



**London Borough of Havering Council**

**Draft Housing Consultation Report June 2016**

In review of;

- **Housing Allocations Scheme**
- **Homeless Placements Policy**

# HOUSING POLICY CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT AND RESULTS 2016



Contents	Page
<b>1. Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overview – what are we consulting on?</li><li>• Background – why are we consulting?</li><li>• Methodology – how are we consulting?</li></ul>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Key findings and themes – what was the outcome?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. Respondent Profile - Demographic Overview – who took part in the consultation?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. Part A: Housing Allocation Policy – consultation results</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5. Part B: Homeless Placements Policy – consultation results</b>	<b>29</b>

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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This report sets out key findings from a 6 weeks period of consultation and engagement with local residents and other key stakeholders on proposed changes made to new and existing housing policy.

In February 2016 the Council conducted a consultation exercise regarding changes made to the Housing Allocation Policy and development of a new policy on Homeless Placements. The consultation aimed to canvass the views of a wide range of community groups and stakeholders with an interest in the future of housing policy in Havering.

The consultation sets out

- How local residents and organisations were invited to respond to the consultation
- The level of satisfaction with each policy proposal, a summary of the main issues raised by respondents and how the Council has taken them into account

## 1.1 OVERVIEW – WHAT IS THE HOUSING CONSULTATION ON?

Housing Services was consulting on proposed amendments made to;

1. **Housing Allocation Scheme** – this is a reviewed policy and covers eligibility for, and the letting of social housing (Council and Housing Association housing)
2. **Homeless Placements Policy** – this is a new policy covering the type of temporary and settled accommodation available for homeless households, how temporary accommodation will be allocated to applicants and the prioritisation criteria that will be used to make placements in and out of borough

The Council have consulted with key stakeholders on the proposed changes to Housing Services through each policy. The revised policies are designed to outline the general direction the Council wants to go in at a time of high demand for accommodation and restricted supply pressures overall.

The consultation was open to anyone who lives, rents or owns a home in Havering, any professional working for an organisation with an interest in the future of housing in Havering and to members and staff working for the Council.

The consultation took place between 22<sup>nd</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup> April 2016. It comprised of an online survey to help find out feedback on new proposals contained within the policy. All responses were gratefully received and considered by senior management in the decision making process for the final versions of each policy.

Please note that the views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the stakeholders responding to our consultation and do not necessarily represent the views, priorities and policies of the Council.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND – WHY CONSULT?

Before drafting the final version of each policy, Housing Services wanted to know what is important to local residents and the organisations that the policies will affect. A consultation enables all stakeholders to have a direct input into the future of housing policy in the Borough. It also enables the Council to understand public attitudes, opinions and the satisfaction relating to each policy proposal. Local Authorities are legally required to consult with groups on policy change.

### Why do the policies need to change?

Policies are adopted principles of action which set out how a particular service intends to operate. The Council is required by law to have a clear and transparent Housing Allocation Scheme which set out how it prioritises the allocation of its housing stock and the procedures that will be followed. The Council understands that the current allocation scheme is difficult to understand and recognises that this needs to change.

In Havering, as with most London Boroughs the demand for housing dramatically exceeds availability. There are increasing numbers of people in Havering who are in need of a home and many more existing tenants with a priority need to move. With a limited amount of properties available through the Council and increasing house prices in the private and owner occupied sectors, the reality is that many households face long waits for suitable and affordable settled accommodation that is fit for purpose. The shortage in the supply of affordable homes has become an acute problem across the region and these pressures are expected to intensify over future years to come. As a result, the current Housing Allocation Scheme has to be revised to ensure local people with the highest need for settled accommodation in Havering can have their needs met.

Historically the Council has not had a published policy surrounding the allocation of temporary accommodation however the increasing numbers of homeless households and reliance on the private rented sector has urged the requirement for transparent policy and procedure. In addition, wider market changes; national legislation and recent case law development, ((*Nzolameso v City of Westminster (2015)*)), has directed the need for policy and procedure to be reviewed by local authorities with regards to interim and long term temporary accommodation lettings.

The wider strategic drivers exerting changes across these policies include:

- the on-going impact of welfare reform,
- social housing rent changes and changes to the Temporary Accommodation (TA) funding model,
- increased cost of accommodation in Havering and restricted availability in the private rented sector,
- demographic changes and increased migration into Havering from inner London Boroughs.

It has become clear in recent years that the Council requires revised policies to ensure homes in Havering can continue to be prioritised for those with the greatest needs. To ensure key housing policies are reflective of the Council's current housing pressures and allow a mechanism for change, the three key housing policies have been reviewed to:

- Prevent unrealistic expectations for households and ensure an informed understanding of stock availability, eligibility and waiting times for temporary or settled accommodation
- Make best use of the housing stock available to the council

- Operate within legal and regulatory frameworks for the allocation of social and temporary housing
- Operate a simplified system of assessing need
- Enable fair access to housing where clear, transparent and fairly applied guidelines are available in policy and procedure for all stakeholders to easily understand
- Resolve homelessness as quickly as possible
- Ensure homes are suitable for household needs and occupation

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY – HOW HAS THE COUNCIL CONSULTED?

The Council consulted on the **key proposed changes** being made to the Housing Service via each policy. The consultation comprised of the following elements:

1. Sending direct letter correspondence and reminder letters on the proposed changes for whom the policy would effect
2. A comprehensive online survey designed to seek detailed views on the proposed changes to each policy
3. Responding and collating feedback submitted via email and phone queries
4. Briefings to key stakeholders on proposed policy change
5. Face to face interview appointments for local residents for whom the online survey was inaccessible to ensure consultation material could be easily understood for all

In order to communicate the content of the policies and provide different methods for people to feedback, different communication techniques were used. The Council actively promoted, advertised and distributed news of the housing policy consultation through:

- Council website pages publicising links to the online survey consultation
- Social media (Council twitter, Facebook pages)
- Council Staff intranet
- Consultation letter sent direct to all applicants on housing register and existing tenants of temporary accommodation
- Email briefings for interested parties including council staff, Councillors, Members, housing association staff, private sector developers and landlords, agencies, voluntary and community organisations, housing specialists and registered social landlords
- Local magazine articles on consultation information contained in 'At the Heart' and 'Living' sent to tenants

To analyse consultation responses the following method was adopted:

- The online survey was placed on the Council's home page and Housing Services page.
- Respondents were asked to self-complete the survey. Respondents were encouraged to submit a response to all questions however if preferable, could choose to respond to the policy that was most applicable to personal circumstance
- The survey described the policy at current and the key features of what was proposed to change. Respondents were asked to submit a response from a multiple choice selection, describe any feedback if they disagreed or to submit a longer qualitative response to the Housing Service's dedicated consultation email, phone address

- Questback, an online survey tool was used as a portal for the data collection exercise. This produced an automatic data report on all findings. The findings were manually analysed to produce graphs and tables
- Non-valid responses have been removed from the survey analysis. No attempt was made to second guess the findings or what is meant by a non-response. Instead, all results have been quantifiably analysed according to response.
- For all open qualitative responses submitted through the consultation, thematic analysis has been used to analyse additional comments made. All respondents have been individually responded to over the consultation period
- The research findings were cross-analysed with demographic data to understand the profile of people who responded to each policy. It also enabled the Council to recognise response trends and identify if there was any disproportionate dissatisfaction with any group, against any of the policies. This informed each respective Equality Impact Assessment.
- The findings have been analysed based on the total number of respondents who accessed the online survey consultation. The analysis for each question is not based on the number of respondents who answered the particular question. This is to ensure that an overarching view of responses and consistent 'baseline' is captured for the total sample size. Blank answers and no preference responses have been grouped together and include those where no responses have been submitted to a particular policy. On average there is a 10-20% non-response rate from this group

#### **1.4 SAMPLE AND RESPONSE RATE – WHO PARTICIPATED?**

The Council sent out correspondence on the consultation to a wide range of community groups. Information was sent to over 3800 interested parties and publicised as appropriate. Across all of the above groups, there were 393 valid responses to the consultation, representing a 10.3% response rate. Whilst this is a low response rate, the profile of respondents (age, ethnicity etc.) broadly reflects the Census data and housing register composition.

A summary of the overall response types is provided below.

<b>Consultation Sample</b>	
Method of consultation	Total respondents
Online survey	308 / 307
Direct (email)	13
Direct (phone)	72
Total	393

Some email or phone queries asked for advice, to confirm what the proposals were or to state general dislike or approval against the proposal.

#### **Sample limitations**

Due to the nature of the self-completion survey, time constraints and lack of respondent incentives, the response rate on the survey could be considered fairly low. However, all parties for whom the proposed policies would affect have been consulted as appropriate. The survey findings are fairly representative of the

demographic population particularly with protected characteristics of religion and ethnicity; however for some denominations within some groups, the findings are unrepresentative of their composition within the borough. The impact of this is discussed within the equality impact assessment and under Section 2 of this report.

### **1.5 THE CONSULTATION REPORT- WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?**

The Council's Housing Services has produced this report to ensure results are transparent and accessible for all local residents and other key stakeholders.

The Council will be considering the results contained within this report to arrive at a final decision on each policy proposal. It will report any action that has been taken as a result of the consultation outcome (i.e. changes made) before drafting the final draft of each policy. Any policy change made as a result of this consultation will be communicated to stakeholders as appropriate.

Full analysis data tables of the results of the consultation findings have been formed and issued to senior management to aid decision-making. The raw data shows the responses to each question, respondent by respondent which has enabled the Council to highlight the key differences in satisfaction opinion. Data findings have been cross-referenced with the respondent profile including demographic indicators and current accommodation type.

Within the consultation, the council also consulted on proposed changes being made to the tenancy policy and strategy. As government legislation is currently being debated within the Housing and Planning Bill 2016 that effects the content of the policies, the results of this will be published at a later time once the final tenancy policy and strategy has been drafted.

### **1.6 EQUALITIES STATEMENT**

Havering is home to a number of different communities. The Council are committed to delivering quality services to all by responding positively to the needs and expectations of all service users. The Council operates an equal opportunities policy and is committed to making sure that all people are treated fairly. The Council are committed to eliminating discrimination on any grounds including race, gender, disability, age, sexuality, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. This commitment is based on the respect for every individual

It is the Council's obligation to fulfil a Public Sector Equalities duty and eliminate discrimination in policy and practice. The Council has used the consultation findings to analyse the impact each policy proposal may have on protected characteristics. These findings are discussed within each Equality Impact Analysis which has been written to support each policy.



## 2. KEY FINDINGS

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### 2.1 COMMON AND RECURRING THEMES

Taking into account all the comments and points of views offered throughout the consultation, across all three policies it is possible to identify some common and recurring themes:

#### 1. Be open, transparent and accountable

- Respondents wanted the Council to develop more accessible, efficient and straightforward housing application processes (for social housing and temporary accommodation).
- Respondents urged the Council to manage an improvement in customer satisfaction and to engage more with applicants, keeping applicants updated was important.
- Respondents wanted to see a more customer-service-focused approach implemented through policy review. Qualitative feedback emphasised that many respondents felt they wanted the Council to help them make more informed choices and to be proactive in providing support through the housing application process
- Respondents asked for complimentary processes to be published on the housing application journey, both for social housing and for homeless people in applying for temporary accommodation

#### 2. Make the best use of all housing resources

- Respondents wanted to feel assured that the Council is making best use of all assets in the context of recent housing pressures and wanted to have a better understanding of whether it is using all the resources at its disposal

#### 3. Reserve the Council's housing supply for those most in need

- Whilst respondents understood the need to accommodate vulnerable people, many were confused about the current allocation scheme and felt people were often 'jumping the queue'.
- Respondents explained they would like to see a simpler process that enabled them to understand the prioritisation order and impact it would have upon individual places on waiting lists.
- Respondents expressed they wanted to feel confident that suitable homes are being occupied by the right people and that people couldn't abuse the condition of properties or the allocation system itself.

### 2.2 HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

Overall the reception to the main proposals for change with the allocation scheme has been positive, with most areas receiving high satisfaction results from the respondent sample. There are three key policy areas which the Consultation found had a significantly lower satisfaction rate, whereby the majority of respondents were dissatisfied and the minority was satisfied.

#### **Proposed policies indicating high dissatisfaction:**

- Proposal A1: Extension of the residency period criteria to join the housing register (62% dissatisfaction)
- Proposal A9: One offer of social housing only policy (47% dissatisfaction)
- Proposal A11: Implementing the policy immediately (55% dissatisfaction)

Slightly lower levels of satisfaction was reported with the changes to Housing Need A5 Proposal (63%) and A6 proposal on Reduced housing priority criterion (61%) however on the whole the satisfaction rate was above 50%.

#### **Proposed policies indicating good satisfaction:**

1. Proposal A2: The qualifying criteria – continuous period of residency (84% satisfied)
2. Proposal A3: The qualifying criteria – financial circumstances, income threshold at which residents can join the housing register (69% satisfied)
3. Proposal A4: The qualifying criteria – introduction of unacceptable behaviour provision (86% satisfied)
4. Proposal A5: Changes made to identified housing need categories (63% satisfied)
5. Proposal A6: Introduction of a reduced housing priority criterion (61% satisfied)
6. Proposal A7: The priority banding system (69% satisfied)
7. Proposal A8: Choice based lettings and assisted bidding system (69% satisfied)
8. Proposal A10: Sheltered housing eligibility criteria (81% satisfied)
9. Proposal A11: Implementing the policy transitionally (62% satisfied)
10. Proposal A11: Implementing policy changes after one year (most votes 39%)

### **2.3 HOMELESS PLACEMENTS POLICY**

Overall as a majority, respondents were satisfied with all four proposals made through the homeless placements policy (+70% positive satisfaction range). Slightly lower satisfaction rate was reported with the proposal to offer PRSOs and implement a discharge of homelessness duty decision (68%) however there was still an overall positive satisfaction rate.

#### **Proposed policies indicating high dissatisfaction:**

None

#### **Proposed policies indicating good satisfaction:**

1. Proposal B1: New Homeless placements pathway approach (73% satisfied)
2. Proposal B2: PRSOs and Discharge of Homelessness Duty (68% satisfied)
3. Proposal B3: In-borough prioritisation criteria (suitability factors to decide on the location of placements) (74%)
4. Proposal B4: Prioritisation criteria for transfer moves between temporary accommodations (77%)

### 3. RESPONDANT PROFILE

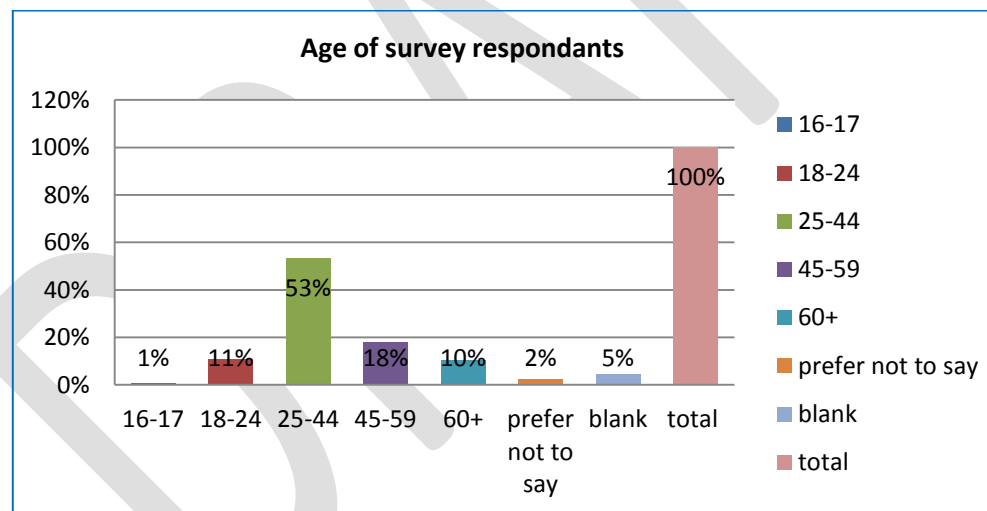
This section aims to provide an overview of who took part in the online survey consultation.

A series of demographic questions was asked to record the respondent type. It is recognised in research that many respondents often choose not to answer demographic questions. The survey design, encouraged responses to this section and on average the Consultation had less than 6% 'blank responses' under the demographic section.

Profiling is extremely important as it enables the Council to identify satisfaction trends in how each different group responds to the policy proposal. It highlights any disproportionate impact or high dissatisfaction rate and enables the Council to take appropriate action in engaging with these groups.

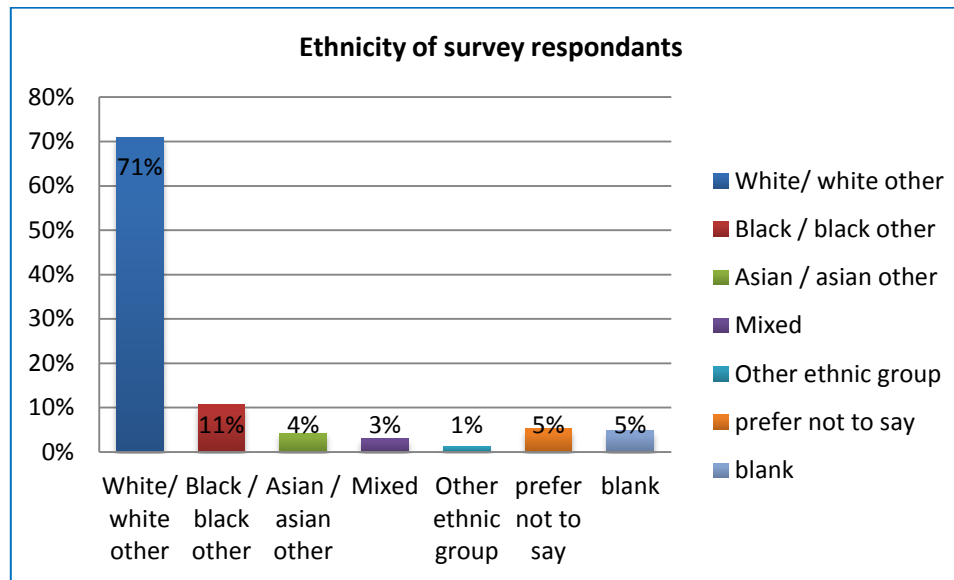
A summary overview of the respondent sample characteristics is provided below.

#### 3.1 AGE



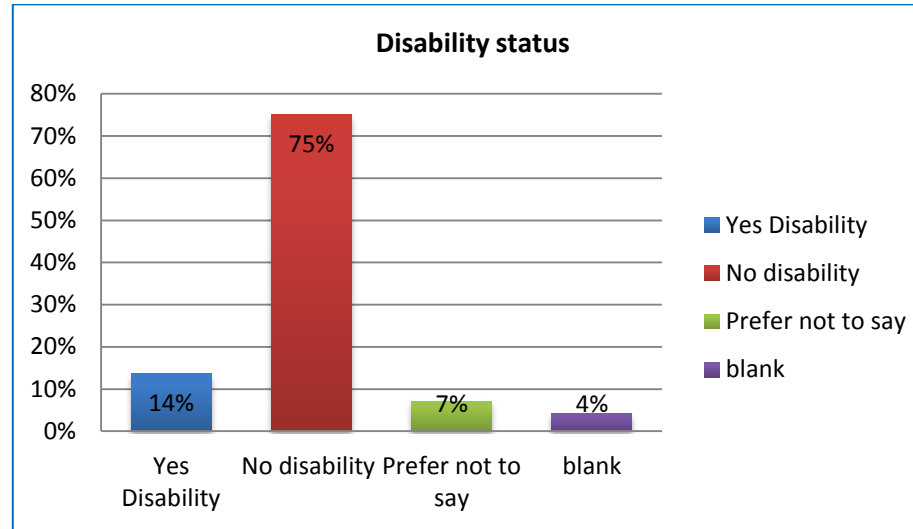
- The age banding asked of respondents in the consultation is not directly comparable to how the borough's demographic population data (ONS) is compiled.
- The vast majority of the consultation sample was from working age households

### 3.2 ETHNICITY



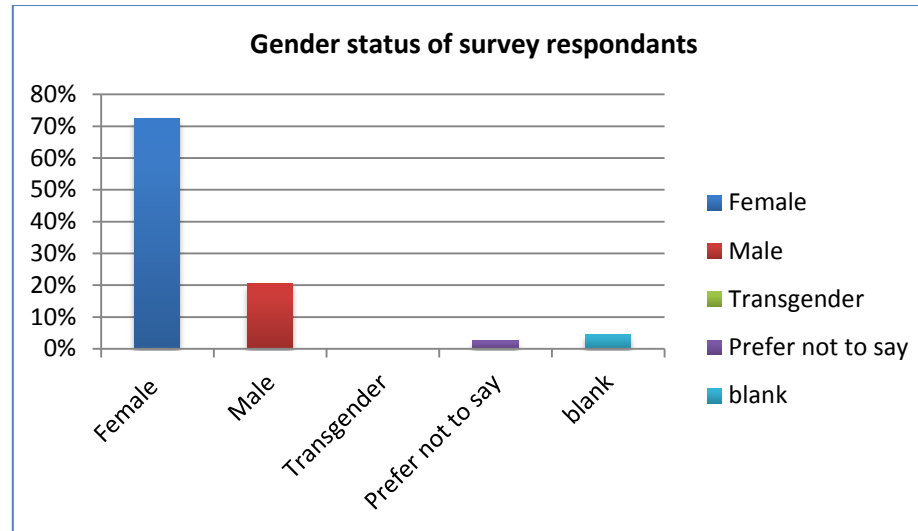
- As of 2014, 88% of the population is formed of White British/White Other denominations. Black and Minority Ethnic households form 15% of Havering’s population. The sample is therefore overrepresentative of BAME households and a slightly unrepresentative composition of white households; however it must be considered the overall total sample of the consultation is a fairly low response rate and the representativeness can therefore not be judged.
- Black households form 5.3% of Havering’s population, 11% of respondents who answered the consultation were of black ethnicity
- Asian households form 4% of Havering’s population, 4% of consultation respondents were of Asian ethnicity
- Mixed ethnic households form 3% of Havering’s population, 3% of consultation respondents were from respondents of mixed ethnicities.

### 3.3 DISABILITY



- According to Census data, 18% of the population have a disability, 82% do not have a disability. In the Consultation 14% disclosed they had a disability, 11% preferred not to disclose and 75% said they did not have a disability.
- Havering is estimated to have one of the highest rates of serious physical disabilities among London boroughs

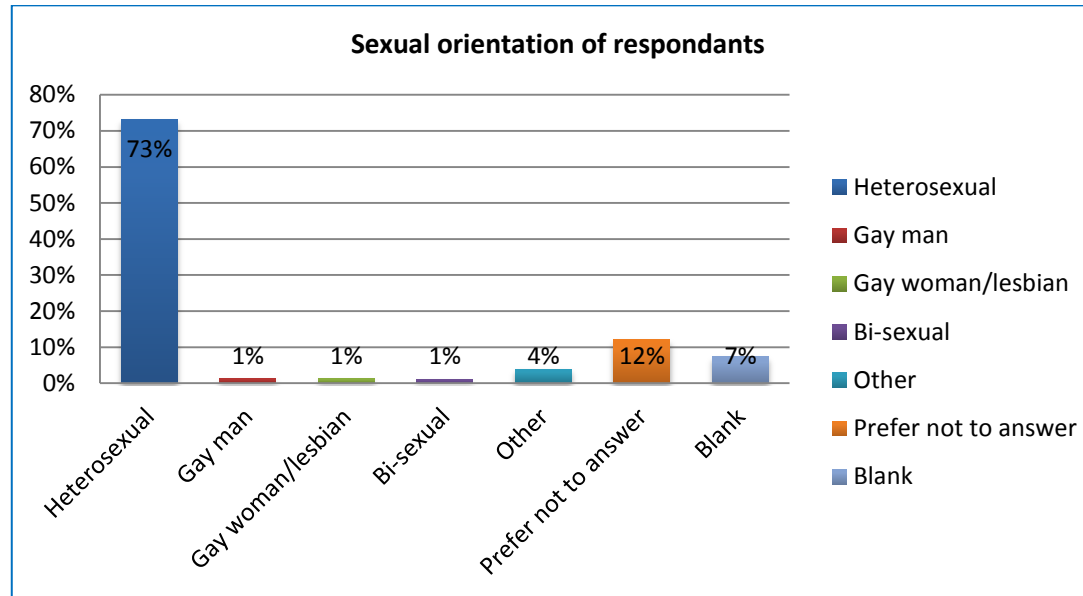
### 3.4 GENDER



- According to Census data, 52% of the population are female, compared to a 48% male composition.
- The sample was mainly answered by female respondents (73%) which are likely to represent the fact that women are more likely under homeless legislation to fulfil a priority housing need and would have a more vested interest in forming a response to the consultation.

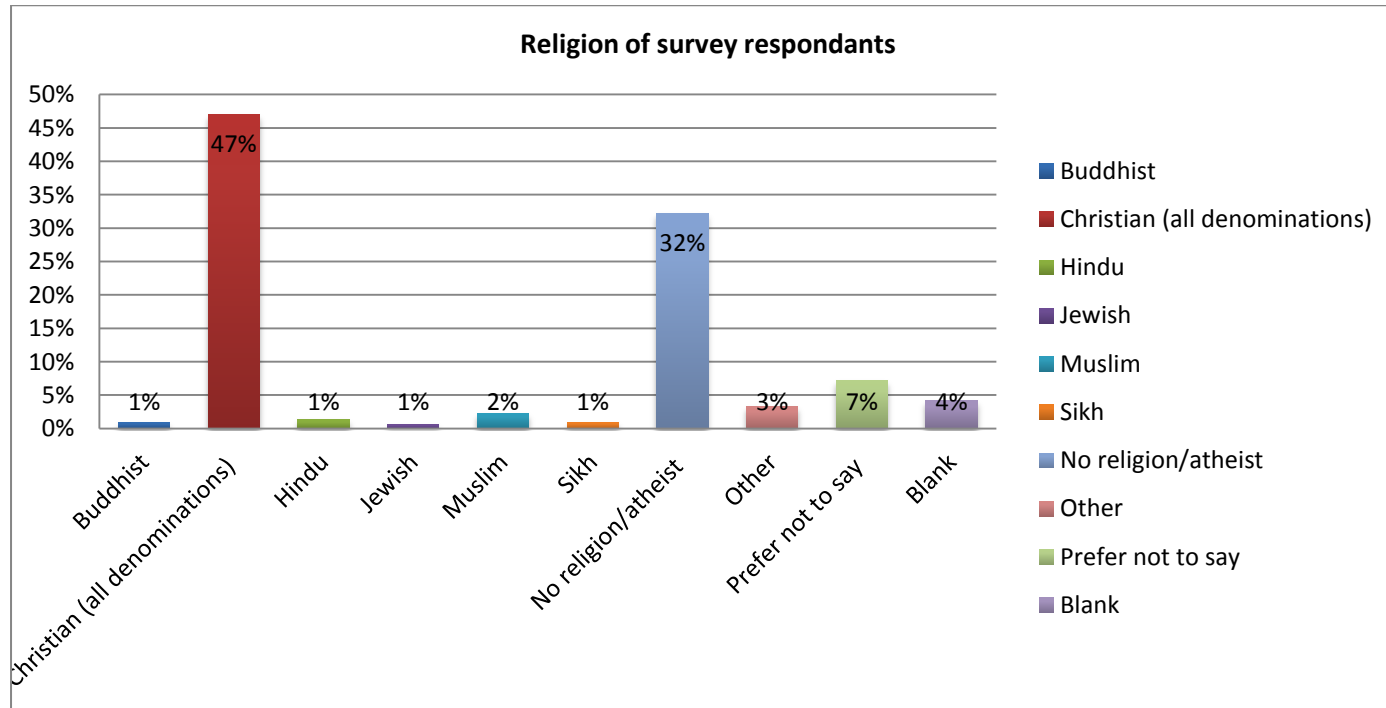
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### 3.5 SEXUAL ORIENTATION



- There is limited availability of Borough wide data on sexual orientation and so this cannot be compared to demographic information with the consultation
- There is a low response rate from gay men, lesbian and bi-sexual respondents who from the minority of the sample

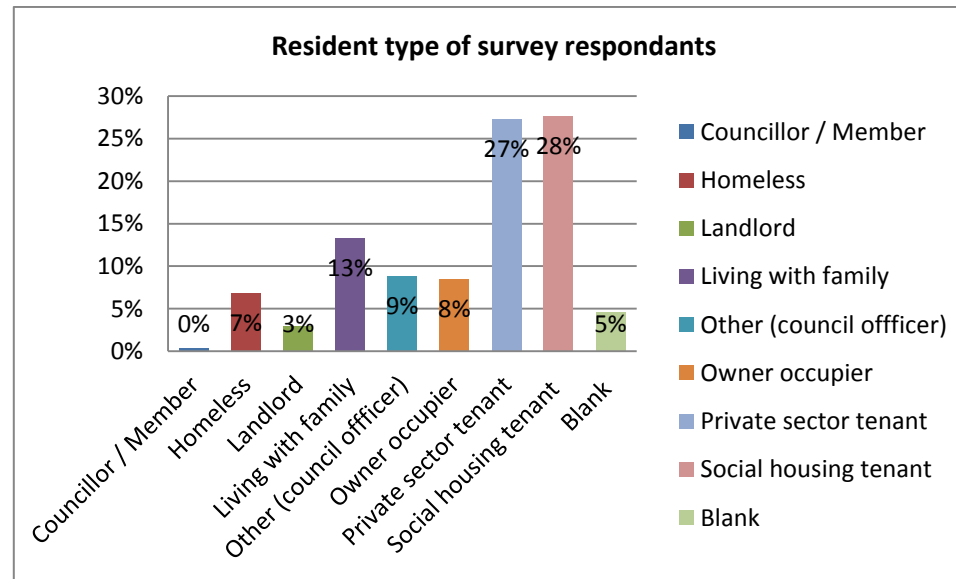
### 3.6 RELIGION



- There is limited availability of Borough wide data on religion and so this cannot be compared to demographic information with the consultation
- Christian respondents formed the greatest response to the consultation; there were very limited responses from all other religions. A large sample was formed from people who stated they had no religious belief.

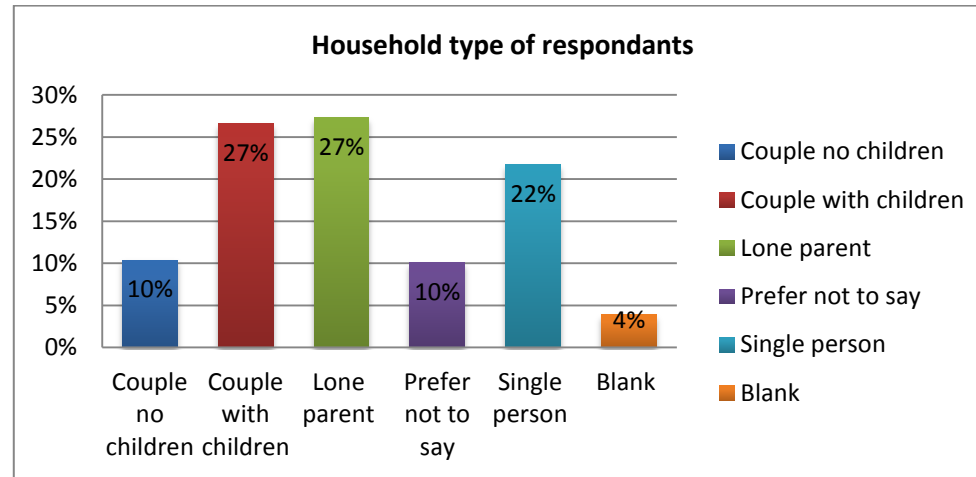


### 3.7 RESPONDANT TYPE



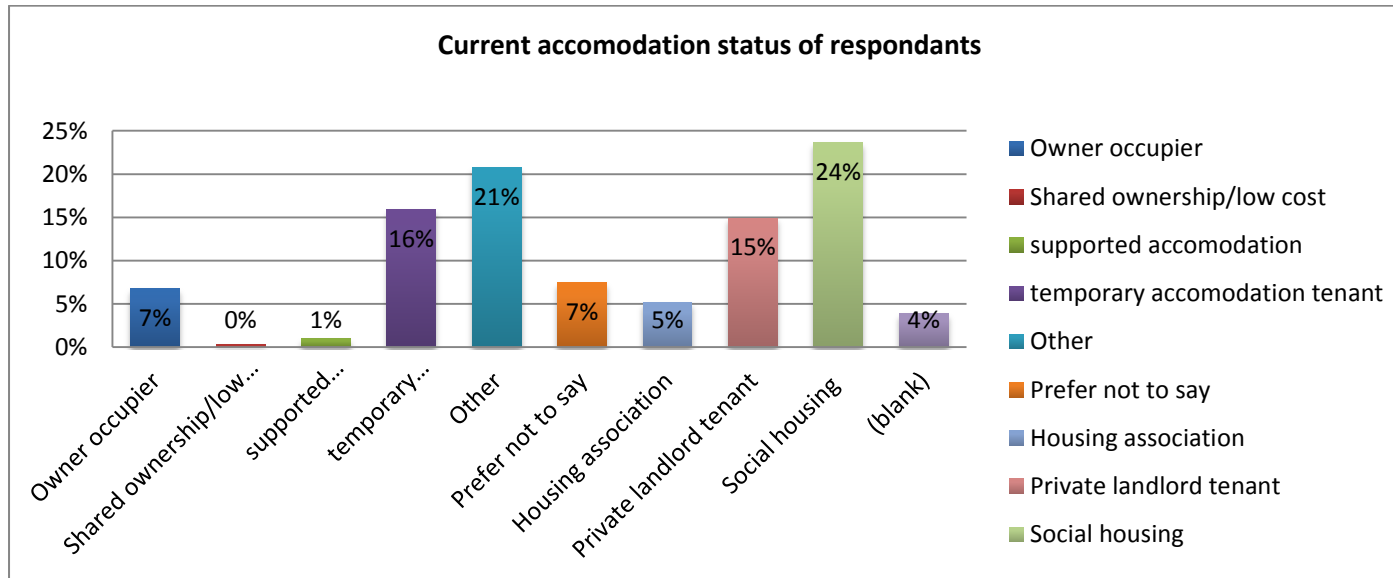
- The greatest proportion of sample respondents has come from council tenants and private sector tenants. It is thought that many people living in privately rented accommodation through the Council's social lettings agency 'Liberty Housing' ticked this option. The sample can therefore be found representative of those who policy change would most likely effect
- There was a fairly limited sample from all other types of respondents

### 3.8 HOUSEHOLD TYPE



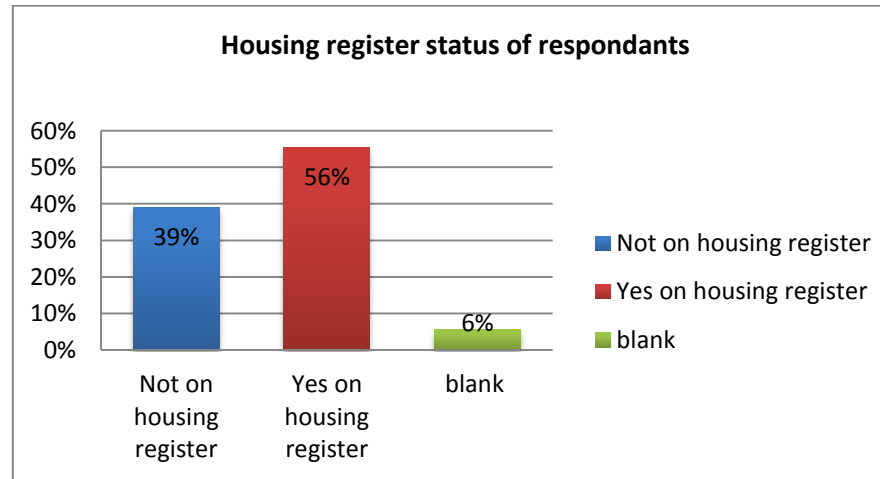
- The greatest proportion of consultation respondents came from couples with children and lone parents who under homeless legislation are more likely to fulfil a priority need homeless category.

### 3.9 CURRENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT



- The greatest proportion of sample respondents has come people living in council homes and in the private sector. It is thought that some people living in privately rented accommodation through the Council's social lettings agency 'Liberty Housing' may have ticked that they live in the private sector opposed to in temporary accommodation.
- The sample can be found representative of the opinions for whom the policy change would most likely effect

### 3.10 HOUSING REGISTER STATUS



- The greatest proportion of sample respondents was on the housing register. The sample can therefore be considered to be, on the whole, representative of those whose opinions that a policy change would affect. It must be noted there is still a significant sample for those not on the housing register.

## **PART A: HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY RESULTS**

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A fundamental review is being undertaken on the Council's existing Housing Allocation Scheme which looks at who qualifies to be eligible for social housing and how it is allocated.

The proposed new allocation scheme aims to be;

- Simple, fair, transparent and understandable
- Realistic and to inform residents of stock availability
- Support local people in need of housing
- Reward those who contribute to their local community

The Housing Consultation asked respondents how they feel about 11 key aspects of the Housing Allocation policy that is proposed to change following reviews. Proposed changes include;

11. The qualifying criteria – residency period duration
12. The qualifying criteria – continuous period of residency
13. The qualifying criteria – financial circumstances, income threshold at which residents can join the housing register
14. The qualifying criteria – introduction of unacceptable behaviour provision
15. Changes made to identified housing need categories
16. Introduction of a reduced housing priority criterion
17. The priority banding system
18. Choice based lettings and assisted bidding system
19. Introduction of a 'one offer' only policy
20. Sheltered housing eligibility criteria
21. New policy implementation arrangements

The Council consulted on key elements of the allocation scheme that are proposed to change. This means that aspects not mentioned contained with the current policy will not be proposed to change; this includes the application process itself which will remain the same in principle and definitions relating to the type of households prioritised under each band and the qualifying criteria.

### **Overview**

Overall the reception to the main proposals for change with the allocation scheme has been positive, with most areas receiving high satisfaction results from the respondent sample.

There are three key policy areas which the Consultation found had a significantly lower satisfaction rate, whereby the majority of respondents were dissatisfied. This includes the residency period proposal, the one offer only proposal and the proposal to implement the policy immediately.

The Council would like to thank all respondents for submitting their view on the Housing Allocation Policy.

All consultation findings and the wider feedback from all stakeholders is being considered by the Council before the final policy version is drafted.

## Overview of Consultation Results

### 1. Proposal A1 Results: Qualifying criteria – the residency period

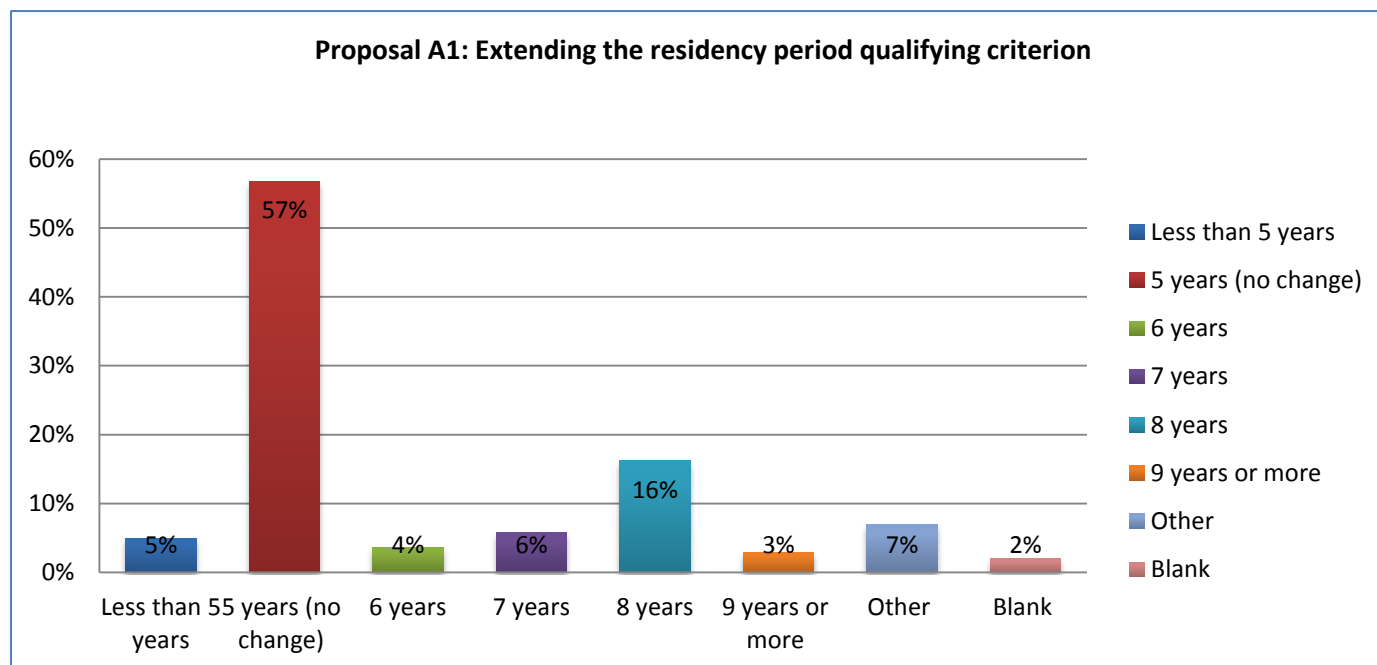
1.1 Under the Localism Act 2011, local authorities can decide to set their own qualifying criteria over who can and cannot join their housing register/Allocation Schemes.

1.2 As there is an extremely limited supply of social housing, the Council would like to reserve the stock for those most in need with the strongest local connection to the Borough.

In order to meet the aims mentioned above, the Council is proposing to extend the qualifying criteria relating to length of residency period that it requires local residents to have before they are deemed eligible to join the Housing Register.

- a) Residency period - under the current policy, an applicant must have lived in Havering for at least 5 years OR 2 out of the last 5 years before they can join the housing register.

1.3 As the Council is considering increasing the residency period, the consultation asked respondents to consider the exact length of residency period it felt was appropriate. The results are outlined below;



1.4 The overwhelming majority of the respondent sample feels that the residency period should remain unchanged at 5 years (57%) and the Council should not be looking at a proposal to extend the residency criteria.

1.5 Although not a selected option, some respondents (5%) answered under 'other' that they felt the residency period should in fact be much lower to ensure the demand for social housing was met by the Council. Respondents in this category suggested a two or three year residency qualification period.

1.6 Residents who agreed with the proposal to extend the residency period formed the minority responses, indicating a combined total 29% of the sample was positively satisfied. Surprisingly, of the 29% who did want to see the residency period extended, 8 years was the highest selected preference with 16% of respondents believing this was a suitable duration.

1.7 Many respondents answered 'other' however then wrote a preference such as 5 years that was already an available response option. Such 'other' responses was analysed and filtered into the appropriate category, the final analysis is shown above under graph A1. The remaining responses classed as 'other' in the graph above (7%) included suggestions that could not be broken down into a category, such as:

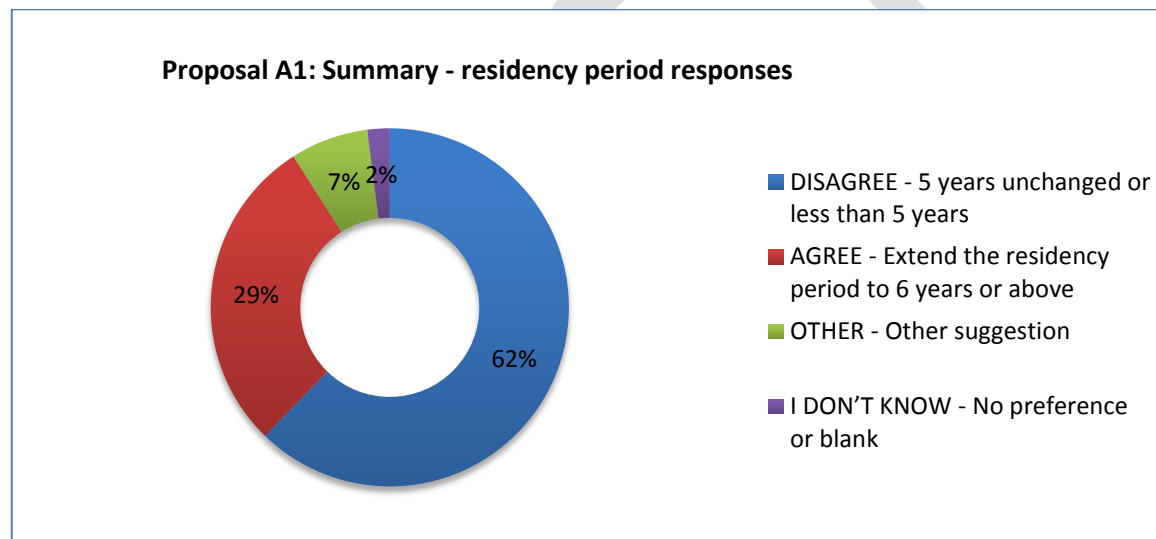
- 'as long as required'

- 'as long as the Council thinks appropriate'
- Other and then a blank comment failing to elaborate on the choice

1.8 Of the small proportion of respondents that answered 9 years or more, around 67% (8 of 12 respondents) described that the policy should be 10 years, 25% felt it should be a much higher level, for example 12 years, 16 years and 20 years, the remaining response felt 9 years was a suitable timescale.

1.9 A summary graph is shown below to provide a simple demonstration of the respondent proportion who is satisfied with the proposal to extend the residency period in some capacity compared to those dissatisfied who have indicated a negative response by choosing a period of 5 years or less than 5 years.

These responses have been distinguished by their preference, by agreeing with the proposal to those who disagree with the proposal.



1.10 As can be seen, the overwhelming majority of respondents are dissatisfied and disagree with the proposal to extend the residency period. Just under half the number who disagreed, chose options of 6 years and above to indicate satisfaction with the proposal

1.11 Respondents were advised to submit an open qualitative response to the Council's consultation contact details if they wished to feedback on this proposed policy. All feedback received in this area was negative and mainly included statements to reinforce an opposition to this proposal i.e. '*I feel strongly the residency period should be less than five years*'. The reason why some households were dissatisfied was because of the impact the policy would have on growing children who reach the age of 18 and have '*little housing options*'.

1.12 All comments from respondents in the consultation submitted have been formally responded to by the Council.



## Proposal A1: Respondent profile Analysis

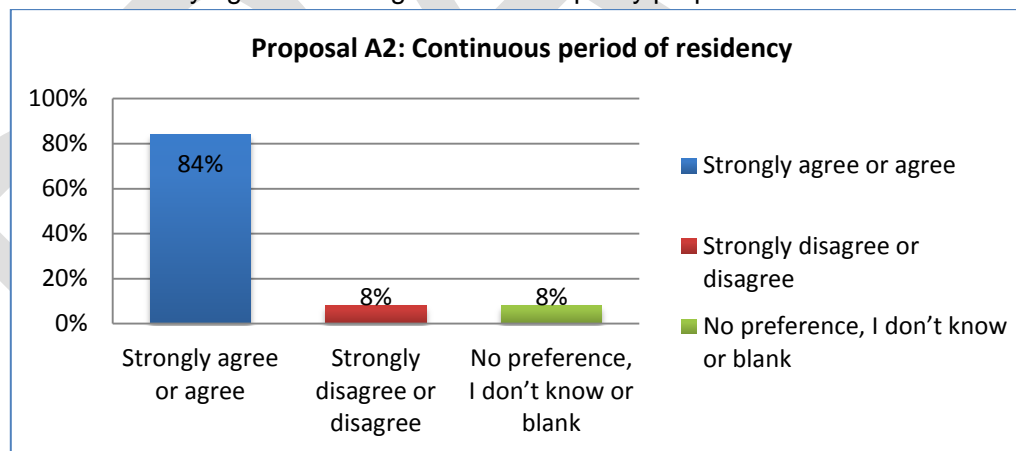
- 1.13 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council is required have due regard to matters of discrimination and advance the equality of opportunity through any action it implements affecting local residents.
- 1.14 It is therefore extremely important for the Council to understand if there is any disproportionate or high dissatisfaction from any demographic group with any proposal made through the Consultation. This contributes to the Council's analysis on whether any proposal will have a negative impact upon any group. The Council has conducted an equality analysis on each policy that will include views expressed through the housing consultation.
- 1.15 As there is a noted high dissatisfaction with this proposal, a developed summary of the findings on how demographic groups responded is provided below:
- All age groups as a majority were dissatisfied (strongly disagreed or disagreed) with the proposal (above 50% dissatisfaction). The highest level of dissatisfaction arose from the 25-44 age group (65%), followed by the 45-59 age group (64%)
  - All ethnicity groups as a majority were dissatisfied (strongly disagreed or disagreed) with the proposal (above 50% dissatisfaction). The highest level of dissatisfaction arose from 'other ethnic group' (75%) however a very low response rate was reported from this group overall.
  - Respondents who did not have a disability were more opposed (65%) to the proposal to extend the residency period than disabled respondents. 50% of disabled applicants who responded to the survey disagreed with the residency period.
  - Of the female respondents who responded to the survey, the majority (66%) disagreed with the proposal. Whilst men had a lower dissatisfaction rate compared to women, 53% were more dissatisfied than satisfied with the proposal.
  - Heterosexual, lesbian and other sexual orientation respondents and those who elected to prefer not to say all expressed majority dissatisfaction with the proposal. In contrast, gay male respondents, and those who left the demographic question blank voted they were satisfied with the residency proposal. It must be noted there was a low response rate from gay men. Bisexual respondents had an equally split preference between satisfied, dissatisfied and no preference, however again a low response rate is noted from this group.
  - All religious groups were dissatisfied with the residency period criterion than satisfied; a majority dissatisfaction rate of over 50%. Jewish respondents were the only ethnicity group in favour of the residency period proposal (100% in favour) however a very small response rate was recorded (2 persons).
  - All resident groups as a majority were dissatisfied (over 50%) with the residency proposal. Where there was a high response rate such as with private sector tenants, 75% was opposed to the policy to extend the residency criteria, a significant high proportion. A high dissatisfaction rate was also recorded from owner occupiers (74%). Interestingly 51% of social housing tenants were dissatisfied with the proposal compared to 40% who were satisfied. Social housing tenants formed the highest positive satisfied group in relation to the proposal followed by respondents living with family (37% satisfied).

- All respondents living in owner occupied properties, shared ownership properties, temporary accommodation, housing association, social housing and in the private sector were more dissatisfied than satisfied with the proposal (above 50% dissatisfaction). Supported accommodation respondents were the only group in favour of the policy (67% in favour) however there was an overall very small response rate so cannot be deemed statistically significant.
- All household groups as a majority were dissatisfied with the proposal to extend the residency period criteria (levels recorded above 50% dissatisfaction). Whilst on the whole more dissatisfied, the highest positive satisfaction rate come from single people where 36% of respondents was in favour of the policy proposal
- All organisations who responded to the survey (including private landlords, private and public sector developers, RSLs and supported home providers) were dissatisfied with the proposal
- Respondents both on and off the housing register were dissatisfied with the proposal to extend the residency period, people on the housing register were proportionately 5% more dissatisfied than those who were not.

## 2. Proposal A2 Results: Qualifying criteria – Continuous period of residency

2.1. Under the current policy's qualifying criterion, you can have lived in Havering for at least 5 years or 2 years continuous residency out of the past 5 years. The Council is proposing to ensure that whatever the residency period is, that this will be a continuous period of residency. This is to ensure the system is simplified, easier to understand and easier to administer. The impact will be that anyone who moves out of the borough on a temporary basis will lose their local connection to the borough and will not be able to join the housing register.

2.2. The consultation asked respondents to which extent they agreed or disagreed with the policy proposal. The results are detailed below



2.3. The majority of respondents are satisfied with the proposal to make the residency period qualification criterion a 'continuous' duration. Due to the response in proposal 1A, the findings indicate many who have voted positively under 1B within this group are satisfied that 5 years is a reasonable time period to be a 'continuous' resident in the borough and be eligible for social housing.

2.4. More respondents who disagree with the continuous period of residency are from the group who answered that the residency period should be extended in the previous question. Overall, the minority of respondents disagree with this proposal.

2.5. No open responses regarding this policy proposal question was submitted.

### Proposal A2: Respondent profile Analysis

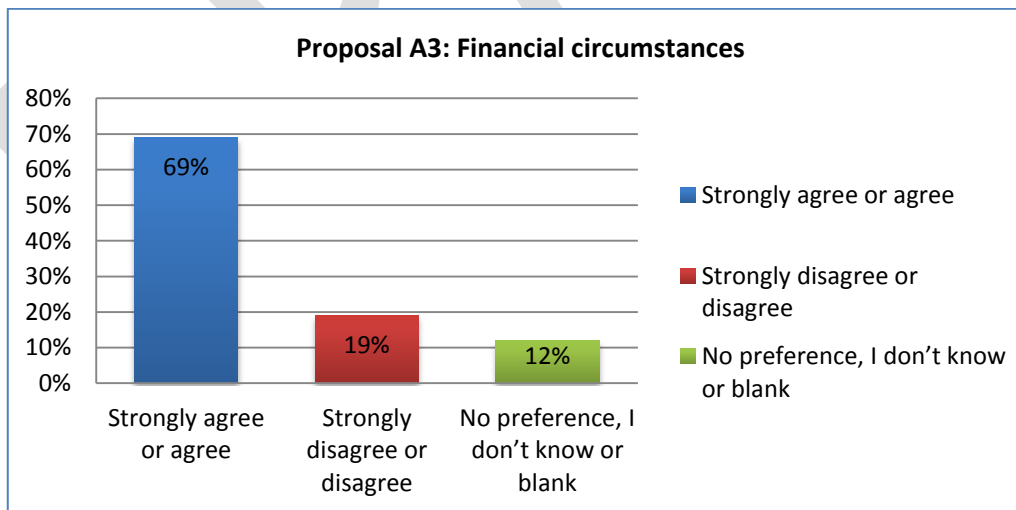
3.1 There was no disproportionately high dissatisfaction (a majority rate of over 50%) from any demographic group or resident type with this policy proposal.

### 3. Proposal A3 Results: Qualifying criteria – Financial Circumstances

3.2. As there is a severe shortage of social and affordable rented properties in the borough, eligibility for social housing has to be restricted to ensure availability for households on low income. Households are not able to join the housing register if they possess sufficient income and/or assets to be able to afford private rented housing in the borough. The current household income threshold to be able to join the housing register is up to a household income of £27,500.

3.3. There is increased competition for private rented housing in the borough and because of this, property prices to buy or rent are rising. In addition, the growing population and migration into Havering has meant there is an extremely limited availability of affordable housing in the borough. For this reason the Council is proposing to extend the income threshold to £36,000. For households who earn above this level, it is considered reasonable and affordable for households to secure an affordable home in the privately rented sector.

3.4. The consultation survey asked respondents to what extent they agreed with this proposal. The results are shown below;



- 3.5. The majority of respondents are satisfied with the proposal to extend the income threshold to £36,000.
- 3.6. The qualitative feedback on this proposal was from respondents satisfied with the Council's acknowledgement that the cost of housing in the borough is increasing. Comments include;
- *'I think the level at which you can join the housing register should be higher and agree with this policy. It is becoming generally more expensive for people living in the borough with general expenses and living costs'*
  - *'I support this because its becoming really difficult to find affordable accommodation in the private rented sector'*
- 3.7. All comments from respondents have been formally responded to by the Council
- 3.8. More respondents disagreed with the proposal than no preference submissions however the overall dissatisfaction rate is less than a third of those who were satisfied.

### **Proposal A3: Respondent profile Analysis**

- 3.9. There was no disproportionately high dissatisfaction (a majority rate of over 50%) from any demographic group or resident type with this policy proposal. However,
- The 'other' sexual orientation group was more dissatisfied (25%) than satisfied (17%)
  - Sikhs were more dissatisfied (67%) than satisfied (33%) however a very low response from this group is noted
  - A Councillor/Member disagreed with the proposal (100%) of the sample from this group as there was only one respondent

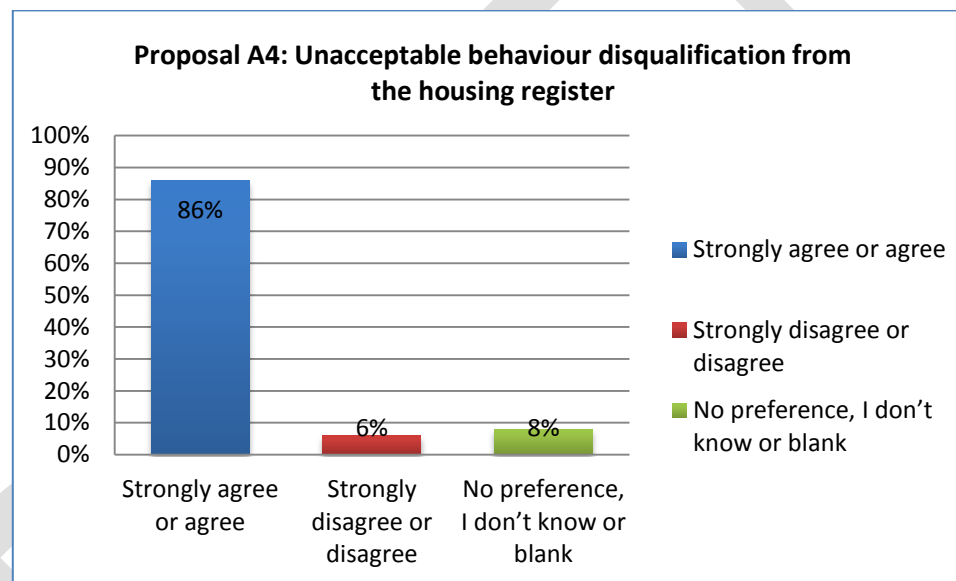
### **4. Proposal A4 Results: Qualifying criteria – Unacceptable behaviour**

- 4.1. Under the current policy, an applicant found guilty of unacceptable behaviour can join the housing register but an offer of accommodation may be withdrawn once they are successful in bidding for a property.

4.2. Under the current policy, an applicant found guilty of unacceptable behaviour can join the housing register but an offer of accommodation may be withdrawn once they are successful in bidding for a property.

4.3. The Council is proposing that such applicants will be excluded from joining the housing register as such behaviour would prevent the person from being considered a suitable tenant. Examples of the behaviour includes anti-social behaviour; obtaining a tenancy by deception; sub-letting social housing; unspent housing or welfare benefit convictions; providing false or misleading information and threat or actual violence against neighbours, council staff, members and Council contractors. In order to comply with legislation, there are some exceptional circumstances where the qualifying criterion will not apply.

4.4. The online survey consultation asked respondents to what extent they agreed with the proposal to exclude applicants from the housing register who are guilty of unacceptable behaviour.



4.5. The overwhelming majority of respondents were satisfied with the proposal to disqualify applicants on the housing register guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour. Positive feedback from respondents covered vocalising support for the policy on the basis that social housing should be rewarded to good behaviour and tenants who can value and respect homes. Comments included:

- *'I'm sick and tired of seeing people abusing the system, their home and causing trouble in nice flats then to get rehoused again. Something is not morally right.'*

4.6. All comments from respondents have been formally responded to by the Council over the consultation period

4.7. A very small number of respondents disagreed with the policy proposal, 80% more respondents were more satisfied than dissatisfied.

## **Proposal A4: Respondent profile Analysis**

4.8. There was no disproportionately high dissatisfaction (a majority rate of over 50%) from any demographic group denomination or respondent type with this policy proposal. All group denominations were more satisfied than dissatisfied.

## **5. Proposal A5 Results: Housing Need Categories**

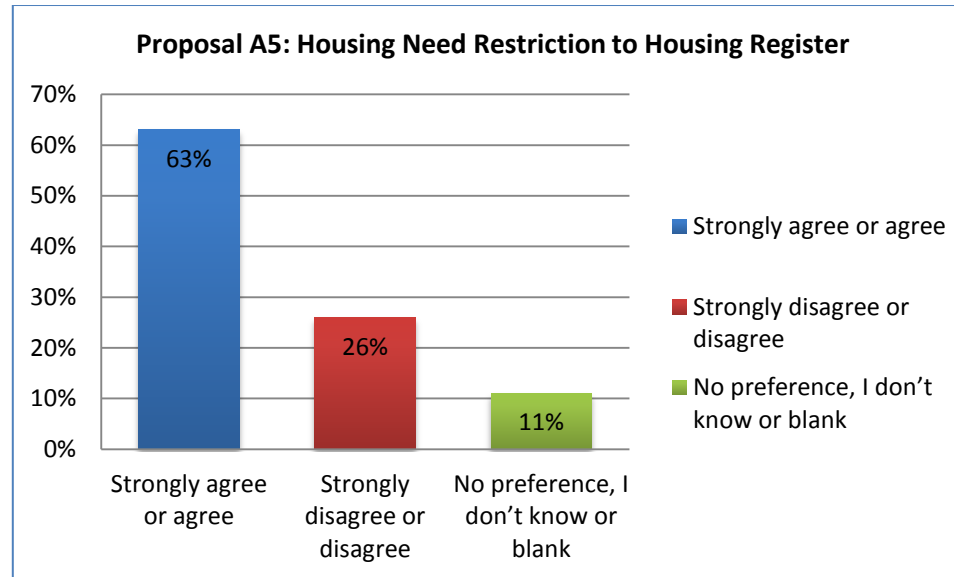
5.1 To join the housing register, a household has to demonstrate they have a housing need. Under the current policy, council or private sector leased tenants who have been in their accommodation for 5 years but are not in housing need or no longer in housing need can apply to be moved to alternative accommodation.

5.2 The Council is proposing to only allow people who can demonstrate they have a housing need to join the housing register. Applicants without an identifiable housing need will be given advice and supported by the Council to find their own housing solutions including private rented sector options.

5.3 Examples of housing need include:

- People who need to move for medical reasons, or to relieve some form of hardship that either they or someone they care for is suffering from
- People who are in life threatening circumstances and are at serious risk of harm by remaining in their current accommodation e.g. from violence
- Households living in overcrowded conditions
- Young care leavers
- People who need to move-on from supported housing
- Families with children who are homeless

5.4 The consultation asked respondents to what extent they agreed with the principle of restricting the housing register to those applicants who can demonstrate a housing need. The results are detailed below:



5.5 Whilst the overwhelming majority voted in favour of the proposal to restrict the housing register for people who can demonstrate a housing need there was a higher dissatisfaction noted with this proposal compared to many of the proposals made through the consultation. Overall, respondents were more satisfied than dissatisfied indicating a preference to reserve the Council's housing stock for people with the highest demonstrable needs in the Borough.

5.6 Few qualitative responses were made on this proposal, excluding those that queried what would happen when your housing need changes whilst on the housing register. All comments from respondents have been formally responded to by the Council over the consultation period

#### **Proposal A5: Respondent profile Analysis**

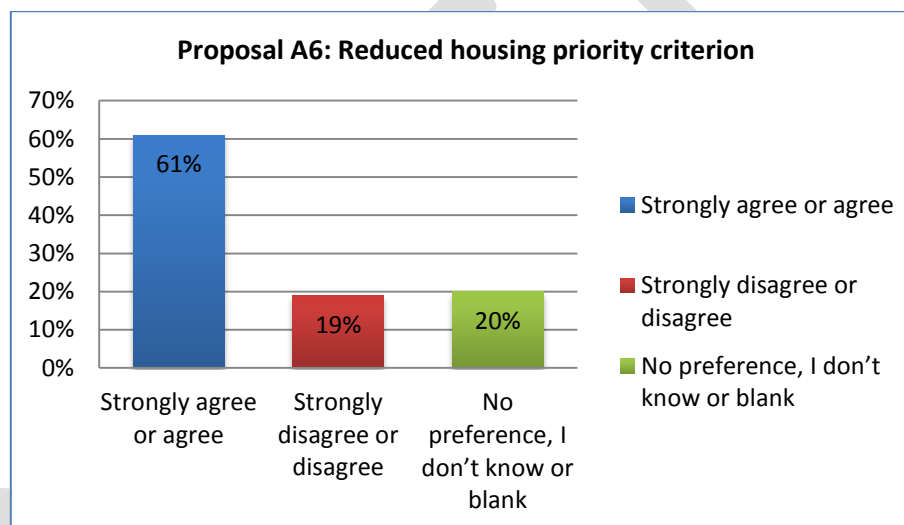
5.7 There was no disproportionately high dissatisfaction (a majority rate of over 50%) from any demographic group denomination or respondent type with this policy proposal. All group denominations were more satisfied than dissatisfied. This excludes:

- Under sexual orientation, amongst the gay woman/lesbian group there was an equal split preference between satisfied and dissatisfied

## 6. Proposal A6 Results: Reduced housing priority criterion

6.1 In addition to only assisting those in housing need, the Council is proposing to implement a new 'reduced priority' criterion to the banding system which will be awarded to accepted homeless households who do not meet the Havering residency period. This is because under the homelessness legislation, we cannot exclude such households from joining the housing register as they fall within a reasonable preference group (in housing need).

6.2 The Consultation asked respondents to what extent they agreed with the proposal to introduce a reduced housing priority criterion to the housing banding system. The results are detailed below.



6.3 The majority of respondents were satisfied with the proposal to introduce a reduced housing priority criterion indicating an understanding that the Council must meet its statutory obligations to house homeless households.

6.4 The minority proportion of sample respondents is dissatisfied with the proposal.

6.5 No qualitative comments have been made on this proposal through the consultation.

### Proposal A6: Respondent profile Analysis

6.6 There was no disproportionately high dissatisfaction (a majority rate of over 50%) from any demographic group denomination or respondent type with this policy proposal. All group denominations were more satisfied than dissatisfied. This excludes



- Under sexual orientation, amongst the bisexual group denomination, more disagree (67%) with the proposal than agree (33%) however, there is a very low response rate from this group overall and so the finding here is not statistically representative of trends.

## 7. Proposal A7 Results: Priority banding system

7.1 This proposal outlined the Council's plan to review the priority banding system for housing applicants on the Council's housing register for social housing.

7.2 Under the current policy, there are four priority bands with a number of different qualifying conditions which are complicated and can be difficult to understand and administer.

7.3 The Council is proposing to introduce five simple priority bands, with simple easily understood qualifying criterion. The proposed banding system is outlined below;

1. ER Band – Emergency Rehousing Band

For households with an urgent need to move, examples include serious health or medical needs, domestic violence, critical safeguarding issues and serious disrepair.

2. CC1 Band – Community Contribution 1 Band

For households with a need to move plus Community Contribution including working people, ex-service personnel or people fostering and adopting

3. CC2 Band – Community Contribution 2 Band

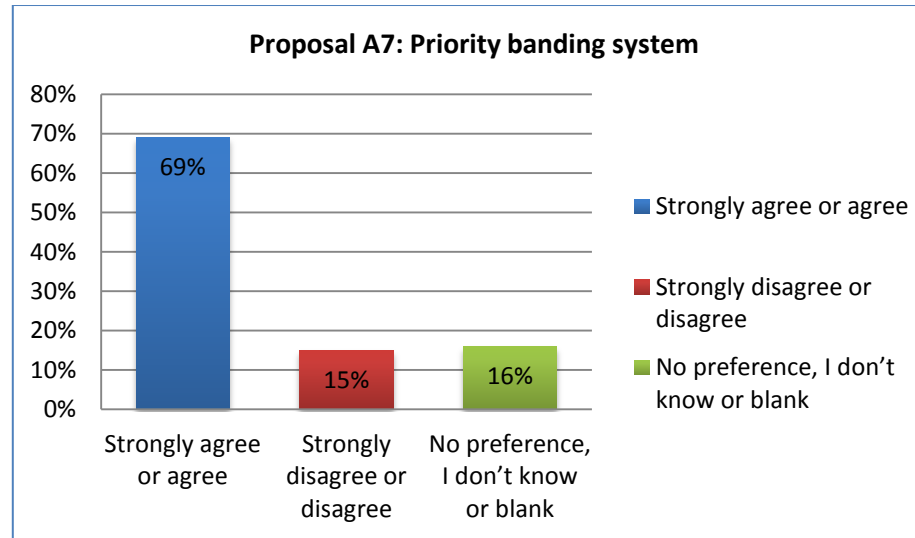
For households with a need to move plus Community Contribution including people volunteering, a Council tenant needing to downsize or households who are a carer for a Havering resident

4. Homeseecker Band

Households with a need to move only

5. Reduced Priority Band

People who are in housing need but have a reduced preference such as accepted homeless households who do not meet the local residency criteria



7.4 The majority of respondents were satisfied with the proposal to change the priority banding system for the housing register. Some respondents submitted additional positive feedback regarding the proposal, particularly in commandment that carers are recognised within the policy for their community contribution in providing care to local people in need;

*'I agree with all proposals outlined specifically the idea to place higher prioritisation to carers above the Homeseeker band. I feel the Council is adopting a common sense approach to allocations... I have real confidence in the proposed system'*

*'I am glad to see carers are recognised for their contribution'*

7.5 The minority proportion of sample respondents are dissatisfied with the proposal. Applicants were encouraged submit feedback if they disagreed with the order of prioritisation or felt the bands should change. Applicants were also provided support in identifying how their individual position could potentially change if the proposed changes were implemented.

7.6 Feedback included themes on;

- Higher prioritisation for carers  
 Whilst respondents were grateful of the proposed banding system recognising carer's contribution, some respondents wanted to see higher prioritisation for carers so that carers would be placed in CC1 and not CC2 on the basis that working households should not be perceived as higher prioritisation than carers.  
*'Can carers be placed in CC1 as it's a form of work and saves the local authority money in social care?'*  
*'Carers need to be placed in a higher band'*
- Banding transparency and guidance

Comments made focused more on operational processes such as keeping applicants updated whilst on the housing register with the availability of social housing, waiting times and place on the housing register.

*'Can the policy be clearer about what happens when housing needs change and the impact this has on banding?'*

*'Please can you be more transparent with updates whilst applicants are in the bidding process?'*

7.7 All comments from respondents have been formally responded to by the Council over the consultation period

### **Proposal A7: Respondent profile Analysis**

7.8 There was no disproportionately high dissatisfaction (a majority rate of over 50%) from any demographic group denomination or respondent type with this policy proposal. All group denominations were more satisfied than dissatisfied. This excludes

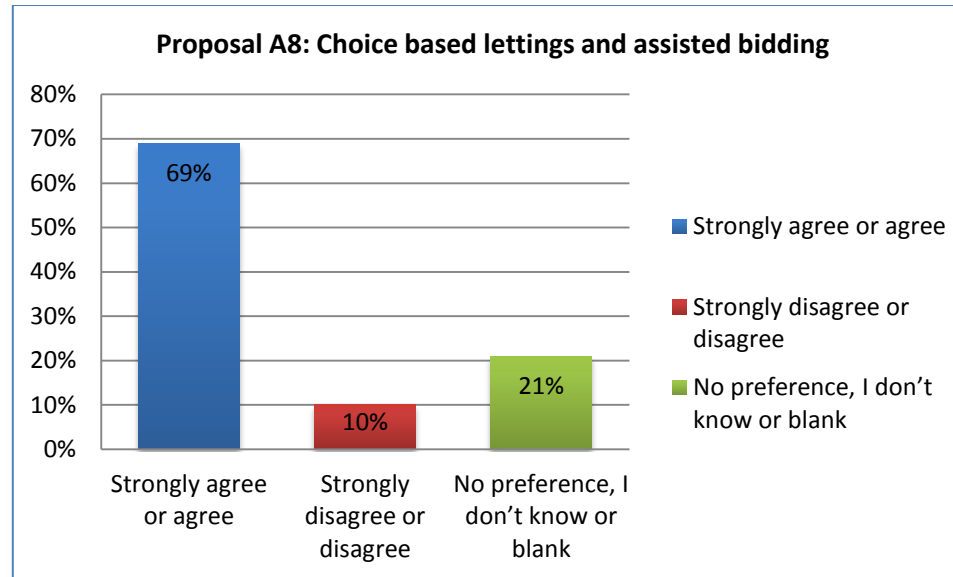
- Under sexual orientation, amongst the bisexual group denomination more disagree (67%) with the proposal than agree (33%) however there is a very low response rate from this group overall and so the finding here is not statistically representative of trends

## **8. Proposal A8 Results: Choice based lettings and assisted bidding**

8.1 The Council will continue to operate a Choice Based Lettings system and advertise properties through East London Lettings Company.

8.2 Under the current policy, assisted bids (direct offers) are made to most applicants in the Emergency Rehousing Band. In order to improve transparency of the process; the council is proposing to limit the number of circumstances under which assisted bids can be made. This will be supported by the proposed changes to the priority bands where most applicants placed on the Emergency Band will also have to bid for available vacancies themselves instead of waiting for an assisted bid.

8.3 The properties identified for assisted bids will not be advertised but the results will be publicised in the usual manner. It is expected that at least 70% of all allocations will be as a result of resident bidding activity.



8.4 The majority of respondents were satisfied with the proposal to limit the circumstances under which assisted bids can be made

8.5 The minority proportion of sample respondents was dissatisfied with the proposal

8.6 No specific qualitative comments or feedback has been made on this policy proposal

### Proposal A8: Respondent profile Analysis

8.7 There was no disproportionately high dissatisfaction (a majority rate of over 50%) from any demographic group denomination or respondent type with this policy proposal. All group denominations were more satisfied than dissatisfied. This excludes

- Under ethnicity the 'other ethnic group had a split satisfaction rate between satisfied (25%) and dissatisfied (25%) however, there was a low response rate from this group overall.

## 9. Proposal A9 Results: One offer only policy

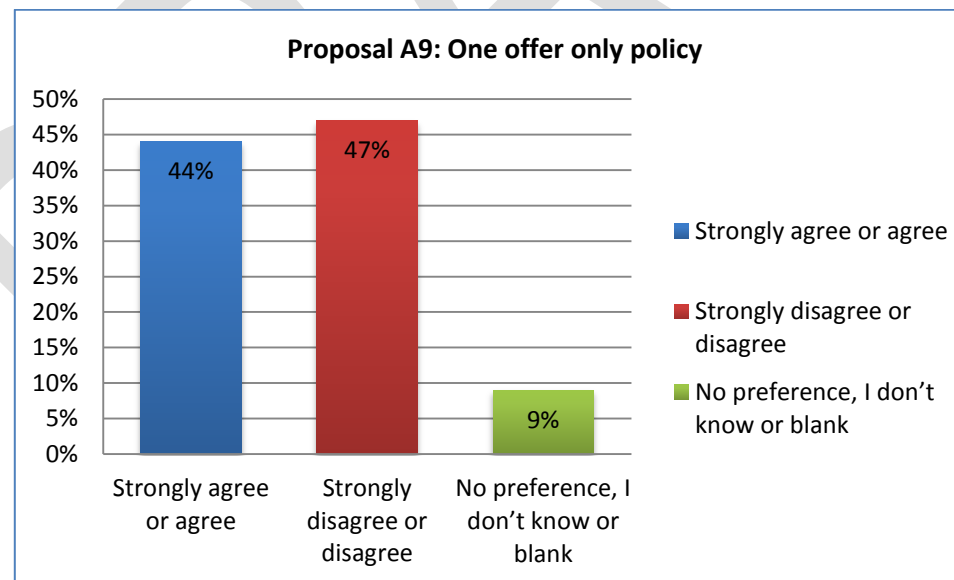
9.1 Under the current policy, there are different numbers of offers and penalties that can be made to households on the housing register depending on the priority housing band a household is placed in.

9.2 In order to make the process easier to understand and to encourage applicants to accept reasonable and suitable offers of accommodation, the Council is proposing to implement a one offer only policy. The Council has a severe shortage of accommodation and this proposed policy is expected to drive efficiencies in the allocation system and ensure those with the greatest needs for accommodation are adequately housed. The Council will support all people on the housing register in bidding for a suitable property that meets individual household needs and requirements.

9.3 If applicants refuse a reasonable and suitable offer of accommodation that meets their needs, it is proposed applicants will be removed from the housing register and not be allowed to re-apply for one year. Applicants will have the option to appeal against an offer made if they consider it to be unreasonable or unsuitable. If their appeal is successful, the applicant will receive another offer of suitable accommodation.

9.4 The one offer policy will not apply to sheltered housing.

9.5 The Consultation asked respondents to what extent they agreed with the proposal to introduce a one offer only policy. The results are detailed below.



9.6 While just under half of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the policy compared to the proportion that agreed, this indicated that there was a relatively higher dissatisfaction rate compared to those who were satisfied. Whilst more respondents disagree than strongly disagree, the split between these options is just 3%, indicating many of the sample felt strongly about this policy not being implemented.

9.7 Despite the high dissatisfaction rate, no qualitative additional comments were made on this proposal through the housing consultation.

### **Proposal A9: Respondent profile Analysis**

9.8 As there is a noted high dissatisfaction with this proposal, a developed summary of the findings on how demographic groups responded is provided below:

- Age – Interestingly, age groups expressed varying preferences under this proposal. The 18-24, 25-44, 60+ age groups and prefer not to say/blank group were all more dissatisfied with the proposal than satisfied. The highest dissatisfaction level came from the 18-24 age group (56%), prefer not to say group (57%) and 60+ group (50%). The 45-59 and 16-17 age groups were in favour and more satisfied with the proposal than dissatisfied.
- Ethnicity – There was an equal split proportion between those satisfied and dissatisfied amongst white respondents, black respondents and those who did not specify their ethnicity (blank). Asian households and ‘prefer not to say’ groups were more dissatisfied than satisfied. In contrast, mixed households and other ethnic group were more satisfied than dissatisfied.
- Disability – the majority of respondents with a disability were dissatisfied with the proposal to introduce a one offer only policy. Those without a disability were more satisfied with the proposal compared those dissatisfied
- Gender – there was a stark difference in how genders responded to this question. Females were 54% dissatisfied with the one offer only policy, whereas males were 59% in favour of the proposal with just a 35% opposition to the policy
- Sexual orientation – All groups were more satisfied with the proposal than dissatisfied however in contrast heterosexual respondents who formed the greatest overall response group were more dissatisfied (51%)
- Religion – all religious groups were more dissatisfied than satisfied, excluding those where who expressed ‘no religion’. The highest level of dissatisfaction came from Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist respondents however there was a low response rate from these groups.
- Resident type – owner occupiers (62%) other groups (consisting of council employees) and homeless groups were more satisfied (57%) with a one offer only proposal than dissatisfied. This may represent vested interests, for example homeless groups who are waiting for social housing and believe one offer system will drive efficiencies in the system meaning they may see a reduction in waiting time. For council employees, such a system might drive efficiencies in administration. By a small proportion, social housing respondents were just slightly more satisfied than dissatisfied with the proposal. Private sector tenants and people living with family were more dissatisfied than satisfied.
- Household types – Respondents of all household structures were mainly dissatisfied with the proposal, the highest level of dissatisfaction came from lone parents (61%) and couples with children (50%)
- Current Accommodation status – owner occupiers, respondents living in supported accommodation, ‘other’ blank and prefer not to say accommodation groups were all more satisfied than dissatisfied with the policy proposal. In contrast, temporary accommodation tenants, housing association tenants, private

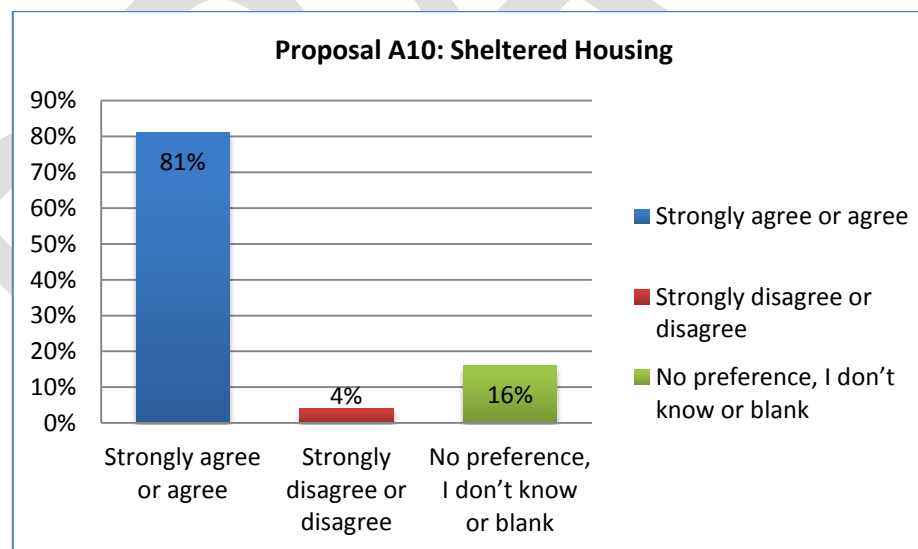
tenants and social housing tenants all were more dissatisfied with the proposal than satisfied. These are the groups most likely to be impacted by the policy proposal, where a high proportion are living in accommodation under the Council's provision

- Organisation types – landlords and supported home providers were more dissatisfied than satisfied with the proposal. In contrast, private sector and public sector developers were more satisfied. RSLs had a split opinion on this policy proposal.
- Housing register – the overwhelming majority of respondents not currently on the housing register was in favour of the one only policy. This may represent the views of people who may wish to go on the housing register, who feel that social housing should be reserved for those most in need, accepting of any form of reasonable and suitable accommodation offered. Those on the housing register were 58% dissatisfied with the policy proposal. This is the group most likely to be impacted by the policy if introduced.

## 10. Proposal A10 Results: Sheltered Housing

10.1 Sheltered housing enables older people to live independently with support. To ensure that the lifestyle of those in sheltered accommodation is compatible with the scheme, the Council is proposing to implement the following eligibility criteria:

- 60 years and over; or
- Aged 55 to 59 years and requiring a higher level of support due to frailty, ill-health or restricted mobility; and.
- Single or joint applicants with no children;
- Who are In need of the housing support provided by the scheme



10.2 The overwhelming majority of respondents were satisfied with the proposal to implement the above eligibility criteria for social housing.

10.3 This proposal received the lowest number of dis-satisfied respondents of all housing allocation policy consultation questions, further indicating the high level of support towards policy introduction.

10.4 No specific qualitative comments or feedback has been made on this policy proposal

### Proposal A10: Respondent profile Analysis

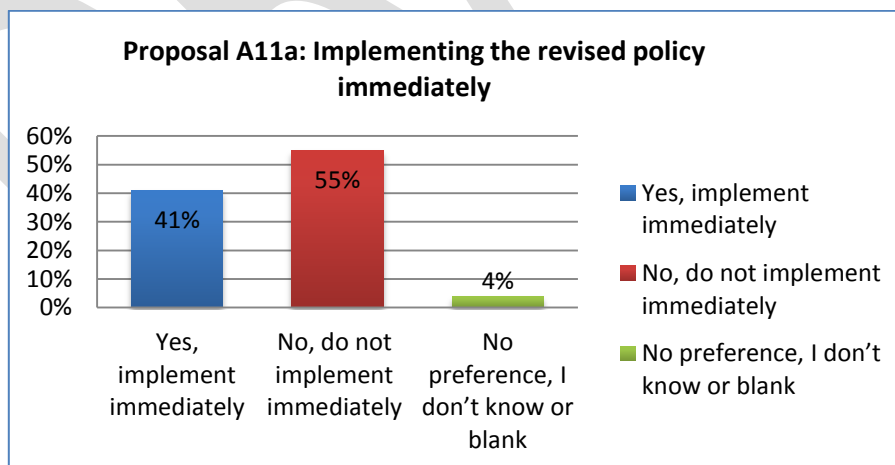
10.5 There was no disproportionately high dissatisfaction (a majority rate of over 50%) from any demographic group denomination or respondent type with this policy proposal. All group denominations were more satisfied than dissatisfied. This excludes

10.6 Under age group, the 16-17 year old respondents who were more dissatisfied than satisfied however there is only two respondents from this sample and so the finding cannot be classed as statistically significant

## 11. Proposal A11 (a-c) Results: Implementation of the revised housing allocation scheme

11.1 As the proposed changes will mean that some applicants currently on the housing register will no longer qualify, the Council asked through the consultation how respondents would feel about the implementation options once any change is approved.

11.2 The Council wanted to know if people would be satisfied with implementing the policy immediately or if transitionally, what preference people would have towards the time period.



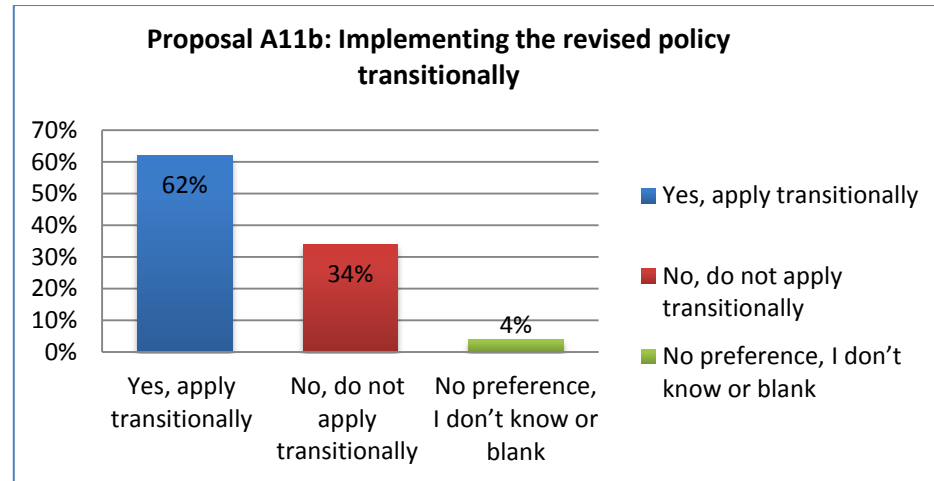


11.3 The majority of sample respondents would not like to see the changes implemented with immediate effect. Despite this surprisingly, a high proportion of respondents did agree with the proposal to implement changes immediately. When asked the following question which posed a transitional arrangement possible, many respondents changed opinion in favour of this option.

### **Proposal A11: Respondent profile Analysis**

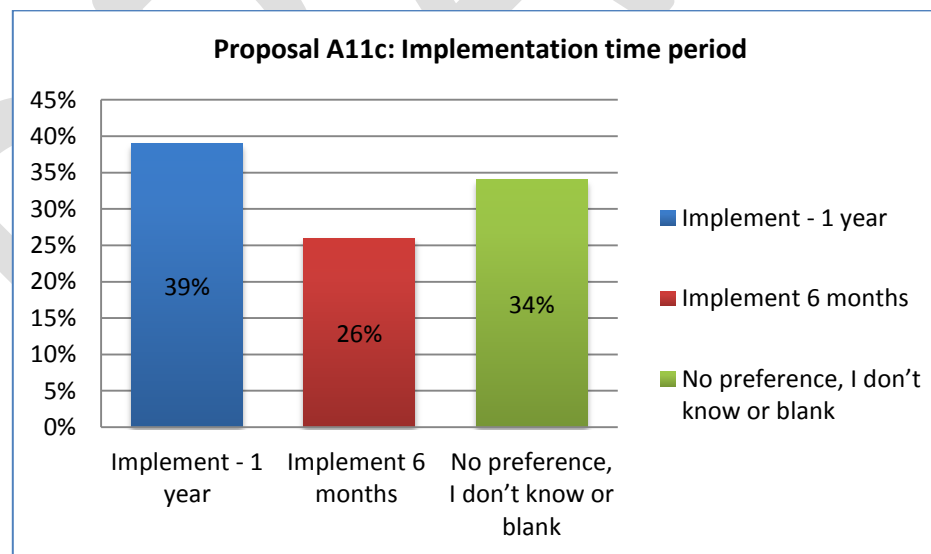
11.4 As there is a noted high dissatisfaction with this proposal, a developed summary of the findings on how demographic groups responded is provided below:

- Age – all age groups are dissatisfied with the proposal to implement the policy immediately
- Ethnicity – all ethnic groups excluding missed ethnicities and blank respondents are dissatisfied with the policy
- Disability – both disabled and non-disabled groups are more dissatisfied than satisfied with the policy
- Gender – as a majority females are dissatisfied with the policy proposal however the majority of men would like to see the policy introduced immediately
- Sexual Orientation – heterosexual group who have the largest overall response sample are more dissatisfied with the proposal. Gay men and bisexual groups are in favour of the policy
- Religion – All religious groups oppose the policy proposal, excluding Hindu and Jewish respondents however these groups had a small sample
- Resident type – Owner occupier and councillor respondents are the only two groups who would like to see the policy implemented immediately, all other resident types including existing tenants would like to presumably see a deferred introduction
- Household type – respondents of all household structures do not want the changes to be introduced immediately
- Accommodation status – All groups excluding supported accommodation tenants are dissatisfied with the idea of implementing the policy immediately
- Organisations – Registered Social Landlords was the only organisational group who were on the whole more receptive to the idea of implementing the policy immediately
- Housing register – Both respondents on/off the housing register oppose the idea of implementing the policy immediately. There is a higher dissatisfaction rate from people currently on the housing register.



11.5 When presenting with this proposal and asked the question if a transitional arrangement to policy introduction would be more preferable, the majority of respondents voted in favour of this option. It can be assumed respondents who previously voted in favour of an immediate arrangement dropped by around 7% once asked this question which then transferred to a transitional preference

11.6 Respondents were then asked when they felt the policy should be implemented and were given two options considered reasonable by the Council.



11.7 More respondents elected in favour of the proposal to implement the policy within a years' time period. This would mean that current housing applicants who are not eligible under the proposed scheme would have a year to continue bidding for accommodation before they are removed from the housing register.

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## PART B: HOMELESS PLACEMENTS POLICY RESULTS

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The Homeless Placements Policy is a new policy which has been developed to cover the eligibility and placement process for temporary and settled accommodation available for homeless households.

The development of the Placements Policy is to provide guidance for the placement of homeless households in temporary and private rented settled accommodation, both inside and outside the Borough. It covers both *interim* placements made while homelessness enquiries are undertaken, and *longer-term accommodation* placements for households accepted as homeless which includes long term temporary PSL and offers of privately rented accommodation (PRSOs) under an Assured Shorthold Tenancy for a contract period of at least 12 months.

The Housing Consultation asked respondents how they felt about four key policies, proposed to be introduced through the Homeless Placements policy. These proposals include:

1. A Homeless Placements Allocation Pathway
2. Making offers of Privately Rented Accommodation (PRSOs) and Discharging Homelessness Duties
3. Procuring out of borough accommodation and applying prioritisation criteria households with the highest needs for in-borough placements (using suitability assessment factors to decide on the location of placements)
4. Applying transfer prioritisation criteria between existing tenants of temporary accommodation with a need to move

### 1. Proposal B1 Results: Homeless Placements Allocation Pathway

1.1 This proposal described the Council's pathway approach for offers and placements of temporary accommodation. It described the rationale for why the service is proposing to adopt this pathway due to the shortage of suitable accommodation and asked respondents if they agreed if it was a suitable process.

1.2 In general, the Council is proposing to implement a two stage accommodation pathway approach to fulfil its legislative requirements to provide suitable accommodation for households presenting as homeless.

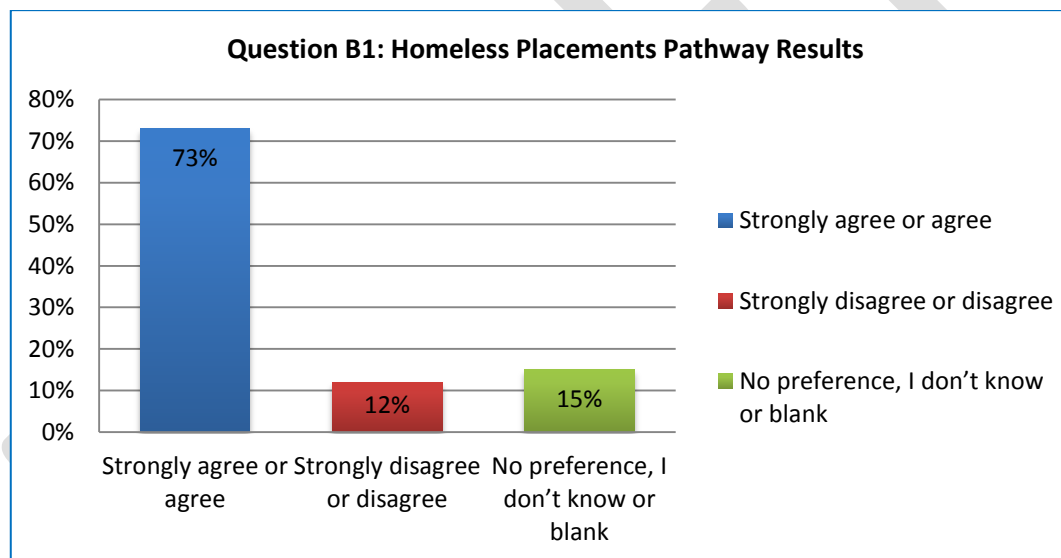
1.3 The process is described below:

- a) **First stage** - homeless applicants who are housed under the Council's interim duty to accommodate whilst homelessness enquiries are being made will be initially placed in Council-owned hostel accommodation before an investigation is completed and a formal housing decision is reached.

In circumstances where there is no available supply of interim hostel accommodation, pursuant to Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996, applicants may be placed as a last resort in emergency B&B accommodation. To comply with statutory legislation the Council will not place households with pregnant members or families with children in B&B accommodation for periods longer than 6 weeks. The Council will endeavour to transfer the household in line with its transfer policy under proposal 4.

- b) **Second stage** - following completion of assessment and where the Council has accepted a full duty, households will be moved to longer-term private sector leased (PSL) accommodation as soon as a suitable vacancy becomes available, or offered a 12 month Assured Shorthold private rented Tenancy (AST) to end the homelessness duty.

The Council has not historically made offers of privately rented accommodation as settled accommodation as a means to discharge its homelessness duties. However, due to the extreme shortage of longer-term temporary accommodation and social housing in the borough and an overwhelming demand, the Council intends to utilise its powers under the Localism Act 2011 to discharge its homelessness duties wherever suitable and reasonably practicable.



1.4 The overwhelming majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this proposal. Where respondents submitted a positive response to this proposal, feedback included:

- *'I feel the process gives the tenant a chance to prove they are capable of looking after a property for themselves and allows the local authority to see that before giving an offer of settled social housing'*
- *'I am happy to see a common sense approach is being taken with the homeless placements and feel it is transparent'*

1.5 A minority number of respondents disagreed with the proposal. The feedback from respondents who disagreed included common themes on:

- Eligibility - *'I feel it is unfair to offer social housing to non-local people'*
- Hostel suitability - *'I don't think hostels are at all suitable for people with children who are homeless', 'Children placed in one room with adults has a medical impact on wellbeing'*
- Use of long-term temporary accommodation - *'I don't think TA should be relied upon. If properties aren't available then they shouldn't be supplied they should just be placed on a waiting list', 'Is it more cost effective to do some quick, new built hostel flats for those in needs with lower rents? 'If people are accepted as homeless, social housing should be offered straight away'*

## 1.6 Respondent profile

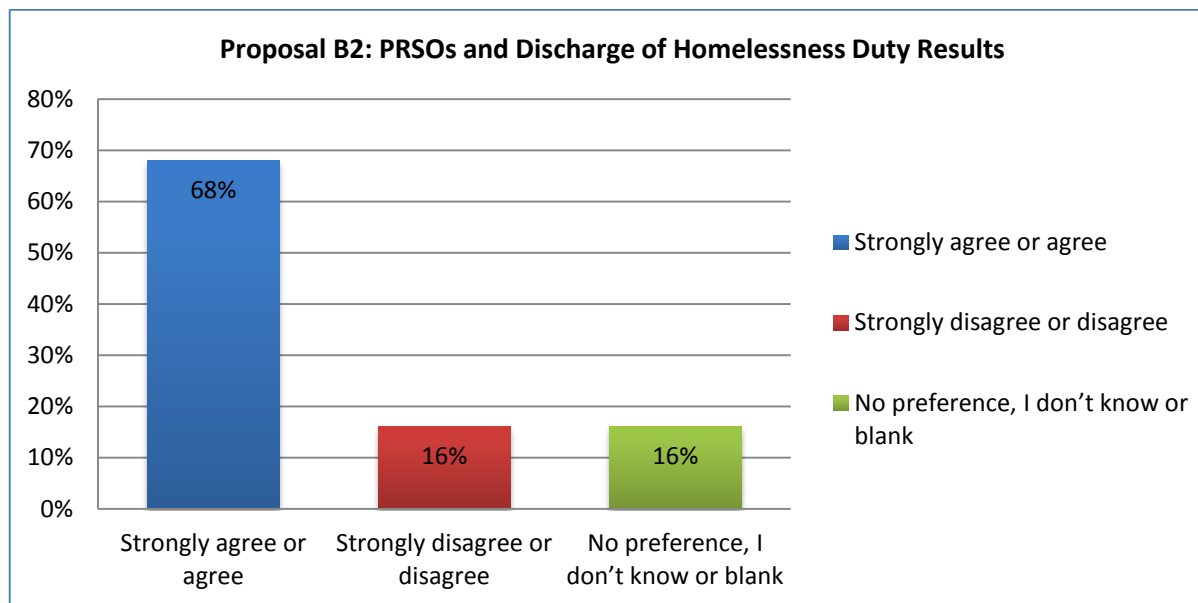
To summarise:

- All group denominations (age, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, resident types, household types, accommodation types, organisational types and housing register status) as a majority strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal

## 2. Proposal B2 Results: Offers of Privately Rented Accommodation (PRSO) and Discharge of Homelessness Duty

- 2.1 This proposal described how the Council intends to utilise its powers as a local authority contained under the Localism Act 2011 to discharge its homelessness duty by arranging for a private landlord to make a suitable offer of private rented property to statutory homeless households for a period of at least 12 months. This means that a PRSO offer could be made instead of long-term temporary accommodation, depending on property availability at any one time. The offer can be made at any stage to homeless people in the homeless placements process.
- 2.2 This change would enable the Council to increase the overall supply of long-term accommodation available for homeless people with a statutory duty in the borough. The consultation survey described how the Council intends to procure private rented properties both within and outside the borough in order to increase overall supply and drive efficiencies in the homeless placements process. All PRSO offers and discharge of homelessness duty decisions will be in line with the Policy's suitability assessment that will ensure the PRSO offer of the property is suitable for individual circumstance.

2.3 Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with this proposal. The results are detailed below:



2.4 This policy proposal had the lowest satisfaction rate of all the proposals made through the Homeless Placements Policy consultation. However, the overwhelming majority (over two thirds) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed resulting in an overall positive satisfaction rate. No respondent submitted a qualitative comment that approved of this policy.

2.5 Respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed formed the minority of the overall sample, with just a single vote less than the total number of no-preference submissions. Whilst the overall number of people who disagreed with the policy is still low in comparison to the approval rate, the level of dissatisfaction with this policy was significantly higher than any other policy proposal.

2.6 There was little feedback provided from people who disagreed with this policy, however some comments included topics in relation to:

- Landlords as fit and proper persons – *'If this policy is to be implemented, the Council needs to ensure adequate checks are made and tenant support is available as some landlords do not treat tenants as they should do. Fit and proper person checks need to be followed'*
- General dissatisfaction with Homelessness Duties being discharged – *'It is underhand'*

2.7 All comments from respondents have been formally responded to by the Council over the consultation period

## 2.8 Respondent profile

To summarise:

- All group denominations, (age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, accommodation types, organisational types and housing register status), as a majority, strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal
- All ethnicity groups as a majority were satisfied, (strongly agree or agree), with the proposal (excluding people with 'other' ethnicities who answered largely with no preference however there was a low response rate overall from this group)
- All religious groups a majority were satisfied, (strongly agree or agree), with the proposal, (excluding 'other' ethnic groups where there was a split opinion between agree and I don't know)
- All resident group types as a majority were satisfied (strongly agree or agree) with the proposal. There was slightly higher levels of dissatisfaction from private sector tenants including tenants of temporary accommodation and homeless households, however the total proportion of those satisfied from these groups was over 60%
- All household types as a majority were satisfied (strongly agree or agree) with the proposal. There was a much higher dissatisfaction rate reported from temporary accommodation tenants, who are a respondent group with vested interests and most likely to be impacted by this policy. Whilst more temporary accommodation tenants are satisfied with the proposal than dissatisfied, the positive satisfaction rate is under 50%.

## 3. Proposal B3 Results: Offers of out of borough accommodation and application of in-borough placement prioritisation criteria

**3.1** Havering Council is committed to securing suitable temporary and settled accommodation for homeless households where this is required by homeless legislation. It is the Council's aim to provide accommodation within Havering wherever possible however due to the increasing demand pressures in the borough, unfortunately this is no longer achievable. The Council is dependent on the supply of accommodation that is available and affordable. On-going increases in rents, changes to benefits and a growing population met with increasing competition for accommodation in the borough means that for some households, homes in Havering will not be affordable.

As a result there will be an increasing need to use accommodation that may be located outside the borough and we need to have a process in place to ensure that we prioritise those who have the greatest need to be in-borough or close to a particular location.

The Council intends to use a suitability assessment where factors will be used to consider the location of placements

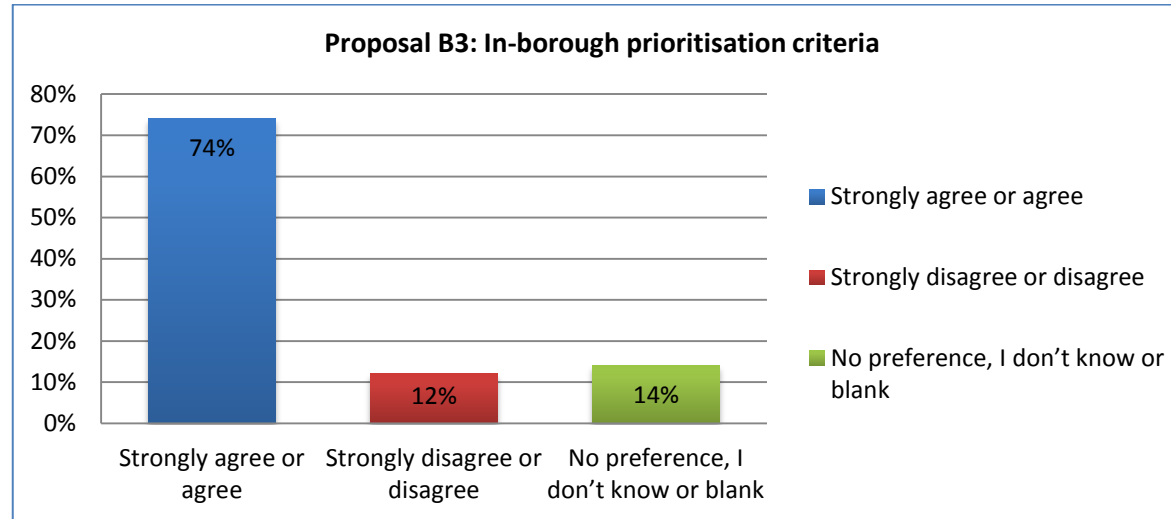
**3.2** This survey question asked how respondents if they agreed to prioritise some households with the greatest needs under suitability factors.. The prioritisation for placements would apply wherever reasonably practicable, depending on stock availability at any one time.

**3.3** The proposed set of suitability factors included

- Medical or health needs needs
- Mental Health needs



- Welfare, Care and Support needs Employment needs
- Education needs



**3.4** The overwhelming majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed (around three quarters of total respondents) with the proposal. This is a strong positive satisfaction rate. Despite this, only one respondent submitted additional positive feedback regarding this proposal:

- 'I agree with the prioritisation but think you are doing more than necessary. If you have found a suitable property and it meets all a homeless person's needs, then it should be accepted no matter the location'

**3.5** Respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposal formed the minority of the total sample.

**3.6** Applicants were encouraged to submit feedback if they disagreed with the proposal or had a suggestion to change the prioritisation criteria to include other needs. Feedback included themes on:

- In-borough prioritisation for all school children  
*'If children are settled in schools they should not be made to move to a new school as it would be extremely traumatic and upsetting'*  
*'Homelessness is extremely upsetting for children and out of borough moves will be even more upsetting for children'*
- Friend and family support networks  
*'A wider view should be taken of the households overall need to be near family, for example due to child care reasons and need to rely on help more'*

*'I don't think you should place single or lone parents out of borough with children, as all the kids have is their local network of friends and family and they won't have anyone out of borough this is especially the case if the parent is working'*

3.7 All comments from respondents have been formally responded to by the Council over the consultation period

### 3.8 Respondent profile

To summarise:

- All group denominations, (age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, resident types, accommodation types, organisational types and housing register status), as a majority, strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal
- All ethnicity groups as a majority were satisfied, (strongly agree or agree), with the proposal, (excluding people with 'other' ethnicities who answered with a split opinion between agree to disagree), however there was a low response rate overall from this group
- Sikh households had a split opinion between agree to disagree for this proposal however there was a low response rate overall from this group

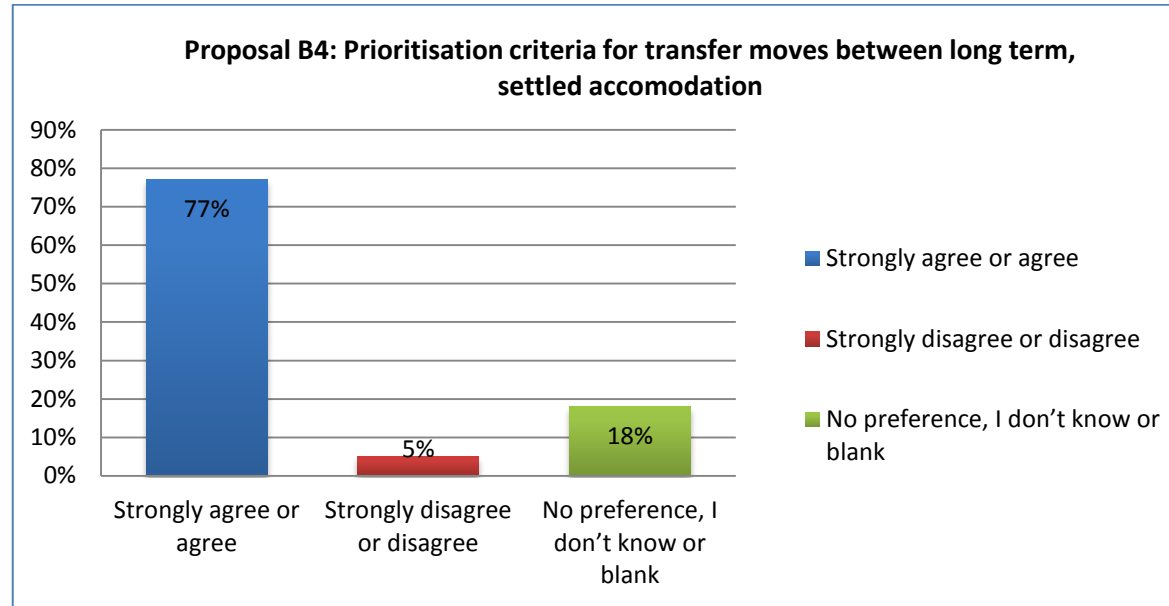
## 4. Proposal B4 Results: Transfer moves prioritisation criteria

4.1 The homeless demand for accommodation comes from not only new housing applicants but existing tenants of temporary accommodation. There are circumstances under which an existing temporary accommodation property may become unsuitable or unavailable for existing tenants. Therefore the Council has to move the household to alternative temporary accommodation.

4.2 In order to ensure there is a fair and transparent process to allocate the limited supply of temporary accommodation, the Council is proposing to adopt the following prioritisation criteria:

- a) Serious, emergency needs - Where the accommodation is found to be in serious disrepair which poses a threat to life or there is an urgent need to move because of domestic violence, critical safeguarding issue or an evidenced serious health or medical need is presented
- b) Emergency accommodation moves - Where households have been in emergency B&B accommodation for at least 5 weeks (to avoid statutory penalties under homeless legislation of placing pregnant households and families with children in emergency accommodation for a period beyond 6 weeks)
- c) Property handback requests - Where the long-term private sector lease is coming to an end and the landlord has requested for the property to be returned
- d) Unsuitability - Where the accommodation has been found to be unsuitable for the applicant household following a statutory review
- e) Serious disrepair - Where the accommodation is in serious disrepair that cannot be rectified while the tenant is in situ
- f) Under-occupation - Where the household is under-occupying the accommodation
- g) Overcrowding - Where the household is overcrowded

4.3 The online survey question asked respondents if they agreed with the proposed set of criteria. Respondents were encouraged to submit open feedback to the policy if they strongly agreed or disagreed or had suggestions for policy change. The results are detailed below.



4.4 The overwhelming majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this proposal. This policy proposal received the highest satisfaction and lowest dissatisfaction rate out of all survey questions relating to the Homeless Placements Policy. Apart from submitting statement to say that they agreed with the policy, there was no developed positive feedback provided from respondents on this policy.

- *'I agree with this policy providing that the move does not remove the Council's homeless duty of care to the household'*

4.5 A very small sample of respondents were dissatisfied with the proposed order of prioritisation criteria. The feedback from respondents who disagreed included common themes on;

- Complimentary effective procedures  
*'I think the process of moving people into alternative temporary accommodation could be a lot smoother and transparent with the next move'*  
*'There is a period of real uncertainty when this happens (transfer requirement). Please review your process as I felt out of the loop... because the alternative accommodation is in short supply we was not provided a long timescale of when we had to move'*
- High prioritisation for tenants of properties where landlords have requested for properties to be returned  
*'I think the prioritisation for when landlords request their property back needs to be rethought and given higher prioritisation'*

*'I lived in long-term PSL accommodation and was informed the landlord wanted to sell the property so therefore had to undergo the eviction process and move into alternative accommodation. The Council staff was very helpful in guiding us through the process however I think the process around transfer moves could be more organised'*

- Preventing a 'need to move'

*'As properties are a temporary fix, families should not need to keep moving from one property to another'*

*Ensure the system is not open to abuse e.g. 'providing families do not move in extended family members to make it unnecessarily overcrowded?'*

4.6 All comments from respondents have been formally responded to by the Council over the consultation period

#### 4.7 Respondent profile

To summarise:

- All group denominations, (age, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, resident types, accommodation types, organisational types and housing register status), as a majority, strongly agreed or agreed with the proposal
- All ethnicity groups as a majority were satisfied, (strongly agree or agree), with the proposal, (excluding people with 'other' ethnicities who answered with a split opinion between agree to disagree), however there was a low response rate overall from this group