

Draft Decommissioning and Acquisition Policies and Proposed Regeneration of Townhill Park - Consultation feedback

Introduction

1. Southampton City Council undertook a tandem public consultation between 10 July 2017 and 01 October 2017 regarding:
 - Proposed changes to housing policies affecting the decommissioning of properties of tenants and leaseholders citywide and
 - Proposed regeneration of Townhill Park, which would entail decommissioning the remaining properties in the Townhill Park Regeneration scheme.
2. The proposals were discussed at Cabinet on 20 June 2017 and the Cabinet agreed that the draft decommissioning and acquisition policies and the proposals for the regeneration of Townhill Park should be consulted with key stakeholders and the public before final decisions are taken.

Aims

3. The aim of this consultation was to:
 - Ensure residents understand what was being proposed in the draft decommissioning and acquisition policies
 - Ensure residents understand what was being proposed for the regeneration of Townhill Park
 - Ensure any resident, business or stakeholder who wished to comment on the proposals had the opportunity to do so, enabling them to raise any impacts that the proposals may have
 - Provide feedback on the results of the consultation to elected Members and key officers to enable them to make informed decisions
 - Ensure that results are analysed in a meaningful, timely fashion, so that feedback is taken into account when final decisions are made.
4. This report summarises the principles and processes of the public consultation. It also provides a summary of the consultation respondents both for the consideration of decision makers and any interested individuals.

Consultation principles

5. The council takes its duty to consult with residents and stakeholders on changes to services very seriously. The council's consultation principles ensure all consultation is:
 - Inclusive: so that everyone in the city has the opportunity to express their views.
 - Informative: so that people have adequate information about the proposals, what different options mean, and a balanced and fair explanation of the potential impact, particularly the equality and safety impact.
 - Understandable: by ensuring that the language used to communicate is simple and clear and that efforts are made to reach all stakeholders, for example people who are non-English speakers or disabled people.

- Appropriate: by targeting people who are more likely to be affected and using a more tailored approach to get their feedback, complemented by a general approach to all residents, staff, businesses and partners.
 - Meaningful: by ensuring decision makers have the full consultation feedback information so that they can make informed decisions.
 - Reported: by letting consultees know what was done with their feedback.
6. Southampton City Council is committed to consultations of the highest standard, which are meaningful and comply with the following legal standards:
 - Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage
 - Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response
 - Adequate time must be given for consideration and response
 - The product of consultation must be carefully taken into account.
 7. Public sector organisations in Southampton also have a compact (or agreement) with the voluntary sector in which there is a commitment to undertake public consultations for a minimum of 12 weeks wherever possible. This aims to ensure that there is enough time for individuals and voluntary organisations to hear about, consider and respond to consultations. This consultation was for a total of 12 weeks.

Approach and methodology

8. The consultation on the draft policies and proposed regeneration of Townhill Park sought views from relevant residents and stakeholders. The formal written consultation ran from 10 July 2017 to 01 October 2017.
9. Deciding on the best process for gathering feedback from stakeholders when conducting a consultation requires an understanding of the audience and the users of the service. It is also important to have more than one way for stakeholders to feedback on the consultation, to enable engagement with the widest range of the population.
10. The agreed approach for this consultation was to use a combination of online and paper questionnaires. This approach enables an appropriate amount of explanatory and supporting information to be included in a structured questionnaire, helping to ensure that residents are aware of the background and context to each of the proposals. It is therefore the most suitable methodology for consulting on a complex issue.
11. The consultation questionnaire was divided in to two parts as the consultation was covering two separate but closely related topics, the first asked about the draft housing policies and the second asked about the Townhill Park proposals to divide up the two parts of the consultation. Respondents could choose to answer either one or both parts of the consultation.
12. Representatives from the council also attended two drop-in sessions in Townhill Park. Feedback from these sessions was captured and included in the analysis of consultation results.

Promotion and communication

13. Throughout the consultation, every effort was made to ensure that as many people as possible were aware of the proposals and had the opportunity to have their say. Particular effort was made to communicate with tenants and leaseholders as they are the most likely to be directly impacted by the proposals should they be implemented.

14. The consultation was promoted in the following ways:

- Paper copies of the Townhill Park newsletter and consultation questionnaire were posted to all residents of Townhill Park.
- Two public drop-ins were held at Townhill Park Community Centre. The drop-ins were advertised on the letters sent to all Townhill Park residents and on social media posts (Council and Housing Facebook and Twitter accounts – reaching thousands of people over this period).
- The online survey was available on the council website for any interested parties to respond to.
- Paper copies of the consultation questionnaire and supporting information were available in libraries, Gateway, Civic Centre reception and Townhill Park Community Centre.
- The consultation was promoted via a banner on the homepage of Southampton.gov.uk website for four weeks at the start in July and two weeks at the end, in September.
- Tenants' Link e-news sent with lead article about consultation.
- The council's Facebook and Twitter accounts were used to signpost people to the consultation.
- E-alerts were sent to subscribers of the council's email marketing service via a range of bulletins including City News, Community News and events, and Your City Your Say. These featured hyperlinks to further information about the consultation and the questionnaire, reaching more than 10,000 people.
- Emails were sent to 218 tenants who are involved in tenant engagement activities and to all tenants associations across the city.
- The consultation was promoted at the tenant summer conference (over a 100 tenants attended).
- The consultation was promoted and discussed at three tenant groups; Tenant resource group, Tenant scrutiny panel and Tenant inspectors.

Consultation questionnaire respondents

15. In total, 151 people responded to the consultation either through paper or online questionnaire. All the questionnaires that had at least one question completed were included in the analysis, to ensure every bit of feedback was considered.

16. Figure 1 shows the age breakdown of the consultation respondents compared to the mid-2016 population estimate for Southampton. The groups with the lowest representation were under 16, 16 – 24, 25 – 34 and 85+ year olds. The most over-represented groups were the 35 – 44, 55 – 64 and 65 – 74 year old groups. This is consistent with other consultation results as the over 35s tend to participate in greater numbers.

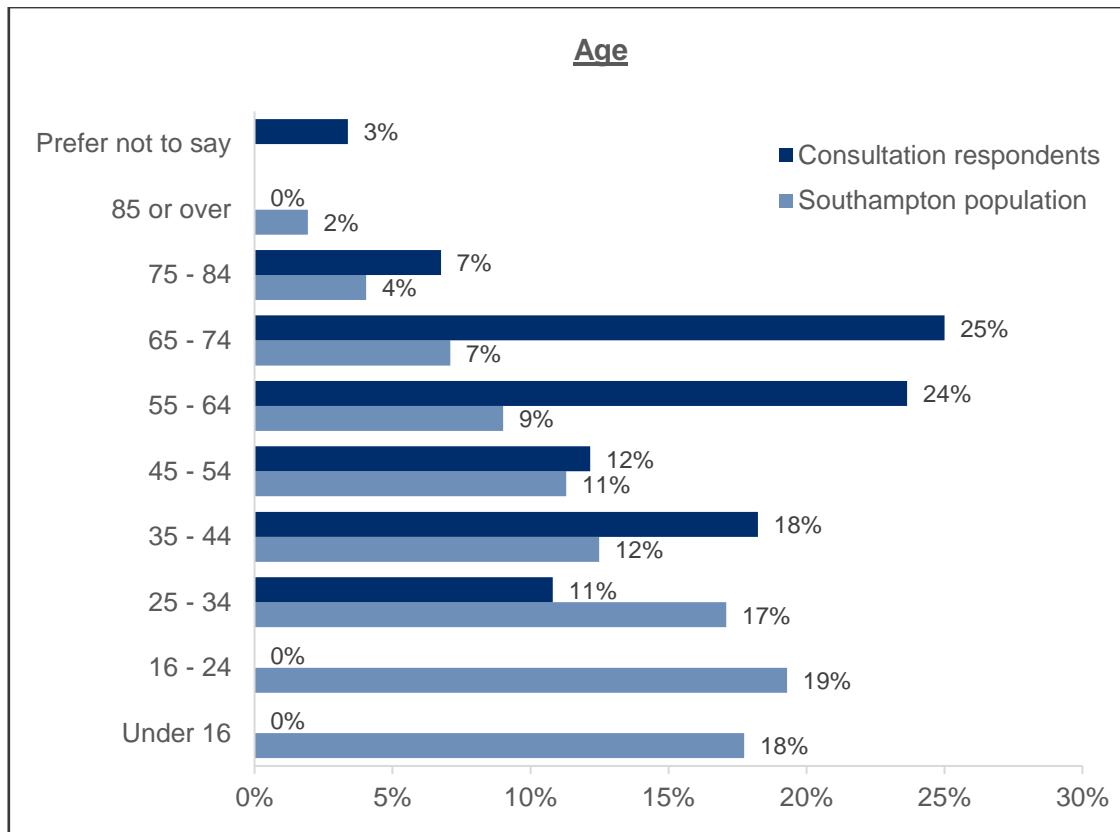


Figure 1 – age breakdown of consultation respondents

17. The gender breakdown of respondents was 56% female, 41% male, 0% Transgender, 0% do not identify as female, male or transgender and 3% preferred not to say. This is a slight overrepresentation of females as the mid-2016 population estimate for Southampton reports 49% female and 51% male.

18. The ethnicity breakdown of consultation respondents was:

- 89% White
- 1% Any other ethnic group
- 1% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
- 0% Asian or Asian British
- 0% Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
- 10% Prefer not to say

19. The proportion of people that describe themselves as White is broadly representative of the Southampton population as recorded in the 2011 census in which 86% of the population describe themselves as White. 8% of the Southampton population in the 2011 census described themselves as Asian or Asian British, 2% mixed or multiple ethnic groups, 2% Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British and 1% other ethnic group. The most underestimated ethnic group was people that described themselves as Asian or Asian British as there were no respondents to the consultation questionnaire in this group.

20. When respondents were asked if they considered themselves to be disabled, 33% answered with yes, 61% no and a further 6% preferred not to say.

21. When respondents were asked if they had any dependent children under the age of 18, 25% of people answered Yes, 71% No and a further 4% preferred not to say.
22. 7% of respondents are employed by Southampton City Council, 87% are not employed by Southampton City Council and a further 5% preferred not to say.
23. Respondents were also asked about their home tenure. The majority (68%) of respondents were tenants living in housing rented from the council. The second most common tenure was owned, representing 18% of respondents. In addition, 3% described their tenure as private rented, 2% shared ownership, 2% other social rented and 1% other. 5% of respondents preferred not to say.
24. Of all respondents to the consultation, 13% are currently a resident or leaseholder of a property that would be decommissioned as part of the current Townhill Park proposals. The majority (80%) do not live in a property that would be decommissioned as part of the current Townhill Park proposals and a further 7% preferred not to say. When the consultation respondents were broken down based upon which part of the consultation they answered, the proportion of people that are currently a resident or leaseholder of a property that would be decommissioned as part of the current Townhill Park proposals rose to 19% of respondents that answered the Townhill Park section.

Questionnaire feedback

25. In total 151 people answered the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided in to two sections, the first asked about draft policies and the second asked about the proposed regeneration of Townhill Park. Respondents were given the option to answer either one or both of the sections. In total 134 people (89%) answered questions about the draft policies and 94 people (62%) answered questions on the proposed regeneration of Townhill Park.

Questionnaire feedback - Analysis of questions on the Draft decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy and draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy

26. The first question asked respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed that the current policy needed to be revised (See figure 2). In total, 59% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the policy should be revised. In comparison, 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the policy should be revised. Overall more people agreed that the policy should be revised than disagreed. Although, there was also a relatively high number (29%) that neither agreed nor disagreed.

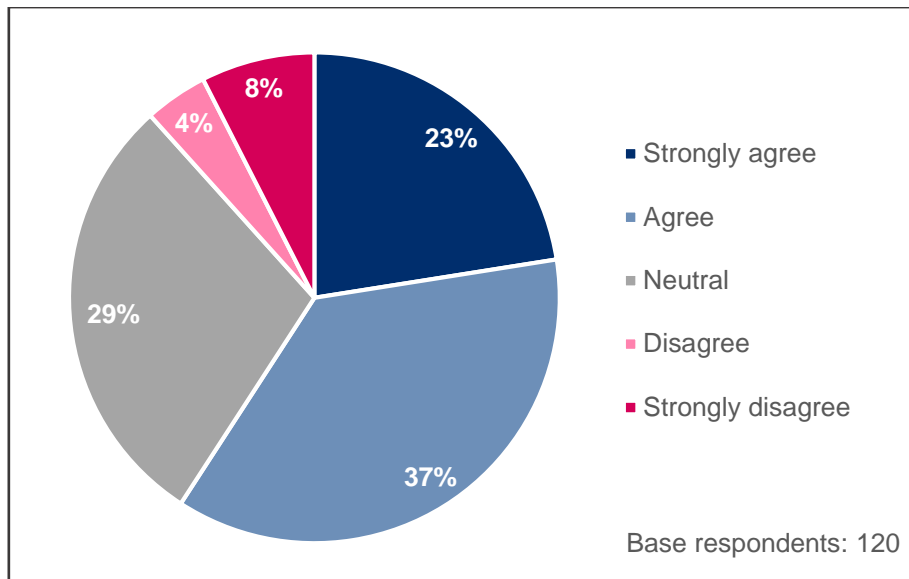


Figure 2 – “To what extent do you agree or disagree that the current policy for the council regarding decommissioning, Compulsory Purchase Orders and Buy-Backs should be revised?”

27. Respondents were then asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the content of the two new draft policies (See figure 3). Overall, 48% of respondents agreed with the content of the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy and 49% agreed with the content of the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy.

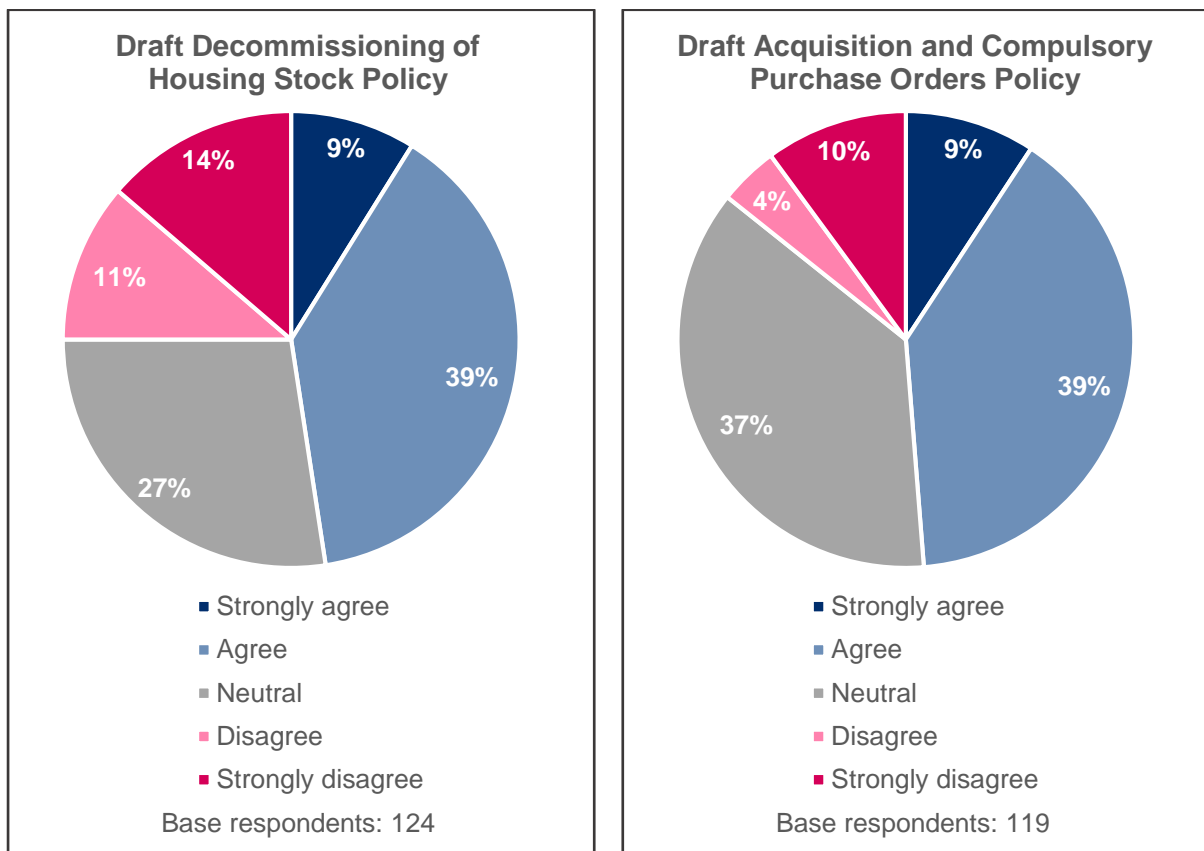


Figure 3 – “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the content of the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy and the content of the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy”

28. In total, 25% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the content of the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy. Fewer respondents disagreed with the content of the Draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy; 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed. There was a relatively high proportion of people that neither agreed nor disagreed (37%) to the content of the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy.
29. Respondents that selected either disagree or strongly disagree to the content of the draft policies were then asked why it was they felt this way. The question was open for them to write free text on what it was about the policy they disagreed with. When analysing the free text comments from the questionnaire, all comments from all questions were analysed and categorised together. For example, if a respondent commented on the content of the policy in a different free text question that comment will have been regrouped with all other comments on the content of the policy to ensure that an accurate picture of opinions can be calculated across the entire consultation. In total, 63 respondents provided a comment on the questionnaire about the draft policies.
30. Figure 4 shows the themes of comments surrounding disagreement with the content of the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy and Figure 5 shows the themes of comments surrounding disagreement with the content of the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy.

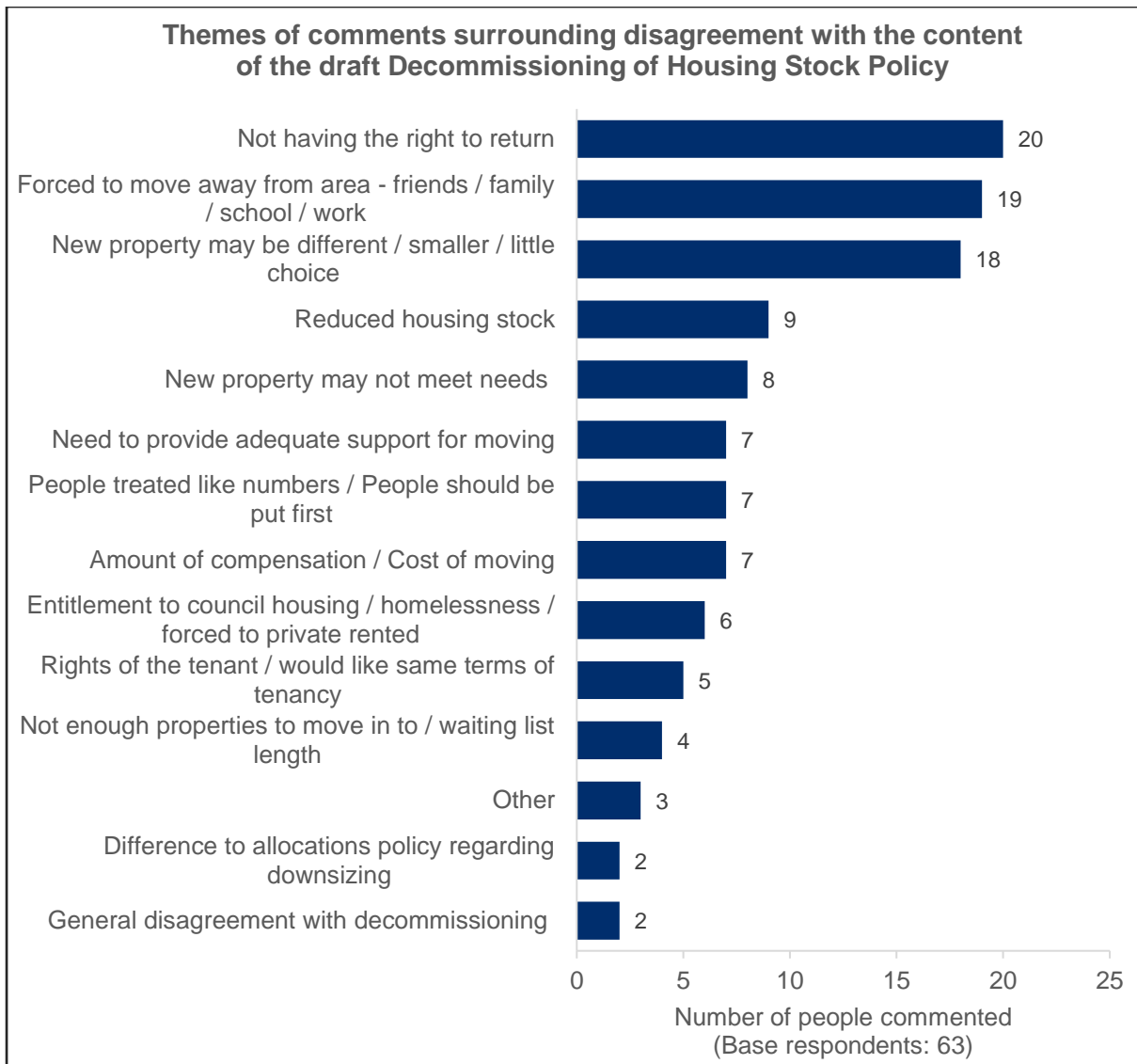


Figure 4 – Themes of comments surrounding disagreement with the content of the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy

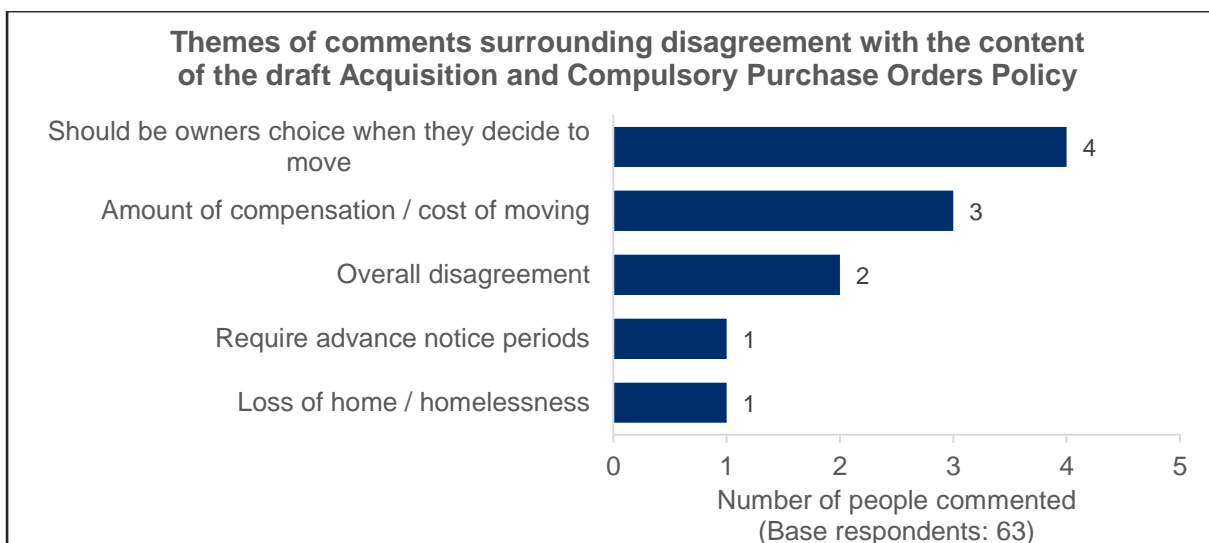


Figure 5 – Themes of comments surrounding disagreement with the content of the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy

31. The aspect of the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy that was most disagreed with surrounded the right to return of tenants to the redeveloped site. In total 20 people commented on this. It was also the most frequent response across all free text questions in the consultation. Examples that encompass the sentiment of the comments submitted include:

“Some tenants that have been in their homes for most of their lives have grown into that community and to be forced away without the chance to return back to the same area would be cruel and unjust”

“If you can afford the rent on the new properties then should be able to move back.”

“I feel that tenants who are asked to vacate their current tenancy should be allowed an automatic right of return.”

“More thought should be put into how to actively assist and encourage tenants to return if they wish too.”

“People should be at all costs rehoused in the area that they live in, if they wish.”

32. The second most reported theme of response was a disagreement with the possibility that tenants may be forced to move away from the area from their family, friends, school, work and other connections they have to the area. In total 19 people commented on this. These comments were very similar to those expressing a disagreement with the right to return. Examples of comments about being forced to locate away from the area tenants live within include:

“My main concern is to remain living close to my family.”

“People may want to stay in the property for more genuine reasons such as close to loved ones, family, schools and areas they have only ever known/lived in so they should be prioritised to go back to a property if developed!”

“If a person has lived in the property/area for a number of years, it seems unfair to move them away from their social networks to start again”

“This will disrupt people's lives in a drastic fashion, forcing people to change schools, doctors and destroying other local links.”

“I'm worried that being a council tenant who lives in a flat that I am comfortable and happy in that I will be asked to move to a different property in a different area that I have no links in or am not comfortable with.”

33. The third most mentioned theme of comment surrounded the concern residents had that they would be forced to move in to a property considerably different to the one they are currently in due to a re-assessment of need. Comments that encompass the sentiment of these opinions include:

“I believe you should be entitled to whatever you already possess.”

“If a tenant has regularly paid their rent, not caused any problems and been in situ for more than 10 years then they should be allowed to return to the redeveloped site should they wish to and/or move into a home that matches what they have given up.”

"It is unfair to force a couple or a single person, living in a three bedroom property to move to a one bedroom property, because their children have left home."

"It's not fair that the tenant would have to downgrade and downsize in property size due to no fault of the tenant."

"I think any tenants having to relocate should be offered a like for like property. It shouldn't be based on their current situation. For example. A tenant that moves into a 3 bed property as they have children. Years later the children have grown up and left home. The tenant pays full rent and received no benefit. They should still be entitled to a 3 bed property"

34. Nine people were concerned about what decommissioning would do to the housing stock of the council. Examples of comments include:

"I feel that we should not lose anymore council housing so much has gone and is not being replaced except by housing assoc and they are nearly as expensive as private renting doesn't help people like myself who live on low wages"

"Whatever is rebuilt should be kept as social housing, no private at all."

"this is southampton city council property and should stay council property, not run by people outside of the council."

35. In total eight people stipulated that the new property would have to meet their specific needs. Comments included:

"would want a ground floor property that I have know because of health problems."

"I need certain things in place I.e being registered disabled"

"I need a ground floor flat with a fully adapted bathroom"

36. Seven people expressed concern over the level of support that needs to be provided for moving. Comments included:

"Put the tenants first, and ensure that they are helped in every way possible, from moving to the house they are having to move to, ask them their needs and (WANTS) from their new home."

"I would be unable to lift or move furniture in a move"

"Some of the older generation tenants might need talking through it at each stage of the process. It might save time and difficulties in the long run."

37. Seven people felt that tenants were being treated like numbers rather than people and that the policy did not appear to make sure tenants were put first. Comments that encompassed this theme include:

"I disagree with the fact that people seem to be relocated wherever the Council deems suitable with no regard for the humans behind the doors or their needs."

"They will never understand how their life can have such little value while you wipe out a life time of memories never to be recaptured"

"I strongly object to tenants being treated as pawns and forced to leave their homes and relocate"

38. Seven people question or expressed concern over the amount of compensation that tenants would receive or the financial implications and cost of moving. Examples of these comments include:

"...will have to pay their own removal costs."

"A vast cash incentive should be given should one be forced to move out as with private sector."

"How will compensation be calculated for the people how will not come back? How will you compensate the transport expenses if you will make tenant to leave the property."

39. Six people expressed concern that either their entitlement to council housing may be affected as a results of decommissioning, that they may end up homeless or that they would be forced in to private rented accommodation. Comments that encompass the sentiment of this concern include:

"I do not agree that someone could risk losing their home, if they are re-assessed when you choose to decommission their current property"

"I don't see how you can possibly re-home all of these residents, so I can't help but think that many will be left paying extortionate private rents when they thought they were going to be able to stay in their properties for the rest of their lives."

"Not everyone can afford a home - by moving out so many, what does the council honestly think is going to happen to all these people because in the current climate (economies and then some aside) I highly doubt hundreds will land so lightly on their feet."

40. Five people commented on the rights of the tenant and that the same terms of tenancy should be expected if a tenant is forced to move. These comments included:

"In my view the proposed policy contravenes the Human Rights Act right to a family life."

"Tenants should be able to return to the area in a property of the same size and with the same conditions as before i.e. secure tenancy."

"Tenants should retain exactly the same tenancy rights that they had before being forced to move."

41. Four people expressed concern over sufficient properties being available for tenants to move in to and also the impact that decommissioning tenants will have on the existing housing waiting list.

"Decommissioning your housing stock will badly hurt everyone in council housing and all those on the waititng list."

"If you need to rehouse people because of redevelopment etc then plan ahead and hold back on allocations in order to have the capacity to rehouse existing tenants."

"...but it's not fair just to get someone out because you say they have to move, and you don't have enough places for people to move to"

"...the eviction of home owners and tenants for spurious purposes of development that will take years to complete will put further strain on local housing and disrupt the lives of many families"

42. Two people commented on the difference between the allocations policy regarding downsizing and the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy. These comments included:

"This policy is inconsistent with the council's policy for those who choose to downgrade their accommodation size. In this case people leaving a three bedroom property are entitled to a two bedroom property. Forcibly moving people to a much smaller property is unfair. It could also be suggested that as these people are being forcibly moved by choice this policy is even worse"

"I disagree with the amount of compensation they get compared to other tenants. Downsizers no longer get a penny, for other "decants" tenants have to make an insurance claim which is after the event, stressful, fiddly and time consuming."

43. There were fewer comments regarding the content of the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy but the most frequently mentioned by those that did comment was that the owner should have greater choice in when they decide to move. In total four people commented on this; these comments included:

"Because once you've bought your home you should be free to live in it until you decide sell it not be forced out by the reigning government."

"If a person buys a property in good faith it is unfair for the Council to have the right to over ride their decisions and buy against their will."

"to be fair they have a right to say where they go if they are giving up their home they have bought"

"After working hard with chronic illness and being able to purchase a council flat, which is my only home for the past 25 years, the acquisition /compulsory purchase, consequently relocation or possible homelessness will cause a detrimental impact on my health and life. I am already retired due to my health and don't want to sell my home or move away from the area."

44. In regards to the content of the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase orders Policy, three people commented on the amount of compensation, financial implications and the cost of moving.

"Because of the upset to people not just financially but emotionally."

"compensation should all recognise the psychological consequences of such redevelopments for some people."

"Removal fees alone may be £3000.00."

45. There were few remaining comments on the content of the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy surrounding the loss of home and homelessness, notice periods, and general disagreement with the policy and. Examples include:

"If decommissioning will cause detrimental changes and homelessness to council tenants and leaseholders, then STOP the decommissioning."

"Because it is wrong."

46. As part of the consultation respondents were also asked if they could suggest any alternatives to anything proposed. With regards to the draft policies there were a few suggestions that were raised by respondents to the survey, as shown in figure 6.

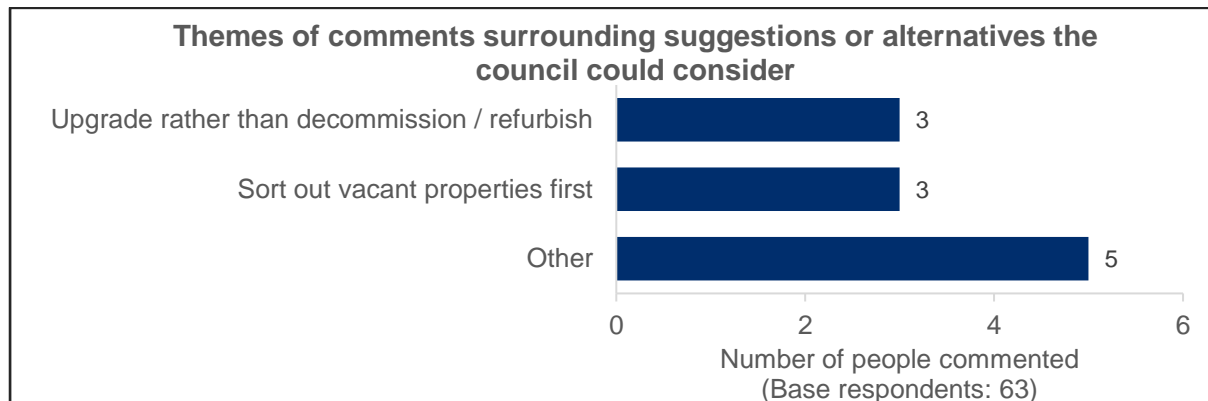


Figure 6 – Themes of comments surrounding suggestions or alternatives the council could consider

47. In total three people suggested that the council should focus on filling vacant properties in the city before considering decommissioning. Comments included:

“I would like to see more done about the amount of empty houses in town”

“Acquiring vacant property should be for any empty properties after empty for say 18 months”

“The council has powers to enter empty dwellings, repair them if necessary and rent them out to the desperate people on its waiting list”

48. In total four people suggested that the council should refurbish and modernise existing council properties.

“a lot of these propertys do not need to be knocked down. they can and should be upgraded by southampton city council and the work given to the people of southampton.”

“There’s quite a few empty blocks and unused office blocks around the city centre (Nelson’s Gate for example). Concentrate on converting those to housing as they obviously aren’t needed for office space.”

“Modernisation”

49. There were also a number of other suggestions. Examples include:

“Some don’t understand and some chose to not to or claim to have been misled. Personally I think right to buy should be abolished but when people do buy they need to be fully aware that compulsory purchase orders can be enforced legally.”

“No council flats to be built higher than 5 storeys high. If this happens it will become to be of a much lower standard area.”

“Southampton council do the works themselves”

“The council needs to stop its grandiose plans and concentrate on providing decent services. How about mending the roads and pavements of the city, which are in a shocking state?”

50. Respondents were asked about the impact that the draft policies would have on them or their community if they were implemented. Figure 7 shows the extent to which people felt that there would be an impact on them or their community.

51. In total, 76% of respondents felt that the implementation of the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy would have either a significant or moderate impact on them or their community and 24% felt that there would be little or no impact. Overall, 66% of respondents felt that the implementation of the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy would have either a significant or moderate impact on them or their community and 34% felt that there would be little or no impact.

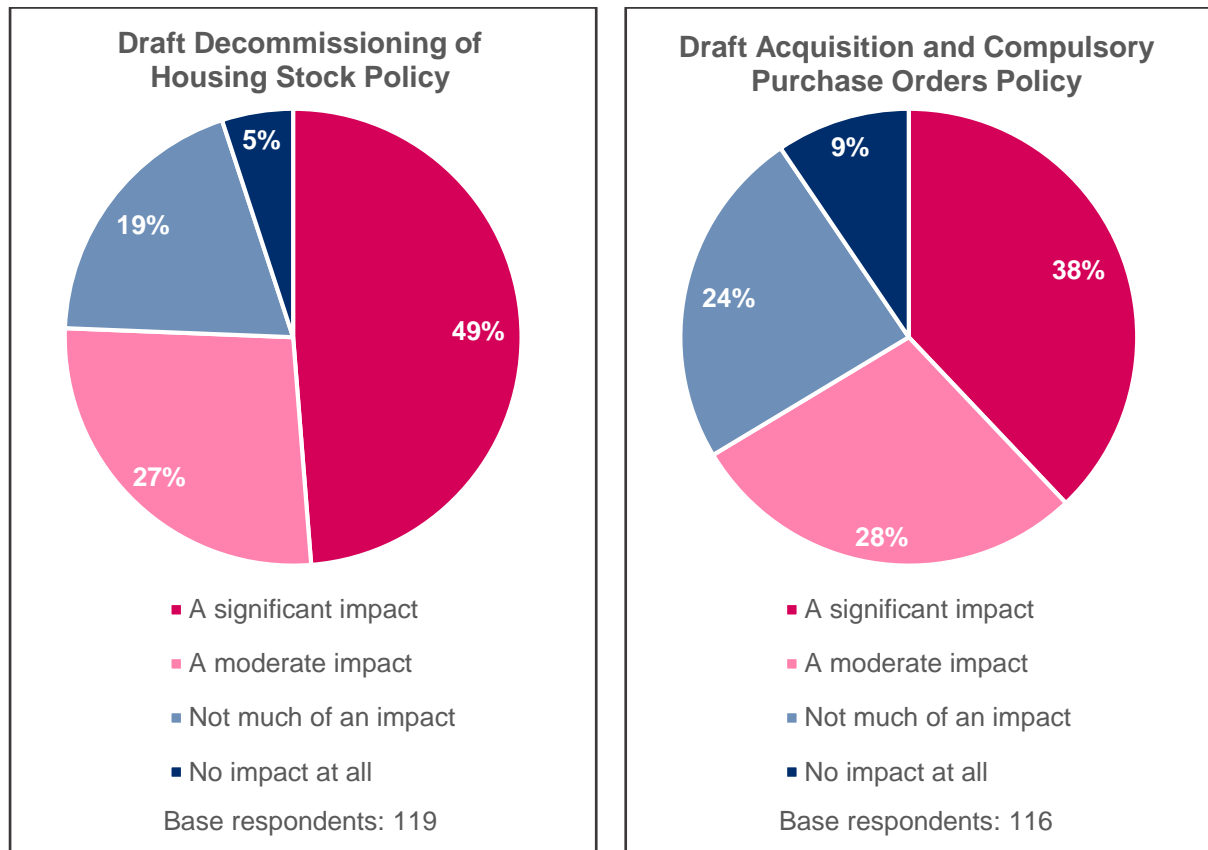


Figure 7 – “What impact do you feel the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy and the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy might have on you or your community if they were implemented?”

52. Respondents that felt they would be impacted by the implementation of the draft policies were then asked if it was linked to a protected characteristic on a list provided in the questionnaire. Figure 8 shows the protected characteristics that they felt would be most impacted by the draft policies.

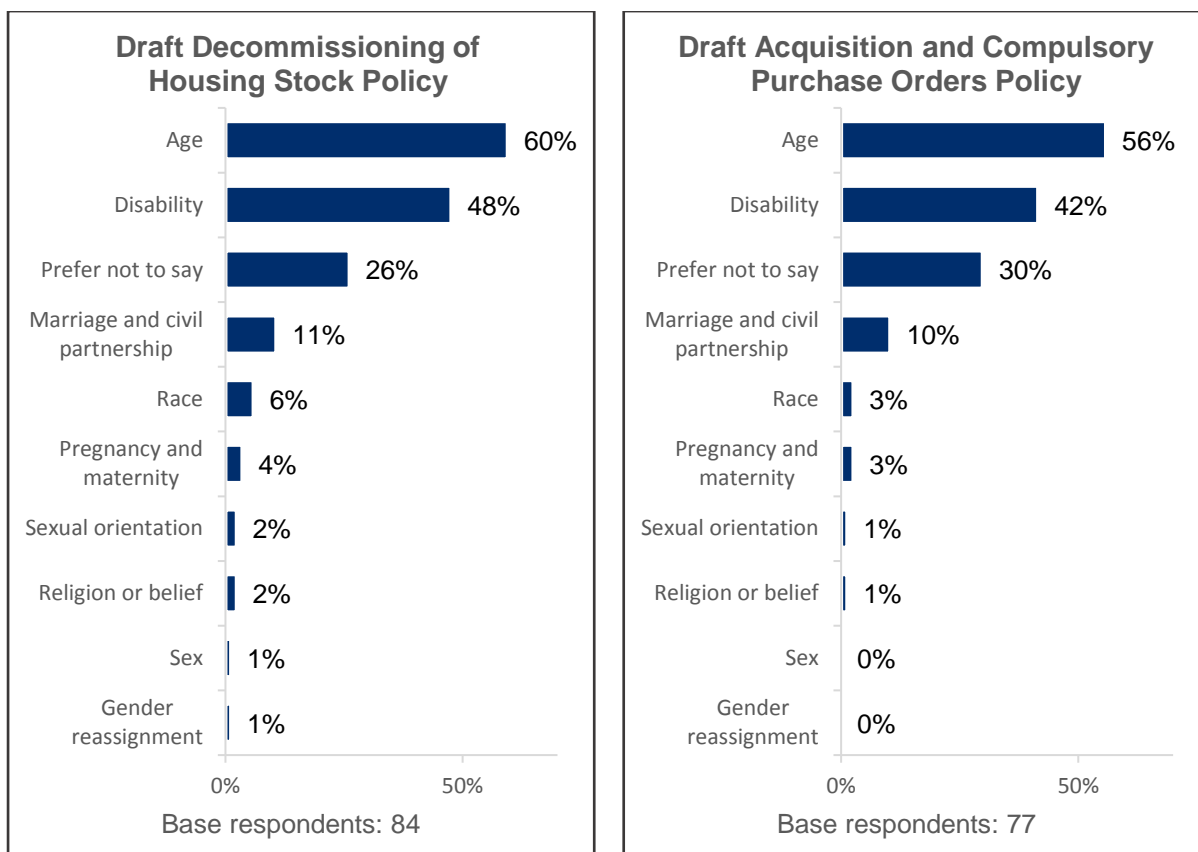


Figure 8 – “If you feel you will be impacted by the implementation of the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy and the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy and that it is linked to a protected characteristic, please select the characteristic.”

53. The most frequently selected characteristics across both draft policies were age and disability. Regarding the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy, a total of 60% of respondents to the question felt that they would be particularly impacted as a result of age and 48% felt they would be particularly impacted as a result of disability. Age and Disability were also the most significant protected characteristics regarding the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy and were selected by 56% and 42% of respondents to the question respectively.

54. Respondents were given the opportunity to explain more in free text questions about how they would be affected by the implementation of the draft policies and also if there were any other personal impacts or equality issues that had been overlooked in the formation of the draft policies. When analysing the free text comments from the questionnaire, all comments from all questions were analysed and categorised together. For example, if a respondent mentioned an impact the draft policies would have in a different free text question that comment will have been regrouped with all other comments on the impact of the implementation of the draft policies to ensure that an accurate picture of opinions can be calculated across the entire consultation. In total 63 people provided a comment on the draft policies in the questionnaire. All impacts identified in comments across the consultation are displayed in figure 9.

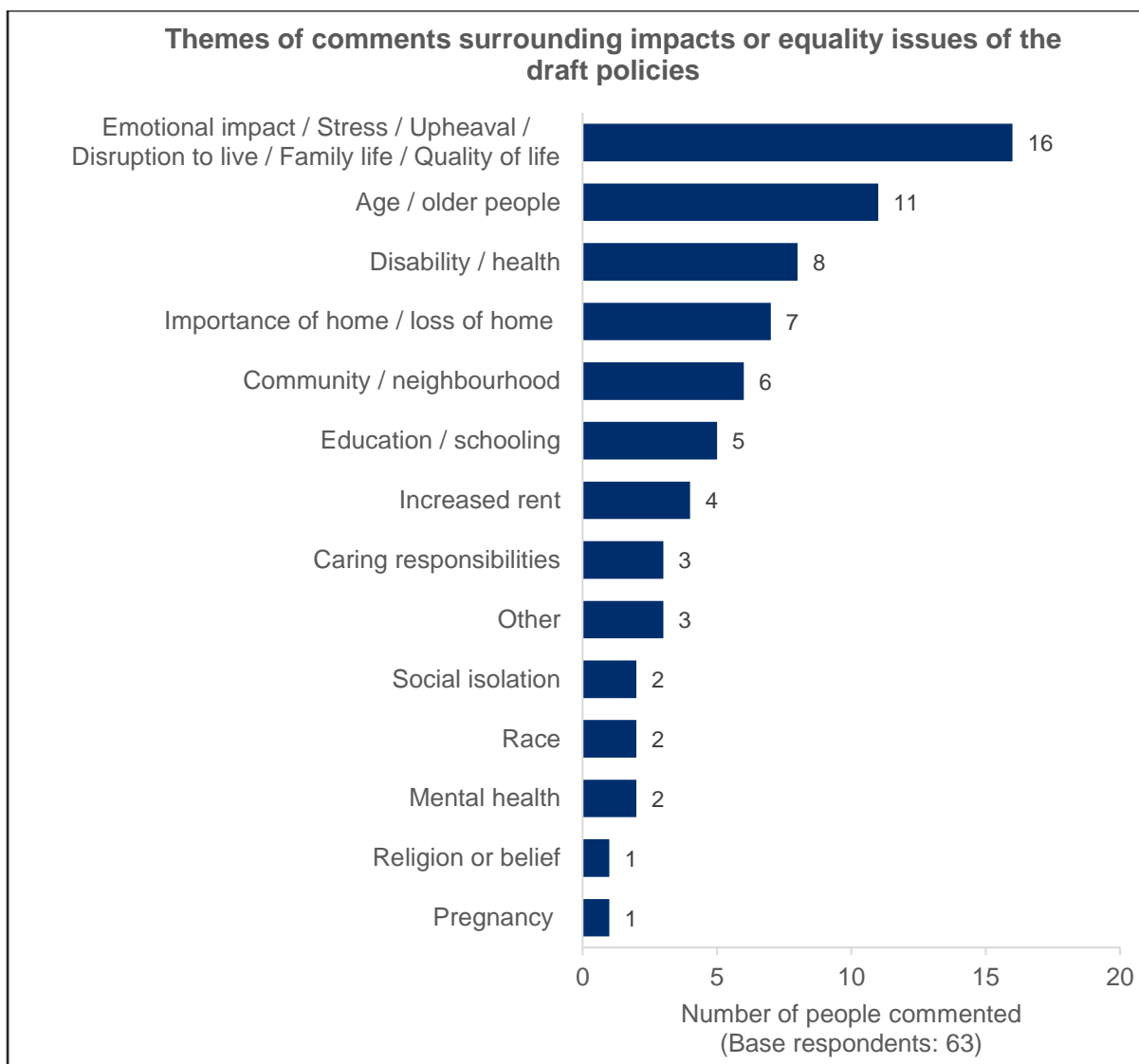


Figure 9 – Themes of comments surrounding impacts or equality issues of the draft policies

55. The most frequently described impact was the disruption to life that the implementation of either draft policies would cause. Comments surrounded the emotional impact this would have and the stress and upheaval that moving house would cause. Comments that encompass the sentiment of the 16 people that identified this as an impact include:

“How can you cover in words on a legal document the sentiment and fear of a tenant being forced to leave their home to make room for a slip road or car park.”

“I think it's disgraceful that you are choosing to disrupt so many individual's and families lives in this way.”

“The decommissioning of so many properties in such quick succession is going to impact the economy (e.g. rental market, affordable housing in Soton) as well as cause upheaved to hundreds of families and neighbourhoods.”

56. The second most frequently mentioned impact expressed a concern over older age categories. In total, 11 people raised this in a comment, it was also the most frequently

selected protected characteristic previously mentioned in figure 8. Examples of comments include:

“The older a person gets the more difficult and distressing it becomes to have to face relocation, especially when this means moving away from family and convenient services. Greater reassurance needs to be built into any decommissioning plans to take these matters into consideration.”

“What will happen to the over 60's accommodation of people that are too old to move”

“I worry that people already in sheltered accommodation may be affected and that for elderly people is this an unnecessary stress.”

57. Similarly to people concerned around the greater impact on the older members of the population, there was also a concern for people with disabilities or poor health should the draft policies be implemented. In total 8 people recognised this as a potential impact in their comments and examples include:

“I think people with disability will be as they have their support networks around them. Adapting to a new environment will be very challenging and support should be put in place when this occurs”

“Disabled facilities are few and far between, people need to live in a settled environment and not moved away from pre developed local doctors and neighbours.”

“You have not taken into consideration the impact it would have on people with mental illness or disability.”

58. Seven people felt that the emotional impact of leaving your home had been underestimated and that the home is very important to people. Comments that encompass the sentiment of these feelings include:

“A house/flat/bungalow is more than bricks and mortar. It is someone's HOME.”

“This is a huge upheaval and you are disrupting one of the most sacred part of anyone's life - their home.”

59. In total six people expressed concern over the impact the draft policies would have on existing communities that have developed over time. Examples include:

“We seemed to have stopped seeing the value of the community and are so ready to destroy it and then ask if we know the people next door or people in the same street”

“Removing the existing community is a discredited regeneration policy.”

60. Five respondents were concerned over the disruption the implementation of the draft policies would have on the education and schooling of children. Comments included:

“acces to education (e.g. primary, nursery) - those moved out of the area who ahve school aged children will be impacted; the education experience may be disrupted for these children.”

“It is important that people are happy with where they are revised as a lot of residents have children at local schools who are at crucial stages in their schooling.”

61. An impact expressed by four people was that they may end up having to pay increased rent as a result of having to move. These comments included:

“my children wood have to pay a lot more rent for a start as the new owners would be private”

“I feel that we should not loose anymore council housing so much has gone and is not being replaced except by housing assc and they are nearly as expensive as private renting doesn't help people like myself who live on low wages”

62. In total, three people mentioned the impact moving away from the area would have on caring responsibilities they have for someone who currently lives close by to them. Comments include:

“People have caring responsibilities. If they are forced to relocate to another part of the city this could cause significant difficulties - both logistically and also in terms of expense. Please do consider that some people have wider family reponsibilities outside and beyond their own immediate needs.”

“child in local school and mother in law has advanced dementia and is in a dementia home less than 1/2 a mile from area and my wife wont drive.”

“I am the only female 'carer' to my grand daughter who relies on me a great deal. I take a huge part in the lives of my daughters 2 children who live with their dad &, as a pensioner, receive support from them in return. It helps that I live close by.”

63. There were a further number of categories each with 1 or 2 comments each. These included comments on the impact upon a person's mental health, social isolation or increased impact as a result of race, pregnancy or religion or belief. Examples of these comments include:

“I have personal experience of the effects of the shock of Compulsory Purchase on a family member. It triggered severe clinical depression which had lasting effects.”

“Without security, human beings face the fear and anxiety of being displaced, losing support of neighbours, friends and becoming lonely”

“Will race be a problem if you are put in a position that is of 99 percent is different”

“I will suffer great distress and anxiety about my poor fellow-citizens, many of whom will be either pregnant or parents”

64. It is important that the policies are clear and easy to understand, that they are open and transparent and provide enough information about the subject. Residents were therefore asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements about the clarity of the policies. Figure 10 shows the results of these questions for each of the policies.

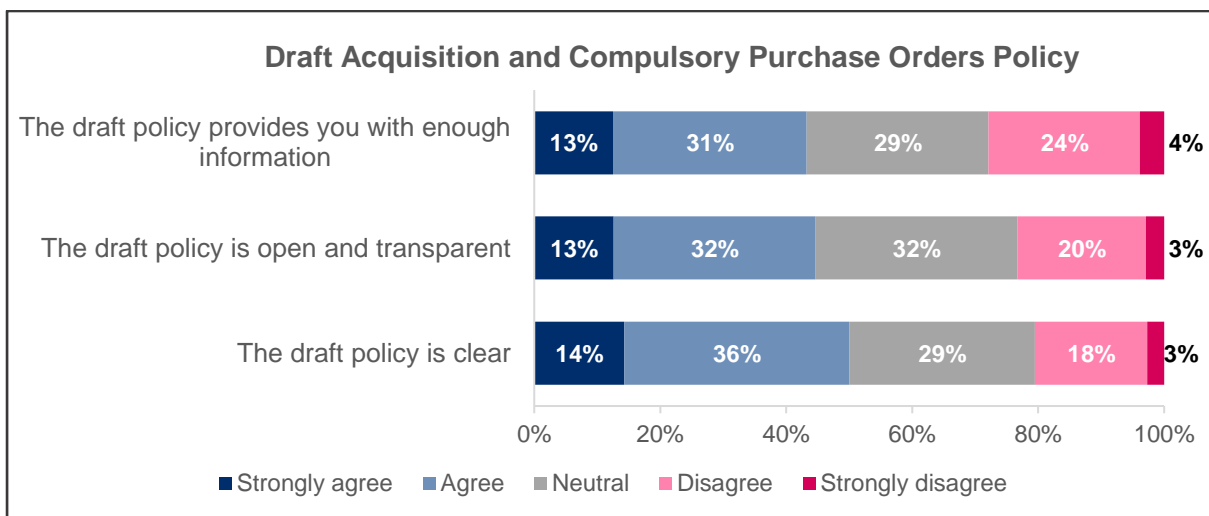
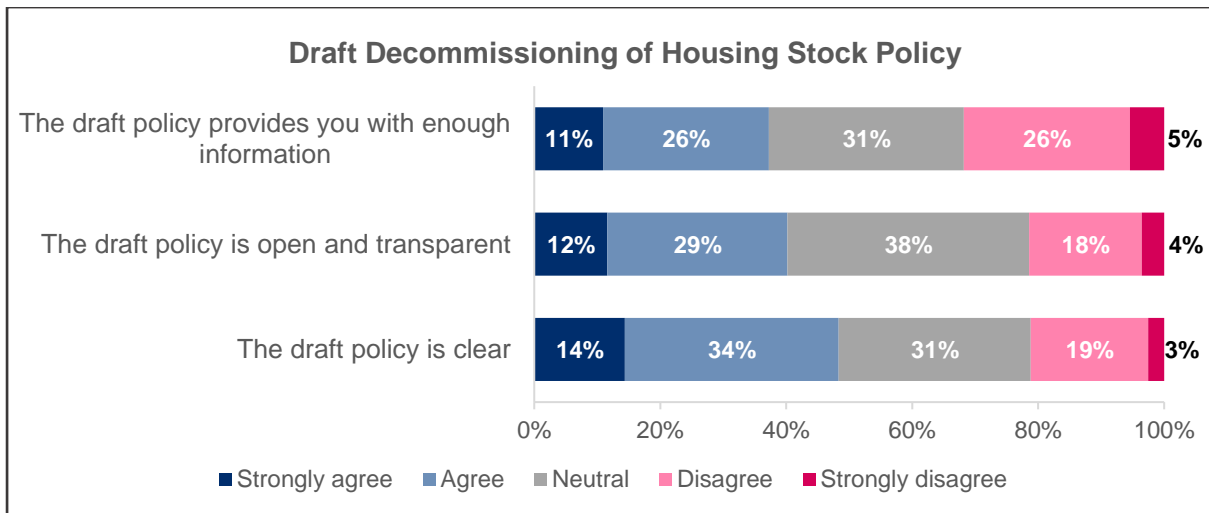


Figure 10 – “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy and draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy?”

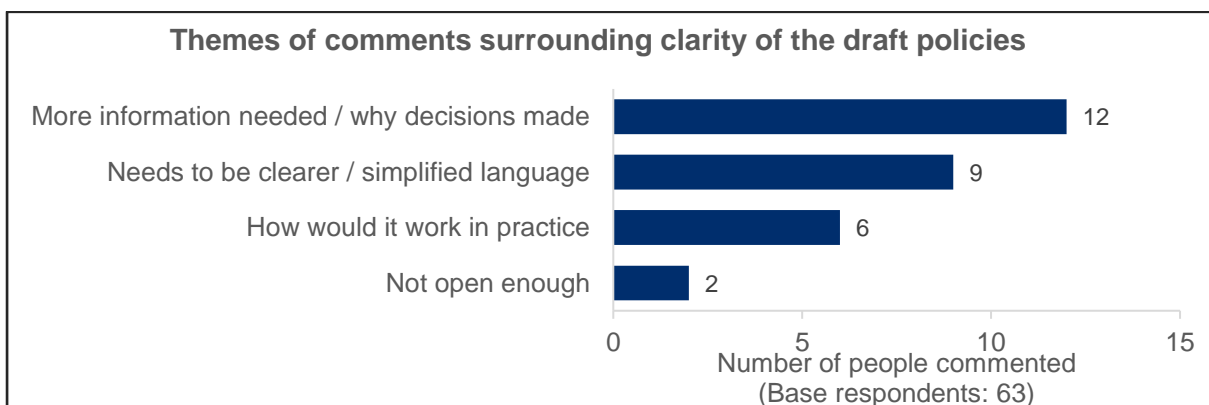


Figure 11 – Themes of comments surrounding the clarity of the draft policies

65. Overall, 37% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy provided them with enough information and 32% disagreed. In total, 43% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy provided them with enough information and 28% disagreed. The

amount of information was the most disagreed with statement regarding the clarity of the draft policies.

66. When respondents were asked why they disagreed with the clarity of the policy statement, in total 12 people mentioned not enough information being available (Figure 11). The comments surrounding this included:

"I'm not sure the content covers everything."

"If there is the option to still live in the same area of the city, it would be helpful for the L.A to provide opportunities for tenants to move into an alternative flat or house asap. There are several areas which are still rather vague so additional information would certainly be helpful. Why does the Council need to decommission homes, what reasons are provided? Is this open to consultation every time?"

"more info on the right to stay in the area."

"What are the certain circumstances of right to return? This should be extended to 'all if accommodation is available'."

"It is not clear how will you choose the property to renovate. Why it is impossible for most tenants to return to their houses after renovation. How will compensation be calculated for the people how will not come back? How will you compensate the transport expenses if you will make tenant to leave the property."

"In this phase will the tenant be required to still pay their council tax and rent ??"

"It is important, I think, to always explain WHY redevelopment needs to be done, and this should be a legitimate reason. Reasons put forward are not always persuasive, especially to people faced with the shock of Compulsory Purchase. It has not been obvious why e.g. Townhill needed redeveloping in the way that has been attempted. Remembering that people's HOMES are being taken away is essential. It is not enough just to focus on the policy and its process."

67. A similar theme of comments, made by 6 people, referred specifically to wanting more information on how the policy would work in practice (Figure 11). Comments included:

"Scenarios for examples of how the policy would be implemented would be good."

"examples of how things would work in practice. implications are too nebulous . what could it mean for older couple who may have to move out of an area they grew up in ? What about school age children having to move schools? What time scales ?"

"The proposals do not give any examples of how it may affect someone in real terms"

"If someone is located in a particular location that is usually for specific reasons and moving them to another area can create many problems and additional expenses eg travel etc. It would be helpful if more specific details were provided to help inform opinions."

68. Overall, 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy was open and transparent and 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed. In total, 45% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the draft Acquisition and

Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy was open and transparent and 23% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

69. When respondents were asked why they disagreed with the clarity of the policies statements, two people mentioned the openness of the draft policies (Figure 11). The comments were:

"clarity how open is "open" - how much wiggle room is there?!"

"I would want to look at why decisions were being made before i could come down on one side or the other

70. Overall, 48% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy was clear and 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed. In total, 50% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy was clear and 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

71. When respondents were asked why they disagreed with the clarity of the policies statements, nine people mentioned how clear the draft policies were. The comments included:

"you need to write an idiot sheet. Some don't understand and some chose to not to or claim to have been misled."

"This doesn't make sense"

"Make the details more clear to the normal person and not use language that is not understood by Normal People, Do not blind your tenants and leaseholders with language which is not understood."

"some of the draft are unclear and we cannot gave a proper answer."

"The policy papers are written in a legally correct and comprehensive manner. However the extensive use of legal, bureaucratic and "official" language makes the documents, and therefore the policies, difficult to understand. A full plain English audit of all documents needs to be carried out."

"I think the draft policy need to be a lot clearer.It needs to be drafted with ordinary people in mind"

"However, if certain circumstances are met and suitable properties are available, tenants may be offered the right to return.' I would like the policy to have more clarity on what certain circumstances means"

"While reading I struggled to understand the logic behind proposed policies, sorry"

Questionnaire feedback - Analysis of questions on the proposed regeneration of Townhill Park.

72. In total, 94 respondents answered questions on the proposed regeneration of Townhill Park. The first question in this section of the questionnaire asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposed decommissioning at Townhill Park. As shown in figure 12, 52% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals and 19% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

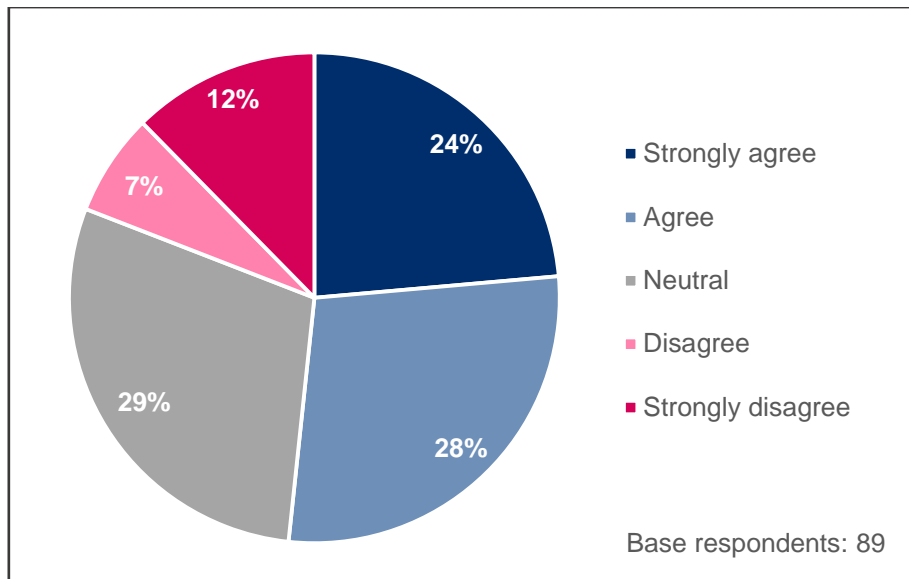


Figure 12 – “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed decommissioning at Townhill Park?”

73. Respondents were asked what impact the proposed changes would have if they were implemented on them or their community. In total, 56% of respondents felt that they would be significantly or moderately impacted by the proposals. 19% of respondents felt that there would be no impact on them or their community at all. The results can be seen in figure 13.

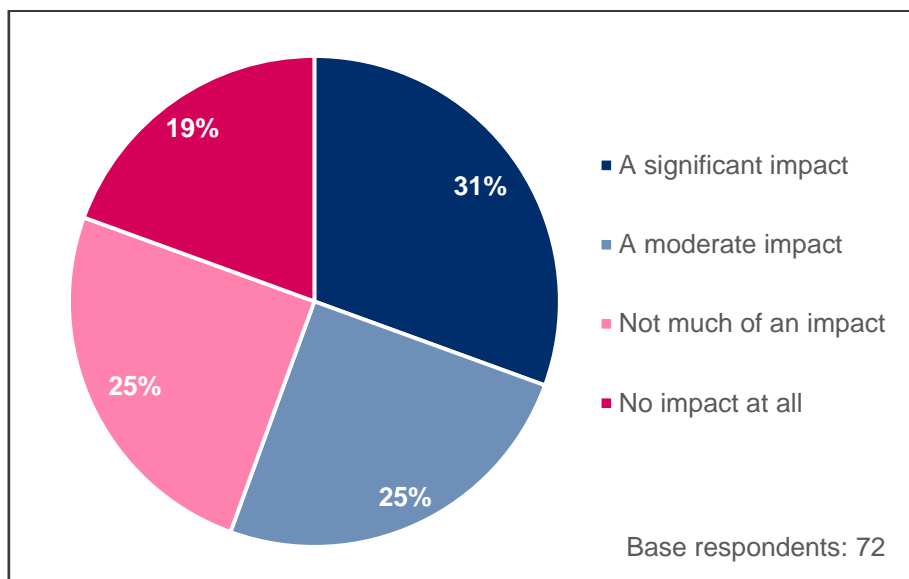


Figure 13 – “If the preferred option were to be implemented what impact do you feel this might have on you or your community?”

74. If respondents felt they would be impacted by the proposed regeneration, they were then asked if it was linked to a protected characteristic, see figure 14. Similar to the results of the same question in the draft policies section, both age and disability were the highest selected protected characteristic that respondents felt were linked to the impact they would feel. 53% of respondents to the question felt that they would be particularly impacted as a result of age and 30% as a result of disability. 40% of respondents to the question preferred not to say.

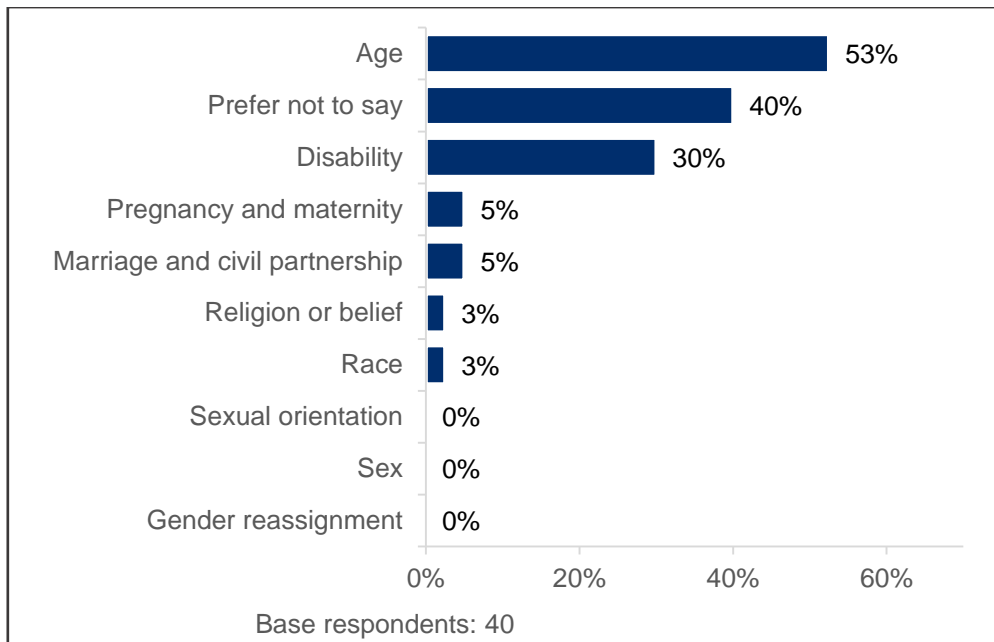


Figure 14 – “If you feel that you will be impacted by the proposed regeneration of Townhill Park and it is linked to a protected characteristic, please select the characteristic(s).”

75. There were four free text questions in the Townhill Park section of the questionnaire. The first asked respondents that disagreed with the proposals to explain why, the second asked if respondents had any alternative options they felt the council could consider, and the final two questions asked about personal impacts and equality issues. When analysing the free text comments from the questionnaire, all comments from all questions were analysed and categorised together. In total 21 people provided a comment specifically regarding Townhill Park proposals throughout all free text questions across the entire consultation. Figure 15 shows the themes of comments regarding the proposed regeneration of Townhill Park.

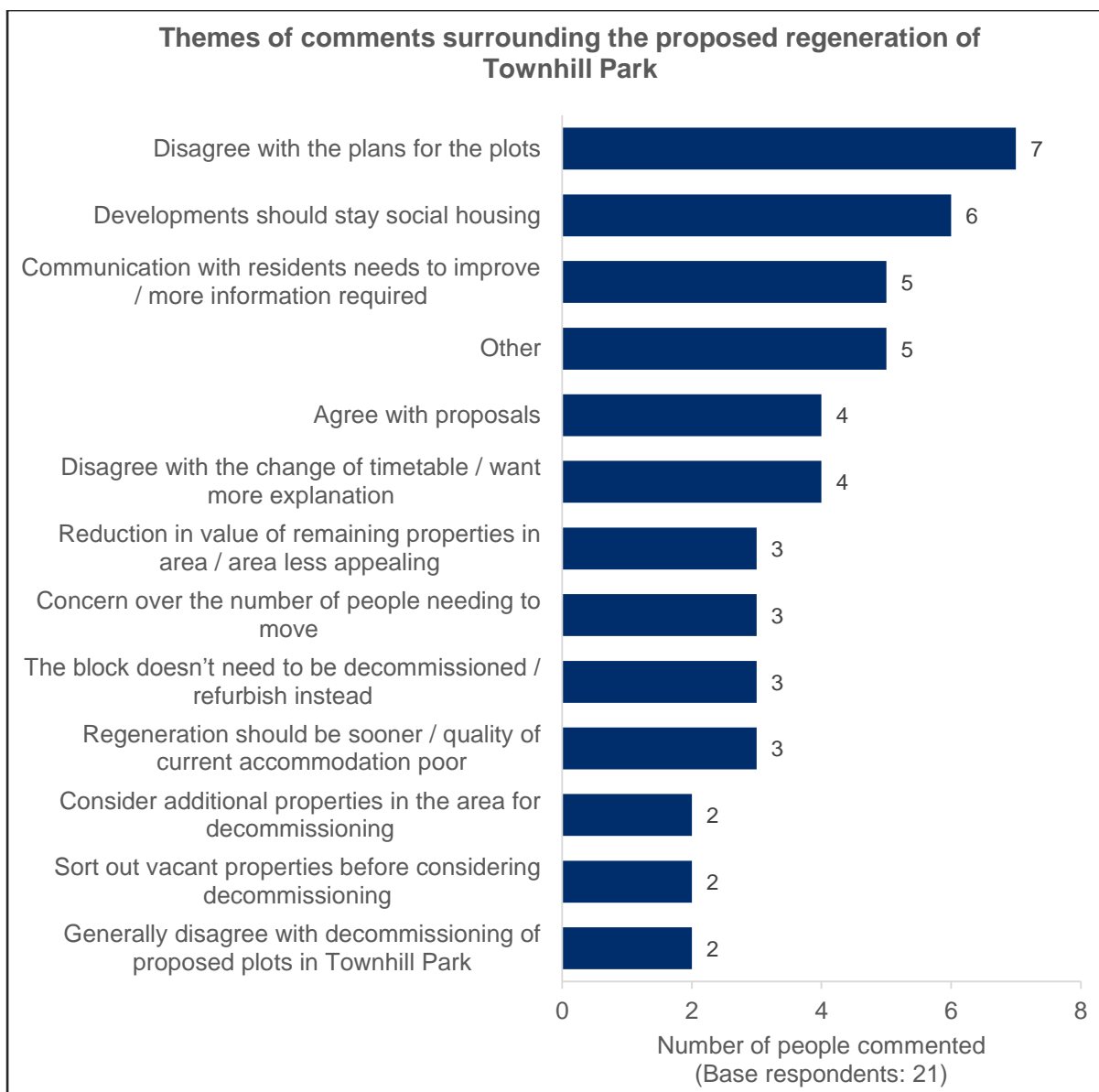


Figure 15– Themes of comments surrounding the proposed regeneration of Townhill Park

76. The most frequently mentioned theme of comment was a disagreement with the current plans for the plots. In total seven people expressed concern over the current designs. Comments that encompass this theme of response include:

“I would prefer the first Draft of Houses along Kingsdown way or if demand for more homes is the pressure, keep the height to 5 stories with out any roof garden.”

“Build 2 story buildings backing on to Cornwall rd. This would be more in keeping with all other properties in the area.”

“Plot II seems like it has just been added because the idea of green space in this area appears offensive.”

“flats to stay five storeys high only. if any more accommodation needed, build houses. (rented).”

77. In total, six respondents expressed concern over whether the proposed new developments at Townhill Park would remain social housing. This was the second most documented theme of response and examples of comments include:

"I don't like the idea of replacing council tenancies and rent with private and the so called affordable rent. I think the council should hang on to it properties and identify other land elsewhere rather than losing a precious resource."

"If decommissioning is to happen then they should be replaced by council homes not by housing association as council have not built up the stocks for a long time."

"Who will you be selling the land off to? How many of the new homes they build will be social housing? -why not every single one?"

78. Five respondents were unsatisfied by the level of communication received throughout the process and felt they would like to know more information. Examples of comments include:

"It has not been obvious why e.g. Townhill needed redeveloping in the way that has been attempted."

"As we are in the first part of the decommissioning I don't find it clear enough how long the process will take for us moving once or if new format is approved this is my only concern . On how quickly we will have to move"

"The phasing of decommissioning of Townhill Park has been changed beyond all recognition from what residents have been led to believe for the last several years. Then without any lead up we are presented with the new timetable squeezed in the middle of the policy changes. Almost under the radar. Despite council Regen representatives' assurances that residents would be kept informed nothing of the like has happened."

79. Four people disagreed with the change of timetable and wanted more information as to why it had changed. These comments included:

"Personal impacts are immense if the decommissioning is carried out strictly to the proposed timetable. A dynamic/flexible approach would be welcome to take into account personal circumstances wherever your property is in the timetable."

"I have known about the regeneration for about 5 years now. Up until now I was told that Kingsdown way was going to be next but it looks like another 5 year wait. This has left me in a difficult situation as my home needs new carpets and furniture but I'm refusing to receive decorate my home as it will be money wasted. I'm not buying new furniture because once it's built and put together nowadays it's unusable to flat pack it again. I'm really upset that it's another 5 year wait."

"For several years the phasing led me to believe that my address would be in phase 2 so we would be moved within a few years. However the timetable has moved our address to the very last. Another 6/7 years. No explanation for this has been given and I am asked if I agree or disagree without being provided with the facts."

80. Although the majority of comments related to a disagreements with the proposed developments, detrimental impacts or suggestions, four people did comment on positive outcomes of the proposed developments. These comments include:

“Impacted in a positive way - it is not just the proposed redevelopment area that will benefit - there are benefits also for residents living nearby.”

“I think that, when completed, this would be a beneficial improvement to the community.”

“But if you can make this as beautiful as the plans show and it will stay social housing I would be pleased and happy for this to go forward”

81. Three people felt the regeneration should be sooner as they wanted to move sooner due to the quality of their current accommodation. Examples of comments include:

“I am in a walk up 3rd floor maisonette, with absolutely no outside personal space or balcony. Even when I leave my front door I have descend three flights of stairs to even take a breath of fresh air. It is not a healthy way of living, and as my years advance if my even become a prison.”

“These flats are deteriorating daily. The heating is not controlled my ourselves and it's currently freezing. I'm top floor flat and have 3 children and the stairs are becoming unbearable so havine that hope of the decanting being soon lifted my spirits. Bit realising another potential 5 years living here in these cold damp leaking flats it's causing my anxiety to rise. These flats are subsiding and my son's bedroom ceiling is coming away from the wall. I think it's disgusting the council can think these flats are liveable for another 5 years.”

“Further residents living in the walk up concrete blocks will be forced to endure paying for a antiquated and totally inefficient heating system. Having no control and made to paid a heating charge every single week in the year whether you have heat or not.”

82. Three people were concerned with the number of people moving at once and the pressure this would put on the available housing. This was a theme observed in comments on the draft policies too.

“are the council so confident they can satisfactorially rehome all evicted familys impacted directly by decommissioning all these plots”

83. In total, three people expressed concern over the reduction in value of remaining properties that are not currently in the proposals to be decommissioned. They also expressed concern over the area becoming less appealing during or as a result of the works. Comments that encompass this theme include:

“The proposed block of flats will dominate the gardens in Cronwall Rd. To an even greater extent than the existing maisonettes.”

“Overlooked by 7 story block, extra noise, wind created by a tall building, us residents in cornwall rd have the value of our properties reduced by about 20%.”

“With the sheer amount of building work to take place rather than drawing people in to the area, it may lead to a fair few departing. The need to decomission PLOTS 13&12 in succession seems odd - this is going to really make that part of Meggeson Ave a tad eerie.”

84. Similar to themes within the policy section, two respondents suggested that vacant properties should be sorted out before planning to decommission existing properties in Townhill Park and three respondents felt that some properties in Townhill Park should be refurbished rather than decommissioned. Comments include:

“when you can truthfully tell us that there are no empty dwellings in the city, for all are occupied by council tenants, we'll talk again.”

“What is the purpose of decommissioning plots such as 12? The first two plots that have already been decommissioned were run down, yet I see nothing wrong with a great deal of these blocks you are looking to re-build.”

“The structure of some of the properties is sound.”

“Rethink the plan and refurbish the flats and homes to save money and misery.”

85. Two people felt that additional properties should be included within the proposals. These comments included:

“The properties on Vanguard Road should also be considered for decommissioning.”

“Only that if you are going to do this in Townhill park when do you stop will my development be next?”

86. Two people disagreed with the regeneration project completely and five people made other comments. The following comments were made:

“If you want to talk traffic calming measures start with repairing the potholes and providing off street parking options, especially for tower building residents.”

“southampton council do the works themselves.”

“In 2014 we had our right to buy withdrawn. When the phasing was different it didn't mean too much but now with another 7 years before being moved my right to buy would have been suspended for 10 years. This is a discrimination.”

“I think the council should hang on to its properties and identify other land elsewhere rather than losing a precious resource. In addition, some of the blocks are of architectural interest as example of mid 20th century modernism.”

“Leave things as they are.”

“The whole programme looks like wilful disruption for very little benefit. Only the seedy shops really need redeveloping.”

Drop-ins and engagement feedback

87. Two drop-ins were held at Townhill Park Community Centre on 19 July 2017 and 13 September 2017. In total there were 20 attendees to the drop-in on 19 July 2017 and 27 attendees to the drop-in on 13 September 2017. The main points of discussion were:

- The majority of attendees wanted to know more details about the decommissioning process itself and timeline and how they would receive further information.
- The difference between the Allocation policy and the draft decommissioning policy was identified. The Allocation policy allows an extra bedroom to be retained compared to the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy is solely determined on need.
- There were comments on the structure of the questionnaire including the length, and positioning of the Townhill Park proposals second after the draft policies section.

88. When the consultation was discussed at the Tenant resources group, Tenant scrutiny panel and Tenant inspectors the following feedback was provided:

- There were issues with the questionnaire about it being difficult to understand and follow.
- There were a mixture of views for and against but they will have been captured in the returned questionnaires.
- The biggest concern for the scrutiny panel was that they didn't think that "sweeteners" should be given to people refusing to leave.

Feedback on the consultation process and approach

89. The council is committed to make the whole consultation process as transparent as possible. As a part of this, any feedback on the consultation process itself received during the course of the consultation is summarised in this section.

90. Overall, out of the 151 people who answered the consultation questionnaire, a total of 9 people commented on the consultation process itself.

91. The comments made regarding the consultation process are shown below:

"I'd like to read this policy, this does not seem to link to anywhere?"

"Residents need adequate support and in order for all residence to understand and cooperate. you need to word the documents in a better way. The questionnaire itself was not very clear. Full of jargon that a lot of residence won't understand."

"I'm not saying I agree or disagree. I would like to look at how it was running before I could say, one way or another"

"More information would be required in order to develop and informed opinion and make balanced judgements, I feel."

"This doesn't make sense"

"the timetable has moved our address to the very last. Another 6/7 years. No explanation for this has been given and I am asked if I agree or disagree without being provided with the facts."

"without any lead up we are presented with the new timetable squeezed in the middle of the policy changes. Almost under the radar. Despite council Regen representatives' assurances that residents would be kept informed nothing of the like has happened. With the added involvement of the legal department 'residents are being dealt with' and yet again the feeling of a fait accompli is felt. Even without a cynical mind there is the feeling of public servants not actually serving their residents."

"I presume option 5 is meant to read Strongly DISagree, as there are currently 2 Strongly Agrees on each question."

"Was it a Freudian slip to turn "Strongly disagree" above into "Strongly agree" in both cases? Is this a sign of any disinclination on your part to take into account the views expressed in this survey? I am sure the Plain English Campaign would not grant you a 'Diamond Award'!"

92. There was an initial mistake on the online questionnaire for the question asking about the clarity of the draft policies. The option that was supposed to read strongly disagree read strongly agree instead. All other options were correct. This was commented on by two respondents to the questionnaire and as soon as it was noticed, it was corrected. This was an error on the online version of the questionnaire, but not on the paper version.
93. Comments were also received at the drop-ins and discussions with tenants regarding the length of the questionnaire, order of the two sections of the questionnaire and how easy it was to understand.
94. The comments regarding the questionnaire design will provide learning points when designing future consultation questionnaire; especially in relation to the number of questions asked when the consultation is covering multiple topics.

Conclusion

95. The consultation sought views on both proposed changes to housing policies affecting the decommissioning of properties of tenants and leaseholds citywide and the proposed regeneration of Townhill Park.
96. In total, 151 respondents completed the questionnaire which ran for 12 weeks from 10 July 2017 to 01 October 2017. In addition 47 people attended drop-ins at Townhill Park Community Centre and the consultation was discussed at three groups: Tenant resources group, Tenant scrutiny panel and Tenant inspectors.
97. The demographic breakdown of respondents to the consultation questionnaire showed that whilst certain groups were less represented than others, there was still engagement across a broad ranges of groups.
98. Overall there was a higher level of agreement (48%) than disagreement (25%) for the content of the draft Decommissioning of Housing Stock Policy and also a higher level of agreement (49%) than disagreement (14%) for the content of the draft Acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Orders Policy. The most frequently mentioned themes of comments included: the right to return of tenants, being forced to move away from the area residents currently live in, the new property being significantly different to their current property and the emotional impact and disruption to life that the draft policies would cause.
99. Overall there was a higher level of agreement (52%) than disagreement (19%) for the proposed decommissioning at Townhill Park. The highest numbers of respondents commented to: disagree with the plans for the plots, highlight the need for the proposed developments to remain social housing and that communication with residents needed to improve.

100. In conclusion, this consultation allows Cabinet to understand the views of residents and stakeholders on the proposals that have been consulted on. Therefore it provides a sound base on which to make a decision.