

Prepared by Directorate for Adult Social Care  
Commissioning

## **SUPPORTED HOUSING STRATEGY**

### Consultation Findings Report

**Purpose:**

To present the findings of the consultation on Birmingham's Supported Housing Strategy.



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## 1. Executive Summary

### Introduction

We consulted members of the public and key stakeholders on the strategic vision, aims and priorities for our five year Supported Housing Strategy. This is an important strategy which is linked to Birmingham's suite of housing strategies as well as the city's Homelessness and Domestic Abuse Prevention strategies.

Supported housing exists in many forms both for people with longer or short-term needs serving a key role in linking together housing, health and social care and support. Good quality provision enables vulnerable people with care and support needs, to transition or progress out of care, hospital or homelessness to live independently in their own community.

This strategy is focused specifically on short-term or transitional supported housing also known as 'exempt accommodation'. This includes less regulated provision which has increased in significant numbers over the last decade, through the private sale and leasing of traditional rented sector property across a number of local housing markets in Birmingham.

Over the last two years Birmingham has been one of five local authorities to lead national oversight pilots working to identify, develop and test how greater local oversight could improve the quality, enforcement and value for money in the supported housing sector, in particular the growing provision of accommodation not directly commissioned by local authorities.

This pilot work has both informed the strategy and two coinciding local and national inquiries on the subject of 'exempt accommodation'.

The consultation findings will help to shape our final strategy and inform and prioritise actions over the next five years in response to local oversight of supported housing in Birmingham.

## SUPPORTED HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION FINDINGS REPORT

### Key Findings

- 78% respondents agreed with the vision
- Over 70% agree with the six strategic aims, with 43% strongly agreeing
- Majority agree with lobbying for legislative changes, national reform and funding for support – this is backed up by comments throughout the consultation
- 17% disagree with rebalancing the provision of accommodation
- 94% agree with improved quality and oversight of support provision
- Nearly 70% agree with interim management measures
- There is a need for good quality and high standard accommodation with regulations and legislation
- Need to consider neighbourhoods and the impact and provide more support to resolve issues
- Funding is a key issue and needs regulation and enforcement
- Housing Benefits are a common theme and need to consider lack of progress on regulations
- Focus should be on people not money when providing support
- There is a lack of detail in some areas and it appears vague for example move on proposals and narrative needed for framework on page 21 and what are the proposals to be piloted?
- It's about quality not quantity
- Need to be able to demonstrate progress of individuals and support needs to be tailored to individuals
- More detail needed around interim management measures backed up by longer term strategic plans
- Need to provide access to affordable, safe, sustainable and longer-term accommodation
- Accommodation and support must be person centred and not disadvantage vulnerable people
- Partnership working is important and further research and workshops with partners would provide more detail
- Will we have the funding and resources to deliver?
- Proposals for lobbying may need to be reviewed in light of draft Supported Housing Bill due in November
- Concern over number units needed as may leave 10,000+ people seeking alternative accommodation

### 2. Introduction

#### **Purpose of this report**

The purpose of this report is to present the key findings of the Supported Housing Strategy consultation to help shape and inform the final strategy and priorities and actions for the next five years.

### 3. Methodology

#### **3.1 Be-Heard Consultation**

The general public and interested parties were invited to participate in the consultation via Be-Heard. This included a questionnaire alongside an easy read version, an introduction providing background and the draft Supported Housing Strategy.

#### **3.2 Stakeholder Consultation Events**

Stakeholder meetings and discussions were held with, Birmingham's Homelessness Partnership Board, Birmingham Homelessness Forum and Birmingham Citizen's Panel. Stakeholders represented from these groups were extensive from the community and voluntary sectors as well as providers of homelessness services across Birmingham the wider region and nationally.

Internally meetings and discussions were held with, planning, social care safeguarding teams, Revenue and Benefits and housing options/solutions.

#### **3.3 Analysis**

Analysis of the consultation consists primarily of two parts quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis. The Be-Heard and stakeholder responses will be analysed and then findings brought together as key findings in the executive summary.

##### ***Quantitative Data Analysis***

Quantitatively analysis will be focused on questions asking whether respondents agree or disagreed with the proposals/suggestions, each with a range of responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree or from yes to unsure to no. Quantifiable responses to the consultation were gathered for quantitative analysis, using a combination of the Be-Heard report generating tool and manually for both (long and short easy to read) paper-based surveys. The anonymised results were then aggregated into an excel workbook for reporting the results shown in the key findings (Section 4) of this consultation findings report. The remaining closed and demographic questions included in the questionnaire were analysed using reporting tools available on Be-Heard.

##### ***Qualitative Data***

All questions enabled an open response and these questions with qualitative responses (text) were analysed and manually coded by theme to enable key findings to emerge. Themes were identified following reading of each individual response, noting and recording recurring themes or issues. These were then collated and presented in both the Executive Summary and Key Findings section of this consultation findings report (Section 4). There was also the opportunity to provide any additional comments.

### 4. Key Findings

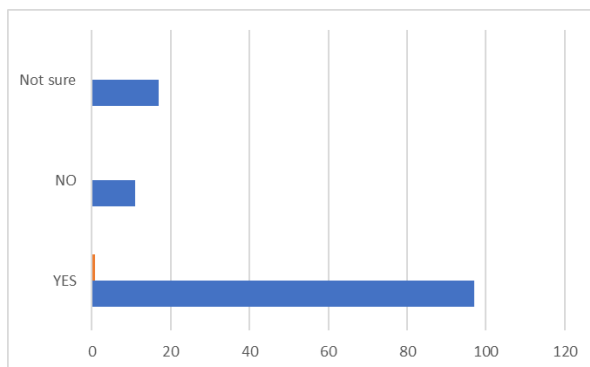
#### 4.1 Be-Heard findings

Overall there were 125 responses and the findings for each question were as follows:

##### Strategic Vision

*Within a reformed national framework, offer supported housing through partnership with Health, Housing, Social Services, the Probation Service, and the voluntary sector that meets the estimated needs for the city.*

##### Question 4 - Do you agree the vision statement established for the strategy?



Almost 80% of respondents agreed with the vision.

There were 31 respondents who commented and the main themes across all comments were:

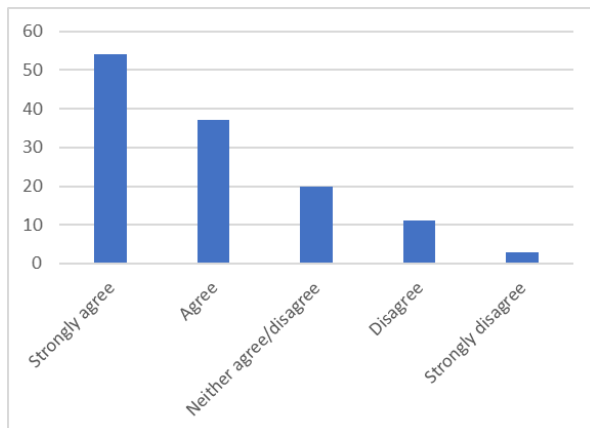
- Concerns around impact on neighbourhoods and neighbourhood views should be taken into account.
- There needs to be national reform, legislation and standards.
- Need proper supported housing with the above.
- Concerns around who will fund this.
- Vision is aspirational and vague.

##### Strategic Aims:

- Reduce the current over supply of supported housing.
- Improve the quality, oversight and funding of supported housing provision.
- Encourage independent living.
- Help to sustain communities.
- Have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals.
- Respond effectively to the needs of a highly diverse community.

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### Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the strategic aims?



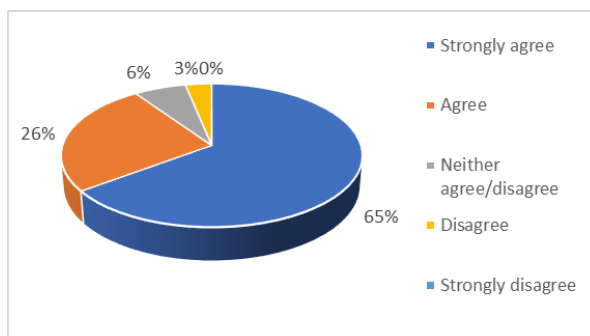
Over 70% agree with strategic aims –  
43% strongly agree

There were 39 respondents who commented providing a wide range of views, but the main themes across all comments were:

- Need good quality and high standard accommodation with regulations and legislation.
- Concerns around landlords who are unregulated, take advantage of the system, don't prioritise the support needed and the poor incentives available.
- Housing Benefit caps do not work.
- Few comments saying there is not an over supply of supported housing, but there needs to be more of a mix including family housing and there are too many HMOs.

### Priority 1: Lobbying for Legislative changes, national reform and funding for support.

#### Question 6 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?



Majority respondent's agree with  
lobbying supported by comments  
throughout the consultation

There were arrange of comments from the 21 people who responded to this section and the main themes included:

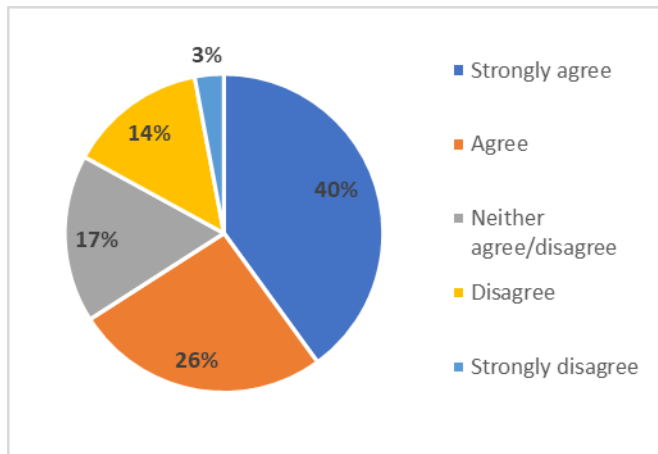
- Funding was the major theme commented on and included:
  - Needs regulating.
  - Exists and could for example use rental income.
  - Need proper funding for early intervention services so less of this type of accommodation is needed.
  - More focused funding is needed.
  - Should include enforcement.

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- It was felt more detail was needed for example what national reform will be done with the funding?
- Regulation at a national level is required.

### Priority Two: Rebalancing the provision of accommodation by reducing the number of supported housing units

#### Question 7 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?

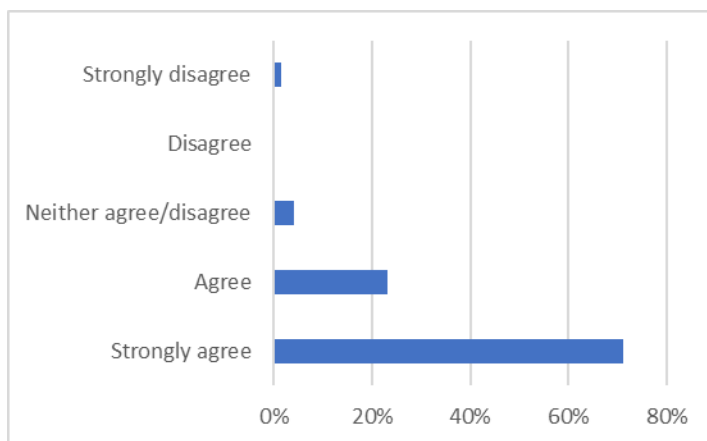


Over 60% of people agree with this priority but 17% are unsure and 17% disagree

Although there was some disagreement no person made any comments about this priority.

### Priority Three: Improved quality and oversight of support provision

#### Question 8 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?



94% of people agree with improved quality and oversight – 71% strongly. Only 2% disagreed with this priority

There were comments from 19 respondents and the main themes addressed were:

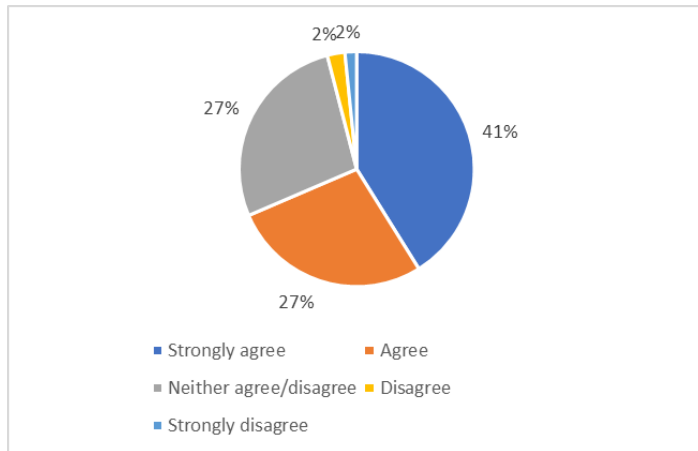
- Needs to be minimum standards and legislation.
- It's about quality not quantity.
- Support needs to be tailored to individuals with a progress plan.
- Supported accommodation with support should not be a model.



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### Priority Four: Interim Management Measures

#### ***Question 9 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?***



Nearly 70% agreed with this priority but 27% were unsure neither agreeing or disagreeing

There were 29 people commenting on this priority and the main themes included:

- People were unsure what the interim measures were, more detail was needed and agreement would depend upon the types of measures.
- Measures should focus on landlords achievements for individuals.
- Need to be backed by standards and accountability that is enforceable.
- Lack of funding is worrying.

#### ***Question 10 - Are there any priorities or aim you think are missing from the strategy and if so, what are they?***

There were 80 additional comments recorded with the most common themes being:

- Neighbourhoods including; more support to raise any issues and resolve, the impact on the neighbourhood and support for both accommodation and people to 'fit into' the local community.
- More accountability including; legislation, regulation. More standards for HMOs and clear guidance in particular for support required.
- Accommodation and support must be person centred and not disadvantage vulnerable people.
- Need to address a range of issues around benefits.
- Need to take an equity approach not just focused on areas with crime and high density.
- Partnership working is important.

### 4.2 Other consultation findings

There were two more detailed consultation responses from Birmingham Exempt Accommodation Forum and Birmingham City Council Housing Directorate Officers Group. The first section considers the responses provided around the priorities and then the concerns/suggestions raised.

## **SUPPORTED HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION FINDINGS REPORT**

### ***Priority 1: Lobbying for Legislative changes, national reform and funding for support***

There was agreement with this priority with the following considerations:

- Proposals may need to be reviewed in light of the draft Supported Housing Bill due in November.
- The proposed framework on page 21 lacks narrative detail to explain the elements. Need to consider the policy asks of the DLUCH inquiry earlier this year.
- What are the proposals to be piloted in relation to the framework?
- The strategy lacks information on how funding, primarily lack of, will be addressed to tackle new legislation under the proposed new Bill.
- Need to consider lack of progress on Housing Benefit regulations.
- A communications/engagement plan is not detailed or described.

### ***Priority Two: Rebalancing the provision of accommodation by reducing the number of supported housing units***

There was agreement in principle to this priority with the following concerns raised:

- Rebalancing has to be done carefully to ensure the worst is squeezed out and replaced with quality.
- Concern around the upper limit and data as 10,000+ people may end up needing alternative accommodation over five years.
- Lacks detail on move on and how will link to other services.
- Need to consider family housing.

### ***Priority Three: Improved quality and oversight of support provision***

There was agreement in principle to this priority with the following concerns raised:

- The proposed registration scheme in the draft Bill needs to be considered.
- Could hold workshops with key partners to flesh out immediate offer of strategy and explore areas such as:
- Establishing greater control of the referral pathway by acting as SEA referral hub to accredited providers. Possibly across the WMCA.
- Considering whether the costs of being an accredited provider (both paying for the course and the costs of having higher standards) can in any way be legitimately offset by increased HB payments.
- Anything else that plays to the drivers for many of the providers i.e. low voids, quick turnover and income. If we cannot overtly control the sector then we need to expand our influence to encourage good practice.

### ***Priority Four: Interim Management Measures***

Interim management measures were welcomed with the following considerations:

- Need to consider draft Bill and associated legislation.
- Quality Standards could be expanded to include due diligence.
- Could examine options of technology and innovation.

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- Concern around resources.

***Are there any priorities or aim you think are missing from the strategy and if so, what are they?***

Areas to consider are:

- Will PRS Licensing scheme result in more landlords moving to exempt sector and therefore increasing pressures?
- Article 4 is missing from the strategy as this may also be encouraging landlords to move into the exempt sector.
- Needs assessment and data need to be continually refreshed and refined.

### ***Other miscellaneous responses***

This section covers any feedback that did not directly respond to the questions asked:

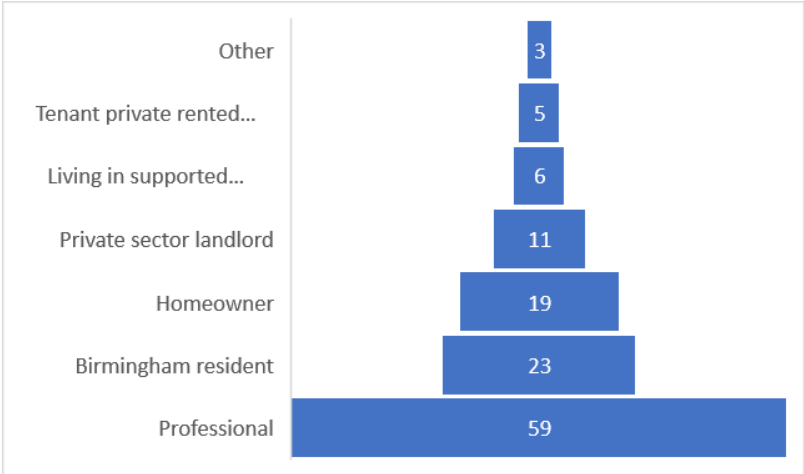
- Strategy needs an overriding objective such as “to stop the growth of EA in Birmingham and gradually reduce it by half; make good and proper provision both for supported housing and those currently in EA who need only proper housing and to set in place immediately an effective system for support and remedy to the communities badly affected by EA properties”.
- Focuses on traditional supported housing and particularly non-commissioned supported housing.
- No reference to wider impact on communities and neighbourhoods.
- Need and demand data needs to be reviewed for example the estimated levels of support.
- Manage, reduce and reshape could perhaps be the objectives?
- Should include clear evaluation of the ‘gateway’ approach as currently there is no reference to it.

4.3 Who responded?

Be-Heard consultation

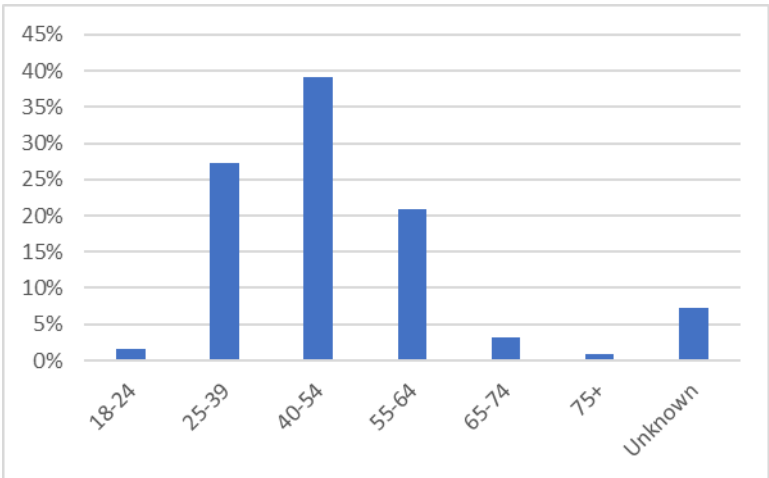
In total 125 responses to the consultation were received.

Who responded?



Nearly half of the respondents were professionals (47%), including individuals and providers, followed by Birmingham residents and homeowners. Only 5% lived in supported accommodation and 9% were supported accommodation landlords.

Age respondents



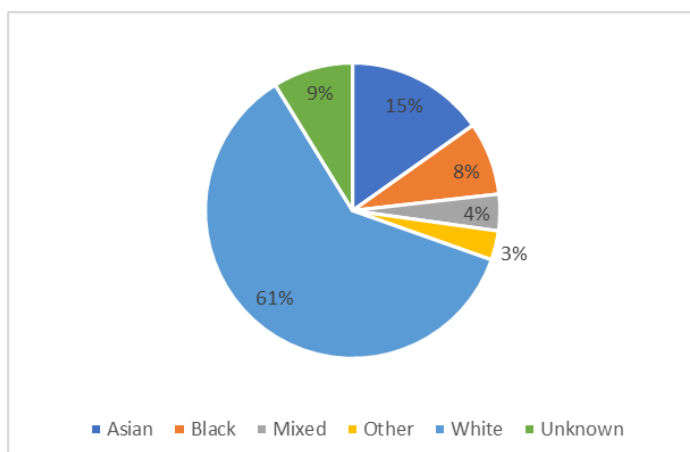
The largest age group to respond was 40 to 54 (39%) followed by 25 to 39 (27%) and 55 to 64 (21%)

Gender and disability

Almost half of respondents were male and 44% female with 8% preferring not to say.

Over 70% of respondents did not have a disability with 16% saying they had some form of physical or mental disability.

### Ethnicity



Almost two thirds of respondents were of White ethnicity with 15% Asian, 9% unknown and 8% Black

### Other respondents

Birmingham Exempt Accommodation Forum  
Birmingham City Council Housing Directorate Officers Group

## 5. Conclusion

The consultation revealed that we are on the right track with our Supported Housing Strategy. Almost 80% of respondent's agreed with the vision and over 70% with the six strategic aims.

Across the priorities the least agreement was with rebalancing the provision of accommodation, but over 60% of respondent's expressed agreement.

However, there was some concern that it lacked detail and was woolly in parts, for example more information was needed around interim management measures as many were unsure about this aspect.

Key to moving forwards is having a well-regulated sector with appropriate standards guided by legislation. It will be important to work in partnership and consider other services for example more investment in early intervention type services may reduce the need for this kind of accommodation in the future. In addition, there is a need to consider all types of housing for example providing access to affordable, safe, sustainable and longer-term accommodation and considering hostel type accommodation for individuals who may have difficulty in living independently.

Support must be person centred focusing on the individual with progress clearly demonstrated by landlords who need to take responsibility for providing quality accommodation and support at the right levels. There needs to be robust monitoring to ensure standards are met.

Neighbourhoods and communities are an important factor and consideration needs to be given to the impact of both accommodation and individuals on the neighbourhood and how they 'fit in' to the local community. An equitable approach needs to be taken not just focusing on areas with high crime rates or density issues. There needs to be processes where any issues can be raised, identified and resolved.

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It should be remembered that it should not be about quantity but quality.

A major concern going forwards is availability of funding and resources to deliver the strategy.

Further research and considerations may be required enabling more detail to be provided. For example, the draft Supported Housing Bill due in November will need to be considered, what will interim management measures look like, what type of accommodation should supported housing be and how to link with other services to enable a move on pathway.

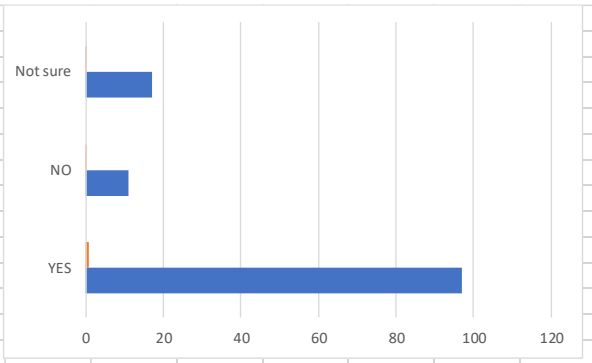
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### Annex A

### SUPPORTED HOUSING DATA

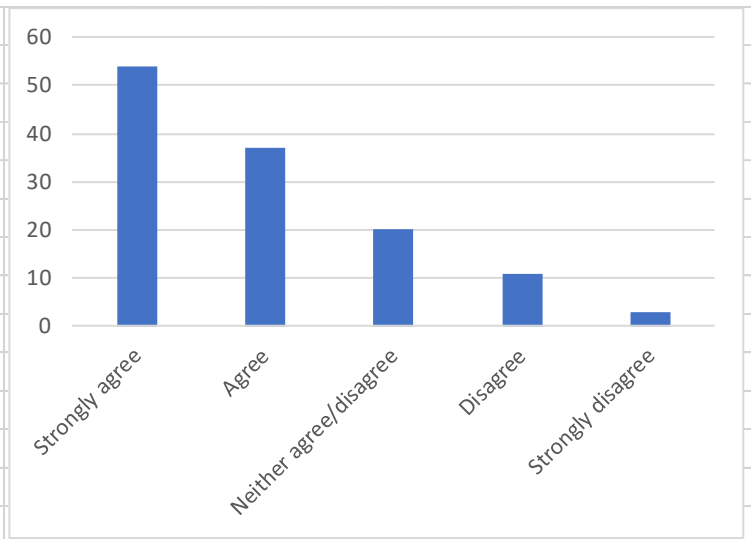
#### Question 4

Response	No'	%
YES	97	78%
NO	11	9%
Not sure	17	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>



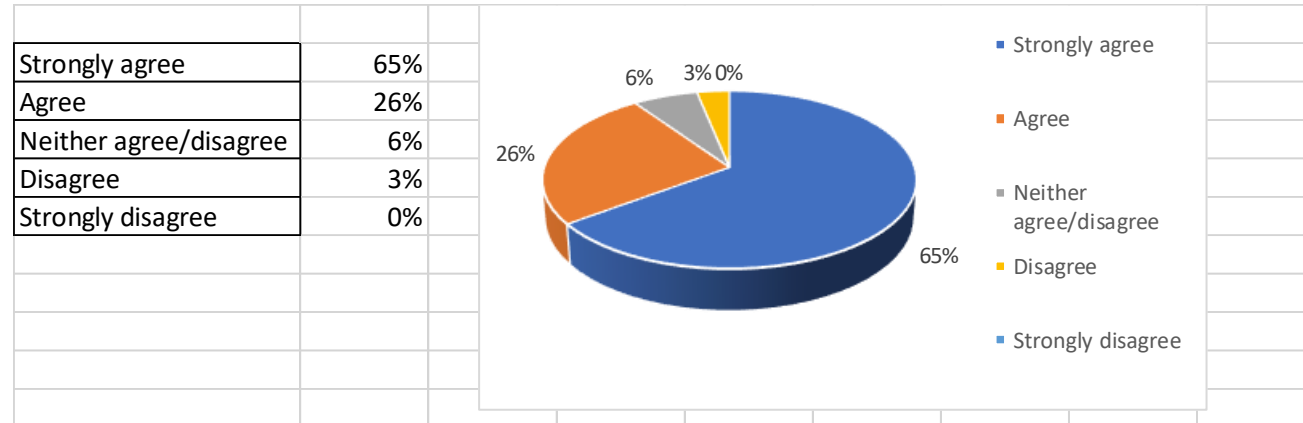
#### Question 5

Response	No'	%
Strongly agree	54	43%
Agree	37	30%
Neither agree/disagree	20	16%
Disagree	11	9%
Strongly disagree	3	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>

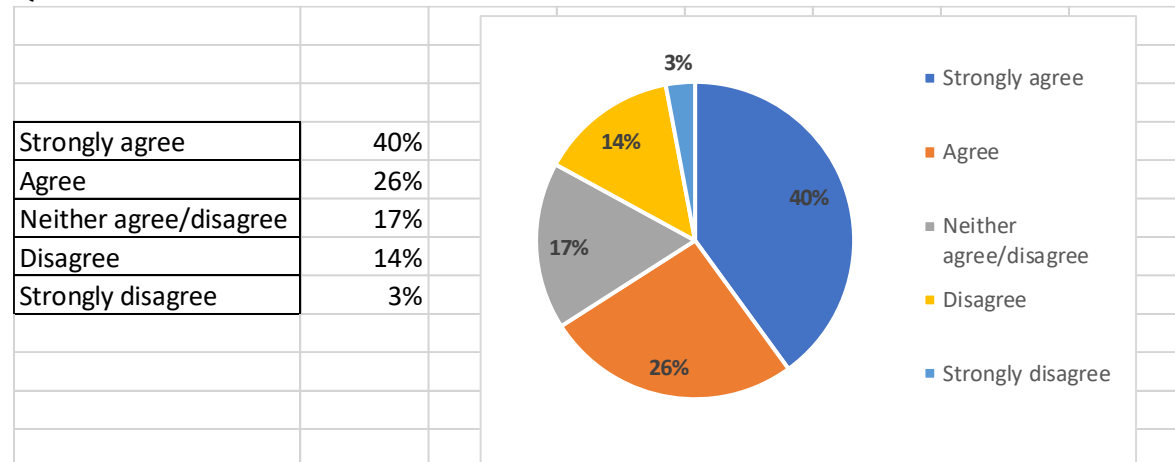


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### Question 6



### Question 7

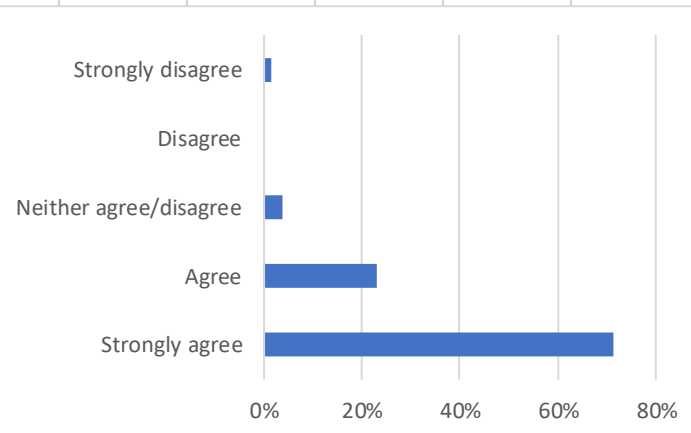




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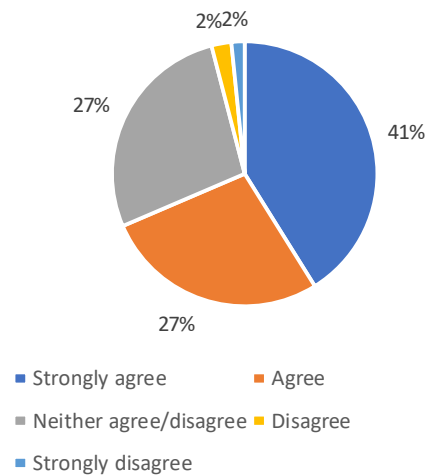
### Question 8

Strongly agree	71%
Agree	23%
Neither agree/disagree	4%
Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	2%



### Question 9

Strongly agree	41%
Agree	27%
Neither agree/disagree	27%
Disagree	2%
Strongly disagree	2%



## SUPPORTED HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION FINDINGS REPORT

Who responded		
WHO	NO'	%
Other	3	2%
Tenant private rented sector	5	4%
Living in supported accommodation	6	5%
Private sector landlord	11	9%
Homeowner	19	15%
Birmingham resident	23	18%
Professional	59	47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100%</b>

Age		
Age	No'	%
18-24	2	2%
25-39	34	27%
40-54	49	39%
55-64	26	21%
65-74	4	3%
75+	1	1%
Unknown	9	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ethnicity		
Ethnicity	No'	%
Asian	19	15%
Black	10	8%
Mixed	5	4%
Other	4	3%
White	76	61%
Unknown	11	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>

**What best describes your interest in this consultation?**

- Someone living in supported accommodation
- A tenant living private rented sector accommodation
- A private rented sector landlord
- A homeowner
- A Birmingham resident
- Other

**4. Do you agree the vision statement established for the strategy?****Supported Housing Strategy Vision Statement**

Within a reformed national framework, offer supported housing through partnership with Health, Housing, Social Services, the Probation Service, and the voluntary sector that meets the estimated needs for the city.

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure.

**If you selected no or not sure to this question please tell us why?**

**5. To what extent do you agree with the six strategic aims set out in the Supported Housing Strategy?**

- Reduce the current over supply of supported housing
- Improve the quality, oversight and funding of supported housing provision.
- Encourage independent living
- Help to sustain communities
- Have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals
- Respond effectively to the needs of a highly diverse community

(For details please see Supported Housing Strategy)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**If you selected disagree or strongly disagree to this question please tell us why?**

## **SUPPORTED HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION FINDINGS REPORT**

### **6. Priority One: Lobbying for Legislative changes, national reform and funding for support.**

**To what extent do you agree with this priority?**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

**If you selected disagree or strongly disagree please tell us why?**

### **7. Priority Two: Rebalancing the provision of accommodation by reducing the number of supported housing units**

**To what extent do you agree with this priority?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### **8. Priority Three: Improved quality and oversight of support provision.**

**To what extent do you agree with this priority?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**If you selected disagree or strongly disagree please tell us why?**

### **9. Priority Four: Interim Management Measures**

**To what extent do you agree with this priority?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**If you selected no or not sure, please tell us why?**

### **10. Are there any priorities or aim you think are missing from the strategy and if so, what are they?**

**Please use box below if you would like to make any further comments**