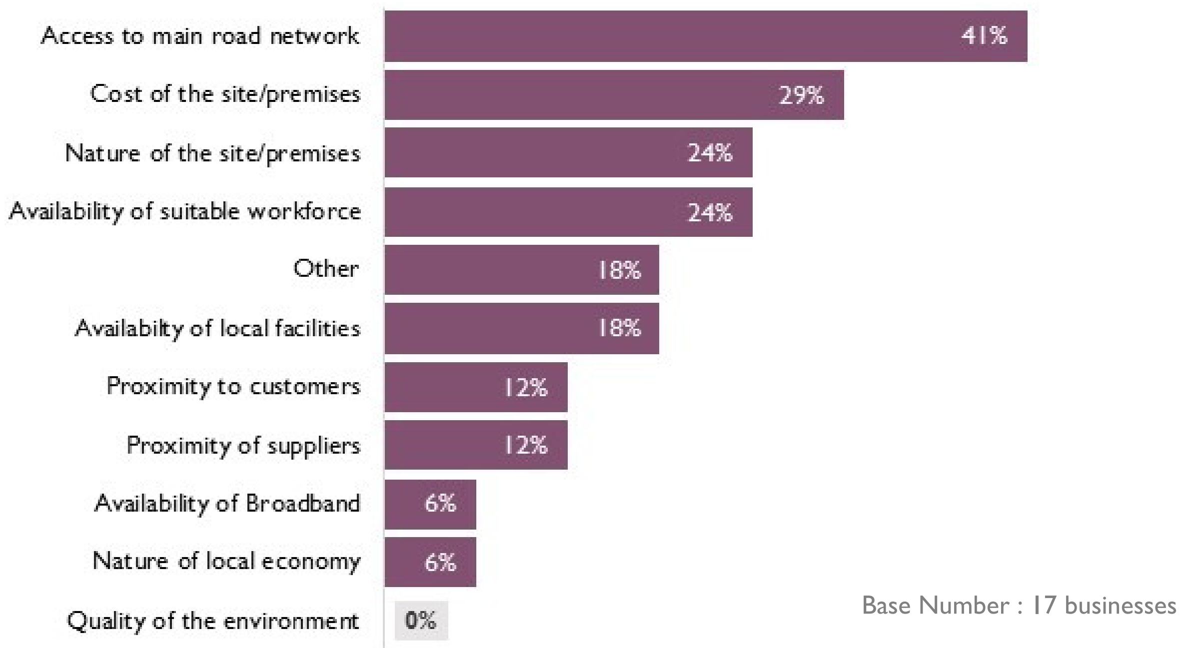
Of the businesses that responded to the consultation, half were based on an industrial estate (50%), 28% were in the town centre, and 11% were based either at home (11%) or within a local neighbourhood area (11%).

The majority of them were independent with no other branches (78%). 11% were a head office and 6% (1 business) a branch or subsidiary of a larger group. 6% (1 business) described themselves as another type of business and qualified that they were a church/community business[3].

Respondents stipulated that access to main road networks was the main reasons for their base (41%). Access to main road networks was also given as the main reason for location in last years consultation responses. Those companies who said access was important were most likely to be based on industrial estates.

The cost of the site/premises was also given as a reason for location by 29%. The quality of the environment wasn't a consideration for any of the respondents. Responses from all businesses are documented in the figure below.

Figure 6.1: What are the main reasons why your company is based here?



[3]Business responses have not been statistically analysed by type as the number of responses does not allow this. Commentaries have however been included where the results suggest it is more common for given types of businesses to answer questions in a similar manner.

6.2 Future business needs

Businesses were asked to indicate whether their current premises were likely to be suitable for their future needs. Whilst the majority did think that they were (89%), 11% (or two businesses) did not feel this was the case for them. Both of these businesses described themselves as head offices.

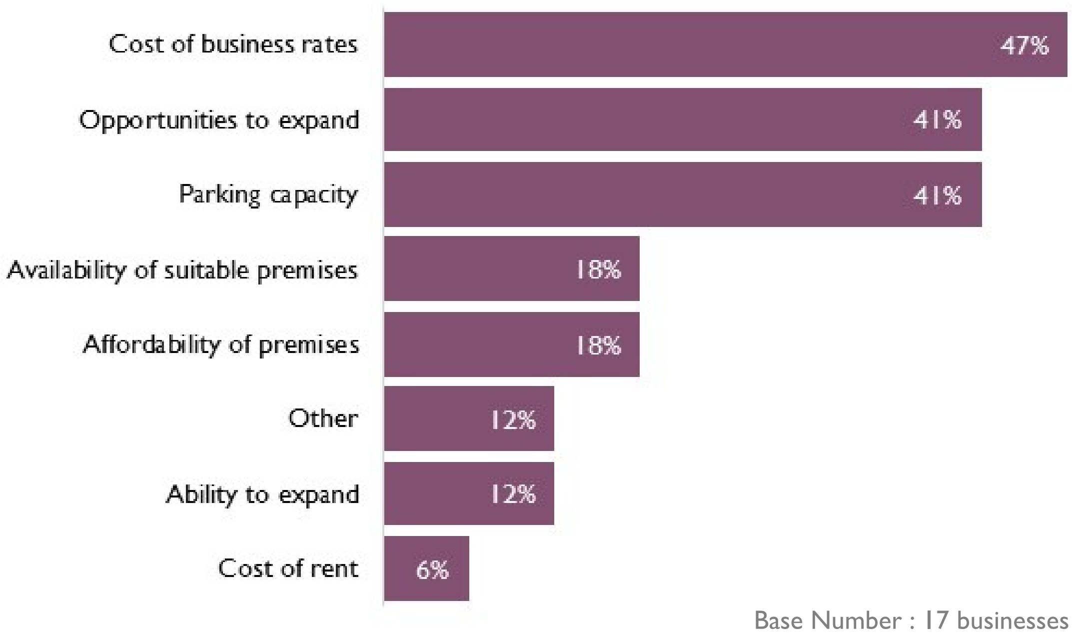
The majority of businesses (63%) intend to stay in the same location, whilst just over a third (37%) were considering expanding. Those considering expanding are currently based in a variety of locations which included industrial estates, the town centre and local neighbourhood areas.

6.3 Barriers to business expansion

As identified in the vision and priorities, the Council is keen for local businesses to grow and therefore needs to be aware of what barriers need to be broken down in order for this to happen. Respondents were asked to identify what they felt were the main barriers to business expansion.

The cost of business rates was viewed as the main barrier to expansion. Nearly half of all respondents selected this as an option (47%) and this was also the main barrier to expansion in last years consultation results. Opportunities to expand (41%) and parking capacity (41%) were other common barriers to expansion this year.

Figure 6.2: What are the barriers to business expansion?



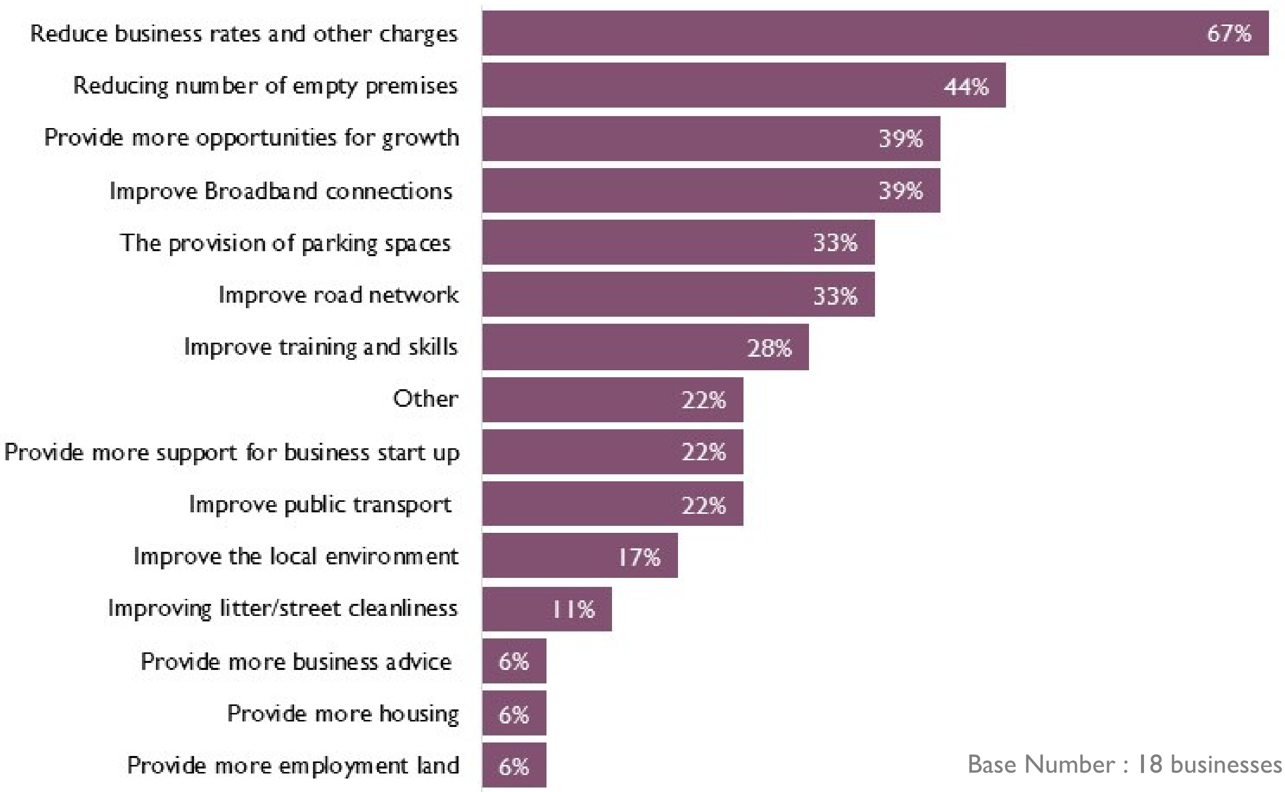
"Unreliable and slow broadband" and *"poor infrastructure on the Lichfield Road Industrial Estate"* were identified as other barriers to business expansion.

These issues were discussed more fully by all businesses in section 6.4 and the results are illustrated in the figure overleaf.

6.4 How can Tamworth be improved to assist business and the economy?

Respondents were invited to indicate up to five priorities which could assist businesses and the economy and help to improve Tamworth. Respondents were able to select their priorities from a list of 15 potential priorities and their responses are illustrated in the figure below. The majority (67%) felt that reducing business rates and other charges would assist business and the economy. This was also the most popular priority in last years results.

Figure 6.3: How can Tamworth be improved to assist business and the economy?



6.5 Additional comments on how Tamworth can be improved to assist business and the economy

Five businesses provided additional comments on how Tamworth could be improved. These are very much individual commentaries from businesses and as such cannot be considered to be representative of businesses overall. They do however still provide useful feedback of issues which could be explored in more depth to understand if they are improvements which would be of wider benefit to businesses and the economy.

⇒ *"Provide communication with regard to what is happening in the town centre, and can we be part of the growth".*

⇒ *"More business friendly pubs, restaurants and meeting places".*

⇒ *"Improvement of roads through industrial estates is needed - Mariner is in a terrible state".*

⇒ *"Provide more opportunities for local businesses to contract and tender to instead of looking elsewhere".*

⇒ *"Provide free parking for say 3 hours in town centre car parks to compete with out of town shopping areas".*

7. Community and Voluntary services organisations

Those respondents who completed the questionnaire from the perspective of a community or voluntary organisation were asked to provide their opinions and comment on a number of questions posed to gather a picture of the impacts of public sector cuts and how the organisations and their clients have been impacted by the economic downturn.

In total, 15 Community and Voluntary Organisations participated in the survey. This is a significant increase in responses since last year when there was one respondent representing this sector.

7.1 Type of organisation

Over half of those community and voluntary organisations participating described themselves as a registered charity (57%). One fifth were a company limited by guarantee (21%), 14% were a community interest company and 7% were a voluntary group.

7.2 The impact of budget cuts and the economic downturn on the services provided by Community and Voluntary Organisations

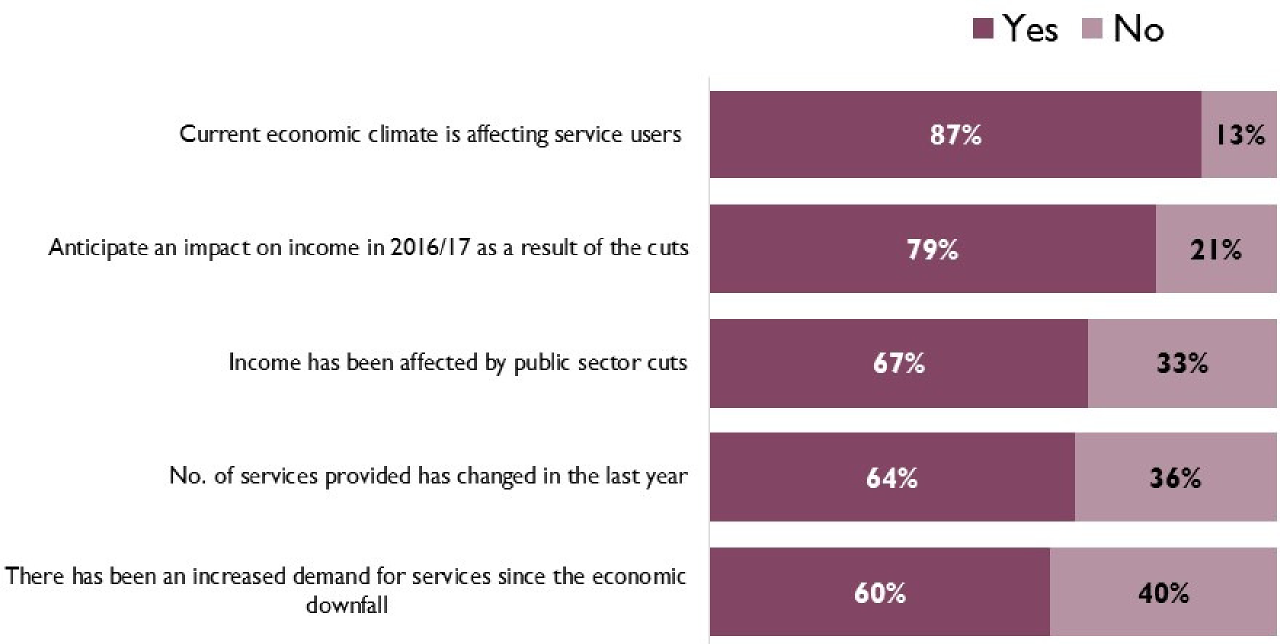
Respondents were invited to answer 'yes' or 'no' to a range of questions about the impact of the budget cuts and the economic downturn. It was most common for organisations to return an answer of 'yes' to all the questions asked.

This was most apparent regarding the question on whether the current economic climate was affecting service users, with the majority (87%) of respondents saying this was the case.

Whilst organisations were least likely to say that there has been an increase in demand since the economic downfall, 60% did still say that this was the case.

The views shared by all organisations are illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 7.1: Community and Voluntary Organisations responses to a range of questions about the impact of budget cuts and the economic downturn (%)



Base Number: 15 Organisations

Respondents were encouraged to explain how service users had been impacted by the economic downturn and where organisations identified an increase in demand for services, they were asked to explain how this had affected them. Their responses to both questions have been summarised below.

7.3 The current economic downturn is affecting service users

The majority of organisations (87%) did feel that their service users had been affected. It was common for respondents to have observed that more people were turning to them for support and their clients were generally facing much greater daily struggles since budget cuts had come into force. The majority of organisations did share examples of the affects that they had observed and these have been summarised below.

Unemployed/benefits:

⇒ *"Unemployed adults with literacy issues are seeking our support. They are finding it hard to meet job application targets as literacy assessment and practical support seems to have been cut at the Job Centre".*

⇒ *"Some vulnerable people have a hard time at the job centre and are pressed to take work which they are unable to sustain for more that a few weeks before they are unemployed again, either because of stresses which impact on their mental health, or because they cannot work to the level required by the employer".*

⇒ *"Customers are more likely to be destitute and having to rely on for example food banks. Often this is due to benefit exclusions which are not justified and can be challenged with the right support".*

⇒ *"Increased risks of homelessness - for example difficulties paying rent due to bedroom tax".*

Families:

⇒ *"Families are not getting timely support from schools due to budget cuts, so come to us instead".*

Mental health:

⇒ *"More customers are experiencing mental health problems - depression, low mood".*

⇒ *"They are being signed off mental health services too soon and just end up at the beginning of the cycle again. Interventions are too short to have an impact meaning that the cost to the public purse is more in the long term".*

Physical health

⇒ *"Hospital discharge is not always well planned by health professionals which can lead to sudden housing crises".*

⇒ *"They are having to source and pay for care and support to stay at home. People are stuck in hospital due to lack of community based services free a point of delivery".*

7.4 There has been an increased demand in services since the economic downfall.

60% of organisations identified that they had witnessed an increase in demand and organisations had responded to this demand in a variety of ways. Some had increased the range of services they were providing for example *"we have now had to provide separate services for adults," "there has been increased demand for individual appointments for children due to constraints experienced by schools,"* and *"we have increased our outreach programme."* Others were making greater use of volunteers to ensure the services which were needed could be delivered. Some expressed concern about the ability to continually sustain the delivery of services, for example *"we are reaching capacity with this [using volunteers]"* and *"we are struggling to raise enough money to cover costs," "we have had to withdraw services for children"* and *"we have greater waiting times for our services".*

APPENDIX 1: RESIDENTS RESPONDENT PROFILE

Are you male or female?

	Survey responses		MYE 2014
	No's	%	%
Male	123	52%	48%
Female	116	48%	52%

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

	Survey responses		Census 2011
	No's	%	%
Yes	72	32%	18%
No	151	68%	82%

What is your age?

	Survey responses		MYE 2014
	No's	%	%
18-24	1	0.4%	10%
25-34	12	5.1%	17%
35-44	23	9.8%	17%
45-54	39	16.6%	18%
55-64	62	26.4%	16%
65-74	73	31.1%	13%
75+	25	10.6%	9%

What type of disability do you have?

	Survey responses	
	No's	%
Communications	1	1.4%
Hearing	14	19.4%
Learning	0	0.0%
Mental Health	11	15.3%
Mobility	40	55.6%
Physical	27	37.5%
Visual	3	4.2%
Other	10	13.9%

What is your ethnicity?

	Survey responses		Census 2011
	No's	%	%
Asian/Asian British/Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi	0	0.0%	0.8%
Black or Black British	2	0.9%	0.51%
Chinese	0	0.0%	0.2%
Mixed Heritage	1	0.4%	1.0%
White British	219	95.2%	95%
White Other	7	3.0%	2.3%
Other	1	0.4%	0.1%

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THURSDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2015

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING & WASTE MANAGEMENT

COUNCIL HOUSING TENANTS ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

EXEMPT INFORMATION

PURPOSE
To provide details of the Councils Landlord Performance for 2014/15 as required under the Homes & Community Agency Landlord Regulatory Framework 2012.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Cabinet approve:-

- Production of the Council's Landlord Annual Report to Tenants' (2014/15) complying with required governance under the Landlord Regulatory Framework, shown at **annex one**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Landlord Regulatory Framework continues to be scrutinised by the Homes & Communities Agency under legislation detailed in the Localism Act 2011. The HCA have recently published its third report into consumer regulation[1] and it remains the case that Local Authorities with their own housing stock are required to demonstrate compliance with the 4 consumer standards:-

1. Tenant involvement and Empowerment
2. Home
3. Tenancy
4. Neighbourhood and Community.

Key to demonstrating performance is communicating performance; and for Tamworth this is via the production of an Annual Tenants' Report. As in the past, the Tenant Consultative Group have influenced the production and contributed to the target setting and scrutiny in relation to core housing management performance. If approved, the production of the Annual Tenants Report will be the **5th** publication since the regulatory code was introduced. The co-regulatory framework developed by tenants is aimed at ensuring they influence, scrutinise and inform policy decisions and their views are routinely referenced in cabinet reports.

Annually the Landlord Service has celebrated improving performance and the majority of the benchmarked KPIs are either top quartile or in an improving position.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consumer-regulation-review-2014-to-2015

This year, following approval by Cabinet 6/11/14, satisfaction levels have been tested independently by MEL.[2] The last independent survey was carried out in 2011 when overall satisfaction with landlord services was just under 75%. It is pleasing to note that overall satisfaction has now increased to just over 78% with significant improvements in satisfaction with the neighbourhood; listening to tenant views and keeping tenants informed. Given the financial climate and challenging decisions around welfare reform it is pleasing to see that this has improved when often recipients are influenced by a range of public sector services not just the ones being tested.

Key Performance Indicators	2015	% dif.	2011
Overall satisfaction	78%	↑+3%	75%
Quality of home	79%	N/A	Aggregate data not available
Neighbourhood	83%	↑+8%	75%
Rent provides VFM	73%	N/A	Aggregate data not available
Repairs & Maintenance	68%	—	68%
Listens to views*	59%	↑+5%	54%
Keeping tenants informed*	80%	↑+12%	68%

Benchmarking across the sector and with 'best in class' is a core part of the Councils approach to performance management; ensuring we are able to measure key performance indicators, improvements and operational efficiencies. Tamworth's own stock retained housing service continues to report outcomes that are either top quartile or in an improving position. In fact qualitative data suggests overall satisfaction (when aggregated across all landlord services) is 88%. Full details of the KPIS are shown in the customer intelligence report at annex four.

In contrast, satisfaction levels with repairs have remained static. Qualitative data from Mears shows that invariably satisfaction with the actual repair is 92% whereas performance issues with making appointments and general customer contact is poorer, reducing overall satisfaction levels. Members know that an options appraisal is already underway to assess future arrangements as the current contract with Mears comes to an end. There is also a strategic focus and commitment from Mears to improve on this.

In November 2014, Cabinet also approved an external programme of in-service assessments to ensure continuous improvement. Progress is well underway as detailed below

Landlord Service	Assessment	Comment
Customer Involvement	TPAS undertook a health	Stage 1 of the

[2] Measurement Evaluation Learning September 2015

& Empowerment	check in 2014 around tenant scrutiny and the wider regulatory standard	accreditation is acknowledged and a detailed action plan for full accreditation is in place The Landlord Regulatory Team have been identified as best practice for the recent “inter-generational cook n eat programme”
Home Repairs	 An independent assessment by ARK/Trowers is under way with a further report due back to Members early 2016	
Tenancy Tenancy Sustainment Sheltered Housing Housing Options	 Rent Income Excellence Network assessed the rental service in 2014/15 and have recommended for early accreditation A full sheltered housing review has been undertaken and members are aware of the outcomes to continue service provision despite SCC funding ceasing Housemark voted Tamworth most improved landlord in relation to void turnaround times in 2012/13	 RIEN have identified best practice in relation to welfare reform and continuing preparations. New Service offer is being consulted on as part of the service charge project A peer review is planned in conjunction with partners for 2015/16 to improve outcomes in terms of improved property standards as well as developing tenant housing options
Neighbourhood & Community Estate Management & Anti Social Behaviour	 Tamworth were the first LA landlord to be accredited in 2012	 Re-assessment by CIH is underway for 2015

There is a strong collaborative relationship between officers, member and partners and this provides a sound basis for improvement. The teams are not complacent and continually strive to improve services. Ultimately this is driven by a desire to improve customer services and the quality of life for citizens. However the consequences for non compliance are detailed in the HCA's consumer review, attached at annex three. A number of housing organisations were investigated and findings of 'serious detriment' found against them. Where this occurs there are interventions that have managerial and reputational consequences for the Councils concerned. The HCA have highlighted key messages from these investigations to avoid other registered providers / LA's finding themselves in this position:-

- Councillors have a responsibility to ensure compliance with the standards
- Councillors should ensure they have proper oversight of health and safety matters including gas servicing, fire safety and other repair issues
- The correct route of redress is through the organisations own complaints process and the regulator will not routinely by pass this
- Consumer standards continue to apply to Local authorities, whereas the economic standards do not.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
The production of the annual report is done electronically and in hard copy for those who specifically request it. This is the second year that the annual report has been distributed in this way and therefore costs are met from existing resources.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND
Failure to comply with the Homes & Community Agency Regulatory Framework could result in intervention should this be assessed as causing "serious detriment" to tenants. The co-regulatory framework developed with tenants to assess consumer standards as well as contribute to economic regulation mitigates this risk going forward.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS
The overall satisfaction with the council's landlord service has a direct correlation with 'the place' and work has been cross cutting with street scene, community safety, and the voluntary sector to ensure improved results in these areas.

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Tenant Regulation & Involvement Manager – Leanne Allwood Ext 484

List of Background Papers

Appendices
Annex One - Annual Report to tenants 2014/15 (attached at the end of the report)
Annex Two - MEL – Independent STAR Survey - Report Published September 2015
Annex Three – Consumer Regulation Review 2014/15 (090915) HCA
Annex Four – Customer Intelligence Report 2014/2015

Landlord Services

Tamworth Borough Council

Annual Report

2014 – 2015

Contents

(page numbers may need to be revisited once printed)

Welcome to your Annual Report

Welcome to our latest Annual Report. Every year, we look at how well we have been performing and what we are going to do in the coming year.

Please have a look!

This is our opportunity to give you information about our services and how we have performed, highlight areas for improvement and share our plans for the future.

This year we will be sending the Annual Report by email. However, the report is still available to download via the web and is available in print for those of you who prefer this. By making these changes we are gradually reducing production and postage costs which will help us to spend more time and money on the things that are important to our tenants such as our day-to-day services.

One of our priorities is to ensure we measure how we are doing and compare ourselves with other landlords including the best in class. We have aimed to make sure the report is honest – celebrating what we do well but pointing out where we need to improve. We can only achieve this by looking at the information you give us – in surveys and meetings and when you contact us with your comments, compliments and concerns. Thank you for providing this feedback as it really helps us to improve.

We are pleased to report that despite the financial challenges that affect many of our tenants, we have maintained our rental income. We rely on this to provide the services you tell us matter most.

78% of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided by Tamworth Borough Council Housing Service. Overall satisfaction level has improved when compared to 75% in 2011

If you would like a printed copy of this report please contact the Tenant Regulatory & Involvement Team on 01827 709260/709374 or email tenantparticpation@tamworth.gov.uk

Who We Are

Area		Total	
Amington	421	Hockley	147
Belgrave	309	Kettlebrook	206
Bolehall	350	Leyfields	457
Borough Road	43	Stonydelph	731
Coton Green	62	The Leys	66
Dosthill	73	Town Centre	397
Fazeley	118	Two Gates	14
Gillway	228	Wilnecote	192
Glascote	588	**Total**	**4,402**

Total number of properties: 4,402

Number of tenancies as at 31 March 2015

Property type	0 Bed	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed +	Total
Bedsit	2	/	/	/	/	**2**
Flat/Maisonette	/	665	576	99	/	**1,340**
House	/	/	480	1834	150	**2,464**
Bungalow	/	204	27	/	/	**231**
Sheltered	/	324	38	3	/	**365**
	2	**1,195**	**1,121**	**1,936**	**150**	**4,402**

A Year in Pictures 2014/2015

Can be found in Housing & Health/Housing/Tenant Participation/Photos/Annual Report 2014/2015

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment

It has been a busy year for tenant involvement. We continue to provide a range of opportunities for tenants to get involved, including having a say in setting our standards and making sure we meet them. If you'd like more information, please contact the Tenant Regulation & Involvement Team on 01827 709374/260, email tenantparticipation@tamworth.gov.uk or visit the website at www.tamworth.gov.uk and take a look at our **Tenant Involvement & Consultation Strategy 2013-2016**

STAR Survey 2015		
Satisfaction with keeping tenants informed	2011	2015
	68%	80%

There are various ways for customers to get involved

More than **100 involvement activities** have been arranged, ranging from postal surveys, estate based activities and consultation events

Three Intergenerational Cook and Healthy Eating projects carried out in partnership with Community Together CIC

Analysed more than **2,000** surveys from customers

Recruited four new tenant inspectors making a total of **21**

68 tenant-led communal cleaning audits carried out across the borough

Annual programme of **Estate Inspections** completed

Reviewed Tamworth's Local Offers consulting with more than **1,200** tenants

Engagement activities – Plant a pot events at Magnolia and Bright Crescent Sheltered Schemes

497 tenants registered on the database of involvement

Looking forward - 2015/2016

- Publish the results of STAR - Survey of Tenants and Residents 2015 – and work with tenant groups to produce a detailed action plan in response to key service outcomes
- Work with the Head of Customer Services in the review of the corporate Tell us policy and produce a customer-friendly user guide to assist customers when making a complaint
- Continue with the Intergenerational Cook and Healthy Eating Project as a three-year project

- Develop a training programme to extend skills and knowledge of involved customers so that they are equipped to understand, challenge and make recommendations for future service delivery
- Facilitate Landlord Services third tenants conference
- Increase the number and representation of customers in the service improvement groups
- Develop a series of DIY skills and awareness workshops in partnership with our repairs contractor and Community Together CIC
- Carry out a series of service charge consultation events to contribute to the final offer documents

Customer feedback

STAR Survey 2015		
Listens to tenants' views and acts upon them	2011	2015
	54%	59%

Complaints, Compliments and Service Requests
We welcome all feedback as it helps us improve services. We aim to resolve all complaints as effectively and as quickly as possible. Any complaint - no matter how minor - is recorded. During 2014/25 we received a total of **213** initial reports of dissatisfaction compared to the previous year of **241.**

	2013/2014	2014/2015
Complaints	241	213
Compliments	105	68
Service Requests	159	171
Total	**505**	**452**

	2013/2014	2014/2015
Number of complaints	241	213
Number of stage 1 complaints	213	189
Number of stage 2 complaints	22	18
Number of stage 3 complaints	6	6
Number of complaints upheld	17	16
Number of compliments	105	68

The following three service areas received the most complaints during 2014/15:

48% Mears (Including Morrison Gas)
14% Housing Solutions
11% Tenancy ASB issues

89% customer satisfaction with complaint handling

Learning from your complaints

- When we looked at some of the formal complaints we received, some customers were unhappy with the lack of detailed information in their response letter, resulting in the complaint being escalated. The Complaints Review Panel has worked with staff to develop a number of good response template letters for all staff to access
- The Complaints Review Panel has reviewed Mears' contact and complaint closure letters. The Panel made recommendations for the letters to be more customer-friendly and free from any jargon
- The Panel highlighted the increase in service requests from Councillors. This resulted in the development of a comprehensive Staff Directory to assist Councillors to ensure enquiries are directed to the most appropriate person / team in the first instance

Customer Feedback

Have Your Say
Tamworth Borough Council wants to ensure that the services we provide meet both our published standards and the needs of our customers. All customer feedback is important to us and can be a complaint, suggestion, comment or compliment.

All feedback, including complaints, is taken seriously and we use it to learn lessons as to how things may have been done differently and to improve future services.

Where possible, we will publish information on how we have made improvements resulting from your feedback.

Home

This section shows how we work with you and our contractors to keep your home safe and well maintained.

STAR Survey 2015		
Satisfaction with the quality of your home	2011	2015
	75%	79%

Responsive repairs

	2013/2014	2014/2015
The number of repairs completed on the first visit	91%	90%
Total number of repairs carried out	12,340	12,835
Customer satisfaction for responsive repairs	93%	94%
Percentage of repairs completed on time	98%	98%
Percentage of appointments made and kept	98%	98%
Percentage of complaints relating to the repairs service	38%	38%
Percentage of complaints relating to the gas service	5%	9%

STAR Survey 2015	
Tenant satisfaction with their last reported repair	
Attitude of workers	89%
Keeping dirt and mess to a minimum	83%
Overall quality of work	80%
Being able to make an appointment	76%
Repair being done 'right first time'	66%

Average number of calendar days to complete repairs = **10 days**

Total cost to carry out repairs **£1,339,886**

Average spend on an empty property **£2,325**

- Number of gas repairs **4,429**
- Number of glazing repairs **947**
- Number of painting jobs **22**
- Number of plumbing jobs **2,282**
- Number of roofing jobs **775**
- Number of electrical jobs **2,909**
- Number of bricklaying and plastering jobs **574**

STAR Survey 2015		
Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance	2011	2015
	68%	68%

Gas servicing

99.72% of properties were compliant with landlord safety checks. Four properties were empty and were capped off for health and safety purposes, with legal action being taken with the seven remaining properties

All of your gas appliances, including your gas boiler, gas cooker and gas fire should be safety checked and serviced once a year. If you do not have your gas appliances regularly serviced and safety checked by a Gas Safety registered engineer you could be putting you and your family at risk and in possible danger of carbon monoxide poisoning.

84% tenant satisfaction with gas servicing arrangements

Looking forward 2015/2016

- Install replacement boilers at two retirement schemes
- Continue with the annual environmental works programme and associated consultation
- Develop an Eco Plan framework which will include energy and fuel efficient options

Health and safety

- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service was successfully awarded the contract for Home Fire safety checks during 2014/15
- We will be working to the Health and Safety ROSPA Accreditation

Planned maintenance

In 2014/15 we spent approximately **£3,148,221** on planned home improvements

Improvement Programme	How Many	Total Spend
Kitchens	251	£839,000
Bathrooms	192	£791,000
Windows & Doors	228	£317,000
Disabled Adaptations	73	£201,000
‘A’ rated boiler installations	441	£1,000,221

Customer satisfaction for planned works	2013/2014	2014/2015
	90.08%	93%

Disabled Facilities Adaptations (DFAs)

Over the past 12 months we have spent **£201,000** providing adaptations to enable disabled people to remain in their property and live independently.

73 DFAs completed of which:

- **61** major works including lifts through floors and level access showers
- **12** minor works completed to include internal and external hand/grab rails, laying non slip flooring and widening doorways for wheelchairs

Energy efficiency

As part of the annual environmental works programme, a further number of garages in the Belgrave area, those situated under flats, have had thermal boarding installed. This has consequently reduced the 'U' value (the value of heat loss) of each property, meaning cheaper utility bills for the occupants of flats.

Looking forward 2015/2016

- Continue to remove old inefficient gas appliances and install 'A' rated appliances
- An upgrade will be undertaken for emergency lighting in the High Rise flats

Tenancy

In this section we talk about how quickly we let our homes, how we can help you maintain your tenancy and how satisfied you are with our overall service

Number of applicants on the housing waiting list, by band, as at 31 March 2015:

Band 1+ **61**
Band 1 **147**
Band 2 **329**
Band 3 **192**
Band 4 **902**

70% of offers of accommodation accepted first time

34 people were given an optional welfare benefit check at the start of their tenancy This is where we talk to new tenants about debt/ referrals to CAB/ referrals to support agencies/ Staffordshire scheme for help with furniture/ DWP crisis loans/ rent quote. The main queries are around what help is available with furniture

17 days on average to let properties

1,631 active housing applications as at 31 March 2015
73 Mutual exchanges
During the year **288** council properties became available for reletting; approximately **24** per month
111 nominations to housing association properties for re-housing people from the housing waiting list
95% of customers satisfied with the Finding a Home service
32 families successfully moved on, as part of the regeneration programme at Tinkers Green

Sheltered Housing

100% (66) visits completed for sheltered schemes within 24 hours of moving in
100% of monitoring sheets completed in relation to Legionella
100% of scheme resident meetings held every other month
On average **97.5% (12,902)** of alarm calls answered within 60 seconds
100% (91) of needs and risk assessments carried out at all sheltered schemes prior to moving in
Annual **fire inspection** completed
Improved heating system at Thomas Hardy Court
Annual **Health and Safety training** programme completed for all Independent Living Managers

Delivered a range of activities at the sheltered schemes to include:

- **Cottage Healing Centre treatments**
- **Hairdressers**
- **Opticians**
- **Dementia Friends**
- **Eat well programme**
- **Olive Branch visits from the Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service**
- **Hearing loss events at all schemes**
- **100th anniversary of WW1 event**

Supported Housing

100% of lettings turned around within ten days from tenancy end date
100% of applicants involved in a needs and risk assessment prior to moving in
100% of support plans agreed within four weeks of moving in
100% successful move ons

STAR Survey 2015	
Sheltered Housing satisfaction with	
Frequency of contact with Independent Living Manager	95%
Overall service provided by Independent Living Manager	93%
Facilities at scheme	86%
Handy Person Service	81%

Looking forward 2015/2016

- Continue to develop the range of current activities in sheltered housing schemes to enable tenants to stay well and continue to live independently
- Working with the NHS and associated partners to continue to work and deliver wellbeing sessions

Rent

Welfare Reform

The Government's welfare reforms continue to put a squeeze on people's incomes. Despite this, nationally £12 billion worth of benefit entitlement goes unclaimed every year, including £3.1 billion worth of Housing Benefit and around £2.8 billion of Pension Credit.

Part of welfare reform is to introduce Universal Credit and in preparation for this we carried out a **Digital Inclusion** survey to identify who does and does not have access to the internet.

Results from the Digital Inclusion Survey indicated:

- **56%** of people did not have access to the internet
- **26.6% of 46 to 55 year** olds had the greatest access to the internet
- **67.9%** did not know that you can only apply for Universal Credit online

A Universal Credit countdown leaflet has been produced to ensure that tenants are fully aware of Universal Credit and the possible impact it may have. This leaflet will continue to be sent out with rent statements until all welfare reforms have been introduced

Average rent (excluding service charges)

Property Type	Average Rent £
1 Bedroom Flat/Maisonette	76.50
2 Bedroom Flat/Maisonette	85.91
1 Bedroom Bungalow	85.88
2 Bedroom Bungalow	93.72
2 Bedroom House	88.34
3 Bedroom House	96.85
4 Bedroom House	107.66

	2013/2014	2014/2015	
The rent collected as a % of annual debit	98.50%	107.70%	Top quartile
Rent loss due to empty properties	.72%	.38%	Top quartile

At the end of the financial year **12** tenants were affected by the benefit cap, although this may increase as the government considers lowering the threshold further.

Because of the bedroom sanction we assisted with the transfer of **14** families who downsized via the incentive to move scheme, **7** of which were due to the properties being under occupied

- **8** families affected by a **25%** reduction of housing benefit
- **3** families affected by a **14%** reduction of housing benefit
- **5** tenants moved to sheltered accommodation
- **5** families moved as part of the regeneration programme
- **2** families either succeeded to the property or mutually exchanged

Tenancy Sustainment Officers (Income) continue to engage with customers both out on the estates and through Marmion House in an attempt to reduce arrears.

Number of attempted	Total	Successful	Unsuccessful
Telephone calls	19,318	16,874	2,444
Visits	4,192	1,402	2,790
Interviews	411	394	17
Total	**23,921**	**18,670**	**5,251**

Despite having fewer successful contacts this year, we have still managed to reduce the arrears by an additional **0.30%**

The number of evictions carried out was **28 in 2014/15 compared to 22 in 2013/2014.** Eviction is always the last resort

The **Tenants' Portal** was successfully introduced during the year and approximately **12,154** viewings have been made. This allows tenants to look at their rent account online any time of day or night.

Our quarterly rent incentive draw continues with a prize of £250 to encourage tenants to keep a clear rent account

The rent campaigns continue to encourage customers to pay their rent via direct debit. This method of payment has increased from **29.65% (1,040) in 2013/2014, to 33% (1,067)**

Did you know?

You can check your balance, pay your rent online, claim housing benefit or download a Direct Debit form. For further information about your account you can also contact a member of the Tenancy Sustainment Team Tel: 01827 709514

Looking forward 2015/2016

- Collect information regarding access to the internet at the sign-up stage and each time contact is made with you
- Develop an online budget planner and run a leaflet campaign on affordability, to make everyone aware of how much it costs to run a one-bed property
- Carry out a series of consultation events about the introduction of service charges

Neighbourhood and Community

In this section we talk about how we work with you and our partners to keep neighbourhoods and communal areas greener, cleaner and safer, preventing and tackling incidents of anti-social behaviour and supporting tenants who experience this where they live.

STAR Survey 2015		
Tenant satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live	2011	2015
	75%	83%

Regeneration

The decision to redevelop Tinkers Green and Kerria estates was taken following an in-depth study of council housing in Tamworth, which found that some housing in these areas was unpopular with residents, outdated and unsuitable for current housing needs.

The first two phases at Tinkers Green have been successfully completed and the final phase is due to finish in March 2016. The regeneration of the Kerria Centre will then start from April 2016

Regeneration Statistics:
100 properties to be demolished at Tinkers Green
108 new homes will be built
36 properties to be demolished at the Kerria Centre
44 new homes will be built

The project is anticipated to cost £21.5 million

Looking forward 2015/2016

- Aim to have a developer appointed by the end of 2015
- The first stage of demolition at Tinkers Green is due to start late 2015 with the second stage late 2016

New Development Programme

In February 2011, the Council's Cabinet agreed to either dispose of or develop 89 garage sites across the borough due to lack of demand, high levels of ASB or investment costs for maintenance:

- **12** sites have now been disposed of to two partner registered providers Waterloo Housing Group and Bromford - to deliver new affordable housing
- **4** sites have been developed, to date, by Waterloo Housing Group, to provide **17** new properties
- **5** sites providing **21** properties have been developed by Bromford

Looking forward 2015/2016

- Further sites will be transferred to registered providers. Work is due to start in April, with properties scheduled to be completed and ready to let in the autumn. There will be a total of 13 properties built, which will include wheelchair accessible flats and disabled bungalows
- It is our intention for the future to look at further sites as part of a new programme of council house building

Environmental Programme

A total of **16** projects have been completed under the continuing environmental works programme. These have included:

- The enhancement of five drying areas by replacing pathways and sheds
- External improvements to sheltered schemes to include erecting raised planters and replacing shrubs and grassed areas throughout the borough.
- Low level fencing was been erected at some bungalows, offering better security and reducing anti social behaviour for the occupants

Can we have 4 photos here of before and after which can be found in Housing & Health/Housing/Tenant Participation/Photos/Annual Report 2014/201/environmental programme

Looking forward 2015/2016

- Consideration will be given into erecting security fencing at one of the borough's sheltered schemes
- The cladding and insulating of garages, underneath properties, will continue into 2015/16
- Improvements to drying areas to continue throughout the borough

Caretaking Services

Throughout the year the Council's Caretaking Team has dealt with

- Graffiti removal (non-offensive) **14 cases**
- Graffiti removal (offensive) **8 cases**
- Fly tipping removal **880 cases**
- Alleyway clearances **39 cases**
- Garage site clearances **3 cases**
- Drying area clearances **27 cases**

178 tonnes of rubbish has successfully been cleared from the estates by the team

Looking forward 2015/2016

- In conjunction with the regeneration programme, the Caretaking Team will continue to ensure the estates are kept clear of any debris and rubbish through regular estate inspection checks

Tenancy Sustainment

- Introduction of the **Something's not Right** campaign which tackles poor tenure and tenancy conditions, with the aim to ensure homes are healthy, warm and safe
- Continue to proactively collect customer profile information and tailor services according to needs

Looking forward 2015/2016

- Develop a hoarding policy
- Look to extend the Something's Not Right to other service areas across the council

Anti - social Behaviour

This is our second year benchmarking with HouseMark, which enables us to compare our key performance with **305** other housing providers

	2013/2014	**2014/2015**
Number of complaints received	584	296
Percentage of customers satisfied that they were kept informed throughout the ASB case	57%	79%
Percentage of customers satisfied with the support given to them during their ASB case	61%	74%
Percentage of customers satisfied with the outcome of their ASB complaint	57%	67%
Successfully closed ASB cases	70%	99% (top quartile)
Percentage of customers who have already made a complaint of ASB, who would be willing to report ASB in the future	79%	85%

Number of ASB cases	**296**
Number of injunctions	**1**
Number of evictions	**1**

348 incidents were recorded during the year which included

Type	Number
Noise	131
Pets/animals	50
Harassment/threats	41
Garden nuisance	40

Did you know?

- We ask every tenant who has reported an ASB case what they thought about our service.
- We will consider your suggestions to be included in future environmental programme. Please discuss with your tenancy sustainment officer
- We introduced the vulnerability risk assessment matrix and satisfaction survey for alleged perpetrators. This enables us to tailor the service to individual needs

Looking forward 2015/2016

- A review of the ASB policy and procedure will take place in conjunction with new legislation on the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Continue to work with partners in dealing with customers' complex needs.
- Prepare for a health check and Housemark re-accreditation of the ASB Respect Standard

Increasing our housing stock

We are currently launching an exciting pilot scheme to buy empty homes. This will increase the supply of affordable council housing for people on the housing register. The council will consider the re-purchase of any homes, but priority will be given to the following types of properties:

- One or two bedroom properties
- Former council homes
- Meeting the council's wider aims around preventing homelessness

So if you know of any one selling their property that is:-

- Up to the value of £100,000
- Will be vacant on completion
- In good condition and minimal repair works required

Then give us a call. The money available is limited each financial year, so you will be advised whether the scheme is open or closed when you contact us.

Value for Money

In this section we explain how we make sure that our services provide value for money

Tamworth Borough Council recognises the importance of demonstrating value for money which doesn't only mean keeping costs to a minimum. Value for money is also achieved through the following:

- Senior managers regularly review budgets and the highest areas of spending.
- Tenants are involved in the choice and appointment of contractors, suppliers and consultants to help ensure we get the right balance between cost and quality.
- Spent more than **£3million** on improvements to homes ensuring that our core business of providing affordable homes to those in need continues to expand
- To assess Value for Money (VFM), we use an independent organisation called HouseMark, which compares our services to other councils and registered social landlords. HouseMark also produces an annual report which identifies areas for improvement.
- In supported housing we moved from residential to commercial utilities making savings of more than £50k
- Tenants and staff have worked together to review Tamworth's Local Offers and used this feedback to ensure that our standards continue to meet the needs of customers
- Reviewing the cost of an anti-social behaviour case without reducing the service
- Continued to remove old inefficient gas appliances and install new 'A' rated appliances, reducing heating and hot water energy costs for tenants across the borough
- Continuing to clad and insulate garages, underneath properties, consequently reducing utility bills for the occupants
- The implementation of the tenant portal will reduce the number of quarterly rent statements that are posted out.
- We continue to provide and improve an easier and accessible service to customers

Did you know?

78% Overall tenant satisfaction with landlord services	**95%** Tenants satisfied with Finding a Home	**94%** Customers satisfied with response repairs	
89% Customers satisfied with complaint handling	**73%** Customers satisfied with the way Landlord Services deals with anti-social behaviour	**100%** Customers satisfied with environmental works	**87%** Customers satisfied with cleaning of internal communal areas

Other than overall satisfaction (based on 2011 STATUS), all performance indicators are either in the top quartile or reflect an improving position.

The following indicators have been agreed with tenants and will be reviewed during 2014/2015

	2011/12	**2012/13**	**2013/14**	**2014/15**	**Estimated Top Quartile***
Overall satisfaction with Landlord Services	75.2%	To be carried out in 2015/16	To be carried out in 2015/16	78%	84%
Average time between lettings	16 days	14 days	19 days	17 days	20 days
Walkabouts/ Estate Inspections	4	4	3	Estate Inspections = 10	Not benchmarked
Satisfaction with cleaning	86%	86%	87%	87%	86.25%
Number of tenants on the database of	373	348	428	497	Not benchmarked

involvement					
% appointments made and kept	99.13%	99.56%	97.57%	97.86%	98%
Gas servicing	99.75%	99.9%	100%	99.69%	100%
Urgent repairs completed on time	100%	95.09	98.53%	98.02%	97.0%
Customer satisfaction	87%	91.45%	93.68%	93.76%	97.0%
Arrears as a % of rent due	2.04%	2.37%	2.28%	1.96%	1.58%
Evictions	8	22	22	28	0.18%

*Figures based on estimated top quartile range when benchmarked nationally

You said:	***We listened:***
Customers have told us that sometimes there is not enough information provided in Stage One response letters	The Complaints Review Panel has worked with staff to compile a comprehensive suite of standard response letters that are fully informative in an attempt to reduce any escalation of a complaint to Stage 2
Customers have complained that they believe that the 90 day repairs category is too long	This will be reviewed as part of the Repairs Policy 2015/16
Repair appointments are not always given out routinely and customers have reported that they are not always offered a job reference number	Mears call centre staff have been requested to routinely offer appointments and issue job reference numbers so that jobs can always be traced back to the customer Mears has also invited customers from tenant working groups to shadow call centre staff
Repair operatives requesting to use tenants' tools.	This was raised with operatives as part of Mears 'tool box talks'
Bathroom refurbishments taking longer to complete than originally advised	In reality, bathroom refurbishments are being completed within agreed timescales - it is simply that the agreed timescales are longer than some customers would like. This is further compounded by the fact that work operatives are not on site constantly, throughout the course of the works, which again gives customers the view that the work could be completed more quickly if operatives were on site more frequently. Communication between customers and the Tenant Liaison Officer has been improved

Customers having to enquire about the outcome of their banding review	A response letter is now sent out within seven days to advise customers that the review will take place over forthcoming weeks and the customer will be advised accordingly.
Residents believe that the time taken to try to resolve their damp and condensation issues takes far too long	In the majority of cases the issue of damp and condensation is the result of individual lifestyle. When this is proved to be the case, staff will offer advice and assistance to customers along with supporting literature on how they can mitigate risks of condensation and damp. When this is not the cause, we will endeavour to work with Oaks Preservation to reduce the time taken to diagnose a damp/condensation issue.

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Homes & Communities Agency

CONSUMER REGULATION REVIEW (2014/15)

September 2015

CONSUMER REGULATION REVIEW 2014/15

September 2015

Executive summary

1. In this review the social housing regulator (the regulator) sets out its experience of carrying out its consumer regulation role in 2014/15. Our remit means that we do not proactively seek assurance on compliance with our consumer standards and can use our intervention powers only where we judge that a failure to meet a consumer standard has caused or may cause 'serious detriment' to a tenant or potential tenants. This is the third review since that remit was established in 2012.

2. As our experience of regulating under the remit continues to develop, we are keen to share broader lessons from our work with the sector. This publication uses our published findings of serious detriment and also includes other case studies to help explain our approach.

3. During 2014/15, we published 6 findings of serious detriment. In each of these cases we found that providers had breached the home standard. In previous years, a failure to meet statutory obligations with regard to gas servicing underpinned all of the breaches we identified. In 2014/15 this occurred in the majority of cases, but we also found serious detriment both as a consequence of a structural failure of a building, and a widespread, persistent failure of an emergency repairs service. These cases illustrate how the regulator looks at the combination of factors in considering serious detriment, including the depth (the number of people affected), seriousness and duration of failure.

4. In this year's report the key messages we want to highlight are largely similar to the messages in last year's report:

- Boards are responsible for ensuring that registered providers comply with all of the standards, both economic and consumer. The fact that the regulator regulates consumer standards reactively does not lessen the obligation to comply, but does make the risk of non-compliance significant as interventions in the event of failure are likely to be of consequence.
- The importance of health and safety obligations. Boards and councillors who govern registered providers' service delivery must make sure that they have proper oversight of all health and safety issues, including gas servicing, fire safety and other issues such as asbestos. Meeting health and safety requirements in respect of tenants is a fundamental responsibility.
- We consider all referrals to see whether they indicate a breach of a consumer standard which has or might cause serious detriment. The regulator looks at the combination of factors in considering serious detriment, including the depth (the number of people affected), seriousness and duration of failure.
- Many of the referrals which come to the regulator are ultimately judged to be individual complaints which, however well-founded they may be, do not represent a breach of the standards. The correct route for redress for these continues to be the registered provider's own complaints process, a Designated Person under the terms

of the *Localism Act 2011*, and the Housing Ombudsman. We continue to encourage tenants to pursue the appropriate route for their complaints, and encourage registered providers to ensure their tenants know of that route.

- In the case of private registered providers, when we find a breach of the standard which has or may cause serious detriment, we will also consider the impact upon our view of the registered provider's compliance with the governance and financial viability standard. There is a separate process and basis for consideration: there is no 'double jeopardy' whereby a breach of a consumer standard automatically creates a judgement of a breach of the governance and financial viability standard.
- Where a private registered provider becomes aware of a potential breach of a consumer standard which it believes has or could result in serious detriment to tenants, it should communicate this to the regulator in a timely way. The increasing number of self-referrals by registered providers to the regulator, particularly on well-established gas safety issues, indicates growing awareness of this obligation.
- The consumer standards continue to apply to local authorities, even though the economic standards do not.
- Where another statutory body is investigating a matter which may be a breach of the consumer standards (such as the Health & Safety Executive), we will take into account the action being undertaken by that authority when exercising our own regulatory powers.

Introduction

5. This report provides an overview of the consumer regulation work carried out by the regulator in the financial year 2014/15. It explains our approach to consumer regulation and how we have interpreted and applied the serious detriment test. The extent and nature of consumer issues referred to the regulator during 2014/15 is discussed and information provided on key issues.

6. At this point, 3 years after the implementation of the *Localism Act 2011*, both registered providers and the regulator are increasingly familiar with their revised roles arising from that legislation. Since April 2012, our role has been to investigate only where we have reasonable grounds to suspect there may be actual or potential serious detriment (which we have interpreted to mean serious harm) to tenants as a result of a failure to meet one or more of our consumer standards. We do not have powers to collect and analyse performance information relating to consumer issues and do not therefore provide proactive assurance of compliance with the standards.

7. The *regulatory framework* sets out consumer standards on:

- tenant involvement and empowerment
- home
- tenancy
- neighbourhood and Community

8. These are set out on our website at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-standards

9. We set these standards in pursuance of the consumer regulation objective given to the regulator by Parliament, which is set out in more detail in our publication *Regulating the Standards*. Boards and councillors who govern registered providers are responsible for ensuring that their organisations meet the standards.

10. Registered providers have principal responsibility for dealing with, and being accountable for, complaints about their services. The tenant involvement and empowerment standard requires that they have clear and effective mechanisms for responding to tenant complaints. As set out in the Localism Act 2011, a tenant with a complaint against their landlord should raise it with their landlord in the first instance. Should the matter remain unresolved, they should then consider contacting a Designated Person (someone identified under the Localism Act to deal locally with the resolution of complaints such as their MP, a local housing authority councillor or a designated tenants' panel) and subsequently the Housing Ombudsman.

11. The legislation specifies that the regulator must exercise its functions in a way that minimises interference and is proportionate, consistent, transparent and accountable. The regulator's ability to use its powers in relation to a provider failing to meet a consumer standard is subject to this legislation. Firstly, we must establish that a consumer standard has not been met. A finding of failure to meet a standard may arise from an individual event, but it is a judgment of failure at a corporate level.

12. We can use our powers where we judge that both a standard has been breached and there are reasonable grounds to suspect that:

- the failure has resulted in a serious detriment to the registered provider's tenants
- there is a significant risk that, if no action is taken by the regulator, the failure will result in a serious detriment to the registered provider's tenants.

13. In defining serious detriment, it is clear from the legislation and the government's review of social housing regulation (from October 2011) which preceded it, that the threshold for regulatory intervention on breaches of consumer standards is intended to be significantly higher than that in relation to the economic standards. Failure to meet one or more of the consumer standards does not in itself lead automatically to a judgement of serious detriment by the regulator. As set out in the regulatory framework, we consider that the meaning of serious detriment is when there is risk of, or actual, serious harm to tenants. In reaching this judgement, we consider the circumstances of the case. For this reason there can be no simple trigger points or thresholds beyond which we automatically conclude serious detriment has been caused or risked. Rather, we must balance the factors of the case including the number of tenants, the duration of the harm or risk of harm, and the seriousness or potential seriousness of it.

14. The serious detriment test is not an end in itself. It is the route we must follow to establish whether we have the locus to deal with a consumer issue. In each case, the regulator's response (including whether any enforcement action is to be taken) depends on the specific facts and circumstances. It is based on the regulator's evaluation of harm or potential harm and the registered provider's response and capability to address any identified breach of the standards. In line with the relevant statutory obligations and guidance, the regulator is expected to ensure the response is proportionate and commensurate with the materiality of the breach by the registered provider.

15. Boards are responsible for ensuring that registered providers comply with all of the standards, both economic and consumer. The fact that the regulator regulates consumer standards reactively does not lessen the obligation to comply. Registered providers should have the systems and processes in place to provide assurance to the board that the standards are being met.

16. Where there is a failure by a private registered provider to meet the consumer standards, we will consider what implications that failure has on our view of the governance of the registered provider. By the nature of our consumer role, which is reactive and therefore takes place either after a failure has occurred or after we have found that there is a significant risk that failure will occur, our intervention is likely to be both public and have significant consequences for the registered provider.

17. Where the test for serious detriment has been met, enforcement powers can be used where there has been actual harm (where there is, for example, the power to award compensation or to fine a registered provider). Or, where the regulator believes that the use of enforcement powers is necessary to prevent future serious harm. In seeking assurance about this, the regulator will take into account the behaviour and effectiveness of the registered provider in dealing with the issue to date.

18. As set out in our previous reports, our process continues to consist of 3 stages: an initial review to see whether the matter alleged falls within our remit (Stage 1), a more detailed consideration by our Consumer Regulation Panel (CRP) to determine whether there is a potential breach which has or could cause serious harm (Stage 2) and a detailed investigation (Stage 3). Further information on the process we have developed to deal with these cases and on the initial stages of case consideration is set out in the regulatory framework.

Summary of cases

19. During 2014/15, 589 consumer referrals were received by the regulator. Cases arose from a range of sources including:

- self-reporting
- whistleblowing or similar from employees
- tenants
- representatives (MPs, councillors, tenant panels)
- friends, relatives and other concerned individuals
- awareness through media reports

20. Of these, 238 were judged to have sufficient potential for a finding of breach/serious detriment that they were then considered by the CRP.

21. Of these 238 cases, CRP sought further information on 89 cases. Following that, 6 were found to meet the test for serious detriment arising from a breach of the consumer standards.

22. The cases where a finding of serious detriment was made are summarised in the regulatory notices available on our website. Further information about the nature and volume of our cases is set out below in Annex A.

Learning from cases

23. For this edition of the consumer review, in order to illustrate our approach we provided examples of where serious detriment as a result of breach has been concluded and where it has not. Where cases have resulted in a published judgement, we have referred to the registered provider by name, otherwise case studies are anonymised.

1) Consumer regulation and governance

24. In each of the cases where we found serious detriment in a private registered provider (as opposed to a local authority), we then considered the implications for our existing assessment of their compliance with the regulatory requirements set out in the governance and financial viability standard.

25. As explained in the introduction above, the threshold for regulatory intervention is intended to be significantly higher than that in relation to the economic standards. So a finding of breach or serious detriment raises questions about the effectiveness of a registered provider's governance arrangements. However, the regulator makes a consideration separately against different standards: there is no 'double jeopardy' whereby a provider has 2 judgements made against it for a single breach.

26. Any evaluation of compliance with the governance aspects of the standard will look at the whole organisation and reach a balanced conclusion. The issues that will be considered arising from a finding of a breach/serious detriment are likely to include:

- how effective are the registered provider's risk management and internal controls?
- how effective was the board's oversight of the issue? Was it receiving adequate and timely information and challenging the executive on performance?
- was the registered provider transparent with the regulator?
- was effective action taken to mitigate the failure?
- does the registered provider recognise any wider systemic concerns raised by such a failure or does it see the problem as only relating to one narrow issue?
- how has the board assured itself that the failings have been or will be addressed?

27. The cases highlight an important sector-wide issue about openness. As we do not proactively collect information relating to the consumer standards, we are most likely to become aware of issues via referrals. We do not expect providers to tell us everything that goes wrong or causes them concern in their business. But in accordance with section 2.3 of the governance and financial viability standard, and in line with the co-regulatory nature of the overall framework and the principles of openness and transparency, we expect all private registered providers to make us aware in a timely way of likely breaches of one or more of the consumer standards which they themselves identify.

Case study 1 - implications for governance where there has been a breach of a consumer standard and a finding of serious detriment

Where we judge that there are reasonable grounds to conclude that a breach of a consumer standard has resulted in, or risked, serious detriment to tenants, we publish a regulatory notice setting out our findings. We also consider whether the information we have received indicates a wider failure which constitutes a breach of the governance and financial viability standard (section 2.34 of Regulating the Standards). The examples below illustrate how the regulator keeps the consideration of the consumer and economic standards separate.

In each case the regulator had concluded that there had been a breach of the home standard which had or could cause serious detriment to tenants and issued a regulatory notice to that effect.

1 a) Circle - governance downgrade G1 to G3

The governance and financial viability standard requires providers to have in place effective systems for risk management and internal control.

The regulator’s assessment of the material relating to the delivery of the repairs service to 13,000 homes was that it represented a chronic failure by Circle to ensure delivery of a satisfactory emergency and urgent repair service to those tenants for a long period of time.

The regulator found:

• the service failure had been made possible or contributed to by serious and enduring failures in, or in the operation of, Circle’s strategic planning and control framework such that Circle did not adequately manage or mitigate the strategic and operational risks inherent in the delivery of that service

• these failures represented a systemic problem in the organisation’s risk management and internal controls

The regulator therefore concluded that Circle was not compliant with the governance and financial viability standard

1 b) First Wessex - governance downgrade G1 to G2

Over at a 2 year period, First Wessex had a significant number of overdue gas servicing certificates. First Wessex had identified this and had already taken effective remedial action. The regulator considered that First Wessex had recognised the problem, had taken effective action to improve performance, that its gas servicing certificates were now up to date, and that it recognised that there were broader governance implications. However, the regulator did not consider that effective measures had been taken quickly enough to address the situation. In addition, whilst the registered provider had been aware of this issue for some time while addressing the issues, it had not informed the regulator. An independent governance review commissioned by First Wessex identified a number of areas for improvement, including weaknesses in First Wessex’s risk management and internal controls assurance framework.

The regulator concluded that First Wessex remained compliant with the governance and financial viability standard, but that it needed to improve some aspects of governance to maintain compliance.

2) Home standard – gas safety

28. One of the required outcomes under the home standard is that registered providers meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes. With regard to gas safety, landlords' legal obligations are clear. The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 state that gas safety checks should be carried out annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

29. We recognise that the requirements of landlords in respect of gas safety are strict for good reason, given the potential danger to both tenants in their home and those who live nearby. In examining whether there had been a breach of the standard, we take into account the materiality of the issues: the circumstances of and reasons for the failure to have a valid certificate, the length of time and how many tenants had been affected. In keeping with previous years, the cases where we concluded there had been a breach of the standard either had a large number of properties or some of the properties had been without certificates for a number of years.

30. In cases where providers were in breach of the home standard, we then had to determine if there was potential for serious harm to the tenants in the affected properties and to neighbouring tenants. The risk of harm which can be caused by faulty gas appliances is well-known and we concluded in each case that the serious detriment test had been met.

31. A general lesson from these cases is the importance of having asset management systems in place and maintaining an accurate record of the condition of properties, including outstanding gas safety requirements. Failures occurred where those systems were not fit for purpose, and where those responsible (the boards) did not sufficiently probe, or challenge in a timely way, the information with which they were being presented and the basis for their own assurance of compliance. The issues then came to light later, after tenants had been exposed to risk.

Case study 2 – the home standard: repairs and maintenance - gas safety

The regulator received evidence of failure to adhere to the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 which state that gas safety checks should be undertaken annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer. In all cases, the regulator considered the case as a potential breach of the home standard, and specifically the regulatory requirement to 'meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes'.

2 a) Cases of breach / serious detriment

In 2014/15 the regulator issued 4 regulatory notices relating to gas safety at registered providers (Yorkshire Housing Group, First Wessex Housing Group, Merlin Housing Society and Severn Vale Housing Society). In each case there were a significant number of properties without a valid certificate, and properties that had been without a gas safety certificate for a long period of time (over a year). This had been caused in some cases by poor processes and others by poor data and record management. In each case, the combination of the seriousness, duration and number of tenants potentially affected, together with the registered provider's corporate response, led the regulator to judge that it was proportionate to conclude that a breach of standard had occurred in a way which caused or risked serious harm to tenants. Regulatory notices were published.

Cases where breach / serious detriment was not found

During 2014/15 we also considered a number of cases where gas safety services were overdue but we did not conclude that there had been a breach of the home standard. Examples of these have been anonymised and set out below:

2 b) Registered provider A

A very large provider contacted the regulator to advise that it might have breached the home standard owing to gas safety failures. Following the CRP process, we concluded that there was no breach of the home standard. Material factors in this decision included:

- the contact came immediately when the registered provider discovered that a number of properties lacked a valid gas safety certificate
- the issue was uncovered by the registered provider's own systems and checks
- the board was also informed immediately
- most of the properties had lacked a certificate for fewer than 3 months, with a very small number being without for several years. The number of properties was a very small proportion of the registered provider's overall housing stock
- all of the properties were tested and had a valid certificate within one week
- a rapid audit to identify and manage further risk was carried out, which gave assurance that there were no further systemic problems

Considering the scale, duration and seriousness of the failure, the registered provider's response and transparency, the regulator concluded that there had not been a breach of the home standard in a way which caused or risked serious harm to tenants.

2 c) Registered provider B

The regulator was contacted by the vice chair of the board to advise that the registered provider had uncovered a potential problem with gas servicing following a planned internal audit. We concluded that there was no breach of the home standard. Material factors in this decision were:

- the proportion of properties identified to have been without a valid certificate was small, relative to the number of homes owned by the registered provider (less than 1%). Of these, a significant majority were out of date for a period of less than 3 months and a very small number were more than a year out of date
- the matter had come to light through the registered provider's own systems and processes
- the regulator was informed promptly following an urgent board meeting
- all properties identified as being without a certificate were swiftly brought into compliance
- an audit was accelerated to cover all parts of the registered provider's group and reported quickly. The registered provider addressed its auditor's immediate

recommendations and put an improvement plan in place to reduce the risk of a recurrence of the issue, delivery of which is being overseen by the board
- the registered provider commissioned further independent validation work and investigation into the circumstances which caused the situation to arise

Considering the scale, duration and seriousness of the failure, as well as the registered provider's transparency and its response to the failure, the regulator concluded that there had not been a breach of the home standard in a way which caused or risked serious harm to tenants.

3) Home standard – asbestos

32. During the year, we considered several cases of potential asbestos exposure. The legal position here is less simple than in regard to the gas safety regulations. Under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, landlords do not have a duty to manage asbestos risks in private houses (except in relation to their employees and contractors), individual flats, private rooms above shops, rooms let to lodgers or domestic garages let to a specific tenant. However, they are responsible for common areas of purpose-built flats and houses converted into flats, such as foyers, corridors, staircases, roof spaces, gardens, lifts and lift-shafts. The regulations also apply to the stairs and access areas of flats above retail and commercial premises.

33. However, the Defective Premises Act 1972 and the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 place broad duties on landlords to maintain property and take reasonable care that tenants are safe from personal injury and illness caused by the condition of the property. In addition, the Decent Homes standard ranks exposure to asbestos fibres (though not simply the presence of asbestos) as a 'Category 1 Hazard'.

34. In both of the cases set out below, the regulator reached a conclusion that no standard had been breached, despite the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) successfully prosecuting the registered providers concerned. The regulator's remit is not the same as that of the HSE and in every case, the regulator considers whether, in the round, the standard has been complied with. In the first case, the regulator concluded that there had been no breach because the case concerned an isolated failure, and in the second there was no evidence of tenants having been put at risk. The obligations of providers to their employees and contractors are part of their obligations to comply with 'relevant law' and serious breaches would be considered against the governance and viability standard.

Case study 3 – asbestos

3 a) Registered provider C

It came to the regulator's attention that a registered provider had been taken to court by the HSE, found guilty and fined a substantial sum for putting tenants at risk of asbestos exposure during the replacement of a lift in common area of a sheltered housing scheme.

The conviction provided evidence that the registered provider had not complied with health and safety legislation. Whilst there was no evidence of actual harm to tenants, there was the risk of harm. However, it was an isolated incident. There was no evidence of a systemic problem across the registered providers' properties. Although the registered provider did not inform the regulator, this was judged to be an oversight as they had informed the HSE promptly of the incident, responded appropriately to the HSE investigation, and demonstrated otherwise robust control systems. The regulator therefore concluded it would not be proportionate to determine that the incident was a breach of the standard.

If the registered provider had not complied with HSE recommendations it is likely that the regulator would have taken further action.

3 b) Registered provider D

In a similar case, a registered provider informed the regulator of a historic incident in 2012 which had been reported to the HSE. The HSE had decided to prosecute both the registered provider and its contractor. The registered provider entered a guilty plea to the charge of failing to provide all of the asbestos information in its possession, or which was reasonably obtainable, to its contractor and received a fine.

The regulator's interest is in relation to whether the health and safety of tenants was put at risk by this incident. Asbestos panels were damaged whilst installing heating systems and one of the asbestos air tests for the 3 affected properties showed a level of contamination which would pose a potential risk to the health and safety of anyone coming into contact with it.

However, the home standard relates to tenants, not contractors or employees. The property in question was unoccupied at the time of the incident because the tenant was in residential care. The HSE had not prosecuted the registered provider for putting its tenants at risk. There was no evidence that health and safety legislation in respect of tenants had been breached. On that basis, the regulator concluded that this did not constitute a breach of the home standard.

The regulator further concluded that, on the facts, this incident did not constitute a breach of the governance and financial viability standard.

4) Home standard – local authorities

35. Local authorities are subject to the consumer standards, but not the economic standards. The requirement for a provider to be transparent with the regulator is part of the governance and financial viability standard which is an economic standard and therefore does not apply to local authorities. As a potential consequence of that, and the local route for redress that local authority landlord status offers tenants, the regulator considers relatively few local authority cases. However, the ones it does consider (for example, when the matter is brought to our attention via the media or another statutory agency) are treated in the same way as private registered providers.

36. This is illustrated by the 2 case studies below. The first case study represents the first time the regulator made a finding of breach/serious detriment for a structural problem with a property. The second was a gas safety case where no breach was found.

Case study 4 – local authorities

4 a) Blackpool Council

In January 2015 the regulator published a regulatory notice about Blackpool Council, the first concerning a local authority. Blackpool Council owns 5,300 homes which are managed by Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH), an arms-length management organisation which is not registered with the regulator. As a local authority, Blackpool Council is required to comply with the consumer standards.

In May 2012 a second floor balcony collapsed in a block of flats managed by BCH on behalf of Blackpool Council. The HSE took legal action and BCH pleaded guilty to risking the health and safety of tenants in a breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The court concluded that the structural flaws in the balconies were present for a significant period of time and the registered provider failed to heed multiple warnings. On recording a guilty verdict, the court ordered BCH to pay a £50,000 fine plus court costs.

At that point the regulator became aware of the case and sought and received immediate assurance that there was no continuing risk to the health and safety of tenants. The regulator also received further assurance from Blackpool Council that it had taken effective steps to prevent such an event happening again, including completing a programme of remedial works for all balconies and tackling the organisational culture which could have contributed to an environment which allowed the balcony to collapse.

The regulator considered the case as a potential breach of the home standard, and specifically the regulatory requirement to ‘meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes’. Notwithstanding the subsequent remedial action, the circumstances that led to the conviction were evidence of a breach of the standard. In particular, the registered provider had failed to heed warnings, meaning the failure exposed a substantial number of tenants to the risk of serious harm for a long time. We therefore issued a regulatory notice.

4 b) Local authority E

Local authority E owns 15,000 homes which are managed by LA Homes, an arms-length management operation which is not registered with the regulator.

During the review of a consents application from local authority E, the regulator noted poor performance regarding gas safety certificate compliance before January 2015. The regulator sought further information from LA Homes which revealed that during 2014 LA Homes had a relatively small number of homes with gas servicing under a year overdue. This was addressed by LA Homes by it replacing its gas contractor. By January 2015 there were no properties with overdue gas safety certificates.

The regulator concluded that as there were a relatively small number of properties involved where the gas safety certificate was overdue for a short period of time, the registered provider had not breached the home standard.

5) Home standard – systemic failure of repairs and maintenance

37. Most instances, even cases that are judged to be a breach of the standard arise from a specific incident or referral, the severity of which provides evidence of the systemic failure that represents a breach.

38. However, the number and scale of cases can also indicate systemic failures. Alongside considering consumer cases prompted by specific incidents or referrals, where it appears that a registered provider is generating an unusually large number of referrals relative to its size, the regulator also looks in the round at cases to get a broad picture of whether it is complying with the standard, and may follow this up with the registered provider. In doing so we are sensitive to the duty to minimise interference. But we do consider any information we have, in order to make a judgement on assurance.

39. We reached one conclusion of breach / serious detriment in 2014/15 arising from this type of broader consideration; the case of Circle. In this case, the regulator concluded that the risk of serious harm was evident because a large number of tenants, including vulnerable tenants, were affected by the failure to complete emergency and urgent repairs on time for a prolonged period. The regulatory notice setting out the detailed reasons for this can be found on the GOV.UK website at:

> https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/402779/20150211_Regulatory_Notice_-_Circle_Anglia.pdf.

6) <u>Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard</u>

40. By applying the serious harm test to all consumer standards, the legislation clearly envisages that serious harm may arise from a breach of standards in ways other than as a matter of health and safety. We set out in Annex B of our publication Regulating the Standards examples (which are not exhaustive) of instances where this might happen. They include:

- loss of home
- unlawful discrimination
- loss of legal rights
- financial loss

41. During the year, the regulator considered several referrals from tenants and representative bodies relating to how providers were involving them (or not) in issues such as how tenants may make representations to the registered provider, and the management of properties.

42. The case study below illustrates that the regulator will consider carefully the framing and meaning of the standard when making a judgement.

Case study 6 – tenant involvement

<u>6 a) Registered provider F</u>

The regulator received a complaint alleging that a registered provider had in effect abolished a tenants' association at a sheltered housing scheme and that this breached the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard.

The registered provider had decided to no longer recognise a tenants' association as it was not, in the registered provider's view, representative of the residents in the scheme. The registered provider supplied evidence that as an alternative they had formalised a monthly meeting into a tenants' forum open to all residents. These sessions were used for tenant consultation and discussion with staff. If the tenants wished to elect a representative committee, the registered provider would support this providing an appropriate constitution and arranging training for committee members.

The regulator considered this complaint in relation to the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard. The standard requires registered providers to ensure tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the management of their homes but it is not prescriptive about how this is done. In the regulator's judgement, the registered provider had given evidence of compliance, and found no breach of the standard.

7) Neighbourhood and Community standard

43. The regulator continues to receive a range of referrals from tenants and stakeholders in this area. Many of these focus on neighbourhood management.

Case study 7

7a) Registered provider G

The regulator received a referral from a local authority councillor complaining about the state of repair on an estate. The councillor alleged that:

- paths were poorly maintained
- cracked walls led to stones falling onto paths and caused trip hazards
- there was inadequate lighting
- fly-tipping was taking place

Photographs were provided in support of the allegations. The information was considered under the neighbourhood and community standard and a response sought from the registered provider. The registered provider responded and:

- set out their programme of management and maintenance for the estate and gave evidence of progress
- demonstrated working with the local authority and community
- showed that in some cases the photographs provided in the complaint related to land not under their control

The regulator therefore concluded that the standard had not been breached.

8) Tenancy standard

44. During the year, the regulator received a number of referrals which it considered against the tenancy standard. In no case was both a breach of standard and serious detriment identified.

45. There were common themes in referrals including:

- allocations, and in particular taking account of individual needs (including disability / health)
- the appropriateness of tenancy issued

Case study 8

8 a) Registered provider H

The regulator received a complaint alleging that a registered provider had breached the tenancy standard in the course of a large estate regeneration scheme by:

• not transferring tenants who had been on Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) since 2007 onto other tenancy types in April 2012, when the current tenancy standard came into force

• preparing to evict those tenants in the course of progressing the regeneration, to free up properties for decanting other tenants on other tenancy types, in breach of their responsibility to prevent unnecessary eviction

The background to this case was complex as it stretched back over several years. The regulator considered that:

• there is an exceptional circumstance component to the Secretary of State's 2011 Direction to the regulator which does therefore does not entirely prohibit ASTs

• the tenancy standard is prospective and applies to the granting of tenancies rather than requiring changing existing tenancies

• the standard obliges providers to work to prevent unnecessary eviction. Eviction in the course of delivering a regeneration scheme, which had been agreed with the local authority, could reasonably be considered necessary

• the tenants had been informed before taking the tenancies that the accommodation was temporary and they could not expect a permanent offer of accommodation

• the registered provider had made reasonable efforts to help AST tenants by supporting them to find alternative accommodation, and that in allocating properties on the regenerated estate it was reasonable for the registered provider to be guided by the local authority's allocations policy and priorities

The regulator therefore concluded that the tenancy standard had not been breached.

8 b) Local authority I

The regulator received a complaint that local authority I had failed to approve a mutual exchange for tenants who wished to move into another local authority area for health reasons. The referrer argued that local authority I had not taken sufficient account of the tenants' health needs in refusing the mutual exchange on the grounds that the incoming tenants would be under-occupying the property. The property was configured as a 3 bedroom house.

The regulator considered this as a potential breach of the tenancy standard, and sought information from the council concerned, in particular the requirement to let homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way, and to enable tenants to gain access to opportunities to exchange tenancies via mutual exchange services.

The local authority acknowledged that it had refused the proposed exchange, and explained that the property currently let to tenants was significantly under-occupied and that the proposed swap would perpetuate under-occupation. It argued that the property could be let as at least a 5 bedroom house which would enable them to let the stock in a more efficient way.

The local authority also provided evidence of the support they had provided, and continued to provide, the tenants in seeking to move to a new area thereby demonstrating compliance with both the mutual swap element of the standard, and also that account had been taken of tenants' diverse needs.

On this basis, the regulator concluded that the standard had not been breached.

Nature and volume of cases in 2014/15

1. Our consumer regulation process, as set out in Regulating the Standards comprises 3 stages:

   Stage 1: the Regulatory Referrals and Enquiries (RRE) team collates and routes all referrals and other enquiries referred to the regulator. Where the matter relates to consumer standards, the RRE team is responsible for determining if it falls within the regulator's remit and if there appears to be a breach or risk of a breach of a consumer standard. If so, the RRE team then refers the issue to the CRP which normally meets weekly.

   Stage 2: the CRP considers the circumstances of each case referred to it to determine the degree of harm or potential harm caused to tenants by a breach of consumer standards. Its discussion considers 4 questions:

   - does the issue raised relate to a matter within the regulator's remit?
   - if the issue is true, is it likely that there has been or could be a breach of a consumer standard?
   - if the issues raised are true would there be any impact on tenants which would cause actual or potential harm?
   - if the issues raised are true, is the actual or potential harm likely to be serious?

   Stage 3: those cases which are identified by CRP as requiring further investigation are subject to more detailed work to ascertain if there has been a breach of the standards which has or may cause serious detriment and to advise whether regulatory action is required.

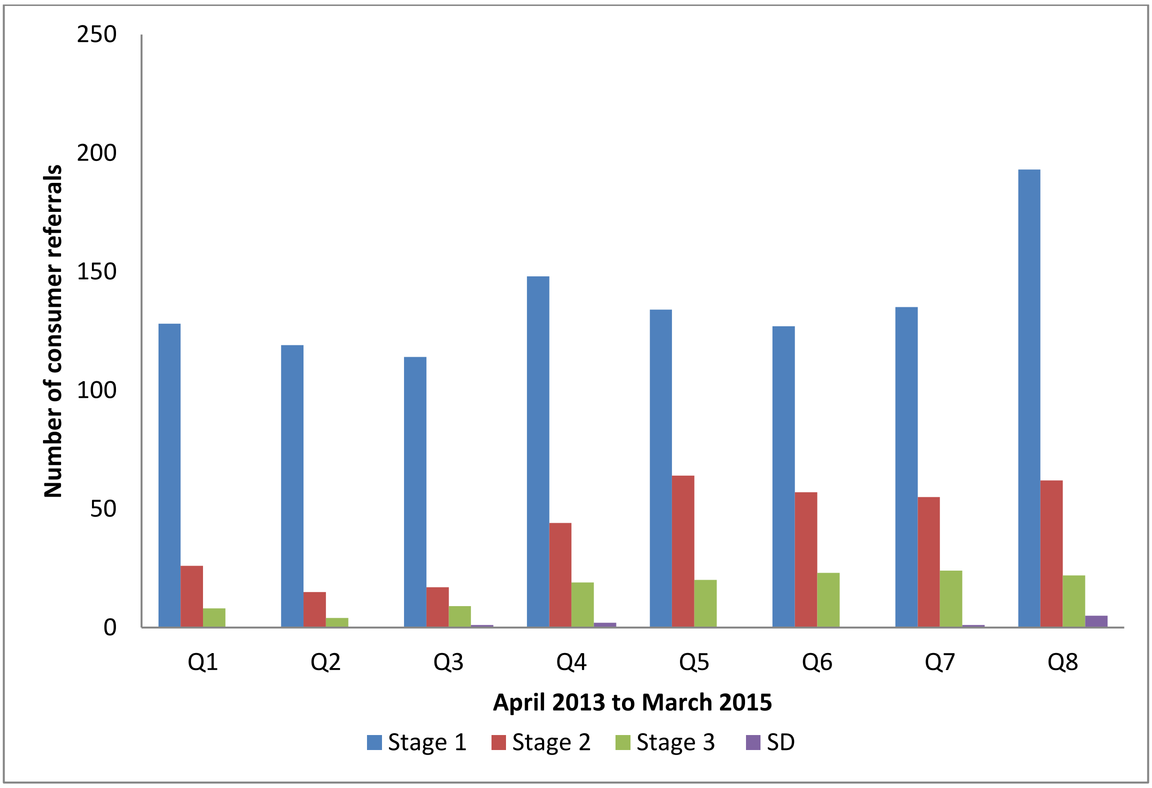
2. The table below shows the total number of consumer referrals handled by the regulator by quarter and how many of these went on to the subsequent stages of our process. The 2013/14 figures are in brackets.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Stage 1: All consumer referrals	134 (128)	127 (119)	135 (114)	193 (148)	589 (509)
Stage 2: Referred to CRP	64 (26)	57 (15)	55 (17)	62 (44)	238 (102)
Stage 3: Further investigations undertaken	20 (8)	23 (4)	24 (9)	22 (19)	89 (40)
Published findings of breach/serious detriment	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	5 (2)	6 (3)

3. The CRP is responsible for considering all statutory referrals and other referrals and allegations relating to the consumer standards which are sent to it by the RRE team. There were 19 statutory referrals in 2014/15 compared to 1 in 2013/14. The panel also

deals with cases where regulatory intelligence acquired in the course of routine engagement with providers leads the regulator to suspect a standard has been breached resulting in actual or potential serious detriment.

4. The chart below shows the number of referrals by stage over the last 8 quarters.



5. Over the last 2 years we have received 1098 consumer standard related referral. Of these, 340 (31%) have gone to CRP. 129 (11.7%) have been investigated further and we found breach and serious detriment in 9 cases (0.8%).

6. There was an increase of 16% in the number of referrals relating to consumer standards in 2014/15. We do not know exactly why the number of cases has gone up but think it may relate to the greater awareness generated by the publication of Regulatory Notices.

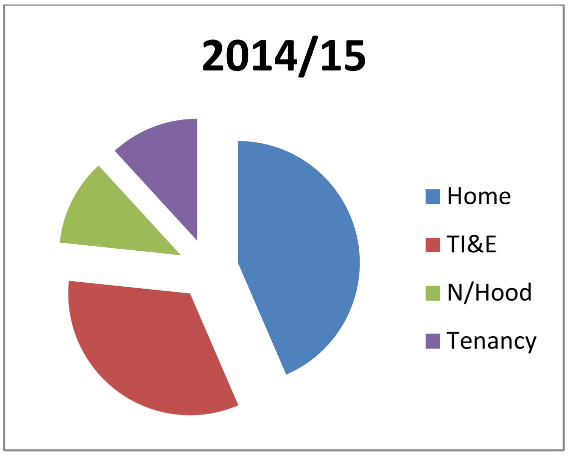
7. The proportion of cases reaching Stage 2 was higher in 2014/15 than in 2013/14 (40% compared with 20%). The increase in cases considered at stage 2 was as a consequence of both the increase in number of cases overall and a change to internal decision making procedures. Volumes of cases reaching Stage 3 also increased in 2014/15 but percentage remained consistent at 35%.

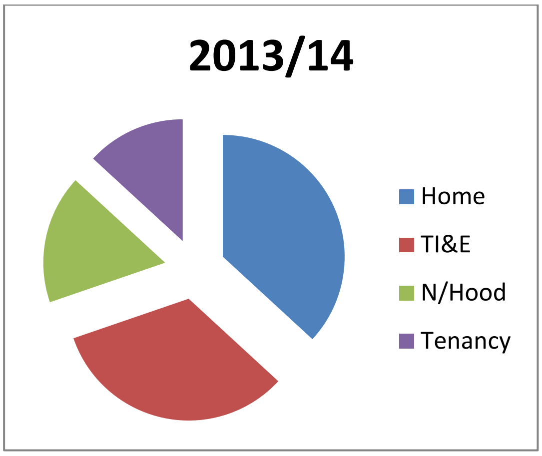
8. Equalities issues were recorded in 26% of CRP cases considered in 2014/15. This compares with 34% in 2013/14.

9. The home standard continues to be the consumer standard which is most often cited in the cases referred to the panel.

10. The percentage figures are shown below and in 2 pie charts:

Consumer standard	2014/15	2013/14
Home	44	37
Tenant involvement & empowerment	33	33
Neighbourhood and community	12	17
Tenancy	12	13





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The Homes and Communities Agency is committed to providing accessible information where possible and we will consider providing information in alternative formats such as large print, audio and Braille upon request.

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Using evidence to shape better services

Measurement Evaluation Learning

Tamworth Borough Council

Wastes & resources management

Community safety & neighbourhood policing

Sure Start & Children's Centres

Affordable housing

Healthy communities

Active citizens & customer research

Local Authority research & evaluation

Tamworth Borough Council

STAR Survey 2015

DRAFT REPORT V2 SEPTEMBER 2015

Measurement ◆ Evaluation ◆ Learning

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Project details and acknowledgements

Title	Tamworth Borough Council STAR Survey 2015 – Draft Report V2
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1) Introduction

M·E·L Research was commissioned to undertake a Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) for Tamworth Borough Council. The survey was commissioned in order to gain an understanding of the levels of satisfaction Tamworth Borough Council tenants have with their homes and the associated services provided to them.

Method

The survey used a postal and online method of data collection which was conducted with a random selection of General Needs, and census mailing for Sheltered tenants. The fieldwork ran between June and July 2015 for four weeks. Tenants who took part were entered into a prize draw (£100, £50, and £25 high street vouchers). In total, 619 responses was received.

Statistical reliability

The overall results in this report are accurate to ± 3.6 at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% certain that the results are between ± 3.6% of the calculated response, so the 'true' response could be 3.6% above or below the figures reported (e.g. a 50% agreement rate could in reality lie within the range of 46.4% to 53.6%). General Need's results are accurate to ±4.6% and Sheltered results in this report are accurate to ±4.2%.

Table 1: Stock totals, survey responses and resultant confidence interval

Tenure type	Stock total	Response number	Confidence Interval
General Needs	3,918	401	±4.6%
Sheltered	364	218	±4.2%
Overall	4282	619	±3.6%

Analysis

The results of the 2015 Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) are presented in this report. The results are weighted by tenure type to ensure that the sample is representative of the overall make-up of Tamworth Borough Council's residents. For each question we present the overall results, along with commentary of previous survey results (where possible) to show changes over time. However, it is important to note that for many of the questions, wording and options differ to that of the 2011 survey, and so such findings should be interpreted with caution. A footnote is included where this is the case. 2011 results reported for key performance indicators are aggregate scores. For all other questions, where overall results are reported from 2011, this has been calculated by combining the results stated in the Sheltered and General Needs reports. To provide further insight into the results, analysis by tenure type; age; gender; housing benefit;

disability and ward has been undertaken and where statistically significant differences occur, these have been drawn out in the report.

Owing to the rounding of numbers, percentages displayed visually on graphs in the report may not always add up to 100% and may differ slightly when compared with the text. The figures provided in the text should always be used as the authoritative results. For some questions, respondents could give more than one response (multiple choice). For these questions, the percentage for each response is calculated as a percentage of the total number of respondents and therefore percentages do not add up to 100%.

2) Executive summary

This section shows the key findings of the 2015 STAR Survey, detailed findings can be found in the subsequent sections of this report.

Overall service provided

Overall, 78% of tenants are satisfied with the service provided by the Tamworth Borough Council Housing Service. 77% of General Needs tenants express satisfaction, compared to 93% of Sheltered tenants. When compared to the 2011 results, overall satisfaction levels has improved (75%).

Quality of home*

79% of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home. 15% more Sheltered tenants (92%) report satisfaction compared to General Needs tenants (75%).

Neighbourhood as a place to live

83% of tenants are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live. Satisfaction rates show an increase by 8% points since 2011 (75%). As seen with other findings, Sheltered tenants express higher levels of satisfaction than General Needs tenants (92% compared to 82%).

Rent provides value for money*

73% of tenants are satisfied that their rent provides value for money. Once again, sheltered tenants express higher levels of satisfaction than General Needs tenants (91% compared to 72%).

Repairs and maintenance

68% of tenants are satisfied with the way the Council's Housing Service deals with repairs and maintenance. Satisfaction levels rises to 83% for Sheltered tenants, and is at 67% for General Needs tenants. Overall satisfaction remains unchanged since 2011 (68%).**

Listens to views and act upon them

59% of tenants are satisfied that the Council listens to views and act upon them. At 77%, satisfaction is much higher for Sheltered tenants compared to General Needs (57%).Overall satisfaction levels has improved by 5% points since 2011 (54%).**

Keeping tenants informed

80% are satisfied that the Council keeps them informed about things that might affect them as a tenant. This rises to 89% in the case of Sheltered tenants and is at 79% for General Needs tenants. These results compare positively to 2011 where respondents were asked how good or poor their Housing Service was at keeping tenants informed (good 68%).**

Highest and lowest satisfaction

84% of tenants are satisfied with their gas servicing arrangement which is the highest satisfaction rate expressed throughout the questionnaire. Satisfaction was lowest for the advice and support received for the Councils 'Finding a Home' Choice Based Lettings website and service (43%).

It is worth noting that typically, older adults report higher satisfaction rates in comparison to younger respondents which may have contributed to the pattern throughout the report of greater satisfaction rates for Sheltered tenants in comparison to General Needs rather than the tenure type itself.

* Aggregate data does not exist from 2011 and so appropriate comparisons cannot be made

**question wording varies between survey and so findings should be interpreted with caution

Table 2: Key Performance Indicators 2011 vs. 2015 comparison

Key Performance Indicators		2015	% dif.	2011
	Overall satisfaction	78%	+3%	75%
	Quality of home	79%	N/A	Aggregate data not available
	Neighbourhood	83%	+ 8%	75%
	Rent provides VfM	73%	N/A	Aggregate data not available
	Repairs & maintenance*	68%	-	68%
	Listens to views*	59%	- + 5%	54%
	Keeping tenants informed*	80%	+12%	68%

*question wording varies between surveys and so findings should be interpreted with caution

Key areas for success

The majority of key performance indicators are showing fairly high levels of satisfaction, with an increase in satisfaction levels being seen for overall satisfaction (78%), neighbourhood (83%), listening to view (59%) keeping tenants informed (80%), and consistent satisfaction rates since 2011 for repairs and maintenance (68%).

Tenants appear to have a positive perception of staff (83%) and service (71%) and have a good experience of contacting the Council's Housing service finding staff to be helpful (78%); easy to get hold of the right person (70%) and having their query answered within a reasonable time (74%).

Another area of success appears to be repairs, with tenants reporting high satisfaction levels in relation to their last repair, for the attitude of workers (89%); keeping dirt and mess to a minimum (83%); overall quality of work (80%); and being able to make appointment (76%).
Satisfaction was highest for gas servicing arrangements (84%).

Key areas for improvement

In terms of the key performance indicators, with 59% stating satisfaction, this area listening to views has the most room for improvement.

Satisfaction rates are low for cleaning services (internal communal cleaning service- 64%; external communal cleaning service -57%; overall estate caretaking- 58%).

Another key area for improvement appears to be the anti-social behaviour service with only 45% reporting satisfaction with the way their ASB complaint was dealt with overall, and consistently low satisfaction for different aspects of the service.

Satisfaction was lowest for the advice and support received for the Councils ‘Finding a Home Choice Based Lettings website and service (43%).

Furthermore, those not on housing benefit, and Mercian residents, are consistently found to be less satisfied (compared to those on housing benefit and other wards, respectively).

3) Aggregate scores for key performance indicators

Table 3 below shows aggregate figures for the key performance indicator questions. This has been calculated by grossing up the data for General Needs and Sheltered tenants individually, to reflect their respective stock numbers and then combined. Weighted data was used in order to ensure that scores are reflective of the overall make-up of the stock.

Table 3: Aggregate scores for key performance indicators

Overall services provided	Number satisfied (grossed up)	Base (grossed up)	% satisfied
General Needs	2,912	3,801	76.61%
Sheltered	311	337	92.54%
Total (aggregate)	3,223	4,137	77.90%
Overall quality of home	**Number satisfied (grossed up)**	**Base (grossed up)**	**% satisfied**
General Needs	3,000	3,879	77.33%
Sheltered	326	353	92.42%
Total (aggregate)	3,326	4,232	78.59%
Neighbourhood as a place to live	**Number satisfied (grossed up)**	**Base (grossed up)**	**% satisfied**
General Needs	3,127	3,801	82.26%
Sheltered	321	350	91.87%
Total (aggregate)	3,448	4,151	83.07%
Rent providing value for money	**Number satisfied (grossed up)**	**Base (grossed up)**	**% satisfied**
General Needs	2,677	3,742	71.54%
Sheltered	301	330	91.37%
Total (aggregate)	2,979	4,072	73.15%
Repairs and maintenance	**Number satisfied (grossed up)**	**Base (grossed up)**	**% satisfied**
General Needs	2,599	3,898	66.67%
Sheltered	296	358	82.71%
Total (aggregate)	2,895	4,257	68.02%
Views taken into account	**Number satisfied (grossed up)**	**Base (grossed up)**	**% satisfied**
General Needs	2,169	3,791	57.22%
Sheltered	258	335	77.00%
Total (aggregate)	2,427	4,126	58.82%
Being kept informed	**Number satisfied (grossed up)**	**Base (grossed up)**	**% satisfied**
General Needs	3,029	3,840	78.88%
Sheltered	301	340	88.67%
Total (aggregate)	3,330	4,180	79.68%

4) Overall services

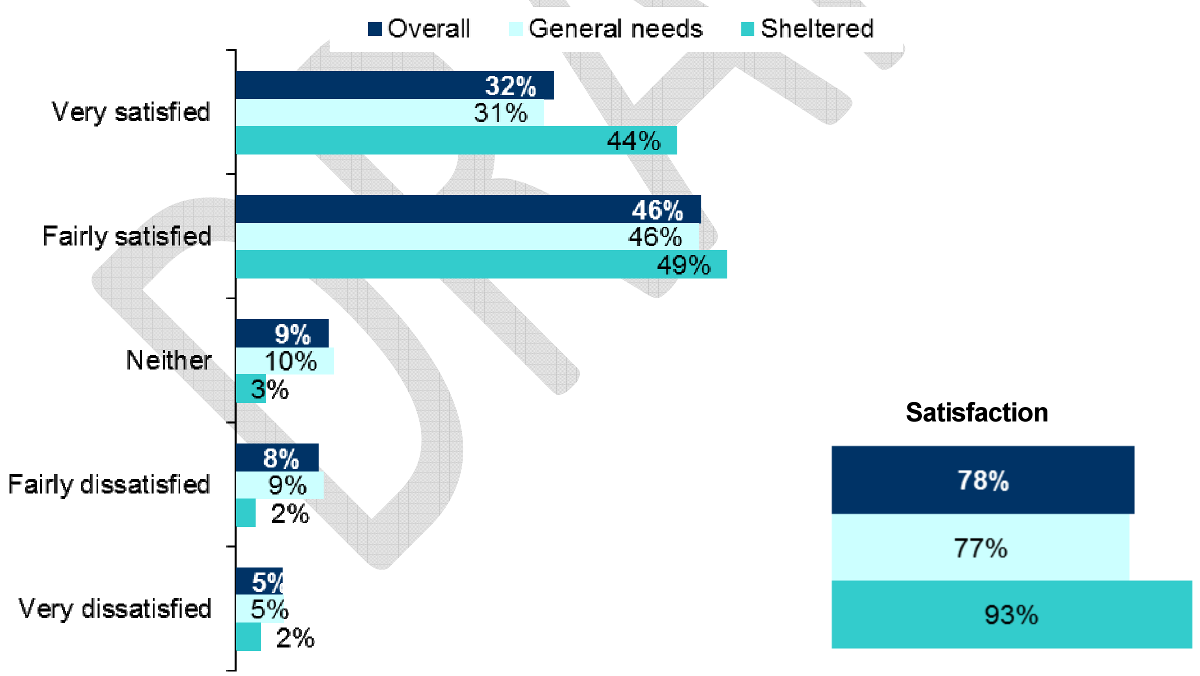
This section presents findings on the overall services provided by Tamworth Borough Council Housing Service.

Overall service provided

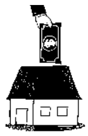
Tenants were asked how satisfied they were with the overall service provided by Tamworth Borough Council Housing Service. Figure 3.1 below shows that just over three-quarters (78%) report being satisfied, with around a third (32%) being 'very satisfied'. Over one in ten (13%) report some level of dissatisfaction, producing a net satisfaction rating of +65%.

Results show that satisfaction has increased by 3% points since 2011 where 75% reported satisfaction.

Figure 3.1: Satisfaction with the overall service provided (Overall and tenure breakdown)



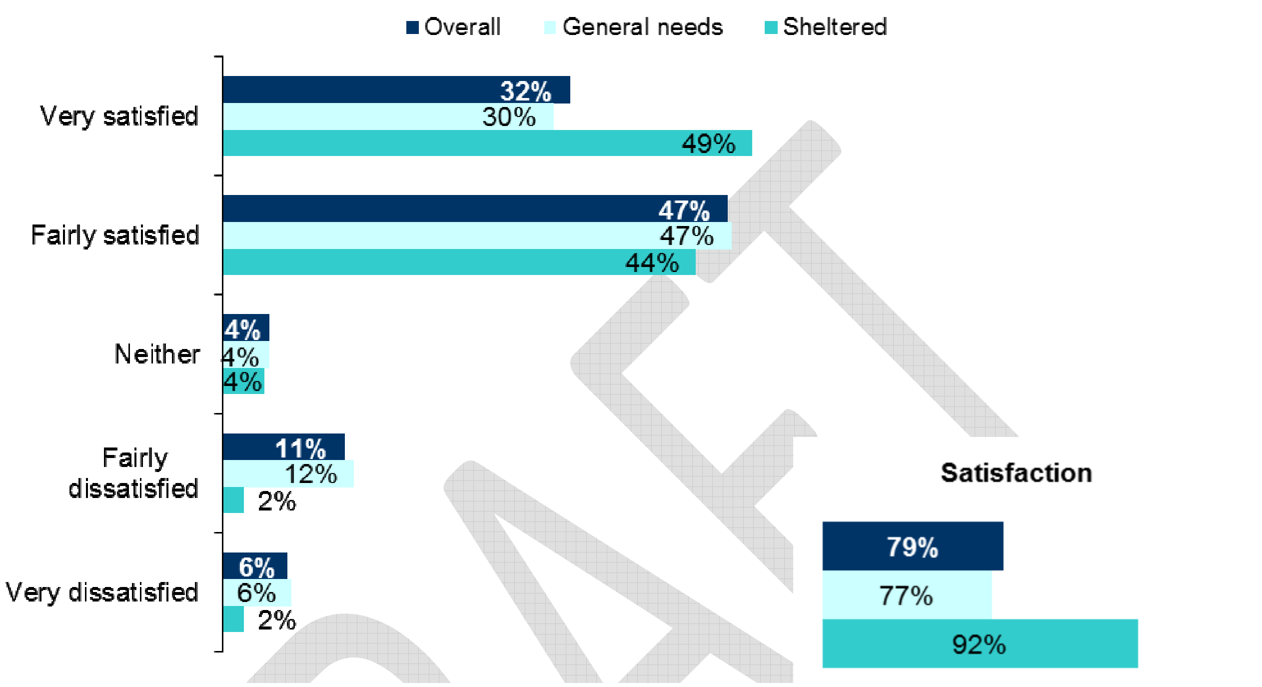
Base size: 598; 549; 49

	Tenants living in Sheltered accommodation report a significantly higher satisfaction rate of 9 in 10 (93%) in comparison to General Needs tenants (77%).
	Residents aged 65+ (*65-74:* 85%, *75+:* 94%) are significantly more likely to be satisfied compared to those under 65 (50-77%).
	Residents in receipt of housing benefit (83%) are significantly more likely to be satisfied compared to those who are not (71%).

Overall quality of home

Around 8 in 10 (79%) report some degree of satisfaction with the overall quality of their home, with nearly a third being 'very satisfied'. 17% of tenants expressed dissatisfaction, producing a net satisfaction rating of +61%. [1]

Figure 3.2: Satisfaction with the overall quality of your home (Overall and tenure breakdown)



Base size: 612; 561; 51

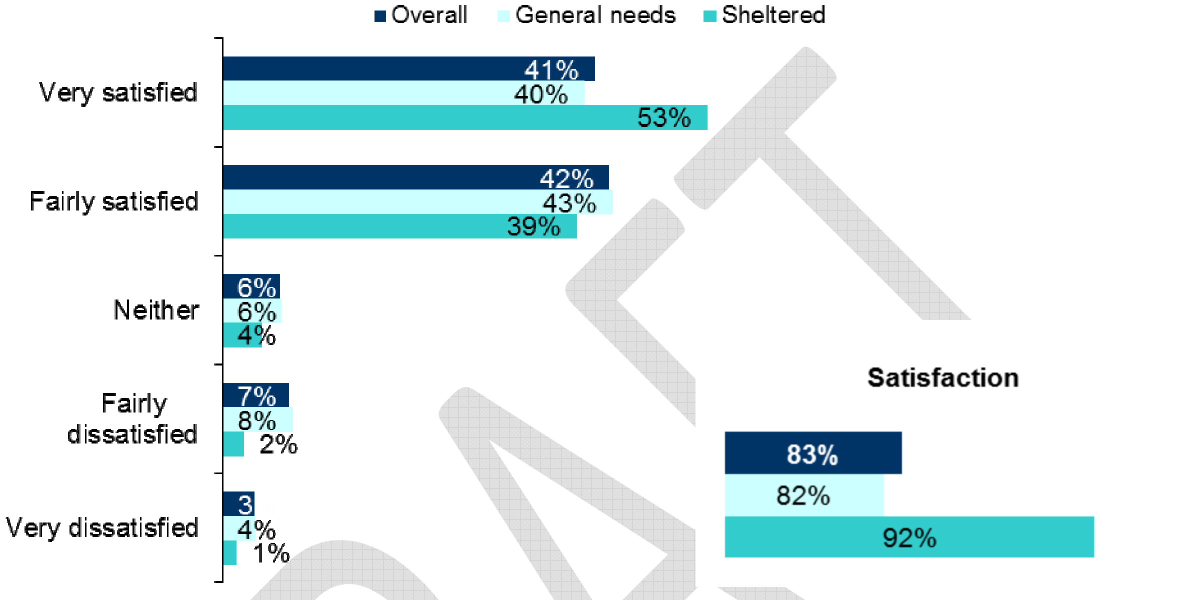
	Once again, a significantly greater proportion of tenants in Sheltered Housing (92%) indicate satisfaction, with 15% more residents stating that they are fairly/very satisfied in comparison to General Needs tenants (77%).
	Tenants aged over 55 (84-93%) were significantly more satisfied compared to those under 55 (48-71%)
	Respondents residing in Mercian (67%) and Spital (69%), were significantly less satisfied with the overall quality of their home compared to several wards in Tamworth (83%-88%) for example Belgrave (88%) and Glascote (84%).

[1] Aggregate data does not exist from 2011 and so appropriate comparisons cannot be made

Neighbourhood

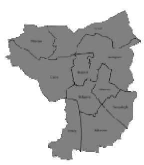
Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their neighbourhood as a place to live. Of the 83% that were satisfied, around half (41%) were 'very satisfied'. Only one in ten (11%) were dissatisfied. This produced a net satisfaction rating of +72%. Findings show a substantial improvement since 2011 where three-quarters (75%) expressed some degree of satisfaction.

Figure 3.3: Satisfaction with neighbourhood as place to live (Overall and tenure breakdown)



Base size: 600: 549: 51

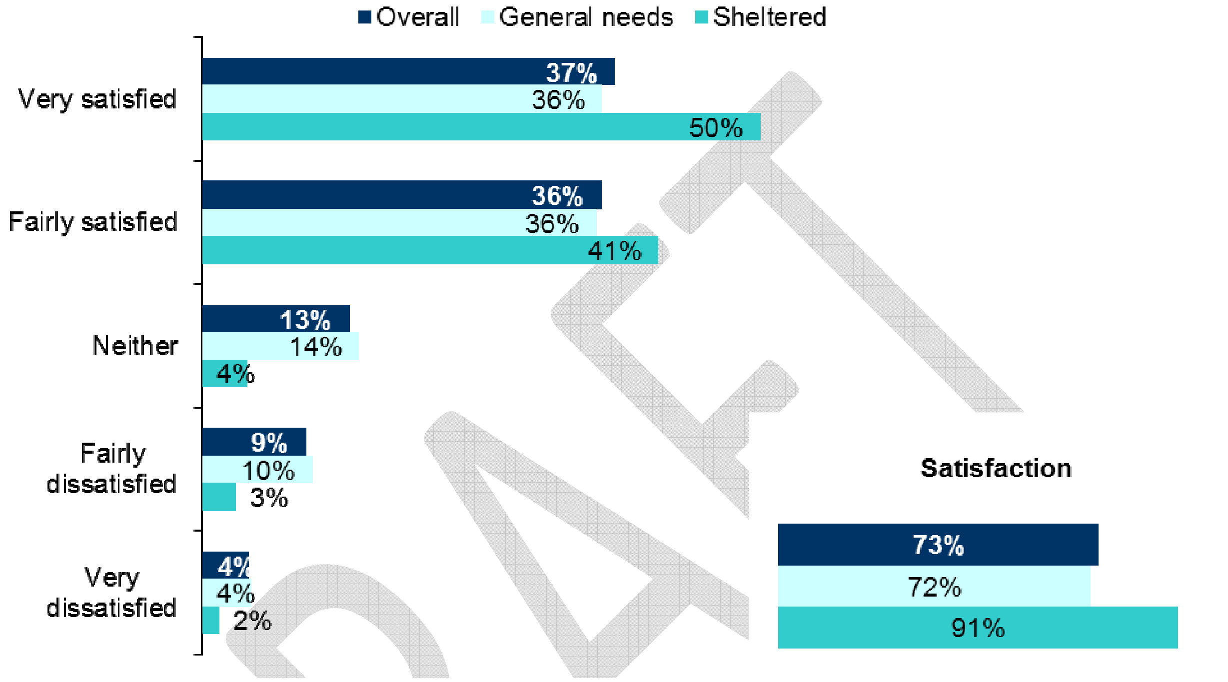
Satisfaction rate was 10% higher amongst the Sheltered tenants group compared to General Needs tenants although this difference was not found to be significant.

	Respondents aged 75+ (94%) report a significantly higher satisfaction rate compared to those below 75 (50%-86%).
	Tenants in receipt of housing benefit (85%), are significantly more likely to be satisfied compared to their non-housing benefit counterparts (79%).
	With a satisfaction rate of 93%, tenants living in Castle are most satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live. This is significantly higher compared to several other wards in Tamworth (73%-83%) for example, Stonydelph (76%) and Bolehall (81%).

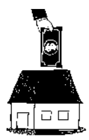
Rent provides value for money

Sheltered and General Needs tenants were asked how satisfied they were that their rent provides value for money. Nearly a quarter (73%) report being satisfied; half of whom are 'very satisfied' (37%). Only 14% indicate some level of dissatisfaction. This produces a net satisfaction rating of +60%. [2]

Figure 3.4: Satisfaction that rent provides value for money (Overall and tenure breakdown)



Base size: 589; 541; 48

	With around 9 in 10 (91%) Sheltered tenants expressing satisfaction, a significantly higher proportion in this tenure group were satisfied, in comparison to General Needs (72%) for which satisfaction rate was nearly a fifth (20%) lower.
	Older adults aged over 65 (*65-74:* 80%, *75+:* 92%) were significantly more satisfied compared to younger adults aged below under 65 years (51-69%).
	Those who are currently receiving housing benefit express significant greater satisfaction with eight in ten (82%) expressing some degree of satisfaction compared to six in ten (59%) of the non-housing benefit group.

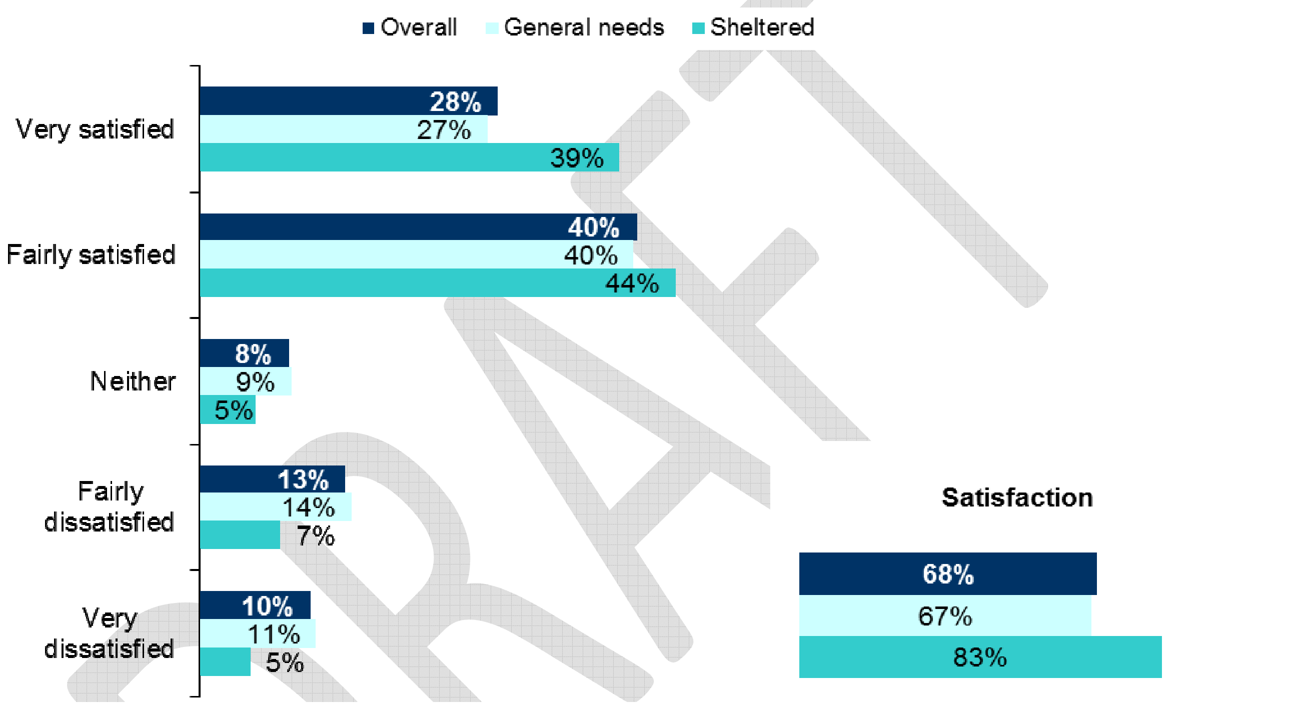
[2] Aggregate data does not exist from 2011 and so appropriate comparisons cannot be made

Repairs and maintenance

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the way their Housing Service deals with repairs and maintenance issues. Figure 3.5 below, shows that just under seven in ten (68%) report satisfaction in this area. Nearly a quarter (24%) are dissatisfied with the way repairs and maintenance are dealt with, producing a net satisfaction rating of +44%.

There findings mirror that of 2011 (satisfaction 68%).

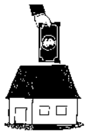
Figure 3.5: Satisfaction with the way your Housing Service deals with repairs and maintenance (Overall and tenure breakdown)



Base size: 615; 563; 52

A significantly higher proportion of Sheltered tenants report satisfaction with the way their repairs and maintenance are dealt with in comparison to General Needs tenants (83% and 67% respectively).

In line with previous questions, older adults over 65 years (*65-74:* 81%, *75+:* 86%) are significantly more likely to express satisfaction in this area compared to those under 65 (40-61%).

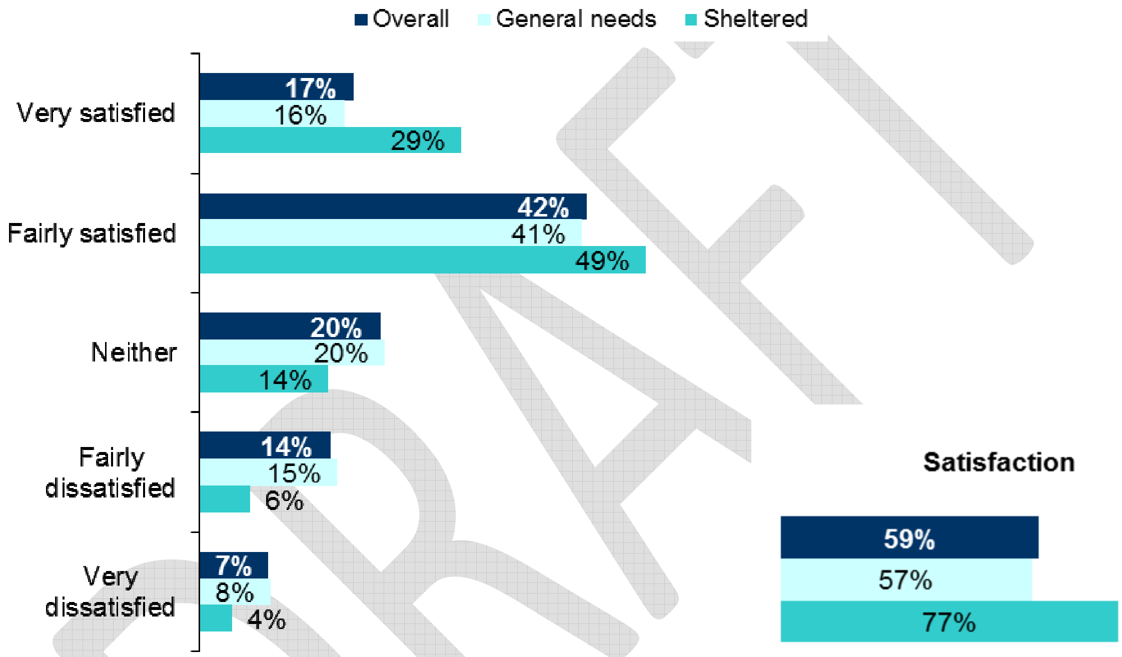
	A significantly higher proportion of residents receiving housing benefit (73%) express some degree of satisfaction compared to those who are not (61%).
	Respondents residing in the Mercian area are significantly more dissatisfied (39%) compared to other wards (11-23%) for example, Glascote (16%) and Castle (23%).

Listening to views and responding to views

Compared to other aspects in this section, satisfaction is lower when tenants were asked about whether their views were listened to and acted upon by their Housing provider, with just under six in ten (59%) reporting some degree of satisfaction. It is worth noting that around a fifth (20%) report being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied leaving dissatisfaction rate at 22%; lower than what one might initially expect. This question scored a net satisfaction rating of +37%.

Comparison to 2011 results show an improvement of 5% points (satisfaction 54%). [3]

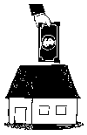
Figure 3.6: Satisfaction that your Housing Service listens to your views and acts upon them (Overall and tenure breakdown)



Base size: 596; 548; 48

	In line with other areas, at 77%, satisfaction is significantly higher for Sheltered tenants compared to General Needs (57%), although lower in comparison to other questions. Please note that sample size for sheltered tenants is very small for this question and so findings should be interpreted with caution.
	Older adults aged 65+ (*65-74:* 67%, *75+:* 76%) report a significantly higher level of satisfaction compared to younger adults below 65 (40-52%).

[3] Wording in question differs to 2011 survey and includes 'no opinion' option so findings should be interpreted with caution

	A greater proportion of tenants in receipt of housing benefit (64%), report satisfaction in comparison to those who do not receive this (50%).
	With a rate of 45%, Mercian tenants express a significantly <u>lower</u> level of satisfaction compared to residents based in several other wards (62%-69%) for example, Belgrave (62%) and Stonydelph (69%).

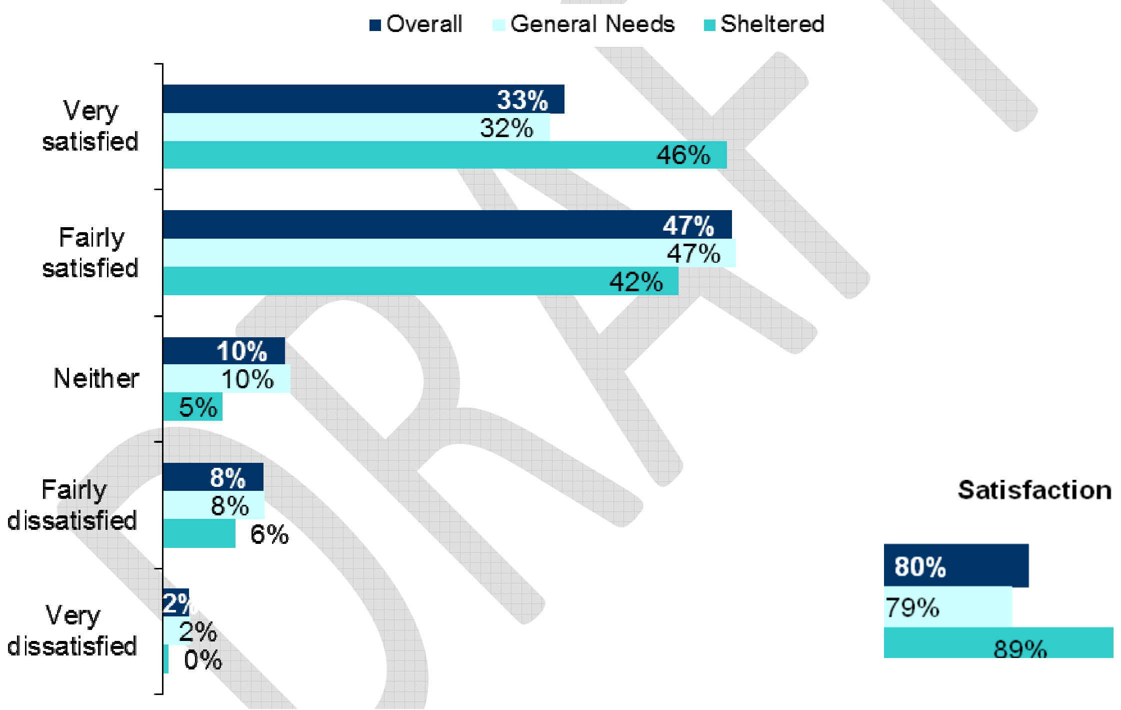
5) General services

Kept informed

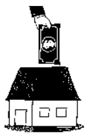
Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were that their Housing Service keeps them informed about things that might affect them as a tenant. Figure 4.1 below shows that four-fifths (80%) are satisfied with this aspect of the service they receive from their Housing Provider. A third (33%) are 'very satisfied'. One in ten (10%) report some degree of dissatisfaction resulting in a net satisfaction score of +69%.

There has been a substantial improvement since 2011 where 68% reported that they were satisfied- 12% less than current satisfaction rates.

Figure 4.1: Satisfaction that your Housing Service keeps you informed (Overall and tenure breakdown)



Base size: 604; 555; 49

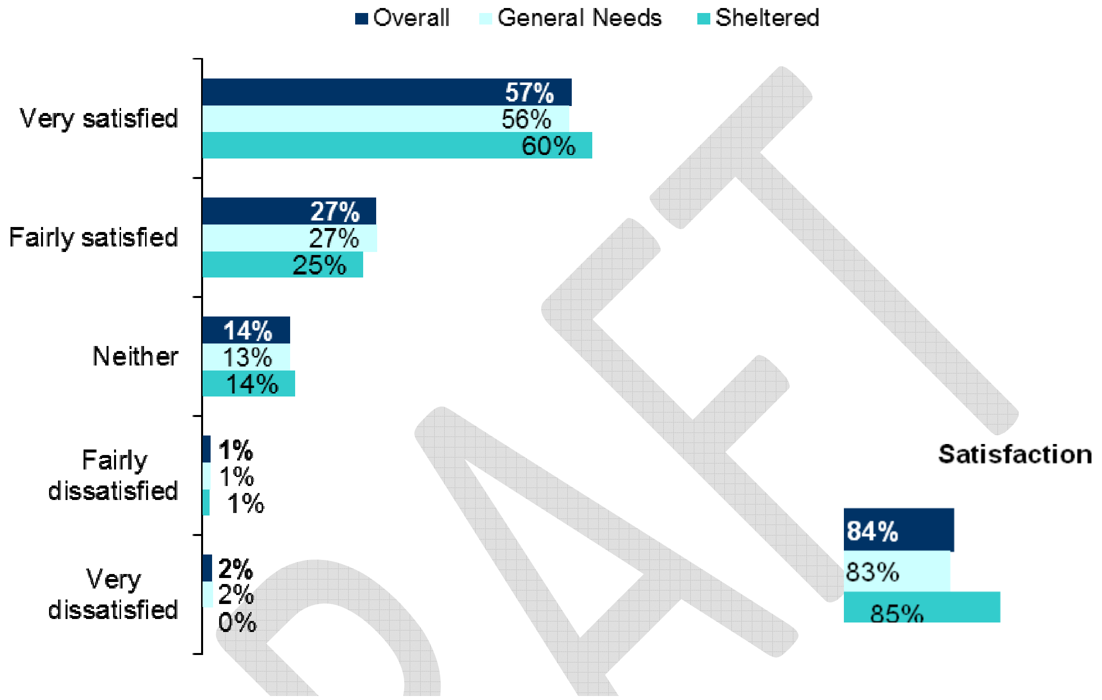
	Older adults aged 65-74 and 74+ (87% and 88%, respectively) express significantly greater satisfaction compared to younger residents below 65 (60-76%).
	Respondents whose household receive housing benefit (85%) are significantly more likely to express satisfaction compared to households that do not (71%).

Gas servicing

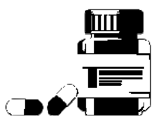
84% of respondents are satisfied with their gas servicing arrangements, of which two- thirds are 'very satisfied'. Only 3% report some degree of dissatisfaction. This gives a net satisfaction score of +81%.

This question was not included in the 2011 questionnaire and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 4.2: Satisfaction with gas servicing arrangements (Overall and tenure breakdown)



Base size: 557; 513; 44

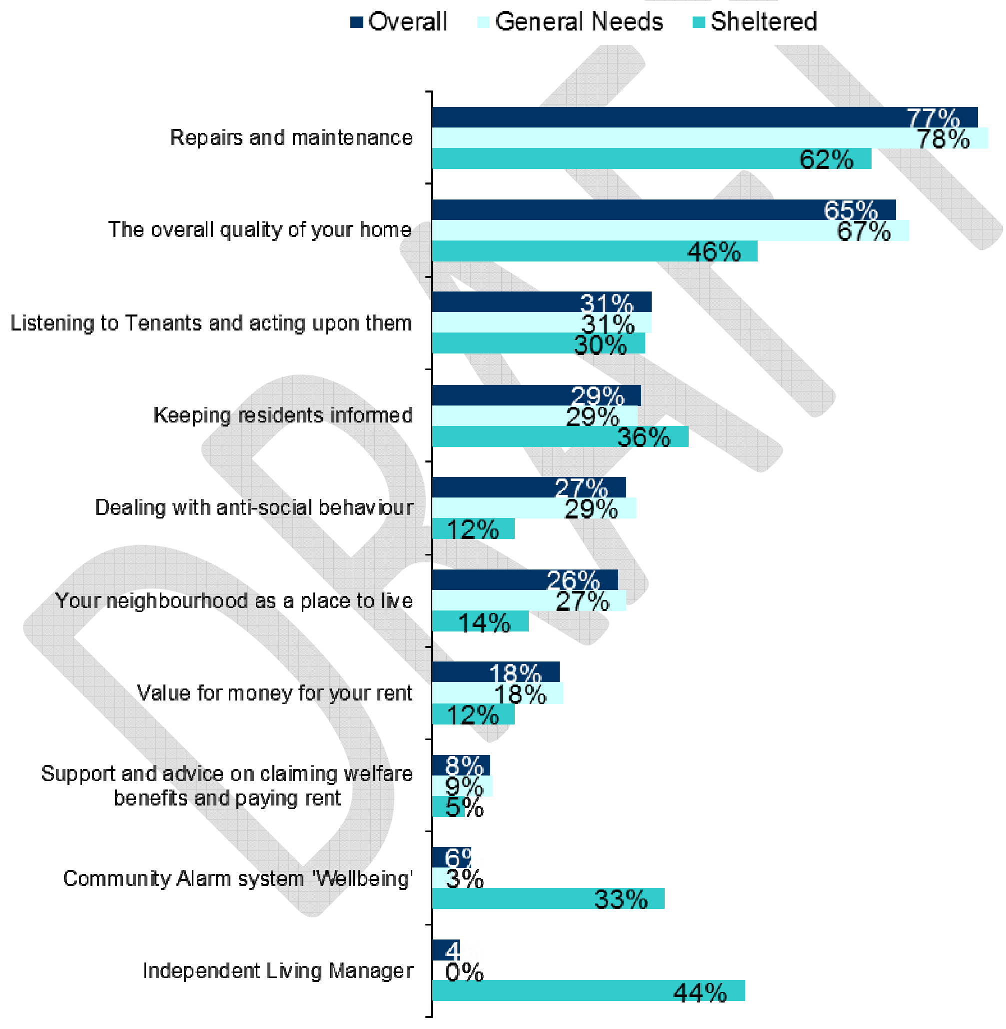
	With only half (50%) expressing satisfaction, young tenants aged 18-24 are least likely to be satisfied with their gas servicing arrangements. This is significantly less compared to all other age groups with the exception of the 55-64 age group who also express a significantly lower satisfaction rate of 67% (other age groups 82%-92%).
	Tenants who report that a member within their households day-to-day activities are limited 'a little' due to long-term health problem (91%), are significantly more likely to report satisfaction compared to those who are limited 'a lot' (81%) and those who did not report such a health problem (83%).
	Castle residents are significantly less likely (53%) to express satisfaction compared all other wards within Tamworth (79-95%).

6) Service priorities

Tenants were asked to pick out of a list of services, their top three priorities. With three-quarters (77%) selecting this option, repairs and maintenance is considered the most important service, followed by the overall quality of your home (65%), suggesting people are most interested in services relating directly to their home rather than wider issues (such as neighbourhood or anti-social behavior) and their relationship with their Housing Service.

These were also the top priorities in 2011 (81% and 53% respectively)[4].

Figure 5.1: Top three priorities (Overall and tenure breakdown)



Base size: 610; 558; 52

[4] Wording of some options vary slightly to 2011 survey and last three options were not included in General Needs survey so findings should be interpreted with caution

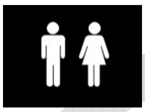
Despite the top priorities being the same for both tenures, there were some differences. General Needs tenants were more unified in their responses with a significantly higher proportion selecting repairs and maintenance (78%) and the overall quality of your home (67%) in comparison to Sheltered tenants (62% and 46% respectively).

Key priorities were more spread out in the case of Sheltered tenants. Perhaps unsurprisingly, respondents in this group were significantly more likely to consider having an Independent Living Manager (44%) and a community alarm system 'Wellbeing' service (33%) as key priorities in comparison to General Need tenants (0% and 3% respectively) who do not have access to such services.

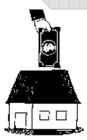
Whilst services relating to repairs and maintenance and overall quality of home is most important overall, they appear to be a high priority particularly for younger adults aged 25-34 (92% and 88% respectively), who are significantly more likely to prioritse these services compared to other age groups.

Those aged 55-54 are most likely to prioritise keeping residents informed, with 40% selecting this option. This is significantly higher than those under 55 (17%-23%) and those aged 65-74 (26%).

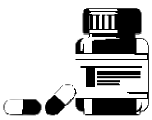
As would be expected, older adults aged 75+ are significanlty more likely to view the community alarm system (17%) and the services provided by an Independent Living Manger (10%) as priorities compared to younger age groups (0-10%).



Females are significantly more likely to include repairs and maintenance (81%) within the top three priorities compared to males (71%).



As one may anticipate, those not in receipt of housing benefit (32%) are significantly more likely to consider value for money for rent a priority compared to those who receive housing benefit (10%).



Respondents who stated that they, or a member of their household has a long-term health problem limiting their day-to-day activities 'a lot', are significantly more likely to prioritise listening to tenant's views and acting upon them (35%) compared to those who do not (27%).

In turn, this group are significantly less likely to prioritise value for money for their rent (10%) compared to those who stated their health problem limited them 'a little' (20%) or who do not have such health problems (23%). This might be due to those with a long-term health condition perhaps being more likely to be in receipt of benefits such as housing benefit which consequently means that such issues might not be a concern for them.

Residents from Mercian (15%) were significantly less likely to be interested in being kept informed compared to several other wards (32%-44%) for example Amington (40%) and Castle (32%).

Spital residents were significantly more likely to prioritise the overall quality of their home (83%) and significantly less likely to prioritise listening to tenants' views and acting upon them (15%) compared to several other wards (47%-66% and 29%-42%, respectively).

Tenants living in Stonydelph (60%), were significantly less likely to prioritise repairs and maintenance in comparison to several wards within Tamworth (77%-87%), for example Bolehall (78%) and Spital (80%).

Respondents residing in Castle (16%) were significantly less likely to consider dealing with ASB as a top three priority suggesting that perhaps this is less of an issue in this ward compared to several other areas in Tamworth (31%-88%) for example Mercian (39%) and Stonydelph (37%).

Mercian and Belgrave residents (both 8%) are significantly least likely to view value for money for rent as being a priority compared to other wards (20%-32%) such as, Bolehall (21%) and Spital (20%).

Trinity residents are significantly most likely to feel that the services of an Independent Living Manager are important with 28% selecting this as a top three priority compared to 0-9% of other wards within Tamworth for example, Castle (2%) and Glascote (0%).

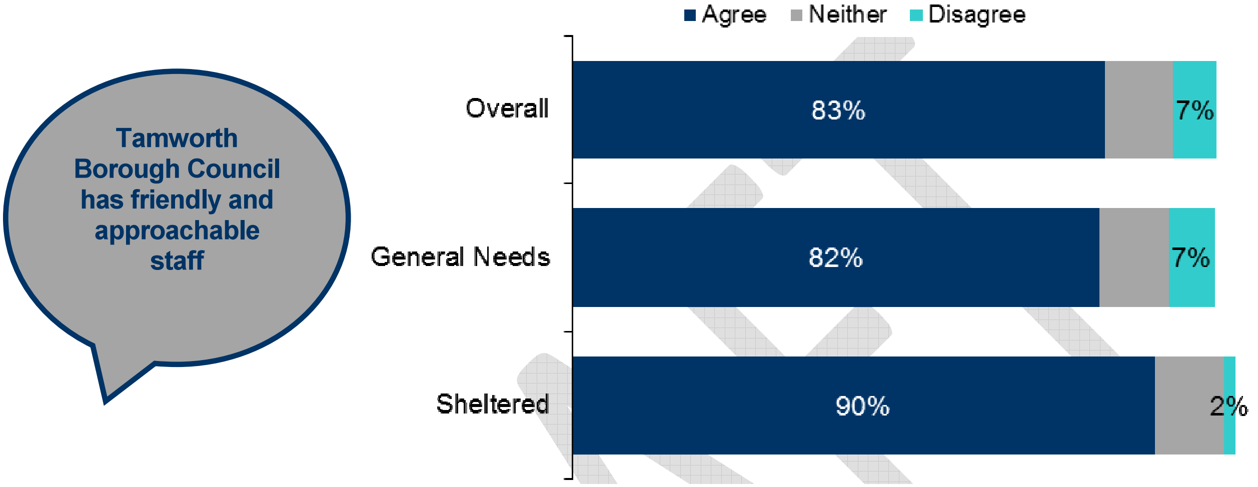
7) Perceptions

Staff

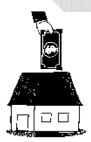
Overall, residents have a positive perception of the staff at Tamworth Borough Council Housing Service with 83% agreeing that they are 'friendly and approachable'. This increases to nine in ten (90%) in the case of Sheltered Housing tenants.

This question was not included in the 2011 survey and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 6.1: Agreement that staff are friendly and approachable (Overall and tenure breakdown)



Base size: 603; 552; 51

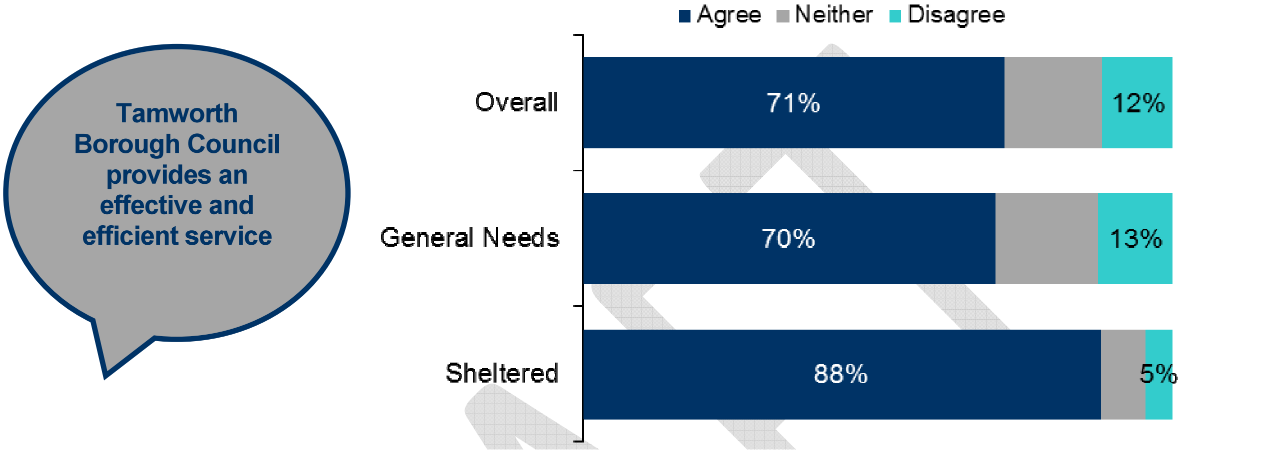
	With nearly all residents stating that they agree (97%), older adults aged 75+ are significantly more likely to feel that staff from Tamworth Borough Council are friendly and approachable compared to all other age groups (60%-83%).
	Respondents from households currently in receipt of housing benefit, are significantly more likely to agree compared to those who do not (87% and 74% respectively).

Service

Tenants had a slightly less positive perception of the service Tamworth Borough Council provides in comparison to the staff with seven in ten (71%) agreeing that it provides an 'effective and efficient service'.

This question was not included in the 2011 survey and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 6.2: Agreement that service provided is effective and efficient



Base size: 600; 549; 51

	Around in nine in ten (88%) Sheltered Housing residents agree; a significantly higher proportion compared to General Needs (70%).
	Older adults aged over 65 (*65-75*: 78%, *75+:* 88%), are significantly more likely to feel that Tamworth Borough Council Housing Service provides an effective and efficient service, compared to younger residents (50%-70%).
	A significantly greater proportion of those in receipt of housing benefit, had a positive perception of the service provided by their Housing Service with 78% agreeing that they provide a service that is effective and efficient, compared to those not on housing benefit (61%).

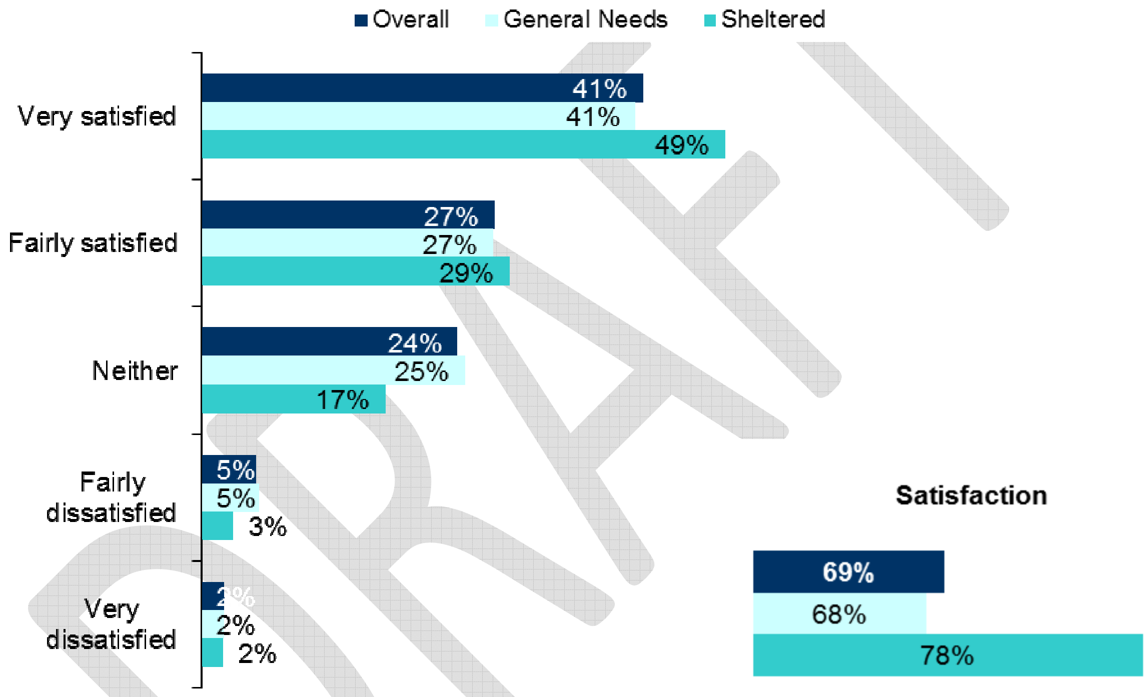
8) Advice and support

Claiming benefits

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the advice and support received from their Housing Service in regards to claiming housing and other welfare benefits. Overall, around seven in ten (69%) report that they are satisfied.

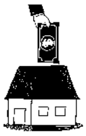
This question was not included in the 2011 survey and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 7.1: Satisfaction with advice and support for claiming benefits



Base: 576; 528; 48

Similar to previous questions Sheltered tenants are more likely to be satisfied compared to General Needs (78% vs. 68%), however sample size is too small to ascertain any potential significant difference.

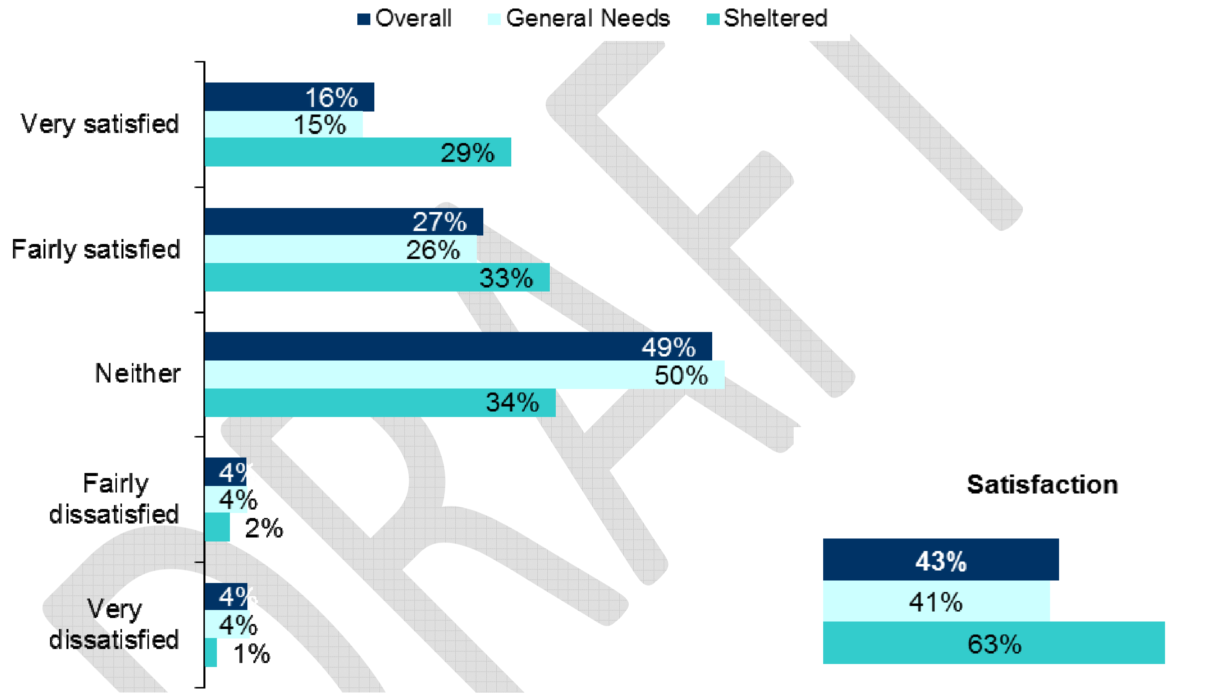
	Older adults aged over 65 years are significantly more likely to be satisfied (*65-74:* 76%, *75+:* 82%) compared to younger adults (53%-63%).
	With nine in ten (90%) reporting some degree of satisfaction, those in receipt of housing benefit are significantly more likely to be satisfied compared to only 27% of those not receiving housing benefit. Those not on housing benefit were in turn significantly more likely to select neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (62%) compared to those on housing benefit (5%) which would perhaps suggest this question was not particularly relevant to them as opposed to a high degree of dissatisfaction.
	Respondents who stated that they, or a member of their household has a long-term health problem limiting their day-to-day activities 'a lot', are significantly more likely to be satisfied (81%) compared to those who stated that their health problem limits them 'a little' (69%) or who do not have such problems (58%). In turn, those whose health limited them 'a little', or do not have a limiting health problem, are significantly more likely to select 'neither' for this question (24% and 32% respectively). This may therefore suggest that that the question was not as relevant to these two groups with those with serious health problems perhaps being entitled to more benefits compared to those in better health, for example due to not being able to work.

'Finding a home' choice based lettings

Less than half of residents (43%) are satisfied with the advice and support they receive from their Housing service with the councils 'Finding a Home Choice Based Lettings website and service. Despite this low satisfaction rate, Figure 7.2 illustrates that this is due to a large proportion being indifferent with 49% stating that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied rather than a high level of dissatisfaction (8%). This question yields a net satisfaction score of +35%.

This question was not included in the 2011 survey and so comparison data does not exist.

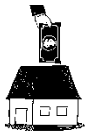
Figure 7.2: Satisfaction with advice and support for the council's 'Finding a Home' website and service



Base: 514; 474; 39

Sample size is too small to ascertain any potential significant differences based on tenure type.

Despite the high level of ambivalence for this question overall, only one in ten (10%) residents aged 18-24, selected neither for this question which is significantly lower compared to all other age groups (43%-57%). This would suggest that perhaps younger tenants are more likely to receive advice and support in using the' Find a Home' website from their Housing Service, or more likely to use it generally, which in turn has meant they are more likely to have an opinion on it compared to older residents who perhaps did not find this question relevant to them. Moreover, the 18-24 age group are also significantly more likely to be dissatisfied (30%) in comparison to older residents (*45-54:* 7%, *65-74:* 5% and *75+:* 3%).

	Nearly half of all respondents whose household are in receipt of housing benefit (49%), report satisfaction which is significantly higher compared to those not receiving housing benefit (32%).
	Around a fifth (21%) of Mercian residents are dissatisfied; a significantly higher rate compared to Bolehall (3%); Castle (5%); Glascote (7%).

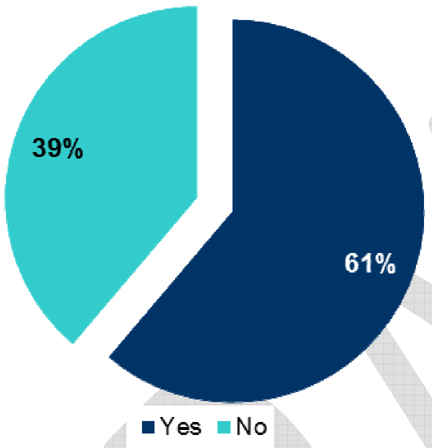
9) Contact and communication

Contacted Tamworth Borough Council

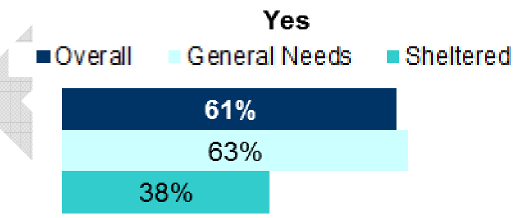
All respondents were asked if they had contacted Tamworth Borough Council in the last 12 months with a query other than paying rent. Figure 8.1 below, shows that around three-fifths (61%) had.

This is 9% points lower compared to 2011 (70%)[5].

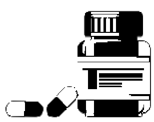
Figure 8.1: Contacted Council in last 12 months



Base: 608



Base: 608; 395; 206

	Sheltered tenants are significantly less likely to have contacted the Council Housing Service with around four in ten (38%) stating that they had, compared to General Needs' six in ten (63%). This corresponds with the fact that on the whole, Sheltered tenants appear to be more satisfied than their General Needs counterparts with the service they receive, and so perhaps are less likely to have a reason to make contact.
	Older adults aged 75+ (48%) are significantly less likely to make contact compared to those below 75 and in turn those aged 25-34, are significantly more likely to (79%) make contact compared to those aged above 65.
	Respondents whose household had a member whose day-to-day activities were limited 'a lot' due to a long-term health problem (69%) are significantly more likely to have contacted the Councils Housing Service in the last 12 months compared to those whose activities were limited 'a little' (54%) or who didn't have any health limitations (60%).

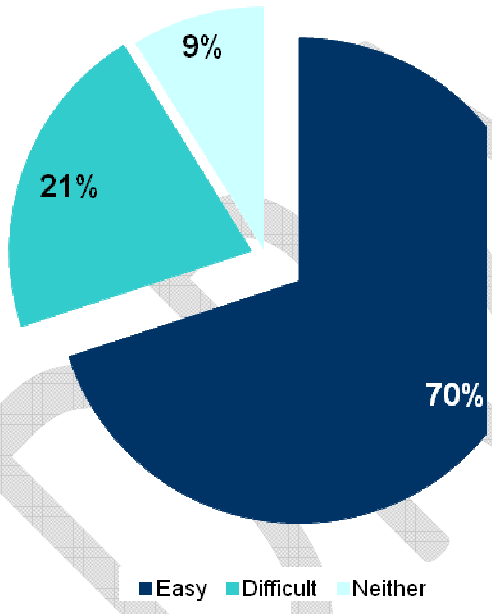
[5] 2011 survey includes 'can't remember' option so findings should be interpreted with caution

Stonydelph residents (51%), are significantly less likely to have made contact compared to respondents based in Bolehall (68%) and Castle (66%).

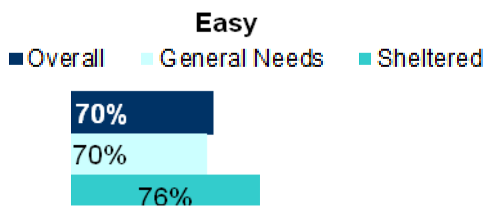
Ease of making contact

Those who had stated that they had contacted Tamworth Borough Council in last 12 months were subsequently asked if they found getting hold of the right person easy or difficult. Overall, seven in ten (70%) report that they found it easy and a fifth (21%) state that it was difficult which is similar to findings from 2011 (69% and 20%, respectively)[6].

Figure 8.2: Ease of getting hold of the right person



Base: 368



Base: 368; 349; 19

Sample sizes were too small to ascertain any significant differences based on tenure type, age, and wards.

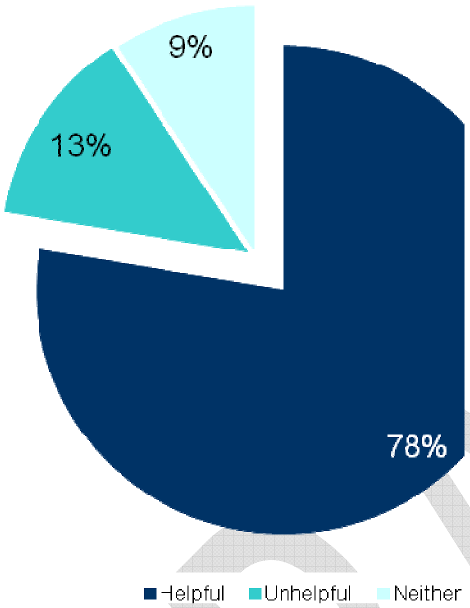
[6] 2011 survey includes 'can't remember' option so findings should be interpreted with caution

Helpfulness of Staff

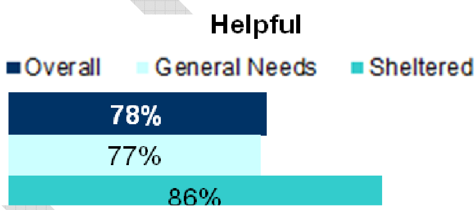
Respondents who had made contact in the last 12 months were also asked if they found the staff helpful or unhelpful. Response was positive with nearly eight in ten (78%) reporting that they found the staff they spoke to regarding their query to be helpful.

This question was not include in the 2011 survey so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 8.3: Helpfulness of staff



Base: 366



Base: 366; 246; 76

Sample sizes were too small to analyse data on the basis of tenure type, age, and ward.

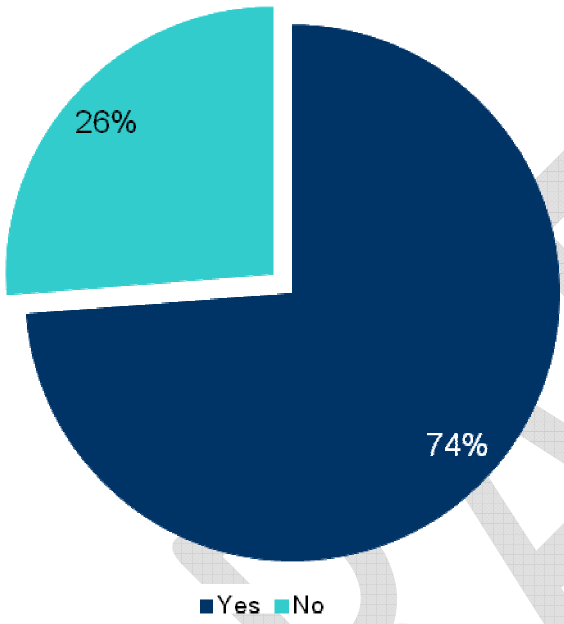
	Residents in receipt of housing benefit (81%) are significantly more likely to have found the staff they contacted to be helpful compared to those not receiving housing benefit (72%).

Query answered within reasonable time

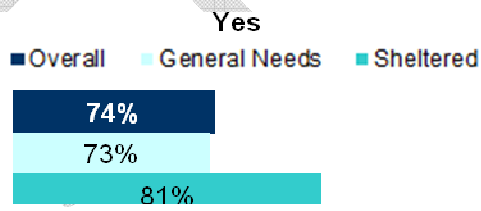
Of the respondents who had contacted the councils Housing Services within the last year, three quarters (74%) felt that their query had been answered within a reasonable time.

This question was not incorporated within the 2011 survey and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 8.4: Was query answered within reasonable time



Base: 368



Base: 368; 350; 18

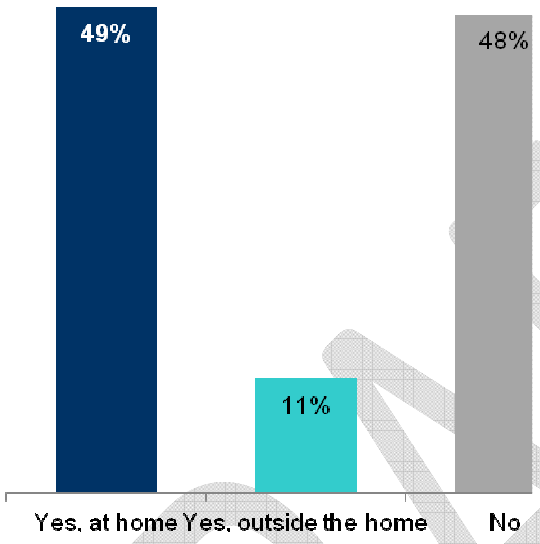
Sample sizes were too small to ascertain any significant differences based on the various sub-groups.

Internet usage

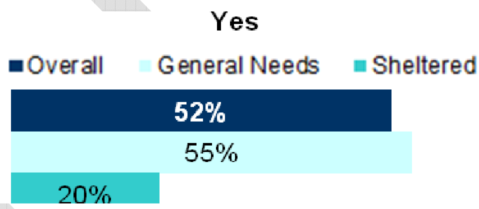
Figure 8.5 below shows that around half (48%) do not use the internet. Of the 52% that do, 49% report using it at home and 11% report that they have access to the internet outside of the home.

This question was not asked in 2011 and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 8.5: Internet usage



Base: 594



Base: 594; 387; 198

	Perhaps unsurprisingly, Sheltered tenants who consist of older adults, are significantly less likely to use the internet in comparison to General Needs tenants with one-fifth (20%) of tenants in Sheltered accommodation reporting that they use the internet compared to just over half of General Needs tenants (55%).
	From 25-34 (92%), internet usage in the home declines with age, with only 17% of those above 75, stating that they use the internet at home. This is significantly lower than all other age groups including older adults aged 65-74. (*18-24:* 90%, *35-44:* 75%, *45-64:* 67%, *55-64:* 53%, *65-74,* 44%). Those aged 18-64 (14-25%) are significantly more likely to use the internet outside the home compared to those in the 65-74 and 75+ age bracket (4% and 2% respectively).
	A greater proportion of tenants, who are not on housing benefit, are significantly more likely to use the internet both at home and outside (65% and 16%, respectively) compared to those who are in receipt of housing benefit (40% and 9%, respectively).

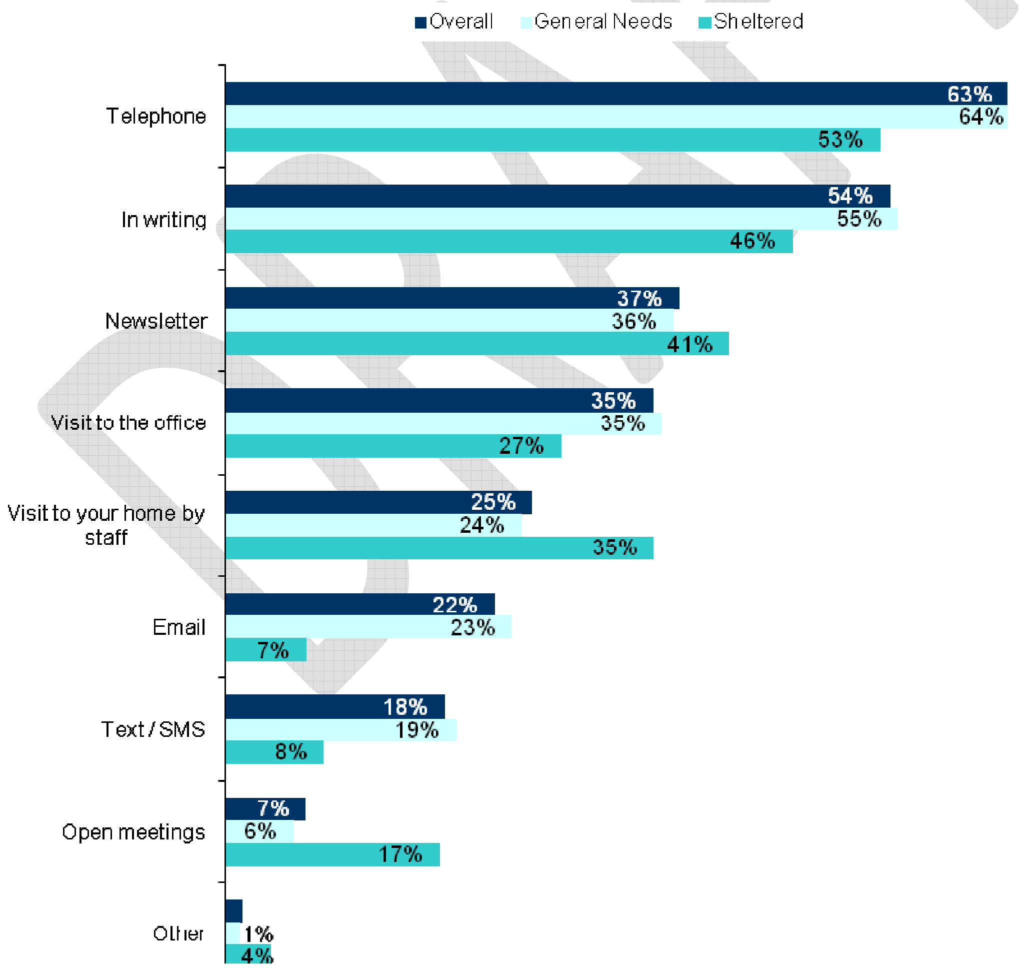
Amington residents are significantly more likely to use the internet at home (71%) in comparison to all other wards (37%-63%), with the exception of Trinity for which sample size was too small to ascertain any meaningful differences.

Methods of contact

All respondents were asked to choose out of a list, which method(s) of being kept informed, and getting in touch with their Housing Service they are happy to use. Overall, the most common method appears to be telephone (63%) followed by in writing (54%). Newsletters (37%) are also a popular choice and a fair proportion of residents appreciated having face-to-face contact with over a third (35%) being willing to visit their Housing Service office and a quarter (25%) opting to have a visit from a member of staff.

In 2011, writing was the most popular method of contact followed by telephone. [7]

Figure 8.6: Preferred Methods of communication



Base: 611; 559; 52

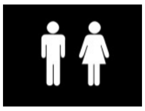
[7] The options and wording varies compared to 2011 and so appropriate comparisons cannot be made

Differences between tenure type appear to be as a result of differences in technological usage as illustrated in the internet usage question (Contact and Communication Section). A significantly higher proportion of General Needs tenants selected email (23%) and text (19%), in comparison to Sheltered tenants (7% and 8% respectively). Whilst both groups appeared happy to have face-to-face contact, when it comes to communication in a group environment, a significantly higher proportion of Sheltered tenants (17%) opted for open meetings (General Needs 6%).

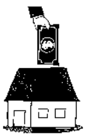
In parallel with internet usage, from 25-34 (54%), preference to be contacted via email declines with age. With older adults above 75, being significantly least likely to want to be contacted via email (4%) compared to all other age groups (18%-54%). Those aged 25–34 are significantly more likely to prefer email compared to those above 45 years (4%-34%).

In the case of text messaging, higher preference starts at a younger age with 18-24 year olds (70%) being significantly most likely to prefer this method of contact and preference declining with age. 18-24 year olds were also significantly more likely to prefer contact in writing with nine in ten (90%) selecting this option.

Older adults aged 75+ were significantly less likely to prefer contact via writing (41%) or newsletter (26%), compared to other age groups,.

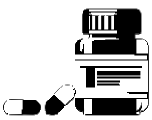


A greater proportion of females report that they would like being kept informed and contacted by their Housing Service in writing (59%)and via text (22%) compared to males (49% and 14%, respectively). Males on the other hand appeared to prefer face-to-face contact with a significantly higher proportion stating that they would be happy to make a visit to the office (42%) compared to females (30%).



Those in receipt of housing benefit appeared to prefer more verbal methods of contact with a significantly higher proportion reporting they would be happy to be contacted via telephone (68%) and visiting the office (38%) compared to those not on housing benefit (58% and 28%, respectively).

On the other hand, those not on housing benefit, appeared to prefer more written methods of contact which perhaps is less reliant on them being available at a set time with 61% selecting writing, 29% for email and 23% stating that they are happy to be contacted by SMS/text. (Housing benefit- 50%, 18% and 15%, respectively).



Those who did not have a health problem limiting their day-to-day activity, were significantly more likely to prefer contact via email (25%) compared to those who report being limited 'a lot' (18%). In turn, those who are limited 'a lot', are significantly more likely to be happy to have a member of staff visit them in their home (33%), compared to those who are limited 'a little' (23%) and those who do not have such health problems (20%).

Glascote tenants are significantly more likely to prefer contact via email, with a third (33%) selecting this option compared to several other wards (13-18%) for example, Spital (13%) and Belgrave (18%). Only 22% of tenants from Amington are happy to use email as a method of contact despite 71% reporting that they use the internet at home.

Respondents residing in Castle (41%) are significantly less likely to prefer contact in writing compared to several other wards (56%-62%) for example, Amington (59%) and Glascote (56%) but significantly more likely to be happy to make a visit to the office (51%) compared to other wards (27%-33%) for example Bolehall (29%) and Spital (33%) .

10) Neighbourhood

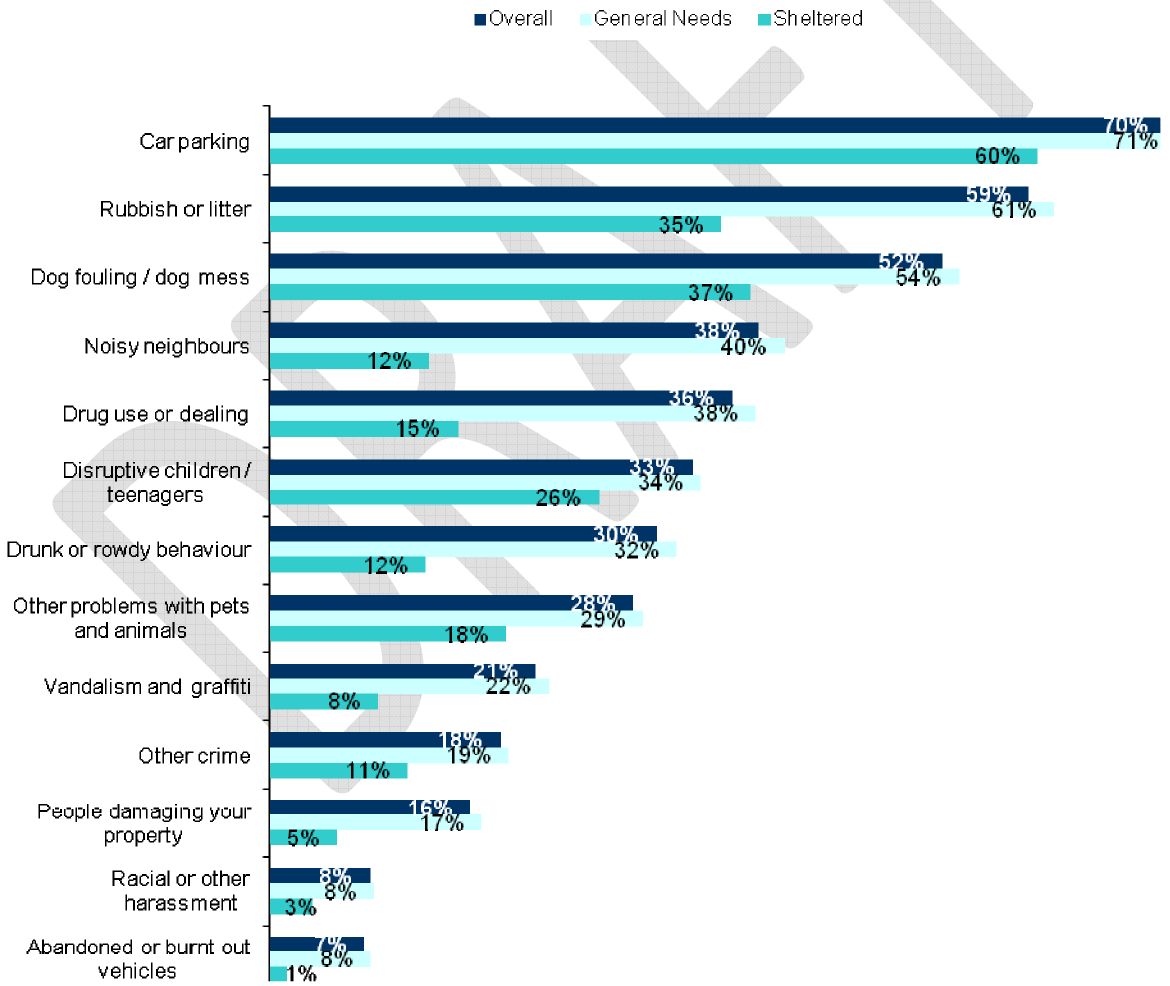
Problems in the neighbourhood

All respondents were asked to identify which out of a list of options, were problems within their neighbourhood. The top three problems identified were:

1. Car parking (70%)
2. Rubbish or litter (59%)
3. Dog fouling (52%)

This question was not asked in 2011 and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 9.1: Problems in neighbourhood



Base: 439-538

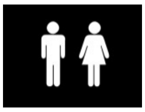
General Needs tenants are significantly more likely to identify problems in their neighbourhood compared to Sheltered tenants for:

Issue	General Needs	Sheltered
Rubbish or litter	61%	35%
Noisy neighbours	40%	12%
Dog fouling / dog mess	54%	37%
Drunk or rowdy behaviour	32%	12%
Vandalism and graffiti	22%	8%
Drug use or dealing	38%	15%

Those aged 45-64 (*45-54:* 40%, *55-64:* 45%) are significantly more likely to view disruptive children and teenagers as a problem in their neighbourhood compared to over 65s (*65 – 74:* 27%, *75+:* 21%).

65–74 year olds are least likely (22%) to view drunk or rowdy behavior as a problem within their neighborhood compared to other age groups. This is significantly lower than those aged 45-64 (35%-36%).

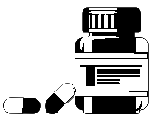
Adults over 75 are least likely (15%) to identify drug use and dealing as a problem compared to those under 75 (33%-58%).



Males are significantly more likely to feel that there are problems in their neighbourhood compared to females for:

Issue	Male	Female
Car parking	75%	67%
Noisy neighbours	44%	35%
Dog fouling	58%	48%
Drunk or rowdy behaviour	36%	28%
Vandalism	27%	17%
Drug use or dealing	47%	30%

Those not in receipt of housing benefit are significantly more likely to consider drug use and dealing as being a problem (41%) in their neighbourhood compared to those who are (33%).



Those who have a health problem limiting their day-to-day activities a lot, are significantly more likely to consider car parking (75%) and people damaging their property (24%) as problems within their neighbourhood compared to those not limited by health problems (66 and 11%, respectively). They are also significantly more likely to view vandalism and graffiti (25%) as a problem compared to those who are limited by their health problem 'a little' (15%).

Car parking is most likely to be a problem for Castle residents with 80% selecting this option. This is significantly higher than Belgrave (61%; Glascote (66%) and Mercian (63%).

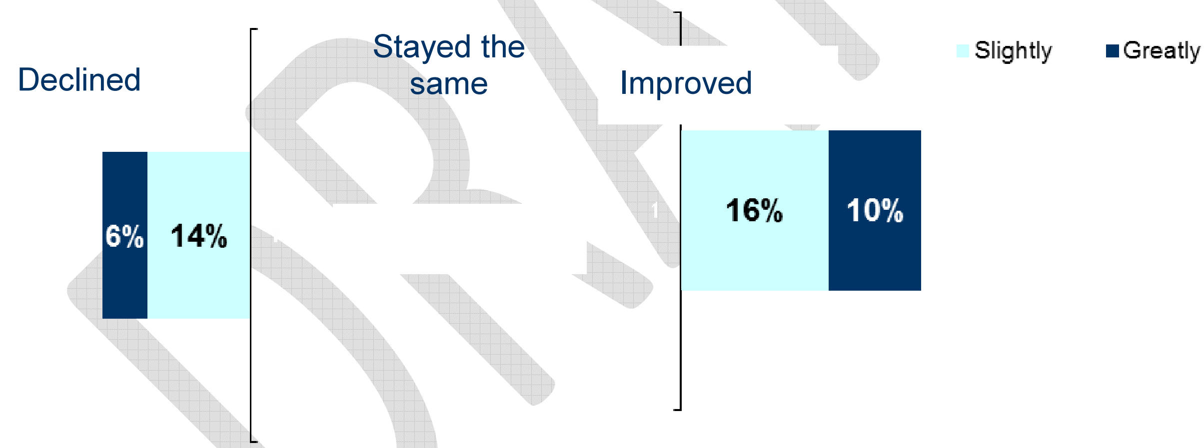
	Respondents residing in Amington are significantly more likely to consider rubbish or litter (77%) and noisy neighbours (54%) as being problems within their neighbourhood. Drunk or rowdy behaviour is significantly more likely to be a problem in Mercian (48%). With only 8% selecting this as a problem, vandalism is least likely to be an issue in Bolehall.

Changes in the neighbourhood

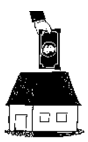
Residents were asked if they felt that their neighbourhood had improved or declined in the last three years. Whilst the majority felt that things remained unchanged (54%), Figure 9.2 below shows that a greater proportion felt that it had improved (26%) compared to those who said that it had declined (20%).

This question was not asked in 2011 and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 9.2: Changes in neighbourhood



Base: 605

	Respondents aged 35-44 (12%), are significantly less to feel that the neighborhood had improved in the last three years compared to older residents aged 45-54 (32%); 65-74 (27%); 75+(30%).
	A greater proportion of those in receipt of housing benefit felt that their neighbourhood had improved (30%) than those who did not (18%).

Bolehall residents are significantly less likely to believe that their neighbourhood had improved in the last three years (14%) compared to several other wards (28%-38%) such as, Stonydelph (28%) and Belgrave (38%) yet were not found to be significantly more likely to consider there to be problems in their neighbourhood compared to other areas in Tamworth (see previous question).

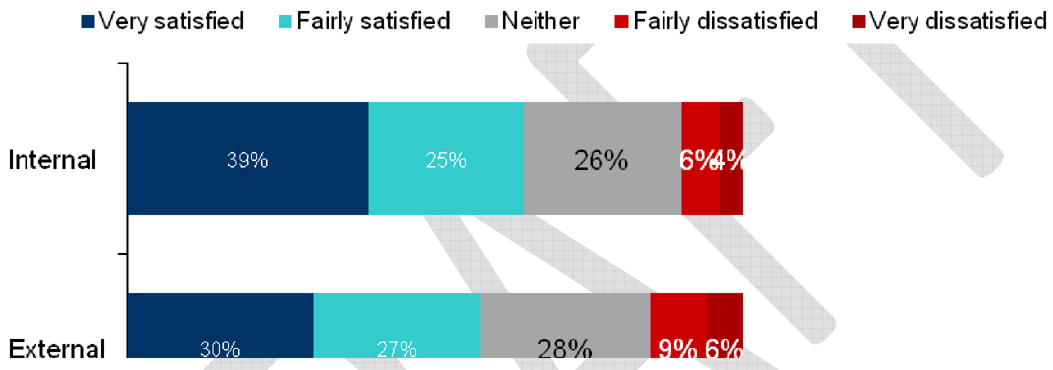
11) Estate services

Communal cleaning service

Those whose receive a communal cleaning service were asked how satisfied they were with the internal and external communal areas. Figure 10.1 shows that tenants are more satisfied with the internal communal areas with a total of 64% being satisfied compared to a satisfaction rate of 57% for external communal areas.

These questions were not included in the 2011 survey and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 10.1: Satisfaction with communal cleaning services



Base: 201; 204

Sample sizes were too small to ascertain any significant differences amongst age groups; disability; and wards.

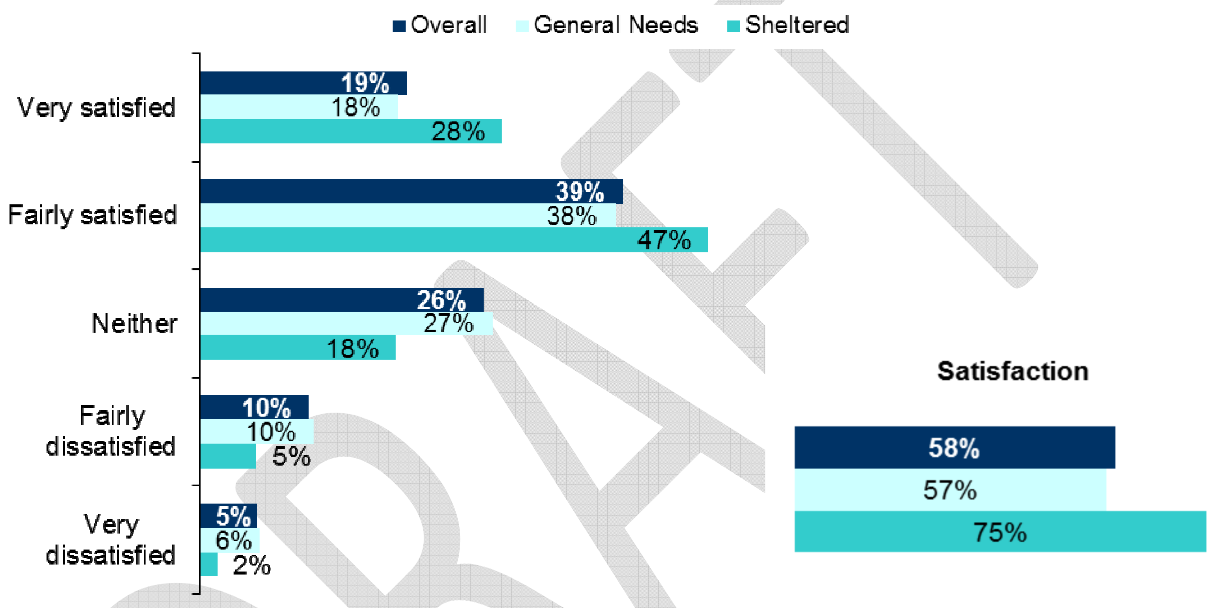
	The sample size for Sheltered tenants was too small for significance testing although it indicates a higher satisfaction rate compared to General Needs. (Internal: 88% vs. 60%; External: 79% vs. 54%.
	Those in receipt of housing benefit are significantly more likely to be satisfied with both internal and external communal cleaning services compared to those who do not (Internal: 69% vs. 53%; External: 63% vs. 46%).

Overall estate caretaking service

Overall, nearly six in ten (58%) residents are satisfied with the estate caretaking service, such as rubbish removal and removal of graffiti with a fifth (19%) being 'very satisfied'. 15% report some level of dissatisfaction producing a net satisfaction rate of +43%. Just over a quarter (26%) are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

This question was not included in the 2011 survey and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 10.2: Satisfaction with Overall Estate Services: Overall and Tenure Breakdown



Base: 581; 484; 47

	A greater proportion of Sheltered tenants (75%) express some level of satisfaction compared to General Needs tenants (57%) however the base size is too small to identify if the difference is significant.
	Those aged over 75+ are most satisfied with seven in ten (70%) reporting some level of satisfaction. This is significantly higher than some those aged 35-64 years (50%-53%).
	Respondents who are currently on housing benefit express a significantly greater level of satisfaction (65%) compared to those who are not (47%).

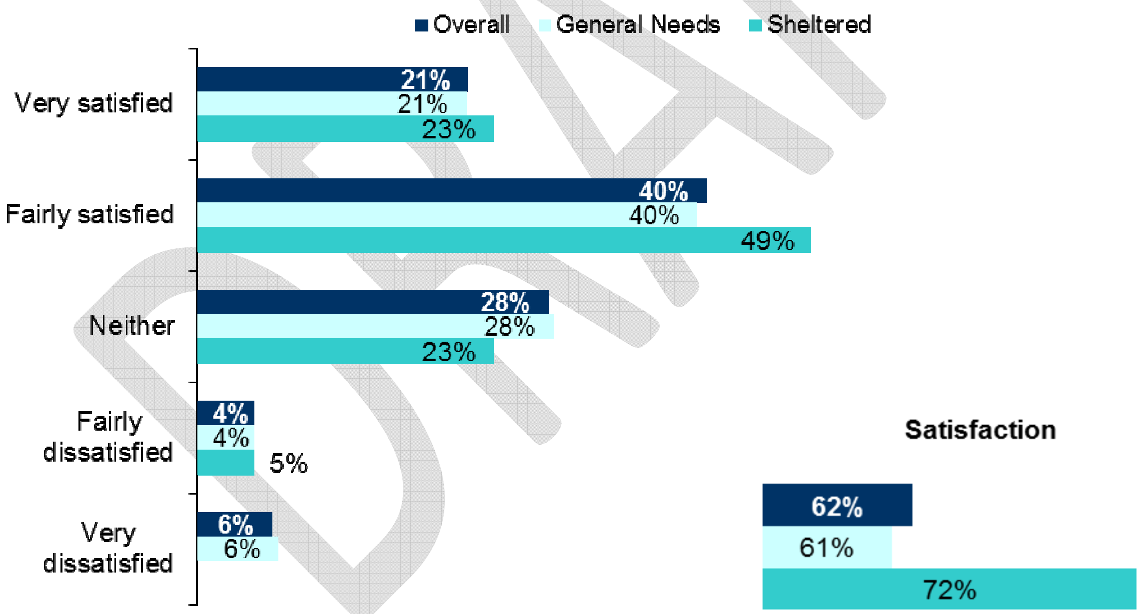
Spital (37%) and Amington (39%) residents are least likely to be satisfied with around four in ten reporting satisfaction; this is significantly less compared to several other wards (58%-73%) for example Belgrave (72%) and Glascote (58%).

Environmental improvements

Respondents were asked if any environmental improvements have been carried out in their area, then how satisfied or dissatisfied were they with the overall works. 62% reported satisfaction and only one in ten (10%) reported some degree of dissatisfaction. Just over a quarter (28%) were ambivalent. This give a net satisfaction rating of +52%.

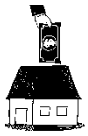
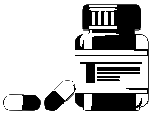
This question was not asked in 2011 and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 10.3: Satisfaction with Environmental Improvements: Overall and Tenure Breakdown



Base: 312; 285; 77

Sample size was too small to ascertain any possible significant differences based on tenure type, age and ward.

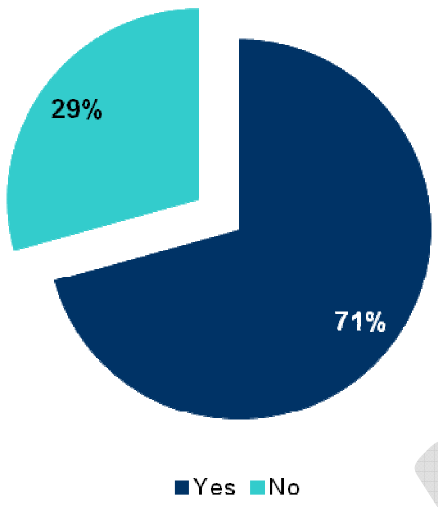
	Respondents receiving housing benefits (61%) are significantly more likely to report some degree of satisfaction in comparison to those who do not (51%).
	Those who did not have a member in their household with a health problem limiting their day to day activity (53%), are significantly less likely to report satisfaction in this area compared to those that are limited 'a little' (71%) and 'a lot' (66%).

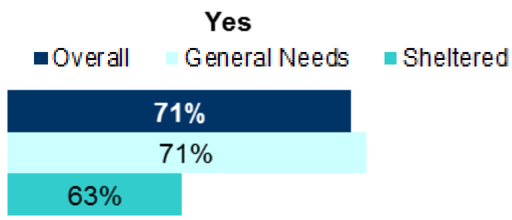
12) Responsive repairs

Repairs in last 12 months

Seven in ten (71%) report that they have had repairs in the last 12 months which is similar to 2011 (69%).[8]

Figure 11.1: Repairs in last 12 months





Base: 608; 395; 208

Base: 608

	A significantly greater proportion of those aged 35-44 years (87%) have had a repair in the last 12 months compared older age groups with it gradually declining the older the age bracket (65%-73%).
	10% more females (75%) than males (65%) have had a repair- a significant difference.
	Amington residents are significantly less likely to have had a repair (55%) compared to six out of the remaining nine wards (70%-78%) including Castle (70%) and Glascote (71%).

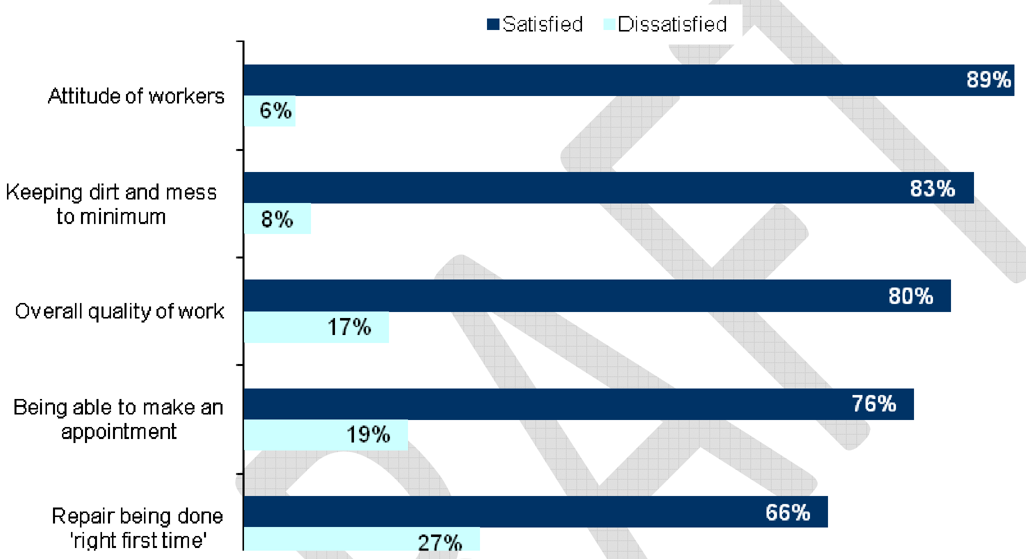
[8] 2011 survey includes 'can't remember' option so findings should be interpreted with caution

Satisfaction with last repair completed

Residents who have had a repair in their home in the last 12 months, were subsequently asked how satisfied they were with number of different aspects relating to the repair work. Figure 11.2 below shows that overall satisfaction rate was high ranging between 66% for repair being done 'right first time' and 89% for attitude of workers.

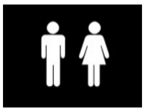
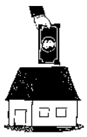
These questions were not asked in the 2011 survey and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 11.2: Satisfaction with last repair completed



Base: 409-419

Satisfaction rates were similar between tenure types and sample size was too small to calculate any significant differences. Base sizes were also too small to ascertain any meaningful significant differences across age groups.

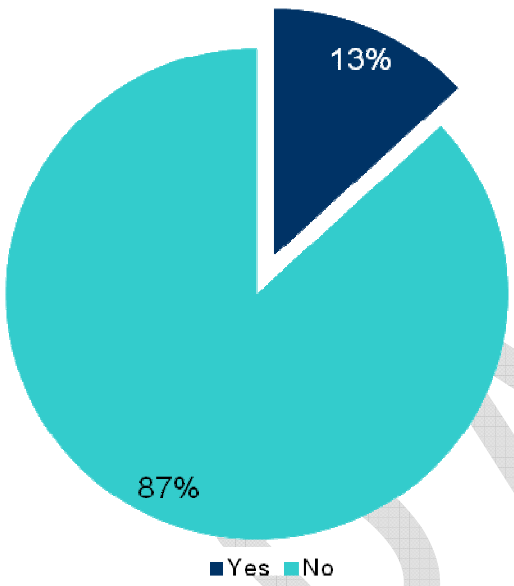
	Females are found to be significantly more likely to be satisfied with the overall quality of the work (83%) compared to males (76%).
	Compared to those who don't, receivers of housing benefit are significantly more likely to report satisfaction with Being able to make an appointment (80% vs. 68%); the overall quality of the work (85% vs. 72%); and the repair being done 'right first time' (72% vs., 56%).

13) Anti-social behaviour

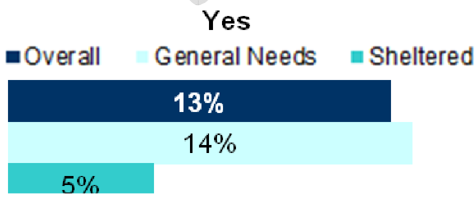
Reporting ASB

Figure 12.1 below shows that only 13% had reported anti-social behavior to their Housing Service in the last 12 months. This is in line with 2011 during which 12% stated that they had reported anti-social behavior.

Figure 12.1: Reported anti-social behaviour in last 12 months

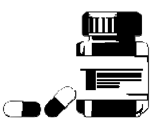


Base: 601



Base: 601; 552; 49

Sample size was too smalll to calculate any significant differences based on tenure type and ward.

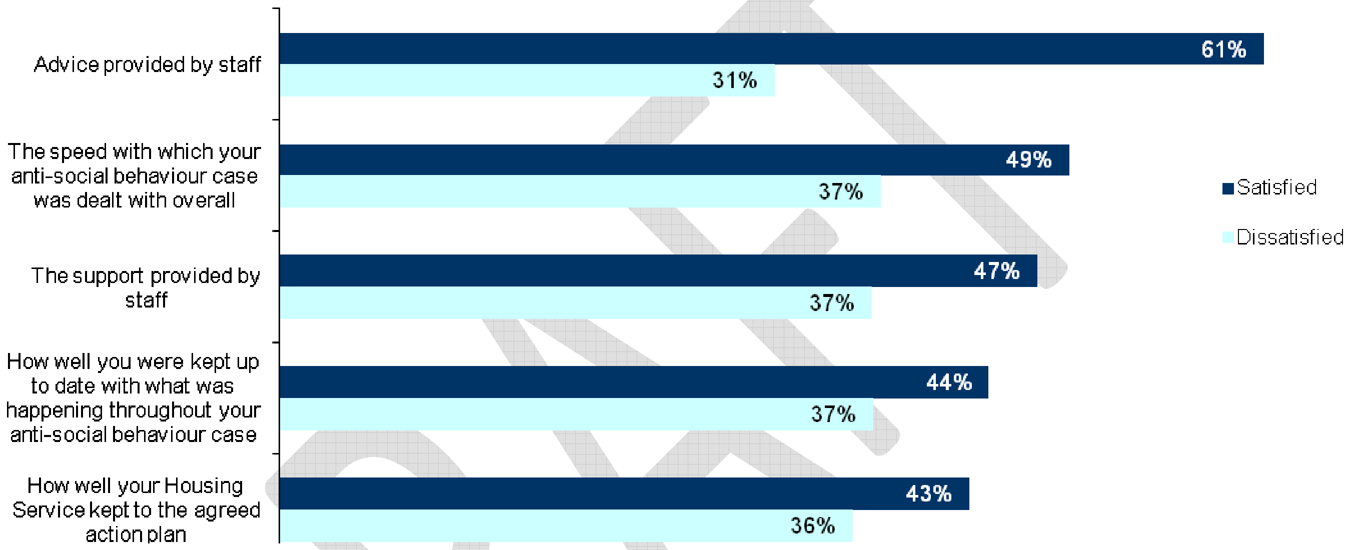
	With three in ten (30%) answering ‘yes’, those aged 35-44 are significanlty more likely to report anti-social behaviour compared to older age groups (6%-15%).
	Those who had a member in their household limited ‘a lot’ by a long-term health problem (17%) are significanlty more likely to have reported anti-social behaviour in the last 12 months compared to those who had a member who was limited ‘a little’ (8%).

Satisfaction with ASB service

Residents who had stated that they had reported ASB to their Housing Service in the last 12 months, were subsequently asked how satisfied they were with a number of different aspects of the service. For four out of the five areas, less than half were satisfied.

In keeping with 2011, satisfaction remains highest for the advice provided by staff with six in ten (61%) reporting satisfaction in this area [9]. Satisfaction is lowest for how well the Housing Service keeps to the agreed action plan (43%).

Figure 12.2: Satisfaction with anti-social behaviour service



Base: 71-76

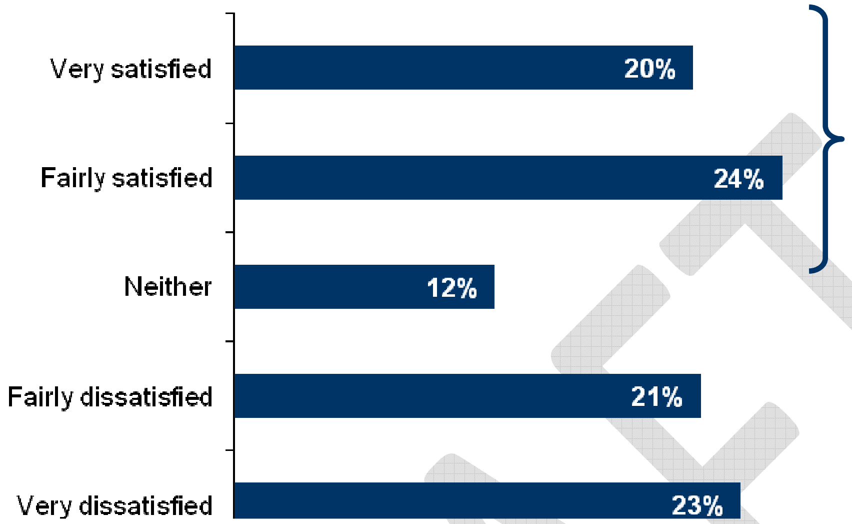
Findings appear similar between tenure types although sample sizes were too small to ascertain any significant differences. Base sizes were also too small to calculate significant differences across any of the other sub-groups.

[9] Options vary to that in 2011 survey so comparisons cannot be made

Overall satisfaction with the way ASB complaint was dealt with

In line with the previous question, satisfaction rate is low with 45% reporting satisfaction and 43% reporting dissatisfaction, producing a net satisfaction score of only +2%. This is slightly lower than 2011 where around a half (51%) reported satisfaction. [10]

Figure 12.3: Overall satisfaction with way anti-social behaviour complaint dealt with



Base: 77

Sample sizes were too small to ascertain any significant differences according to any of the sub-groups.

[10] Wording of question slightly different in 2011 survey so findings should be interpreted with caution

14) Sheltered housing

Tenants living in Sheltered Housing were asked how satisfied they were with specific services relevant to their tenure type.

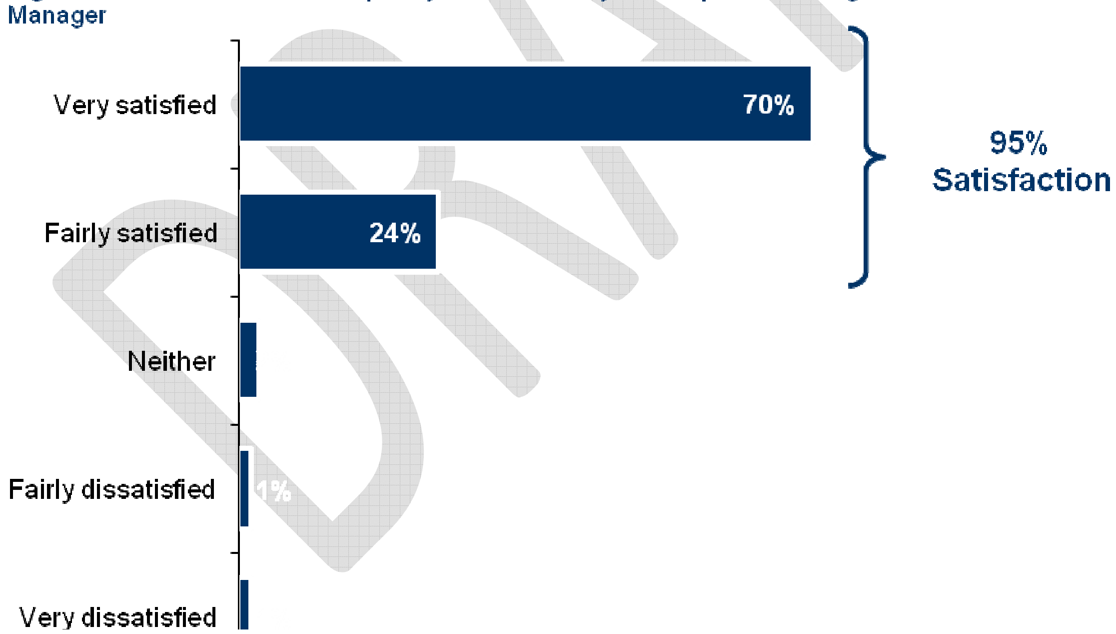
Sample sizes were too small to calculate any significant differences on the basis of age, gender, disability, housing benefit and ward in this section.

Frequency of contact with Independent Living Manager

95% report some level of satisfaction with the amount of contact they have with their Independent Living Manager, with the vast majority (70%) being ‘very satisfied’. Only 3% state that they are ‘dissatisfied’ producing a net satisfaction score of +92%.

This is slightly lower compared to 2011, where 97% reported satisfaction and 1% dissatisfaction, resulting in a net rating of +96%[11].

Figure 13.1: Satisfaction with frequency of contact with your Independent Living Manager



Base: 49

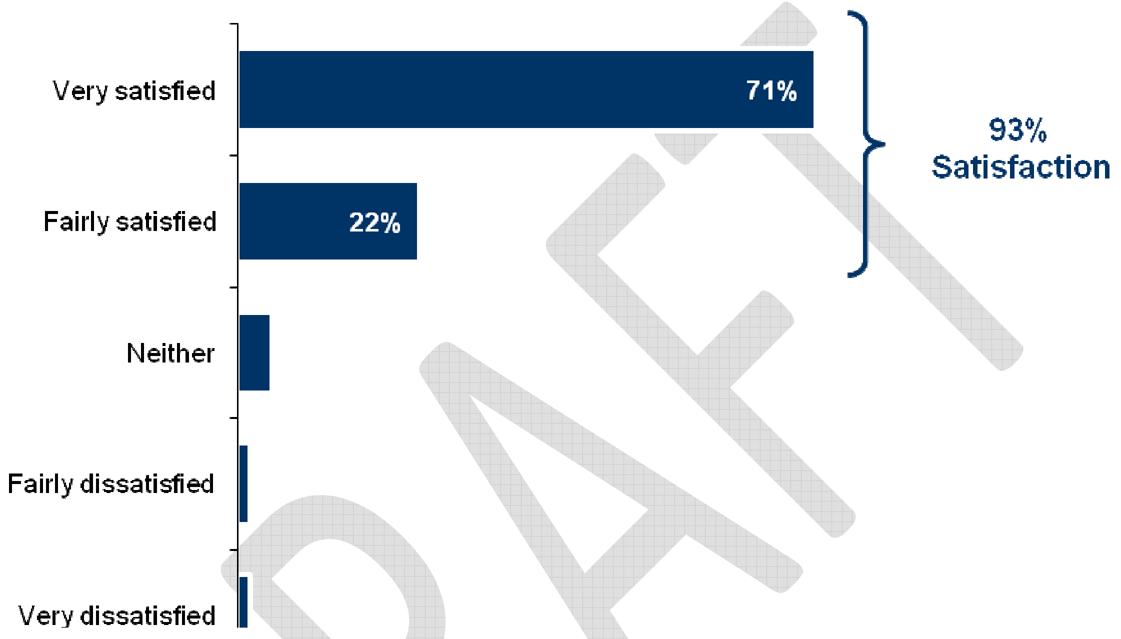
[11] 2011 survey includes ‘no opinion’ option so findings should be interpreted with caution

Overall service provided by Independent Living Manager

Similarly, 93% are satisfied with the overall service provided by their Independent Living Manager with 71% reporting that they are 'very satisfied'. Only 3% express some degree of dissatisfaction. This gives a net satisfaction score of +90%.

Again, there has been a slight decrease since 2011, where 96% reported satisfaction and 2% reported

Figure 13.2: Satisfaction with overall service provided by Independent Living Manager



dissatisfaction which produced a net satisfaction score of +94%[12].

[12] 2011 survey includes 'no opinion' option so findings should be interpreted with caution

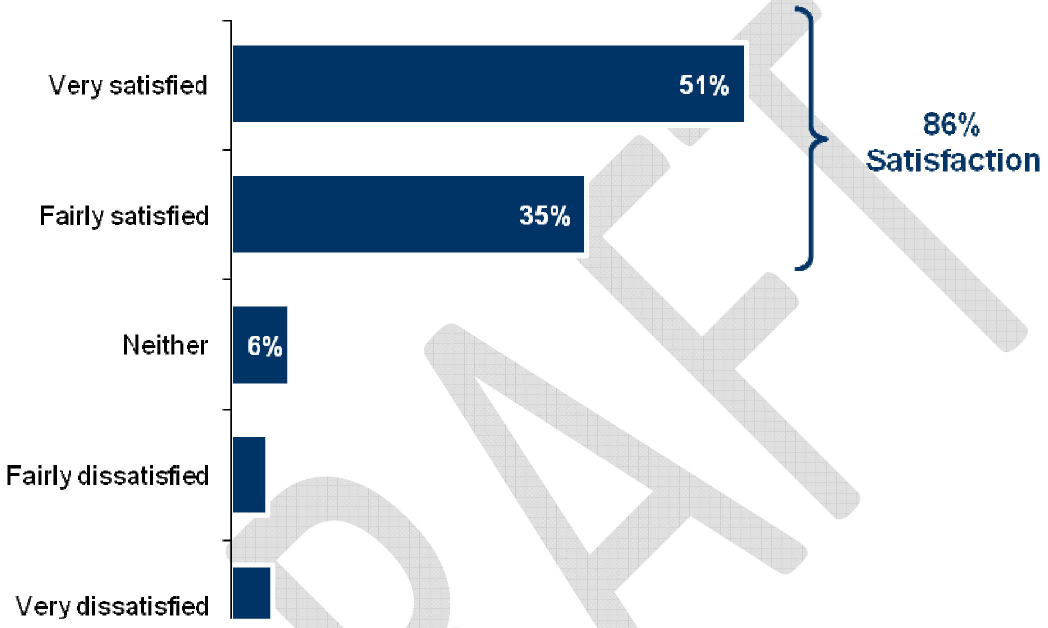
Base: 47

Facilities at scheme

Satisfaction was slightly lower for facilities available at their scheme, with 51% reporting that they are 'very satisfied' and 86% in total expressing satisfaction. Just under one in ten (8%) felt dissatisfied. This results in a net satisfaction score of +78%.

This question was not asked in 2011 and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 13.3: Satisfaction with the facilities at scheme



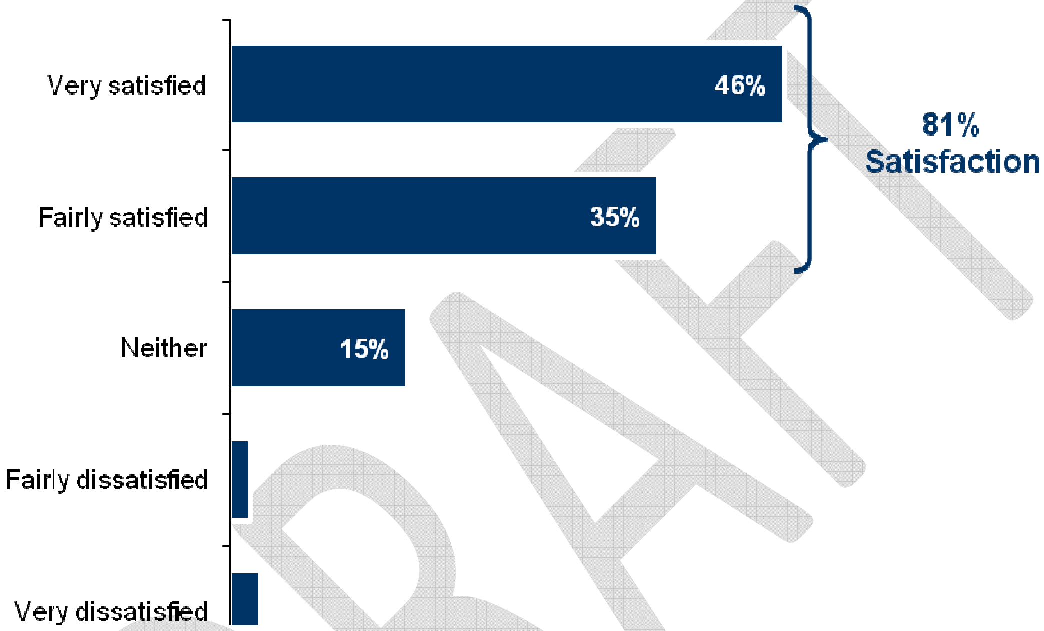
Base: 46

Handy person service

Although still relatively high, satisfaction was lowest for the handy person service with 81% of those who had used this service reporting satisfaction. However, ambivalence is higher in this question (15%) compared to the previous questions and only 4% report dissatisfaction resulting in a net satisfaction score of +77%.

This question was not asked in 2011 and so comparison data does not exist.

Figure 13.4: Satisfaction with handy person service



Base: 28

Appendix 1- Demographics

	Total (Unweighted)	Percentage	
Tenure			
General Needs	401		
Sheltered	218		
Gender		**General needs**	**Sheltered**
Male	240	43%	40%
Female	331	57%	60%
Age			
18 – 24	10	3%	0%
25 – 34	24	7%	0%
35 – 44	41	11%	1%
45 – 54	66	18%	0%
55 – 64	70	16%	7%
65 – 74	160	27%	34%
75 – 84	171	19%	58%
Day to day ability limited due to ill-health			
Yes, limited a lot	217	32%	45%
Yes, limited a little	152	23%	29%
No	227	45%	26%
Housing Benefit			
Yes	393	62%	74%
No	202	38%	26%
Ethnic Group			
White	589	99%	99%
BME	5	1%	1%
Ward			
Amington	63	9%	11%
Belgrave	86	10%	22%
Bolehall	83	12%	17%
Castle	93	16%	13%
Glascote	49	12%	0%
Mercian	69	12%	9%
Spital	40	10%	0%
Stonydelph	75	9%	18%
Trinity	27	1%	11%
Wilnecote	34	8%	0%

Appendix 2- Copy of questionnaire

Tamworth Borough Council

Tenants and Residents Satisfaction Survey 2015

This survey covers areas across Tamworth Borough Council **HOUSING SERVICE ONLY** to Include repairs, income management, tenant involvement, anti-social behaviour, tenancy issues, maintaining estates through our caretaking and cleaning services and allocating council accommodation through our choice based lettings 'Finding a Home' scheme.

Please visit the web site at www.tamworth.gov.uk for further details

Please note that the questions asked within this survey **ONLY** relate to the above mentioned services and do not cover services such as refuse/recycling collections, grass cutting, highways, council tax and housing benefit.

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read these instructions carefully before completing the questionnaire.

- It should be completed by the tenant at this address, their partner/spouse or carer.
- Please read the instructions for answering each question carefully.
- Please check that you have answered all the questions that apply to you.
- Please return the completed questionnaire in the **FREEPOST** envelope provided to M·E·L, or alternatively complete it online at www.m-e-l.co.uk/TamworthBC.aspx
- **All responses will be kept confidential.**

YOUR VIEWS

1. Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Tamworth Borough Council Housing Service? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

2. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following? *(Tick one box only for each line ✓)*

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
a. The overall quality of your home	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b. Your neighbourhood as a place to live	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
c. That your rent provides value for money	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

3. Generally, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your Housing Service deals with repairs and maintenance? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

1

4. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your Housing Service listens to your views and acts upon them? ***(Tick one box only ✓)***

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

GENERAL SERVICES

5. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your Housing Service keeps you informed about things that might affect you as a tenant? ***(Tick one box only ✓)***

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

6. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the gas servicing arrangements? ***(Tick one box only ✓)***

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

YOUR SERVICE PRIORITIES

7. Which of the following services would you consider to be priorities? ***(Please tick your top three only ✓)***

Keeping residents informed	☐ 1
The overall quality of your home	☐ 2
Listening to tenants' views and acting upon them	☐ 3
Repairs and maintenance	☐ 4
Dealing with anti-social behaviour	☐ 5
Your neighbourhood as a place to live	☐ 6
Value for money for your rent	☐ 7
Support and advice on claiming welfare benefits and paying rent	☐ 8
Community Alarm system 'Wellbeing'	☐ 9
Independent Living Manager	☐ 10

2

PERCEPTIONS

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following? *(Tick one box only for each line ✓)*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. Tamworth Borough Council Housing Service has friendly and approachable staff	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b. Tamworth Borough Council Housing Service provides an effective and efficient service	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

ADVICE & SUPPORT

9. Thinking about your rent and income, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the advice and support you receive from your Housing Service with the following? *(Tick one box only for each line ✓)*

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
a. Claiming housing benefit and other welfare benefits	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b. The Councils 'Finding a Home' Choice Based Lettings website and service	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

CONTACT AND COMMUNICATION

10. Have you contacted Tamworth Borough Council Housing Service in the last 12 months with a query other than to pay your rent? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Yes ☐ 1 **GO TO Q11** No ☐ 2 **GO TO Q14**

11. Was getting hold of the right person easy or difficult? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Easy ☐ 1 Difficult ☐ 2 Neither ☐ 3

12. Did you find the staff helpful or unhelpful? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Helpful ☐ 1 Unhelpful ☐ 2 Neither ☐ 3

13. Was your query answered within a reasonable time? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

14. Do you use the internet? *(Tick <u>all</u> that apply ✓)*

Yes, at home ☐ 1 Yes, outside the home ☐ 2 No ☐ 3

3

15. Which of the following methods of being kept informed and getting in touch with your Housing Service are you happy to use? ***(Tick all that apply ✓)***

Email	☐ 1	Visit to your home by staff	☐ 6
Telephone	☐ 2	Open meetings	☐ 7
Text / SMS	☐ 3	Newsletter	☐ 8
In writing	☐ 4	Other - please state	☐ 9
Visit to the office	☐ 5		

NEIGHBOURHOOD

16. To what extent are any of the following a problem in your neighbourhood? ***(Tick one box only for each row ✓)***

	Major problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
Car parking	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
Rubbish or litter	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
Noisy neighbours	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
Dog fouling / dog mess	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
Other problems with pets and animals	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
Disruptive children / teenagers	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
Racial or other harassment	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
Drunk or rowdy behaviour	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
Vandalism and graffiti	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
People damaging your property	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
Drug use or dealing	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
Abandoned or burnt out vehicles	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3
Other crime	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3

17. In the last three years, would you say your neighbourhood has improved or declined? ***(Tick one box only ✓)***

Greatly Improved	Slightly Improved	Stayed the same	Slightly declined	Greatly declined
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

4

ESTATE SERVICES

18. If you receive a communal cleaning service, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following? *(Tick one box only for each row ✓)*

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	N/A
a. Internal communal areas	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6
b. External communal areas	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6

19. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall Estate Caretaking service? This service involves the removal of graffiti/offensive graffiti, clearing alleyways, rubbish removal, removal of ivy, estate inspections and external communal cleaning to include garage and drying areas (*Tick one box only ✓)*

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

20. If any environmental improvements have been carried out in your area, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall works? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6

RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

21. Have you had any repairs to your home in the last 12 months? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Yes ☐ 1 GO TO Q22 No ☐ 2 GO TO Q23

22. Thinking about the last repair completed, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following? *(Tick one box only for each row ✓)*

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
a) Being able to make an appointment	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b) The attitude of workers	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
c) The overall quality of work	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
d) Keeping dirt and mess to a minimum	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
e) The repair being done 'right first time'	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

5

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

23. Have you reported anti-social behaviour to your Housing Service in the last 12 months? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Yes ☐ 1 **GO TO Q24** No ☐ 2 **GO TO Q26**

24. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following aspects of the anti-social behaviour service? *(Tick one box only for each row ✓)*

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
a) The advice provided by staff	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b) How well you were kept up to date with what was happening throughout your anti-social behaviour case	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
c) How well your housing service kept to the agreed action plan	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
d) The support provided by staff	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
e) The speed with which your anti-social behaviour case was dealt with overall	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

25. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way your anti-social behaviour complaint was dealt with? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

SHELTERED HOUSING

26. Do you live in a sheltered housing? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Yes ☐ 1 **GO TO Q27** No ☐ 2 **GO TO Q29**

27. Thinking about where you live, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following? *(Tick one box only for each row ✓)*

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
a) The frequency of contact with your Independent Living Manager	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b) The overall service provided by your Independent Living Manager	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
c) The facilities at your scheme	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

28. If you have used the handy person service, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service you have received? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not Applicable
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6

DEMOGRAPHICS

Everyone please answer these questions.

29. Please tell us the age and gender of everyone who lives with you in your household...

	Age Write in	Gender Male	Gender Female		Age Write in	Gender Male	Gender Female
Main tenant		☐ 1	☐ 2	Person 4		☐ 1	☐ 2
Partner / spouse		☐ 1	☐ 2	Person 5		☐ 1	☐ 2
Person 3		☐ 1	☐ 2	Person 6		☐ 1	☐ 2

-Please select either male or female for your gender. Select the answer which you identify yourself as. You can select either 'male' or 'female', whichever you believe is correct, irrespective of the details recorded on your birth certificate. You do not need to have a Gender Recognition Certificate.
- If there are more than six people in your household, including children under 16, please continue on a separate sheet.

30. What is your (and your partner's if applicable) ethnic group? *(Please tick one only ✓ for each)*

	You	Your partner		You	Your partner
White			**Mixed / multiple ethnic groups**		
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	☐ 1	☐ 1	White and Black Caribbean	☐ 10	☐ 10
Irish	☐ 2	☐ 2	White and Black African	☐ 11	☐ 11
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	☐ 3	☐ 3	White and Asian	☐ 12	☐ 12
Any other White background	☐ 4	☐ 4	Any other mixed / multiple ethnic background	☐ 13	☐ 13
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British			**Asian / Asian British**		
African	☐ 5	☐ 5	Indian	☐ 14	☐ 14
Caribbean	☐ 6	☐ 6	Pakistani	☐ 15	☐ 15
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	☐ 7	☐ 7	Bangladeshi	☐ 16	☐ 16
Other ethnic group			Chinese	☐ 17	☐ 17
Arab	☐ 8	☐ 8	Any other Asian background	☐ 18	☐ 18
Any other ethnic group	☐ 9	☐ 9	Prefer not to say	☐ 19	☐ 19
			Not applicable		☐ 20

7

31. Does your household currently receive housing benefit (either paid directly to you or to your landlord)? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Yes ☐ 1   No ☐ 2

32. Are your or any household member's day to day activities limited because of a health problem which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? *(Tick one box only ✓)*

Yes, limited a lot ☐ 1   Yes, limited a little ☐ 2   No ☐ 3

THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Please return your completed questionnaire to M·E·L Research in the freepost envelope provided.

Annex Four

Customer Intelligence End of Year Report 2014/2015

"You said – we listened"

Introduction

The aim of Landlord Service is to provide a high quality service which is responsive to, and driven by, the needs of our customers. Each year we produce our Annual Report which shows achievements for the previous year and plans to maintain and improve the service we provide in the future. The Annual Report to tenants contains a wealth of informative information on key performance, customer satisfaction, complaints, achievements and more.

This report sets out an analysis of all customer intelligence received within Landlord Services between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015 and will contribute to the production of the Council's Landlord Annual Report to tenants (2014/15) complying with required governance under the Landlord Regulatory Framework,

Local Offers

The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England (From April 2012) sets out the regulatory standards for registered providers of housing; these place emphasis on the relationship between landlords and their tenants at a local level. There are two types of Standards: consumer and economic. Consumer standards apply to all registered providers, including local authorities. Economic standards apply only to private registered providers; these include organisations previously known as housing associations (HA's) or registered social landlords (RSL's).

Consumer Standards

- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment
- Home
- Tenancy
- Neighbourhood and Community

Economic Standards

- Governance and Financial Viability*
- Value for Money
- Rent*

*This does not apply to local authorities

The standards aim to put tenants at the heart of shaping, influencing and monitoring the services they receive. The HCA expects tenants and landlords to work closely together to set local service standards/offers. Landlord Services Local Offers were reviewed early in 2015 in consultation with tenants.

How do we compare!

	2012/2013	**2013/2014**	**2014/15**
Complaints	237	241	213
Compliments	184	105	68
Service Requests	237	159	171
Total	**658**	**505**	**452**

What we know at a Glance!

	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
Tell Us'	**290**	**215**	**159**
Complaints	142	141	108
Compliments	128	61	37
Service requests	20	13	14
MP Enquiries	**39**	**30**	**38**
Complaints	/	1	2
Compliments	/	/	/
Service Requests	39	29	36
Councillor/Other	**122**	**90**	**110**
Complaints	11	5	11
Compliments	4	2	1
Service Requests	107	83	98
Other	**207**	**170**	**145**
Complaints	84	94	92
Compliments	52	42	30
Service Requests	71	34	23
Year Total	**658**	**505**	**452**
Response time	8.75 days	6 days	5 days

Complaints & Compliments

	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
Number of complaints	236	241	213
Number of stage 1 complaints	214	213	189
Number of stage 2 complaints	17	22	18
Number of stage 3 complaints	5	6	6
Number of complaints upheld	18	17	16
Number of compliments	184	105	68

A total of 452 complaints, compliments and service requests were received within Landlord Services during 2014 – 2015. Of the total number received, 47% of these were complaints, 38**%** service requests and 15**%** compliments

Across the total number of 213 complaints, 48% relate to Mears (inclusive of Mears Gas), 14% relate to Housing Solutions and 11% relate to Tenancy/ASB issues

Across the total number of 105 compliments, 37**%** relate to the Caretaking Service, 15% to Housing Solutions and 10% to Tenancy/ASB

In summary, only 213 complaints were received within Landlord Service during 2014/2015. This is a significantly small proportion in relation to 5087 household and garage tenancies.

6 Stage 3 complaints were investigated by an independent member of staff. None of these were upheld.

Complaints upheld
During 2014/2015 there was a total of 16 complaints, that following investigation were classified as upheld. Of the 16 cases 75% were associated with Mears 33% regarding gas, the remainder for responsive repairs.

The common themes and trends for the upheld complaints were
- Poor communication between Mears and the customer
- Poor out of hours service
- Operatives not turning up when arranged
- Repairs taking too long to complete

There were no compensation or financial payments, just formal apologies made for all upheld complaints

Ombudsman
There were no ombudsman cases this year.

Compare our Performance April 2014 – March 2015

Landlord Service continues to review key performance indicators, with tenants', to ensure they remain customer focused and are meaningful. We continue with the live updating of the customer dashboard, on line, as reporting performance openly builds credibility and satisfaction. However, the intention has been to reduce indicators and the following have been agreed with tenants'.

	2011/12	**2012/13**	**2013/14**	**2014/15**	**Estimated Top Quartile***
Overall satisfaction with Landlord Services	75.2%	To be carried out in 2015/16	To be carried out in 2015/16	Carried out in 2015/16 – 78%	84 %
Average time between lettings	16 days	14 days	19 days	17 days	20 days
Walkabouts/ Estate Inspections	4	4	3	Estate Inspections = 10	Not benchmarked
Satisfaction with cleaning	86%	86%	87%	87%	86.25%
Number of tenants on the database of involvement	373	348	428	497	Not benchmarked
% appointments made and kept	99.13%	99.56%	97.57%	97.86%	98%
Gas servicing – CP12	99.75%	99.9%	100%	99.69%	99.92%

Urgent repairs completed on time	100%	95.09	98.53%	98.02%	97.0%
Customer satisfaction	87%	91.45%	93.68%	93.76%	97.0%
Arrears as a % of rent due	2.04%	2.37%	2.28%	1.96%	1.61%
Evictions	8	22	22	28	0.18%

Top performance indicators as voted for by tenants – As at 31 March 2015

Performance Indicator	Target	Current Value	Are we on target	Trend
Percentage of all responsive repairs completed within target	97%	98.2%		↑
Percentage of appointments made and kept	96%	97.7%		↑
Percentage of repairs completed on first visit	80%	91.6%		↑
Percentage of properties with valid Gas Safety Certificate	100%	99.69%		↓
Average re-let times (in days)	16 days	17 days		↑
Percentage of ASB reports acknowledged in writing within 24 hours	90%	92.5%		↑
Percentage of ASB cases with an agreed customer action plan within 10 days	90%	92%		↑
Current rent arrears as a percentage of annual debit	-	1.96%	-	-
Number of complaints since 1st April 2014	-	213	-	-
Number of complaints upheld since 1st April 2014	-	16	-	-
Number of compliments since 1st April 2014	-	68	-	-

Monitoring performance
Landlord Service monitors performance to ensure its services are delivered to a standard acceptable to tenants and to meet any statutory requirements.

A series of performance indicators have been put in place for key performance areas. These indicators are used to measure how well we are doing in delivering services such as housing management, major works, allocations etc. The **Tenant Consultative Group** have been significantly involved in the development of local indicators determining how they would like to see performance information reported.

Reporting our performance
Each year Landlord Service publishes an annual report to tenants which includes a summary of the previous year's activity and performance information in key areas of service delivery accompanied by commentary. This report is published 'in lieu' of the October edition of 'Open House'. In addition, performance information is also published on Tamworth Borough Councils website

Feedback received from the Council's formal complaints system 'Tell Us' and recommendations from the Complaints Review Panel are routinely reported at **Landlord Performance Management meetings** detailing trends and key performance data. The Complaints Review Panel, set up at the beginning of 2012, specifically monitors complaints and emerging trends as part of the wider customer experience.

Customer satisfaction forms a key part of the Landlord Service performance management process and helps to drive improvements through learning from customers. Landlord Service has a robust programme of individual service satisfaction measures in place to consistently compare tenants' satisfaction with services overtime and in addition to this, the **STAR survey** – Survey of Tenants and Residents helps to keep up-to-date with tenant opinion as well as maximising our understanding of overall tenant satisfaction and expectation.

Alongside the above, the results of all customer satisfaction surveys and feedback are reported quarterly to the Tenant Consultative and Tenant Involvement Groups. These groups provide the opportunity for tenant scrutiny of services with actions/recommendations put forward to resolve issues.

STAR survey – Survey of Tenants and Residents
Although the Status Survey is no longer a statutory requirement we continue with **STAR** to ensure the continued measurement of customer satisfaction with services our customers receive from their landlord and how its performance compares to other landlords both alike and national. In addition to this, the survey will identify areas for service improvement, compare satisfaction with services over time, specifically with the results of previous surveys of tenant satisfaction and enable performance comparison with other comparable Borough Councils.

The principal objectives of the STAR survey are to:

- provide robust data which accurately represents the views of tenants on key satisfaction measures;
- provide a comprehensive view of other perception-based measures on a range of specific services provided by the Council's Landlord Service
- provide an assessment of progress against the 2008 and 2011 STATUS survey to illustrate how the Council's Landlord Service has performed over time in changing

patterns of customer satisfaction and expectation to inform future operational development.

STAR Survey 2015 key performance indicators

Key Performance Indicators	2015	% dif.	2011
Overall satisfaction	78%	↑+3%	75%
Quality of home	79%	N/A	Aggregate data not available
Neighbourhood	83%	↑+8%	75%
Rent provides VFM	73%	N/A	Aggregate data not available
Repairs & Maintenance	68%	—	68%
Listens to views*	59%	↑+5%	54%
Keeping tenants informed*	80%	↑+12%	68%

During the interim years of STAR we will continue to undertake a series of mini service assessment based on key priorities as part of Landlord Services annual satisfaction Calendar.

During 2014/2015, Landlord Service has engaged and carried out significantly more qualitative research', to determine customer opinion and expectation i.e. ASB telephone surveys/Complaint surveys. The primary benefits of qualitative research is that information is considerably richer than a series of numbers on a page, and in addition we can interact with customers more positively as the same time as performing the research. For Landlord Service this is key opportunity to interact and communicate with those tenants that ordinarily are considered 'hard to reach'

HouseMark
To ensure that we are always looking at ways to improve services, maintain high satisfaction rates and provide good value for money, we subscribe to HouseMark. HouseMark collates information from more than 950 ALMOs, Councils and Housing Associations to compare and benchmark valuable information such as value for money and performance.

Impact Assessments
In addition to customer satisfaction surveys and tenant feedback, Landlord Service routinely carries out impact assessments for all Landlord initiatives and activities. Impact assessments measure not only customer satisfaction but also the overall impact of activity to enable us to learn what has worked well and what can be achieved for future involvement/activity.

Tenant Inspectors
As part of its Tenant Involvement and Co-regulation framework the Council also runs an innovative scheme to empower customers to act as tenant inspectors. This scheme, which has now been running for over two years, provides tenant volunteers with the opportunity

to audit the delivery of estate caretaking and cleaning services. The scheme has also been extended to include estate inspections. Tenant inspectors monitor the quality of service delivery against defined standards and undertake on-site inspections. They are empowered to call managers to account if services do not meet required standards and their feedback forms part of overall performance monitoring.

Service assessments 2014/2015
During 2014/2015 we have continued to review and measure tenant opinion in many ways as the most productive method for measuring customer service levels across one area may differ substantially for other areas. The Tenant Regulatory and Involvement Team have been responsible for collating, monitoring and reporting on the following:

Customer intelligence 2013/2014 & 2014/2015		
Customer feedback/Intelligence	**Format**	**Frequency**
Complaints satisfaction	Telephone/postal	Monthly
Repairs satisfaction	Focus Group	Half yearly
New Tenant questionnaire	Paper based/postal	Quarterly
Open House	Paper based/postal & face-to-face	Bi-annual
Supported Housing moving in survey	Paper based	Quarterly
Supported Housing moving out survey	Paper based	Yearly
ASB resident perception survey	Paper based/postal with rent statements	Yearly
ASB tenant satisfaction	Telephone	Monthly
ASB perpetrator survey	Postal	Monthly
STAR survey	Paper based/postal	Bi-annual
Communal cleaning	Postal/face-to-face	Yearly

In addition to the above, the following customer intelligence has also been collected:

- Repairs & Maintenance satisfaction - Mears
- Gas servicing satisfaction - Mears
- Finding a Home satisfaction
- Non-Bidders Questionnaire ‘Finding a Home’ – This is a questionnaire that is carried out to ascertain why some people are not bidding for properties on the ‘Finding a Home’ Choice Based Letting Scheme
- Local Offers consultation
- Environmental works programme satisfaction
- Communal cleaning satisfaction

Tamworth Borough Council Landlord Service is committed to providing a high quality service in a responsive and approachable manner. We continue to develop our services to meet the changing needs within the resources available and to demonstrate value for money.

Looking to the future
The current difficult financial climate and national policy changes affecting welfare benefits and housing have implications for the services we provide, and in general will increase pressure on services at a time when resources for public services are declining. Time has been spent focusing on how we can re-design services to minimise the impact of external change on the services we provide. Our priority continues to be to provide a high quality customer experience and to undertake the proactive work that is necessary to ensure we can better meet housing needs in the future.

You said, we listened
Landlord Service values its customers' comments, views and ideas about how services may be changed or improved. Below are some of the ways customers have already had an influence on services or ideas they have suggested, which gives an improved outcome for all customers.

You said:	***We listened:***
Customers have told us that sometimes there is not enough information provided in stage 1 response letters	The Complaints Review Panel have worked with staff to compile a comprehensive suite of standard response letters that are fully informative in an attempt to reduce any escalation of complaint to stage 2
Customers have complained that they believe that the 90 day repairs category is too long	This will be reviewed as part of the TBC Repairs Policy 2015/16
Repair appointments are not always given out routinely and customers have reported that they are not always offered a job reference number	Mears call centre staff have been requested to routinely offer appointments and issue job reference numbers so that jobs can always be traced back to the customer Mears have also invited customers from some of the tenant working groups to shadow call centre staff
Repair Operatives requesting to use tenants' tools.	This was raised with operatives as part of Mears 'tool box talks'
Bathroom refurbishments taking longer to complete than originally advised	In reality bathroom refurbishments are being completed within agreed timescales it is simply that the agreed timescales are longer than some customers would like. This is further compounded by the fact that work operatives are not on site constantly throughout the course of the works which again gives customers the view that the work could be completed more quickly if they were on site more frequently. Communication between customers and the Tenant Liaison Officer has also been

	improved
Customers having to enquire as to the outcome of their banding review	A response letter is now sent out within 7 days to advise customers that the review will take place over forthcoming weeks and the customer will be advised accordingly.
Residents believe that the time taken to try and resolve their damp and condensation issues takes far too long	In the majority of cases the issue of damp and condensation is the result of individual lifestyle. When this is proved to be the case, staff will offer advice and assistance to customers along with supporting literature on how they can mitigate risks to condensation/damp When this is not the cause we will endeavour to work with Oaks preservation to reduce the time taken to diagnose a damp/condensation issues

Landlord Service Achievements 2014/15

Customer Dashboard – Key Performance Indicators as voted for by tenants

Performance Indicator	Target	Year End 2014/15	On Target	Comments
Overall satisfaction with the councils landlord	80%	-		• 75% in 2011/12 via independent status survey • 78% in 2015 - Star Survey independently commissioned • Aggregate Satisfaction (based on internal qualitative survey shows 88% satisfaction
Older people, living independently in Sheltered housing, satisfied with the service	95%	98%	↑	• Continued external Accreditation with CHSH • High Satisfaction levels despite SCC SP grant funding cessation and communications around future service options
Current Arrears as a % of the debit	3%	1.96%	↑	• Arrears are at the lowest for last 3 years • Arrears reduced by £53k – target of 1% based on arrears at year start (£412k) exceeded and arrears reduced by almost 13% • HouseMark benchmark (best in class) shows collection 100.1% - top

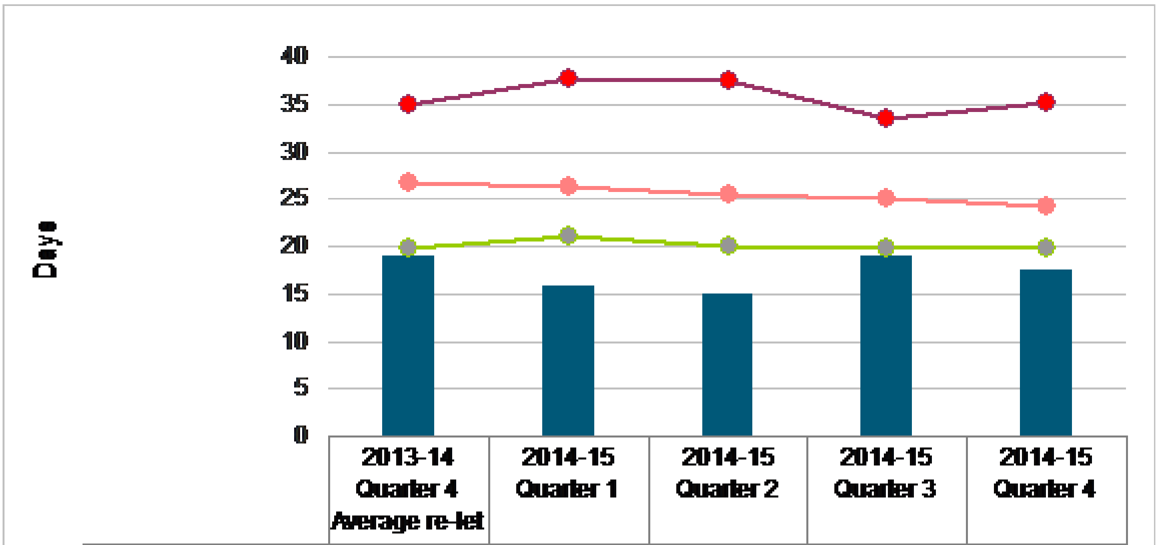
				quartile performer
Average re-let times for empty properties resulting in reduced rent loss	16 days	17 days	↔	• Voted by HouseMark most improved landlord 2013/14 • Sustained top quartile performance • 98% satisfaction with 'finding a home' service
% of properties with a valid gas certificate – complying with LGSR % of all responsive repairs completed within target % appointments made and kept	100% 97% 96%	99.69% 98% 99%	↔	• Reported performance is good when benchmarked with HouseMark • Mears understand that appointments need to be offered in 2 hr slots rather than am/pm • Gas compliance is excellent when compared with HCA recent interventions in the private sector • Overall satisfaction with the repair is 93%
% ASB cases resolved and communicated	95%	100%	↑	• Independent Accreditation is set for 2015/16 following award in 2012 • Satisfaction is improving overall from 57% in 2012 to 80% currently • Mini web site and joint working with CS hub is invaluable and improves local interaction and joint working with a range of partners
Numbers of Adaptations outstanding at year end outside agreed service standard Minor works – completed within 28 days DFA – within 1 year	-	0	↑	• A new OT joined up this year part funded from SCC and is an excellent addition to the team • All DFAs (33) have been issued and there is no waiting list
Satisfaction with cleaning & caretaking services	85%	91%	↑	• Aggregate figure of 88% cleaning (measured by tenant inspectors) and caretakers continue to have highest number of compliments when compared to other service areas across the directorate

Improvement programme	How many	Total spend
Kitchens	251	£839,000
Bathrooms	192	£791,000
Roofing (High Rise)	/	/
Windows & Doors	228	£317,000
Disabled Adaptations	73	£201,000

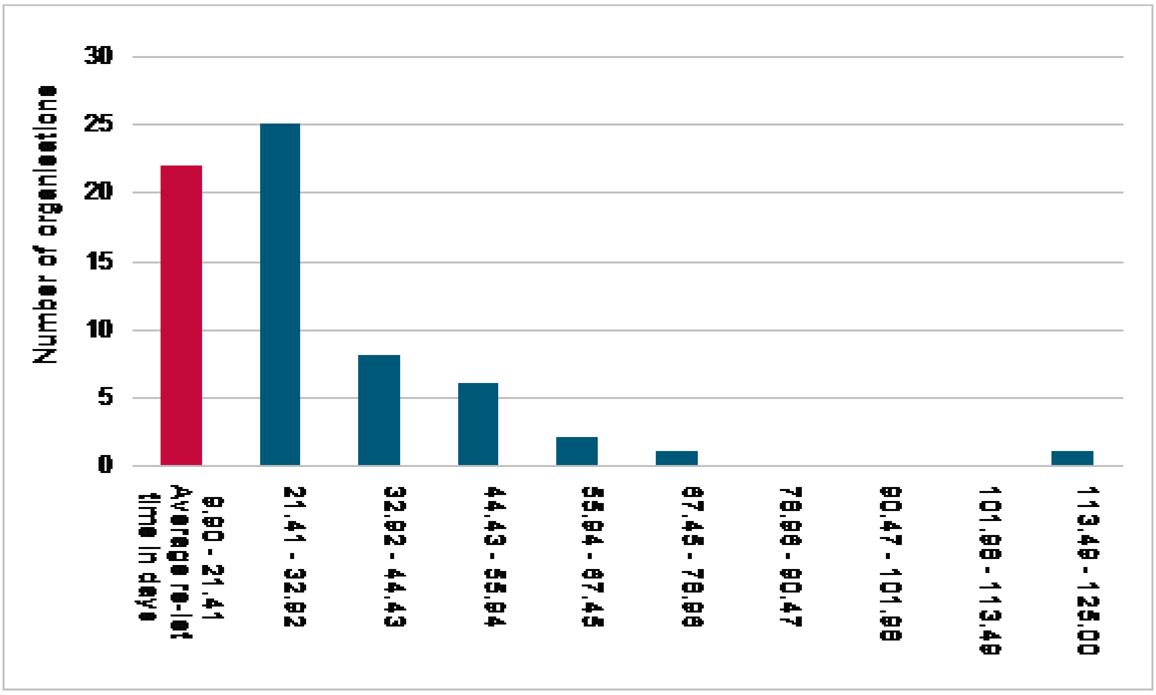
Also during the year!

What we achieved in 2014/2015	
Number of needs and risk assessment carried out prior to moving in	91 - (100%)
Number of new tenancy visits completed at sheltered housing schemes within 24 hours of moving in	66 - (100%)
Percentage of legionella checks completed during the year	100%

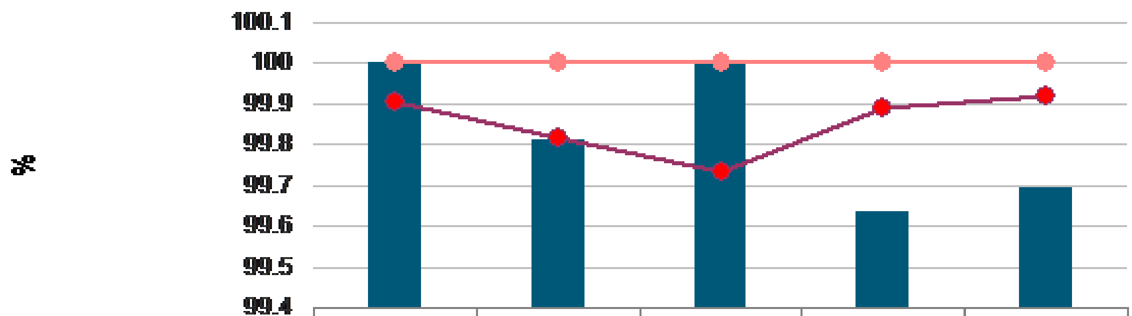
Average re-let time in days (standard re-lets)



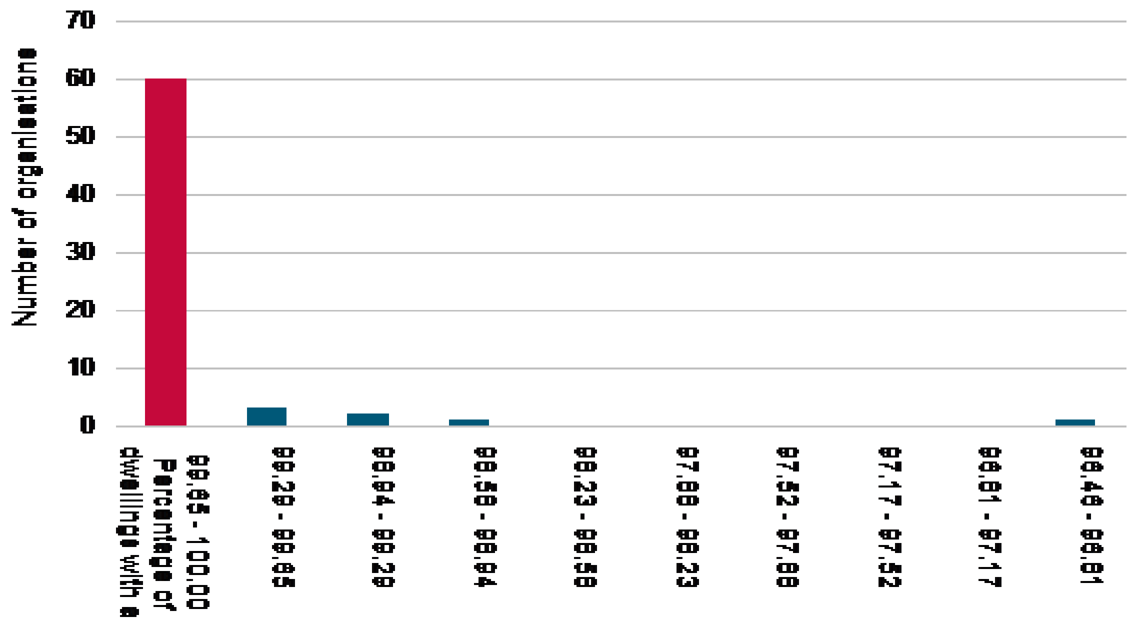
	2013-14 Quarter 4 Average re-let	2014-15 Quarter 1	2014-15 Quarter 2	2014-15 Quarter 3	2014-15 Quarter 4
KPI Value	18.91228	15.74	14.92	19	17.42
Upper Quartile	19.745	21	19.9	19.73	19.8
Median	26.77	26.4	25.53	25.01	24.3
Lower Quartile	35	37.7	37.45	33.44	35.24
Sample	90	69	73	57	65



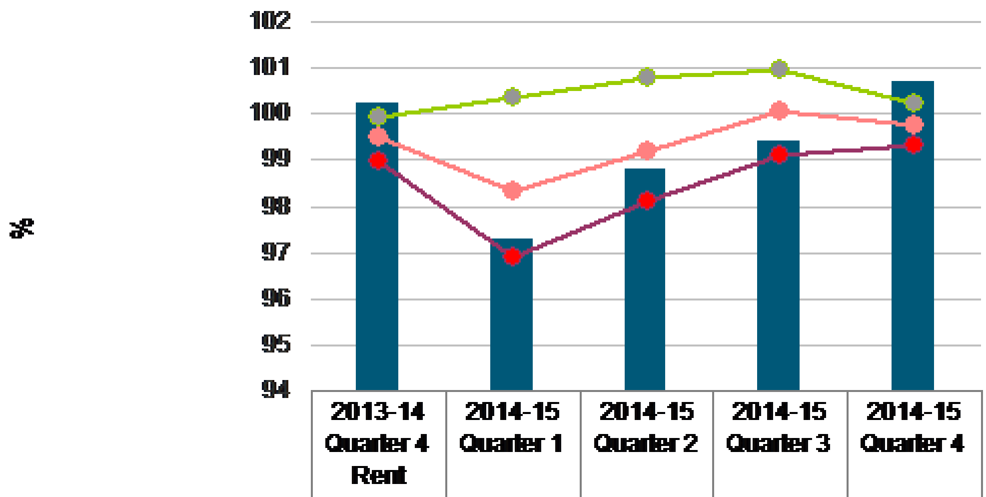
Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate



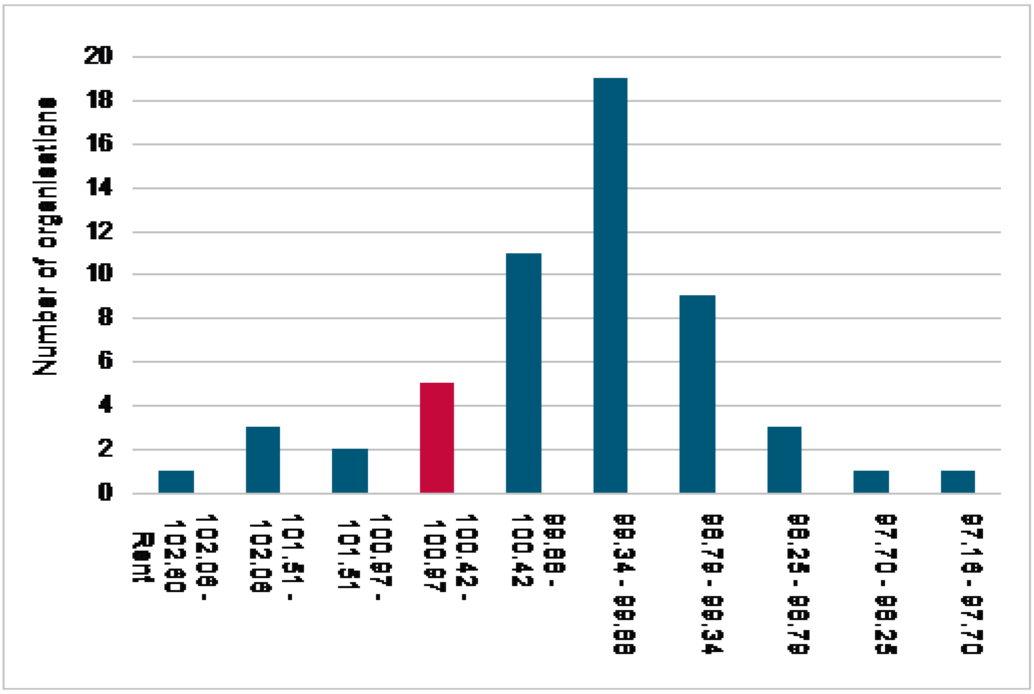
	2013-14 Quarter 4 Percentage	2014-15 Quarter 1	2014-15 Quarter 2	2014-15 Quarter 3	2014-15 Quarter 4
KPI Value	100	99.811168	100	99.637378	99.692995
Upper Quartile	100	100	100	100	100
Median	100	100	100	100	100
Lower Quartile	99.9038	99.814624	99.730579	99.891634	99.918244
Sample	99	66	70	56	67



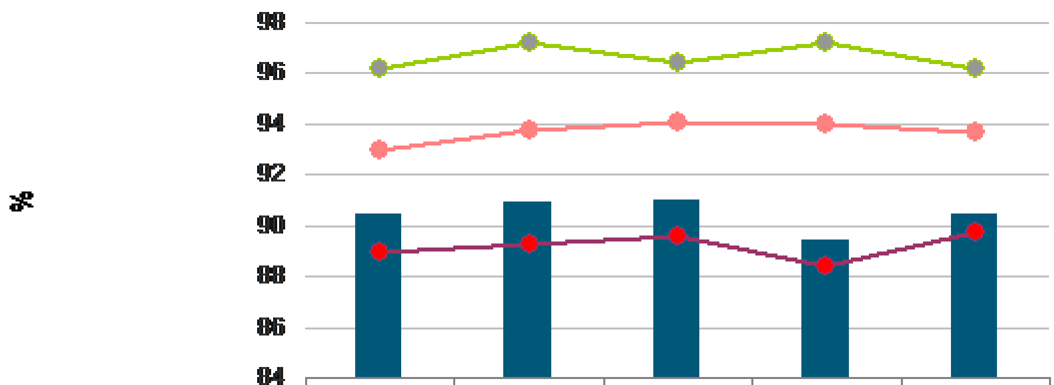
Rent collected from current and former tenants as % rent due (excluding arrears b/f)



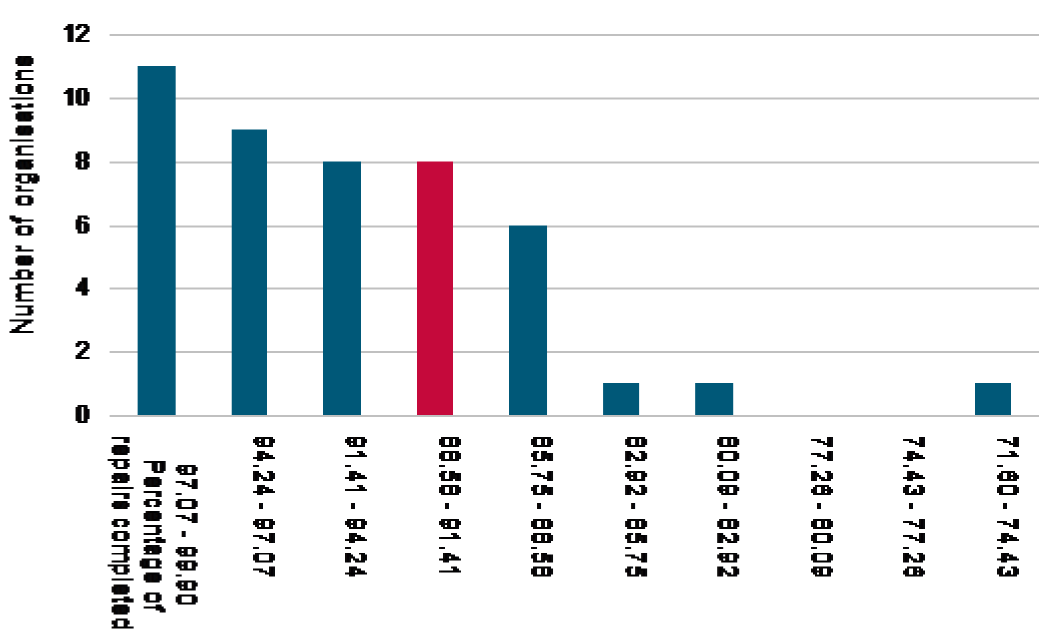
	2013-14 Quarter 4 Rent	2014-15 Quarter 1	2014-15 Quarter 2	2014-15 Quarter 3	2014-15 Quarter 4
KPI Value	100.22762	97.298293	98.794353	99.420735	100.70299
Upper Quartile	99.935813	100.3358	100.80427	100.95315	100.2055
Median	99.498221	98.306723	99.209037	100.07511	99.760003
Lower Quartile	98.990646	96.885733	98.115066	99.081207	99.308541
Sample	86	47	47	37	55



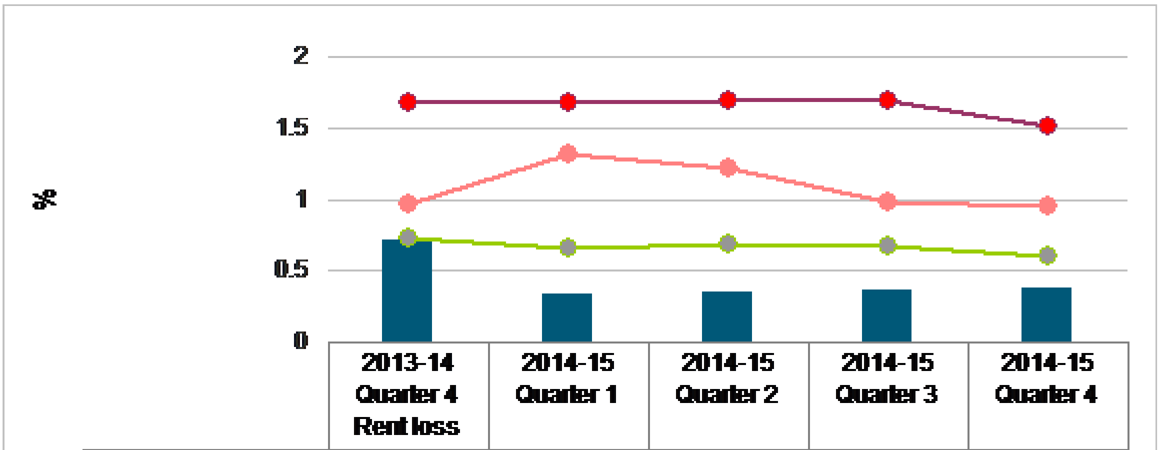
Percentage of repairs completed at the first visit



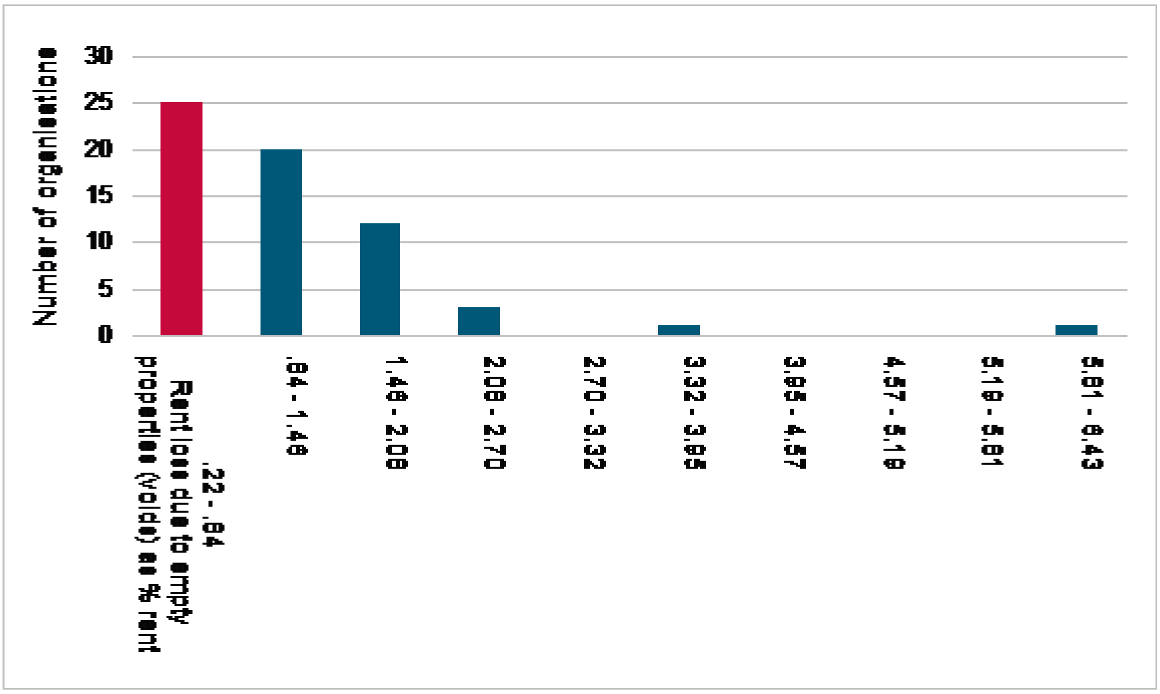
	2013-14 Quarter 4 Percentage	2014-15 Quarter 1	2014-15 Quarter 2	2014-15 Quarter 3	2014-15 Quarter 4
KPI Value	90.42	90.92	91.02	89.46	90.47
Upper Quartile	96.205	97.175	96.4425	97.2	96.2
Median	93	93.715	94.09	94	93.66
Lower Quartile	88.975	89.3	89.58	88.4	89.75
Sample	71	44	44	37	45



Rent loss due to empty properties (voids) as % rent due



	2013-14 Quarter 4 Rent loss	2014-15 Quarter 1	2014-15 Quarter 2	2014-15 Quarter 3	2014-15 Quarter 4
KPI Value	0.71928	0.338159	0.349325	0.362042	0.375552
Upper Quartile	0.723416	0.662888	0.682917	0.669747	0.60311
Median	0.966265	1.31383	1.218627	0.978949	0.951566
Lower Quartile	1.678223	1.680714	1.686712	1.690775	1.504727
Sample	88	60	65	49	62



REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING & WASTE MANAGEMENT

TENANTS RENTAL EXCHANGE PROJECT

PURPOSE

To set out the details of the tenants' Rental Exchange Scheme being promoted via *Big Issue Invest* and *Experian,* in partnership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members endorse the sharing of tenants' data for the purposes of signing up to ***The Rental Exchange Scheme***, save where tenants' reserve the right to opt out.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Big Issue Invest (an arm of The Big Issue) together with Experian, one of the largest credit reference agencies in the UK, have been working together since 2012 to develop 'The Rental Exchange Scheme' to help tenants to improve their credit rating. The scheme is free in the sense that there is no cost to the housing provider co-operating or to the tenants participating. It remains the case that there is a range of costs for individuals to access their own credit reports and this is unaffected by these proposals.

The Rental Exchange was initially created to address inequality between mortgage payers and renters which can lead to financial, digital and social exclusion. Without this scheme tenants who maintain a good payment record would not build the same credit rating that a home owner would for instance. Credit reports are now routinely checked by a range of financial institutions before deciding on levels of credit and in particular the terms of customer borrowing.

At this time, this is the only scheme of its type and is an innovative approach to

- Support tenancy sustainment by allowing tenant data to be used for credit rating purposes – facilitating the potential for more sensible borrowing solutions
- Incentivise rental payments when tenants know the data could affect their credit score
- Encourage tenants to review their credit report and validate data held about their identity and financial transaction mitigating tenancy and other related fraud

Tamworth Borough Council's Landlord services along with other local authorities and housing organisations throughout the country were invited to join the Rental Exchange. In 2014 the Portfolio Holder agreed to an initial scoping exercise to identify the benefits for tenancy sustainability and economic improvement in Tamworth. The outcome from that exercise was presented to the Tenant Consultative Group (TCG) earlier this year. The Presentation is shown at annex one.

Summary results were:-

- ✓ Incorporating tenants data into a generic score will increase the credit score for tenants that don't have significant arrears by around 45-55 points
- ✓ 61%(2,697) of Tamworth Borough Council's tenants have no significant arrears on their rent account and their credit scores would improve as a result of incorporating rental data
- ✓ 13%(352) of these tenants would gain access to previously inaccessible credit and services
- ✓ 6 %(284) have serious rent arrears on their rent so would have their credit score reduced by 90-140 points.
- ✓ 14 %(39) of these tenants would move to a reject category (around 82% of those tenants also have a CAIS default which already impairs their credit score.

Tenants reserve the right to opt out of the scheme. If Cabinet endorse signing up then tenants will be informed using the literature and video material available and given 28 days in which to opt out. If they do, then the details will be removed from the data base and not submitted to The Rental Exchange partners.

Broadly, the scheme aims to improve tenant's credit score by including their rental payment data. The higher your credit score the easier is to borrow, achieve better rates and deals and get better access to contracts for example mobile phones. The financial illustrations in the attached presentation show examples of where having an improved credit rating can access more sensible borrowing. The quote for a sofa from someone with a poor credit score would be more likely to pay a much higher price for interest and therefore pay much more money than someone with a good credit score and who are more likely to be offered an interest free loan to make the purchase, thus paying less overall.

As well as providing a credit score the information also acts as authentication. General authentication requirements are two on line proofs of identity. Improving electronic identification rates will give tenants easier access to full banking services as well as a range of non financial public and private services. On Money Super Market.com someone without digital authentication will pay £30-£35 more for car insurance than someone with authentication. The number of tenants that hold two or more electronic proofs increases from 77% (3,447) to 95 %(4,246) when the rental data is included.

Matters for Consideration

Literature

A full suite of literature and on-line resources are available on Schemes website, including a useful video discussion about The Rental Exchange, this will be shared with tenants if the scheme is adopted.

http://www.experian.co.uk/rental-exchange/resources.html

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Data Protection

Rental payment information will be kept secure and will not be shared with any third parties for marketing purposes and the data will be accessed when a tenant applies for goods or services where a credit or identity check is made through an organisation using Experian's database.

Data protection will be overseen by the Corporate Information Security Manager under the DPA Act 1988. This scheme is to enable tenants to be able to have the same benefits to accessing credit as mortgage payers. The scheme has been designed with the Big issue to assist tenants with accessing more sensible borrowing. A fair processing statement is designed as part of the consultation with tenants and any tenant who does not want their data shared will be excluded from the scheme.

Tenant Consultation

At the Tenants Consultative earlier this year Experian gave the feedback from the analysis and supported going to stage 2 of the process and for tenants to be issued with a Fair Processing Notice.

Benefits for tenants	Details
Positive Credit History	Cheaper loans more access to instant free credit
Online Proof of Identity	Increasingly important when applying for goods and services
Negative History	Help will be available for tenants who want to improve their credit history
Equality with Home Owners	Equal rights with home owners whose mortgage payments are automatically taken into account with their credit score

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Participation in the scheme is free of charge and as such there are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Administrative costs are minimal in that the requirement is to submit an electronic payment file once a month.

LEGAL RISKS

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Risks	**Controls**
Tenants do not opt out of the scheme during the first 28 days but later choose to do so	Tenants can opt out of the scheme at any time and the scheme will be kept under review with advertisements and details posted in "Open house" and via other tenant publications
Further schemes come on board offering similar services with a greater range of tenant incentives	There is no procurement risk as this is not a contractual arrangement and is done in partnership. It does not preclude the Council from entering into other and/or different arrangements at a later date
Tenants are not accepted for credit that they might otherwise have been, due to	The use of rental data can positively and adversely affect credit scores. The point

the revised credit rating score	is that the tenants' full history will inform the lenders decisions

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List of Background Papers

APPENDICES

Annex one – Presentation by Experian on the Tamworth Data 2014/15

The Rental Exchange

Tamworth Borough Council

Help your tenants build better futures; innovating for social benefit to increase fairness

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By Social Entrepreneurs For Social Entrepreneurs BIG ISSUE INVEST

Experian™

What is The Rental Exchange?

- Why shouldn't rent be treated in the same way as mortgages?
- The Rental Exchange will provide the same level of data, allowing renters equality and better access to mainstream credit:
  - Store Cards
  - Energy Contracts
  - Mobile Phone Contracts

What is a Credit Report?

- Your credit report is a key element of your **financial CV**. It details credit you have taken out such as credit cards, loans and mortgages, along with your repayment history, any court judgments or bankruptcies against you.

- Information on the following items is shown in your credit report:

  - Profile Details
  - Credit Accounts
  - Electoral Roll
  - Aliases
  - Financial Associates
  - Public Records
  - Previous searches of your report

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What is a Credit Score?

- Before deciding whether or not to offer you credit, many organisations take your credit report, plus the details you give the lender on your application form to generate a credit score. This is a single figure that indicates how likely you are to repay what you owe.

- CREDIT REPORTS EXPLAINED

- Usually, the higher your score, the easier you will find it:
- To borrow
- Achieve better rates and deals
- Get better access to contracts e.g. mobile phones.

Category	Score range	Description
VERY POOR	0-560	Most lenders would regard this score as very high risk and would expect most people in this category to have serious problems with repaying credit.
POOR	561-720	Most lenders would view this score as high risk and would expect a high proportion of people in this category to have serious problems with repaying credit.
FAIR	721-880	Most lenders would regard this score as moderate risk and would expect only a small proportion of people in this category to experience serious problems with repaying credit.
GOOD	881-960	Most lenders would view this score as low risk and would expect few people in this category to experience serious problems with repaying credit.
EXCELLENT	961-999	Most lenders would regard this score as very low risk and would expect very few people in this category to experience serious problems with repaying credit.

A quote for a Sofa for someone with a Good Credit Score

A quote for a Sofa for someone with a poor credit score or thin credit file
(very limited information recorded about them)

Why access to mainstream credit is important

Carmen Corner Sofa

£22.00 per week **Get Product Now**

(1 reviews) ★★★★★ (5.0/5) feefo

- 253 x 187 x 88 cm
- Material: Fabric with faux leather accents
- Full Range: Corner sofa, single seater swivel chair and footstool.
- Manufactured in the UK

Product Code: BUOCARCOR

Weekly payment	£22.00
Representative Example	
Product with 5 star service	£1,788.15
Weekly payment	£22.00
Number of weeks	156
Representative APR	64.7 %
Total payable	£3,432.00

£22 per week compared with £16.64 per month. Or £799 compared with £3,432

Going the extra mile

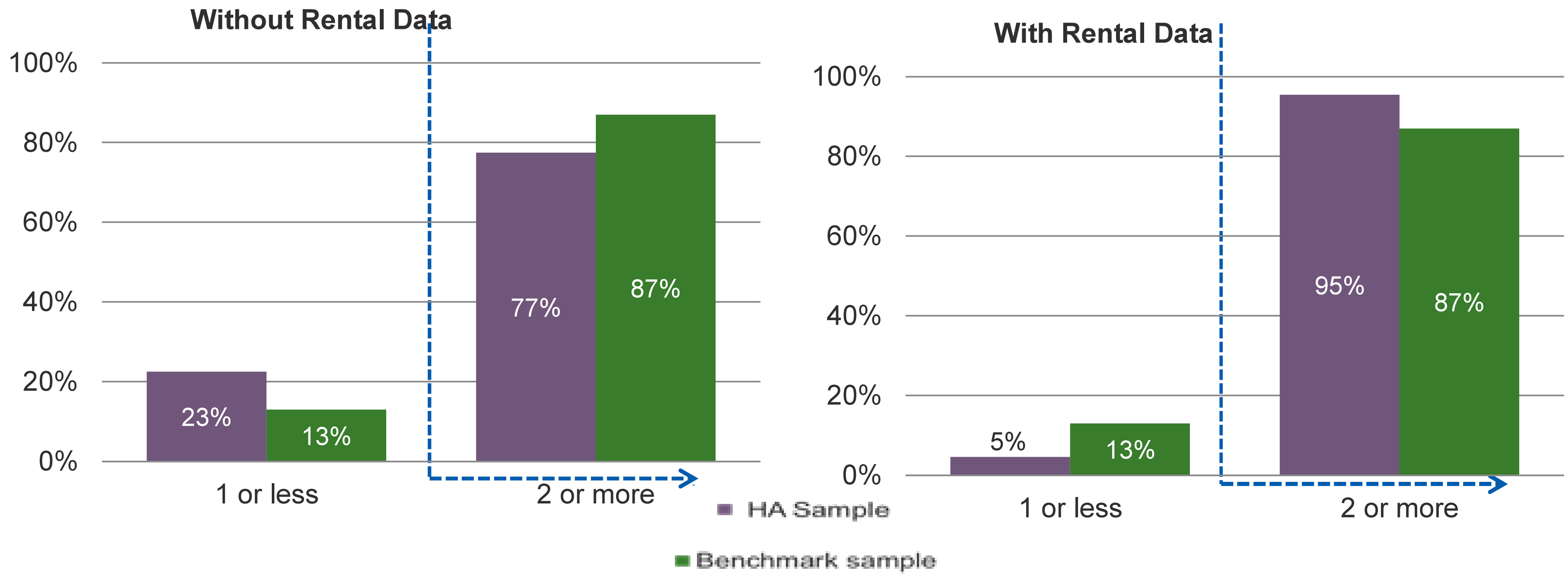
Solihull community housing

Tamworth Data Analysis – Match Rates

Result	No. of Records
Records Received	5,592
Duplicates	0
Records with fields missing:	32
- Address Elements	1
- Name Elements	3
- Date of Birth	30
Records not pinned	1,136
Fully populated and not Pinned	1,134
Total not processed	1,136
Records Processed	4,456

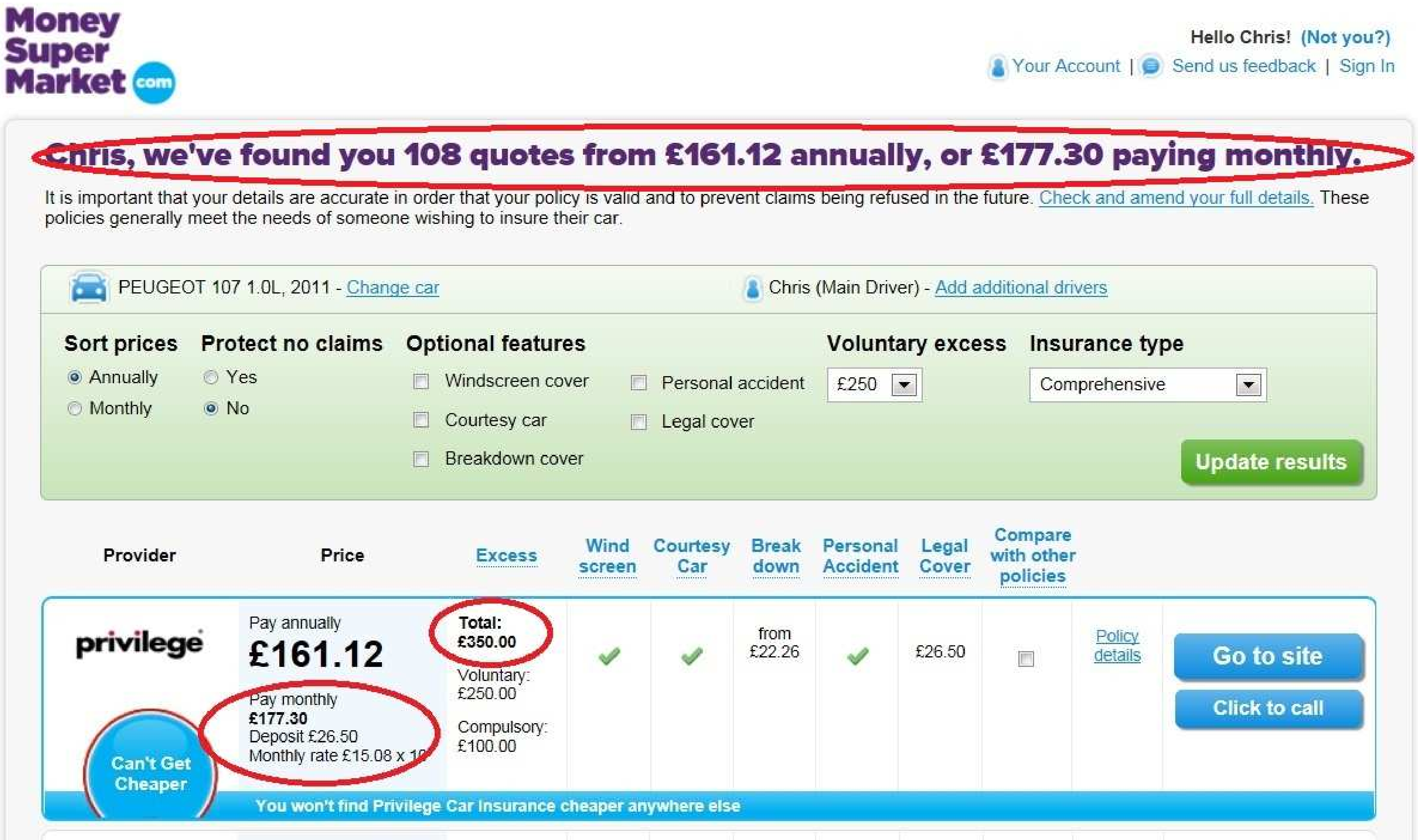
** In the live environment a new identity will be created if no information can be found.*

Data Analysis - Identification



- The general authentication requirements is **two online proofs of identity.** Typically in manual processing two proofs e.g. gas bill and a rent record would be sufficient as a means of authenticating identity.
- Number of tenants that hold **two or more electronic proofs increases from 77% (3,447)** to **95% (4,246)**.
- Improving electronic identification rates will give tenants easier access to full banking services as well as a range of non-financial public and private services.

An Insurance quote with Digital Authentication



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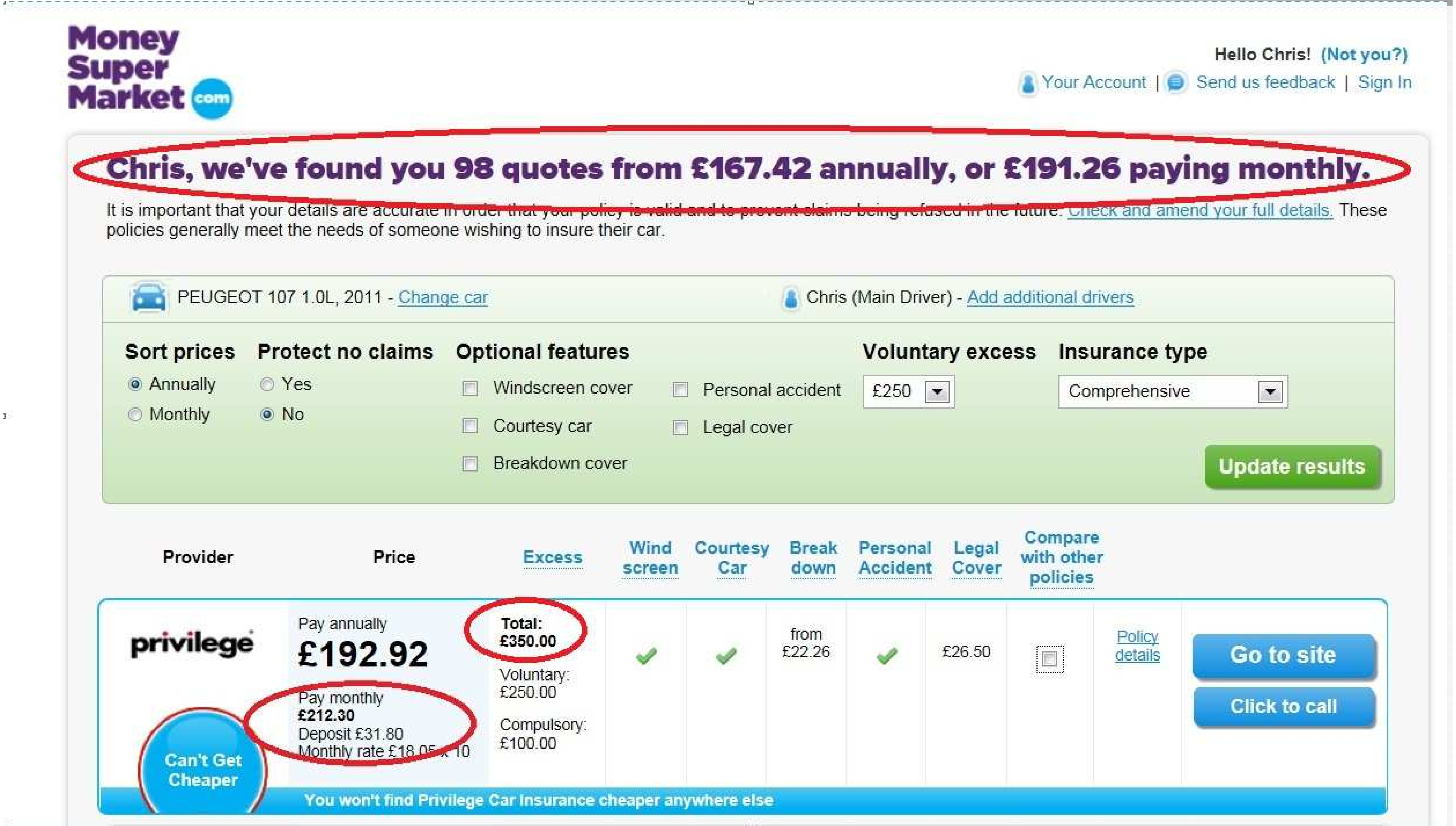
Without Digital Authentication (£30 - £35 +more)



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What does this mean for Tamworth?

Incorporating rental data into a typical generic credit score will increase the credit score for tenants that do not have significant rent arrears* by around **45 – 55** points.

- **61% (2,697)** of **Tamworth Borough Council**'s tenants have no significant arrears on their rent and their credit scores would **improve** as a result of incorporating rental data.
- **13% (352)** of these tenants would gain access to previously inaccessible credit and services.
- **6% (284)** tenants have serious arrears on their rent so would have their credit score **reduced** by something in the order of **90-140** points.
- **14% (39)** of those tenants would move from the *accept* to *reject* category (around **82%** of those tenants with rent arrears also have a CAIS default which already impairs their credit score).

33% (1,468) of tenants are on Full Housing Benefit so would see no effect to their credit score.

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Fair Processing Notice

Fair Processing Notice

Not only will we be able to work with you more closely to manage your existing tenancy agreement, your track record as a tenant will enable Experian to use the information supplied to them in the future to assist other landlords and organisations to:

Assess…

and manage any new tenancy agreements you may enter into

Assess…

your financial standing to provide you with suitable products and services

Manage…

any accounts that you may already hold, for example reviewing suitable products or adjusting your current product in light of your current circumstances

Verify…

your identity and address to help them make decisions about services they offer

Help…

prevent crime, fraud and money laundering

Contact…

you in relation to any accounts you may have and recovering debts that you may owe

Data unlocking event

- **Existing tenant:** one-off letter or notification on tenancy renewal
- **New tenant:** FPN in separate privacy notice

Data Protection

Explanation Requirement

- The ICO recognise that tackling social, financial and digital exclusion issues through enabling tenants to use their information in a way that helps them is not something that should be prevented by the DPA, subject to tenants being provided with a very clear explanation of how this will benefit them.

Benefit Recognition

The unequivocal benefit to tenants is recognised by DPA '**legitimate interests**' provisions (**Data Protection Act 1998** Sch2 paragraph 6).

The Rental Exchange is based on protecting tenants' data while at the same time enabling them to ensure organisations can use this data to support their application.

Supporting Material for Tenants

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- BII/Experian have produced supporting material to assist in ensuring tenants are positively engaged.
- For further information:

www.experian.co.uk/rental-exchange

- Any queries email: rentalexchangedata@uk.experian.com
- To order a copy of your Statutory Credit Report: http://www.experian.co.uk/consumer/statutory-report.html