



Title	BBCHA/LHT Transfer Consultation Outcome Report
Purpose of Report	To summarise the feedback received from stakeholders during the 6 week consultation period about the potential transfer of BBCHA to LHT (running from 26 th March to 11 th May 2015).
Executive Summary	n/a
Links to Key Corporate/Business Objectives	Best for People Best for Customers Best for Value for Money
Financial/Efficiency Implications	The business case previously presented and approved by Board outlines the significant efficiency and financial benefits to the community if the transfer was to proceed.
Equality & Diversity Considerations	The consultation process included a variety of communication methods to gain stakeholder feedback. This ensured that as many people as possible could give their views in whatever way they preferred (included Facebook, email, text messaging, open events, face to face contact).
Risk/Risk Management Considerations ----- High/Medium/Low	Medium Ensuring stakeholders are well informed and feel able to ask questions about the possible transfer is important in influencing the decision to vote for or against by shareholders. We also want tenants to feel confident that the benefits are attractive and worth pursuing and that their tenancy is secure no matter who is landlord.
Implications for Member Organisations	Direct implications on LHT
Health & Safety Implications	Venues and activities were devised to ensure accessibility and safety for staff and stakeholders.
Recommendation	The Board are asked to approve the report which will be sent to Wirral Borough Council as part of the Cabinet paper for approval.
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BBCHA/LHT Transfer Consultation Outcome Report

1. Introduction and Background

As part of the process for considering a transfer of engagements to LHT, BBCHA undertook a formal 6 week consultation process involving a wide range of stakeholders. This process followed the broad requirements of the Homes and Communities Agency and advice sought from Trowers and Hamlins (BBCHA's legal advisors).

2. Consultation Process and Timetable

The consultation process commenced formally on 26th March and ran until 11th May 2015. The consultation process adopted included a number of methods to encourage participation from stakeholders including formal letters, meetings with Wirral Borough Council and shareholders, open events for the public and updates on progress being posted on BBCHA's website, twitter and Facebook.

The consultation with stakeholders included the following formal actions:

Date	Details
12 th January 2015	A letter sent to all tenants and leaseholders explaining that the BBCHA Board was considering negotiations with LHT and that over the coming months more information would be provided.
9 th February 2015	Meeting with Wirral Borough Council Officers, Symphony Housing Group and BBCHA to explain the rationale behind the possible transfer.
26 th March 2015	Meeting with Wirral Borough Council Officers, BBCHA and LHT to provide an update on progress and the outline business case.
26 th March 2015	More detailed information on how the negotiations were progressing was sent to all BBCHA tenants. Included frequently asked questions, summary of benefits, comments card and freepost envelope. Letter advertised the open sessions and how to get in touch with BBCHA. Mirrored information was also placed on BBCHA website, twitter and Facebook.
31 st March 2015	Meeting with Wirral Borough Council Officers and Councillors to provide a briefing on the business case.
8 th April 2015	Invitation sent to all shareholders to attend a consultation/communication meeting to outline the business case. Invitation included a full copy of the business case document.
15 th April 2015	Tenants newsletter published outlined key benefits that could be realised with the transfer took place compared to BBCHA staying as it is.
16 th April 2015 (Thursday)	Open session held at BBCHA office in the early evening. Advertised via mailshot, twitter, website and Facebook. Staff and Board Members also talked to local people about the transfer outside the main shopping area.

17 th April 2015 (Friday)	Open session held at BBCHA office at lunch-time. Advertised via mailshot, twitter, website and Facebook. Staff and Board Members also talked to local people about the transfer outside the main shopping area.
18 th April 2015 (Saturday)	Open session held at BBCHA office at lunch-time. Advertised via mailshot, twitter, website and Facebook. Staff and Board Members also talked to local people about the transfer outside the main shopping area.
22 nd April	Letter sent to all BBCHA tenants providing an update on the consultation process so far giving answers to the common questions asked. Invited tenants to contact BBCHA if had any further queries.
22 nd April	Letter sent to all commercial leaseholders confirming their position in relation to the transfer and to confirm no plans are being contemplated regarding shutting the shops.
24 th April 2015	Meeting held with BBCHA shareholders, BBCHA and LHT officers to outline the business case and answer questions.
28 th April 2015	Meeting with Wirral Borough Council Officers to provide an update on the consultation process to date.

Throughout the process BBCHA staff and Board Members have responded to emails, text messages and direct contact from tenants and other stakeholders asking questions about the possible transfer. All questions and comments were formally recorded by staff and Board Members and these were logged on BBCHA's contact system.

It should be noted that prior to the consultation process commencing tenants reported to BBCHA that a petition had been started by a tenant shareholder who opposed the transfer. The Acting Lead Officer met with the person organising the petition and during this meeting asked them to engage in the consultation process and to voice their concerns directly to officers so that issues could be addressed and discussed. No petition was submitted to BBCHA for consideration and no specific concerns were submitted other than they were opposed to any transfer.

3. Summary of Comments and Feedback from Stakeholders about the Transfer

134 contacts were made to BBCHA asking about the transfer. (A small number of these include repeat contact from the same people).

Of those who contacted BBCHA 121 contacts were from BBCHA tenants (90%) and 14 contacts were from other people living and working in the area (including those living with other social landlords, owner occupiers and 2 commercial leaseholders). This gives an overall response rate from tenants of 15% (based on BBCHA's 823 homes).

Stakeholders in the main wanted to know how the transfer would directly affect them and asked for clarification about the impact it could have on them and sought reassurance.

The table below shows the most common questions or queries raised by stakeholders. A much more detailed report is included in appendix 1.

What common questions did stakeholders ask about?	Number	% of all BBCHA tenants who made contact	Response provided
Overall no concerns as long as services can be guaranteed to be maintained and no changes to tenancy rights take place	98 (7 are not tenants)	76%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Right to Buy and Right to Acquire confirmed is protected - Repairs service confirmed will be of the same standard - Home support service will be retained - Local office retained - No changes to tenancy agreement will take place - No increase in rent charges other than outlined in tenancy agreement - Will still address ASB - Shops will not be shut - Will continue investing in the area including building more homes and addressing issues like vacant land and play areas
General enquiry about why the transfer was being considered	24 (3 non-tenants)	17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided information on why LHT chosen - Provided information about the Boards decision and the risks BBCHA are exposed to - Provided information on potential benefits - Reiterated information previously sent out
Opposed to transfer including being unhappy about consultation process	13 (4 non-tenants)	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided additional information including Business case Summary and offered discussions with officers - Provided details about consultation process being followed - Number of comments did not give specific reasons why opposed so general information given

* The percentage of responses received has been divided by the total number of contacts made by tenants to BBCHA.

A Shareholder meeting was arranged on 24th April to discuss the Business Case in more detail. Of the 6 shareholders who attended the meeting 4 were tenants.

The main questions raised included:

Questions/Comments	Answers
The need to retain the identity of the estate and the legacy of investment already made	Reassurance that LHT will deliver a local neighbourhood service run from the retained local office on Beechwood
Why has LHT been selected? Tenants should have been given a choice.	Outlined relationship with LHT past and present and the proven service history in the area. The need to minimise the risks and costs associated with entering into transfer talks is less with LHT as part of the same Housing Group. Any move to approach another partner would require a demerger from Symphony Housing Group.
Concern that this was taking place during election time and impact on the ability of people to lobby councillors	Confirmed WBC representation on the BBCHA Board including councillors and their involvement in developing the decision reached so far and the ongoing dialogue with ward and local councillors via the WBC representative on the BBCHA Board

4. Outcome following the consultation process

Officers have reviewed the comments and questions received so far from stakeholders and considered if anything needed to be revised in the transfer of engagements negotiations. Comparing the feedback received with the reassurances built into the transfer the conclusion is that the key concerns highlighted by tenants are protected and addressed (i.e. the ability to exercise their right to buy, security of tenure, continuity of services received).

5. Recommendation

The Board are asked to note the outcome of consultation process.

This report will be shared with Wirral Borough Council as part of their report to Cabinet about the transfer.