

Stevenage Borough Council

Test of Opinion Survey

August 2011

Executive Summary

This report presents the results of a survey with tenants of Stevenage Borough Council. The survey aimed to find out tenants views on the future management of Council housing in the borough.

The survey involved telephone interviews, conducted by trained interviewers, of a random sample of 1,413 tenants from 8,115 tenanted addresses in the Borough. If grossed up to represent the total population of tenants, the results are accurate overall to within a sampling error of $\pm 2.4\%$ at the 95% confidence limit.

Test of Opinion 2011 Results

- 64% had read the leaflet which outlined the changes
- 67% felt they understood the changes proposed
- 42% who strongly or tend to support the proposal to bring management of council housing back into the council (rather than continue with Stevenage Homes)
- 41% of tenants had no feelings either way regarding the proposed change to bring management of council housing back into the council (rather than continue with Stevenage Homes)

The headline results are that the majority of those consulted **fully understood** the Council's proposal to bring housing management back in house. The telephone survey found 42% of tenants in support and 41% had no feelings either way.

For residents expressing support, there is a strong sense of things being better with the Council. Better services and value for money feature prominently as an advantage of the propose change.

There were no clear disadvantages mentioned by tenants regarding the change however those tenants who oppose the change gave a high level of advocacy for Stevenage Homes.

1. Introduction

Stevenage Borough Council commissioned Voluntas MRS, to conduct a survey with their tenants to explore their views on the future of Council housing in the borough.

This report details the findings from the tenants' survey.

1.1. Research aims and objectives

The aims of the survey were as follows:

- to establish whether tenants had read the information leaflet
- to outline to tenants the Council's proposals (where the leaflet had not yet been read)
- to establish the level of understanding for the changes being proposed by the Council
- to ascertain the level of support or opposition for the proposed changes
- to obtain tenants views on the advantages and disadvantages for the proposed changes

1.2. Survey method and accuracy of results

The survey involved trained interviewers conducting telephone interviews with tenants of the Stevenage Borough Council. A total of 1,413 interviews were completed split by two tenures:

Tenure	Number of households	Interviews completed	Sampling error (95% confidence limit)
General needs	7,242	932	3%
Sheltered housing	873	481	3%
Total	8,115	1,413	2.4%

In terms of the accuracy of the survey results, if grossed up to represent the views of the total population of Stevenage tenants, the results are accurate to within a sampling error of $\pm 2.4\%$ at the 95% confidence limit.

1.3. Conduct of the fieldwork

The survey fieldwork started on 4th August 2011 and was completed by 21st August 2011.

A copy of the survey is attached at appendix one. The survey was approved by the Stevenage Borough Council representatives and the Independent Tenant Adviser.

1.4. Notes to figures

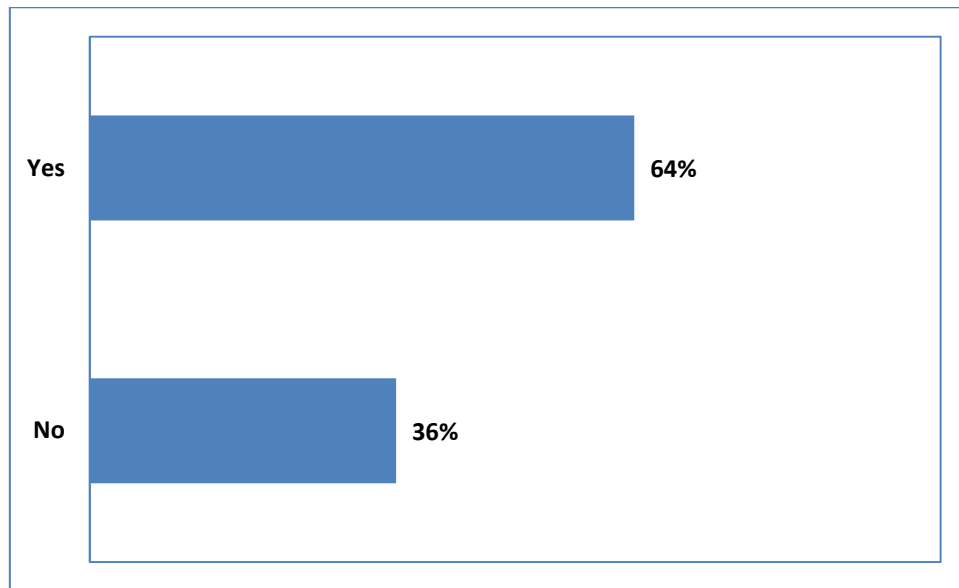
Throughout this report, the figures show the results as percentages. Base numbers are shown where appropriate.

Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, and for this reason may not in all cases add exactly to 100. In some figures, totals do not add to 100% where more than one response was possible to a single question.

2. Survey findings

Respondents were asked about whether they had had an opportunity to read a leaflet from Stevenage Borough Council about proposed changes to the housing management service.

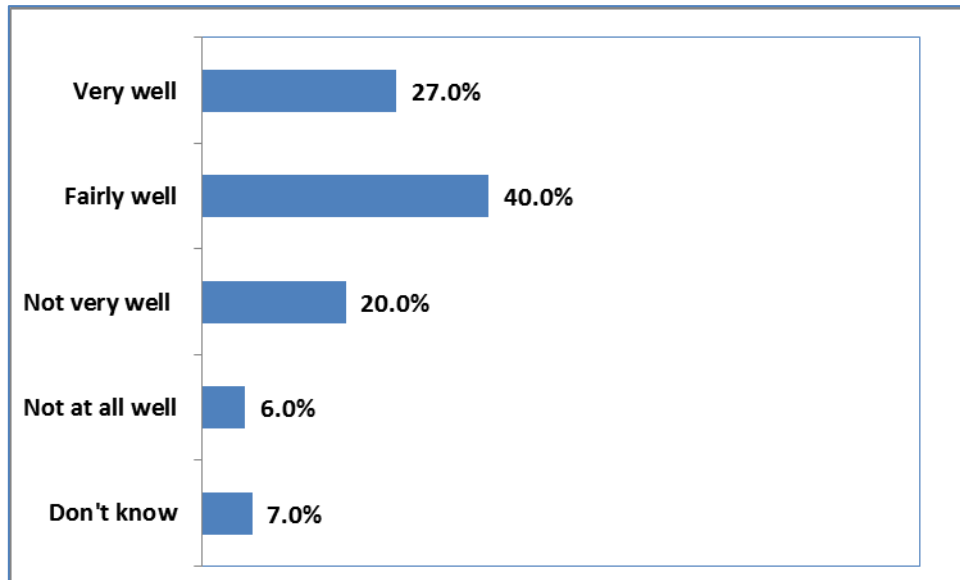
Please could you tell me if you have had an opportunity to read this leaflet which outlines the proposed changes?



Within the overall position, 72% of sheltered housing tenants and 60% of general needs tenants had read the leaflet.

Respondents were asked whether they felt they understood the changes that the Council is proposing to the way their home is managed.

How well do you feel you understand the changes Stevenage Borough Council is proposing to the way your home is managed?

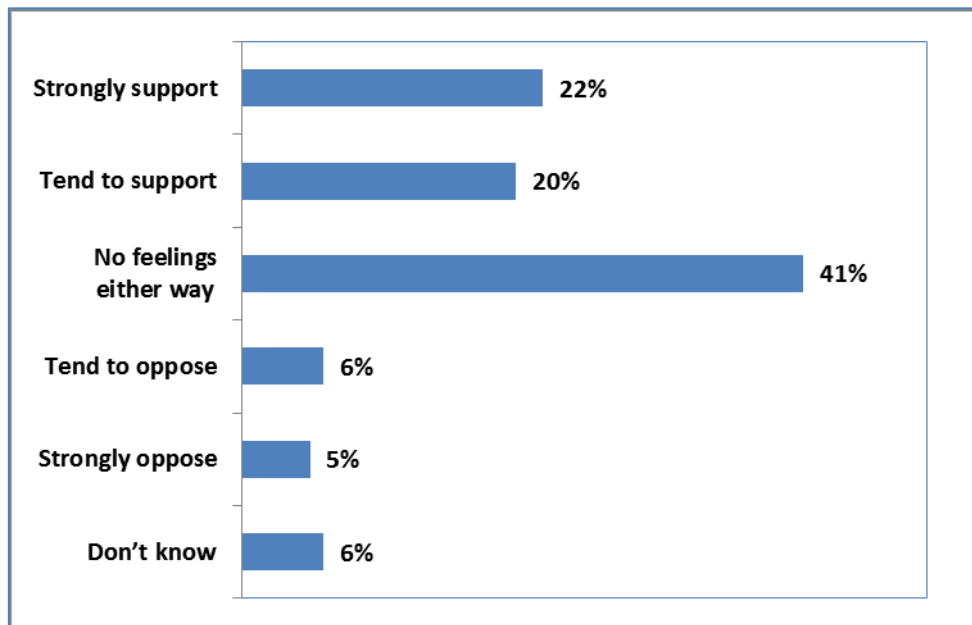


64% of general needs tenants understood the changes fairly or very well whilst 72% sheltered housing tenants expressed the same views.

Respondents were asked whether they supported or opposed the proposed changes to the way their home is managed (direct management by the council rather than by Stevenage Homes).

Stevenage Borough Council's proposal is that your home would no longer be managed by Stevenage Homes but would be managed directly by the council.

To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal?



Within the overall position, 47% of sheltered housing tenants and 39% of general needs tenants either tended to support or strongly supported the proposal.

Respondents were asked what they considered as the main advantages of the proposed changes were.

What, if anything, do you consider to be the advantages of Stevenage Borough Council's proposal to change the way your home is managed?



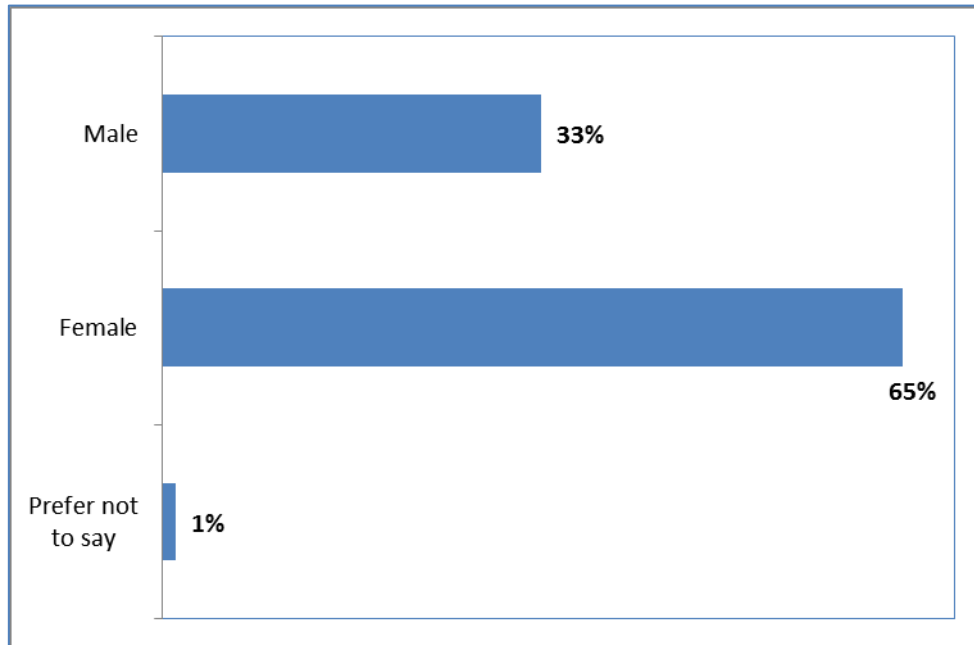
Within main advantages, the following common themes emerged:

- Saving money
- Better services
- Council responsibility (to manage housing)

3. Demographics

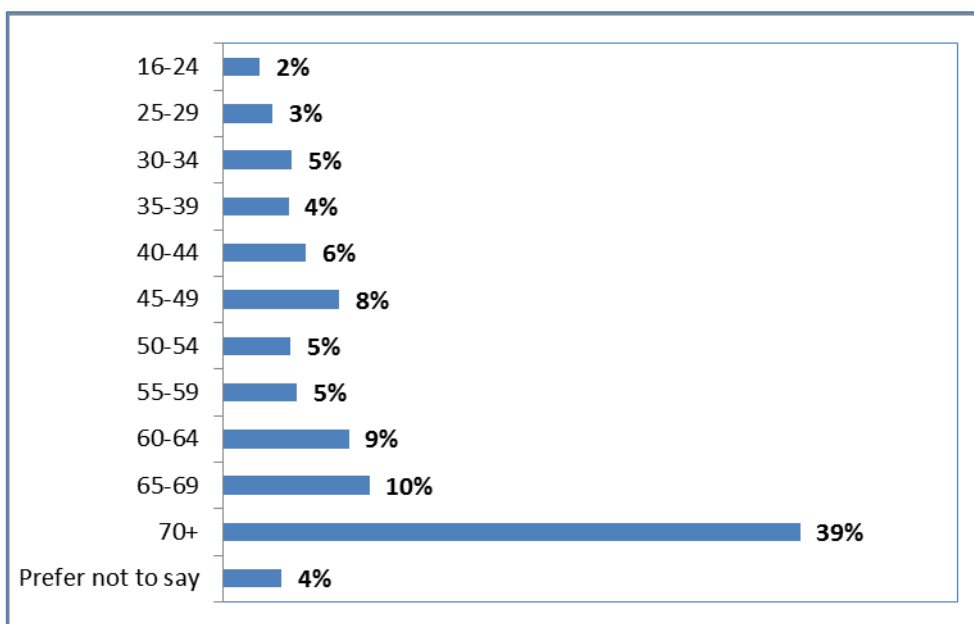
The final section asked tenants about themselves.

Figure 1: Gender of respondent



65% of respondents were female and 33% were male.

Figure 2: Age of respondent



The majority of respondents were aged 65 years of age (53%). Just 2% were aged between 16 and 24 years of age.

Figure 3: Disability

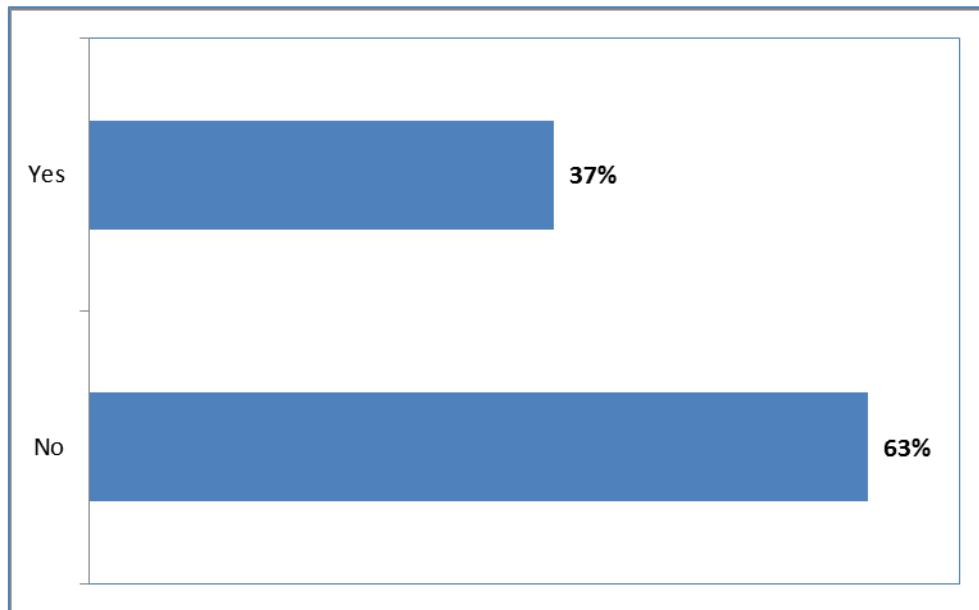


Figure 4: Type of disability

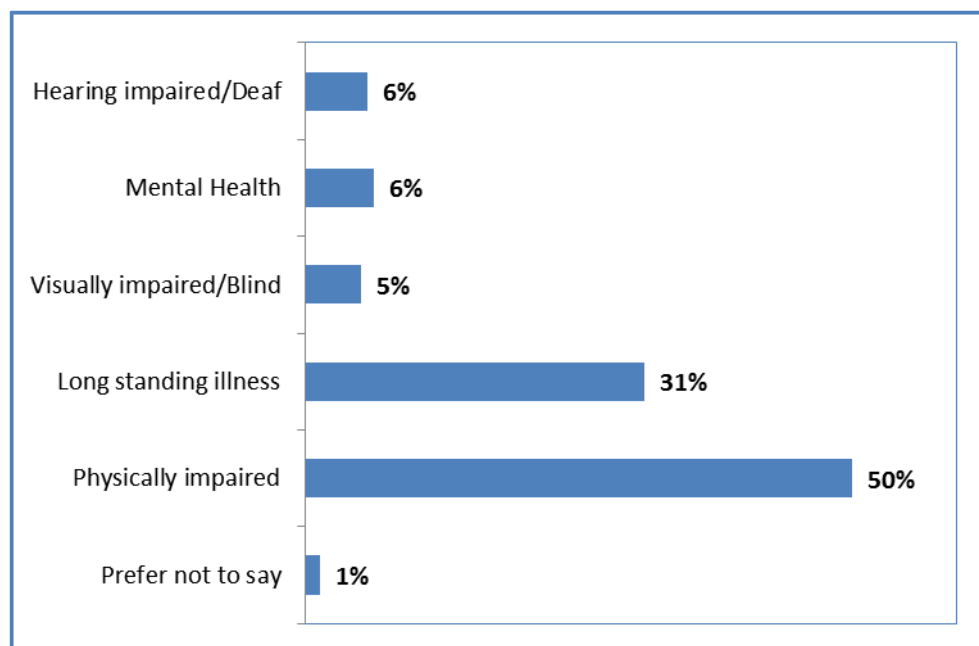
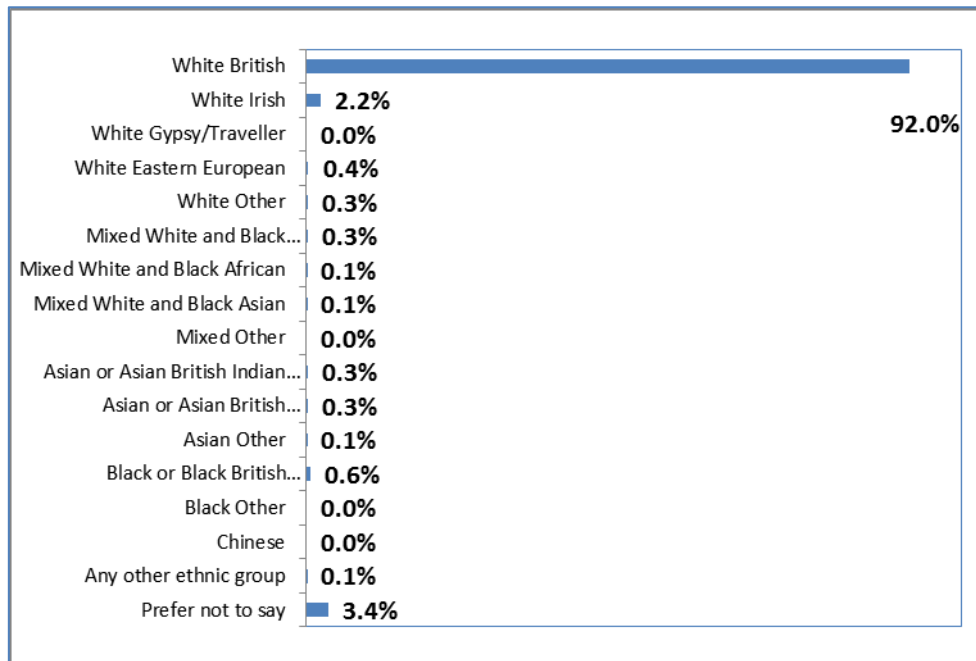


Figure 5: Ethnic group



Appendix one - Test of Opinion Survey (abridged)

Question 1:

Please could you tell me if you have had an opportunity to read this leaflet which outlines the proposed changes?

(One answer only)

- Yes
- No

If “yes” to Q1 > Q2.

If “no” to Q1:

I would now like to tell you about the council’s proposals...

Question 2:

How well do you feel you understand the changes Stevenage Borough Council is proposing to the way your home is managed?

(One answer only)

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Not very well
- Not at all well
- Don’t know/not sure

Question 3:

Stevenage Borough Council’s proposal is that your home would no longer be managed by Stevenage Homes but would be managed directly by the council.

To what extent do you support or oppose this proposal?

(One answer only)

- Strongly support
- Tend to support
- No feelings either way
- Tend to oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don’t know

Question 4:

Why do you have this view?

(Open question)

Question 5:

What, if anything, do you consider to be the advantages of Stevenage Borough Council's proposal to change the way your home is managed?

(Open question)

Question 6:

What, if anything, do you consider to be the disadvantages of Stevenage Borough Council's proposal to change the way your home is managed?

(Open question)

Demographics

I'd now like to ask some questions about you and your household. This information is collected to make sure that we have taken into account the views of a wide range of people. It helps us to identify where we are not offering equal opportunities to participate. As with the rest of the survey all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only. It will not be possible to identify any particular individual or address in the result.

Question 7:

How would you describe your gender?

(One answer only)

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Transsexual
- Prefer not to say

Question 8:

What is your age?

(One answer only)

- 16 – 24
- 25 – 29
- 30 – 34
- 35 – 39
- 40 – 44
- 45 – 49
- 50 – 54
- 55 – 59
- 60 – 64
- 65 – 69
- 70 and over
- Prefer not to say

Question 9:

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

(One answer only)

- Yes
- No

If yes to Question 9

Question 10:

Which of the following best describes your disability?

(One answer only)

- Hearing impaired/Deaf
- Mental Health
- Visually impaired/Blind
- Long standing illness
- Physically impaired
- Prefer not to say

Question 11:

Which ethnic group do you consider you belong to?

(One answer only)

- White British
- White Irish
- White Gypsy/Traveller
- White Eastern European
- Other white background
- Mixed White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed White and Black African
- Mixed White and Black Asian
- Other mixed background
- Asian or Asian British Indian Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi
- Other Asian background
- Black or Black British Caribbean African
- Other Black background
- Chinese
- Any other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

Question 12:

What is your sexuality?

(One answer only)

- Heterosexual
- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Lesbian
- Prefer not to say



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