

# **Rochford District Council Stock Options Appraisal Test of Opinion Report**



**Prepared by the Independent Tenant  
Advisor  
*Your Choice* Housing Consultants**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The Options Appraisal requires tenants and leaseholders to be well informed and involved in the decision making process. The test of opinion is a means of enabling tenants and leaseholders to express their views and preferences.

The results from the test of opinion survey will provide the decision makers with evidence from the wider tenant and leaseholder community, which will assist them in recommending an option for the future.

It is important that when tenants and leaseholders make their preferences, their decisions are based on an understanding of what each option can offer in terms of investment in their homes, community and in service improvements.

The Community Housing Task Force (CHTF) have recently said that they would expect a response rate of at least 20% from a test of opinion survey for the purposes of getting the Option Appraisal signed off.

The Rochford Housing Options Appraisal Board (RHOAB) comprising tenant and leaseholder representatives, councillors, officers and consultants have been working together for the last nine months.

The Board have considered the investment requirements to meet the Decent Homes Standard and other tenant improvements alongside the council's anticipated resources.

Meeting housing need and understanding how each of the options can support the affordable housing programme is an important part of the Option Appraisal. The Board have received presentations on the recent Housing Needs Survey undertaken by David Coultie Associated on behalf of the Essex Thames Gateway Local Authorities and are fully aware of the housing need situation in Rochford.

It has been established that the Council cannot meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. This means that the council cannot consider retention and the PFI option was also discarded as the housing stock in Rochford does not fit the criteria for this option.

It was agreed that the two remaining viable options of ALMO and transfer were put to tenants and leaseholders in the test of opinion survey.

A copy of the final test of opinion survey was agreed with the Council and is attached in appendix 1 of this report.

## **2.0 Methodology**

It was agreed that a postal test of opinion survey would be undertaken to ascertain tenants and leaseholder views.

A postal survey provides an opportunity for all tenants and leaseholders to express their view.

When undertaking a postal survey there are a number of factors to consider which influence the return rate. These include:

- ❖ level of interest of the options appraisal amongst the tenants and leaseholders
- ❖ style and presentation of the survey
- ❖ size of the survey, language and ease to complete
- ❖ advice and support for respondents to answer any questions
- ❖ a reminder and second survey
- ❖ incentive to return the survey
- ❖ other publicity and promotion of the test of opinion.

The content of the survey was agreed with RHOAB. It was decided to ask tenants and leaseholders to indicate their level of support for both the ALMO and transfer options.

A total of 1905 test of opinion surveys were sent to tenants and leaseholders during the first week of February. An initial response of 481 was received and a reminder letter and second survey was sent to the 1,424 tenants and leaseholders that had not responded during the last week of February.

The closing date for surveys to be returned was Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March although we will continue to record any returns that are received after this date and add these into the body of the report.

In total we have received 936 surveys to date. This equates to 49% which is an excellent rate of return for a survey of this nature and way in excess of the CHTF minimum requirement of 20%.

In total we have received 4 second surveys from tenants which have not been included in the data analysis.

Some of the questions on the survey forms have not been answered and this is reflected in the results.

### **3.0 Data Analysis**

All completed test of opinion surveys have been included in the database for this final report. Any second surveys received will not have been included unless a difference of views was expressed by joint tenants or leaseholders.

Surveys are still being returned and these will be added to the database and included in an updated report. It is very unlikely that this will effect the preferences on the chosen options although will increase the response rate.

The survey asked tenants and leaseholders to indicate their preference between ALMO and stock transfer and level of support for both options.

Not everyone completed every question and this is reflected in the results.

The results have been analysed in to the following groups;

- district 1
- tenure type 2
- areas 10
- length of tenancy 5
- age profile 6
- BME & non BME 21

The results are based on the number of returns received to date.

Confidence in the data is important and for surveys of this type you are looking to have a confidence level of plus or minus 5%. This means that if 75% of respondents answered a question in a particular way you know that either 70% or 80% of all respondents share this opinion including those that did not respond.

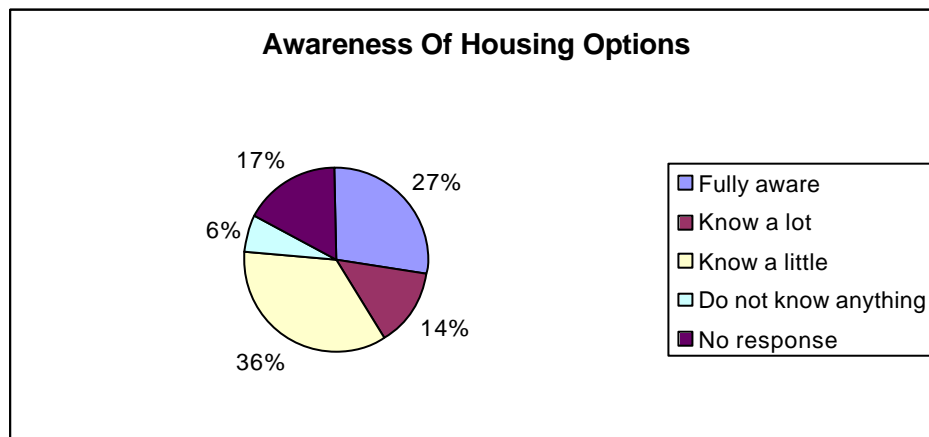
With regard to the confidence in this data the results can be expressed at 2% at 95% for the sample as a whole. That means that if 50% of tenants preferred a particular option, somewhere between 48% and 52% of all residents share this opinion, including those that didn't respond to the survey.

#### 4.0 Results

Tenants and leaseholders were asked to answer the following questions;

##### Q.1 How much do you feel you know about the housing options? Base = 936

Awareness	Number	%
Fully aware	257	27
Know a lot	128	14
Know a little	331	36
Do not know anything	59	6
No response	161	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>100</b>



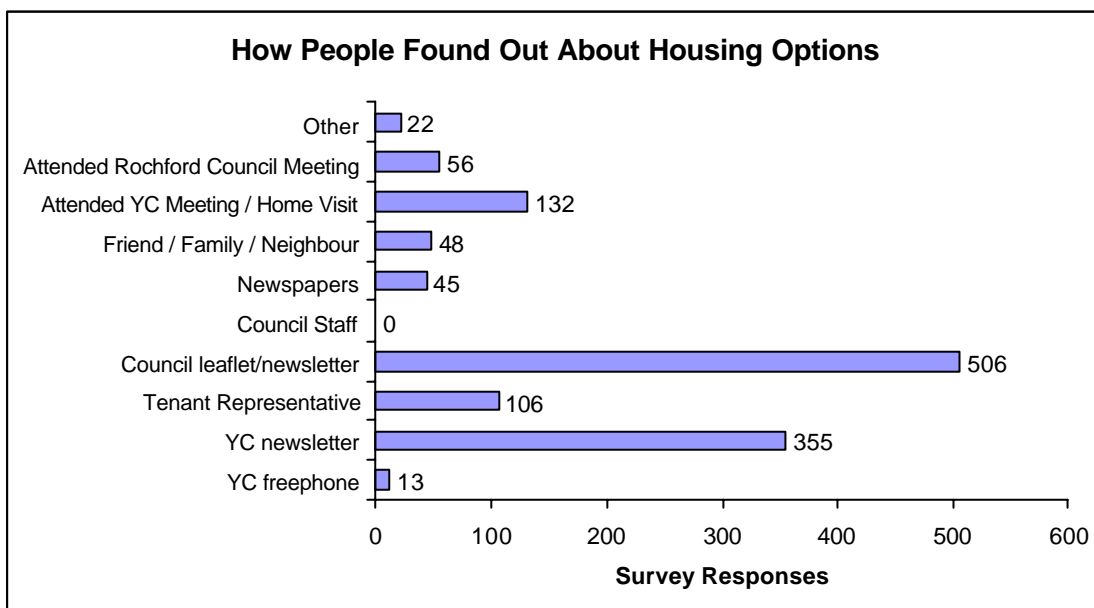
#### Comments

A large number of respondents, 72% knew a little or a lot about the options. Only 6% said they knew nothing and 17% did not answer the question.

It is impossible to say why respondents did not answer the question.

**Q.2 How did you find out about the options?  
Base = 1283**

Information	Number	%
YCHC freephone	13	1
YCHC newsletter	355	28
Tenant Representative	106	8
Council leaflet / Newsletter	506	39
Council Staff	0	0
Newspapers	45	4
Friend / Family / Neighbour	48	4
Attended YCHC Meeting / home visit	132	10
Attended Rochford Council Meeting	56	4
Other	22	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1283</b>	<b>100</b>

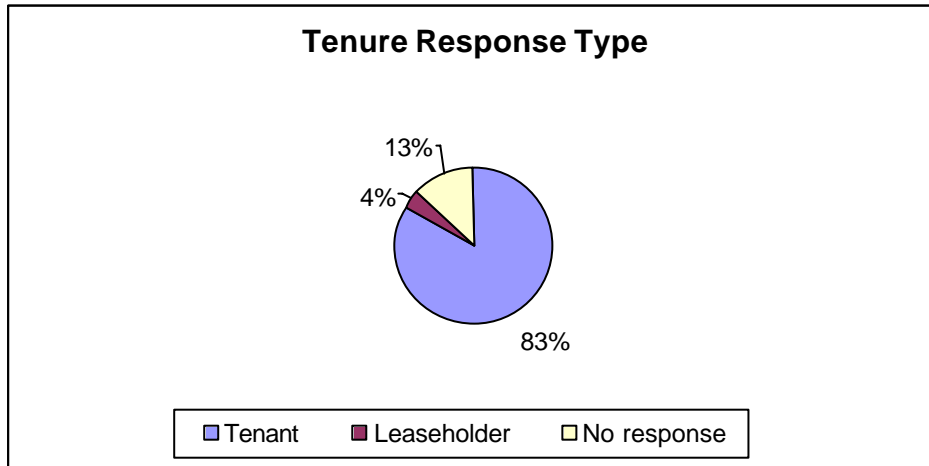


**Comments**

Respondents were asked to tick as many as applied.  
The most popular way of finding out the options was through newsletters with the council's and YCHC accounting for over 70% of responses.

**Q.3 Are you a tenant or leaseholder?**  
Base = 936

Tenure Type	Number	%
Tenant	781	83
Leaseholder	36	4
No response	119	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>100</b>

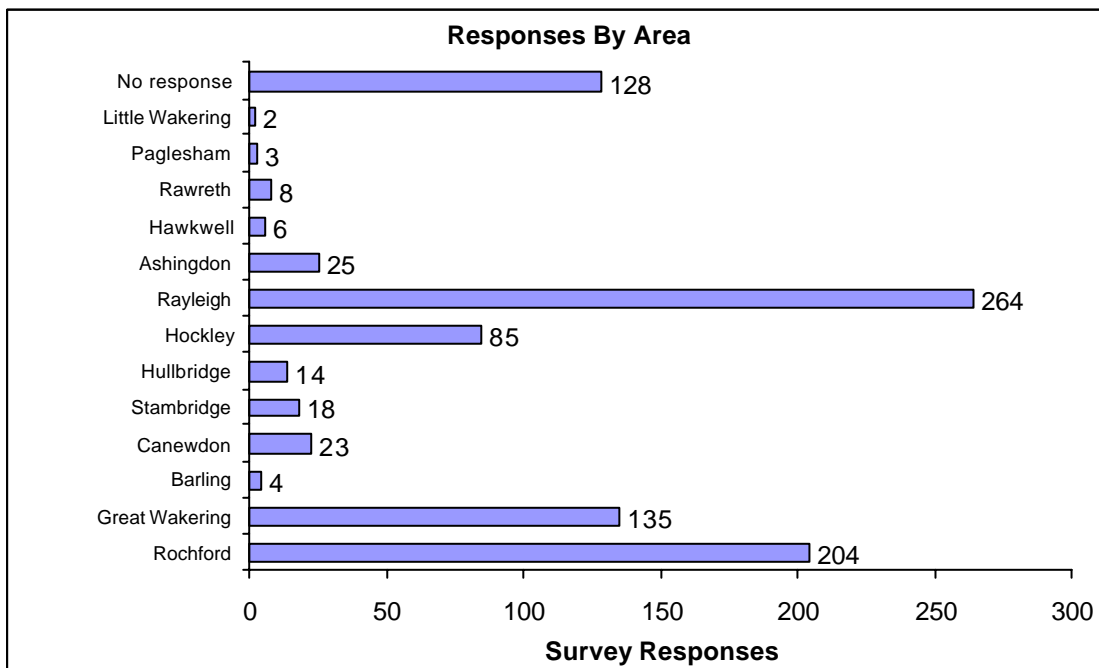


**Comments**

The majority of responses were form tenants. Some respondents did not answer this question.

**Q.4 Where do you live?**  
**Base = 919**

Area	Number	%
Rochford	204	22
Great Wakering	135	15
Barling	4	0
Canewdon	23	3
Stambridge	18	2
Hullbridge	14	2
Hockley	85	9
Rayleigh	264	28
Ashingdon	25	3
Hawkwell	6	1
Rawreth	8	1
Paglesham	3	0
Little Wakering	2	0
No response	128	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>919</b>	<b>100</b>



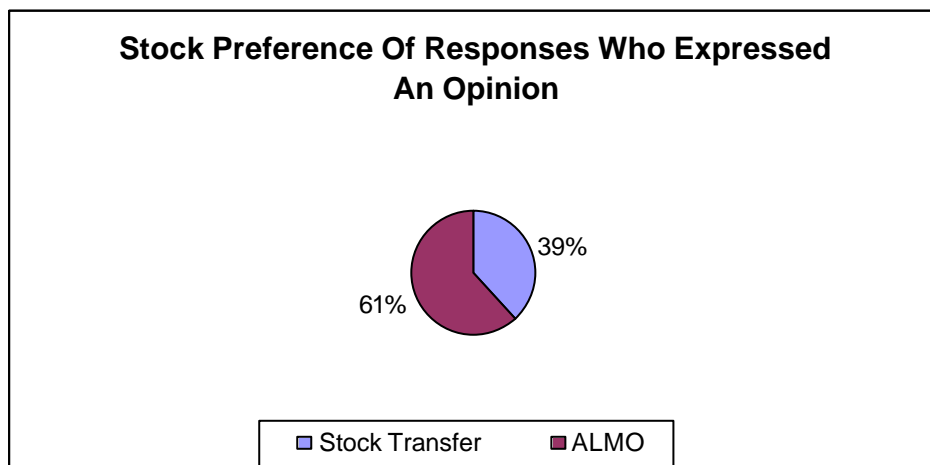
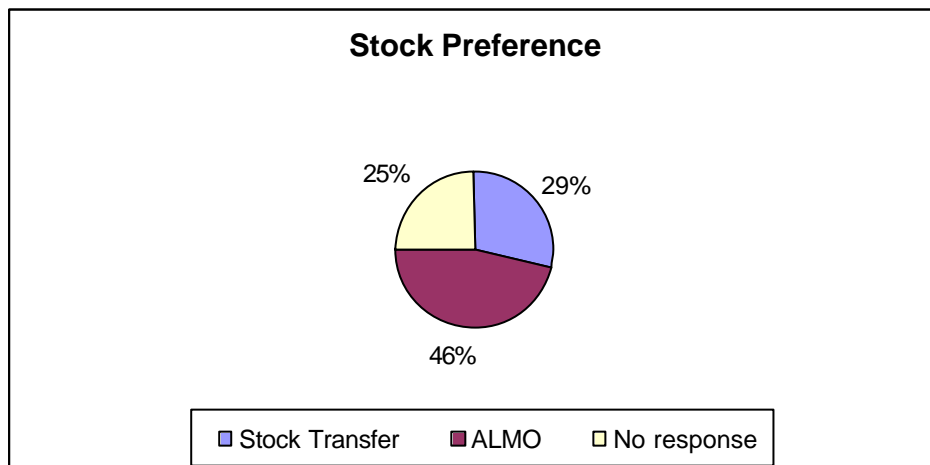
**Comments**

The majority of responses were from the larger tenant and leaseholder areas of Rayleigh, Rochford and Great Wakering.



**Q.5 Which of the two options do you prefer?**  
**Base = 931**

Stock Preference	Number	%
Stock Transfer	270	29
ALMO	427	46
No response	234	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>100</b>

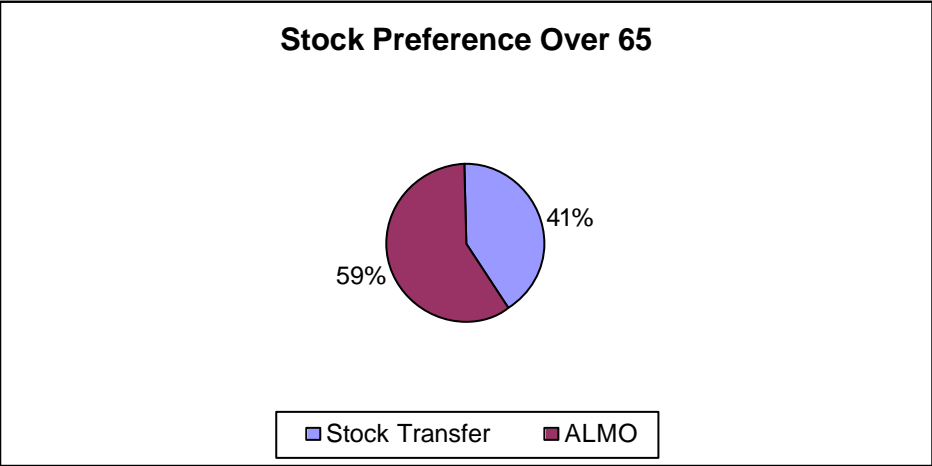
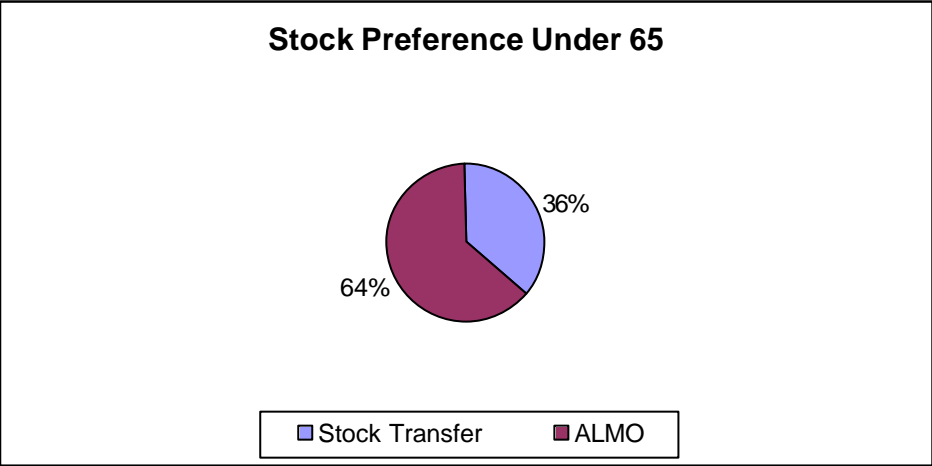


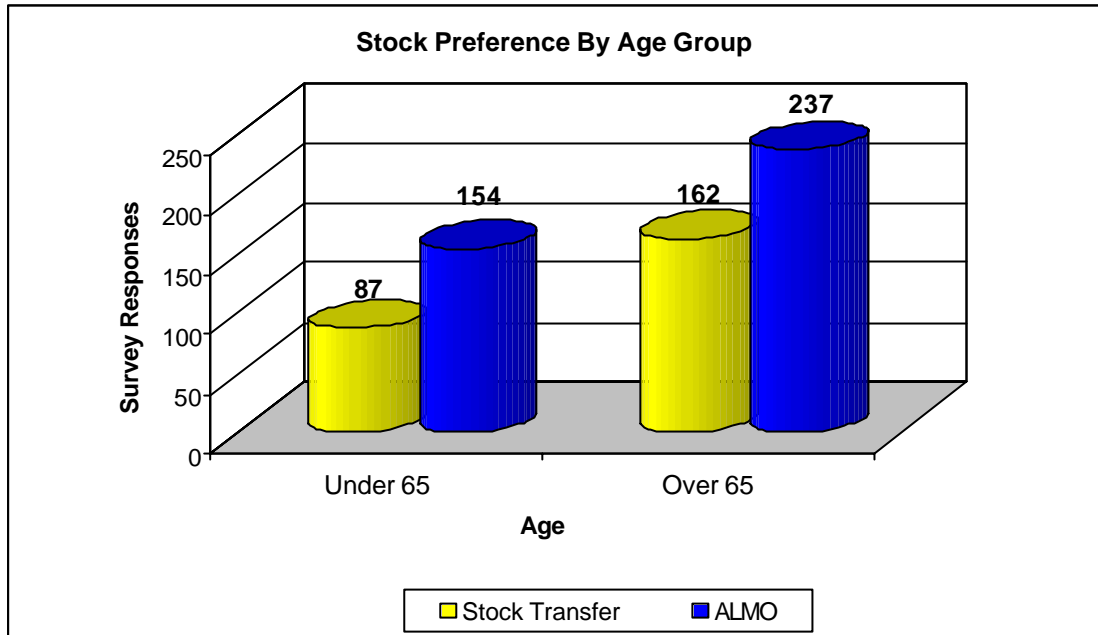
**Comments**

The ALMO option was the preferred option from tenants and leaseholders that expressed a preference. There was interest in transfer with 29% favouring this option. Of the 25% that did not answer some said that it was because they did not understand or did not like either of the two options. If you consider that only 6% of respondents said that they knew nothing about the options, it is probable that many did not answer because of the later of the two reasons mentioned above.

**Q.5a Preferences by Age**  
**Base = 640**

<b>Stock Preference By Age</b>	<b>Under 65</b>	<b>Over 65</b>	<b>Total</b>
Stock Transfer	87	162	249
ALMO	154	237	391
<b>Total</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>640</b>





**Comments**

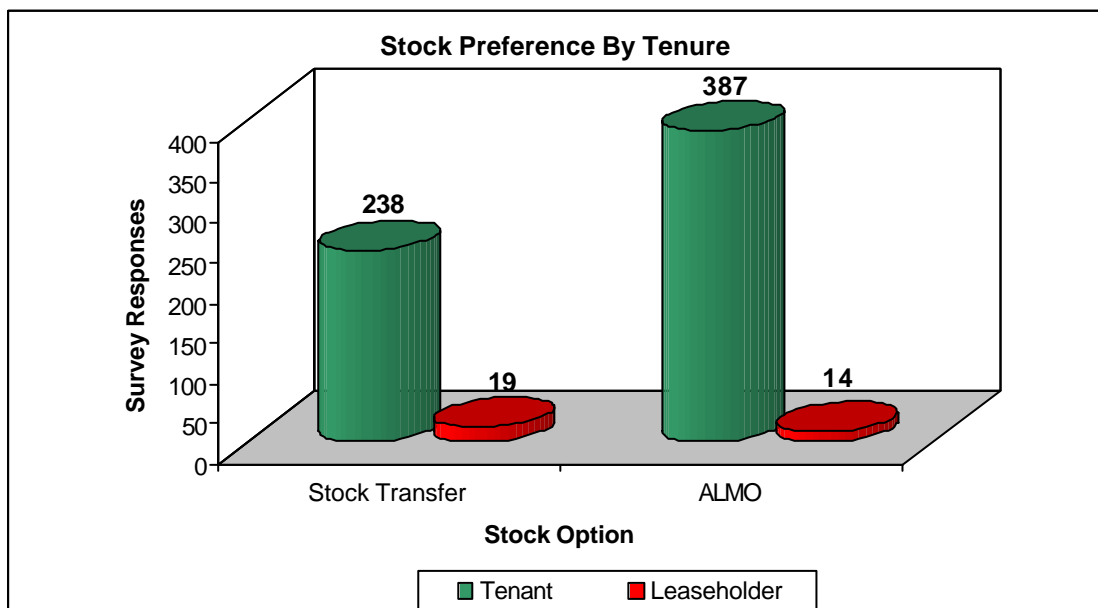
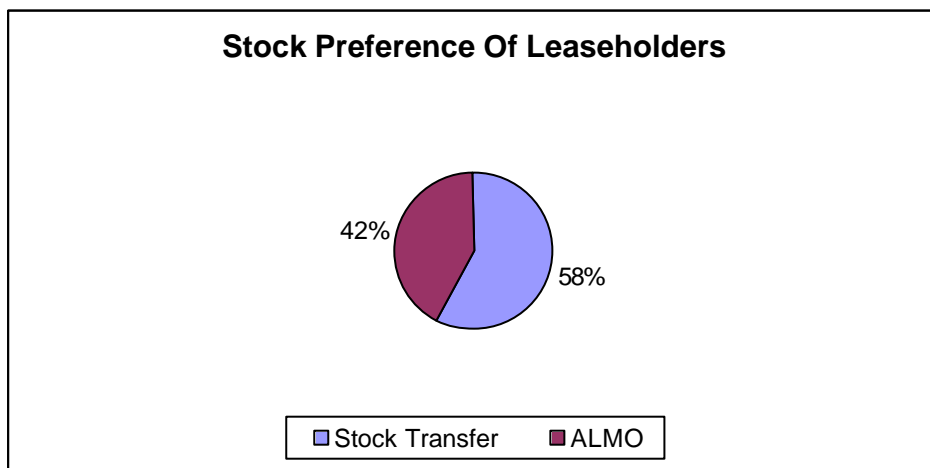
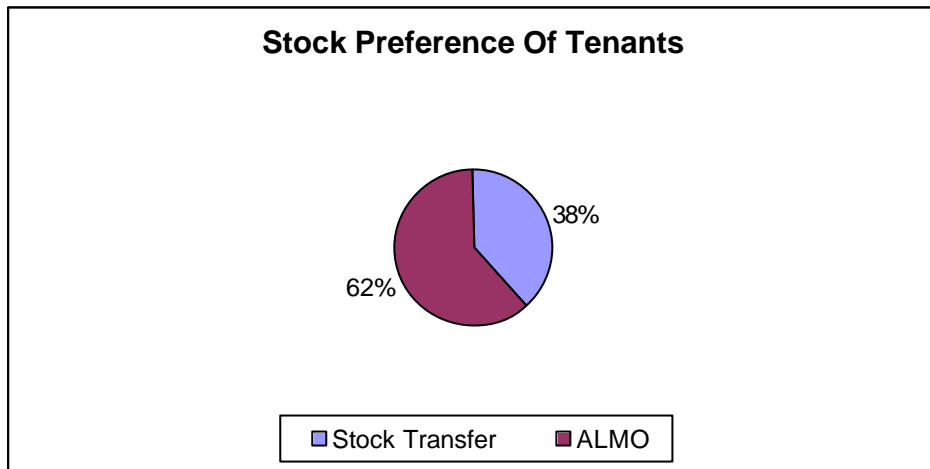
There was a stronger preference for transfer from respondents over 65 than from those under 65. A number of respondents that expressed a preference did not declare an age, 57.

**Q.5b Options preference by tenants and leaseholders**

**Base tenants = 625**

**Base leaseholders = 33**

Stock Preference By Tenure	Stock Transfer	ALMO	Total
Tenant	238	387	625
Leaseholder	19	14	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>658</b>

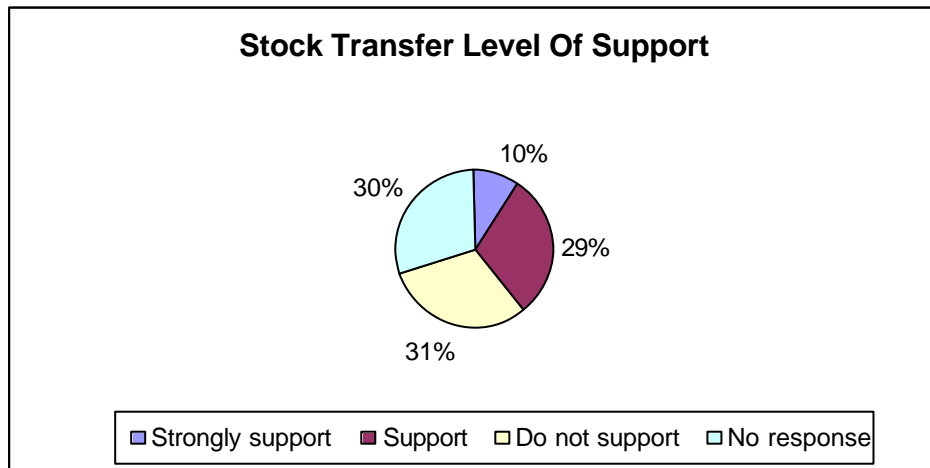


**Comments**

Leaseholders expressed a preference for the transfer option. Tenants preferred the ALMO option.

**Q.6 Please indicate your level of support for the stock transfer option  
Base = 936**

Stock Transfer Support	Number	%
Strongly support	92	10
Support	274	29
Do not support	286	31
No response	284	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>100</b>

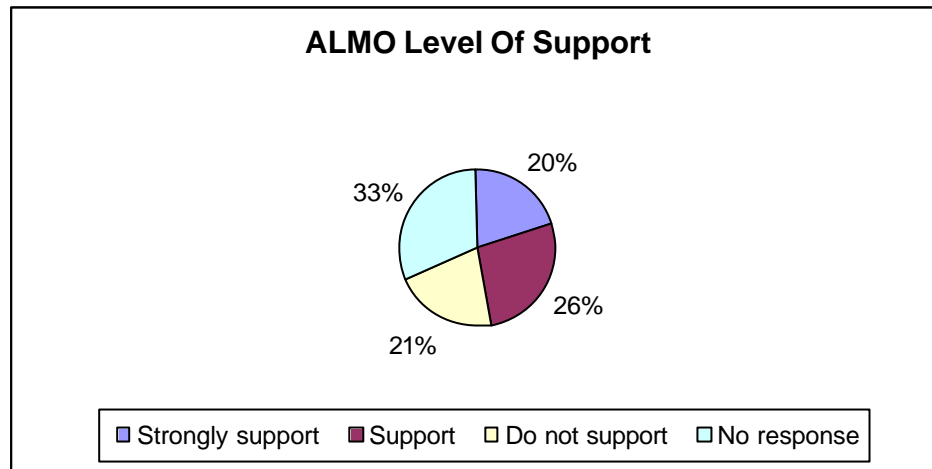


**Comments**

39% of respondents supported transfer. 30% did not answer this question and 31% said they did not support transfer.

**Q.7 Please indicate your level of support for the ALMO option  
Base = 936**

ALMO Support	Number	%
Strongly support	189	20
Support	248	26
Do not support	199	21
No response	300	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>100</b>



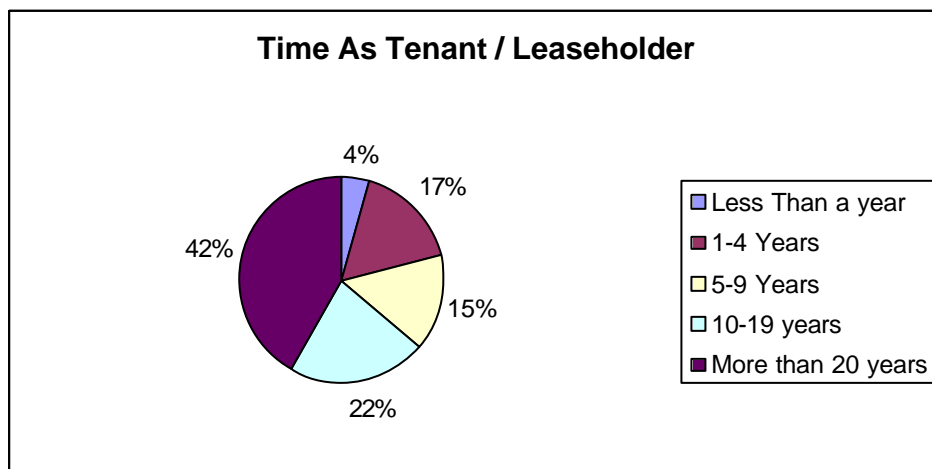
**Comments**

46% of respondents supported the ALMO option. 21% were against and 33% did not express a view.

**Q.8 How long have you been a council tenant or leaseholder?**

**Base = 936**

Time As Tenant / Leaseholder	Number	%
Less Than a year	32	3
1-4 Years	127	14
5-9 Years	116	12
10-19 years	166	18
More than 20 years	317	34
No response	178	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>100</b>



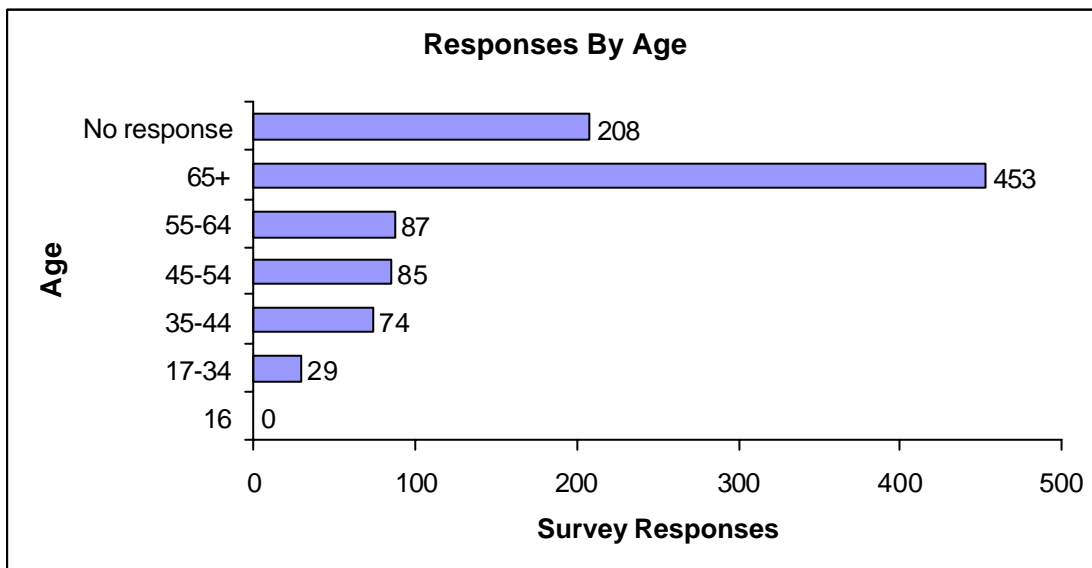
**Comments**

The majority of respondents had been Council tenants for more than 20 years. This is consistent with the age profile of Rochford. However, there were good levels of response from new tenants and from tenants that had been with the Council for up to 4 years.

**Q.9 How old are you?**

**Base = 936**

Age	Number	%
16	0	0
17-34	29	3
35-44	74	8
45-54	85	9
55-64	87	9
65+	453	49
No response	208	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>100</b>



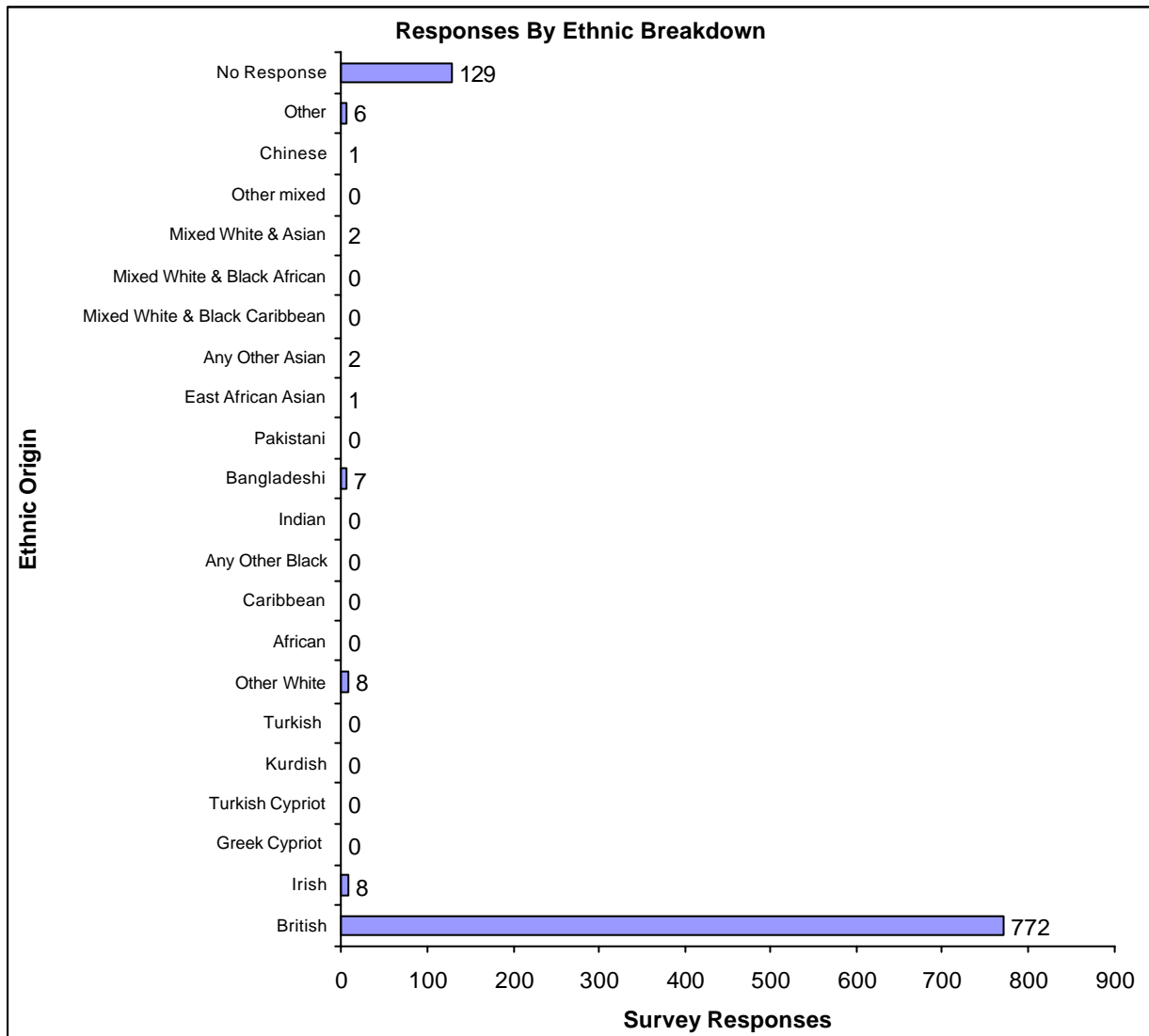
**Comments**

49% of respondents are 65 or over. This is consistent with the age profile of the Rochford District.

**Q.10 How would you describe your ethnic origin?**  
**Base = 936**

<b>Ethnic Origin</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
British	772	82
Irish	8	1
Greek Cypriot	0	0
Turkish Cypriot	0	0
Kurdish	0	0
Turkish	0	0
Other White	8	1
African	0	0
Caribbean	0	0
Any Other Black	0	0
Indian	0	0
Bangladeshi	7	1
Pakistani	0	0
East African Asian	1	0
Any Other Asian	2	0
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	0	0
Mixed White & Black African	0	0
Mixed White & Asian	2	0
Other mixed	0	0
Chinese	1	0
Other	6	1
No Response	129	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>100</b>





**Comments**

84% of respondents were British, Irish or other white. 14% did not answer the question and 2% were from BME or other ethnic groups. This is broadly consistent with the ethnic profile of Rochford.

## **5.0 Conclusions**

The preferred option of the respondents that expressed a view was for ALMO. There was significant support for transfer and leaseholders preferred transfer to ALMO.

A significant number of respondents did not express a preference and this was down to a combination of not understanding or not wanting either the transfer or the ALMO options.

Additional surveys are still being received and we have a total of 15 surveys to be added to the database. However, these additions will not make any difference to the results but will increase the response rate to 50%, which is an excellent result.