

## Housing management review - Consultation Summary

In January 2013, the Council's Executive Board made a decision to go out to consult tenants on two options for the future of council housing in Leeds:

1. Move to a single company model (e.g. a single ALMO) with a retained locality delivery structure and strengthened governance arrangements; or
2. Move to all services being integrated within direct council management with a retained locality delivery structure and strengthened governance arrangements to include tenants and independent members.

An Advisory group consisting of officers from the review team, ABCL, Leeds City Council communications and consultation teams, and Leeds Tenants Federation was set up to oversee the consultation process, with the tenants federation providing an independent voice.

What we did:

- Consultation packs including a tenant survey was sent to all 70,000 tenants and leaseholders in January, with a reminder sent to all tenants in February.
- The consultation was promoted through tenant magazines, press release to local media, posters placed in public buildings and ALMO offices and through online and social media.
- Undertook 75 consultation sessions across a range of stakeholders (broken down below)

### Summary of Events

Activity	No of attendees
13 Area Panel meetings	92
3 LCC staff briefings/Q&A	69
4 Elected member drop-ins	7
4 Public meetings	66
13 tenant road-show drop in sessions	101
10 Staff Conferences	285
3 Staff workshops	79
1 Trades Union consultations	6
24 sites visited through mobile tours/drop-ins for tenants	113
	<b>Total: 818</b>

Event / Activity	Number of contacts
70,000 consultation packs sent out (to all tenants and leaseholders) with information and a survey form. A reminder was sent to all tenants midway through the consultation period.	
Calls received through Leeds Tenants Federation regarding Consultation	23
Contact centre incoming calls	964
Emails to 'YourHomeYourSay' inbox	22
Reminder emails sent to tenants during consultation	Awaiting figure

### Interactions with tenants:

#### Tenant Survey:

In total we received 8,889 returned tenant survey forms, 8582 paper surveys and 307 through the online survey. This represents around 13% of tenants surveyed. The large number of responses means that the results have a relatively low margin of error, of +/-1.0%, which suggests that the findings are an accurate reflection of the tenant population's views.

The split across the 3 ALMOs as identified by tenants in question 6 (Which ALMO area do you live in?) was as below:

Aire Valley Homes	28.1%
East North East Homes	30.6%
West North West Homes	36.2%
Don't Know	5.1%

A breakdown of the survey responses is detailed below but the headline points to note are, of those who completed the survey:

- 69.3% strongly agree / agree that the best way to make savings and deliver better and more consistent housing services is to move from three ALMOs to a single organisation. (Question 1)
- 77.5% strongly agree / agree that within a single organisation there is still a need to deliver services through locally based teams. (Question 2)
- 60.9% would prefer all housing services to be provided by the Council. (Question 3)
- 61.5% are very satisfied / fairly satisfied with their repairs or maintenance service (Question 4a)

- 77.8% strongly agree / agree that their housing management provider should have its own repairs and maintenance team along the East North East model. (Question 4b)

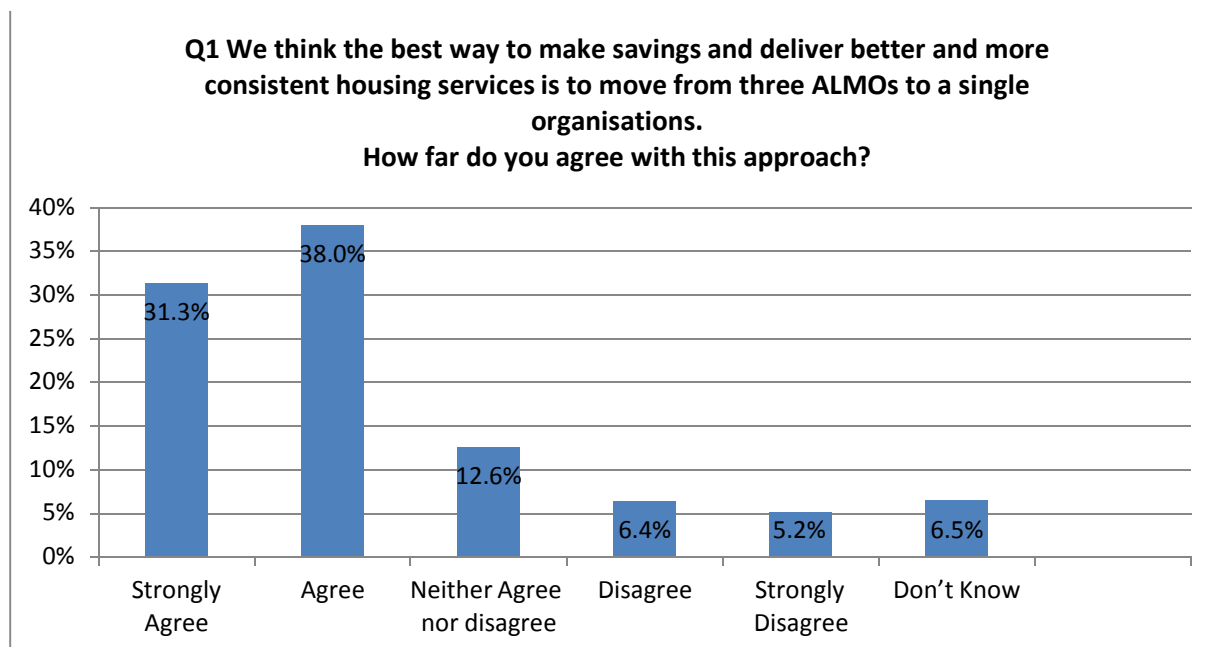
There is a gap between the number of people who say they want to be involved in how their council housing is run, and the number of people who are involved or feel they have any influence in ALMO decisions. This is a concern and will need to be reviewed further during implementation to ensure we maximise tenant involvement in the new arrangements.

- 82.5% feel 'a great deal' (40.4%) or 'to some extent' (42.1%) that it is important they can be involved in how their housing is run;
- 78.6% feel that they are 'not very much' (28.9%) or 'not at all' (49.7%) involved in how their housing is run currently.
- When asked how much influence they felt they had in how council housing is run, 73.3% felt they had 'not very much' / 'not at all'.

The survey results have also been analysed by each of the three ALMO areas but is broadly consistent across the three and does not warrant being broken down into the 3 areas for further analysis.

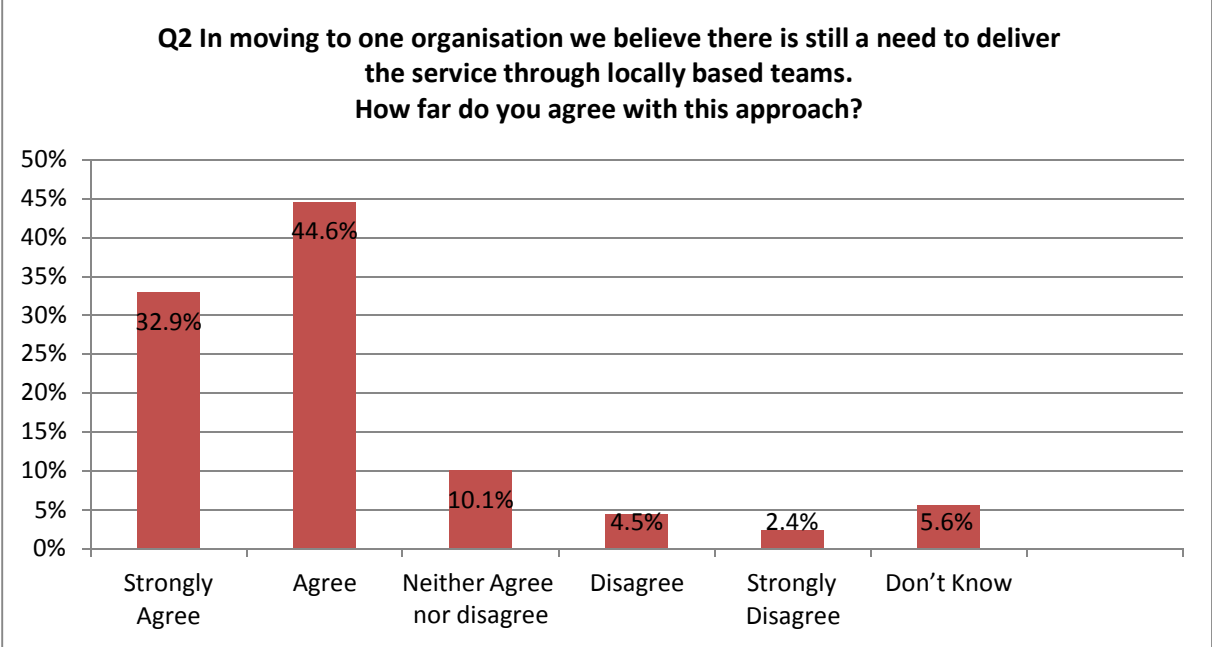
The full survey results are below:

**Q1. We think the best way to make savings and deliver better and more consistent housing services is to move from three ALMOs to a single organisation.  
How far do you agree with this approach?**



**Q2. In moving to one organisation we believe there is still a need to deliver the service through locally based teams.**

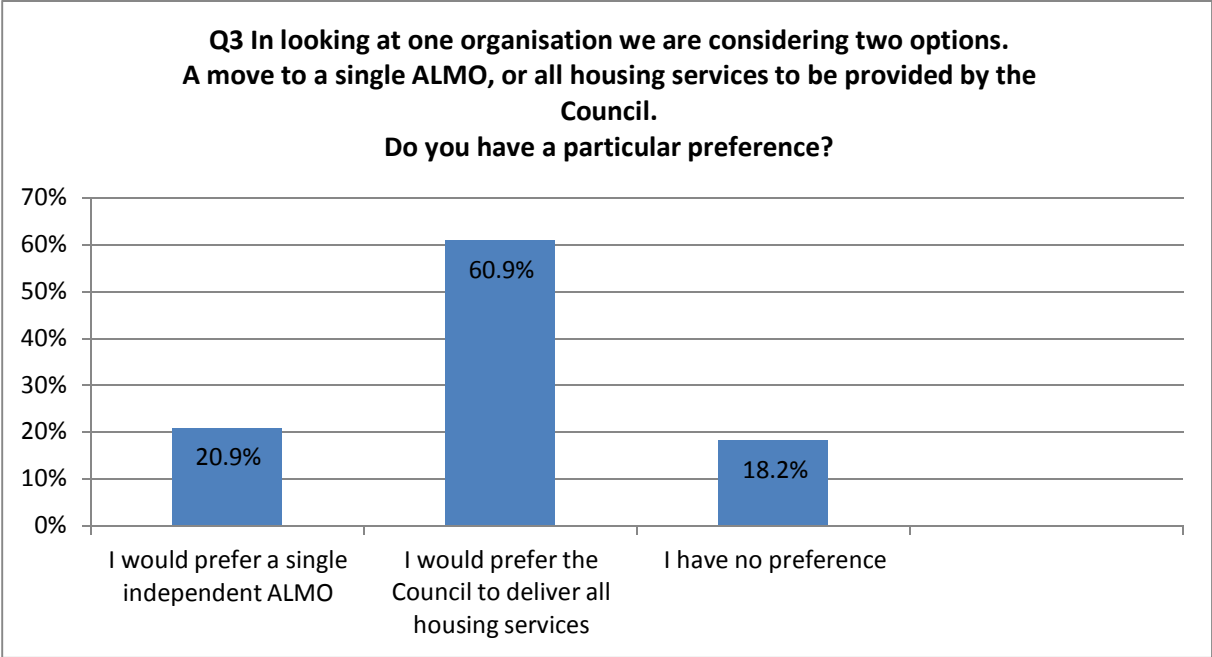
**How far do you agree with this approach?**



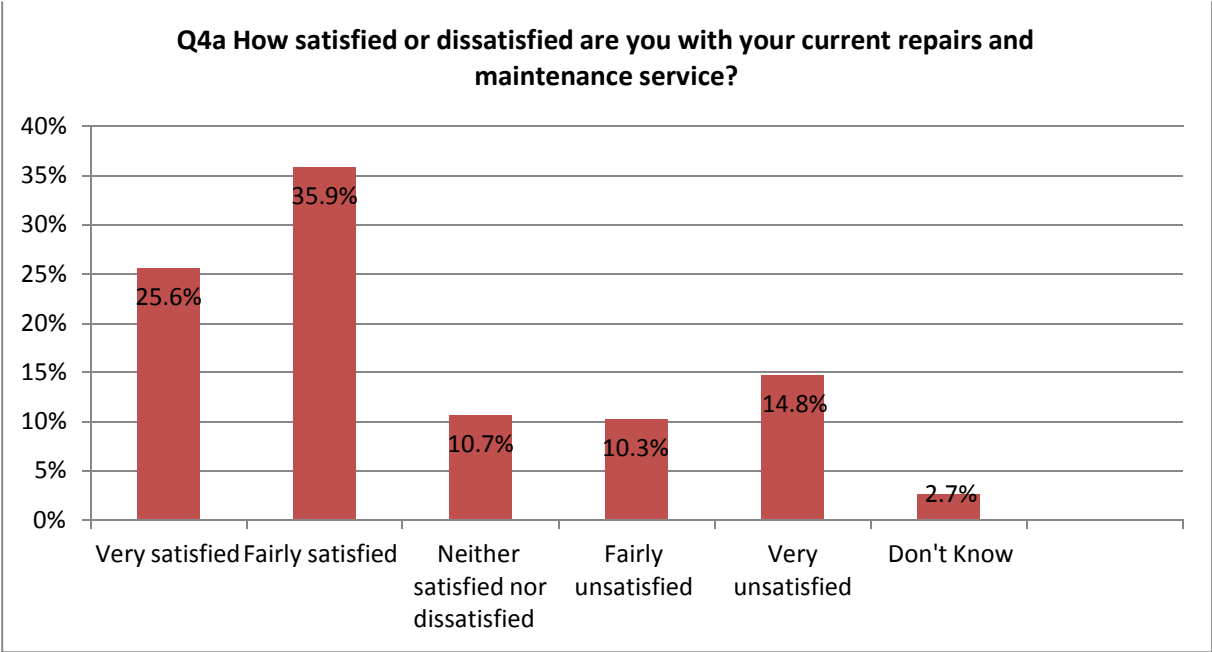
**Q3. In looking at one organisation we are considering two options.**

**A move to a single ALMO, or all housing services to be provided by the Council.**

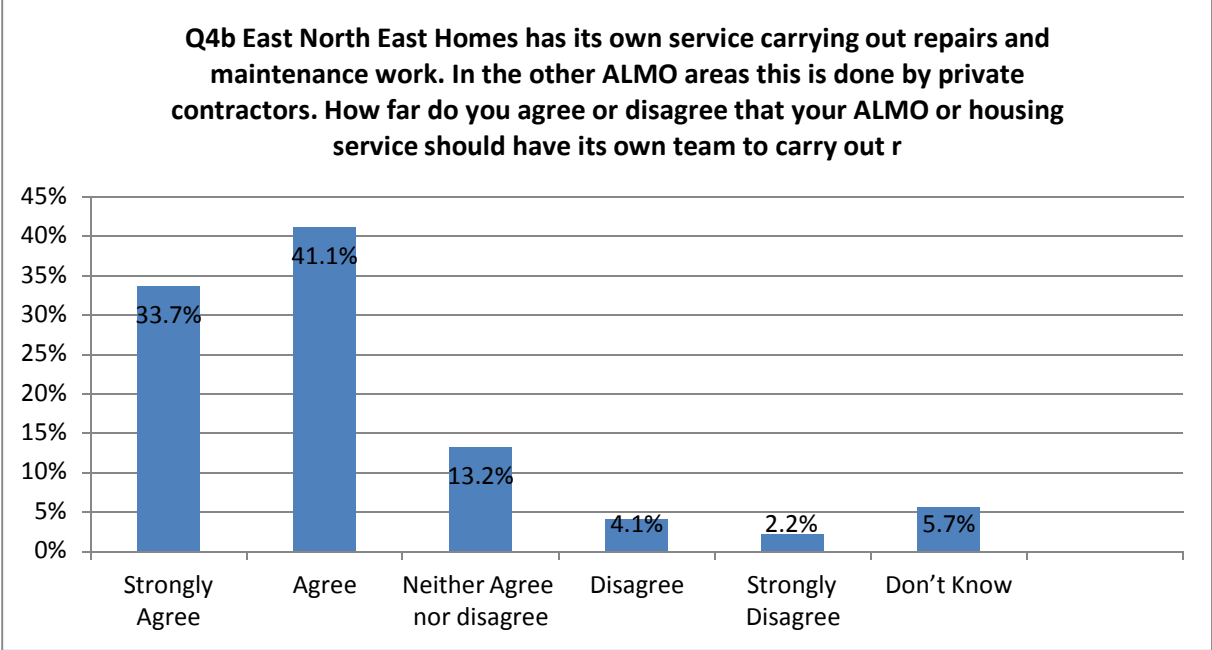
**Do you have a particular preference?**



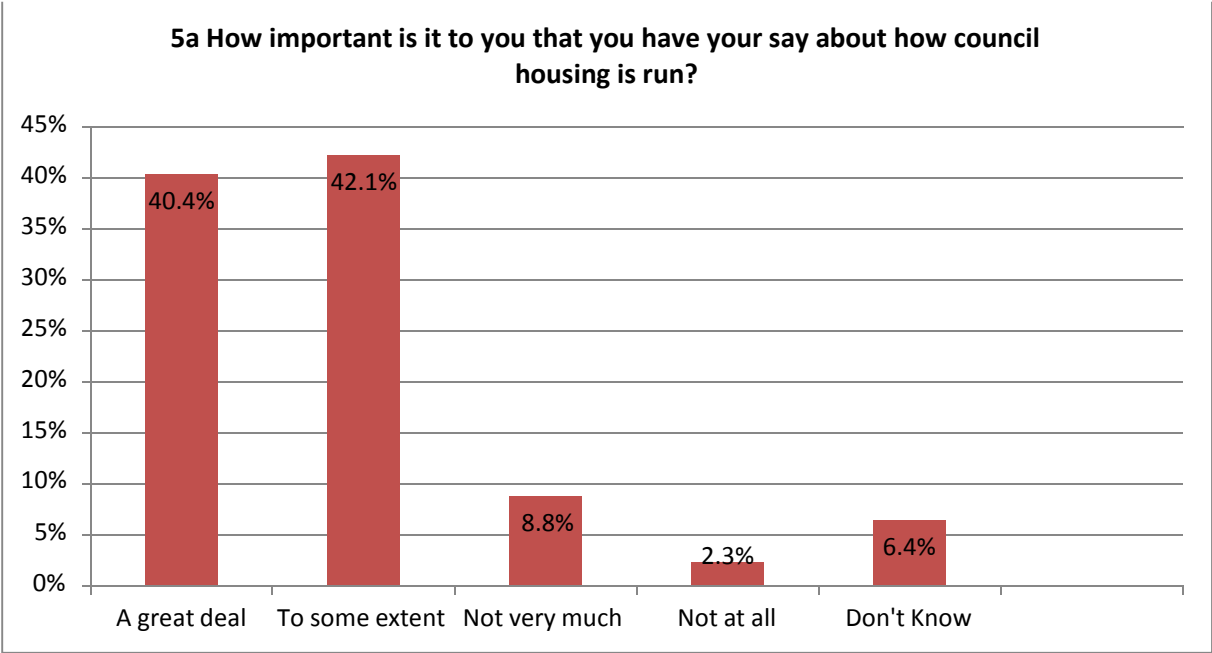
**Q4a. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your current repairs and maintenance service?**



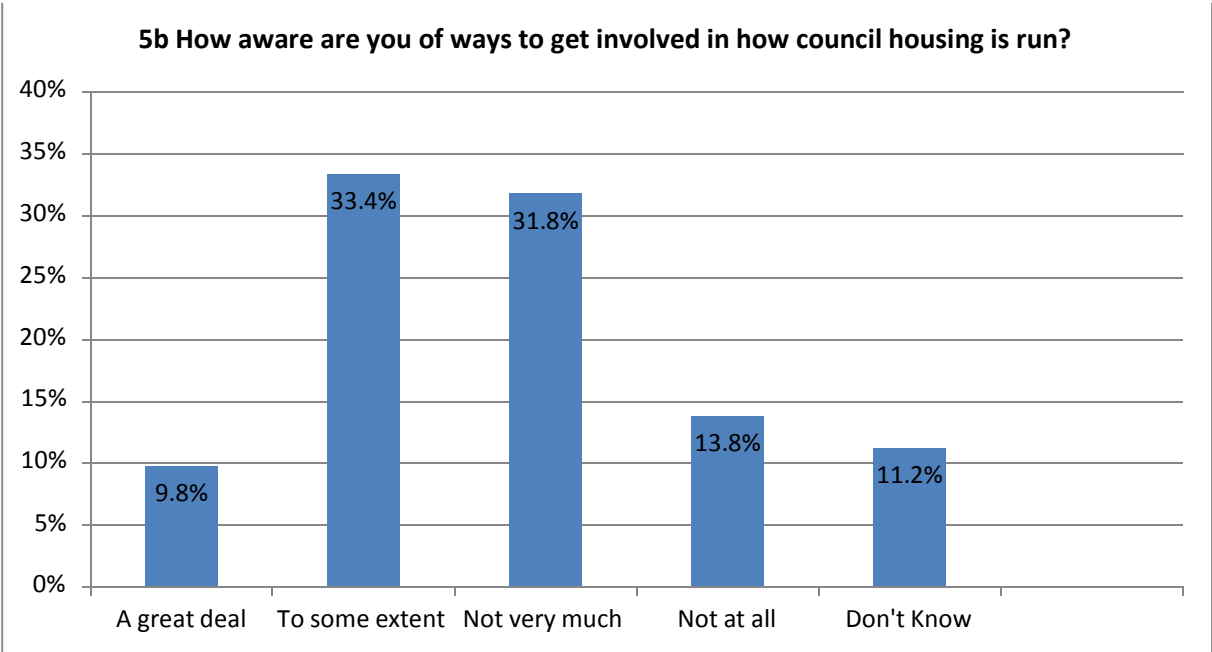
**Q4b. East North East Homes has its own service carrying out repairs and maintenance work. In the other ALMO areas this is done by private contractors. How far do you agree or disagree that your ALMO or housing service should have its own team to carry out repairs?**



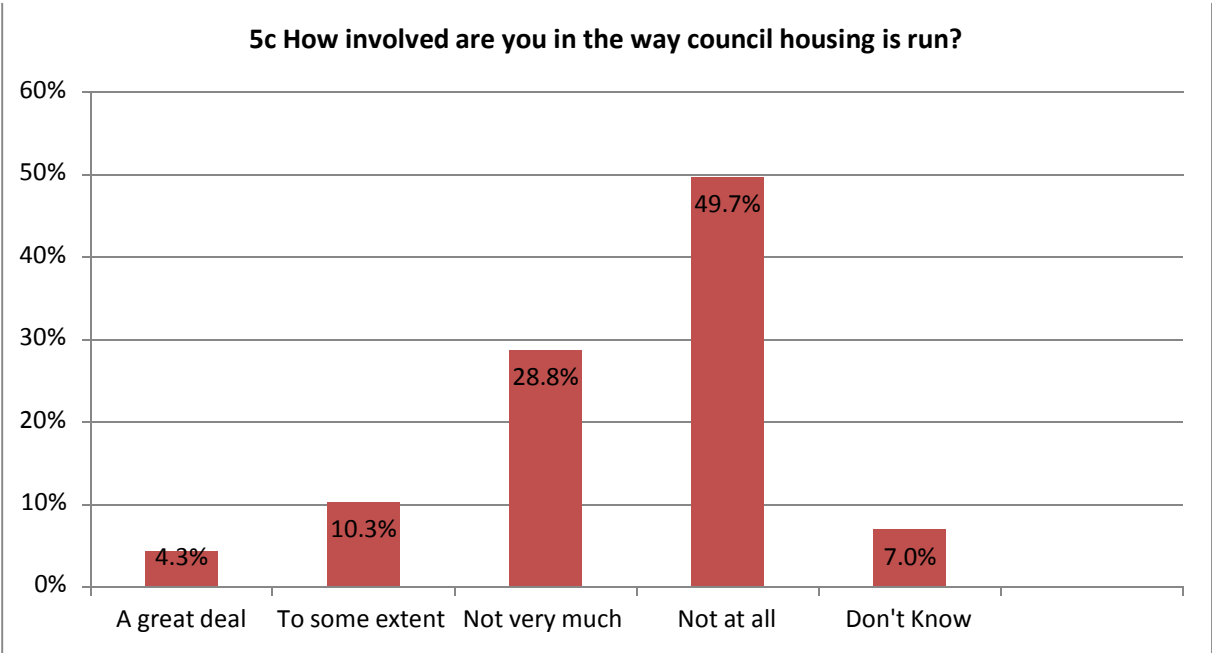
**Q5a. How important is it to you that you have your say about how council housing is run?**



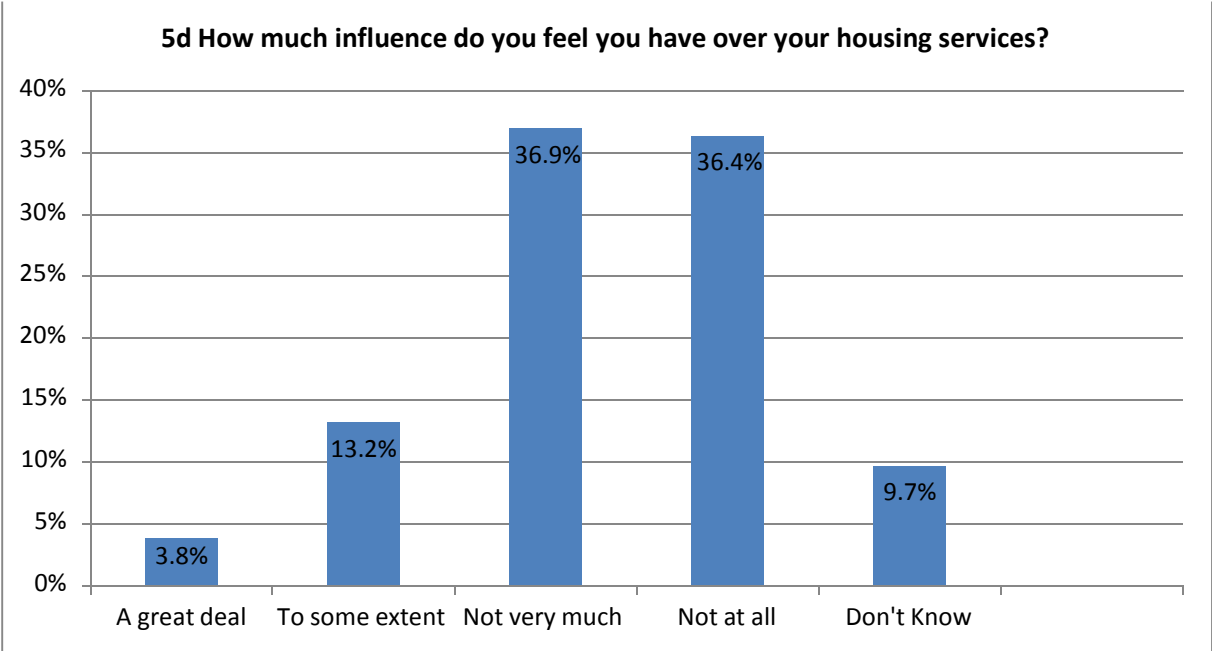
**Q5b. How aware are you of ways to get involved in how council housing is run?**



**Q5c. How involved are you in the way council housing is run?**



**Q5d. How much influence do you feel you have over your housing services?**



## **Key Messages from tenants:**

The public meetings and road-shows represented the engaged audiences who proactively sought to discuss or question us. Unsurprisingly, the majority of public consultation and road-shows were dominated by issues which do not directly relate to the options for future management of council housing in Leeds. But each of the meetings generated questions and requests for clarity on some key issues, including:

Clarification over:

- How the ALMOs make money?
- How could the 'in-house' option save more money/ How much?
- Greater involvement of councillors. Would they have more say in how things worked/would their involvement reduce bureaucracy?
- What independent representation on Boards means
- Why there are only two options
- Why we have to change at all
- Why we are holding a survey and not running a ballot
- What would you do with the extra money?

Concern over:

- Wanting tenants to be more engaged;
- Retaining local services delivered by losing housing offices/staff;
- Quality of service – whether we expected standards to increase, stay the same or reduce;
- At two of the meetings, tenants requested that we do not embark on an expensive rebranding exercise in either option.

Other questions:

- Have ALMOs achieved what they set out to do?
- Which option do 'we' prefer?
- What are the big differences between the two options?
- How will money be distributed in the future? One tenant perceived a disparity between inner and outer area funding at present.
- Has the council got the structures in place to play a self-critical role in the same way it can scrutinise an ALMO?
- How sheltered housing would be affected by the review.

At some events the consultation team were trying to engage tenants who hadn't proactively sought to attend the meetings, using a mobile office, one stop shops and a stall on Kirkgate market. These sessions revealed: