

New Community

Polling Insight Briefing 2024



ASTER
GROUP

Introduction

As the new government focuses on delivering the biggest boost to affordable housing in a generation, we believe that communities should be at the heart of getting Britain building again.

As a housing association with over 37,000 homes across the south of England and London, we work with a wide range of customers and communities and provide a range of housing options and services. Working towards our vision that **everyone has a home** in response to the housing crisis, we understand how important community is for social cohesion, wellbeing and regeneration.



To better understand the role of housing associations and what '**community**' means to people in the UK, we surveyed 2,000 adults and this is what we discovered ...

New Community

Research findings :

Our research found that building more affordable homes and successfully creating communities go hand in hand. Below we outline three key insights from our research and our recommendations to bring them to life.

64%

Of people polled felt there was insufficient affordable housing locally

Respondents said they would like to see more affordable homes covering a range of tenures including affordable rent (47%), private sale (30%), social rent (25%) and affordable ownership, including shared ownership (23%).

Our recommendation :

Variety is as important as volume. We want to help build more affordable homes offering a range of tenures and sizes to help create mixed and thriving communities that are accessible to all.

40%

Of people don't live where they want to due to a lack of social housing or high house prices and rents

Two-thirds of people said a sense of community is important to deciding where to live, yet, some said they don't live where they would like to due to the lack of affordable housing in that area. 68% of those people said house prices and rents stopped them living where they wanted to.

Our recommendation :

Access to affordable homes helps communities to flourish. We want to ensure affordable housing provision is central in regeneration and new town delivery to allow people to live and remain in the communities they grew up in.

69%

Think local communities should have a greater say over housing built locally

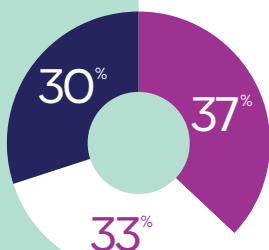
Many of those surveyed wanted new measures to unlock the voice of the community when it comes to delivering new homes. The top three responses told us that people are keen for resident committees to be consulted on planning applications (40%), they'd want to see better communication (emails) from councils on proposed new developments (34%), and to see housing developments directly owned by community groups (31%).

Our recommendation :

Put communities at the heart of delivering new housing. Consider mechanisms for making local voices heard through the design and planning process alongside exploring where community-led housing projects could be deployed.

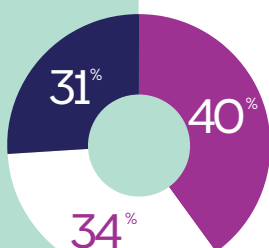
What people want – a closer look at our New Community

Research findings :



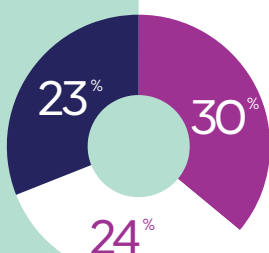
The most important things the people polled believe create a sense of community are :

Feeling safe (37%), healthcare services like GPs (33%) and green spaces (30%).



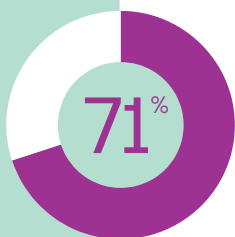
To give communities more say over the homes built locally they want :

Recognised resident committees consulted on planning applications (40%), email notifications of new planning applications from the council for comment (34%) and housing developments directly owned and managed by local community groups (31%).

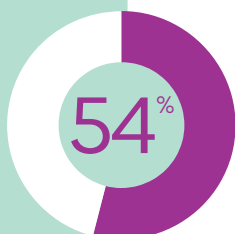


The top three tenures of housing people want to see more of built in their area are :

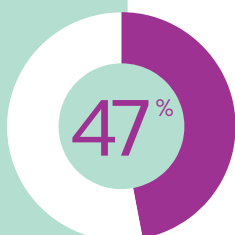
Homes to buy (30%), affordable rent homes provided by housing associations (24%) and shared ownership homes (23%).



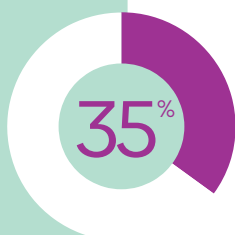
Either agreed or strongly agreed that communities should have more say over the types of housing in their area



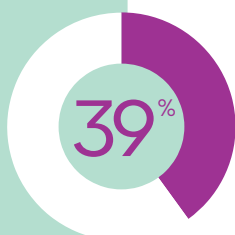
Of people polled agreed or strongly agreed that housing associations currently perform a vital role in their community



Almost half of people polled want housing associations to create neighbourhoods and shared spaces that communities can be proud of



Of people polled would like to live in a small town or village if housing and job opportunities were no issue



Four in ten say they live somewhere other than where they would ideally like to live

Among that group, they cite high house prices and rent (68%) and not enough social housing options (40%) as the reasons for being shut out of where they want to be.

Our work_{in} action

Investing in our homes, supporting our communities
and building new high-quality affordable housing



Supporting our customers:

Supporting our customers is at the heart of the work we do. During the 2023/24 financial year our financial wellbeing team assisted customers in accessing around £659,000 in benefits and helped over 2,500 customers facing financial challenges. That's almost £100,000 more than the previous year to help our customers to be better off financially.

2,594

Customers received help from our financial wellbeing service

699

General benefits advice offered for customers who called in

418

Successful hardship fund applications

237

Customer money management cases

232

Cases for disability benefit claims

179

Food bank referrals

61

Successful grant applications



Maintaining our customers' homes

We own and manage over 37,000 homes across the south of England and London.

We completed over 130,000 repairs across our homes in the past year, with 81% of customers satisfied with the quality of their repairs and 84% of routine repairs completed on time, with an ambition to increase satisfaction and speed of repairs.

We use real time data and insights to actively manage our homes - ensuring maintenance and upgrade investment is targeted efficiently where it is needed. We are focused on taking an intelligence and data-based approach to channelling our target investment of over £500m in our existing homes between now and 2030.

Delivering new homes communities want and need

We believe in strong partnership working to improve the availability of affordable housing. We work with community land trusts (CLTs), national housebuilders like Vistry and local authorities like Mendip District Council to deliver much needed new homes across the south of England and London. Together we are able to create more sustainable, energy efficient homes which help us connect with and empower communities to thrive.

It's through these partnerships that we can boost the amount of affordable homes across social and affordable rent, and shared ownership options so local people can stay in their communities. In fact, we have ambitions to deliver 8,500 new homes over the next seven years.

Click here for a document detailing our work with CLTs.

Driving down homelessness

Our vision is that **everyone has a home** and by providing safety and security through our Housing First work, it ensures that those without a home have a safe and well-maintained place to live.

With funding secured from Homes England and working in partnership with Test Valley Borough Council, homeless charity Two Saints and Vivid housing four homes have been purchased in Andover.

Over the next 30 years, these homes will continue to provide homes for people who are at risk of rough sleeping, or who have been sleeping rough in the borough.

Our tenancy sustainment service also aims to improve the dignity, life opportunities, and financial wellbeing of our customers with vulnerabilities who, without intervention, would be at risk of homelessness.

Find out more about our Housing First work [Click here](#).





More information:

For more information, visit:
aster.co.uk/corporate/about-us.

If you have any questions about any part of this briefing, would like a site visit to a local Aster development or would like a one-to-one meeting to discuss in more detail, please get in touch at: mp.enquiries@aster.co.uk or councillorenquiryinbox@aster.co.uk.